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CATECHIZING THE HEAD AND THE HEART: AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR CONFIRMATION MINISTRY

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In catechesis for adolescents seeking confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church, a dualistic bias unconsciously dichotomizes objective doctrine and subjective psychology. This is problematic because if a catechist does not communicate mind-independent truth, no seed of Catholic faith will have been planted in a student. At the same time, if a catechist does not affirm a student's subjectivity, the seed cannot find receptive soil. I believe the key to integrating these intellectual and affective elements – the head and the heart – lies in the link between what Bernard Lonergan calls authentic subjectivity and objectivity. Catechists can appeal to this link by embracing the moral responsibility to 'know our knowing,' becoming aware of our dualistic bias and judging our faith experiences according to objective standards of knowledge.

> 'They should likewise bestow appropriate study upon the method of teaching Christian doctrine and of adapting themselves to the capacities of children or simple persons.'[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

Standing in a room of eighth grade confirmation students, I am faced with a catechetical problem more fundamental than the question of what to teach them. First I must ask myself what I assume they need to know, which depends on what I myself know. Before teaching anything, I must recognize my own pedagogical assumptions, including my unconscious bias toward subject or object.[2] A subjectivizing bias may urge me to ask the students to hold hands and share their feelings about the gospels, minimizing or ignoring Catholic doctrinal claims; on the other hand, an objectivizing bias may push me to teach litanies and dogmas, neglecting how students receive the faith. In either form of this dualism, I assume thought must exclude emotion, or vice versa. Can I bridge this dichotomy of head and heart in an integrated way? This essay argues that integration is possible, but that it requires catechists to recognize our dualistic bias and work to overcome it by attending to the link between objectivity and what Bernard Lonergan calls authentic subjectivity, judging our experiences according to transcendental precepts.[3]

In constructing this argument, I will use Lonergan's claim that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity to judge the insights of philosophers Orestes A. Brownson and Gottlob Frege in light of Catholic tradition and my own teaching experience. Brownson and Frege struggled with two subjectivizing forms of dualism which I believe catechists need to be wary to recognize in ourselves today: deism and idealism. Brownson insists we

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must be free to know God on our own terms, but with an intuitive grasp of cognitive standards which prevent us from judging faith experiences according to the bias of a deist who is 'spiritual but not religious.'[4] Frege warns us against understanding truth as definable in terms of knowing (as a result of a metaphysical idealism common since 1800 to the present time) in a way that leads to relativism about truth. In this paper, I will use Brownson to illustrate the dualistic bias of deism and point toward a more authentic subjectivity. I will then use Frege to reveal the dualistic bias of idealism that hinders objectivity. Ultimately, Brownson and Frege suggest insights for catechesis which I judge to be authentic, inasmuch as they follow Lonergan's four transcendental precepts to be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible.

Lonergan's transcendental method, the framework for this paper, is rooted in these four precepts or norms of consciousness. In reflecting on experience, Lonergan is confident that our biases simply drop away as our minds produce insights, judgments and decisions[5] which are authentic insofar as they obey the four precepts, and inauthentic when they do not. We must be attentive by probing the full range of our experience; be intelligent by cultivating an inquiring mind and gaining insight into experience; be reasonable by examining evidence and judging the validity of our insights; and be responsible by acting on our valid insights (Lonergan 1971, 438). These precepts are conditions of the authentic self-appropriation of experience, which is the human subject's becoming familiar with the dynamic structures of his own consciousness through the exercise of intelligent insights, rational judgments and informed decisions.[6] According to Lonergan, the authentic consciousness that follows from the precepts is never a fixed state, but a constant and imperfect struggle to overcome bias. By consciously judging our faith experiences in light of objective standards, Lonergan's theory suggests we can become aware of our dualistic bias in catechesis, and begin to overcome or transcend the limits of our own minds.[7]

Following Lonergan, I contend that subjectivizing forms of dualistic bias in catechesis (specifically deism and idealism) represent an inauthentic form of subjectivity that is especially common today. As catechists, I believe our subjectivity becomes inauthentic whenever dualistic bias leads us to adopt the unconscious assumptions of a deist or idealist, frustrating authenticity inasmuch as we embrace a closed system of catechesis that precludes legitimate questions of truth from emerging in class. In an integrated model of confirmation, embracing the concerns and searching of a mind open to objective truth helps us attend fully to the heads and hearts of students, distinguishing between believer and belief without creating a harmful dichotomy.

My judgment on this point resonates with a foundational image that Vatican officials proposed in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, a 1971 publication requested by the Second Vatican Council to set guidelines for contemporary catechesis. Quoting Christ's parable of the sower as a paradigm for evangelization,[8] the *General Directory* notices many different soils where the gospel seed falls today. It exhorts pastors and catechists to 'a greater consciousness of the necessity to keep in mind the field in which the seed is sown, and to do so with the perspective of faith and mercy' (#14). In other words, catechists must be responsible for knowing the psychological soil of our students, while also being aware of the truths we wish to plant. To know our students, I contend that we must first become aware of ourselves as knowing subjects, judging our own experiences in light of epistemological norms like Lonergan's four transcendental precepts.

My judgment in this paper is rooted in my own experience as a catechist. During my Jesuit philosophy studies at Loyola University Chicago, I spent three years (2007–2010) teaching eighth grade confirmation at a Spanish-language parish in an immigrant

neighborhood. Our program was on a two-year cycle involving mandatory mass attendance, community service, and regular testing in addition to small-group activities. In class we tried to make our teenagers feel as free and informed as possible about choosing or rejecting Catholicism, yet we could not do so without being free and informed ourselves. In striving for authentic subjectivity, even though I recognized it as a virtue not fully attainable this side of the grave, I found it helpful to reflect on my own dualistic bias as a catechist in a way that made me more open to stepping outside of myself in service of my students. Am I inclined to teach the Catholic faith only as a relationship to Christ and others, or only as a set of rules to be memorized? I asked myself, do I believe in the reality of the truths I am teaching, or have I yet to self-appropriate them? In short, am I an authentic model of the Catholicism I am purporting to teach?

I believe catechists must confront these questions because we are models of the faith for our students; what we do and how we go about it tends to influence them more than the content of what we teach. When we deal honestly with our own questions of faith, rather than remaining trapped unconsciously in the bias of a subjectivizing dualism, we become authentic Christians who help our students to appropriate religious truth claims on their own terms – engaging in the dialectic of a faith illumined by reason that leads to personal conversion in Christ. The image of seed and sower in the *General Directory* evokes the integrated catechesis that our dualistic bias represses: 'The Gospel seed makes fertile the history of mankind and promises a rich harvest. Jesus also cautions, however, that the word of God grows only in a well disposed heart' (#15). A well-disposed heart is one that shines with the virtue of authentic subjectivity, opening itself to both the intellectual and affective dimensions of faith experience, not merely to one or the other.[9] Although Christians believe the Gospel seed is in a mystical way transformative in itself, we also see the need to plant it in good soil. Philosophically, the seed of faith must have a truth value beyond our minds to be 'good seed,' even though it must first be scattered in a meaningful way that takes root in the believer.[10]

Modern catechetical documents like the *General Directory* have paid special attention to the role of developmental psychology in fostering the self-appropriation of religious truth claims. After the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), religious education in the United States took a psychologizing or subjectivizing turn, as Catholics stopped following the objectivist model of the *Baltimore Catechism* and its simple answers to questions like 'Why did God make me?'[11] This impulse assumed that inter-subjective relationships – the believer and God, the believer and others, etc. – were now central in catechesis. Less aware that religious truths might have mind-independent value, catechists felt freer to adapt doctrines to different psychological and cultural needs.[12] By contrast, the objectivist Baltimore model continued to attract Catholics who assumed the primacy of doctrine, teaching propositional claims whose truth value is not conditioned by our mental judgments. Both models run the risk of dualism. But in contemporary catechesis, I believe subjectivizing forms of dualistic bias are more common, and that they fail to do justice to teens preparing for confirmation, who may feel Catholicism neither understands them nor offers anything worth taking seriously. This paper focuses on deism and metaphysical idealism as two particularly strong manifestations of subjectivizing bias.

By contrast to subjectivizing and objectivizing forms of dualistic bias, I believe that an integrated catechesis proceeds from a student's sense of inner freedom to a pedagogy that leads him or her to external participation in Catholic sacramental life. The guidelines for religious education in the United States, articulated by the U.S. bishops in their *National Directory for Catechesis*, call for a Christ-centered catechesis that gently invites young

people to the Catholic Church while at the same time developing in each believer 'the personal relationship that Christ has initiated with each of his disciples' (*National Directory* #25). As catechists in contemporary CCD[13] programs, we must offer our students the freedom to know Jesus personally, but also lead them to an appropriation of basic Christian doctrines (e.g. the Trinity) and active participation in a parish community.

In today's psychologically-minded culture, I believe Catholics are unconsciously tempted to view religion as a wholly personal matter (like the deistic idea that one may be 'spiritual but not religious' because God is not noticeably involved in our lives) or as a set of beautiful ethical ideals lying just beyond the reach of human experience. American Christianity sometimes resembles what sociologist Christian Smith calls 'moralistic therapeutic deism,'[14] with pastors acting more like ethically enlightened psychologists than shepherds of souls. Studies suggest that the sociological impact of this popular deism is not that people are leaving Catholicism for other churches or faiths, but that they are fleeing organized religion altogether in favor of individual spiritual practices.[15]

Influenced by what Lonergan calls the general bias of common sense, many contemporary people see little point in external religious observance.[16] Adolescents do not find the Catholic Church too 'progressive' or 'traditional' for their tastes; they simply do not care or have time for it. Dualistic bias, because it limits our attention to subject or object, blinds us from seeing the more basic problem that people are bored with religion itself. Confirmation has become known in some quarters as the 'sacrament of farewell,'[17] whereby people bid goodbye to the Catholic Church until they marry or die, with their faith never maturing beyond an adolescent developmental level.

In this climate, it is easy to see how dualistic bias can lead Catholics to believe implicitly that confirmation ministry is an 'either/or' affair. For many of us who are catechists, it may be tempting on some days to assume the Catholic Church is declining either because it has neglected timeless religious truths, or because these truths have neglected human experiences. In fact, these are two aspects of the same problem, and the unconscious nature of our dualistic bias prevents us from grasping it fully. On a philosophical level, catechists who succumb to this dualistic bias have accepted a false dichotomy between the self-aware believer and the mind-independent content of beliefs.[18] They unconsciously assume that either Catholic teaching must suit the affective hearts of contemporary people, or Catholics must adjust their minds to the teaching, but that both of these things cannot happen at the same time. In Lonergan's terms, catechists afflicted by dualistic bias have neglected the insight that we must think and feel simultaneously for the faith to take root in our interiority as a lived reality, forgetting that the habit of self-appropriation is essential to integration. Yes, we need to encourage personal encounters with Jesus and adapt the articles of faith to the developmental needs of students, but we must judge our experiences according to a clear sense of the doctrinal and moral claims we are inviting students to appropriate.

Only by reflecting on our pedagogical assumptions can we move creatively beyond the false dichotomy of 'dogmas or relationships' that unconsciously affects our catechesis when we become mired in dualistic bias. As a closed system that resists new questions and oversimplifies the faith, neither subjectivizing nor objectivizing catechesis is wholly effective in sowing the seed of Catholicism among young people. Subjectivist pedagogy seeks to nurture the experiential reflection of young people at their own level, but forgets how to persuade students of the objective value of attending Sunday mass. Objectivist pedagogy gives students doctrines to memorize, but neglects the subject's freedom to self-appropriate the faith at his or her level of cognitive development.[19] In both models there is

a basic alienation between believer and belief, resulting in a chasm between the head and heart as confirmation ministry becomes too cold or too touchy-feely.

I must add a word of caution. In the contemporary political context, it may seem that subjectivizing and objectivizing forms of dualistic bias correspond to popular labels like 'progressive and traditionalist' or 'liberal and conservative.' Yet this language is imprecise because not all doctrinally-centered catechesis is 'conservative,' and not all relationally-centered catechesis is 'liberal.' Two examples are the Catholic charismatic renewal, which encourages personal forms of prayer while drawing heavily from ideological conservatives, and the tradition of Catholic social thought that attracts liberals through Marxist-friendly doctrinaire claims. The dichotomy between believer and belief is not political or ideological, nor is it a crisis of interpretation over the modernizing reforms of Vatican II. On a deeper level, it is a problem of philosophical bias.

Modern philosophy is characterized by its embrace of human subjectivity, which philosophers broadly understand as a person's specific interpretation of any aspect of experience. After Immanuel Kant, Western philosophers focused in new ways on the psychology or subjectivity of the human mind, seeking to explain how human beings know and experience reality. Epistemology – the study of human consciousness or knowing – replaced metaphysics as the major concern of thinkers like Lonergan and Brownson, who strove to articulate normative criteria of consciousness. Meanwhile, semantic philosophers like Frege resisted a subjectivizing form of idealism that denied the possibility that the content of a thought or judgment could be objective.[20]

In the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council represented a massive institutional attempt to take the turn to the subject seriously, an effort symbolized by the turning around of Catholic altars to face the people. Recalling St. Augustine's words, the Second Vatican Council exhorted Catholics in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World to 'let there be unity in what is necessary; freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case' (*Gaudium et Spes* 92). It is difficult to describe just how this attempt to listen to modern human experience – rather than simply reiterating dogmatic truth claims about God – related to broader philosophical trends. What's certain is that theologians like Lonergan had been taking the turn to the subject seriously long before Vatican II, exploring human consciousness in works like *Insight*.

Lonergan's works do not advocate a partial turn to the subject, but a full 360-degree rotation that allows us to translate our personal insights back into authentic religious judgments which transcend the limits of the mind. When our subjective insights about religion fail to mature to this point of authenticity and objectivity, Lonergan suggests we remain trapped in biases like the dualism between subject and object, transmitting them to our faith communities. In many CCD programs, waves of children might become confirmed Catholics without feeling obliged to believe much of anything as truth, except the vague idea that they should love God and be nice to others. In other catechetical settings, a reaction against coloring books and Bible stories might perpetuate an emotionally stunted catechesis where children are told what to do and what to think, without ever being challenged to appropriate it for themselves, and they may consequently reject the faith as childish when they become mature thinking adults. How should we respond?

At the bottom of this paper is my conviction that the key to integrating the affective and intellectual aspects of catechesis lies in the responsibility to know our knowing, transcending dualistic bias through a more authentic use of consciousness. In the process of recognizing our dualistic bias, Lonergan suggests we will discover the possibility of

transcending it, leading to objective judgments about our faith experiences. Brownson's insight is that human beings must be free to seek God in their own way as a condition of this authenticity. He approached dualism from the perspective of a human subject seeking authenticity, a journey that led him to the Catholic Church. Frege offers the complementary insight that truth is objective and independent of us and at the same time we can come to know it, adding that a proposition may be true even if we do not know it. Although the Catholic Church has never defined truth as propositional, she can only formulate her doctrines propositionally, and Frege resists an idealist bias that rejects the ability of language to refer objectively to reality. In the end, I believe Brownson and Frege suggest ways for Catholics to live creatively with dualistic bias in the context of self-reflection, rather than accepting unconsciously a facile resolution in either subject or object.

The next two sections of my paper will focus on Brownson's attempt to achieve authentic subjectivity as a Christian, and on Frege's insistence on the objectivity of meaning. In Brownson's life and thought, we find an example of how authentic subjectivity or self-hood flourishes in the heart that seeks God in freedom – and reflecting on this journey helps, in a partial and limited way, to liberate us from the trap of transferring our culture's deistic bias to the young people we catechize. But Brownson's weak philosophy needs help to move beyond authentic subjectivity to objectivity, and this is where Frege's attempt to pinpoint the mind-independent truth conditions embedded in propositions is helpful.[21] If we do not catechize adolescents with a strong sense that Jesus exists and we can know him, we run the risk of reducing religion to a form of psychotherapy for people who believe in God. By appropriating Frege's notion of truth, I believe we can grow in our ability to teach Catholicism as not simply being true for you or me, but objectively true in a way that can be communicated meaningfully to the pupil as truth.

II. BROWNSON AND AUTHENTIC SUBJECTIVITY

The life of Orestes A. Brownson (1802–1876) provides a striking example of how subjectivity becomes authentic through fidelity to transcendental precepts or conditions of knowledge. In this section of my essay I want to describe Brownson's own flight from 19th century deism, a set of assumptions about religion typified by Thomas Paine's personal creed in *The Age of Reason*. I will eventually conclude that Brownson's thought helps unveil the presuppositions of our own dualistic bias as catechists, a bias that represses our self-awareness and ability to respond to different situations in the classroom.

First I will sketch Brownson's life, drawing out insights from his autobiography *The Convert*, and then I will explicate deism using Paine's religious creed in chapter one of his own book. As the best-known American journalist of the Revolutionary War period, and later an elected delegate to France's revolutionary National Convention, Paine articulates a popular form of deism that is quintessentially American in tone. He also presumes a number of popular ideas which many U.S. Christians probably continue to hold today, even though they may not be aware of it.

At first glance, Brownson's search for God before his conversion to Catholicism at age 42 may seem like an impulsive tour of 19th-century American religions. His beliefs shifted between Arminianism, Calvinism, Unitarianism, Universalism, deism and socialism. Yet Brownson stayed remarkably faithful to his own sense of authenticity, combining a love of truth with the humble recognition that his own intellect was fallible and its hypotheses

about God in constant need of testing. In the spirit of Lonergan's transcendental precepts, Brownson prefaces *The Convert* by declaring the desire to transcend his own mind:

> Truth is not mine, nor my reader's and is the same whatever may be his or my opinions. It is above us both, and independent of us, and all that either of us should aim at is to ascertain and conform to it. I have no vocation to dogmatize or to teach. If what I say carries conviction, accept it; if not, reject it, or suspend judgment till better informed (Brownson, 2).

Brownson sought an objective standard for knowing truth, seeking to overcome bias in his beliefs. A precocious reader and autodidactic learner, he remained faithful to this impulse throughout his unstable childhood. Adopted and raised by non-churchgoing Congregationalists in Vermont, he rebelled against their morals and prayers, espousing Arminianism by age seven. As a rural child whose only friends were books, he had strong religious inclinations, but knew nobody who could teach Christianity to his satisfaction, and he attached little definite meaning to it. He even felt revulsion toward the competing Protestant sects and their fire-and-brimstone preachers, who shouted warnings about hell in the local churches he visited. Their vision of Christianity terrified and puzzled Brownson, because although he was predisposed to believe in God, he recognized no authority in the claims of Methodists and Baptists that they alone knew God. As a youth he explored different churches, and a Congregationalist lady whom he respected suggested that he 'join one that began with Christ and his apostles,'[22] which seemed reasonable enough, if he could only find such a place.

By the time he left home at age 14 to attend school in upstate New York, Brownson had become a Universalist through the influence of an aunt, professing its central doctrine of universal salvation for all people regardless of creed. This enthusiasm soon passed and he became a deist professing no particular creed. But scruples about his lack of church affiliation plagued him. His self-confidence weakening as the world opened before him, he soon fell into doubt and despair about the sufficiency of his own reason to guide him, accusing himself of intellectual pride for having honest doubts about God. Deeply moved by a Presbyterian service at age 19, and terrified of hell, Brownson finally decided to submit his reason to ecclesial authority. He was baptized into the Presbyterian Church in October 1822, a decision that soon proved to be a big mistake.

While the Presbyterian leaders of Brownson's church defended the private interpretation of Scripture, they also ordered him never to read any book contradicting Calvinist doctrines. Furthermore, his fellow congregants seemed more interested in condemning lapsed members than in proclaiming the good news of Christ. He writes:

> I had joined the church because I had . . . wished to submit to authority . . . but she . . . disclaimed all authority to teach me, and remitted me to the Scriptures and private judgment . . . . But while the church refused to take the responsibility of telling me what doctrines I must believe . . . she yet claimed authority to condemn and excommunicate me as a heretic, if I departed from the standard of doctrine contained in her Confession (Brownson, 13).

Finding Presbyterianism in limbo between objectivity and subjectivity, Brownson left the church after only a year. 'Either bind me or loose me,' he fumed. 'Do not mock me.'[23] If the Presbyterians could break from the Catholic Church and enforce a new interpretation of Scripture, he wondered, why could he not do the same? He had found that pure Calvinism, in its emotionally-loaded doctrine that humanity is totally depraved and incapable of rational acts, was sustainable only at the expense of his mind. Although he wanted to know Jesus personally, Brownson still could not reconcile his image of Christ with any particular church. Disappointed with Protestant responses to the dualisms of

faith and reason, subject and object, and spirit and matter, he decided to embrace natural reason as the only criterion of truth.[24]

Determined to resist all organized religious authority, Brownson soon returned to Universalism, drawn anew to its doctrine of universal salvation based on nature and reason as the rule of faith. In 1826 he was ordained a Universalist minister, but another crisis of scruples soon emerged: He could find no Scriptural support for the doctrine of universal salvation, and much evidence against it. Brownson now felt forced to choose between the revealed truths of Scripture and the Calvinist doctrine of endless punishment for sins, with either path leading him to feel vaguely inauthentic. Calvinism had asked him to reject reason, Universalism was asking him to accept the authority of Scripture for a non-Scriptural doctrine, and he could do neither in good faith.[25] At age 27, Brownson gave up his Universalist pulpit and his faith in God, becoming an agnostic socialist who simply did not know whether God exists:

> I know nothing, I said, and can know nothing on the subject [of God], and let me not attempt to decide any thing [sic] respecting it one way or the other. I may trust my senses, and believe in the world of sensible phenomena. I will henceforth confine myself to that, and leave alone all metaphysical or theological speculations, and neither assert nor deny the invisible and the spiritual. Thus I had . . . left me only my five senses and what could fall under their observation (Brownson, 38) . . . .

From 1829 to 1842 Brownson wholeheartedly embraced his new role as a world-reforming socialist, espousing a naïve idealism that sought the progress of humanity in theories of secular education and democracy. 'I recognized God, but only in man, and I held that he exists for us only in human nature. For years I went no further in my thoughts, and thirsted for nothing higher or broader' (Brownson, 49). He embraced multiple social schemes, but they all failed and left him dissatisfied.

Some of these schemes were elaborate. Besides writing frequently on politics and embracing an agnostic attitude during this period, Brownson founded a political 'Working-Men's Party' to promote a radical theory of public education. He writes:

> We hoped, by linking our cause with the ultra-democratic sentiment of the country, which had had, from the time of Jefferson and Tom Paine, something of an anti-Christian character, by professing ourselves the bold and uncompromising champions of equality, by expressing a great love for the people, and a deep sympathy with the laborer, whom we represented as defrauded and oppressed by his employer, by denouncing all proprietors as aristocrats, and by keeping the more unpopular features of our plan as far in the background as possible, to enlist the majority of the American people under the banner of the Working-Men's Party (Brownson, p. 63) . . . .

As his political party began to flounder, Brownson drifted back toward religion, embracing the deistic idea that God exists but is not involved in the world. For the deist, Brownson realized that the equality of men is rooted in their divinity in a way that excludes the reality of God's love for man as something open to human experience. Men are equal because each man is like God, about whom very little may be known objectively. Becoming pastor of a Unitarian congregation in 1832, Brownson justified his return to the pulpit by describing himself only as a 'humble inquirer after truth' who had committed himself to preaching no dogmas, denying all ecclesial authority, and 'asserting the right of private interpretation' of revealed truths (Brownson, 66–68). He enjoyed the fact that Unitarians, whose founding doctrine was the simple monotheistic belief that there is only one God, allowed him to seek the truth in freedom from church-imposed conditions of right thinking. Furthermore, he was attracted to Unitarianism because he could not rid

himself of 'certain religious sentiments' which he saw as laws of nature to be cherished, but which he could not quite accept as objective truths open to reason:

> I found [these sentiments] universal, manifesting themselves, in some form, wherever man is found; but I received them, or supposed I received them, on the authority of humanity or human nature, and professed to hold no religion except that of humanity. I had become a believer in humanity, and put humanity in the place of God. The only God I recognized was the divine in man, the divinity of humanity (Brownson, 68) . . . .

His flickering faith in humanity notwithstanding, Brownson remained troubled by certain logical inconsistencies in Unitarianism, particularly in the area of eschatology. He simply could not make up his mind about the reality of heaven and hell. It did not help that he could find no consensus on the afterlife among even his most intelligent Unitarian friends, who wavered between traditional and naturalistic views. He writes:

> In regard to another life, the Unitarians were not precisely agreed . . . . A few held the orthodox view of a future judgment and the endless punishment of the wicked; now and then one thought there would be a final judgment, and that the wicked, those who died wicked, would be condemned, and then annihilated. Some believed in future disciplinary punishment, the restoration of the wicked, and the ultimate holiness and happiness of all men; others, and the majority, held that the future life be simply a continuation, under other and perhaps more favorable conditions, of our present natural life, in which we should take rank according to the progress made here, and in which we might grow better and happier, or worse and more miserable forever. With these last, so far as I had any fixed views on the subject, I agreed. The heaven the Unitarians promised in the world to come, was in the natural order, – a sort of natural beatitude, such as some Catholics have supposed might be enjoyed by those in the least unpleasant part of hell (Brownson, 80).

Brownson was troubled by the realization that heaven for a deist looks something like 'the least unpleasant part of hell' for a Catholic. This consideration only strengthened his restless desire to know the truth about God. In 1836 he moved to Boston and attended meetings of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendental Club until 1842, becoming pastor of a Unitarian parish and befriending Theodore Parker. Although humanity remained his only God and reason was still his only criterion of truth, Brownson was beginning to doubt the sufficiency of self-interest as a paradigm of life.[26] In response to subject-object dualism, he began laying the groundwork for a 'synthetic philosophy' based on the ideas of atheist French philosophers. Ironically, this philosophy did not lead him further from God, nor to another sect, but resulted in his conversion to Catholicism in 1844.

Brownson had planted the first seeds of his transcendental theory of knowledge in the 1836 book *New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church*, where he asserts that all dualisms can only be resolved in favor of a *unified* metaphysical theory of distinct things, and not on the *unity* of dichotomous things. In arguing for union, Brownson critiques spirit-matter dualism, rejecting the underlying bias of subject-object dualism whereby natural religion insists on seeing the spiritual realm as entirely subjective or personal, separated from the material realm that is the only standard of objectivity.

By this point in his life, Brownson was thirsting for objectivity. Unitarian and democratic values had lost their appeal for him when William Henry Harrison defeated Martin Van Buren in the 1840 presidential election. Brownson had supported Van Buren's re-election campaign with his pen, but the victory of Harrison's vapid 'Tippecanoe and Tyler Too' over Van Buren's equally shallow 'hard cider' campaign spoiled his faith in man's natural perfectibility, redirecting his attention to the human need for supernatural assistance. The disappointment of 1840 inspired him to make a renewed study of

philosophy, including Aristotle's *Politics*, which convinced him that only a just authority guarantees freedom. But where could he find such an authority?

With this question in mind, Brownson read the atheistic French philosophers Pierre Leroux and Victor Cousin, borrowing two of their key ideas for the basis of the 'synthetic philosophy' he introduced in an 1842 essay of the same name. Leroux convinced him that the spiritual and material realms correspond, with the material imitating the spiritual by drawing aid from it. This idea seemed to resolve spirit-matter dualism and shattered Brownson's admiration for the epistemology of Locke, Reid and Stewart. On the related issue of subject-object dualism, Cousin asserted that thought is a phenomenon with three elements: subject, object and their relation. These elements exist in a triadic relationship. The *subject* is always the thinker (me), the *object* is always something (not-me) standing over and against the subject, and their *relation* is the form of thought itself.[27]

Leroux used Cousin to show that thought is the synthetic result of two factors, linking subject and object in an intrinsic agreement. This insight proved decisive for Brownson's intellectual development. He writes:

> The subject cannot think without the concurrence of the object, and the object cannot be thought without the concurrence of the subject . . . . The subject and object are both given simultaneously in one and the same thought or act, and therefore the reality of the one is as certain as that of the other. The object affirms itself in the fact of consciousness as object, as distinct from, and independent of, the subject; and the subject recognizes itself as subject, as thinker, and therefore as distinct from and opposed to the object (Brownson, 128).

In other words, although subject and object cannot be reduced to each other, we must recognize that one can never exist without the other. According to Leroux, man lives by communion with his object, which elevates him through the gift of higher virtue to an integrated knowledge of reality. In addition to seeing his way out of deism, Brownson believed he had found in Leroux a solid 'foundation of true realism in opposition to the Kantian subjectivism or idealism' (Brownson, 131). Hoping to transform this insight into what Lonergan would call an authentic judgment, Brownson applied Leroux's subject-object distinction to Christianity, concluding that the human person – as subject – must live in supernatural communion with God as his or her ultimate object. Just as the object and subject 'mutually act and react on each other' to generate life, so the divine flows into the human. This relationship makes it possible for supernatural grace to build upon nature without eradicating it. Brownson concluded that the visible Church is a living organism that continues Christ's incarnation and manifests the authority of God, particularly through the example and apostolic succession of 'providential men.'[28]

Epistemologically, Brownson's theory of knowledge is based on intuition, holding that the human mind tends naturally to believe in divine realities and needs only the removal of rational objections. 'For belief reason never requires anything but the mutual presence, with nothing interposed between them, of the credible object and the creditive subject.'[29] To know the truth of something like the Trinity, the mind must apprehend it through a simple intuition. This intuitive assent is immediate and the burden of proof is negative rather than affirmative. Brownson proposes a principle of belief that defines faith in God as the 'assent to propositions not immediately known, on the authority affirming them; that is, it is assent on testimony.' Divine reason creates human reason, making God the highest object of knowledge toward which the human subject aspires.

Brownson rejected the idea that human beings cannot appropriate doctrines on any felt level simply because their value as objects is distinct from human subjectivity. He writes that 'we know the object because we think it, and we think it simply because it is, and is

immediately present to our intellect.' Unfortunately, he appears to make the idealist mistake of treating God merely as an object of knowledge. He also does not explain how intuition works, leaving his theory partially stuck in the Kantian subjectivity it purports to transcend. Ontologically, Brownson identifies *life* with the metaphysical category of *being*, allowing him to argue that the actuality of God renders creation possible. It is the object rather than the subject that determines the form of our cognition of religious truth claims, and the object is the condition of its own actualization. Yet God is both object and subject, according to Catholic teaching on the incarnation.[30]

Brownson sees intuition, not incarnation, as the key to moving beyond the dualistic bias that drives a wedge between head and heart: 'In the generation of thought, both subject and object must act. What is not actual cannot act, and therefore both subject and object must be actualities prior to thought.' He adds that the object 'can be thought only on condition that it exists prior to the thought.' It is the object that affirms the subject, not vice versa: 'In all human life the action of the object precedes and renders possible the action of the subject.' Brownson says a thing 'does not exist because we think it, but we think it because it is intelligibly – actively – present to our intelligence.' As Donald Gelpi observes, he is a transcendentalist insofar as he offers an intuitive epistemology that seeks to move beyond the deistic tendency to reduce religion to a matter of personal preference or opinion, neglecting its universal truth claims (Gelpi, 164–165).

Although Brownson's theory of knowledge did not come from Catholic sources, it removed his *a priori* objections to belief and predisposed him to seek Catholic catechesis as a catechumen.[31] What he didn't tell his bishop was that his desire to receive the sacrament of confirmation flowed from his application of synthetic philosophy to God. He writes:

> In making this application of the doctrine of life, as I did, my mind was intent mainly on one point, that of the real infusion of a divine element into human life, by which that life should be supernaturally elevated, and rendered progressive . . . . Back of it in my mind was the true doctrine that the object, though it may create or actualize the subject, is itself actual antecedently to human thought, as is evident from the fact that I held to Providence, and asserted the free intervention of God in human affairs, that the Father has life in himself, and therefore lives independently of the subject, and that he performs the miracle of raising the man Christ Jesus into a supernatural communion with himself (Brownson, 149).

Despite his neglect of inter-subjectivity in the relationship to God, Brownson's 'doctrine of life' led him to accept the supernatural as a principle and end of life. This insight made him believe he had transcended the bias of subject-object dualism and justified his conversion to the Catholic Church, where he spent the last 32 years of his life. In Lonergan's language, Brownson represents a human subject who struggled for authenticity by self-appropriating of religious truths according to transcendental precepts, leading him to objective judgments about his faith experiences.[32] In this conscious process of testing his biases and appropriating religious doctrines for himself, Brownson evokes a particular attempt to transcend dualistic bias.

Brownson understood the importance of Christian charity in the effort to transcend dualism. The two 'great commandments' to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbor as ourselves are the highest insights we can appropriate as Catholics, helping us to resist the dualistic tendency of deism to ignore the objective demands of a faith that takes flesh in the good works of a heart moved by God's love.[33] While dualistic bias obscures our experience of God's love, the sincere response of our own disinterested love – of the habituated desire to give without reward – to our experience of God's love is

essential to making our catechesis authentic. Lonergan realized as much in his later work, insisting on the centrality of love in judging our faith experiences according to the transcendental precepts. As St. Ignatius of Loyola put it, using deceptively simple language, 'love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words.'[34] In Brownson's life, the love of truth did not make him a passive believer, but impelled him to reflect on his own authenticity and strive to live accordingly.

I have noted that synthetic philosophy falls short of fully integrating subject and object, being trapped in an idealism that can't quite see God as anything but ideal object.[35] Brownson never quite explains how intuition allows us to know transcendental objects, an idea that Charles S. Peirce would later dispute.[36] He also lacks a clear appreciation for the mind-independent value of truth claims as distinct from the process of knowing. Although he recognizes the need to overcome the dualistic bias that dichotomizes subject and object, Brownson lacks the logical training to articulate a clear view of truth. Such a definition is necessary for his theory of knowledge to move beyond the ideals or concepts of the subject. Brownson therefore offers only a partial answer to the subjectivizing bias of deism, the idea that one may follow God without the objective mediation of any particular church. It will be helpful now to give a fuller account of deism, with an eye to recognizing how its presuppositions may influence Catholics on an unconscious level today.

Deism is the rejection of institutional Christianity's authority to mediate the invisible realities of salvation and redemption through objective norms of faith and morals, a rejection illustrated by the attitude that one can be 'spiritual but not religious.' It is the idea that God created but is no longer noticeably involved in the world. Deists believe in God, but this belief does not visibly affect how they live and it does not lead to any convictions deeper than personal opinion. Deists do not attend church often and, when they do, they do not believe in the objectivity of what they experience there.

Although a deist believes in God, he or she rejects the authority of an ecclesial community to form the believer's conscience objectively. Deists tend to believe in God's existence and creation of the world only by virtue of natural reason. Thomas Paine, the most articulate popularizer of deism in early America, denied the objective reality of an invisible or spiritual order, asserting that God is revealed only in laws of nature apprehended through illumination of the individual conscience – i.e. by natural theology or religion. He followed Lockean epistemology by limiting knowledge to the five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling.

Deism in the age of Paine and Brownson arose as a particular reaction against Calvinism, the dominant religion of early America. But Christian Theism, the widely held belief that God is both active and present in the world, is Paine's broader target in *The Age of Reason*. In chapter one he offers the following profession of his own deistic faith, which directly repudiates the Theistic idea that God is constantly bringing the world into being and that Christ is its unique savior:

> I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring [sic] to make our fellow-creatures happy. But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them. I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church . . . But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe (Paine, 21–22).

Like Brownson, Paine believes in authenticity, but his prose suggests a dualistic bias that prevents him from fully achieving it. He makes no attempt to explicate this creed, nor any effort to use its principles as a basis for reasoning. He simply moves on to the rest of his book, where he articulates his own form of deism based on Newton's concept of planetary motion and gives a naturalistic analysis of Christianity, rejecting the authority of both Protestantism and Scripture. Paine does not refer to his creed again. Yet the creed presupposes certain things which are emblematic of deism, and which I should now like to explicate as illustrative of dualistic bias.

Like Brownson, Paine suggests that the spiritual seeker often stays away from organized religion because it perpetuates a dichotomy between believer and belief that is evident in the inauthentic lives of some Christians. On the same two pages where he offers his creed, Paine expresses his dislike of hypocrisy by blaming 'moral lying' for what he calls 'the adulterous connection of church and state.' He rejects all national churches and advocates a radical separation of church and state, which he sees in necessary opposition to each other, just as spirit and matter are for him opposed. Faced with the classic dualisms of faith and reason, subject and object, Paine judges that reason compels him to exclusively choose the objectivity of material reality over what he supposes can only be the subjective insights of the spiritual and moral realm.

Paine's creed suggests that deism is typified by its resolution of dualistic bias in a Lockean conflation of the spiritual with the subjective. He shares Brownson's aversion to institutional hypocrisy, a childlike trait I have found common today in many adolescent students who seek the sacrament of confirmation, insofar as they are quick to spot any discrepancy between a catechist's words and actions. What Paine and Brownson call hypocritical is analogous to what Lonergan calls inauthentic. Both Paine and Brownson (in his deistic phase) wanted badly to avoid being inauthentic believers. They chose the head over the heart, trusting the objectivity of reason over what they thought were the fairytales of a Triune God, and denying that authentic subjectivity might yield objectivity.

Paine's creed is composed of four propositions or articles referring to God, the afterlife, human equality, and the moral duties of religion. All of these articles are directed against institutional religion. When Paine tells us in the first line of his creed that there is 'one God, and no more,' he denies the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the idea of one God in three persons. At the end of chapter one he blames 'human inventions and priest-craft' (foreshadowing Brownson's own deistic phase)[37] for obscuring 'the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more' (Paine, 23). Like the other assertions in his creed, this claim is implicitly rooted in Lockean empiricism. For Paine the Trinity is a subjective mental concept because it exists independently of the natural world that is verifiable by the human senses. The Trinity for him is thus a human ideal rather than a spiritual reality; God must be one 'and no more' because the Trinity is too mysterious to be known even by the inner light of conscience.

What does Paine mean by his belief in happiness beyond this life? On this point, his deism leads him to assert the existence of another life without trying to describe its reality objectively. Because the deist recognizes no authority outside of his own judgment, Paine's expression of 'hope for happiness beyond this life' represents the most he can say about heaven. For the deist, happiness beyond this life exists, but he can say nothing further. This vagueness is logically required by Paine's Lockean sensism, in which reality can only be known by the human senses. Then as now, Deists tend to treat the afterlife as an ideal arising out of our subjective sentiments or opinions, rather than as a reality that might have objective implications for the way we live here and now.

If we catechists remain unaware of our dualistic bias, particularly as it manifests itself in this sort of deism, I have found that our students do not appropriate the ideas of heaven and hell as meaningful realities. This creates a problem since the Christian doctrines of salvation and redemption through Christ alone depend on our view of the afterlife. On a confirmation test, I once asked my eighth grade students in Chicago to say what was wrong with the idea that 'only Catholics go to heaven' and what was wrong with the statement that 'everyone goes to heaven.' Many of my eighth graders quickly found fault with the first statement, but they were unable to dispute the second, and I had to overcome my own bias to help them. If we pressed contemporary CCD students on this point, how many would agree that heaven and hell are real? How many would believe Jesus is active in their daily lives?

Foreshadowing Brownson's socialist phase, the next part of Paine's creed upholds the divinity of humanity independent of our concepts of God. His belief in the 'equality of man' invokes a founding principle of American democracy with more bias than logic behind it: All men are created equal, as is self-evident from their inherent nobility. Paine seems aware that this first principle of democracy is a powerful ideal that can enlist the sympathy of readers without needing to mean anything specific.

We come now to the article of Paine's creed concerning the moral purpose of religion, which for the deist is simply to care for the needs of human beings. Paine writes that the only necessary religious duties 'consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy.' For the deist, the only moral obligation entailed by these ideas is to respect and facilitate our neighbor's right to happiness. Paine leaves readers free to attach their own meaning to words like happiness, justice and mercy. For him to do *justice* apparently means to be faithful to one's own concept of what is just; to love *mercy* likewise means to be merciful according to one's own lights. No institutional or ecclesial authority has the right to contradict these lights.

Paine adds that man's happiness requires him to be 'mentally faithful to himself.' This final part of his creed illuminates the moralistic and therapeutic aspects of deism which help to reduce religion to a mass phenomenon of self-affirmation. The dualistic bias of deism presumes that if religion comforts you and makes the world better according to your standards of what is good, then please believe it, but don't take it too seriously. Again, how many confirmation students and even catechists would dispute this attitude today, if we pressed the point?

Paine makes two final comments. First he clarifies that he considers his convictions incompatible with the authority of all traditional religious institutions. He writes that he does not believe 'in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of.' Second, Paine makes a statement that dramatically contextualizes and clarifies all that he has just professed: 'My own mind is my own church.' Neglecting to specify how it is possible to join such a church, Paine betrays here the subjectivizing bias of his Quaker background. By declaring his mind to be the only legitimate church, he follows the Protestant principle of individual judgment to its most extreme logical end. If one accepts the Protestant principle that the truths of Christian faith must always be subject to private interpretation as the highest principle of authority, it certainly seems reasonable for Paine to refer all religious matters to a single authority, i.e. himself.

What insights can we draw from Brownson and Paine for catechesis today? In reflecting on Brownson's story, I believe we find that we must be attentive to what our students are thinking and feeling about what we are teaching them. Yet this freedom of conscience must

be tempered by the objective standards of a legitimate communal authority to avoid becoming trapped in the subjectivizing bias of deism. Brownson's lifelong search for a religious system that was both meaningful and relevant validates the *General Directory's* call to adapt catechesis to the contexts of human rights, culture and cultures, the signs of the times, and particular concerns like the environment. The *General Directory* emphasizes that good catechesis awakens the inner freedom of students to encounter God on their own developmental level.[38]

It may help to illustrate this last point with a story. One day in eighth grade confirmation class I drew a shamrock on the board, explaining to my students that it was St. Patrick's image of the Trinity – and then I asked them to write down their own images and explanations of the Trinity. The point of this lesson was to engage their creativity, challenging students to think and feel about a central dogma of the faith for themselves, rather than simply memorizing someone else's explanation. When it came time to share, one very bright girl showed me an unusual drawing of the Trinity as a 'turducken.' What's a turducken? 'It's a turkey with a duck and a chicken in it,' she explained slyly. 'It's three birds, but one delicious meal. My family makes it for Thanksgiving.' This struck me as a profound image for a 13-year old. Not only did it evoke the Trinity in a way that gave St. Patrick a run for his money, but she had arrived at it by her own dialectical lights, creating an authentic image that might stick in her consciousness for years.

This story highlights Brownson's insight that we must be as free as possible to accept or reject the Catholic Church on our own terms. For it is not simply the person of Jesus that a CCD student accepts or rejects, but the Catholic Church that purports to mediate Jesus in its external norms and sacramental life. At some point, all Catholics or aspiring Catholics must confront the doctrines of the Church objectively, feeling free to accept or reject them according to objective cognitive standards. To make a mature commitment to the faith, we must know what we are getting into, the catechists as well as our students. If we do not experience the freedom to interpret our own faith experiences, we will not quite choose the faith for ourselves, but act to some degree out of compulsion or obligation. We must freely seek God on our own terms, whether they lead us to the Catholic Church or not, but with an objective image of what Catholicism represents.

I have repeatedly insisted that if we catechists want our students to appropriate the Catholic faith authentically, we must first reflect on our own dualistic bias and reject it. I believe the subjectivizing bias of deism becomes manifest when we follow Brownson's example of attentiveness, responsibility, reason and intelligence regarding our faith experiences. As one contemporary American catechism sees it, the faith journey of a spiritual seeker like Brownson must begin with experiential self-reflection before it can proceed to objective judgments and decisions:

> Our own experience can guide us to God. Our feelings of dependency, our sense of wonder and awe and joy, our feelings of being invited and called to do greater things than we are doing right now – all of these may speak of a God who has made us to discover him. When we reflect on ourselves as something very special in creation, we are given some strong insights that help us conclude there is a Creator who brought us into existence (Pennock, 21).

I must finally note that Brownson's search for God prefigures what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says about belief: 'What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe "because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived"' (#156). Brownson found in Catholicism an authority he respected. But

although his life illustrates how one spiritual seeker can freely find a home in the Catholic Church on his own terms, his synthetic philosophy falls short of integrated catechesis through its idealist bias. Despite arguing that human intuition unites object and subject in a triadic relationship, Brownson resolves subject-object dualism firmly in favor of the knowing subject. He neglects inter-subjective meaning by reducing God to an object or ideal, leaving the door open to relativism about truth. This unresolved idealism brings us to the analytic tradition of Frege, who clarifies that cognition (rather than faith) concerns propositions and things. In comparing and contrasting Frege with John Paul II, I will demonstrate that Frege's theory finds much in common with the Catholic tradition on truth, which insists that truth is both personal and objective.

III. FREGE AND THE OBJECTIVITY OF TRUTH

Although in catechesis we ask our students to give assent to propositions *about* God, Catholicism insists on the mystery that God himself is not simply a propositional object or ideal, but a person. While Brownson tested his religious experiences in light of normative criteria, the 20th century philosopher Gottlob Frege sought a way of treating truth as mind-independent, insisting on the mathematical possibilities of propositions in a way that resisted the dualistic bias of subjectivizing idealism. Even though Frege never succeeded in reducing language to symbolic terms of pure logic, I will argue in this section of my paper that his metaphysical realism is helpful to the ability of a religion like Catholicism to make objective truth claims, resisting subjectivizing idealism and the relativism that often follows from it. In making a case for realism in contemporary catechesis, I place Frege's notion of truth in dialogue with the Catholic critique of relativism, concluding that we as catechists must consciously reject the subjectivizing (or psychologizing) dualistic bias that arises from idealist assumptions in the classroom. I contend that a realist view of truth is necessary to move Catholic catechesis beyond the temptation to resolve subject-object dualism in favor of the subjective ideal, to the exclusion of the personal object.[39]

St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us of the paradox that 'the more perfectly do we know God in this life, the more we understand that he surpasses all that the mind comprehends' (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 8, a. 7). Frege's theory of meaning reinforces Aquinas's point that truth is not limited by the ideas of knowing minds like ours, even though meaning may take the form of a proposition. In comparing Frege's article 'On Sense and Reference' with Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, I see several points of similarity (despite other points of contrast) which suggest Frege's ideas of *sense* and *reference* fit better with the Catholic tradition on truth than the subjectivist idea that we are trapped in language. Through his realist insistence on the objectivity of truth, I believe Frege complements Brownson in resisting the subjectivizing bias of idealism that impedes catechists from achieving an integrated catechesis of the head and heart.

Quid est veritas? Catholicism holds that truth is found in the interrelated realms of faith and reason.[40] Although Catholicism does not reduce truth to propositions, it insists on the role of reason in discovering truth. As Lonergan's precepts indicate, the faith of a spiritual seeker like Brownson cannot be authentic if the mind does not accept it as reasonable. But unless the believer accepts the possibility that reason gives him access to doctrinal propositions with mind-independent truth value, his notion of truth becomes reducible to the subjective will to believe. In such circumstances the Christian's faith may degenerate into an irrational fundamentalism rooted in ideological willpower. On the other hand,

reason without faith isolates religious principles from the believer's experiences, leaving him with little self-appropriation of (or desire to self-appropriate) the Christian faith. In this case a Christian might accept religious principles as reasonable without actually believing them, leading to hypocrisy or agnosticism.

Modern popes have taken greater care to address the consequences of faith without reason than vice versa. Since the First Vatican Council (1869–70) they have taken a particularly strong stand against relativism, or the idea that there is no normative truth, and fideism, the agnostic doctrine that we can't know anything about God. Responding to the consequences of the turn to the subject, John Paul II and Benedict XVI have frequently reminded the secular world that Catholicism still makes truth claims whose objectivity does not depend on our mental verification of them. In this task they have found common cause with analytic philosophy, which arose in reaction against Hegelian and post-Kantian idealism by emphasizing the objective meaning expressible in language. In different ways, psychologism or subjectivism is the common enemy of the analytic realists and Catholic popes. By conditioning the meaning of words by the mental processes aroused in speaker or hearer, psychologism leads us to believe propositions are conditioned by the mind ('true for you' or 'true for me') but need not in themselves contain objective truth.

We find an especially strong point of convergence between Catholicism and the analytic tradition in Frege's idea that propositions have a built-in *reference* and *sense* which allow people to make claims with mind-independent truth value. In his 1892 essay 'On Sense and Reference,' Frege emphasizes this distinction between thinking and thought, or psychological process and semantic content. He insists that *thought* (or judgment) as content is independent of the mind. Frege's view complements the Catholic critique of relativism in pointedly rejecting a wholly psychologizing theory that limits truth by our self-appropriation of mental concepts. Nevertheless, Frege and John Paul II express their concerns with subjectivizing dualism on different levels. While Frege argues for the sense-reference distinction on the basis of language, John Paul II takes a much broader path to truth through reason, declining to reduce truth to language.

Frege's idea of *reference* holds that propositions can refer to a reality independent of the mind, making it necessary that we seek truth as something existing independent of ourselves. Meanwhile, the Catholic tradition exhorts believers to care about the objective truth value of divine revelation, discouraging them from the blind will to believe in whatever interpretation of religious experience strikes their fancy, as in Paine's attitude that 'my own mind is my own church.' While Catholicism does not reject the relationship between reason and the individual believer's faith experiences, John Paul II and Frege agree in the fundamental claim of metaphysical realism that truth exists objectively and we can know it through reason.

In his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II critiqued the unhealthy tendency of modern believers to subordinate their natural reason to their personal interpretations of faith experiences, and to replace all appreciation for the objectivity of truth with a fixation on inner experience. Frege is more broadly concerned with the psychologizing of logic by philosophical idealists who ignore the objective content of beliefs to focus on the subjective process of believing, reducing the former to the latter. Yet Frege's concern with the subjectivizing of philosophy dovetails with John Paul II's objection to the subjectivizing of religious values. Unless we understand truth as holding mind-independent value, John Paul II points out that religion is reduced to the task of psychologically affirming the believer without offering anything meaningful to believe or act on besides 'partial and provisional truths' (*Fides*, #5), which ultimately feed the subjectivizing drift of modern

religion toward moralistic therapeutic deism. While he does not use this terminology, John Paul II is like Frege in that he effectively wants to distinguish the *objectivity* of truth from the epistemological *process* of knowing truth.

Frege's work on *sense* and *reference* represents a *realist* theory of truth, holding simply that sentences may refer to concepts or reality. His central claim is that we use propositions as sentences with determinate truth-conditions built into them.[41] For him the truth or falsity of a proposition depends not on our assent to it, but on whether it is expressed in language that in some way reflects reality. The *sense* of a sentence is the objective conceptual meaning it expresses, whereas the *reference* of a proper name is the mind-independent object it designates or picks out. For Frege a thought relates to the True as sense relates to reference, and not as subject relates to predicate. For Frege's followers the reference of a proposition is a state of affairs or fact.

A proposition must be expressed linguistically, with the sentence containing what Frege calls a *proper name* (word, sign, combination, or expression) in order to both express the *sense* of the proposition and designate its *reference*. Frege cites the sentence 'The Moon is smaller than the Earth' to illustrate what he means by the two terms. In this sentence, he argues that the proper name 'the Moon' expresses a conceptual meaning common to all of us (like a Platonic form) and denotes something in reality; it does not refer to the observer's idea of the moon. The subjective idea or mental picture that we conjure up when we hear the name 'the Moon' is distinct from what Frege means by *sense* and *reference*. Contrary to the popular idealist view, he believes we are aware of this difference and can distinguish between talking about an object and talking about our *idea* of it. In the conceptual meaning it conveys, 'the Moon' expresses a *sense* that exists independently of our subjective mental picture of 'the Moon.' In denoting something called 'the Moon,' this name refers to an existing object. Frege argues that the sentence 'The Moon is smaller than the Earth' makes a direct truth claim that is either true or false.

The idea that 'the Moon' must be capable of referring to something real is essential to Frege's view of truth. Frege begins from the assumption that the world exists independently of our concepts of it: If 'the Moon' referred only to my subjective mental image of the moon, Frege points out the speaker would say 'my idea of the Moon.' To assume that 'the Moon' really means 'my idea of the Moon' (rather than an actual object denoted by the name 'the Moon') alters the embedded meaning of the sentence. It is a fallacy of idealism to assume that the object of our truth claims is conceptual rather than real. An idealist might say the sentence 'The Moon is smaller than the Earth' is a true proposition on the grounds that it is consistent within an established system of beliefs about the Moon. Nevertheless, he cannot say this truth claim is objective in the sense of being mind-independent, because the proposition corresponds only to the mental criteria of a thought system that is subject to change.

Truth remains subjective in Brownson's theory inasmuch as he conflates it with knowledge, which he conditions by the mind's judgments. Against this subtle subjectivism, Frege's realism insists that the objective meaning of 'the Moon' may refer to a Platonic ideal and to a particular object existing in reality, rather than to our individual ideas of 'the Moon' or process of assenting to a belief in what 'the Moon' means. Frege implies that idealists conflate epistemological concerns with the question of truth, assuming that whether a proposition is true depends in some way on *how* we know it. His argument suggests that 'X is true under Y conditions' may easily degenerate into skepticism or the relativistic claim that 'X is true in one conceptual system but may not be true in another.' This is an important point. In Frege's theory of truth, 'The Moon is smaller than the

Earth' is true if and only if the Moon *is* smaller than the Earth, and is false if and only if the Moon is *not* smaller than the Earth. Our idea of 'the Moon' makes no difference to whether something denoted by the name 'the Moon' exists and whether it is smaller than what is denoted by 'the Earth.' The question of *how* we know such a proposition is distinct from the question of *whether* it is true or false.

In a catechetical context, how we come to know the essential doctrines of the faith must likewise be a distinct question from whether they are true. Frege's distinction, while not applied directly to religion, respects the ability of a religion like Catholicism to make normative truth claims. If things are only 'true for me' or 'true for you,' a pope might express his personal beliefs, but he could not make a truth claim based on anything existing in reality. I have found that this dilemma plays itself out in catechesis when we teach propositional doctrines like the Ten Commandments.[42] Do the Ten Commandments describe the whole reality of sin, or do they simply offer ideals which we strive to follow? A realist view of truth insists on the former.

Frege's metaphysical realism suggests a justification for moral realism in our catechesis as an antidote to the subjectivizing bias of idealism. Consider the proposition 'human life begins at conception,' which we teach in confirmation class as a constitutive part of Catholic moral doctrine. If one applies the Fregean ideas of *sense* and *reference* to this claim, then the proper name 'conception' expresses a concept we all agree upon and refers to a particular moment in embryonic development that exists in reality regardless of what we call it. The proposition carries an objective moral authority because its truth does not depend solely on a concept of life conditioned by our mental assent, but on an idea that has profound consequences for how we live and treat each other. If one conceives of truth without Fregean notions like sense and reference, it becomes harder to see this proposition as holding any objective meaning. By saying 'conception' exists only as a concept in our minds – and does not refer to an objective reality – we begin to believe it is impossible to agree on when human life begins. It becomes problematic for us to say 'human life begins at conception' with any normative authority because someone might retort that it is 'true for you' that this is the case, but 'not for me.'

To clarify the distinction between truth and knowledge, Frege offers several illustrations of the relationship between sense and reference, which he expresses in symbolic logic. While truth is not a property of our minds, it is also not a property of *sense* alone, i.e. of objective concepts which lack any particular reference to reality. Both sense and reference must be present in a sentence for the question of truth to arise. In 'On Sense and Reference,' Frege allows that sentences may sometimes have a sense but no reference. As examples he cites the expressions 'the celestial body most distant from the Earth' and 'the least rapidly convergent series.' The expression 'the celestial body' expresses an objective conceptual meaning (sense), but the sentence lacks a proper name (reference) like 'the Moon' that would denote a particular object existing in reality.

In Frege's theory, a sentence cannot be true or false unless it refers to a state of affairs or fact that exists independently of our knowledge of it. Frege offers the analogy of looking at the moon through a telescope, comparing the Moon (the object of observation) to the reference, the glass of the telescope (the mediating object) to the sense, and the retinal image to the mental ideas inspired in the observer. The retinal impressions of the viewer have no bearing on whether the moon actually exists, just as the telescope glass is useless if does not actually point to an object called the moon. Without Frege's concept of reference, it is easier to assume that language can refer only to things within a conceptual system, and not to real objects. Frege argues that truth is not possible in such a system, inasmuch as

truth requires a proper name that refers to reality as well as to an objective concept. I believe something like a Fregean notion of truth is decidedly more helpful in catechesis today than a psychologizing one, inasmuch as it allows us to distinguish between God *qua* God and our *ideas* of God, which an idealist bias does not allow.

Now that I've sketched Frege's theory, I want to compare it with the Catholic view of truth as Pope John Paul II articulates it in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. I've chosen this encyclical for three reasons. First, by looking at truth in terms of faith and reason, it offers several points of comparison and contrast with Frege, particularly regarding the subjectivizing form of dualism that is inherent in idealism. Second, it seems more reasonable in the limited context of this paper to treat the self-contained thought of a single encyclical, rather than attempt a synthesis of papal documents and church statements. Third, I find it helpful that John Paul II critiques relativism and uncritical objectivism from the perspective of an academically trained philosopher. John Paul II is not as sanguine as Frege about the capacity of language to express what we know, but insists that reason must be chastened by faith, lest it pursue the hubris of absolute certainty.

John Paul II begins his encyclical on the relationship between faith and reason with an appeal to humanity's journey toward truth, a pilgrimage he understands to be rife with metaphysical implications:

> It is a journey which has unfolded – as it must – within the horizon of personal self-consciousness: the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, with the question of the meaning of things and of their very existence becoming ever more pressing (John Paul II, 1).

As Frege does, the pope takes 'reality and the world' as the object of self-knowledge. For him it is more proper to our self-appropriation of faith experiences to pursue the knowledge of reality than the knowledge of ideals. Both Frege and John Paul II accept the metaphysical idea of a world or reality independent of our minds, which distances them from subjectivizing forms of idealism. The pope sees knowledge of the world as a necessary condition of self-knowledge. Since the first object of knowledge is the world itself, and not our concepts of the world, he is already moving toward metaphysical realism in a way more suited to Frege than to Kant in regard to truth. The pope nevertheless insists that the world be experienced in the context of 'personal self-consciousness,' suggesting that an authentic catechesis appreciates the inability of language to capture God fully, even as we utilize reason in removing any obstacles to belief in God.

Complementing John Paul II, Frege's insight that sense and reference are necessary conditions for a sentence to express a truth claim will prove helpful for any catechist seeking to argue the objectivity of religious doctrines in today's relativistic age. Before entering a classroom, we must reflect on whether we are teaching what is true in an objective sense or merely 'true for me.' Ambiguity on this point will result in the shallow catechesis that flows from subjectivizing bias. Consider the commandment 'You Shall Not Kill.' Frege's view of truth makes it possible for us to tell our students that one ought to kill or ought not to kill, regardless of our knowledge of killing in its different circumstances. Whether I ought to kill someone is not 'true for you' or 'true for me' in different cultures, but simply true or false. The same applies to the idea that human beings share a deep biological and spiritual kinship with nature, and that our stewardship over the environment does not give us the right to destroy it. If we look at nature's kinship as a

concept that is only true in the eye of the beholder, it becomes easy to justify human exploitation of nature.

Frege and John Paul II do not seek to construct truth so much as encounter and describe it. As a condition of authenticity relating to the transcendental precept to 'be reasonable,' Frege's insistence on truth as something encountered primarily outside of the mind helps keep our subjective self-appropriation of experience accountable to the objectivity of facts. Frege would say we do not create the world, but encounter it and try to say something true about it in propositional language. The pope would likewise say we do not create God in our own image, but struggle to say something true about God through the twin lights of natural reason and inner faith, even as we realize our language will fall short of describing fully. As catechists, this metaphysical realism invites us to ask ourselves that if we do not believe in the objectivity of revealed truth, why catechize at all?

Although he insists on the personal appropriation of faith, John Paul II also insists on the objectivity of faith, resisting the subjectivizing tendency to treat truth as a matter of personal opinion. In ecclesial terms, he does not view truth as being relative to particular persons or churches, even though it is open to discourse and hence to language. The pope emphasizes the unity of truth, or the idea that all truths are part of a larger personal truth who is God himself. God's truth is objective and yet cannot be captured fully in any proposition or system. Although philosophy is not the end of human inquiry, the pope believes philosophy plays an important role in fostering our desire to seek God, preparing us to do theology by helping us look at the world in the light of natural reason. He sees *Christian* philosophy as an inquiry into the ultimate truth of existence, rather than a Fregean attempt to produce a single mode of thought 'through the logical coherence of the affirmations made and the organic unity of their content' by which it produces a systematic body of knowledge. All systems are subordinate to 'the complete reading of all reality' toward which they must strive. In confirmation ministry, the integration implied by 'the complete reading of reality' suggests the need for catechists to transcend the dualistic bias of our own idealism, becoming more responsible for self-appropriating both the objective content of what we are teaching and the subjective dynamics of our students.

John Paul II's respect for reason echoes some of Frege's rationalistic, philosophical concerns. In *Fides et Ratio* the pope declares his intent to focus on the 'special activity of human reason' as a key to seeking truth. In doing so he is not just 'following upon similar initiatives by [his] Predecessors,' but taking aim at modern philosophy from a different angle than Frege:

> I judge it necessary to do so because, at the present time in particular, the search for ultimate truth seems often to be neglected . . . . Rather than make use of the human capacity to know the truth, modern philosophy has preferred to accentuate the ways in which this capacity is limited and conditioned. This has given rise to different forms of agnosticism and relativism which have led philosophical research to lose its way in the shifting sands of widespread scepticism [sic] . . . . Recent times have seen the rise to prominence of various doctrines which tend to devalue even the truths which had been judged certain. A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid, which is one of today's most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth (John Paul II, #5).

The pope is deliberately vague about the limits and conditions of human knowledge in modern philosophy, but he undoubtedly means to criticize the idealist notion that we can only know our *ideas* of the truth rather than the truth itself. He worries that

modern philosophy has discouraged believers from seeking truth at all. Rather than taking aim at a particular form of modern philosophy, John Paul II is worried about its consequences for religion – specifically agnosticism, relativism, skepticism and undifferentiated pluralism. These 'symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth' suggest a subjectivizing form of dualistic bias. While Frege avoids qualitative judgments about the consequences of idealism, confining himself to logical distinctions concerning the possibilities of language, John Paul II sees psychologizing philosophy as corrosive of faith in God. Always a priest before a philosopher, he defends the believer's right to seek the truth who is God.

In *Fides et Ratio* John Paul II reaffirms a number of revealed truth claims, defending Thomas Aquinas's view of the intrinsic harmony of faith and reason. I have noted that the Thomistic tradition he upholds does not view faith and reason in competition, but as twin lights guiding the believer to God along the same path. In Lonergan's terms, we might say that our ability to 'be reasonable' opens our consciousness to authentic subjectivity regarding the meaning of faith. Citing Anselm of Canterbury on the *intellectus fidei*, John Paul II describes the role of human reason in the Christian search for God:

> Reason in fact is not asked to pass judgment on the contents of faith, something of which it would be incapable, since this is not its function. Its function is rather to find meaning, to discover explanations which might allow everyone to come to a certain understanding of the contents of faith (John Paul II, 42).

For the pope, we see here that reason functions primarily in helping Christians to authentically self-appropriate the truth claims of divine revelation. While sense and reference are two objective aspects of Frege's theory of meaning, John Paul II sees faith and reason as necessities of an integrated search for God who is the ultimate truth. The task of the Christian philosopher is to allow faith to purify reason, while allowing reason to clarify the truths contained in revelation (John Paul II, 76).

By identifying truth with a personal God more fundamentally than with the object of propositions, the pope moves in a different direction from Frege, who is concerned only with the truth conditions embedded in language. John Paul II offers no endorsement in *Fides et Ratio* of any specific philosophies or theories of truth, which Catholicism relativizes with respect to divine revelation. Frege wants to address philosophical truth as distinct in itself, but John Paul uses philosophical reasoning only as the starting-point for a theological inquiry into divine truth. In his notions of sense and reference, Frege upholds the objectivity of truth in a way that allows an institution like the Catholic Church to make authoritative truth claims, but his theory is no friendlier to Catholicism than to anyone else who makes propositional statements embedded with objective meaning. Frege sees knowledge of the world as an end in itself, but John Paul sees it as a means to acquiring knowledge of God. While both men affirm the objective existence of truth, resisting the subjectivizing dualistic bias of idealism, they use truth in different ways.

We have seen that John Paul II critiques the under-reaching of modern philosophy for its susceptibility to relativism, using philosophy as a starting-point for making sense of theological truth claims. Frege is more concerned with the semantic content of propositions. The pope does not say truth is propositional and does not endorse Frege, whose theory of meaning can do little more for Catholic catechesis than insist on the possibility of doctrinal language to refer objectively beyond itself. Yet both men share an attitude of metaphysical realism regarding the objectivity of truth.

Although Frege confines himself to logic, his theory of truth depends firmly on epistemological objectivity, and it is here that his thought overlaps most clearly with the Catholic view of truth. Both Frege and John Paul II hold that truth is objectively rooted in facts which exist in reality. Describing this sort of realist view of truth, Peter Van Inwagen sees two propositions as essential to the thesis of objectivity:

1. Our beliefs and our assertions are either true or false; each of our beliefs and assertions represents the World as being a certain way, and the belief or assertion is true if the World is that way, and false if the World is not that way.
2. [T]he World exists and has the features it does in large part independently of our beliefs and our assertions (Van Inwagen, 73).

Despite his ambiguity about the meaning of terms like 'us' and 'the world,' Van Inwagen articulates some basic metaphysical assumptions which the Catholic tradition and Frege's analytic philosophy share in regard to the question of truth. Truth by its nature does not exist in our minds, but says something about a reality that is independent of us. Reality is not conditioned by our minds. Truth exists, and we can know it.

In the final analysis, Frege's realism has more in common with the Catholic critique of relativism than with idealism, suggesting that analytic philosophy is helpful to the self-reflection of catechists who seek to overcome the dualistic bias of subjectivizing idealism. This idealism allows that we can perhaps know what seems true in certain linguistic contexts, and we can certainly know our *ideas* of what is true, but we cannot say or know with certainty what is true of the world independent of language. The dualistic bias of a subjectivizing idealism becomes especially present in confirmation ministry when a catechist believes the object of doctrinal knowledge is conceptual rather than real. In catechesis, the bias of idealism helps to reduce religion to a form of therapy, resulting in the unspoken assumption that 'none of this needs to be taken seriously.'

By contrast, a catechist who holds something like Frege's view of truth will be better able to recognize when confirmation ministry gets mired in inauthentic subjectivity, wherein our dualistic bias excludes *a priori* the realist possibilities of objective truth claims. Confirmation is not merely a sacrament that invites adolescents to appropriate the Catholic faith for themselves; it also has the effect of 'a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that of Pentecost' that 'impresses on the soul an indelible character and produces a growth in the grace of Baptism' (*Compendium*, #268). When the bishop traces the sign of the cross in holy oil on a student's forehead, he says, 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.' If a young adolescent does not believe the spiritual effects of confirmation are real, but sees them simply as beautiful ideas, then we have not sowed the Gospel seed. What believer professes something that is not real? For confirmation to be *effective*, a bishop or priest must say the right words and perform the right actions with our students. But for the sacrament to be *fruitful* – for it to actually make a difference in someone's life – the adolescent must decide to live in deeper accordance with his belief in God.[43]

Decision is the final chain in the link between authentic subjectivity and objectivity. If we treat doctrinal propositions like the Ten Commandments as just one way of looking at things – being true for only a given person or culture rather than simply being true or false – then our catechesis becomes toothless. If my faith is to have any noticeable effect on the way I and my students live, there must be an objective aspect of Catholic truth claims which resonates prophetically beyond my individual thoughts and feelings as a catechist. The catechism of the U.S. bishops puts it this way:

> The Catholic Church will always need a vehicle for telling the truth to the public and to her members about her positions on problems in society, her hopes for people's happiness, and her fresh insights into the eternal Gospel of Christ. This becomes acutely necessary when forces outside the Church distort her teachings, misrepresent her intentions for society, and attempt to diminish the Church's life and integrity (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 429).

Our ability to speak prophetically as Catholics depends on the objectivity of the truth claims we proclaim in catechesis. Frege's realism complements John Paul II in a way that suggests Catholics should not be too quick to surrender this prophetic voice to popular opinion polls. In confirmation ministry, catechists need not reject the possibility that Catholic truth claims are objectively real simply because public opinion may be running against them on certain social, moral and economic issues. The goal of catechesis is not to make young adolescents feel comfortable about 'going with the flow' of contemporary culture, but to form their consciousness in an authentic way that invites them to critically engage the world and challenge prevailing injustices. The problem that inspired this paper is not that students are unwilling to hear prophetic religious claims, but that the dualistic bias of deism and idealism prevents catechists from taking the claims seriously.

IV. CONCLUSION

My aim has been to argue for a way of transcending subjectivizing forms of dualism in Roman Catholic catechesis, specifically deism and idealism. Using Lonergan's appeal to the link between authentic subjectivity and objectivity, I have examined Brownson's efforts to escape the subjectivizing bias of deism and Frege's resistance to the subjectivizing bias of idealism, judging them in light of my own classroom experience. Lonergan emphasizes the moral duty to reflect on ourselves as knowing subjects, or to 'know our knowing' in order to arrive at correct judgments about reality (Lonergan 1957, 199). In my own ministry, I have often found myself arriving at the realist judgment that if we want to make something relevant to young people, we must decide firmly to teach them *something*. If we neglect the reality of the people we are teaching, or if we neglect the reality of the things we are teaching them, our catechesis becomes stuck in subjectivizing forms of dualistic bias. Our self-awareness as subjects is the first step toward an integrated catechesis that transcends the bias of deism and idealism. How do we catechize the head and the heart? An integrated model of catechesis appeals to the link between authentic subjectivity and objectivity by helping us to recognize our bias and arrive at legitimate insights, judgments and decisions about our faith experiences. In Brownson and Frege, we have found that we must be free to judge what is true on our own terms, but that this search is fruitless if it rejects the realist idea that objective truth exists and is knowable.

Notes

1 Ignatius Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, edited by John W. Padberg, SJ. (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), #410. This line refers to the duties of Jesuit scholastics studying philosophy.

2 Philosophers define the *subject* of knowledge as the *self* or *me*; the *object* is anything *other* or *not-me*.

3 Lonergan says our subjectivity becomes authentic – the conscious self coming to terms with external realities – when we are attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. These four *transcendental precepts* are opposed by the qualities of inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness and irresponsibility, which lead to inauthenticity and the alienation of a person from his or her true being.

4 Lonergan understands *bias* as the unconscious censorship mechanism whereby we repress the images or insights we require for objective judgments about external realities. In chapter four of *Insight* he distinguishes between dramatic, individual, group and general bias. Authenticity transcends bias by exposing it in its moral, intellectual and religious dimensions. When we move from insight to an authentic judgment about reality, we go from subjectivity to objectivity.

5 Lonergan sees *insight, judgment*, and *decision* as the three fundamental operations of human consciousness. From reflecting on our experiences, we move to grasp or appropriate them in *insights*, to posit something about them in *judgments*, and to resolve to act on them through *decisions*.

6 In Lonergan's cognitive theory, we can overcome subject-object dualism only by becoming aware of ourselves as knowing subjects in relation to our faith experiences, obeying the four precepts as normative criteria of authenticity. This process requires the constant testing of our insights, judgments and decisions.

7 Lonergan believes truth is found formally only in the human subject's self-transcending, intentional judgments of experience. See Lonergan, *The Subject*, p. 422: 'The fruit of truth must grow and mature on the tree of the subject, before it can be plucked and placed in the absolute realm.'

8 The introduction to the *Directory* quotes Mk 4:3–8 (New American Bible): 'Behold! A sower went out to sow. As he sowed some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns which grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing, and yielding thirty fold, sixty fold, and a hundred fold.'

9 For Lonergan, objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. It arises from our willingness to raise all the relevant questions and answer them through insights authenticated by the transcendental precepts.

10 I understand *head* as the logical aspect of human consciousness; *heart* refers to the affective dimension.

11 Children memorized 421 questions and answers (propositional statements) in the *Baltimore Catechism*.

12 Using the language of T.S. Kuhn, we might say that what now occurs in Catholic catechesis is a dialectical encounter between two different narratives and paradigms of theoretical knowledge: the Christian one that proposes moral certitude and metaphysical absolutes, and the modern secular one that inclines more to relativism. Kuhn proposed a sociological model for paradigm shifts in his landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

13 Abbreviation for Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the traditional Catholic term for religious education programs which prepare children for the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion.

14 See Christian Smith and Melissa Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Their book presents the first published results of the National Study of Youth and Religion, a survey funded by the Eli Lilly Endowment.

15 In her 2008 book Quitting Church, Washington Times religion reporter Julia Duin analyzes the recent statistical trend of Christians not merely to switch denominations or religions, but to quit institutional religion altogether. A survey by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago indicates that Sunday church attendance fell from 41% in 1971 to 31% in 2002. According to a 2001 City University of New York American Religious Identification Survey, 'the fraction of Americans with no religious preference doubled during the 1990s from 8 to 14%. However, of that 14%, less than half (40%) were atheists; the other 60% were merely "religious" or "spiritual"' (p. 13). Duin adds on p. 18: 'Survey after survey says many Americans continue their private religious practices, such as reading the Bible, praying to God, and even sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. But they have given up on the institution.'

16 By 'practical common sense,' Lonergan is referring to the unhealthy tendency of the human mind to focus only on pragmatic and short-term goals, ignoring long-term and theoretical inquiry. In other words, we direct our minds toward the simplest and quickest solutions, like praying on our own rather than in community.

17 Gerard Holohan, bishop of Bunbury in Australia, used this phrase in an 11/18/08 media statement.

18 A dichotomous view of subject-object is jointly exhaustive in reducing one to the other. It is also mutually exhaustive since nothing can belong simultaneously to both parts. In catechesis a dichotomous pedagogy often arises in the unconscious assumption that emotion must exclude thought, and vice versa.

19 An intellectualized approach to catechesis is particularly damaging in cases of students with cognitive disabilities, when appealing to the 'head' is not possible. Such catechesis must be more relational.

20 In his *Nachlass*, Frege attributes this 'erroneous belief' to a common mistake in Locke's sensualism and Berkeley's idealism, namely the failure to distinguish between thinking and representing. Philosophical idealism holds that the nature of the world is ultimately rooted in the mind, as contrasted with the realist view that the world has an absolute existence totally independent of consciousness.

21 Frege held that whether a proposition is true or false depends on conditions of objectivity embedded in the language of the statement itself. I will explicate this theory in the third section of my paper.

22 See Brownson, chapter 1. This lady distrusted many of the Protestant sects in the area.

23 See Brownson, chapter 2. Brownson was disgusted by his experience of Presbyterianism.

24 See Brownson, pp. 1–19. Brownson had decided to believe only what he could know by unaided reason.

25 Brownson makes his feelings clear on p. 38: 'Give me rather the open, honest unbeliever, who pretends to believe nothing more than he really does believe, than your sleek, canting hypocrite, who rolls up his eyes in holy horror of unbelief, and makes a parade of his orthodoxy, when he believes not a word in the Gospel, and has a heart which is a

cage of unclean beasts, out of which more devils need to be cast than were cast out of the Magdalen. The former may never see God, but the latter deserves the lowest place in hell.'

26 See Brownson, pp. 20–82. Brownson's faith in the virtue of self-interest faded and finally evaporated as he saw how people treated each other when left to pursue their own subjective lights.

27 One may dispute this triadic theory on the grounds that it actually depicts only a dyad, insofar as the relation between subject and object cannot itself be a term of thought. But it persuaded Brownson.

28 Brownson does not equate providential men with saints in the Catholic sense. For him they were exemplary historical figures, including but not limited to Jesus.

29 See Brownson, pp. 133–150, for all of the quotations and material contained in these paragraphs. Here 'credible' simply means believable and 'creditive' means apt to believe.

30 According to the Catholic understanding of the incarnation, Jesus Christ is the embodiment of truth, a divine principle expressed in human flesh. Truth for the Catholic is therefore an object that is also a person or subject. Catholicism consistently maintains that this view of truth is a mystery rather than a contradiction, and that only a faith rooted in the love of God is capable of resolving the tension.

31 *Catechumen* is the ancient word for someone preparing for reception into the Catholic Church.

32 By flourishing I mean the conscious process whereby a person, within his particular cognitive and developmental limits, arrives at a greater interior knowledge of self in relation to the external world.

33 Or to borrow the title of a little book by Hans Urs von Balthasar, we might say that 'love alone is credible' as evidence of Christian truth.

34 St. Ignatius Loyola makes this remark in #230, 1 of *The Spiritual Exercises*, translated by Louis J. Puhl, SJ. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1951).

35 Ideal objects exist but lack substance. Metaphysical idealism asserts the ideality of reality in contrast to epistemological idealism, which holds that in the knowing process the mind can grasp only its own contents.

36 Peirce argues that intuition as Brownson and the other American Transcendentalists used the term is nothing more than inference, or a sort of hypothetical guessing. In his article 'Questions Concerning Faculties Claimed for Man' (*Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2, 1868, pp. 103–114) Peirce defines intuition 'as signifying a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object, and therefore so determined by something out of consciousness.' Intuition does not actually exist, he argues, because there is no proof for the Brownsonian type of claim that cognition is determined directly by its transcendental object.

37 See Brownson, p. 55: In his Unitarian days, he echoed Paine by decrying 'kingcraft and priestcraft' and arguing for the abolition of all superstitious belief in spiritual doctrines like the Trinity. Also see p. 72: Brownson further accepted the deist writer Benjamin Constant's definition of God as a mere spirit or metaphysical form of visible elements of nature, a sort of beautiful ideal.

38 As recommended in #181, which acknowledges that many pre-adolescents abandon the practice of their faith after confirmation, and cites the need to distinguish this age group from adolescents and young adults: 'In developed regions the question of preadolescence is particularly significant: sufficient account is not taken of the difficulties, of the needs and of the human and spiritual resources of the pre-adolescents, to the extent of defining them a *negated age-group*.' (Emphasis original.)

39 Here I am referring to an idealist tendency to see God as a subjective concept that we make in our own images, not as a person with objective reality. It is my experience that this idealist bias contributes to a popular assumption that religion is essentially a personal matter, resulting in relativism about truth.

40 Pope John Paul II opens his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* with the following image: 'Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – in a word, to know himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.'

41 In other words, the objective meaning of a proposition does not depend on the intentions of the speaker, but on conditions of objectivity embedded in the language itself. See Frege, pp. 25–50.

42 Living in a bad part of Chicago, many of my students knew family members or friends killed by street gangs. Invariably, they saw 'You Shall Not Kill' as the biggest commandment, and its truth was quite real for them.

43 This distinction between the *effectiveness* and the *fruitfulness* of the sacraments belongs to Catholic dogma, and may be found in Aquinas and the *Catechism*. For Lonergan, decision follows judgment and insight.

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