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# Invisible Missions: The Grace that Heals Disjunctions

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## **Invisible Missions: The Grace That Heals Disjunctions**

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### **1. Situating the Disjunctions**

Charles Taylor's four disjunctions within the contemporary Catholic Church and of the Church from the world it purports to address would, among other things, prompt a quite negative judgment on the manner in which the church has heeded the challenge of the Second Vatican Council.

As we know, there is a disjunction, first, of the 'seekers' from the 'dwellers,' which plays out often as a disjunction of the official magisterium from the spiritual seeking that prompts people to ask questions that some religious authorities do not want to entertain.

Next, there is a disjunction between the model of authority that some in the magisterium are holding onto and a contemporary instinct that distinguishes authority and power and that grants authority only where the authenticity of that authority is acknowledged by the community.

Third, there is a disjunction around the sexual morality and gender equity that contemporaries, and especially younger contemporaries, increasingly accept as correct, a disjunction only exacerbated by the hierarchy's failure to comprehend and respond to the sexual abuse crisis. Moreover, some battles that the church should not have been fighting in the first place are over, and the church has lost. Same-sex marriage is exhibit A. Much time and energy and credibility in the public arena have been lost by the way the hierarchy has dealt with this issue.

And fourth, there is a disjunction between plural forms of spirituality, including those drawn from other religious traditions, over against exclusive emphasis on the sufficiency of the Christian dispensation.

The disjunctions need not be contradictory or dialectical, but in fact as the positions harden, that is precisely what they are becoming.

These four disjunctions may be included, I believe, under a more all-embracing category: the disjunction of the church from the very work of God in the contemporary world, a work that I will argue *includes, encourages, and even demands, rather than forbids or laments, a great deal of secularization*. I wish to call for attention to, discernment of, and participation in the invisible missions of both Word and Spirit, divine Truth and divine Love, as the source of a quotidian, indeed secular grace that, if received, would heal that all-embracing disjunction and provide the criteria for discerning legitimate from illegitimate secularization. That discernment would in turn be a central element in healing Taylor's four disjunctions or at least prevent them from hardening into dialectical oppositions. Some on each side of the four disjunctions, as they have hardened in their positions, fail to make some key distinctions with regard to secularization and sacralization. A hardened fixity in the opposed sides of the four disjunctions risks a secularization that becomes secularism. The key is the discernment of sacralization and secularization. One contribution to the explicit horizon required for that discernment at the present time, I would like to propose, is the acknowledgment of the universal presence of divine healing and elevating grace in the world through the invisible missions of Word and Spirit, divine Truth and divine Love, both inside the church and beyond the explicit contours of ecclesial membership. In my view, it is in the realm of these quotidian and often secular instances of grace that we must search as we strive to find a way to a new evangelization, a new journey as a global community gathered for mission in the name of Christ Jesus. Otherwise 'new evangelization' is little more than a cover-up for refusing to face the real issues and to renew the task of implementing the Second Vatican Council.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is that meeting the fourth of Taylor's disjunctions, which would find grace outside the Church, and which is less a matter of ideal types or models than the first three disjunctions, may be the best way not only to meet the overarching disjunction that I have mentioned but also to address the first three of Taylor's disjunctions. The fourth disjunction is transcended, I believe, as the explicit

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<sup>1</sup> I must point out that major portions of this paper were written before the election of Pope Francis. The probability of the church succumbing to the danger mentioned here will be greatly reduced if the major thrusts of *Evangelii Gaudium* are taken seriously by the universal church.

acknowledgment of so-called visible missions of both Word in Incarnation and Spirit at Pentecost are seen as the revelation of a divine Truth and a divine Love that are universally given even when they are not known. A genuinely 'new' evangelization can be effected only as the church has the humility and discernment to acknowledge these divine gifts wherever they are found, to point them out, to welcome them, to participate in them, and to cooperate with them.

## 2. Doctrinal Continuity

The universal mission of the divine Word is affirmed in the prologue to John's Gospel. The Word that became flesh and dwelt among us in the man Christ Jesus, in the so-called visible mission of the Incarnation, that very Word through whom all things were made and in whom is the life that brings light to all, the real light that shines on all who are born into the world – the church is called to point to *that* Word, and especially to the presence of that Word in all efforts of women and men to speak truth in situations of injustice, poverty, and oppression, in attempts to formulate economic, social, political, and cultural meanings that address these situations with transforming power, in efforts to mediate science and faith in a manner respectful of the legitimate concerns of both, and in efforts to heal divisions and promote reconciliation.

The divine Love that was poured forth in a palpable mission on Pentecost is present everywhere in the world, as Vatican II and subsequent church teaching have emphasized. The church is called to acknowledge and foster that gift of divine Love wherever it is found, and to call people together on the basis of this universal gift, a gift that is not restricted to realms of explicit Christian belief but manifests itself in a universalist faith born of the divine gift of unqualified love.

## 3. Comments on Sacralization and Secularization

If the work of grace in the world includes and encourages a great deal of secularization, we need a heuristic structure for discriminating various attempts in this direction. Not all of them are genuine, but many are. How can we tell the difference?

As long ago as 1973, Bernard Lonergan proposed the heuristic categories of (1) a sacralization to be dropped, (2) a sacralization to be

fostered, (3) a secularization to be welcomed, and (4) a secularization to be resisted.<sup>2</sup> I have attempted to provide a 'lower blade'<sup>3</sup> for these heuristic categories, with the help of the mimetic theory of René Girard. Here I can do little more than indicate the conclusions I have proposed.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Setting the standard of *sacralizations to be dropped* in the conduct of human affairs are any and all misuses of the name or word of God to justify, or perpetuate a system that justifies, not only natural evils, but also persecution, exclusion, and scapegoating both of carriers of the genuine religious word and, given the character of that word itself, of *anyone else*, and any and all attempts to use the name of God or religion to advance personal career or ideology (where by 'ideology' I mean a conceptual justification of inauthenticity). While an astute philosophy of God will speak of physical evils in terms of what Lonergan calls emergent probability,<sup>5</sup> God is not the cause of basic sin and moral evils in any way whatsoever, nor is God well-disposed to being used for personal or ideological advance. The divine presence is offered rather as consolation and strength to those affected by natural disaster and human sinfulness. And calls to serve God in the church come from God, not from oneself, and have nothing to do with 'career.'

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<sup>2</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Sacralization and Secularization," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> On the scissors metaphor used to illustrate the relation between a heuristic structure and concrete data, see Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). See the index, Heuristic method: scissors-action of.

<sup>4</sup> Complementary discussions of Lonergan's heuristic anticipations have been proposed by John D. Dadosky and Gordon Rixon. A full articulation would have to take their work into consideration. My own attempt here is to name an element of the lower blade without which the discernment of authentic sacralization and secularization cannot succeed. See John D. Dadosky, "Sacralization, Secularization, and Religious Fundamentalism," *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* 36 (2007), pp. 513-29, and 'The Church and the Other: Mediation and Friendship in Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Ecclesiology,' *Pacifica*, October (2005), pp. 302-22; Gordon Rixon, "The Papacy in the Post-Modern Church: Reform and Renewal in the Ministry of Solidarity," paper presented at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, June 20, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight*, chapter 4.

Pope Francis has made the latter point clearly and bluntly, on several occasions.

(2) The standard of *sacralizations to be fostered* in the conduct of human affairs can be spoken of in Christian terms as adherence to what Lonergan calls the just and mysterious Law of the Cross, returning good for evil in the details of daily living. These terms have some correspondence in other religions: the servant of God in the Hebrew bible, the bodhisattva ideal and perhaps even enlightenment in Buddhism, Gandhi's non-violent appropriation of Hindu spirituality, etc. This standard entails recognizing and celebrating the transformation of evil by love into a greater good, indeed the supreme good of a new community, precisely through the absorption of evil in love, so that good is returned in exchange.

For Christians such love imitates and embodies the attitude of the Incarnate Word of God, to see whom is to see the Father. The reality of the Law of the Cross, which for Christians is revealed progressively in the Israelite scriptures and paradigmatically in the deuterio-Isaian Servant Songs, and embodied in the Incarnate Word, is itself a specification of a genuine or authentic religious component that can be found in other traditions as well. I continue to wager that it is more clearly differentiated progressively in the revelation given in the Hebrew bible and definitively bestowed in the New Testament, even if existential fidelity to it is at times no more prominent in the lives of Jews and Christians than elsewhere. What is specific to Christianity are the mysteries of the Incarnate Word and the Trinity, but part of what is specific to the Incarnate Word himself as embodying a Trinitarian mission is that in him there is revealed a law of utmost generality affecting the very constitution of history: a law that specifies the primary locus of grace and so of the supernatural order in history.

It seems clear from the study of other religions that this law is present there as well, even if not as clearly articulated as it may be in the anticipations to be found in the Hebrew bible's suffering servant of God and in the realization of those anticipations in the Passion, death, and Resurrection of the Incarnate Word. It was, after all, the Hindu Gandhi who quotes from the Gujarati didactic stanza, 'And

return with gladness good for evil done.’<sup>6</sup> And it was a Chinese student who may have had little contact with any religious tradition that stood in front of a massive tank in Tianenmen Square, forever providing one of the most beautiful images of resistance to evil ever bequeathed to the rest of us. That *is* the Law of the Cross. This reality, wherever it is found, is determinative of what in my first point I called the genuine religious word, as that word affects historical action or praxis, no matter what language is used to express it. Any word that would purport to be ‘religious’ but that neglects, shortchanges, or runs counter to this dimension is fraudulent, a manifestation of deviated transcendence. But wherever this dimension is found, there the sacred occurs in a preeminent way in human history.

(3) Setting the standard of *secularizations to be welcomed* in the conduct and organization of human affairs are, first, any realities that correspond to what Lonergan formulates in his transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. These precepts name what alone qualifies as ‘natural law.’ The natural orientation of the human spirit to intelligibility, the true and the real, and the good, and to beauty as the splendor of these objectives, along with the concomitant affective dispositions that match this spiritual orientation, will disclose over time and over the development of human culture which cultural and social arrangements can and should be granted their own autonomy from the mantle of sacral authority, while still encouraging the influence of religious and personal values in the cultural and social spheres. But it should be noted at once that, as Lonergan makes abundantly clear, sustained fidelity to the integrity of human nature is possible only by the gift of God’s love, and so only by some lived participation in Trinitarian life, in the genuine sacred, and so in the love embodied paradigmatically in the Law of the Cross, whether these realities are named as such or not.

(4) Setting the standard of *secularizations to be resisted* in the conduct and organization of human affairs are any and all attempts, whether or not grounded in a false sacralization, to condemn or scapegoat carriers of the genuine religious word in whatever tradition – the assassination of Oscar Romero for political reasons may be taken as

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<sup>6</sup> See Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), p. 35.

paradigmatic – and any efforts to locate human ‘coming of age’ as a perfection to be attained exclusively in this life and exclusively on the basis of human resources.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Theological Continuity

Not only is the point I am attempting to make in doctrinal continuity with the Christian scriptures, as I argued in section 2 above. It is also in harmony with some major strands in the Catholic intellectual tradition. I mention here only one somewhat neglected development on grace that is found in the work of Thomas Aquinas and that is very important to my overall position on these matters.

Among the several questions that Vatican II raised but did not answer is the question, How are we to understand the council’s doctrinal affirmation in *Gaudium et Spes* that ‘the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery?’<sup>8</sup> The same combination of a doctrinal affirmation of the universal offer of grace and a systematic question as to how this doctrine is to be understood appears in at least two encyclicals of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* and *Redemptoris missio*. The Pope writes:

This [the Council’s affirmation in *Gaudium et Spes*] applies to everyone, since everyone is included in the mystery of Redemption, and by the grace of this mystery Christ has joined himself with everyone for all time ... Every individual, from his or her very conception, participates in this mystery ... Everyone without exception was redeemed by Christ, since Christ is somehow joined to everyone, with no exception, even though the person may not be conscious of it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The account of these heuristic categories offered here is a development on what may be found in Robert M. Doran, *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 1, *Missions and Processions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). See chapter 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, § 22.

<sup>9</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, § 14. One has to wonder why a recent similar statement by Pope Francis caused so much bewilderment. One also has to wonder why the word ‘all’ is changed to ‘many’ in the words of consecration in the recent and disastrous English translation of the Roman Missal.



Again, John Paul writes,

Universality of salvation does not mean that it is given only to those who believe explicitly in Christ and join the Church. If salvation is meant for all, it must be offered concretely to all ... The salvation of Christ is available to them through a grace which, though relating them mysteriously with the Church, does not bring them into it formally but enlightens them in a way adapted to their state of spirit and life situation.<sup>10</sup>

The answer to the systematic question of how these affirmations can be true may well have been given by Thomas Aquinas in an entirely different context and so without any intention on Thomas's part to answer such a question. In *De veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, Thomas, possibly for the first time, extends the meaning of *gratia gratum faciens*, the grace of justification, beyond the habitual grace infused with baptism: 'every effect that God works in us from his gratuitous will, by which he accepts us into his kingdom, pertains to the grace that makes one pleasing'<sup>11</sup> and so to sanctifying grace, the grace of justification. This explicitly articulates a *second* way in which justification is offered; the first is through baptism. This second way is quotidian and, we may legitimately say, secular. It occurs through what the Catholic tradition has come to call actual grace, which as operative is from God alone and as cooperative seals our acceptance of the divine help and in many instances elevates us into participation in divine life, however anonymously this may take place.

There are other texts in Aquinas that make the same point, including the texts that Jacques Maritain relies on to argue that in the first moral act of every individual justification and elevation to a share in divine life are at stake.<sup>12</sup> In a recent paper and again in the third chapter of the second volume of *The Trinity in History*, a work still in progress, I trace an argument to the effect that such a position was not only maintained but also developed by Aquinas for the remainder of

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<sup>10</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, § 10.

<sup>11</sup> "... omnem effectum quem Deus facit in nobis ex gratuita sua voluntate, qua nos in suum regnum acceptat, pertinere ad gratiam gratum facientem ..." Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 27, a. 5.

<sup>12</sup> See Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Scribner, 1952). See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1-2, q. 89, a. 6.

his life. And I go on to maintain that, as we seek to determine which instances of actual grace qualify also as infusions of sanctifying grace, as elevation into participation in Trinitarian life, we may turn to the passage already cited from Vatican II. What the Holy Spirit offers everyone in a manner known only to God is “*the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery*” and so in the Law of the Cross, where I would locate the principal instance of the sacred in history.

Paradigmatic of the instances of actual grace that are justifying, that are also sanctifying graces, are those in which the recipient is called to those instances of insight and decision in which she assents to the invitation to participate in the dynamics of what Christians know as the Law of the Cross, the dispensation whereby the evils of the human race are transformed into the greater good of a new community through the loving and non-violent response that returns good for evil.<sup>13</sup> That dialectical posture is a function of supernatural charity. It is by no means limited to the baptized members of Christ’s church or even to those outside the church who have in some way become heirs of the positive effective history, the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Christ’s historical causality, an influence of which René Girard makes so much.<sup>14</sup> It is present everywhere. As I wrote in the same paper:

Among the principal supernatural acts that qualify as actual graces, then, are (1) the inverse insight that the violence that returns evil for evil solves nothing, (2) the direct, reflective, and deliberative insights entailed in concrete instances of non-violent resistance and the return of good for evil, and (3) the divinely proposed invitation to participate in a manner of living that concretely and, whether acknowledged as such or not, is patterned on the just and mysterious Law of the Cross ... We are here moving into the territory staked out by charity, and charity and sanctifying grace are inseparable.

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<sup>13</sup> For the first installment on this argument see Robert M. Doran, “Moving Vatican II Forward: The Multi-Religious Context,” Essay 46 in *Essays in Systematic Theology: An E-Book*, on [www.lonergranresource.com](http://www.lonergranresource.com), found under “Scholarly Works/Books.” A developed argument will be offered in chapter 3 of *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 2, *Missions, Relations, and Persons*.

<sup>14</sup> See for instance, René Girard, *I See Satan Fall like Lightning*, trans. James G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), pp. 161-69.

There is never one without the other. The grace-enabled assent to the promptings of the Holy Spirit regarding an act of charity that would return good for evil brings with it the justification that is meant by *gratia gratum faciens*. At least *these* actual graces are also sanctifying graces, and they are so by definition, because of the intimate relation of charity with sanctifying grace.<sup>15</sup>

In what follows I wish to summarize some aspects of the development of these themes in the work I have tried to do over the past ten years or so. In doing so I hope to point to the way in which Lonergan's thinking and my own attempts to implement it do in fact transcend Taylor's fourth disjunction. I begin with the universal mission of the Holy Spirit, since it is in that area that most of my work has been done. I am currently working to develop a theology of the mission of the Word, visible and invisible, and what I will say here in that regard indicates the direction in which I think this very incomplete work will head over the next seven years or so, if I am given the time to develop it. I will conclude with a brief statement of the way in which this theological approach can lead us to move beyond the first three of Taylor's disjunctions as well. To repeat, meeting the fourth disjunction will also address the danger that the church will be disjoined from the very work of God's grace in the contemporary world, since that grace is at work far beyond the explicit boundaries of church membership, and discovering it there will enable us better to acknowledge it also in our own midst; but meeting the fourth disjunction will also help the church transcend the first three disjunctions.

The technical development of what follows on the missions of the Holy Spirit and the Word is worked out in detail in the first volume of *The Trinity in History*. It cannot be repeated here except very briefly. However, it should be kept in mind that it is only in the second volume that there will be worked out the key role of actual grace in operating the reception of both divine missions. This is the usual, not the extraordinary way to participation in divine life. Sacramental incorporation into Christ renders explicit an elevation of human

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<sup>15</sup> Doran, "Moving Vatican II Forward: The Multi-religious Context," p. 9.

spirituality that occurs much more frequently in the everyday events of ordinary living.

### 5. The Universal Mission of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's first gift. 'Gift' is a personal, not appropriated, name for the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup> All other supernatural divine gifts, including the Incarnation of the divine Word, are given 'in' the Holy Spirit. This gift is universal: wherever there is human attentiveness, intelligence, rationality, and moral responsibility pursuing the transcendental objectives of the intelligible, the true and the real, the good, with these pursuits encased in a tidal movement that includes aesthetic and dramatic intentions of the transcendental objective of the beautiful, there is the offer of the gift of God's love, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the inchoate supernatural fulfilment of a natural desire for union with God, and as a pledge of the beatific knowing and loving that is our supernatural destiny. In the transactions of God with us in ordinary living, the offer and inchoate fulfilment take the form of insights from God into the demands of the exercise of charity, and of horizon-elevating willing of the ends that these insights propose. The insights themselves are the initial instance of invisible missions of the Word, and the transformation of horizons the initial instances of invisible missions of the Holy Spirit. There is never one divine mission without the other.

The mission of the Holy Spirit, the gift of divine love, was revealed, made thematic, in the visible mission of the incarnate Word, where it plays a constitutive role. Jesus, we are told, was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, baptized under the sign of the Holy Spirit at the Jordan, driven by the same Spirit into the desert for forty days, led back by the Spirit to preach the coming of God's reign, and raised to life from death by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the course of his public life he was constantly receiving not only the gift of the Spirit but also the insights that enabled him to utter the knowledge of God that in itself was ineffable. That same Holy Spirit was then sent by the Father and the Son on the apostles and the other women and men gathered in the upper room on Pentecost, in what may be called a visible or palpable mission of the Holy Spirit, to

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 38, aa. 1 and 2.

fulfill the twofold mission of the Son and the Spirit, and to enable a public acknowledgment that what happened in Jesus was indeed the revelation of the triune God in history. The mutual interplay of divine and human freedom can now be carried on in explicit recognition of what, prior to the revelation that occurs in the mission of the incarnate Word, necessarily remained *vécu* but not *thématique*, implicit but not recognized, conscious but not known, or to employ a Scholastic designation that still has some usefulness, present *in actu exercito* but not *in actu signato*.

If this is the case, Christians share religious community with other human beings, including people of the world's other religions. And yet this community is, at the present time, for the most part only potential. There is a shared *experience* of what Christians call the gift of God's love through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, but shared experience is merely potential community. The principal task in front of us, it may be legitimately claimed, a task that it will take decades and perhaps centuries to work out, is to find ways to elevate potential community to formal and actual community through the elaboration in linguistic form of common meanings and values.

We may better participate in the promotion of such community the clearer we are about the immanent constitution of life in God through the first gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift offered to all in the silent voice of grace. Even then, as Lonergan was well aware, we will have to forge a new language as we develop these common meanings in an explicit fashion, and that effort will go through the vicissitudes of historical dialectic, much in the way Lonergan lays out in his spring 1963 course "De methodo theologiae," reported on in volume 24 of the *Collected Works, Early Works on Theological Method 3*.<sup>17</sup> But what

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<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 3*, vol. 24 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). See especially pp. 11-18. In the human sciences, philosophy, and theology, there is (1) the commonsense understanding that characterizes the object of the science, (2) the understanding of that object that the human scientist is searching for, which is not coincident with (1), (3) the mutual influence between (1) and (2) so that (1) itself undergoes a *Wendung zur Idee* under the influence of the human science that studies it, (4) the experimental correction of (2) as history goes forward, (5) the histories that are written about (1), (2), (3), and (4), and finally (6) crises that affect (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5). See my paper "'No Other Gospel': Ecclesial Integrity in the Appropriation of the Second Vatican Council," presented at the West Coast

follows is an attempt, using language familiar to Christians, to indicate precisely what it is that we will be expressing in that new language. The development of the requisite new language will be, I believe, a principal arena for cooperation with the invisible mission of the divine Word in our time.

What has been called sanctifying grace is, ontologically, nothing but a created term that serves as a supernatural base, in the form of the *gift* of a habit, for a created relation to the uncreated Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is an uncreated relation to the Father and the Son, however, to be in relation to the Holy Spirit must entail being related also to the Father and the Son, as distinct terms of a distinct created relation. The base of that distinct created relation is charity, the love of the God who has first loved us and bestowed divine love upon us in the Holy Spirit. The divine gift thus establishes relations to each of the divine persons. Those relations share in and imitate the Trinitarian relations, and so bestow on us a distinct participation in the divine life of each person, in keeping with the distinct fashion in which each of them exercises the divine creative love. For Christians these relations are thematic; but they exist even when they are not formulated in the Trinitarian terms that name for Christians what is going on.

While the ontological character of what we have known as sanctifying grace is that it is simply a created term that serves as consequent condition for the truth of a contingent predication about God, namely, that God has bestowed upon us the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit, we are driven by theological exigence in our time to attempt as best we can to find psychological correlatives to such ontological terms, at least when this is possible. I have argued for some time that here we can be helped by one of the statements in Lonergan's so-called four-point hypothesis that links the four divine relations to four created participations and indeed imitations.<sup>18</sup> In that hypothesis the created base of a created relation to the uncreated Holy

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Methods Institute, April 2013, Loyola Marymount University, now uploaded to [www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com) as essay 48 in *Essays in Systematic Theology: An E-book*. In this paper I apply this schema to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* to date of Vatican II.

<sup>18</sup> For the hypothesis itself see Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12 in *Collected works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 470-73.

Spirit is understood as a participation in and imitation of the divine relation called active spiration, that is, a participation in and imitation of the Father and the Son as together, as one principle, they consciously 'breathe' the Holy Spirit. Augustine found after much struggle that perhaps the self-presence of mind, *mens*, that he called *memoria*, might function as a way of understanding the Father's role in this relation, while scriptural revelation itself gave grounds for understanding the Son's role in terms of *Verbum*, the Word that issues from the self-presence of divine Intelligence and Love. There is a transformed self-presence experienced on the part of one who finds herself on the receiving end of unqualified love, and from that transformed self-presence there issues an ineffable 'yes' of value judgment that constitutes a universalist faith. From these two together there issues charity as created participation in the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit, as well as, I believe, the supernatural hope that constitutes the created relation to the Father.

The triad of self-presence, faith, and charity-hope is the created participation in the Trinitarian relations that, while named in terms drawn explicitly from Christian doctrinal and theological sources, is really something that can be found unthematically just about everywhere, through the working of actual grace.<sup>19</sup> What I am suggesting is that it is the church's responsibility in our age to discern the presence of such participation in Trinitarian life wherever it may be found, and then to foster it and join hands with it in working for the establishment of God's reign in human affairs.

## 6. The Universal Mission of the Divine Word

Participation in the *Verbum spirans Amorem* that is the eternal divine Word takes place first through the gift of insights from God into the appropriate responses to human situations, and then through a created supernatural judgment of value, an often ineffable 'yes' uttered in response to the gift of divine love recalled in the self-presence of one who acknowledges his or her giftedness. Here I am putting Christian language to an experience that more often than not occurs without any such reflective objectification. The gift of God's

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<sup>19</sup> For details see chapter 2 of my *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 1: *Missions and Processions*, "The Immanent Constitution of Life in God."

love includes a participation in an invisible mission of the divine Word. The judgment or judgments of value that participate in the Word's role in breathing the Holy Spirit, our participation in the invisible mission of the Word, constitutes a universalist faith, a faith common to all who have assented to the reception of unqualified love. Faith thus grounds the proceeding charity that a Christian theology acknowledges as a created participation in and imitation of the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit.

This universalist faith Lonergan distinguishes in his later work from the beliefs of particular religious traditions. The faith reflected in such judgments of value can be and is found in diverse traditions, and is responsible, it would seem, for Lonergan's hope that the religions of the world will find common ground and common cause in the gift of God's love. Such faith is the knowledge born of religious love, a knowledge contained in judgments of value consequent upon the reception of the gift of unqualified love. Articulating those common judgments of value represents, I believe, the locus of interreligious dialogue today. Christians will regard that locus as a share in the invisible mission of the divine Word. It is the articulation of common judgments of value that will raise our community with the people of the world's religions from the potential community constituted by a shared experience to the formal and actual state generated by shared understanding and affirmation, and because the judgments in question are judgments of value, also to the status of a community that can act in solidarity in the collaborative constitution of the human world. That elevation to articulate shared understanding will entail the emergence of a new language, and the work of developing that new language is a major arena of collaboration with the invisible mission of the divine Word in our time and for many years to come.

Most of what I want to say about the invisible mission of the Word remains to be worked out in the second volume of *The Trinity in History*. But part of the heuristic structure for understanding that mission is already available in the scale of values that constitutes perhaps the central set of categories in my *Theology and the Dialectics of History*<sup>20</sup> and that remains central to the positions expressed in the first

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<sup>20</sup> Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1009, 2001). See chapter 4 for an overview. The elaboration of the scale of values constitutes the principal point of the book. Part 2 is devoted to personal values, part 3 to social values or the good of order, and part 4 to cultural



volume of *The Trinity in History*. The scale of values presents in effect the structure of what we may call social grace, where 'social grace' is perhaps a contemporary way of talking about the kingdom of God. From a metaphysical point of view, social grace refers to the formal effects of grace in the creation of cultural values and the transformation of social structures.

Social grace demands constitutive meaning, and the elaboration of that constitutive meaning will represent a major instance of human collaboration with the invisible mission of the divine Word. The discernment of social grace, of the presence of divine Truth and Love in cultural forms and social structures, is perhaps the central theological and pastoral challenge of our time. The scale of values, understood as the social objectification of the structure of authenticity due to the isomorphism of the scale with the levels of consciousness, will be central to that discernment. But a heuristic structure remains an upper blade. Even upper blades develop, and they do so in particular when they are brought to bear on the data of everyday living. Collaboration in the mission of the Word entails reorientation of human science and of myriad forms of common sense. To a large extent, this is the theological challenge of the present century. I am not yet prepared to delve into it further.

### **7. The Multi-Religious Context and the Structure of Systematic Theology**

What I am suggesting has important implications for the work of theology, and especially of systematic theology, whose objective is to express the meaning of Christian constitutive meaning in terms that can be assimilated by contemporary women and men. Lonergan understood the massive shift called for in theological method in terms of the cultural factors of modernity: modern science, modern historical consciousness, and modern philosophy. To these must be added the deference to the other that constitutes the postmodern phenomenon. In particular I stress the interreligious context within which systematic theology must be conducted from this point forward, as well as the vast call that both God and humanity are uttering for social and

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values. The entire scale is isomorphic with the levels of consciousness as worked out by Lonergan. This for me is the source of its exceptional validity and normative capacity.

economic justice, for gender equity, and for an up-to-date notion of sexual differentiation. The triune God with which a contemporary systematics begins is a God whose gift of grace is offered to all women and men at every time and place and in a manner that calls for the transformation of cultural meanings and values and the elaboration of social structures that deliver the goods of the earth in an equitable fashion to all. The Incarnation of the Word of God is the revelation of that universal offer of grace and of the demands that come with it. Once meaning is acknowledged as constitutive of the real world in which human beings live and know and choose and love, soteriology can be phrased largely in revelational terms: the introduction of divine meaning into human history, which is what revelation is, is redemptive of that history and of the subjects and communities that are both formed by that history and form its further advance in turn.<sup>21</sup> It is first and foremost the mission of the Holy Spirit that constitutes the universal realm of religious values in the integral scale of values, and by and large the systematics that I envision would articulate the relation of that mission and of the revealing visible mission of the Word to realities at the other levels of value: personal, cultural, social, and vital.

As the previous two sections have argued, the invisible mission of the Spirit is not isolated from an equally invisible mission of the Word. The elaboration of the gift of the Spirit enables us to develop a new variant on the Augustinian-Thomist psychological analogy for understanding the divine processions. As the gift of God's love comes to constitute the conscious *memoria* in which the human person is present to herself or himself, the summation, as it were, of life experiences as these constitute one's self-taste, it gives rise to a set of judgments of value that constitute a universalist faith, a faith that gives thanks for the gift, a faith that in fact is the created term of an invisible mission of the Word. Together this self-presence in *memoria* and its word of Yes in faith breathe charity, the love of the Givers and a love of all people and of the universe in loving the Givers of the gift.

Thus the theology that would move Vatican II forward, I believe, has to follow Frederick Crowe in understanding the visible mission of

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<sup>21</sup> On revelation and the Incarnation, see Charles C. Hefling, Jr., "Revelation as/as Insight," in *The Importance of Insight: Essays in Honour of Michael Vertin*, ed. John J. Liptay, Jr., and David S. Liptay (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 97-115.

the Word in the context of the universal offer of divine healing and elevating grace in the invisible missions of the Holy Spirit and of the Word. While I would bring the invisible mission of the Word into greater prominence than did Crowe, his emphasis on the invisible missions of Spirit and Word introduces multi-religious advances on the theological situation, and these change everything in that situation. They do so in ways that are enriching but at the same time for many anxiety-producing. They also do so in ways that are as yet unforeseen. We do not know what God has in mind. As Crowe has insisted, there is no answer as yet to the question of the final relationship of Christianity to the other world religions. We are working that out. God wants us to work it out. We will work it out with divine assistance, with the actual graces of insights and horizon-converting intentions of the ends that God wants us to pursue. The relation of Christianity to the other religions is a set of future contingent realities, and nothing true can be said about them now. There will be no answer to that question until we have worked it out, and we are at the very beginning of that elaboration.<sup>22</sup>

It was with this in mind that I have also suggested that the functional specialties in which Lonergan elaborates the overall structure of theology, a structure in which systematics is but one set of tasks among many, need to be considered as functional specialties for a global or world theology.<sup>23</sup> The functional specialties, which I number as nine rather than eight,<sup>24</sup> are really functional specialties for a vast expansion of theology, and of every functional specialty in theology, beyond what even Lonergan had explicitly in mind. The data relevant for Christian theology become all the data on the religious living of men and women at every age, in every religion, and in every culture. For the Holy Spirit and the invisible Word are at work, on mission, everywhere, and not simply in the post-resurrection, Pentecostal context of Christian belief. It is the responsibility of

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<sup>22</sup> See the concluding comments in Frederick Crowe, *Christ and History* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005; reissued by University of Toronto Press, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> See Robert M. Doran, "Functional Specialties for a World Theology," *Lonergan Workshop* 24 (2013), pp. 99-111. This paper can also be found in *Essays in Systematic Theology*, as Essay 36.

<sup>24</sup> See Robert M. Doran, "The Ninth Functional Specialty," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, new series, 2: 1 (2011), pp. 12-16. This paper can also be found in *Essays in Systematic Theology*, as Essay 38.

Christians to discern the workings of the Holy Spirit and the Word on a universal scale, and in theology that responsibility will take the form of interpreting the religious data, narrating what has been going forward in the religious history of peoples, dialectically and dialogically discerning what is of God from what is not, discriminating genuine transcendence from deviated transcendence in the various religions of humankind including Christianity and Catholicism, and taking one's stand on what is of God wherever it may be found, articulating this in positions that all can accept, and understanding the realities affirmed in such judgments. At the heart of that discernment is the Law of the Cross that returns superabundant good for evil done.

### **8. Transcending Taylor's First Three Disjunctions**

Addressing and transcending Taylor's fourth disjunction in this manner may contribute to moving beyond the first three disjunctions as well.

The theology of the missions of Word and Spirit is thoroughly rooted in doctrinal and theological tradition, and so it should, in the ideal order at least, appeal both to Taylor's seekers and to his dwellers. This would be the case unless the dwellers are really what Lonergan calls the solid right determined to live in a world that no longer exists and the seekers are really the scattered left with no center to hold them together. But then both seekers and dwellers are called back to the issue of their own personal authenticity, where this first disjunction can be, it seems to me, very easily transcended.

The disjunction between a sense of responsibility to bring church teaching into critical convergence with contemporary trends and exigences and a conception of the church as a jurisdictional authority to which is due mainly obedience is also fairly easily reconciled, I think, when one acknowledges, first, that the teaching authority of the church has itself called for a critical reading of the signs of the times, and second, with Lonergan, that authority is legitimate power, and that legitimacy is conferred only by authenticity acknowledged by the community. Without that, there is no authority; there is only power.

The difficult disjunction is the third. For while the formulation of the disjunction may be almost a caricature, since genuine natural law ethics is not based on abstract essences but on concrete exigences

demanding attentiveness, intelligence, reasonable judgment, and self-transcending responsibility, still the issues to which this disjunction is applied by Taylor and at least some of his commentators – issues of gender, sexuality, and sexual differentiation – remain neuralgic in our time and in our church. This is particularly true as gender issues lead to discussion of the ordination of women, and as sexual differentiation leads to discussion of same-sex marriage. My own position is that the official teaching of the church on both of these issues may have attempted a premature systematization and closure. But I am not so naive as to believe that perhaps needed developments are going to happen quickly. How and when this might play out is anyone's guess at the present time, and I can only propose that the sole means of resolving the issues will be through the discernment of the movements of Word and Spirit inviting us into collaboration with Trinitarian grace in our history. Any judgment as to where this will lead us has to do with future contingents, and as Frederick Crowe reminded us several times in last writings, on such matters no judgments of fact may be passed. As Aristotle emphasized that it is neither true nor false that there will be a naval battle tomorrow, as Crowe argued that it is neither true nor false that Christian relations with other religions will take this or that form, so too it is neither true nor false that future generations will judge this way or that on the issues at stake in the third disjunction. We must, however, as a church acknowledge that these issues have not yet been closed.

### Conclusion

The emphasis on the primacy and universality of the mission of the Holy Spirit and the invisible mission of the Word will be one source of the church's redirection of its energies so as to heal the disjunctions. Vatican II, I suggest, began with what is first for us: the church. It followed the way of discovery. As a pastoral council it acted appropriately in so proceeding. But now we must acknowledge that the theology of the church is not first in the order of teaching but close to last, and so that a theology and an ecclesial praxis that would understand the topics that in reality come before the church – Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation, revelation, creation, original sin,

redemption, and at least the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist<sup>25</sup> – a theology that would understand these realities in terms of an assumed ecclesiology rather than understanding the church in terms of these prior topics, is itself a distorted theology. The mission of the church is an extension of the missions of the Spirit and the Word, of divine Love and divine Truth. ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ The appropriate systematic-theological understanding of the church can occur only within the dogmatic-theological context set by an adequate Trinitarian theology and within the unified field structure established by joining that Trinitarian theology to the integral scale of values. In accord with Vatican II, we may justly list the paschal mystery as the central articulation of what the mission of the Holy Spirit is always about: incarnating, whether the gift is recognized as such or not, the Law of the Cross in the dynamics of human history, the Law that enjoins human beings in the promptings of grace to cease returning evil for evil and to begin to resist in a new way, by heaping up superabundant good in the face of hatred, malice, corruption, ignorance, and decline.

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<sup>25</sup> For a fuller elaboration of these categories, see Robert M. Doran, “A New Project in Systematic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 76 (June 2015), pp. 243-59.