



## The Catholic Tradition of Classical Education with Dr. Andrew Seeley

### Lesson 10: The Magisterial Documents of the Church Continued

#### Outline:

##### Definition of a school

- What is the definition of a school?
- What is the extension of that definition to a Catholic school, how closely does it follow the vision of Classical education?

##### Catholic School Document

- Document published by the congregation for Catholic Education in 1977 is called the Catholic School
- Document emphasizes importance for all the teachers and administrators to organize, understand and transmit a concrete vision of their goals.
- Catholic schools need to retain and defend their Catholic identity, even if it means detracting from the educational policy of other schools and adapting their own.
- It's important for all faculty to adhere to the same vision and values, even if they are teaching subjects that seem unrelated to the Catholic faith.
- The authority to educate comes from having goals and a vision. It's a travesty to teach only according to criteria ordained by administration, without understanding the purpose behind it. It's unhealthy for the students to have no vision or structure in their system.
- **Example One:** *Mathematician's lament*, article by Paul Lockhart, a Colombian PHD in Mathematics.
- Summary: The Mathematics that [Lockhart] loved and pursued in my education is not taught in K-12 education but Formula memorization and training in how to apply it as soon as possible. It's like presenting Music Theory to students 5 days a week, one hour a day, all of their K-12 years, without letting them hear music at all.
- **Example Two:** Valedictorian address from a young girl, Erica Goldberg. "I proved that I was the best at doing what I was told to do, and working the system. But I am a human being, an adventurer, a thinker, not a worker. A worker is trapped within repetition, a slave of the system set up before him."

##### Cultural Pluralism

- Other great danger for Catholic school, according to document.
- Cultural Pluralism signifies many competing views on what life is all about.



- There is a likelihood of us abandoning the search for truth amongst all these separate views, or giving up hope of finding true meaning, becoming relativist.
- If you are going to form a school where there is no commonly understood set of values, then you are going to end up reducing education to what we can all agree upon.
  - Materialism - if we can figure out how to work nature properly, we can harness nature and get financial progress.
  - Pragmatism - let's just figure out how to solve problems
  - Technocracy - ultimately submitting to a culture of relying on machines which we don't know how to control very much anymore

## Definition of school

- Depends on how much it fits with the classical understanding of education
- Definition: Place of integral formation by critically assimilating a culture into a system
- Classical Education focuses the school towards creating a communal experience, so that people in it can experience a true community
- The school educates by pulling from this culture, and students assimilate this culture through the school.
- Objective is to help students fit truth from subject areas. It is integral that it develops all human faculties - mind, soul, imagination, heart, will. All this help inform and strengthen who you are and what you are about.
- Teachers need to collaborate on a subject sometimes whenever their disciplines overlap over it, which will help the students approach it from different scholarly understandings.
- This is what the character of all Catholic schools should be like according to the Catholic document
- So we never forget how each of the subject areas is to encounter Christ. The document goes on to describe two aspects where we merge:
  - Catholic school's task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith. Involves all aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught in light of the Gospel. Reached in growth of the Christian's virtuous characteristics
- Catholic school's task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith. Involves all aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught in light of the Gospel. Reached in growth of the Christian's virtuous characteristics.