

International Association of Catholic Bioethics (IACB)
Concordia University Lonergan Centre for Ethical Reflection
Meeting of the Working Group on Lonergan's Functional Specialties and Bioethics
Preliminary Programme (version: August 3, 2006)

Tuesday, August 15

5.10 p.m. Mass at St. Basil's Church
5.45 p.m. Reception

Wednesday, August 16

7.00 a.m. Mass at St. Basil's Church
7.30 a.m. Breakfast
8.00 a.m. Opening prayer and orientation

8.30 a.m. **Session 1**

Reflections on Lonergan's functional specialties

Discussion Starter: Michael Stebbins

Where are we at in our understanding of Lonergan's functional specialties? What are the merits and difficulties of Lonergan's account? Where, if any, are the gaps and areas lacking clarity in this account? Are the functional specialties in Method applicable to investigations in areas other than theology? What difference, if any, does interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness make to functional specialization?

10.00 a.m. Break

10.30 a.m. **Session 2**

IACB Contexts of doing Catholic bioethics and bioethics research

Discussion Starter: Bill Sullivan

In appropriating what we do in bioethics research, what seems to characterize our recurrent operations? What is our experience of what has worked well and not so well in doing bioethics and bioethics research collaboratively? (Bill will outline briefly some points of discussion from his experience of organizing research colloquia, and invite others to reflect on their experiences.) Is functional specialization always necessary in bioethics? If each discipline has its own adaptations of Lonergan's functional specialties, how could functional specialization work in an inter-disciplinary discipline like bioethics? Should there be different combinations of functional specialties for specialized areas in bioethics, e.g., bioethics research, research ethics review, clinical ethics, policy review? In our experience, what difference, if any, does striving to be a self-appropriating Catholic make to doing bioethics?

12.00 p.m. Lunch

Wednesday, August 16 (continued)

1.00 p.m. **Session 3**

**Adapting / applying the functional specialties to bioethics, phase 1
(from research to dialectic)**

Discussion starter: Christine Jamieson

*What could phase 1 mean in bioethics? How could each of the first four of the functional specialties in **Method** apply to bioethics? (We will take Christine's Jamieson's paper as a starting point for discussion). The focus will be on deciding which of the first 4 functional specialties applies/apply to bioethics research, and whether modifications and additions are required.*

2:30 p.m. Break

3.00-4:30 p.m. **Session 4**

**Adapting / applying the functional specialties and bioethics, phase 2
(from foundations to communications)**

Discussion starter: Christine Jamieson

*What could phase 2 mean in bioethics? How could each of the next four functional specialties in **Method** apply to bioethics? (We will continue discussing Christine's Jamieson's paper.) The focus will be on deciding which of the next 4 functional specialties applies/apply to bioethics research, and whether modifications and additions are required.*

Thursday, August 17

7.30 a.m. Breakfast

8.00 a.m. Opening prayer and Presentation of synthesis of prior discussions

8.30 a.m. **Session 5**

Questions, comments, further thoughts about the Synthesis

The goal by the end of this session is to move towards a consensus on a list of relevant functional specialties for bioethics research.

10.00 a.m. Break

10.30 a.m. **Session 6**

The Structure of the Functional Specialties in Bioethics

Discussion leader: Christine Jamieson

*The goal is to consider the structure of each of the functional specialties in bioethics research, along the lines of what Lonergan tries to do for theological dialectic in **Method**, pp. 249-253.*

12 p.m. Lunch

Thursday, August 17 (continued)

1.00 p.m. **Session 7**
Practical Considerations in Organizing an Integrated Research Project in Bioethics

Discussion Starter: Patrick Byrne

The goal in this session is to work through what tackling a concrete issue in bioethics would look like, given the conclusions of prior discussions. As an example, we will explore generally how to organize a research collaboration inquiring into the ethics of deriving pluripotent stem cells from ANT (altered nuclear transfer) entities for biomedical research. This issue is one that is controversial within the Catholic community (See <http://www.communio-icr.com/ant.htm>) and will be among the issues debated in Rome by FIAMC /Pontifical Academy for Life and in London by the IACB next year. Let us therefore use this as an example to consider what functional specialization and integrated research would contribute to tackling a controversy in Catholic bioethics comprehensively and well.

2:30 p.m. Break

3.00-4:30 p.m. **Session 8**
Further Considerations: Core Questions for Catholic Bioethics and Communications?

Discussion Starters: Danny Monsour and Charles Muggeridge

Are there core foundational problems in bioethics that arise from our discussions on functional specialties in bioethics research? How do we deal in Catholic bioethics with disputes within moral theology on foundational questions—can we really move ahead as Catholics on bioethical questions before these theological questions are settled?

5:10 p.m. Mass in the College chapel beneath St. Basil's Church followed by Dinner

Friday, August 18

7.00 a.m. Mass at St. Basil's Church

7.30 a.m. Breakfast

8.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Orientation

8.30 a.m. **Session 9**
What should we communicate concerning the results of our discussions?

Presentation of a sketch of a consensus document, followed by discussion. The goal is to agree on at least the section headings of this document and the points under each section. Wording can be refined later. Future publication(s) would be based on this document but adapted to the particular purpose and audience.

10.00 a.m. Break

10.30 a.m. **Session 10**
By what means should we communicate our results, for what purpose(s), and to what audience(s)? Are there other "next steps" we should consider as a group? *(Brainstorming session)*

12.00 p.m. Lunch and Closing prayer