

LONERGAN—CONSULTATION

Topic: Justice and Mercy in Light of Lonergan’s Work
Convener: Mark T. Miller, University of San Francisco
Moderator: Mark T. Miller, University of San Francisco
Presenters: John Dadosky, Regis College/University of Toronto
Cristina Vanin, University of Waterloo
Neil Ormerod, Australian Catholic University
Joseph Martos, Independent Scholar

The moderator welcomed those attending and informed them of the inability of two participants on the program to make it to the conference: Cyril Oriji of the University of Dayton, who was to convene the session, and Joseph Ogbonnaya of Marquette University, who was to present a paper. He let them know that Cristina Vanin and Neil Ormerod had kindly accepted an invitation the night before to present their paper, recently published in *Theological Studies*.

Prof. John Dadosky presented “God’s Eternal ‘Yes!’: An Exposition and Development of Lonergan’s Psychological Analogy of the Trinity.” He first gave an overview of Lonergan’s psychological analogy of the Trinity and then proposed clarifications and developments. The overview focused on Lonergan’s early take on the analogy in his *Triune God: Systematics*, and it located the analogy in the context of contemporary theological reflection on the Trinity.

Dadosky then presented two developments. The first followed Robert Doran, S.J., in developing the analogy as a proceeding Word of affirmation or God’s eternal Yes. He explored an interpretation proposed by Doran in order to reconcile the earlier analogy with Lonergan’s later analogy in light of Ignatian spiritual theology, particularly the three kinds of election, therefore retaining the fittingness and complementarity of both analogies. Finally, he proposed a qualification to Doran’s fecund solution.

Profs. Cristina Vanin and Neil Ormerod presented “Ecological Conversion: What Does it Mean?” The paper is an attempt to meet call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* to explore the meaning of “ecological conversion,” a term introduced into Catholic theology by Pope John Paul II that has not been defined. They sought to bring out the full reality of ecological conversion by putting *Laudato Si’* in dialogue with the four conversions suggested by Bernard Lonergan and Robert Doran: religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic.

Lonergan’s definition of “religious conversion” as a state of being in unrestricted love gives ecological conversion a transcendent foundation that is more general than an explicitly Christian understanding. Moral conversion, a shift from personal satisfactions to a scale of values offers a matrix for analyzing our actions and their consequences to the environment, society, culture, and personal development. Intellectual conversion reminds us that values and their relations are objective, and it enriches the scientific method by freeing it from conceptualism or empiricism. Psychic conversion counters the “nature deficit disorder” identified by Thomas Berry.

Prof. Joseph Martos presented “How the Insight into *Insight* Turned an Average Student into a Scholar who Thinks Out of the Box.” Drawing on personal experience, he recounted his youthful concern for “education more than grades,” which left him dissatisfied by much of his schooling. Eventually, as a seminarian in Rome, he found

some satisfaction when reading Lonergan's *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* and discussing it with fellow students.

Martos struggled with the book's project of enabling readers to become familiar with their own cognitional activities, but during his third reading, while in conversation with a friend, he was finally able to achieve "insight into insight" and thereby some understanding of the basic workings of the human mind and organization of the universe. As Lonergan intended, this project resulted in discovering what knowledge is from the inside, as it were, rather than from reading a theory about it in a book. Yet this discovery informed Martos's own book *Doors to the Sacred* and helped him in other aspects of his career, from parish work to college teaching. He concluded by suggesting why self-appropriation ought to be promoted among students today.

This led to an open discussion of how much young scholars read Lonergan's *Insight* and practice his method of self-appropriation with resultant personal conversion and promotion of social justice. Thomas Groome shared that he took three courses with Lonergan, whom he loved and called "a living magisterium." He revealed that, while he never mentioned Lonergan in his textbooks, Lonergan's method and ideas informed them as the books taught children to attend to the data, come to good ideas and judgments, and eventually to responsible decisions. The conversation turned to promoting just, responsible solutions to the global environmental crises, which those present felt was an exciting prelude to the 2017 CTSA convention with its theme, "Ecology: Theological Investigations."

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