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Perspectives in Support of the Narrative Turn in Pastoral Care

ABSTRACT

Meaning is constructed or finds its expression in stories. This insight brought narrativity into prominence. The “narrative turn” in pastoral care will be discussed from three different supporting perspectives:

- P. Ricoeur’s hermeneutics
- Social constructionism.
- Post-foundationalist practical theology

How these perspectives support the narrative turn in pastoral care are considered and discussed after each section. At the end the authors reach the conclusion that the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, social constructionism and the postfoundationalist approach to theology are all part of one family. The article is concluded with the formulation of minimum requirements for Practical Theology in the domain of pastoral conversations as informed by the above mentioned three perspectives.

In the 1980’s a paradigm shift came about in pastoral care. The therapeutic model which was previously considered to be the most important had to make way for the hermeneutic model.¹ This move redefined the territory of work most proper to pastors as that of meaning: the experience of meaning, the giving of meaning, the finding of meaning and acting meaningfully.² Meaning is constructed or finds its expression in stories. Narrativity therefore came into prominence. The “narrative turn” will be discussed with three different perspectives in mind:

- P. Ricoeur’s hermeneutics
- Social constructionism.
- Post-foundationalist practical theology

A. THE HERMENEUTICS OF P. RICŒUR

1. Narrativity through prefiguration, configuration and refiguration

In Ricoeur’s case, the stress on narrativity originated from his study of hermeneutics. His study of hermeneutics started off with an investigation of symbols, then moved to metaphors, before ending with the text. The interpretation of the text, in the broader meaning of the word, becomes the paradigm for interpretation of actions and even for the interpretation of (wo)man’s identity.

1 K. Demasure, *L’accompagnement pastoral dans le vingt et unième siècle*, dans *Camillianum*, 12/4 (2004), 503-518

2 K. Demasure, *Verdwaald tussen liefde, macht en schuld. Pastorale begeleiding bij seksueel misbruik van kinderen. Een hermeneutisch model voor pastorale begeleiding van dader en slachtoffer bij seksueel misbruik van kinderen*, Leuven, 2004, p. 191.

According to Ricoeur, hermeneutics is a process that should pass through three phases. According to Ricoeur a text is not only an *œuvre*, but the concept also encompasses social institutions, art and monuments. Each text is approached with the foreknowledge, prejudices, feelings, etc. proper to the concrete human being. Ricoeur here speaks of a prefiguration. While reading a text, a meeting takes place between the textual world and the reader's world: the configuration. This meeting leads to a new perception of the world and to a new manner of standing in the world. Ricoeur calls this a refiguration. If one of these phases does not take place or is skipped, the process of interpretation is not rounded off. We will now consider each of these phases in greater detail.

People act in the world and tell stories about it. The acting is the prefiguration, which provides the raw material for the construction of stories. Ricoeur elaborately proves that the actions in the world have a prenarrative nature and are therefore available to be converted into stories. One could even say that the actions taking place in time are calling up the story.

If we start looking at the prefiguration from the reader's point of view, it is about that which a person brings with him/her when he/she starts to read a story. It is his or her understanding of the situation at that certain point in time and from that well-defined place.

The construction of the story takes place in the configuration. When constructing a story, people use the structure of a plot, the development of characters and ideas. In that process, they try to bring together in a whole the heterogenic elements of fate's inconstancies, of their own actions and that of other persons. Such a story is characterised by a beginning, a middle and an ending. A story indeed does not only consist of a mere succession of sentences expressing actions. Discursive elements are added, by which we mean elements turning the simple succession into a whole. From the heterogeneity one tries to construct a unity, which will however always contain an enduring tension. Ricoeur describes the story as a discordant concordance.³ Discordant, because it consists of facts or events which are experienced as unpredictable.

Thus in a story, events occurring successively in time are put together in a causal connection. In this process, the connection is not necessary, but probable. The selection of facts included in the story is based on their probable involvement with each other. The start of a story takes place at a well-defined moment in time. This does not mean that there are no antecedents; it means however that they are considered as irrelevant to the story. The composition of a story happens through innovation and sedimentation. As a result, each story has something unique, whereas it also appeals to a certain number of genres available in a culture. The use of existing structures heightens the intelligibility. It helps other people understand what is being told.

Although the creation of a story is mainly about the structuring of actions, of what people do, it is also capable of conveying feelings through the construction of the plot. Through the inclusion of the discordance, the frightening and pitiful, pathos and feeling are brought into the story. The reader suffers along with the characters in the story when bad luck comes over them; likewise that person will share the joy when fortune smiles upon them.

The last phase of the configuration consists of the reader meeting the text. The horizon of the textual world and the reader's world merge and allow for the enrichment of the reader's horizon. The term horizon, which comes from Gadamer, refers to the world in which the text finds its origin and the reader's world, which can be very different from the textual world.⁴ It is precisely this distance, which can lead to a 'disclosure', to a new insight enabling refiguration.

3 P. Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, I, Paris, 1983, p. 86-92.

4 H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and method*, London, 1975, p. 269. The "horizon" is an important concept in order to understand the term "situation". "We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. (...) The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."

Ricœur suggests that man's transformation is most easily achieved through stories. As has already been mentioned, the story is mainly about actions. Therefore a refiguration in relation to a story leads not only to a redescription of reality, but also to a change of the reader's actions. The start of a story lies in the world of action. Refiguration leads back to the world and action.

Apart from action, a story also contains symbols and metaphors.⁵ Although these phenomena touch upon a domain other than that of actions, they inspire actions. Metaphors for example belong to the linguistic reality and owe their existence to the symbols on which they are based.⁶ New or unknown and surprising metaphors also carry a redescription of reality, just like stories do. However they do not do this on the level of acting, like a story, but on the level of feeling, of values and of beauty.

Refiguration can only be achieved after a configuration, which leads to a disclosure. In order for refiguration to take place, one has to discover something new. That is why Ricœur states: "*expliquer plus c'est comprendre mieux*".⁷ This is the basis of and motivation for interdisciplinary work. Each détour and every scientific endeavour intends to lead to a new disclosure and thus to a deeper and better understanding of the problem researched. After ending this process of explanation, we again arrive at the – now new – prefiguration. With a new configuration, with a new text, a new refiguration can take place. That is why Ricœur does not speak of a hermeneutic circle, which would imply that the prefiguration has remained the same after the refiguration has taken place, but of a hermeneutic spiral.

2. (Wo)Man as narrative identity

Stories construct a (wo)man's identity. The question "Who is that person?" is rarely answered by the announcement of a name. Apart from the name the question is still: "Who is this?". The answer is usually constructed through the telling of stories about that person. People also construct stories about themselves. Stories reveal more than concepts. After all, concepts are shared with many people. A story is not. Even though stories are sometimes shared, each life story is unique. Thus, when an inquiry is made about a (wo)man, the life story is put on centre stage.

The concept of narrative identity is not only applicable to the individual person, but also to a group. The Jewish identity is a beautiful example. Jews form their identity on the basis of texts, which they have created themselves. This clearly indicates the dialectic movement between texts with their symbols and metaphors, and the active contribution of people.

3. Some pastoral consequences

Ricœur assigns a privileged hermeneutic position to texts and stories because they are simultaneously identity founding and potentially transformative. We would like to indicate a number of possible pastoral conclusions from this. According to Ricœur, the manner in which facts and events are selected and linked to each other is based on probability and not on necessity. This implies that other constructions are equally possible. Although it is impossible to change facts and events in life, it nevertheless seems possible to construct another story from the same facts, which means giving it another meaning.

5 For a more elaborate discussion of Ricœur's view on symbols and metaphors see: K. Demasure *Verdwaald in liefde, macht en schuld*, p. 104-118.

6 P. Ricœur, *Interpretation theory, discourse and the surplus of meaning*, Fort Worth, 1976, p. 69. "*Metaphors are just the linguistic surface of symbols, and they owe their power to relate the semantic surface in the depths of human experience to the two-dimensional structure of the symbol.*"

7 P. Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, I, p. 11.

The notion of the horizon brings the importance of the context into play. The person telling the story, as well as the person listening, is marked by his or her own context. This context defines the way the story is told and interpreted.

In a pastoral conversation, other than when reading a text, the persons speaking are present and are refigured during the conversation. The fusion of their horizons enriches all the conversational partners, including the therapist/pastor. If stories are the most appropriate medium to achieve transformation, we have to conclude that (more) stories should be told in order to create an opening for people to change.

B. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

It is hard to define social constructionism because it encompasses a whole spectrum of quite different viewpoints. V. Burr therefore proposes the usage of the metaphor of a family.⁸ As in a family, the members share a number of things with each other, but they also differ on a number of points.

1. Micro and macro social constructionism

In order to shed some light on the matter, V. Burr makes a distinction between micro and macro social constructionism.⁹ Under micro social constructionism, we can classify discursive psychology. Micro social constructionism focuses on the role of microstructures and the use of language in interaction. Social construction takes place in every day discourse. K. Gergen is a representative of this movement. He stresses the constructive power of interaction and the embeddedness of every individual thought and action. J. Shotter's focus on the local conversation, also falls into this category. He investigates interpersonal construction processes, which he calls joint-action.

The "Foucauldian discourse analysis" falls under macro constructionism. The most important representatives are M. Foucault and J. Derrida. Here, the focus is on the macro linguistic and social structures, which eventually constitute the framework in which our psychological and social life take form. This movement accepts the fact that language has constructive power, but considers this power to be dependent on, or the result of social and material constructions, social relations and institutionalised practises. The notion of "power" is essential in this approach. Power is acquired as people participate in the different discourses creating a society.

Deconstructionism wants to reveal these power relations. It stresses the constructive power of language as a system, as opposed to discursive psychology's focus on the contribution of persons in daily interaction. The human being is created by language structures and ideology. The most important concept is the "text". Deconstruction consists of a critical analysis of the text. This analysis demonstrates how the text succeeds in imposing a certain image of the world on us. Therefore deconstructionism is concerned with the historical and cultural production of knowledge and how a certain construction contributes to power and social action.

2. A discourse

The discourse is the focus of social constructionist research. "A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way

8 V. Burr, *Social constructionism*, 2nd ed. Hove-New York, 2004, p.2.

9 V. Burr, *Social constructionism*, p. 21-22.

together produce a particular version of events.”¹⁰ This definition means that different discourses can exist around the same object or event. What people say or write is part of a certain discourse and is conducive to that particular discourse. E.g. one can participate in a political, religious, or gender-discourse on poverty. What this discourse means will depend on the discursive context in which it is situated. Every text can be considered as the manifestation of one or more discourses. Thus, in social constructionism, the concept “text” has several meanings. The notion of the “text” refers to every printed, visual, oral and auditive production. Everything “readable” is placed in the category of text. Since almost no aspect of human life is meaningless, almost everything can be considered as a “text”.

3. Language

From the previous it has already become clear that with a social constructionist approach language is the most important point of interest. It is language, which brings people into being. Language provides us with a structure that enables us to give form and meaning to our experiences. According to social constructionists, there is no such thing as an essence of things or of a person. The manner in which we define a person is a social construct. This opens the possibility of alternative construction through language.

K. Gergen, a prominent representative of social constructionism, sees “the dialogue”¹¹ as the most important metaphor of the movement. He formulates this after a discussion of Gadamer, who with his theory on the “fusion of horizons” stood at the basis of P. Ricœur’s insights on configuration. Here, Gadamer more than Ricœur,¹² speaks of a dialogic relation. In such a fusion (Ricœur would say: configuration) the original understanding is replaced by a new one, at least if one allows the text to place its own questions on the foreground.¹³ This leads Gergen to the conclusion that meaning originates and is transformed in relationship or communion. Gergen is interested in the question how one can change meaning once a certain construction of meaning has taken place. How can dialogue be utilised as “a transformative medium”¹⁴? A part of his research is therefore concerned with these mechanisms of transformation.

4. Language and action

Language is performative and action oriented. Austin argued that a number of sentences have their importance, not because of their descriptive, but because of their functional value. By this he means that a number of sentences “do things”. An example could be “I, president of X, declare war upon Y”, or “I take you as my husband”. People structure their talking to obtain certain effects: they justify themselves, accuse others or define a relationship.

The language used, prescribes a certain action. It makes all the difference whether one calls a paedophile a criminal or a paraphile personality. In the first case, he belongs in prison; in the

10 V. Burr, *Social constructionism*, p. 64.

11 K. Gergen, *An invitation to social construction*, London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, 1999, 147.

12 The term dialogue is certainly applicable to an oral conversation, the most important domain in Gergen’s research. The term is less evident in the framework of a meeting between text and reader, because a text does not change under the influence of the lecture. The reader however does. In an oral conversation, both partners change – under the given conditions – and the term dialogue is in place.

13 K. Gergen, *An invitation to social construction*, p. 144: “Through this dialogic effort is first a suspension of one’s own forestructure of understanding; one must set the forestructure aside and let the text ask its own questions.”

14 K. Gergen, *An invitation to social construction*, p. 148.

second he needs psychiatric help. With this example it becomes clear that language does not only call for a specific action, but also lies at the base of power relations. Using the same example: it gives a certain group of persons the power to lock others up in prison or to refer them for psychiatric assistance.

5. Identity

Post structuralism differs from De Saussure in its conviction that the meaning of a word can always change. The acceptance of this insight has great consequences for a person's identity. The constitutive power of language and the variability of meaning leaves (wo)man with a fragmented, changing and temporary identity. Social constructionism therefore does not lead to a new analysis of personalities. It consists of a fundamentally changed framework/paradigm. Personality is seen as the social construction of private, historical and relational circumstances. Macro social constructionism is inclined to declare the subject dead because it is conceptualised as the outcome of discursive and social structures.¹⁵ Most researchers however do not go this far. Social constructionists resist the modernist vision of a "self contained" individual.¹⁶ This modernistic approach consists of three important assumptions: the borders of the individual coincide with the border of the body, the body is a container accommodating the individual and the individual is a "self-contained entity". Everything outside these indicated borders is experienced as threatening. Thus, the other is not welcomed but considered to be a potential danger. In opposition to this modernistic idea of the individual personality, social constructionism proposes the idea of a "relational self". Most characteristics attributed to people, such as caring, friendliness, and shyness; receive their meaning in relationship with others. These characteristics can never be proven in isolation.

Identity is co-constructed out of the discourses available in a certain culture, such as a gender discourse, education, age, sexuality, etc. Identity consists of the tissue of many different threads. Every thread represents a choice from a limited number of available discourses, and a person is capable of making a choice from these discourses.

6. The story

Social constructionism prefers story telling to an argumentative discourse. K. Gergen provides several reasons for this: Whilst using an argumentative discourse, one rapidly falls into the trap of considering the other as an opponent and not as somebody participating in the construction of meaning. In addition to that, the perception of the individual as a coherent entity, as we know it from modernism, has as a consequence that we manifest ourselves one-sidedly. There are different voices in us and one of these voices will have the upper hand. This leads to an over-simplified point of view, which makes it difficult to reach an agreement. Telling stories clearly avoids these disadvantages. People recognise themselves more easily in stories than in concepts. Stories are known in all cultures and everybody has used them, from childhood on. Furthermore, the public is involved in the story. A story recalls images and feelings and people suffer and celebrate together with the persons in the story. And eventually, a story leads to acceptance instead of resistance.¹⁷

15 V. Burr, *Social constructionism*, p. 23.

16 E.Sampson, *Possessive individualism and the self-contained ideal*, in GERGEN. M & GERGEN, K, *Social construction. A reader*, 123-128.

17 K. Gergen, *An invitation to social construction*, p. 158-159.

7. Some pastoral consequences

Boyd (1996:219-222) has already drawn attention to some implications of a social constructionist view for the pastoral conversation. He discerns three. Firstly, the therapy system is a language-meaning-generating system. Language creates reality, also the reality of the therapy system. It is the languaging about a problem that creates the therapy system and not the system which creates the problem. The focus of therapy is therefore on the socially constructed meanings in the public, intersubjective space between persons in conversation about a problem. Secondly, the pastoral conversation becomes a dialogical process in which the therapist joins with the conversational partner in a two-way exchange to co-generate new ideas and new meaning. Thirdly, the therapist takes the position of “not knowing”. This means that the therapist does not challenge the client’s version of reality with preconceived therapeutic knowing. The therapist instead communicates a desire-to-learn attitude in which he/she joins with the curiosity of the client in a mutual exploration of the client’s experience and understanding. To Boyd’s conclusions could be added that the notion of ‘discourse’ leads to the acceptance of the importance of the narrative approach. Life stories of persons become essential. Furthermore, the insight that language and action are connected, is of great importance to the pastorate and Practical Theology. However, one should be warned against too much optimism. Because of the embedding in the ‘master stories’ of a society, one cannot simply talk oneself out of problems. Very often, social institutions are connected to the dominant discourse, making it impossible to simply act according to a possible insight. As an example we can take gender discourse. Even though a woman is convinced that she should have the opportunity to work outside the house after having a child, this can simply be impossible due to a lack of institutional providence of facilities such as a nursery.

Deconstruction and the consciousness of power indicate the importance of allowing the “silenced voices” to speak. When people realise which stories are dominant in society, how they were created and which consequences they have, questions can be asked about the legitimacy of these stories. Marginalised voices can then be given a chance and shed a light on alternative stories.

Social constructionism definitely has revealed the importance of a self as a relational being and of the fact that meaning is created in relation. This puts the importance of the pastoral relation back into the spotlight.

C. POSTFOUNDATIONALIST PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Practical Theology happens whenever and wherever there is a reflection on practice, from the perspective of the experience of the presence of God. There are obviously various levels of Practical Theology. It can be very spontaneous, informal and local. It can also be very formal, systematic and organized. It can be part of ministerial activities on the congregational level, or it can be highly academic on university level. In any case, it is always guided by *the moment of praxis (always local, embodied, and situated)*. In this article the emphasis is on practical theology as it occurs in the pastoral conversation.

1. Practical Theology as local wisdom

Postfoundationalist Practical Theology should be seen as a way of understanding within the broad paradigm of the hermeneutical approach. And yet, it moves beyond *hermeneutics* as a metaphor for Practical Theology. For instance, the hermeneutical approach as such does not provide a positioning in between the foundationalist and the nonfoundationalist approaches. Hermeneutics can be abused towards both extremes. Postfoundationalism, on the other hand, positions itself

firmly opposite both of these paradigms. (see Müller 2005:75). It even goes one step further and argues for a very specific view of understanding: namely an understanding, which not only includes the local context as one of the hermeneutical circles (cf. Bons Storm 1989:63), but an understanding that can only develop within and from a local context.

The postfoundationalist approach forces us to firstly listen to the stories of people struggling in real life situations. It does not merely aim to describe a general context, but we are confronted with a specific and concrete situation. This approach to Practical Theology, although also hermeneutical in nature, is more reflexive in epistemology and methodology. According to Van Huyssteen (2006:10) "... embodied persons, and not abstract beliefs, should be seen as the locus of rationality. We, as rational agents, are thus always socially and contextually embedded."

This way of thinking is always concrete, local, and contextual, but at the same time reaches beyond local contexts to transdisciplinary concerns. It is contextual, but at the same time in acknowledgement of the way in which our epistemologies are shaped by tradition. Van Huyssteen (2006:22) refers to the postfoundationalist notion as "a form of compelling knowledge", which is a way of seeking a balance between "the way our beliefs are anchored in interpreted experience, and the broader networks of beliefs in which our rationally compelling experiences are already embedded."

The following anecdote of a small conversation between Hiltner, the pastoral theologian and Tillich, the systematic theologian, perhaps illustrates this position of Practical Theology at its best.

Tillich: Let us say that there was a certain man

Hiltner (interrupting): What was his name?

Tillich: Oh, ... err ... let us say John. So, there was this man named John and

Hiltner (interrupting): Was he married?

Tillich: Let us say he was. So. There was this married man, John, who

Hiltner (interrupting again): What was his wife's name? Did they both work?

Tillich (with exasperation): Professor Hiltner, won't you please let me finish?
What is the meaning of all your questions?

Hiltner: To speak of just *any* man is to speak of no man at all.

(Childs 1998:193)

3. Social constructionism and postfoundationalism.

Van Huyssteen does not use the terminology of social-constructionism, but clearly uses a similar line of thought when arguing for a postfoundationalist or *transversal rationality* (2006:21). He refers to Schrag and says:

Transversal rationality is now fused with consciousness and self-awareness, and this consciousness is then unified by an experience of self-presence, emerging over time from a remembering self-awareness/consciousness in which diverse past experiences are transversally integrated as we reach out to others.

Talk about the human subject is now revisioned by resituating the human subject in the space of communicative praxis. Thus the notion of transversal rationality opens up the possibility to focus on patterns of discourse and action as they happen in our communicative practices, rather than focussing only on the structure of the self, ego, or subject.

The shift of emphasis from individual to social, from subjective to discourse, which constitutes a new epistemology in the social sciences, is also part and parcel of the postfoundationalist movement.

The idea of socially constructed interpretations and meaning is clearly part of the postfoundationalist approach. Van Huyssteen (2006:25) argues: "Because of our irrevocable contextuality and the embeddedness of all belief and action in networks of social and cultural traditions, beliefs, meaning, and action arise out of our embedded life worlds."

4. Some pastoral consequences

The concept of *local wisdom* is vital for the pastoral conversation and a basic principle in the narrative approach. It corresponds with the idea of the not-knowing position taken by the narrative therapist. The assumption on which such a conversation is based is that the real expert knowledge about a person's life is situated with the person self. The key to the good progress of this type of conversation is not the *scientific knowledge of peoples lives* the therapist-pastor has, but the *local wisdom* of the person seeking help. This (not-knowing position) calls for the professional self-reducing of the pastor. The pastor does not attempt to provide the new or alternative narrative and therefore can not lay claim to the "success" of the pastoral care, but she/he explicitly attributes it to the parties concerned. Here, humbleness is elevated to the status of a methodical principle. The task of the pastor is to facilitate a conversation where this *local wisdom* can be re-told and re-invented in order to construct a new preferred reality.

Contextuality is a key concept in the postfoundationalistic approach. Experience is situated and experience is always interpreted. The person with whom the pastor is in conversation has an interpretation of his/her experiences. The pastor working within this paradigm is sensitive for these interpretations. For this pastor an understanding of the person's context will be the highest priority and his/her conversational partner is the only gateway to such an understanding. The pastor is not interested in the context in general, but in this person's interpreted experiences of the context. This can only be done through the listening to stories.

According to Van Huyssteen (1997) a postfoundationalist notion of rationality should open our eyes to an epistemic obligation that points beyond the boundaries of our own discipline, our local communities, groups, or cultures, toward plausible forms of *interdisciplinary dialogue*. In his Gifford Lectures (2006:25) he says: "A postfoundationalist approach helps us realize ... that we are not the intellectual prisoners of our contexts or traditions, but that we are epistemically empowered to cross contextual, cultural, and disciplinary borders to explore critically the theories, meanings, and beliefs through which we and other construct our worlds."

The theologian-pastor hasn't got the only valuable and valid perspective on the context. On the contrary, the theological perspective can be a very thin description of a person's life story. The narrative therapist-pastor will be looking for thick descriptions. The story is thickened when various perspectives are entertained in the therapeutic process. This is indeed an interdisciplinary process, which can be conducted on an informal and non-academic level, or on a professional level where experts from other disciplines are invited to participate in the conversation. These perspectives can be brought in by inviting a skilled professional into the room; through research that is done by either the pastor or the conversational partner; or through the collaboration of people concerned with the problem.

The postfoundationalist approach is in the first instance contextual, but it is at the same time also an acknowledgement of the way in which our epistemologies are shaped by tradition. A pastoral conversation which is conducted within this paradigm, will therefore always invite an interaction with tradition. For both of them it would be important to reflect on the situation/context from the perspective of their own religious traditions. The specific family or group tradition can

also be explored. A conversation in which there is a reflection on tradition gives a feeling of situatedness and belonging, a sense of being part of a long tradition of understanding and interpretation. This sense of belonging is often in itself already a very meaningful discovery for a person in crisis.

5. Conclusions

It seems as if the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, social constructionism and the postfoundationalist approach to theology are all part of one family. These epistemological approaches support the narrative turn in pastoral care and conversation on several points. We can formulate them as guiding criteria for a pastoral conversation:

- Preference for stories in stead of concepts and arguments
- Locally contextual
- Socially constructed stories and identities
- In dialogue with the tradition
- Exploring interdisciplinary meaning

These criteria are relevant for the epistemic questions of Practical Theology, as well as for the pastoral conversation. In fact, it is in the doing, or in the practice of Practical Theology that its true epistemic nature will be shown.

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