

## THINKER OF TRANSCENDENCE

### Introduction, Intention

As human beings we are always challenged to think truth in the horizon of our time; the changes and shifts of time are enormous and unique in human history. We are faced with possibilities that mankind has never had before; we are faced with problems that mankind has never had before. Just to mention three of them:

- a) keyword "globalization"
- b) keyword "genetic manipulation"
- c) keyword "pluralism of horizons"

aa) As to globalization questions may arise such as:

- What is the relation between political culture and the economic power of multinational groups? In the trend towards globalization, how to maintain or establish the main principles of Christian social ethics: solidarity and subsidiarity; how to establish a world-wide common good?

bb) As to genetic manipulation questions may arise such as:

- What are the criteria for a possible manipulation of the human genetic material? What is the alternative to an implicit or explicit standard of morality which considers to be good what is according to scientific progress and to be bad what seems to block this progress?

cc) As to the pluralism of horizons questions may arise such as:

How to establish a transcultural understanding of human nature? Pluralism understood absolutely would mean that it is impossible to mediate between different cultures.

Solutions to these problems are impossible to be found without an understanding of man's nature and destination; and solutions to these problems cannot be realized without a transcultural agreement about man's nature and destination. But how to achieve such an agreement since even in the very limited field of Catholic theology there seems to exist a gap of non-understanding between the different disciplines of theology?

It is the Canadian thinker B. Lonergan who offers us insights that enable us to understand ourselves, our nature and destination, to understand how the different disciplines of theology and philosophy, the different fields of politics, economy, natural science, human sciences, philosophy and theology are related to each other and complemented by each other; he enables us to understand the reasons for the diversity of different cultures and what they have in common despite their diversity; he enables us to understand the relation between personal conversion and thinking and, most importantly, he encourages us to go the way of intellectual self-approach and conversion.

For sure, B. Lonergan is one of the greatest Christian thinkers of the

20 century. Unfortunately, even among Christian philosophers and theologians he is not paid the attention that he deserves to receive due to his importance for our time.

What I would like to do in my talk is to introduce B. Lonergan to you but not as an isolated philosopher in the mainstream of contemporary philosophy but as a thinker in a great tradition of thinking. It is a tradition of thinkers - perhaps the next one comes from Russia - which I name "thinkers of transcendence" by which I want to point out that their thinking was formed by their experience of transcendence and that they cannot be understood without our openness towards transcendence.

If I could encourage you to try to make yourself a judgment about B. Lonergan, I would be overjoyed; at the end of my talk I would like to say some words about how to approach B. Lonergan's work.

### **Dostoyevsky**

Before I am going to say some words about transcendence, I would like to mention a person to whom I owe that he evoked in me a desire for something and an experience of something which only later I learned to identify as a desire for the transcendent goal and a kind of experience of transcendence.

This person had lived in St. Petersburg for some time. In simple words he describes his experience of transcendence that overwhelmed him unexpectedly when he was waiting to be executed here in St. Petersburg in 1849. This experience, according to his own judgment, changed his life. You know his name: Dostoyevsky. It was my intense reading of Dostoyevsky's novels as a young man that gave my life another direction. I was devouring his books long time ago but I have kept images of some of his main characters of his novels in my mind, of the Idiot, Alyosha Karamazov, the Starez Zosima, Stawrogin etc.

Dostoyevsky named his way of writing fantastic realism; the characters that he creates and brings to life in his dialogs are not persons as we can find them in the so-called real life. Perhaps, the painter El Greco would have been able to give us an adequate visual impression of Dostoyevsky's characters. Their distorted and exaggerated character, however, reveal us a deep truth of man's desires and motives. An Alyosha, a Starez Zosima can evoke in us a deep desire for truth, for love, it is an unrestricted desire for truth and love.

### **Transition**

A novel by Dostoyevsky, a Gothic cathedral, a painting by El Greco, an icon, a Gregorian chant, literature and art created on the writer's or artist's tension towards transcendence are able to evoke an experience of transcendence in an open-hearted and sensitive person.

Another approach to transcendence is possible for us by intellect and reason, reason and intellect not understood in the narrow sense of rationalism but as our inmost and highest faculties in so far as we are beings endowed with an unlimited spirit.

If we can show that we are beings of transcendence by nature, that we strive for transcendence by nature, if we can show that, based on our inner dynamism and on the dynamism of our intellect and will, we can experience and understand an inner order which can further be the basis of an outer order, and if we can make that distinctions which reveal to be real distinctions not just of our intellect and mind but of the whole universe - then we would be able to understand and solve the problems mentioned at the beginning of the talk.

## Transcendence

When we look up the word "transcendence" in a textbook of philosophy we can see different and even contradictory interpretations of it. Kant uses this term in a completely different way than Thomas Aquinas. A representative of this philosophy uses this term in a completely different way than a representative of that philosophy. Let us not get confused, however, by all these different interpretations and just try to make some considerations about our acts of thinking, questioning and desiring.

Simply counting up numbers - one, two, three etc. - do we reach an end in our counting? There is no limit. We can think a limit of our thinking but thinking this limit we have already gone beyond this limit otherwise we could not think a limit. Asking questions - do we reach an end in our questioning? There is no end. Is there anything on earth that is able to fulfill our inmost desire? It is our painful experience that nothing on earth can fill up the unlimited space of our desire.

When we become aware that we are unlimited in our acts of thinking, questioning and desiring, the question arises about the end of our acts. This questioning will be increasing if we are clear about the fact that we could not even ask questions about the last end, if we were not related to it in a certain way. We could not ask questions about the last unknown end, if we had not a kind of knowledge of it, though this knowledge is an unknown knowledge.

When I speak of transcendence in the course of my talk, I use this term with reference to the fact that we are unlimited in our acts of thinking, questioning, desiring, with reference to a last known unknown goal of our acts, with reference to our inner dynamism to the last end and with reference to our desire and longing for a last end. The most precise nominal definition is useless without our experience of transcendence used in this sense. What is important is to grasp the interrelation between our transcendence and our understanding of it and our attempts to express what we understand.

## Plato<sup>1</sup>

Let us now turn to our first thinker of transcendence - Plato. He grew up in a society that was involved in a deep decline. The myths and symbols of the old religion had lost their power to mediate between the divine and humane sphere. Their gods were no longer considered to represent a divine reality. The forum of public opinion was dominated

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Voegelin's interpretation of Plato and Aristotle.

by relativism and skepticism. Philosophy had degraded itself to rhetoric, to a technique for young men to make their career in politics. The ruling class was no longer able to solve the problems caused by an enormous extension of Athens's political and economic power.

In this society of disorder and decline, Plato was able to find a new principle of order. And this new order was based on - as we can say in our terms - his experience of transcendence; and his philosophy can be regarded as an unfolding of his experience of transcendence. I would like to mention three points: Plato was the great thinker

- a) of the inner dynamism towards transcendence
- b) of an order based on this dynamism,
- c) of our status as beings between two orders

To understand Plato we must know that, in a course of centuries, Greek culture had developed an understanding of a psyche or soul as an unlimited space in ourselves. In his reflections on the movements in his soul Plato made a strange discovery. The starting point of his discovery was the experience of a kind of restlessness and unquietness or a kind of vague or anxious questioning.

This unquiet status caused an ambiguous impuls - either to try to ignore this unquiet status or to try to stand it and to begin to reflect on it. The strange experience now was that the more he opened himself to the status of unquietness the more he experienced a change of it. In the process of reflecting, the unquietness turned into quietness, the vague questioning into a kind of knowledge and the experience of disorder into an experience of order. Plato called this transition *periagoge* - that means *turning back, turning around*; it reminds us of the Greek term in the New Testament: *metanoein*.

In his reflections on the reasons for this strange change he found that this change was possible only because his decision to face the restlessness, the process of reflecting and his attempt to follow the line of questions was a participation in the reality of an inner power - *nous* or *eros*. And this inner power was a kind of participation in the divine reality that is beyond ourselves.

At the bottom of his soul Plato experienced the divine pole of his inner dynamism. But Plato did not - and that shows the brilliance of his thinking - identify the divine pole of his inner dynamism with the divine reality itself. The divine reality was in his terms *epekeina*<sup>2</sup> that means beyond. He had grasped the transcendence of the divine reality.

Plato concluded the transcendence of our last goal from his insight that a reality that is able to turn disorder into order and to satisfy one's deepest inner desire cannot be a reality within the world - where nothing is immutable and eternal - but must be a reality beyond this world.

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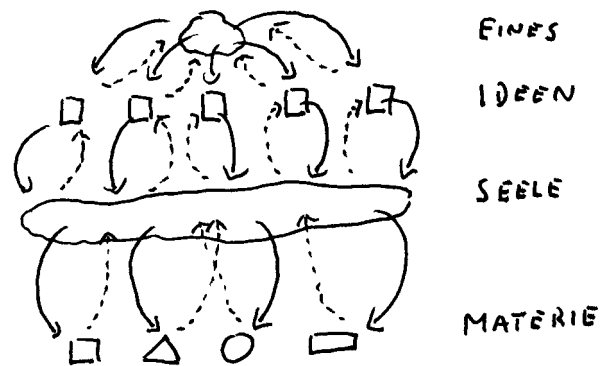
<sup>2</sup> E. Voegelin, *Ordnung, Bewußtsein, Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1988, 137f.

A main problem, however, remained to be solved: how to think nearness and transcendence of this divine reality? On the one hand, we participate in it; on the other hand it must be beyond ourselves.

### Plotinus<sup>3</sup>

With Plotinus, the chief exponent of Neo-Platonism, who thought in the wake of Plato we can see the consequences caused by the method of their thinking.

Plotinus tried to solve the problem of nearness and transcendence in this way - schematically. As long as we are able to think the highest reality, this reality is not really beyond ourselves because it is related to our thinking. As long as the highest reality can think itself, it cannot be the highest reality because then it would include a difference in itself, the difference between subject and object - the subjects thinks itself. And this difference would require a further reality which could cause this difference. The result of his thinking was that we must cut off the highest reality from its own intelligibility. The highest reality must realize itself outside of itself, by means of emanations.



From: B. Bernhard, Die zerrissene Welt, 82

In his attempt of saving the transcendence of the highest reality Plotinus had separated it from its intelligibility. Parmenides' insight of the identity between thinking and being was no longer able to be thought. The identity between highest reality and intelligibility was destroyed.

In the last analysis, it was the beginning of the separation between reality and thinking. The transcended reality itself could no longer be thought as the inner principle of our thinking and of our world.

### From Description to Theory

Plato and Plotinus were brilliant thinkers. They were not able, however, to solve the problem of how the highest reality can be transcendent and the inner principle of our thinking and of our world

<sup>3</sup> B. Braun, Die zerrissene Welt, Thaur-Wien-München, 1996, 80ff

because, in their thinking, they had remained on the level of imagination and description. They had not yet discovered the thinking on the level of theory. What does it mean?

Let us imagine a point without any extension. Is it possible? The imagination of a point without extension is impossible because we cannot imagine anything without any extension at all. In the framework of theory, however, a mathematical or geometrical point without extension is not only possible but even necessary. It was the mathematician Euclid - he lived two generations after Plato (365 - c. 300 BC) - who had achieved this insight in his considerations on a circle and on geometrical figures.

Let us ask: How is an absolutely round circle possible?<sup>4</sup> It is possible when we think a circle as "a locus of coplanar points equidistant from a center"<sup>5</sup>. Now, if the center of the circle had an extension, the radii would not radiate from the same starting point; hence they would not describe an absolute round circle.

It was Euclid who formulated the definitions: "A *point* is that which has no part". Or. "A *line* is breathless length". Or. "The extremities of a line are points".<sup>6</sup>

Why and how was Euclid able to go beyond imagination? He was able to do so because he had learned to think in strict relations. As elements which construct a circle he identified radius, center and plane; in relating these elements together under the viewpoint of an absolute round circle he found that - in this structure - a point must be thought without extension and a radius without breath. Thinking on the level of theory means to have an insight into a structure of an object, to find its main elements and to relate these elements together under the point of view of necessity or of further insights.

In addition, when we are able to quantify these relations of a structure and to develop verifiable equations, we have reached the level of classical physics and chemistry.

## Aristotle

The first philosopher who thought systematically on the level of theory was Aristotle (384-322 BC). He was able to solve the problems that Plato, his teacher, had not yet been able to solve. As long as we remain on the level of imagination we cannot really think an absolute transcendent reality which is the inner principle of the world because - on this level - it would be a contradiction. In a similar way, as long as we remain on the level of imagination we cannot develop a theology of the trinity because such a theology based on the facts of revelation is simply not imaginable. A main problem of philosophical and theological understanding is that we must learn to think beyond the borders of mere imagination.

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<sup>4</sup> In many works B. Lonergan refers to the structure of a circle

<sup>5</sup> B. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 81f

<sup>6</sup> Internet, <http://www.educa.fmf.uni-lj.si/java/pck/ELEMENTS/bookI.html>

It was Aristotle, thinking on the level of theory, who was able to think a transcendent absolute reality that is intelligible to itself and the first mover of the universe. If we bear in mind what we know about the biblical understanding of God as omniscient and as the Creator of the world we can grasp that it is was Aristotle's thinking that became important for a systematic development of theology - and not Plato. We cannot understand theologians and church documents up from the 13th century till to the beginning of the 20th century without understanding Aristotle's main principles.

Aristotle developed his principles in his reflections on movement - on movement in a wide sense: movement from one place to another, change in quality and quantity, generation and corruption. Thus, the process of thinking can be understood as a movement in a wide sense as well as a leaf of a tree in the autumn that changes color from green to red. On the basis of his main principles Aristotle developed his philosophy on the level of theory.

What are his main principles? Let us ask: How can a green leaf turn into a red leaf? First - to say it schematically - the green leaf must have the possibility to change colors - otherwise it could not turn into a red leaf. Second, the process of changing colors must be according to a certain unchangeable inner plan - the green leaf in autumn turns into a red leaf and not into a red bird. Third, the moment of the actuation of the inner plan and of the possibility by which the green leaf gradually turns into a red leaf.

We can apply the same principles to the generation and development of living beings. In a dog, for example, from its beginning there must be the possibility of growth and development, an inner plan according to which it develops and the moment of the actuation of the inner plan and the possibility. On this way, Aristotle could understand the soul as the inner plan of living beings.

The same principles can be applied to sensory perception and understanding. There must always be, in an analogous way, a potency of a movement, an inner plan according to which the movement happens, and the moment of actuation.

For this different principles Aristotle used the terms: *dynamis*, *eidos* or *morphe* and *energeia*; we are familiar with the terms derived from the Latin translation: *potency*, *form* and *act*.

In a similar way as Euclid developed his understanding of geometry based on his main principles and relating these principles to each other, Aristotle developed an understanding of reality based on his principles. What he calls - in translation - *substance* and *accidence* or his distinction of different causes - material cause, final cause, formal cause and efficient cause -: all this can easily be understood when we understand his main principles.

This short excursion to Aristotle will cause us to ask many questions. One urgent question will be: What have these strange principles really to do with reality? I will come back to this question soon.

## Thomas Aquinas

Let us turn now to Thomas Aquinas. It is breath-taking to read how main works of Aristotle mediated by Arabic scholars entered into the world of the Middle Ages. This new philosophy, this new type of interpretation of the world, this manifestation of intellect together with other historical events - the struggle between papacy and empire; a new type of justification of political power in France and England; the emergence of new social classes in the cities etc. - was threatening church authority and a theology which was still in its infancy.

It was Thomas Aquinas (1224/25-1274) who was able to think Christian truth in the horizon of his time. Aquinas had grasped that Aristotle's method was of highest importance for a systematical development of theology. In approaching Aristotle's method, Aquinas, however, was faced with a new problem of which Aristotle had not yet been aware. The ancient world had understood the universe as everlasting. In the framework of a Christian understanding of Creation out of nothing the being of reality itself - not only its nature - had become to be a problem of thinking.

In Aristotle's thinking the act was the principle of actuation, actuation mostly understood as actuation of a form. It was this principle that now attracted Thomas attention. And it was Aquinas's deep new understanding of the act in which he went far beyond Aristotle, his ancient teacher. Thomas had achieved an understanding of this act as an act of being.<sup>7</sup> In the consequence he could understand God as pure act whereas Aristotle had remained to think his highest reality as *pure form*.

Again, our short excursion to Aquinas will cause us to ask many questions. One urgent question will be: What is these pure act of being? What on earth has this principle to do with reality? I will come back to this question soon.

As to Aquinas, I just would like to add that that this medieval thinker is, for sure, one of the greatest thinkers of Western tradition at all. Unfortunately, in contemporary philosophical and even theological education Aquinas is just dealt with as a footnote in the course of the history of philosophy. If we know how to read Aquinas, he is an inexhaustible source of joy for us and of insights that help us to understand ourselves and our time. And we know how to read Aquinas if we understand Aristotle's main principles of reality.

## K. Rahner

The line from Plato through Aristotle to Thomas finds a continuation in our time; I just would like to mention two thinkers: the German theologian K. Rahner and B. Lonergan. Both were Jesuits; both were born in 1904 and died in 1984; both had studied Aquinas for years and both

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<sup>7</sup> To be precise: Aristotle had already an understanding of the act of existence (otherwise he could not have spoken of the *aitiai tou einai*) but it was Aquinas who worked out a clear understanding of the act of being.



tried to free Aquinas from the layers of petrification which had come over this thinker in the course of history.

In a similar way as Plato and Aristotle in the crisis of their time had dugged down to the roots of our nature that we are beings related to transcendence in order to find a new order, these thinkers, in the deep crisis of our time, unfolded their thinking again and in a new way, according to the horizon of our time, on the basis of their tension to transcendence.

K. Rahner named his theology a *transcendental theology*. In his work *Foundations of Faith*, he starts with an analysis of human being as a being of transcendence. He shows that we are by nature related to a transcendent goal. From his deep understanding of transcendence and from his ability to think transcendence - on the level of theory - he could gain a new and deep understanding of revelation.

If we have an unrestricted desire for a last transcendent goal by nature and if this last goal is really transcendent, we can only gain an understanding of this last goal and find the meaning of our life in case of the fact that this last goal reveals itself in a way that there is a real unity between both dimensions - between the transcendent divine dimension and our human dimension. It is the mystery of Jesus Christ. In him both dimensions, the divine and human dimension, come together, unseparated and undivided.

Revelation is the counterpart to our openness towards transcendence; or better to turn it around: God has endowed us with an absolute openness in order to enable us to receive himself in His totality. Grace can now be understood as the free and unlimited self-giving of God. Further, in the framework of his thinking, Rahner can show how all past dogmas can be derived from the Christian main mysteries such as Creation, Incarnation and the presence of the Holy spirit in our heart.

## **B. Lonergan**

At the beginning of my talk I mentioned that true literature and art is able to change one's life. Now, I want to insure you that if we approach Lonergan's work with an open heart and mind, it will, for sure, change our life. Plato and Aristotle understood philosophy as a way of gaining one's inner order; Thomas Aquinas regarded philosophizing as participation in the process of salvation. Lonergan wants his way of thinking to be understood as intellectual self-appropriation which involves to attain inner order and to participate in salvation. And he clearly points out the interrelation between intellectual progress and conversion.

A serious dialog with Lonergan is able to heal us from a deep wound that has affected our thinking in all fields that require to think the "whole" - in the fields of philosophy, theology, ethics, moral, political science and human sciences. This wound is the deep-rooted bias that we are not able to attain an absolute truth and on objective reality either because we cannot bridge the gap between our thinking and a reality in itself or because what we call reality is nothing more

then a mere construction of our mind or a mere convention. We all know phrases such as *Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent*<sup>8</sup>. And such phrases and such a self-limitation of our thinking are common knowledge nowadays. The mainstreams of contemporary philosophy think in the wake of this bias.

How can Lonergan heal us from this wound? Simply, in so far as he is able to evoke the striking insight in us that, in the process of our intellectual, moral and religious self-appropriation, we are able to attain an objective reality and an absolute truth.

In order to give you a preliminary idea of his method, let us go back to Euclid and the circle. Let us focus on what we are doing when we try to gain an insight into the structure of the circle or when we try to enable others to gain an insight into this structure.

Let us imagine it is our task to explain the structure of a circle to a young student who is not yet familiar with geometry. We start drawing a circle on a paper. We ask for the conditions of an absolute round circle. We set a point in the middle of the circle, we draw radii - and perhaps at this point it can happen that the student cries: "I've got it! I've got it!" Going on in our efforts to explain the circle it can further happen that we reach a point where the student says: "Yes, Yes! Given all these conditions the circle must be an absolute round circle."

Now, the student has come to have an insight into the structure of the circle and to the affirmation "Yes". This affirmation is the result of a process which ran through three different levels. The level of seeing a drawing of a circle, of the point and of the radii; the level of gaining the insight into the structure of the circle, into the relation between center and equidistant radii; and the level of his "Yes". In terms of Lonergan these levels are : the level of experience, the level of intelligibility and the level of judgment.

Lonergan further shows that everyone gains one's insight according to this structure. A theologian achieves his theological insight in the same way according to this structure as a scientist who states a hypothesis or a housewife in judging that it is now time to take the cake out of the oven.

The sequence of this structure is unchangeable that means that we cannot have an insight without experience or imagination and without a material for the insight and that we cannot give an affirmation of something without having gained an insight. It is easy for you to prove these three steps in focusing what you are doing when you come to have an insight.

Now I put these three-fold structure into other words. Perhaps this will remind you of something. The level of experience or imagination is what we called *potency*; the level of intelligibility is what we called *form* or *inner plan* and the level of judgment is what we called *act*. The drawing or imagination of a circle is the *potency* for the insight into

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<sup>8</sup> L. Wittgenstein

its structure which is the *form* and the concluding "Yes" is the *act*. In addition, In his reflections on ethics Lonergan introduces a forth level - the level of responsibility which is again based on the antecedent levels.

It is Lonergan who undertakes the transition from the level of theory to the level of interiority in so far as he shows in a clear and systematic way that the foundations for Aristotle's and Thomas' theory are based in ourselves, in our process of knowledge.

In a similar way as Thomas was challenged to gain a new understanding of Aristotle's theory on account of the new historical fact of revelation, Lonergan was challenged to find a new basis for philosophy on account of the historical fact of the gap between thinking and reality and of a pluralism lacking any unity behind the pluralism. Thomas had developed a new understanding of Aristotle's *act* - Lonergan offers us a new basis for philosophy - a basis which we can proof easily in reflection on our own process of insight - and he shows further that we can attain objective reality in actuating our insight through our judgment. No wonder that it was Aquinas' understanding of the *act* that attracted the attention of the young Lonergan.

In working out the basis for philosophy, Lonergan starts with questions of the type: What are we doing, which acts are we performing when we come to an have insight. He analyses the acts which are involved in the process of knowing. Here he identifies the three levels of this process. Then he goes on with questions of the type: Why do we achieve a knowledge in performing these acts? On this way he comes to an inner understanding of what happens in these acts and why they are able to constitute a knowledge. And he goes on with a third type of question: What is the knowledge that we achieve when we perform these acts? On this way he comes to an understanding of an objective reality.

Lonergan shows how the third level of the process of knowing, the level of judgment, is constitutive for an appropriation of reality. Most philosophers overlook or ignore or misinterpret the meaning of *judgment*. It is the third level on which we can ascribe a status of reality to our insight - either a yes or no or perhaps. If all conditions on the second and third level are fulfilled at best we can come to judgments such as: this is a necessity in logic or mathematics; this is a hypothesis; this is an objective structure of reality; this is an ontological reality.

In the field of logic and mathematics, as Lonergan shows, we can achieve an insight into necessary conclusions; in the field of natural science we only can attain hypothetical insights because it never can happen that all conditions are fulfilled. Laws of nature are only valid on the basis of probabilities. Lonergan who had a deep understanding of mathematics and modern physics shows the interrelation between classical natural science and the theory of probability. Nevertheless these hypothetical insights, insights into classical laws of nature and into the theory of probability, are insights into the material structure because the accumulation of such hypotheses show a clear direction to certain basis principles of the material world.

As to the understanding of ourselves, however, we can achieve the objective reality: "Yes, we are existent; we are beings with insight; we are beings with an unrestricted desire for knowledge." Out from this certain knowledge Lonergan enables us to elaborate an understanding of the isomorphism between the structure of our thinking and the structure of reality. On the basis of this isomorphism he enables us to elaborate an ethics, a theory of moral, an understanding of the common good and of metaphysics.

As to theology, Lonergan helps us to overcome the fruitless pluralism of methods and of different theological disciplines which is a main reason for many confusions in theology nowadays. He shows how the different fields of theology are interrelated according to the different levels of the process of knowing.

If you further know that Lonergan in his late years, in the context of his concern for common good, was dealing with the principles of economics, you can guess how brilliant this great thinker was. I just can invite you to make yourself an idea of him.

There remains one point I would like to mention. An insight in mathematics or physics does not necessarily touch our personal life. We cannot be indifferent, however, towards an insight in ethics or an insight concerning our own reality. Lonergan's appeal to intellectual self-appropriation cannot be realized without conversion.

Lonergan speaks of three conversions: If we try to understand that reality is not just what we see or experience but what we achieve in the acts of true judgments, we perform intellectual conversion. If we try to live according to our insights, we perform moral conversion. If we try to stretch us out - loving and praying - to our personal God, then we perform religious conversion.

Persons who try to achieve these conversions are able to communicate with people of other cultural areas. There is an urgent need of such persons in order to renew our church, in order to develop a new order in our countries and a common good for our world.

Our world is more and more faced with the alternative: either to go on in the tracks of group egoism, national egoism or cultural egoism or to undertake the effort to realize more and more a common good for all. The first way relentlessly leads to political chaos, poverty and injustice - so, we think, it is high time to try to invite people to come to know Lonergan's offer of intellectual, moral and religious self-appropriation.

### **How to approach Lonergan**

There are many ways to approach Lonergan depending on your knowledge etc. For beginners, one of the best ways to approach Lonergan is to read the introduction by B. Cronin: *Foundations of Philosophy*. Fortunately, this book is available for free on the Internet. I prepared some papers where you can find a reference of recommendable books and some Internet sources. Cronin's book will enable you to

understand a more sophisticated introduction into Lonergan or something by Lonergan himself. Just ask Fr. Igor. Perhaps, Lonergan's *Method in Theology* is recommendable if you are interested in theology in general. Further, of interest might be a Lonergan mailing list where you can ask questions and communicate with Lonerganeans. Understanding Lonergan's main principles, you are also able to read Thomas Aquinas. Again, what luck, many works by Aquinas are available for free on the Internet.