



## Disability and Classical Education: Student Formation in Keeping with Our Common Humanity with Dr. Amy Richards

### Lecture 3: The Blessing of Welcome

#### Outline:

##### The Blessing of Welcome: The Doxological Classroom

- How might we describe a school shaped by the practice of telic attention and the openness to strange vocations that it cultivates?
- A school shaped by telic attention will be shaped by doxological classroom.

##### Doxology

- Doxology is the practice of collective liturgical praise of God and his cosmic ordering of the world.
- Doxology is the study of glory. This is the praise of the Divine.
- Doxology indicates our contentment to be creatures (adoring man).
- Praise is embodied in songs and even in dance. It is a poetic rather than discursive practice. It is free.
- To truly welcome all people as gift, we need to acknowledge the ways in which everything is gift and respond appropriately.
- People with certain kinds of intellectual disabilities seem to be able to friends with time.
  - They are not in a rush to move on to the next thing.
  - They see people before tasks.
  - They want to love.
  - If we listen to them, we may learn to reclaim a part of our own humanity.

##### What does it mean to have a doxological classroom?

- The gestalt of doxology looks for glory in each student and in any subjects we pursue together in light of their place in the great economy.
- It understands each person and the world primarily as gift.

##### Why talk about doxological classrooms rather than inclusive classrooms?

- We want to include all students in the project of classical education.



- Language of inclusion is not adequate to the task of defining our approach to the place of students with disabilities and learning differences in our schools.
- Key trouble with language of inclusion is that it presumes prior exclusion.
- When an inclusion model is used without prior commitment to the why or proper attention to the how of incorporated students with disabilities and learning differences into a school community, the result is often burned out, frustrated teachers and poorer education for everyone.
- The vision has to come first.
- The inclusion model does not have the resources to offer genuine welcome because it has not fully transcended the cult of normalcy.
- Doxological classrooms would ideally anticipate difference by being designed to receive the gift of strange vocations that they expect to appear in their presences (universal design).

### A potential worry

- We might worry, “Will classrooms oriented in this way cease to be classical?”
  - Aren’t classical schools committed to not throwing away received forms?
  - Aren’t we trying to recover the wisdom of the past, not subject it to new scrutiny in the tyranny of the present?
  - Two key responses to this question:
    - Are some of the practices to which we are attached are in fact classical (such as grade levels)?
    - The second response is about the nature of the project of classical recovery and renewal.
    - A third: There is a difference between a practice not arising in a classical educational model and a practice being incompatible with or contradictory to a classical educational model.

Doxological classrooms as places of genuine welcome that anticipate difference through the practice of telic attention.

- The practice of classical education itself might be our own strange vocation.
- When we, as classical educators, take up our own strange vocations we do so in a posture of blessing appropriate to the study of glory.
- Every classical school will not be able to welcome every student. These are matters for prayerful prudence.