

Preface

In the *Confessions*, Augustine remarks about how much more interesting it is to explore the hidden reaches of the memory than it is to travel abroad to see the wonders of the world. He describes how we can search the vast caverns of memory and retrieve half hidden images of long ago. He considers how some images are retrieved easily and others have to be dragged into the light of day, and how some bring happiness and laughter, while others bring sadness or fear or dread. He notes how entertaining these memories can be. He wonders how these memories are retrieved, how they are preserved, and how they can change over time.

His focus was on memory; my focus is on the mind. How much more interesting again is it to explore the ideas of the mind than the images of the memory! In the mind we find a vast storehouse of ideas, principles, and laws operating beneath the surface, and we did not even know they were there. We find a variety of activities like thinking, criticizing, classifying, comparing and contrasting, dividing and defining. They appear and disappear, overlap, jump ahead, and crash into one another in a never ending stream of thoughts and possibilities. We find feelings of encouragement and discouragement, joy and frustration, determination and surrender, excitement and boredom. How do we sort out this buzzing, chaotic confusion of thoughts and feelings? Where did they all come from? How are they remembered? Where are they leading us to? We can ask so many questions with so many possible answers. What unlimited power we have to ask any question under the sun; how fragile are our tentative answers leading to yet more questions. In our mind we can visit Mars, travel at the speed of light, understand black holes, go back in time to the beginning of the universe—or go forward in time to the big crunch. How much more interesting are these explorations of the mind compared to visiting the Grand Canyon or seeing the Taj Mahal.

This book is an exploration of the human mind as it attempts to sort out the buzzing confusion of our mental activities to which we normally pay such little attention. The human mind is not a chaos of competing forces but a structured sequence of mental activities heading in the direction of truth and value. I am proposing this text as a map to guide the explorer through the labyrinth of possibilities. A map or GPS is very helpful if one is on a journey through unknown territory. It will help one to proceed confidently, knowing he or she is going in the right direction. The map provides warnings of sudden bends, hills, or obstacles; it will identify the hills on the right, the river on the left, and the village just passed through and the town ahead. Journeying into the human mind can be a difficult and dangerous project, especially without a map. Many have gotten lost; many have misinterpreted what they have seen. Many have seen but have neither recognized nor named what was right there in front of them; some returned more confused than ever before.

My aim in this text is to provide a detailed map of the human mind as oriented to truth and value. It begins with asking a question, leading to a sequence of activities on the way to a correct answer. Many things can be noted to the left and the right in that sequence. To use a GPS effectively usually takes some instruction and practice. I propose a special method to explore the human mind, which does require both a little explanation and lots of practice.

I acknowledge the help given to me on my own intellectual journey. This text is the product of a lifetime of thinking, teaching, writing, and reflecting. Dedicated professors introduced me to neo-Scholasticism in the 1960s, but by sheer luck our library was restocked and copies of Lonergan's *Insight* were included. He was my map for the rest of the journey. I have spent most of my life teaching philosophy in Africa, learning from my students, and developing the philosophy and pedagogy presented in this text. I owe a great debt of gratitude to the professors of Boston College where I defended my PhD and enjoyed five postdoctoral fellowships. I should acknowledge the late Father Joseph Flanagan SJ, who was chairman of the department of philosophy and sponsor of the fellowship program who became a mentor to me and many others. I continue teaching in Duquesne University and thank our dean, Jim Swindal, for time off to finish this project and our head of department, Ronald Polansky, for a manageable teaching load and encouragement to allow this work to come to completion. Finally, my thanks to Brock Bahler who copy-edited the text in great detail and helped with many suggestions.