
This book is a magnificent response to the need, long felt by many teachers, to introduce Lonergan’s thinking to students. It reproduces selections, mostly from Insight, Method in Theology, and the three collections. The study of each selection is facilitated for teachers and students by an introductory abstract and by a concluding list of related references. It ends with two pages of chronology, five pages of bibliography, and an alphabetical index of seventeen pages that has the makings of a veritable encyclopedia for Lonergan students.

The editors’ own introduction reveals a mastery of Lonergan materials and of the complex task of labeling them under theology or philosophy or methodology. A special complication is the case of economics. Hopefully, the editors will forgive this reviewer’s hypercritical propensity to make a mountain out of a molehill by questioning their statement on page 13 that “Lonergan’s economic work, as interesting and important as it was to Lonergan, took second place to his other intellectual pursuits.” (Emphasis is added.)

That it was “second place” in the order of academic specializations, yes, it is true. But is it also true in the order of pastoral urgency? The theology of the “signs of the times” since Vatican II, together with its pastoral corollary in the “preferential option for the poor,” seem to have suggested to Lon-
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ergan that for any option for the poor to be "preferential," there was (and still is) an urgent need of healing and creating in macro-economic history (pp. 566-76). For many years, he undertook "the task of constructing a technically viable economic system" (p. 576) that can be put in the place of the present dysfunctional macroeconomy. This task takes first place in the order of urgency incumbent on pastoral theologians.

A confirmation of this primacy may be gleaned from a decision Lonergan made after 1975 when he was facing a choice between two options: Christology or economics; he chose economics.¹ Does this not indicate some kind of a new primacy of economics over Christology in Lonergan’s mind?

If so, it may be inferred that Lonergan must have undergone an intellectual conversion. Before 1975, economics for him was only an "intellectual pursuit" and in a secondary position. After 1975, it was still an intellectual pursuit – and very intellectual indeed – but pastoral urgency had raised it to top priority. In fact the "new context" of his theology (pp. 408-19) now emphasizes the pastoral function of theology: theology is for the pasture of God’s flock.

This reviewer is grateful to the editors for facilitating a comprehensive overview of Lonergan’s encyclopedic thinking in one rich compendium.