



DOING THEOLOGY IN A GARBAGE DUMP

The Rough Grounds and Theological Method



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OUTLINE



1. **The Rough Grounds of Payatas**
2. **Their Lives as Painful Questions**
3. **Closed Churches**
4. **Closed Theologies**
5. **Reflective Theologizing**

1. THE ROUGH GROUNDS OF PAYATAS







community health services



Housing programs, etc.



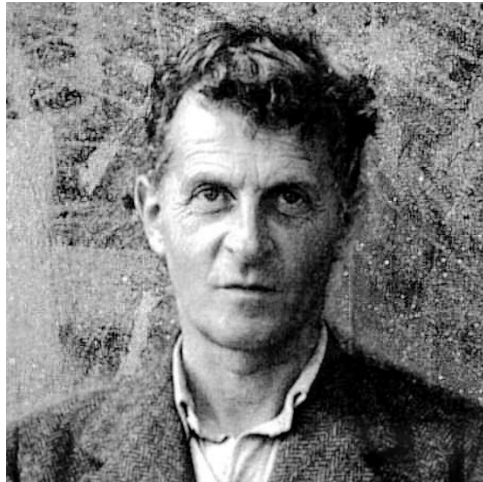




MY QUESTION



**How do these
rough
grounds affect
the way I do
theology?**



We have got onto slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk, so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!

-Ludwig Wittgenstein
Philosophical Investigations

2. THEIR LIVES AS PAINFUL QUESTIONS



A Family in Payatas

Liturgies on the Ground



3. CLOSED CHURCHES

***“Please do not
be too strict.”***



“Can you please leave the church open?”

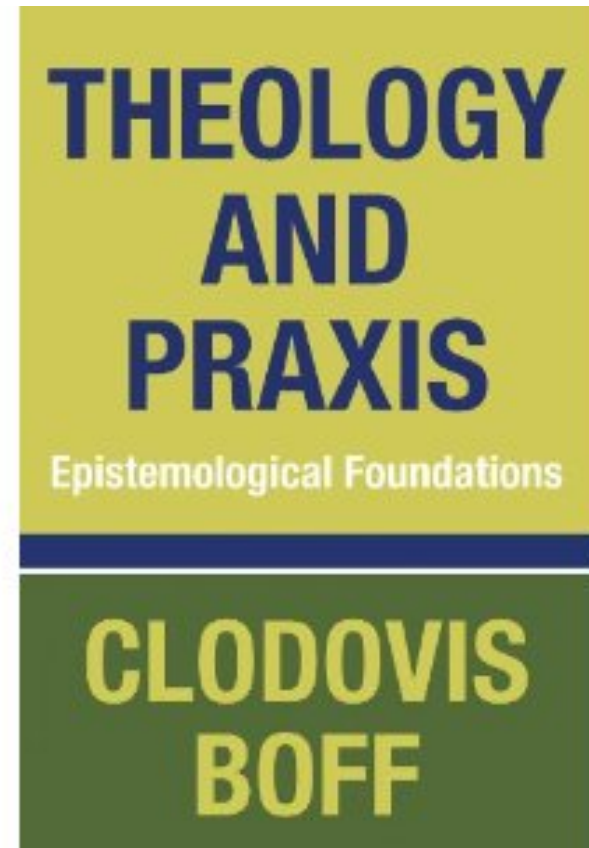
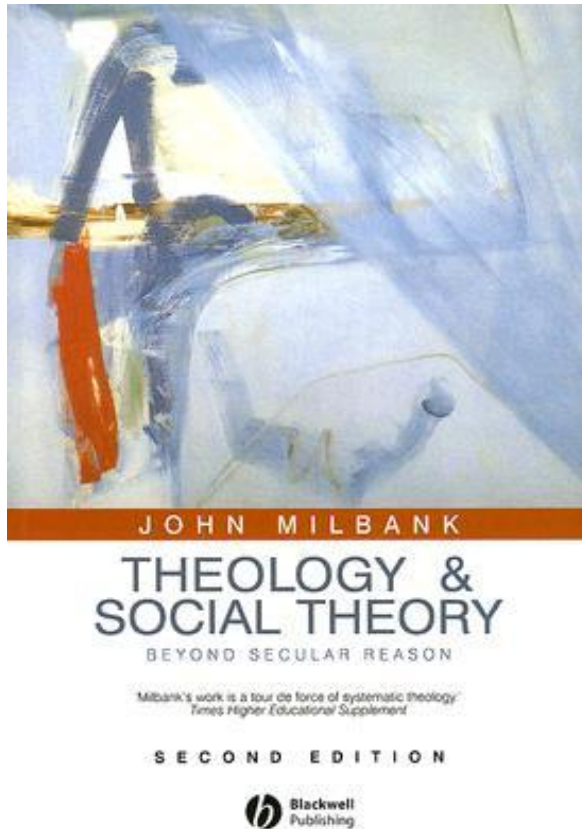


4. CLOSED THEOLOGIES

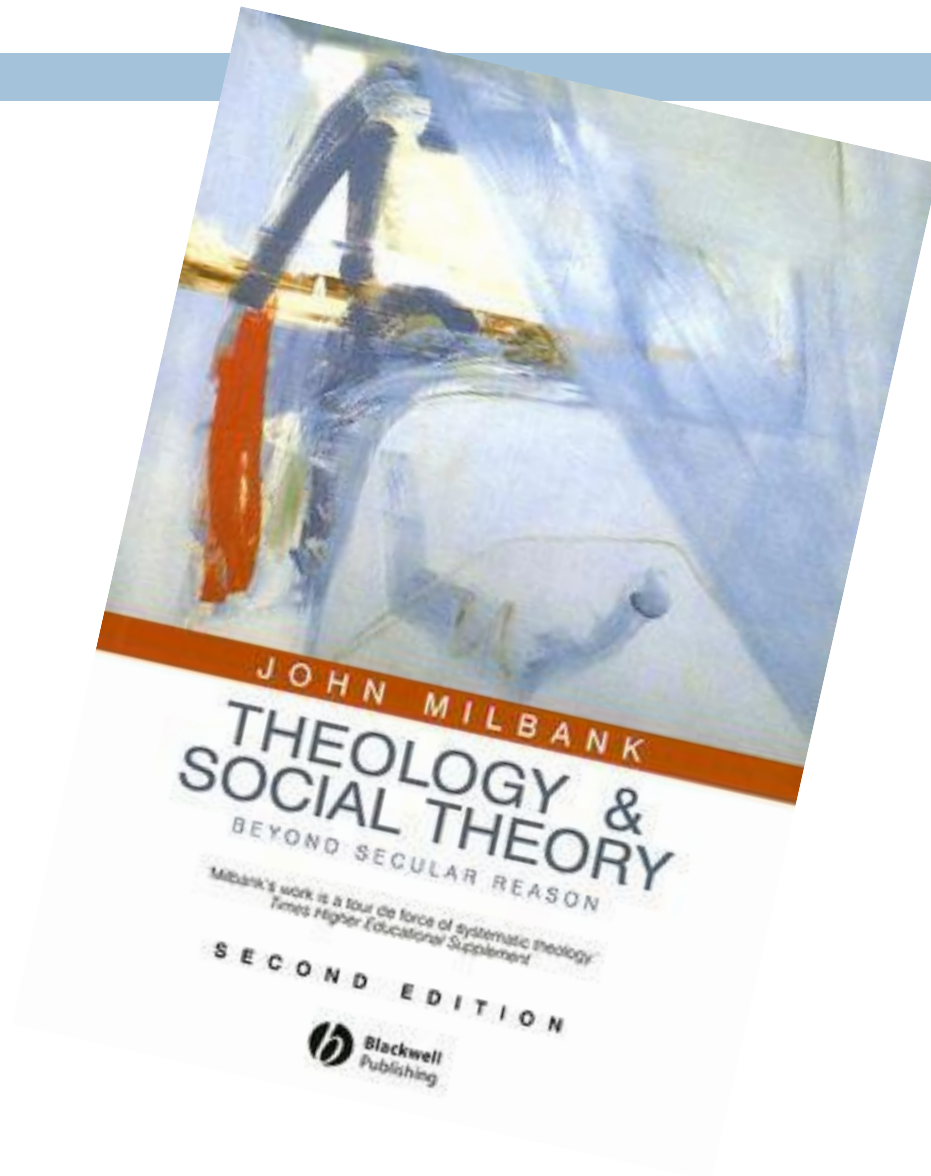
It is not only our churches and mentalities which are closed but also the way we do theology.

It is this closed methods that make the Church deaf both to people's voices and to the whispers of the Spirit. In the end, we have a dead church - so closed and so dead that God has decided to move to the cemetery.

A Closer Look at Two Methods



RADICAL ORTHODOXY: John Milbank

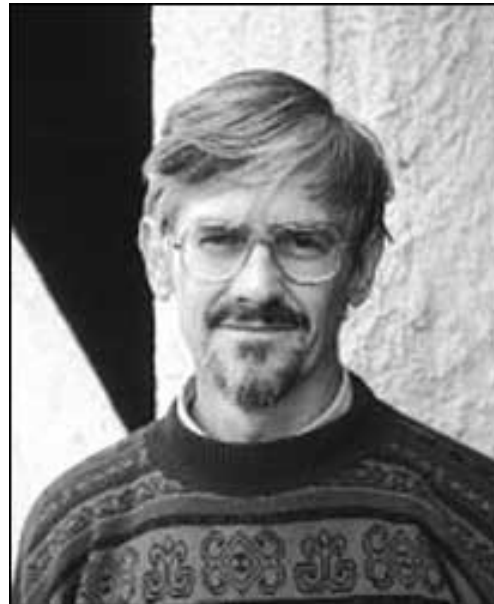
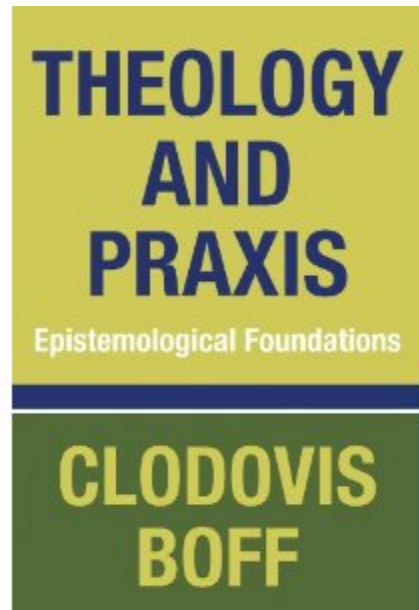


IN QUEST OF A STOLEN CROWN

Once upon a time, it was theology that wore the crown, theology that carried out most of the fundamental reading of all other interpretations and all other social formations... It was *the* master narrative. Stolen by secular reason, and worn as 'social theory', the master-narrative is now sought by its earlier owner.

- Gerard Loughlin

LIBERATION THEOLOGIES: Clodovis Boff



- 1970s - “Ideologization of the Faith”
- 1974 – International Theological Commission studies liberation theology (ITC)
- 1984 – Instructions on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation (CDF)

See-Judge-Act Process

1. **SEE** - What is our situation?
2. **JUDGE** - What does God tell us about our situation?
3. **ACT** - What do we need to do to transform our situation?

1. **Socio-Analytic Mediation**
2. **Hermeneutic Mediation**
3. **Pastoral Mediation**



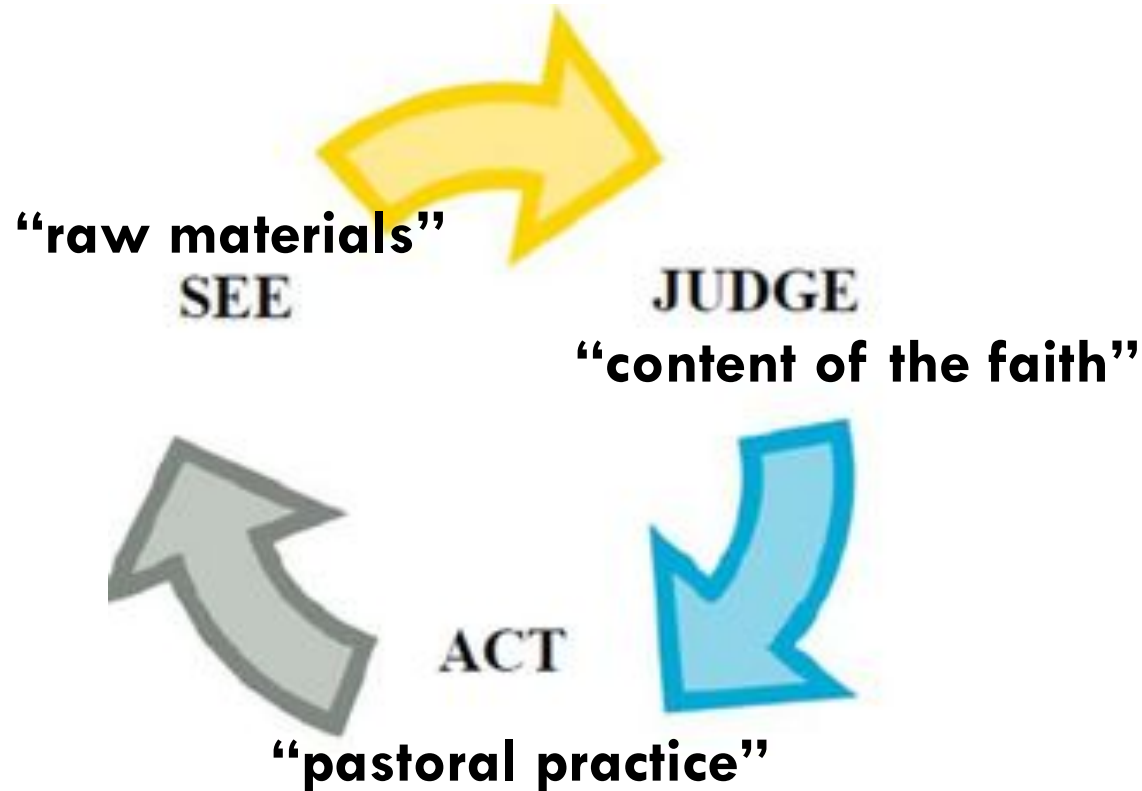
‘PRACTICE’ IN ALTHUSSER

By practice in general I shall mean any process of transformation of a determinate given raw material into a determinate product, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means of production.

In any practice thus conceived, the determinant moment is neither the raw material nor the product but the practice in the narrow sense; the moment of the labour of transformation itself.

- Louis Althusser, *Reading Capital*

BOFF'S THEOLOGICAL METHOD

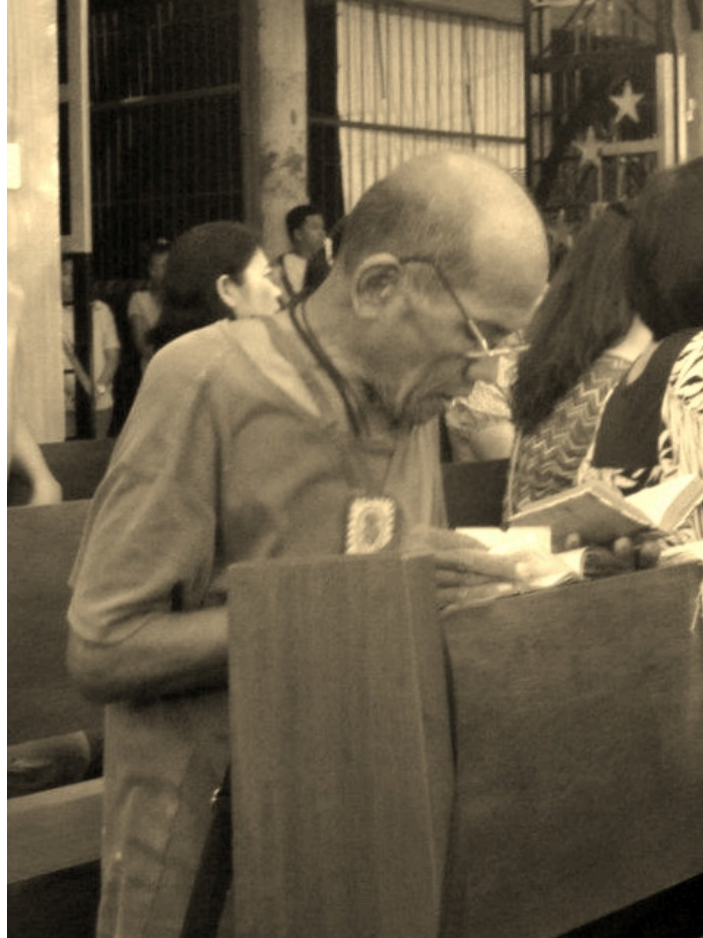


convergence

Milbank and Boff - theologians who find themselves in opposite sides of ideological spectrum - in fact possess a common weakness.

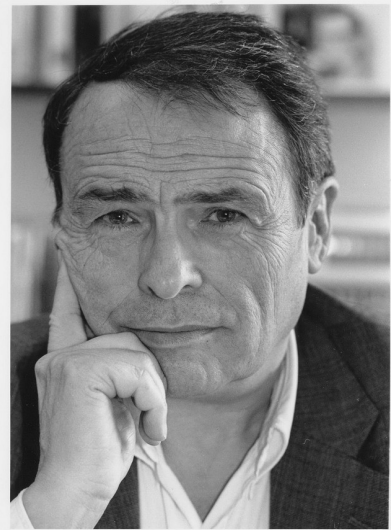
Both enthrone the "theologian" as the ultimate arbiter of theological meaning **at the expense of voices from the ground.**

5. REFLEXIVE THEOLOGIZING



SCIENCE VS. PRACTICE

Science has a time which is not that of *practice*. For the analyst, time disappears: not only because the analyst cannot have any uncertainty as to what can happen, but also because he has time to totalize, that is, to overcome the effects of time.

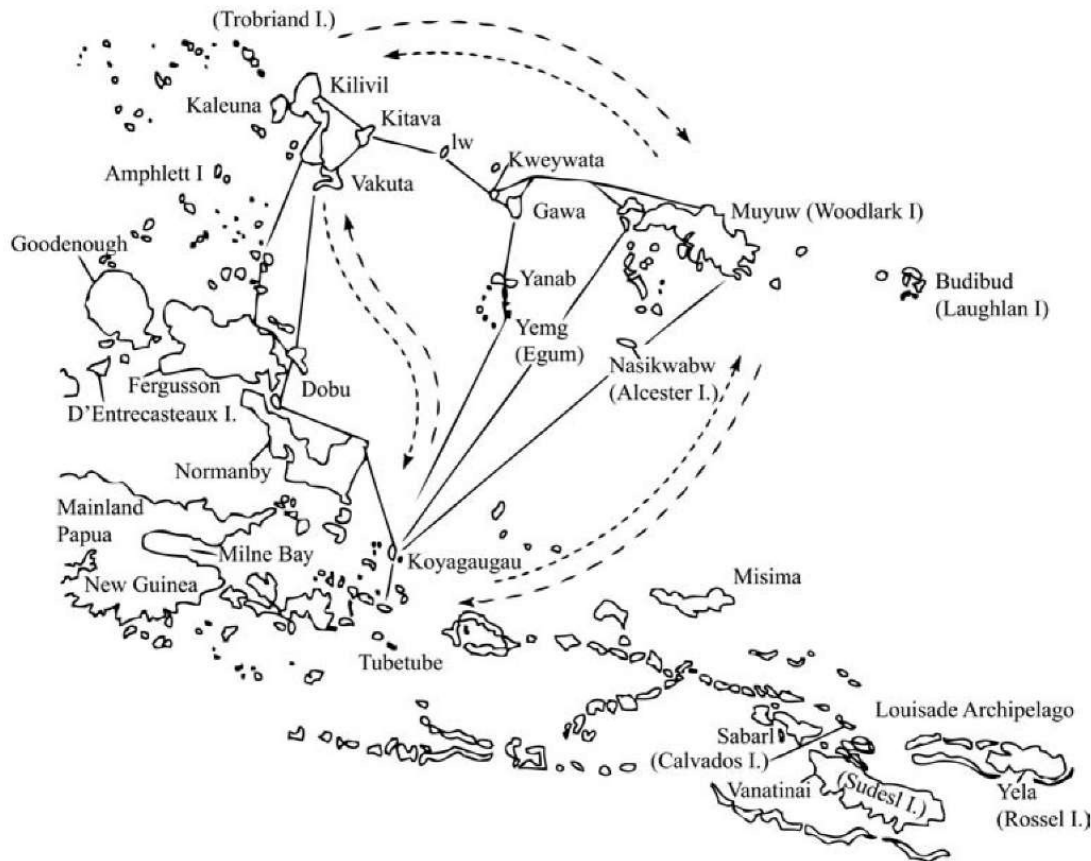


Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*

The Feel for the Game



Cycles of Reciprocity



THE GIFT

[*The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*]

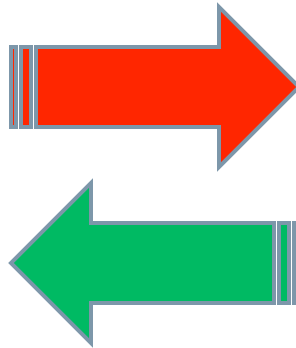
TRANSLATED BY W. D. HALLS • FOREWORD BY MARY DOUGLAS

MARCEL MAUSS

"[A] profound and original book..."—from the foreword

THE POLITICS OF GIFT-GIVING

GIFT

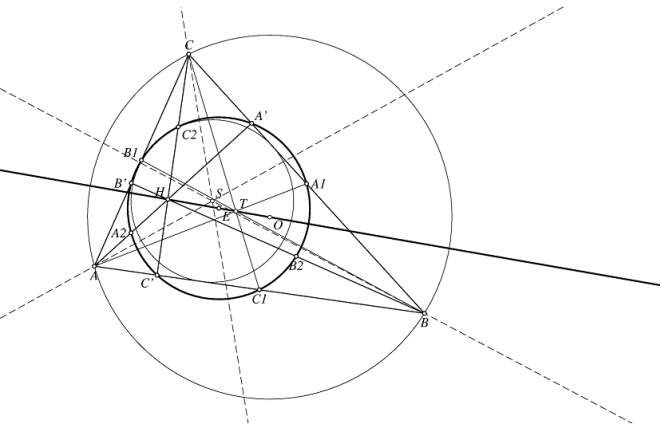


RETURN-GIFT



The time between the gift and the return-gift determines the character of the gift-exchange.

MATHEMATICS AND REALITY



“As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.”

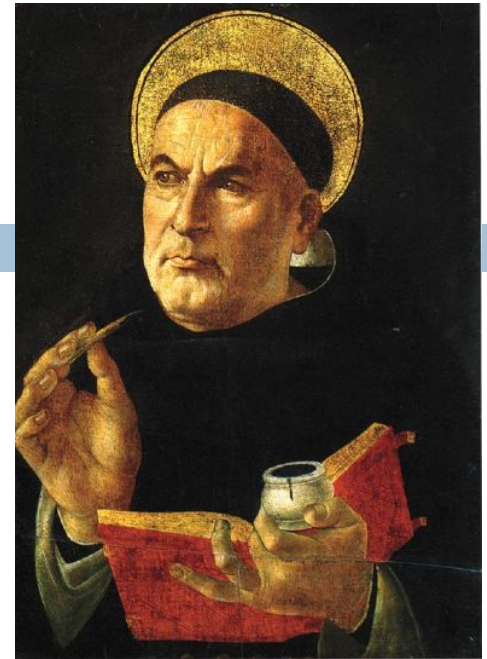
- **Albert Einstein**
- **(Prussian Academy of Sciences 1921)**

What are the implications to theology?



1. **Theological Reflexivity**
2. **The Role of Praxis in Theological Method**

THOMAS AQUINAS



All that I have written seems like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me.

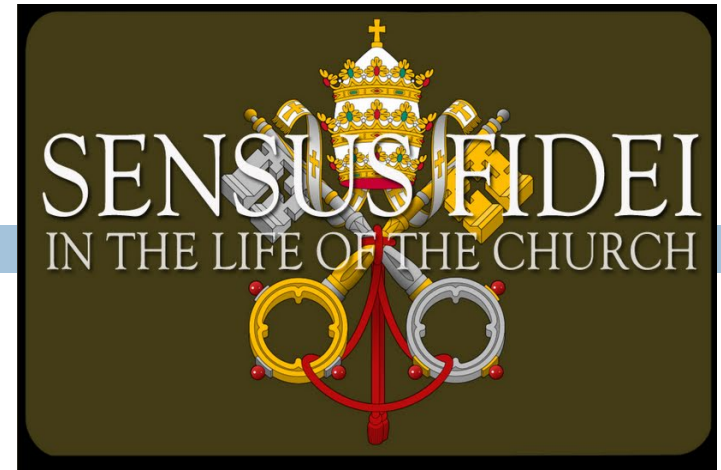
(Thomas Aquinas)

THE ROLE OF PRAXIS IN THEOLOGICAL METHOD

The voices, sentiments, reflections and praxis from the rough grounds are necessary to develop, change, modify or subvert the way we have formulated our doctrines, dogmas and beliefs.



***Sensus Fidei* (2014)**



Problems arise when the majority of the faithful remain indifferent to doctrinal or moral decisions taken by the Magisterium... This lack of reception may indicate a weakness of lack of faith on the part of the people of God...

But in some cases it may indicate that certain decisions have been taken by those in authority without due consideration of the experience of the faithful, or without sufficient consultation of the faithful by the Magisterium. (123)

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION



Payatas Dumpsite – December 18, 2011