

work on the Islamic and Christian view of God and perhaps on the place of martyrdom in both.

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METHOD IN THEOLOGY

Topic: The Legacy of Rahner and Lonergan
Conveners: Richard M. Liddy, Seton Hall University
J. Michael Stebbins, Gonzaga University
Moderator: Catherine T. Nerney, Chestnut Hill College
Presenter: Michael Vertin, St. Michael's College

The 2004 session was devoted to honoring Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan in this centennial year of their births. The session began with a presentation entitled "Rahner, Lonergan, Loving, and Teaching," by Michael Vertin, of St. Michael's College, Toronto. The presentation had four main parts.

First, Vertin recalled a basic similarity of philosophical perspective. Strongly influenced by the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas developed by Joseph Maréchal, both Rahner and Lonergan maintain that I have my general notion "being" by nature rather than by acquisition. It is a notion that is transcendental not just in the scholastic sense of "transcategorical" but also in the Kantian sense of "a priori." And my actual knowledge of this or that particular being emerges through a cognitional process that culminates not with judgmental intuition but rather with judgmental affirmation, the assertion that this or that intelligible synthesis of experiential data is a partial instantiation of my transcendental notion's content.

Second, Vertin suggested a basic but easily overlooked philosophical difference. For Rahner, my transcendental notion of being is primordially cognitional. It is my preapprehension of the universe of being, my actual though wholly indeterminate and merely implicit knowledge of all that is. Consequently, the affirmations that culminate my knowledge of particular beings are mere elucidations, not extensions, of that primordial knowledge. They simply make explicit various portions of the implicit knowledge that is already naturally in place. For Lonergan, by contrast, my transcendental notion of being is strictly heuristic, a mere anticipation of the universe of being, not actually cognitional in any way. It is only through my particular affirmations that I know anything at all. And those affirmations, for their part, are my transitions not from merely implicit to explicit knowledge but rather from merely anticipated to actual knowledge.

Third, Vertin drew attention to an important difference between Rahner and Lonergan regarding the place of the psychological analogy in trinitarian theology. In our theological efforts to make some headway in grasping what we Christians mean when we say "in God there are three," is there a central role for the analogy between our knowledge of our own knowing and loving, on the one hand, and the internal life of God, on the other? Rahner regularly answers this question in the negative; Lonergan, in the affirmative. For example, compare Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Seabury, 1978) 134-35, and Lonergan's *VERBUM: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (originally 1946-1949; Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967) 207-208, and (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 214-16.

Vertin argued in some detail that a major, though not readily noticed, reason for this theological difference between Rahner and Lonergan is their aforementioned philosophical difference regarding my general notion of being and my knowledge of particular beings.

Fourth, as a way of helping the seminar participants to grapple personally with the philosophical and theological disagreements he had highlighted, Vertin recounted two imaginary dialogues and then invited everyone to vote for one or the other of the contrasting positions in those dialogues. The core of the second dialogue was the following:

Think of the last time you were in a profound conversation—not just a friendly chat, but a really deep and satisfying meeting of minds and hearts. Next, recall the following events that may have occurred in that conversation. First, after struggling for some time with an important but puzzling issue, you suddenly had an "Aha!" experience that sharply illuminated the answer to your question. Before, things were confused; but now, they became strikingly clear. Second, you found yourself searching for just the right word or phrase to express a really important point, just the right sentence or gesture to communicate clearly and completely a significant idea you eagerly wanted to share. Then, after lots of effort, you hit upon exactly the right expression. Third, you found yourself listening to your partner, really listening. You were not using your silence to buy your partner's silence so that you could tell him or her some bright thing you wanted to say. Rather, you were eagerly and committedly silent—perhaps remaining quiet for several minutes, even though your partner was not speaking, in order to be as helpful and supportive and available as possible.

Do you think this knowledge of yourself as clearly understanding, skillfully expressing, and generously listening is *essentially peripheral* to a proper (though always inadequate) Christian theology of God as three-in-one (as Rahner maintains), or is it *inescapably central* (as Lonergan maintains)?

A spirited discussion followed Vertin's presentation. Some participants endorsed the thrust of his suggestions. Others contended he had given short shrift to Rahner's stance on the psychological analogy, and perhaps to Rahner's epistemology as well. Still others emphasized that even for Lonergan the psychological analogy at best is not conclusive but only probable. Several

additional issues were also treated. Are the stances of Rahner and Lonergan ultimately complementary rather than opposed? As sources of theology, what is the relative weight that should be accorded to Christian history, on the one hand, and personal experience, on the other? Given both the advent of postmodernism and the desire of many present-day theology students to make revelation rather than self-knowledge foundational, how if at all is the "transcendental" approach of Rahner and Lonergan still relevant?

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THOUGHT OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Topic: Reconciliation in the Life and Work of Newman
 Convener: Kevin Godfrey, Alvernia College
 Moderator: Edward Jeremy Miller, Gwynedd-Mercy College
 Presenters: John Connolly, Loyola Marymount University
 Edward Enright, Villanova University
 Kevin Godfrey, Alvernia College

Professor Connolly presented "Newman and Reconciliation with/in the Church," being a portion of his forthcoming book from Sheed and Ward. During his life Roman authorities often questioned Newman's theological views. In spite of such challenges, Newman remained faithful to his Catholic faith and to his Church. Three struggles were instanced: his 1846-1847 encounters with Roman theology, the *Rambler* incident in 1859, and Propaganda's reaction to his 1875 *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*. John Connolly analyzed how Newman's response can provide some direction for Catholics today, particularly theologians, when facing difficulties with church authorities, yet wanting to remain fully reconciled with the church. One of the elements enabling Newman to remain faithful to the Church in spite of all his struggles was the personalist nature of his understanding of faith vis-à-vis more intellectualist conceptions.

Ed Enright's presentation, "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: Perspectives from Augustine and Newman," followed. This recent Declaration between Lutherans and Roman Catholics stated "by grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." Professor Enright then delineated Augustine's position on justification from a number of works, beginning with a response to Simplicianus ca. A.D. 397; Newman's position was explicated from his 1829 sermons on Paul's *Letter to the Romans* and his 1838 *Lectures on Justi-*