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2012

Filial Relationship, Mercy and limitation in Thérèse of Lisieux: Towards a Thérésian  
Theological Anthropology and its Implications

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Publication Details

Schneider, J. (2012). Filial Relationship, Mercy and limitation in Thérèse of Lisieux: Towards a Thérésian Theological Anthropology  
and its Implications (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/74>

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Towards a Thérésian Theological Anthropology

In Chapter Seven, we saw that thinking about our union with God, in terms of higher knowing and acting (scholasticism), instead of being-in-relation (Macmurray), could lead to defining grace in categories of objective increases in an individual person. In this chapter we investigate whether Thérèse shifts the understanding of grace from ‘objective increases’ to ‘being-in-relation’. Thérèse, in *Man A*, uses the image of growing up (mastery over her emotion – an objective increase) to describe her “conversion.”<sup>1</sup> In *Man B*, observing she cannot grow up (from audacious, foolish love), she characterizes her relation with God as not growing up, and uses the image of being a child. ‘Limitation’, conquered in the first way of thinking, is prized in the second.<sup>2</sup> Needing, and looking out for God’s gracious help leads to enjoying God’s presence, to being with God, reminiscent of her childhood relating. While McDargh’s method acknowledges the centrality of being in relation to faith-development, do any post-Thérésian theologies do likewise in response to Thérèse’s thought?

This chapter will begin with three post-Thérèse theologians’ understandings of ‘the experience of God’.<sup>3</sup> It will then discuss Lonergan’s method in theology, contrasting his thought with Thérèse’s, and proceed to use his “functions of meaning” in order to describe her experience as theology. Where an ‘objective increase’ is shown in Thérèse in spiritual maturity<sup>4</sup> and an “about face” in conversion,<sup>5</sup> we show Thérèse’s self-imaging reflects her desire *to be-in-relation*. To be-in-relation means to become a child, not any child, but the one she once was, one who responds to her mother/father with confidence rather than fear.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Growing up’, in turn, enabled her to become a Carmelite, to enter her vocation, Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul. The Autobiography of St Thérèse of Lisieux*, translated by John Clarke (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1996), 97. Rarely using the word “conversion” in relation to herself, Thérèse repeats her *Man A* conversion description to Bellière (writing in October, 1896). “Without this change, I would have had to remain for years in the world.” Thérèse of Lisieux, *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence Volume II 1890-1897*, translated by John Clarke OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1988), 1016.

<sup>2</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 208.

<sup>3</sup> This approach will be taken from Anthony J. Kelly and Francis J. Moloney in *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John* (New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Joann Wolski Conn. “Rereading Spiritual Classics Thérèse of Lisieux: Far from Spiritual Childhood.” *Spiritus* 6/1 (2006), 68-89.

<sup>5</sup> Joann Wolski Conn & Walter E. Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St Thérèse of Lisieux.” *Spirituality Today* 34/4 (Winter 1982), 303- 311.

Finally, we look for evidence of Thérèse's thought in von Balthasar, who uses Thérèse's sense of vocation in his idea of personhood, and notes similar themes as Thérèse in Christ's call to "become a child."

### 1. Some Theological Understandings of "the Experience of God"

Kelly and Moloney present four theological understandings of experiencing God, that of a) Aquinas (1225-1274), b) Karl Rahner (1904-1984), c) von Balthasar (1905-1988), and d) Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), which are respectively: (a) gifts of "charity and infused wisdom;" b) openness to the experience of the transcendent; c) a progressing dispossession of the self, and d) a radical "being in love."<sup>6</sup> Thérèse subscribes to Aquinas's increases, as the happy fruit of relation. Rahner's supernatural existential is hinted at in Thérèse's "empty hands" (seen in Ruth Burrows' use of this expression).<sup>7</sup> Von Balthasar interprets Thérèse as an exceptional instance of progressively looking away from her self and toward God, in a self-surrendering mission.<sup>8</sup> Finally, writers have used Thérèse to exemplify Lonergan's dimensions of conversion.<sup>9</sup>

#### a. Post Thérésian Developments

We offer a brief overview of de Lubac (1896-1991), Rahner, von Balthasar, and Lonergan, to see if they resolved the unacknowledged theological issues of Thérèse's time – lack of dynamism (little sense of the fact of, and the good of the human as developing), the subject as an authority of their own authenticity, and relationality (*being-in-relation* is an objective, which leads to the activity of graciousness). A change began with de Lubac.<sup>10</sup> Feeling that the concept of pure nature (two distinct levels of nature) was alienating Catholics, and fuelling

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<sup>6</sup> Kelly and Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, 4-8.

<sup>7</sup> For example, see Ruth Burrows, "If you Knew the Gift of God," *The Pastoral Review*, September 2008, [http://www.thepastoralreview.org/cgi-bin/archive\\_db.cgi?priestsppl-00051](http://www.thepastoralreview.org/cgi-bin/archive_db.cgi?priestsppl-00051) on 12/09/2008. Also, "Amen: The Human Response to God." *The Way* 43/2 (April 2004), 78-90.

<sup>8</sup> See Mary Frohlich, "Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne D'Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation." *Spiritus* 6/2 (Fall 2006), 173-194. Hermeneutics sensitive to Thérèse's use of symbol have been designed to analyse experience of God the way Thérèse understood it.

<sup>9</sup> See Dorothy Day, *Thérèse: A Life of Thérèse of Lisieux* (Springfield IL: Templegate Publishers, 1987); Wolski Conn and Robert Doran; Tom Ryan.

<sup>10</sup> De Lubac responded openly to the flourishing of atheistic humanism against an anti-modernist Church stance. Mulcahy, "Not Everything is Grace," 17. See Henri de Lubac. *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950).

atheistic humanism, de Lubac tried to restore the cohesion of human 'being' by removing a superstructure of grace, and offering one God-intended passage.<sup>11</sup> He proposed that all are constituted by a desire for God (God-desire constitutive of human nature); God freely constitutes humanity this way when choosing to destine all for union with God.<sup>12</sup> Human nature, for de Lubac, is intrinsically disposed to reach for, and attain God, which is effected through grace.<sup>13</sup> All creatures are intrinsically God-oriented; Aquinas's fundamental 'desire to know' is conflated with the 'desire to know God'.<sup>14</sup>

To maintain continuity with Aquinas, Rahner asserted that pure nature *was* needed to preserve grace as a gift. Taking up the idea of an unconditioned existential, all in concrete history are endowed with a supernatural desire for God/a God-orientation/capacity for God (a sense conveying grace is always and everywhere on offer) – a “supernatural existential” – without which we are still human.<sup>15</sup> To overcome the impersonal categories that led to extrinsicism, Rahner described grace more relationally: as God's Self-communication. For Rahner, the *way* God is universally available is via a human capacity for God, with grace as God's Self-communication. Rahner (following Rousselot and Maréchal) begins with a transcendental notion from Kant: experience is (*a priori*) configured in the “ontological construction of the human knower.”<sup>16</sup> For Rahner, this ontological construction points to a transcendental conception broader than Kant's mere cognition; it points to the human as a “volitional, cognitional, affectional, composite, who bears a fundamental openness to God,

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew Bernard Mulcahy, OP, “Not Everything is Grace: Aquinas's Notion of “Pure Nature” and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac and of radical Orthodoxy,” Doctoral Thesis submitted to the Australian Catholic University, 2008. [dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adu-acuyp238.../index.html](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adu-acuyp238.../index.html). Accessed 25 Sept 2011, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* (Maryknoll, New York, USA: Orbis Books, 2007), 118.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen J. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon: Nature and Grace in Modern Catholic Thought*. (Collegeville Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 15.

<sup>14</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 119.

<sup>15</sup> Rahner states that human desire for God is constitutive of human nature but not essential to it. If our yearning for God comes *through* our original sense of unity and dependence on another (our universal prenatal experience), Rahner needs to explain its non-essentiality. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 120-121.

<sup>16</sup> Jessica Wormley Murdoch, *Foundations of Christian Faith? Karl Rahner's Transcendental Hermeneutics and the Post Modern Critique*, (Maryland: UMI, ProQuest LLC, 2008), 16, 18.

and is constituted in such a way as to possess this God in the mode of offer (supernatural existential).”<sup>17</sup> Rahner (following Hegel) takes the human as

a union of the whole person in its ground with Absolute Mystery. Thus, “transcendence” means the condition of possibility of human knowing, which *necessarily* includes the dynamism toward the infinite God.<sup>18</sup>

Hence he begins with the human person as a question. Accepting the notion of a synthetic *a priori* whose judgments can access “the noumenal realm,” Rahner avoids the

Kantian “dichotomies between sensibility and understanding, understanding and reason, and theoretical and practical reason.” ...[as] the question about being already intimates a nascent knowledge of absolute being. Hence ...the investigation of human nature points to God as the ground for human knowing.<sup>19</sup>

Rahner introduces dynamism in “sublation,” the awareness of “transcendental experience” (annihilation, elevation, and preservation).<sup>20</sup> Von Balthasar, together with Rahner and de Lubac, stated that God created humanity with the sole intention of final union with Godself.<sup>21</sup> Human life has only this end in view, with gift to be understood relationally (to a beneficiary), never as an “absolute” (an abstraction).<sup>22</sup> Humanity finds itself in a supernatural order constituted by its necessity to actually possess grace, ordered by God this way and no

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<sup>17</sup> Murdoch, *Foundations of Christian Faith?* 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> Murdoch, *Foundations of Christian Faith?* 19.

<sup>19</sup> Murdoch, *Foundations of Christian Faith?* 19-20.

<sup>20</sup> Rahner imports *Aufheben* from Hegel, who uses to describe the transcending resolution to a dialectic’s conflict. William Friedrich Hegel, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 15. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>. Accessed on 27/01/2012. Rahner moved from tradition to contemporary theology by posing theology’s “own questions to revelatory texts,” which “annihilates the original question meaning binary, and elevates it to a new understanding, and then preserves the truth by this process.” Murdoch, *Foundations of the Christian Faith?*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> “Grace is for a nature and to a nature; logically, if not chronologically, grace always presupposes a nature” Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung Seiner Theologie* (Cologne: J Hegner, 1951), 291, in Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 116.

other.<sup>23</sup> While humans tender an “otherwise” reality from their perspective “below,” life’s meaning and end comes “from above” (God’s perspective).<sup>24</sup>

Von Balthasar views nature and grace as necessarily distinct due to their representing others in relation.<sup>25</sup> “The supernatural existential ordering humanity to intimate union with God,” flowing from and expressing God’s divine creative and summoning decree is both, a “reality modifying humanity,” and “a necessary, ontological constituent of humanity’s concrete being, without belonging to its nature.”<sup>26</sup> Grace is only received by nature; grace’s freedom resides in God who is sovereignly free, and it is experienced as an eternally fresh, unexpected “I-thou” encounter.<sup>27</sup> This existence (we apprehend) is the one God chose.<sup>28</sup>

Von Balthasar used Thérèse in a phenomenological study on personhood.<sup>29</sup> Did he also draw from Thérèse to inform his thought on ‘grace’: the mercies of childhood as analogous to God’s grace? In his work, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, von Balthasar points to the young child as representing something distinctive.<sup>30</sup> Our early years resemble a “sphere of original wholeness and health;” human and divine goodness are felt as one.<sup>31</sup> Upon entering

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<sup>23</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 116, 117-118. At 119, God’s gratuity from above is maintained because God chose this order.

<sup>24</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 119.

<sup>25</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 122.

<sup>26</sup> Von Balthasar, *Karl Barth*, 454 in Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 122, 123.

<sup>27</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> With Rahner, von Balthasar holds that there has never been a “pure nature” in history; God’s grace has always been present, and there has always been only one “telos.” Pure nature is retained to prevent nature and the divine from collapsing into each other. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 129.

<sup>29</sup> See Victoria S. Harrison, “Personal identity and Integration: von Balthasar’s Phenomenology of Human Holiness,” *Heythrop Journal*, XL (1999), pp 424-437, 429-435. For von Balthasar, Thérèse instantiates the call to die and be born again, meaning all ‘untruth’ in the ‘personality’ has to die making way for ‘personhood’ which is God’s ‘truth’. Finding Thérèse’s humility brings out her ‘truth’, he views humility as underpinning and equating truth; through humility a person arrives at precisely what they are in “God’s idea.” By living God’s idea, a person brings Christ back into the world. This leads to personal integration. Uniquely self-conscious, both limited and living within limits, yet open to the unlimited, the human’s radically different constituents of “spirit” and “nature” are integrated through “relation” to God – where wholeness may be found.

<sup>30</sup> Von Balthasar’s beginning point here is observing Jesus’ statements, “Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a child will not enter it” (Mk: 10: 15), and “Whoever welcomes such a child in my name, welcomes me” (Mt 18: 5). An echo of it is in 1 Cor 14:20. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 9-10, 12.

moral-autonomy, we may experience “definitive breaks” from this sphere, leading us to now feel this sphere’s goodness and truth as arbitrary, unnatural, impositions.<sup>32</sup> Jesus offers a solution: we may again become a child, by God’s “Spirit within our heart” integrating the “treasures of our original condition into our maturity” — enabling us to cry “Abba Father!”<sup>33</sup>

Using a phenomenology of early human development, von Balthasar then describes a archetypical trinitarian dimension in selfhood.<sup>34</sup> From its “very origin the child possesses... an incontrovertible faith instinct,” which provides an incalculable “capital” for absorbing the Christian faith, even after the separation in his consciousness between divine and human goodness.<sup>35</sup> Jesus offers his experience of filiation to others, through living human existence for our sake.<sup>36</sup> ‘Being a child’ involves an abiding looking up to the father “with eternal childlike amazement.”<sup>37</sup> While hard to preserve, “in the depths of the heart...eros can keep alive an awed amazement” at nature’s delights; “[for] the person who is open to the absolute... ‘The Father is greater than I’ lies hidden in all human experiences.”<sup>38</sup> “In everything the human child is dependent on free acts of giving by others: in him, plea and thanks are still indistinguishably one. Because he is needy he is always thankful in his deepest being, before making any... decision to do so.”<sup>39</sup> To ‘be child means to owe [our]

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<sup>31</sup> These “definitive breaks” are “due to original sin.” The infant is defenceless in the presence of powerful adults who might behave in egotistical ways, “unconscious” of the child’s receptivity to values. Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 12-13.

<sup>32</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 13-14. “This is what it means to receive from God the *instinctus Spiritus Sanctus* as Thomas Aquinas calls the gift grace gives the human heart for it to be able to respond to God’s movement of love. ...[the] adult, who has ... recovered at a higher level the concrete spontaneity of the child, is called ... ‘the synthetic child’.”

<sup>34</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 15-25.

<sup>35</sup> “Capital” aligns with the propensity for religious faith that Rizzuto and Mc Dargh refer to (in object relations theory). Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 42.

<sup>36</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 38-40.

<sup>37</sup> Jesus “knows himself to be sheer Gift that is given to itself and which would not exist without the Giver who is distinct from the Gift and who nonetheless gives himself within it. What the Father gives is the capacity to be a self, freedom, and thus autonomy, but an autonomy which can be understood only as a surrender of the self to the other.” Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 44.

<sup>38</sup> Again we find *eros*, Hegel’s spirit of learning and exploration. Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 46-47. One of McDargh’s subjects, in a state of prayerful communion with God, reports once again entering such joyful awe over nature, an “oral stage” (mouthing) of learning. McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory*, 196-197, 243.

existence to another,” and this truth is never outgrown, because in relation to God we never outgrow our condition as children.<sup>40</sup> Von Balthasar makes no mention of Thérèse, yet this is implied in her writing.

Lonergan, the third post-Thérèse theologian we examine, writes of a “natural desire to see God,” evidenced in the human “search for meaning, truth, and value;” this, a quest for knowing, proportionate to its end, remains a potential obedient to (subject to) reception of grace.<sup>41</sup> Using Rahner’s notion of “sublation,” he states that grace sublates our knowing, that is, it puts all our previous knowing (effable) on a new basis (ineffable) – in service of the beatific vision, preserving the notion of one desire, yet two ends (“proportionate” and “supernatural”).<sup>42</sup>

*b. Was Grace Re-evoked as Relational?*

The above post-Thérèse theologians continue to describe grace as what God gives the human person to enable encounter with Godself. For von Balthasar and Lonergan, grace is the gift that fulfils capacity for that encounter (achieved self-dispossession, or self-transcendence, by ‘falling-in-love’), while for Rahner, grace, more ambiguously, is the apprehension of God’s offered self-communication, the capacity for this (capacity to sense mystery), *and* God’s self-communication itself. While implicit in all three theologies, relation is not a central focus, as it became in Protestant theology.<sup>43</sup> In accommodating Thomistic categories, all three retain elements of grace as ‘substantial’, *something* God provides, and, though softened in a climate of “turn to the subject,” there remains a disjunction with the ‘adjectival’ God-is graceful-to-us associated with felt-experience. We recall that God acts *graciously* in terms of a “Thou-I”

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<sup>39</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> Von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, 49.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Intellect’ includes ‘practical knowing’. In the Thomistic tradition, with its roots in Aristotle, this distinction is allied with that between discursive/analytical knowledge and intuitive/non-discursive knowing. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 121.

<sup>42</sup> Keeping with Aquinas, Rahner and von Balthasar, Lonergan preserves the possibility of a graceless world-order. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 122.

<sup>43</sup> “The Reformer’s notion of nature is more existential than substantialist; hence it is understood more in terms of the human relationship with God than in terms of alterations of structures of a prior and continuing existing identity or essence.. The true self is “excentrically” rather than “inwardly” located.” Stephen J. Duffy in “Our Hearts of Darkness: Original Sin Revisited” *Theological Studies* 49 (1968), pp 597-622, 604-605.

relation – where giver and receiver are not merged – and, acting graciously, God *gives* gifts. However, Aristotle’s essentialist influence led to emphasizing *the gift* (life, its telos, and provision for these) and giftedness (capacities, abilities, and vision toward ends: coming to know God in the revelation of Jesus, acquiring virtue, being endowed with charity, and union with God, a final unending bliss). Left as implied was the ‘adjectival’, where God *is* gracious *toward* persons (relation), which *defines* the ‘substantial’ (capacity, ability, transforming events). Substantial graces are only grace inasmuch as an able, more potent one offers these as help to the less able one. Yet while substantial graces carry persons toward levels or tasks of completion, ‘God-as-gracious’ encompasses the entire activity of the able one and the limited one inter-relating (responding to the one who awaits engagement toward fulfilling capacities, producing trust, confidence, joy and gratitude). Further, God, who creates all, created this *propensity* as the matrix and fabric of developing life, the place for ongoing interpersonal communion. *That* God and creation interact *is* grace. We find this in Thérèse’s appreciation of God’s entrance through her limitation.

Alluding to her life and its capacities as ‘given’, reminiscent of God-human dialogues in the ‘Prophetic’ and ‘Wisdom’ literature, Thérèse offers a more biblically based anthropology.<sup>44</sup> Her early experience, containing abundant valuing of her presence, parallels Genesis 1, where life is not incidental, or of dubious worth, but it is accompanied by God’s blessing “it is good” and God’s responsive presence.<sup>45</sup> The gestation-birth-infancy experience configures persons to increasingly become an other, a subject in relation, its realization dependent on another. Thérèse experiences this self-becoming in relation to various mothers, but when abandoned, finds the possibility of being an ‘other’ continues through bestowal of gracious help via analogies of a God-human dyadic relation.

Thérèse’s spiritual milieu leads her to think differently from Genesis 2:18, where God is concerned to give the human an embodied partner to not be “alone.” Beyond family harmony (felt on feast days), Thérèse hopes for union to God in spiritual marriage (the character of the human soul interpreted as feminine), sharing in the more literal practice of women imaging

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<sup>44</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 29-30. For example, at 181, “Your Mercy reaches to the heavens.” Ps 35:6. For Thérèse’s use of Biblical literature, see 305.

<sup>45</sup> Thérèse’s presence was awaited. *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Volume II*, 1198-1199. She was feted and placed in nature’s bounty. *Story of a Soul*, 30.

themselves as bride united to the male Christ.<sup>46</sup> Immersed in this symbolism, when she reaches puberty and discovers that Jesus needs her, wants her, has a right to her more than any other, and is attracted to her as martyr (Arminjon), she falls in love with him. She draws even closer to Jesus when she discovers her early childhood relating to be her truest, leading her to simply dwell in unity with her Christian family.<sup>47</sup> Before revisiting Thérèse, we introduce Lonergan's method.

## 2. Lonergan's Method in Theology

Bernard Lonergan, a Jesuit priest, philosopher and theologian, like Rahner, approaches the "world of history and human existence" with "meaning and existential responsibility" in the foreground.<sup>48</sup> Where Rahner is concerned with the substantive matters of theology, and offers a reinterpretation of the mystery of a self-communicating God, Lonergan is "concerned with the unveiling of the structural framework that underlies... every thinking operation, and in particular, the theological enterprise," and pursues a method.<sup>49</sup> Noting that

the problem of value judgments cannot be evaded by the theologian, it has to be met head on...

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<sup>46</sup> This was held by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Spiritual marriage, intended as asexual, in uniting in the heart, mind and will of God, was less asexual in the Medieval Beguines, especially in Hadewijch of Antwerp, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete who used the nuptial imagery of the Song of Songs. Thérèse's writing in some ways resembles theirs. See Abby Stoner, "Sisters Between: Gender and Medieval Beguines," 7-9 [http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~epf/journal\\_archive/volume\\_IV\\_no\\_2\\_sp\\_1995/stoner\\_a.pdf](http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~epf/journal_archive/volume_IV_no_2_sp_1995/stoner_a.pdf) accessed 14/01/12. "The notion of virginal perfection is rooted in the consciousness of the primitive Church, and, in fact, helped to establish that consciousness." Its importance "is exemplified in the casual but unequivocal statement of Epiphanius, writing about the year 375, that 'Virginity is the cornerstone of the Church'." John Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 4. Thérèse wrote, "It seems to me this is what [Jesus] must feel the most, ingratitude" from "souls who are consecrated to Him in so absolute a way... Celine, let us ... plant only lilies in our garden... and allow no other flowers, for other flowers can be cultivated by other souls, but it is virgins alone who can give lilies to Jesus..." "... you know that I myself ... think of the Heart of my Spouse is mine alone, just as mine is His alone, and I speak to Him then in the solitude of this delightful heart to heart..." *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Volume II*, 708-709. Thérèse echoes Arminjon's request that her heart belongs to Jesus alone. Charles Arminjon, *The End of the Present World and the Mysteries of the Future Life*, translated by Susan Conroy (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2008), 316.

<sup>47</sup> Psalm Ps 133:1. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for kindred to dwell together in unity!" (הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב ( רַמְּה זָעִים שְׂכָרָה אֶחָיִים גַּם יַחַד is sung at the Shabbat gathering. See *Story of a Soul*, 215.

<sup>48</sup> Lonergan's *Insight* and Rahner's *Geist in Welt* both characterise a "retrieval of being ... through the transcendental structure of knowing." Gaspar Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God: Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies* (NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2001), 179.

<sup>49</sup> Michael O'Callaghan writes that "Rahner is a theologian concerned with working out the general and special categories of foundational theology. Lonergan is a methodologist concerned with how these categories are to be worked out." Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God*, 179.

Loneragan endeavours to uncover “value judgments along with their assumptions, their implications and their associations,” to offer in the “moral order” some equivalent to natural science in terms of its crucial elements.<sup>50</sup> Toward this, he sets the theologian eight tasks which incorporate the phenomenological, empirical, and deductive operations contemporary scientists employ in their disciplines.<sup>51</sup> Whether Lonergan’s method, which is not open “to revision,” is sensitive to theological issues depends on the adequacy of its categories.<sup>52</sup> For example, are they sensitive to grace as relational? To bring Lonergan’s thought into relief, we contrast his ‘doing theology’ (surrounding “conversion” in the individual) with a relational approach – levels of faith (in relation to an other) – as offered by Fowler. This is followed by an approach from Wolski Conn.

*a. Some Contrasts*

We begin with James W. Fowler (1940), from the more relationally oriented reformed tradition (United Methodist). In a project to discover human “faithing,” and its stages (as described by McDargh), Fowler proposed a pathway of increases, reflecting normative progress in this sphere.<sup>53</sup> While *evaluated* as individuals, persons are seen as representing their relational background. Circumscribing life as developing through fundamental trust, mimesis, pair-bonding, cognitive and skill advancement, value-sensing and mirroring, and identity-emergence,<sup>54</sup> Fowler shows faith stages largely “happen” in response to exterior factors, not to claim passivity, but to emphasize the weight of circumstance in faith: the

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<sup>50</sup> Inside cover, *Method in Theology*. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

<sup>51</sup> The tasks are: “research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.” Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, xi, 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> “[T]he objectification of the normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations does not admit to revision.” Or, revision must include conscious attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility. Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God*, 181 -182. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 18-20.

<sup>53</sup> McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory*, 37 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Fowler uses the theories of Erik Erikson (psychosocial development), Jean Piaget (mental development), Lawrence Kohlberg (moral development), and to a lesser degree Robert Selman (on perspective taking). In relation to the nature of faith, he uses Cantwell Smith, Paul Tillich, H. Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Michael Polanyi. Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, *The Sacraments in Religious Education and Liturgy: An Ecumenical Model* (Birmingham, Alabama; Religious Education Press, 1985), 101.

“from whence” (“What are we finally up against?”).<sup>55</sup> His project, in terms of ‘faithing’, parallels ours of ‘gracing’.

In the Catholic tradition, theological emphasis is on the side of “Towards what?”<sup>56</sup> Joann Wolski Conn, a spiritual director whose concern is in spiritual development, shares this focus. In an article, where she uses a structural framework to promote Thérèse’s spirituality as characterizing maturity, she notes that Erikson’s life-span development is

rooted in tasks that arise inevitably, such as identity and intimacy, whereas advances in structural development may not happen at all. In a structural framework, development is a process of detaching oneself from embeddedness in restrictive relationships in order to love with more realistic self-knowledge and self-donation.<sup>57</sup>

She argues that while holiness might be found in fullness in every developmental stage, a “structural framework” is concerned with holiness in terms of maturity (spirituality as corresponding to psychological advancement), that is, in terms of co-operating “with grace by choices for greater self-knowledge, and surrendering love.”<sup>58</sup> Thus she introduces intentionality: the aim of improvement by deliberation-exertion.<sup>59</sup> Focusing on proficiency in relationship-skills, Wolski Conn searches for an objective increase in Thérèse.<sup>60</sup> Measuring Thérèse’s spiritual advancement, involves seeking evidence of effort that prompted psychological progress.<sup>61</sup> Distanced from the *fact* of persons replicating the duet orchestrated

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<sup>55</sup> John McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the imaging of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 41. In the observation of persons occupying aspects of many if not all stages simultaneously, many now accept these ‘states’ as less ‘hierarchically’ progressive.

<sup>56</sup> “From Where?” and “Towards What?” are McDargh’s categories. McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory*, 41-44.

<sup>57</sup> Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood,” 69-70. At 85, Wolski Conn suggests “Milestones for Possible Self-Development,” adapted from Elizabeth Liebert *Changing Life Patterns* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), using Jane Loevinger, *Ego Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976), and Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>58</sup> Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood,” 69-70.

<sup>59</sup> Wolski Conn finds a shift in maturity: “within four years (1894-1897) Thérèse’s ‘little way’ underwent profound transformation.” Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood,” 78.

<sup>60</sup> “Though at first the ‘little way’ seems to espouse a romantic notion of childhood free of effort, on closer inspection this way emerges as the fruit of painful discernment, daring self-awareness, and generous self-donation.” Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood,” 84.

<sup>61</sup> Spiritual advancement is inseparable from and mutually supportive of psychological development if both are interpreted as “a process of differentiation for the sake of relationships that are ever more inclusive, complex and mutual.” Wolski Conn then seeks to demonstrate Thérèse moving toward a sense of mutual autonomy. (Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood,” 68, 77, 84). Wolski Conn, however does not take into account

by their ‘other’ in infancy, Wolski Conn concludes that Thérèse’s activity as “far from childhood.” Perhaps it is truer to say that Thérèse aimed to repeat the activity of childhood (confident trust, mutuality, magnanimity, sense of potency) in *circumstances* far from childhood (now tempted to suspicion, striving, and control).<sup>62</sup>

Where Wolski Conn places spiritual development in the realm of exertion, beyond ‘involuntary’ responses, Lonergan places intention-willing as inherent in human development. Lonergan bases his method for doing theology on individual cognitive progress as corresponding to advancing human consciousness in history. He is eager for his method to be “dynamic” (process sensitive, transcultural, meeting the diverse specializations in contemporary theology, and applicable to the progress of theology in history) and “transcendental” (concerned with the metaphysical: the “unrestricted” forward reach of human enquiry, representing the “unfolding of a single thrust, the *eros* of the human spirit”).<sup>63</sup> Acknowledging the developing character of this world resolves issues arising from the static Greek world-view.<sup>64</sup> Influenced by Hegel’s dialectic, Lonergan aligns the developing cognition of the individual (entailing four levels of consciousness), with a societal dialectic, where new phases of knowing resolve, or sublimate, the insufficiency and conflict in previous way of knowing.<sup>65</sup>

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the many letters written by Thérèse pressuring Celine to become a Carmelite at Lisieux (so that they might resume Thérèse’s happy memory of their spiritual bond) See Thérèse’s letters (LT 122, 129, 132, 135, 137, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 157, 161), *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 708-851. It also leads to Wolski Conn implying that Thérèse attempts to interact with the “unbelievers” whose table she shares, when Thérèse does not interact with any unbelievers in a concrete or physical way.

<sup>62</sup> Wolski Conn, “Far From Spiritual Childhood.” 84.

<sup>63</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 125, 13. Lonergan’s “transcendental” aspect echoes Georg Hegel’s (1770-1831) romantic idealist position. See Coppleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume VII*, 184, 199, 216-230.

<sup>64</sup> The “immobility of the Aristotelian ideal” conflicts with developing natural and human science, dogma, and theology. “In harmony with all development is the human mind itself which effects the developments.” Lonergan follows the idea of advancing historical consciousness from the “German Historical School.” Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 24, 84-85.

<sup>65</sup> Lonergan refers to Rahner’s use of ‘sublation’: “what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering from the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.” Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 141. Here Lonergan and Rahner are concerned to preserve theological tradition. See Murdoch, *Foundations of the Christian Faith?*, 33. Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness are: sense data apprehension and language, common sense/undifferentiated consciousness, theory, and self-appropriation of differentiated consciousness. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 84-85. See Petillo’s discussion on this. L. Matthew Petillo, “The theological problem of grace and experience: a lonerganian perspective,” *Theological Studies* 71.3 (2010) 586+, 5.

Lonergan sees the trajectory of human cognitive development as drawn by intentions.<sup>66</sup> He asserts that while humans share “empirical consciousness” with animals, for humans this serves as a “substratum” for particular intentions, to be attentive, rational, reasoning, and responsible, abiding operations underpinning its progress.<sup>67</sup> These “precepts”, he emphasizes, are an *a priori* drive; given intentions produce effort – we are not spontaneous responses to relationships or circumstances, but we are born aspiring, and must culture it further.<sup>68</sup> For Lonergan, a sense of ‘what ought to be’ (intention) supersedes the animal ‘what is’. Further, as higher beings, humans, consistent with these evident operations, should self-consciously strive to “be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible” – strikingly similar to Ignatian practice.<sup>69</sup> The activity of theology, for Lonergan, entails consciousness-heightened rational intentional subjects evaluating themselves, others, and human history. Relation, which John Macmurray and Martin Buber view is the primary goal that human agency is directed to, and which Erikson, Winnicott, and Fowler, view is critical for normative development, is for Lonergan simply the fabric or context of human life.<sup>70</sup>

Lonergan thus defines the theologian as a subject who heightens their conscious mind to reveal their intentional operations, so to answer, “What am I doing when I am knowing? Why

<sup>66</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 8, 12. He notes that these intentions have many “objects.”

<sup>67</sup> Aristotle’s (and Aquinas’s) hierarchical taxonomy is evident here. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 10, 53.

<sup>68</sup> Lonergan stresses the necessity of effort in understanding. “[A]bsence of the effort to understand is constitutive of stupidity;” neglect of critical reflection “constitutes silliness.” Lonergan, who couples “behaviourists” with “positivists,” later refers to the dissimilarity between rats and humans (alluding to B. F. Skinner’s behaviourism), an undisclosed apologetic against behaviour as the sum of environmental conditioning, the threat of scientism in the American context. Lonergan, *Method*, 18, 16, 248-249. Skinner represented an extreme pole of behaviourism – yet behavioural science, in its attention to human behaviour, became a valuable approach to collecting data on normative behaviour, showing conditioning as a significant influence.

<sup>69</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 9. Rahner views the human as a “volitional, cognitional, affectional, composite.” Murdoch, *Foundations of the Christian Faith?* 18. Here is a meeting of Jesuit and German idealist lenses. There is a similarity between Lonergan’s imperatives and Ignatian spirituality. On ‘interiority’, Brian O’Leary SJ quotes from Cardinal Martini SJ, José M. de Vera S.J, *Jesuits: yearbook of the Society of Jesus* (General Curia of the Society of Jesus, 2006), “there is one especially salient message Ignatius can give us: the great value of interiority. I mean by this everything that has to do with the sphere of the heart, of deep intentionality, of decisions made from within.” “The Call to Interiority” Catholic Ireland Net. <http://www.catholicireland.net/spirituality/ignatian/976-the-call-to-interiority> accessed 10/01/12. On “contemplation in action” see: See Ignatian Spirituality, Society of Jesus Oregon Province, <http://www.nwjesuits.org/JesuitSpirituality/IgnatianSpirituality.html>, accessed 24/12/2011

<sup>70</sup> Martin Buber views the human as an inherently relation-seeking subject. He places relation as primary: “Man becomes an I through a You.” See Buber’s discussion on the human person as primarily a relation-seeking being. Buber, *I and Thou*, 77-79.

is that knowing? What do I know when I do it?”<sup>71</sup> This proactive element has been welcomed by those in the discipline of spirituality like Mary Frohlich. In “Critical Interiority,” she notes the activity of “critical interiority” (“an agent of one’s own destiny reaching toward “the fullness of life,” as distinct from a “mere billiard ball knocked around by circumstances”) following Lonergan’s self-attentive imperatives.<sup>72</sup> Frohlich interprets Lonergan’s knowing “what we are doing when we are doing it” as consciously appropriating “the inner data of our consciousness at work.”<sup>73</sup> Thérèse engages in this at the level of making sense of her life, and, further, to express a True Self.<sup>74</sup>

Lonergan’s epistemological and cognitive dimensions are aimed to interact with theology’s concerns, but we wonder whether his means lead to an ‘I-it’ project, subverting theology’s *raison d’être* – Save me from death! Help me live! Hold me; remain with me; feed me! Why do I live? Who am I? Where did I come from? Where will it end? Why will it end? – the ‘I-thou’ project of Hebrew Scripture.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, does resolution of the ‘I-Thou’ quest render intellectual evaluation of it superfluous? Finally, Lonergan’s focus on ‘conversion’, with its cognitive connotation from Christian Scripture, appears to be to the detriment of earlier Scriptural expressions, such as, ‘change of heart’ and ‘repent’, or ‘turn away from sin’, sin as forgetting God who once helped us – analogous to remembering the mercies of childhood.

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<sup>71</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 24-25.

<sup>72</sup> Frohlich views spirituality as dealing “with the stories of such events and the choices they engender in concrete human lives,” where they are felt as “peak moments, conviction, and self appropriation... [and] unknowing;” as with “the living and concrete human person in dynamic transformation towards the fullness of Christ.” Mary M. Frohlich, “Critical Interiority.” *Spiritus* 7 (2007) pp77-81, 77-79.

<sup>73</sup> Frohlich, “Critical Interiority,” 78.

<sup>74</sup> In felt-powerlessness, Thérèse often concedes to God as controlling all. Clarke notes when Thérèse helped the bursar, “several Sisters... never ceased repeating that she was doing nothing, that she seemed to have come to Carmel to amuse herself.” Thérèse writes to Celine in 1893, “I will pray for her [a deceitful maid]; perhaps were I in her place, I would be less good than she is, and perhaps, too, she would have already been a great saint if she had received one half of the graces God has granted to me. ... Jesus is pleased to shower His gifts on some of his creatures ... to attract other hearts to Himself ... when... attained, He makes those external gifts disappear... He despoils the souls dearest to Him. ...these poor little souls ... [feel] they are good for nothing since they receive all from others and can give nothing. But it is not so: the *essence* of their *being* is working in secret.” She adopts Arminjon’s concept of adversaries, and God’s later vindication of her value. *Letters of St Thérèse Volume II*, 813-815.

<sup>75</sup> Using Archibald MacLeish’s play *J.B.* (a modern Job), Dunn illustrates limit experiences, where persons “fan into flame ... something within” to “find the strength to go on, to continue the search for “the meaning of it all”.” Edmund J. Dunn, *What is Theology? Foundational and Moral* (Mystic: Twenty-Third, 1998), 7-10.

b. Lonergan's Thought on Cognition

As he declared value-acquisition as critical to his aim, we expect Lonergan to begin with value-acquisition in human development (the origin of values as integral to evaluating values), but his account of human development is limited to Piaget's intellectual development (skill-formation), Scheler's observations of an original "we," and a mention of the phenomenon of 'being-in-love'. While asserting that "feelings" give

intentional consciousness is mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these.. our knowing and deciding would be paper thin,"<sup>76</sup>

Lonergan passes over their genesis in relation, observing only that they arise spontaneously, then are fostered, modified and educated. He describes one feeling worthy of fostering, a couple's being-in-love (serving to form a permanent and secure "we"), then turns to a feeling which ought not be fostered, to "ressentiment," a (re-felt) hostility toward the values of one's superior resulting in "a distortion of the other's whole scale of values."<sup>77</sup>

To equip the theologian with methodological tools, Lonergan lists the components of meaning. Adding 'intersubjective', 'linguistic' and 'symbolic', to 'rational' and 'intentional', indicating humanity's relational context, he describes a process: sense data provokes inquiry; inquiry leads to understanding, and understanding to language.<sup>78</sup> Accumulated insights supply the background for "critical" reasoning, and mounting data produces a concern for truth ("what is or is not so"), leading persons to meet "one another in a common concern for

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<sup>76</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 30.

<sup>77</sup> Using Scheler's meaning of this expression, Lonergan concludes: that this distortion might spread through "a whole epoch." See Manfred S. Frings, *Max Scheler: A Concise Introduction into the World of a Great Thinker* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1965), 81-102. 'Ressentiment' for Nietzsche is the "pessimistic mistrust" in "slave morality." The slave, suspicious of the virtues of the powerful" brings into prominence those qualities which serve to ease his suffering, "pity, the kind and helping hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, friendliness," for here are the "means of enduring the burden of existence." Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), 178. Lonergan's preference for Scheler's 1913 existential schema addressing the nineteenth century loss of hierarchical social order ("ressentiment" a socio-economic malaise, a contagion of diminishing social values) over contemporary research on normative affective development reflects his emphasis on societal trends. On feelings, Lonergan advises: take cognizance of one's feelings otherwise "obtuseness, silliness, irresponsibility that gave rise to the feeling one does not want" are left unattended in the "conscious but not objectified." In suggesting that psychoanalysis is to feelings what transcendental method is to knowing (in transcendental method we appropriate our self in terms of knowing, in psychoanalysis our feelings), does he view feelings are not integral to knowing? Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 30-33, 34.

<sup>78</sup> Stating, briefly, that meaning's locus is "intersubjectivity," he lists Scheler's priority of a "we," followed by communicated "feeling, fellow feeling, psychic contagion and emotional identification." Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 57-59.

values,” and to organize life on the basis of the precepts “intelligence, reasonableness, and responsible exercise of freedom.”<sup>79</sup>

‘Conversion’ names a change in one’s horizon (toward authenticity), bringing new conclusions.<sup>80</sup> Each of three spheres, intellectual, moral, and affective, has its own mode of conversion, or “self-transcendence.”<sup>81</sup> Unlike ‘intellectual’ and ‘moral’ conversions, which follow advancing phases, ‘religious conversion’ simply arrives. This, a falling-in-love with God, Lonergan observes, sometimes follows intellectual and moral conversion, but is more likely their inspiration.<sup>82</sup> Such an observation begs exploration, but none is offered. For instance, why does “religious-affective knowing’, unlike intellectual and moral progress, involve a different, and pervasive, quality of knowing which parallels an earlier form of operating (immediacy in infancy), in continuity with submerged relational ‘maps’?<sup>83</sup> In the next section, we turn to M. Scott Peck on ‘falling-in-love’ and Reinhold Niebuhr’s thought on ‘knowing as transcendence’.<sup>84</sup>

c. *Love: A Means for Transcendent Knowing*

For Lonergan, persons move from “common sense” to “theory,” then to “interiority,” entering transcendental method when they enter “the realm in which God is known and loved;” one’s capacity for self-transcendence is realized

when one falls in love. Then one becomes being in love.. [O]nce it has blossomed forth and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It is the first principle.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 10-11.

<sup>80</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 247-266. Lonergan assigns an order of progression for each object-driven phase (common sense, theory, interiority, self-transcendence).

<sup>81</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 242.

<sup>82</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 242-243.

<sup>83</sup> Lonergan describes ‘symbols’ as the carrier for affective-psychic operations (and includes forms of psychoanalysis available for interpreting them), but again fails to explore symbolic-knowing as originating in relation, or to note its ongoing influence. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 23, 64-65.

<sup>84</sup> Peck, a Christian psychiatrist, aims to dispel the “myth” that there is one person for each, the vehicle for its revelation being “falling in love.” He addresses problems arising from identifying ‘being in love’ with love: dependency, perfect unity, or self-sacrifice.. M. Scott Peck, *A Road Less Travelled: a New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (London: Arrow Books Limited, 1978), 96-98.

<sup>85</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 73-75, 82-83, 105.

Religious conversion is to be “in love in an unrestricted fashion,”

without qualifications or conditions or reservations or limits ... with someone transcendent... real to me from within me.<sup>86</sup>

Lonergan does not explain what he means by “real to me from within me,” but simply asserts fulfilment of intellectual-moral capacities is blissful “knowledge of him,” and the love of God, “not a product of our knowledge and choice,” transvalues our values, and the eyes of that love, transforms our knowing.<sup>87</sup> While elsewhere he asserts that “being-in-love” belongs between “persons that disclose their love to one another,” he tends to speak of a perspective, a surrender or gaining a heart of flesh, from a “gift of grace,” which is horizon changing.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, in speaking of being-in-love as an unsolicitable feeling state, he intuits what is observed by Peck – that it is an involuntary collapse of one’s ego-boundaries,<sup>89</sup> allowing reversion to the height of the heady happiness of mother-infant unity, of free and open response to a sense of the other valuing us to the uttermost, of undifferentiation in power.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105.

<sup>87</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 106, 107. At 109: “[T]he one that fulfils that thrust must be supreme in intelligence truth and goodness. Since he chooses to come to me by a gift of love for him, he himself must be love. Since loving him is loving attention to him, it is prayer, meditation, contemplation” which “overflows into love of all those he loves or might love. Finally...there wells forth a longing for knowledge, while love itself is a longing for union, so for the lover of the unknown beloved the concept of bliss is knowledge of him and union with him.”

<sup>88</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 283- 284, 241 -243. At 241: Love itself is “operative grace” and “effective good works,” coming from that new heart, is “co-operative grace.”

<sup>89</sup> Peck assigns a neutral value to ‘falling-in-love’ as it is not chosen, and, as such, does not ask to be maintained with effort in the face of difficulty. He writes, whilst a feeling “of ecstatic lovingness,” perhaps leading to love, falling-in-love is not love itself, but recalls the infant’s state of undifferentiation with its parent (when I kick my legs, the whole world moves, when I am hungry, the whole world is hungry). When an identity (Peck views the infant has “no identity,” but one could equally say it feels ‘I am everything’) defined by otherness eventuates, by gradually discovering that our will is not the other’s will, that we “are confined to the boundaries” of our “flesh and the limits” of our “power,” a “frail and impotent organism, existing only by co-operation within a group... called society,” in that isolation of separate “identities, boundaries and limits,” we find ourselves lonely. This loneliness, beginning physically (when the infant is hungry, the mother does not always appear), becomes psychic when the child realizes its wish is not the mother’s command, but clings to that “possibility” as “a sweet, sweet dream” even after several years of painful confrontation with one’s own omnipotence.” (Happy extensions of Thérèse’s will include, “mama” with each step, forgiveness, prayers and tucking-in.) M. Scott Peck, *The Road less Travelled*, 89-103.

<sup>90</sup> We “yearn to escape from behind [the] walls [of our identity]... [F]alling in love is a sudden collapse of a section of an individual’s ego boundaries, permitting one to merge his or her identity with that of another ... bringing a sense of the strength of this mutual love such that all darkness will disappear and problems overcome. The sudden release of oneself from oneself, the explosive pouring out of oneself into the beloved, and the dramatic surcease of loneliness accompanying this collapse of ego boundaries is experienced by most of us as ecstatic. We and our beloved are one! Loneliness is no more! ...The experience of merging with the beloved one” echoes “the time when we were merged with our mothers in infancy.” We “re-experience ...omnipotence...

Hence, the feeling of ease in doing things, as if carried on shoulders, *is* an un-anticipatable feeling-state phenomenon. Lonergan's sense of being "held, grasped possessed, owned" by a totally loving other fits this description.<sup>91</sup> Thérèse cultivates this as a feeling-image, likening it to parental grace: being responded to, lifted, carried, given some understanding, strength or hope.

Being-in-love's effect, to draw us into relation, is obscured in Lonergan's list of progresses. Thérèse, thwarted in her efforts to be in relation, turns to the permanent and undemolishable Other, who defends one's identity.<sup>92</sup> The unrepresented self senses God is for *them*. Re-engaging with her God-representations, she finds the face who loves and protects her becoming, and provides her with courage to be herself. It might be said that parents are in love with their infant, and their infant adores them in return. As Thérèse was once in love with parents and sisters who nourished her self, she now is in love with God. (Around Christmas 1886, she falls-in-love with one who is in harmony with her needs, loves, and aims – to become a Carmelite. Arminjon voices 'God's call' to pray for sinners; Carmelites do this; now she feels *God* wants her to become a Carmelite.) In falling-in-love with a God who loves and 'needs' her love, and feeling the familiar pattern of operating this entails, Thérèse retrieves her former happiness, continuing to operate in this pattern even when its rewards fall into darkness.

Peck writes that in the course of everyday living, the reality of separateness from the other in the diversity of desires, tastes, and prejudices, and timing, leads "to the sickening realization" that we "are not one with the beloved... the ego boundaries snap back into place;" one falls out of love.<sup>93</sup> For Peck *love* is an effortful "extension of one's limits or boundaries" to

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All things seem possible! United with our beloved we feel we can conquer all obstacles. We believe the strength of our love will cause the forces of opposition to bow down in submission and melt away." Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 92.

<sup>91</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, 242. "Operative grace" could be described as our being wholly carried, and "co-operative" as the hand guiding our effort.

<sup>92</sup> The intensity of God's entrance (psychically) perhaps occurs in relation to the degree of relational/identity destitution. Bernadette Soubirous was on the verge of extinction, when a loving woman-companion appeared to her. Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), 44-49.

<sup>93</sup> Peck asserts "Falling in love is not an act of will. It is not a conscious choice" – not only is the feeling unexpected, but it can be "inconvenient and undesirable" if we are "ill-matched" to the object of this feeling. Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 93.

include another, but *falling-in-love* is an effortless “temporary collapse of them.”<sup>94</sup> This raises questions. If falling-in-love represents a temporary loss of control, is it worthy of elevation to God’s grace? Does Peck, however, reduce being-in-love (a re-infection of a “sweet, sweet dream” not “completely given up”), to a monadic feeling-state, rather than a dialogue (re-evoked by something associated with its former reality)?<sup>95</sup> Where Lonergan fails to acknowledge that falling-in-love recalls a past reality, Peck fails to represent being-in-love as the possibility of life. He concedes that, though falling-in-love “is an illusion which in no way constitutes real love,” it is “very close to real love, ...potent because it contains a grain of truth.” real love also involves ego boundaries, but rather than their collapse, their effortful extension.<sup>96</sup> Sainthood, Peck argues, cannot be retreated into via regression, yet, perhaps ‘falling in love’ asserts values through the force of its feeling and its expanded boundary, habituating real love.<sup>97</sup>

Lonergan and Thérèse’s ‘being-in-love’, reveal their respective spiritual context and wider social circumstances. Educated and occupying the socially dominant gender, Lonergan was far from destitution of relation or identity. He felt ‘authentic knowing and right judging’, the goal of his Jesuit vocation, came with God’s love, a gift giving wings to one’s belief in “the truths taught by religious tradition,” “fidelity to the word,” and “awe” of God’s “supreme intelligence, truth, reality, righteousness, goodness.”<sup>98</sup> He writes of passing through levels of consciousness. Then, entering interiority, he experiences, “a gift ... cultivated by a life of prayer and denial,” which results in, both, “the cloud of unknowing” and the “intensifying, purifying, clarifying,” of the objectives in all the “realms” he encounters.<sup>99</sup> Lonergan, in effect, here describes Ignatius of Loyola’s aim, to neither retreat into contemplation, nor be wholly taken up by the activity of action, but to combine these.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 94.

<sup>95</sup> Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 91.

<sup>96</sup> Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 99, 101.

<sup>97</sup> Peck, *A Road Less Travelled*, 102.

<sup>98</sup> Describing love lyrically in it as “without conditions, qualifications, reservations; it is with all one’s heart and all one’s soul, and all one’s strength.” Without limitation, “it does not pertain to this world... It is other-worldly fulfilment, joy, peace, bliss,” in other places Lonergan supplies Pauline texts to illustrate this otherworldly love of God, fellowship, spreading the Christian message, and service to others. Rom 5:5, 8:38ff and Gal 5: 22. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 242, 243, 111, 105-106.

<sup>99</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 266

In contrast, Thérèse, a youngest girl-child ‘abandoned’ by those who most conveyed love toward her, sought rescue from felt-superfluosity. Her in-love experience, reflecting sexual maturation, appears as maternal (defending Jesus from others’ ingratitude), then expands into a quest to love impressively as a martyr virgin spouse.<sup>101</sup> From the height of sexual abandon, she inserts herself into Arminjon’s text of torture, passion and death, positively dripping the milk of magnanimity. The cloistered world she chooses represents the intimacy of God’s bed-chamber, the place of God’s in-and-outgoing, where women have God’s ‘ear’, reflecting marriage in Thérèse’s social context. Later, she nestles into God (as God’s kin, consummated and secure) confident that God can conduct his affairs without her help. She returns to her former confidence in being the effective child-lover of her father (his “queen” to her “king”), unequivocally valued, carried as an infant, engaged by admirers and empowered to impact in return. Her final expression, amid God’s absence, is sheer fidelity. A theology that emphasizes “conversion” to “a living and acting incarnation of the divine will,” in service to God – away from divine-human intercourse – reflects Lonergan and not Thérèse.<sup>102</sup> To clarify this further, we pursue what is submerged in *Method*.

Does Lonergan’s ‘transcending increases in knowing’ toward new heights allude to a Greek classicalist ideal: to participate in God’s knowing? Here we encounter a concept peculiar to ancient Greek thought which was not present in ancient Hebrew thought. Thorlief Boman argues that underlying the two cultures, embedded in language, was an epistemological difference: “dynamism in movement and relation” in Hebrew, contrasts with “stasis in immutable being” in Greek.<sup>103</sup> Hebrew conceptualizing (of such as goodness, grace, and

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<sup>100</sup> Ignatius sought to offer a “service” spirituality, wherein “prayer and religious experience” are not for their “own sake but as a means to seek, find and accomplish God’s will. The link between prayer, abnegation, and reformation of life, and seeking, finding, and executing God’s will (Ex., nos. 170-189)” is distinctive to Ignatian spirituality. It seeks to convert persons to “a living and acting incarnation of the divine will.” Commentators distinguish this from “bridal” spirituality, where “the divine-human intercourse at the soul’s centre is valued above all else.” Michael Downey ed. *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Harvey D. Egan SJ, “Ignatian Spirituality” (Collegeville, Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book, The Liturgical Press, 1993), 523.

<sup>101</sup> Jesus needs her love and sacrifice, a role she feels prepared for. Her need for advocacy continues through felt powerlessness as a child, and as a female, male adults allowing her access to Carmel only on their terms.

<sup>102</sup> Downey, ed., *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, 523.

<sup>103</sup> Boman argues that this epistemological difference is inherent in the structure and components of the two languages. Hebrew thinking on beauty was in terms of a moral dynamic (faithfulness), while Greek, in terms of beauty’s appearance ‘at rest’, represented in a scene or object. The ancient Hebrews, experiencing existence “by hearing and perceiving,” were concerned with material, motion, impressions, meanings, time, and psychological understanding; the Greek experience of “seeing” were concerned with form, rest, appearance, space, place, and logical thinking. In much Greek thought, *being* was inherently immovable and immutable; all becoming and

beauty) tended to be relational-dynamic, while Greek conceptualization, object/principle-static, or visual-apprehension. The first relates to “I-thou,” the second, Bruno Forte suggests, to conquering.<sup>104</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr investigates this in *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.<sup>105</sup> Humans self-transcend through their “capacity for horizontal perspectives over the wide world, made possible by the height at which the human spirit is able to survey the scene. This height is none other than the human capacity to know God.” Niebuhr, however “recoils from making this capacity the basis for any mystical union with God...”<sup>106</sup> Naming two poles of sin, on one side, imagining ourselves as all spirit, we fall to pride over our knowing, and on the other, holding ourselves as physical and focusing on our bodily self alone we fall to anxiety over its limitation and loss, Niebuhr classes the above as falling on the side of pride in our spiritual capacity.<sup>107</sup> Achieving heights belongs to Lonergan’s milieu: the lived-reality of an educated priest-theologian identity, suffering neither the poverty of identity nor of relationships in his

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mere passing away is “equivalent to what is not, about which nothing positive can be said.” Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, translated by Jules L. Moreau (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), Inside cover, 27- 73, 51-52.

<sup>104</sup> Apprehending truth in the Greek mind, Bruno Forte writes, was in terms of “victory of vision” where “sight embraces the object, the thing in its totality;” this “thirst for an all-encompassing vision ... reaches its climax in the total embrace ... in Hegel’s monism of the Spirit.” In Greek thinking, “the vision of beauty, truth” is “exact correspondence between the object and the mind in the all-encompassing act of the idea.” (Thomas Aquinas inherited that Greek thirst to dominate by intellectual power, while, as Forte notes, his sense of the Word made flesh as the irruption of the other, of brokenness as the locus of beauty, is to be found in the Hebrew tradition of faithful relationship). In Hebrew, truth is about mutual fidelity. “[T]ruth stands originally for relationship; it is not you who seeks the truth, but the truth which takes you to itself; it is not you who embraces the idea, but you who listening... let yourself be received by truth. Here it is not ‘cogito ergo sum’ which triumphs, but ‘cogitor ergo sum’: I exist because the other thinks of me, because the other perceives and welcomes me, because the womb of another is my dwelling place - I live in a place which is not mine! The dwelling place, the welcoming womb of the other, is my place-which-is-not-mine: more than seeing the truth, we must do it, dwell in it, and let ourselves be guided into all truth...” Bruno Forte, Paul McPartlan, *The Portal of Beauty: A Theology of Aesthetics*, translated by David Glenday (Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 25-26.

<sup>105</sup> We follow Marjorie Suchocki’s study of Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Volume I* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1941, 1964) in *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: the Continuum Publishing Company, 1994).

<sup>106</sup> Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 25.

<sup>107</sup> Niebuhr asserts that all persons theoretically have the resources to respond to the sin of anxiety by trusting in God, and chooses to address the sin in response to the limits of our physicality, “anxiety.” Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 25-26.

power to both be recognized and to impact.<sup>108</sup> *Intending* to reason intelligently and to *act* virtuously (as fruitful) presumes (given) power.

Thérèse's lack of power is obvious. Facing the possible extinction of being herself (lover of God, and daughter at play), she sought to *be* in a relation that guaranteed her self-becoming (resuming what she felt achieved this), which involved naming it. Her affinity with Hebrew Scripture arises through her predicament, paralleling the felt-threat of extinction through no heir (the patriarchal stories), or in enslavement, occupation, exile, sickness, defeat or death (expressed by the Psalmist).<sup>109</sup> One's degree of agency influences one's intention-goals; a subliminal 'awareness' draws us to symbols representing solidarity with the threatened self.

*d. Review of Comparing Post-Thérèse Theologies*

Our research began with an account of human development. Sroufe, in a synthesis of behavioural and developmental research and psychoanalytic thought, demonstrates that cognitive and physiological advancement occurs inextricably with affective engagement, an intrinsically relational event. McDargh, responding to William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, investigates the 'irrational' deep senses humans have about God, which come to light as early relational experiences (reflecting the interior constructs described by Winnicott, and elaborated by Rizzuto). The deepest sense in humans (being held, called, rescued, forgiven, given a mission, vindicated), precedes, enlivens and corrects the doctrines and dogmas later encountered.

Lonergan's approach to theology shows sensitivity to the flux of human development, on the basis of a conversion process.<sup>110</sup> Progressing phases, in distinct spheres, finally transform "the existential subject into a subject in love, a subject held, grasped possessed, owned through a

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<sup>108</sup> "... ever striving for a fuller richer apprehension of the yet unknown ... whole, universe..." Lonergan expresses freedom to withdraw from more "ordinary ways of living," to pursue goodness, truth, understanding, and beauty. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 13, 83.

<sup>109</sup> For Thérèse's use of Hebrew Scripture, see *Story of a Soul*, 305.

<sup>110</sup> "Conversion, a movement toward authenticity is not some pure quality, some ...freedom from all oversights, all misunderstanding, all mistakes, all sins. It is ever precarious, ever to be achieved afresh, ever in great part a matter of uncovering still more oversights, acknowledging still further failures to understand, correcting still more mistakes, repenting more and more deeply hidden sins." Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 252-266.

total ... love”, providing “a new basis for all valuing.”<sup>111</sup> While Lonergan’s aim is “to understand what human authenticity is and how to appeal to it,” he barely visits the influence of affective-relational development on faith. A focus on communication, reveals persons as passing from “unmediated immediacy” to “mediation by meaning,” to finally return to mediated immediacy of one’s “subjectivity reaching for God,” but does not explore the significance of ‘being-in-love’ as a reprise of infancy experience.<sup>112</sup> Lonergan sees a conversion component to theological investigation. Development “is largely through the resolution of conflicts,” and the investigator’s own “movements towards cognitional and moral self-transcendence” bring empathy to the other’s ambivalence, their work in overcoming conflicts, their conceptions as “misinformed, misunderstood, mistaken.”<sup>113</sup>

e. *Being-in-Relation and Self-becoming as Human Aims in Theology*

Behavioural research supports the idea that when all is well, persons progress to widen the boundaries of their concern, to self-transcend. Following relational fulfilment (good-enough nourishment, positive affective engagement, a safe “holding environment,” the uncompromised presence of a secure pair bond, a “circle of security,” primal others allowing a True Self), children joyously seek to explore their environment. Competency for success in future relationships, including God, is nourished in relation. If relating becomes an eroding experience, the developing child might retreat into the safety of controlling information by converting knowing to ‘it’ items, that is, they will seek to live in an “I-it” world, where they make a thing of themselves and of others.<sup>114</sup> Thérèse experiences relation as good but painfully unreliable. In Carmel, she reports reading less and less, turning to prayer where she

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<sup>111</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 242. For Lonergan, effects connected with relational-affective development are a matter for “depth psychology.” All persons “are subject to bias ... a block or distortion of intellectual development .... There is the bias of unconscious motivation ... There is the bias of individual egoism, and the more powerful blinder of group egoism. Finally, there is the bias of common sense ... [centring on] the particular and the concrete ... [which] usually considers itself omnipotent.” Lonergan believes persons can remove their bias by being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 231.

<sup>112</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240-242.

<sup>113</sup> The work of evaluation is reciprocal; the investigator comes to know him/her self, filling and refining their apprehension of values. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 252- 253.

<sup>114</sup> When relating is felt as a threat, we exclude the ‘you’, reducing ‘knowing’ to information-collection, owning and manipulation; becoming a form of control over a threatening environment. See Buber, “*I and Thou*,” 65. Persons may enter a role to make an object of oneself. For example, to preserve her freedom, in the face of another’s lust, a woman might conceive of a body-part as an object. A person may take up the exaggeratedly automatic movement of a waiter (according to society’s demand), suspending one’s real being. Sartre calls these expressions of “bad faith.” Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 63-64, 55-56, 59-60.

empowers the One who has the capacity to love her into being, increasingly relying on this ever-revealing reliable other.

Searching for the source of Thérèse's sense of mercy we examined emotional development and then used psychoanalysis for our analysis. We saw that affective engagement organizes and integrates all developing functions, including cognitive, and that a dyadic dialogue forms a secure familiar dyadic bond/holding environment, from which to explore, and to become a valued other/self capable of relation. When an intermediate goal (e.g., secure bond) is hindered, it is returned to and repeated.<sup>115</sup> We ascertained that an experience of mercy for the infant involved the able parent sensitively filling its capacities to become a new other, and that Thérèse experienced this. Our exploration of authenticity in the developing self, through McDargh's notion of selfhood (using Winnicott and Rizzutto) and the True Self/False Self paradigm, led us to note an experience in Hebrew Scripture which mirrored the shape of graciousness toward the limited one: God, like a parent, acts as advocate for the weak, threatened self. Limitedness appeared to invite God's gracious initiative. This context for relation, limitedness drawing help, remains an indelible sense in persons, with respect to physical and psychic survival.<sup>116</sup> Self-becoming, belonging to the "erotic thrust of the human spirit," is threatened by lack of grace (insensitivity, lack of restraint, apathy and neglect). When hindered by lack of grace, the self becomes distorted and gives witness to a distorted God (a God who harms). In the Psalms, Wisdom books, and Isaiah, Thérèse finds the self defended. However, Lonergan, testing a measure (for authentic values) that withstands cultural flux, would class these texts from an epoch of distant history as merely primitive.<sup>117</sup>

Influenced by Hegelian progress in consciousness, Lonergan lists advances on earlier forms of thinking; for example, a lack of "historically-mindedness" resulted in the errors of

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<sup>115</sup> Behaviourists observed this pattern in parent-infant behaviour. Sroufe, we recall, acknowledges a relationship between behavioural research and theoretic constructs offered by psychoanalysts and clinical psychologists. The behaviourist, refraining from applying causal mega-claims to data/trials, should not be viewed as representing positivism. Lonergan is in conflict with the behaviourist who, in the 1970's represented life as 'mere sum of behaviour'. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 16, 248-249.

<sup>116</sup> This sense is supported by William James: There persists "in the human consciousness a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we might call 'something there'..." McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 117-118.

<sup>117</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 306. For example, Hebrew fidelity represents the symbolic thought of a primitive era.

“anachronism” and “archaism.”<sup>118</sup> However, did these errors arise from imposing Greco-Roman aims onto writings which did not address those aims, bringing to light a problem of identifying genre? Perhaps ‘ancient’ texts addressed events symbolically because this was the most apt approach to God-self or God-community dilemmas.<sup>119</sup> Paul Ricoeur’s psychoanalytic interrogation of Hebrew Scriptures has yielded results, by emphasizing archetypal relational issues in its narrative texts. When investigating Thérèse, we find she most values an early-life affective/religious experience. She treats theoretical knowing, gathering intellectual data and evaluating it, as of little importance, as even representing distraction that harms one’s relationship with God.<sup>120</sup>

We use Lonergan’s categories to organize our findings toward interpreting Thérèse’s activity as theology, taking up his invitation to use his method creatively,<sup>121</sup> noting that Lonergan’s method, less sensitive to Thérèse’s experience than McDargh’s, has been used by other authors to show shifts (in terms of “conversion”) that would not be markedly manifest without its categories.

## 2. Thérèse’s Writing under Lonergan’s Four Forms of Meaning

“Functions,” aiding in theology’s eight tasks, has four dimensions “cognitive, efficient, constitutive, and communicative.”<sup>122</sup> We will use these to convey Thérèse’s thought as

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<sup>118</sup>“Archaism,” a kind of literalist projection of the past onto the present is, however, reflective of a level of faith development present in all times of history. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 312

<sup>119</sup>Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 314. Lonergan’s application of Hegel’s historical-consciousness dialectic across epochs leads away from socio-psychological analysis, such as: did the Roman Church favour clerical writers, notables educated in Greco-Roman classicism, who treated relational matters in a remote, systematizing – conquering – manner?

<sup>120</sup>“The chapter in *Imitation* which speaks of knowledge came frequently to my mind, but I found ways of continuing [to study] all the same...” *Story of a Soul*, 101. “What is the point of great argument about abstruse and difficult matters, when no one will be charged at the judgment with being ignorant of them? It is very foolish of us to neglect what is profitable and necessary... Why do we trouble ourselves with theories about *genera* and *species*?” “When the day of judgment comes we will not be asked what we have read, but what we have done...” Thomas À Kempis, Trans Betty I. Knott, *The Imitation of Christ*, (Great Britain: Collins, Fontana Books, 1963), 41, 42. Thérèse refers to *Imitation* “nearly fifty times” in her writing. Nevin, *God’s Gentle Warrior*, 321.

<sup>121</sup> See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, inside cover, xii.

<sup>122</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 76-81. At 356: “In so far as meaning is cognitive, what is meant is real. In so far as it is constitutive, it constitutes part of the reality of the one that means: his horizon, his assimilative powers, his knowledge, his values, his character. In so far as it is communicative, it induces in the hearer some

theology.<sup>123</sup> The idea of using “functions” in relation to Thérèse presented itself in Thérèse “writing herself,” in a dramatization of events and thoughts in relation to grace resembling John’s Gospel, “a divinely authored drama ... drawing believers into a dramatic experience.)”<sup>124</sup> Her “little doctrine,” recorded by her sisters as a felt-mission, meant to impress upon Christians in the future, may be also be viewed as a “way” which initiated a culture of response.<sup>125</sup>

(a) *Communicative Meaning*

Communicative meaning involves the intersubjective sharing of an experience. Thérèse joins an established community (the Lisieux Carmelites) which expresses a particular experience of God, at first to affirm it, but eventually she narrates a drama where she finds herself loved by God in her own way, re-authenticating the heart of Lisieux’s operation. This choice communicates the “content” of her faith experience, a felt call to retreat from the world in contrast to engagement with world, representing the dichotomies, “lay” and “religious,” and “active” and “contemplative,” within her Catholic tradition.<sup>126</sup> The “form” of her faith,

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share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker. In so far as it is effective, it persuades or commands others or it directs man’s control over nature.” At 298, Lonergan applies it to “Doctrine” in *Method*.

<sup>123</sup> Kelly and Moloney, for example, use “functions” in *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, to show the dimensions of meaning operating in the Johannine community’s response to the “Word.” They write, i) the cognitive dimension of meaning “implies a definable content grasped in an objective judgment;” ii) “meaning functions in a *constitutive* manner,” by the Word affecting “the experience of human identity,” forming it “in the light of the divine meaning,” and constituting an “awareness of ourselves as “the children of God;” iii) “the meaning of the word is *communicative*” – a shared possession of the Word results in “a community of common experience conviction, and identity;” iv) “the Word is *effective*” in the sense that through “a conversion” it enables “Christians to transform the world in new and hopeful ways.” Kelly and Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, 55-56.

<sup>124</sup> For “writing herself,” see Thomas R. Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior*, 161. For “divinely authored drama,” see Kelly and Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, 9-10. Thérèse’s self-dramatization (for Pauline, Marie, and Marie de Gonzague, in *Story of a Soul*) is due, in part, to writing within the convention of the Carmelite *circulaire* (self-hagiography), and, further, to a desire to be cradled and watched by her family as a way to make her self valued and real. “[F]or some persons God functions as that all accepting other, who...is the guarantor and preserver of that background of safety which makes possible play. ...God serves as a transitional object which allows the person to experience and express the True Self.” In her writing, Thérèse surrounds herself with God as an interested watching “background” to all she does. McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 144-5.

<sup>125</sup> Pauline records, “...I think God has been pleased to place things in me which will do good to me and to others.” Thérèse of Lisieux, *Her Last Conversations*, translated by John Clarke (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1997), 131. At 142: With reference to her manuscript, Pauline reports Thérèse as saying: “... there will be something in it for all tastes, except for those in extraordinary ways...”

<sup>126</sup> Thérèse has some awareness of events outside Carmel and, even, engages with the world through prayer. She prays for Pranzini and Loyson, she has ‘met’ in newspaper articles, without meeting them physically, only knowing what is printed about them. Her photo and letters to Diana Vaughan, who didn’t exist, were mediated

discerning and responding to this call, is represented by her writing, especially in *Story of a Soul*. Written under “religious obedience” (unlike her vocation itself, her self-offering, poetry, and familial correspondence), the three manuscripts in *Story of a Soul* comprise of a reply to Marie’s request for her “little doctrine” (*Man B*), a review of her religious life (*Man C*), and a redirection of Pauline’s assignment (*Man A*), to record her reminiscences. An animated telling of childhood reminiscences during recreation (triggering Pauline’s request for them to be written), results in the drama of her ‘home-ward’ journey from a projected God-perspective (an exteriorization of her inner life).<sup>127</sup> Addressed to Pauline, Marie, and Marie de Gonzague, and the heavenly community, this writing appears to be conscious of a further readership, perhaps of its function in supplying material for a *circulaire*.

Whether Thérèse intended, in her writing, to influence only some close to her, or many others, after her death, not known to her, cannot be ascertained. What is certain is that she aimed to proclaim God’s mercy in a subjective light, to move her reader to experience God as she experienced God. While acknowledging there are patterns and purposes not unique to Thérèse (shown by Thomas Nevin’s research on Carmelite *circulaires* of her time), thousands since have ‘felt’, with Thérèse, her sense of God’s mercy – one she hoped would draw others to God. One aim in communicating this experience of God was toward keeping God-within alive and present, to preserve and reinforce the communal bonds which this God stood for.

To Roulland and Bellière, her missionary correspondents, Thérèse emphasized an eschatological dimension, revealing the extent of her felt-potency in relation to God. Conscious of the heavenly community – vividly alive to her – she addressed its inhabitants with a sense of belonging to them.<sup>128</sup> For her, the Church is a movement in time, peopled by living and spirit persons in relation to Jesus.<sup>129</sup> This is evident in her letters to her priest

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by Marie de Gonzague. “Beside her superiors, l’abbé Youf, two other religious made up the narrow circle of her daily contacts.” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 703.

<sup>127</sup> “Marie...said: ‘Ah, mother, what a pity we don’t have this in writing; if you were to ask Sister Thérèse to write her childhood memories for you, what a pleasure this would give us!’” *Story of a Soul*, xv.

<sup>128</sup> For example, *Story of a Soul*, 93, 131-132.

<sup>129</sup> Thérèse writes in 1897; “I really count on not remaining inactive in heaven. My desire is still to work for the Church and for souls. I am asking God for this and I am certain He will answer me. Are not the Angels continually occupied with us...Why would Jesus not allow me to imitate them?” “...your messages for heaven... you will only have to tell me...in a whisper...” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1143-1144.

brothers, where she implements her role as “love at the heart of the Church”<sup>130</sup> (promising to accompany Bellière, as a spirit of encouragement, in his missionary work in Africa.)<sup>131</sup>

(b) *Cognitive Meaning*

‘Cognitive meaning’ is the evaluation of experience into “meaning and language,” to become “a definable content grasped in an objective judgement.”<sup>132</sup> With respect to Thérèse’s thought, this process has not yet been brought to completion, and is our present project. Nevertheless, cognitive meaning is already in her writing in terms of assimilated meaning, ‘objective’ statements, and brief deductions, both categorical and theoretical. Thérèse makes objective assertions when she explains how a doctrine or Scriptural text underpinned an experience, serving as a principle or precedent upon which to rest her experience.<sup>133</sup> She asserts doctrinal positions, interrogates/supports her tradition’s understanding and articulation of its beliefs, via Scripture, and speaks analogically about herself and God, using metaphors ‘proven’ by experience.<sup>134</sup>

In relation to cultural influences, Thérèse affirms Carmelite values coloured by Jansenism (the mortification of humiliations seemed also to serve as a cure for an underlying ‘rebellious condition’) when she accuses herself of infractions (“faults”) to break inclination to self-

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<sup>130</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 194.

<sup>131</sup> Thérèse writes to Bellière, “... I shall be very close to him, I shall see all that is necessary for him, and I shall leave no rest to God if He does not give me all I shall want!... When my dear little brother leaves for Africa, I shall no longer follow him by thought...; my soul will always be with him, and his faith will be able to discover the presence of a little sister whom Jesus gave him... *right up to the last day of his life*. ...you must begin to realize that God has always treated me like a spoiled child.” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1140.

<sup>132</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 55.

<sup>133</sup> Thérèse argues using Song of Songs 5:2, Mt 17: 19, Jn 11:3, 2:4 to describe how enduring trial (no entry yet into Carmel) ended in great reward (a symbolic gift and affection), *Story of a Soul*, 142. To find what one most desires – the impossible – she bends low and peers in the darkness as Mary did at the tomb of Jesus. Jn 20: 11. *Story of a Soul*, 130.

<sup>134</sup> For example, Thérèse affirms the doctrine of purgatory, as a place of purification of fault after death. She hoped her prayer might shorten another’s suffering in purgatory. “I wanted to deliver all the souls from purgatory.” *Story of a Soul*, 167. Support found in Scripture: The sublimity of her calling was aroused in the grandeur of nature’s beauty which gave her a foretaste of heaven, an idea of “*what Jesus has reserved for those who love Him*.” 1 Cor 2:9. Metaphors: As a plant stores water in its calyx for later use, so Thérèse stores some supply of wisdom or kindness for later. As a plant pulled up with its roots intact has the capacity to regrow in new soil, so her removal, entire, allowed her to put down roots in Carmel (from moss to fertile soil). As her pet linnet tried to imitate its surrogate canary mother in song, so she worked hard to ‘sing’ the same Canticle as Pauline. *Story of a Soul*, 206, 112, 113-114.

will.<sup>135</sup> Desire-for-God (Augustine) draws her to God, its inspiration.<sup>136</sup> Finally, she affirms Arminjon's eschatology: that suffering is the means God chose to arrive at her destination, union with God will take place in a heavenly realm upon resurrection. She concurs with the Augustinian sense of remorse over sin, and Arminjon's 'noble' feelings in being one of the elect,<sup>137</sup> hope in vindication for Catholics, retribution for deriders of the faith, and desire to transcend the lure of 'base' physicality and the shallowness of the present.

Overall, Thérèse's theology, in its cognitive dimension, asserts that God is true to what God makes persons to be and sets in motion. In particular, God has attracted Thérèse by grace by ordaining her circumstances, which includes the desire in her to draw others to God. In the Augustinian X position, grace sustains "human love for God ... the perfection of nature itself," and "[t]he chief reason for grace is not the sublimity of the end sought but the feebleness of the will seeking it."<sup>138</sup> The powers of human nature are unable to be lost, as "they are the very substance of human life," and grace's role is to direct these intrinsic powers to God in all situations, and to support them, lest in their mutability they defect from their true end, God.<sup>139</sup> Thus Thérèse awaits God's grace to make her efforts in obedience, poverty, and chastity effective. Alternatively, she refers to Augustinian-Thomistic Z notions, in being lifted up to an unattainable end, infused by charity, and illuminated by wisdom, by (inexplicable) supernatural help,<sup>140</sup> yet these do not preclude X, as her experience attests to both. Z gives an impression of grace lifting one up upon some completion of effort after which a person can go no further. Thérèse, however, intimates that grace lifts up simply when

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<sup>135</sup> Nevin, *God's Gentle Warrior*, 138-139. "I was unable to meet her without kissing the floor." *Story of a Soul*, 150, 206.

<sup>136</sup> For "...God cannot inspire unrealizable desires..." (God underlies our desires) echoes Augustine. *Story of a Soul*, 207. "He always made me desire what he wanted to give me." *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1140.

<sup>137</sup> Thérèse is recorded in July 1897 (Thérèse of Lisieux, *Last Conversations*, 102) as saying: "I can't rest as long as there are souls to be saved. But when the angel declares 'Time is no more!' then I will take my rest, because the number of the elect will be complete and because all will have entered into joy and repose." Clarke attributes this, in a footnote, to Apocalypse 10: 6 ("And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them ... and said, "There will be no more delay!"), perhaps unaware of Arminjon's writing: "...human destinies will be brought to a close when... the number of the elect consummated." Arminjon, *The End of the Present World*, 15.

<sup>138</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 17. Duffy, usefully for us, draws this wording for the X position from John Healey, *Jansenius' Critique of Pure Nature* (Rome: Universities Gregoriana, 1964), 71-77.

<sup>139</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 17.

<sup>140</sup> For example, *Story of a Soul*, at 179, "certain lights." At 99, "I felt *charity* enter into my soul."

lifting is needed (like an elevator “un ascenseur”), arriving as a response to a call accompanied by willing reliance on help.<sup>141</sup>

Her X position resembles von Balthasar’s “from above” anthropology: God ordains all events, and brings them to completion by his grace. Next to X, Thérèse includes what appears to a Z idea (from Arminjon’s *The End of the Present World*), the “poor savage” and “the child” enjoy a simple end, and not a great one, which pleases God,<sup>142</sup> to support a metaphor which describes how God loves his diverse creatures (satisfying concern over gratuity and justness): God enters the “poor savage” and the child’s heart to humble Godself; such exist for love to become manifest.<sup>143</sup> Grace, in its quality of stooping down (an attribution of God), is Thérèse’s ordering principle here, showing what God’s glory consists of. (This divine condescension or lowering is later echoed in von Balthasar’s kenotic emphasis.) As glasses of varying capacities may all equally achieve fullness via their capacity for being filled,<sup>144</sup> so God ‘conceived of’ fullness of grace in terms of simplicity – representing the fullest in humility, responsiveness, and gratitude. Here Thérèse alludes to the doctrine of “divine exchange,” or the “exchange of natures:” by entering humanity through Jesus, God raises, or divinizes, the human state. In “It is to their hearts [“the child,” “the poor savage”] that God deigns to lower Himself,” Thérèse adds, God does not merely divinize humanity, but the simple (childlike) state.

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<sup>141</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 207 -208. “The elevator which must raise me to heaven is Your arms, O Jesus!” At 238, “I threw myself in the arms of God as a little child...” and at 239, “I took my place in the arms of Jesus...like the watchman observing the enemy from the highest turret...”

<sup>142</sup> In speaking of God lowering himself into their hearts, Thérèse does not speak of ends in the sense of after-life reward, but in relation to God’s present purpose and pleasure. *Story of a Soul*, 14. Arminjon’s concern is with after-life. The simple one’s end is not *inharmonious* with God. Yet as “vision of God” is “not connatural to Man,” coming in no way “from the forces of nature,” and “does not correspond to any desire or necessity in our hearts,” he assigns them eternal bliss without vision of God, rather than hell, consistent with Abelard’s notion of “Limbo.” Arminjon has human history passing from the “law of nature” to the “Mosaic Law,” to the “law of grace.” Arminjon, *The End of the Present World*, 218-219,14.

<sup>143</sup> Ormerod notes that human existence is social and historical, which means it involves “social constructions.” He writes, the “poor savage,” a naive adult, is a romantic notion, popularized by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the myth of the “noble savage,” one “freed from all social and cultural accretions.” Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 35.

<sup>144</sup> Concerned that all the elect would not be equally glorified in heaven, Thérèse was shown by Pauline that the human person is related to God’s glory like the capacity in a “tumbler” is to water. *Story of a Soul*, 45.

Kelly and Moloney state the *cognitive* dimension “implies a definable content grasped in an objective judgment. It is inherent in faith’s answers to the questions: Who is the one true God? How is God revealed? How is the divine will to be discerned?”<sup>145</sup> To answer this, we turn to Thérèse’s experience of God, constitutive of her faith, where Thérèse’s early-childhood identity-forming experience (producing God-object representations), as felt-knowing, tempers any ‘objective’ religious teaching that threatens her identity.<sup>146</sup>

(c) *Constitutive Meaning*

For Kelly and Moloney, meaning functions in a *constitutive* manner by the Word affecting “the experience of human identity,” forming it “in the light of the divine meaning,” and constituting an awareness of ourselves as “the children of God.” Here we speak of Thérèse’s experience and its recall, through symbolic imaging, as meaning (meaning “constitutes part of the reality of the one that means:” their horizon, assimilative powers, knowledge, values).<sup>147</sup>

In Thérèse’s writing, her experience from earliest memory (embellishing the portraits from her mother’s correspondence to Pauline), we access developmental continuity in an ‘experience of God’, uncommon in analytical accounts of self-God experience in older Catholic literature.<sup>148</sup> Testimonies, to be spiritual, were generally presented from an adult perspective by religious in a monastic setting,<sup>149</sup> in an environment disconnected from

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<sup>145</sup> Kelly and Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, 55.

<sup>146</sup> Her affective-knowing corrects a necessity to be “great” (spectacular) in one’s martyrdom of love for God, to cower on a steep “staircase of fear,” to recite beautiful prayers, to fear God’s justice, and to seek painful obstacles as mortifications. This supports William James. God’s existence is prior to humanity, but experience of God is prior to intellectual operations such as creeds and formulations about God – which “presuppose immediate experiences as their subject matter.” James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 433.

<sup>147</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 356.

<sup>148</sup> Augustine, the most famous Christian self-analyst, in an autobiographical account, influenced by his post-conversion feeling, offers childhood experiences from a somewhat negative perspective to illustrate his theological view. But more positive (and very early) first-hand portraits such as we have from Zélie Martin, Augustine states are unavailable to him. Augustine, *Confessions of St Augustine*, translated by F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed & Ward, 1960), 7-19.

<sup>149</sup> Pierre Abelard’s (1079-1142) *Historia Calamitatum*, Chapter VII, refers to this in Heloise’s opposition to their marriage. Appraising married life as “intolerable annoyances” (citing Paul and Ambrose) and the presence of children bothersome (“whining,” a “noisy confusion,” with nurse’s “lullabies,” and “continual untidiness”), Heloise prefers to be his mistress. Merging philosophy and the religious life as solitary in quality (citing Pythagoras of Samos, in Augustine’s *City of God*, that the philosopher was first identified as a “wise man” due to “virtue”), she reasons a philosopher’s success is connected with theological success, associated with the unmarried state. Accessed 31/12/2011, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/abelard-histcal.asp>.

mothers, babies, sisters, the whole domestic garden of growing human, integral to the experience of God.<sup>150</sup>

It is through her aim to show her life wholly guided and encompassed by God's mercy from its outset, that Thérèse reads her early family life through a theological lens, offering a glimpse of the passage of her religious faith. Her enculturation into the monastic virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience, is revealed, along with the fact that she wanted to be like Pauline,<sup>151</sup> who practiced these toward a hoped for 'espousal' to Jesus. Thérèse recalls, in her early years, a happy freedom to love God, and easy forgiveness, feeling herself allowed to extract forgiveness by a pre-emptive firm confession, the process according to her impression of things.<sup>152</sup> She projects these characteristics onto God;<sup>153</sup> forgiveness is not just hoped for, but confidently relied on, and actively sought.<sup>154</sup>

Though she speaks of a "conversion,"<sup>155</sup> Thérèse describes being attracted to God and a God-oriented life – aiming to become a saint – from her earliest awareness (embedded in a culture which promotes this).<sup>156</sup> There are no divergences from this aim, but experiences of hindrance to it (her illness from 'demonic forces') and feelings that prevent her from looking away from herself (needing praise for her 'selfless' efforts). Thérèse's conversion is not intellectual, turning from a previous knowing, as Augustine turned from Manichaeism to

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<sup>150</sup> This is the environment McDargh explores toward self-becoming, via Winnicott and Rizzuto. See McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 214-236.

<sup>151</sup> "At the age of two," she thinks "I will be a religious." At three, "she wants at times to join in the practices [of virtue];" at four, "I shall be a religious in a cloister." *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 1220, 1226, 108. "The one who was my ideal from childhood was Pauline." *Story of a Soul*. 20.

<sup>152</sup> *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1224-1225.

<sup>153</sup> God (as a representation) has as much of a developmental history as the historical individual who believes in him or who denies his existence. Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Psychological Foundations of Belief in God*, in James Fowler & Vergote, Antoine et. al. *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity*. NJ: Silver Burdett, 1980), 116-117.

<sup>154</sup> De Meester, Conrad. *The Power of Confidence: Genesis and Structure of the "Way of Spiritual Childhood" of St Therese of Lisieux* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1998), 310-321.

<sup>155</sup> In relation to herself, Thérèse seldom uses "conversion:" once in *Story of a Soul* (p 97) and once in a letter to Bellière, where she speaks of St Teresa calling her nuns to be as "'strong men', armed ... for war." *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1016.

<sup>156</sup> "I have always wanted to be a saint." *Story of a Soul*, 207. 'Saint' was part of the Martin family day-to-day familiar vocabulary. See *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1201.

Christian beliefs, nor moral, as he forsook his bodily passions.<sup>157</sup> Becoming ‘maturely’ in command of her feelings (and so, her self) to independently own her family values has been described as psychic, affective, or structural.<sup>158</sup> ‘Conversion’ for Thérèse denotes God steering all toward his own “from above” purpose.

In her writing about it, evidence of God in all aspects of Thérèse’s life intensifies, like a pattern becoming visible.<sup>159</sup> “Grace” at Christmas leads to reading *The End of the Present World* (the nourishment of “oil and honey” from God) which invigorates her and initiates a quest for Carmel, via an urge to intercede for sinners for Jesus’ sake. Thérèse’s ‘experiences of God’, revealing her identity-formation, witness to a transparently consistent Thérèse. For example, while penning being as a “child” in *Man A*, she writes in corresponding letters (July 1895) “I who am and want to remain always a child,” and (October 1895) “I am converted and ...too bold in my requests” (“converted” referring to a resumption of her childhood talkativeness).<sup>160</sup> These images, unique to this date, show interaction between felt-remembrances and her current perception and expectations of God.

Thérèse’s writing is an exercise in constituting meaning. She makes sense of the theological doctrines of grace, God’s free election, and end, through affective-knowing, namely, less as truths needing affirmation, than as values that are appreciated.<sup>161</sup> For example, to reach her end she needs to become, by surrender to grace, most perfectly what she is ordained to be, which involves recognizing one’s shape - as this inscribes one’s end (pointing to a “personalist” particularity: her unique history shapes her subjective value.) Being most

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<sup>157</sup>See “Book Three,” “Book Four,” and “Book Five,” *Confessions*, 30-79.

<sup>158</sup> Tom Ryan argues Thérèse’s conversion as affective in Tom Ryan SM. “Psychic Conversion and St Thérèse of Lisieux.” *The Australasian Catholic Record* 22/1 (Jan 2005), 3-18.

<sup>159</sup> Von Balthasar notes this as Thérèse’s emerging sense of mission in Von Balthasar, *Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Mission*.

<sup>160</sup> *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 908, 916. Also, in July, she writes “remaining as calm as a little child in its mother’s arms...”, and, in October, to Leonie, “...I was not mistaken and even Jesus was content with my desires, my total abandonment.”

<sup>161</sup> In *Man C* Thérèse relates some characteristics of charity which she has encountered that reveal to her God’s “from above” ways. She has discovered, through experience of others’ reception of it, her well-meant behaviour as insufficiently reflecting her good intention: all is not at it appears outwardly. Further, in her practice of daily poverty, chastity, and obedience, Thérèse grasps the purpose of preferring poverty (attributing her perspicuity to illumination), and giving up her will, as a path to interior freedom (confessing that only sometimes she succeeds in practice). *Story of a Soul*, 159, 226-227.

herself in relation to God means to know herself. Knowing herself is attained through the practice of ‘self-forgetting’, which paradoxically evokes self-remembering.<sup>162</sup> Ultimately, however, Thérèse finds her identity (lover of and loved by God) as disconnected from practices, however worthwhile. Initially feeling ‘aspiration to greatness’ as defining her identity in relation to God,<sup>163</sup> Thérèse settles for being ‘indulged by God’, in extravagant spousal gifts like snow, then favour, in permission to sleep, finally returning to being one “dandled on God’s knee” and treated gently (“difficult things not allowed for me”) as a youngest daughter. She once felt great desires augured greatness in action (exclaiming in martyrdom, in Arminjon’s words, ‘let me suffer more!’), but she found greatness not pursuant on great desires. Indeed, to enact great desires (travel to the Saigon Carmel) would render her not-Thérèse (she is to be cosseted and spared from danger). Thérèse acknowledges that invented physical suffering is not to her taste;<sup>164</sup> ‘ordinary’ endurance is heroic enough for her. Yet, while accepting her limits with respect to enduring suffering, Thérèse endures what overtakes her (accepting suffering as from the hand of God), welcoming and surrendering to God in “darkness” and pain, feeling God in God’s absence as much as in physical impact.<sup>165</sup>

Meaning is also constituted for Thérèse through experiencing God in a dialogue. When beset by a problem and asking for help, or after a loving bid, Thérèse awaits an answer, looking out at her physical environment and searching within. God’s reply is felt when unexpected circumstances arise, without manipulation, to meet her expressed desires, such as Celine’s entry into Carmel. This activity points to Lonergan’s “dialectic of transcendence and limitation operating within the individual person,” further explored by Robert Doran, who

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<sup>162</sup> In searching for God, Thérèse “abased herself to nothingness.” There she discovers (remembers) who she most is, ‘lover’. *Story of a Soul*, 194.

<sup>163</sup> Harking back to early feelings of treated as good and adored by her family, Thérèse exteriorizes her desires early – she wants to become great, a great saint, to visibly realize her ample desire.

<sup>164</sup> “...when I am reading certain spiritual treatises in which perfection is shown through a thousand obstacles, surrounded by a crowd of illusions, my poor little mind quickly tires; I close the learned book which is breaking my head and drying up my heart. ... I see it is sufficient to recognize one’s nothingness and to abandon oneself as a child into God’s arms...” *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 1093-1094.

<sup>165</sup> *Story of a Soul*, Close to death, in great suffering she is recorded as wishing to say with respect to more suffering: “so much the better!” Thérèse of Lisieux, *Last Conversations*, 224. Thérèse, early in life, made a strong connection between suffering and goodness. Rose/Zélie’s face serves as a critical transitional object. Mary Frohlich’s article “Your Face is My Only Homeland,” notes how this gave her a sufficiently strong sense of self, saving her from falling apart during her suffering, and her crisis of faith due to the ‘absence of God.’

speaks of persons seeking purpose in their lives through “the confluence of inner affect and outer events.”<sup>166</sup>

In relation to her dialogue, we note that amid acute desire for relation, when estranged from embodied interaction, a person may conjure up fantastical projections using inner-world images.<sup>167</sup> When inclined toward an absolute listening-other in prayer, however, a person may also encounter their affective memories, consolation, fear, felt-inabilities, self-dissatisfaction, and felt-distance between self and others, to re-represent God through re-engagement with their God-representation. Rather than a move towards the fantastical, there is a deeper and wider engagement with the ‘real.’ While repetitious interaction with one group and their thoughts (Thérèse is largely enclosed by her past relationships) could be detrimental to self-becoming,<sup>168</sup> in facing herself through God (as witness to her authenticity), Thérèse’s inner working is laid bare – we see God at work in her self-becoming, defending her from uselessness, condemnation, and valuelessness.

Thérèse’s ‘constitutive meaning’ has a further element. Her experience of limitation is significant and productive, evoking analogical imagery in terms of calling for a reply from a more able one. In infancy, the able one (Zélie/Rose) represented ‘outside’ help. Sensory-affective responses to help were recorded,<sup>169</sup> making up what Winnicott proposes is an “inner world,” whose symbols have an abiding sustaining quality, serving as an indispensable operating mechanism. When new limitations are encountered, this inner world is entered by way of a prayer conversation, and felt-help from the able one is accessed. Calling to the one whose earlier help constituted grace in a literal-concrete sense generates a renewed felt-

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<sup>166</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 31, 60. Referring to Robert Doran, Tom Ryan notes this dialectic of transcendence and limitation as operating between conscious and unconscious. Tom Ryan, “Psychic Conversion and St Thérèse of Lisieux,” *The Australasian Catholic Record* 22/1 (Jan 2005), pp3-18.

<sup>167</sup> Doran states that “to deny the limitation of matter and psyche... [we add: or to live disconnected from its reality] is to invite escape into manic fantasy.” Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 31. For an example of Thérèse sharing her fantasy, see *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 925-930.

<sup>168</sup> Ormerod uses Silvia Plath’s imagery from “The Bell Jar” (1963): “sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air.”

<sup>169</sup> For example: Zélie made milk available to Thérèse, through her own breasts, bottle, and through Rose; response to Thérèse’s gestures were ensured by proximity through Rose making herself available to Thérèse by securing Thérèse to the cow she was milking, and through Zélie arriving at each step of the staircase.

confidence, or openness to external help. Help arrives in a convergence of the psychological and spiritual.

Experience of limitation calls for grace. Grace lies in between two persons: one needing help limitation and another offering help. Limitation, not the same as suffering evil, is integral to the activity of grace.<sup>170</sup> Emphasis on the giver (whether “uncreated” or “created” grace, or God’s self-communication) leads to the impression that grace might be present regardless of limitation. Thérèse’s understanding of her experience highlights grace as not absolute but as in-relation. Though not precisely as in-between, theologian Romano Guardini (1885-1968) describes grace as an *atmosphere* which is generous, creative and sensitive.<sup>171</sup> Grace is beauty as sensitive to limit. Without limitation in human experience, grace would be irrelevant and superfluous.

From his perspective, Von Balthasar argues that there must be two descriptives (grace and nature) to differentiate between the giver and receiver of grace.<sup>172</sup> We suggest, rather than ‘giving’ as *grace*, and ‘receiving’ as *nature*, viewing giving and receiving as in response to one condition, ‘limitation’. The interplay of giving and receiving manifests God’s grace to humanity. In mutual interchange these positions are adopted in turn by both.<sup>173</sup> *Limitation* calls for giving and receiving: grace is pursuant upon limitation. Thérèse’s analogical thinking, that the small child relates with the parent, via a plaintive appeal,<sup>174</sup> attractive to one who is inclined toward them, suggests that capacity for God is through the characteristic of human limitation. Thus, though the human experience of limitation may be felt as one of

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<sup>170</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 13.

<sup>171</sup> For Guardini a graced atmosphere is an environment which is free, generous, creative, sensitive and not mechanical, surprising, even contradictory. Romano Guardini, *Freedom, Grace, and Destiny: Three Chapters on the Interpretation of Existence* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 101-116. It should be kept in mind that Aquinas describes grace, amongst other things, as experiencing “a “certain sweetness” which leads to a level of self-knowledge.”” *Summa Theologica* 1-2 q. 112, a5. (See Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 124.)

<sup>172</sup> See “The Absolute Gratuity of Grace: Hans Urs von Balthasar ‘From Above’,” in Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 122.

<sup>173</sup> John Paul II, discussing marriage, speaks of giving and receiving as represented by both persons in the couple because of the mutual, reciprocal, interpenetration of gifting. Active reception of another’s gift is, itself, a *giving*. The gift giver, in turn, *receives* that active reception. John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1997), 71.

<sup>174</sup> An analogy is the adult’s attraction to the dilated eyes of a newborn baby – dilated because they are as yet unable to focus (limitation).

deficiency, this is the ground of the human's attractiveness to God (as a baby is to its parent), and its occasion for communion with God. Limitation is the locus for grace, and the very condition of its possibility.

Thérèse's theology, then, is grounded on a strong theme in the Hebrew Scriptures: God is the one called upon by the simple, poor and lowly, the helpless ones, who by their need and openness to help are, metaphorically, children, and, in relation to God's power and responsiveness, existentially, children. Consciousness of limitation and need, in Hebrew Scripture, is the opening for God as the mercifully favouring divine parent God, advocate for those in need,<sup>175</sup> the God who forms a strong identity from within the person as loved, listened to, protected, taught, and sustained.

Within this analogy, Thérèse expresses little concern with preserving God's freedom. The God who declares Godself to *be* love may be counted on as loving. The connection between parent and infant and their developing relationship – the basis for mutual responsiveness – leaves nothing to be desired.<sup>176</sup> The gains felt peculiar to each side of this two-way interaction is a conversation of grace and benediction.<sup>177</sup> The child absorbs parental valuing of him/her and learns skills, and the parent is consoled and healed by the infant's mirroring back the value shown. It is a being-in-love. Attributing this created dynamic to the God-human relation, challenges us to rethink the meaning of limitation in the context of embodied relating, where we are a valued, loved, forgiven, wanted 'I' searching the face of the 'You'. Thérèse, as the Hebrew Scriptures do, places God in a powerfully immanent position: God replies to human need from within, interacting there with persons in an infinite way, reinstating in each generation an inviolable ("it is good" - you are good) self-identity, for the purpose of blessing the other (Jesus' forgiveness was a form of this benediction).<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Exodus 22: 23: "when they [widow or orphan] cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry..."

<sup>176</sup> In searching the physical world to find instances of operations as evidence, for God's truth (flowers provide pleasure through their beauty), Thérèse implicitly affirms the created order as good.

<sup>177</sup> Glenn Morrison, "Building Jewish-Christian Friendship," in a CCJWA (Council for Christians and Jews in Western Australia) lecture delivered 20/09/2011, speaks of the notion of benediction as between persons, in the initiating smile of friendship.

<sup>178</sup> Thérèse's growing conviction about limitation and divine power is reflected in Jesus. In his humanity (Col 1: 19) he receives the fullness of God. Paul prays that we be "filled with the utter fullness of God." (Eph. 3: 19). Interacting in an unrestricted way captures the mystery of how human limitation is *capax dei* – it offers a limitless capacity to share in God's knowing, loving, and joy.

Her experience of God leads Thérèse to fall in love with who she truly is. By meeting the all-powerful other, who loves her without limit; she no longer flees from who she is, from her foibles and neuroses. When she imagines God as sympathetic with all that she desires and in command over all that happens externally, she ‘empowers God’ (waits on God) to bring her undisclosed inner desires to fruition, and to surprise her with unexpected events. Thérèse ascribes a love perspective in her favour, to all that occurs.<sup>179</sup> Conceiving of God as a merciful mother, she views all through what she once felt mercy consist of. As God ordains and governs all, and acts only from tender merciful love, all in the universe may be construed to abide by this natural order of mercy toward limitation (a “confluence of inner affect and outer events”), and God may be felt this way in all.<sup>180</sup>

Thérèse’s spiritual imagining allows the inclusion of existential limits. From her imagining (remarkably like von Balthasar’s later anthropological formulation where he returns to analogical attributions of God), we ascribe intrinsic goodness to this-world limitation (in felt phenomenologies and operations) as a created reality, particularly when understood in relation to God who only loves. If God brings all to good in a spiritual sense (Rom 8: 28), existential parameters, felt as hardship, must also be purposed for good. Processing embodiment, in a single affective subject, where the vulnerability and sensitivity required for nurturing and self-becoming give rise to ‘weakness’, may, through love, be comprehended as *the* ground for relation where hope and fidelity might be expressed, in sum, *the* ultimate realization of love. Grace, found in lifting up, belongs to the human experience of limitation. From the perspective of anthropocentricity (the anthropic principle), limit is God’s principle for relation to occur.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Missing in Peck’s somewhat Pelagian *The Road Less Travelled*, Thérèse holds two notions in tension: virtue based interior work (fruitful in that it reveals to her who she is) against not owning the task of ‘fixing’ herself to be acceptable, because that, she senses, is encompassed by God’s transcendent help – which will come to her by way of affective preconscious operations.

<sup>180</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 31.

<sup>181</sup>The Anthropic principle is a cosmological principle where all creation evolves, or develops, toward human consciousness. In Teilhard de Chardin’s thinking, the epitome of this is represented by God entering humanity in Christ, the divine exchange. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 25, 76.

f. *Effective Meaning (praxis)*

Here we look at the ethical implications of Thérèse's experience of God.<sup>182</sup> We begin with her vocational life choice. Expected to choose between a life in "the world" and a religious life, Thérèse chooses a *desert* monastic life ("I felt Carmel was the *desert* where God wanted me to go ... to hide myself").<sup>183</sup> Carmel's blend of eremitic and cenobitic was an option for those of a contemplative disposition. Thérèse alludes to being of a sensitive disposition, and socially awkward at school;<sup>184</sup> later she expresses distaste of worldly ways, and speaks of wanting to leave "the world" to be alone with God (as Zélie and Louis had wished). The Carmelite life, in its solidarity with Elijah's "suffering and lone service to God," its passivity, yet preparing to receive God,<sup>185</sup> its vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, expressed a form of liminal existence.<sup>186</sup> Though the French Carmels had strong connections with Teresa of Avila's reform and mysticism, in Thérèse's time, distancing from the world reflected the Jansenist ideal of maintaining moral and religious standards by being removed from compromising secular life.<sup>187</sup> The Carmelite environment provided elements through which women could express perfect charity to neighbour, and perfect love to Jesus.<sup>188</sup> While Thérèse's motivation issued from a fragile self which yearned to be healed and protected (her "intense affectivity" untiringly recreates "Jesus within the terms of her emotional needs"), the

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<sup>182</sup> How does Thérèse's experience of God inspire a "new and hopeful" way to "transform the world?" Kelly and Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John*, 56, 57.

<sup>183</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 58.

<sup>184</sup> "Sometimes I felt alone, very much alone, and as in the days ... as a day boarder when I walked sad and sick in the big yard, I repeated these words: 'life is your barque not your home'." *Story of a Soul*, 83.

<sup>185</sup> Nevin, *God's Gentle Warrior*, 116.

<sup>186</sup> Adapting anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's theory of "rite of passage," Victor Turner proposed the categories, "separation, liminality and reaggregation." Persons (by way of a ritual) separate themselves from the ordinary of life to experience the *liminal* ('limin' - threshold). While sensitized to nature, or the sacredness of others, persons reach a level of communion which usual social structures inhibit, through a loss of ego boundaries, a powerful sense of at-oneness, an awakening of the transcendent dimension. Liminality also refers to "living on the edge," that is, seeking the invigoration felt in great risking the possibility of death to experience events of "utter life." Hunger, silence, cold, sleep deprivation, and being shut in, in Carmel produce a *liminal*, or desert experience. Michael Drumm in *Passage to Pesach: Revisiting the Catholic Sacraments* (Dublin: The Columbia Press, 1998).

<sup>187</sup> See Louis Dupre and Don E Saliers, with John Meyendorff (editors), *Christian Spirituality: Post Reformation and Modern* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 122-123. Also, Wallace K. Ferguson, "The Place of Jansenism in French History". *The Journal of Religion* 1/7 (Jan 1927), 16-42.

<sup>188</sup> Nevin, *God's Gentle Warrior*, 117.

Carmelite life in a Jansenist atmosphere was vulnerable to negative aims,<sup>189</sup> allowing ambivalent motives. There is some confluence between a desire for self-becoming in a sheltered environment, and, in viewing embodiedness as a this-world fault and its wills as disordered, a desire for detachment from these through a reliable, self-possessed, God-oriented will. There is, however, tension between self-appropriation by self-knowing, and by ruling over one's affective life through any means.

We explore the implications of this for effective meaning in Thérèse. Self-becoming constitutes the subconscious momentum of Thérèse's motivation. With her conscious objective as nearness to God, she communicates feeling this as possible through pleasing those who give value to her – becoming her True Self (her sense of Arminjon conveying Jesus' need for her, which echoes Zélie's acceptance of suffering, and the image of the child as powerful in the eyes of God). Apart from Marie de Gonzague and some incidental spiritual figures, Thérèse's evaporating family remains almost entirely the source of her value. There is no clash between clearly distinguishable entities, such as between cultural beliefs and Thérèse's family affective-value traditions because in Carmel these form one environment (they inhabit each other). Her whole environment has the power to threaten self-becoming by denying her value (affective and embodied) by positing a False Self. In Thérèse, Catholic tradition does not critique Martin ways, or Martin ways the Catholic tradition. Nevertheless, what plays out in Thérèse is, for all that, valuable in itself.

At times, attributing high value to the religious virtue of obedience gives rise to a conflict between Thérèse's self-becoming and supporting the family 'contract' (what each member's role and value is).<sup>190</sup> We note two periods when Thérèse distances herself from obediently absorbing others' devaluing her, by appointing God (indirectly re-affirming earlier value felt through Rose/Zélie) in their place to be an advocate for her self-becoming. At ten, Thérèse,

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<sup>189</sup> Ormerod writes about a moralizing spirituality based on repression: "not being content with the grounded reality of human bodily existence," persons succumb to the temptation of "...*libido dominandi*, a desire to dominate, to control, often resulting in violence against the other; ...limitation denied will eventually demand recognition." Ormerod gives the example of denying sexual desire, through viewing it as base and defiling, as leading "to an eruption of sexual irresponsibility," for a person "simply has no way of controlling what he or she denies." The attempt to escape from one's sexual identity through celibacy will lead to an uncontrolled clumsy assertion of this dimension. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 48.

<sup>190</sup> See Jean-François Six, *Light of the Night: The Last Eighteen Months in the Life of Thérèse of Lisieux*. Translated by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1995), 1-16. Six's thesis is that Pauline imposes an infantilizing spirituality upon Thérèse by her "corrections" (additions and erasures).

familiar with feeling her value as “sweet,” “small,” “innocent,” “intelligent” and independent (“stubborn”), hears that she is clingy, no fun, difficult, and “too soft-hearted.”<sup>191</sup> Subsequent illness causes her to be inaccessible to all around her. Further troubled self-becoming (up till fourteen years of age) manifests in a ‘rebellion’ of sickness, scruples, and tears.<sup>192</sup> Then, from her entry into Carmel up until Pauline becomes prioress (between fifteen and twenty years of age), Thérèse evades self-disclosure to Pauline (representing another hindrance to self-becoming) by strictly appealing to the rule of obedience. In this, for the sake of self-becoming, and succumbing to desire to control the demeaning feeling associated with compromise and ambivalences (failure), she tends to objectify those around her.

To “grow up more” (a False Self ambition) at Carmel, so as to be equal alongside Pauline and Marie, meant divesting herself from the felt need for attention and affection from Marie de Gonzague (received at ten years of age after the “virgin’s smile”).<sup>193</sup> This included a refusal to acknowledge to her novice sisters that she competed with them for attention (sharing her weakness), thus refusing ordinary connections.<sup>194</sup> Yet Thérèse’s need (True Self) involves completing a necessary bond, interrupted when she was taken from Rose, revisited with calling Zélie at each stairway step, and with knocking on Marie’s door, when Marie was to leave for Carmel. Nevertheless, in removing herself from others’ mirroring unsatisfactory self-images, Thérèse allows God to be her only mirror (aptly described by Fitzgerald), thus completing a bond with one whose name she can always call upon and whose door she can always knock on – finally fusing with this positive mirroring.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 53-54, 60.

<sup>192</sup> See Kathryn Harrison, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, 44-49. At 48, Harrison writes: “Marie offered Therese some water and she cried out... ‘They want to poison me!’ It was a hysterical cry, certainly, but one with explicit content; that Therese later insisted she never lost her reason makes it impossible to dismiss her words as meaningless. Even if we resist forcing a literal gloss upon her accusation – ‘poison’ a metaphor of toxic despair, all she was expected to swallow rather than express – the Martin family’s faith asked much of a child. When Zélie died, Therese had been taught to turn a face of sweet acceptance to an unappeasable God ... What was the cost of continuing to perceive that God as good, a God of Love?”

<sup>193</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux, *General Correspondence Volume I, 1877-1890*, translated by John Clarke OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1982), 155, 160, 286. *Story of a Soul*, 67, 237.

<sup>194</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 223-224, 235-36.

<sup>195</sup> Fitzgerald, Constance. “The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux.” *The Way Supplement* (Summer, 1997), 75- 77.

Later, recognizing her ambition to control, even manipulate, her sense of God, Thérèse asks to be robbed of anything standing in the way to love God (in her “Offering,” a prayer whose fulfilment she awaits).<sup>196</sup> By trusting that God will attend to this weakness, Thérèse spares herself from an excess of self-scrutiny, counter-productive to relation. Through this dialectic prayer-conversation, God’s role in the interior operation of self-becoming (confirming Jesus’ teaching, that relation be held above legality, mercy above obeying the law as a mere principle), is visible to the reader. Thérèse’s conversation with God, via affective memory, does not result in narcissism (idolizing herself as an object), but in an honest defence of her self as a relational other (as commanded by Jesus).

Nevertheless, Thérèse remains needy – in needing to have her good named, struggling against the Jansenist suspicion of the self as deceitful when it regards itself well, the sickness of her time. From desire to be in relation (entailing obedience), she subordinates herself to her family’s trust in the validity of a Catholic culture (*the way to come to God*), where distorted views of the self in relation to God have infiltrated self-understanding.<sup>197</sup> She defines herself in terms of her relation to her sisters (and their perception of the world), giving up her life for them – remaining in the noviciate, agreeing to give up her hope of writing a commentary on Song of Songs (relinquishing recognition for her creative ability), and accepting that suffering most elicits God’s love.<sup>198</sup> Yet by viewing this as a mission felt given to her by God (a True Self in the sense that God would never abandon her to an aimless existence, but provides her a dignifying purpose) and fleeing into ‘the arms of God’ through hoped for death, she simultaneously obeys God and escapes False Self constraints.

In sum, Thérèse restates to her sisters, and the novices in her care, what she felt stated to her: be undividedly given to God, poor, chaste and obedient; this brings us to God. Recalling a relational dimension in devotion to God,<sup>199</sup> Thérèse urges Celine to join her in Carmel, then

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<sup>196</sup> Cf Mt 12: 7-13.

<sup>197</sup> Thérèse tests the truth of this culture by her experience – insofar as she accepts her experience. For example, she reflects that a poor person, after asking, has no expectation to receive. But the truly hungry are more likely to snatch at what they need. When she hungered for acknowledgment for her good efforts from others, she ‘snatched’ it by her tears.

<sup>198</sup> Six, *Light of the Night*, 127-139, especially 127-130.

<sup>199</sup> Celine represented the one who did not abandon Thérèse, when all others did. Thérèse, herself, though, simply repeated the abandoning pattern she felt by Zélie, Pauline and Therese’s leaving.

pledges herself as an “Offering to Merciful Love.” Later, speaking of forgiveness, she heartens all, especially her seminarian correspondent Bellière, to take up God’s offer of mercy, not in terms of ‘wrongs’, but as a happy occasion to be indebted to God, so to be in a state of enjoying God’s favour. In insisting ‘avail yourself of mercy as I do!’ (rather than offering a kind of self-justification as though free and total forgiveness is not really expected), Thérèse takes up the Reformers’ bold hope.<sup>200</sup> Whilst taking pains to avoid sin, scruple-prone Thérèse advises others to ‘press on’, to maintain the flow of loving interaction.

In considering effective meaning and the relationship of vocation to Thérèse’s attitudes and behaviour, we return to the underlying dynamic in Thérèse’s life. In response to her own painful lack (from her experience of attempting to retain a role in the family when she was small and neither useful nor helpful – presenting as a False Self), Thérèse constructs a permanent identity to fulfil the role she envisages God has given her. This ‘truer self’, a happy infant, she offers to others as an identity they too might take up. In sharing in her identity, they may enjoy relief from a burden of high self-expectations, self-accusation of failure, or being a non-entity (Mt 11: 25).<sup>201</sup> She invites others to share in her freedom, by sharing her disposition and actions in obtaining forgiveness, and in her affirming that their efforts to love will be accepted by God in their surrender to desire for relation (with Jesus) alone. Thérèse shares the fruit of her psycho-spiritual reflection towards self-becoming, meeting those who suffer likewise. If modelling this process is not enough, Thérèse is so confident in knowing how God feels, she lends her ‘self’ confidence to others to take as their own, offering the pattern of a self-identity as completed by God.<sup>202</sup> She evokes in others:

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<sup>200</sup> The Protestant Reformer’s hope was a *felt* conviction of being saved – discouraged by Trent in the anathemas pronounced on persons who articulated such conviction, and supported by the Catholic Catechism in the light of an extrinsicist milieu. See Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 123-124.

<sup>201</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 105. Thérèse uses Mt 11:25 a number of times: “I praise you Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children” - referring to her kind of knowing as like Jesus’ knowing. Also, on p 225, verse 30 (“... the yoke of the Lord is sweet and light.”).

<sup>202</sup> Thérèse borrows from *Avis spirituality pour la sanctification des âmes*: “Look at a little child who has just annoyed his mother...if he comes to her holding out his little arms smiling and saying “Kiss me, I will not do it again,” will his mother be able to not press him to her heart tenderly and forget his childish mischief?”... she knows her dear little one will do it on the next occasion, but this does not matter...” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 966 -968, 1153. Thérèse shares her confidence: “...I shall be more useful to you in heaven than on earth ... you will [thank] the Lord for giving me the means of helping you more effectively... I am asking God for this and I am certain he will answer me.” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1141.

“you are good” (Gen 1:31).<sup>203</sup> Before we explore dimensions of existential suffering as part of an experience of God’s love, we turn to Lonergan’s idea of conversion as a reorientation of one’s experiential knowing.

### 3. Conversion in Thérèse

Does a focus on self-transcendence as ‘conversion’ lead to demonstrating psychic advancement, and, implying this as the goal of the human dialectic, displace relationship as its goal? Joann Wolski Conn and Walter E. Conn use Thérèse’s life and writings to exemplify ‘conversion shifts’ (manifesting as a consistent redirection of intention) in Lonergan’s three spheres, cognitive, moral, and religious/affective, in “Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St Thérèse of Lisieux.”<sup>204</sup>

For “cognitive conversion,” Wolski Conn and Conn suggest that Thérèse shifts her locus of authority from exterior sources to an interior one: to “a gentle but firm trust in her own judgments.”<sup>205</sup> We argue Thérèse, however, was outspoken with regard to her own interpretations of God from an early age.<sup>206</sup> For “moral conversion,” the Conns state that self-transcendence depends on self-possession, and that “the primary characteristic of moral conversion is the shift from concern for self-satisfaction” to desire for a life devoted to value, an “about face,” toward committing one’s self (in love) to something.<sup>207</sup> Earlier, we noted that the capacity for self-possession involves the gift of empowerment in infancy, through the parent guiding the infant’s affect in a dialogue, parental response giving the infant a sense of

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<sup>203</sup> *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1093.

<sup>204</sup> The Conns ask whether, through conversion, the “possible and sporadic” drive for self-transcendence becomes a “probable and regular one” – viewing conversion as redirecting intentionality from self interest to “what will I do from moral responsibility” and to “what, finally, am I going to commit myself in love?” They affirm self-transcendence as “normative for the spiritual life,” and as occurring “whenever we respond to the radical, questioning drive of the human spirit for meaning” via “reflective questioning.” Joann Wolski Conn, Walter E Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St Thérèse of Lisieux.” *Spirituality Today* 34/4 (Winter 1982), pp303- 311, 1-2.

<sup>205</sup> Wolski Conn and Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence,” 2.

<sup>206</sup> Much was made of it by Zélie and Marie. Zélie writes in May 1877, Thérèse “has answers that are very rare for her age; she gives advice to Celine who is twice her age.” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1234. She remained independent in thought, temporarily losing this character when Zélie (upon her death) and Marie’s affirmation of it ceased (upon her leaving). *Story of a Soul*, 88.

<sup>207</sup> Moral conversion is a shift away from “self-centred or illusory attempts to deny the self or to meet its desires.” Wolski Conn and Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence,” 1-3.

impacting the other. The Conns cite Thérèse's "complete conversion" at Christmas 1886 as a "shift from self-pity to concern for others," an experience of "adult decision-making," and "strength and freedom of decision."<sup>208</sup> But, are these not the very characteristics Pauline's religious culture promoted (grow up! think of others not yourself! act from love! be useful for God and others!), which compromised her "self's authentic realization," to make her acceptable?

Thérèse overcame 'failure' by suddenly being able to do what she yearned to do – to love according to the standards (obstacles) set for her.<sup>209</sup> Her earlier inability was due to loss of maternal valuing and physiological immaturity and not due to previously being absorbed in shallow self-amusement. The hyper-sensitive Thérèse tries hard to please, but fails at it, falling to tears when not praised enough, then crying over her crying because she cannot do what essentially flows from the kind of "circle of security" she lacks.<sup>210</sup> Though in 1895, she writes of being strong and undefeated, ever after (the source of her tears "dried up"), she cries many more tears.<sup>211</sup> God, however, was now felt to take up her cause.<sup>212</sup> Thérèse's new found strength was not a shift from self-absorption to a sense of value; she now felt equipped ("armed") to practice what she valued.<sup>213</sup>

The Conns, lastly, show "religious-affective conversion" in Thérèse's love shifting from the desire to "snatch" sinners (adolescent) from "the eternal flames" to "sisterhood" with

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<sup>208</sup>Wolski Conn and Conn, "Conversion as Self-Transcendence," 3.

<sup>209</sup> Thérèse's account of "complete conversion" for Pauline is complicated by her aim to demonstrate to Pauline that God values her, by way of supernatural signs, and that God realized in her what she already wanted but could not achieve *alone*. (With Pauline and Marie both in Carmel, her only companions to confess her problems to were her deceased siblings in heaven; she was tearful and sensitive without their praise for her efforts to be selfless.) She changed "in an instant" from being a girl who "was really unbearable because of [her] extreme touchiness" to "strong and courageous." *Story of a Soul*, 97. See also *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1016.

<sup>210</sup> See Vitz and Lynch, "Thérèse of Lisieux From the Perspective of Attachment Theory and Separation Anxiety." *The International Journal For the Psychology of Religion* 17/1 (2007), 61-80.

<sup>211</sup> This portrayal symbolizes her 1895 hope to be a martyr-saint. She cries in the presence of the bishop and the pope, and on other occasions. A subtext for Pauline might read: 'you left me behind but God, to whom I matter, grew me up (in your absence), and here I now am'.

<sup>212</sup> Thérèse names her tears as "self-pity," a "fault." But self-pity arises when *others* do not pity (show mercy) toward the needy one Her tears reveal the need for affirmation to reach a critical mass to form a self that could tolerate being forgotten and overlooked amid meeting the expectations of the adult world.

<sup>213</sup> With God on her side she is undefeated. God armed her with "His weapons," and gave her legs to "*run as a giant*." *Story of a Soul*, 97.

unbelievers at whose table she is “content to eat the bread of sorrow” (mature).<sup>214</sup> We find more continuity than a shift.<sup>215</sup> In 1897, Thérèse writes that she now accepts that there really are souls who have no faith.<sup>216</sup> But, while identifying herself as a sinner (in feeling no faith), she does not feel herself as “impious,” viewing herself as sinner only insofar as she has a ‘no faith’ feeling. Thérèse feels herself seated here by God’s design as God’s instrument.<sup>217</sup> Her brothers “soil” the table; she purifies it.

Thérèse’s sense of mercy is circumscribed by her experience. She accepts ‘no faith’ in others to the degree that she accepts it in herself (doubt must not be entertained, certain actions lead to ‘no-faith’).<sup>218</sup> Nevertheless, what mercy Thérèse *does* enjoy (as the origin of ‘no faith’ feeling, God knows her helplessness in it), she passes on.<sup>219</sup> In embracing God’s broader view, it is probable that Thérèse would have come to an even greater appreciation of human helplessness – as her retrieval of self in a deepening conviction of her goodness, with God as ‘Thou’, rests in the dynamism of God stooping down to lift the weak and limited to share in his own life.

The Conns’ article (identifying a movement toward self-sufficient adulthood), does not reveal Thérèse’s developing authenticity – *how* she recovers from the absence of a loving

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<sup>214</sup> Wolski Conn & Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence,” 4.

<sup>215</sup> Whilst suffering over Leo Taxil’s deception (he threw scorn on her over her prayers for Diana Vaughan), Thérèse reasserts the sense of her “Oblation to Merciful Love,” an offering to absorb God’s love in the place of those who refuse it (for their redemption). See *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 986-987.

<sup>216</sup> Perhaps contrasting her own position with Leo Taxil’s, Thérèse now accepts that there really are souls who have no faith “who, through the abuse of grace, [have] lost this precious treasure.” She recalls she once felt “impious people who had no faith,” “were actually speaking against their own inner convictions.” *Story of a Soul*, 211. “...je ne pouvais croire qu’il y eût des impiés n’ayant pas de foi. Je croyais qu’ils parlaient contre leur pensée en niant l’existence du ciel...” Sainte Thérèse, *Histoire D’une Ame*, 241.

<sup>217</sup> Thérèse’s self-perception raises the question: Why were instances of ‘no faith’ in others an “abuse of grace” (bearing in mind Sartre’s experience), yet not hers? While others’ intentions amid ‘no-faith’ were felt to be foreign, Thérèse felt her good intentions over-rode her ‘no faith’. She writes “Your child... begs pardon for her brothers.... Can she not say in her name and in the name of her brothers, ‘Have pity on us, O Lord, for we are poor sinners!’ ‘If it is needful that that the table soiled by them be purified by a soul who loves you, then I desire to eat this bread of trial... until it pleases you to bring me into Your bright Kingdom’.” *Story of a Soul*, 212.

<sup>218</sup> Thérèse would not have known that children who suffered abusive parenting lack a sense of God as present for them, or that they lack the ability to organize their emotions in terms of self-restraint.

<sup>219</sup> See *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 998-1000.

‘you’, needed in order to self-transcend.<sup>220</sup> Suggestion of a need for her child-state to be conquered threatens an emerging recognition of the vitality of infancy’s intensely dialogic interaction.<sup>221</sup> Lonergan’s “conversion dialectic” perhaps belongs to knowledge, power, and secure relations, while Thérèse’s ‘I-Thou’ dialogue belongs to one ‘done unto’, forgotten, without a ‘you’ to impact. For her, the poor one, the one whose identity is under threat, God becomes ‘You’. In this state, she senses the privilege of God’s ‘ear’. While experiencing powerlessness, she has, paradoxically, “the power of confidence,” a stubborn conviction that her ‘You’ values her and will come for her, echoing the Hebrew experience of grace.<sup>222</sup> There, God is felt as taking the side of the “poor and needy one,” God mercifully raising them up – confirming (the True Self) the person is created as “good,” and Jesus’ witness to God as “Abba.”<sup>223</sup>

## 5. Concluding Remarks

In theology post-Thérèse, Lonergan, with Rahner, responded to the effects of substantialist metaphysics and stasis in Greek thought (by “turning to the subject,” engaging with Kant’s thought, the early German Idealists, and the existentialists of Thérèse’s time), with transcendental theology. They redefined the human as a self-conscious enquiring subject, and God as the mysterious self-communicating knowing and loving the human accesses. Acknowledging an incomprehensible dimension to God, ‘human-as-inquiring’ took precedence over ‘human-as-relation’ and the structure and norms of faith development. Von Balthasar, in his exploration of the Trinitarian life, Anthropology, and Christology,

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<sup>220</sup> The infant’s ability to love depends on the previous presence of a loving ‘you’, who demonstrates love and acknowledges its effort to love; its offer of love cannot surmount an absence of response.

<sup>221</sup> While growing older allowed her to *act* other-centredly, it did not yet cure her thinking that limitation was a deficiency with respect to her relation to God. Later she understands that desire to love alone is enough, as long as the object of one’s desire recognizes that desire. Zélie’s correspondence in *Man A* shows she understands Thérèse’s desire to love. *Story of a Soul*, 17.

<sup>222</sup> The New Testament’s recourse to Old Testament documents “... seems to be indispensable...” God in a new light cannot be explained without the “Law and the Prophets.” “Without the Old Testament, who Jesus is apparently remains completely hidden. The same is true for what is given in him as a gift and also the knowledge of how man is to be rightly related to him.” Hans Walter Wolff, Trans Wilbur A. Benware, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” in Walter Brueggeman, *The Vitality of the Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 41.

<sup>223</sup> Exodus 22: 23: “when they [widow or orphan] cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry...” “Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31: 8-9. God defends the poor in Mosaic law: Exodus 22: 22, Deut 10: 18. Created “good” from Gen 1: 30. For “Abba, Father...” see Mk 14: 36.

envisioned an “above” Creator-parent view of human reality. He appears to have been influenced by Thérèse in his ideas on ‘personhood’, and being as a child in the Christian life. Thérésian writers following Lonergan’s thought, such as Wolski Conn and Conn, while attending to developmental structures, are led by Lonergan’s notion of advances through ‘conversion’. Our final consideration in this chapter concerns Thérèse thought on grace, God, and the human person.

## **6. A Thérésian Anthropology: Limitation as the locus of love**

### *a. Grace as Operating Interiorly*

Thérèse projects her interior representations of God onto events and existential effects (limitation, suffering, death). In her desire to attribute all God-ward movements to God, she points to God manipulating the usual processes. (“God would have to work a little miracle to make me *grow up* in an instant, and the miracle He performed on that unforgettable Christmas day.”) Amazed at bursting through a barrier, for so long an obstruction, Thérèse, without the benefit of awareness of psychic processes, while sensing that change came from within, thought in terms of a “miracle.” However, her change involved a process whose dynamic is submerged. This investigation has been able to uncover that the interior processes noted by Sroufe, Winnicott, and Rizzuto, themselves originate in God and deserve a more central place in theology – as these processes illustrate the ontological equation, God is the source of all good, and all the good which is created includes humanity as capacity for God.<sup>224</sup> Knowledge of human developmental operations leads to a deeper understanding of how God conveys God-self, in a way more profound and fluidly integrated than that conveyed by prior theological approaches based on the limited psychological and philosophical models of Thérèse’s time.

### *a. God’s Graciousness: A This-World Attribute*

The metaphysical arguments of Thérèse’s time had God’s being-in-relation to humanity as a composite of ‘entirely other and unknowable’ and anthropomorphic images. Love, hope, trust, and freedom, belonging to the time-space continuum, were imagined as perfections

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<sup>224</sup> God was understood through a perception of God as “first cause” and “secondary causes” based on an *ex nihilo* creation premise (a monarchical dominating view), rather than *creatio ex deo* where God simultaneously creates and sustains.

when inhabiting omniscience, immortality, and omnipresence.<sup>225</sup> Love and freedom removed from history did not do justice either to Greek metaphysics or to the analogical nature of language. Thérèse's True Self returned to God the dynamic attribute found in Hebrew Scripture: tenderly merciful.

While Thérèse does not explicitly object to these distortions, her subjective interior engagement with God challenges them. She makes peace with her limitations (sickness, tiredness, inability to concentrate, inability to perform certain duties, loss of hereafter-vision), by viewing them in terms of their value in infancy.<sup>226</sup> The limitation between herself and God she finds to be like the one between herself and her (M) Others – a locus for receiving help – the primordial ground for relation.<sup>227</sup> Through her God-object representations, God becomes an enabling, and forgiving, God.<sup>228</sup> From felt-knowing on her own and God's behalf, Thérèse affirms God as merciful (True Self statement). She offers 'her God' to others, describing God as unperturbed by neuroses and foibles (refusing a False Self), and shows childly limitations as the means for continuing this relation. Within interiority, or mental prayer (mediated by God-representations), a True Self is asserted in favour of a False Self. This activity encounters sin, not as biology, justice, or concupiscence, but in Alice Miller's terms of "victimhood."<sup>229</sup> The effects of another's devaluation of us (sin) stubbornly 'stick' to

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<sup>225</sup> When removed from their dynamic, embodied, relational context, properties involving flux such as sexuality, creative drive, and desire, become distorted. Absolutizing restraint (virginity, obedience, docile receptiveness), removes their relational character. Grace is restraint or extension for the sake of alleviating, stimulating, relating to another in love. Faint, floating, transparent, ethereal beauty cannot feed, warm, defend or console. Unlimited receptivity is too vulnerable; a new resilient self cannot form. No consummation or bringing to birth leads to physical and relational extinction.

<sup>226</sup> Pauline records the following in August 1897. Distressed by the thought of succumbing to temptations against the faith, through pride over self-sufficiency, and self-satisfaction, Thérèse views herself as not mastering any virtue. By remaining "humble" and "little," she retains the "right of doing stupid little things until my death. ...Look at little children: they never stop breaking things, tearing things, falling down, and they do this even while loving their parents very, very much. When I fall in this way, it makes me realize my nothingness more ..." If she were to rely on her own strength (the virtue of a strong love for God), her "temptations [against the faith] would become more violent, and I would certainly succumb to them." Thérèse of Lisieux, *Last Conversations*, 140-141.

<sup>227</sup> We use (M)Others as Fitzgerald does, to name Zélie, her wet nurse, Pauline. Fitzgerald, "The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux," 76.

<sup>228</sup> Offered "empty hands," she feels, delights God (like a mother) because, when open, gifts may be placed in them. In her sickness, toward the end of her life, Thérèse discovers herself again in Pauline's care; the sick child who is watched over, allowed to sleep in her bed, given gifts, and wheel-barrow rides. *Story of a Soul*, 44.

<sup>229</sup> Augustine's description of original sin (blurring concupiscence with sin itself) has traces of Manichaeism: humanity trapped under a spell of evil, where good and evil are exterior forces 'under' a God who is not omnipotent. Then, in the Middle Ages a conception of "original justice" (a special grace), was proposed, lost at

our self-identity – resulting in the devaluation of our particular being, potential, and in devaluing the general materials of human existence, in bodily and spiritual components, and the capacity to become an outgoing, creative subject-in-relation in harmony with the world.

In Lonergan’s perspective, the momentum of being-in-love (accompanied by attentiveness, intelligence, and reasonableness, and responsibility in interiority) sustains a dialectic of self-transcendence toward authenticity. Mary Frohlich notes that for Thérèse, this dialectic occurred in the symbolic sphere.<sup>230</sup> We connect Thérèse’s attention to the Hebrew parent-child metaphor, guiding her interior human-God dialogue, where she awaits merciful approval for who she is (loved sinner), to the existential plane, and to the phenomenology of human development. Human subjectivity, a product of existential limits, leads to an experience of God which cries out for more, and new, true glimpses of God’s face, mirroring our value. Thérèse felt her impotence when she experienced herself not big enough to impact the invisible God with her love, when she was unable to save her mother, to transcend her sadness, to act without thanks, to overcome others’ decisions obstructing her desire, to save her father, express remarkable courage, die impressively, and feel great love and faith.<sup>231</sup> She presents these to the God who imbues her with felt-potency, as her mother once did, in a “lift” of confident love (supporting de Lubac’s idea that humanity, in principle, does have the means for that existence; grace arouses “and sustains the activity that one is capable of by

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Adam and Eve’s “fall,” where the will lost its ordering power over the passions (restored by practice of virtues and supernatural grace). This idea bears some analogical resemblance to a child’s development. Alfred Vanneste suggested original sin as simply naming the fact of the universality of sin, while Sebastian Moore, more realistically, described sinners as first victims of sin. “Vatican I enjoined theologians to find analogies for the mysteries of faith (DS 3016)” so Ormerod takes this up, using Alice Miller’s understanding of the state of the abused child. From the misplaced sense of self-guilt accrued over the “myriad of minor humiliations and cruelties” a child endures, imprinting a distorted, “diminished, distorted sense of self,” sin – that inferior self-worth – is perpetuated. We see Thérèse in her autobiography refusing self-devaluation; God is charmed by her confidence in God’s love for her. Becoming one who is thoroughly valued by God liberates her to love with great magnanimity. This is consistent with “It is good” as underpinning human identity. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace and Redemption*, 71-72. 79- 80.

<sup>230</sup> See Mary Frohlich, “Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne D’Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation.” *Spiritus* 6/2 (Fall 2006), 173-194.

<sup>231</sup> Thérèse writes to Bellière, “I understand... the degree to which your soul is sister to my own, since it is called to raise itself to God by the ELEVATOR of love and not climb the rough stairway of fear... the practice of familiarity with Jesus...” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1152.

nature...”).<sup>232</sup> Dialoguing with our affective remembrance of the God of the past opens us to the living God of the future.

Thérèse finds her demeanour and tastes meet the events she encounters, in a way that confirms God means well in all things,<sup>233</sup> removing despair over an idea of perfection where to be *not* omnipotent, not omnipresent, not omniscient, means to be flawed by virtue of not being able to love in proportion to the infinite.<sup>234</sup> God integrates all operations, physical and non-physical, to form consistency in the created sphere. Thérèse ‘recalls’ from infancy-experience, the relief of help, the invigoration of encouragement, and the sense of impacting her all-powerful loving other, and draws on its sustaining presence. Response to this interiorly felt God has exterior consequences. Confidence in her own value (conveyed by the Other’s face) emboldens her to ask forgiveness for anything. This boldness is present in Judaic thought, where humans mirror God-given principles back to God in questioning and remonstrance. God, in chosen contingency to his created ones (God chooses to limit Godself), waits for us to speak. God also awaits the recognition of his grace, self-limitation in the form of contraction and restraint so that we might have life and freedom, expressing faith in humanity).<sup>235</sup>

The Thérèse-God interaction reveals God as immanently potent. Thérèse experiences God’s transcendence in the metaphysics of relation: in the phenomenon of self-formation, a continuum of identity whose continuous thread is ‘I value because you value me’.<sup>236</sup> God

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<sup>232</sup> While “ascenseur” is the invention of a vestibule carrying people upward, Thérèse makes a connection between this and Jesus lifting arms (“l’ascenseur qui doit m’élever jusqu’au Ciel, ce sont vos bras, ô Jésus!” Sainte Thérèse, *Histoire D’Une Ame*, 237). “The elevator which must raise me to heaven is your lifting arms, O Jesus!” *Story of a Soul*, 208. For de Lubac, see Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 15.

<sup>233</sup> Thérèse writes to Bellière, “[God] always made me desire what He wanted to give me.” *Letters of St Thérèse: Volume II*, 1140.

<sup>234</sup> Arminjon’s God punished children with purgatory or hell, for an unconfessed misdemeanour (This was Zélie’s concern in her prayers for daughter Hélène who died at five and a half years of age. *Story of a Soul*, 64.

<sup>235</sup> Jacob Chinitz, “Creation and the Limitations of the Creator,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol 134, no 2, 2006, 129. Though we cannot “fathom” the overall “reasoning” of events, we have the ability to argue with God about our position of not understanding all. Humanity’s activity, in turning God’s logic back to God (“my children have triumphed over me”), leads to “consoling” God. Six sees Thérèse as offering to help God, in God’s limitation, like Etty Hillesum, who died in Auschwitz. Six, *Light of the Night*, 177-178.

<sup>236</sup> God is free to create other orders, but God created and entered *this* self-revealing order. The speculation ‘God is free to choose entirely otherwise’ echoes nontheistic ‘multiverse’ theorizing (where “a large, if not infinite number of alternative universes, each with vastly different laws and physical conditions. Among this large

participates in human identity. What in the theological anthropology of Thérèse's time was explained as God's effect from outside, Thérèse demonstrates as occurring from within her. God, present and available within, supplies from within. Positive affect experienced in the context of mercy shown toward limitation, generates hope to experience this again, consistent with the realities of this created existence. What occurs interiorly withstands expansion to a transcendental "above" order, yet mediates that order within the realm of the immanent.

*b. Final Remarks*

Like von Balthasar, Thérèse takes an "above view," viewing all through God's eyes, via analogical images of earlier parental care. But unlike the fatalism found in Jansenism, she does not passively suffer these "above" ways. To impact God with her love, and to feel God in return, she gives value to this-world processes, in both happenings and absence of happening. Her theology is a quest for self-hood in relation, finding a Thou who validates her original/early childhood 'I'. Finitude's effects when felt as painful are avoided by most, but Thérèse, insisting on God's benevolence, experiences them positively and searches them out.<sup>237</sup> This allows God to be free to be Godself, and for her to experience God that way. For example, the retreating and reappearing face symbolizes the limitation felt by the infant, a sense in the 'memory' of all human persons.<sup>238</sup> To the growing child, all feels like a waiting for an other to value them anew. Experience of valuing inspires hope for its reappearance. The other's freedom, the ground for being an other, is eventually understood. As Thérèse suffered in waiting for the other's presence, so she felt God, awaiting it from us, suffers by our withholding. Her sense of reciprocity is palpable.

Thérèse's optimism may be extended to the existential plane. Hope, trust and fidelity, belonging to embodied life, describe the in-between time of waiting for a reply to one's

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number of universes, ours happens to be one where life is possible, but there are others where no life evolved") to eliminate life's importance. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 26.

<sup>237</sup> From an early age, Thérèse learned that the pains of waiting, involving restraint, endurance, feelings of abandonment, loss of autonomy, or humiliation were the cost of engaging in a desired relation. Though valuing suffering is not specifically her idea, as she is imbued with its 'good' from many quarters, Thérèse gives it her own interpretation.

<sup>238</sup> Her endurance through God's absence, noted by Mary Frohlich in "Desolation and Doctrine in Thérèse of Lisieux," occurs through her fixing on the meaning of the retreating and reappearing face. See Mary Frohlich HM. "Desolation and Doctrine in Thérèse of Lisieux," *Theological Studies* 61/2 (Jun 2000), 261-279.

reaching out to the other. This waiting is not a by-product of a faulted existence, to be superseded by something instant and permanent, but is intrinsically connected to being a free subject in procession, the one means for love. If the created world is God's intended way (and not depleted by loss of "preternatural gifts"), then time-space 'limitations' may be understood as the condition for free interchange between persons.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup>The anthropic principle, where the universe's physical constants are "fine-tuned" for sustaining life, dignifies embodied consciousness within this world as God's intended.