

Questions for November 15

- 1.) How do you evaluate David Tracy's Blessed Rage for Order?  
As the discussion group engaged in dialectic, comparing Method with Blessed Rage, we focussed on the difference between changing historical contexts (in your position) and the possibility of changing truth (in the process position). Is this the crucial difference between you?
- 2.) The concluding sentences of Section 4 in the chapter on Foundations, p.281 are: "The era dominated by Scholasticism has ended. Catholic theology is being reconstructed." These sentences were written in the late 1960's or early 1970's. Has the context in which they were written changed significantly? Or are you addressing an historical context much longer than a decade or so?
- 3.) On p. 318 there is this sentence which has troubled members of the discussion group: "In both Barth and Bultmann, though in different manners, there is revealed the need for intellectual as well as moral and religious conversion." The sentence occurs within the context of a discussion on the importance of intellectual conversion. But the question arises: is this a judgment on Barth and Bultmann as subjects? Can one distinguish oneself as subject from one's position adopted in public writings? Do Barth and Bultmann illustrate the lack of religious and moral conversion as well as the lack of intellectual conversion?
- 4.) On p. 320 you suggest that "human psychology and specifically the refinement of human feelings is the area to be explored in coming to understand the development of Marian doctrines." Have you in your own work made such an exploration or do you know of another theologian who has followed this suggestion in a way that is compatible with your intent? Would you describe more definitely the "known unknown" which leads you to make such a suggestion?

in  
addition  
to

2. The medieval construction (Thomist) is being transposed  
from the priority of metaphysics to the priority  
of epistemological theory

Questions for December 6

- 1.) This is a request for elaboration of the status of married love, of the "we" beyond I and Thou ( pp. 33 & 57 of Method). This clearly is of some significance since "what holds for the love of a man and a woman also holds in its own way for the love of God and man." (Method, p.113)

Barth criticized Schleiermacher for suggesting the ideal of an undifferentiated "we" beyond the I and Thou of the individual marriage partners. Barth also criticized Roman Catholic theology for exalting this relation to something metaphysical or absolute. (Church Dogmatics, Vol. 3, Part 4, pp. 121-125). Both, Barth believed, lost sight of the essential dualism and the creaturely status of the relationship. Would you care to comment?

Is this "we" relationship possible between people of the same sex?

- 2.) If theology mediates between a religion and its cultural matrix, a distinction between religion and theology is implied. This in itself implies the further possible distinction between religious authority and theological authority, that is, the difference between the congregationes fidei promulgating a doctrine, and E. Schillebeeckx publishing a work. But a closer analysis further distinguishes the theologian as subject (with his or her own religious life) and the results of his or her theological speculation. The theologian, in some way, provides religious authority for his or her theological conclusions. What is at stake here with regard to the problem of authority? Is the distinction between religious authority and theological authority a real one?
- 3.) Revelation, while mentioned and assumed in Method, receives little explicit attention. Why is that? Is it because of the distinction between religious living and theological reflection, where religious living provides the "given" for theology?
- 4.) How do you respond to the Marxist critique of religion that suggests religion is not only the "opiate of the people" but also the "sigh of the oppressed"?
- 5.) The empirical notion of culture has given rise to a number of "theologies": black theology, feminist theology, liberation theology, theologies of hope and play. Would you call these attempts at theology as Method understands theology or are these attempts in the eighth functional specialty of communications?
- 6.) The recently reported disciplining of William Callahan raises this question: how does one weigh one's responsibility on the fourth level of consciousness with respect to religious obedience under the vow?
- 7.) The Christian church is described on p. 363 as a process of "self-constitution." Read antagonistically, this might be construed to mean "arbitrarily self-legislating." But a fundamental concern of your work is the control of meaning. For the subject, the foundations of this control are found in the transcendental precepts and the three-fold conversion. What analogous controls operate for the church? Does the word Selbstvollzug have a different connotation to German ears? What is the background to the use of this term which led you to use it here?