

Seton Hall University

From the Selected Works of Richard M Liddy

October, 1989

Lonergan on the Catholic University

Richard M Liddy, *Seton Hall University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/richard_liddy/13/

Lonergan on the Catholic University

**Msgr. Richard M. Liddy
Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ**

A version of this appeared as "Lonergan on the Catholic University," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (October 1989), 116 - 131.

LONERGAN ON THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Msgr. Richard M. Liddy

In 1951 Bernard Lonergan wrote an article entitled "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World." Originally published in French, it can be found in Lonergan's **Collection**.¹ Published at the same time he was working on his **magnum opus**, **Insight**, it reflects the basic thrust of that major work.

Some years later, in 1959, in a series of lectures in Cincinnati on the philosophy of education Lonergan touched again upon the subject of the Catholic university.² Here he adverted to the fact that of its very nature the whole immense Catholic school system is rooted in a "supernaturalist vision" that is in conflict with the dominant philosophies of education of modern times.

The fact is that we have a Catholic educational system, with primary schools, high schools, colleges and universities. That is the concrete fact and it exists because it is Catholic.³

What Lonergan finds lacking is a philosophical vision capable of defending the existence of the Catholic school system. Educational theorists tend to be divided into "modernists" whose appeal is to human experience and scientific verification and "traditionalists" who appeal to immutable truths transcending scientific verification. Catholics certainly are to be found on the traditional side of the argument, but Lonergan found the traditionalist program, as usually expounded, inadequate in its argument against modernism.

An educational philosophy that appeals to the immutable elements in things, to their eternal properties, to the truths that hold in any age, and simply urges that empirical methods are not the only methods, really is defending a negative position. It is not offering a vision.⁴

That element of vision is present in Lonergan's 1951 article on the Catholic university. Our essay will be a comment on that article with clarifications from some of his later writings. This is particularly topical at a time when the Sacred Congregation for Education is asking Catholic universities to clarify their own mission. Lonergan provides some elements that can be helpful in constructing a mission statement for a Catholic university.

Lonergan divides his article into six sections which Frederick Crowe, the editor of his **Collected Works** has subtitled: "The Human Good," "Community," "The Dialectic of History," "The Modern World and the University," "The Catholic University," "The Catholic University in the Modern World." For our purposes three points are central to Lonergan's argument: first, he defines the university as a mediator of culture; secondly, he points out the ambiguity of culture and hence, of the university; thirdly, he locates the precise mission of the Catholic university in the transformation

of culture.

Readers of Lonergan's later writings will recognize in these three elements a parallel to what he will call the three vectors of human history: progress, decline and redemption.⁵ Lonergan's 1951 article can be seen as a particular application of that schema.

1) THE UNIVERSITY AS AN ORGAN OF CULTURAL COMMUNITY

A university is a reproductive organ of cultural community. Its constitutive endowment lies not in buildings or equipment, civil status or revenues, but in the intellectual life of its professors. Its central function is the communication of intellectual development.⁶

In this short definition of the university Lonergan states that the constitutive endowment of the university, that which makes it what it is, is the intellectual life of its professors. The central function of the university is the communication of that development to others. In this process of personal development and communication, there takes place the transmission of human culture.

In order to clarify this description of the educational process from his early writings, it is helpful to use a metaphor which Lonergan employed frequently in his later writings; and that is the metaphor of human development taking place in two ways: "from below upwards" and "from above downwards."⁷ It is from below upwards as the person develops his or her intellectual capabilities. It is from above downwards as community, tradition and culture make personal development possible. Obviously, our first and most obvious image of human development conceives it as "from below upwards." The seed gives way to the sprout and to the gradually developing plant. The major thrust of Lonergan's work was to highlight human development as "from below upwards." Human consciousness moves from experience through questioning to understanding, judgment and decision. The process is recurrent and cumulative as wider experience gives way to fuller understanding, wiser judgment and more effective decisions. Throughout a lifetime this inwardly driven conscious process develops through the rejection of inattention, ignorance, stupidity, selfishness. According to Lonergan, such development is the human response to the notion of being, the notion of truth, the notion of value, the notion of the good. Such notions are the inner anticipation of the answers to all our questions and all our human striving.

Such is the whole point of Lonergan's "transcendental method" in philosophy: to highlight this inner drive to authenticity that issues in developed understanding, judgment, decisions.⁸ Such highlighting is in the first place pedagogical, for it involves calling each person to pay attention to their own inner being, their own understanding and drive for truth, their own thirst for authenticity. Such a program issues in the personal appropriation of the structures of one's own conscious life.

Such a program of self-appropriation particularly involves the appropriation of one's own intelligence and the structures of intelligence in general; and such intelligence is the focal point of the university. In his 1951 article Lonergan gives this magnificent description of intelligence, the act of understanding:

it is the **intus legere** of intelligence in act that alone grasps many truths in comprehensive synthesis, that holds ranges of concepts in the unity of their intelligible relations, that moves back and forth freely between the abstract and the concrete, the universal and the particular, the speculative and the practical. Without developed understanding, explanations are of hypnotic drugs by their **virtus dormitiva**, truths become uncomprehended formulas, moral precepts narrow down to lists of prohibitions, and human living settles into a helpless routine without capacity for vital adaptation and without the power of knowledge that inspires and directs the movement from real possibility to concrete achievement.⁹

"Insight into insight" - the point of Lonergan's work by that title - is really the concrete realization of Newman's "science of sciences" which the latter sees as the integrating factor in the university. Thus, Lonergan in his lectures on education extolls the value of a "general education" that allows a person to move in and out of many different areas of inquiry.

In other words, you are educating, in the sense of developing assimilative power, by the study of language, by teaching people to read, so that they are able to read not merely comic books and the titles under the pictures in **Life**, but anything. If you spend long hours reading Thucydides and Plato, you do not find much that has been written since heavy reading. You are in training, and when you sit down with a book you have not got an irresistible tendency to go to sleep, or to get out somewhere and move around. There is a development in assimilative power in the study of languages and literature...Similarly, the study of mathematics rather than natural science, of philosophy and history rather than the human sciences, are all cases in which you are developing the assimilative power of the pupil or student, enabling him to do whatever he may choose to do in any particular field.¹⁰

Such is the importance of development "from below upwards." It is the development of human intelligence. But Lonergan's metaphor from his later writings highlights the concomitant importance of development "from above downwards." It is the development that takes place by trusting others: parents, teachers, professors, mentors. Through this trusting of others one comes to see what others have seen, to hear what they have heard, to understand what they have understood and learned. Without this development from above through trusting others, that is, trusting the tradition, the infant would remain the bundle of unfocussed needs and experiences. The communal element is essential to all human development.

As it is only within communities that men are conceived and born and reared, so too it is only with respect to the available common meanings of community that the individual becomes himself. The choice of roles between which he can choose in electing what to make himself is no larger than the accepted meanings of the community admit; his capacities for effective initiative are limited to the potentialities of the community for rejuvenation, renewal, reform, development. At any time in any place what a given self can make of himself is some function of the heritage or sediment of common meanings that comes to him from the authentic or unauthentic living of his predecessors and his contemporaries.¹¹

Learning, then, takes place through this scissors-like action of primarily trusting others so that one can come more and more to trust oneself and add one's own personal contribution to the communal

fund of the human family's intellectual development. To quote Lonergan's own description of this scissors-like action:

The handing on of development...works from above downwards: it begins in the affectivity of the infant, the child, the son, the pupil, the follower. On affectivity rests the apprehension of values. On the apprehension of values rests belief. On belief follows the growth in understanding of one who has found a genuine teacher and has been initiated into the study of the masters of the past. Then to confirm one's growth in understanding comes experience made mature and perceptive by one's developed understanding. With the experiential confirmation the inverse process may set in. One is now on one's own. One can appropriate all that one has learnt by proceeding as does the original thinker who moved from experience to understanding, to sound judgment, to generous evaluation, to commitment in love, loyalty, faith.¹²

Now in the definition with which we began this section Lonergan sees the university as the point of intersection of both of these movements of development. On the one hand the obvious and central function of the university is to foster personal intellectual development. On the other hand, the university is obviously a communal enterprise; it is obviously a community. It is organized in such a way as to pass on the value of intellectual development. The good of order that is the concrete functioning of the university sets all its elements - buildings, finances, personnel, etc. - within the light of the value of total intellectual development.

Through its professors, through their research and teaching, the university passes on something that is not limited to any one course or one area of science or scholarship. It passes on a way of looking at things. It passes on a culture: a certain set of meanings and values. That culture may be popular American or secularist or Catholic. It may try to be relativist: explicitly limiting itself to being a structure where any combination of meanings and values are passed on. But the university, by being a communal enterprise in the area of intelligence, is by its very nature "a reproductive organ of cultural community."

What is cultural community? In his 1951 article and in **Insight** Lonergan makes the point that cultural community is distinct from intersubjective and civil community. Just as the human person is a composite of various levels of consciousness, so there are various levels of human community.¹³

Corresponding to a first experiential level there is the spontaneous intersubjective community that finds its special expression in the family. But the human person also understands and organizes his or her life, and so labor is divided, systems are created, collaboration is encouraged and, as a result, civilizational community emerges. This is the level of the technology, economy, politics. Such civil community comes to distinguish itself from more primitive society by its tremendous division of labor, its developed institutions and chiefly through its achievement of theory, the ability to understand things in their relations to each other and not just in relation to our own subjective needs. Such civilizational achievement found its particular expression in Greek philosophy.

There is, then, the emergence of individualism and critical thinking. There are discussion groups and wandering teachers. There is the formation of academies, schools, libraries,

universities, universalist tendencies in intellectual, religious, and political fields; and there is the pursuit of wisdom and of culture for its own sake. It is a pure development of intelligence that is not practical.¹⁴

Therefore, just as human intellectual consciousness gives rise to civilizational community, so evaluational consciousness gives rise to cultural community. For civilized people can and sometimes do ask questions about the meanings and values of civilizational community. Where did it come from and where is it headed? What is the meaning and value of it all? Is some of it good and valuable and some of it evil and degrading? The human person and human community are capable of both appreciation and criticism. Such appreciation and criticism transcends the frontiers of states and the epochs of history. It is enshrined in the classic writings of the human family. As Lonergan puts it, cultural community is:

the field of communication and influence of artists, scientists, and philosophers. It is the bar of enlightened public opinion to which naked power can be driven to submit. It is the tribunal of history that may expose successful charlatans and may restore to honor the prophets stoned by their contemporaries.¹⁵

Although transcending the boundaries of the university, such cultural community is especially mediated by and passed on by the university. In the university these questions arise in the movement from the field specializations of research to the communication of the results of that research in university departments and in the subjects taught in those departments.¹⁶ What data in fact will we research? Why? What conceptual categorization will we use to communicate the results of our research? What will we communicate to our students and why? What subjects are truly valuable for them and why? Why do it at all? What in fact is it that we are doing?

Such are the questions about the meaning and value of the sciences, the professions, the humanities. Such are the questions about the meanings and value of human life and human society. They are the subject matter of cultural community of which the university is and should be **the** reproductive organ.

As we mentioned previously, Lonergan in his lectures on the philosophy of education points out the value of a general education in literature, philosophy, history and mathematics that can protect a student from premature specialization. With a background in these more general studies that correspond to more general questions about the human person and the meaning of human life, one can then go on to master the various specialties of human intelligence. Without this development one's mind can easily contract into the horizon of one particular specialization.

General education, then, aims primarily at the development of assimilative power. If a man learns to know man, through the reading of literature and the study of history, he will have a basis for stepping into the human sciences that is much more useful perhaps than the study of the human sciences. If he spent all that time studying the human science, what would he know? He would learn what his professor knew of what the bigger men had figured out five years ago, ten years ago, fifteen years ago, thirty years ago. By the time he set about working in the field, he would have something to do to keep abreast; and ten years later all of his stuff might be out of date. And would he have the capacity to judge the new, to jump

with it or stand against it? If he has had this more general development in assimilative power, this more intimate communication of what it really is to be a man, the development of the human touch that comes through the traditional classical education or the literary education as opposed to the scientific education, he would have a basis within himself that would enable him to judge about men, and not become a crackpot. It is easy to produce crackpots by premature specialization.¹⁷

2.THE AMBIGUITY OF CULTURAL COMMUNITY & THE UNIVERSITY

Obviously, cultural community is not utopia; it is not the ideal cosmopolis where unbiased reason reigns supreme. It can be filled with Heideggerian "chatter." Words can enchant and distract. Just as the nature of cultural community is to arrive at judgments on the meaning and values of civil community, about what constitutes progress, so cultural community itself can be riven with decline. Its judgments can be biased. In theological language, our cultural community itself is subject to the drag of sin.

The darkness that affects the individual's judgments to blind him to his own egoism, can also affect the group. Then group feelings can mobilize judgments that see no limit to a group's pretensions: those people are the evil ones - that group, that clique. "My country right or wrong, but my country." Then the Marxist feeling-driven class warfare issues in a disintegrating process of violence. Civil community itself is split into self-serving factions.

But most of all the darkness can be such as to claim it is light. The individual and the group can claim that their egoism is "reasonable," practical, the only common sense way of acting. Then philosophies appear in the cultural community that claim that the whole thing is about electro-chemical events, a materialistic universe heading nowhere. In the words of the existentialists, it is all absurd; or in the words of the ancient tragedians, "Whom the gods destroy they first make blind."¹⁸

Such is what Lonergan in his 1951 essay called "the ambiguity of cultural community." Such a deep ambiguity clinging to cultural community concerns the nature of human reason itself. Lonergan describes the "rationalizing" tendency of human reason in this way:

The pronouncements of rational reflection are splendid but they lack efficacy. In another universe things could be different, but in the existing universe man suffers from moral impotence. This fact leads men to question the hegemony of reason, to relegate its precepts to some isolated academic or ecclesiastical sphere, to develop "realist" view in which theory is adjusted to practice and practice means whatever happens to be done. It follows that, besides the succession of higher syntheses characteristic of intellectual advance, there is also a succession of lower syntheses characteristic of socio-cultural decline.¹⁹

Lonergan delineates the spiral of cultural decline with an assessment that he repeats in **Insight**. The medieval synthesis between faith and reason shattered into the several religions of the Reformation. The wars of religion proved that human life was to be led not by revelation but by

reason. The disagreements among reason's representatives opened the door to toleration as the fundamental value. The helplessness of toleration to provide coherent solutions to social problems called forth the totalitarian who collapses all of reality into economic and military development and the dominance of the all-inclusive State. It is a spiral of narrower and narrower decline.²⁰

Such is the world in which we live. It is the cumulative product, not just of personal and cultural development, but also of personal and cultural decline. Such decline becomes solidified in human assumptions, mentalities, interpretations, philosophies, tastes, habits, hopes, fears. These ways of thinking, attitudes and practices distort the character of the human spirit and human society. In his **Method in Theology** of 1972 Lonergan describes this human situation of cultural ambiguity.

Initially not all but some religion is pronounced illusory, not all but some moral precept is rejected as ineffective and useless, not all truth but some type of metaphysics is dismissed as mere talk. The negations may be true, and then they represent an effort to offset decline. But also they may be false, and then they are the beginning of decline. In the latter case some part of cultural achievement is being destroyed. It will cease being a familiar component in cultural experience. It will recede into a forgotten past for historians, perhaps, to rediscover and reconstruct. Moreover, this elimination of a genuine part of the culture means that a previous whole has been mutilated, that some balance has been upset, that the remainder will become distorted in an effort to compensate.²¹

This distortion of the culture takes place in different ways in different societies and exacerbates the already disastrous effects of individual and group bias. In these cases believing what is told you will work toward your destruction rather than toward your growth. As belief in a humanly developing society aids personal development, belief in an ambiguous culture can work toward your destruction.²¹ Examples among our young people abound.

In this situation of cultural ambiguity people tend not to comprehend their own situation, and so appropriate action is impossible. To this extent the modern or postmodern world is involved in a major crisis - and the university is itself caught in the same crisis, the same ambiguous cultural situation.

It may lag in consenting to aberrations but in the long run it has to yield, for it recruits its students and their professors from the socio-cultural situation that exists.²²

To a great extent this has been the import of Allen Bloom's recent book, **The Closing of the American Mind**. Whatever its exaggerations, it is a trenchant critique of the contemporary university and the relativist culture it reflects. It is a critique of our culture, that is, our modern philosophies, as well as of our lack of culture, our ignorance.

3) THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

It is precisely here, face to face with the the ambiguous development and decline of modern culture that the Catholic university finds its mission. Certainly as a university it has the identical essential function as the secular university, that is, the communication of intellectual development.

Nor can anyone suppose that a second-rate Catholic university is any more acceptable to God in the new law than was in the old law the sacrifice of maimed and diseased beasts.²³

Nevertheless, this identity of essential function is overlaid with "profound difference." The secular university of its nature is caught in the ambiguities of civil and cultural development and decline. The same situation constrains the Catholic university. Nevertheless, as Lonergan says in his 1951 essay, the latter is "armed against the world."

The supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity are named theological because they orientate man to God as he is in himself. None the less they possess a profound social significance. Against the perpetuation of explosive tensions that would result from the strict application of retributive justice, there is the power of charity to wipe out old grievances and make a fresh start possible. Against the economic determinism that would result in egoistic practicality given free rein, there is the liberating power of hope that seeks first the kingdom of God. Against the dialectic discernible in the history of philosophy and in the development- and-decline of civil and cultural community, there is the liberation of human reason through divine faith; for men of faith are not shifted about with every wind of doctrine.²⁴

It is precisely in the liberation of human reason through divine faith that the Catholic university as a university finds its specific difference and makes its unique contribution. For as Lonergan defined the university, its constitutive endowment lies in the intellectual life of its professors. In the major work of his later years, **Method in Theology**, Lonergan spells out more fully this liberating character of divine faith.

Without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to be good, for a good God to exist. But faith recognizes that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good...Faith places human efforts in a friendly universe; it reveals an ultimate significance in human achievement; it strengthens new undertakings with confidence...Most of all, faith has the power of undoing decline. Decline disrupts a culture with conflicting ideologies. It inflicts on individuals the social, economic, and psychological pressures that for human frailty amount to determinism. It multiplies and heaps up the abuses and absurdities that breed resentment, hatred, anger, violence. It is not propaganda and it is not argument but religious faith that will liberate human reason from its ideological prisons.²⁵

Such a liberation is aided by a Christian theology that is both faithful to divine revelation on the one hand and open to an interdisciplinary integration with all the other sciences on the other. For Christian revelation is not only doctrine about God; it is also God's word about the meaning and

values of human life. Divine revelation is God's entry and his taking part in our communal making of our world. It is God's claim to have a say in the aims and purposes, the direction and development of human lives, human societies, human cultures, human history.²⁶

Theology in the university, then, will not just be reflection on the truths of revelation. It will also be reflection on how those truths relate to, refine, explain and complete all the other truths the human family knows. The example of Aquinas is instructive.

In the medieval period theology became the queen of the sciences. But in the practice of Aquinas it was also the principle for the molding and transforming of a culture. He was not content to write his systematic works, his commentaries on Scripture and on such Christian writers as the Pseudo-Dionysius and Boethius. At a time when Arabic and Greek thought were penetrating the whole of Western culture, he wrote extensive commentaries on numerous works of Aristotle to fit a pagan's science within a Christian context and to construct a world view that underpinned Dante's **Divine Comedy**. To this paradigm theology today must look if it is to achieve its **aggiornamento**. Its task is not limited to investigating, ordering, expounding, communicating divine revelation. All that is needed, but more must be done. For revelation is God's entry into man's making of man, and so theology not only has to reflect on revelation, but also it has somehow to mediate God's meaning into the whole of human affairs.²⁷

In order to mediate God's meaning into the whole of human affairs, theology needs an interdisciplinary philosophy. It needs a vision of how the various sciences are related to each other, to the human person, to the universe, to God. It needs a vision of genuine intellectual development and of the accompanying cultural development, decline and possible redemption.

Today theology itself is heavily influenced by the other sciences of the modern university: just think of the influence of critical history on the study of Scripture, Patristics, Church history. But what about theology's own contributions to the other sciences? Was that not Newman's point in the **Idea of the University** when he vindicated theology's rightful place in the university curriculum? Is this not the specific mission of the Catholic university: to foster the influence of Catholic theology on all the university disciplines? This is particularly true of the human sciences. As Lonergan wrote in 1951:

Not pure nature envisaged by philosophy but man as he exists is the object of empirical anthropology and psychology, of economics and sociology, of the existentialisms, of explanatory histories of civilizations and cultures, of religion and dogma. But man as he has existed and exists is man subject to moral impotence; it is man as the cooperative or uncooperative recipient of divine grace. Hence, the integration of sciences that deal with man concretely has to be sought not in philosophy but in theology. The old maxim that theology is the queen of the sciences has been given a new relevance and Newman's **Idea of a University** a fresh significance.²⁸

Theology will be able to integrate the other sciences to the extent that the philosophy it employs, its explicit vision of the human person and of reality, can be related to all the other sciences. As it

"sublates" philosophy into a faith vision, that is, brings it into a higher viewpoint, so its interdisciplinary philosophy will sublate the other sciences as well. Through its interdisciplinary philosophy economic theory will be evaluated in the light of fundamental moral values. Genetic research will take place against the backdrop of the transcendent dignity of the human person. Political science will take place in the light of evaluational history, a foundational vision of what constitutes human progress and what constitutes human decline. As Lonergan noted in a writing from his later years that showed his continuing commitment to the idea of a Catholic university:

As it is only in the university that all aspects of human living are under study, it is only in the Christian university that theology can attain its full development and exercise its full influence.²⁹

This is not an easy project. It calls for a fundamental commitment on the part of Catholic universities to their theology and philosophy departments - hopefully working together and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. To quote Lonergan on his Halifax lectures on **Insight**:

To put it more concretely, we go to great expense to have Catholic universities; yet, our professors cannot be anything more than specialists in physics, specialists in chemistry, specialists in biology, specialists in history. If they can search and search for philosophic and theological aids to give them the orientation that would be specifically Catholic in their fields and still not find them, because neither philosophy nor theology are doing their job of integrating, then we have a problem.³⁰

One final point. Contemporary events reflect the fact that the Catholic university is involved in an ambiguity of its own. Lonergan's 1951 article has two things to say on this point.

From the schools of Alexandria and Antioch, through the medieval universities, to **Pascendi** and **Humani Generis**, Catholic intellectuals have been discounted as doubtful blessings. Praise is given to St. Thomas because of his merits; it is concentrated on him because one finds it a little difficult to be outright in praising so many others. Indeed, the misadventures of Catholic intellectuals could be taken as a counsel to wrap one's talent in a napkin and bury it safely in the ground, were not that conclusion clean contrary to the gospel which demands, beyond capitalist expectations, one hundred percent profit. Such then is this third ambiguity: Catholic intelligence is to be used to the limit; yet so complex, so arduous, so excellent is the task confronting it that failure is both easy and disastrous.³¹

Lonergan's final word on the subject is a call to conversion. If the Catholic intellectual is to call others to authenticity, he must be pure himself. If he is to pronounce on the ambiguities and decline of contemporary culture, he must be aware of his own biases.

One cannot remove the mote in another's eye when there is a beam in one's own; the true intellectual has to be humble, serene, detached, without personal or corporate or national complacency, without appeals to contemporary, let alone, archaist, bias or passion or fads.³²

CONCLUSION

Lonergan's 1951 article provides the elements for constructing a mission statement for a Catholic university. Certainly, he did not foresee all the legal and political complexities involved in that project in our own day. Nevertheless, it seems to me that he highlighted three specific elements that should be kept in mind in designing such a mission statement for a Catholic university.

1)The Catholic university as rooted in and related to God's self-revelation in Christ, a revelation that is also the revelation of the ultimate meaning of human life and human history.

2)The Catholic university precisely **as** a university as the locus of cultural development and transmission.

3)The Catholic university through its theology and interdisciplinary philosophy as serving the redemptive transformation of culture. Such commitment to Catholic philosophy and theology will be reflected even in its budget.

It seems that almost forty years after Lonergan's article, Catholic universities are barely beginning to take up the challenge. Monumental obstacles remain. The turf-wars among university departments militate against Lonergan's interdisciplinary vision. So also does short-sighted hiring and tenure-review practices. In America the very idea of any university embodying any cultural view whatsoever - besides a secularist view - is at issue.

Still, beginnings are being made here and there. Lonergan's model can help us focus on what still needs to be done. The catalogs of our Catholic universities generally have mission statements included. It would be interesting if in their last year at such universities students were asked to take a seminar whose whole theme would be: how has that mission been fulfilled in my educational experience at this Catholic university?

A quote from an earlier writing captures this mysterious process of education.

The problem of education is not a problem of machinery, of divising curricula and securing professors, of buying libraries and getting the books read...the real problem of education is the problem faced by the teacher who displays the heritage of civilization with what skill he masters, who watches and waits with conscious helplessness for the fecundation and blossoming and growth of that seed that can easily be sterile and easily be monstrous but not easily fine and delicate, stout and sound. The mystery of individuality confronts him...³³

But these questions cannot be permanently stymied. When a particular science is mastered, the question can arise: What is the meaning of what I am doing? How is it related to what others are doing? Can I attain to some comprehensive vision of the whole civilizational enterprise?

These questions, you will note, are the questions Newman in The Idea of the University puts at the foundation of his "science of sciences," the philosophy that relates each science to every other

science and to an integrated vision of the whole of knowledge. These are also the questions that Eric Voegelin finds reflective of the deep moral and religious drive toward authenticity that constituted the classic Greek experience of human reason. They are the bases, according to Lonergan, of human cultural community.

Such community is the community of those who ask the deepest questions about the human situation. It is the community of those who write and who appreciate the classic writings of the human family. Such cultural community transcends the frontiers of states and the epochs of history.

Such cultural community is the subject of the liberal arts in the university: the languages and literatures, the evaluative histories and philosophies by which the various civilizations have constituted themselves. The critical study of such cultural community can bring unity into the innumerable specializations of human knowledge. It is the study of such cultural community that can make of the university something more than what Robert Hutchins said of the modern "multiversity:" a series of separate schools and departments held together by a central heating system. If the university is to be anything more than an information-retrieval system, it must be cultural. It must pass on a view of the whole. It must do so in the light of an evaluative history of the conflicting viewpoints on the aims of knowledge. The sciences and the humanities must interact with each other and with a philosophical vision of that whole. Only in this way can teaching be anything more than the boring transmission of formulae. The teacher himself or herself must be a person of appropriated culture:

It remains that the process of handing on can be incomplete. There occur socialization, acculturation, education, but education fails to come to life. Or the teacher may at least be a believer. He can transmit enthusiasm. He can teach the accepted formulations. He can persuade. But he never really understood and he is not capable of giving others the understanding that he himself lacks. Then it will be only by accident that his pupils come to appropriate what was sound in their tradition, and it is only by such accidents, or divine graces, that a tradition that has decayed can be renewed. (1985: 181)

For it is not enough for the university to communicate facts or information in one area or another, skills in one area or another. If it is at all to do its job, then it has to give an inkling into the meaning of those facts, how they relate to facts in other areas and to the whole enterprise of knowledge. It has to present not only skills but the value of those skills within the whole vision of the human enterprise. In order to do its job of presenting some comprehensive viewpoint, it has to take a critical stand vis a vis the culture in which it exists. For not to take a stand is to take a stand. Not to take a stand is to say that everything goes: everything is equally meaningful and valuable. Not to decide is to decide. The foundational energies the professors brings to his subject, whether it be literature or science, will be communicated to his students. These foundations need to be explored and acknowledged.

NOTES

1. Bernard Lonergan, **Collection** (edited by F.E.Crowe and Robert M. Doran), vol. 4 of **Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan**, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, 108-113. Originally published in New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, 114-120. Our citations will be from the 1988 edition.
2. Bernard Lonergan, **The Philosophy of Education** (transcribed and edited by James and John Quinn), unpublished notes of an institute at Xavier University, Cincinnati, August 3-14, 1959. These will be published in volume 10 of the **Collected Works**, University of Toronto Press.
3. **Ibid.**, 20.
4. **Ibid.**, 8.
5. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, **Method in Theology**, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, 53-55; **A Third Collection**, New York: Paulist Press, 1985, 10.
6. **Collection**, 111.
7. **A Third Collection**, 106; 126; 180-181.
8. **Insight: A Study of Human Understanding**, New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. A brief outline of Lonergan's cognitional theory can be found in "Cognitional Structure," **Collection**, 205-221.
9. **Collection**, 111.
10. **The Philosophy of Education**, 276-277.
11. **Collection**, 227.
12. **A Third Collection**, 181.
13. **Collection**, 109.
14. **The Philosophy of Education**, 95.
15. **Collection**, 109.
16. **Method in Theology**, 125-145.
17. **The Philosophy of Education**, 277-278.
18. **Insight**, 225-234.
19. **Collection**, 110.
20. **Insight**, 231-232.
21. **Method in Theology**, 243-244.
22. **Ibid.**.
23. **Collection**, 111.
24. **Ibid.**.
25. **Ibid.**, 112.
26. **Method in Theology**, 117.
27. **A Second Collection** (eds. William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell), Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974, 62.
28. **Collection**, 113.
29. Bernard Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy," **Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies**, 2/2 (October 1984) 9.
30. Bernard Lonergan, **Understanding and Being**, (eds. Elizabeth and Mark Morelli), Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1980, 119.

31.**Collection**, 112.

32.**Ibid.**, 113.