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William Rehg, S.J.

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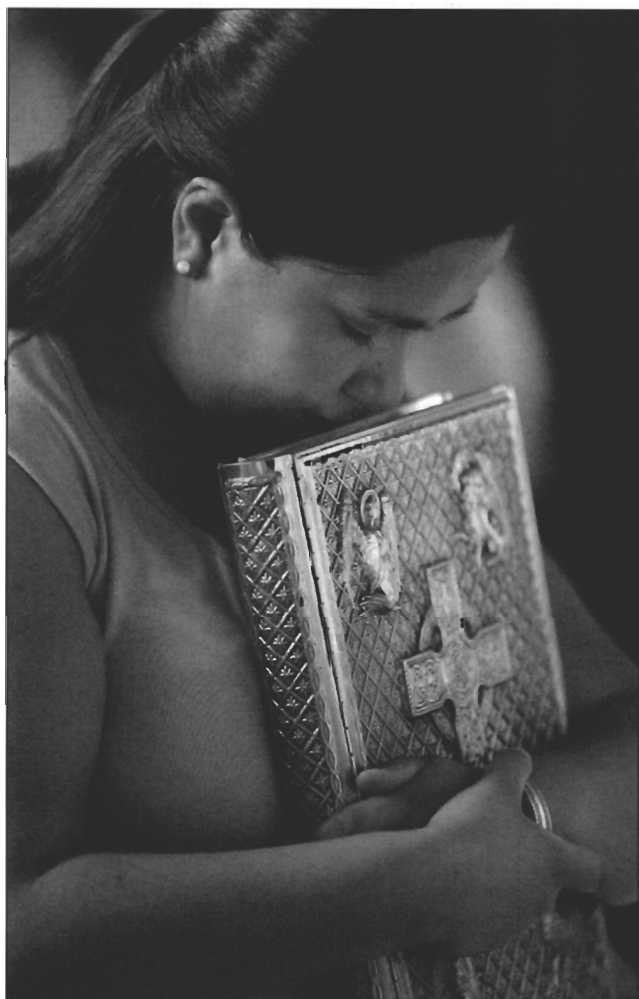
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## *Three Jesuit Giants: What is the Value of Their Work?*

Mark Bosco, S.J., and David Stagaman, S.J., editors,  
*Finding God in All Things: Celebrating Bernard Lonergan,  
John Courtney Murray, and Karl Rahner.*

New York: Fordham University Press, 2007, 221pp.

By William Rehg, S.J.



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**1904** was a very good year. In saying that, I refer not to the St. Louis World's Fair but to the birth of four of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century—Bernard Lonergan, John Courtney Murray, Karl Rahner, and Yves Congar. Drawing together essays from various centenary venues, this book celebrates the first three figures, each a Jesuit (Congar was a Dominican).

The first four essays helpfully illuminate important aspects of Lonergan's contribution. Lonergan is known above all for two groundbreaking methodological works, one philosophical, the other theological: *Insight* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1972). Elizabeth Murray's essay on Lonergan the methodologist thus provides a good starting point (though it is not the first chapter). His methodology rests on a complex analysis of the "polymorphism of consciousness," but as Murray set forth that analysis I became increasingly impressed by Lonergan the *phenomenologist*, who carefully mapped the contours of conscious existence.

What is the payoff in Lonergan's phenomenology of inquiring consciousness? Nothing less than a breakthrough in metaphysics, previously considered the most arid of subject matters. Patrick Byrne eloquently describes this breakthrough, which led Lonergan to understand metaphysics as a "passionateness" that responds to the "passionateness of being" itself—both rooted in the passionate love of God poured out in the universe and into our hearts.

John Haughey, S.J., elaborates on a further aspect of Lonergan's philosophical breakthrough, namely his turn from the ancient and medieval "classical consciousness" to an evolutionary, historical awareness that remains

open to revision and surprise. This openness to revision finds concrete illustration in the first chapter on Lonergan, in which Donald Gelpi, S.J., draws on C. S. Peirce to correct deficits he sees in Lonergan's cognitional analysis—e.g., its overly transcendental character, inattention to intuitive feeling and community.

The essays on John Courtney Murray have a more personal tone that helps us understand his thought as a response to American culture. Indeed, Mark Williams' essay is entirely personal—a nephew's reminiscences on his “Uncle Jack.” Michael Schuck contextualizes Murray's thinking in the latter's experiences as the son of Irish immigrants whose old-world mentality conflicted with the American experiment in democracy. Leon Hooper, S.J., traces Murray's movement beyond Catholic tribalism to a “love of enemies,” that is, an appreciation of American values, the historicity of natural law, and dialogue, both interreligious and Christian/atheist.

Finally, Thomas Hughson, S.J., draws timely conclusions from Murray's positions on religious freedom and nonestablishment: ecclesiastical authorities have the duty to form, but not to command, the citizen's conscience in the exercise of “politically prudent judgment” at the voting booth.

**T**aken together, the four essays on Rahner powerfully convey a theological vision that is at once deeply spiritual and breathtaking in its sweep and grandeur. The breadth and grandeur

come across especially well in the essay by Leo O'Donovan, S.J., who surveys five themes in Rahner's thought: knowledge as orientation toward the incomprehensible; the internal relation between knowledge and love; the ontological interconnectedness of self, other, and God; the primacy of praxis; and the dialectical, historical character of the human response to God.

The other three essays mine the spiritual depths of Rahner's vision. Harvey Egan, S.J., gives us a sense of how that vision flows from Rahner the human being—a generous and pastoral priest, a modest and hard-working Jesuit scholar. After tracing the historical background and intellectual sources of Rahner's thought, George Griener, S.J., goes to its heart: a theology of grace as the self-communication of the incomprehensible mystery that is God. Finally, James Voiss, S.J., confronts Rahner with criticisms raised by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Although the charges are not groundless, Voiss finds resonant depths in Rahner's corpus that call for more careful attention and belie the first impressions that sparked Balthasar's critique.

The postscript provides the concluding coda: Stagaman recalls his own intellectual encounter with the three figures and finishes with some brief remarks on the fourth member of the 1904 quartet, Yves Congar. In bringing these essays together, editors Bosco and Stagaman have honorably discharged a service incumbent on Catholic Jesuit theologians: Lonergan, Murray, and Rahner deserve our thanks for their enormous contributions, and this volume pays them grateful homage. ■

*William R. Rehg, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at Saint Louis University.*



Friends study together on the lawn at University of Detroit Mercy.