

Liberty and Revelation

Symposium: Liberated by God and His Church
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Liberty and Revelation are two terms that have a rich history and a deep emotional embodiment. The wonderful reality of Lonergan's methodological contributions is that he helps us to explore the meaning of such terms through intentionality analysis. It is not easy to do, and if you have given it a spin –intentionality analysis that is—you know that it requires a meditative spirit that needs to let go both of ideology and strong emotion states –or at least the ability to ignore those states.

When I think of liberty, two meanings come to mind. One is the liberty that is intrinsic to a decision or an act of will. Many people would have that notion of liberty in mind and for good reason. A decision changes being, either generatively or destructively. This is why our knowledge of being is essential for a decision—because knowledge as a judgment about the correctness of an insight affirms the truth of a link between conditions and a conditioned. This link provides one with the possibility of making decisions to bring about the realization of the conditioned.¹ The more insights that we have, the more kinds of being that we are able to impact through decisions.

There is another kind of liberty that is more fundamental to the entire universe of being. Let us start with a quote from Insight,

A first degree of freedom appears in the vast diversity of chemical compounds in which patterned aggregates of aggregates render subatomic limitations indirect. A second degree of freedom appears in the multicellular plant; each cell is an aggregate of aggregates; and the plant not only is an aggregate of cells but also it is the aggregate determined by its own laws of development and growth. A third degree of freedom appears in the animal, in which the second degree is exploited to provide the materials for the higher system of biological consciousness.²

¹ Insight, chapter 9.

² Bernard Lonergan, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (New York: 1970), 264.

I would like to draw your attention to that little phrase “degree of freedom.” We know of course that it does not necessarily mean the same as liberty, especially in considering human liberty. However in this particular case, Lonergan is understanding it as a kind of liberty. Notice that liberty involves a transcendence of a limitation. He generalizes this principle later in the book, in the section on metaphysics where he speaks of limitation and finality.³ The principle of finality is the explanatory source of this liberty at the heart of our unfolding universe. Finality is a characteristic of potency in the relation of potency to indeterminate actual forms.⁴ All of this highlights the same thing. Liberty is related to intelligibility. As intelligibility increases, a thing is gaining more intrinsic order and it increases in interiority.⁵ This is what degrees of freedom means. It is tied to the finality of the universe and is the source of the open ended, dynamic orientation of the universe that Lonergan formulates as generalized emergent probability.

The more comprehensive notion of liberty that is linked to the finality of the universe opens up a more comprehensive grasp of liberty within the human subject. As one’s knowledge grows from the crib to the neighborhood, from the present to the past, from time to eternity, one’s intrinsic intelligibility as an intelligent, rational, volitional being expands. This growing landscape of intelligence, truth, and the good within one’s soul is really a growth of the soul itself. This points to the foundational liberty that Lonergan calls self-transcendence. To deepen one’s understanding of the range of human self-transcendence requires an exploration of the interior operations within all fields of human activity. Many of Lonergan’s writings are designed to help us with this exploration. Insight opens the doors to math, sciences, common sense, and philosophy. Method in Theology does the same for theology.⁶ All of Lonergan’s writings on economics, politics, and history are permeated with a horizon that has come to

³ Insight, 442 – 451.

⁴ Insight, 450 – 451.

⁵ Lonergan writes this somewhere, but I have not been able to locate it yet.

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: 1972).

grasp its own intrinsic patterns. Likewise, many of his major breakthroughs, such as his generalized theory of emergent probability, his formulation of the method of metaphysics as the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, his account of the scale of values and his theory of the human good, his development of functional specialization, and his treatise on the dialectical development of economies in his macro-economic dynamics facilitate us in discovering both intelligibilities of all types within the universe, but also the real potential of the human mind in knowing this universe at the levels of understanding and judgment, and the potential of the human will in participating in its unfolding intelligibility at the level of decision. Most profound in all of Lonergan writings, and the most demanding in terms of self-appropriation, is that of his systematics on the Trinity.

Perhaps one of the more thought provoking moments in Lonergan's formulations of the human subject is found in Insight, where he discusses a startling point in which "...the tension that is inherent in the finality of all proportionate being becomes in man a conscious tension."⁷ If liberty is tied to increasing intelligibility, in the human being the development of liberty is maximized because the intelligibility is also intelligent, rational, and volitional.

"For an animal to begin a new mode of living, there would be needed not only a new sensibility but also a new organism. An animal species is a solution to the problem of living, so that a new solution would be a new species; for an animal to begin to live in quite a new fashion, there would be required not only a modification of its sensibility but also a modification of the organism that sensibility systematizes. But in man a new department of mathematics, a new viewpoint in science, a new civilization, a new philosophy, has its basis, not in a new sensibility but simply in a new manner of attending to data and of forming combinations of combinations of data." (Insight, 266).

This results in something quite extra-ordinary, "Man, then, is at once explanatory genus and explanatory species." A genus is based upon generic principles of order that systemize a lower manifold. So chemicals are a genus that systematize sub-atomic particles. Cells are a genus that systematize

⁷ Insight, 473.

chemicals. Sensitivity is a genus that systematizes cells. Human beings systematize the psychic contents of sensitivity. In that way, human beings are a genus. But human beings are unique among all creatures. Why? Because of intelligence and free will. Human intelligence is a potency for understanding and knowing all genera and species. Lonergan then concludes that in the human being “genus is coincident with species, for it is not just a higher system but a source of higher systems. In man there occurs the transition from the intelligible to the intelligent.”⁸ (267)

The transition from that which is intelligibility to that which is intelligent can be drawn out in terms of the transcendental notions. In Insight, Lonergan develops the notion of being, which includes intelligibility.⁹ The notion of being underpins, penetrates, and goes beyond all acts of direct and reflective insights. This notion becomes the better known as one learns about specifications in heuristic notions such as correlations, ideal frequencies, and developmental operators. Over the next decade after Insight, Lonergan differentiated three transcendental notions: intelligibility, being, and value. All three can be examined in terms of how they underpin, penetrate, and transcend the objects that these illumine.¹⁰ The notion of intelligibility when in an inquiry, underpins the search for correlations, ideal frequencies, and developmental operators.¹¹ In discovery, it penetrates correlations, ideal frequencies, and developmental operators. And in new inquiry, it goes beyond each correlation, ideal frequency, and developmental operator to discover new correlations, new ideal frequencies, and new

⁸ Later, in the chapter in Insight on genetic method, Lonergan writes of how “the higher system of intellectual development is primarily a higher integration, not of the man in whom the development occurs, but of the universe that he inspects” (Insight, 469).

⁹ Insight, 348 – 357.

¹⁰ Following the Greeks, Augustine called these notions “lights” – “the light of being,” “the light of faith,” “the light of conscience,” “the light of glory.” St. Thomas, building on Aristotle, formulated this light by its relation to operations, as a light that is an agent cause—hence the name “Agent Intellect.” Light suggests an illumination of an object. Agent cause identifies a key condition that brings about an operation (eg. abstraction of a species).

¹¹ These three form the primary heuristic notions that constitute Lonergan’s elements of metaphysics. Once Dialectic is introduced, then the four heuristics need to account for the totality of proportionate being is complete, a totality that includes the deformation caused by human intellectual inauthenticity.

developmental operators. Likewise the notions of being and of value underpin, penetrate, and go beyond particular truths and values.

One can expand upon how these notions that underpin, penetrate, and transcend operators and operations can form into entire viewpoints or horizons. The deductive and homogenous expansions that Lonergan mentions in chapter one of Insight are a first articulation of a horizontal expansion. In the last part of chapter one, Lonergan discusses the move to higher viewpoints from arithmetic to algebra to calculus, shifts which illustrate vertical expansions. Similar expansions take place in shifting from technologies to economies to polities, or from a descriptive to an explanatory to an interior realm or stage of meaning. The exploration of any of the horizons, and of the relationship of one type of viewpoint to another provides one with an increasing glimpse to the unrestricted range of the capacity for self-transcendence, and hence of the real and mysterious character of human liberation.

Liberation can frequently be thought of as a liberation from something. With evil, which will be discussed in the next section, there is some truth in this statement. But only with regard to evil. Liberation as a transcending of the limits of potency, especially that of the empirical residue, is not a liberation from potency but within it. The higher is always a higher within a lower.¹² Higher orders of intelligibility emerge within lower and reside in the lower. There is a kind of embodiment of higher orders within lower that must always be kept in mind. And this is certainly true of the human spirit, even though it has an intrinsic liberty with regard to the empirical residue.

¹² Technically, the way in which form informs matters is the relationship.

This embodiment is worth exploring in terms of liberty. In Insight, Lonergan notes how the human mind is intrinsically independent of the empirical residue.¹³ The evidence that grounds this certitude is the fact that understanding abstracts an intelligibility from the image, leaving behind that which belongs to the empirical residue.¹⁴ Understanding a water molecule is to discover an intelligibility that is true of any water molecule found at any time and location. As with understanding, judgment also transcends the empirical residue. Judgment reaches affirmations of the virtually unconditioned that is then “abstracted” from the conditions that lead to it, including those of space and time. These capabilities of the human spirit are quite incredible. At the same time, intelligence and rationality can only be actuated through images and the imagination. In other words, the operations of understanding, reason, and volition can only be realized via a lower manifold that is intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue. Another way to say this is that though the human mind possesses a vertical degree of freedom relative to motor-sensory psychic events, it is dependent upon this lower manifold. And, just as with all lower manifolds, it operates within the manifold. There is a kind of incarnation that takes place. Insight is incarnated in the image.

As well, insight is incarnated in the **affectivity** of the lower manifold. Notice how Lonergan described insight as a release in the opening of Insight.¹⁵ When we are trying to understand or know anything, all the passions can rise up in response to the intelligible object or virtually unconditioned that we seek. Joy rises in its discovery. Despair if we fail. Hope as we gain ground.

¹³ Insight, 517. As intrinsically independent, it is neither constituted nor conditioned by the empirical residue.

¹⁴ The empirical residue include particular places and times, individuality, the continuum, random divergences from ideal frequencies, and inertia. In each case, there is something positive (eg. place) which has no formal intelligibility to explain what and why it is as it is. Such residues are mere facts. As well, every material reality is constituted (prime matter) and conditioned (via conditions which lead to the formation of a material being) by the empirical residue. It is first introduced in Insight in chapter 1.

¹⁵ Insight, 4.

This is true not only of cognitive operations, but of all spiritual operations. They are incarnated within the psychic manifold of the human subject.¹⁶ This psychic manifold orients the world mediated by meaning “massively and dynamically.”¹⁷ And furthermore, the same is true not only of operations, but of the operators – questions for understanding, for being, and for value.

And perhaps most profound of all is how the capacity for self-transcendence is embedded in the lower psychic manifolds.¹⁸ This is why eros and desire, as well as the word “will” have so frequently been linked to the basic orientation of the human subject. I think Heidegger’s *Sorge* also refers to the state of this capacity. The existentialists notion of angst seems to fit as well, since a profound angst happens to anyone who refuses the gift of divine love. Even psychologists recognize it, such as Erickson, who speaks of a basic trust or distrust that arises in an infant.

Human liberty then must go to the core of the human subject, to the very liberation of the capacity for self-transcendence, and its must ascend throughout all levels of human subjectivity, from the neurons that embody psychic events and affectivity, to the psychic events and affectivity that embody intellectual, rational, and volition operators and operations that are intrinsically independent of the empirical residue.

An odd realization precipitates from all of these explorations of liberty within the human subject. Human liberty includes the heavens and the earth. The human subject at the levels of understanding and judgment is directly related to the whole of intelligible being. The human

¹⁶ As a note, I am not using “incarnated” in the manner of a carrier of meaning, but rather as something that is related to that which is intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue.

¹⁷ *Method in Theology*, 31.

¹⁸ As a note, understanding the extrinsic dependence of the capacity for self-transcendence upon the psychic manifold provide a starting point for transposing concupiscence and how original sin is inherited. More on this in the future.

will at the level of decision is directly related to a participation in the whole of that which is good. It means that human liberty includes much of what is outside of the human subject's personal capacity to impact. Yet, as a stream of increasing genera and species, as a potentiality that mirrors the entire universe of being, only nothing is excluded from human existence, and only nothing. Being and the universe as good is included. Pause for a moment on that fact. Some concrete examples illustrate this point. Think of the moments when a kind of joy and fulfillment wells up within one's soul (partial though it is) because of the good things which happen to friends or family that you love. Or, again, think of when you are watching a favorite sports team which just won a big game, when they win, you feel like you win. Numerous experiences throughout the day point to how the reality of others, and the world at large directly impacts the realization of one's own.

And finally, human liberty as related to the whole of being and the good, is brought to that isomorphic realization step by step, only in the mediational context of human history, civilization, family life, and the Church. Lonergan once again provides us with some initial clues. Human beings collaborate, necessarily so. We mutually self-mediate. In the essay "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer" Lonergan formulates a term that he has used in a number of writings from the 1960s and on, namely mediation.¹⁹ Lonergan formulates mediation....

...then we can say of any factor, quality, property, feature, aspect that has, on the one hand, a source, origin, ground, basis, and on the other hand, consequences, effects, derivatives, a field of influence, of radiation, of expansion, or that has an expression, manifestation, revelation, outcome – we can say that this factor, quality, property, feature, or aspect is immediate in the source, origin, ground, or basis, and on the other hand is mediated in the consequences, effects, derivatives, outcome, in the field of influence, radiation, expansion, in the expression, manifestation, revelation.²⁰

¹⁹ Bernard Lonergan, "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer" in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958 – 1964* (Toronto, 1996), 160 – 182.

²⁰ "Mediation of Christ in Prayer," 162.

Lonergan illustrates mediation in the next section, and then goes on to define mutual mediation, in which both terms mediate something to each other. He then proceeds to things that are self-mediating such as an animal that is walking, in which motion in the muscles is being mediated to the entire organism. Finally, there is mutual self-mediation. And this is when two self-mediating beings are mediating each other as well. This is what happens in our relationship to Christ in prayer. It is what happens in any human exchange, and is a key heuristic for examining the kind of exchanges that then open subjects to the common funds and to all moments of self-transcendence.

In some other writings, Lonergan provides us with a few differentials of communal life and history, of which I will briefly mention. A first differential arises from types of collaborative relationships. Human beings can mutually self-mediate in complementary, developmental, or dialectical fashions. Complementary when they are different but form a unity within the human good (eg. doctors and lawyers). Developmental when they form relationships in which one is helping the development of another (eg. parents and teachers to children and students). And finally, dialectical, which I will introduce later, after discussing the fallen state of the human race. A second differential arises from the levels of the human subject as the perfection of these levels are pursued together; intersubjective community mutually self-mediate common lived experiences, social community mutually self-mediate common insights into living, cultural community mutually self-mediate common judgments of truth, personal community mutually self-mediate common decisions, and religious communities mutually self-mediate ultimate meaning and value. Within social communities, one can distinguish between technology and skills, economy, and polity. Within culture, one can distinguish between descriptive, explanatory, and interior mediations of meaning, which can be further elaborated into patterns that constitute methods such as functional specialization. A third differential places these

mutually self-mediating communities into trends that constitute history and can be distinguished based on progress, decline, and redemption.

One of the keys that is mediated with all types of community is belief. Belief is the realization within a human subject of a common fund of knowledge and value. Most of all that we know and value come through belief, which points to how crucial it is for human liberation. Lonergan in many places points out how belief is structured, and why it is valid, and how it can contribute to real knowledge and genuine values.²¹ Interiorly, the human subject needs to affirm the value of belief. It requires that it come from another as an offer. In this offer, tradition is taking place. And the offer needs to be made by a credible witness, one who has authority and is recognized as so. Once one has made an assent to the offer, then one comes to a judgment, and through the mediation of the judgment, into the presence of the reality or value affirmed, self-transcendence has taken place. The common fund of knowledge or value has been opened up, and with it some facet or corner of the universe of being or the good. Belief is crucial for the liberation of the human subject.

This completes my notes on liberty. Liberty is a liberation of the entire universe of being which becomes conscious in each human subject, and must permeate every operator and operation at all levels of the human subject, both material and spiritual. Furthermore, this liberation in the human being takes place socially and historically. It requires a mutual self-mediation of subjects that opens up the common funds of knowledge and value that form traditions and orient those subjects in the present and toward the future.

²¹ Lonergan's focus upon belief is a brilliant move. The epistemic challenges of modernity and post-modernity have nearly destroyed any sense of certitude. Lonergan redeems not only the certitude possible in self-knowledge—an important starting point—but certitude within common sense, within conscience, and within belief, including religious belief. The virtually conditioned can be reached whenever conditions are finite. And in certain types of beliefs, such conditions are finite. It allows for an authentic transmission of the common fund of knowledge and value.

The Problems of Evil, the Fallen State, and the History of Decline

There is something that challenges and even destroys human liberation. An account of evil and sin must be introduced, because it adds a nuance to the meaning of liberty. Liberty is not merely developmental. It is dialectical. And if we are to understand how Revelation liberates, we must also understand this dialectic.

Evil as a privation of being is also a privation of intelligibility, and thus a privation of freedom. Lonergan's development of generalized emergent probability helps us to unveil the character of evil. Things come to be and cease to be in intelligible manners within the emergent order of the universe. Emergent probability can explain successful realizations of higher and lower orders of being, and even dead ends. It can help us to grasp the impact of the size and magnitude of our universe. In contrast, evil simply does not make sense, neither within the world understood in terms of causality nor within the intelligibility of emergent probability. It is a dead end, but not one that can be explained by probabilities and trends. It is a surd, but not one that should be. Irrational numbers are surds in mathematics, but these are not evil. Given the nature of being that has the empirical residue intrinsic to its existence, one can account for the surd of irrational numbers. But the social surd is evil. The social surd has its roots in that which is intrinsically independent of the empirical residue, and thus it cannot be explained via the empirical residue. Surds that spring from what is intrinsically independent of the empirical residue should not be. This points to the real source of evil. It springs from creatures that are intelligent, reasonable, and moral. We know of it because of what is natural in such creatures. It is natural for the human person to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and even loving. It is unnatural for these to fail when they should. That is when a spiritual surd arises, and there is no empirical residue to account for such surds. And because the transcendental notions that ground these precepts regard one's own self as much as the world in which we have our being, their failure deforms one's own self as

well as the world in which we have our being. Spiritual surds are really inauthenticity within the human subject. And inauthenticity should not be. It is absurd. Unintelligible.

Evil generated by inauthenticity introduces dialectic within the universe. Dialectic as it is treated in Insight is a tension between opposites.

...dialectic denotes a combination of the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory.²²

In Insight, Lonergan tended to focus on concrete and contradictory tensions between different levels of the human subject, primarily between the two types of knowing, animal vs. human, sensory vs. intellectual/rational. Taking characteristics of knowing from the sensory level and using these as the account of intellectual and rational operations causes all kinds of deformities in epistemology and in metaphysics, as well as in self-knowledge and method. By the time of his writing of Method in Theology, Lonergan had generalized the concrete and contradictory tensions by shifting the contradictory opposites to authenticity and inauthenticity in self-transcendence. Our interest in liberty encounters its problem in the dialectic that is rooted in failures to self-transcend (inattentiveness, unintelligence, irrationality, irresponsibility), and most fundamentally at a failure in the capacity for self-transcendence as such. One cannot understand the depth of the dialectic without understanding the fundamental privation that takes place in the state of the capacity for self-transcendence. This privation was a privation of sanctifying grace.

In other words, the profound and fundamental dialectic centered in the central capacity of the human subject as an interior war upon the heart. It is captured and its origins are explained in the story of Adam and Eve. They had been created in an authentic state, and thus they were free. Interiorly, they were ordered in love to God and each other. They had been created not only in the image of God, but in the likeness of God. The tree from which they were forbidden to eat is a symbol of their place in

²² Insight, 217.

relationship to God and to the whole order of creation as intelligible, real, and good. They did not create that order. They did not create the character of authenticity constitutively signified by the tree.²³ They needed to be obedient to that authenticity, to God, to their transcendent origin and destiny. By listening to the serpent, and eating from the forbidden tree, they became disobedient. And in turning from God, they turned from authenticity at its most fundamental level, that of the actuated capacity for self-transcendence in a state of being in love with God. Liberty was attacked at the very heart of the human race.

The dialectic is not only in the human soul, but because it is in every soul, it also manifests within every mutual self-mediating relationship starting with the most basic and necessary community, that of man and woman. Notice that the first thing to go after Adam falls with Eve is their relationship to each other. It turns into one of disordered desire, one of concupiscence. This then spreads to Cain who murders Abel, and then on to the entire human race that is destroyed by the flood. As St. Augustine discovers, concupiscence is fundamental, and pertains to the state of the capacity for self-transcendence. The dialectic spreads into all mutually self-mediating relations. In economics, one finds the business cycle. In politics, one finds revolutions that are all too frequent. In culture, one finds it in the inability to develop and maintain genuine cosmopolis that is fed by a community of philosophers and metaphysicians. In intersubjective communities, it is found in group bias. In religion, it is found in the frequent crossing over into the demonic.²⁴ We could go on to explore the source of this in the fallen angels and in the serpent, and the entire order of creation. The point is this—the state of the world cannot be accounted for as one developing within the lines of emergent probably. An absurd element has introduced a dialectic that cuts to the foundations of the world, starting at the very point in which

²³ Constitutively signified, because it was not merely a sign, but one of whose proper treatment realized their interior obedience to God.

²⁴ Of course, this is not merely original sin, because personal sin enters all of these situations as well.

the finality of the universe becomes conscious, and that is the capacity for self-transcendence within every man, woman, and child. We are “conceived in sin.”²⁵

We have been inept in overcoming this dialectic and for good reason. We cannot. At its foundations, the original order that has been concretely contradicted was a supernatural gift. And the fall is the loss of that gift. And human beings cannot restore it. Another gift is needed.

O Happy Fault.....

There is an ancient debate, as some of you know, about whether God would have become incarnate even if we had not sinned, even if there was not a fallen state to this world. In his Christological writings, Lonergan assumes the obvious. Jesus “died for our sins.” We do not have a revelation about what God would do for an unfallen race. But both sides agree that what God did far transcended a simple undoing of the impact of the Fall. God not only elevates us beyond the natural capacity for self-transcendence as was done for Adam and Eve, but God elevates us to a self-transcendence that allows us to enter into the very heart of God as God, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The gift that allows the human race to become brothers and sisters to the Son points to a new kind of mutual self-mediation that allows every man, woman, and child to be able to call the Son’s Father “Our Father.” O Happy Fault as is said in the Easter Vigil exsultet.

The need for a gift to overcome the fundamental dialectics of the universe and of each biography is answered in divine Revelation. Lonergan succinctly defined this Revelation as “God’s own entry into man’s world mediated by meaning.”²⁶ This is different than an interior illumination. It is not Voeglin’s leap in being as he formulated the revelation that took place to Moses, though Revelation as

²⁵ Psalm 51.

²⁶ Bernard Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism” in A Second Collection (University of Toronto Press Reprint, 1996), 260.

Loneragan means certainly causes a leap in being. Lonergan's definition implies that God has entered into a real conversation with human beings and with the whole of creation by entering into carriers of meaning and forming an outer word. God enters into the fabric of that which actualizes the human capacity for self-transcendence through mutual self-mediation. Why? To liberate us incarnately—person to person—and culturally—mediational modes of truth—In the midst of our dialectical deformations.

In Insight, Lonergan does begin to explore the problem of evil and what an adequate response would be in its face. It would be interesting if he was to expand upon this in light of his advance of the nature of the dialectic as that between authenticity and inauthenticity. Many of the basics I think have already been hinted above. An adequate response would meet the dialectic in all of its differentials. These differentials all spring from the deformed capacity for self-transcendence of each human subject, and how human subjects mediate each other. So, the response would need to address the root. But, as well, it would need to address how that root is mediated throughout a biography, within a society, and down through history.

Within a biography, to recall, the dialectic of authenticity and inauthenticity of self-transcendence has become embedded within all levels of the human subject. It is embedded within neurons and the psychic manifold as disordered desire. It is embedded at the level of understanding and judgment, as a darkening of understanding and reason, and a privation of wisdom. It is embedded in human decisions, as a weak will that has great difficulty in doing what is right, and simply is incapable of loving God as God deserves, and loving our neighbor as our neighbor is loved by God. The response, if it is to be truly liberating, must address all of these levels.

Within society and history, in the dialectics as these are manifested in mutually self-mediating relationships, the response must address all the different facets of society and history. These include all

the common, complementary, and developmental relationships as these have fallen into dialectical distortions. It includes as well the way that technology and skills are ordered in economies and guided by polities. It includes culture which is thwarted not only by poorly crafted literature and ineptly executed science, but fundamentally by a lack of sustained cosmopolis, which itself is rooted in the failure of philosophy and metaphysics within the polyphony of philosophical counter-positions. It needs to move to the fundamental human community that is closest to the formation of the capacity for self-transcendence as such, and that is the family. It must address the fall of the first man and the first woman, and how they in turn beget that fall in all subsequent children born to them. It must address distortions of religion and how the human race is always tempted and partakes in the forbidden fruit and creates a tower of its own babble. Lonergan writes about this in his formulation of revelation within historical consciousness.

When one apprehends man through historical consciousness one suddenly becomes aware of the significance of divine revelation, which is a meaning transforming all other meanings, and it grounds an order, the mystical body of Christ, to transform all other orders." (*Regis College Lectures, 1962* in Early Works on Theological Method I, 321)

In short, the response must be effective. And to be effective, it must enter into the world mediated by meaning with a genuine authority by which mutually self-mediating relations can bring about sustained conversions. All of this is what is meant by Revelation as the divine entrance into the world mediated by meaning.

Lonergan and the Divine Entrance into the World Mediated by Meaning

Lonergan's exploration of the Divine entrance into the human subject, society, history, and creation spans his entire life. In the human subject, his early writings on grace and freedom explore the most profound meanings of interior liberty. This never goes away of course, as later, he transposes

sanctifying grace into interiority analysis.²⁷ To recall, sanctifying grace is the actuated state of the capacity for self-transcendence, a state that is a love of God without qualifications.²⁸ His location of grace in relationship to the capacity for self-transcendence provides a framework for the conversion of the psyche, the intellect, and the moral life.²⁹ And within each of these, one can situate Lonergan's writings that dealt with a variety of subsequent dialectical tensions within the human subject, from the scotosis in the psychic censor to the tension between sensate and intellectual knowledge,, as well as the tension between pleasure and value.

In society and history, one finds Lonergan's interest in the divine entrance in his early writings on a metaphysics of history, and the trends of history that move from progress to decline to redemption.³⁰ This likewise continues throughout his life. Recall for instance his interest in the decline of civilization in Insight, and then his solution to the problem of evil as requiring a kind of incarnation of a higher order of faith, hope, and love. In the midst of this solution is when Lonergan introduces his recovery of the nature and epistemological validity of belief.³¹ And in the last 15 years of his life, his formulation of a functionally specialized theology that mediates a living religious tradition manifests this same divine entrance, especially in his functional specialty of foundations which is center upon grace and its differentials. As part of theological method, Lonergan formulates religion, and in the midst of chapter four, he makes a careful distinction between faith and religious belief, and how religious belief when constituted by the Divine entrance, provides an outer word that is proportionate to the inner word of faith. One can then link this religious belief to how it mediates the ongoing development and perfection of the human subject. It will have a relation to all dialectics that have been introduced as a

²⁷ Bernard Lonergan, Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas in Volume 1 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto, 2000).

²⁸ Method in Theology, 105.

²⁹ Conversion is the key to being liberated from inauthenticity and hence dialectical deformations. Lonergan has a good summary of three principle conversions (intellectual, moral, and religious) and their relationships in Method in Theology, which is found in his chapter on dialectics (Method in Theology, 237 -244).

³⁰ I had read through some of these papers from the 1930s, or so, at the Lonergan Center at Boston College.

³¹ Insight, 703 – 718.

result of sin. As he systematizes the Law of the Cross in his Christological writings and the missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in his Trinitarian writings, Lonergan proposes the divine basis for the liberation of human existence, society, and history. This basis provides an answer to civilizational decline, to the counter positions of philosophy, to moral hedonism and idealism, and to the hardened heart. A mutual self-mediation rooted in prayer and self-sacrifice that is fed by the Body of Christ to a creation that is constituted of higher and lower levels of being, that has become intellectually, rationally, and morally conscious in human beings, meets the dialectic at the root and in all of its differentials.

Evidence for the Divine entrance abounds. When we carefully examine the divine response in Israel and the Incarnation, what we find is a response that hits all facets of human liberation. As Lonergan mentions,

The dynamic state of being in love has the character of a response. It is an answer to a divine initiative. The divine initiative is not just creation. It is not just God's gift of his love. There is a personal entrance of God himself into history, a communication of God to his people, the advent of God's word into the world of religious expression. Such was the religion of Israel. Such has been Christianity. (Method in Theology, 119)

Revelation liberates the capacity for self-transcendence. It heals the body. It promises life and resurrection. It opens the mind to understanding, truth, and wisdom. It strengthens the will in its weakness. It heals damaged and destroyed relations of any type--common, complementary, and developmental—that had become dialectical. It transforms through mercy and reconciliation the kinds of mutual self-mediation that take place in homes and workplaces. It reopens the doors to a generative common fund of knowledge and value. It reorients, restores, and strengthens human beings and civilizations. In the end, it gives human beings to the divine Son, who allows each person to become his

brother or sister, and thus to have his Father as their Father. In other words, it opens the doors to an interior participation in the very life and existence of the Holy Trinity.³²

I would be remiss if I did not address the second of perhaps two of the most significant challenges to the effectiveness of the Divine entrance into the world mediated by meaning. The first was mentioned above, namely the epistemological challenges to the transmission of the common funds of knowledge and value through belief. The second regards the authoritative character of the mutually self-mediating transmission of these funds which is significantly pronounced in religious belief. One sees this challenge springing up in the last few centuries with great intensity around the subject of infallibility, both of the Church and of the papacy. One of the steps in belief is the recognition or judgment that the one offering the belief is credible. Numerous discussions of course have sprouted around this particular step. It is worthwhile to note how important it was from the beginning. Numerous times in scripture, we find a recollection of the kind of authority that emanated from Jesus. It reminds me of Lonergan's point in chapter four of Method in Theology, that when the inner word of faith meets its proportion in the revealed outer word, there is an assent in judgment to the truth of that outer word. Part of that revealed outer word includes the credibility of those carrying the Revelation. Jesus had that credibility, that authority. His Body, we would say has this credibility, this authority. But, we need to go further as well, because we are human beings who come to our perfection through mutual self-mediation. This requires personal, incarnate mediations. Thus, an abstract notion of the Church will not do. Real persons with real authority are needed. To whom did Jesus give his authority. At this point, I will not repeat the numerous studies on this subject, and its difficulties, but I do want to highlight it in terms of liberation. The apostles were the recipients of Jesus' authority regarding the carrying of his revelatory gifts to the ends of the earth. In the Catholic world, we know that their

³² Lonergan's systematic development of the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit provides profound food for thought. (Bernard Lonergan, The Triune God: Systematics in volume 12 of The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Toronto, 2007).

successors were the recipients of this same authority. If such authority does not exist, then the liberating power of revelation died with Jesus. It reminds me of a statement by Blessed John Henry Newman.

. . . the very idea of Revelation is that of a direct interference from above, for the introduction of truths otherwise unknown; moreover, as such a communication implies recipients, an authoritative depository of the things revealed will be found practically to be involved in that idea.³³

A response that profoundly and fully cannot liberate the human subject is simply no worthwhile response. A response that inadequately addresses human society and history in how it mutually self-mediate inauthenticity will be ineffective and incomplete. However, Revelation that is a divine initiative will be complete and effective. It will mediate a liberation of self-transcendence that has no compromise. It will overcome all dialectics that spring from sin. It will transform every recipient and the whole of history and creation. It will give birth to a new heavens and a new earth. Such is the divine initiative found in Israel. Such is its perfection in Christ and his Body.

³³ Ibid., 445-46.