CHAPTER FOUR: AUGUSTINE'S CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

> My apprehension, at that time, was not that precise. It was something vaguer that made me devote my free time to reading Plato's early dialogues...and then moving on to Augustine's early dialogues written at Cassiciacum near Milan. Augustine was so concerned with understanding, so unmindful of universal concepts, that I began a long period of trying to write an intelligible account of my convictions.[1]

1. AN INTELLIGIBLE ACCOUNT OF CONVERSION

In the summer of 1933 Lonergan was in Montreal finishing his regency, a period of teaching for young Jesuit scholastics, and preparing to begin the study of theology in the fall. In Augustine the focus of his reading became again, as in reading Newman, someone explicitly a Catholic Christian. In Augustine intellect and its activities are one part of a larger picture, the picture of Augustine's whole life: his moral struggles, his wrestling with the currents of his own time, his wrestling with God. Years later Lonergan would write of Augustine:

> a convert from nature to spirit; a person that, by God's grace, made himself what he was; a subject that may be

> studied but, most of all, must be encountered in the outpouring of his self-revelation and self-communication.[2]

Lonergan specified the works of Augustine that he read in the summer of 1933 as the ones written at Cassiciacum, perhaps the modern Cassiago near Lake Como, outside of Milan, in November, 386. These dialogues are the **De Beata Vita** (**The Happy Life**), **Contra Academicos** (**Answer to Skeptics**), the **De Ordine** (**Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil**) and the **Soliloquiae** (**The Soliloquies**).[3]

The dialogues took place at a mountain villa lent to Augustine by a friend, Verecundus, where he had retired with his mother, his brother, his son, and several pupils, after the events of his conversion in August, 386.

> You are faithful to your promises, and you will repay Verecundus for his country house at Cassiciacum, where we rested in You from the world's troubles, with the loveliness and eternal freshness of your paradise. (**Confessions**, 9,3)

At the time Augustine was experiencing some physical ailments, perhaps brought on by the emotional upheaval of his conversion, and at least one of the motives for the vacation was just physical rest. There are a number of "homey" references to life at the villa in the beautiful foothills of the Alps during these fall months of 386 and the coming together of this small band of friends around Augustine: references to taking care of the farm, the weather intermittently sunny and rainy, watching a cock fight,

Augustine waking in the middle of the night and listening to the on-and-off flow of water in a drain clogged with autumn leaves. In this context of rest, the "otium liberale" of creative leisure that Augustine had so long desired, the group frequently convenes, indoors or outdoors weather permitting, with a scribe at hand, to dialogue about the central issues of life:

> What is the good life? Does it consist in great possessions? But do not great possessions bring the fear of their own loss? Is "wisdom" the way to a happy life? a wisdom in which the lower levels of the human person are subordinated to the human mind? (**De Beata Vita**)

Also,

> Does wisdom consist in knowing the truth or only in seeking the truth? Can any truth be known with certitude? Is there **the Truth** that can enlighten us about what is truth? How come to a vision of such Truth? (**Contra Academicos)**

In addition,

> If God is good, how account for evil? Does evil, like the jagged edges of a single stone in a mosaic, fit into some larger plan, some larger order in the universe?(**De Ordine)**

Finally, in the **Soliloquies** the dialogue with others becomes a dialogue of Augustine with his own mind and soul - and with God.

These dialogues took place when Augustine was thirty-three years old. Lonergan read them in 1933 when he was twenty-nine years

old. The question can be raised why Lonergan chose to read precisely these dialogues of Augustine; why not some of Augustine's later writings?

Perhaps the answer can be found quite simply in Lonergan's previous reading in Plato; these early Augustinian dialogues are patently "Platonic" in inspiration. In fact, they are so rationally argued and philosophical that some critics have emphasized the discrepancy between the highly religious and "incantatory" nature of the account of Augustine's conversion in the **Confessions** and these highly philosophical reflections.[4] Some have contended that his conversion of August, 386, was really a conversion to the Neo-Platonic philosophy which fills the dialogues, and not primarily to Catholic Christianity. For example, the incident of the "Tolle lege" in the garden in Milan, so central to the **Confessions**, is absent here.

Today it is generally conceded that the context of these philosophical reflections is indeed fundamentally religious and Christian.[5] The religious and moral underpinnings gleam through the dialogues. There are references to "our priest," that is, Ambrose. There are Monica's uniquely religious contributions to the dialogues, which Augustine highly approves. There are references to the incarnation, the Scriptures, invocations of the Trinity, the "sacra" and "mysteria" of Christian belief and worship. The fervent prayer at the beginning of the **Soliloquies** shows that the author of the **Confessions** is already present in these dialogues. Above all, there is explicit deference to the

"authority" of faith. For Augustine at this point faith plays an essential role in coming to the "true and authentic philosophy."

Nevertheless, the general focus of these dialogues is philosophical; but the "philosophy" Augustine has in mind is a combination of the Platonic philosophy which had just recently opened his mind to Christianity and his newly appropriated Christian faith. Just emerging from his famous "conversion experience" described so movingly in the **Confessions**, in these dialogues Augustine is obviously trying to set his convictions into some kind of intelligible framework. Afraid perhaps of being carried away with the emotion of the moment, he is trying to consolidate the fruits of his conversion in rational terms.[6]

Consequently, both in his own mind, for his own self-understanding, and because he is still in contact with his Neo-Platonic friends, Augustine's dialogues are couched in philosophic categories. To put it in terms of the later Lonergan, at this point Augustine was aiming at clearly expressing the intellectual conversion whose pivotal moment took place in the spring of 386, the intellectual conversion that opened the way for the religious and moral conversion of the following summer.

Our method here will not be to provide an exhaustive account of each of these dialogues, but rather to highlight the themes that will later find their way into Lonergan's own writings. These themes are:

1) Conversion from corporeal thinking;

2) Refutation of scepticism;

3) Faith and understanding;

4) **Veritas**: from truths to the Truth.

These themes represent concrete understandings that occurred to Augustine in the course of his own journey; they facilitated concrete understandings in Lonergan's own intellectual journey.

We might begin by noting that in the first completed Cassiciacum dialogue, the **De Beata Vita**, Augustine invokes the image of a philosophical journey over the sea of life to the port of true philosophy. He recalls the beginning of his own journey in his reading of Cicero's **Hortensius** at the age of nineteen.

> From the age of nineteen, having read in the school of rhetoric that book of Cicero's called **Hortensius**, I was influenced by such a great love of philosophy that I considered devoting myself to it at once. (**DBV** 1,4)

What the **Hortensius** represented for Augustine, as he beautifully recounts in the **Confessions**, was that it inspired in him a disinterested search for the truth, a desire that remained beneath the surface of his life throughout all the years of his moral and philosophical wandering:

> Quite definitely it changed the direction of my mind...Suddenly all the vanity I had hoped in I saw as worthless, and with an incredible intensity of desire I longed after inward wisdom. I had begun that journey upwards by which I was to return to You...The one thing

> that delighted me in Cicero's exhortation was that I should love, and seek, and win, and hold, and embrace, not this or that philosophical school but Wisdom itself, whatever it might be. The book excited and inflamed me; in my ardor the only thing I found lacking was that the name of Christ was not there. For with my mother's milk my infant heart had drunk in, and still held deep down in it, that name according to your mercy, O Lord, the name of Your Son, my Savior; and whatever lacked that name, no matter how learned and excellently written and true, could not win me wholly. (**Confessions** 3,4)[7]

Years later, in **Insight**, Lonergan would repeatedly write of "the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know." The desire for the truth evidenced in Augustine, irrespective of philosophical schools, must have struck a deep chord in the young Lonergan. In addition, as with Augustine and his reading of the **Hortensius** and later, "certain books of the Platonists" (**Confessions** 7,9), Lonergan's philosophical journey had also been marked by certain books: Newman's **Grammar of Assent**, Joseph's **Introduction to Logic**, Stewart's **Plato's Doctrine of Ideas**, and now...Augustine's dialogues at Cassiciacum.

2. CONVERSION FROM CORPOREAL THINKING

> Yet I was not free of those intellectual mists which could confuse my course, and I confess that for quite a while I was led astray, with my eyes fixed on those stars that sink into the ocean.(**DBV** 1,4)

The reference is to Augustine's involvement in the fantastic myths of the Manichees from 374 to 383. This eastern cult held all kinds of imaginative tenets about the battle between the two principles of good and evil. These two principles, God and Satan, each had its own kingdom, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. Satan invaded the kingdom of light and did battle with the Primal Man, an emanation from the God of Light. In their battle Satan overcame the Primal Man and his "five elements" and these latter remain as scattered elements of light in the kingdom of darkness. Jesus personifies the light elements imprisoned in darkness and the whole of human history is concerned with the freeing of the light elements from the realm of darkness and restoring them to the kingdom of the light.

> A childish superstition deterred me from thorough investigation, and, as soon as I was more courageous, I threw off the darkness and learned to trust more in men that taught than in those that ordained obedience, having myself encountered persons to whom the very light, seen by their eyes, apparently was an object of highest and even divine veneration. I did not agree with them, but

> thought they were concealing in those veils some important secret which they would later divulge.(**DBV** 1,4)

Within the Manichean community a small body of the Elect engaged in certain ascetical practices so as to release more effectively the elements of light from the darkness. These consisted in such things as the eating of certain foods and the practice of celibacy. Augustine was not a member of the elect, but only one of the larger number of Hearers (**auditores**) among the Manichees for whom there were no such strict rules. They were encouraged to virtue, but if they did fall into sin, they were consoled by the teaching that they were not responsible; sin was rather the work of the foreign power of evil at work within them.

Augustine rejected the religion of the Manichees in 383 when he realized the unintelligible nature of these myths and was very unimpressed with the philosophic understanding of the Manichee leaders. Nevertheless, as Newman said of some of his own early reading, his imagination was "stained" by these doctrines for years to come.[8]

> They cried out "Truth, truth;" they were forever uttering the word to me, but the thing was nowhere in them. (3, 6)

According to the **Confessions**, the chief intellectual obstacle in Augustine's journey to Christianity - besides the moral obstacles so emphasized in the **Confessions** - was his need to imaginatively "picture" things which cannot strictly speaking be

pictured: whether those things be God or even his own conscious self. It is a theme that Lonergan took up more than fifteen hundred years later in the introduction to **Insight**.

> St. Augustine of Hippo narrates that it took him years to make the discovery that the name "real" might have a different connotation from the name "body."[9]

This theme is present in the Cassiciacum dialogues in embryonic form. For example, what struck Augustine in listening to the sermons of St. Ambrose was the incorporeal character of God and the soul.

> For I have noticed frequently in the sermons of our priest, and sometimes in yours, that, when speaking of God, no one should think of Him as something corporeal; nor yet of the soul, for of all things the soul is nearest to God. (**DBV** 1, 4; cf. **SOL** 2,4,6; 2,17,31)

And again, in the **Contra Academicos**:

> The populace is rather prone to rush into false opinions, and through familiarity with bodies, a person very readily - but very dangerously, as well - comes to believe that all things are corporeal. (**CA** 3, 17, 38)

The **Confessions** bring out this theme much more forcefully and fully. Surely the young Lonergan was familiar with these passages.

> Though I did not even then think of You under the shape of a human body, yet I could not but think of You as some

> corporeal substance, occupying all space, whether infused in the world, or else diffused through infinite space beyond the world. (**Confessions** 3, 1; cf. 3, 6)
>
> When I desired to think of my God, I could not think of him save as a bodily magnitude - for it seemed to me that what was not such was nothing at all: this indeed was the principal and practically the sole cause of my inevitable error. (5, 10)

Augustine even thought of evil as a type of bodily substance.

> I did not know that evil has no being of its own but is only an absence of good, so that it simply is not. How indeed should I see this, when the sight of my eyes saw no deeper than bodies and the sight of my soul no deeper than the images of bodies? (3, 7)
>
> In my ignorance I thought of evil not simply as some kind of substance, but actually as a bodily substance, because I had not learned to think of mind save as a more subtle body, extended in space. (5, 10)

At one point Augustine set out to write a treatise "On the Beautiful and the Fitting" and in the course of this writing he faced the question of the character of his own mind and soul.

> ...it was by corporeal examples that I supported my

> argument. I did consider the nature of the soul, but again the false view I had of spiritual things would not let me get at the truth - although by sheer force the truth was staring me in the face. I turned my throbbing mind from the incorporeal to line and colour and bulk, and because I did not see these things in my mind, I concluded that I could not see my mind. (4, 15)

The philosophical issue, as he slowly began to realize, was the character of his own mind.

> My mind was in search of such images as the forms of my eye was accustomed to see; and I did not realize that the mental act by which I formed these images, was not itself a bodily image. (7, 1)

As he had stated in the **De Beata Vita**, he learned from Ambrose not to interpret the Scriptures in a corporeal way. It was while listening to the homilies of Ambrose that some of Augustine's imaginative ways of thinking began to dissolve. For example, some of the Manichean objections to the anthropomorphisms of the Scriptures were themselves based on imaginary ways of thinking.

> If only I had been able to conceive of a substance that was spiritual, all their strong points would have been broken down and cast forth from my mind. But I could not. (5, 14)

Slowly Augustine began to believe in the reality of the

unseen: what Lonergan will later speak of as the world "mediated by meaning." It is a world mostly mediated to us by belief.

> I began to consider the countless things I believed which I had not seen, or which had happened with me not there -so many things in the history of nations, so many facts about places and cities, which I had never seen, so many things told me by friends, by doctors, by this man, by that man; and unless we accepted these things, we should do nothing at all in this life. Most strongly of all it struck me how firmly and unshakably I believed that I was born of a particular father and mother, which I could not possibly know unless I believed it on the word of others. (6, 5)

Augustine sensed the falsity in the Manichean position, but still held back from believing the Christian faith as he heard it expounded by Ambrose.

> Nothing of what he said struck me as false, although I did not as yet know whether what he said was true. I held back my heart from accepting anything, fearing that I might fall once more, whereas in fact the hanging in suspense was more deadly. I wanted to be as certain of things unseen as that seven and three make ten. For I had not reached the point of madness which denies that even this can be unknown; but I wanted to know other things as clearly as this, either such material things as were not present to my senses, or spiritual things which

> I did not know how to conceive save corporeally. (6, 4)

What was happening, as Lonergan would later point out, was a movement begun by Christians in other areas of the ancient world to think of God, not on the analogy of matter, but properly, on the analogy of spirit.

> The point was picked up by Clement of Alexandria who taught that the anthropomorphisms of the bible were not to be taken literally and, thereby, started the century-long efforts of Christians to conceive God on the analogy of spirit rather than of matter.[10]

But first, before satisfactorily addressing this problem, Augustine was forced to consider another issue: can we know anything for certain? Having been mistaken once in his beliefs, how could he be certain he would not be mistaken again?

3. REFUTATION OF SCEPTICISM

> After I had shaken them off and abandoned them, and especially after I had crossed this sea, the Academics for a long while steered my course amid the waves, while my helm had to meet every wind. (**DBV** 1,4)

After leaving the Manichees, Augustine faced another major obstacle on the way to truth and that was the sceptics' philosophy that truth could not be attained. He himself had embraced this philosophy between 383 and 386 and he felt deeply that many people, influenced by scepticism, were threatened by a despair of attaining the truth. This philosophy had a stultifying effect on the mind and was a great obstacle to faith.

For the sceptics of Cicero's "New Academy" the truly wise person will refuse to give assent to anything; for the wise person merely seeks the truth. Lest this lead to a paralysis of action, the sceptics held that some things **resemble** the truth, that is, they are probable, and probability is a sufficient basis for action in this world.

Augustine pointed to the inconsistencies in the Academics' position. For someone to know what "resembles the truth," that is, what is probable, one must know some truth. Sometime later Augustine would articulate his method for showing the implicit possibility, and indeed inevitability, of knowing the truth:

> Everyone who knows that he has doubts knows with certainty something that is true, namely, that he doubts. He is certain, therefore, about **a** truth. Therefore everyone who doubts whether there be such a thing as **the** truth has at least **a** truth to set a limit to his doubt; and nothing can be true except truth be in it. Accordingly, no one ought to have doubts about the existence of **the** truth, even if doubts arise for him from every quarter.[11]

Augustine devotes a great portion of the Cassiciacum dialogues to refuting the Academic position. His basic position, one he would develop later in the **De Trinitate**, is that there are certain ineluctable truths, especially truths of the self and reason, that it is "self-contradictory" to deny. Centuries later Bernard Lonergan would pay tribute to Augustine's basic methodology:

> For Augustine, the mind's self-knowledge was basic; it was the rock of certitude on which shattered Academic doubt; it provided the ground from which one could argue to the validity both of the senses of one's own body and, with the mediation of testimony, of the senses of the bodies of others.[12]

In the **Contra Academicos** Augustine vindicates the validity of the senses. Against the classic argument of the delusion of the senses by the oar that appears bent in water, Augustine places the emphasis on the acting subject, even the subject as being deluded.[13]

He admits the appearance of the delusion, while maintaining the truth of the fact that the acting subject sees or feels this or that. If there were reason to believe the senses were deceived, one would need to study the causes for the different appearances of things.

> Therefore, as to what they see with regard to an oar in the water - is that true? It is absolutely true. In fact, since there is a special reason for the oar's appearing that way, I should rather accuse my eyes of deception if it appeared to be straight when it is dipped in water, for, in that case, they would not be seeing what they ought to see. (**CA** 3,11, 26; cf. **SOL** 2, 6, 10)

The act of sensing itself, as an internal fact of the subject, remains certain and secure, and in its own manner true.

> "Nevertheless," says someone or other, "I am deceived if I give assent." Restrict your assent to the mere fact of your being convinced that it appears thus to you. Then there is no deception, for I do not see how even an Academic can refute a man who says: "I know that this appears white to me. I know that I am delighted by what I am hearing. I know that this smells pleasant to me. I know that this tastes sweet to me. I know that this feels cold to me." Tell me, rather, whether the oleaster leaves - for which a goat has a persistent appetite - are bitter **per se**...I know not how the oleaster leaves may be for flocks and herds; as to myself, they are bitter.

> What more do you wish to know? Perhaps there is even some man for whom they are not bitter...Have I said they are bitter for everyone? I have said they are bitter for me, but I do not say that they will always be so...This is what I say: that when a man tastes something, he can in good faith swear that it is sweet to his palate or that it is not, and that by no Greek sophistry can he be beguiled out of this knowledge. (**CA** 3, 11, 26)

Salvino Biolo, a commentator greatly influenced by Lonergan, has commented on the above passage.

> Here it is a case of the acting subject affirming oneself as conscious of one's internal phenomena through the mediation of external objects, which are not themselves the primary focus of the interior testimony.[14]

Biolo goes on to say that here in the **Contra Academicos** it is a question of the certain and irrefutable self-affirmation of the subject on the level of experience. The focus is on sensitive consciousness, affirmed however by conscious judgment.

In the **Soliloquies** Augustine argues to the immortality of the soul by an analysis of truth and its inherence in the human soul. He begins by engaging in a dialogue with his own Reason.

> R. Do you, who wish to know yourself, know that you exist?
>
> A. I know it.
>
> R. How do you know it?
>
> A. I do not know.

R. Are you conscious of yourself as simple or composite?

A. I do not know.

R. Do you know that you are moved?

A. I do not know.

R. Do you know that you think?

A. That I know. (**SOL** 2, 1)

Two basic facts are here held to be immune from doubt and ignorance: first, the human subject inevitably knows that he exists; and secondly, he knows that he thinks. Augustine brings out the **immediacy** of the "knowledge" that the concrete subject has of himself as existing and acting through the very fact that he thinks. As Biolo comments on this text:

> It is a self-affirmation lived, not reasoned to; it is an existential consciousness internal to the fact of being a person and being a thinker. Nothing is said of the nature of this knowledge. It seems to me that the sense implied in the text demands that typical "consciousness" that the thinking subject has as a subject, that is, before formulating and objectifying oneself for one's interior thought. It is merely an intimate experience of oneself as a human being, which adds nothing entitatively to existence and thought, but accompanies them from within as self-consciousness.[15]

Biolo traces this theme throughout Augustine's writings, especially its clearest expression in the **De Trinitate**. But there is another example of the same theme which I would like to mention

here, since it comes soon after the Cassiciacum dialogues in the **De Libero Arbitrio**. Lonergan might have included this in his early reading, since it includes an emphasis on **"intelligere,"** which he later remembered as so prominent in Augustine. In this work Augustine aims at proving the existence of God by beginning with the first evidences of the human spirit: one's personal existence, about which one cannot be mistaken, because existence is the first condition of the possibility of error itself. Also, since the existence of his interlocutor, Evodius, is evident through the fact that he actually lives, his living is also at the same time evident. The two facts are evidently true. The interlocutor clearly understands them. Therefore, Augustine passes on to a third fact, the fact of understanding.

> A. Therefore, this third fact thing is likewise manifest, namely that you understand?
>
> E. Yes, it is evident. (**De Libero Arbitrio** 2, 3, 7)

And thus there is touched upon the understanding, the most noble element in the human person, precisely because it implies the other two, and not vice versa. Augustine's interlocutor gives the reason:

> For the one who understands both necessarily lives and exists.

Biolo comments:

> This third fact, the intellectual act, enjoys a fundamental transparency, which illuminates also the other two, a transparency manifest to the subject

> precisely in the act of understanding: "it is evident you understand." The Holy Doctor thus professes in this text, concretely, in a manner implicit but clear, the luminous self-witness inherent in the person as actually understanding, and thus with indestructible certitude known to be both existing and living. It is the human intellectual consciousness which emerges and becomes evident to the interlocutor even as he exercises it, and which affirms itself as a distinct value different and superior for its nobility and dignity, not only from the inanimate world of stones, but also from the biological and psychological world of animals.[16]

The unifying science that concerns the self is philosophy and the result of refuting academic scepticism is a philosophical knowledge even more certain than numbers.

> I now say to both of you: Beware lest you think that you know anything except what you have learned at least in the manner in which you know that one **plus** two **plus** three **plus** four is ten. And, likewise, beware lest you think either that in philosophy you will not gain a thorough knowledge of the truth, or that truth can by no means become known in this manner. Believe me - or rather, believe Him who says: 'Seek, and you shall find' - that knowledge is not to be despaired of, but that it will be even more manifest than those of numbers. (**CA** 2, 9)

4. FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

In the Cassiciacum dialogues we see Augustine as an ardent lover of philosophy - for this is associated in his mind with wisdom and with happiness. In his own case this search had first been delayed through his involvement with the Manichees and now, more recently, with Academic scepticism. Finally, at length,

> I came into this land; here I have learned to know the North Star, to which I entrust myself. (**DBV** 1,4)

"This land" is the land of true philosophy which combines the best of the world's philosophy with Christian wisdom. He had come upon "certain books of the Platonists" and compared them with the authority of those who taught the Divine Mysteries.[17] It was this combination that so "inflamed" him that he was able to cast asunder all the anchors that kept him from sailing into the harbor of true philosophy. That philosophy was an amalgam of reason as expressed in the Platonic writings and of authority as embraced in the teachings of the Church.

It was especially in the sermons of "our priest," Ambrose of Milan, that the subject of such philosophy was broached: God and the soul, a preoccupation of the Platonic tradition. The study of the soul gives us knowledge of ourselves; that of God gives us knowledge of our origin, the Parent of the universe of whom reason can give no adequate knowledge since he is better known by not being known (**melius scitur nesciendo**). (**DO** 1, 18, 47)

Later on in the dialogues Augustine will speak of such

philosophy as "our true and solitary habitation," "our sacred inner shrine." (**DO** 1, 3, 9) In the **Contra Academicos** there is again an extravagant praise of philosophy whose two-fold paths of reason and authority are distinct, but not separate. His benefactor, Romanianus, had furnished him with certain books "packed with thought," (**libri quidem pleni**), which produced in him a marvelous effect:

> They at once enkindled in me such a conflagration that I scarcely believe it of myself. What importance did I then attach to any honor? Was I affected by human pomp? by a craving for empty fame? or, in fine, by the bond and bondage of this mortal life? (**CA** 2, 2, 5)

Augustine describes his reaction to such books:

> Certainly, no one doubts that we are impelled toward knowledge by a twofold force: the force of authority and the force of reason. And I am resolved never to deviate in the least from the authority of Christ, for I find none more powerful. But, as to what is attainable by acute and accurate reasoning, such is my state of mind that I am impatient to grasp what truth is - to grasp it not only by belief, but also by comprehension. Meanwhile, I am confident that I shall find among the Platonists what is not in opposition to our Sacred Scriptures. (**CA** 3, 20, 43)

The "true and authentic philosophy" Augustine has in mind in these dialogues is a combination of Christian faith and the

philosophy of Plato mediated to him by the Neo-Platonic writings of Plotinus and perhaps Porphyry. Though this philosophy has gone through many mutations, still a single valid doctrine has filtered through. Speaking of Plato and his "re-appearance" in Plotinus, Augustine says:

> Then Plato's countenance - which is the cleanest and brightest in philosophy - suddenly appeared, especially in Plotinus. (**CA** 31, 41-42)

What Augustine obtained from the Neo-Platonic stream of philosophy was a unifying vision of God, the eternal Truth and Light, ever present to the human self, even when the latter's attention was directed toward the external world. According to Plotinus, the human soul, fallen from its pre-existent state - a doctrine later repudiated by Augustine - animates the human body by forming a portion of matter as an expression of its inward life, even while it is able, in principle, to remain "within itself" and "outside" all that is corporeal. (**Enneads** IV, 3, 9-10)[18] In this condition the soul becomes enslaved to the things of the body and, becoming fascinated with the brilliant reflections of the divine in the material world and, losing sight of itself, it "turns" toward them and "goes forth" from itself and "becomes present" not to itself but to the body (9,12,17). As Eugene TeSelle notes:

> Both of these aspects - the power of man's inward life over his bodily actions, and his enslavement by his own affections for the finite - were a matter of experience to Augustine; he could give unconditional assent when he

> read them in Plotinus or in Porphyry. He could say along with them but out of personal conviction, for himself, that the soul has gone outside itself (**progressus**) and is poured out (**a seipso fusus**) into the world of multiplicity, from which it needs to return to itself and thereby to God, who is present within the self. And he could say, again with them, that the way of return is through "fleeing sensible things altogether" (**SOL** 1,14,24; cf. **DO** 2,11,31), without thereby meaning to suggest that the soul must lose all relation to the body.[19]

Although Augustine had perhaps come across this Platonic schema only recently - he probably read the Platonic books in the beginning of the summer of 386 - he had thoroughly interiorized it.[20] The analogy of spirit demanded a conversion in one's understanding of one's own spirit. After years of intellectual searching and wrestling with his own moral life, and after a sojourn in the gardens of the Academics, Augustine was able, with the help of the books of the Platonists, to make the beginnings of his own intellectual breakthrough.

In these dialogues Augustine emphasizes the possibilities of the knowledge of God; but when it comes to the **actual** human condition, that is a different story. Even when people catch some glimpse of the light shining inwardly upon them, they are unable to endure its splendor because of their impurity of mind; afraid to

turn toward the light, they fall back into their accustomed patterns. (**DBV** 4,35; **CA** 1,1,3; 2,2,5; **SOL** 1,6,12) And in the case of most people, there is no awareness at all of the divine presence. In their concern with external things they have turned away from God and forgotten him.[21]

Consequently, in the present condition of humanity people need to be shown the way to return to God; and God in his "clemency" has made this way known. (**DO** 2,5,6)

> Human reason would never lead such souls to that intelligible world if the most high God had not vouchsafed - through clemency toward the whole human race - to send the authority of the divine intellect down even to a human body, and caused it to dwell therein, so that souls would be aroused not only by divine precepts but also by divine acts, and would thus be enabled to reflect on themselves and to gaze upon their fatherland, without any disputatious wranglings. (**CA** 3,19,42)

It is here that the authority of faith finds its essential role in relation to reason.[22] Authority is the doorway that must be humbly entered; but it leads to the further treasures of rational knowledge, and this is the goal aimed at by revelation itself. Reason supplies arguments which aid the comprehension of the truths of revelation; and at the same time reason exercises the mind so that it will be capable of beholding spiritual things.

For Augustine this second practical goal is extremely

important, reason's "anagogical" character, leading the mind toward the goal of immediate vision and accustoming it to the intelligible realm so that it will not be blinded by the light of eternity.

> Believe me, then, you will attain to these things when you will have given attention to learning, by which the mind, heretofore in no way fitted for a divine planting, is cleared and cultivated. Now these discourses, precious to us by reason of their association with your name rather than by the satisfaction of our own work, will, I am sure - especially if you will have the good will to co-operate and make yourself a part of this very order of which I am writing to you - sufficiently show you what is the nature of all this clearing and planting, and what mode of procedure it demands, and what it is that reason promises to those who study and are good. (**DO** 1, 1, 4; **CA** 3, 9, 20; **SOL** 1, 13, 23; 2, 20, 34)

There is then a process that Augustine himself experienced of moving from being so wrapped up in the senses that he could not think except in representative images to another type of thinking, a type of thinking that is characterized by **veritas**: "the truth:"

> If anything is true, it is through truth that it is true. (**SOL** 1,15,27)

> Will anyone deny that that is Truth itself through which

> all branches of learning are true?...that by which all things are true is through itself and in itself the true Truth. (**SOL** 1,11,21)

Such is the truth of the soul; such is the truth of God. And that is all that Augustine desires: "Noverim te; noverim me."(**SOL** 1,2,7; cf 2,1,1; also **DO** 2,18,47) It is the philosophic desire in his soul that has brought Augustine back to himself and to the courts of "true philosophy."

Divine authority, which is "true, reliable, and supreme," which transcends every human power, bids the human person not to be held down by the allurement of sensible things, but to fly to reason, for it tells him that he can acquire great things by the use of this power. And yet, whatever reason can attain is transmitted in a more hidden manner and with greater assurance (secretius firmiusque) "through those sacred teachings in which we are initiated and by which the life of those who are good is purified not by the intricacies of arguments, but by the authority of the Mysteries." (**DO** 2,9,27)

Perhaps it is significant that, soon after reading Augustine, Lonergan wrote a 25,000 word essay - now lost - on the act of faith. It was in reading Augustine that Lonergan was led to articulate the relationship between faith and human reason.

5. VERITAS: FROM TRUTHS TO THE TRUTH

Henry Chadwick in the introduction to his translation of the **Confessions** brings out how the Neoplatonic schema on personal conversion is part of a total vision of the return of the whole universe to the One.[23] The dialogue, **De ordine**, asks how a divine and beneficent Providence can be said to exercise a universal guidance and control when lack of harmony appears so evident both in the physical and the moral order. The difficulty, Augustine believes, is due to two causes: first, the scope of the human person's vision is so limited that he cannot discern the unity and perfection of the entire plan of the universe.

> If one were examining the details of an inlaid pavement, and if his searching eye could grasp no more than the outline of one little cube, he might censure the artificer for lacking skill of arrangement and order. On this account he might think the uniformity of the little stones disarranged, just because the drawn lines, harmonizing into one integral form of beauty, could not be seen and examined all at once. Something very similar to this is found in the case of uninstructed men, who, on account of their feeble mentality, are unable to grasp and to study the integral fittingness of things. They think the whole universe is disarranged if something is displeasing to them, just because that thing is magnified in their perception. (**DO** 1, 1, 2)

Secondly, in the present condition of humanity the person finds himself so "immersed in sensible things" that it is no easy task for him to refuse to accept at face value the information received by way of the senses and to seek the truth within the sanctuary of one's own mind.

> The chief cause of this error is that man does not know himself. Now, for acquiring this self-knowledge, he needs a constant habit of withdrawing from things of the senses and of concentrating his thought within himself, and holding it there. This they alone succeed in doing who definitely mark out in solitude the impressions of opinion which the course of daily life has made, or correct them by means of the liberal branches of learning. When the soul has returned to itself in this manner, it understands what is the beauty of the universe. (**DO** 1, 1, 3)

This process is keenly reminiscent of a quote from Lonergan in an article on **Insight** published in 1958. He is speaking of the importance of moving from "our own little worlds" to the universe of being grasped by true judgment. This move requires a constant correction of our own private worlds. However, Lonergan notes, quoting Thomas Aquinas:

> I am inclined to believe...that this constant and sedulous correction does not occur without a specifically philosophic conversion from the **homo sensibilibus immersus** to **homo maxime est mens hominis.**[24]

For Augustine, very helpful in this journey of the soul's return to itself is the proper study of the liberal arts. In them reason is exercised and can establish its mastery over the senses. In the **De Ordine** Augustine establishes this by reflecting on the various disciplines, beginning even with those that directly concern the delights of the senses, such as cuisine, music and architecture. Even in these studies there is a distinction between the delight **of** the senses and delight in reason's mastery **through** the senses.

Reason becomes more aware of itself in the art of grammar wherein the proper use of words is considered. Higher again on the scale of the liberal arts is the study of numbers which have an "immortal" quality about them. Finally, there is dialectics, the "discipline of disciplines:"

> This science teaches both how to teach and how to learn. In it, reason itself exhibits itself, and reveals its own nature, its desires, its powers. It knows what knowledge is; by itself, it not only wishes to make men learned, but also can make them so. (**DO** 2, 13, 38)

In dialectic reason provides us with a revelation of itself: it discloses what it is, what it wishes, what power it has. Therefore it is the highest and most useful of the disciplines. (**DO** 2, 13, 38)

It could be said that dialectics is precisely the exigent discipline that Augustine is exhibiting in these dialogues: the Socratic quest exposing superficial views and moving the mind to

"the Truth" whose influence on the human soul is, indeed, at the origin of the quest. Such a science of "right reasoning," of bringing everything to a synthetic grasp of a higher unity, has a mathematical quality to it and, indeed, Augustine connects the two:

> No one ought to aspire to a knowledge of those matters without that twofold knowledge, so to speak - the knowledge of right reasoning and that of the power of numbers. And, if anyone thinks that this is indeed a great deal, let him master either numbers alone or only dialectics. But, if even this seems limitless, let him merely get a thorough understanding of what unity in numbers is, and what its import is - not yet in that supreme law and order of all things, but in the things that we think and do here and there every day.(**DO** 18, 47)

As one reads these dialogues one cannot help but remember the long analyses in Lonergan's **Insight** of mathematical and scientific understanding. All point to the human importance of what Lonergan will call "the intellectual pattern of experience," that concentrated attention that pulls the mind out of distracting images and helps it attain to truth.

Augustine wrestles with the nature of various dimensions of imagination and its distinction from intellect. He notes, for example, that imagination can be misleading, pouring false colors and forms into the mind, so that even truth-seekers are misled. For like the fabled Proteus, who impersonates the truth, false

images constantly strive "to deceive and delude us through the very senses which we use for the needs of this life."(**CA** 3,6,13)

On the other hand, the mind can through the process of abstraction arrive at what is essential.

> Thus, for example, thought depicts to itself and, so to speak, displays before the eyes squares of varying size. But that inner mind which desires to see the true rather turns aside, if it is able, toward that vantage whence it judges that they are all squares. (**SOL** 2,20,35)

In the same passage the distinction between imagination and intellect is captured, significantly enough, by geometric examples, one of them Lonergan's favorite, the circle.

> A. What if someone tells us that the mind judges according to what it is wont to see with the eyes?
>
> R. Why, then, does it judge, if, indeed, it is well instructed, that a true sphere of any size whatsoever is touched by a true plane at only one point? What thing of this kind does the eye ever see or can it see, when nothing like it can be pictured even by the imagery of thought? Do we not prove this whenever we describe by the mind's imagining the tiniest circle and draw lines from it to the center? For, when we have drawn two lines, between which one can hardly insert a needle, we are unable to draw, even in our imagination, other lines between them in such a way that they will reach the center without touching each other. Yet, reason asserts

> that lines without number can be drawn, and that, in these unbelievable narrow spaces, the lines can meet only in the center, so that in every space between the lines a circle can be described. Since the phantasy is incapable of doing this, and since it fails more than the eyes themselves -because it is through the eyes that the phantasy is imposed on the mind - it is evident that the phantasy is far different from the Truth, and, as long as it is seen, the Truth is not seen. (**SOL** 2, 20, 35)

One position that made a particular impression on the young Lonergan was Augustine's emphasis on "intelligere," understanding. Now it does not seem that this word occurs that often as such in these early dialogues of Augustine - in the **Soliloquies** he promises to discuss "understanding" in the future. Still, the reality is there: Augustine's emphasis on question and answer; the dialectical dialogue that goes on with others and, at its deepest level, with oneself; his high regard for dialectic's "tools" of definition, division and distinction (**SOL** 2,11, 20ff); his introspective account of the processes of human consciousness, etc..

Eugene TeSelle summarizes Augustine's fluid terminology in these dialogues:

> Reason... can mean (a) the "eye" of the mind, (b) the mind's "looking" (**adspectus**), its attending to possible contents of knowledge without yet grasping them; (c) the

> mind's thinking (**ratiocinatio**), the activity of inquiry as it moves among the data, guided by the rules laid down in the science of dialectic, classifying and distinguishing things through definition and partition, separating them with disjunctive propositions and joining them through formal implication (**CA** 3; **De quantitate animae**, 25, 47; 26, 51-27, 52); and finally (d) the completion of the process either in an immediate vision ("intellectus"), a union of mind with that which is known (this is the Plotinian way of describing it) or, at a lower level, in a "grasping" of something with unshakable conceptual knowledge ("scientia" [and this is the Stoic and Academic way of describing it]).[25]

There is a singularly interesting use of the term, **intelligere**, in the section where Augustine is speaking of the purification of the soul in order to see God. We will quote it in both Latin and English for it brings to mind a fundamental theorem concerning knowledge which Lonergan will later emphasize in studying Aquinas:

> Ipsa autem visio, intellectus est ille qui in anima est, qui conficitur ex intelligente et eo quod intelligitur; ut in oculis videre quod dicitur, ex eo sensu constat atque sensibile, quorum detracto quolibet, videri nihil potest.

> However, this vision itself is the understanding which is in the soul, brought forth by the one who understands and that which is understood: just as in the eyes, what is called "seeing" consists of the sense itself and the thing sensed, either of which being withdrawn, nothing can be seen. (**SOL** 1,6,13)

One is reminded of Aquinas' axiom, owed to Aristotle and often alluded to by Lonergan: **sensus in actu est sensibile in actu, intellectus in actu est intelligibile in actu**: the sense in act is the sensible in act; the intellect in act is the intelligible in act. This principle itself is opposed to the empiricist myth of the confrontation of the "blooming buzzing confusion" of sense data over against the sensing organ. On the contrary, sensation already structures and patterns its object in the very act of sensing. Similarly, intellect is primarily one with its object prior to sorting out the complexities of objectivity and subjectivity.

The above paragraph also reminds one of the section in the **De Ordine** where Augustine is pointing out the benefits to reason if it submits humbly to the dictates of the authority of faith:

> When he has become docile through these precepts, then at length he will come to know: (a) how much wisdom is embodied in those very precepts that he has been observing before understanding; (b) what reason itself is, which he - now strong and capable after the cradle of authority - follows and comprehends; (c) what intellect

> (**intellectus**) is, in which all things are, or rather, which is itself the sum total of all things; (d) and what, beyond all things, is the source of all things. (**DO** 2,9,26)

For Augustine in these dialogues the Truth, **veritas**, is that by which all things are true. The Truth is that which is the source of all truths and which illuminates the mind as to what is true. Ultimately, the Truth is the Word of God and the Light of God.

> Now consider, as far as it is required for the time being, something concerning God Himself drawn from that comparison of sensible things, which I will now teach you. God is, of course, intelligible, as those principles of the sciences also are intelligible, yet there is a great difference between them. The earth is visible and light is visible, but the earth cannot be seen unless it is brightened by light. So, likewise, for those things which are taught in the sciences and which everyone understands and acknowledges, without any cavil, to be most true - one must believe that they cannot be understood unless they are illumined by something else as by their own sun. Therefore, just as in this sun one may remark three certain things, namely, that it is, that it shines, and that it illumines, so also in that most hidden God whom you wish to know there are three things,

> namely, that He is, that He is known, and that He makes other things to be known. (**SOL** 1,8,15)[26]

In the incantatory prayers at the beginning of the **Soliloquies** Augustine invokes God under the title of the true and intelligible Light.

> I call upon Thee, O God the Truth, in whom and by whom and through whom all those things are true which are true.
>
> O God, Intelligible Light, in whom and by whom and through whom all those things which have intelligible light have their intelligible light. (**SOL** 1,1,3)

Later in his life Lonergan will refer to Augustine's doctrine of the inner and outer teacher to exemplify his own teaching on religious experience.[27] His specific reference will be to Augustine's **De Magistro**, written several years after the Cassiciacum dialogues, after Augustine's return to Africa.

> Concerning universals of which we can have knowledge, we do not listen to anyone speaking and making sounds outside ourselves. We listen to Truth which presides over our minds within us, though of course we may be bidden to listen by someone using words. Our real Teacher is he who is so listened to, who is said to dwell in the inner man, namely Christ, that is, the unchangeable power and eternal wisdom of God.(11, 38)[28]

> I have learned by your warning words, that by means of words a man is simply put on the alert in order that he may learn; also that very little of the thought of a speaker is made evident by his speaking. I have also learned that in order to know the truth of what is spoken, I must be taught by him who dwells within and gives counsel about words spoken externally in the ear.(14, 46)[29]

5. CONCLUSION

Reading these dialogues was certainly a great consolation for the young Lonergan. Obviously, his personal journey was far different from Augustine's. He had never "wandered" far from the Catholic faith, as had Augustine. Still, he was a young man of quite independent views, one who, although a Jesuit scholastic, had defined himself as a "nominalist," because he could not accept the official scholastic philosophy of his day.

Like Augustine, he had recently experienced a great "release" in reading Platonic philosophy. And like Augustine, his life - moral and religious - was connected with his thinking and his thinking was connected with his life. It behooved him to get things straight. "What on earth is this all about?" seemed to be his constant quest. He sought the truth - and this was one of the major Augustinian categories that was to influence him: "**veritas**."

So many themes are present in these early dialogues of Augustine that it is not difficult to see how they prepared the way for Bernard Lonergan's own intellectual conversion. There is Augustine's honest desire for the truth, irrespective of philosophical schools. There is his obvious commitment to following out that desire, to submitting to the normative demands of reason, the intellectual pattern of experience that allows all relevant questions to arise. There is tremendous respect for liberal learning. There is Augustine's commitment to introspection, to coming to terms with the facts of his own

consciousness and the inevitability of those facts. There is the dawning conversion to understanding God and the human spirit in terms of spirit and not in terms of matter. There is the transcendental **a priori** of Truth - **veritas** - that enables us to come to know any truth.

Augustine had a profound sense of the moral and religious implications of the pure desire to know. He knew the destructive force of human desires and their deleterious effect on human imagination and, consequently, human thought. As the years went on he would come to a greater awareness of the "reign of sin" that plunged human society into darkness and the absolute need for the liberating grace of Christ. In his unpublished writings on the philosophy of history from the mid-1930's Lonergan will refer to Augustine's doctrine that sin is from the human person, an unintelligible that has no "reason," and that infects all of human society. Everything else, all good thoughts, motives and actions, are ultimately rooted in God.[30]

Still, as Lonergan would later point out, Augustine's work was done in the world and language of common sense. In **Insight** he would even point out the remnants of a type of empiricism in Augustine's doctrine of illumination.

> For years, as he tells us, St. Augustine was unable to grasp that the real could be anything but a body. When with Neo-Platonist aid he got beyond that view, his name for reality was **veritas**; and for him truth was to be

> known, not by looking out, nor yet by looking within, but rather by looking above where in an immutable light men consult and contemplate the eternal reasons of things. It is disputed, of course, just how literally St. Augustine intended this inspection of the eternal to be understood. Aquinas insisted that the Uncreated Light grounds the truth of our judgments, not because we see the Light, but because our intellects are created participations of it.[31]

But, as Lonergan would several times point out, Augustine's vocabulary, like Newman's, was a "common sense" vocabulary. Because he had no fixed technical language with which to express what he knew, his language floated. In a remarkable comparison with Aquinas Lonergan spoke of Augustine:

> Augustine was not a technical theologian, a theoretical theologian. He was a person who knew the human soul in an extraordinary way. He knows more about consciousness than Thomas does. But he was not a technical theologian.[32]

In thinking of Augustine, then, it is well to remember, not just the remarkable religious conversion of August, 386, but the quieter turning point in the spring of 386 when he read "certain books of the Platonists" and came to an intellectual conversion in his understanding of himself and of God.

It seems that something in this rang a bell in the soul of the twenty-nine year old Lonergan when he read these early Cassiciacum

dialogues in the summer of 1933. In fact, as we mentioned previously, in **Insight** Lonergan uses Augustine's change of mind in 386 as a paradigm of the transformation that he is seeking to facilitate in the minds of "sufficiently cultured" readers of the twentieth century.

Indeed, Lonergan once described intellectual conversion as meaning as much as Augustine meant when he spoke of **"veritas."**[33] From his later writings it seems evident that Lonergan intended to do just that. From now on his concerns, though always with the concrete processes of human consciousness, will also include the metaphysical dimensions opened up to him by Augustine's understanding of **veritas**.

1. **Second Collection**, 265. Cf. also **Caring About Meaning**, 22 and 48; also **Understanding and Being**, 250, where he claims the order was from Newman to Augustine to Plato.

2. **Verbum**, x.

3. Quotations from these sources will be indicated in the text as following: **DBV (De Beata Vita)**, **CA (Contra Academicos)**, **DO (De Ordine)** and **SOL (The Soliloquies)**. Unless otherwise noted, our references and translations will be from **The Fathers of the Church, Writings of Saint Augustine**, Volume 1, Ludwig Schopp, editor (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1948).

4. Cf. Eugene TeSelle, **Augustine the Theologian**, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) 39; check also 59-60. Also Peter Brown, **Augustine of Hippo** (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1969).

5. Cf. TeSelle 59-60.

6. As Newman said in the **Apologia** when he became aware of some intimations of profound changes in his own future life: "I determined to be guided, not by my imagination, but by my reason." **Apologia pro vita sua**, 119. Newman needed time to determine "the logical value" of his experience and its bearing on his duty. Peter Brown speaks of the period of Augustine's dialogues in a similar way: "Seen in his works at Cassiciacum, this "conversion" seems to have been an astonishingly tranquil process...As [Augustine] wrote to Zenobius, some men deal with the wounds inflicted on them by the senses by "cauterizing" them "in solitude," while others "apply ointment to them" by means of the Liberal Arts. (**DO** 1,1,2) Plainly Augustine, surrounded by his relatives and pupils, his library in Cassiciacum well stocked with traditional text-books, had chosen the more gentle treatment of the Liberal Arts." **Augustine of Hippo**, 113.

7. Our references to the **Confessions** will be from the translation by F.J. Sheed, **The Confessions of Saint Augustine, Books I-X** (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942).

8. Cf. Newman, **Apologia pro vita sua**, 7.

9. **Insight**, 15 (xx). Cf. 778-779 for the editors' note on this statement.

10. Bernard Lonergan, **Doctrinal Pluralism** (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971) 67-68. Cf. also **Method in Theology**, 307; 319; 329; 344.

11. **De vera religione** 39, 73, John H.S.Burleigh, trans., **Augustine: Earlier Writings, The Library of Christian Classics VI** (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953).

12. **Verbum**, xii.

13. Somewhere in Lonergan's writings he refers to this classic example of the oar appearing bent in water; I have not been able to locate the reference.

14. Salvino Biolo, **La Coscienza nel "De Trinitate" di S. Agostino** (Rome: Libreria Editrice dell'Universita Gregoriana, 1969) 12. My translation.

15. Ibid., 13-14.

16. Ibid., 15.

17. Cf. **Confessions** 7, 9, 13.

18. It is interesting to note that in a letter to his superior from Rome in 1935 Lonergan mentions that among the few books he possesses are selections of Plotinus' **Enneads**.

19. TeSelle, **Augustine the Theologian**, 70.

20. As Peter Brown says: "It was a reading that was so intense and thorough that the ideas of Plotinus were thoroughly absorbed, "digested" and transformed by Augustine...For Augustine...Plotinus and Porphyry are grafted almost imperceptibly into his writings as the ever present basis of his thought." **Augustine of Hippo**, 95.

21. Cf. TeSelle, **Augustine the Theologian**, 68.

22. "Augustine understands auctoritas not in the abstract sense that the word "authority" has in modern political theory, but more in the classical Latin sense of authentic and authoritative testimony to or disclosure of something that is not directly known." Ibid., 74.

23. Henry Chadwick, **Saint Augustine's Confessions** (New York: Oxford University Press: 1992) xxiv: "The last four books make explicit what is only hinted at in the autobiographical parts, namely that the story of the soul wandering away from God and then in tears finding its way home through conversion is also the story of the entire created order. It is a favorite Neoplatonic theme, but also, as Romans 8 shows, not absent from the New Testament. The creation, made out of nothing, is involved in the perpetual change and flux of time. It falls into the abyss of formless chaos, but is brought to recognize in God the one source of order and rationality. Because it comes from God, it knows itself to be in need of returning to the source whence it came. So Augustine's personal quest and pilgrimage are the individual's experience in microcosm of what is true, on the grand scale, of the whole of creation. Augustine found his story especially symbolized in St.

Luke's account of the parable of the prodigal son. But this parable also mirrors the evolutionary process of the world as understood by the Neoplatonic philosophers of the age." In that light one can understand how the last four books of the **Confessions** on memory, time, eternity and creation are just the cosmic dimension of what is illustrated in an autobiographical way in the first nine books.

24. **Collection**, 148.

25. TeSelle, **Augustine the Theologian**, 82-83.

26. For an exposition of the various usages of **veritas** in Augustine, see the monograph of Lonergan's Roman dissertation director, C. Boyer: **L'Idee de Verite dans la philosophie de Saint Augustin** (Paris: 1941; original edition, 1920).

27. **Third Collection**, 229.

28. **Augustine: Earlier Writings**, trans. H. S. Burleigh (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953) 95.

29. Ibid., 101.

30. Unpublished notes on the Philosophy of History, available at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto.

31. **Insight**, 412; cf. 370. Also **Verbum**, 73 where, after describing Augustine's position, Lonergan says: "The Platonism of this position is palpable, for its ultimate answer is not something that we are but something that we see; it supposes that knowledge essentially is not identity with the known but some spiritual contact or confrontation with the known." For the various possibilities of meaning of Augustine's theory of illumination, cf. Eugene Portalie, **A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine** (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960) 109-114. This is the English translation of Portalie's article on Augustine published in the **Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique**. In his notes on the philosophy of history from the mid-1930's Lonergan mentions Portalie's work on Augustine.

32. Interview with Bernard Lonergan in **Curiosity at the Center of One's Life** (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1987) 403-404.

33. "Method in Catholic Theology," **Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies**, vol 10, n. 1 (Spring 1992) 10-11.