

JULY-AUGUST 2022

The

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

ANGELUS

THE VOICE OF TRADITIONAL CATHOLICISM

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

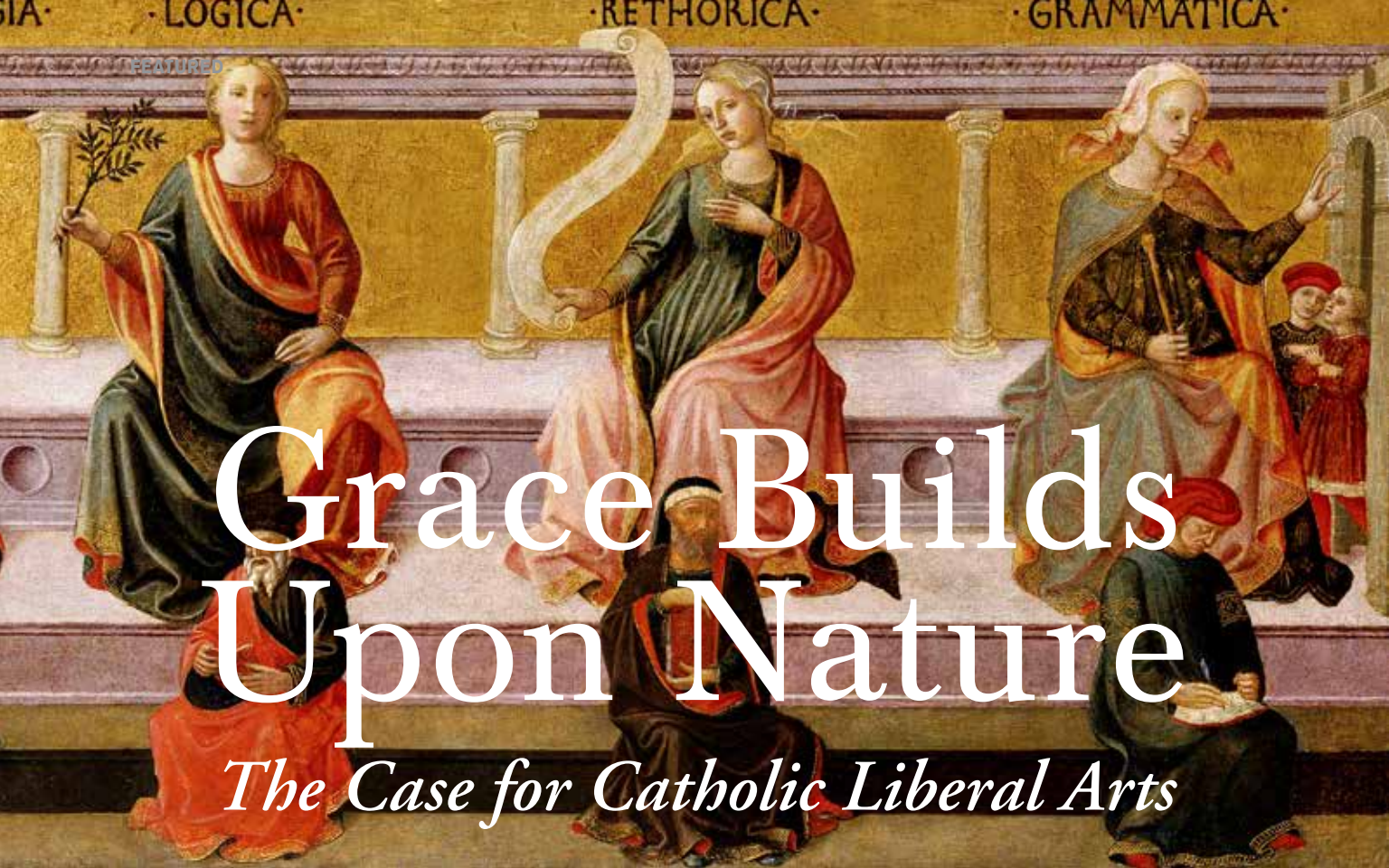
Dr. Matthew Childs: Grace Builds Upon Nature

Things Old and New by Robert Wyer

Patrick Murtha, The Loss of God in School

Educating for the Joy of God—Ann Marie Temple

Jonathan Wanner on the Lost Art of Poetic Knowledge



Grace Builds Upon Nature

The Case for Catholic Liberal Arts

Dr. Matthew Childs

The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Luke 8:5-8)

The principle that grace builds upon nature has perhaps become an axiom so familiar that we have lost the sense of its urgent implications for education. When we speak to new teachers about our profession, we often make reference to the parable of the sower and the seed because our essential job as teachers is to do what we can to prepare the soil of our students' intellects so they can fully receive the seed of truth and

bear intellectual and spiritual fruit. This parable and Christ's own explanation of it vividly depict how grace builds upon nature. The seed, "the word of God," comes from the same source and has the same capacity for life no matter where it falls; the difference is in the ground, the receiver. The truth is always the truth, available for all, but only those who are properly nurtured and disposed to do so will fully receive and profit from it. The supernatural virtues are perfect, as the very life of God, but they cannot act without being received and they cannot flourish, as a soul matures, unless they are grounded in the natural virtues. In establishing the Church, *the Word of God, the good Seed*, instructed her leaders to teach and to sanctify; to educate or to lay the foundation of natural virtue and "give the increase" by administering the sacraments. This two-fold mandate, "the great commission," is confirmed by Pius XI in his 1929 encyclical on education *Divini Illius Magistri*: "education belongs pre-

eminently to the Church” (para. 15), and “not merely in regard to the religious instruction... but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned” (para. 23)—which is *every* branch of learning, as even progressive educators prove by their own efforts to undermine the Church’s prerogative and pervert every part of the educational process.

While formulating a plan for the expansion of St. Mary’s College to a four-year program, I read the book *Catholic Higher Education in Protestant America: The Jesuits and Harvard in the Age of the University*, by Kathleen A. Mahoney, published in 2003. The “reformers” of higher education at the beginning of the twentieth century proceeded along the very same lines and presented many of the same arguments as the proponents for *aggiornamento*—to get with the times—within the Church several decades later. The revolutionaries were attempting to subvert the Church and academia—and thereby culture at large—early in the twentieth century. St. Pius X held them back in the Church, but they won the battle for the soul of education, paving the way for their eventual ascendancy in the Church and in the world in the latter part of the century. When Catholics chose modern education over traditional education, naturally the errors of modernism began to permeate the “soil” of their children’s intellects. There are two major points emphasized in Mahoney’s book: Protestantism is the motivating force behind the shift from traditional liberal arts colleges to elective and specializing universities, and the initial battle for education was lost not on principle, but because Catholics were drawn away from traditional colleges to the new, progressive universities. A closer look at the “Law School controversy” featured in the book can be read as a cautionary tale about abandoning the centuries-old tradition of Catholic liberal arts as well as a motivation to re-assess our attitudes toward the purpose and value of higher education.

The controversy, which began as a protest by Jesuit college administrators against discrimination in the admissions process of Harvard Law School, revealed the agenda of progressives there. Mahoney summarizes the importance of the battle between the university and the college approaches early in her book: “[c]ulminating in 1900, the Law School controversy

proved a defining moment in American Catholic higher education... Americans had come to understand the era in which they lived as an age of modern progress, a powerful temporal construct making formidable claims on both Christianity and higher education. Being timely, modern, and up-to-date became cultural imperatives in many quarters and a driving force in the university movement” (13). The desire to get with the times is a normal human social inclination. What is more important for our understanding of the qualitative nature of the educational reform is the deeper motivation, the ideological driver, so it is critical to know that “during the academic revolution, religion helped reshape higher education, with liberal Protestantism playing patron to the modern, nonsectarian university” (8). In our times, educators shy away from religion—in its theological form, while pushing the new “religions” of the day, such as critical race theory and gender ideology—but those promoting the university of elective-specialist approach at the dawn of the twentieth century were very clear about the motivating ideology behind their “reforms.” Mahoney notes that the educational reformers “understood their work as furthering... Christian goals by freeing higher education



Memorial Hall at Harvard University.



Things Old and New

Some Considerations on Parish Schools

Robert Wyer

Most of us could probably readily agree on what we are *against* in education, but consensus on what we are *for* is another matter. Few disagreements are more acrimonious than this one; it is something akin to a family fight or a lovers' quarrel. Just about everyone considers himself an expert on education, perhaps because most of us have spent so much of our lives in school. And, to be sure, parents are meant to be terribly invested in their children's well-being; the years devoted to their children's schooling occupy a considerable part of their concern and cash. Any division about what those schools for their kids ought to look like stems from different ideas about what a school is and what it is meant to do, and the answers to these questions necessarily involve an accurate appreciation of the students we have and the time in which we live. A school is, by definition, a place of perennial things, but how we prudentially craft the Catholic school in our

day, given the realities involved, may represent something that appears innovative, though it replicates timeless elements. Here, we are concerned with the so-called "parish school," one that strives to welcome all (or the majority of) children associated with a particular place.

Obviously, any school lives by certain principles, and these principles are worth some attention. Beyond these principles, the realities that distinguish the parish school require a closer look for our purposes. What remains, finally, are practical considerations in the life of the school that predominates in SSPX priorities—how we might do well to structure them to best serve the children entrusted to our care and the families we seek to assist in the raising of their children in a challenging age.

One of the first principles of any school is the presupposition that everyone ought to know certain things. These things are worth knowing for their own sake, because they reflect (in greater or lesser measure) the goodness, truth, and

beauty that is ultimately God Himself. Knowing these things makes us more of what we are: creatures, body and soul, caught up to heaven but rooted in the earth—the unique human place between purely material creation and the spiritual world of the angels.

For I will behold thy heavens, the works of thy fingers: the moon and the stars which thou hast founded.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou visitest him?

Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: and hast set him over the works of thy hands. (Ps. 8)

Though some of these things learned might prove useful, that is not the reason we learn them.

One corollary—because we are human—is that teachers are more important than the curriculum. Ultimately we learn from others who know and teach us. Knowledge per se does not exist in books; it must be known by a knower, exist in the mind of someone. That person, much as the angels of the various hierarchies do for each other, communicates to and enlightens others. When an author communicates by means of written language, he is conveying what is in his mind to another, and even then, it often takes a teacher, like St. Philip for the Ethiopian, to ask: “Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest?” And the student echoes the eunuch: “And how can I, unless some man shew me?” (Acts 8) Teachers are the heart of the school. If what Plato calls the divine spark is not leaping to and fro in the minds of the faculty in the conversation within that circle of friends, it is unlikely it will be firing in the minds of the students.

From this, it follows that much of educating involves the cultivation of relationships. Plato calls teaching “a species of friendship,” and Garrigou-Lagrange says, echoing St. Thomas’ commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: “the perfection of anything is that it become similar to its cause ... thus, the perfection of the student is that he become a master.” Or, as one master put it:

The gratitude a student has towards his teacher, according to St. Thomas, comes from the fact that his learning is a “becoming”; the teacher is the cause of a “similitude” of himself in his



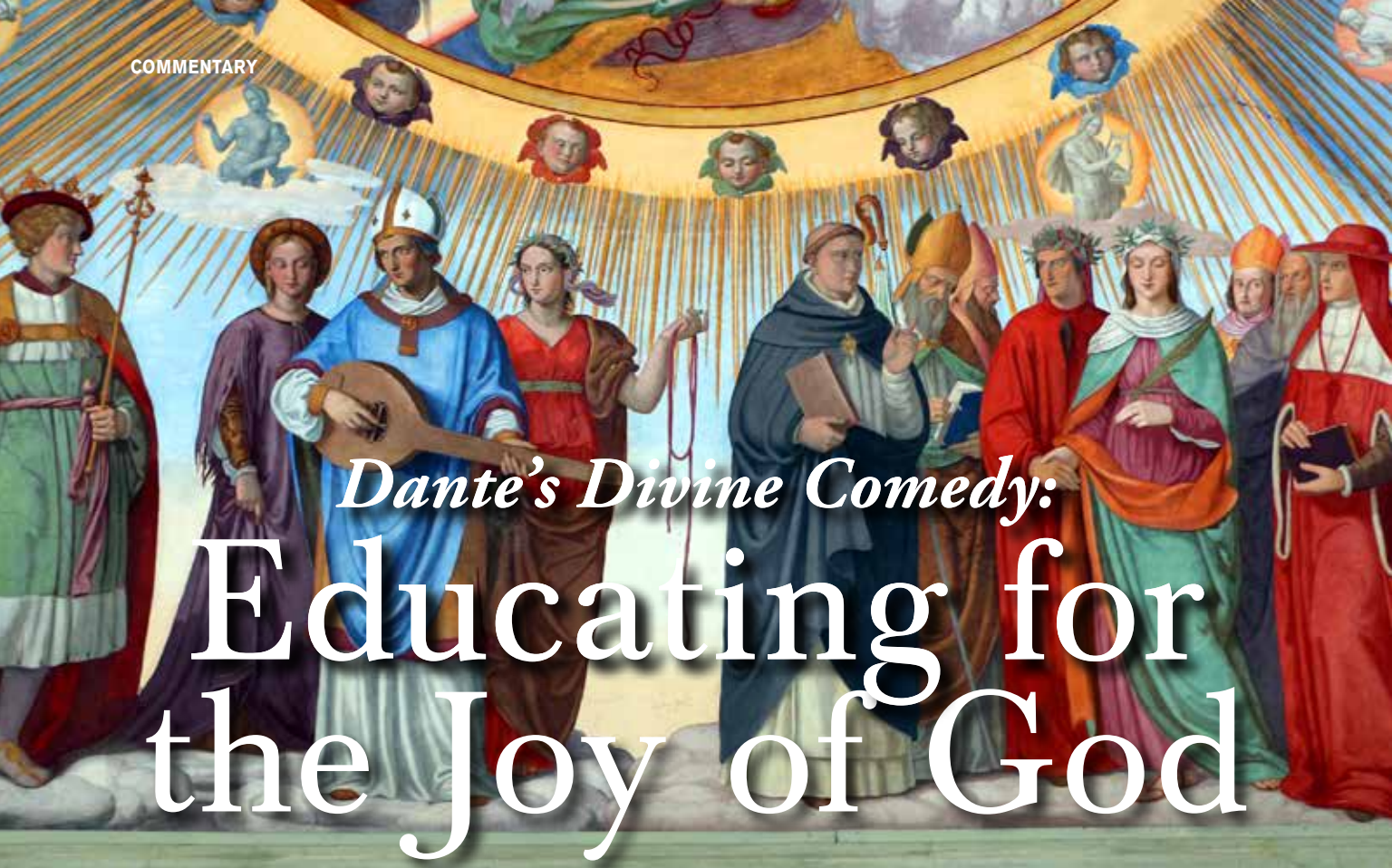
The SSPX Sisters’ active apostolate includes teaching in schools.

knowing, analogous to a father generating a similitude of himself in his son.

Offspring, in the physical realm but also in the intellectual and spiritual realm, is the fruit of knowing. “And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived.” Con-ception, the quickening of ideas (concepts) in the mind of another, requires the intimacy of knowing the other. The teacher must love his students, and they return this love. Ultimately, of course, it echoes and reflects the knowing and loving that is the eternal life of the Holy Trinity.

What happens in the classroom itself is not enough then, partly because of the necessity of forming these relationships, but there is more to it. A great deal of the “stuff” of learning exists outside of the school building. One could insist, for instance, that without a prolonged exposure to the natural world, beyond the classroom windows, much of what is attempted inside will not bear lasting fruit. The cultivation and exercise of the senses, imagination, and memory necessarily precede and accompany any intellectual activity. The scholastic dictum *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu* (“there is nothing in the intellect unless it is not previously in the senses”) is not reserved to describe the earliest stages of childhood development.

Teachers must meet students where they are. There is always something of returning to a beginning or an earlier point in the teacher’s own journey (because he can only give what he has first received). The goal, the point the teacher hopes the student reaches (even surpassing the teacher), is real, but so is the starting point. Again, this requires coming to know the student. For Socrates, this involved conversation, asking questions, probing what the student knew but also countenancing dreams and passions, even tolerating a certain youthful silliness.



Dante's Divine Comedy: Educating for the Joy of God

Ann Marie Temple

*When he had brought his lecture to an end,
the lofty scholar looked into my face,
searching to see if I seemed satisfied;*

*and I, already thirsting for more drink,
kept silent, wondering: "Could he, perhaps,
be tired of all this questioning of mine?"*

*But that true father, sensing my desire,
which was too timid to express itself,
spoke first, and thus encouraged me to speak.*
Purgatorio XVIII, l. 1-9¹

In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) creates himself as a character in his own work of art and unfolds before our imagination the process of his complete education, on an allegorical journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven (for "there was no other way to save his soul," as Beatrice explains in *Purgatorio XXXI*). "The lofty scholar" above is Virgil, and the one who says "I" throughout the poem is Dante "the Pilgrim." Dante was both scholar and student himself, and his teacher of predilection was St. Thomas Aquinas, who had died only ten years after Dante's birth.² The education which the Pilgrim receives over

the course of the *Commedia* is in fact a *Thomistic* education. In the passage quoted above, the pilgrim Dante and his *maestro* Virgil are halfway through their climb of Mount Purgatory, and their discussion in these central cantos of the *Divine Comedy* takes us to the core of the principles of St. Thomas on teaching. Virgil, the educator, true father, attentive to the soul entrusted to him, seeks every means to satisfy the blessed thirst which God placed at the core of every man. "Sensing my desire," in a union of charity, Virgil "spoke first, and thus encouraged me to speak," to act, to choose, in an apprenticeship of freedom which will end finally with the gift of Dante's will to God in the enjoyment of the beatific vision. In the following pages, I would like to offer the words of the poet as illustrations of the teaching principles of St. Thomas. I have chosen the verses and scenes which most struck me in the classroom and in my own reading as embodiments of St. Thomas' vivifying ideas. I hope this taste will encourage other Catholic educators to open the *Divine Comedy* and drink for themselves with confidence at the source.

question he was too timid to express; throughout the *Inferno*, along the paths which Virgil had already trodden, we see him continually foreseeing the route and adapting his pedagogy to foster Dante's learning. Whether alerting Dante to what he will encounter, allowing Dante to live an experience and then formulate his own questions, or pausing to give philosophical explanations and discuss the reasons for what they have seen, Virgil is always aiming at the most effective manner of awakening Dante to grasp truth for himself. St. Thomas explains, "The teacher's presentations are like tools that the natural reason of the student uses to come to an understanding of things previously unknown to him." As the doctor gives medicine so that the body will heal itself, so the educator fulfills all of his tasks so that the student's soul will reach knowledge and virtue by its own power.⁸ "Our role in class," confirms Dominican Mother Hélène Jamet in a letter to teaching Sisters,

is principally to help each child to discover, in each domain, and in an atmosphere of generosity and freedom... the few central notions which he must make his own and which he must be able to use as his own."⁹

The educator initiates and mediates the process of discovery, but the mind of the student works his own knowledge, just as his will works virtue.

The Teacher: A Manifestation of the Goodness of God

St. Thomas insists that the teacher is genuinely a cause of goodness and knowledge in the child, albeit instrumental. The teacher really does share in God's power *to do good*; the educator *saves*. "Virgil, sweet father," Dante cries, "Virgil to whom for my salvation I gave up my soul" (*Purgatorio* XXX, l. 50-51). It is Beatrice by her action who has brought Dante to the heights at which she leaves him:

She, with the tone and gesture of a guide
whose task is done, said: "We have gone
beyond –
from greatest sphere to heaven of pure light,

light of the intellect, light full of love,
love of the true good, full of ecstasy,
ecstasy that transcends the sweetest joy."

(*Paradiso* XXX, l. 37-42)

The teacher collaborates with God in bringing the soul to such sublimity. God has "woven



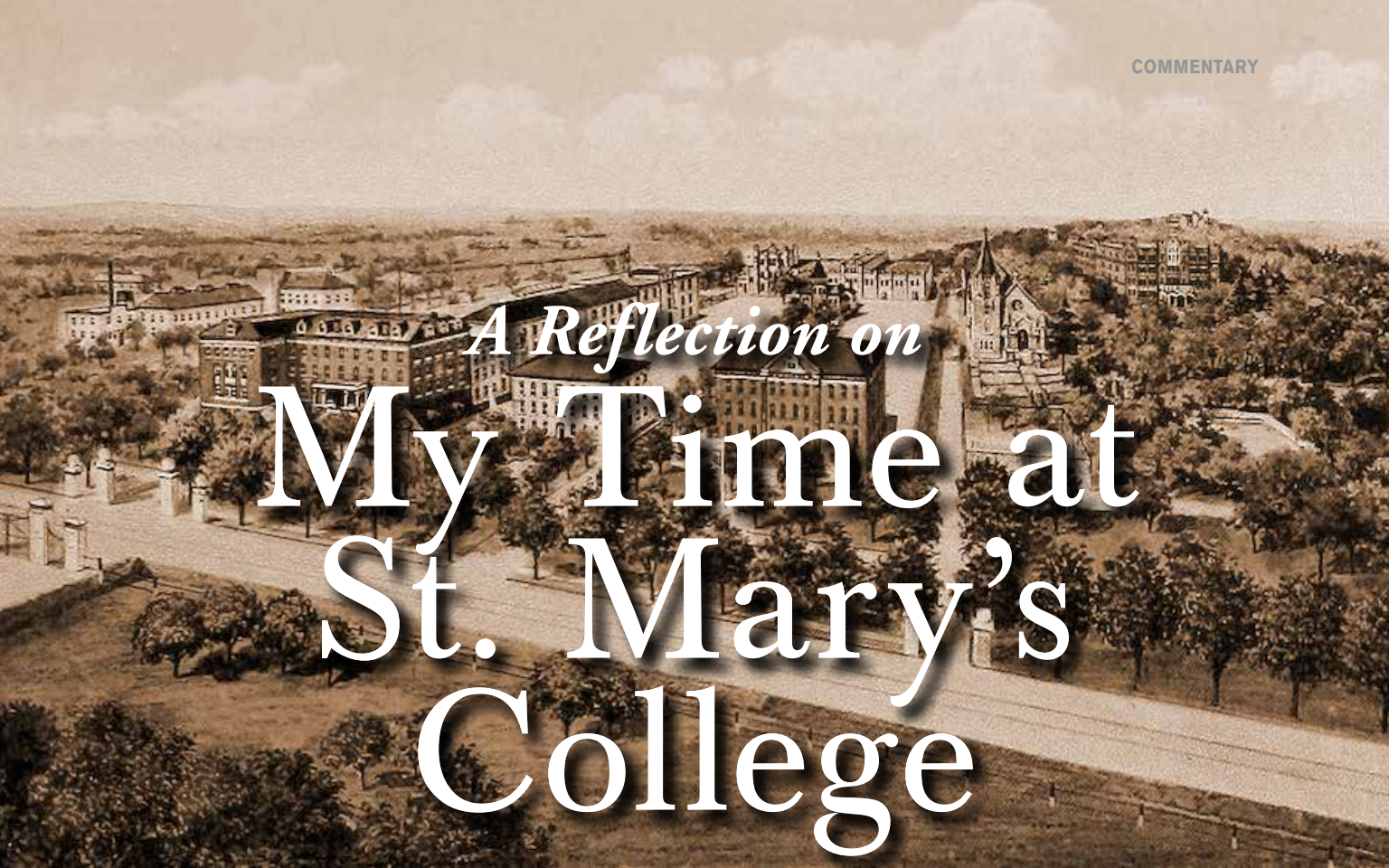
Detail from *Empyrean*—A fresco by Philipp Veit, Dante Hall, Casino Massimo, Rome, 1818-1824.

Source: Saïlko, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

[the created universe] together by the order and interconnection of causes": the order of the universe is a fabric of interdependence, "for the primary Cause, from Its outstanding goodness, makes other things not only to be, but also to be causes."¹⁰

Just like the sun's outpoured rays, which not only illumine other bodies but make them to be sources of light, too... similarly, in the ordering of the universe, as a result of the outpouring of God's goodness, superior creatures [men and angels] are not only good in themselves, but also are causes of goodness in others.¹¹

Virgil and Beatrice stabilize Dante in truth and in orientation toward the good by guiding him to perform acts of discovery and freedom. The angels in the *Paradiso* illustrate the interconnection of teachers and students in human education:



A Reflection on
**My Time at
 St. Mary's
 College**

Jane Spencer

In the children's novel *Carry on, Mr. Bowditch*, ship clerk Nathaniel Bowditch teaches his uneducated shipmates to navigate by measuring the stars. "It [does] things to a man," Nat thinks, "to find out he has a brain." The point isn't that the ship arrives at its destination any more efficiently manned by a whole crew of navigators than by one. Nat is just glad that the men are intellectually satisfied and consequently happy. When I arrived as a first-year student at St. Mary's College, I was surprised to find that—like myself—many of my classmates hadn't originally wanted to come to St. Mary's. They were persuaded by parents, mentors, religious or friends to make a decision which, to an ambitious teenager, seemed pointless: working hard for two years at an unconventional liberal arts college which wasn't even fully accredited. In hindsight, I see that this decision was a mark of freedom: only a free person "wastes" time on an education which is simply good for him.

This essay reflects on the relation between freedom, which has grown misunderstood (and consequently fragile) today, and the mission of St. Mary's College. It draws three connections

and explores how the liberal arts are critical in the connecting: the first is between freedom and time, the second between freedom and understanding, and the last is between freedom and pilgrimage.

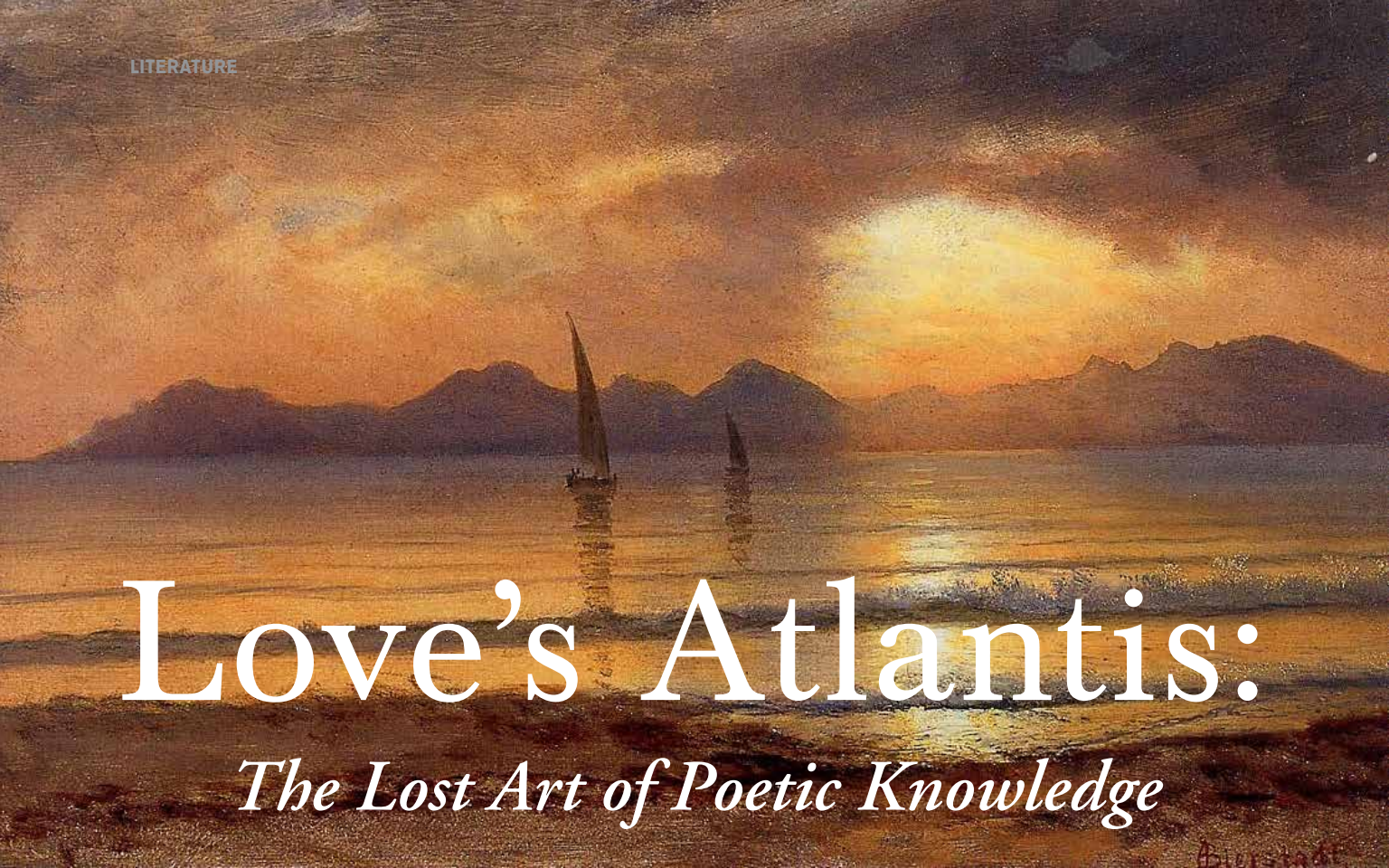
My two years at St. Mary's were a step out of time. I remember trying to capture one night, shortly before graduation, when my friends and I sat on a dock watching the stars come out. It was an "eternal moment," like Dostoyevsky described, or T.S. Eliot's "intersection of the timeless with time," and I told myself that it would stay for the rest of my life, continuing somewhere in my soul. Two years had passed quickly, but they had also been marked by interior stillness and a freedom from time because what would come *after* was not the purpose of what happened *during* those two years. Some educations are preparations for a busy life in the world: Nursing students study to take care of the sick, MBA students study so they can become successful businessmen, and students of trades study to put their trades into practice. The present is dominated by the shadow of the future, and the education isn't free; it is at the service of something to come. At St. Mary's,

however, the future held the mission to carry on what we were doing in the present. Rather than preparing us for life as nursing school prepares functional nurses, our liberal education marked us with the mission of returning to itself and of spreading it into whatever active role we played in the world. It established a core of contemplation which defied being “useful” because it, itself, was the final goal. A liberal education is a journey to the heart of what *is*—not to manipulate, cure or fix it, but simply to contemplate its deepest reasons. This is why the liberal arts have been dismissed by a use-driven society: they can’t be used, but only lived. Learning dead languages or theology yields no method for making factory production more efficient, and no one dissects Homer’s *Iliad* to harness the words into something practical for ending poverty or curing cancer; the essence would be lost in the harnessing. Instead, the persisting same-ness of the piece testifies to the persisting truths which it celebrates. When Francis Bacon—at the beginning of the scientific revolution—re-defined “the true ends of knowledge... [to be] benefit and use,” he sapped education of its inherent worth: learning was no longer contemplative but became a tool whose worth was measured by its productivity. Since our minds are so closely tied to our identity, this is only a step away from the conclusion that people *themselves* should be measured by their productivity. Bacon’s modern day disciples champion an exclusively STEM system of education in which the classroom is merely a springboard to material inventions. The liberal arts classroom is not a springboard, but a resting place. It is free from the passage of time because its value doesn’t lie in a subsequent product or event, but in the activity of the present moment.

At St. Mary’s, this activity was one of understanding: we were invited to know the way things are most deeply, as a whole, and from a higher perspective. My liberal arts classes were like a kaleidoscope in which many layers contributed to a whole picture which, while greater than any individual subject, depended on all of them. In history, we learned the context of the ideas we discussed in philosophy. At the same time, we saw these ideas play out in the art of epic poetry and novels, and ultimately sought the source of truth in theology. In a spiritual conference, one of the priests at the college explained that our education was freeing us from our own opinions. We could step from

the world of our own prejudices to the world as it *is*, which was always more beautiful. It’s true that this inspired us to plan for vocations which would “set fire to the earth,” but even more importantly our new understanding set fire in our hearts: *cor ardens* was our college motto. This was the point of our freedom: not primarily in anything we would accomplish, but in setting our minds on noble things to understand and love, and in our consequent happiness. Freedom depends on understanding not only because we need to know what a man *should* be before we can choose to be a good one, but because understanding is the heart of the human identity. Aristotle says that contemplation, or a wondering gaze at the highest truths, is the act which defines a human person; we are men because we can see the way things are. Our desire to understand is consequently closely tied to our desire to *be*, and an exploration of the world through the liberal arts is an act of being. As Aristotle explains, “a human being is free... when he is for his own sake and not for someone else.” The liberal arts are deeply for our own sake—not, however, enclosing us on ourselves. Aristotle’s understanding of “for our own sake” is expansive rather than isolating because he sees our highest fulfillment to be an act of contemplation: we gaze in worship at God, the deepest Reason of all. The liberal arts open our minds to contemplation, the friendship with Christ which is our purpose.

At St. Mary’s, we were told that we were, at heart, pilgrims. Pilgrimage was “a microcosm of life,” in the words of our chaplain. Freedom is an invitation to enter into pilgrimage because our identity is, first of all, a call towards a goodness which must be pursued. Aristotle defines identity as a readiness for action. He calls it a “starting point”: from the moment of our conception in the womb we have the capacity to thrive, while actualizing this capacity is the journey of a lifetime. The destination—our perfection—is as fixed as a lighthouse, but this doesn’t make us any less free in pursuing it because perfection is the purpose of freedom. Our being, with its aspirations, weaknesses and complex union of body and soul, can’t be changed to serve other ends; we can’t alter human nature to further medicine, advance the arts, or stop wars. The constraints of the puzzles we solve in life are set *by*, rather than imposed *on* our nature. This makes our identity and our pilgrimage to fulfill it free, subject to nothing but itself and its



Love's Atlantis:

The Lost Art of Poetic Knowledge

Jonathan Wanner

“Love takes up where knowledge leaves off.”
—Aquinas

When students dip their toes into a poem, they usually wade their way through its figurative language until they wash up to some shore of meaning. The problem is the students' eyes: they believe they've discovered a new continent when, in reality, they've hit a sandbar. The irony is that the poem's meaning is not even on land: it is in a New Atlantis fathoms below, and you must drown a little to see it. To show you what I mean, here are a few “sandbars” my college students recently discovered:

Student 1: Wordsworth's “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” poignantly reminds readers to appreciate nature with child-like wonder.

Student 2: Wordsworth's “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” touches upon some rather deep feelings about youth, nature, and growing up.

Student 3: Wordsworth's “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” really paints a vivid picture in the reader's mind through the use of imagery, personification, and metaphors.

No one would disagree, and that is precisely the problem. These observations are so universal, so agreeable that they lack purpose entirely: the first two are true of nearly every Wordsworth poem, and the third describes millions of literary works. Student 1 already knows that he should appreciate nature as children do; Student 2 simply records a list of themes he found on LitCharts, neither specifying them nor explaining why they matter; and Student 3—utterly confused about the poem's content—avoids interpreting it altogether, commenting only on stock stylistic devices. In each case, the student affirms familiar notions at the expense of new-found wisdom, at the expense of experiencing the poem's true artistry. They would be better off if they drowned a little more in the inconvenience of wonder.

whatever is lost or found you return always to the meter's drumming, the ink's humming, the lyre's strum. Always the heartstrings tug: a sad mirth here, or there a pleasing pain—and the gut cries that you have imagined more than you will know. The lights dim, the curtains close, and the world keeps its habit of going on. Yet the memories whirl in the cosmic space between your ears—the music of spheres, Dante's rings, and the elliptical planets on peacock tails.³

Of course, peacocks do not trail literal solar systems behind them, and most educators would hardly believe that even a feather has a cosmic purpose, or that every little ornament of nature tends toward time's ultimate end. Poetic fancy, they presume, is only meaningful when it teaches students “innovation” or when it fools them into learning quantifiable facts and catch-all platitudes. A castle in the sky, under terms of common sense, becomes an O-so-fun! opportunity to learn about meteorology, or to teach a lesson about cloud pollution, or yet another random occasion to remind children to “just be nice.” How easily we demote the fine arts by performing them like servile arts, as if poetry were just like hiring a mechanic or prescribing the right medication. If we believe the only point of a castle in the sky is to “get the job



William Allingham by Helen Allingham, 1876.

done,” then we miss the opportunity of actually looking at it, of admiring its Edenic glory. What fool would say that God made roses beautiful only so that we could make money selling them or only so that children would have another noun to memorize? The purpose of their beauty is desirability: we are drawn to them for their own sake since, in themselves, they are a foretaste of the divine. For “the beauty of anything created is nothing else than a similitude of divine beauty,” so that to gaze upon a rose is to touch, in a simple way, God’s transcendental desirability, to peer at our very likeness of God, and to ennoble the soul with an encounter of its origins: indeed “divine beauty is the cause of... all that is (*Ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur*).”⁴ How much more useful beauty would be to us if we used it a little less and instead listened to its sparrow’s song, touched its hem, smelled its incense, tasted its savor, and watched it ebb and soar.

Still, to the angel-eyed, there is an indulgent taint to the aesthetic encounter: stopping to smell the roses, even in the phantasmic theater of the imagination, feels so material, so mutable, so vain. Surely infatuation with art pales in comparison to the eternal realm of immaterial concepts and universal essences. As high-witted as this view may seem, Thomas Gilby assures us it is snobbery: “We must distrust the philosophical journalese that ... imagines the mind as a cold impersonal being lodged in us somehow, but quite apart from the rhythm, the color, the scent of life, from the untidiness and infinite variety of individual wholes.”⁵ Roses are undeniably corruptible, contingent, not an ultimate end in themselves, yet their concrete presence, their individuality, their transience are the very reasons we coil them in the palms of our hands:

“oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.”
—*William Johnson Corey*

There is a simple and immediate contact with the real when we contemplate the particular *existence* of beauty, not with the bestial appetite of a Netflix binger, but with the all-encircling body-mind union of a lover.

Certainly abstract concepts have some share in this encounter. Dogs cannot comprehend what a rose is, so they cannot understand a sonnet about one. Yet, *universals do not beget or attract*

ART

The Corruption of
Art Education
in the Modern Era



Prof. David Clayton

Crucifix of San Damiano - Santa Chiara - Assisi.

© José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro / CC BY-SA 4.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

The Church has always seen the need of art for the communication and sustenance of the Faith. The Seventh Ecumenical Council, which closed in 787 A.D., did not simply permit the use of images—rather, it mandated the veneration of images of Christ, Our Lady, and the Saints as an essential aspect of devotional prayer and worship of the prototypes that the images depict.

Every Catholic church therefore must have images that inspire in the faithful right worship and devotion. Such images will not only have the right content—*what* they portray—but also must portray that content in the *right way*—how it is portrayed. The style of the art is just as important as the content, because style enables the artist who understands what he is doing to convey both visible and invisible realities through his painting.

Visible realities are conveyed by conformity to natural appearances. Put simply, we know that we are looking at a painting of Jesus because it looks like what we all believe Jesus to have looked like, as handed on to us through tradition.

Invisible realities are conveyed by partial abstractions—slight deviations from natural appearances that are undertaken by the artist in such a way that we perceive truths about that person that visual appearances alone could not convey. For example, a man has an invisible and immortal soul. An artist conveys to the viewer that this person is alive and possesses a soul by deviating from a strict naturalism. The viewer understands that what is represented is not simply a model that is identical to a man in every visible detail.

The precise way in which the artist deviates from strict naturalism gives him or her a distinctive and recognizable artistic style. We recognize a Fra Angelico, not by his adherence to natural appearances, but by the way he consistently deviates from them. Furthermore, we recognize Fra Angelico as a great Christian artist because tradition has judged his stylistic vocabulary to consist of a partial abstraction that *abstracts*—i.e. draws out—and hence reveals even greater truths than mere naturalistic appearances alone could portray. This is why, for example, the modern style of photorealism or the 19th-century realism of artists such as Bouguereau are not considered authentically Christian. They are too naturalistic.



Sketch for *The Crucifixion*, Graham Sutherland, 1946.
<https://www.wikiart.org/>

Similarly, this partial abstraction can be done well or badly. Consider, for example, the work of Picasso. His works were a deliberate distortion of naturalistic appearances inspired originally by traditional west African artistic styles. He wished to portray man as the innocent noble savage, uncorrupted (as he saw it) by a society of Christian values. This Romantic anthropology, which originated with Rousseau in the seventeenth century, manifests itself in Picasso as both a false (and not to mention highly patronizing) view of west African society and culture, and of Christian society and culture.

Given what Picasso was setting out to do, we should be highly suspicious of any attempt to portray Christian subjects in his style or those that are consistent with any wrong anthropology. A painting of the Crucifixion in, say, a 20th-century expressionistic style will very likely have within it an inbuilt contradiction. The content might speak of Christ, but the style speaks directly against it by design. To admit such works into our churches is to risk undermining the Faith. Picasso himself painted a Crucifixion which is so distorted that it is just about unrecognizable; one should not be surprised that an avowed atheist should be so disrespectful of the subject. However, we see also what is to my eye grave distortion of the 16th-century Isenheim altarpiece—or at the very least a significant departure from the Christian tradition—in the expressionistic style of the crucifixion painted in 1946 by the British artist Graham Sutherland. Sutherland was a convert to Catholicism and so was presumably sincere in trying to por-



The Origins of Education in America

Fr. Daniel Muscha, SSPX

Colonial Times

America has always been seen as a land of opportunity; a land that allowed a new way of life and a freedom from the institutions and restrictions of England and Europe. This is proven by the fact that Harvard, the first American college, founded in 1636, granted its first degree in 1642 without receiving authority of any kind! This might pass unnoticed except for the fact that in England the Bachelor of Arts degree could be awarded only by Oxford and Cambridge and only for law, medicine, theology and the traditional seven liberal Arts. Thus, Harvard granting degrees was as Samuel Elliot Morrison explains, “almost a declaration of independence from King Charles.”¹

America never had any distinction between college and university as Europe did, where a college was a place to receive instruction, was largely self-governing and had no power to grant degrees, and where a university was a

degree-granting institution having received this special authority in the form of a papal bull or a Royal or Parliamentary charter. With Harvard granting its first degree independently of any authority, the precedent had been set and by the time of the American Revolution there were at least nine institutions granting degrees.

The universities of Europe date back to medieval times, and so received a medieval heritage of being run by clerics. They were largely independent of government control and consequently removed from politics. They possessed rich tracts of lands, large endowments, and buildings for support. Free from government control, they were given to free academic pursuits and learning.

In America the college or university depended directly upon the support of the local government and people around them. Lay boards oversaw their welfare and ensured they remained in touch with the community upon whom they were directly dependent. Nor did the American

There was more emphasis on “popular science” or things that could be understood by everyone rather than refinement of craft.

When Abbé Raynal said in 1774, “America has not yet produced one good poet, one able mathematician, one man of genius in a single art or science,”⁴ Thomas Jefferson was annoyed but could only say that the colonies had not had time yet to produce a Homer or Shakespeare, but then pointed to George Washington as a great military leader.

Post-Colonial Years

In the years after the Revolution, America was lost in the struggle to establish a national identity. Having broken from England, she wanted to throw off her English habits and develop a culture of her own. This is what drove Noah Webster to publish his “American Spelling Book” in 1789 and his first dictionary in 1806. He wanted to establish the “purity of the English language” which he thought had been destroyed in England by writers of the 18th century.

With his spelling book and use of the spelling bee, Webster sought to change the spelling and pronunciation of the English Language to an American language. The American pronunciation of the language became what the word “ought to sound like” rather than by custom. This is clear when he says in the preface to his dictionary “those people spell the best, who do not know how to spell.”⁵

With the influx of people to America, the great melting pot, there were in the 19th century many words from other language which became part of daily speech. Slang became so commonplace that truly the American language is one of slanging.

The opportunity for the common person to own land was arguably the single most important factor in drawing people to America. This was impossible in England as the land was owned by a few. America was seen as a land of opportunity, and following the Revolution the American businessman was born. Often coming from lowly roots, men in the 19th century had an irresistible urge to “improve themselves.” This improving, though, most often meant making money and lots of it. Thus, Alexander de Toqueville says of Americans that they were taken with the pursuit of money. This desire for money led to the over-emphasis on the practical and useful in America. Even education suffered more and more from this.

In the 19th century the expansion of America grew at an exponential rate. With the founding of each town, county, territory, and state there was an overwhelming need for politicians. Thus, there was a great emphasis on politicians in America; this need even began to affect the primary schools. American politicians were not men of great learning but practical men who often possessed little education; they became self-taught orators as politicians. Thus, even in



A Dame's School, Thomas George Webster (1800-1886). Dame schools were small, privately run schools for young children that emerged in the British Isles and its colonies during the early modern period.

The Restoration of Catholic Civilization

in SSPX Schools

Fr. Gerard Beck, SSPX

Fr. Beck, since 2005 you have been the superintendent of schools for the US District of the Society of St. Pius X. In all those years of working with education, what has been your central aim? How would you express the purpose of the schools of the Society of St. Pius X?

The aim of our schools is no different than the motto of our patron, Saint Pius X, as set forth in his first encyclical: *the restoration of all things in Christ*. We hear this phrase so often it can sound like a cliché and we do not think about what it means, so it is good to refresh our understanding. The Archbishop explained that these words of St. Paul, in Greek, mean to put everything back in order under the Kingship of Christ: literally to *recapitulate* all things, to put all human reality under Christ as its head.

The goal of our schools is to work in close union with Catholic families to help each child

become the saint God created him to be. A saint is a person whose entire life is Christ-dependent, every detail in order at the service of Christ the King. Through the children, with the families, our schools are meant to help recreate a Catholic civilization, and give back to society the Catholic spirit, the sense of God, that St. Pius X spoke of in his encyclicals.

Father, I imagine most parents who send their children to our schools are more thinking about protecting their children from our current civilization than hoping to change it. What would you say is the biggest threat or obstacle that the modern world poses to the education of our children?

Modern society is essentially in revolt against God's order. Any attempt to give Christ back His rightful place in human lives, to order

human life under the rule of Christ, is going to be met with opposition.

We see this opposition on every level, toward individuals and toward institutions. We have twenty-two schools across the United States, and each one is struggling valiantly to accomplish its mission. Large or small, each of our schools has to swim upstream. Thankfully, we do not yet face some of the legal obstacles that Catholic schools in other countries are obliged to contend with—I am thinking of certain European countries, or our neighbor to the north.

The greatest obstacle to our schools right now is not official persecution but the ambient culture of revolt and rejection of order. Twenty years ago, children drank in the spirit of the world through television and video games. Today, television has been replaced by the internet, available literally everywhere to children who have their own cell phones, and video games have reached a sophistication that really overwhelms the minds and emotions of the children who play them. Not to mention social media, which exercises an enormous pull, and lets young people live alternate, unreal lives outside the control of educators. It is a nightmare when these influences come into the lives of our young people.

This culture of revolt threatens differently the various members of society: children, parents, teachers—all of us. We have to be on our guard against attitudes in ourselves that actually reflect the spirit of the world and the spirit of revolt against God.

Father, isn't the phrase "the spirit of the world" a bit of a cliché as well? What is this spirit of the world we are so often warned against?

One of the difficulties that we Catholics and educators deal with daily is that words have lost their impact, we are so disconnected from what is real.

The spirit of the world rejects the spirit of Christ—ultimately, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who makes us cry to God, "Abba, Father," as His children, coheirs with Christ. The spirit of the world is the *Non serviam* of Satan, an attitude of independence from God. Concretely, for us, the spirit of the world comes whenever we separate the details of our daily life from the principles of our Faith.

Our schools have to struggle, because our work is not flashy or exciting or a work of quick domination. It is a work of gradual submission of each individual student to God's order, in nature and grace.

Father, how do our schools go about giving a Catholic education in this context of universal revolt?

As Archbishop Lefebvre said of the Society, our work is not primarily *against* the crisis, but *for* the Mass and the Catholic faith. In our schools, we strengthen children against the world by a strong, deliberate, faithful attachment to the traditions of Catholic education.

First of all, the education which we offer in our schools is Thomistic. St. Thomas Aquinas is the patron of Catholic schools, and his solid principles of philosophy and theology are at the basis of our curriculum and our teaching methods. These principles tell us about God and His creation, and especially about human nature and grace: how grace builds on nature, how nature grows, how nature is wounded by original sin. These principles tell us about what is *real*, about the world around us and about ourselves and the truths of our supernatural destiny. St. Thomas is very realistic, and if we respect these principles that he presents to us so clearly, our smallest practical decisions will



How to Get a Solid Catholic Formation . . .

in Paris!

Fr. François-Marie Chautard, Rector of the Institut Universitaire Saint-Pie X

Could you tell us a little about the IUSPX?

The Institut Universitaire Saint-Pie X, or IUSPX, is located in the heart of Paris, near the Rue du Bac and Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, in a land which was part of Christendom for centuries and whose history is full of memories of St. Thomas, St. Louis, St. Francis de Sales, as well as Abelard, La Fayette, and Napoleon.

The IUSPX was founded in 1980 by university professors desirous of founding a truly Catholic university, one that would guarantee reliable teaching free of modern errors. After the riots of May 1968 (in France but also elsewhere), they wished to create a college where they could pass on the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual heritage of our Greco-Roman and Christian civilization to the young people who desired to receive it.

From the outset the Institut was entrusted to the Society of St. Pius X at the request of its

founders, who went to Archbishop Lefebvre in February 1980.

What degrees does the IUSPX offer?

Classical Literature (now officially known as Humanities), History, and Philosophy.

Why these three majors?

Because they are particularly conducive to ennobling the minds of our students, and what we seek first and foremost is to form the minds and souls of our youth before they set out into the practical and often utilitarian universe of professional life.

Jacqueline de Romilly, a great French Hellenist and member of the Académie Française, once said, “It is a mistake to imagine that the more important thing to think about is career opportunities, without necessarily considering what will be truly useful for the formation of the youth..”¹

And no one can deny that history, philosophy, and literature are excellent means for uplifting minds.

Furthermore, they truly deserve to be known as Humanities, not in the pagan sense of an elevation of a man without original sin or grace, but in the classical sense of the *Humaniores Litterae*, the formation of the highest human faculties through the study of literary subjects; these studies ennoble the loftiest part of man: his intelligence, his will, his memory, his sensitivity.

“Indeed,” wrote Monsignor Dupanloup, “when we say a child is doing his Humanities or that he has to do his Humanities, it is a very commonplace expression, but it has a very profound meaning and expresses something admirable. What does it mean? That he has to become a man... Where do a nation’s schools get their dignity and sovereign importance? From the fact that they are where the Humanities are studied, where men are made...”

Who preserved European society from barbarianism in the Middle Ages? The popes, Charlemagne, the bishops and monks, by means of the Humanities.

Who raised modern Europe up to be the greatest civilization? Who made the 16th century in Italy and Spain? Who made the 17th century in France and Europe? Again, it was the Church, the teaching religious congregations and the Catholic universities, by means of the strongest, most brilliant and most religious Humanities ever.”²

“They are not only a country’s inner need,” added Guizot, minister to the French king Louis-Philippe in the 19th century, “they are its dignity, its credit in the world. Without the cultivation of greatness of mind, there can be no lasting depth, and minds only become great by being formed in classic masterworks from childhood so that they can glean the treasures of the past.”³

The same spirit is expressed in Archbishop Lefebvre’s charter for the schools of the Society of St. Pius X: “These schools... respect the hierarchy of the sciences, attributing the priority to realist philosophy, the Humanities and history, in order to form an upright judgment with a classical formation of the mind” (§5).

More precisely, these subject matters accomplish the *cultura animi* (culture of the mind) spoken of by Cicero. They form both its contents and its form.

First of all, they nourish the mind by transmitting to it the best and most profound part of what the past has bequeathed to us. Entering into history, literature or philosophy means coming into contact with the great men of the past and their heritage.

The study of these monuments of the past offers a true school of truth, goodness, and beauty, and the teachings of the past shed light on the present.

When Tocqueville wrote about American democracy, he developed an extremely subtle analysis that enlightens us as to the current development of the Western countries.

When one opens Plato’s dialogues that relate Socrates’ debates with the Sophists, one sees how infected our society is with the gangrene of their same intellectual diseases.

As for literature, it plunges one into the heart of the timeless man, it gives an understanding of human psychology and its intricacies, allowing for exceptionally lofty perspective.

These subject matters also refine the moral sense. Forming a conscience is a long, delicate, and difficult undertaking. It requires intelligence, moral virtue, and sensitivity, all qualities that are excellently formed by the Humanities. Mathematics enrich the mind, but not the heart, and certainly not moral virtue, which is completely foreign to mathematics.

“I have seen classes laugh at Socratic irony,” remarks Jacqueline de Romilly. “They were for Socrates and against his ignorant or conceited



Fr. François-Marie Chautard.

AVAILABLE SOON FROM ANGELUS PRESS

Available soon!

The Courage to Be Afraid

Fr. Marie-Dominique Molinié, O.P.

Translation by Fr. Alexander Wiseman, SSPX

The Courage to Be Afraid is remarkably different from other spiritual books. It is a tour de force that examines many aspects of the Christian life, yet always returning to a simple, powerful theme: we have to let God act. Fr. Molinié addresses himself to us, children of the modern world, in order to recall us forcefully to what never changes, no matter the state of things: the divine life is in us, and will transform us if we surrender to it. **“God’s love is a consuming fire...”**

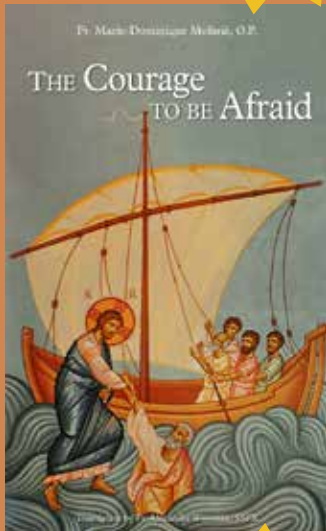
“Fr. Molinié brings us back to the essentials of the Gospel: the simplicity of following Christ and the grandeur of God’s plan for us. Every Catholic will find in this book clarity, rejuvenation, and wisdom.”

—Fr. Alexander Wiseman, SSPX

Some of the themes included in this book:

- Nature and grace
- Combat between pride and humility
- Development and stages of the spiritual life
- Suffering and the Mystery of God

236 pp. Color softcover, STK# 8797 \$21.95



Available soon!

The Story of Fr. George Kathrein, C.Ss.R.

Fr. Alphonsus Maria Krutsinger, C.Ss.R.

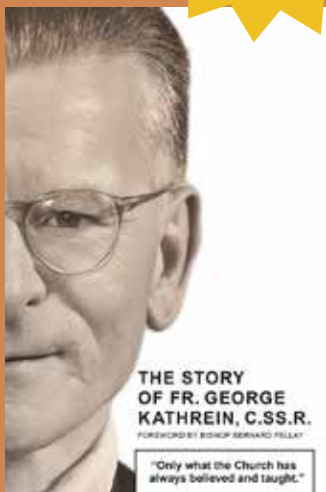
Foreword by Bishop Bernard Fellay

The life of Fr. Kathrein is a reminder to all readers, especially newer generations who are too young to have experienced the spiritual abandonment that traditionalist Catholics went through during the years after Vatican II. It also serves as a reminder that the fight itself has not changed, even if the tactics have mutated with time and circumstances: our goal is to eradicate the neo-Modernist errors from the Catholic Church, and to restore the Church’s own unchanging and infallible Tradition to the hierarchy and to the faithful, who have been left spiritually poor and abandoned due to the erroneous teachings, poor catechesis, and liturgical anarchy of the past 60 years. Only Catholic Tradition can efficaciously give the life of God to souls for His glory and for their salvation and sanctification.

“You will find here an uncommon life of a Redemptorist in the middle of the torment of Vatican II, the catastrophe of the 20th century. The damage it caused worldwide to souls, first the Catholic souls, then any soul... is beyond any imagination.... Suddenly, the normal actions, the normal life turns into heroism. This example should give us joy and courage for our times.”

—Bishop Bernard Fellay

283 pages. Color softcover. STK# 8823 \$16.95



Fr. Alphonsus Maria Krutsinger, C.Ss.R., made his religious profession in 1994 and was ordained by Bishop Fellay in 2000. Since 2005, he has been preaching parish missions and retreats throughout the English-speaking world.

www.angeluspress.org | 1-800-966-7337

Please visit our website to see our entire selection of books and music.