

part, a legacy of the history of excluding African Americans from the ranks of ordained ministry and religious life.

Massingale also spoke of the temptations of being a Black Catholic scholar, chief of which is despair: "Why do I keep doing what I'm doing for an ecclesial community which would seem to be more comfortable with my silence?" He concluded by reflecting on the joys of this vocational commitment, among which are the esteem granted by the Black Catholic community and being entrusted with voices, tears, and hopes of the community.

The forty attendees then entered into a spirited and at times moving discussion. Among the points raised were the following: the responsibility of the larger Catholic theological community to read and teach works of Black Catholic scholars; the parallels between the experiences of Black Catholic and Latino Catholic theologians; the future of Black Catholic theological scholarship and the practical means of mentoring future theologians from underrepresented communities; the importance of appreciating the "scholar-activist" and "organic intellectual" understandings of the theological vocation; and the sense of despair shared by many in the theological community during this time of national and ecclesial crises. The following provocative question was articulated in several ways during the discussion: How does the Catholic theological academy truly and effectively value the diversity of gifts and perspectives offered by those who have been deemed as "other"?

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METHOD IN THEOLOGY

Topic: The Foundation of the Theologian's Vocation
 Conveners: Richard J. Liddy, Seton Hall University
 J. Michael Stebbins, Gonzaga University
 Presenter: John Haughey, Loyola University of Chicago

In a paper entitled "Lonergan's Transcendental Notions as Callings," John Haughey set out to reconceive the meaning of "vocation" or "calling." Many people are accustomed to thinking of a vocation as a dramatic, passively anticipated, once-in-a-lifetime call that issues from a voice external to the self and specifies a task, job, or position that the recipient is to pursue. But to the extent that we adhere unreflectively to this extrinsicist view, Haughey maintained, we are likely to end up "looking for callings in all the wrong places or sitting beside a phone that will never ring."

Haughey explained that he had found Bernard Lonergan's account of human consciousness an exceptionally fruitful basis for thinking out a more adequate

theory of vocation. For Lonergan, consciousness is a directed dynamism that heads toward an ever fuller encounter with being. Haughey pointed in particular to what Lonergan refers to as the "transcendental notions" of the true, the good, the valuable, and the beautiful. They are not concepts; they are the drives that undergird our coming to know and propel us continually beyond ourselves. Haughey referred to them as "sentinels that stand on the parapets of the soul," whose function is to signal the entry into consciousness of particular calls to self-transcendence. Whatever we have learned and whatever good we have done can be traced to our having responded to these notions.

It is Haughey's contention that God's call to us comes precisely by way of the transcendental notions. That call is felt, in Lonergan's words, as "a dynamic vector, a mysterious undertow, a fateful call to holiness." We uncover our life's calling by gradually becoming aware of this pull and by choosing to make it the central guiding force of our conscious living. But precisely how our calling unfolds is for each of us a matter of assuming responsibility for the process of inquiring, judging, deliberating, and deciding by which we respond to the urgings of the transcendental notions. A vocation is not a passively received blueprint or career path; it is the active response by which a person participates in the emergence of the self God is inviting him or her to become. Put another way, the tasks of self-appropriation, of taking responsibility for one's own humanity, and of discovering one's vocation all turn out to be one and the same. In this view, the church's putative vocation crisis is really an attention crisis—a failure, in the midst of the distractions of our media-saturated, positivist culture, to notice what our interiority is truly seeking.

In the course of his presentation Haughey made the intriguing suggestion that Lonergan's writings are best understood as autobiography, a spelling out of his evolving understanding of his own calling. But what Lonergan has to say is relevant to other lives than his own: he names the unfolding process with a clarity and accuracy that can aid the rest of us in the pursuit of our vocations.

Haughey's remarks met with a very favorable response from those who were present. The topics that arose in the course of the discussion included the following: the relevance of this view of calling for understanding the vocation of the laity and the function of authority in the Catholic Church; the need to explore further what Lonergan called "the way from above downward" in order to gain a better understanding of the way God acts on and within human consciousness; the correlations between Haughey's approach and the method of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius; the problem of how to properly characterize the experience of religious conversion, since for some the language of "falling in love with God" is unhelpful; and the role of a liberal education in helping people cultivate their desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

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