Q. 12 Functional Talk and Intellectual Conversions

1. (Tom Halloran: October 2012). Your emphasis on functional talk seems to displace talk about intellectual conversion as central to the task of renewal. Would you please relocate that conversion in the new scheme of things and bring out better facets that you have entertained, like intellectual conversion related to theory, to axioms, to what you call "comeabout", and to the second canon of hermeneutic.

A. 12 I'll have to be brief: you put your finger on a large crisis (your larger question points out correctly the low levels of understanding that go with the name *intellectual conversion*). Intellectual conversion is a vastly difficult enterprise. I should say that less than 10% of Lonergan students – and among the 90% are some senior members of the school – have broken through on this. It is the long climb up to and through the bewilderment of chapter 13 of *Insight* and of the beginning of chapter 14 that lands one with the choice on page 413. Can you really go for this mad view?? The view is expressed in an elementary fashion so I regularly talk of the need to build a fuller view, but certainly there is the missing axiom of intentionality - one present in *Verbum* - that lifts one out of idealism. The other axioms are too complex to enter into here. BUT you raise good further questions regarding complexification through the "comeabout" mentioned at the bottom of Insight 537, and the shift to a "fuse into a single explanation" (*Insight*, 610, line 9) that happens when one ingests adequately the second canon of hermeneutics. These two shifts are a deepening of intellectual conversion in the positional sense, a luminosity re the is-question, and pivot on theoretical conversion, a luminosity of the what-question. These complexification are quite absent in Lonerganism, and indeed *Insight* 17, section 3 seems to be a carefully avoided zone.

Now this brings us to functional talk. Functional talk includes my brutal pointing above in the challenge to talk discomfortingly that is in lines 18-33 of *Method in Theology*: indeed, there it is a hilariously brutal self-pointing and community-pointing. No wonder those lines seem to attract little or no attention. BUT when they do get attention in an initial shot at functional collaboration, then there will be initiated an openness regarding positionings. AND that openness will be cycled and re-cycled so as to ensure that the Tower Community is "at the level of the times" (Method, 350-51).