

Eldorede 3

Prayer, Spirituality

1. Basics

Recently a young lady, out of the blue, thanked me for leading her to thinking of prayer as thinking. And that is, I suppose, as plain and simple a speaking as I might manage.

But the young lady knew what I meant by thinking and this may not be true of some of my readers. So we need a pause, and by *we* I do mean both of us. This notion of **my** need may seem peculiar to you, and it is worth a pause. Wow, are we departing from the plain speaking, or what?

Yes, this is tricky work: recall my view captured in the word (about)³ : but don't follow it up for the moment, if ever.¹ Let us think, here, of my earlier expression of prayer as thinking: it was Cantower 21, "Epilodge". It expressed my thinking early in 2004: my pragmatic thinking about pragmatic thinking.² But my thinking on the matter has expanded enormously in the three years since: a topic we just have to face in the next *Eldorede*, the topic of normative adult growth. That perspective is at the heart of hopefilled and positive spirituality. The plain point here is that my view changes exponentially³ even as I struggle with this *Eldorede*, as I pragmathink. There: that is a new word for me laced into a new emerging perspective that I cannot share - or rather that I can share doctrinally, which means that you may be able to climb to it over the

¹Footnotes, as you may also recall from the first *Eldorede*, are optional diversion, expansions. The meaning of (above)³ can be sought by going to, say, in chapter 2 of *ChrISt in History*, "The General Solution to Present Ineffective Fragmentations", section 2.

²This is a complex issue of defining finite reachings adequately, but there is a quite pragmatic beginning in my view of economic reachings, expressed plainly in the previous *Eldorede* or at more length in *PastKeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*, Axial Publishing, 1999.

³See the quotation from Lonergan's letter of 1954 and the discussion around it there: note 4 of *Eldorede 4*.

decades.

But let us stay with what I call the basics. I am not promoting some strange view of, or practice of, prayer, that is novel: it is merely the stand of the lover that makes the beloved an object of interest and concern. In terms of the Christian tradition it has been around since the beginning, sloganized gradually as “faith seeking understanding”. Nor is it posed in opposition to that other type of prayer that is associated with a negative attitude, an attitude of accepting mystery, one that has a long tradition in Christianity, in Zen, in other cultures.⁴ But this positive prayer is being pushed by me here and now as a desperate personal and cultural need. Simply put, I find the negative and also what I call the “dependent”⁵ attitude over-emphasized.

And also I have to claim that I find the positive attitude, when present at present, too weak, too narrow. Here I would draw attention to Bob Doran’s pointers in his paper “Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan”⁶ and associate his efforts with one of the central pointers of *Insight*. “Theoretical understanding, then, seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view.”⁷ Is reading *Insight* prayer? Oh yes. Indeed I would claim that reading physics is prayer. Is one not

⁴The acceptance varies depending on the intellectual maturity of the group or the individual with the mystery-context of their own faith. On Rahner’s obscure acceptance as compared with Lonergan’s precisions through various inverse insights, see the beginning of Chapter 4, “Foundations”, of *ChrISt in History*.

⁵We come back to this topic in Eldorede 11, but it is a common attitude e.g. expressed in standard prayers and hymns. “Guide me, Oh Thou Great Jehovah” is certainly a genuine request. But is there not a law in the heart (Jeremiah 31 : 33), the gift of a guidance system? Perhaps, even here I could make the main point of this adventurous notion of prayer by talking of the Journey of the Soul in a very eccentric way: “It must lift its eyes more and ever more to the more general and more difficult fields of speculation.”(Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, 20.

⁶*Toronto Journal of Theology* 22(2006) 39-54. I have to hand only the typescript, kindly sent to me by Bob, as well as a version presented at the Boston Workshop of 2006. So my references will not be to specific pages.

⁷*Insight*, 417[442]. In the Cantowers I gave this important norm **The Tomega Principle** for obvious reasons.

seeking to embrace the universe?

Further I would note that the pragmathinking that I write of is at the heart of *Insight*, and should be the heart of the embrace, an embrace that gently groans to erect such a synthesis as oneself, “The Song of the Adorable,”⁸ that longs with a molecularity of 13 billion years to be a synthetic whole.⁹ *Insight*, of course, was written to make a simple point¹⁰: the embracing of Lonergan, with both objective and subjective genitives meant, was a hidden thing. And I would note, for your encouragement, that for me, the book of uncommon prayer since Lonergan sent it to me in 1964 has been the Systematic Treatise on the Trinity. There is still a hiddenness - Lonergan never broke forwards to the self- and Selves-revelation demanded by his challenge of linguistic feedback¹¹ - but Speak, Spoke and Clasp can be met there in a fresh subtle embrace that lifts the seeker, literally, into his or her own inner word of those Three, with fresh identification of Them and us.¹²

⁸I have reflected on this perspective, in relation to the *Bhagavad Gita*, in chapter 5 of *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young Christian Minders*, a book available on the website.

⁹This longing has not been thematized sufficiently to carry us beyond Lonergan’s suggestions regarding **exigence** and **non-Noah’s Ark integrity** of finitude in his *Phenomenology and Logic* into a fuller perspective on the subject’s selection-reach in every decision of a different universe. The context here is the 18th place of the ninth section of chapter 19 of *Insight*.

¹⁰Foolishness regarding the early and later Lonergan can be avoided by taking seriously just what Lonergan was doing in each of these books. On *Insight* he is quite explicit: “I was dealing in insight with the intellectual side - a study of human understanding - and got human intelligence in there, not just a sausage machine turning out abstract concepts” (“Interview with Bernard Lonergan”, edited by P. McShane, *A Second Collection*, 222) Regarding *Method in Theology*, I would say - recalling conversations with him in the late 1960s - that his effort there was one of a tired persuasiveness.

¹¹See *Method in Theology*, 88, note 34.

¹²Lonergan *De Deo Trino Pars Systematica* is rich in suggestions. The volume is to appear shortly in English, which will give me the opportunity to give detailed references in English. I add here just one instance from the conclusion of the lengthy *Quaestio XXXII*, which talks of the divine presence according to charity: there is the drive of finitude towards the

This may seem quite unrealistic, unrealizable for you now. It reminds me of a story of Stravinsky showing a violin part to a violinist, who remarked “This is quite beyond me!”. To which Stravinsky replied, “I did not write it for you”. But I am writing to you in the hope of you and I moving the human group forward slowly beyond its nominalist dependent¹³ conversations with our Infinite Lovers. My plain speaking, then, is doctrinal towards the future, and the distant future: and is this not what doctrinal talk aims at?¹⁴

My plain speaking of necessity homes in on just a single aspect of our feeble journey in the making of our story and God’s history. In a later culture this pointing will not be necessary: the human group will have reached a new phase of the Clasp’s embrace.¹⁵

Still I would make a further remark before moving to the next section. Pragmathinking, pragmaprayer, has to do with us living in a reach for delicate

speaking in us of our word of the Divine Word. This is just the beginning, quite beyond Augustine and Thomas, of a fuller luminous theology that is the cosmic call of sex and all. “The sexual extravagance of man, unparalleled in the animals, has its ultimate ground in St. Augustine’s *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*. The ignorance and frailty of fallen man tend to center an infinite craving on a finite object.” (Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage”, *Collection*, 49)

¹³This is a huge pastoral problem mentioned already in note 5: glimpsed by contrasting the inner law of Jeremiah 31: 31-33 with the perspective of asking for and waiting for guidance that dominates contemporary hymns.

¹⁴There is the problem of distinguishing various levels of talk: so, for example doctrinal talk in the sixth specialty is remote and incomprehensible - when functional specialization and scientific theology matures - massively different from the doctrinal talk either of the eight specialty or of local communications.

¹⁵The context here is represented by the metagram that I name W3: see, for example, page 124 of *A Brief History of Tongue*, or page 130 of *Music That Is Soundless*. Both books are available from Axial Publishing.

alignment with “God’s concept and choice.”¹⁶ Within our religiousness, our cosmic tie-in, there is that strange invitation to be Perfect as the Speaker.¹⁷ But what might we mean, concretely, by this reach? In my own years of formal Jesuit religious living there was a tendency to home in on detail. I recall then, for you, a moment of doctrinal delight in the spring of 1978 when, in a casual aside of a lecture on economics, Lonergan remarked, “being perfect is trying to remove the major obstacle to your living”. You may recognize here the same attitude he expressed in his reflections on correcting our belief-system.¹⁸ More on this in section 3 below.

2. Unusual Progress

What do I mean here by *unusual progress*? Since my speaking is primarily directed to a Lonergan community it is my hope that that directing would nudge some to aspire to becoming part of the strange Tower Community that I have been advocating especially in my *Cantower* years. There is to emerge, in a hundred years or so, a global minority whose pragmatic contemplative power will encourage, embarrass, frighten, world parliaments and banks and industrialists and lobbyists - think of the *Supersize Me* horror - towards sane progress.¹⁹ Certainly, there is a range of types of unusual progress that can be related to such encouragement: I think immediately of that magnificent eccentric woman of the twentieth century, Theresa of Liseaux, opening us

¹⁶*Insight*, 726[748]. Note the peculiarity here of slipping in the notion of a divine concept, beyond the reachings of *Insight* chapter 19.

¹⁷Matthew 5: 48.

¹⁸*Insight*, chapter 20. Section 4.3.

¹⁹The context here is a heuristics of the full dynamics of theological system presented in chapters 6 of *Method in Theology and Botany*.

to a realism of attitude.²⁰ But here I have I mind that subgroup of contemplatives²¹ who are to reach sustainedly, in a hundred years or so, for a larger fullness of the full explanatory conversion caught in Lonergan's shocking invitation: "So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extension and experiencing duration gives place to the subject oriented to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms, and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies."²² That community is to emerge, under global pressure within the Clasp, from all religious searchings. So, for example, the great Arab tradition that was prior to Aquinas will have its later fuller echo of history's heart. The contemplative Muslim will cherish freshly the invitation of the **The Recital**²³ and the Tower searchers in all traditions will converge on the mystery that is the single truth of history,

²⁰The spirituality of Theresa of Liseaux is considered in chapter 3 of *Lack in the Beingstalk* and in *Joistings* 4, "Personality Types", a useful reflection on such variations of attitude as are represented by those three "Theresas" : of Avila, of Liseaux, of India.

²¹There is the grounded fantasy expressed by Lonergan for an identity of contemplation and any theoretical pursuit. "Theoretical understanding, then, seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view"(*Insight*, 417[442]) This should be related to the similar view lurking in *For a New Political Economy* 's perspective on leisure.

²²*Insight*, 514[537].

²³Translation of the Arabic *Qu'an*. I note here the translation that I use in the quotations to follow is that of N.J.Dawood, Penguin Books, 1999. "We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue so that you may grow in understanding" (165) As with any scriptures, such as the Old Testament, there is the problem of full heed, repeated in this scripture throughout the section on The Moon : "We have made the Koran easy to remember, but will any take heed?" (374). What is that heed, that understanding? It is an element in the remote goal of the Towering minority of Muslim world, "that you may thereby proclaim good tidings to the upright" (219)? Within the distant truth there is a truth of the claim that Jesus is not God's son. But the Tower search has to grip "in its intellectual paws"(compare this reflection on comprehending Euclid [*Phenomenology and Logic*, 357]) with the problem of total comprehension. That grip requires the "come about" already quoted. Light on the struggle may be had from the effort in my *ChrISt in History* to lift the 4th century Christian struggle with the meaning of Matthew 16:16 into a pattern of metaphysical equivalence, a pattern foreign now as then to the followers of the Testament.

mediating mutual tolerance and collaboration in the making of that truth. But some further plain words on that are best left to the end of the next section.

3. Ignatian Spirituality

One of my favorite lines from Ignatius' *Exercises* has been, for the past fifty years, those lines where Ignatius justifies his divergence from scripture on the matter of Jesus appearing to his mother: "are you also without understanding?"²⁴

Very obviously I am not about to venture into some compacted commentary on those **Exercises** of St. Ignatius: I wish only to give a few doctrinal pointers that mesh with the suggestions already given.²⁵ This is made easier for us in so far as you can get your hands on the essay of Robert Doran to which I referred already.

I refer especially of his reflections on the reading of *Insight* and on the task

²⁴I am using the version of *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, of Vintage Books, Random House, 2000, translated by Louis Puhl S.J., prefaced by Avery Dulles S.J. It is referred to below simply as **Exercises**. I give page and section numbers. Here, **Exercises** p. 107, s. 299. I have to hand another translation which may help my reader to put in context what this entire essay is about: .David L.Fleming S.J., *Draw Me into Your Friendship. The Spiritual Exercise: A Literal Translation and A Contemporary Reading*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, Missouri, 2002. The contemporary reading in Fleming's book goes page by page with the translation, and, from the point of view of my present suggestions, the work is of quite limited value. The contemporary reading that I envisage here is a vastly different business, a task of future functional specialization that would make ever-freshly available, to the local communities of the globe, the strategies of Ignatius' *Exercises* in a manner that is to be "something better than was the reality" (*Method in Theology*, 251).

²⁵I resist, too, the urge to extend the reflections on Ignatian spirituality to a clearly-implied transformation of the *Ratio Studiorum*, linking it up with the classroom transformations envisaged in section 2 of *Eldorede 1*. The solution cannot be just a matter of programs: it is the need for a new spirituality of teachers which can only be generated by a hierarchy of reformed recurrence-schemes of their formation.

Ignatius sets of “Thinking with the Church”.²⁶ But think now of the unusual²⁷ climb towards a such a reading and thinking as is to be mediated by the “Standard Model” of which I wrote in *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, or more elementarily in *Method in Theology and Botany*. I should really have written there not “think now” but “fantasize strangely”. It is a goal of a massively transformed theology. It would lift forward Pierre de Caussade’s reach for every moment’s sacrament²⁸ and ground a positive shift in the statistics of achievement of an *Inward Vision*²⁹ adequate to our times, giving the lie to Lonergan’s gloom when he wrote, “Theologians, let alone parents, rarely think of the historical process.”³⁰

²⁶**Exercises**, page 124, section 352, “Rules for Thinking with the Church”.

²⁷A clue to the climb and its oddness is **Cantower IX**, “Position, Poisition, Proto-Possession”. I note here that the oddness of the climb has nothing to do with what I might call the oddness of mysticism, on which I comment briefly in the final note here. In the essay of Doran to which I refer (see note 5 above) he has enlightening suggestions for mediating an enlargement of perspective of the Exercises mediated by reading Lonergan. I would note in particular his pointings regarding patterns of elections (see **Exercises**, p. 57, s. 175) that would push us back through Lonergan to the context of Aquinas reflections on consent and election in *Prima Secundae*, qq. 6-17.

²⁸I am recalling a central pointing of that 18th century Jesuit in his work *Abandonment to Divine Providence*. His writings, of course, need a lifted out of various metaphysical mythology, but the primary point I would make about the perspective is that made in the final footnote here.

²⁹I am recalling a book of that title, *The Inward Vision*, by H.J.Steuart, London, 1929. The problem of achievement is expressed in a piece that impressed me in my struggles of the early 1950s. It seems worthwhile to quote at length from *Music that is Soundless*, my late 1960s expression of what I am dealing with in this essay. “The discovery of the promised pearl and the emergence of growth of openness is the reader’s personal challenge, a problem of savoring the gift of God and Who They Are that summons us endlessly yet gently. That silent summons is not easy to listen to: it seems a disturbance of our daily goings of good and evil. We are prejudiced in favour of the sounds we hear. ‘History, heredity, personal experience, all combine to rivet my prejudice upon me. Under their influence, I gradually outdistance the disturbing echo of His words, spoken without reservation to me as to everyone else who should believe in Him, until at last it happens that I hear it no more’ (Stuart, 113)”

³⁰“Finality, Love, Marriage”, *Collection*, University of Toronto Press, 1988, 47.

But one must fantasize about the effective operation of the tasks of functional specialization, especially the heart-cleansing tasks described on page 250 of *Method in Theology*, through which the word is made fresh and recycled in a “vertical finality to God himself obscure.... shrouded in mystery.”³¹ How, THEN,³² would one read those words of “The First Principle and Foundation”³³ or the pointers of “Contemplation to Attain Love of God”?³⁴

So, what then of the rules for thinking with the church? Doran wisely advises us to shift from details to doctrines. I am merely placing his suggestion in a larger context, the one hinted at above when I was implicitly writing of the future foundationally-bent and -blessed Muslim thinking with and within the Mosque. And so, plainly speaking even if in fantasyland, one can envisage a fresh reading, character-forming, of either Ignatius’ *Exercises* or Dogen’s *Shobogenzo* lifting us forward to a coming convergence of global contemplation. The convergence is to be a slow-paced Hindu-braced cycling, a second sight of the Zulu *isisusa* dance,³⁵ clasped in a cosmo-genetic heuristic embrace of

³¹Lonergan, “Mission and Spirit”, *A Third Collection*, 26.

³²The capitalized THEN refers to the context of *Cantower IV*, “Metaphysics, THEN”

³³**Exercises**, p.12, s. 23.

³⁴**Exercises**, p. 79, s. 230. This topic of fresh reading is an enormous one and would require reflective reachings about - (about)³ - levels of contemplative maturity in approaching any of the exercises, e.g. those related to the Christ Child (**Exercises**, p. 92 ff). I am thinking, then, of a fuller context that would sublate Lonergan’s musings on **Existenz** where he invites us (*The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, 31) to make a “beginning from this particular time and place familiar to us through our senses and then proceeding by our imagination until we arrive at the Palestine, the Bethlehem, the Nazareth, and the Jerusalem of two thousand years ago”. The mature contemplative, going (about)³ that journey, may be present and proceeding as a cosmic cuddler, amazed at the light from Jesus’ little eye - an invisible organ of a strange visionary organism - reaching out from Bethlehem to Betelgeuse and arriving there in the decade before of the Council of Ephesus’s talk of his strangeness. And Betelgeuse of 431 B.C. spoke back to his new-born eyes on wings of primal energy.

³⁵I am recalling the first book written in Zulu, Mageme M.Fuze, translated by H.C.Lugg as *The Black People And Whence They Came*, University of Natal Press, 1979, where there

the hidden Hebrew harvest.³⁶

occurs the proverb, “the *isisusa* wedding dance is always appreciated by being repeated”. I recall too my earliest reference to this work (note 10 of the Prologue to *Lack in the Beingstalk*) and the continuity of my concluding reflections there: “The story of that great suffering continent may yet illuminate us on what is meant by *Axial*. Lonergan, in the context of Whitson’s *Coming Convergence of World Religions*, sensed African hopes, “underground until such times as the black man could worship God in his way”(A *Third Collection*, 69). I am not entirely frivolous when I quip that Lonergan might have learned more by focusing on the Hottentots “whose god was an insect with many knees” (Fuze, 5) instead of Husserl, seeking to inset one kneed axioms. And does not Kimbanguism point towards a meso-Christianity of many knees (analogous to its budding meso-economic structures) remote from the Axial centrism of Rome?”

³⁶A central point should be held in mind regarding all this. It is that my view of contemplation is a matter of the natural dynamic of curiosity captured in the phrase “faith seeking understanding” with that phrase placed in the meaning-context pointed to in note 4 above. Technically, there is nothing mystical about its dynamics. I do not think that Doran would disagree with me on this, though in the paper to which I refer he uses the title “Trinitarian Mysticism” for the title of section 2.2. But there is a tendency in some authors, e.g. William Johnson, to point to a relevance of mysticism, in his case of the Zen type, that I find unacceptable. Certainly Ignatius’ Trinitarian visioning (see *Music That Is Soundless*, p.79), if mystical, is motivational within the dynamics of his life and indeed of others: but it is not articulately so. These comments are random, anticipating the later context that would sublate Lonergan’s suggestions regarding the dialectics and the foundations of contemplation (see *Method in Theology*, 266, 290). The sublation itself, of course, would interweave in the consciousness and character of the contemplative in a manner that would make microautonomic the dynamics of functional system and specialized systematics sketched in chapter 6 of *Method in Theology and Botany*. The full operation of that system should eventually lead to a sublation both of the confused Jesuit tradition on mysticism and of the aspirations of the Renaissance humanism, identifying luminously the axial place of nominalism’s alliance with descriptiveness in its frustration of faith’s invitation to understand. But that is a task for future centuries. A survey and referencing context is chapter 7 of John W.O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*. The fuller methodological context is my *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, (on the website in the Summer of 2007), with its relocation of *Cantower XXIII’s* rejection of descriptivism.