
A Letter from the Community of

ST. TIMOTHY'S

Leading Students to Reverence Truth, Desire Goodness, and Rejoice in Beauty

Fall 2011

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Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church

Contact Information

St. Timothy's Classical Academy
c/o 350 Avondale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K2A 0R5
Telephone: 613-794-1750
www.st-timothys.ca

An Excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI's Address to Artists

For this newsletter we have decided to focus on Beauty. We hope you will find the following excerpt from Pope Benedict XIV's address to artists on November 21, 2009 helpful in your own musings on "rejoicing in Beauty" this Advent and Christmas. We hope, too, that St. Timothy's will be a place of great beauty that draws all who come to us to the Creator of all beauty.

"[...] an essential function of genuine beauty, as emphasized by Plato, is that it gives man a healthy "shock", it draws him out of himself, wrenches him away from resignation and from being content with the humdrum – it even makes him suffer, piercing him like a dart, but in so doing it "reawakens" him, opening afresh the eyes of his heart and mind, giving him wings, carrying him aloft. Dostoevsky's words that I am about to quote are bold and paradoxical, but they invite reflection. He says this: "Man can live without science, he can live without bread, but without beauty he could no longer live, because there would no longer be anything to do to the world. The whole secret is here, the whole of history is here." The painter Georges Braque echoes this sentiment: "Art is meant to disturb, science reassures." Beauty pulls us up short, but in so doing it reminds us of our final destiny, it sets us back on our

path, fills us with new hope, gives us the courage to live to the full the unique gift of life. The quest for beauty that I am describing here is clearly not about escaping into the irrational or into mere aestheticism.

Too often, though, the beauty that is thrust upon us is illusory and deceitful, superficial and blinding, leaving the onlooker dazed; instead of bringing him out of himself and opening him up to horizons of true freedom as it draws him aloft, it imprisons him within himself and further enslaves him, depriving him of hope and joy. It is a seductive but hypocritical beauty that rekindles desire, the will to power, to possess, and to dominate others, it is a beauty which soon turns into its opposite, taking on the guise of indecency, transgression or gratuitous provocation. Authentic beauty, however, unlocks the yearning of the human heart, the profound desire to know, to love, to go towards the Other, to reach for the Beyond. If we acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us, that it opens our eyes, then we rediscover the joy of seeing, of being able to grasp the profound meaning of our existence, the Mystery of which we are part; from this Mystery we can draw fullness, happiness, the passion to engage with it every day [...]

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Director's Comments: Reading with Our Ears

My old friend Joyce Derstine died in November, and I am going to honour her memory by reading James Joyce's *Ulysses*. My friend was a clear-thinking and straight-talking woman who served for years as the fashion editor of the *Globe and Mail*. She always said that I was lucky for having not read *Ulysses*, since I had a wonderful experience waiting in my future.

She was known for the clarity and simplicity of her own journalistic writing, but James Joyce was her favourite author because he *sounded* so lovely. He was obsessed with the oral language – so much so that with his novel *Finnegan's Wake* he abandoned good syntax in favour of sound - the way the words roll in the mouth and come out.

Joyce was not by any means the first writer to do this. The Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote for sound, and the almost syntactical style of his choral odes has tormented students for thousands of years. One of my favourite poets, Gerard Manley Hopkins, also loved the sound of the language, and it makes some of his poetry very difficult to understand, the sentence structure hidden as it is inside his alliterative and rhythmic structures. The fourth stanza of his poem "*The Wreck of the Deutschland*" sends shivers up my spine, largely because of its sound:

I am soft sift
In an hourglass—at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

We're obviously not at this point at St. Timothy's where we will tell the students to make free with grammar and sentence structure. Still, we should encourage them to "write (and read) with the ear, not the eye," as C.S. Lewis said. So I'm going to pick up *Ulysses* and try to read it with my ears. While so much language is printed on paper, its real beauty comes when we read it out loud.

What Is STEP? By Alex Small

Hello Everyone, I am here to let you know about the enjoyment we have had in the St. Timothy's Endurance Programme(STEP) and how much the students' running has improved. It was fun to spend time with my fellow students and to get exercise at the same time. Other children were motivated by clocking up the kilometers in order to gain their STEP running shirt, and then after that for different coloured shoe laces (10km - blue, 20km - purple or brown, 35km - green, and up!). All the students improved incredibly. My own reward is that I can now run faster than my Dad (I hope he agrees with that!).

This Fall we had our first Cross Country Meet with Maryvale Academy. Each grade had to run a different distance: 1 km for the Grade 1s and 2s, 2 kms for the Grade 3s and 4s, 3 kms for the Grade 5s and 6s and 4 kms for the Grade 7s and up. It was exciting to have more students to compete against and it was fun to support our friends. I was encouraged in my last few laps by the cheers from parents of both schools. We all really enjoyed the Cross Country Meet and I hope it becomes an annual event. Thanks to Mrs. Small (my Mum!) for starting STEP and getting the St. Tim's kids out running.

Beauty...Continued from page 1

Beauty, whether that of the natural universe or that expressed in art, precisely because it opens up and broadens the horizons of human awareness, pointing us beyond ourselves, bringing us face to face with the abyss of Infinity, can become a path towards the transcendent, towards the ultimate Mystery, towards God. Art, in all its forms, at the point where it encounters the great questions of our existence, the fundamental themes that give life its meaning, can take on a religious quality, thereby turning into a path of profound inner reflection and spirituality. This close proximity, this harmony between the journey of faith and the artist's path is attested by countless artworks that are based upon the personalities, the stories, the symbols of that immense deposit of "figures" – in the broad sense – namely the Bible, the Sacred Scriptures. The great biblical narratives, themes, images and parables have inspired innumerable masterpieces in every sector of the arts, just as they have spoken to the hearts of believers in every generation through the works of craftsmanship and folk art, that are no less eloquent and evocative.

"Since love grows
within you, so beauty
grows. For love is the
beauty of the soul."
St. Augustine

Voices from Our Community:
St. Timothy's through the Eyes of My Two Boys
By Belinda Riscalas

My son Timothy had practically chosen the school before we even did! He heard its name and said, "Mummy, that's my school!" His brother, though, quickly piped up, "And I will be going to St. Nicolas' school!" And that's how our journey into the wonderful world of classical education began. My twin boys are now in their second year of school, having completed senior kindergarten. I never thought they would ever sit quietly through chapel, but now they are quick to coax the younger kids into sitting still and are bothered when they turn around and distract them! How quickly they seem to be growing up.

Thursday afternoon is one of the highlights of the week as they get to sing in the choir. When I picked them up the first Thursday they proudly announced they had learnt their first Latin song and burst into singing, "Jubi Lucky Deo Omnes Dentist!" I tried to stifle my laughter. The world of learning is also opening up before their eyes as they master spelling, practise journal writing, mathematics, reading, penmanship, phonics and history. (Their love of mathematics, I believe, was cleverly cultivated by Mr. Musca's math mobile in the parking lot, where the kids try to compete for a trophy after school by completing math questions). Their reading seems to improve every day and somehow their fine art skills are also improving so I can actually recognize what they are drawing (they don't get that from me!).

But what's truly beautiful (of everlasting beauty) about this little school is the love for the children that is so palpable wherever you turn. The kids are greeted with a hand-shake – and looked in the eye when they arrive and depart each day, and then lovingly taught by committed teachers how to treat each other respectfully and help one another. The older kids take a genuine interest in the well-being of the younger kids and are often seen consoling a little one who has scraped his or her knee, or helping one of my sons get into his snow suit. Truly it is a beautiful thing to behold two little boys learning the foundational skills of reading and writing in a loving and enriching environment, rooted in the love for our Lord. Being inspired to observe nature around them (last year their SK class watched a chrysalis turn into a monarch butterfly and this year the grade ones joined the rest of the school on a wonderful hike in the Gatineau park) and to take care of one another. Today, I asked Nicolas "What do you like MOST about school?" and he replied, "EVERYTHING!"

Pied Beauty
By Gerard Manley Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Highlights from This Term

A fall tromp in the Gatineau Hills for almost the whole school (Grades 1-8).

A trip to Stoney Swamp (SK).

A visit to the butterflies at Carleton University (SK).

"Laces and Races" with STEP, St. Timothy's running club. Thanks go to Jenny and her group of mums and especially to Gary's Dad for the splendid running shirts (Grade 3-8).

The cross country competition with Maryvale Academy (Grades 1-8).

Pumpkin painting with the Seniors at St. Maurice's (Grades 3-4).

A visit to the Museum of Nature to complete a science unit on minerals and rocks (Grades 3-4).

"I have an apatite!" More about rocks and minerals with Mr. Scherf and Mrs. Suci (Senior!) (Grades 3-4).

Examining the movement of tendons using real chicken feet in science class (Grades 5-6).

Fingering a pig's stomach to learn more about the human stomach (Grades 5-6).

Swimming at Dovercourt and the JCC pool (Grades SK-8 plus siblings).

A visit to the St. Maurice Seniors to join in their exercise class (SK).

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His
shoulder.

And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government
and peace there will be no end.

(Isaiah 9:6)

The Reader's Nook

Young Children's Picture Books

Saint Nicholas: The story of the real Santa Claus

retold by Mary Joslin, illustrated by Helen Cann

This compellingly told and boldly illustrated story is a spiritually refreshing glimpse into the life of humble, pious, and generous Nicholas, Bishop of Myra.

The Star Child

by J & W Grimm, illustrated by Bernadette Watts

In the tradition of St. Francis, a young girl gives away even the little she has and is rewarded for her goodness. Watts' illustrations are beautiful.

Bella's Tree

by Janet Russell, illustrated by Jirina Marton

An interesting story about a "crooked" grandmother, a young girl and her dog, and their search for the perfect Christmas tree. Native birds and trees are lovingly included in this tale.

A is for Angels: A Bible Alphabet

written & illustrated by Laurie Parker
Not just for small children, this alphabet of poeticized Bible stories is accompanied by stunningly beautiful illustrations and by Scripture verses that can be used for memory work or simply to rejoice in the beauty and power of God's Word.

Red Sings from Treetops

by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski

A fun romp through the seasons with

colours and sounds. This book was surprisingly uplifting to read. The illustrations are fun-loving and beautifully quirky.

Books for Older Children

A Circling of Oakleaves & Eagle's Egg

by Rosemary Sutcliff

If your young reader is tired of the "baby" books you might want to try Sutcliff's history tales for first readers. Well written and gripping, these books give the reader a sense of accomplishment once read. Especially appealing for young boys.

A Prairie Boy's Winter

written and illustrated by William Kurelek

This Canadian classic pairs Kurelek's lively paintings with his equally lively memories of childhood on the prairies. Presented in vignette style, yet woven together to narrate the adventures of a whole season, this book can be read to younger children over several nights, while older ones may take it all in at a single read. Grandparents, even great-grandparents, may enjoy reading this to the younger generations, and adding their own memories of those harsh yet joyful winters.

They Sought a New World

by William Kurelek and Margaret S. Engelhart

Kurelek gives us a deeper understanding and sympathy for the struggles of the first immigrants.

Adult Reads

The Mind of the Maker

by Dorothy Sayers

Sayers, who will be familiar to many in the classical education community for her essay "The Lost Tools of Learning," takes on in this book the courageous task of trying to articulate how human artistic (and especially literary) creativity is linked to the creativity of God. Philosophical and theological, this is a book that will stimulate and challenge the thoughtful reader.

For the surfer in you...

ArtWay is an international and interdenominational web site of Christianity and the visual arts. The site includes a selection of articles, by well-known authors, on beauty and creativity.

www.artway.eu/artway.asp?lang=en

Michael O'Brien, an Eastern Ontario painter, novelist and essayist has a web site on which you can view many of his paintings and read excerpts from his writings and talks.

www.studiobrien.com

This article comments on how our busy lives are impeding our ability to recognise beauty. Would you have stopped to listen?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/04/AR2007040401721.html>

Random Acts of Culture bring many to tears through the beauty created in unexpected places. To watch the audience's reaction as they listen to a surprise free concert of a classical work is a lot of fun, especially as you do not know who in the crowd will emerge as a musician.

www.knightarts.org/random-acts-of-culture

St. Timothy's Classical Academy - a little school that rejoices in beauty.

www.st-timothys.ca

Please Pray for Our School

- ❖ That Jesus Christ will always be the light for our school.
 - ❖ Praise God for a wonderful Fall Term.
 - ❖ Thanksgiving for Bromley's renovations. We have real classrooms and so much space!
 - ❖ Praise the Lord for the gift of new families and the new enthusiasm they bring to our community.
 - ❖ Thanksgiving for our teachers and the work they put in to teach our children to reverence truth, desire goodness, and rejoice in beauty.
 - ❖ Please continue to pray for new families to join our community.
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