

Q.14. (February 6th : Ángel Lamuno). Are the Spiritual Exercises a 'pre' methodical form of 'Communications' (Just as the old Dogmatic Theology is a 'pre' methodical form of 'Doctrines'?)

A.14. Questions 14, 15 and 16 come from the same person, and indeed there are five questions. Ángel gave me freedom to edit, but I refrain from doing so. I prefer to hold to the original. But I would note that questioners should feel free to discuss the format and content of questions with me, even when they wish anonymity. My preference, of course, is for non-anonymity. Further I would note that in my answers I will try to bring out the connection with the general topic,

Functional Talk.

On now to Question 14. The simple answer is Yes, but it involve a range of what-complexities. First I would note that I have been “on” this topic since 1950, when I when through the thirty day version of the exercises. In 1964 I repeated the long version, but in between those dates, and after, there were 8-day versions. Ángel’s question only emerged slowly for me, and only after 1966 did it take a form, the 8-form, associated with functional talk. My search for answers got a great lift from being asked to deal with the question during a five-week visit to St. Ignatius College, Sydney, Australia, around 2007. I was able to identify Ignatius’ effort as remarkably “insight into phantasm” stuff: better than his later broader efforts regarding education. But it was, in Ángel’s terms, “‘pre’ methodological”. [a stray question here: what is the inner dynamics represented by Lonergan’s 50 pages of notes, available in the Archives, of his 1937 retreat?] To be helpful here I would ask us to fantasize: what are the methodological versions of the *Exercises* to be like? The answer splits: there are to be Tower Versions, and there are to be plain plane versions.

The core of the Tower Version, curiously, is what I was aiming at pointing to in *Posthumous* 1-21: best leave that to the next two questions. Here I would like a serious communal pause over the plain plane versions. I would connect this pause with the two essays *Posthumous* 14 and *Posthumous* 15, where I talked of people who were scarcely on the edge of seriousness regarding Lonergan’s invitations or even who were inclined to opt out entirely of serious Lonergan studies. What I am getting at is the need for them, for us all, to foster a new culture of kataphatic prayer that includes kataphatically the praying self.

Now this is tricky. There is a spectrum of spiritualities that seem to include the self – self-focus self-improvement, whatever – but are solidly truncated. I won’t venture into the abundant literature, but mention it only to plead for its slow effective replacement. Ángel is right about pre-methodical *Exercises*: now, therefore, we need a solid self-attentive commonsense pause, Lonergan influenced, over this “existential gap” (see *CWL* 18, index) which sometimes is covered by a *persona* of piety [a topic I raised in *Posthumous* 14 at note 22 and again in *Posthumous* 15 at note 15], a pause that reaches for a fuller sense of deep realism. But that common sense needs support if it is to pause effectively over the problem. We are back at the long term issues of e.g. education based on the **Childout Principle**. Still, there is a short-term route, even for those that opt out of heavy Lonergan studies. It is the humble self-opening, self-leisuring, that tackles sets of simple self-investigation. [illustrated by chapter 3 of *Wealth of Self*, or the end of the second chapter of *Process*. It amazes me how many folk lecture on Lonergan without little exercises]. So, if I find it difficult to solve problems of the ups-and-downs of alphabet letters, what of the problem of getting a little better understanding of self or God? Yes, it is amazing – should I say shocking? – how few take really seriously the advice of Lonergan in the first paragraph of *Insight* chapter one.

This relates to the reorientation of the retreat-doer. But what of the retreat-giver? We'll muse about that in the next two questions. The great thing about Ignatius' *Exercises* is that he does not give the impression that insight comes easily. Indeed, he would vibe positively with Rita Carter's claim: "Episodes that are destined for long-term memory are not lodged there straight away. The process of laying them down permanently takes up to two years." (*Mapping the Mind*, Phoenix pb, 268)

What I am touching on here is a new tradition, not just a startlingly new big book on the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius. Could I sum it up in a cute slogan? Well, pause over the word *deem* [whose base is related to that of *doom*: a strange lead to thinking ahead, even eschatologically]. What I am talking about is **deeming**, kataphatic reaching. That perhaps, gives you an odd nudge regarding the meaning of your re-deem-tion. Do you deem it worthwhile to deem about your own dynamic loneliness? (Helpful here perhaps the five essays, *Prehumous* 4-8, on Foundational Prayer).

Q. 15 (February 6th : Ángel Lamuno). In MiT Lonergan offers the key for a transformation of 'doing theology' from a (relatively) unreflective practice into a properly methodical practice that effectively mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within a cultural matrix. Is this transformation relevant to any properly human practice (e.g. painting, composing music, doing industrial design, doing financial analysis)?

A.15 I flow on from the previous question in that the issue we ending with there was the problem of mediation: the mediation of the retreat-giver that would lift the statistics of self-mediation. [a distraction here regarding the pursuit of perfection talked of by not too few retreat-givers. In 1978, in an aside during an economics lecture, Lonergan made the telling remark that one seeks perfection by trying to eliminate the major obstacle in one's life: a long way this from pious resolutions of reform!].

Ángel is right on here, but think of the massive structure of that mediation e.g. between today's culture of doing theology, being religious, praying, et cetera, and the distant goal of luminous collaboration. I present that challenge bluntly with the third word of methodology, **W₃**. Why this complexity? The mess, the rut of theology, its teaching and preaching, is deep, deeply "axial superego"-structured. And in the break forward I can twist the last sentence of Ángel above: "the transformation of any properly human practice (e.g. painting, composing music, doing industrial design, doing financial analysis) is relevant to the re-deem-tion of theology." I am back at Lonergan's comment about breathlessly late (*Insight*, 755), or at his conclusion to "Healing and Creating in History". The 8-fold dynamic may well emerge from the struggles with composing music (ho ho a point obviously related to chapter 2 of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, a paper presented in 1970 at the Florida Conference). Here I remind you of Michael Shute's two articles in *Divyadaan* 2013.

The twists and turns and slopings towards common foundations: that is a heavy topic I touched on in A.13, and of course throughout the *Cantowers*. But I pause over the reality of might I call it Christian laziness? : puddling and peddling along, with no serious bent towards understanding, in "the greatest of all works" (CWL 12, 491, end of Q. 29)

Q. 16 (February 6th : Ángel Lamuno). Is there in MiT a shift 'from object to subject' in the *res* of heuristic structure? From an intelligent anticipation of the object's attributes to an intelligent

anticipation of the subject's activities? Does the *implementation* of MiT's heuristic structure (Functional Specialization) consist in the methodical discovery, through praxis, of ways of doing theology methodically? Is Lonergan offering a methodological meta-theology just as the metaphysics of proportionate being is a methodological meta-physics (natural science)?

A.16. A massive set of questions, and I move into them by enlarging the quotation with which I ended the previous answer:

“Since the divine persons are sent to accomplish such a great task throughout the world by themselves or through others, we cannot pin down with a brief statement the finite flows that distinguish the successive stages of this, the greatest of works” (I have modified the translation). I am quoting from Lonergan’s not-very-successful undergraduate text (I won’t go into the reasons for failure here). But, thinking in the parallels that Lonergan suggests on page 3 of *Method*, in a good physics degree one has to live with not-very-successful texts – not to mention teachers! A big problem here, which I pass over, is what is a good coherent theological degree? At all events, yes, to all Ángel pointers, but with the occasional twist. The problem, obviously, is *implementation*. Q/A 16 points to the dynamics of culture as it twines with the stumbling stuff of theology, and the “methodological discovery through praxis,” may eventually come through e.g. someone noticing the 8-fold structure which the Wellek and Warren book on literature warrants. But what I would note as relevant here is a practice of the semi-decent science of physics: that you get serious as a graduate and do the relevant stuff properly. Now in theology the central relevant stuff is the stuff of Father, Son and Spirit as They juggle with “the greatest of all works”. Present theology graduates, alas in the main, puddle along without that effort, and without being encouraged to make that effort, without even anyone noticing that how we relate to the Three-as-subjects is a deep question of mediative *theoria*. Obviously it is more than an effort to move “from an intelligent anticipation of the object's attributes to an intelligent anticipation of the subject's activities?” Rather, it is the move to integrate both [See 3rd *Collection*, top of page 141) on a quite strange intimate level. So I arrive back at the point made in A. 14: that move was the heart of my pointing in the 21 *Posthumous* essays. There is no way I can summarize the effort involved, to meet and greet oneself and Themselves as subjects, especially to transform radically our thinking about notional acts. We need to try this, gently, analogically, slowly, each poised as best they can positionally, assertively, inwardly climbing. Then we may create an ethos in which perhaps a dozen decent postgraduate efforts will open the way, in the next generation, to a quite new version of *CWL* 12. And that new foundationality will ground the creatively-constructive slopes down to the eighth functional specialty, the proximate breeding ground of retreat-givers in 10,000 villages, 10,000 universities.

Ángel’s final question: “Is Lonergan offering a methodological meta-theology just as the metaphysics of proportionate being is a methodological meta-physics (natural science)?” It is more complicated yet more integral than that. Lonergan knew that his description of metaphysics in *Insight* was incomplete – check out both the end of chapter 7 and the syllogistic ventures of chapter 14 after the description. Proportionate being needs the 8-fold collaborative method if human beings are to be nudged into some Christian version of Aristotelian excellence. Above I noted that this need, as it emerges in the world of secular thinking, might well nudge a reluctant – rich and complex, but commonsensical – theology to get to breathing properly an air quite different from “an air of profundity” (*Insight*, 567) redolent with “pseudometaphysical mythmaking” (*Insight*, 528).

So, Lonergan is offering a revised version of the description of *Insight*, one that has a better statistics of success (see top of *Insight*, 144), lifting implementation into quite a new culture, heading thus slowly – in seven millennia? - towards An Arrival in Cosmopolis, a global citadel of “the greatest of all works”, where statistically-all tower people will take for granted that if you deem, think, at all seriously, then that thinking, “theoretical understanding” ...”seeks to embrace the universe in a single view.”(*Insight*, 442). And increasingly, all thinkers in all religions will share the common luminous subject-as-subject conviction that “Thought on Method is Apt” (the first five words of *Method* chapter one), and, in 10,000 years or 100,000 years, or more, “the greatest of all works” will be effectively recognized as The Thoughtout Symphony of Jesus bracketed by the Father, the ultimate Me Thoth, and the Wholly Haptic Embracing Spirit. So there is to emerge a recognition of **W₃**, Double You Three, as a contemplative assertive reach, and of the notional acts describe by Thomas and Lonergan as the molecular weavings of Friends.