

Foundational Praying

“Look!
Hidden beneath your feet
Is a luminous Stage
Where we are meant to rehearse
Our Eternal Dance!”¹

In my Craving for the Kingdom, I continue to ask, “How am I the beloved?” The Craving and the Continuing that are not mine but Theirs, Yours. How are we five one, in “this, the greatest of all works”?² How are we all to be one, in this blossom of Ye, this Sunflower, this Sonflower? What is our weave, all and one and Ye, round the prayer of Jesus, “... may they all be one ...”³

So we begin together, sister or brother, begin again today, an effort of foundational contemplation, ‘scrutinizing the self-scrutinizing self’⁴ in our gapped and gaping way. But let me and you take an odd next paragraph step to repeat our first prayer-paragraph melody with chords and cords that help us to each see and seize our Existential Gap.⁵ See, indeed, prior to the repeat, that we have noted, in the present paragraph, two chords and cords wound round our storied climb in history by Brother Bernard, chords and cords of his positive *haute vulgarization* titled *Method in Theology and Phenomenology and Logic*.⁶ Now, a repeat, freshly chorded.

¹ I quote here from a poem by Hafiz, the fourteenth century Persian. I used the poem before as a beginning to a relevant mood-setting “Foundations of Communication,” *Seeding Global Collaboration*, edited by Patrick Brown and James Duffy, Axial Publishing, 2016. A further relevant context is my series of five articles on the converging of religions in *Divyadaan. Journal of Education and Philosophy*, 2019 (1). I am treating here of the heart of convergence, but restricting myself to the challenge of meeting that heart, that Heart, in Christian Contemplative Engineering. But the Global enterprise is that named in the title of the *Divyadaan* volume mentioned above: *Religious Faith Seeding the Positive Anthropocene Age*.

² CWL 12, *The Triune God: Systematics*, 491. Henceforth referred to as CWL 12.

³ John 17:21, as quoted in the final section of CWL 14, *Method in Theology*.

⁴ *Method in Theology* 167[158].

⁵ I regularly refer to the two final chapters of CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, as a pre-functional source of pointers to this problem.

⁶ The heuristics of positive *haute vulgarization* is a tricky interpersonal problem. The lectures published in *Phenomenology and Logic*, as I indicate in my Introduction, were an amazing achievement of personal climbing and its expression on the part of Lonergan. The audience, on the whole, were not in the ballpark, so the positivity of the expression was shrunken. What of *Method in Theology*? The problems of Lonergan’s shot at *vulgarization* are the main topic of my recent book, [Interpretation from A to Z](#) (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2020).

In⁷ my⁸ Craving⁹ for the Kingdom,¹⁰ I continue to ask,¹¹ How am I the beloved?¹² The Craving and the Continuing are not mine but Theirs, Yours.¹³ How are we five one, in “this, the greatest of all works”?¹⁴ How are we all to be one, in this blossom¹⁵ of Ye, this Sunflower,¹⁶ this Sonflower?¹⁷ What is our weave,¹⁸ all and one and Ye, round the prayer of Jesus, “. . . may they all be one . . .”¹⁹

⁷ The first word of the first chapter of *Insight*. “In” . . . in what way, In What’s way, does that **In** point you now boldly—see the eleven boldfaced notes of my *Interpretation from A to Z*—to the climb towards the “inn” of the New Testament, where room was not available (Luke 2:8; John 1:11). In what way does this first word of *Insight* weave round in INNN? What might you think of the fermenting meanings of the title *Christian Philosophy*?

⁸ So you may think of **my** copy, my *imago*, of *CWL 2, Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, my *Imago Dei* (*Ibid.*, chapter five’s title). Is it my mine, mine, a “road from critical to contemplative understanding” (*Ibid.*, 232, 3rd last line)?

⁹ There is the challenge here of sublating, into the context of identifying the missionary Personalities of the Trinity, the range of problems associated with a tendency “to center an infinite craving on a finite object or release.” “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *CWL 4, Collection*, 49.

¹⁰ “Do you know the Kingdom?” is a question raised by Lonergan on the concluding page of his 1934 *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*. It is the question raised sharply on the topic of page 237 of *CWL 5, Understanding and Being*. “Understand the emergence of a still greater good of order that is the mystical body^j of Christ and his church.” Follow up the note, j, to arrive at page 423 of *CWL 5*, and savor the need to reach for the problem that is posed in *Insight* 763–4 regarding the missing treatise on the mystical body. See note 17 below.

¹¹ What is my asking in continuity with? The topic is that of *CWL 1, Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought in St. Thomas Aquinas*.

¹² A discomfiting point needs to be made here, made by Lonergan “To speak of the dynamic state of being in love with God pertains to the stage of meaning when the world of interiority has been made the explicit ground of the worlds of theory and of common sense” (*Method in Theology*, 107[103]). The added notes in the new text are not central to my point here, which is your existential poise with regard to the presence in you of explanation and its increasingly luminous grounding through “scrutinizing the self-scrutinizing self” (*Ibid.*, 167[158]). What, really, does explanation mean to you? What is your weave round the Explanation that is the Word, named *Jesus*? So you arrive at the explicit discomfort pointed to in note 18.

¹³ To the refinements of meaning pointed to in note 11 there must be added the contemplation of the post-resurrection pilgrim intersubjectivity of Jesus, a self-scrutiny that is a shared spooky Self-scrutiny of The Sunflower. See further note 26 below.

¹⁴ *CWL 12, The Triune God: Systematics*, 491.

¹⁵ Rising from and “giving rise to the succession of Christologies” (Lonergan, “Christology Today: Methodological Reflections,” *A Third Collection*, Paulist Press, 1965, 87). See above note 10 and follow through to note 17 below.

¹⁶ I am recalling the starting poise of my [Cantower](#) series and my continued interest in that shocking paragraph of *Insight* 489 about “study of an organism begins.” The title of *Cantower 2* is “Sunflowers Speak to us of Growing.”

¹⁷ Philip McShane, *The Road to Religious Reality*, introduces the Sonflower’s growth sequence as containing the full heuristic significance of the word *Comparison* in section 5 of Chapter 10 of *Method in Theology*.

I have crossed a line to write this sentence. Was there a line crossed in your reading, a crossing out of T, of the Triune One? “If we consider the subject properly, sisters [and brothers], we shall see that the soul of a just man is nothing else but a paradise, wherein the Lord thereof takes His recreation.”²⁰ On what side of the line is this talk of Teresa of Avila? What is it to ‘consider properly’ the Subjects and subjects of being? “After considering the divine persons in themselves and in their relations to one another, we must now treat of their mission to us.”²¹ Is Lonergan writing there across the line? What is it to treat Their Missions? Is not Their treatment really of us? Whatever about the old style chat of Teresa in translation, is it a reality that the just, the *pius*,²² “is nothing else but a paradise”?

Teresa ends her first paragraph thus:

In order that I may begin on some foundations,
let us consider our soul as a castle,
composed entirely of diamonds, or very clear crystal,
in which there are many rooms,
just as in Heaven there are many mansions.

What am I to do “in order that I may begin on some foundations”? The fourth word on the next line from Teresa is *our*. Whatever the flow of metaphors in Teresa’s minding that word *our* is **our**, indeed, **Our**, starting place and time, phyletically and ontically. Does not the start of the Lord’s Prayer seem an appropriate start for really considering, really treating,

¹⁸ We can follow here self-scrutiny of note 12. But do try to think of the fulsomeness of the weave flying in the word “murmuration.” The self-scrutiny is that discomfort brutally required by two pages, 121 and 155 of *CWL 6, Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*. I push the brutality in the shocking claim that the axial theological community was “never bitten by theory” (*ibid.*, 155) and is “lost in some no man’s land between the world of theory and the world of common sense” (*ibid.*, 121). What, you can certainly ask, of Thomas Aquinas? Then think of Butterfield’s view of the emergence of science and its various batterings throughout history. Add Thomas’ entrapment by bourgeois Aristotle as he, Thomas, struggled to tune into the engineering of God. I recall Lonergan, from a letter of 1935. “I advance that Aristotle was a bourgeois,” and a few lines later writes of a talk with a guiding Gregorian University professor where “finally we got down to the real issue, Is philosophy to explain? He assured me that explaining and trying to explain seemed to him to be the fundamental error of all modern thought. Now such a view is perfectly outrageous yet absolutely in keeping with all contemporary Catholic thought” (I quote from page 152 Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, where the ten-page letter is reproduced).

¹⁹ John 17:21, as quoted in the final section of *CWL 14, Method in Theology*. Did you notice, on this second reading, the odd absence, in that first paragraph of mine, of an ending question mark?

²⁰ *The Interior Castle*, 1: the beginning of the second paragraph. [and brothers] is my evident addition.

²¹ *CWL 12*, beginning of section 6.

²² I am thinking here of Virgil’s “*pius Aeneas*,” of pieties that seem secular, of pieties in the religions of history fermenting forward in the manner noted in the volume named in note 1 above.

really “scrutinizing the self-scrutinizing self,”²³ a start of which I claim, “we are not there yet”²⁴?

The self and selves of Faith is and are a paradise in the making. A paradise in the Maker.²⁵ It is an intersubjective paradise.²⁶ Should we not now read freshly the outburst of a fifty-year-old Lonergan?²⁷ But we do so scrutinizing feebly, axially: reaching in twilight luminously for a luminosity of Teresa’s “consider” and Lonergan’s “treat.” Here, once more, I present the text.

The Method of Theology is coming into perspective. For the Trinity: Imago Dei in homine and proceed to the limit as in evaluating $[1 + 1/n]^n$ as n approaches infinity. For the rest: ordo universi. From the viewpoint of theology, it is a manifold of unities developing in relation to one another and in relation to God, i.e., metaphysics as I conceive it but plus transcendent knowledge. From the viewpoint of religious experience, it is the same relations as lived in a development from elementary intersubjectivity (cf. Sullivan’s basic concept of interpersonal relations) to intersubjectivity in Christ (cf. the endless Pauline [suv- or] sun- compounds) on the sensitive (external Church, sacraments, sacrifice, liturgy) and intellectual levels (faith, hope, charity). Religious experience: Theology: Dogma:: Potency : Form : Act.

Are we not on the edge here of a new “coming into perspective” on “consider” and on “treat” and on the “manifold of unities developing in relation to one another and in relation to God”?

²³ *Method in Theology*, 167[158]. This expression and that of the next quotation might be considered slogans of my recent work, slogans growing increasingly luminous to me.

²⁴ *CWL 21, For a New Political Economy*, 20. The expression begins a page-long paragraph that needs to be lifted forward into our present poise.

²⁵ I refer you to the book named in note 29, and its struggle (see pp. 233–4) with a kataphatic self-scrutiny of the proposal “On what I have called the primary and fundamental meaning of the name, God, God is not an object.” (*Method in Theology*, 342[316]). One needs here an explanatory and self-explanatory pause in the stress of “it comes about” (*Insight*, 537, line 29) that is a “filling of that structure” (*ibid.*, line 1) down—up up!—that page.

²⁶ The topic is one that I continue to struggle with, nudged by Fred Crowe’s reachings in his *Christ in History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1933 to 1982* (Ottawa: Novalis Press, 2005). See the book referred to below in note 29: note 36, p. 244; note 44, p. 248; note 56, p. 170. The nudges, centered on the 1954 communication of Lonergan to Crowe, weave forward through the W-enzyme searchings of [The Future: Core Precepts in Supramolecular Method and in Nanochemistry](#) and [Interpretation from A to Z](#). In the intimacy of reaching for Jesus one may trip into strange echoes of the question raised in the previous note: Does *Jesus*, “lovely in eyes not his” (Hopkins, “As Kingfishers Catch Fire,” line 13) name an object?

²⁷ The quotation given shortly is from a letter of Lonergan to Fred Crowe, May 5th 1954. See Patrick Brown, “Interpreting Lonergan’s View of Method in May 1954”, 45-79 of the volume mentioned in note 1. The meaning of the letter is considered further by me in *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis* 10, 105–35, “Method in Theology: From $[1 + 1/n]^n$ to $\{M(W_3)^{\text{opt}}\}^4$.”

Our Paradise Who Art ... how are we ... Our Lord, how are we ... how are we to “fuse into a single explanation,”²⁸ fuse into Your Single Explanation, except: in the Gift of You and You that is You, Grace. “Grace, Grace, Grace, attune us to the Allure of the Scent of a Nomen.”²⁹ But now we, We, have crossed the line, indeed crossed out the line, for the line is a phony axial exclusion of the spooky Intersubjectivity that is the reality of being and of pilgrimage. But in crossing out the crossing of the line, We—or rather perhaps, I and Ye—have paralleled the leap from the shock of lightning to the shock of the equations of James Clerk Maxwell, equation that twirl so differently in You, Explanation.³⁰ How do you, sister or brother, find this leap?³¹ And how do you resonate with the lift of that musing of Lonergan in 1954 when you weave in the poise of applied electromagnetics that echoes, Gracefully, the eternal practicality of You, Jesus, the Explanation of Our Engineering Father? Indeed, how do you, sister or brother, find the invitation to leap to the threshold of *CWL 7*,³² the invitation of brother Bernard’s first six volumes noted quietly in that repeated first paragraph?³³ Do we meet You, Jesus, in, Inn, INNN, those next six volumes of Brother Bernard?³⁴ Or Are You and Grace and Nadia³⁵ hidden irretrievably there in the “chores,”³⁶ beached on the shores, of late axial academic convention?

²⁸ *Insight*, 610.

²⁹ P. McShane, *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, Axial Publishing, 2015, 199–200; 223.

³⁰ The different twirl is the topic of Section 7, “The Secondary Component in the Idea of Being,” pages 672–4, of chapter 19 of *Insight*.

³¹ The question is nicely ambiguous. Likely enough, you find the leap disconcerting. But how do you find the leap? By climbing on from the little beginnings mentioned at the start of chapter one of *Insight*.

³² The volume is titled *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*. It was written to help students through puzzlings about the human consciousness of Jesus. “It was because of teaching obligations that I was led to write the book and not because I had nothing else to do. Likewise, it was the immanence of examinations and not the desire to finish this rather hastily written volume that has urged me to publish it for the use of my students.” (*Op. cit.*, 3). The publication, in sad fact, was to later for use in examination preparation. But note the ethos of the enterprise, and link its problems to those of note 36 below.

³³ You may pause over the puzzle of the non-Latin *CWL 10*, *Topics in Education*, as one of that six volumes. It is a half-way mark of Lonergan’s second period of dark years in Rome. I sometimes muse about the Dionysian side of Lonergan, “as ready to tear it all down he is Dionysian.” *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁴ See my final note here, note 37, and weave its pointings into Lonergan’s claim about art. “The fundamental meaning to us in art is that, just as the pure desire to know heads on to the beatific vision, so too the break from the ready-made world heads on to God. Man is nature’s priest, and nature is God’s silent communing with man” (*Topics in Education*, 224–5). Was the priest silenced in the ready-made world of the Gregorian University?

³⁵ I recall the volume mentioned in note 1 above and the mood-setting involved. I introduced Nadia as a *Nomen Paternitatis* on page 244 of the Epilogue to that volume, “Embracing Luminously and Toweringly the Symphony of Cauling” (See also the bottom line of W_3 , where Charity, Faith and Hope are wound into the flow of history). Here I am thinking of each person’s challenge to mood-set, to self-rescue perhaps from one’s own heritage, or in one’s heritage and one’s gender. Might the Nomen of the

And are we not praying here? We are if we are questing in the real. You see the deep cultural problem, so gently expressed in that first section of Chapter 17 of *Insight?* Euripides rots European Poesis. Against that drift stands the lost fact that the Divine is not a sporadically-entering character in the drama of history but the core of our curiosity.³⁷

Scent be named *Nadia*, a name from Russia and Arabia? Or named from India or Africa? Oddly, the words “na Dia” are a neat conflict in my own Gaelic language: *Dia* is singular for God, yet *na* is plural for *the*. Does naDia then seed a hope—the Russian reading—of a strange pluralization, God’s personalities in elephants and trees?

³⁶ “Those things are practical chores that you have to do if you are teaching a class of 650 people. . . . it belongs to a period in which the situation I was in was hopelessly antiquated.” (“An Interview with Bernard Lonergan,” edited by Philip McShane [a 1970 Florida conference event], *A Second Collection*, edited by William Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1874, 211-12. Dear God, I am weaving here round a hopeful antiquation!

³⁷ I quote from page 8 of the first of five website essays, [Prehumous 4–8](#), on “Foundational Prayer,” written in November 2007. As I added this finale to my little essay there came to mind my phoning Lonergan in Boston one afternoon in Oxford—for him it was morning—when I had been reading my way through Greek drama, and been startled by this twist in Euripides. To my enthusiastic identification-push his reply was “Oh, yes.” The twist and the territory was familiar to him. His habitual minding was far from the poise of Euripides, or stop-gapping with ἀπὸ μηχανῆς θεός, 'god from the machine'. So, I return you, dramatically, to the volume *Topics in Education* as Lonergan bubbles to a powerful conclusion. “I spoke yesterday of the notion of destiny as exhibited by drama, and that is the idea I am speaking of here.” (*op. cit.*, 257). He goes on to speak of “the possibilities of resisting the mechanisms and the determinisms that can emerge historically” and climbs to the view that haunts his lectures, Christ and Grace as the “supreme force in history” (*ibid.*, see further pp. 47–48 of the volume.)