

Louis ROY, *Self-Actualization and the Radical Gospel*, 2nd ed.
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Kasper impute à Thomas d'Aquin une affirmation essentialiste, à savoir que Dieu serait une substance statique. Dans un contexte où il discute la pensée de Thomas, il écrit : « La définition personnelle de l'essence divine [que Kasper propose] reprend la définition classique de l'essence et en même temps la surpasse. Elle ne pense plus Dieu dans l'horizon de la substance, elle le pense plutôt dans l'horizon de la liberté et définit *Dieu comme la liberté parfaite*. » (*Le Dieu des chrétiens*, p. 231 ; les italiques sont de Kasper) Mais en parlant de substance, Thomas voulait simplement dire, à la suite d'Aristote, qu'une substance est ce qui ne change pas, mais tout en permettant aux accidents de changer. De même, ce que Thomas appelle (de temps en temps seulement) « la substance divine » ne change pas, mais, comme Cause première, elle permet aux causes secondes de changer. En outre, le Dieu de Thomas d'Aquin est la plénitude de l'Être, selon Exode 3,14, c'est-à-dire le Dieu vivant. Que l'on pense à la *Summa*, Première partie, question 18, intitulée « De vita Dei ».

En somme, Kasper insiste sur une discontinuité entre les positions patristiques et médiévales et ce que la théologie d'après Vatican II devrait devenir. Ici encore, on doit se demander si Kasper ne va pas trop loin en opposant ontologie traditionnelle et ontologie de l'amour. Peut-être devrait-il non pas opposer, mais plutôt présenter son apport comme une inflexion plus ou moins en continuité avec le passé catholique.

Certes il nous présente de bons principes, ici et là accompagnés de contradictions au moins apparentes, mais la complexité de ses exposés a pour conséquence que l'intégration de ces principes n'est pas facile à comprendre. Le cardinal développe ses idées grâce aux emprunts qu'il fait à de nombreux philosophes et théologiens ; essentiellement dialogique, cette méthode ressemble à celle de Paul Ricœur. Par conséquent, une recension ne saurait traiter de tous les thèmes que Kasper présente.

Nous devons louer la connaissance que Garreau possède tant de l'œuvre entière de Kasper que des ouvrages et articles portant sur celle-ci. Ceci nous permet d'apprécier vivement l'érudition de Kasper lui-même. Le livre de Garreau est bien fait, bien équilibré et à recommander car il nous permet de comprendre une pensée continuellement en évolution, celle de Walter Kasper. En effet, Garreau éclaire fortement la voie théologique de Kasper, dont les intuitions peuvent continuer de rendre des services à l'Église.

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Louis ROY, **Self-Actualization and the Radical Gospel**, 2nd ed. Eugene OR, Wipf and Stock (Cascade Books), 2022, 13,9 × 21,5 cm, 128p., ISBN 978-1-66679-440-3.

Father Louis Roy makes clear in several places, including in the title of his book, what he intends to do. One might say, following in the footsteps of St. Thomas, that his project is a both/and one, the challenge to be *both* self-actualizing *and* a radical follower of Jesus. In chapter six he states that his central question is: "Are these ideals [self-realization and the radical Gospel] incompatible, or can they coexist?"

(73). And in chapter seven he asks: "How can we take seriously the radicalism of the Gospel while being also concerned with our own personal development?" (92). The opening sentence in his conclusion is: "In the course of this undertaking, a double conviction has propelled us: living faith is both inculturated and countercultural" (106). One might phrase it: Is it possible to be both a Christian and a humanist at the same time? Is a Christian humanism possible? Roy clearly sees these two values as not only compatible but integral to each other. You will have to read the book to see how he succeeds, which reading will be of benefit to every Christian struggling to live the Gospel in a secular and psychologically oriented world.

Roy distinguishes self-actualization and self-transcendence, both aspects of self-realization, although practically they are almost interchangeable. There are two forms of self-realization. In self-actualization, we seek to actualize our human potential. In self-transcendence, we seek to find ourselves by moving beyond any egoic sense of self. Roy utilizes the psychologies of Abraham Maslow, Viktor Frankl, and Erich Fromm. He points out that self-actualization and self-transcendence can each be envisioned in healthy or unhealthy ways.

The question is: Can one seek self-realization if one desires also to live in accord with the Gospel which calls forth radical self-sacrifice. Can one *both* be one's truest self *and* deny oneself in following Christ? Is this a contradiction? Do we not need to choose *either* self-fulfillment *or* a gospel way of life? Is it possible to love God, neighbor, and self at the same time?

Whatever expression we use, whether self-transcendence, self-actualization, altruism, or some other, they can exist in unhealthy as well as healthy forms. In the first two chapters Roy unpacks some of their unhealthy, false, or distorted manifestations – such as a self-abnegation that lacks true self-love, the quest for immediate satisfaction, an individualistic egoism, to name only several. The question is what is truly healthy and what masquerades as healthy. When altruistic actions are genuinely performed for the sake of the other, they are healthy. What is lacking in unhealthy forms is an attentiveness to objective aspects of self-transcendence or self-actualization. What is lost or becomes problematic in societies today is this loss of any objectivity, the loss of objective norms in terms of which one might evaluate one's human growth. What is genuinely about the "other" and not just about "me" in some disguised form? There is the "psychological self" and the "moral self," and they ought to be integrated, not at odds with each other. Roy brings in Bernard Lonergan's intentionality analysis. Religious values are intrinsic to healthy self-realization, not inimical to it.

In what Maslow calls a "peak experience," one forgets oneself, goes out of oneself or beyond oneself, becomes part of something greater than oneself. Roy quotes Viktor Frankl: "It is true that young people should not be subjected to excessive demands. However, we have also to consider the fact that, at least today, in the age of an affluent society, most people suffer too few demands rather than too many (39)." What is true Christian altruism? Are altruism and self-realization compatible? This is Roy's question and the question of many Christians in our world today. Can I be both deeply human and genuinely Christian at the same time? This is also a question to which the Jesuit paleontologist and mystic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, gave much attention, especially in *The Divine Milieu*, although Roy does not engage with him here.

For Roy, gospel radicalism means what is demanding, what goes against ordinary or customary wisdom, what departs from a habitual way of being in the world (49). Is it possible to be committed to the radicalism of the gospel and at the same time pursue a path of self-fulfillment? Is self-fulfillment even a desirable goal for a Christian? A Christian is radical in that he or she lives "for the sake of the gospel." The motivation is that one's desire is to imitate Jesus.

The radicalism of the gospel pertains to *all* Christians, not just to some. However, there are many ways to enact radicalism, to in fact be radical. Not all forms of radical discipleship apply to all Christians although all Christians are called to a radical way of life. In other words, some demands of the gospel apply to all, are universal, e.g., love of neighbor and forgiveness, while others pertain to a particular way of life or to a particular time or place in history. One reconciles the radicalism of the gospel with the life of the Christian by one's discernment of what the gospel is asking of me. This is not a toning down of the radicalism but a realization of varied ways in which the radical gospel is incarnated in the world. One could supplement Roy's insight with the Johannine statement that in the Father's house there are many mansions (John 14:2).

Roy, so familiar with the thought of Thomas Aquinas, has absorbed a medieval axiom associated with the thought of St. Thomas: Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it. Grace builds on what is there. Roy highlights God's call to develop all that is positive in human nature. Hence, self-actualization, when pursued with religious faith, is integrated into a richer context – God's dream for humanity (91). The Christian, the radical disciple, someone "dazzled by God" (85), desires to share God with others, for each of us is essentially relational. Being God-centered is in itself radical and revolutionizes our lives. Being radical and fully human are not opposed to each other but in fact complement each other. Herein lies Roy's solution: Self-actualization not only is compatible with the radicality of the gospel but in fact requires it. Hence his conclusion quoted above: "living faith is both inculturated and countercultural" (106). This is where the notion of paradox may be of help. On the one hand, we are called to a radical counter-cultural way of being in the world; on the other, our being in the world may not seem radical because it is self-fulfilling.

There is much to contemplate in Roy's reflection as we strive to be both profoundly Christian and deeply human. In addition to the spiritual project of Teilhard de Chardin, one also thinks rather quickly of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*. One struggles with what it means to be a Christian in the modern world, as the Second Vatican Council itself did in its pastoral constitution, *On the Church in the Modern World*. The Church, Christians, theologians will continue to ponder this question, and Roy's insights will inspire and contribute to the discussion. The Second Vatican Council's call to universal holiness is simply an invitation to be fully human, our best selves, our true selves. Discipleship answers two questions. What does it mean to be fully human? What does it mean to follow Christ? Roy argues that, in their healthy manifestations, self-realization and a gospel way of life enrich each other and can unfold together. They need not be at odds.

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