

**CHAPTER SEVEN: LONERGAN'S INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION**

In the Preface to **Insight** Lonergan writes of the ideal detective story in which the reader is presented with all the clues yet fails to spot the criminal.

He may advert to each clue as it arises. He needs no further clues to solve the mystery. Yet he can remain in the dark for the simple reason that reaching the solution is not the mere apprehension of any clue, but a quite distinct activity of organizing intelligence that places the full set of clues in a unique explanatory perspective.<sup>1</sup>

Placing all the clues into "a unique explanatory perspective." It seems to me that this is what the early Lonergan was seeking: an **explanation** that would bring together all he had learned from mathematics and logic, from his reading of Newman, Plato, Augustine, Hoenen and Maréchal, and most of all, from his own mind. As he would say in years to come, philosophy is not something in book; it's in a mind.

But how did these elements fit together? How was his early emphasis on the schematic image connected with Hoenen's writings on grasping "first principles" in imaginative presentations? How did

the heuristic character of intellect in Stewart's book on Plato relate to Augustine's doctrine of **veritas**? How was his insistence on understanding as "immanent act" related to Maréchal's emphasis on the discursive nature of human understanding? How was all this related to the scholastic insistence on the real distinction of essence and existence? What did these terms really **mean**? How were they all related to each other and to a whole explanatory viewpoint on human mentality and reality?

The whole process was not an easy one. By now he had been engaged in it for some years. It represented a personal problem. As he once put it:

An exact account of knowledge raises the epistemological problems in a real fashion, not merely in the sense of refuting adversaries, but also in the sense of solving personal problems - and not how I am going to help other people that are in difficulties, but how I'm going to help myself! The intrusion of epistemological problems in a real significant way is a disturbing event.<sup>2</sup>

That this whole issue represented a personal and "existential" issue for him is evident from a letter he wrote from Rome to his superior in Canada in January of 1935.

## 1. THE LETTER OF 1935

In the introduction to **Insight** Lonergan writes of the process of self-appropriation taking place, not publicly, but privately. The process takes place in the hiddenness of one's presence to oneself and one's growing knowledge of oneself. Nevertheless, as Lonergan goes on to say in the same introduction, though the act is private, both its antecedents and its consequents have their public manifestation.<sup>3</sup>

That this whole period of the mid 1930's was a period of enlightenment and powerful emotions is certainly evident from a letter Lonergan wrote from Rome to his Jesuit superior in Canada, Fr. Henry Keane, dated January 22, 1935. The letter is a remarkable testimony to the character and depth of the transformation that was taking place in him. What comes through are the clear and firmly held convictions of a relatively young man of thirty-one, a young man who, as he says in the letter, "thought a lot."

Lonergan begins the letter with some minor matters of Jesuit obedience: permission to continue smoking in spite of the high cost (twenty dollars a year!), to read works on the Index connected with his proposed future study of epistemology, to possess a typewriter and some books, and to study German the following summer at the villa for the German students. Then he gets down to the main issue: "at which I have been poking about for expression for some

time."

The issue is his own intellectual development and the quandary that development had placed him in on a practical level. He begins with a history of his philosophical development as we have recounted it: beginning with his early nominalism and then moving on to his study of Plato, St. Augustine and St Thomas. In the letter he identifies the beginnings of his reading of St. Thomas with the time in Canada before coming to Rome. His consolation of studying in Rome is followed by the words:

I can give you my present position in a few words. It is definite, definitive and something of a problem. The current interpretation of St. Thomas is a consistent misinterpretation.<sup>4</sup>

The words are indeed "definitive." In the context of the times, they are a challenge. They represent a stance at variance with the reigning interpretation of St. Thomas. He goes on to present his convictions.

A metaphysic is just as symmetrical, just as all-inclusive, just as consistent, whether it is interpreted rightly or wrongly. The difference lies in the possibility of convincing expression, of making applications, of solving disputed questions. I can do all three in a way that no Thomist would dream possible. I can prove out of St. Thomas himself that the current interpretation is absolutely wrong.

The words can seem arrogant - especially in light of the fact that his own views had recently been influenced by certain Thomists, Hoenen and Maréchal among them, and within some months he will look on himself as a "Thomist" through his involvement with Bernard Leeming's course. In fact, he goes on to invoke the authority of Joseph Maréchal, even though the latter's view were frowned upon at the Gregorian:

Not only can I prove it, but the issue has already been raised decisively though not completely or altogether satisfactorily by Fr. Maréchal whose views reign in our house in Louvain but are somewhat frowned upon here. The whole difficulty is to grasp Maréchal's point not in the abstract but in the concrete; because Fr. Maréchal is utterly in the abstract he is not understood. This may sound arbitrary so let me give the reason: the only argument raised against Maréchal is that it is "obvious" he is wrong; but in the abstract nothing is obvious either way since it is all a matter of argument and against Maréchal they cannot argue; when they say it is obvious he is wrong in interpreting St. Thomas, they mean no more than that they want an explanation that goes into the concrete.

Lonergan uses words here that he will repeat time and time again in the coming years: one of those words is "explanation:" he is seeking the intrinsic causes of things, a systematic

understanding. The other word is "concrete." It is not a question of deducing truths from abstract concepts or propositions; the issue is an understanding and explanation of facts.

That explanation I can give and I can prove and I can confirm from every view-point.

Strong words. Explanation of what? What is it that Lonergan can explain that is a **terra incognita** to contemporary Thomists?

in a word it is that, what the current Thomists call intellectual knowledge is really sense knowledge; of intellectual knowledge they have nothing to say; intellectual knowledge is, for example, the "seeing the nexus" between subject and predicate in a universal judgment: this seeing a nexus is an operation they never explain.

The issue is joined. The Scotist and Suarezian presupposition of intellectual knowledge as "seeing the nexus" between the concepts of a universal judgment is the basic misunderstanding in most philosophical thought.

In Lonergan's future writings he will maintain that this basic misinterpretation of intellectual knowledge as a type of "seeing" is the fundamental error in cognitional theory. It is at the root of the basic counter-positions in philosophy, whether in their naive realist, empiricist, or idealist forms. Let us call to mind his definition of intellectual conversion from thirty-seven years later.

Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification and,

consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and knowledge. The myth is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is out there now to be looked at.<sup>5</sup>

The only way such a misinterpretation can be challenged is by examining the facts of consciousness. In his letter of 1935 he prefigures what he will later call his basic philosophical method of self-appropriation. This method will be at the basis of his understanding and explaining the real meaning of Thomas' thought. It is reminiscent of Stewart's interpretation of Plato:

What were Plato and these other people talking about? Surely about the right way of expressing some experience which they all had in common, and we ourselves still have.<sup>6</sup>

As Lonergan put it in 1935:

The important thing about my views are that they are entirely a difference of interpretation. I do not say, Thomas said this and I say that. I say, Thomas said this; the current Thomists going into their own experience pick out this element to be what St Thomas is talking about; I go into my experience and find something entirely different to be what St. Thomas means.<sup>7</sup>

Lonergan speaks of using the same method in understanding of what is meant by "will."

I establish from introspective psychology that the "will" is what Card. Billot wants the will to be to provide himself with an analogy for the Trinity. I prove what he asserts.

A short time later, in his unpublished notes on the philosophy of history, he will describe himself:

But I am not speaking of the supernatural order; I am speaking as a psychologist of the school of St. Augustine and St. Thomas.<sup>8</sup>

How does this Augustinian and Thomistic psychologist propose to explain human intelligence? What is his basic approach? In the letter he gives us a clue.

From an initial Cartesian "cogito" I can work out a luminous and unmistakable meaning to intellectus agens et possibilis, abstractio, conversio to phantasm, etc.etc.

The Thomists cannot even give a meaning to most of this.<sup>9</sup>

In Lonergan's later writings it is obvious that he was sympathetic with Rene Descartes' basic project of analyzing the basic facts of human consciousness, although it is also obvious that he disagrees with Descartes' method of universal doubt and his inadequate division of reality into **res cogitans** and **res extensa**.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time I can deduce the Thomist metaphysic: universal individuated by matter; real distinction of essence and existence; the whole theory of act and potency.

The reference is to the arsenal of interlocking terms in the

Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics. The reference to the real distinction of essence and existence is evidence that he is wrestling with the issue that he will later identify as mediating his own intellectual conversion.

He goes on in the letter to say that the validity of his "explanation," as with any theory, will be seen both in its adequacy for explaining all the facts, in its ability to solve disputed questions, and in the fruitfulness of its applications. The basic facts to be explained are those of consciousness.

In addition, his explanation can solve problems, such as the nature of the act of faith and the centuries' old theological problem, "de auxiliis," on the relation between divine grace and human freedom. This will be the subject of his doctoral dissertation a few years later.

I have a complete solution to the arguments against Bellarmine's opinion in the de Auxiliis and not only is Bellarmine the only Doctor Ecclesiae who had an opinion on the precise issue but to defend Bellarmine you have to know what intelligibility is; indeed, if you know that, you are inclined to leave the question where St Thomas left it.

As to new applications which would demonstrate the fruitfulness of his ideas, Lonergan mentions one of his central preoccupations of this period, that is, the philosophy of history.

As to new applications, I am certain (and I am not one who becomes certain easily) that I can put together a

Thomistic metaphysic of history that will throw Hegel and Marx, despite the enormity of their influence on this very account, into the shade. I have a draft of this already written as I have of everything else.<sup>11</sup>

A Thomistic metaphysic that will throw Hegel and Marx into the shadow? Certainly a startling claim! No wonder he had trouble putting this letter together! And yet, "I have a draft of this already written." We have already taken a look at those unpublished writings on the philosophy of history from the mid-thirties.

He gives two "extrinsic" arguments in favor of his views: one is the fact that the current Thomist profession not to understand St. Augustine on intelligence is in fact, **eo ipso**, an admission that they do not know what Thomas means by intelligence, since Thomas professes to agree with Augustine at every turn. As for Lonergan, "I am quite certain that I understand Augustine."

On the other hand, there is no difficulty in conceiving a long tradition of misinterpretation of Thomas and Augustine on intellect. The conflicting views of the Middle Ages on such issues as the act of faith gave every opportunity to confuse understanding, or intelligible explanation, with demonstrability, that is, the mere absence of intelligibility in the contradictory proposition. In addition, there are examples of now firmly held positions which took centuries to establish.

Why did no one suspect there was something wrong before? Here Lonergan gives a brief conspectus of the history of philosophy,

with the Scotist "intuitionism" becoming firmly established in the naive realism of the Suarezians - substance as "something there." The same stream of intuitionism then filtered into secular philosophy with Kantian philosophy obviously needing to be completed by a critical Thomism.

After Thomas there was Scotus, the nominalists, the conceptualists; then Suarez and the Spaniards with their naive realism (substance is the "something there"); then the brilliant Jesuit pupil, Descartes, who was brought up on this stuff; then the antithesis of Spinoza and Hume; then Kant (and do you see any difference between Kant's need to go back to the causal origin of knowledge to know the thing-in-itself and, on the other hand, the Thomistic conversion to phantasm to know the singular; only singular things exist; therefore, existence is not in intellect alone; nor is it in intellect plus phantasm, since one can imagine what does not exist); then traditionalism, ontologism, Hermesian rationalism; finally, Pope Leo's "Back to Thomas." I take him at his word. I also accept his "**vetera novis augere et perficere**"; hence my excursion into the metaphysic of history.<sup>12</sup>

The letter is not clear on "existence;" but he is obviously adopting a position different from what he had adopted in the "fragments" from the early 30's. There he seemed to hold that existence was perceived. Here he is convinced it is not.

Although Lonergan's interests extended far and wide into the philosophy of political history, nevertheless he will spend the next eleven years of his life researching what Thomas Aquinas really meant: first, on the doctrine of grace, the subject of his doctoral thesis in the latter part of the 1930's; then on Thomas' actual writings on intelligence in the 1940's. He truly took Leo XIII at his word and Leo's words, "**vetera novis augere et perficere,**" became something of a motto for him in his future years: to build up and perfect what is old by means of the new.<sup>13</sup>

The new was certainly Lonergan's new and "simpler" understanding of what St. Thomas meant by understanding. The new was also his interest in the philosophy of culture, of history and economics which had remained abiding interests through the 1930's. The new was also the new methods for studying all these issues: the new methods of science, the new methods of scholarship and philosophy.

What is remarkable in this letter is that it all hangs together: the history of philosophy, the philosophy of history, and the philosophic understanding and misunderstanding of Christian theology. All are linked together by a common thread: the accurate or inaccurate account of human intelligence.

The disputed question is the crucial experiment of a philosophic system; you have to explain everything except what you can prove to admit no explanation; otherwise you are not a philosopher or your system is inadequate. But this, the presupposition of all argument, is precisely

what 99% of the people you would argue with neither grasp nor grant. They simply do not take philosophy seriously, they do not consider whether arguments are valid or not but simply what they prove, and when they prove what seems to them the wrong thing then you are a Bolshevik in character and a heretic in mentality.<sup>14</sup>

Nor can you explain everything by theology: you have to invoke philosophic understanding to understand the natural order of things. And such philosophic understanding has to be, as he has said all along, comprehensive and explanatory. The Catholic philosopher must formally invoke the principle of sufficient reason for his explanations of the facts. He cannot, as has taken place too often in the past, merely show that opposed views involve contradictions.

The method is sheer make-believe but to attack a method is a grand scale operation calling for a few volumes.<sup>15</sup>

The "few volumes" will certainly be Lonergan's future works. He ends the letter with reflections on his own situation as a Jesuit:

I should add that I am substantially a Jesuit with no difficulties about obedience on this matter. Naturally I think this is my work but I know more luminously than anything else that I have nothing I have not received, that I know nothing in philosophy that I have not received through the society.

Still, what is to be done? He has done his duty to the Truth and the Light by laying his capabilities before his superiors. It is up to them what happens next. Still,

I am no tragedian. I do care enormously about the good of the church.

His basic intention in writing is to ask advice from his superiors:

What on earth is to be done? I have done all that can be done in spare time and without special opportunities to have contact with those capable of guiding and directing me as well as to read the oceans of books that I would have to read were I to publish stuff that is really worth-while. Briefly, this question is: shall the matter be left to providence to solve according to its own plan; or do you consider that providence intends to use my superiors as conscious agents in the furtherance of what it has already done?

It is difficult to imagine the response of his superior to this letter. Concern about the pretensions, possibly the "megalomania" of a bright young man? As far as I know, there is no record of the superior's response. The fact remains that Lonergan continued on the normal course of Jesuit studies, that he was chosen to teach, not just in Canada, but in the Society's prestigious Gregorian University in Rome, perhaps most of all, the fact that he continued to write on his chosen project, the analysis of human understanding. All of these indications lead one to

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believe that the superior treated him as deftly and wisely as  
Father Bolland had when Lonergan told him in 1930 that he was a  
"nominalist."

## 2. BERNARD LEEMING'S COURSE ON THE INCARNATE WORD

Lonergan always attributed his basic intellectual conversion to the course he took in the Catholic doctrine on Christ in the fall and spring of 1935-1936 with the Jesuit, Fr. Bernard Leeming, S.J. (1893-1971). Of course, he brought his own questions to Leeming's course!

To Leeming, along with Maréchal, Lonergan attributes his first acceptance of the label "Thomist."

I had become a Thomist through the influence of Maréchal mediated to me by Stephanos Stephanou and through Bernard Leeming's lectures on the **unicum esse in Christo**.<sup>16</sup>

The whole of his previous development was "rounded out" by Leeming's course: that is, at this point all the intellectual influences from his early years come together.

It was through Stephanou by some process of osmosis, rather than struggling with the five great **Cahiers**, that I learnt to speak of human knowledge as not intuitive but discursive with the decisive component in judgment. This view was confirmed by my familiarity with Augustine's key notion, **veritas**, and the whole was rounded out by Bernard Leeming's course on the Incarnate Word, which convinced me that there could not be a hypostatic union without a real distinction between essence and existence. This, of

course, was all the more acceptable, since Aquinas' **esse** corresponded to Augustine's **veritas** and both harmonized with Maréchal's view of judgment.<sup>17</sup>

As someone once said to me, "Moments of enlightenment come during periods of enlightenment." That this was a period of enlightenment is certainly evident from the feeling-charged letter Lonergan wrote to his superior in January, 1935. But "the whole" of his previous development was "rounded out" by this moment in Leeming's course, the moment he later remembered as the key moment in his own intellectual conversion.

The precise question that was being dwelt with in the course was the **unicum esse in Christo**, the one act of existence in Christ. What did this mean? What was this "**unicum esse in Christo**?" The basic theological issue came down to this:

If, as Christian faith always held, Christ was both divine and human, what were these "two" in him? Furthermore, if we must maintain that there is an underlying and substantial unity in Christ, what is that "one" in him?

At the time traditional European scholastic philosophers were engaged in a battle over the "real distinction" between essence and existence. Many traditional Thomists held the real distinction between these two principles of being, but others, especially Jesuits influenced by Suarez, denied the distinction and its presence in St. Thomas.<sup>18</sup> I remember Jesuits telling me that even

during the 1950's, soon after entering the society, they were approached by other young Jesuits during recreation periods to ascertain their fundamental feelings on the "real distinction." Difficult as it may seem to believe to people today, it was a question which, at least for some, had an existential import!

In an interview Lonergan gives an account of the relevance of the controversy.

I was very interested in philosophy, but I [had] no use for the scholastic philosophers. I first discovered that Saint Thomas might have something to say when I was taught "**De Verbo Incarnato**" in Rome. Can you have one person who has two natures? The argument given me by a good Thomist, Father Bernard Leeming, was that if you have a real distinction between **esse** and essence, the **esse** can be the ground of the person and the essence too. If the **esse** is relevant to two essences, then you can have one person in two natures. On that basis I solved the problem of Christ's consciousness: one subject and two subjectivities. It wasn't the divine subjectivity that was crucified, but the human subjectivity; it was the human subjectivity that died and rose again, not the divine person.<sup>19</sup>

The theological problem was to maintain the full integrity of the humanity of Christ and at the same time to explain why such a full humanity is not that of another person besides the person of

the Word of God. Suarez, who held the real identity of essence and existence, held that the personhood of Christ was merely a "substantial mode" added to the existing essence. To Suarez' position Leeming in his Christology textbook replied that it was not at all evident why a fully existing singular nature would not by that very fact be a "**suppositum**," that is, a thing in itself. The Suarezian "mode," in this case the personhood of Christ, seems to be nothing other than an accidental property of something already fully constituted in itself.

Leeming chose to follow the opinion which he believed was that of St. Thomas, the opinion also of the Thomistic commentator, Capreolus (1380-1444). The latter held that the core of personhood is to have one's own existence in oneself. By the very fact that essence is united with existence, there is the subsistence and "incommunicability" of personhood. Capreolus' opinion, Leeming felt, best maintains the integrity of the human nature of Christ, while also explaining the unity of Christ.

It shows that Christ is one person, precisely because he has one "**esse**," one act of existence; it shows that in which the human nature and the divine nature communicate: that is, in the "**esse**" of the Word; but it leaves the human nature entirely whole in its essence. Christ is one; truly the Son of God is human; truly this man is God; and in these sentences the word "is" is indeed a logical copula; but in our opinion it is much more than that: it is especially taken in a real sense and not just

as a denotation.<sup>20</sup>

Leeming goes on in his notes to comment on the use of such philosophical distinctions in the understanding of a theological and religious doctrine.

Someone might say that this opinion is grounded on a philosophical distinction that, if not uncertain, is at least denied by many, namely the real distinction between essence and existence. To which we reply: the revealed dogma evidently teaches a truth which can be called philosophical: namely, that a singular nature cannot be identified with personhood. We should, therefore, clarify our philosophical concepts in such a way that this truth remains uncontested. But, if among the philosophical systems that try to explain this truth, one is found to be more apt than the others to properly protect this truth, while the others are less apt, then this is obviously an argument in favor of that system.<sup>21</sup>

What the terms, essence and existence, add to Lonergan's philosophical vocabulary are the objective correlatives of the subjective acts he has been so intent on differentiating in his own consciousness.

As he would later point out, Aristotle had basically pointed to two types of questions that the human spirit asks: questions of the type, "What is it?" or "Why is it so?" and questions of the type, "Is it?" or "Is it so?" The first type of question cannot

be answered by a "Yes" or a "No." This type of question heads toward an understanding of the nature of something, eventually, its essence. On the other hand, the second type of question can only be answered by a "Yes" or a "No" - or "I don't know." It aims at judgment, the determination of existence.

What Lonergan was coming to see, the core of his own intellectual breakthrough, was that the entire Aristotelian metaphysical system of Aquinas was really the objective "heuristic" framework for the acts he had all along been so intent on coming to know. One dimension of that metaphysical system was the **real distinction** between essence and existence.

Later on he would define a distinction as real if it is true that 1) **P** is not **Q**; 2) **P** is real; and 3) **Q** is real. A real distinction is asserted on the level of judgment, not on any previous level of consciousness, certainly not by a prior imagined "look."<sup>22</sup> Such real distinctions are major or minor. Major real distinctions are between things. Minor real distinctions are between the elements or constituents of proportionate being, such as between essence and existence.

In his Latin Christology notes, written during the 1950's, Lonergan uses the distinction between soul and body as an example of a minor real distinction between constitutive principles of a person.<sup>23</sup> He then shows from Church doctrines the effort to express this kind of a distinction in understanding the humanity and divinity of the one person of Christ. It is not just a mental distinction, a "**distinctio rationis**." It is a real distinction,

though a minor real distinction: not between two things, but between two principles in the one person of Christ. Of course, because it is a case of understanding the humanity and divinity of the Son of God, all these terms have to be understood analogously.

Certainly, such a distinction puts a great weight on words. But so does modern science. And so do all the doctrines of the Church. They reflect the understandings and judgments of the human family. They mediate our knowledge of reality.

As he would later point out in an article, "The Origins of Christian Realism," the ability to make such distinctions is rooted in the fact that we are human beings. We exist, not just in the infant's world of immediacy, but in the far vaster world mediated by meaning.<sup>24</sup>

An empiricist or a naive realist confuses the criteria for knowing the world mediated by meaning with the criteria for the world of immediacy. The latter is known by merely feeling and touching and seeing. The idealist knows there is more to human knowing than what the empiricist or naive realist assert, but he conceives that "more" in sensitive terms and so concludes that our knowing cannot be objective. The critical realist asserts that objective human knowing takes place, not just by experience, but by experience completed by human understanding and correct judgment.

The Thomistic metaphysical terms used by the Christian community to interpret its belief are "heuristic" categories correlative to human understanding and judgment. Just as the scientist uses technical terms to penetrate to the constituents of

physical reality, so the theologian uses terms like "nature," "person," "essence," "existence," to understand the realities of Christian faith. They aid our human understanding. While later developments put persons and natures in many further contexts, the context of the ancient Council of Chalcedon needs no more than these heuristic concepts.

What is a person or hypostasis? It is in the Trinity what there are three of and in the Incarnation what there is one of. What is a nature? In the Trinity it is what there is one of and in the Incarnation what there are two of.<sup>25</sup>

Though such a heuristic understanding seems incredibly "simple," still it can be a tremendously rich method of focussing our thinking within the framework of the judgments of faith. It is similar to the methods of the scientists that enable them to focus on unseen realities far beyond the realm of immediate experience.

It was in relationship to this course in 1935-1936 with Bernard Leeming on Christology that Lonergan first uses the term "intellectual conversion" to identify the intellectual transition he was undergoing.

So there was considerable room for development after Aristotle and you get it in St. Thomas when he distinguishes existence from essence and makes them really distinct; and to make them distinct really you have to have something equivalent to an intellectual conversion even if you don't know what is meant by an

intellectual conversion. I had the intellectual conversion myself when in doing theology I saw that you can't have one person in two natures in Christ unless there is a real distinction between the natures and something else that is one. But that is the long way around.<sup>26</sup>

In the same interview Lonergan gives a pithy description of the ultimate psychological and intellectual basis for the Thomistic real distinction between essence and existence.

I once gave a talk to psychiatrists at Halifax General Hospital and at the end of the talk one of the doctors said to me, "Our patients have all kinds of insights; the trouble is they're wrong!" Well that is the basis of the distinction between essence and existence. They have hold of an essence, but it isn't true.<sup>27</sup>

Lonergan spoke of his intellectual breakthrough as taking "the long way around," since it came by way of his theology course on Thomistic Christology. He implies that there could be a shorter way around - perhaps by reading his **Insight?**

But before going on, let us note a line from his 1972 **Method in Theology** where he explicitly speaks of faith in the Word of God as a possible source of intellectual conversion.

Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious

tradition, and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. For the word, spoken and heard, proceeds from and penetrates to all four levels of intentional consciousness. Its content is not just a content of experience but a content of experience and understanding and judging and deciding. The analogy of sight yields the cognitional myth. But fidelity to the word engages the whole man.<sup>28</sup>

In the mid-1930's it seems obvious that Lonergan has explicitly recognized "the cognitional myth" that conceives of intellectual activities in sensible terms. But if, as in his own case, intellectual conversion is promoted by faith in the Word of God, still in itself it regards coming to know the intrinsic character of our own human intelligence and the relationship of that intelligence to reality.

1. **Insight**, 3.
2. **Understanding and Being**, 351.
3. Ibid., xix.
4. Letter to Provincial, January 22, 1935, 4.
5. **Method in Theology**, 238.
6. Stewart, **Plato's Doctrine of Ideas**, 2.
7. Ibid., 5.
8. In Lonergan's unpublished philosophy of history essay: "Panton Anakephalaiosis - A Theory of Human Solidarity." Available at the Lonergan Research Institute.
9. Ibid., 4.
10. In **Method in Theology** he remarks favorably of Descartes' **Regulae ad directionem ingenii**: 261.
11. Ibid., 4-5.
12. Some of these allusions to historic philosophical positions can be seen in Keeler's book. Certain expressions will even find their way into **Insight**: cf. the use of the term "half-way house" to speak of Platonic philosophy: "This is just the Eleatic doctrine that there is no half-way house between 'what is' and blank nonentity;" **The Problem of Error from Plato to Kant**, 6. Cf. **Insight**, xxviii.
13. Cf. **Insight**, 747-748.
14. Ibid., 7. Cf. the phrase, "**experimentum crucis**," in the "fragments" from the early 1930's, 7. Cf. also the introduction to **Insight** with overtones of this "crucial experiment:" "The crucial issue is an experimental issue, and the experiment will be performed not publicly but privately;" xviii. Cf. also **Method in Theology**, 253: "Such an objectification of subjectivity is in the style of a crucial experiment."
15. Ibid., 8.
16. **Caring About Meaning**, 276. Originally I had thought that Lonergan's letter to his provincial of January 22, 1935, came after the course with Father Leeming. But after consultation with Fr. Fred Crowe and Fr. Robert McNamara of the diocese of Rochester, it became evident that Fr. Leeming's course was given in the fall and spring of 1935-1936.

17. **A Second Collection**, 265.
18. For an account of this controversy, cf. Helen James John, **The Thomist Spectrum** (New York: Fordham, 1966) 72ff.
19. **Caring About Meaning**, 258.
20. Bernard Leeming, **Adnotationes de Verbo Incarnato** (Rome: 1936)  
124. Our translation.
21. Ibid., 124-125.
22. Cf. **Insight**, 488-490.
23. **De Verbo Incarnato** (Rome: 1961) 172; cf. 146 ff..
24. **Second Collection**, 241.
25. Ibid., 259.
  
26. Transcript by Nicholas Graham of discussions at Lonergan Workshop, June 13, 1978.
27. Ibid..
28. **Method in Theology**, 243.