



The Scholé Way with Christopher Perrin

Lecture 6: Thomas Aquinas and the Sanctification of Learning

Outline:

In this lesson, Dr. Christopher Perrin explores Thomas Aquinas' *Prayer Before Study* as an example of how learning can become a form of prayer. He examines Aquinas' poetic language and theological insights, connecting the prayer to classical education and the sanctification of intellectual pursuits.

“What would it be like if you could create a discipline of prayer before every segment of study in your life or the life of your students?”

The Integration of Prayer and Study

- Introduction to *Prayer Before Study* by Thomas Aquinas
- The classical and medieval tradition of sanctifying learning
- Study as a form of prayer, as seen in Aquinas and Basil

Recitation and Structure of the Prayer

- Encouragement to recite the prayer multiple times
- The prayer's poetic structure and its role in classical education
- Reading as an act of contemplation and worship

Key Themes in Aquinas' Prayer

- God as the “true font of light and wisdom”
- The metaphor of light and its connection to learning
- The invocation of angels and cosmic order in study
- The plea for knowledge where ignorance and sin persist

The Five Requests for Learning

- Keeness of mind
- Capacity to remember



- Skill in learning
- Subtlety to interpret
- Eloquence in speech

The Classical Vision of Education and Rhetoric

- Eloquence as a classical goal of education (connection to Quintilian)
- The importance of clear and virtuous speech in the intellectual life
- The prayer's final petition for divine guidance in study

Applying the Prayer to Classical Education

- How educators and students can incorporate this prayer into their studies
- Making study a form of worship and communion with God
- Developing habits of contemplation alongside academic rigor

