


Sacred Heart, Beatific Mind: Exploring the Consciousness of Jesus

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Abstract

Traditional Christologies have focused attention on the question of Jesus' beatific knowing. On the other hand, recent explorations into Spirit Christology raise different questions about his affectivity. Both issues highlight a concern with Jesus' psychological experience. The present article proposes that both these issues can be fruitfully examined through the lens of the psychological analogy for the Trinity. In particular, Bernard Lonergan's developments of the analogy drawing as they do on the experience of grace, shed a new and helpful light on the question of Jesus' knowing and loving. This approach alleviates some of the more problematic aspects of the traditional approach to Jesus' beatific vision, while also providing a more solid trinitarian basis for Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Keywords

beatific vision, Christology, Bernard Lonergan, psychological analogy, Sacred Heart, Trinity

Theological interest in the question of Jesus' knowing can be traced back to the early Church Fathers, as they played off issues of Jesus' divine identity with Gospel passages indicating both growth in "wisdom and grace" (cf. Lk 2:52),

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and ignorance about divinely appointed “days and hours” (cf. Matt 24:36).¹ This interest reached something of a speculative highpoint in the *Summa Theologiae*, where Aquinas sought to distinguish and relate Jesus’ beatific knowing and his human experiential knowing.² Moving to more recent times, under the impact of both a “low”/ascending Synoptic-based and kenotic Christology, the issue of the beatific vision in relation to Jesus has tended to fall by the wayside to be replaced with less precise notions of a messianic consciousness, or “Abba experience.”³ Even conservative Catholic theologians such as Jean Galot, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Thomas Weinandy have called Jesus’ beatific vision into question.⁴ On the other side of the ledger there has been a growing interest in a Spirit Christology, one which gives a prominent role to the presence of the Holy Spirit within Jesus’ consciousness.⁵ Particularly in the work of James Dunn, this presence is manifest in certain ecstatic or charismatic experiences both in Jesus and the early Christian community.⁶ What both these themes reveal is an interest in the interior or conscious life of Jesus, one more intellectual (beatific vision), the other more affective (the presence of the Spirit as grace).⁷ Attempts to address either of these questions must deal with a paucity of primary data—what do we actually know of Jesus’ conscious experience?—while

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1. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Jeremy D. Wilkins, trans. Charles C. Hefling, Collected Works 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 613–61.
 2. See *Summa Theologiae*, 3, qq. 9–12 (hereafter cited as *ST*). In fact Aquinas’s major contribution to the debate at the time was the recognition of a genuine human knowing in Jesus. Lonergan states that Aquinas “discovered and introduced” the distinction between infused knowledge and acquired or experiential knowledge in Jesus, which then became a theological commonplace. Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, 711.
 3. The notion of Jesus’ “Abba experience” was introduced in Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York: Seabury, 1979).
 4. The following draw attention to these suggestions and their respective authors: Randall S. Rosenberg, “Christ’s Human Knowledge: A Conversation with Lonergan and Balthasar,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 817–45; Thomas J. White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 236–74; Jeremy D. Wilkins, “Love and Knowledge of God in the Human Life of Christ,” *Pro Ecclesia* 21 (2012): 77–99. Rosenberg engages in an extensive dialogue with Balthasar, while White focuses greatest attention on Galot and Weinandy.
 5. G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit*, The Bampton Lectures (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975); David Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit in Christ,” *Theological Studies* 45 (1984): 466–80.
 6. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*.
 7. As far as we know, while affectivity in Jesus is a subject of much popular piety, such as devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and while there have been volumes written on the cognitional aspects of Jesus’ beatific vision, there has been little systematic theological interest in his affectivity. One notable exception to this is Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” upon which we comment towards the end of this article.

contending with the theological inference that in virtue of his divine identity Jesus' consciousness contains elements originating with that identity and in a way that does not prejudice or diminish his full humanity.

A recent paper by Neil Ormerod has provided a speculative framework for the discussion through his use of Lonergan's four-point hypothesis to speak of Jesus' consciousness as containing both a beatific vision and a Spirit-filled heart.⁸ In the terms of that hypothesis Jesus enjoys the light of glory through his created participation in the trinitarian relation of filiation, while also enjoying the fullness of grace through his created participation in the relation of active spiration. The first of these relations, filiation, terminates in the Father, and so establishes by created participation a conscious relation to the Father; the second, active spiration, terminates in the Spirit, and so establishes (again, by created participation) a conscious relation to the Spirit.⁹ These relatively formal considerations, however, are a long way short of a phenomenology of Jesus' interiority. Such a phenomenology can only be approached at best analogously on the basis of our own conscious experience.¹⁰

Ormerod further complicates such an approach by noting the shift in Lonergan's writings from a cognitional to an existential and religious focus, as evidenced by his attempt to formulate a psychological analogy for the Trinity with a doctrinal starting point of God as love.¹¹ If the basic starting point for understanding the Father is not the unoriginated and unlimited light of insight (conceiving a word) but the unoriginated and boundless warmth of divine love (avowing its love), with a concurrent shift in how we might conceptualize the beatific vision—from a starting point in divine understanding to one in love—how then might we distinguish between Jesus' conscious experience of the Father and his conscious experience of the Spirit?

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8. Neil Ormerod, "'For in Him the Whole Fullness of Deity Dwells Bodily': The Trinitarian Depths of the Incarnation," *Theological Studies* 77 (2016): 803–22.
 9. These are conscious relations, that is, they are on the side of the subject, not the object. They are not necessarily known as such until such time as they are objectified by the subject. A good parallel is found in the notion that the human intellect is a created participation in the divine intellect. The divine intellect is not an object within human consciousness but our participation in it can be identified with the unrestricted desire to know, which constitutes our intellectual consciousness. It is manifest in our natural desire to see God, a conscious relation to the divine.
 10. See for example the efforts of Wilkins, "Love and Knowledge of God in the Human Life of Christ," in comparing Jesus' experience to that of Christian mystics such as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.
 11. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," in *A Third Collection*, ed. F. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985), 74–99. For an excellent exposition of the different phases in Lonergan's development of the analogy see John D. Dadosky, "God's Eternal Yes! An Exposition and Development of Lonergan's Psychological Analogy of the Trinity," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 81 (2016): 397–419. There is of course also a foundational starting point in foundations and conversion. See Neil Ormerod and Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, *Foundational Theology: A New Approach to Catholic Fundamental Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

These are difficult and speculative questions and demand increasing attention to the categories of interiority if progress is to be made. In this regard the recent work of Patrick Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment*, provides a useful model for deepening our understanding of the affective realm and thus articulates categories that can assist in responding to these questions.¹² Though Byrne's writing is directed towards problems in ethics, it inevitably touches on matters of theological import. In particular we shall draw on his notion of the affective horizon of a subject and the role of personal value within that horizon as the originating value of the subject. This provides us with a way of conceptualizing the more metaphorical language of "heart" as found in biblical and spiritual literature. We shall seek to identify the heart of a person with personal value as the originating value of the subject.

The approach we adopt draws heavily on the systematic work of Bernard Lonergan with respect to both trinitarian theology and Christology. We argue that Lonergan's work on the psychological analogy provides openings into the divine mystery of the Trinity that are in turn fruitful for Christology. If, as Robert Doran suggests, there is some value in seeking to develop a supernatural—as distinct from a natural—version of the psychological analogy (i.e., based on the human experience of grace), then the paradigmatic example of such a supernatural, psychological analogy would be found, one would think, in the consciousness of Jesus.¹³ Indeed this is the working hypothesis of the present article: that the psychological analogy provides a speculative vantage point for an examination of the psychology of Jesus. While this stance is indeed highly speculative, it should come as no surprise. Both the psychological analogy in trinitarian theology and attempts to understand the inner life of Jesus in Christology take as their starting point certain basic anthropological commitments.¹⁴ The psychological analogy seeks to understand the inner life of God (i.e., divine processions) on the basis of an analogy with operations of human consciousness, while speculation about Jesus' inner life focuses on the experienced fulfilment of those same operations. Differing perspectives on the analogy thus shed quite different light on Jesus' inner life. We believe this approach is "fruitful" in the sense suggested by Vatican I (*Dei Filius*) in its understanding of the role and purpose of theology, in that it identifies connections between the mysteries of faith.

The structure of this article is as follows. We begin with a consideration of a developing position on the psychological analogy of the Trinity. The basic anthropological

12. Patrick H. Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundations for Ethics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

13. On the notion of a supernatural psychological analogy see Robert M. Doran, *The Trinity in History: Missions and Processions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 166–68. The "natural" analogy is based on conscious human operations and these operations are found in all human beings. See Augustine, *De Trinitate* 14.6. On the other hand Augustine offers something like a supernatural analogy when he focuses attention of acts of knowing and loving God as the basis for the analogy; *De Trinitate* 14.15.

14. These commitments themselves arise from religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion (or their lack) in the theologian. See Ormerod and Jacobs-Vandegeer, *Foundational Theology*.

foundation underlying this position is the notion of the *imago Dei*: that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. This development will be traced through three stages: (1) an intellectualist stage as found in Augustine, Aquinas, and the early Lonergan; (2) an existential stage, found briefly in Lonergan's work on the Trinity; and finally (3) a religious stage suggested in Lonergan's later writings. As the anthropological foundation expands, the corresponding analogy deepens. We then turn to the question of Christology and Jesus' conscious experience. This question is then addressed through these same three stages, on the basis that if the *imago Dei* is to be found in any human being it will be found in the consciousness of Jesus. To further spell out the implication of these dimensions for Jesus' affective life we consider the notion of "heart" as a symbol for that life, while seeking to give it an explanatory account, drawing on the work of Byrne, with a nod towards the writings of Sebastian Moore. We then use this construct to speak of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in more systematic theological terms as Jesus' participation in active spiration. We conclude with a brief comparison with suggestions found in the writings of David Coffey.

The Psychological Analogy within an Expanding Anthropological Horizon

The first suggestion of a relatively well-developed psychological analogy for the Trinity occurs in the experimental context of Augustine's *De Trinitate*.¹⁵ Particularly in Book 9 Augustine explores as an analogy for the procession of the Son a number of possible ways in which the mind forms an inner word. It could be to do with "approval or disapproval", that is, a judgment of value (9.12); or with practical action "either for sinning or for doing good" (9.13); or like uttering a definition (9.15).¹⁶ Finally it is "knowledge with love": "The kind of word then that we are now wishing to distinguish and propose is 'knowledge with love.' So when the mind knows and loves itself, its word is joined to it with love" (9.15). By the time, however, we come to Aquinas, this relatively exploratory stance finds precise and exact formulation in the very first question he raises in relation to the Trinity: are there processions in God? "Whenever we understand, by the mere fact that we do understand, something proceeds within us,

15. It should be noted that elements of the analogy are to be found in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. He compares our own speech act with that of God: "that imperishable and ever-existing nature has speech which is eternal and subsistent ... In the human context we say that a word comes from the mind, being neither completely identical with the mind, nor utterly different from it ... yet it cannot be conceived as different since it reveals the mind itself ... Thus, we have recognised the Word in the transcendent nature by an ascent from the facts of human nature." *The Great Catechism*, chap. 1, in Henry Bettenson (ed. and trans.), *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 151. Where Augustine clearly differs from Nyssa here is in relation to the procession of the Spirit.

16. Translation from Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City, 1991).

which is the conception of the thing understood, issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from its knowledge."¹⁷ Corresponding to this formulation is a conception of divinity as *ipsum intelligere*, an unlimited and pure act of understanding that understands everything about everything from which proceeds a divine Word which perfectly expresses that understanding.¹⁸

This very intellectualist account of the psychological analogy and basic conception of divinity as *ipsum intelligere* find their correspondence in an anthropology that focuses attention on human intellect and the eschatological fulfilment of that intellect in the beatific vision in which we see God face to face and we know as fully as we are known (1 Cor 13:12). The restlessness of the heart (Augustine) gives way to the endless questioning of the mind (Aquinas) with the fulfilment of the human subject found in sharing in the divine knowing.¹⁹ This same intellectualism is evident in the conception of the procession of the Spirit. Augustine and Aquinas both speak of the proceeding word as a *verbum spirans amorem*, a word breathing love.²⁰ Lonergan interprets this as a judgment of value where it is a judgment of value grasped intellectually through insight.²¹ Both the analogy for the procession of the Word and for the procession of the Spirit reflect certain anthropological stances about what it means to be human.

Still the focus of the analogy for the procession of the Spirit in a judgment of value raises questions about the nature of these judgments and whether a purely intellectualist account of them is adequate. As Blaise Pascal noted, "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know."²² Frederick Crowe and others have noted that Lonergan increasingly sought to distinguish the cognitive levels of experience, understanding, and judgment from the richer and fuller existential context of affectivity, judgments of value, decisions, and love.²³ This increasing differentiation led to developments in how Lonergan conceived the psychological analogy. The first movement in this direction can be found in what Lonergan identifies in his Latin courses on the Trinity as the

17. Aquinas *ST* 1, q. 27, a. 1. This is the translation given in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael Shields, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 133. See n. 3 for some of the textual issues around this text.

18. For God as *ipsum intelligere* see Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 14, a. 4. Also *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 700.

19. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Crowe and Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 100.

20. Aquinas *ST* 1, q. 43, a. 5, quoting Augustine, *De Trinitate* 9.10.

21. Lonergan, *Verbum*, 209: "As complete understanding not only grasps essence and, in essence, all properties, but also affirms existence and value, so also from understanding's self-expression in judgment of value there is an intelligible procession of love in the will." Also 152, 188.

22. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* §277.

23. Frederick E. Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 51–70.

most fitting analogy for the Trinity, to be found, not in cognitional issues directly but in the exercise of existential autonomy:

In the third and final way it is exercised in the existential sphere insofar as one asks about oneself, understands what kind of person one ought to be, judges how one can make oneself that kind of person, and from all this proceeds an existential choice through which, insofar as one is able here and now to do so, one makes oneself to be that kind of person. Accordingly, it seems that the Trinitarian analogy ought to be taken from the exercise of existential autonomy.²⁴

This act of taking possession of oneself still retains the earlier features of understanding and judgment, but the focus of these acts is existential—"what kind of person one ought to be"—and issues in a decision to be that kind of person.²⁵ Nonetheless the sweep within consciousness remains one of "below upwards" or ascending. In classical terms it is still operating under the aegis of an adage found in Augustine and repeated by Aquinas, *nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum* (nothing is loved unless it is first known).²⁶ As such this represents a transition phase in an expanding anthropological horizon.

The terminus of this development resides in Lonergan's post-*Method* writings in his essay "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections."²⁷ There he posits a new anthropological starting point for the psychological analogy, not in his previous intellectualism with a focus on the act of understanding, but in "that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love."²⁸ This higher synthesis incorporates a more positive contribution for affectivity in intentional consciousness than we find in the cognitional theory of *Insight*, for Lonergan now envisages feelings as intentional responses to value, as a specific differential of moral consciousness from intellectual and rational consciousness.²⁹ Affectivity then becomes a mode of human self-transcendence, together with questioning, understanding, conceiving, judging, and deciding. We are now much more in Augustinian territory than Thomistic with an emphasis on heart not just head. The analogy is spelt out as follows:

Now in God the origin is the Father, in the New Testament named *ho Theos*, who is identified with *agape* (1 John 4:8, 16). Such love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value. The judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit.³⁰

24. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, 179. The first and second ways are ordinary judgments of value, and practical judgments to do something.

25. This may well prefigure Lonergan's later notion of moral conversion.

26. Augustine, *De Trinitate* Book 10, 1.2; Aquinas *ST* 1, q. 27, a. 3 ad. 3: "nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect."

27. Lonergan, "Christology Today."

28. Lonergan, "Christology Today," 93.

29. Crowe brings out the shift from Lonergan's position in *Insight* toward that of *Method* and post-*Method* writings in Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value."

30. Lonergan, "Christology Today," 93.

Here Lonergan proposes a psychological analogy which conceives the Father in terms of unoriginated *agape* rather than unoriginated understanding. Most importantly, he can make this new proposal because of his mature position on intentionality and his attention to the importance of affectivity. The procession of the Word is still conceived as a judgment of value, but the ground of that judgment is now “based on evidence perceived by a lover.”³¹ By implication, the same evidence perceived by a non-lover might lead to a different judgment. *Love reveals truth in this analogy rather than truth grounding love.* Lonergan in fact explicitly reverses the traditional saying, nothing loved without first being known, to nothing truly known without first being loved: “There has been opened up a new world in which the old adage *nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum*, yields to a new truth, *nihil vere cognitum nisi prius amatum*.”³² Moreover, there are two distinct loves involved in the analogy, the unoriginated and originating love identified with the Father, and the originated loving identified with the Spirit. The judgment of value is the pivot between these two loves.

We shall now seek to link this development within the psychological analogy and its underlying anthropology with the question of Christ’s consciousness. Lonergan raises this possibility himself, noting, “It is on the analogy of such transforming love that we can gain some imperfect understanding of the mystery that the life lived by Jesus of Nazareth really was the fully human life of the second person of the Blessed Trinity.”³³ Our task is now to unpack this possibility.

The Conscious Experience of Jesus Considered as a Systematic Issue

As noted in our opening comments, to speak of the consciousness of Jesus is difficult given the paucity of historical data available to us on the question. On the other hand, church teaching and speculative theology has long had an interest in the question of whether Jesus experienced the beatific vision in this life, and if so what that might mean for his human living. We have already drawn attention to the more recent writings of some quite conservative theologians who have recently called this claim into question: Jean Galot, Thomas Weinandy, and Hans Urs von Balthasar.³⁴ Responding to these concerns Thomas White has mounted a spirited defense of the position that Jesus enjoyed the vision as essential in understanding the indefectibility of Christ’s will.³⁵ Others drawing more from the Scriptures have highlighted other aspects of Jesus’ conscious experience. Edward Schillebeeckx has sought a distinctive element in the

31. Lonergan, “Christology Today,” 93.

32. Lonergan, “Christology Today,” 77.

33. Lonergan, “Christology Today,” 77.

34. Jean Galot, “Le Christ Terrestre et la Vision,” *Gregorianum* 67 (1986): 429–50; Thomas G. Weinandy, “Jesus’ Filial Vision of the Father,” *Pro Ecclesia* 13 (2004): 189–201. Also various writings of Balthasar cited in Rosenberg, “Christ’s Human Knowledge.”

35. White, *The Incarnate Lord*. For a response to White’s position from a Lonerganian perspective see Neil Ormerod, “Doing the Will of the Father: Jesus’s Freedom and the Beatific Vision,” *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 83 (2018): 203–16.

consciousness of Jesus in his “Abba experience”³⁶ while James Dunn has attempted to identify what evidence there may be of Jesus’ experience of the Spirit through a close exegesis of the Gospel texts.³⁷ All this indicates ongoing interest in the question of Jesus’ conscious experience and some sense that there is something unique about that experience that is central to understanding his identity. What our above discussion on the shifting accounts of the psychological analogy and their underlying anthropologies raises is a systematic framework for examining the issue enabling a move from a focus on the question of what Jesus knew (cognitional/intellectualist) to what Jesus loved (religio-existential). This latter focus is more congruent with Catholic piety which is more concerned with Jesus’ heart than his mind, as evidenced in the popular piety of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Corresponding to Aquinas’s intellectualist stance evident in his psychological analogy, there is a similar intellectualist concern in his account of the beatific vision in Christ. Aquinas is very clear that because knowledge pertains to a person in relation to a nature, any claim to beatific knowing in Christ does not follow automatically because of his divine knowing in his divine nature.³⁸ Beatific knowing in the human consciousness of Christ is not the same as the beatitude and knowing the Word enjoys as God. It is, however, the same as that enjoyed by the blessed in heaven, though preeminently so in the case of Jesus (*ST* 3, q. 9, a. 2). This must be the case for Aquinas, because the humanity of Jesus is the cause of their blessedness (his reading of Hebrews 2:10), so that: “it was necessary that the beatific knowledge, which consists in the vision of God, should belong to Christ pre-eminently, since the cause ought always to be more efficacious than the effect.”³⁹ For Aquinas, we can conclude that Jesus enjoys the beatific vision in his human consciousness because he is the cause of our sharing it in the next life. As that fulfilment is conceived intellectually, so too is Christ’s fulfilment. The motivation, however, for this argument is soteriological rather than being a metaphysical deduction from the fact of the Incarnation. It is *fitting* because Christ cannot give us what he himself does not have.⁴⁰

Aquinas also recognizes the role of habitual grace in the life of Jesus, which is necessary for Jesus’ human nature to be elevated to a supernatural life and is distinct from the grace of union. His account of the ordering of these two graces follows the trinitarian logic of the processions/mission:

Now the mission of the Son is prior, in the order of nature, to the mission of the Holy Spirit, even as in the order of nature the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and love from wisdom. Hence the personal union, according to which the mission of the Son took place, is prior in

36. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 256–69.

37. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*.

38. *ST* 3, q. 9, a. 1 ad 3. Translation here and below from the Benzinger edition.

39. *ST* 3, q. 9, a. 2.

40. The notion of “fittingness” is a sound theological goal where necessity is not possible. It reminds us that we are dealing with mystery which resists our attempts at certainty and that necessity is not the only type of intelligibility open to the theologian.

the order of nature to habitual grace, according to which the mission of the Holy Spirit takes place.⁴¹

The relative ordering remains that of the *filioque*, with the Spirit proceeding from the Son, as love from wisdom: “nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect.”⁴² We have here an example of the psychological analogy drawn from Jesus’ conscious experience of habitual grace. Significantly there has been far less attention given to the question of Jesus’ experience of grace than there has been on the question of his beatific vision, even though Aquinas raises it as a question prior to his discussion of Jesus’ knowing.

Discussion of Jesus’ beatific knowing has been increasingly problematic for modern authors for a variety of reasons. Most of these difficulties revolve around how such a beatific vision impacts on Jesus’ acquired or experiential knowing, with claims that positing the vision encourages a monophysite understanding of Jesus; that is, if Jesus’ beatific knowing supplants his discursive performance, it becomes difficult to understand how he grew in knowledge in a genuinely human way.⁴³ Against these objections, we suggest that it is vital to recognize that such beatific knowing is ineffable and hence incommunicable in itself. It is not like “taking a good look” at everything, but more an insight that holds everything in its proper place, an insight which must still be deciphered or unpacked for communication. Without his ordinary human knowing, gained through experience, understanding, and judgment, Jesus could not communicate anything about, or in virtue of, his beatific knowing.⁴⁴

If we now turn to the more existential analogy briefly considered by Lonergan in his *Triune God: Systematics*, we can map out a corresponding shift in relation to the consciousness of Jesus. The focus is now on “what kind of person one ought to be.”⁴⁵ For Jesus we would suggest that the question of “what kind of person one ought to be” is inseparable from what Doran has called his “mission consciousness”⁴⁶ or what an earlier generation of theologians might have called his “messianic consciousness.”⁴⁷ This mission consciousness is the core of Jesus’ identity and so Doran proposes it as a fitting transposition of the Thomistic notion of the secondary act of existence, the created term of the relation of paternity by which the human nature of Jesus exists as the incarnate Word. It also focuses our attention on the question of Jesus’ self-knowledge:

41. *ST* 3, q. 7, a. 13.

42. *ST* 1, q. 27, a. 3 ad. 3.

43. This is the concern raised by Galot, “Le Christ Terrestre et la Vision.”

44. Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, Thesis 12, 573–715; Rosenberg, “Christ’s Human Knowledge”; Eric Mabry, “*In Illo Tempore*: Being and Becoming in the Historical Life of Jesus Christ,” *The Heythrop Journal* 58 (2017): 17–36.

45. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, 179.

46. Robert M. Doran, “Are There Two Consciousnesses in Christ? Transposing the Secondary Act of Existence,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82 (2017): 148–68.

47. The use of this category was always muddled by a failure to attend to the difference between consciousness as perception/knowledge and consciousness as experience.

understanding and judging “what kind of person” he is *sent* to be.⁴⁸ In more direct parlance, considering Jesus’ mission consciousness raises the question of whether Jesus understood and judged himself to be the incarnate Son sent by the Father. Recently Eric Mabry has identified a growing line of exegetical and historical opinion which is more open to an affirmative answer to this question, in a departure from the more skeptical scholarship of the past.⁴⁹ We could suggest that while a verbal statement may or may not be present, there is certainly a performative element, of incarnate meaning, to Jesus’ mission which speaks of a unique and transcendent source of authority and identity, evident in his teaching, forgiveness of sins, and miracles.⁵⁰ There is still the question of Jesus’ experience of the Spirit to consider, but we postpone this until we move on to the third and final stage of the development of the underlying anthropology.

This focus on the existential issue of identity is only a transition for Lonergan’s understanding of the psychological analogy before he moves to a more fully developed position with a starting point in the “higher synthesis of intellectual, rational and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love.”⁵¹ However, before we unpack the christological implications of this for the consciousness of Jesus we require a brief digression into the notion of the human heart as a symbol of love and affectivity in the person.

The “Heart” of the Matter

We noted above the famous aphorism of Pascal, “The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know.”⁵² But what do we mean by the heart in this way? The biblical texts such as Ezekiel 36:22, where God proclaims that he will replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh, speak of the heart of something like the core of a person, the center or core of their moral and religious identity. The heart is the secret place where God speaks to us, the site where radical conversion is possible, so that a change of “heart” affects our whole life. The question is whether this symbolic and

48. As Doran notes, this makes a strong connection with the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, for whom person *is* mission. Doran, “Are There Two Consciousnesses in Christ?” 164–68. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, “On the Concept of Person,” *Communio* 13 (1986): 18–26.

49. Mabry, “Being and Becoming in the Historical Life of Jesus Christ,” 20, and 34–35 n26. Significantly many of these exegetes and historians have been influenced by Lonergan’s critical realism, as mediated by the work of Ben Meyer; for example N. T. Wright and Larry Hurtado.

50. On incarnate meaning as one of the carriers of meaning, see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), 57–73. Mabry helpfully suggests that “Jesus’ life is not primarily one of personal self-discovery but one of self-revelation. What Jesus discovers is ever more appropriate ways to manifest his divine Sonship, to teach humankind about the Father.” Mabry, “Being and Becoming in the Historical Life of Jesus Christ,” 25.

51. Lonergan, “Christology Today,” 93.

52. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* §277.

metaphorical language can be captured in more explanatory terms. The suggestion proposed is that the notion of personal value, one's felt sense of oneself as loved and lovable, provides a satisfactory explanatory account of what is meant by the heart. As Sebastian Moore puts the matter, "This sense of myself as desirable is the basis of all my relating. For it is the heart of desiring. It is because I am desirable that I am desire-able."⁵³ To make this more precise we draw on recent work by Patrick Byrne.

In his recent work, *The Ethics of Discernment*, Byrne provides a thorough phenomenology of the affectivity of discernment focusing on its role in moral decision-making. Byrne introduces the notion of a horizon of feeling against which we make our "questions of comparative and personal value" which are determined by "one's horizon of feeling and one's habitual valuing." One's own personal scale of values "is already established by one's horizon of feeling, and one's *feelings about oneself—one's personal value*—play a prominent role in establishing that hierarchy." The existential question about what sort of person I should be or become is "also determined by the extent to which one is operating out of a limited or an unrestricted horizon of feeling that feels *the value of being oneself*."⁵⁴ He goes on to note that we "spontaneously *feel the value of ourselves* as what Lonergan called 'originating value'—the value of ourselves as the beings who make actual the value of ourselves as well as other values."⁵⁵ In fact, Byrne argues, when we make any judgment of value at all, we do so against this preexisting horizon of value. "Even when our judgments of value are indeed virtually unconditioned judgments, they are so only relative to the sense of values as determined by the concrete constitutions of our horizons of feeling."⁵⁶

We would propose then that these "feelings about oneself—one's personal value" provide an explanatory account comparable to the notion of the heart. Inasmuch as this sense of personal value shifts, through falling in love and being loved, through the action of divine grace, we emerge as a new person who lives a different kind of life. These shifts open up for us a world of different possibilities that accompany our "change of heart." With this more technical conception of the notion of heart we can consider the implications of Lonergan's shifting psychological analogy for the Trinity towards a basis in love in relation to the consciousness of Jesus.

53. Sebastian Moore, *Let This Mind Be in You: The Quest for Identity through Oedipus to Christ* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), 14.

54. Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 195; emphasis added.

55. Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 196; emphasis added. Drawing on the work of Sebastian Moore, Ormerod came to the same observation, if expressed in less technical terms: "My own evaluation of myself, my self-feeling or self-esteem, is the prism through which the world's values are refracted. And so I propose that *human self-esteem is the basic determining principle of a subject's horizon*." Neil Ormerod, *Grace & Disgrace: A Theology of Self-Esteem, Society, and History* (Newtown, NSW: E.J. Dwyer, 1992), 24.

56. Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 208. There are significant issues that can be raised here about the objectivity of moral judgments which Byrne directly addressed in his text. However, these are beyond the scope of our present concerns.

Love Is His Origin, Love Is His Purpose

Byrne's analysis of our affective horizon has immediate application to the question of Jesus' human consciousness. Rather than conceiving Jesus' beatific vision as the fulfillment of the human desire to know, we can reframe it as the complete fulfillment of "the human desire to know and value *everything that is good*."⁵⁷ This fulfillment occurs through Jesus' conscious relation to the Father who is unrestricted and unoriginated love, a love which is the source of all goodness and being. This formulation is a significant shift from identifying Jesus' conscious experience in terms of an intellectually conceived beatific vision. Here love reveals truth, rather than truth grounding love. Questions of Jesus' knowing are now in the context of this prior love which reveals truth, a truth of the heart. Jesus grasps the world through the eyes of divine love, "based on evidence perceived by a lover."⁵⁸

Now such "love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value."⁵⁹ This is the key to Jesus' identity, the divine "Yes" to the Father's love.⁶⁰ He is the Word incarnate, living a life of complete obedience to the Father. This captures what Schillebeeckx expressed in his notion of Jesus' "Abba experience" which was the core of his identity and source of assurance in his mission.⁶¹ Such a stance is also reflected in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which downplays somewhat the notion of the beatific vision as an intellectual vision to speak of Jesus' "intimate" knowledge of the Father (CCC 473), referring more to a lover's intimate knowledge of his or her beloved. This may also capture what Doran means by the term "mission consciousness" present in Jesus, for his mission is his personal identity, one of complete obedience as sent by the Father.

Finally, "the judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit."⁶² Byrne's account allows us to conceive the presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' human consciousness as Jesus' felt personal value as the Father's "beloved." The originated loving that is the presence of the Holy Spirit within Jesus' human conscious experience is then the originating value from which Jesus' human decisions and judgments flow. The personal value that Jesus experiences remains the value of a divine person incarnate *in a human nature*. It is not an experience of the divine value per se, which cannot be encompassed within a human consciousness, any more than the divine intellect can be humanly comprehended.⁶³ However, it is that experience of divine value as a created participation in active spiration, whose term is the Holy Spirit. In less technical terms, the love with which Jesus

57. Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 210; emphasis added.

58. Lonergan, "Christology Today," 93.

59. Lonergan, "Christology Today," 93.

60. See for example Dadosky, "God's Eternal Yes!"

61. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 256. He describes the Abba experience as the source and secret of Jesus' being, message, and manner of life.

62. Lonergan, "Christology Today," 93.

63. Note for example that Aquinas does not identify Jesus' experience of the beatific vision with that of the Logos in its divinity.

is loved by the Father and in which he rests as a human being is the love with which he loves us. The sacred “heart” (as felt personal value) of Jesus is then the Spirit residing in him.

Thus all three of the elements identified in Lonergan’s final psychological analogy for the Trinity can be found in the consciousness of Jesus: the origins of his life in the divine love of the Father, a beatific love and intimacy which is the source of his identity; that identity is a complete “Yes” to that love, a judgment of the divine value revealed in his experience of divine love and lived out in his mission; the first and grounding object of that love as felt in proceeding love, the Holy Spirit, delighting in him, the value of a divine person incarnate *in a human nature*. Jesus’ own conscious experience would then be the exemplar for what Doran has called a supernatural psychological analogy.⁶⁴

This proposal allows us to identify both a similarity and a difference between Jesus’ experience of grace (the Spirit) and ours. First, the experience of grace in both cases entails the same Spirit poured into our hearts. However, in Jesus’ case the Spirit (as created participation) *is* his felt personal value. His *person* is divine and so his *personal* value is nothing other than the Spirit residing within him. This is not the case with us. While we might think of the experience of grace as sublating our personal value, placing it within a new and larger horizon, nonetheless our apprehension of personal value in this context involves the apprehension of ourselves as human persons loved by God. Concurrently, with us, grace can be lost through sin, but in Jesus grace is intrinsic to his personal identity as the incarnate Word. He remains always in the Spirit. On the other hand, Jesus still grows “in wisdom and grace,” and as he grows and develops in the inherent potentialities of his humanity, there is more personal value in which to take delight. We find something of this stance in the way Aquinas comments on the text of Luke 2:25, which speaks of Jesus increasing in wisdom and grace:

Anyone may increase in wisdom and grace in two ways. First inasmuch as the very habits of wisdom and grace are increased; and in this way Christ did not increase. Secondly, as regards the effects, i.e. inasmuch as they do wiser and greater works; and in this way Christ increased in wisdom and grace even as in age, since in the course of time He did more perfect works, to prove Himself true man, both in the things of God, and in the things of man.⁶⁵

There is a perfection about Jesus’ experience of grace inasmuch as he experiences God’s delight in him fully, but there is also growth as the effects of that grace are manifest in his human life; as he matures physically, socially, intellectually, and morally, he realizes his potential more fully (“inasmuch as they do wiser and greater works; and in this way Christ increased in wisdom and grace even as in age”). These aspects too are “delightful” and so there is an increase in a sense of his personal value.

64. Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 106–7.

65. *ST* 3, q. 7, a. 12 ad 3.

A Comparison with the Position of David Coffey

Over the span of his theological career David Coffey has developed an approach to the Trinity which seeks to take seriously questions raised about Jesus and his relation to the Holy Spirit. The motivation behind this project has been to harmonize a theology of grace in us with that of grace in Christ, or as he puts the matter,

to understand the divinization of the humanity of Christ (I trust I can now say that without fear of misunderstanding) as the work of the Holy Spirit, whom both Scripture and the Fathers present as the sanctifier and divinizer, not only in regard to ordinary people but also, and principally, in regard to Christ.⁶⁶

The misunderstanding to which he refers here is one which we would identify as adoptionism. However, as he admits, the Christology that he proposes in holding to this position “does not harmonize with the doctrine of the immanent Trinity as normally expressed.”⁶⁷ In order to overcome this difficulty Coffey draws upon a different “model” for the immanent Trinity than that of Aquinas, not one based on the processions, but one which identifies the Holy Spirit as the mutual love between Father and Son.⁶⁸ This model for the immanent Trinity grounds an understanding of the Holy Spirit as the mutual exchange of love between the Father and the incarnate Son:

If Jesus is brought into being as the divine Son in humanity through the Father’s radical bestowal of love on him, which love is the Holy Spirit, and if the response of Jesus is a love for the Father which ultimately is a return of this same Spirit, then in the immanent Trinity itself the Holy Spirit exists as the mutual love of the Father and the Son. . . . [T]he Holy Spirit has to be seen as the return of the Father’s love by Jesus and his sending of the Spirit upon the Church as the obverse of this love.⁶⁹

As Ormerod has already noted, the approach to these questions through the four-point hypothesis achieves many of the goals Coffey seeks to achieve while still operating within a classical conception of two processions, their corresponding missions and the four trinitarian relations.⁷⁰ However, the analysis above allows us to point out another significant difference. We have identified the presence of the Spirit in Jesus in terms of his personal value, or in more popular parlance, his self-esteem or self-love, whereas Coffey identifies the Spirit as Jesus’ love of the Father. In the background here is Rahner’s essay on the unity of the twin commands to love God and love our

66. Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” 469.

67. Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” 470.

68. He variously calls this the “bestowal” model or the model of “return.” His initial and most substantial study here is *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1979).

69. Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” 479–80.

70. Ormerod, “The Trinitarian Depths of the Incarnation,” 822.

neighbor.⁷¹ Coffey argues, “In the case of Jesus, and after his death, this twofold love is simply the Holy Spirit, incarnate in his human love.”⁷² However, the missing element here is the full meaning of Jesus’ command to “love your neighbor as *yourself*.” One’s self-love is the originating personal value from which one’s own acts of valuing and loving arise; in the more traditional language of grace, this self-love pertains to habitual grace, the grace that makes us pleasing to God. And this remains true not only in our case but in the case of Jesus. This aspect is identified in the proposal above.

Jesus’ love for the world that emerges from this originating personal value is then identified not with the term of active spiration (the Spirit) but with the term of passive Spiration (Father and Son) and so is the common work of both. As Ormerod states it, “Just as partaking in the relation of active spiration is to have one’s heart flooded by the Holy Spirit, partaking in the relation of passive spiration is to engage in the common work of the Father and Son, which has traditionally been identified as the habit of charity, the habitual orientation to enacting God’s love in the world. Today we might equally call it ‘working for the Kingdom of God.’”⁷³

Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this article, its working hypothesis is that the psychological analogy for the Trinity provides a speculative vantage point for an examination of the psychology of Jesus. We have traced through how different conceptions of that analogy shed suggestive light on the question of Jesus’ beatific vision and his own sense of personal value. In particular it assists us to shift from questions of Jesus’ beatific knowing to his beatific experience of unrestricted divine love and the divine love of self that emerges from this experience. As we have hinted within the text, this gives some theological depth to a tradition in Catholic piety of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by placing it within a fully trinitarian context. This would indeed seem to be a fruitful outcome.

Author Biographies

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71. Karl Rahner, “Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 231–49. This is footnoted in David Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” 478 n18.

72. Coffey, “The ‘Incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit,” 478.

73. Ormerod, “The Trinitarian Depths of the Incarnation,” 820.