



## Scholé Learning with Dr. Christopher Perrin

### Lesson 3: Scholé in the Ecclesial Tradition

#### Outline:

#### The Ecclesial Tradition of Scholé: Great Church Fathers

##### Augustine of Hippo (1:45)

- Augustine (354-430 AD) wrote *The Confessions* and *The City of God*.
- Augustine was a “Theologian of Rest.”
  - Humanity finds its delight when it restfully contemplates worthwhile things (divine truth).
  - The soul can perceive truth, but that truth is the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- Augustine also taught a “Double Love,” or a love for God and a love for our neighbor.
  - In *The Confessions* Book 19, Augustine emphasizes an active life (*vita activa*) and a contemplative life (*vita contemplativa*).
    - Luke 10 (Mary and Martha visit with Jesus) portrays Mary as *vita contemplativa* and Martha as *vita activa*.
    - Augustine suggests that the contemplative life is superior, but active and contemplative are needed.

##### St. Gregory the Great (8:22)

- Gregory (540-604 AD) was born in Rome and later became Pope.
- Gregory believed that both the active and the contemplative life are needed for a harmonious life!
  - Learning in school or homeschool must be *both active and contemplative*.
- Gregory wrote in *Moralia* that Christ’s life was an example of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*; Jesus performed active miracles in the day and contemplative prayers at night.

##### Basil of Caesarea (14:08)

- Basil (330-379 AD) was an Eastern Orthodox Saint or Greek Father.
- Basil replaced the ideal of scholé in the Christian tradition with *prayer*; prayer to God became the highest form of contemplation.

##### Thomas Aquinas (15:00)

- Aquinas (1225-1274) was a great theologian of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- In his *Summa Theologica* Question 182, Aquinas wrote that a man might be called away from the active life for a time, but he must not forsake the contemplative life.
  - For Aquinas (similar to Augustine and Luke 10), the contemplative life is better because the true, good, and beautiful things we



contemplate become permanent possession, while an active life passes away.

## Monasticism (19:48)

- Monastic education (European, Western) meant spiritual, leisurely learning!
  - Men and women left active society to pursue lives of contemplative leisure, which included both contemplation and activity.
- How can we set aside time in our lives for *scholé*, or spiritual leisure? How can the following list be a part of our schools?
  - *Lectio divina*— “Divine Reading,” or thoughtful, slow rereading of a Scripture to meditate on its meaning and truth
  - *Florilegium*— “Book of Flowers,” like a commonplace notebook
  - Praying the Hours—Monks prayed 7 to 8 times a day, weaving prayer into their daily schedule
  - *Ora et Labora*— “Pray and work,” a Benedictine or monastic practice

## Monastic Architecture (26:35)

- A monastery’s architecture suggests a community approach to contemplation and activity.
  - Construction: Communal dining, chapter meetings, prayer spaces
  - Restful architecture: Breezeway between classes and gardens
  - Monastic cells: Paintings on walls to contemplate true, good, beautiful
  - Monastic books: Hymn books, illuminated texts



*Fra Angelico's Annunciation and Baptism of Christ*



## The Reformation (28:40)

- The Reformation was an energetic time of recover and return to the purity of Church teachings.
- It emphasized activity and energy rather than contemplation; leaders like Martin Luther were skeptical of monasteries, which faced criticism due to corruption.

## The Puritans (31:05)

- Despite having a dour reputation, Puritans enjoyed themselves through recreation, drinks, celebrations and parties.
- Puritans saw a person's work ethic as a manifestation of his or her zeal for God.
- Despite emphasizing *vita activa*, Jonathan Edwards spent 13 hours in his study (*vita contemplativa*).

## Josef Pieper (32:52)

- Josef Pieper (1904-1997) was a German Catholic philosopher who studied Aquinas.
- He wrote *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, in which he said that scholé can renew culture by “a total immersion in the real,” or the true, good, and beautiful.
  - 2 conditions for perceiving the true, good, and beautiful:
    - An attitude of receptive openness and attentive silence
    - The ability to celebrate a feast