

Born in Wonder, Brought to Wisdom

A Philosophical Vision Statement
for the
Fulfillment of a
Catholic Liberal Education
at
Wyoming Catholic College



Introduction

In the early stages of planning in 2004, the original founders of Wyoming Catholic College realized that a college has the moral duty to explain clearly what it stands for. Consequently, they asked Dr. Robert K. Carlson, one of their fellow founders, to write this philosophical vision statement, which was officially adopted by the Board of Directors of the College in 2005. This statement sets forth and clarifies the fundamental philosophical, religious, and educational principles underlying the mission of the College. The two appendices by Dr. Jeremy Holmes, approved by the Board of Directors in January, 2012, expand on two important aspects of the College adumbrated in this vision statement, namely, our Outdoor Leadership Program and our technology policy.

In WCC's vision statement, Dr. Carlson considers it necessary to discuss the philosophical and religious underpinnings, the occasion for the College, and the nature of liberal education. He then orders this discussion to three purposes: the immediate, the proximate, and the final. The immediate purpose is the development of physical, moral, and intellectual virtues; the proximate purpose is the acculturation of our students—which makes them true citizens of Western culture; and the final purpose concerns happiness and the role that liberal education plays in helping the students achieve it.

In July of 2005, Wyoming Catholic College was founded to fulfill this philosophical vision statement. As the College grows, we pray that, with God's help, it will always remain true to the principles contained in this statement.



Mission Statement

Wyoming Catholic College is a four-year college committed to offering a liberal arts education that steeps its students in the awesome beauty of our created, natural world and imbues them with the best that has been thought and said in Western civilization, including the moral and intellectual heritage of the Catholic Church. The College strives to promote a love of learning, an understanding of natural order, and the quest for virtuous living so that its graduates will assume their responsibilities as citizens in a free society.

The curriculum and campus are devoted to the formation of the whole person, i.e., the spiritual, physical, and intellectual dimensions. Studies include the classics of literature, history, mathematics, science, languages, philosophy, fine arts, and theology. They employ the Great Books as well as the natural created world, effecting a rich combination of intellectual and experiential or poetic knowledge. Students' imaginations will be enriched and their capacity for wonder deepened. Moreover, students and faculty share in a campus life that reflects the ideals taught directly and indirectly in the classroom.

In the Catholic tradition, emphasis lies not on the dissemination of information but rather on the development and perfection of the intellect, the passions, and the will, enabling students to approach and embrace the good, the true, and the beautiful throughout their lives.

In addressing the whole person, the College contributes, finally, to the students' spiritual and moral formation. This is done via Catholic culture, context, and traditions. The faculty and College will be faithful to the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church and the deposit of faith handed down over the past two thousand years.



The Philosophical and Religious Foundations of Wyoming Catholic College

“The beginning is the most important part of the work,” says Plato. Certainly, in constructing a house we understand the truth of this. If it is to endure, then its beginning—its foundation—must be true to line, square, and level. The same holds in founding an educational institution. It must be based upon a true foundation—a philosophy of education—in order to achieve its purpose and thrive.

Scripture reminds us that there is something even more primary than the foundation, namely, the ground upon which the foundation is set: “The rains fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set on solid rock.” Similarly, a college must be grounded on rocks of sound philosophy and religion because, ultimately, it derives from these. If an educator errs about the nature of man and his relationship to God and reality (which are primary philosophical and religious concerns), he will also err in his philosophy of education. The philosophical and religious rocks upon which Wyoming Catholic College is founded are therefore explained here, briefly and generally.

THE TWOFOLD PATH TO TRUTH

Human history shows that we are continuously on a journey to discover truth. Truth ought thus to be the principal concern of any educational institution. Because we are spiritual creatures made in the image and likeness of God and are therefore rational, we wonder, raise fundamental questions, and seek true answers: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? The core of these questions is the quest for the meaning of life and, as Pope John Paul II says, “Here begins, then, the journey which will lead [man] to discover ever new frontiers of knowledge.” Formal liberal education should help us discover true answers to such questions as we take our journey.

How do we acquire sure knowledge of truth? Catholic tradition holds that there are two means, by reason and by divine faith, the respective objects of which are natural and revealed truth. The First Vatican Council delineates this:

There exists a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only as regards their source, but also as regards their object. With regard to the source, because we know in one by natural reason, in the other by divine faith. With regard to the object, because besides those things which natural reason can attain, there are proposed for our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless they are divinely revealed, cannot be known.

REASON: THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY

In respect to reason and its object, natural truth, the rock of philosophy underlying Wyoming Catholic College is called the *Philosophia Perennis*, the Perennial Philosophy. It is called “perennial” (or “traditional”) insofar as it follows the common understanding of God, man, and reality handed down from the ancient Greek philosophers (Socrates,

Plato, and Aristotle) and the Bible through the Christian Middle Ages and the Renaissance into our own times.

Jacques Maritain describes the Perennial Philosophy in its nascent or pre-reflective form:

It can therefore claim to be abiding and permanent (*Philosophia Perennis*) in the sense that . . . it existed from the dawn of humanity in germ . . . as an instinct of the understanding and natural knowledge of the first principles of reason and . . . has remained firm and progressive, a powerful and living tradition, while all other philosophies have been born and have died in turn.

John Paul II, affirming Maritain's view, calls the Perennial Philosophy an "implicit philosophy...within the history of thought as a whole, based upon man's common experience of reality and his common-sense judgments about that reality." Stating some of the first principles of reason that constitute the judgments alluded to by Maritain, John Paul II says,

Although times change and knowledge increases, it is possible to discern a core of philosophical insight within the history of thought as a whole. Consider, for example, the principle of non-contradiction, finality, and causality, as well as the concept of the person as a free and intelligent subject, with the capacity to know God, truth, and goodness. Consider as well certain fundamental moral norms which are shared by all. These are among the indications that, beyond different schools of thought, there exists a body of knowledge which may be judged a kind of spiritual heritage of humanity. It is as if we had come upon an *implicit philosophy*, as a result of which all feel that they possess these principles, albeit in a general and unreflective way.

To possess the principles of an "implicit philosophy"—or of other philosophies—in a specific and *reflective way*, and to reason from these principles to their conclusions, is the job of the philosopher proper, who, by doing so, helps bring the Perennial Philosophy to perfection. St. Thomas Aquinas, by common acclaim, is the philosopher (and theologian) who accomplished this *par excellence*. It is for this reason that St. Thomas will possess pride of place among philosophers at Wyoming Catholic College, and the College will look to him as its guide in teaching the Perennial Philosophy.

According to the Perennial Philosophy, a reality external to the mind exists, the mind can know this reality, and a person can communicate that knowledge. The acceptance of these principles is fundamental to our discussion. From time to time, they have been attacked, as they were by the ancient Greek sophist, Gorgias of Leontini, an antagonist to Socrates, one of the great champions of the Perennial Philosophy. In his book entitled *Of Nature or the Non-Existent*, Gorgias expounded these three denials: (1) that a reality external to the human mind does not exist, (2) that if it does, the human mind cannot know it, and (3) that if anyone could know it, he could not communicate his knowledge to another.

John Senior (former professor at the University of Kansas), in a provocative essay titled "The Perennial Heresy," refutes Gorgias by stating the two most self-evident judgments that all sane persons know to be true: "The real is really real" and "Truth follows upon the existence of things." These judgments underlie the Perennial Philosophy:

With due respect to its failures—for it seems to be failing now—the triumph of three thousand years of Western civilization has been, from the point of view of ideas, the philosophy vaguely called the Perennial Philosophy because it has survived so many seasons. It may be summed up in a sentence: *The real is really real*; or in a word—is. The terse scholastic formula defines it: *Demonstrationis principium 'quod quid est'*—the beginning

of proof is ‘that which is’; or in another: *Veritas sequitur esse rerum*—truth follows upon the existence of things. According to this view, the principle of all things is “to be.”

Senior then expands his statement:

It is the normal mind’s first reaction to the world—to know that it exists. Before he reflects, that is, “bends back” his attention to his own mental and sensory processes, a man first simply looks, smells, tastes, touches, and affirms existence. Not *Cogito ergo sum*; but *Aliquid est, intelligo, ergo sum et ergo cogito*. Something exists and I know it and therefore I know that I exist and think.

In addition to affirming the existence of a reality independent of the human mind and the fact that we can know the truth about it, the Perennial Philosophy also contends, contrary to Gorgias’ third denial, that knowledge can indeed be communicated, as common sense and experience attest. Ironically, Gorgias himself confirms this by the fact that he wrote his book, communicating knowledge to his readers. His position is thus reduced to absurdity by his very writing.

According to the Perennial Philosophy, then, all persons share the same essential nature and have the cognitive power of intellect that enables them to arrive at certain, pre-reflective, and true judgments about a reality independent of the mind. These judgments constitute a knowledge that can be communicated. They are common-sense judgments, which Maritain describes as “vital convictions, instinctively acquired by every sane mind, which compose the domain, wide as humanity, of common sense.” Furthermore, man then reflects upon these “vital convictions” in his attempt to understand them more profoundly, and he reasons from them as he formulates his philosophy.

DIVINE FAITH: THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN RELIGION

In respect to divine faith and its object, revealed truth (the second and most important path to knowledge of truth), Wyoming Catholic College founds its educational philosophy upon the rock of Catholicism. The College is firm in its conviction that, through Jesus Christ, God has revealed certain truths about Himself, man, and reality, truths that reason alone is incapable of knowing and that can be known *only* through divine faith. These truths are contained in the Deposit of Faith that has come down to us through sacred Scripture and Tradition, authentically interpreted, taught, and guarded by the Magisterium of the Holy Catholic Church. An educational institution that ignores supernatural truth is like the blind leading the blind, for such an institution cannot *finally* liberate its students from ignorance and error. The fullness of truth lies only in Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Wyoming Catholic College, in fulfillment of its obligation to be an institution of *Catholic* liberal education, will therefore remain faithful to the Magisterium, particularly according to the 1990 Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* of Pope John Paul II. The religious, moral, and doctrinal principles of the College, those principles both taught and lived, will be those revealed and fulfilled in Christ and His Church.

In sum, Wyoming Catholic College is inspired by the words of the Holy Father who counsels us that we should “be not afraid” in our search for truth, and who states with conviction: “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.”



The Occasion for Founding

WYOMING CATHOLIC COLLEGE

The occasion for founding Wyoming Catholic College is the crisis of disintegration we now face in Western culture, especially in education. Yeats, playing the seer in his poem “The Second Coming,” ominously prophesied in the late 1920s the impending disintegration or anarchy that would decimate modern Western culture: “Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.” And why? Because “the center cannot hold,” Yeats answered.

What did he mean by “the center cannot hold”? The center to which the line of a circle is ordered is a fixed point. One could call this the principle or rule of the circle. A culture, including the component of education, must also be centered. A culture or education without a center is like a curved line disjoined from center; it meanders or retrogresses into anarchy (meaning “without rule or principle”).

Traditionally, the discovery of truth has been the center to which education is ordered. Lynne Cheney, past chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, inferred this in a 1992 report to Congress, “Telling the Truth”:

Long the goal of our colleges and universities, this aim [to discover truth] is enshrined in mottoes: *veritas* at Harvard, *lux et veritas* at Yale and Indiana Universities, *quaecumque sunt vera* at Northwestern . . . For decades educators have affirmed the idea that higher education should be about seeking evidence, evaluating it critically, weighing conflicting opinions—about trying to tell what is true.

And Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in his Harvard commencement speech, cautioned the graduates that “Harvard’s motto is *Veritas*. Many of you have already found out and others will find out in the course of their lives that truth eludes us as soon as our concentration begins to flag, all the while leaving the illusion that we are continuing to pursue it.”

Dennis Quinn, professor at the University of Kansas, has commented on this speech:

History may well judge that for sheer daredevil courage this act [to mention *Veritas*] ranks above defiance of Soviet Communism. It is doubtful that anyone at Harvard (or elsewhere in academe) cares much whether Mr. Solzhenitsyn thinks them cowards. . . . But to speak of *Veritas*! I mean, it is not *done*.

One may speak publicly in obscenities or in glossolalia in these days of liberty unlimited; discourse about any variety of sex is appropriate in polite society; and one may coolly debate the merits of cannibalism and abortion. One may even speak of (if not to) God. But *Veritas* is unmentionable, especially in that naked way—with no quotation marks of apology and without a thicket of qualifiers. It’s a sort of metaphysical streaking.

“Such derision,” Quinn admits, “may seem excessive, but there are large numbers of American academicians who really regard *truth* as an obsolete term.”

Sociologist Edward Shils of the University of Chicago concurs. Writes Shils:

There is abroad today a desire, more frequently expressed by academics in the humanities and the social sciences, to derogate or even to dissolve the idea that truths can be discovered and taught. Denial of the possibility of detachment, denial of the possibility of the disciplined and disinterested search for knowledge, denial of the possibility of objective knowledge, which is true independently of the passions or desires or “material interests” of the discoverer and transmitter have become more common in recent years in certain influential circles of academics. Some academics preach these denials day in and day out.

Why do a large number of academicians think truth is an obsolete term? Because modern man has accepted the old sophism proclaimed by the ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras, that “man is the measure of all things—of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not.”

Solzhenitsyn has asked thus:

How did the West decline from its triumphal march to its present debility?

The mistake must be at the root, at the very foundation of human thought in modern times. I refer to the prevailing Western view of the world which was born in the Renaissance and has found its political expression since the Age of Enlightenment. It became the basis for political and social doctrine and could be called rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. It could be called anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of all.

If each person is the “center of all,” as Solzhenitsyn, echoing Protagoras, said, then each decides for himself what is true. Hence the thought would not be measured by reality, but reality measured by thought. This is tantamount to measuring without a ruler. Truth loses all objectivity; it descends into pure subjectivism; and we no longer seek it as an object, we create it. *Voluntas* replaces *veritas*—will replaces truth. What follows? The term “truth” along with objective truth itself becomes obsolete, nothing but a chimera.

Fr. James V. Schall, in criticizing the modern view, says that “truth has become unfriendly. We ‘hold’ these truths that no truth can exist, that all views are created equal, that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are defined only by ourselves. They have no objective content.” Lamenting, he adds, “Truth, as I say, is unfriendly. Indeed, it is arrogant. It judges. It says of what is that it is, and of what is not, that it is not.”

If truth becomes unfriendly and obsolete, and the cultural center that unites person to person is lost, then what would follow but anarchy and the disintegration of education and culture alike?

EDUCATION AND THE FAMILY

Today, “disintegration” describes that most basic institution of Western culture, the family. Ideally, the family carries the primary responsibility for educating the young, and formal education should be only *in loco parentis*. A *Newsweek* article particularizes the disintegration of the family:

The upheaval is evident everywhere in our culture. Babies have babies, kids refuse to grow up and leave home, affluent Yuppies prize their BMWs more than children, rich and poor children alike blot their minds with drugs, people casually move in with each other and out again. The divorce rate has doubled since 1965, and demographers project that half of all first marriages made today will end in divorce. Six out of ten second marriages will probably

collapse. One third of all children born in the past decade will probably live in a stepfamily before they are 18. One out of every four children today is being raised by a single parent. About 22 percent of children today were born out of wedlock; of those, about a third were born to a teenage mother. One out of every five children lives in poverty; the rate is twice as high among Blacks and Hispanics.

Most of us are still reeling from the shock of such turmoil. Americans—in their living rooms, in their boardrooms and in the halls of Congress—are struggling to understand what has gone wrong. We find family life worse than it was a decade ago, according to a *Newsweek* poll, and we are not sanguine about the next decade.

What has gone wrong? Why do we find family life worse? John Senior provides one prominent reason, namely, that parents have neglected their responsibilities:

In the 1970s they used to flash a question in print across the bottom of the television screen around ten o'clock each night: "Where are your children? Where are your children?" It was a good idea to scare parents because the children were certainly not home in bed, though they may have been in bed somewhere else, at the teenage Bunny Club sponsored by the PTA, sundry churches, Planned Parenthood and the YMCA where they participated in experimental "interrelationships," "sharing their concerns," and "exploring" each other's bodies and souls. By 1984 things are worse because parents are at the Bunny Clubs and they will have to flash the question to the kids: "Where are your parents?"

"Where are your parents?" Indeed, if parents, who should be the nucleus of the family, are not home, or, when home, neglect their children's education, then how will the young minds be cultivated? Traditionally parents have read or recited to their children, saturating their imaginations with fables, fairy tales, stories, rhymes and adventures.

Senior describes the literary cultivation of the imagination as "the gift to us of life and understanding [that] can only be handed down":

The primary act of human communication is in the sense of touch—that is why we can say "handed" down. It cannot be done in print or on records or the television screen; the child must have the direct experience of a warm and loving real person sitting in the room, preferably at bedtime in semi-darkness; it is best if you know the tale by heart; there in the dark or semi-dark before the great refreshing mystery of sleep, which is a little death, a tenderness is passed from person to person.

Too many children are deprived of tenderness now, and not only tenderness, but the proper formation of the senses, imagination, and memory—faculties so necessary to the cultivation of intellect.

Senior recommends that the "music of words" be restored:

Music in the strict sense of song and instruments plays an enormous part in shaping the sensibilities, so does art; but what you read enters directly into the intelligence and has therefore an even stronger effect. We must put our greatest effort into restoring reading in the home, first and foremost reading aloud around the fireplace of a winter's evening or on the porch of a summer's afternoon; and for the older children and adults, silent reading, each by himself as they all sit together in the living room, reading, not the hundred great books which are for analytic study and mostly for experts, but reading what I shall call the *thousand good books*, not everyman's but

every child's library, the ordinary stories and poems we all should know from Mother Goose to Willie Shakespeare, as she affectionately calls her best friend, the thousand good books for children in the nursery to the youth at college, which we read and reread all the rest of our lives.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

In more and more homes, parents send their “whining schoolboy with his satchel / And shining morning face, creeping like snail / Unwillingly to school.” Seeds of education fall on infecund, unimaginative soil, where roots cannot grow because the imagination and memory have not been properly cultivated.

What seeds of education greet the whining schoolboy as he enters the doors of academia? Will he find there a curriculum ordered to a well-defined, true end? Does the center hold in elementary and secondary education, or has it been lost?

In 1983 President Reagan convened the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In its report, “A Nation at Risk,” it addressed the question of quality of education in our democracy. The report begins: “Our nation is at risk . . . The educational foundations of our society are presently eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people.” And then, to awaken us from our torpor, the report strikes a foreboding note: “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”

The signs of a failed elementary and secondary school system are quite obvious to anyone who has paid attention to education over the last forty years: mass cultural illiteracy in students (addressed by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., in *Cultural Literacy*); a fragmented school curriculum that offers a potpourri of courses ordered to no apparent end; a high number of students who drop out of school; schoolrooms filled with undisciplined and apathetic students; students who lack the basic educational skills of reading, writing, thinking, observing, calculating, and speaking; and teachers who are expected to assume the roles of mother and father, brother and sister, friend and counselor—a burden unjustly visited upon them.

HIGHER EDUCATION

After twelve years of schooling, the exigencies of life are imposed upon the souls of our children grown to young adulthood. Many of these children matriculate in a college or university, now more accurately termed a “pluriversity” or “multiversity.” Quinn claims that today's university reflects the disintegration of society:

Nowhere is this disintegration more obvious than in the university—which derives its name from the universe. Modern schools of higher education have been called “multiversities” and compared to vast supermarkets or smorgasbords of ideas and disciplines. Indeed the modern university prides itself on being a place like Alice's Restaurant where “you can get most anything you want.” . . . There one can dabble in the arts and sciences as well as in all the latest diversions, perversions, and “life-styles”; it is a promiscuous rather than a liberal education.

Robert Hutchins, past Chancellor of Chicago University, writes:

The modern university may be compared with an encyclopedia. The encyclopedia contains many truths. It may consist of nothing else. But its unity can be found only in its alphabetical arrangement. The university is much the same case. It has departments running from art to zoology; but neither the student nor the professors know what is the relation of one departmental truth to another, or what the relation of departmental truths to those in the

domain of another department may be.

If students cannot find unity of knowledge and disciplines ordered to a general end, what will they find? In one word, specialization—specialization ordered to vocationalism. To the detriment of liberal education, specialization in all disciplines imposes itself on most students the moment they begin their studies, because most must immediately declare a major. Each student is assigned an advisor, who enrolls him, for the most part, in a specialized curriculum.

The overemphasis of specialization and the de-emphasis of a liberal or general education creates a type of person perfectly suited to our modern, bureaucratized industrialism. Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst and social critic, declared that “each society creates its own type of personality by its system of education. What kind of men does our large-scale, bureaucratized industrialism need? In general, our society is becoming one of giant enterprises directed by a bureaucracy in which man becomes a small, well-oiled cog in the machinery.”

José Ortega y Gasset, in *Revolt of the Masses*, in the chapter “Barbarism of Specialization,” calls the type of personality we produce by higher education the “learned ignoramus.” Such a person is learned in his specialty, which prepares him for his vocation, but he is an ignoramus because he remains uncultured or illiberally educated. He generally has no expectation or desire of finding anything more at the university other than specialized knowledge and skills that will prepare him for work. Allan Bloom describes such a person:

Today a young person does not generally go off to the university with the expectation of having an intellectual adventure, of discovering strange new worlds, of finding out what the comprehensive truth about man is. . . . And the university does not try to persuade him that he is coming to it for the purpose of being liberally educated, at least in any meaningful sense of the term—to study how to be free, to be able to think for himself. The university has no vision, no view of what a human being must know in order to be considered educated. Its general purpose is lost amid the incoherent variety of special purposes that have accreted within it.

If each student at the university pursues a special purpose only, e.g., to become a computer specialist, a lawyer or an engineer, then the general purpose of education is “lost amid the incoherent variety of special purposes.” We suffer dissolution of higher education. Lacking a well-understood end, or touting many ends, the university becomes a multiversity with no order. Education, and life, becomes built on disorder.

HIGHER CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Has higher *Catholic* education in America escaped the debilitation visited upon secular institutions? Catholic parents who sent their children to a Catholic college or university used to be generally assured that the institution would educate them in light of Catholic faith, which was the acknowledged purpose for the institution’s existence. Students would learn both the natural truths of secular learning and the revealed truths of Catholic wisdom. This was the boast of Catholic colleges and universities everywhere, and in the eyes of the parents, such an education justified the expense.

Those institutions had a core curriculum in which the major disciplines of learning—history, science, mathematics, humanities, and so forth—played a part in educating the whole person, both body and soul. Overseeing these disciplines was Theology, Queen of the Sciences, which, along with Philosophy, ordered and integrated the subordinate disciplines.

The fact that a few small Catholic liberal arts colleges have sprung up throughout the United States in the last thirty years, because the larger Catholic colleges and universities for the most part have abandoned true liberal education, is evidence enough

to convince the most casual observer that higher Catholic education has not escaped the crisis in education.

CONCLUSION

Today, more and more students come to our colleges and universities enmeshed in nihilism acquired from their early education and from our culture at large. This nihilism is further nourished in our colleges and universities. It is rooted in the denigration of objective truth and feeds a denial of any objective meaning in life. It leads to a loss of hope that ends in the despairing cry of Macbeth: Life's "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Belatedly, educator Gil Bailie, in voicing the concern of many, contends that "the nihilism today is so persuasive [and pervasive], only the most hardhearted of Grinches would complain of Hallmark card sentiments." Nihilism brings our youth to a moment of crisis when a critical decision must be made for or against the two means (reason and faith) by which we can come to know objective truth.

Wyoming Catholic College rests secure in its conviction that the very *raison d'être* for an institution of higher Catholic education is the cause of truth, as stated by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

It is the honour and responsibility of a Catholic University to consecrate itself without reserve to *the cause of truth*. This is its way of serving at one and the same time both the dignity of man and the good of the Church, which has "an intimate conviction that truth is (its) real ally . . . and that knowledge and reason are sure ministers to faith." Without in any way neglecting the acquisition of useful knowledge, a Catholic University is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man, and God. The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of *proclaiming the meaning of truth*, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice, and human dignity are extinguished.

As we ponder the eloquent words of our Holy Father, we are moved to ask, "What then must we do?" In order to provide a place where our youth may have the opportunity to undergo a life-changing conversion—a turning away from the nihilism of our age and a turning towards the objective supernatural and natural truths of faith and reason—we have established Wyoming Catholic College, dedicated to true Catholic liberal education ordered to "the cause of truth."



Education Defined

Western tradition has defined education as “the cooperative art of making men better.” It is classified as a cooperative art because the teacher cooperates with nature in achieving the goal. Other cooperative arts are medicine and farming. Nature left alone may accomplish the goals of learning, healing, and producing crops, but the results are enhanced by the cooperation of the teacher, the doctor, and the farmer. Specifically, the teacher cooperates with human nature.

Aristotle says that “all men by nature desire to know.” There are two general ways we come to know: by way of discovery and by way of instruction. The human race would remain in relative ignorance if it learned only by way of discovery, and the art of formal education aids tremendously in the quest for knowledge. Socrates emphasized the necessity of instruction in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* when he, “wishing to arouse Euthydemus,” who wanted to be a statesman but didn’t think he needed a teacher, said, “If men could not excel in the minor arts and crafts without teachers, it was simple-minded to think that the governing of a state, the greatest of all works, came automatically.”

The word “education” comes from the Latin *ex-ducere*, which means “to draw out” or “to educe” specifically that which is potentially but not yet actually in the student. Michelangelo, it is said, was once asked by a fellow Florentine, amazed at the colossal size of the *David*, how he had put such a gigantic figure into that block of Carraran marble. He replied that he hadn’t put the figure in the marble, but through the sculptor’s art had simply educed or drawn out the figure that was potentially there. Like Michelangelo, the teacher, as artist, simply and mysteriously educes or draws out the “better man” that is potentially within the student.

THE NATURE OF MAN

Since the governing principle of any art is the end at which it aims, the question any philosophy of education must ask and answer is, What is a “better man”? Prior to that, however, the educator must consider: What is man? Just as the artist must first understand the nature of the material he works on, so too the teacher must clearly understand the nature of man, the material he’s forming.

The traditional definition of man is: “Man is a rational animal.” Because man is a sentient, living, material substance, he is an animal. But what further distinguishes him? Simply put, he is rational. Rationality, which among corporeal creatures only man possesses, is the specific trait that differentiates him in kind as a species and gives him his especial dignity. Also, rationality is what makes education possible. This is why we say we educate men, but train animals.

Other animals are endowed with determinate characteristics or attributes at birth, but man, as Mortimer Adler rightly claims, “is constituted by determinable, not wholly determinate, characteristics or attributes.” These determinable attributes, he says, are innate potentialities or powers that may be formed in a wide variety of ways. He concludes

that “man is to a great extent a self-made creature. Given a range of potentialities at birth, he makes himself what he becomes by how he freely chooses to develop those potentialities by the habits he forms.”

The “habits he forms” is a crucial hinge between reason and education. Pico della Mirandola, in *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, makes the same point through the eloquent words of the “Supreme Maker,” who, as He gazes upon man, proclaims thus:

We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine.

According to St. Thomas, man possesses seventeen generic powers: three of these are vegetative (the nutritive, augmentative, and reproductive); twelve are sensitive (of which nine are cognitive, two are appetitive, and one is locomotive); and the last two are rational, namely the cognitive (i.e., the intellect) and the appetitive (i.e., the will).

Robert Brennan asks, “What is it, then, that turns the weak and puny child into a well-bred and well-rounded man? What force or energy gives his powers that grace and ease, that assurance and command, which we so much admire in the full-grown person?” He answers that “the secret of such perfection, of course, is habit [especially virtue as habit]. We are talking here of habit in the strict sense of the word, as a perfection of our powers. From this point of view, we can define it as a *permanent quality which enables us to act in a way that is not only prompt and skillful, but full of zest and pleasure as well.*”

While man shares the vegetative and sensitive powers with the lower animals, only man has the rational powers of intellect and will, which accounts for his high rank among corporeal creatures. Of the rational powers, intellect is paramount, because as Brennan claims, it is always the basis of habit formation:

For St. Thomas, [reason] stands at the head of the list. In greater or lesser degree it can influence most of the other powers. Notice how it reaches out into all spheres of activity. If we condition our reflexes, it is reason that is behind the conditioning. If we train our memories, it is reason that lays down the rules. If we learn to curb our passions and temper our instincts, it is reason that guides our conduct. If we develop a strong will and manage to keep ourselves on the path of virtue, it is reason that lights the way. In fine, reason is always the basis of habit; and this, as we shall see, is the firm teaching of Aquinas. . . . In every instance where a lower faculty becomes the lodging place of habit, we shall find that reason has something to do with it.

Unlike the innate powers that constitute part of man’s essential nature, good habits are acquired during the course of a lifetime. This is why all men, by nature, have the same powers, but all do not possess the same habits. The ancient philosophers considered habits of such importance that they called them man’s second nature. Not willing to leave such an important task as good habit formation to chance, or to parents alone, man developed the art of formal education. All education, whether liberal or illiberal, should thus be ordered to the immediate end of forming good habits, which, ultimately, as the ancient Greeks said, are qualities or excellences that make the better man.

LIBERAL AND ILLIBERAL EDUCATION

If all education aims at making men better through good habit formation, what distinguishes liberal from illiberal education?

All men at once are both the same and different. They are the same in kind because they have the same essential nature and possess the same powers. But they are different because they possess these powers to a greater or lesser degree. For example, while all men have intellects that allow them to reason, only some men have such powerful intellects that they become scientists like Einstein or philosophers like Aristotle; or while all men have imaginations, only some men become poets.

In respect to man, the principle of sameness in nature but difference in degree led to the traditional distinction between liberal and illiberal education, which have these different goals: one cultivates man's *similarities*, the other cultivates his *differences*. Liberal education aims at making men better as men by perfecting their similar natures, while illiberal education aims at making men better as workers by perfecting their different talents. This echoes the division of labor in the state, as Plato contends in *The Republic* where Socrates argues that "I am myself reminded that we are not all alike; there are diversities of natures among us which are adapted to different occupations."

Mortimer Adler has distinguished the two views of education:

One view of education is that which takes these individual and functional *differences* into consideration and says that men are made better by adjusting them to their occupations, by making them better carpenters or better dentists or better bricklayers, by improving them, in other words, in the direction of their own special talents.

The other view differs from this, in that it makes the primary aim of education the betterment of men not with respect to their differences but with respect to the *similarities* which all men have. According to this theory, if there are certain things that all men can do, or certain things that all men *must do*, it is with these that education is chiefly concerned.

The salient point to understand is this: both kinds of education aim at making a man better through good habit formation, but liberal education educates him as an end in himself so that he is a good man and his worth is measured by his goodness as a man. This is an intrinsic end. Illiberal education improves man so that he is a good worker and his worth is measured by the goodness of his work. This is an extrinsic end.

In describing the intrinsic end that liberal education cultivates, Adler says, "An educational process has an *intrinsic* end if its result lies entirely within the *person* being educated, an excellence or perfection of his person, an improvement built right into his nature as a good habit is part of the nature of the person in whom a power is habituated."

In respect to illiberal education, Adler points out that an educational process may aim not at cultivating an excellence or perfection of man *qua* man, but at an end extrinsic to man. He claims that this is the general goal of illiberal education, to aim at an "*extrinsic* end [that] lies in the goodness of an operation, not as reflecting the goodness of the *operator* but rather the perfection of something else as a result of the operation being performed well."

Succinctly put, when education aims at perfecting the special functions or talents that only some men possess, it produces better men who are called "good workers," but when it aims at perfecting the human nature all men possess, it produces better men who are called "good men."

Philosopher Marcus Berquist explains that a liberally educated man is a free man in the sense that he "realizes within himself the end for which he lives and is joined to it in his own person." By developing our similar powers into good habits (virtues), a man becomes a good or *free man*, who is master of himself, capable of ordering his life to its proper end. In other words, because he possesses good habits, he is able to direct himself and does not have to be directed by another, as, for example, the small child who must be directed by his parents or the slave directed by his master.

One can now understand why liberal education is *general* rather than specialized and why it is everybody's rather than somebody's business. Human nature, in need of development as long as we live, requires a liberal education, which, unlike illiberal education, is permanent rather than progressive, as William Whewell (Master of Trinity College) stated in the nineteenth century: "The permanent studies [are] the main substance or core of everyone's education."

John Stuart Mill, in his inaugural address as rector at St. Andrews University, argues that the undergraduate college should provide a liberal education *only*, ordered to making "capable and cultivated human beings," and not workers:

It [the undergraduate university or college] is not a place of professional education. Universities are not intended to teach the knowledge required to fit men for some special mode of gaining their livelihood. Their object is not to make skillful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings. It is very right that there should be public facilities for the study of professions. It is well that there should be Schools of Law, and of Medicine, and it would be well if there were schools of engineering, and the industrial arts.

Mill, in expounding on his statement, summarizes the importance of liberal education:

Men are men before they are lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians. What professional men should carry away with them from a University, is not professional knowledge, but that which should direct the use of their professional knowledge, and bring the light of general culture to illuminate the technicalities of a special pursuit. Men may be competent lawyers without general education, but it depends on general education to make them philosophic lawyers—who demand, and are capable of apprehending principles, instead of merely cramming their memory with details. And so of all other useful pursuits, mechanical included. Education makes a man a more intelligent shoemaker, if that be his occupation, but not by teaching him how to make shoes; it does so by the mental exercise it gives, and the habits it impresses.

It is important to note that, unlike illiberal studies that prepare men only for work, liberal studies—the permanent studies—prepare them for leisure, which, as Josef Pieper says, is the basis of culture. True and good culture cannot come into existence unless people are prepared by good habit formation to engage in fruitful leisure activities.

Leisure, it must be understood, is not simply free time. It is free time put to good use by engaging in activities that aim at perfecting one's life. Adler describes leisure activities as "those activities desirable for their own sake (and so uncompensated and not compulsory) and also for the sake of the excellences, private and public, to which they give rise." He names some such activities: "thinking or learning, reading or writing, conversation or correspondence, love and acts of friendship, political activity, domestic activity, artistic and aesthetic activity."

Wyoming Catholic College is devoted exclusively to providing its students with a true liberal education, which aims at an *intrinsic* rather than an extrinsic end, is *general* rather than specialized, prepares a person for *leisure* rather than work, and creates a *free man* ca-



pable of leading a good life.

The Immediate Purpose of Liberal Education

Liberal education, first and foremost, is concerned with humanizing us. This is its *immediate* purpose. We can be made better by achieving what the Greeks called “excellence” or the Romans “virtue” by developing certain natural capacities into good habits leading to natural perfection. Good habits, as Mill says, produce “capable and cultivated human beings,” beings who are free because they have the discipline to exercise their faculties as these *ought* to be exercised.

Liberal education cultivates three human excellences that constitute perfection on the natural level: (1) physical virtue, said of a sound and graceful body and of well-formed powers of sense, both external and internal; (2) moral virtue, which pertains to an ordered and harmonious soul; and (3) intellectual virtue, said of a disciplined mind.

The highest human powers liberal education cultivates through good habit formation are the intellect and the will. A liberally educated person possesses a properly formed intellect endowed with speculative and practical virtues and a will that leads to human happiness via the habits of justice, temperance, and courage. Before one considers these higher powers, one should understand the physical virtues and the proper formation of the lower powers, accomplished through the poetic mode of education.

PHYSICAL VIRTUE: THE POETIC MODES OF GYMNASTICS AND MUSIC

Plato, the first great educational theorist in Western culture, says that liberal education must take “a long way round”; St. Augustine, describing his own liberal arts curriculum, cautions us to “either follow this long itinerary or renounce everything”; and H. I. Marrou claims that “[educational] culture is something very different from the ‘gardens of Adonis’, which flowered in eight days and faded as quickly; like the art of the true peasant it is a serious work that needs deep ploughing, carefully chosen seeds and continual hard labour.”

According to Plato, the first step in the long journey of liberal education is the elementary or poetic mode of education. This manner of educating is ordered primarily to cultivating the lower powers of sense—the external senses as well as the internal ones (imagination, memory, emotions, etc.)—through both direct and indirect experience of reality, which means through gymnastics and music.

From about the age of seven to twenty, Plato says, a student “is confined . . . to the cultivation of the sensibilities and imagination and to the acquisition of all the bodily coordinations.” As Mark Van Doren describes it, “The first [stage of learning] can be called preparatory [and] can be said to have in view the improvement of the creature through a wise exercise of his senses, his memory, and his imagination.”

The senses, memory and imagination must be properly formed because they are inextricably linked to the higher powers of intellect and will. Because, as St. Thomas contends, all knowledge begins in the lower senses, how can we expect the intellect to be

properly formed if we have malformed imaginations? As John Senior explains, imagination affects our ability to think:

The psychology of thought is precise and difficult; thinking is the process whereby the intellect abstracts from the imagination the intelligible content of what it is the imagination presents. The intellect, like a seagull, dives into the water for the fish, but if there is no water—if there is no imagination—no fish can live and nothing can be caught.

The educator Michael Platt likewise points out that “learning is first in the senses and imagination” and adds that a student’s poetic education must begin in the home:

Students who have never been read aloud to, never danced gracefully, never dressed neatly, and never sung happily, are seldom ready for pure reason alone. Learning is first in the senses and in the imagination before it is in the intellect; students without the family life that feeds the sense, regulates the habits, and excites the imagination need a catch-up course.

Granted the necessity of forming these lower powers properly, the question is, how will they be formed? Traditionally, beginning with Plato and the Greeks, this has been accomplished through gymnastics for the body and music for the soul. Plato says, “Then what will this education [from seven to twenty years] be like? It seems difficult to discover a better one than that which our forefathers adopted—gymnastics for the body and ‘music’ for the soul.”

In order to create harmony between body and soul and to avoid the extremes of the foppish aesthete or the brutal athlete, Plato established his liberal poetic education program along traditional lines. So, too, does Wyoming Catholic College.

The term “gymnastic” comes from the Greek *gymnos*, meaning “naked.” Gymnastics, broadly speaking, refers to the naked or direct experience of reality, as the author James Taylor explains:

For a simple understanding for our times . . . we can think of a gymnastic . . . as direct experience with reality, for example a life lived more out of doors, say, [by] a child walking to school in all kinds of weather. . . . The direct confrontation with the most simple realities of nature, the gymnastic, participates in the poetic mode.

Gymnastics is also understood to embrace the athletic arts or skills, which the word “gymnasium” suggests. As historians have pointed out, the ancient Greeks invented the gymnasium, where men would go to practice athletic skills ordered to perfecting the body—cultivating “a healthy mind in a healthy body.” According to the ancients, the student who had a well-ordered body possessed strength, endurance, and coordination, and was physically more perfect than a student who was without gymnastics and thus lacked an “ordered” body.

The ultimate test of a physically mature student was his ability to participate in the games we now read about in epics such as *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid*—wrestling, discus throwing, archery, and so forth. The importance of the physical perfection led to the Olympic Games and the Pindaric odes. These odes celebrated the physical prowess of the Olympic athletes and reflected the high esteem in which the ancients held physical excellence.

Gymnastics may also include more refined activities such as stargazing, horseback riding, and dancing. Stargazing—distinguishing the constellations and learning their stories—disciplines the eyes and the imaginative power by providing, as St. Thomas says, “an ability to picture material things in their absence.” Horseback riding requires direct contact with one of nature’s noblest creatures. It disciplines the equestrian’s body as he

coordinates himself with the trotting, cantering, and galloping horse. And dancing educates the student's ear and body, which he orders to the melodious rhythms of music. These gymnastic activities, and others as well, bring a person into direct contact with nature and engage and educate the body and the lower powers.

The ancient Greeks well understood that experiencing the natural world through gymnastics instructs us directly in such universal realities as order, proportion, and cause and effect, and in fundamental realities such as birth and death. The natural world also instills in us a certain humility and gratitude, for it exercises a sovereignty over us (a sovereignty often otherwise obscured by thoroughly man-made environments).

This same understanding is found in the Catholic intellectual tradition. The Church fathers insist that God authored two books, the Holy Bible and the "book of the world." If one is to acquire genuine wisdom, one must study both. In our day, unfortunately, though religion and Scripture are studied, the other "book" is rarely experienced directly and immediately through the senses. The consequence of this is a certain narrowing of the imagination and the heart, accompanied by the naïve belief that the unnatural world man has fashioned can render deep truths or profound learning.

In tacit recognition that our largely man-made environments are deeply inadequate, people almost universally need to "get away" from these environments and restore themselves in natural and beautiful surroundings. A world of virtual reality, languorous comfort, and media assaults on the senses forms mental habits of frenetic restlessness, inability to endure rigor, and imaginative superficiality. The "philosophic habit of mind" that John Henry Newman speaks of as the object of a liberal education requires mental habits and a fertile imagination far more subtle and refined than those inculcated by an Internet world. The steady, reflective, and contemplative grasp of the profoundest truths requires a love of beauty and an appreciation for things learned slowly (and sometimes with difficulty), not stimulation or instant gratification.

Wyoming is particularly well suited to answer the need. Its mountains, streams, and prairies, and its traditions of ranching and farming, supply what the modern imagination so sorely lacks. Its nature is awe-inspiring and glorious, yet severe and demanding of discipline. Viewing its grandeur and severity, one is at once humbled and ennobled. The virtues so often associated with the best of the American West—*independence, courage, sacrifice, personal responsibility, neighborly generosity and charity*—are still cherished and cultivated in Wyoming. Here one learns to wonder at God's creation, to respect it, to toughen into adulthood, to embrace one's heritage as an American, and to accept one's liberties and responsibilities as a Christian.

Wyoming Catholic College is mindful that a direct gymnastic experience of the natural, created world properly forms the heart and imagination. Students will engage in gymnastic activities traditionally associated with Wyoming's rural way of life. Ranching, farming, horsemanship, and learning the ways of livestock and the natural world are traditional features of Wyoming's history and culture, though few students today have the benefit of such immediate experience of natural creation.

The College will therefore seek to educate the whole person—the mind, heart, and imagination. Rich, liberal learning can thrive in the midst of powerful personal experiences of the natural world and with familiarity with the fine arts that celebrate and re-create great beauty. Illuminating these activities by the Catholic faith, the College will cultivate an integrated, human education where the good, the true, and the beautiful are not merely studied but lived.

The poetic mode of education comprises not only gymnastics, but also music, which, Plato says, includes not only tune or the melding of tunes and words, but also the fine arts such as sculpture, architecture, pictorial art, and imaginative literature. These musical arts have the student participate in reality in an indirect or *vicarious* way. A student studying Michelangelo's "Pieta," for example, vicariously participates in the

pathos of Mary, the mother of God, tenderly holding her crucified son in her arms.

In the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, the musical arts were considered the primary means of educating the human soul on the poetic level. Werner Jaeger, in his *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, explains:

Art has a limitless power of converting the human soul—a power which the Greeks called *psychagogia*. For art possesses the two essentials of educational influence—universal significance and immediate appeal. By uniting these two methods of influencing the mind, it surpasses both philosophical thought and actual life.

Works of art have “immediate appeal” to the observer because they first engage our lower powers—our senses, imagination, emotions, etc.—which guide us on the level of the particular. Our intellects then intuitively understand the universal significance of art works—their truth, their goodness, their beauty.

To the ancients, music came under the patronage of Apollo (the god of poetry) and the muses (from the same root word as “music”). Plato asks in the *Laws*, “Shall we begin with the acknowledgement that education is first given through Apollo and the muses?” The muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (the goddess of memory), were the deities who presided over the fine arts, which in early Greek culture meant primarily (1) the poetic arts (Calliope specifically in charge of epic, Melpomene and Thalia of tragedy and comedy, and Polyhymnia, Erato, and Euterpe of the various kinds of lyric verse); (2) history, which Clio inspired; and (3) astronomy and dance, which Urania and Terpsichore governed.

The work of the muses was to inspire the artist. Socrates says that when he heard the poets in conversation, he realized that “I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration.” Through inspiration (from Latin *inspirare*, meaning “to breathe into”) the muse enabled the poet to tell his story. Epic poets have traditionally acknowledged the power and importance of the muses, invoking one or more of them at the beginning of their stories. Recall, for example, the opening of *The Odyssey*:

Tell of the storm-tossed man, O Muse, who wandered long after he sacked
the sacred citadel of Troy. . . . Of this, O goddess, daughter of Zeus, speak
as
thou wilt to us.

or of *The Aeneid*:

Help me. O Muse, recall the reasons: Why,
Why did the queen of heaven drive a man
So known for goodness, for devotion, through
So many toils and perils? Was there slight,
Affront or outrage? Is vindictiveness
An attribute of the celestial mind?

In Western tradition, as Maritain points out, the muses later came to mean “creative intuition,” a quality that the artistic genius needs in creating his art: “Music, thus in Plato’s vocabulary, does not mean only music [in the narrow sense], but every artistic genius which depends on the inspiration of the Muse. . . . [but] I think that what we have to do is to make the Platonic Muse descend into the soul of man, where she is no longer Muse but creative intuition.”

Plato describes the poetic muses at work. They first move the storyteller to divine madness and then to ecstasy: “Possession by the Muses, and their madness, invade a gentle and chaste soul, awaken it, and bewitch it with songs and all kinds of poesy; and, by glorifying countless deeds of men of old, educate posterity.” In the sixteenth century, Shakespeare continues this idea: “The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling doth glance from

heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, and as imagination bodies forth the form of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes and gives to aery nothing a local habitation and a name."

According to Robert Penn Warren, it is the mystery of our life and the attempt to understand this mystery that lead us to stories:

We are in suspense about the story in fiction because we are in suspense about another story far closer and more important to us—the story of our own life as we live it. We do not know how that story of our own life is going to come out. We do not know what it will mean. So, in that deepest suspense of life, which will be shadowed in the suspense we feel about the story in fiction, we turn to fiction for some slight hint about the story in the life we live.

We are in suspense about the story in our own life precisely because it is a mystery—surrounded by the great mysteries of being. Gerard Manley Hopkins calls these great mysteries incomprehensible certainties, which surely exist but are obscure and finally impenetrable. Because mysteries are ultimately inexplicable, the muses (and thus the poets) cannot explain them but can only imitate or re-present them. Quinn says of them that "the stories they tell do not explain; they imitate or re-present their subject; they render it present again, call it to mind again but surrounded now with mystery, enveloped in protected and holy silence."

When any one of us participates in the muses' stories—when we hear or read or recite the tales—we are first delighted, because we recognize the similarity between them and the mysterious realities they re-present. We are then moved to wonder. Because wonder stimulates our attention to and interest in the world, it is the beginning of philosophy. Hence stories motivate us in our quest for wisdom. On the poetic level of education, the major work of the muses and of Wyoming Catholic College is to awaken wonder by drawing students' attention to reality through story and the other musical arts. Only then can we progress to the more advanced stages of liberal education, the liberal arts and the sciences.

To conclude this discussion on forming the physical virtues by the poetic mode of gymnastics and music, three excerpts, from modern writers, demonstrate the importance of this stage of education.

Mark Twain in his *Life on the Mississippi* relates that when he first hired out as an apprentice river-boat pilot, he was struck with wonder when he saw a particular sunset: "I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me and I had never seen anything like this at home." He describes the scene:

A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling on the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings that were as many tinted as an opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot that was covered in graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendor that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances, and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it every passing moment with new marvels of coloring.

The day came, however, when Twain "murdered to dissect":

Now when I had mastered the language of this water and had come to know every trifling feature that bordered the great river as familiarly as I knew the letters of the alphabet, I had made a valuable acquisition. But I had lost something, too, I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived. All the grace, the beauty, the poetry had gone out of the majestic river! . . . No, the romance and beauty were all gone from the river. All the value any feature of it had for me now was among the usefulness it could furnish toward compassing the safe piloting of a steamboat.

From a different realm, that of science, we quote Charles Darwin, who also admits to a loss of wonder:

I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great, delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music. Music generally sets me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure. I retain some taste for fine scenery, but it does not cause me the exquisite delight which it formerly did.

As if in a moment of epiphany, the great scientist passes judgment on himself:

My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized or better constituted than mine would not, I suppose, have thus suffered; and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.

Lastly, from belles-lettres, Shakespeare has the lover Lorenzo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, give this declaration:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils,
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Vis-à-vis students who have not “marked the music” and are therefore unqualified to advance in liberal education to the liberal arts and sciences, Wyoming Catholic College proclaims: *Nascantur in admiratione* (“Let them be born in wonder”). We know, as did Plato, Twain, Darwin, and Shakespeare, that the most important task in restoring a true center to liberal education is the beginning. Our students will pass on to more advanced levels of education only after they have shown competence in the physical virtues gained through

the poetic mode of education.

MORAL VIRTUE: ITS DEVELOPMENT IN FORMAL, LIBERAL EDUCATION

Liberal education aims at making better men and not just better intellects. A person may have a well-disciplined mind and still not be a good man. For this reason, liberal education necessarily cultivates moral virtue, an ordered and harmonious soul. John Locke tells us this is hard to do, but valuable: “Tis virtue . . . which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education, and not a forward pertness of any little arts of shifting. All other accomplishments should give way and be postponed to this.”

The spiritual power of will, our capacity for free choice, makes us moral creatures capable of doing good and evil as we journey toward our end. Unlike the intellectual power, which is properly formed by developing good habits of *knowing*, the will is habituated by cultivating good habits of *choosing*. Robert Brennan calls the will “the axial force in the building of character”:

Now, we are good or bad because we are free. Without the element of choice, there could be no moral aspect in our behavior. Will, then, must be the axial force in the building of character. Boiling all this down to a single statement, we can say that *character is the sum total of all our moral habits, grouped around the axis of will.*

Moral habits, “grouped around the axis of will,” may be good or bad—if good, they are virtues, if bad, they are vices.

While it is true that the will is the primary source of morality and is free to choose, moral philosophers contend that our character—“the sum total of all our moral habits”—influences the will greatly in the choices it makes. This is manifest in the fact that our moral habits (vices and virtues) are often so strong that our will seems to be in their bondage. St. Augustine addresses the problem in a famous passage in his *Confessions*, where he describes the enslavement of his will to the vice of lust: “The enemy held my will and made a chain out of it and bound me with it. From a perverse will came lust, and slavery to lust became a habit, and the habit, being constantly yielded to, became a necessity. These were like links, hanging each to each (which is why I called it a chain), and they held me fast in a hard slavery.”

Part of the education at Wyoming Catholic College will thus be geared to forming moral virtues.

THE CARDINAL MORAL VIRTUES

Like melodious music in which notes are ordered to produce the “sweet concord of sound,” the powers of the soul—sense appetite, will, and intellect—must be properly habituated and well-ordered to create virtuous souls. The sense appetite must be ordered to the will and the will to *right* reason. But because sense appetite often leads the will not to choose the good that right reason knows, the will must be habituated rightly so that it controls sense appetite. With right reason as its guiding light, the will can make good moral choices with ease, promptness, and skill.

As far back as Plato, tradition teaches us that a harmonious soul is characterized by right desire and the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. These virtues are called “cardinal” (from the Latin *cardo* meaning “hinge”) because they are the virtues upon which the other moral virtues swing or depend.

While prudence is justly called a cardinal virtue, it is, strictly speaking, a practical intellectual virtue rather than a moral virtue. Prudence is right reason about things to be done in a specific situation. Brennan defines it thus:

[It is the] kind of knowledge that has its eye . . . on a goal outside the mind. It is acquired, not for the sake of knowing [like speculative knowledge], but for the sake of accomplishing some sort of external action. It is concerned with the practical affairs of life. . . . Its aim is to tell us how to behave. . . . Its task is to judge what ought and what ought not to be done in any given situation.

Prudence may be seen as the light of reason that guides the will in choosing the right means to the right end in a *specific* situation. In a given situation, in order to *do* the just thing, we must first know what the just thing is and then how to accomplish it. Prudence shows us the way, as it did in guiding Odysseus to blind Polyphemus, or King Solomon to threaten to divide the child, or Christ to confound the Pharisees.

Temperance is the moral habit that controls the concupiscible sense appetite, the appetite that gives rise to desire for something materially good. More particularly, it is “a habit which moderates the pleasures that arise from food, drink, and sex,” says St. Thomas. Intemperance will disorder the soul and wreak havoc on the body, as with Dante’s Ciaccio, the glutton in his *Divine Comedy*, the Hollywood anorexic, or the town drunk. In contrast, the temperate person habitually chooses the golden mean, avoiding the extremes of too little and too much.

Sometimes we desire arduous or difficult goods, like winning a battle, passing an important test, or exercising for good health. Due to the difficulties involved in obtaining them, our irascible sense appetite might initiate fear. If fear is not moderated, it causes us to give up in our pursuit of these goods. Fortitude, St. Thomas teaches, is the “virtue which makes us firm and steadfast in bearing the trials and dangers to the good life.” Fortitude involves conquering fear. It helps the saint, the soldier, and the scientist accomplish difficult and great things, and is needed by everyone to master the hurdles and setbacks that occur along life’s journey.

If we were solitary creatures, prudence, temperance, and fortitude would be enough to order the will, but because we are social animals, members of families, cities, and states, we need the social moral virtue of justice. As Plato explains in *The Republic*, justice is the habit of rendering to each his due or right. Justice directs the law-abiding citizen to pay his taxes, the patriotic soldier to serve his country, the state to grant each citizen his inalienable right to life, the dutiful father to keep promises to his son, and so forth.

Justice, the moral philosophers say, looks immediately to the particular good of others, to the common good of the state, and, ultimately, to the individual’s own good. When we render to each his due, we cultivate the common good, especially the good of peace, which enables us to live together in harmony. Without justice society would be in a perpetual state of war and discord, and the good life would be impossible.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Because Wyoming Catholic College is *Catholic*, it is interested not only in developing the cardinal virtues but also the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Catholic tradition teaches that man is not simply a creature only ordered to a natural end. He is also destined for a supernatural end. In order to possess this end—heaven or the “beatific vision”—our nature must be elevated to the supernatural level by means of sanctifying grace, also called the “supernatural life.” This supernatural life, the Church teaches, is a gift from God; it is a “created participation in the life of God” or, more explicitly, “Christ living in us.” As St. Paul states: “I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me.”

With the supernatural life received at baptism come the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. They perfect our innate faculties of intellect and will by giving them higher acquired powers (or virtues) whose object is God Himself. By grace, faith perfects the intellect (grace perfects nature) by giving it the power to know the su-

preme Truth, God, in an elevated or supernatural way. Frank Sheed explains: “The *intellect* retains its object, namely, truth, but its action is elevated; in other words, it can get at the truth in a higher way; it can now believe upon the word of God, that is, it has the supernatural virtue of *faith*.”

Hope, Sheed says, elevates the will: “And the will is rendered capable of another supernatural action needed for perfection—the action of *hope*; that is, of aspiring to God [as our beatitude] in reliance upon his power and goodness.”

Charity perfects the will by enabling it to love supreme Goodness. Sheed contends that “the will likewise retains its object—namely, goodness—but its action is elevated from love in the natural order to supernatural love; that is, it has the supernatural virtue of *charity*, by which it loves God and makes the love of God the root of all its other loves and therefore of all its other actions.”

St. Paul, putting an order to the three theological virtues, claims charity as the greatest: “And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.”

Unlike the natural moral virtues, acquired by repetitive doing, the theological virtues are freely given by grace. Nonetheless, a college can help students be more apt to receive such grace, especially by its campus culture. This matter will be addressed following the consideration of moral education in general.

MORAL EDUCATION

One of the abiding questions in liberal education is how to develop the natural moral virtues. Because they are habits of choosing rather than knowing, they cannot be directly taught. We can form them only by doing. Habit “arises from repeated action,” Brennan states. “Hence, the more often we use it, the more robust it becomes. As Aristotle said: ‘One swallow does not make a summer.’ So one act does not [normally] generate a habit.” Thus, if we want to develop good habits or give up such vices as intemperance, cowardice, or injustice, we must repeatedly choose to act with temperance, fortitude, and justice.

Generally speaking there are three ways to move students to want to practice virtue: by example, by a poetic moral education, and by campus culture.

EXAMPLE

Common experience proves that the most efficacious way to make students want to practice virtue is by example. In *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch says this:

Virtue, by the bare statement of its actions, can so affect men’s minds as to create at once both admiration of the things done and desire to imitate the doers of them. . . . Moral good is a practical stimulus; it is no sooner seen, than it inspires an impulse to practice, and influences the mind and character not by a mere imitation which we look at, but by the statement of the fact creates a moral purpose which we form.

Throughout life one finds numerous examples of virtuous people—the sacrificing mother, a pious priest, a courageous fireman, a loving teacher. It is said that St. Thérèse of the Little Flower was moved to religious piety by the example of her parents and sisters, that many Englishmen in World War II imitated the unrelenting determination and patience of Winston Churchill, and that by the example of St. Francis, St. Clare was inspired to embrace the religious life.

College students are at a most impressionable and formative age, and thus, as Plutarch says, especially apt to admire, imitate, and acquire moral virtues. It is thus imperative that Wyoming Catholic College employ persons of good moral character—teachers, priests, administrators, and workers, for, as Newman reminds us, “Persons influence us, voices

melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us.”

POETIC MORAL EDUCATION

The second way to inspire students’ moral practice is through a poetic moral education. In Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates argues that character can be formed by heroes and virtuous tales. “You know,” he says, “that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken.” He asks if we should “just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?” His answer, though relative to the young, should not exclude older students: “It is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts.”

The poet’s job, Shakespeare says in *Hamlet*, is “to hold, as ‘twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.” In showing “virtue her own feature,” the poet creates a character who embodies an idea of moral goodness manifested in virtuous deeds—a pious Aeneas, a brave Horatio, a faithful Eumaeus, a merciful Samaritan. The child forms a likeness or image of the character and stores it in his memory. As time passes and he matures, the child remembers the character, understands him better, and admires him more. His admiration elicits a desire to imitate the character, and, through repeated imitation, the child—or student—develops moral virtues.

Through a poetic moral education, the student becomes better apt and able to consider, judge, and understand moral precepts deduced from literary examples, e.g., “Forgive your enemies,” “Avoid evil,” “Render to each his due,” “Love God with your whole heart, with your whole mind, and with your whole soul.”

Skillful teachers can teach by examples of vice as well as virtue, although the best writers do the job themselves in making certain characters not only unworthy but also undesirable—Shakespeare’s Iago, Flaubert’s Emma Bovary, or Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, for example. Such morally corrupt characters help prepare the student to deal with such people and at the same time steer him from wanting to imitate them.

A good poetic moral education, while forming imagination, memory, emotion, intellect, and will, can also motivate the young to want to practice virtue.

Wyoming Catholic College will carry on a poetic moral education at the college level, preparing students for the more abstract and arduous disciplines of moral philosophy and moral theology.

CAMPUS CULTURE

The third way to influence students’ moral behavior is through a cultural environment conducive to moral and spiritual development. G. K. Chesterton once said that in education, the cultural environment is virtually everything. If it is not everything, it is at least the *first* important thing, and something many educators today have forgotten or at least neglect. Catholic tradition is on Chesterton’s side (or, more accurately, he is on its side), for it has never placed students in sterile surroundings. The cultural environment of a campus in which students are nurtured is indeed of primary importance if Catholic liberal education is to bear the proper fruit. Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, addresses this issue:

A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message

of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character.

The environment in which students live should not be left to chance. Educators must cultivate a proper environment. Plato, in *The Republic*, declares: “We would not have our [students] grow up amid images of moral deformity, as in some noxious pasture, and there browse and feed upon many a baneful herb and flower day by day, little by little, until they silently gather a festering mass of corruption in their own soul.” They who are nurtured in an educational environment in which the true, the good, and the beautiful are rightly cultivated will, Plato argues, “become noble and good,” and “salute the friend [reason] with whom his education has made him long familiar.”

Wyoming Catholic College will establish and cultivate a proper campus culture through the liturgy, sacraments, and music of the Roman Catholic Church integrated into the life of the College. This pastoral ministry will serve the Holy Father’s directive in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

Pastoral ministry is that activity of the University which offers the members of the university community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their academic study and non-academic activities, *thus integrating faith with life*. . . . As a natural expression of the Catholic identity of the University, the university community *should give a practical demonstration of its faith in its daily activity*, with important moments of reflection and prayer. Catholic members of this community will be offered opportunities to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives and will be encouraged to participate in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist as the most perfect act of community worship.

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE: THE SCIENCES AND ARTS IN FORMAL, LIBERAL EDUCATION

The highest power that liberal education forms through good habit formation, St. Thomas claims, is that of intellect. Intellect is highest because it is a spiritual power; it knows being in an immaterial way, influences and orders all of man’s lower powers, and accounts for his special dignity as a species made in the image and likeness of God.

The intellectual virtues are habits of knowledge that better the mind in two basic ways: first, by helping it acquire knowledge as an end in itself, and second, by helping it acquire knowledge for the sake of practice. The first is speculative knowledge, which betters the mind by understanding, science, and wisdom, while the second is practical knowledge, which betters the mind through prudence and art.

The educator Hutchins, speaking on the traditional view of liberal education, expounds:

By the intellectual virtues I mean good intellectual habits. The ancients distinguish five intellectual virtues: the three speculative virtues of intuitive knowledge, which is the habit of induction; of scientific knowledge, which is the habit of demonstration; and of philosophical wisdom, which is scientific knowledge, combined with intuitive reason, of things highest by nature, first principles and first causes. To these add the two virtues of the practical intellect: art, the capacity to make according to a true course of reasoning, and prudence, which is right reason with respect to action.

The first branch of speculative habits of knowledge is intuitive knowledge (or “understanding,” as the ancient Greeks called it), the inductive grasp of first principles, such as that of identity (whatever is, is) or that of non-contradiction (something cannot both be and not be at the same time in the same way). All discursive reasoning is based upon

our intuitive grasp of first principles.

The second speculative habit, scientific knowledge, comes through proof or demonstration. If the proof is mainly inductive, based on special or contrived experience (laboratory experiment, for example), and searches for proximate causes, we speak of science as the modern world understands it. If the proof is mainly deductive, based on common experience, and searches for ultimate causes, we speak of science as the ancients understood it, i.e., philosophy.

Philosophy is the love of wisdom, as the Greek word suggests. A philosopher is one who seeks the highest kind of knowledge, which, in the natural order, is philosophical wisdom. Philosophical wisdom, primarily, is the knowledge of ultimate causes or principles that apply to *all orders of being*. These principles are studied in the highest branch of philosophy, metaphysics. Secondly, it is the knowledge of ultimate causes in a *particular order of being*, such as mobile being or quantified being, which are studied in the philosophy of nature and mathematics, respectively.

While the speculative virtues better the mind by helping it acquire knowledge for its own sake, the practical intellectual virtues of prudence and art better the mind by helping it acquire knowledge for the purpose of some particular action. As was noted earlier, St. Thomas defines prudence as “right reason about things to be done.”

Art, says St. Thomas, is “right reason about things to be made.” It is the practical intellectual virtue that helps the artist create in the right way, whether he produces a fine art product—a painting, a poem, a sculpture—or a work of useful art—a chair, a table, a knife.

While some of the useful and fine arts will be learned by students at Wyoming Catholic College, they will be approached in the vein of liberal education, to help students acquire habits that will make them better as men rather than better as workers. Adler makes this important distinction in respect to the useful art of carpentry:

There can be two reasons for learning carpentry. One might wish to learn carpentry simply to acquire the skill or art of using tools to fabricate things out of wood, an art or skill that anyone is better for having. Or one might wish to learn carpentry in order to make good tables and chairs, not as works of art which reflect the excellence of the artist, but as commodities to sell. This distinction between the two reasons for learning carpentry is connected in my mind with the difference or distinction between liberal and vocational education. This carpentry is the same in both cases, but the first reason for learning carpentry is liberal, the second vocational.

Besides the useful and fine arts, the liberal arts will be of special concern at Wyoming Catholic College because they are the arts of learning itself. They govern the operations of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, observing, and calculating. The liberal arts, traditionally, are divided into the trivium and quadrivium. The trivium consists of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, which discipline the mind as it finds expression in language. The quadrivium includes geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music. These four arts constitute the mathematical disciplines, as is obvious in respect to arithmetic and geometry but true also of astronomy and music, which may be considered from a purely quantitative point of view.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LIBERAL LEARNING

A major problem in higher education today in both sciences and arts is that students seldom have much choice for the learning of the generalist over that of the specialist. Influenced by the rise of modern sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their rapid development, and their prominence today, specialized scholarship and knowledge have come to dominate all academic disciplines in higher education—not just the natural and social sciences, but the traditional humanistic disciplines as well—i.e., history,

literature, and philosophy.

For decades, the humanities were the domain of liberal learning in higher education, but, as Adler purports, “The humanities, as currently taught and studied, are as much addicted to specialized scholarship as are the scientific departments to highly specialized research,” and Bloom rightly shows the consequence of this addiction:

The humanities are the repository of the books that are at the foundation of our religion, our philosophy, our politics, our science, as well as our art. . . . Only here are the questions about knowledge, about the good life, about God and love and death, at home in the university. If, however, one looks at the humanistic side of the campus, one finds a hodgepodge of disciplines, not integrally related with one another and without much sense of common purpose.

The humanistic disciplines are indeed as fragmented as the other disciplines within the university—“not integrally related with one another.” Students have suspected for quite some time now that professors in the humanities have often abdicated their duty to guide and have left their charges to fend for themselves in the fragmented world of academia. Typical college students find themselves lost in a labyrinth of humanities courses and programs, a maze that leads, as Newman says, to a “spurious philosophism” he calls “viewiness.” Students have learned little soundly or thoroughly. They have experienced little or no continuity among the humanities courses and have seen that the courses lead nowhere in particular, thus destroying any integrity.

Quinn submits the following:

The humanities have sold their heritage for a mess of methodology. The humanities have been professionalized and scientized to the point where the ordinary undergraduate with a budding love for poetry or history or art or philosophy finds his affection returned in the form of footnotes, research projects, bibliographies, and scholarly jargon—all the poisonous paraphernalia that murders to dissect.

In short, the humanities are being taught, for the most part (on both the undergraduate and graduate levels), not liberally, but illiberally, most often scientifically, for specialists. The course of study is fragmented rather than integrated, as Frank Nelick (former professor at the University of Kansas) points out:

This dominance by specialty and method, or “scholarship” as it is called, takes away from poetry all recognition of its purpose or direction as an art.

On all sides there are indications that the decay of the discipline worsens. Deans, chairmen, federal bureaucrats and the lesser lights of eager committees fear, after “agonizing scrutiny,” that the Humanities are in for hard times in the years ahead. Humane studies are indeed in total disarray; in the past twenty years or so, the faithful shepherds have become naughty Boy Blues who . . . not only failed to guard their heritage but even aided in its abandonment. . . . The integrity of the profession is lost.

Mark Van Doren (Columbia University), acknowledged as one of the greatest professors of literature, considers the problem vis-à-vis teaching English literature: “If there is merit in the proposal that English departments be abolished in favor of departments which shall have literature in the large as their concern . . . the reason is not that English literature is a little thing, but that it is taught as such. It has become a specialty; that is, a subject the importance of which no one is educated to know. . . . Students improve their knowledge not of it but about it.”

Students no longer study the concerns of literature—love and hate, war and peace,

life and death—but instead study its methodology, the study of the study of literature. In Senior’s opinion, current teaching lacks this human value, not only in literary studies, but also in the other humanistic disciplines:

Departments of Classics, Literature, Philosophy, History, Music, Art and the like at universities are increasingly staffed with experts in the technical problems of editing texts, computerizing indexes and constructing linguistic, sociological and psychological hypotheses—all of which, whatever their value, is not human value; it is scientific research in the humanistic field; it is not itself humane.

Due to excessive specialization in all areas of higher education today, the liberally educated person or generalist has become even rarer and our culture has suffered tremendously as a result, for culture, as Adler says, is “the common or general learning in which all human beings should be able to participate and in terms of which they should be able to communicate and understand each other.”

THE LEARNING OF THE GENERALIST

In the history of education, the ancient Greeks were the first to make the important distinction between the knowledge of the specialist and the learning of the generalist, which the Greeks called *paideia* and the Romans *humanitas*. Aristotle articulated this distinction in *On the Parts of Animals*:

Every systematic science, the humblest and the noblest alike, seems to admit of two distinct kinds of proficiency; one of which may be properly called scientific knowledge of the subject, while the other is a kind of educational acquaintance with it.

Aristotle considered this “scientific knowledge of the subject” the realm of the specialist, which is somebody’s—not everybody’s—business. The lawyer, the doctor, and the scientist, for example, need specialized knowledge and skills or techniques in order to practice their professions. Theirs was the illiberal education.

“A kind of educational acquaintance” with the subject was the realm of the generalist, which is everybody’s business. All persons need this kind of knowledge, this liberal education, for it leads to a good and cultured life.

What makes a certain kind of learning everybody’s business, and how does it differ from the kind of knowledge that is only somebody’s business? Specialized knowledge arises from a special experience or investigation especially contrived to answer specific questions by means of highly specialized methods of investigation. This is obviously true of the modern sciences, both natural and social, but it is also true of specialized scholarly pursuits in all other disciplines of learning as well—history, philosophy, literary studies, languages, and so forth. In contrast, *humanitas*, the learning of the generalist, is derived from a universal core of common experience that gives rise to common-sense notions that all persons possess but, initially, only in an unreflecting way. These notions can be reflected upon, analyzed, and transformed into what George Santayana calls “essential doctrine,” constituting a philosophy, which is simply a refinement of “what everybody knows” in rudimentary form:

For good or ill, I am an ignorant man, almost a poet, and I can only spread a feast of what everybody knows. Fortunately, exact science and the books of the learned are not necessary to establish my essential doctrine, nor can any of them claim a higher warrant that it has in itself: for it rests on public experience. It needs, to prove it, only the stars, the seasons, the swarm of animals, the spectacle of birth and death, of cities and wars. My philosophy

is justified, and has been justified in all ages and countries, by the facts before every man's eyes. . . . In the past or in the future, my language and my borrowed knowledge, would have been different, but under whatever sky I had been born, since it is the sky, I should have had the same philosophy.

Any discipline may be approached from the point of view of the generalist rather than just the specialist. Adler addresses this point: "Imaginative literature—epic, dramatic, and lyric poetry, novels and plays . . . draws upon the common experience of mankind and represents reflections about it. Nothing but common experience and reflection about it is needed for the understanding of such literature." Further on he says, "Even the literature of the sciences and of mathematics can be read and understood in a way that brings them within the grasp of the generalist who, in the light of his common sense and his common experience, asks philosophical questions about them and uses the liberal arts to pursue the answers."

THE INTEGRATED LEARNING OF THE GENERALIST

It is not enough for the generalist to possess fragmented and disparate bits of knowledge. He must integrate his learning into an ordered whole. What precisely is integrated knowledge? The word "integrated" is derived from the Latin *integer*, meaning "whole." There are two kinds of wholes, argues St. Thomas, one whose integrating principle is from without, like a pile of bricks or a modern university, and the other whose integrating principle is within the nature of the thing itself, like an organism. A man, for example, is a whole composed of many parts—feet, legs, head, arms—but no one thinks of a cadaver as a man. The integrating principle of soul must inspire a human body before it is an integral whole, or man. So it is with a liberally educated person. The knowledge he possesses will not constitute an integral whole unless it is inspired and united by an integrating principle.

What is this integrating principle that gives continuity, coherence, order, and direction to *humanitas*? It is certainly not something superimposed from without, but rather a principle inherent in the knowledge itself. Newman says that the integrating factor makes a certain kind of intellectual perspective possible. It consists in the formation of a mental habit or an acquired power, which he describes thus:

[It is] the power of viewing many things at once as a whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values and determining their mutual dependence. Possessed of this real illumination the mind never views any part of the extended matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else, it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, until that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning.

Senior claims that the integrating principle has been handed down by the Perennial Philosophy: "The great tradition in philosophy has held that knowledge is analogous, that is, one integral structure having many parts but moving together and arranged from within by its intrinsic nature."

To illustrate the principle of analogous or integral knowledge, Senior, following Aristotle, says that business, which deals with the common good, is a branch of ethics, the study of "what is to be done." Ethics, in turn, is a branch of the general knowledge of the nature of man, psychology. Psychology is a division of biology, "the science of internally motivated moving natures." Biology in turn belongs to "the science of mov-

ing natures in general,” physics. And physics, finally, raises the largest questions of all in metaphysics—questions of the ultimate reasons for existence, questions of “being” in itself and of the *good*, the *true*, and the *beautiful*.

Hutchins makes the same important point in this way:

Now Greek thought was unified. It was unified by the study of the first principles. . . . Among the Greeks, then, metaphysics . . . is the ordering and proportioning discipline. It is in the light of metaphysics that the social sciences, dealing with man and man, and the physical sciences, dealing with man and nature, take shape and illuminate one another. In metaphysics we are seeking the causes of things that are. It is the highest science, the first science, and as first, universal. It considers being as being, both what it is and the attributes which belong to it as being.

He then draws the following syllogistic conclusion: “The aim of higher [liberal] education is wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge of principles and causes. Metaphysics deals with the highest principles and causes. Therefore metaphysics is the highest wisdom.”

While “metaphysics is the highest wisdom,” it must be noted that this is true only in the natural order. In the supernatural order, theology, the study of God in the light of faith, produces a higher wisdom. This wisdom will be the ultimate goal of students at Wyoming Catholic College.

In summary, according to the Perennial Philosophy, the knowledge contained within all disciplines in themselves and in their relation to each other is dependent and arranged in a hierarchical or vertical fashion, from the lowest study to the highest studies (metaphysics and theology). These last deal with the ultimate principles of being and knowledge. These principles give cogency and order to all knowledge contained in the various disciplines. In effect they make possible the integration of the learning of the generalist. If this view were not true it would be difficult to see how there can be order among the many disciplines we study from a generalist, or even a specialist, point of view.



The Proximate Purpose of Liberal Education

The poet John Donne points out that “no man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” Being social animals, we belong to a community, both spatially and in time, historically to Western culture. A liberal education initiates and educates us in that culture. Thus acculturation is the proximate purpose of liberal education.

Secretary of Education William J. Bennett delivered a speech at Stanford University in 1987, occasioned by Stanford’s decision to alter its Western Culture Program due to political pressure. Bennett raised the question, “Why must we study, nurture, and defend the West?” He then gave the compelling answer: “Because it is ours . . . it is good . . . [and] the West is under attack.”

Contemporary thinkers often disagree with Bennett’s (and Wyoming Catholic College’s) claim that our cultural patrimony is good and worth preserving. They like to assume that only the modern generation originated whatever is truly good in the intellectual world. They overlook the fact that we are the recipients of an intellectual legacy with deep roots in the ancient world. The Western Classics, poetry, history, philosophy, and religion, germinated in the rich, intellectual soils of Greece, Rome, and Israel, establishing a tradition and culture that have been flowing throughout the Western world ever since.

Even though our past culture is often obscured, it nevertheless can be studied and revived. If it is not, it may well be lost forever. Should that happen, we can blame only ourselves for being prodigal sons and daughters who wasted a precious heritage. Like the prodigal son who rejoined his family, so too may we through liberal education be reunited with our Western culture.

What, precisely, does it mean, to belong to a culture? Our greatest of English poets says a person plays many parts in his lifetime—mother and father, teacher and student, vocationalist and avocationalist—but he always carries his humanity with him. He is always the *human* father, the *human* teacher, and the *human* vocationalist. The educator Hutchins proposed that all persons should study the liberal or permanent studies “because these studies draw out the elements of our common human nature, because they connect us with the best that man has thought, because they are basic to any understanding of the world.”

Liberal education at Wyoming Catholic College thus deals with the permanent and perennial questions that address God, man, and nature, such as what it means to be a civilized man or a barbarian, the purposes of work and leisure, the nature of democracy and tyranny, the values of wealth and luxury, the battles of man and nature, and the relation of man to God. To ignore these questions is to forget that one is first a human being and then a mother, student, or worker. If we citizens of the West want to make intelligent decisions about our common destiny, we must be prepared to consider what all persons do.

Thus, liberal studies at Wyoming Catholic College aim, as Maritain claims, “to guide man in the evolving dynamism through which he shapes himself as a human person—armed with knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtues—while at the same time conveying to him the spiritual heritage of the nation and the civilization in which he is involved, and preserving in this way the century-old achievements of generations.” Wyoming Catholic College graduates will thus attain both the immediate and proximate



The Final Purpose of Liberal Education

We have said that liberal education is an art ordered to the end of making a “better man.” Linked to the ethical matter of man being better is man’s final goal: happiness. In the Western tradition, the ultimate purpose of a Catholic liberal education concerns man’s happiness in this life (natural happiness) and in the next (supernatural happiness), the highest good we seek. A Catholic liberal education produces the truly free man who, because he possesses the intellectual, moral, and theological virtues, can direct himself—with God’s grace—to his proper end. The man who can direct himself thus is a better man and a better citizen. He may not have attained it yet, but he will be as sure of it and as close to it as Moses overlooking the Promised Land. The curriculum at Wyoming Catholic College will have spared the student many years of wandering and will have set his purpose firmly in mind.

The Realization of This Vision

In August of 2007, Wyoming Catholic College welcomed its first class of students, offering them a curriculum that faithfully embodies the vision articulated in this statement. A separate publication, the College’s *Catalog*, shows how our philosophical vision is realized in a definite curriculum. The *Catalog* explains in detail our mission of educating the whole person and unfolds the courses in their particularity, including the reading lists of Great Books. Those who have appreciated the overall argument advanced in this *Philosophical Vision Statement* are encouraged to examine next its concrete realization as described in the *Catalog*.



Appendix I

THE OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OF WYOMING CATHOLIC COLLEGE

“Faith has the added task—in a time when creation has been forgotten, in which we live, to a large extent, in a secondary world of the self-made—of putting man once again in the way of creation in order to let him see it again and thus learn to know himself.”

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*

Although Wyoming Catholic College is distinctive in many ways, perhaps nothing strikes a casual observer more than the Outdoor Leadership Program. Our Latin program is innovative, and our Trivium sequence unlike anything found at other colleges, but Latin and the arts of writing and speaking have gone together with Catholicism and liberal arts for millennia. What connects Catholic liberal education with hiking, fishing, and horseback riding?

Why the Outdoors?

A moment’s reflection will show that the alternative to “outdoors” is “indoors,” a manmade environment. In the modern western world, humankind is more and more enclosed within a world of its own making: the air conditioner, the light bulb, the enclosed automobile, and a host of other wonderful technologies push unwittingly in the same direction. Men even in the largest cities of antiquity were more in contact with nature than the typical suburban dweller of today. As we embrace the blessings of modernity, we have also to think critically about them.

THE MAN-MADE WORLD

We relate to man-made environments as gods to our creation, as masters to our slave. Those who live all of their lives in the posture of gods may understandably come to think of themselves as lords of all, unaccountable to anyone and free to dispose of the world as they will. What man has made is, by that very fact, lower than man and subject to him.

For the same reason, the manmade world cannot enrich mankind: the lower cannot enrich the higher; everything it has, it has from man, so it can only give back what man has given it. As we live more exclusively in the world of our own making, we find it increasingly difficult to believe that knowing the world ennobles us. The only reason to know the world, it seems, is to secure our control of it.

The manmade world may of course inspire curiosity. Someone who knows about refrigerators may experience a fascination in tracing the same system through air conditioners and heaters. Knowing that cars drive around the whole day long, someone may be curious about where the cars go and whether there is a pattern. But the point is that this is curiosity. The manmade environment does not provoke wonder.

Wonder and curiosity both begin in ignorance, but from there they differ. Curiosity often wants to see how a known system works itself out—what path, for example, the next rain drop will take down the windowpane—but wonder always seeks the roots of things. Wonder begins with facts and wants to know causes; it begins lower and desires to ascend. Similarly, curiosity is a rather detached sort of desire, often pursuing the most trivial details, and easily replaced by the next curiosity. Wonder, on the contrary, always includes an acceptance, a loving affirmation of the roots of things, even a festive attitude, and once aroused persists for the whole of life.

In the manmade world, man himself is the first cause and final goal of all things. What room is there for wonder to ascend, when nothing is higher than man? How can wonder long to gaze in love on the roots of the world, when man himself is better than the world and in fact its root?

GOD'S CREATION

The outdoors, God's own creation, evokes wonder. Although the smallest insect causes wonder in those with eyes to see it, we feel wonder most powerfully when we directly experience what seems more than man, what is grand: a lofty mountain range, vast night skies full of far-distant stars, or an unstoppable storm. The sense that we are on top, with nowhere to ascend, vanishes like the morning mist.

The love implicit in wonder is most strongly evoked by beauty. When we see not only the grandeur but also the sublime beauty of the Wind River Range, or the brilliance of the starry night, we are moved to accept, to affirm, to celebrate: we say, "This is good." Drawn out of ourselves, we begin to see that the world can ennoble man, and that power is not the only motive for knowing it.

As Scripture says, "From the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator" (Wisdom 13:5). Commenting on this verse, Pope John Paul II explained: "This is to recognize as a first stage of divine Revelation the marvelous 'book of nature,' which, when read with the proper tools of human reason, can lead to knowledge of the Creator" (*Fides et Ratio* 19). Wyoming Catholic College is committed to reading, not only God's "second book," the Holy Bible, but also his "first book," the book of nature.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

This commitment to "reading" nature arises from our mission as a liberal arts college. To see this, one must consider the meaning of the term "liberal education." It implies a contrast with "servile education": a liberal education is the education befitting a free man as opposed to that befitting a slave.

A slave is someone who lives and works not for his own good but for a good outside of himself. While every man is naturally ordained to a good realized in himself, to his own perfection and happiness, it is possible for a naturally free man to be enslaved either by other men or by his own slavish mentality. A man can fail to live for his own perfection.

Although other factors come into play, a totally manmade environment tends, as we have seen, toward the belief that all knowledge is only good if it is useful; all of man's thought must lead to something productive or it is worthless. Since action follows thought, the result is that in such an environment man's whole life is centered around the useful rather than the good: he works for some utility and he plays, ultimately, so that he can return to work refreshed. We see this in the widely held view that the purpose of education is to prepare for a job, as though a man's life must be no bigger than his job, as though "man" is reducible to "worker," to a cog in the machine. The worker, so conceived, never celebrates the good; his good has moved outside of himself. As Scripture could have foretold, the very environment that whispers "You are gods" ends by trying to enslave us.

An education rooted in wonder, however, offers freedom. Because the heart of wonder is a loving affirmation of the roots of things, in the contemplation of God and his creation, in worship, in poetry, man finds activities worthwhile for their own sake and not for any utility. His life becomes bigger than a job plus the weekend. This is a liberal education.

So while the manmade world suggests that its citizens are gods and ends in slavery, God's creation leads through wonder to humility and thus to freedom. This humility, the seed of detachment from self, is a precondition for wisdom. The fundamental choice in human life is whether we shall prefer truth to self or self to truth. The one who prefers self to truth is in a poor position to receive truth, especially truth about ultimate realities; the one who prefers truth to self has transcended even his own culture—he is a saint. He knows that “this is eternal life, to know you, Father, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3), and he begins to know God even here on earth in the studies opened up to him by the liberal arts.

IMAGINATION AND SENSES

While God's creation provokes wonder in the soul, it also enriches and stabilizes the imagination. Movies, television, and the Internet fill the mind with rapidly changing images geared towards stimulation, leading to a sense of frenzy and restlessness. Because imagination and the power of association go hand-in-hand, the innumerable images of sensuality and violence return throughout the day to affect how young people perceive the world and what attracts them. Nature counteracts the media on every point: it is relentlessly slow, promoting a sense of contemplation and satisfaction; it roots perception of the world in remembrance of the real; it orients desire toward the good rather than the provocative. In short, nature strengthens the imagination for its proper function.

The classic literature of Western civilization was written by men living close to nature, such as Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare. Their books proceed from a strong imagination and demand the same of the reader. Their imagery is slow and rich, like nature itself, and difficult for the student accustomed to hyperlinks. Their themes of birth and death and nobility escape the modern reader oriented toward the glitzy and glib. Very often even the particulars of their comparisons, drawn from farm and country life, escape the urban dweller. All of this applies especially to Scripture, which draws poetically on creation to draw its reader toward the Creator.

Nature strengthens not only the soul and the imagination but also the senses. The very multitude of images and sounds poured out by modern media tends toward a dulling of sensation. While the physical acumen of the eyeball may be as good as ever, the eye glances impatiently over the world and sees only what it expects to see. Really to see requires not only the eyeball but also the mind's eye; the receptivity and reality-rootedness mentioned above affect not only the mind's activity but even what registers on physical sight. The ability to see with one's own eyes, instead of with the eyes prepared by advertising moguls, is not only essential to a free man but a strong ally of contemplation. Liberal education, by its very nature, trains people to grow in this freedom and contemplation; our Outdoor Leadership Program provides the perfect complement to liberal education in its task of freeing souls and ordering them to the real.

Why Leadership?

In the charter document for Catholic Universities today, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Blessed John Paul II says that students in these institutions “should realize the responsibility of their professional life, the enthusiasm of being the trained leaders of tomorrow, of being witnesses to Christ in whatever place they may exercise their profession” (ECE 23). Why Catholic liberal arts students in particular have a mandate to be the “leaders of tomorrow” may not be immediately clear, and especially why at WCC this leadership relates to the outdoors.

LEADERSHIP

As we have seen, a liberal education opens one up to understanding the goal of all human life, and revelation perfects our grasp of this goal. No one can lead well without knowing his destination, and one might argue that those who know the destination have a duty to lead. While all humans are called to some level of contemplation in their lives, most are called to take an active role in human society. Our students are called not only to order their own souls but to order society as citizens.

But to see the full relationship of leadership to liberal education, we must return to the notion of liberal education as the education of a free man. Although the free man is free precisely because his life is not subordinated to the practical, sustaining a life of freedom does require handling the practicalities of life. Here too we find a difference between the free man and the slave. The true slave, the interiorly slavish man, is someone who needs another to rule him; the free man, by contrast, is able to govern himself. Freedom implies self-mastery. By the same reasoning, a society of free men does not need to call in a tyrant from the outside, but can bring forth leaders from within its own ranks: the free man can govern not only himself, but others. “Leadership” therefore gathers under one name all the practical virtues of the liberally educated man.

The chief part in leadership is prudence, which WCC’s *Philosophical Vision Statement* defines as “the light of reason that guides the will in choosing the right means to the right end in a *specific* situation.” While the crown of the liberal arts is theoretical wisdom, a grasp of the root causes of things, prudence is wisdom in practical affairs. It includes organization, thoroughness, preparedness, and the careful calculation of risks.

Because prudence chooses the right means to an end, it presupposes that the right end is in view. Right means to a bad end profit nothing. While knowledge of the right end comes from study of the liberal arts followed by philosophy and theology, the moral virtues of temperance, fortitude, and justice orient desire towards the true good; or to approach the same thing from the other side, gluttony, lust, cowardice, and a criminal mind distort one’s perception of what is good and bend desire towards what is bad. The free man, who is master of himself, must be master of his appetites and passions.

FOLLOWING

The fact that a free man can lead does not mean that he does lead at all times. In a society of free men, not all can lead equally at every moment. But the free man does not follow in the same way as a slave.

A slave works for a good that is not his own, which he may not understand, and to which he is forced. Left to his own inclination, the interiorly slavish man, lacking prudence and the moral virtues, seeks his own particular good apart from others and seeks to escape obedience to any authority outside of his own desires. A free man, on the other hand, works for the common good, which is in fact his own good and realized in himself; he understands the goal, and why prompt obedience is necessary to the goal; and he willingly submits himself to the leadership of his fellow free man.

Borrowing a phrase from the National Outdoor Leadership School, WCC instructors call this “active following,” the manner of being led which is proper to a free man.

OUTDOORS

As explained above, direct experience of God’s creation provokes the starting point of the virtues, namely a humility in the face of what is true and good. Our outdoor instructors have found that the same experience serves to nourish this small beginning towards true virtue.

Because God’s creation is not man’s creation, the dangers and discomforts it imposes are real and unavoidable. Any wilderness expedition requires organization, thoroughness,

preparedness, and the careful calculation of risks—in a word, prudence—and punishes their absence. Students mature quickly in the knowledge that this is not a game, not a drill, but real life.

Choosing the right means to the right end in the wilderness often requires a temperate ability to get along on less. Inability to control appetites does not fit with limited supplies and unexpected, difficult situations. To persevere in achieving an arduous goal requires both physical and mental strength; from the Latin word for strength (*fortitudo*) we have the word “fortitude.” Finally, members of a wilderness expedition need to cohere as a group, to treat one another with consideration and fairness, to handle one another’s failings equitably, and everything else implied by the social virtue of justice.

This last point brings out the special role of the wilderness expedition as opposed to just any outdoor activity. Beginning with Plato’s *Republic*, Western political philosophy has sought to discover the virtues of man and the nature of society by imagining the smallest community possible. Also beginning with Plato, philosophers have tied the beginning of society to the fact that human beings are not self-sufficient but need one another to survive. In a wilderness expedition, far from the nearest civilization, this smallest community is not imagined but lived. It is a microcosm of society. The need to balance individual and common goods, often masked in large cities, emerges clearly; the value of true leadership and of active following, distorted by petty politics, becomes clear; lastly, the supreme importance of human virtue for the good of society stands forth in stark relief. While the outdoors offers contact with God’s creation, the expedition in particular offers clear contact with the pinnacle of God’s creation: human society.

On the other hand, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has argued in *Handing on the Faith in an Age of Disbelief*, the indoors, the self-made world of man, is whatever man made it to be and it could be any other way he chose to make it. Because the world is not a given but something made, there is no “way things ought to be,” no nature—and hence no morality. While contact with God’s creation promotes virtue, lack of contact with God’s creation destroys the very root of virtue.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM

The sense of wonder and reality-rootedness and the strengths of imagination and sense fostered by contact with God’s creation clearly contribute to success in a liberal arts classroom. But the virtues instilled by leadership training also turn out to be vital.

Students in any school need prudence to organize their time, prepare for classes, and complete assignments thoroughly. But because WCC students often learn in the seminar mode, more than other students they need group cohesion and the ability to take a leadership role in the classroom. In discussion classes, the students work together and lead one another to discover the truth in what they are studying. They handle questions and objections with fairness, and deal with one another’s failings equitably. In the wilderness, some students have particular abilities which allow them to lead a certain part of the trip; team members are taught how to recognize this and assist that student in leading. Similarly in the classroom students with particular intellectual skills must recognize their ability and lead their classmates, while others can actively follow to better understand and learn the material themselves. In every class, students learn to “actively follow” the teacher, whose special expertise qualifies him to lead in the quest for truth.

But the moral virtues contribute in an even more direct way to learning. Because gluttony, lust, and cowardice cloud the mind and bend the will, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that “the exercise of the moral virtues, through which such passions are held in check, is of great help in acquiring knowledge” (*In VII Physic.*, lect. 6). The spark of humility, which prefers truth to self and therefore opens self to truth, is safeguarded by the virtues.

What is the Program?

While the goals of the program are ultimately the intellectual and moral excellences outlined above, the students' concrete activities are almost always physical, requiring dexterity, agility, balance, and endurance. This is not by accident. A sound and disciplined body is not only good in itself, but of great importance to a student. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that to say the soul alone understands would be as ridiculous as saying the soul alone builds or weaves (*De Veritate*, Q. 19, Art. 1, arg. 1 and ad 1). In a similar vein, he said that "the different dispositions of men for the operations of the soul depend on the different dispositions of their bodies" (*De Memoria*, lect. 1). Men are by nature bodily thinkers, so just as moral vices cloud the mind, poor health and lethargy disrupt the operations of the intellect. Aquinas goes so far as to say that "to a good bodily constitution corresponds the nobility of the soul" (*II De Anima*, lect. 19).

The Outdoor Leadership Program course sequence includes an initial three-week backpacking expedition, a winter course, and extended trips each semester led by students themselves. Students learn the fundamentals of wilderness backpacking, travel and navigation, wilderness medicine and more; then they learn how to do all of this in the winter environment, where the stakes are higher. From there they move on to more challenging adventures including rock climbing, canoeing and sea kayaking, canyoneering and desert backpacking, whitewater rafting and more. Each student has opportunities to lead the group as well as to practice the skills of a good follower. A detailed description of the current program can be found in the College's *Catalog*.

Conclusion

While the combination of Catholic liberal arts with hunting, fishing, and hiking surprises at first, they fit together at Wyoming Catholic College like soul and body. Outdoor education renews wonder, the root of all learning; it strengthens the imagination and the senses, the indispensable supports of every mental endeavor; it cultivates virtue, the mind's compass and the wellspring of happiness. The heart of our college will always be in the classroom, and certainly students at WCC spend more time studying than exploring the outdoors, but the Outdoor Leadership Program is essential to what we do. It provides needed preparation and ongoing formation not only for the body, but for the soul and the mind as well.



Appendix II

TECHNOLOGY AND CATHOLIC LIBERAL EDUCATION

“Christianity will offer models of life in new ways and will once again present itself in the wasteland of technological existence as a place of true humanity.”

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*

For the last several decades, the trend in education has been towards more technology in education. Tax money funds “smart” classrooms, students use only the Internet to research their papers, and libraries boast that they will soon have no books. In spite of this trend, WCC has chosen to limit technology: no computers are allowed in the classroom, papers come fundamentally from books and the minds engaged with them, and students do not even carry cell phones. This decision follows as a logical consequence from other points where WCC differs from most institutions of higher learning today: it is Catholic, and it is dedicated to liberal education. The College is not against technology, but in favor of human excellence. To see this, one must consider the nature of technology.

Technology and Culture

Because man is made in the image of God, he is naturally creative. He grasps the world in terms of cause and effect, and so learns how to arrange causes in new ways to achieve new effects. The word “technology” comes from the Greek *techne*, which simply means an art or method for doing something. Technology is natural to man, so much so that many technologies are understandably not recognized as technologies: writing is a technology, as are hammers, roads, and silverware. To prove that man was present at a given time and place, archeologists look for the presence of tools, because every human culture uses tools—creates technology.

The creation of a new technology goes in two directions, outward and inward. First, man makes a new extension of himself or, to put it another way, extends himself outward to live in the world through a new medium. A hammer extends the craftsman’s arm, writing extends the speaker’s presence to a broader audience, and the spear extends the hunter’s blow to a wonderful distance. The tool user really lives in and through his tools, becomes one with them, in a way that goes beyond a machine with an added part.

Then the new technology works inward: as man extended himself out into the tool, so the tool insinuates itself inward into the man and reshapes him. For example, members of a purely oral culture do not think linearly in the way taken for granted by those who read and write. The printing press furthers these effects and, by making reading and writing available to all, changes how the entire culture conceives of responsible citizenship.

In this way, technology and culture intermingle inextricably: human culture is impossible without technology, and every technology has its effect on culture. To understand WCC’s technology policy, we must keep in mind both sides of this principle.

The Whispered Message

The outward extension of man is the obvious and intended effect of a new technology. Because the inward extension of the technology into man is both unintended and difficult to predict, it tends to go unnoticed: if its intended use is what a technology shouts to the world, the unintended impact is what it whispers in every ear.

To continue the previous example, the inventor of the printing press was a devout Catholic, and the first book from his tool was a Bible, a service to the Church. But, unknown to Gutenberg, because the printing press would also make it possible for every Christian to own a Bible, it would also make it possible for the individual Christian to re-conceive the Bible as a private possession rather than as a common good of the Church. The outward extension was obviously a boon to Catholicism, while the inward extension—the unintended psychological effect of the new technology—made possible Protestantism as it exists today.

After the printing press, few great leaps were made in communications technology for several centuries, and society and Church learned to situate the new force within a larger culture. But in recent times, new technologies have appeared faster than culture can react to and assimilate them. Society and Church are still coming to grips with the television, while in the meantime the computer, the Internet, the cellular telephone, the iPod, and the Blackberry have piled on in rapid succession.

While it would be impossible to examine exhaustively the unintended psychological effects of every recent invention, a glance at several more important technologies will make the point clear. In what follows, we offer four vignettes highlighting certain technologies relevant to WCC's policies.

TELEVISION

The television offered a magical power of seeing far-away events. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then who could calculate the word-value of a video with sound? The word itself has always carried an aura of authority: when a culture is first introduced to writing, the written word is seen as magical, and even in an age-old print culture such as our own a printed sign seems “official.” No one is standing in the parking lot to say “Customer parking only”: it simply “is said,” and it brooks no argument. Television carried the same dynamic to a new level. It seemed to capture an entire person and event, remove them from immediate day-to-day reality, and represent them as more real than everyday events. Walker Percy noticed that a person who appeared on television had been “validated,” that is, seemed to enjoy a unique ontological status as the Platonic form of what the shadow people—the viewers—imitated in their own pale way.

A medium with this power could not remain a tool for information transmission. It seemed to present a greater reality, worth more than the hum-drum, day-to-day realities it claimed to transmit, and so it invited viewers to view for viewing's sake. Given how television appeals to senses, and given the extreme passivity of television viewing, to view the television for its own sake is simply to be entertained. At this point, the television begins to affect how a culture perceives the goal of life.

Plato criticized mankind in general, in every age, for fixating on the sensible world around, the everyday trees and horses, while failing to grasp the eternal forms which are inaccessible to the senses yet underlie all that is sensible. His famous analogy of the cave had men chained below the earth and convinced that shadows are what is really real. Television all too often leads men to the basement below the cave, so to speak, in which they are convinced that the really real is not the eternal form, nor even the everyday sensible, but the flickering shadow of an imitation of the sensible. It cuts men off from the real and causes them to think it better so.

None of this is to deny that there are good movies worth seeing and educational programs worth watching. Some artists have used the television's unique power of imitat-

ing eternity to offer a true poetic glimpse into the archetypes of reality. The point here is that when a large percentage of television viewers show addictive behaviors, watching six hours of television per day and obsessing about the personalities and private lives of television stars, they are not showing us their personal faults but the inner direction of the medium itself, its natural inward extension into man. To use the television well requires moral strength.

COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

Computers have such diverse applications and correspondingly diverse effects on man that it is impractical to discuss them all, even if they could be catalogued. Here we will focus on two of their more important inward effects.

In *The Phaedrus*, Plato tells a story about the gods Theuth and Thamus. Theuth enumerated his many inventions, and Thamus commented on them. When they came to the invention of writing, Theuth was particularly proud: this art, he claimed, will make men wiser and give them better memories. Thamus countered that the opposite is true: by leading men to entrust their knowledge to an externally written word, it will diminish what they have as interior word in the memory; but because it will allow men to amass tremendous piles of knowledge in the exteriorly written word, it will persuade them that they are wise when in fact they know nothing.

Thamus was no doubt too harsh: writing also brought with it logical habits of thought and the possibility of a slowly accumulated wisdom such as began precisely with Plato's school. But his distinction between the interior word and the exterior word is valid and became more relevant as technology developed. From papyrus rolls to medieval manuscripts to printed books, the trend has been ever towards more precise organization and categorization of knowledge, rendering memory less and less important. As books became ever more readily available to ever larger segments of the population, more and more people had to deal with the vices Thamus predicted. Why take the trouble to store things in memory when they are right at hand on a bookshelf?

With the invention of the computer, a wealth such as Theuth could not imagine and a temptation beyond Thamus's dreams were born together. Today one can store all the books of all the greatest thinkers of the world on a small, portable device, and information anywhere in these books can be extracted in seconds by key-word search. Academic journals have moved their contents to the Internet alongside encyclopedias, professional and technical blogs, and tremendous resources such as Project Gutenberg and Google Books. When one recalls that a major university library of the middle ages had perhaps four or five hundred books, the information at the fingertips of today's student is staggering.

But Thamus has his revenge. Today more than ever, we are tempted to give up remembering anything at all. Why should I memorize facts and figures when they are all on the Internet, and the Internet is in my pocket? Rarely do Christians memorize Bible passages anymore, and why should I when I can word-search the entire Bible in the original languages or any modern language of my choice right on my laptop? Reliance on the external word becomes almost total.

The computer itself has suggested that this movement from interior word to exterior word is not significant by putting itself forward as a metaphor for the human mind. The brain has a processor, active memory, and data storage; conversely, the computer "thinks," "remembers," and "decides." Computers were designed to imitate the brain, so the comparison has some value, especially when we say that the computer is like the brain. But if the brain is a computer, and memory a form of data storage, then what difference does it make whether information is stored on the hard drive between the ears or on the hard drive in the briefcase?

In reality, as experience shows, the interior word and the exterior word are radically different. Knowledge in a book or on a computer is like an axe hanging on my wall, powerful and ready to be wielded at any time. It is transparently a good thing. But knowledge in the memory is like my hand: it has become a living part of me. It is no longer just the object I think about, but has also become that by which I think about other things. As we devise more and more capacious data storage systems, we find ourselves in a world of more and more axes but fewer and fewer hands. Bible data has never been more accessible, but Paul's injunction to "let the word of Christ dwell *in you* richly" goes largely unheeded.

Here we come to one of the computer's most important yet entirely unintended inward effects: because it is wonderfully good at managing information, because it suggests itself as a metaphor for the mind, and because it tempts one to rely on it rather than on the mind—because of all of these factors, the computer insinuates that all learning is the acquisition of information, data encryptable in a certain number of bits. Knowledge is information, understanding is information, wisdom is information. The computer does not say that wisdom is unreal, but quietly replaces the old meaning of the word with a new content. Those who cannot conceive of writing a paper without the Internet have a new view of the goal of education; and when all knowledge has been reduced to information, it is difficult to say what the Information Age could have to learn from previous eras.

Opposed to this is the view that wisdom has more to do with depth than breadth, with formation than information. If understanding is precisely "standing under" things, grasping deep roots invisible to the senses, then education requires patient, meditative dwelling on a few things for a long time. As the medieval monks expressed it, one must ruminate, chew the cud again and again, before the nourishment latent in information is released. And as understanding increases, its verbal expression in fact decreases: the wisest men say the most in the fewest words, so that wisdom goes up while encryptable bits of data actually go down. All of this is resisted by the Internet, where hyperlinks to hyperlinks to endless resources discourage users from dwelling anywhere too long, where everyone "browses" and hardly anyone ruminates.

PERSONAL MEDIA PLAYERS

The signs of a personal media player addict are well known. Ear buds implanted, the iPod person avoids eye contact, when addressed does not reply—indeed, does not hear—and may even jiggle or hum in private celebration. He is, we say, "off in his own world."

This casual phrase reveals a profound insight into human life. Plants differ from rocks and dirt inasmuch as they interact with their environment, receiving from it and stretching into it, as roots grow further and further into the ground to receive water and leaves turn towards the sun. The "world" of a rock is only as big as the rock itself, but the "world" of a plant extends into the space around it. Animals differ from plants inasmuch as they inhabit an immeasurably larger world: they sense afar off, emote in reaction to sensing, act on emotion, and move through the world they sense in search or flight. Humans differ from animals inasmuch as their "world" is both broader and deeper: even without telescopes, man can reach out in thought to the boundaries of the universe; even without microscopes, he can ponder the hidden roots of things, even the deep causes that microscopes cannot probe. The world of man is as broad and as deep as being itself.

Corresponding to these levels of life are levels of community. Rocks have no community whatsoever, because the world of a rock is limited to its material extension and its material extension excludes all other rocks and dirt. Plants can share soil and air, and to this extent can form what we call "symbiotic relations." The worlds of animals overlap tremendously: for example, all that one dog senses, another dog can sense as well. They can know and desire and pursue the same thing, and this shared knowledge and shared

good makes possible the pack and the herd. The worlds of men interpenetrate even more, because they not only know and desire the same exteriorly visible goods but also cast their thoughts into the interior depths: man can know man and be known inwardly, in the thoughts and movements of his heart.

The personal media addict is therefore truly “off in his own world”: like the rock, his world extends outward no further than the surface of his skin and so does not overlap with that of others. His senses are directed towards the buds in his ears or the miniature screen before his eyes, and his thoughts are absorbed as well.

Although such devices can be used for audiobook classics or news programs that direct the user’s thoughts out towards truth or at least towards his fellow men, the nature of the medium is to create a private world. In keeping with this, its uses tend to be private, either games or music. The music typically is not of a sort to shape the soul’s response to truth—Bach, Mozart, Handel—but such as to promote emotional responses to private goods: anger, lust, depression, or a groundless good cheer. Continued dwelling in this exclusively private world tends in turn towards habitual concern with the sheerly private, and therefore with sensory stimulation and gratification of whims rather than with the wide-open spaces of truth and goodness where community becomes possible.

For this and other reasons, many personal media player users “plug in” nearly constantly. Some teachers report having to give students permission to leave the classroom and “get their fix” of pop music or what have you because detachment from stimulation for even a couple of hours has become difficult. Even for those who are not so addicted, personal media players round out a total environment of constant noise: few and far between are the havens of silence in today’s society. It is difficult to achieve interior quiet, to find some space for thought; for the truly “plugged in,” even the capacity for interior quiet dies.

This perpetual interior noise makes it impossible to focus attention in the steady way necessary to live fully in one place or be truly present to one person. The personal media player addict not only loses community while the device is on but even loses the interior conditions necessary for healthy, human communion—and for prayer.

CELL PHONES

The desire for communion with others is inscribed on the heart of man. His destiny, according to revelation, is communion with God and the saints in heaven, and his heart is restless until it knows and is known, loves and is loved. Today this longing for communion expresses itself in various technologies meant to connect people, including the cellular telephone, e-mail, networking websites, Blackberries, Twitter, and so on. People are connected at every moment not only with their close associates but also with virtual communities of likeminded individuals the world over. For those in isolated or hostile places, this can be a blessing.

More and more, the cellular telephone encompasses all of these technologies. Today’s cell phones not only receive calls but manage e-mail, browse the Internet, send text messages, play games and music, and on and on. They are the ultimate connectivity devices.

As experience shows, however, connectivity and communion are not the same. Being connected means receiving near-perpetual stimuli from the outside, adding to the total-noise environment and stimulation craving described above. Being connected also means perpetual half-absence from one’s physical place to be present to one or many other people in other places: one often sees a group of friends walking together, each talking on his cell phone with friends in other places. In other words, connectivity can dilute one’s full presence in one place and therefore one’s ability to be fully present to others. Arising from desire for communion, it can become a perversion of communion that kills the real thing.

From Technology to Technopoly

The outward extension of modern man through his technology is apparent to all: we live longer than any previous generation, we have more food than any previous era, we have more information about the world than any previous civilization, and the peoples of the world know more about each other and interact with each other more than in any previous age. So far in our discussion we have focused on the inward extension of technology into man, which is less obvious. Although we have looked at only a few technologies and at those in only a limited way, a look back over what has been said reveals a common direction in all of them: in various ways, they separate man from what is real, and redefine what “real” and “true” mean; by so doing, they redefine the good, and hence the goal of human life; by cutting man off from the true and the good, they also extinguish human community.

Or at least, so go the technologies if given free reign. If a culture is strong, and the values of truth, goodness, and communion are clear and dominant, then that culture will dictate how a technology is to be used and how it must not be used. This is what Neil Postman called a “tool-using culture.” On the other hand, if a culture lacks the resources to resist the psychological effects of new technologies, those technologies will take the driver’s seat, so to speak, and will dictate to the culture the values by which it should judge technology use. When technology drives culture rather than the other way around, we have what Postman called a “technopoly,” or what Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has called “technological civilization.”

Modern Western society not only lacked the resources to resist, but was even predisposed to accept the inward influences of modern technologies. As far back as the late Middle Ages, philosophers debated whether things in the world had real natures or not, and whether the good was real or only someone’s arbitrary decision. By the sixteenth century, the consequences of this debate began to emerge. Francis Bacon (born 1561) declared that pursuing natures and goods had been a distraction and a shackle to serious thinkers, and that henceforth real science must look only at how a thing is structured mechanically and what provides the push for the mechanism. This, he declared, was the path to improving the human condition. His vision was borne out: science took the direction he foresaw, and the human condition was improved tremendously. Even the details of his plan came to fruition—he planned a “College for Inventors” rather like our Massachusetts Institute for Technology, recommended government sponsorship for inventors, and foresaw scholarly journals and international associations of scientists.

The success of the new technologies reinforced Bacon’s view. Having rejected nature and natural goods, he concluded that knowledge is only desirable for the power it gives. As knowledge indeed gave great power, men were inclined to agree that knowledge is only desirable for its usefulness. Since the knowledge useful for technology is knowledge of mechanical structures and forces, it seemed sensible to ignore any other kind of knowledge—that is, to reject knowledge of nature and natural goods. Once in place, the system perpetuated itself.

As we have seen, the outward movement of a new technology usually has to do with a tangible improvement in the human condition. But the inward extension of technology into man affects his grasp of the truth of things, of what is good in the world, and the communion he lives in and for—in other words, the unintended, inward effects of technology redefine nature and natural goals, precisely those areas ignored by the new, technologically driven culture. Today, as for the first time in history a majority of the population lives in cities, and as it becomes possible for those in cities to move from one

totally manmade environment to another, the power of these inward effects is magnified beyond all bounds.

In fact, technopoly tends of itself in the same direction as the particular technologies mentioned above. If nature and natural goods are unreal, then the only value left is usefulness—production and profit. As Cardinal Ratzinger said, “If man were absolutely incapable of knowing the truth itself but only the fitness for use things have in view of particular aims, use and consumption would become the measure of all action and thought.” The good is therefore decided by whoever has the power to enforce his will, and every individual wants to decide it for himself. The common good vanishes, and human communion with it. Left are “use and consumption,” work and entertainment. Work is the true value, but entertainment both passes the time when we are not working and persuades us that perhaps we are not slaves after all—perhaps, in our subjection of all to the useful, we have excepted at least ourselves?

The WCC Technology Policy

In light of all that has been said, technology is clearly an issue every serious educator must face. Precisely what stance to take may not be clear in every circumstance, but that one must have a deliberate stance is unmistakable. The worst policy is no policy.

Being a Catholic liberal arts college, Wyoming Catholic College is already committed to a certain general position. Because we are Catholic, we must be dedicated to the notion that man really has a nature and a supernaturally graced end which he does not create arbitrarily for himself, that truth about man’s nature precedes the good he will pursue. Because we are a liberal arts college, we are also dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake rather than simply for its usefulness. On both counts, Wyoming Catholic College must, as part of its mission, equip its students to resist technologically driven culture.

There is no question of abandoning technology. As we said in the beginning, human culture is not possible without technology, and every technology has an effect on human culture. The question is not whether to accept or reject technology, but how to ensure that culture uses technology rather than letting technology drive culture. The difficulty is that, once established, technopoly absolutizes the message of each technology by saying that we should ignore the domain of nature and natural goods: this means that individual technologies can quietly redefine nature and natural goods while we ignore that whole region of life, absorbed as we are in the shouted promise of increased production and consumption. At the same time, the unseen inward effects of individual technologies all reinforce the message of technopoly that the true is what we produce and the good is satisfaction of whims. How then to overcome these mutually supporting forces?

The fascination of technopoly lies in technology’s overwhelming and obvious success in the realm of material prosperity. We who would resist technopoly must therefore call attention to other goods such as truth, virtue, and communion, which fall outside the values of production and consumption. Meanwhile, we must overcome the incessant tug of particular technologies, which insinuate that such goods are unimportant. So ideally, a technopoly resistance movement would at the same time (1) call the absolute value of technology into question and (2) occasionally “fast” from current technologies in order to re-sensitize people to “hear” the hidden “whispers” so as to consciously and freely judge whether they are good.

For most people, however, this is very difficult. They live in entirely manmade environments, so their “fasting” is limited to begin with. To give up text-messaging one day per week would do some good in any circumstance, and the very act of giving up a gadget is a cry of defiance against technopoly, but its effect is limited when one’s every contact with the world is contact with technology. In a total technology environment, the total claims of technopoly retain some credibility despite it all.

Moreover, a new technology brought in as a luxury is soon used as the basis of a new system in society, then the new technology is necessary for the system, and what was luxury and advantage suddenly becomes necessity and duty. For example, cell phones were originally an added advantage, but are now required by many jobs; the same is true of automobiles, e-mail, and all manner of inventions. Many who would like to live with less find that they cannot do so responsibly.

On both counts, Wyoming Catholic College has a unique opportunity to help. Our students have time free—and in fact mandated—to escape the entirely man-made environment and encounter the natural world. Because the total technology environment brings with it a host of problems uniquely its own, and because contact with God’s creation offers a host of unique benefits, this document can only touch on these issues. For a more complete discussion of the problem and its solution, see the foregoing appendix, “The Outdoor Leadership Program of Wyoming Catholic College.”

The difficulty of societal expectations is overcome by the fact that the College offers a small but complete community. Because we offer students employment within the College to cover tuition, they are free to live and work in a community specially designed so that they will not need various intrusive technologies to function from day to day. They have the opportunity to “fast” for a few years and re-sensitize, and the very act of limiting technology calls into question the absolute value of production and consumption. They are equipped to resist technopoly.

Reserving the right to make new rules about any future technology, as of this writing WCC prohibits cell phone usage on campus or in the local area, dedicated DVD players, gaming stations, personal digital assistants, televisions on campus or in the residence halls, and private Internet access. On the other hand, students are expected to bring a computer to school for writing papers, and they are encouraged to bring a private printer; public Internet is available both in the College library and in the student lounge. Students are allowed to use personal music players in the privacy of their rooms, so long as the noise does not disturb anyone. No computers are allowed in the classroom itself.

Our policy seeks a balance, because our goal is not that students should graduate never to use modern technologies again. That would be to deny the fundamental role of technology in human culture. Rather, the College desires that graduates form the vanguard of a new “tool-using culture,” in which their vision of the world determines technology’s place rather than technology dictating to them their vision of the world.

For this very reason, the faculty at Wyoming Catholic College do not abstain from all the technologies students are forbidden to use. Those who are surprised to see teachers carrying cell phones have not understood the College’s technology policy. While students go through a necessary period of formation, the faculty should model responsible and appropriate use of newer tools, molded by the vision of the Church. This means that faculty will have more of certain technologies than students do, although their role as models may at times mean that they use even less of a particular technology than is permitted the students. As the times and trends are in constant flux, faculty will need to maintain an ongoing conversation among themselves about what “responsible use” means.

Our graduates will likely choose to restrict their use of technology in various ways. However, they will also be equipped to take advantage of the Internet while subjecting it to the goals of contemplation, to use a personal media player while retaining interior quiet, and to carry a cell phone while preserving personal contact. In short, they will know how to master technology rather than serving it—and they will communicate this hope to others. In Ratzinger’s words, “Christianity will offer models of life in new ways and will once again present itself in the wasteland of technological existence as a place of true humanity.”



The Crest of Wyoming Catholic College

captures the mission of the College. The Eagle with its breast shield represents far-sighted wisdom. The Lion is the symbol of Christ the King. The Book and Sword stand for learning and truth. The Mountain, Sun, and Wheat signify the created world, which also instructs the students. The Moon is the symbol of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, above the Wall and Anchor of the Church and her faith. The true (*verum*), the good (*bonum*), and the beautiful (*pulchrum*) are the transcendental goals of all of the College's educational endeavors.

