

Light FROM THE Light

“OF ALL THE HOLY WORKS, THE
EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IS MOST HOLY.”
— ST. THEOPHAN

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PILLARS OF EDUCATION



ORTHODOX CLASSICAL SCHOOL
News & Views

Small but Mighty

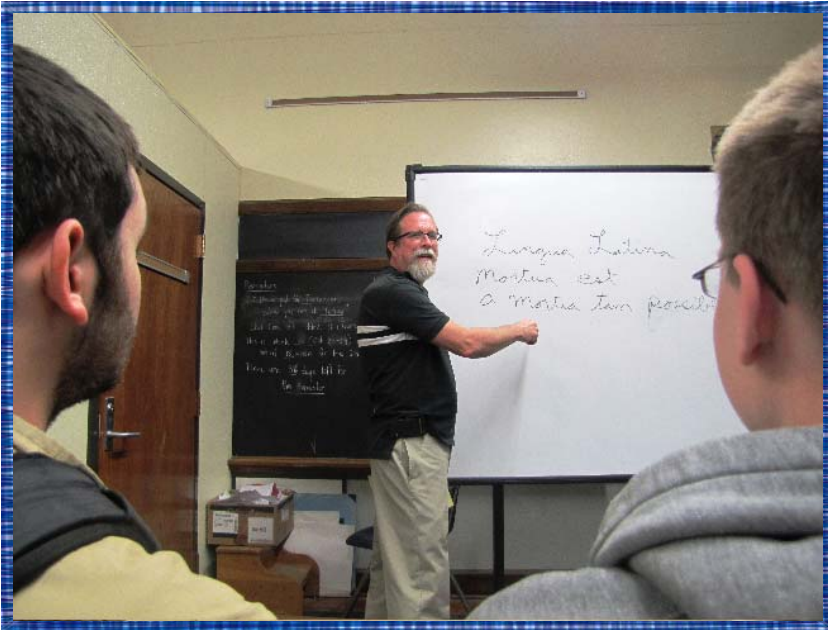
by Gigi Shadid

If we, as Orthodox Christians, were to start a school and only ten students were enrolled, would it be worth our time, talents and treasures? While it would be tempting to dismiss such a small school, in doing so, respected schools across the country, including The Independent School here in Wichita, or Annunciation Orthodox Christian School in Houston, TX, would have never had a beginning. The fact is, case after case proves that the size of the school in the beginning does not determine the success the school will have given time.

We in Wichita have only to look to our neighbors on Douglas Avenue for an example of a school that started very modestly and now boasts an enrollment of nearly 600 students. The Independent School, founded in 1980, just celebrated 30 years of existence. In the beginning, there were only eight elementary students who attended, where they met in a former nursing home. The Wichita Eagle recently reported on this anniversary year, stating that “where Baskin-Robbins ice

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Issue III



The Case for Latin Studies ... A Teacher's Perspective

by Stan Cox

LINGUA LATINA MORTUA EST, a MORTUA TAM POSSIBLE.

PRIMUM INTERFECIT ROMANOS. NUNC, INTERFICIT ME.

For years, I asked my beginning high school Latin students to memorize this quote at the start of the class. Translated, it reads, “The Latin Language is dead, as dead as dead can be. First it killed the Romans, now it’s killing me.” My purpose was to humorously address at the outset, two of the most common misunderstandings concerning Latin study. First, Latin is not a dead language. It is alive in well in English (roughly 60-65% of all English vocabulary directly or indirectly is derivative from Latin), as well as in Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian. The second fallacy addressed by our quote has to do with the misperception that Latin study is inordinately difficult and should be reserved for elite students with advanced academic abilities. The study of Latin is appropriate for all ages and academic backgrounds and has a track record of almost two millennia.

Historically, Latin was the cornerstone of western education for over 1500 years. Initial Latin study, in

addition to its many other benefits, provided the blueprint for how study should be conducted in all other disciplines as well. As late as the 1950s, graduate programs in this country were still conducted in Latin in a few universities. A century before, virtually all graduate studies were conducted in Latin. A common assumption is that Latin was the staple of only Roman Catholic institutions, but all early American universities featured Latin-based curricula. Nevertheless, for the last half century, schools have abandoned the study of Latin in favor of more “practical and contemporary” languages and subjects, to the detriment of their students’ academic skills and performance.

The case for reinstating Latin as foundational to 21st century curricula is not just based on a nostalgic desire to reestablish lost traditions, it stems from a need to return to what gives students the most practical, effective and results-based educational experience possible. Statistical data annually confirm the superior benefits of Latin educationally and

intellectually. Annual analysis of standardized test scores consistently demonstrate that students of Latin have higher numbers than other academic groupings, including students of all other second language studies combined. Not only do Latin students score the highest on tests evaluating reading and writing, there is a direct relationship between Latin and improved scores in math and science as well.

In my experience, one of the most common motivations of parents enrolling students in Latin is the belief that this discipline is a good precursor for those

who intend to study medicine or law. Latin does establish a great deal of legal and medical terminology, but it is also foundational to just about every other field of study as well. As important as vocabulary building is the logical and analytical thinking



processes automatically developed in course of the Latin Curriculum. The most significant factor contributing to the increase of intelligence is the ability of the learner to distinguish fine shades of similarity and difference in various subject matter. Latin is optimal for the development of these abilities, which is one of the main reasons for the direct link between Latin and standardized test scores.

In an age of random sound bites, 30 second advertisements, and channel/Internet surfing, Latin helps establish in its students disciplined and organized minds. Through the memorization of

increasingly complex noun declensions and verb conjugations, to the ability to distinguish categories of active, passive and deponent voicing, to the memorization and translation of great passages from classical literature and The Holy Scriptures, Latin nurtures a mind that is able to see the world as it really is and has the intellectual discipline to logically develop and understand important thoughts and principles for application. Much of current educational theory is based on so-called “research-based” curricula; fads and trends often the result more of social and political agendas than sound

pedagogical theory and practice. Latin has a fifteen century, evidenced-based track record of being the optimal foundational academic subject to not only fostering better students, but nurturing the learners to become better human beings as well.

Finally, Latin is a great springboard to the study of other languages. One reason that it is the best starting point is that instructors and students do not need to worry about developing the ability to speak it fluently in a native setting. The result is that the focus can be on the nature and structure of language itself. Latin grammar is also more fully developed and consistently applied than most, which makes it a solid foundational paradigm from which other language studies can be conducted. This is especially true when it comes to the study of Greek, which is another essential element of an Orthodox classical curriculum.



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ANNUNCIATION
ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
BEGAN IN 1970 WITH
ONLY 10 STUDENTS
AND NOW BOASTS
AN ENROLLMENT OF
650 STUDENTS.



cream buckets lined up in the hall served as students' lockers, Independent now has five buildings at its campus on Douglas east of Rock Road."

There are several Orthodox schools that have been operating in this country for some time now, schools that started really small and now are thriving. Annunciation Orthodox School in Houston, Texas is in its fortieth year of operation, with an enrollment of over six hundred-fifty students; year one, there were only ten. The school is a Pre-K through 8 program associated with Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, and blends a traditional curriculum with religion classes and chapel services. It is important to note that the student population is about 10% Orthodox; they have developed such a strong reputation that there is a waiting list of non-Orthodox families who want to bring their children to this Orthodox school. What a beautiful opportunity to witness our faith to our communities!

St. Peter's Classical School in Fort Worth, Texas is an example of an Orthodox school that grounds its philosophy of education in "permanent things and eternal verities." Established five years ago in the new educational facilities at St. Peter's Antiochian Orthodox Church, the school already has eighty students divided into multi-grade levels ranging from Pre-K to 12. Students in the grammar school master the rudiments of literacy and numeracy while having their imaginations stocked with the words, images, and sounds of the greatest creative works of our culture. Students study Latin and Greek beginning in the lower grades, with the linguistic focus intensifying in middle

school. The juniors' recent verbal scores suggest its language arts program is far superior to most.

Explaining the unique mission of an Orthodox classical school, priest Fr. John Cholcher wrote this: *"The academic standards in any secular or Christian school should be the highest possible, and the students of a Classically-modeled program will master more subject matter facts and methods of analysis than most, if not all, students from a non-Classical program. The aim of a specifically Orthodox approach, though, is to contemplate created things, then go beyond them to the Creator, and ultimately to know God, the Holy Trinity.... To this end, Orthodox education possesses its own triple-way, to which the secular Classical model harmonizes quite well. The Orthodox way is purification, illumination, and union with God."*

One final example of a school that started small is Annour Islamic School in Wichita, just off of K-96. Their vision of a school came to fruition in 1996, starting with only 12 Pre-School students. Now, they have an enrollment of over 100 students ranging from grades Pre-K-8. Dare I ask, WHY NOT US?

We, too, have a vision for a unique school in Wichita, an Orthodox classical school. This vision is catching fire, and we pray that the all-Holy Spirit will continue to flame that fire into a reality. Just as the Paschal candle begins with only one small flame, it continues to grow into a mighty body of flames as we lift our candles and reach for the Light, one by one, filling the Church with the light of Christ.





Why I love Latin ... A Student's Answer by Grace Farha

*LATINA NON CECIDIT
CUM ROMA.*

Any idea what that says? I'm sure you could guess at the first and last words: Latin and Rome. You might be able to get the second word also: not. You may even know that "cum" means "with." But what about "cecidit"? Here's a hint: the root of this word in Latin is "cado." If you have ever heard the English word "cadent," meaning "being in the process of falling," you may have guessed the meaning of cado as "I fall". In Latin, cecidit is the perfect tense of cado. So, it means "he did fall." Put these words together and you get: Latin did not fall with Rome. This saying, posted on my Latin teacher's wall, is something I look at almost every day, and it could not be more true.

Although Latin is no longer a spoken language, it can still be extremely useful. Being in my fifth year of Latin, if I had seen the word "cadent" on a test such as the SAT, I may have been able to decipher its meaning. I have personally used this strategy on the PSAT vocabulary section. When I do not know the meaning of a word, I turn to my knowledge of Latin and look for roots that I recognize. Even in my English Literature books, I find myself putting my Latin to use. Every day I hear words with roots from Latin. I expect

Latin will also help me in college. Because I am hoping to go into medicine, my Latin skills should help me to better understand the meanings of disease names or other medical terms. For example, did you know that the term "stat" as in "bring me the insulin needle, stat!" comes from the Latin word "statim" which means "immediately"? This is just one example of how Latin can help me in the future.

But, Latin is not just helpful. To me, it is also interesting and exciting. I enjoy the class and learning a language that is unknown to most people. French and Spanish, the other languages offered at my high school, are pretty common, whereas Latin is not a language widely studied. While part of my enjoyment is due to having a great teacher, the material is interesting too. Currently, my Latin Literature class is translating a poem by Ovid, and we have translated poems by Catullus in the past. These poems show what life in Roman times was like, and at the same time, are good stories. But ancient poems are not the only texts that can be translated from Latin to English. Next semester, my class will be translating *Harrius Potter et Philosophi Lapis* (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*). (Did you see "philosophi" and think "philosopher"?) If that isn't modern, what is? *Latina non cecidit cum Româ*. Latin did not fall with Rome, but continues to show up in our everyday lives.



WHAT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PERSONNEL SAY ABOUT LATIN ON TRANSCRIPTS:

- "That's a student who is willing to step away from the crowd." Ray Brown, Dean of Admissions, Texas Christian University
- "This student is likely to be disciplined, have a strong basis for further learning, be a little more creative toward intellectual pursuits than most." Michael C. Behnke, Vice President for Enrollment, University of Chicago
- "We value the study of Latin very highly." Steve LeMenager, Director of Admission and Associate Dean, Princeton University
- "Students taking Latin are typically scholarly. They pursue academic study in the purest sense, they are not simply fulfilling a requirement." Matthew Potts, Admissions Counselor, University of Notre Dame

THE THREE WEIGHT-BEARING PILLARS OF EDUCATION: THE CHURCH, HOME AND SCHOOL

BY FR. PATRICK TISHEL — HEADMASTER OF ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA
SCHOOL, ALLSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



*“WHEN we are BAPTIZED in CHRIST,
we BECOME PART OF His BODY -
THE CHURCH - AND ARE REPLANTED
in NEW SOIL. THE CHILDREN NEED TO
KNOW THE FULLNESS OF THE FAITH.”*

Years ago I lived in a house that was undergoing renovations. As one of the workers bounded up the stairs to the second floor, the house began to sway back and forth. It so happened that they had taken down certain walls that bore the weight of the structure. It is clear in all “construction” projects that all of the “finish” work must be done after the house has been furnished with strong, weight-bearing pillars.

The same must be true in a child’s formation. If the educational foundation is not in place, then all of the knowledge gained in specialized disciplines will be for naught. Often parents assume that such a foundation is simply found in school-in any school. Yet just as a literal foundation upholds and affects the entire house and not merely certain rooms, it is clear that the educational foundation must also include all

areas of life. For this reason the three weight-bearing pillars of a child’s education are primarily the Church, the Home and the School. If we begin to see these divinely ordained institutions as rich fountains of wisdom and grace, flowing with the living water of Truth, then we will expect of them unity and cooperation in the midst of their particular functions. Instead, given the secularization of curricula in schools, busy home lives and minimal church attendance, we are left with weakened relationships amongst the three and, therefore, an unstable foundation. While it is possible to presume that Church exists for Sundays, home-life is for the evenings, and school is for weekdays, they actually deeply affect each other and the overall education of our children. The Church is the most prominent and foundational of the three pillars. St. Timothy calls it the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim 3:15). It is upon this ground and under this umbrella that the home and school must operate. When we are baptized in Christ, we become part of His Body - the Church - and are replanted into new soil. The children (and parents) need to know the fullness of the Faith.

Our life in Christ is founded upon a living faith—a revelation from God delivered to us by the Son of God Himself. The Divine Services express the ineffable wonder of living in the fearsome, awesome presence of the Living God. The prayers of the Hours and the celebration of the Feasts lead us to understand Christ's life. When the Gospel is preached, the heart and mind are given wings to soar to the throne of God. When various Church traditions are practiced (such as lighting candles and making the sign of the cross) the spiritual reality is realized more fully. We must teach and encourage the children to inhale the air of the Church—to stand boldly upon its foundation clad with the full armor of Christ.



St. John of San Francisco Orthodox Academy

The home and the family are close to the heart of the Church - the Little Church. This is where the heart of a child is formed, the feeling for prayer, the zeal for the commandments, and the love of God and neighbor, all within the child's heart. The obedience of the children to the parents, is the precursor to the obedience to God and the Church. The love of God is nourished within the Children while they stand before the icons during morning and evening prayers.

The bridge between the home and the Church (and servant of both) is the third pillar - the school. During the Turkish enslavement of Greece, St. Cosmas of Aitolia, an apostle and martyr from Mt. Athos, dedicated his entire life to establishing schools throughout Greece. Ignorance, he feared, was a greater yoke of enslavement than political totalitarianism. St. Cosmas claimed that

schools would build the church and fill the monasteries. By his tireless efforts, he left a legacy behind that resounded throughout the centuries. Our schools should also build up the churches and monasteries.

The school is a workshop for servants of Christ to enter into human society and make a difference. They have to learn to think, to discern, and to speak intelligently and convincingly in the context of the world—in a language that non-Christians can also understand. Just as a brain surgeon's training must be thorough in their vital work, so too our children must know their faith thoroughly and possess a right understanding of the world. We should all be concerned about our schools, not only

because of Columbine-type tragedies, but because of the more insidious precursors of this type of bloodshed—apostasy and ignorance and coldness towards God and neighbor.

We must uphold these three pillars of education—The Church, the Home, the School—in order to fulfill our Lord's command to suffer the little children to come unto Me. This means that parents, godparents, educators and pastors need to labor to ensure that all three pillars are in order and ready to support the edifice. Sports and social events have their rightful place, but if we sacrificed as much to make it to the Feasts and vigils as we do to go to soccer games and violin recitals (even on Sunday during Divine Liturgy), the children would see in living color the hierarchy of what we valued on their behalf.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL:

- Tax-free contributions can be made to the St. George Cathedral Endowment Foundation. Please note it is for the Orthodox Classical School. (Funds will be used to financially assist the research and development phase through the end of the year.)
- If you have children, please take time to fill out a short survey about the school. Please click on the link below.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/CathedralClassicalSchoolSurvey



LIGHT
FROM THE
LIGHT

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