

Jesuit Education and The Classics

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Edited by

Edmund P. Cueva, Shannon N. Byrne
and Frederick Benda, S.J.

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

On November 4–6, 2005, Xavier University hosted a conference entitled “Jesuit Education and the Classics.” About seventy-five of the approximately two hundred faculty teaching classics at Jesuit high schools, colleges, and universities attended. The conference was held in order to host a much-needed dialogue on the state of Classics and Jesuit education at the secondary and university levels. The goal of this dialogue was to explore whether or not Classics truly is moribund, or whether it is still an integral part of the Jesuit educational experience. The conference came about as an attempt to repair the harsh reality that the study of the Classics at Jesuit institutions of education is mistakenly seen as antiquarian and irrelevant. For example, in “The Future of Philosophy in Jesuit Higher Education,” Ronald Anderson, S.J., noted that to “use the crisis language we philosophers sometimes draw on, philosophy may go the way of Classics in Jesuit Higher Education, a discipline that flourished decades ago in curriculums, but now is very much on the margins.”

In order to arrive at a clearer understanding of the relationship between Jesuit education and Classics, Xavier University’s Classics faculty held the meeting, which at its conclusion demonstrated that Classics is a vital component of the Jesuit educational experience. The meeting also offered an opportunity for Classicists to share their research with their colleagues. Some of the topics discussed were as follows: Classics and the Jesuit Mission, Classics and the Core Curricula, Jesuit History and Tradition, Secondary Education and the Classics, Teaching, Research and Service, Technology, Art and Archaeology, History, Literature, Natural Sciences, and Philosophy.

The post-conference response was overwhelmingly positive. For example, Edgar (Ned) Jackson, Jr. (Regis High School, New York City) wrote, “At this time of pronounced and grave uncertainty, not leastly in Jesuit education, about the role of Classics and, indeed, the humanities in general, I believe that the event did the university honor.” Gregory S. Bucher (Creighton University) stated that “the conference opened my eyes to the relevance of Classics to Jesuit education and its ability to model Ignatian ideals. I brought a lot of ammunition home to defend my program, to defend my university, and to defend my discipline. I look forward to future iterations of this conference.” What needs to be done

next? A few of ideas and suggestions that resulted from our discussions are to form a society, make this meeting a biennial event, try to ensure that future conferences would include schools from outside of the USA, encourage all local/regional Classics associations (e.g., CAMWS, APA, CANE) to host receptions for folks who are teaching in Jesuit schools (high school, college, university) and for people who have studied at Jesuit schools, and make obvious that what we classicists do is in line with the documents from The Decrees of General Congregation Thirty-Four and the October 2000 address delivered at Santa Clara University by Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

Is Classics no longer important or relevant to a Jesuit education? No, Classics is an essential component of Jesuit education. The conference attendees noted that Classics and Jesuit education are indivisibly intertwined. Moreover, any Jesuit school that embraces the liberal arts must have Classics at the core of its curriculum.

We include below a brief summary of the essays selected for publication. The essays have been divided into three sections: Context, background; current trends in Jesuit education; scholars at work at Jesuit institutions. We hope that these essays will demonstrate unequivocally that not only is Classics an integral and indispensable part of Jesuit education, but that it also still has a visible presence and is actively engaged in the mission of the Jesuit educational system.

PART I: CONTEXT, BACKGROUND: Stephen M. Beall (Marquette University) uses the 1570 Jesuit college public catalog of Vilnius (Lithuania) to compare the value that early Jesuits placed in Latin for its ability to prepare a man for inward conformity to God in Christ with current trends in Jesuit education that seek to turn individuals outwards by living for others. The earlier focus on self-reflection risked becoming an exercise in self-absorption, but there are still risks in the new focus that one might live for others before he understands or lives for himself. The original function of the Classics in Jesuit education is still relevant today: the discipline teaches about being human and emphasizes self-understanding through an understanding of our fellow man, which is integral to living for others successfully. Philip Calliendo (Xavier High School, NYC) likewise looks at the role of Latin in early Jesuit education, in particular the purpose (*quid utile?*) of such study, and he explores whether any such purpose exists today. Calliendo rephrases the question to ask “whatever for?” (*quorsum?*), and observes that Classics (Latin in particular) can have relevance in the modern world as long as students continue to find answers in antiquity about humanity. As long as the discipline offers something of value, Jesuit education rightly incorporates

the Classics, but if someday the Classics are no longer useful in understanding humanity, then Jesuit education would have the right to jettison the pursuit. Brian Dunkel, S.J. (Collegio Internazionale del Gesù) responds to criticisms that Classics have no relevance in today's world by noting that the study of Latin and Greek authors in early Jesuit education was intended not merely to make a man eloquent, but also to promote Christian *pietas*. Knowing Cicero was a way to enhance rhetoric skills, but Cicero also happens to speak at length about the human condition, a crucial focus of Jesuit training. The works of Latin authors, especially Cicero, were mined for wisdom. Interestingly, Greek authors were always secondary to Latin (Ciceronian) eloquence and morals, and after the establishment of the *Ratio* there is a shift in Greek away from pagan to patristic authors, which seemed better designed to inspire Christian faith. Classics departments should naturally build bridges with Theology, Art, Archaeology, etc. "for a more inclusive look at the era of early Christianity and the classical influence on the long tradition of western culture." Claude Pavur, S.J. (St. Louis University) considers the relevancy of Classics in Jesuit education from the perspective of the essence or core of Jesuit education when the order was first formed. The primary focus of Latin and Greek provided the foundation on which the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 rests, and as such the study of Classics served as the first stage of Jesuit education itself. The study of Classics is the tradition-defining authority in Jesuit education, a center that cannot be removed without changing the essence of the Society of Jesus into something different. In the interest of continuity and for the sake of a connection to the original mission of the Society, no other languages or cultures can replace Latin and Greek in Jesuit education.

PART II: CURRENT TRENDS IN JESUIT EDUCATION: Gregory S. Bucher (Creighton University) underscores how important it is for classics departments at Jesuit institutions to reinvent themselves to keep up with real world changes, taking Creighton University as an example. After merging with Modern Languages in the 1980s and most of the 1990s, faculty in Classics at Creighton came to join forces with faculty in Theology and Philosophy to form a Classical and Near Eastern Studies major. At the same time, changes were made to the course offerings that allowed a student interested in Latin or Greek to complete an undergraduate degree in a timely fashion. The realistic paring down and reordering of courses, and the cooperation among departments have resulted in a success for the discipline and could serve as a model for other Jesuit institutions looking to boost their classics profile. John Feeney (University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Wayne State University) and

Nicholas Young (University of Detroit Jesuit High School and University of Detroit Mercy) outline the results of their combined efforts in Latin and French to make both languages and cultures come alive in the classroom through the use of plays in each language with similar themes. Young deals with the Roman playwright Plautus and the *Aulularia*, which deals with a greedy man's desperate attempt to hold on to a pot of gold, and Feeney deals with the Jesuit educated Molière and his *L'Avare*, a play about a miser loosely based on Plautus' work. Plautus and Molière present an opportunity to showcase the interrelationship between French and Latin on several levels, and the shared learning experience can start as early as the second year. Moreover, both plays introduce students to issues of present-day concern, such as greed, marital relationships, and women's roles. Edgar Jackson Jr. (Regis High School, New York City) offers a unique approach to the often asked question about the relevance of Classics in today's Jesuit institutions. Jackson presents us with a conversation between two high school teachers who chat with each other while in the process of getting rid of their Classics library because the administration has reduced their space. One teacher is practical about Jesuit education's willingness to adapt to modern trends, while the other is saddened and unconvinced that all the changes are good. During the exchange both speakers offer opposing views on the loss of regard for Classics as a discipline that represent similar debates that are occurring or have occurred in high schools and colleges across the country. John M. McMahon (Le Moyne College) practices what he preaches in his essay that hopes to convince teachers to get students out of the classroom and into nature to appreciate more fully the world of nature through classical texts. Classical literature, of course, offers an opportunity to gain deep appreciation for "humanness," but the natural world likewise can be accessed in the same texts. McMahon suggests going under the stars at night while reading about what stars should induce certain works in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, or studying mythical figures that form constellations in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Take students outside to sit under modern versions of the ancient plane tree that permeates the background of so much ancient literature. Under the right circumstance, true interdisciplinarity can be achieved by using classical literature to awaken students to the world around them. Edward J. Vodoklys, S.J. (College of the Holy Cross) shares his experiences in the classroom following the 9/11 terrorist attacks to show the relevancy of Cicero's thought in Jesuit education today. Vodoklys focuses on his Intermediate Latin course, in which the *De officiis* figures prominently, a work Cicero addresses to his son who was away from Rome studying in Greece.

Cicero's *De officiis* caught the attention of early church fathers like St. Augustine as well as that of St. Ignatius himself, and was mentioned by name in John O'Malley's 2000 inaugural address at Holy Cross for its place in Jesuit humanistic tradition and for the moral guidelines it recommends. The work deals with a variety of topics, such as virtue and moral responsibility, but of particular relevance is Cicero's discussion of the "just war," which provided and continues to provide Vodoklys' students with much to think about and a context for expression for their own fears and concerns. Cicero's ideas resonate with Jesuit concerns, which became immediately relevant to Vodoklys' class in the days and weeks after 9/11. Finishing the section on current trends in Jesuit education, R. J. Wood, III (St. Ignatius High School) demonstrates why Fr. Henle's Latin Series is best suited for Jesuit and indeed all high school Latin courses. Henle's Latin Series is founded on Jesuit principles of education, which happen to be in line with the principles of the constructivist approach to education in which a student actively works to build new knowledge on top of previous knowledge, with a teacher acting as guide through lucid example and organized lessons. In Henle's own words: "Your knowledge of Latin is just like a building. If you don't put down the foundation strongly and firmly, it will be very hard to keep the third story where it belongs." Henle's Latin Series is a natural fit with Jesuit approaches to education and curriculum, especially as Henle himself encouraged others to adapt his plans to current needs with better learning always the goal. For this reason, Wood envisions Henle as suitable for web-based support, and with an eye to linguistic mastery and human insight, Latin is a given as an instrument of general education.

PART III: SCHOLARS AT WORK AT JESUIT INSTITUTIONS: Valentina DeNardis (St. Joseph University; formerly at St. Joseph's) uses her own research in the Roman poet Manilius to show that scholarship continues to benefit classroom performance and learning. In his *Astronomica* Manilius reveals that he was hardly an imperial lackey destined to regurgitate ideas about the divinity of emperors, and in fact he seems at times outright conflicted with the implications that mortals now regularly turned into gods. Manilius wrote at the time when early Christian concepts were taking form, and since early Christian debate on religion and the nature of divinity was informed by contemporary pagan debates throughout the Roman Empire, Manilius' reluctance, questions, and anxiety could tell us something about how early church fathers engaged concepts new to Christian thought. James G. Keenan (Loyola University Chicago) raises several interesting points, some very humorous, concerning the uneasy relations between papyrologists and historians of classical antiquity. Since

M. I. Finley's *The Ancient Economy* (1973), historians dealing with the Greco-Roman Near East have tended to ignore what papyrological evidence has to offer, and some exclude Egypt altogether from their scholarship on the basis that Egypt was too different and therefore unrepresentative of life in other eastern provinces. A leading papyrologist himself, Keenan does not lay the blame entirely on historians since papyrologists in the past have not produced texts that historians can easily manage or access. Thankfully, the trend seems to be reversing and historians are recognizing the importance of papyrology in interpreting the Roman Near East. Brian M. Lavelle (Loyola University Chicago) likewise makes Egypt the focus of his scholarship. He examines the importance of the role played by Milesian Greeks and Karians in establishing relations with Egypt in the seventh century bc that brought significant Egyptian influence to bear on Archaic Age Greek culture. The pharaoh at the time, Psammetichos, relied heavily on Greek and Karian mercenaries from Miletus in his bid for power, settling them at Naukratis. At first Naukratis was a mercenary settlement, but it soon developed into a trading center, with grain being among the most lucrative exports for the Greeks and Karians. These trading endeavors "opened" other Greek cities in Asia Minor and the mainland to the vast cultural and economic benefits Egypt had to offer. Thomas R. Martin (Holy Cross) examines possible ways that contemporaries of Tertullian would have understood his idea of *libertas religionis* ("freedom of religion"), a concept that did not have the same meaning as it does today. Tertullian himself seems to have used the phrase in a familiar way when he introduced it in his *Apologia*. Using slogans on imperial coins, Martin shows that *libertas* had been used by men in power since the late republic and had come to be part of the emperor's domain. In his later work, the *To Scapula*, Tertullian intentionally shifts the concept of *libertas* from *nomos* to *physis*, thereby deemphasizing its imperial links and making *libertas religionis* something more relevant to Christian thought in a way pagan readers would understand.

PART I:
CONTEXT, BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE

JESUIT HUMANISM AND RADICAL CHRISTIANITY

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A recent essay by Jesuit Father Paul Crowley has the provocative title, “Is there such a thing as ‘the Jesuit thing’?” The levity of the phrasing underscores the familiarity, not to say urgency, of the question. It puts me in mind of another question, posed almost as frequently: “Is there any point in studying the Classics?” I am grateful, therefore, to the organizers of this conference and collection of essays for the opportunity to confront the twin demons of my career, and to suggest a way in which both questions can be answered in the affirmative.

If my proposal seems “radical,” however, I hope to lay the blame on the origins of Jesuit education itself. This subject has generated many books and articles which admirably digest the internal correspondence and curricular plans of early Jesuit educators. We might also profit, however, from looking at a different sort of document, which shows how some of the first Jesuits represented themselves to contemporary “consumers” of education. In 1570, the Jesuit *collegium* in the city of Vilnius, Lithuania, issued its first public catalogue. This document, which is preserved in the third volume of the *Monumenta Paedagogica*, was clearly intended to attract new clients. In addition to a schedule of classes, it contains a set of poems in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, to demonstrate the erudition of the faculty. It also presents what amounts to a “mission statement” for the new school (See Appendix A).

The opening lines of this statement bring us directly to a favorite theme of the Renaissance: “Among all the things that the world encloses within its embrace, there exists nothing more excellent than man” (sec. 1). The standard of excellence, as the following sections make clear, is primarily intellectual: “For relying on true knowledge, man will contemplate all things above and below...without any danger of error—like God, who can

neither deceive nor be deceived” (sec. 3). Man’s knowledge potentially extends, moreover, over both space and time; thus he can also acquire “that most certain understanding of past, present, and future which is characteristic of the divine nature” (sec. 3). In short, the educated man is a kind of Promethean figure, who shares the practical wisdom (*sapientia*) of God. It follows that a country blessed with such men will “be administered with wiser policies and greater success” (sec. 6). Apart from his “usefulness to the state,” however, the educated man enjoys the “pure and sincere pleasure” experienced by painters, musicians, and sculptors (sec. 4); for like them, he is able to form a true and coherent picture of the world.

Right from the start, then, our document makes two assumptions that are typical of classical and humanist thinking about education. The first assumption is that effective government depends on the perfection of individuals, rather than the reform of political structures. The second is that the effective “man of action” is first and foremost a contemplative, who understands before he acts. Both of these assumptions point to a *concentric* model of human life and society, in which the inner life is the source of the outer life and the individual forms the collective. The essential task of education, then, is to develop the innermost principle, the individual soul. Following the Platonic tradition,¹ our document describes the soul as “enclosed in this earthly bulk as if in a prison” (sec. 2). When a ray of knowledge penetrates this bodily prison, however, the soul realizes its true nature and becomes the principle of “vigorous” interaction with the outside world (sec. 2). Thus, the first question that faced humanist educators was how the intellect or soul could best be “illuminated.”

At the conclusion of the document, the Jesuits announce their plan to open the College with “foundational” courses in Latin grammar, literature, and rhetoric (sec. 8); they would eventually add mathematics, philosophy, and theology. One would have looked in vain, however, for classes in the social and empirical sciences, not to speak of pre-professional or vocational training. It may seem odd to us that the early Jesuits were content with such a narrow curriculum. We must keep in mind, however, that their chief concern was the development of the *soul*, and this was the special province of the “liberal” arts. Since Late Antiquity, it had been customary to divide the arts into the *trivium*, which focused on language skills, and the *quadrivium*, which centered on mathematical reasoning. What all seven arts had in common, however, was a focus on order,

¹ On early Christian adaptations of the *soma/sema* (body/tomb) theme in Platonism, see Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 246–7.

harmony, and proportion as principles for making sense of the world.² Moreover, the liberally educated man was supposed not only to have perceived the symmetry inherent in language, thought, and nature, but also to have *internalized* this quality in the operations of his soul. It is fitting, then, that the Vilnius catalogue draws an analogy between the “delightful harmony” of music and the intellectual “consistency” of the educated person (sec. 4), since the ultimate object of a liberal education was to be “in tune” with the universe.³ Nor is it surprising that specialized training did not form part of the humanist program. Such training could prepare an individual to interact in particular *ways* with the outside world or with particular *parts* of it, but only a liberal education was capable of producing the *uomo universale*, the person who was ready for anything and useful to everyone.⁴

What I have said so far, of course, applies to liberal training in general. We come next to the question that most concerns members of the philological association: why should one study the Greek and Latin Classics? The masters of Vilnius offer a curious answer. Following the example of the “holy Fathers” of the Church (and St. Ignatius himself),⁵ they compare the Classics to the gold and silver “spoils” that Moses and his companions carried out of Egypt (sec. 5). As the “true Israelites,” Christians are likewise entitled to carry off the treasures of Greece and Rome into the New Dispensation. The analogy is conventional, but we should not ignore its underlying complexity. To compare the Classics with foreign plunder suggests, on the one hand, an *instrumental* view of culture. Like gold and silver, the Classics are worth preserving because they are the means, the “raw currency” required to achieve certain practical ends. This was obvious to the men and women of the sixteenth century, in which Latin was the language of diplomacy and scholarship, and a Ciceronian

² See Maher, “The Just Development of Mind and Heart,” 415–8. Many of the later humanists focused almost exclusively on the “political” arts of rhetoric and moral philosophy, but the Jesuits kept a place for the *quadrivium* in the “superior” philosophy course. See Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System*, 9 and 30, and Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education*, 131–5.

³ Here we find an echo of the broad humanism of Leon Battista Alberti; see Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti*, especially 213–43.

⁴ The term “universal man” was projected onto the Renaissance by modern historians, but points to an authentic (and flexible) Renaissance ideal. See Gadol, “Universal Man.”

⁵ *Constitutions* 4.359E, p. 152. On the history of this commonplace, see Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System*, 52.

style identified one as a member of the governing class.⁶ Greek was less essential, but it provided the models of taste and decorum that Cicero himself had followed, and it conferred a higher status on those who had mastered it. Both languages, then, possessed a certain “cash value.” Nevertheless, we should also keep in mind that precious metals have little in the way of intrinsic usefulness; their utility depends mainly on the *value* we assign to them. This value, in turn, derives from their rarity and beauty. The same can be said, in the realm of language, of Ciceronian Latin. Cicero did more than communicate his thoughts clearly and efficiently; he also wrote with unparalleled grace and charm. It was chiefly for these *aesthetic* qualities that he became the “gold standard” of Latin composition and the center of the humanist and Jesuit curriculum.

The reference to the “spoils of Egypt,” then, reminds us of the ultimate connection between the useful and the beautiful. Many of the things that we seek for ulterior purposes also have a kind of “splendor,” which makes them desirable for themselves. By the same token, the Classics could be studied not only as a useful preparation for the forum and the court, but also because they lent refinement and beauty to the soul, which, as we have seen, was the focus of humanistic education. Moreover, the Jesuits recognized that beauty, as a transcendental value, ultimately points to God. It is appropriate, then, that our document completes its defense of the Classics by allegorizing the Christian faith as a beautiful mistress and the classical disciplines as her handmaidens (sec. 5); one is reminded of the attendants of Solomon’s bride in Psalm 45. The beauty of maidens may vary in *degree*, but there is a basic identity in *kind*; thus the Biblical handmaidens point to the bride, and accompany her “with gladness and rejoicing” into the King’s palace (Ps. 45:13–15). In the same way, the pagan Classics could be appropriated for their intrinsic qualities of utility and beauty in the construction of a *new* culture, inaugurated by the spotless Bride of Christ.

We have seen, then, how the Vilnius catalog links the Classics both to the general program of liberal education and to the specific objectives of a Christian school. We may still ask, however, what all this has to do with the Jesuits. Why should one go to a Jesuit school? As before, the masters of Vilnius approach the matter indirectly. Rather than claim to be

⁶ On the rationale and methods of Latin instruction in the sixteenth century and after, see Ganss, *Saint Ignatius’ Idea of a Jesuit University*, 208–48; see also Herman, *La pédagogie des Jésuites au XVIIe siècle*, 231–47.

innovators in curriculum or teaching methods,⁷ they point to the *general* apostolate to which the new Society is committed: “the education of youth, the interpretation of Holy Scripture, preaching to the people, the explanation of Christian doctrine to the uneducated, and the administration of those sacraments and spiritual gifts by which their neighbors can principally be helped” (sec. 8). At first glance, this all seems beside the point; in fact, it makes the Jesuit mission seem too broad and unfocused. In the mind of St. Ignatius, however, the various ministries of the young Society had a common object. This was defined in the *Formula of the Institute*—the original Jesuit “mission statement”—as the “progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, and the propagation of the faith.”⁸ It is significant, I think, that “life” is so closely connected here with “doctrine,” or more literally, with “teaching” (*doctrina*). It reminds us of the first rule of the *Ratio studiorum definitiva* (1599), which defines the object of Jesuit education as an increase in “the knowledge and love of our Maker and Redeemer.”⁹ Love, it seems, is impossible without knowledge. If life’s main project, then, is “to seek (God), to know him, and to love him with all one’s strength,”¹⁰ a Christian education is indispensable. It also follows that for the Jesuits, whose entire apostolate could be summed up in the phrase, “to help souls,”¹¹ the educational apostolate was a natural fit.

If we are seeking, in fact, to distill the essence of Jesuit education from the Vilnius catalog, we might describe it as an effort to make *everything* fit: God and man, body and soul, contemplation and action, education and nature, antiquity and modernity, pastors and laity. The Jesuits hoped to bring each of these seemingly antithetical principles into a new and durable unity. This theoretical pursuit of unity may help to explain some of the more controversial features of early Jesuit education, such as the centralized administration of Jesuit colleges and the uniform structure of

⁷ In many respects, they were not. See Codina, “The ‘Modus Parisiensis’”; see also Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System*, 1–74, and Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education*, 17–72.

⁸ The *Formula* was approved in two versions, first in 1540 by Paul III, and then in 1550 by Julius III; see *Constitutions*, 3–14. I have quoted the earlier version, section 1 (pp. 3–4). It should be noted that the two stated objects (progress and propagation) are really one: that all people should know and love God better.

⁹ See Pavur, *The Ratio Studiorum*, 7, and the accompanying footnote.

¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1.1, p. 7.

¹¹ On this phrase, so frequent in the writings of St. Ignatius, see O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 18–19 and *passim*. On the genesis of the Jesuit educational apostolate, see O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 200–42, and O’Malley, “How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education.”

the Jesuit curriculum.¹² Unity, in short, was both the *means* and the *goal* of their educational enterprise. To some of us, of course, this preoccupation with unity may seem fastidious and controlling. For the masters of Vilnius, however, it was entirely consistent with their formation as Jesuits.

This formation began, as we all know, with the *Spiritual Exercises* of the founder, St. Ignatius Loyola.¹³ The *Exercises* can be described as a plan of guided meditations culminating in a specific “election” or religious commitment. They begin with the famous “principle and foundation” of the spiritual life: “Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.”¹⁴ They end with the equally famous “contemplation for attaining the love of God,” in which one is encouraged to discover the presence of God in all things.¹⁵ Thus the work begins with a single principle, proposes a single goal, and concludes with a great act of contemplative synthesis. It also focuses on a single model of humanity. For fully three weeks of the month-long retreat, the Jesuit novice imagines that he is an eye-witness and companion of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this way, he comes to view the historical Jesus as the center of reality and the unique standard of human perfection. His entire world view becomes, in short, “radically Christian.” It should not surprise us, then, that the Jesuits gave a new twist to the humanist ideal of the *uomo universale*. The object of their program of studies was not merely to become a latter-day Cicero, but to become a companion of Christ—or more precisely, an *alter Christus*. By the same token, a student’s daily progress in practical virtue, knowledge, and eloquence could be viewed as a “following” and imitation of Christ, the ideal human being and the eternal Word of God.¹⁶

It follows, then, that the value of Jesuit education ultimately depends on the coherence of Jesuit spirituality. If one defines the goal of education

¹² It is significant that *union*, rather than *community*, was also the ideal of the Society’s internal relations and governance; see Gray, “The Experience of Ignatius Loyola,” 14.

¹³ On the *Exercises* as a model for education, see Gray, “The Experience of Ignatius Loyola,” 1–21, and Fitzpatrick, *St. Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum*, 36–43.

¹⁴ Mattola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, 47.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁶ Cf. Cooke, “Jesuit Student Spirituality for Today,” 219: “The graduates of our schools are, in the mystery of Christianity, a rather privileged group in whom Christ is meant to continue the work of his redemptive Incarnation. We should have as our ambition to produce students conscious of this fact and willing to live it in full awareness and dedication.” See also Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project*, 17–20.

as an *inward conformity to God in Christ*, the traditional Jesuit curriculum makes perfect sense. If one rejects this definition, however, the whole project falls apart. This has been the basic problem of Jesuit education from the beginning, and it lies at the heart of the tensions in Jesuit schools today. It is to these tensions that we shall now turn.

As before, there is no shortage of documents reflecting the philosophy that currently prevails in Jesuit schools and colleges. For the sake of symmetry, however, I have selected a pair of more recent mission statements, which impressed me with their brevity, clarity, and consistency with recent documents from the Jesuit Curia. The first appears (at the time of writing) on the website of my *alma mater*, the University of Detroit Jesuit High School (see Appendix B); the other is the mission statement of Boston College, approved in 1996 (Appendix C).

As I read these statements, I am struck first of all by an apparent reconsideration of the *general* ends of a Jesuit education. The U. of D. High statement resembles many others by setting forth a plurality of objectives, with no obvious order among them (sec. 2–6).¹⁷ These objectives are personal maturity or “growth,” intellectual “competence,” a capacity for “loving,” the quality of being a “religious person,” and a commitment to “doing justice.”

At first glance, these objectives seem to resonate with the Vilnius catalogue by combining the personal and social ends of education. On closer inspection, however, they reflect a philosophy that is more *relational* and *activist* than that which informed our first document. Maturity is measured in terms of extracurricular socialization—especially one’s capacity for “loving” (sec. 4). Intellectual attainments are important, of course, but these are justified as a preparation for “more advanced levels of learning” (sec. 3); the focus of the latter, according to Boston College, is “citizenship, service, and leadership in a global society” (sec. 3). “Christian morality” at U. of D. High seems to be largely a matter of “doing justice,” which includes “working actively in society” to reform “surrounding social structures” (sec. 6). Boston College likewise commits its resources to the “pursuit of a just society” (sec. 1). In short, it appears that the ideal Jesuit product is no longer the “universal man,” whose intellectual and moral virtue overflows into the service of Church and society. Rather, he is the “Man for Others,” whose virtue is more or less *defined* by the quality of his relationships, both personal and political.

¹⁷ The list appears to be based on remarks by Jesuit Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, quoted in *Ignatian Pedagogy*, sec. 13.

There is something to be said for this shift. The classical ideal arguably overstated the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the individual; thus, it could degenerate into an ethic of self-perfection and, ultimately, self-absorption. On the other hand, the new, relational model runs a different risk: that of sundering the unity of the interior and the exterior life of a person, precisely because it rejects the priority of the interior. To put it differently, there is a danger that we are forming “persons for others” without first enabling them to be persons for *themselves* and for *God*.¹⁸ This mistake would have a disproportionate effect on our discipline, which holds to the Socratic principle that “care for the soul” is the foundation of caring for others.¹⁹ In a thoroughly relational account of education, the Classics must appear fatally self-centered.

We may also return for a moment to the religious objective of Jesuit education. As we have seen, humanist educators tried to conform their pupils to an ideal type of human being, “the universal man.” The Jesuits identified this ideal with Jesus Christ, who shows us human nature in its divinized perfection. To put the matter this way, however, commits Jesuit schools to a specific corporate theology, and that is something they seem increasingly unwilling to accept. In many recent Jesuit mission statements, religious “diversity” is held up not only as practically expedient, but even (in the words of Boston College) as “essential to the fullness” of a school’s “intellectual life” (sec. 2). This puts Jesuit schools in something of a bind. How does an institution “serve faith”²⁰ without appearing to serve a *particular* faith? The Jesuit Curia proposes the following solution: “To all, *whatever their beliefs*, Christ is proposed as the model of human life. Everyone can draw inspiration and learn about commitment from *the life and teaching* of Jesus, who witnesses to the love and forgiveness of God, lives in solidarity with all who suffer, and pours out his life in the service

¹⁸ Henle, “Objectives of the Catholic Liberal Arts College,” 21–2, states the problem in philosophical terms: “Knowing and loving are indeed relational activities, but of their very nature they are imminent in consciousness and inseparable from self-awareness. They are fully possessed and fully realized only when held in conscious reflection, by which both the self and its objects are fully grasped...not only do we love and choose, we know we love and choose and can know why...it is within this context that responsibility and freedom, maturity and human perfection must be understood.”

¹⁹ See Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*; especially 22–38.

²⁰ Cf. GC 32, 1.4.2, page 17: “The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement.” There is a tendency in Jesuit literature to restate this formula as “the service of faith *and* the promotion of justice” (my italics).

of others” (my italics).²¹ That sounds impressive, but unless one’s “beliefs” happen to coincide with traditional assertions about Christ’s *death and resurrection*, it is hard to see how Jesus can be more than one “model” among many, such as the compassionate Buddha and the kindly Dr. Schweitzer. In the pursuit of “diversity,” it seems, the one-point focus of Jesuit spirituality has been lost. After high school, moreover, the students of Boston College are thrust into a “dialogue” between “religious belief” and “other formative elements of culture” (sec. 3), which are presumably forming our culture without any religion at all.²² What is curious about all this is that Jesuit schools no longer feel empowered to create and promote their *own* culture, in which the “spoils of Egypt” become adornments for the Bride of Christ. A radically Christian institution seems to have been ruled out from the start.

This is not to say, of course, that Jesuit education is no longer a “good thing.” But it is increasingly difficult to describe it as *one* thing—much less as the *same* thing that its founders envisioned. Their idea, as I have suggested, was that the entire curriculum would converge on the “one thing needful”—an interior conformity of the individual (and consequently, of the whole culture) to Christ as the complete human being. The Classics provided the “currency” needed to effect this transition. Recently, however, it seems that Jesuit schools are trying to be *all* things to all people, and that they intend to form their students along the same lines. Above all, they want to get along with the “formative elements” of the emerging (and not specifically Christian) “global culture.” The status of Classics in this new dispensation is far from clear.

We should keep in mind, however, that the question before us is not whether the Classics can *survive* in this new cultural milieu. As a matter of fact, the pluralistic and competitive environment of the modern Academy can be congenial to Classics programs. Many have kept themselves alive and even flourishing through astute programming and self-promotion. Nevertheless, we should also take the point recently made by Oswyn Murray. Part of the appeal of our discipline, he argues, is that we do *not*

²¹ *Characteristics*, 61. The document continues: “Everyone can imitate him in an emptying of self, in accepting whatever difficulties or sufferings come in the pursuit of the one goal to be achieved: responding to the Father’s will in the service of others.” On the history and (somewhat dubious) authority of this document, see Duminuco, “A New *Ratio* for a New Millennium?,” 151–60.

²² Cf. GC 34, 4.102.18–108.24, pages 58–61. Such a dialogue can be valuable, of course, but only if it includes a “countercultural Paschal Christology”; otherwise, “belief” (or more accurately, faith) has nothing worthwhile to say. See McDade, “The Jesuit Mission and Dialogue with Culture”; especially 63–4.

simply play the game. Our position, in fact, tends to be counter-cultural, because our “product” is a set of intellectual habits ordered toward truth, goodness, and beauty, rather than a shortcut to political and economic success. Moreover, unlike knowledge-areas that focus on practical knowledge for particular ends, Classics is a *unifying* discipline, which touches on “ultimates of the most vital and universal significance for human life.”²³ Thus our common training, not to speak of our religious convictions, may cause some of us to miss the coherent and unified vision typical of the early Jesuit documents.²⁴ Is it still possible, we may ask, to teach in the spirit of the masters of Vilnius—to recover, as Classicists, the original “Jesuit thing”? In my closing remarks, I would like to suggest how we can take one step in that direction.

This first step might be a kind of self-examination, roughly analogous to the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*. We may begin by trying to define the “principle and foundation” of our careers as Classicists—to specify, perhaps, what really “hooked” us on the study of the Classics. With a little effort, this becomes an exercise in “discernment of spirits,” for it obliges us to clear our minds of secondary motives such as career advancement and institutional security, and to rediscover the “pearl of great price” for which we were willing to trade other possible careers. Having found the pearl, we may happily dispense with platitudes about the “value of the Classics in today’s global society” and indicate, with empirical certitude, the value of the Classics for *us*. We will then be able to state more precisely what it is that we most want to share with our students and colleagues. Above all, we will have articulated a unifying principle upon which our syllabi, curricula, and careers can be built. In short, we will have achieved a *unity of plan*, and will have recovered one of the chief virtues of early Jesuit education.

Meditating on our deepest values may, of course, prompt reflections of a specifically religious nature. In this regard, I count myself fortunate to have met Jesuit colleagues²⁵ who, like the masters of Vilnius, have made a “radical” commitment to Christ as “the center of the universe and of

²³ Henle, “Objectives of the Catholic Liberal Arts College,” 32; this is what distinguishes the humanities, including theology, from other modern disciplines.

²⁴ Cf. the comments on “intellectual integration” in Daly, “A Classicist’s View of GC 34 and Catholic Higher Education”; especially 91–2.

²⁵ I doubt that “Ignatian” education can flourish in the absence of professed Jesuits. As my father (also an alumnus of Jesuit schools) succinctly put it, “the distinctive feature of Jesuit education is Jesuits.” On the problems attending lay-Jesuit collaboration, see O’Donnell, “From Omaha to Philadelphia and Beyond”; especially 85–6.

history.”²⁶ With the help of such guides, one can begin to see and portray Classical Antiquity as an “advent culture,”²⁷ and even secular authors as “heralds of Christ.”²⁸ The writings of modern Jesuit humanists, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Hugo Rahner, can also be helpful in this regard.²⁹

We may also find, of course, that such a commitment goes against the popular and institutional grain. In that case, it may help to recall the words of Father Pedro Arrupe, the late General of the Society of Jesus. In his famous address entitled “Men for Others,” Father Arrupe argued that the “spirit of openness to new challenges” is also a perpetual and radical conversion to the Gospel of Christ, which is “always ancient, ever new.”³⁰ The same adjectives, it seems to me, can be applied to the Classics. We may experience, in fact, a kind of perpetual conversion of our own by rediscovering the deeper reasons for our eccentric devotion to the *litterae humaniores*. If so, we may take to heart this additional advice from Father Arrupe: “Sitting together on the same school bench, let us listen to the Lord, the Teacher of all mankind.”³¹

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²⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 1.

²⁷ On “adventist paganism,” see Haecker, *Vergil, Father of the West*; especially 70–81.

²⁸ Jouvency, *De ratione discendi et docendi*, 120; cf. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 221.

²⁹ See, for example, Von Balthasar’s masterful essay “On the Idea of the World Stage” in *Theo-drama I*, 135–257, and Rahner’s “Odysseus at the Mast” in *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, 328–86.

³⁰ Arrupe, *Men for Others*, 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*

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APPENDIX A

CATALOGUS LECTIONUM COLLEGII VILNENSIS (1570)

Monumenta Paedagogica III, pages 574–579

Translated by Rev. Maurus Mount, O.S.B.; revised by Stephen M. Beall
(Section numbers have been added)

1. Among all the things that the lower world encloses within its embrace, there exists nothing more excellent than man; so too can nothing be imagined more dignified and godlike than his soul (*animus*). For in addition to his once exceptional and excellent character, he received the imprint of the image and likeness of God, to signify his close kinship with the Most High Divinity.
2. However, since the Heavenly Creator joined the soul to a body, so that without it the soul can accomplish nothing in this mortal life, the soul, enclosed in this earthly bulk as if in a prison, experiences a kind of darkness. Consequently, unless some light enters from the outside, the soul cannot rise up to exercise its own power and vigor. When, however, the light of doctrine and the sciences penetrates, as it were, the windows of the senses and comes into the faculty of understanding, and when the soul is illumined with the knowledge of divine and human things, nothing will be found more splendid, nothing on earth more similar to God.
3. For relying on true knowledge, man will contemplate all things above and below that are defined by the sky, the earth, and the waves, no matter how remote from view, as if they were lying before his feet, without any danger of error—like God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. He will measure everything, moreover, by its own principles, so that even in the reliability of his judgment he carries before him, in a manner of speaking, a clear trace of divinity. Finally, through a well-reasoned examination of all Antiquity, he will acquire a knowledge of future things from the past and the present; thus he shall imitate, in a manner proportionate [to his nature], that most certain understanding of the past, present, and future which is characteristic of the divine nature.
4. Thus, it is easy to determine what achieves pure and sincere pleasure, the defense of religion, and the utility of the state. For if a harmony of sounds delights the flutist, and the imitation of bodies pleases the painter, and [the carving of] images delights the sculptor, will not an educated man receive much more

pleasure from an understanding of causes, a comprehension of effects, and a consistency in forming opinions without any hesitation?

5. And will not that entire set of scholarly disciplines, in which men gloried when they were separated from the knowledge of the true God, be rightly transferred, like the spoils of Egypt, from unjust possessors to the true Israelites—that is, to the Christian religion? We see that our holy Fathers did this in an exemplary way. For since the content of our holy Faith was revealed by God, and thus cannot tolerate any fraud, deceit, pretense, or vanity, it is far from being obscured by the sciences; rather, it becomes brighter and more beautiful, like a mistress distinguished and accompanied by her entourage of handmaidens.
6. Moreover, will not a state that has counselors and citizens who are wiser, more religious, and better instructed in a variety of subjects (as Homer says in the *Odyssey*) be administered with wiser policies and greater success?
7. (*This passage praises the school's patron, Bishop Valerian Protaszewicz of Vilnius*).
8. He (Bishop Valerian) commended and entrusted, with great enthusiasm, the governance of this school to the household of the Society of Jesus, after he had learned through hearsay and the reports of friends that its proper mission is the education of youth, the interpretation of Holy Scripture, preaching to the people, the explanation of Christian doctrine to the uneducated, and the administration of those sacraments and spiritual gifts by which their neighbors can principally be helped. We ascribe to the singular providence of God Most High the fact that this report about our little Society has been carried to such remote regions, and we shall endeavor in the future to measure up, to the best of our ability and relying on divine help, to the high opinion that has been formed about us. Meanwhile, we shall begin, in accordance with the mind and intelligence of young people, with the simplest subjects, so that from there we can easily rise to more elevated things, content at this time to have established the somewhat trivial foundations of our work, and to have instructed students in rhetoric and in *belles-lettres* in the manner and order which the subject catalog indicates.

APPENDIX B

Philosophy of the University of Detroit

Jesuit High School and Academy

<http://www.uofdjесuit.org/academics/philosophy.htm>

(Section numbers have been added)

1. The University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy is committed to providing the highest quality Jesuit Catholic college preparatory education for young men throughout the Detroit metropolitan area. The University of Detroit Jesuit, in collaboration with parents, will challenge its students to go beyond academic excellence, to be reflective, to be committed to the service of faith and the promotion of justice: to be “*Men-for-Others*.” As part of its mission, the University of Detroit Jesuit will provide an atmosphere of learning and spiritual development that reaches into the larger community.
2. A U of D Jesuit student strives to be *Open to Growth*. He seeks opportunities to stretch his mind, imagination, feelings, and religious consciousness.
3. A U of D Jesuit student strives to be *Intellectually Competent*. He strives for appropriate mastery of the fundamental tools of learning. He discovers his emerging intellectual skills for more advanced levels of learning.
4. A U of D Jesuit student strives to be *Loving*. He tries to move beyond self-interest or self-centeredness in his relationships with others.
5. A U of D Jesuit student strives to be a *Religious Person*. He has a basic knowledge of the major doctrines, practices and spirituality of the Catholic Church. He strengthens his relationship with a religious tradition and community while being respectful and open to the religious traditions of other faiths.
6. A U of D Jesuit student seeks ways to *Commit to Doing Justice*. He recognizes the potential within himself for doing injustice, as well as the injustices in some of the surrounding social structures. He is preparing himself to become a competent, concerned and responsible member of his family of local, national, and international communities. He is beginning to appreciate the fact that Christian morality not only involves the individual conscience, but it demands that each person work actively in society to positively promote social justice.