The Lyceum—Making the Extraordinary Ordinary!

Mark Langley

What I mean is that Lyceum students do extraordinary things in an extraordinary manner on an ordinary basis!

They become so habituated to doing extraordinary things that it all seems very normal to them.

Sometimes I look at the students when they are doing something extraordinary—like having a discussion about the “Melian Dialogue” in Thucydides...and of course they have no idea that this is one of the very famous passages in Western literature...and they talk about it as if they were thinking “of course...everyone does this sort of thing all the time.”

Or saying lauds every morning...singing the Canticle of Zechariah (i.e. “Benedictus”)...participating in the millennial traditions of Western Civilization...demonstrating Euclidean propositions...writing theses...not realizing that there is anything unusual about it because young people quickly adapt and take things as they come and quickly rise to the occasion to perform wondrous feats.

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A Note from the Headmaster

Luke Macik

Classical liberal education, as the name suggests from the Latin word, liber—“free,” is the education of free men. The freedom which man ultimately desires is a freedom of life over death. Such an ultimate victory, of course, only comes through the incarnation of the Word who conquered death through His death and resurrection. Classical liberal education, however, is a part of that same Christian ideal of seeking life over death because such an education concerns itself with the proper use of words which is one of the ways by which we encounter the Word. When students master their use of words through the liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric and logic, they are capable of clearly expressing the truth, persuasively presenting it, and actively distinguishing it from what is false. Through the mastery of the liberal arts students become effective truth seekers and are habituated to seek the truth wherever it can be found. Classically educated students see the truth in nature by observing the marvelous instinct in a creature as simple as a bee and learn the nature of truth by reflecting on their own ability to grasp reality.

Through the proper cultivation of their use of words by the continual study of the foundational languages of their own civilization—Greek and Latin, and the reading and discussion of Great Books whose authors were themselves masters of the liberal arts, classically...
Another example. The night before graduation the students put on a brilliant performance of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

The play was exceptional (even if staged and produced for under $50!) And unlike other schools, where a certain segment of talented students are chosen in a competitive process to act in their usual plays (e.g. The Phantom, “Les Mis” and CATS!), at The Lyceum we eschew the whole idea that acting in a Shakespeare play is something that should only be reserved for the talented. No! Everyone must act in a Shakespeare play at least once in a lifetime! Everyone ultimately gets the big part! (This seems self-evident to me. Besides, it’s a far more democratic way of doing things.)

And the students demonstrated for the umpteenth time that every student has acting talent. The crowd loved it. Everyone was edified and delighted. We laughed for two hours and enjoyed spectacular lines coming from the mouths of ordinary students turned into extraordinary actors. Making the extraordinary ordinary!

The following morning the students woke up and sang Palestrina’s “Missa Brevis” almost in toto! The Mass was celebrated in the “Extraordinary Form” of the Roman Rite (which the Church has clearly been promoting and encouraging recently... Think “July 7 2007!”).

- Prelude: “Dixit Archangelis” (a sweet Traditional Austrian variation on the Ave Maria- with descant)
- Processional Hymn: “All Creatures of our God and King” (always nice to belt out a hymn)
- Introit “Adeamus” (Chant Propers from the Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)
- Kyrie and Gloria: “Palestrina” 1525-1594 Missa Brevis
- Graduale: “Exultabit cor meum” (Chant Propers from the Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)
- Heart of Mary
- Alleluia: “Magnificat Anima Mea” (Chant Propers from the Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)
- Offertory: “Exultavit Spiritus Meus” (Chant Propers from the Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)
- Offertory Motet: “Cibavit Eos” (Christopher Tye 1505-1572)
- Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei: “Palestrina” 1525-1594 Missa Brevis” (as well as a section from the Gregorian Mass XVII)
- Communion: “Dixit Jesus Matri Suo” (Chant Propers from the Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary)
- Communion Motet 1: “Ave Maria” Verum William Byrd ca. 1540-1623 (The other old chestnut- not the Mozart)
- Communion Motet 2: “Palestrina” 1525-1594 “Sicut Cervus” (everyone loves this one)
- Recessional Hymn: “Holy God” (who doesn’t love this with full organ?)
- Postlude: “Handel” 1685-1759

Halleluia Chorus with Organ....Wow!

They were spectacular. They were in tune. They sang in a prayerful way. It was absolutely beautiful. But.... Lyceum students do this kind of thing all the time....I mean all year long...and rarely with an audience. For them it is no big deal!

Except that it really is a big deal!
educated students are connected with the truth of the past and thus better able to encounter and judge writings of current authors and their claims to truth. Such are the students of The Lyceum.

Lyceum students are skeptical of the claim in contemporary culture that, in the words of Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, "tends to consider the only real truth to be that of technology: Truth is what we succeed in building and measuring by our scientific know-how, truth is what works and what makes life easier and more comfortable." Instead Lyceum students grasp the truth of the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: "The ways of the Lord are not comfortable, but we were not created for comfort, but for greatness, for good." Lyceum students are indeed encountering the greatness of Western civilization in their education. In this culture which Blessed John Paul II called the "culture of death," Lyceum students are learning to be the bearers and guardians of the culture of truth, light and life. Fiat lux!

**Liberal Education and Friendship**

*Miss Helen Peyrebrune was the valedictorian for the class of 2013. The following is her address:*

As gratitude should be the dominant tone in any student’s graduation speech, I would like to begin by thanking, on behalf of myself and my fellow graduates, our wonderful parents and tutors, who have given so much of themselves to us. Our parents deserve the more thanks because they have given us life and nourishment, and on this occasion they deserve much thanks and honor because they are our primary teachers and because they have given us the chance to go to such a wonderful school. They have put considerable effort into giving us this good education, not only by paying tuition and driving us to and from school, but by volunteering their time and talents to providing for the school’s needs in ways that parents might not need to do at other institutions. Small communities like ours must rely much more than larger communities do on all our members, and our parents have been incredibly willing to work for the school’s wellbeing.

Our tutors also deserve thanks and honor from us because they have worked hard and successfully to make this school a sanctuary of truth and a haven of Catholic culture. I need not say how rare such a community is, and I cannot imagine the labor that makes its existence possible.

I have received many blessings from the Lyceum, but today I would like to talk about just one: good friendship. When we had been coming to the end of a rather boisterous discussion of I-don’t-remember-what, and our feelings were strong and our opinions stronger, and we were all marveling at our opponents’ ideas, Mr. Langley said something along these lines: “You know, I think that we all get to know each other better around the discussion table than we would anywhere else. You probably know more about Erin Hogan by taking Greek History and Philosophy and Moral Theology and English Literature with her and having these conversations in this classroom than you would if you spent every weekend at her house and talked to her every day on the phone. You probably become better friends with her this way, too.” Now, at the time, this struck me as a mildly strange thing to say, but I didn’t give it too much thought. Afterwards, though, I wondered about it often. And then, earlier this year, I read something that reminded me of Mr. Langley’s statement and helped shed some light on it.

In C.S. Lewis’s chapter on Friendship in *The Four Loves*, he tells the story of how friendship arises from companionship. I must quote him at length. He says,

“In early communities, the co-operation of the males as hunters or fighters was no less necessary than the begetting and rearing of children. A tribe where there was no taste for the one would die no less surely than a tribe..."
there was no taste for the other. Long before history began we men have got together apart from the women and done things. We had to. And to like doing what must be done is a characteristic that has survival value. We not only had to do the things, we had to talk about them. We had to plan the hunt and the battle. When they were over we had to hold a post mortem and draw conclusions for future use. We ridiculed the cowards and bunglers, we praised the star-performers. We revelled in technicalities...In fact, we talked shop. We enjoyed one another's society greatly; we Braves, we hunters, all bound together by shared skill, shared dangers and hardships, esoteric jokes—away from the women and children. As some wag has said, paleolithic man may or may not have had a club on his shoulder, but he certainly had a club of the other sort...This Companionship is, however, only the matrix of Friendship. It is often called Friendship, and many people when they speak of their 'friends' mean only their companions. But it is not Friendship in the sense I give to the word...Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, 'What? You too? I thought I was the only one.' "...For us, the shared activity and therefore the companionship on which Friendship supervenes will not often be a bodily one like hunting or fighting. It may be a common religion, common studies, a common profession, even a common recreation. All who share it will be our companions; but one or two or three who share something more will be our Friends. In this kind of love, as Emerson said, Do you love me? means Do you see the same truth?—Or at least, "Do you care about the same truth?" The man who agrees with us that some question, little regarded by others, is of great importance can be our Friend. He need not agree with us about the answer. "...those pathetic people who simply 'want friends' can never make any. The very condition of having Friends is that we should want something else besides Friends. Where the truthful answer to the question Do you see the same truth? would be 'I see nothing and I don't care about the truth; I only want a Friend,' no friendship can arise...there would be nothing for the Friendship to be about; and Friendship must be about something, even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travelers."

When I read this, I saw a wonderful correlation between the lives of Lewis' ancient tribal Braves and my own life at the Lyceum. When I first came to the school, I found many companions among the students. The small size of the school and the common experiences we shared produced a real unity in the student body. We were all together, being Lyceum students, taking the same classes and spending our free time the same way. We all struggled through Greek conjugation after Greek conjugation, discovering the painful aptness of

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fort and good fun were not the real battles to be fought. What we really must fight for was Truth, to defend it and to reach it ourselves. And Truth, we knew, was God! This Truth, this wisdom that Socrates loved, and that we were beginning to love, was our own Lord in whom we had always believed; and the same God that we had always known by faith, we now began to see by reason. We saw another manifestation of St. Augustine’s declaration that “My heart is restless, Lord, until it rests in Thee!” Lewis says that friendship must be about something, that a shared love of some truth is the basis of friendship. Because of the Lyceum, and because of those shared classes and common experiences, I have been lucky enough to find friendships with you, my fellow students, that are based, imperfectly for now, on the love of God who is Truth. What a wonderful thing to unite friends! May our friendships, both those with each other and with those we will meet in the future, always grow more perfect and lead us to our Lord, and may our Alma Mater always foster such friendships.

...When one learns something, he seems to go through three phases. First, he has to weed out any false ideas he might harbor, then he has to learn the real truth, and then he must realize how that truth fits with all his other ideas, with the rest of the world. I think a Lyceum student goes through each of these phases throughout his six years. In seventh and eighth grade, all the false assumptions and ideas one might have are rooted out in preparation for the years to come. From then onward one is more free for real learning to occur. Throughout the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades, you are bombarded with great and noble ideas, and you are forced to think deeply about a vast array of truths, or so it seems then. For in twelfth grade, you begin to realize that it is not a myriad of truths, but one Truth. You stand on a sort of threshold of wisdom realizing that that so-called “vast array” of ideas you studied really did have an order, and that all the beauty and goodness of the songs you sang in choir or the great art you studied, or that discussion about glory in your class on Homer’s *Iliad*, is really contained in that same one glorious Truth.

When I think of The Lyceum now, it is sort of mixed up with Michelangelo and Beethoven and the *Iliad and Sicut Cervus*. And that is sort of what The Lyceum is: a bringing together of everything beautiful and great and noble and holy. A sort of proving that all of these are what is truly real in the world. That men are only fitted to noble and great things.

I have a feeling that I’ll be able to chant the “hic haec hoc” till I’m 90, but even if we forget all our Latin forms, that nobility of beauty which we were privileged to take part in will remain. A glorious awakening begins to take root after years at The Lyceum and the graduate is transformed from what he was in the seventh grade. We are always being told to go and “transform the world.” But you can’t transform the world until you yourself have been transformed, freed from all slaveries and made firm in a recognition of what the Truth is.

We, as graduates of The Lyceum, are armored with a firm foundation in the Truth. We have undergone to some extent a transformation, from beginning at The Lyceum until now, small in comparison to the transformation which is our life-long duty, but of great import in our spreading of the Light of the World to those in darkness. “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and the light was made and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. And God saw that the Light was good.”
Olivia Tarr ’15
“Poetry Out Loud”
Champion 2013

Tutor Dr. Peter Gilbert with
Helen Peyrebrune ’13 (left) and
Anna Langley ’13 (right)

Tutor Mr. Ray Wilson

Tutor Mr. Ted Smith

Lyceum Faculty Barbershop Quintet at Gala 2013

Mark Langley ’19 and Alex Flood ’19
working in the science lab

Tutor Mrs. Jeanette Flood

Headmaster Macik with Bishop Roger Gries

Helping out the nuns at
Christ the Bridegroom Monastery

Annual March For Life in Washington DC

Tutor Mrs. Hogan
with new alumna
daughter Erin

“Missionaries of Mercy”
take a break from raking

Fr. Dave Ireland Pastor
of Sacred Heart Parish
and Lyceum friend

Great Season for the Boys’
Basketball team!
THE LYCEUM PILGRIMAGE TO EWTN 2013

Senior Renee Shumay with Fr. Marc of EWTN’s Life on The Rock!

Parent & Faculty Chaperones: Left to Right back: Mr. Smith, Fr. Ireland, Mr. and Mrs. McKeogh, Dr. Gilbert, Mrs. Erickson, Mr. Macik, Mrs. Weaver, Mr. Langley, Miss Sutherland, Mr. Erickson, Mrs. Urban

Academic Dean Mr. Langley researching convent life for his nine daughters

Tutor Miss Sutherland makes a Theological point

Shrine of The Most Blessed Sacrament, Pilgrimage to EWTN

Tour of the set at EWTN. Afterwards students and faculty participated in a recording of a short episode of Life on The Rock!

Saint Cecilia Chapel, Nashville, Tennessee

Schola Director James Flood

Thank you to the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association and its Cleveland district branches who helped make the trip to EWTN possible.

Going Home!
Congratulations!  
The Class of 2013 was accepted to the following colleges and universities with over $1,200,000 in financial grants and scholarships offered!

- Catholic University of America
- The Peabody Institute of Music at Johns Hopkins University
- University of Dallas
- Thomas Aquinas College
- Case Western Reserve University
- St. Mary's College (South Bend)
- Notre Dame College
- Franciscan University
- John Carroll University
- Walsh University
- University of Minnesota
- University of Michigan
- Oberlin College and Conservatory
- Cleveland Institute of Music

Celebrating Ten Years & Our 40th Graduate!

The Lyceum extends its thanks with profound gratitude to all of its benefactors and foundations who make Catholic Classical Education possible for others.

To Bishop Lennon and Bishop Gries, Fr. Wessel and Fr. Ireland and the many other priests and religious who have provided for the spiritual welfare of the school and

To all of the families and individuals who made the sacrifices necessary to offer this education for their children and

To all our friends who have lent their talents and skills in fixing, renovating, and building our school and

To all our faculty past and present who have worked tirelessly in promoting the formation of our students and finally

To all of our students, alumni and associate alumni who inspire us all by your youthful zeal with joyful hope!