

ST. THÉRÈSE NEWSLETTER

To Know | To Love | To Serve

Seeking the Whole Truth

Classical Education Unifies All Subjects



Sistine Chapel exhibit at the Old Mission

In his essay “The Boy,” G.K. Chesterton noted: “The one thing that is never taught by any chance in the atmosphere of public schools is this: that there is a whole truth of things, and that in knowing it and speaking it we are happy.” Occasionally, we’ll get a visitor who is non-religious inquiring about the curriculum wondering what the point of a theology class is. To which we reply: “Well, in a way, every class is a theology class. It’s because we want our kids to be happy.” This is immediately followed by a puzzled look and an hour-long explanation. In another era, when Catholic schools were run by men and women religious, this truth was evident on its face. A woman wearing a religious habit, a clear sign of piety, might be instructing a class in science or literature or any other subject not simply because her vocation was to impart knowledge to ignorant children. Rather, in learning these subjects she would know more intimately the one to whom she has given her life and in turn share this passion with her students. Likewise, the teachers of St. Therese Academy share this vision of education that all subjects can be an opportunity for awe and wonder. Ideally, every day is a glimpse into God’s handiwork; whether it be a virtue highlighted in an ancient Greek work, the beauty of a perfect geometric shape studied in math or art, or perhaps a law of nature discerned from science or the natural law from ethics both reflecting the creativity of an eternal law-maker. The Classical approach to seeking this truth is a tremendous tool for bringing together the whole of objective truth. In a world where so much is fragmented, subjective, or just broken, the students of Catholic classical education reunite those pieces and in doing so are happy.

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Fr. Symeon Halsell at the Sacred Arts Festival

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The school play “Antigone”



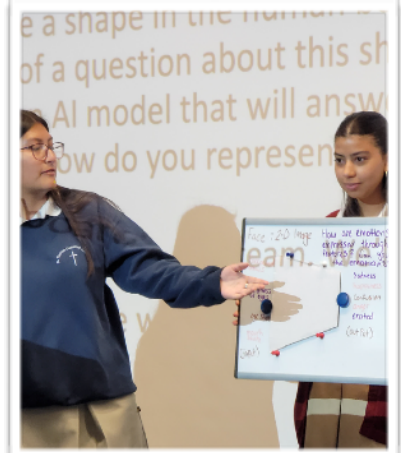
UCSB Engineering Dept. Allosphere

Applying Science *Going Beyond the Book*

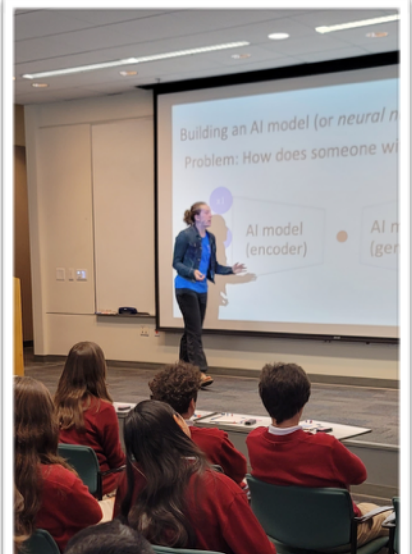


One of the criticisms leveled toward home-schoolers and small independent schools is their general lack of lab experiences available to their students. Because of the necessary equipment and supplies, laboratories tend to be expensive

and demand a certain amount of expertise in that subject area. However, for those small schools that manage to acquire the proper materials and know-how, the lab experience can be far superior due to the low student to teacher ratio. One of the best resources at St. Therese has been the 15-seater school van. Countless trips have been made to destinations both far



and near to get hands-on learning experiences in science and engineering. Recently, Mr. Peter Benbow took his Biology class to a behind the scenes tour at the Museum of Natural History, where St. Therese students were able to see specimens not available to the general public. One of our parents, Anton Van der Ven who's also a university professor, arranged a visit for our Physics class to the UCSB Engineering department. Grad students hosted an intriguing interactive activity about modeling AI



technology. The university also made available access to their sophisticated Allosphere research facility, where the students had a blast visualizing and interacting with various scientific formulas and data sets. Back on campus, the students were also studying the history of flight. In the process, they do historical research that they then develop into research papers and ultimately build working models of various flying vehicles. Meanwhile, the junior high life sciences class took a simple "shop class" to learn how to safely use drills, saws, routers and other equipment. They applied these skills to construct an incubator to hatch the next generation of egg-laying chickens for the Santa Teresita Ranch.



Transitions & Achievement



We are very proud of our two lady graduates Valeria Pacheco and Jenin Van der Ven. The academy loses two dynamic student leaders and amazing Christian role models. Both Jenin and Valeria could be counted on to bring joy in their smiles and inspiration in their work every day. Jenin plans to attend Christendom College in Front Royal Virginia and Valeria is on a path to a UC school via the SBCC Promise. While Jenin was homeschooled up to Junior year, Valeria and her siblings joined the academy just after the COVID lockdowns. Valeria transferred her junior year from a local public high school where remote learning had proven difficult. Both young ladies were quick to make friends and became very involved in the leadership activities on campus, while maintaining very high academic standards. We were especially impressed by their volunteerism. We wish both Valeria and Jenin all the best in their very bright futures!



The American Dream

Dr. Bob Niehaus graced our students last year with a fabulous presentation on the founding fathers, while dressed as Paul Revere. We first met Bob in 2019 at the 9/11 memorial on West Beach when he shared the harrowing experience of being an eye witness along with his wife Margie to the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York city. Our students also frequently cross paths with Bob while attending the roundtable lunches at the Ronald Reagan Ranch Center. Both Bob and Margie are strong advocates of classical education and have provided abundant resources and networking for our academy. Several weeks ago Bob hosted a talk sponsored by Heritage Events entitled Great Christian Jurists and followed up the presentation with a seminar style discussion with our students. We were all so delighted with the interaction that we're hoping to make it a bimonthly activity for our students.



In Defense of Homer



Recent St. Therese graduate and now English Literature major at the University of Dallas, Barbie Najera took to the local press to defend the reputation of Homer's The Illiad. Responding to a newspaper article entitled "The Illiad is Trash," Barbie set the record straight with her rebuttal piece "Stop Trashing Homer." Her defense presented the profound influence Homer's writing had on Western literature and the messages which are relevant to this very day. She attributed many of her own attitudes about independent thought and appreciation for eternal truths to her exposure to such classic literature. In January, Barbie heads to Rome for a semester abroad. We're happy to see our students willingly engage in such cultural dialogues and even happier to see them marshal compelling arguments in defense of Western Civilization. Keep up the good work Barbie and best of luck in the eternal city!

Recreation for Re-creation

The Importance of Holy Leisure



Just before Halloween, the academy held its 4th annual Barn Dance - confirming our commitment to wholesome family fun to bring our school community together as well as the broader Santa Barbara community. Other events have included food drives, Friday family nights, Sunday morning liturgies, on-campus competitions, and off-campus retreats. Most of these events are organized by the upperclassmen leadership team. We've learned over the years that one of the best ways to bring students from diverse backgrounds



together is to offer them shared experiences. Furthermore, these recreational experiences offer an additional benefit as well. The great German Thomistic philosopher Josef Pieper once wrote, "The power to know leisure is the power to overstep the boundaries of the workaday world and reach out to superhuman, life-giving, existential forces that refresh and renew us before we turn back to our daily work." Recreation taps into that unique human ability to experience what some have described as holy leisure.



In the case of the academy, we allow our students to step back from the "workaday world" on a regular basis and recollect the broader experience of life and avoid what can become a tunnel vision of work and achievement or the other modern danger - an assimilation into the world of social media and technology. Lest one forget what it means to be truly human, planning time for recreation with friends, family, and God is a life skill required to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life.

