



For This Day

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Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

The Beauty of Classical Christian Education

"Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, thousands can think for one who can see." - John Ruskin



Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale *The Snow Queen* begins with the story of a demon that creates a looking-glass with the power to make everything good or beautiful "shrink to nothing, while everything that was worthless and bad looking increased in size and [became] worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes appeared like boiled spinach, and the people became hideous..." The demon kept a school to show mankind what the world was really like and he carried the looking-glass everywhere so that the people in every land could look through the distorting mirror. Eventually in his pride the demon even tried to fly the mirror up into heaven to see the angels, but it slips from his hand and breaks into tiny fragments which rain down on mankind. These tiny fragments can lodge in people's eyes and even their hearts so that they can see nothing either rightly or justly. The rest of the fairy tale concerns the fate of one boy who has a mirror fragment lodged in his eye and heart.

It is a commonplace in our world that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder",

meaning that what is beautiful is completely relative and up to the individual to decide. This is not the understanding of the best of the ancients or the great teachers of Christ's Church. The classical and Christian tradition has understood beauty as an objective reality that comes from God himself who is indeed the source of all beauty. But sin has entered in and distorted our sight and in some cases completely inverted the true order of the world. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky has one of his characters say that we have fallen so far that "what to the mind is shameful is beauty and nothing else to the heart. Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me, that for the immense mass of mankind beauty is found in Sodom. Did you know that secret? The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting and the battlefield is the heart of man." If beauty is objective and our vision is distorted preventing us from seeing, then what is needed to purify our eyes and restore our vision? As philosopher Mark Anderson says, beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, rather "beauty is in the eye of the beautiful." Or as the Apostle Paul puts it "be not conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Our souls must be rightly ordered and renewed; they must become beautiful in order for us to see what is beautiful. Now to be sure, this is the work of the grace of God, yet we also need practice, or dare I say, classical Christian education to assist us in seeing aright. The task of education according to David Hicks is to cultivate virtuous human beings: "Virtue is the life that knows and reveres, speculates and acts upon the Good, that loves and reproduces the Beautiful, and that pursues excellence and moderation in all things." That is why we read great children's stories: to beautify our imaginations. That is why we study logic, mathematics, and science: to beautify our minds. That is why we read and discuss classic literature and history: to beautify our souls. That is why we study the scriptures and the theology of the

Christian church: to beautify our hearts. In the words of the great fourth century theologian Gregory of Nazianzus, we need to "polish our theological self to beauty like a statue" so that we can see what is truly beautiful.

What happened to the young boy with the distorted glass shards in Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*? You'll have to read it yourself to see the great lengths that had to be pursued, but ultimately it was removed by the love of another who would not rest, who would suffer any hardship, who would sacrifice all for the restoration of the young boy's true heart and sight. And ultimately that is what we have in Christ and what we must do and be as parents and teachers to teach ourselves, our children, and our students to be able to see what is good and true and beautiful. This is why we pursue classical Christian education.

Robert Terry

Parent Fellowship Opportunities

Parent to Parent

If you would like some help navigating your first year at CDA or your first experience with a grade, don't forget that Parent to Parent can help.

Grammar School M/W contact - Jacque Younger

Grammar School T/Th contact - Kimberley Lyons

Logic & High School M/W contact: Kristin Downey

Logic & High School T/Th contact: Donna Rector

Coram Deo Cafe

"Encourage one another and build each other up",
1 Thess 5:11

Make plans to attend our Coram Deo Cafe Meeting. Visit CDA Connect for more information.

Moms in Prayer

Moms in Prayer meets twice each week!

M/W Contact: Leah Clark

T/T Contact: Tessa Nownes

CDA Parents' Book Club

For more information visit the *CDA Parent's Book Club* Facebook page