

Trinity Review

Illuminating Truth, Goodness and Beauty

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Conspiracy Theories
Shea Ramquist

Courage
Lily Caddow, John Carlson,
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The Iliad
Mark Phillips, Chris Leigh



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Cover

"The Lion" by Jossalyn Miller, 7th Grade

The lion, being king of the animals, is a symbol of courage and King Jesus has often been depicted as a lion throughout history. Revelation 5:5 states, "Weep no more; the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered" - Jossalyn Miller



Conspiracy Theories Meet Classical Education

How Classical Education Separates Fact from Fiction

by Shea Ramquist

TRINITY U SPEAKER SERIES, NOVEMBER 11, 2021

WHO REALLY SHOT JFK? DO YOU BUY THE OFFICIAL explanation that it was a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald? Or perhaps Cuban agents acting on orders from Fidel Castro? Or hit-men sent by an angry mafia boss? Or even CIA assassins, in a plot hatched by Vice President Lyndon Johnson?

While we're at it, did Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin really land on the moon? Or was the Apollo 11 moon landing faked on a Hollywood soundstage? What about aliens? Did a spaceship crash near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947, and the government covered everything up at Area 51? Conspiracy theories like these have, over the last few years, crept out of small skeptical subcultures to increasingly take center

stage in American culture.

Now, some conspiracy theories are so outlandish that they strain credulity. There's the "Phantom Time Hypothesis," which says that the early Middle Ages were faked, Charlemagne never existed, and our calendars are all wrong. There's the "Birds Aren't Real" conspiracy: birds are actually tiny CIA drones. (True believers ask, "Have you ever seen a baby pigeon?") There's the Reptilian Conspiracy, in which most world leaders are actually shape shifting lizard-like aliens. As bizarre as that theory sounds, a Public Policy Poll in 2013 reported that 4% of American voters believe the Reptilian theory is true.

While these conspiracy theories might sound wacky, others are much more serious. You do not need me to remind you of the many theories today about COVID,

school shootings, climate change, elections, and vaccines. And then there are the cluster of QAnon conspiracy theories, which mostly center around the idea that devil-worshipping elites run a child sex ring and are controlling the media and American politics.

I do want to point out that conspiracy theories are sometimes right. There are a number of examples, but here are just three. First, in 1975, the US government admitted that the CIA had run a program during the 1950s and 60s called "MK Ultra." In the program, the CIA secretly administered drugs to unknowing American citizens in an attempt to develop mind control. Second, in 2012, journalists confirmed the long-rumored, but seemingly unbelievable theory that Jimmy Saville, Britain's most beloved children's television host, was a sexual predator and pedophile. Third, the most famous confirmed conspiracy theory is the Watergate scandal from the early 1970s, where President Nixon and his allies abused presidential powers to cover up his involvement in a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters.

I cannot resist adding a fourth confirmed conspiracy theory. In 2019, players from a certain baseball team from Houston admitted to stealing pitching signs, often banging on trash cans to alert their batters of upcoming pitches. While simultaneously denying allegations of such sign-stealing, the Astros used their shameless system to win a tainted World Series against the Dodgers.

While most conspiracy theories are almost certainly false, some are true. How do we know which ones to believe? That question is pressing, because being wrong about conspiracy theories can have deadly consequences. During the Black Death pandemic in the middle ages, Europeans in many cities believed in false theories that Jews were causing the disease. As a result, a series of massacres broke out against Jewish communities, including one in Strasbourg in 1349, where two thousand Jews were burnt alive. The Holocaust in World War II itself was the result of the "stabbed in the back" conspiracy, which claimed that the only reason the Germans lost World War I was that they were betrayed by Jews and other undesirable elements.

More recently, conspiracy theories inspired Timothy McVeigh to bomb a federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 and wounding 680 others. Conspiracy theories also inspired Anders Breivik to kill 77 people in Oslo, Norway in 2012 and Brenton Tarrant to gun down 51 people in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019. In 2002, belief in conspiracy theories about genetically modified foods led the government of Zambia to reject food aid during a terrible famine, at a time when 3 million people in the country were suffering from extreme hunger. And from 2000 and 2005 the government of South Africa, motivated by conspiracy theories, denied the existence of HIV/AIDs, causing an estimated 330,000 deaths from AIDS.

The consequences of believing false conspiracy theories will hopefully not be a matter of life or death for our friends, our family, and ourselves. But false conspiracy theories do bind their believers into constricting circles of unreality, often producing a way of approaching the world, our country, and our neighbors that is filled with skepticism and fear. That is not an approach that Christians should have. Instead, as 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment."

So that takes us to the central question of this essay: how can we tell conspiracy fact from fiction? That essentially is the same question as asking: how can we judge the truth in uncertain, controversial issues? And those are questions that Christian Classical Education is designed to help us answer.

As you may know, Christian Classical Education is centered on the liberal arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. In grammar, we teach students to learn the truth; in logic, we teach students to discern truth from falsehood; and in rhetoric, we teach students to powerfully proclaim the truth to others. We do this not just with the easy questions, but with the hardest questions humans have ever grappled with.

It is my privilege to aid in that process here at Trinity as a history and rhetoric teacher. In history classes, we teach students how to discern the truth about controversial

historical events, where the facts are hard to come by and none of the historical actors are telling the same story. And in rhetoric classes, we teach students how to spot bad arguments, avoid being manipulated by seductive, destructive ideas, and create their own powerful defenses of the truth. My goal is to take a few of the lessons that we teach about seeking and knowing the truth here at Trinity and apply them to conspiracy theories.

Before we go further, I want to note that this essay is not using “conspiracy theory” as a pejorative or negative term, but as a technical description for a certain type of belief about the existence of conspiracies. To support that approach, I have included in the essay one or more conspiracy theories that I personally believe may be true.

Conspiracy Theories, Their Origin, And Their Rise

What are conspiracy theories, where did they come from, and how have they become so powerful today? Let us start with some definitions. A “conspiracy” is a secret plot, usually planned by a powerful group of people who have some kind of sinister purpose. There are many true “conspiracies” in history. In 44 BC, Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by a conspiracy of Roman senators. In 1605, a group of English Catholics led by Guy Fawkes attempted to assassinate the protestant King James I by blowing up the Parliament building. That conspiracy was discovered shortly before they could blow up the explosives, and the conspirators were captured and executed. And again, in 1972, the Watergate scandal began with a conspiracy of a handful of White House operatives to break into the DNC headquarters. Notice that in each of these cases, as in most actual conspiracies, there are small groups acting over a short time frame before they are either discovered or they achieve their goal.

A “conspiracy theory,” as the name indicates, is a hypothesized belief about the existence of a conspiracy. Conspiracy theories often have a certain set of shared characteristics. They typically oppose the standard interpretation about the potential conspiracy, often rejecting the interpretations offered by traditional experts

and authorities, like scientists or historians. Conspiracy theorists often believe they have unique access to truths for which they might be persecuted by the broader society, but by knowing separates them from the masses who believe the official account. Conspiracy theories are generally unproven and, as we will see, perhaps unprovable.

Where do conspiracy theories come from? Conspiracy theories are by no means a recent phenomenon in American life. One of the oldest conspiracy theories emerged during John Adams’ presidency, in 1797. After witnessing the chaos and horrors of the French revolution, a Scottish scientist named John Robison wrote a book alleging an international plot to “[root] out all religious establishments, and [overturn] all the existing governments of Europe” by followers of “Illuminism.” The Illuminism movement was a pretty standard group of Enlightenment utopian idealists who wanted to “bring the human race under the rules of reason.” But Robison and his many nervous American adherents accused this group of being godless and wicked, bent on corrupting women and destroying property rights. Robison also accused the group of secretly orchestrating the disorder and bloodshed of the French Revolution. He made their name synonymous a host of different conspiracy for future generations, calling them the “Illuminati”

In the 1830-40s, as hundreds of thousands of Catholic Irish and Germans immigrated to America, various anti-Catholic conspiracy theories swirled about, leading to many violent attacks on Catholic churches and monestaries, including the Philadelphia Bible Riot of 1844, which left over twenty people dead and hundreds injured. Jumping to the 20th Century, during the great depression, the “merchants of death” conspiracy alleged that the US had been forced into WWI by greedy munitions manufacturers and bankers. This theory helped keep the US out of WWII, allowing Hitler to rampage across Europe mostly unchecked until 1941.

During the height of the Cold War in the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy provoked the Red Scare by alleging the existence of a secret list of names of Communists who had infiltrated the heart of the American government. While

communist spies actually did operate in the US during the Cold War, McCarthy’s list was made up. And the resulting hysteria that his lies and congressional inquiries provoked created a climate of paranoia that unjustly ruined the careers and lives of countless innocent Americans. That takes us up to the JFK assassination in 1963, which shocked the nation and spawned endless conspiracy theories. And finally, the national trauma of the 9/11 attacks created a new level of willingness to consider conspiracy theories, including alleging that the attacks themselves had been an “inside job”.

While conspiracy theories have been with us since the beginning of America, over the last few years conspiracy theories have surged into the mainstream of American culture. What explains this recent rise? How have they become so powerful? I believe that there are five main factors. First, conspiracy theories rise during times of crisis and social disruption. Theories are especially popular among groups who believe they are losing out or being marginalized as result of the upheaval. Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, we have had a series of crises and major social changes in America.

Second, the crises of the 1960s and 70s involving Vietnam, racial unrest, and Watergate led to a breakdown in trust in governmental authority and social consensus, that some historians have termed the “age of fracture.” As part of the fracture, we have seen a collapse of trust in traditional sources of authority in America, like government officials, news media sources, and university-based experts. In the wake of that collapse and fracture, conspiracy theories of many types have flourished.

Third, we’ve also seen a significant rise in social and political polarization and suspicion. In this polarized climate, both conservative and liberal politicians and pundits have promoted and legitimized certain conspiracy theories to attack their opponents and score partisan points. For example, since the 1992 presidential election, the losing political party has embraced a conspiracy theory targeting the winning president: a few examples include the Clinton assassination theory, the Blood for Oil theory

of Bush’s Iraq invasion, the Obama Birther theory, and the Trump and Russia theories.

Fourth, the American educational system has mostly stopped teaching the intellectual skills needed to think clearly and resist the allure of false conspiracy theories. Unlike classical schools, American public schools no longer teach logic. They do not teach students how to think deeply about what is and is not scientific knowledge. They do not teach objective truths of morality—or even that objective truth exists. As a result, we have become a “post-truth” society where people make decisions on what they want to believe mostly based on their feelings.

Fifth, all these trends—the sense of crisis, the fracture of trust, the polarization, the loss of truth—have been powerfully intensified by social media networks. These networks also connect conspiracy theorists together. And to keep users on their sites, social media algorithms actively push the curious to consume increasing extreme conspiratorial content.

So, with more and more conspiracy theories surging around us, how do we know which to trust and which to reject? We can get some clarity by using five principles for gauging the truth or falsity of conspiracy theories. None of these principles by themselves can prove or disprove a conspiracy theory. But they can help you know when to be more or less trusting.

Consider the Source

In my US History class, I teach students how to work through tricky historical controversies, like what was the real cause of the Civil War or was the US’s entry into WWI justified. In these controversies, there are many contradicting pieces of evidence. So how can we tell what actually happened?

This is a standard problem in the field of history and one that we teach early on as part of the parts of historical thinking. To solve this problem, consider the following thought experiment. You are a school principal and you have heard that there was a fight at lunch. How do you find out what happened and who is to blame? First, interview

the alleged fighters, their friends, and any bystanding students and teachers. Which of these will have a perfect account on what happened? None of them. Almost none of the witnesses will be completely unbiased; some will be very biased.

So, do we throw out the testimony of biased witnesses? No. School principals and historians do not discount biased sources; instead we consider the evidence in light of a source's bias. The fact is there are no infallible, unbiased witnesses in history, nor on today's controversial issues, including those related to conspiracy theories.

Discounting arguments or evidence based on their source not only is bad practice in history, it's also committing a logical error called the "genetic fallacy." The genetic fallacy occurs when someone bases the truth or falsity of an argument not on the strength of its evidence, but on the origin of the argument itself. For example, some people argue that smoking bans in restaurants and other public spaces are wrong, since the Nazis were the first ones to institute smoking bans. While that is a historic fact, it is a logical fallacy to say that the bans themselves are wrong only due to the first source of the bans.

Let's apply this principle about considering sources and avoiding the genetic fallacy to a recent conspiracy theory, involving a potentially nefarious, international organization that targets children: Chuck E Cheese. In 2019, YouTuber Shane Dawson started promoting a conspiracy theory that Chuck E Cheese employees across the country were taking multiple leftover pizza slices, putting them together, and serving these "recycled" pizzas to new customers. Numerous Chuck E Cheese employees immediately went on social media and denied the claims, saying any leftover pieces were eaten by the staff or thrown out. These employees are clearly biased—they were motivated to protect the company they work for and keep their jobs.

But remember, a source's bias does not automatically disqualify their evidence. We need to evaluate the truth of the evidence separately from the source. Just because we like someone and agree with their perspective does not

automatically make what they are saying true. Just because we dislike someone and disagree with their perspective does not automatically make what they are saying false.

The Time and Numbers Test

This is a simple test, reflecting the reality of how hard it is for big groups to keep big secrets for a long time. As one writer puts it, history shows that "real conspiracies, even very simple ones, are difficult to conceal and routinely experience unexpected problems. In contrast, conspiracy theories suggest conspiracies that are unrealistically successful and groups of conspirators ... who can act with near-perfect competence and secrecy."

For example, for a moon-landing hoax to stay secret, it would require about 411,000 people—the number of NASA employees in the 1960s—all to stay quiet. An Oxford University physicist named David Robert Grimes actually developed a formula for calculating the lifespan of big conspiracies. Grimes estimates that if over 400,000 people were in on the moon landing hoax, it would have broken down in under four years. Similarly, the conspiracy theory that big pharmaceutical companies have as a secret cancer cure would require over 700,000 people to keep the cure a secret—a feat that Grimes estimates would have become impossible after about three years.

Consider, on the other hand, how quickly the secret leaked in the real-life conspiracy for the Watergate scandal. Chuck Colson was a White House special counsel for President Nixon, who was jailed for his part in the Watergate conspiracy. As Colson later recounted, "here were the ten most powerful men in the United States. With all that power, we couldn't contain a lie for two weeks."

So, for any conspiracy, consider the number of people who would have to be a part of the secret and the amount of time that has passed without any proof of the plot leaking out. The larger the numbers and the longer the time, the less likely the conspiracy is real.

The Falsifiability Test

It may seem like the best theories have no holes. But

actually, if a theory is unable to be disproved at all, that's a sign of intellectual weakness, not strength. In philosophy and science there is something called the "principle of falsifiability." This principle states that a healthy hypothesis should have a condition in which the theory can be disproved. For example, the claim that "all swans are white" could potentially be disproved—by finding a black swan.

On the other hand, here is an unfalsifiable claim: "last night, aliens abducted you, gave you a new body, implanted you with someone else's memories, and you woke up with someone else's life this morning." There is no way to disprove this hypothesis. It is not falsifiable. For that reason, we should be very skeptical about it.

It is important to add some qualifications to the idea of falsifiability. First, the principle of falsifiability does not mean you need to actually disprove your own theory; a theory simply needs to have the possibility of being disproved. Second, a theory being falsifiable does not prove that the theory is true. Third, some unfalsifiable beliefs may be true. But the point is that if a theory is unfalsifiable, it is a big red flag for that theory. We need to proceed with great caution in such cases.

Let's apply the principle of falsifiability to a conspiracy theory. At the start of Barack Obama's presidency in 2008, many accused him of being born outside the United States and conspiring to hide that fact. As support for this theory, conspiracy theorists pointed out that President Obama had never released a birth certificate. So, in 2011, Obama finally released his birth certificate. But then theorists claimed that the released birth certificate was forged. At this point, the theory gets close to being unfalsifiable. What would be enough evidence to prove that Obama had been born in the US? Even if Obama's mother or the doctor who delivered him came forward, theorists could claim that they were lying. Again, the potential unfalsifiability of the "birther" conspiracy is not proof that the theory is wrong, but that we should now be highly skeptical of it.

Many conspiracy theories are deeply unfalsifiable, like the Reptilian conspiracy theory. When skeptics point out that there is no evidence for such theories, believers

sometimes say "that's just what we'd expect! They have destroyed the evidence!" In the 1997 movie *Conspiracy Theory*, Mel Gibson's character expresses this viewpoint, when he says "A good conspiracy is unprovable. I mean, if you can prove it, it means they screwed up somewhere along the line."

C.S. Lewis dealt with this kind of conspiratorial thinking in the realm of literary analysis. As he wrote in *The Four Loves*:

The very lack of evidence is thus treated as evidence; the absence of smoke proves that the fire is very carefully hidden. Yes—if it exists at all. But we must first prove its existence. ... Otherwise we are arguing like a man who should say, 'If there were an invisible cat in that chair, the chair would look empty; but the chair does look empty; therefore there is an invisible cat in it.'

Lewis went on to point out that such a belief about invisible cats cannot be disproved through logic, but commits the believer to a damaging approach to reality.

This points to another side of conspiracy theories: they are often tightly logically consistent, but will not consider evidence from the other side, nor even a scenario in which they could be disproven. This way lies a peculiar form of intellectual madness that G.K. Chesterton wrote about in his book, *Orthodoxy*: "The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason."

A good hypothesis needs to be falsifiable and needs solid evidence in support of it. But what counts as solid evidence?

The STAR test

In rhetoric classes, we teach a fundamental concept: arguments need evidence. Just because a theory sounds possible does not mean we should believe it. For example, reusing old pizza sounds like something Chuck E Cheese might do. It just "makes sense." But is there any evidence for that claim? If not, it's possible—it could be true—but there is no reason to believe it. If there is some evidence, it's plausible. And the more evidence, the more probable it

becomes that the theory is true.

Now, some conspiracy theorists love evidence. For example, in 2018 Flat-earther Eric Dubay published “200 Proofs Earth is not a Spinning Ball,” with all kinds of evidence. But not all evidence is created equal: some is stronger than others.

There is a tool for testing the strength of evidence called the “STAR test.” According to this test, strong evidence is Sufficient, Typical, Accurate, and Relevant. Let’s work through each of these points.

Sufficient: is there enough evidence to support the claim? The bigger the claim, the more evidence we need to support it. If we jump to a conclusion without enough evidence, we commit a logical fallacy called “hasty generalization.” For example, when Richard Nixon was elected president in 1972, New York film critic Pauline Kael is supposed to have remarked, “How can that be? No one I know voted for Nixon!” Another classic example are those who say something like, “who says alcohol is bad for you? My grandfather drank a six-pack of beer everyday and he lived to the ripe old age of 93.” In each case, there is some evidence for the claim, but not a sufficient amount to support it.

Typical: is the chosen evidence representative and typical? If we only pick the pieces of evidence that support our claim and discount the majority of evidence that does not, we commit the logical fallacy of “cherry picking.” For example, we might look at a list of successful high school and college dropouts—Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg—and conclude that dropping out of school is the path to great success! But that list is the most atypical list of dropouts possible; they certainly do not represent the average dropout experience. Good evidence is typical of the rest of the evidence about a claim.

Accurate: is the evidence accurate and true? This point might seem obvious. But with the spread of “fake news” and misinformation on the internet, it has become increasingly important to be sure the evidence we are using is actually accurate. For example, last year, during the debates about raising the national minimum wage in the United States to \$15 per hour, a Twitter user named “Legally Blonde” (@

baddbeckie) posted three pictures of multiple politicians dozing off during legislative sessions. She captioned the post saying, “If \$15/hr is too much for minimum wage then \$85/hr is too much to pay our senators to literally do nothing.” The post went viral, amassing over 55,000 likes and 18,000 re-tweets. The only problem: the pictures she used as evidence did not show American politicians, but instead snoozing members of the British House of Lords. In our increasingly heated debates, we need to guard against untrustworthy evidence, especially when that evidence stirs up our emotions. If we let our emotions guide us instead of logic, we become prone towards believing all sorts of misinformation and lies.

Relevant: is the evidence relevant to the claim being argued? While we try to choose evidence that we believe will support our points, there are many different ways to give evidence that actually is not properly related to our claims. There are a number of different logical fallacies that result from irrelevant evidence.

Perhaps the most common is “post hoc ergo propter hoc,” which states that “correlation does not equal causation.” For example, a study done in Germany in the 1980s found that couples who kissed before leaving for work lived an average of five years longer than couples who did not. It sounds like those are some magical, life-giving kisses! But the correlation of kissing and living longer does not mean the kisses themselves were causing the longer lifespan. Both the kissing and the lifespan increase were likely caused by another factor, like being in a happy marriage or having a job, which might have paid for health insurance. In such questions we have to ask, what is the relevance of the two events—is the one really causing the other, or are they simply correlated?

A second common fallacy of irrelevance is called “ad hominem,” in which the speaker of an argument is attacked instead of the argument itself. For example, a few years ago the Heartland Institute posted a billboard with the mugshot of Ted Kaczynski, the domestic “unabomber” terrorist. Next to his photo, they put in big red text, “I still believe in Global Warming. Do you?” This is a classic “ad hominem” attack;

there is little relevance between Kaczynski supporting the idea of global warming to the potential truth or falsity of global warming itself.

Now that we understand the STAR test, let’s apply it to the Chuck E Cheese pizza conspiracy theory. For “sufficient,” there are a few pictures posted online of suspiciously cut pizzas and the anecdotal evidence of one person online who worked at the store and claims to have witnessed the practice. Is that enough evidence to prove that this is a widespread policy throughout Chuck E Cheese across America? For “typical,” we need to ask if the pictures posted are typical of the way pizzas are cut at Chuck E Cheese restaurants, or whether these are a few worst cases. For “accurate,” can we be sure that these are actually pictures of pizzas from Chuck E Cheese? More importantly, is there any real evidence that these are pictures of recycled pieces of pizza? Finally, for “relevant,” in the YouTube exposé, Shane Dawson devotes several minutes to violent fights caught on camera at Chuck E Cheese restaurants, as well as a few cases of employees wearing the Chuck E Cheese mascot who were drunk. We might ask how these examples are relevant to the claim about recycled pizza.

When we apply the STAR test to the evidence for conspiracy theories, we can gain a stronger sense on how much we should trust the theories themselves. But sometimes both a traditional theory and a conspiracy theory equally explain the evidence. What should we do then?

Occam's Razor Test

Occam’s Razor is a powerful intellectual tool for deciding between two seemingly plausible theories. But first, who was “Occam” and what’s a “razor”? This tool was first credited to William of Occam, who was a Franciscan friar, philosopher, and theologian, who lived in Occam, in South East England in the 1300s. (By the way, he developed his famous theory after receiving a first-rate classical Christian education.) Next, a “razor” in philosophy is a logical tool for eliminating—or “shaving off”—unlikely explanations for a phenomenon.

What, then, is Occam’s Razor? Here is the basic

version: “other things being equal, simpler explanations are generally better than more complex ones.” A famous analogy for this is: “If you hear hoofbeats, think of horses not zebras.” Both horses and zebras are good explanations for hearing the sound of hoofbeats, so which explanation should we believe? All things being equal, horses are much more common than zebras, so the simpler explanation and more likely one to be true is horses. A practical example is the case of having a headache. What might explain that phenomenon? It could be cancer or stroke—both explanations would explain the headache. How terrifying! But what’s the simplest, most likely explanation? It is probably just a little dehydration.

Like the falsifiability test, Occam’s Razor requires a key qualification: the simplest explanation is not always true. Sometimes headaches are indeed caused by cancer; sometimes hoofbeats might mean zebras. But usually, in most cases, the simplest explanation is the right one. But why?

To understand why we should prefer simpler explanations and why they are usually right, we need to understand Occam’s actual razor, which is slightly different from the simpler, common version given above. What William of Occam actually wrote was, when forming an explanation, “do not multiply entities beyond necessity.” That is, the explanation that requires the fewest “entities”—i.e. causes or assumptions—is generally the correct one. Why? William argued that a wise, loving God created an orderly, non-chaotic universe, so he would have created it as simple and straightforward as possible, with the fewest needed causal mechanisms or entities. So, if God created the force of gravity to pull objects down to earth, he wouldn’t have also created a second, redundant mechanism, like little angels who jump on every ball that’s thrown, pushing it down.

A second reason to believe that the best explanations usually have the fewest number of entities is true—aka Occam’s razor—is that history and observation shows us over and over: it works! This is true especially in the sciences: scientists in physics, biology, chemistry have repeatedly applied Occam’s razor to make strong predictions leading to major discoveries. The razor is also used all the time by

doctors to make accurate medical diagnoses.

To make the razor more clear, let's apply it to the question of Leprechauns. These tricky, invisible, magical creatures can be successfully added to pretty much every explanation or theory. For example, imagine coming home and discovering that your beloved flat screen TV has been shattered—and your child is looking immensely guilty. When you ask your child what happened, he replies, "I didn't break the TV. It was a leprechaun!" If you reply that you've never seen a leprechaun in your house, your child might reply that leprechauns are invisible. If you ask why a leprechaun wanted to break your TV, your child might reply that the motives of leprechauns are complex and mysterious. Perhaps you have a trump card: a secret security camera in the TV room. You report to the child that the security video clearly shows the child breaking the TV. Yet the child replies: the leprechaun tampered with the video! The leprechaun theory explains the broken TV just as well as the theory that your child did it. Which should you believe? Clearly not the leprechaun theory, because it requires more entities and more assumptions: for a start, that Leprechauns exist, they are invisible, and for some reason they hate your TV.

Here are a few practical examples of how Occam's Razor can help us decide between competing explanations. If you go outside and find that your car has a flat tire, should you assume that a random nail stuck into the tire wall or that a secret enemy slashed it? Which is the simpler explanation, requiring fewer entities and assumptions? Unless you know you have an enemy, the flat was most likely caused by an unfortunate nail. Next, let's say that you hear a loud sound and see a flash of light outside your bedroom window tonight. Is it an alien spaceship or a firework? The spaceship requires adding the unproven assumption that aliens exist and have spaceships that can visit earth, so it is probably just a firework. Finally, say that you send a text message to a close friend but receive no response for several hours. Are they secretly angry and holding a grudge? Or did their phone battery die? The second theory requires just one assumption (a dead phone); the first requires many

assumptions (you said or did something offensive, your friend is angry about it, your friend holds grudges in this way, etc.).

How does Occam's Razor help us evaluate conspiracy theories? Conspiracy Theories often require complicated webs of assumptions, unproven entities, and causal explanations, compared to a much simpler official explanation. That complexity of explanation does not automatically invalidate conspiracy theories. But in such cases, it should drastically increase our skepticism and need for other evidence.

For example, consider the theory that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were actually an "inside job" perpetrated by the US government. In their book, *American Conspiracy Theories*, political scientists Joseph Uscinski and Joseph Parent evaluate this theory using Occam's Razor. Considering the claim that the real cause of the World Trade Center buildings collapses were not airplanes piloted by terrorist, but carefully set explosive charges, what would such a plot require? First, dozens of agents secretly setting charges throughout the busy buildings completely undetected. Second, the charges would have to be set to blow up the building in a pre-specified location and height, which airplane pilots would have to hit exactly. Third, the two planes' impact and burning fuel could not affect the charges at all, thereby preventing them from exploding an hour after impact. Finally, thousands of people—including the president, the 9/11 Commission, FBI, CIA, NYPD, and all major news organizations—would need to work together to hide explosives, destroy evidence, and mislead the public. As Uscinski and Parent conclude, compared to the official explanation, the conspiracy is fairly complicated, and requires many more assumptions and causal elements, making the theory highly implausible.

Summary & Test Case:

Now that we've learned about these five tests, it's wise to remember that none of them can fully disprove a conspiracy theory. But taken together, they offer strong guidance for whether we should trust certain conspiracy theories or not.

With this in mind, let's use the tests to evaluate one of the oldest recorded conspiracy theories: the theory that Jesus did not actually rise from the dead, but his disciples conspired to secretly steal his body in the night. We see this theory taking shape in Matthew 28:12-15, where the chief priests tell the guards of Jesus' tomb to spread this story.

Let's apply our tests. First, the source test. Both the high priests and Jesus' disciples are heavily biased, which should not surprise us and also does not mean we can discount either group's evidence. It is worth considering, however, that one of the earliest attestations to the Resurrection comes from Paul in his letters, written before the Gospel accounts, and that Paul was initially one of the strongest critics of the idea of the resurrected Jesus. The fact that Paul flipped sides makes his testimony carry more weight.

Second, the time and numbers test. For this conspiracy theory to be true—that the disciples stole Jesus' body and lied about seeing him as resurrected—how many people would have to keep the secret and for how long? We have the main twelve disciples, plus many other early alleged witnesses, including the women who visited the tomb and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Indeed, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul lists the number of witnesses to Jesus' resurrection and claims that Jesus eventually appeared after his death to over five hundred people. And these witnesses continued to proclaim Jesus as resurrected until their deaths. So we are dealing with hundreds of people for decades and decades, which the time and numbers test tells us makes it highly unlikely that they are keeping a conspiratorial secret.

Third, the falsifiability test. Is this conspiracy theory falsifiable? Well, yes, the resurrected Jesus could—and of course one day will—physically appear before those who believe in this conspiracy. So the theory passes the falsifiability test. Before moving on from this test, though, it might be worth noting that Christianity is a falsifiable religion. In particular, Paul clearly makes the faith falsifiable in 1 Corinthians 15, where he hangs the whole faith on the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus. As he writes in verse 17, "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." Indeed, I know

of no other religion that can pass the test of falsifiability.

Fourth, the STAR test. The testimony of four guards may be typical and not cherry picked, but it does not seem very sufficient to prove that Jesus's body was stolen. Considering the accuracy of their testimony, we might wonder how they could know what happened if they were asleep at the time. Or if they were not asleep, how were they—trained soldiers with weapons and armor—overcome by a small group of mostly unarmed young men? Finally, is their testimony relevant? Here we must answer a clear "yes." But overall, the STAR test should cast some strong doubt over the conspiracy theory.

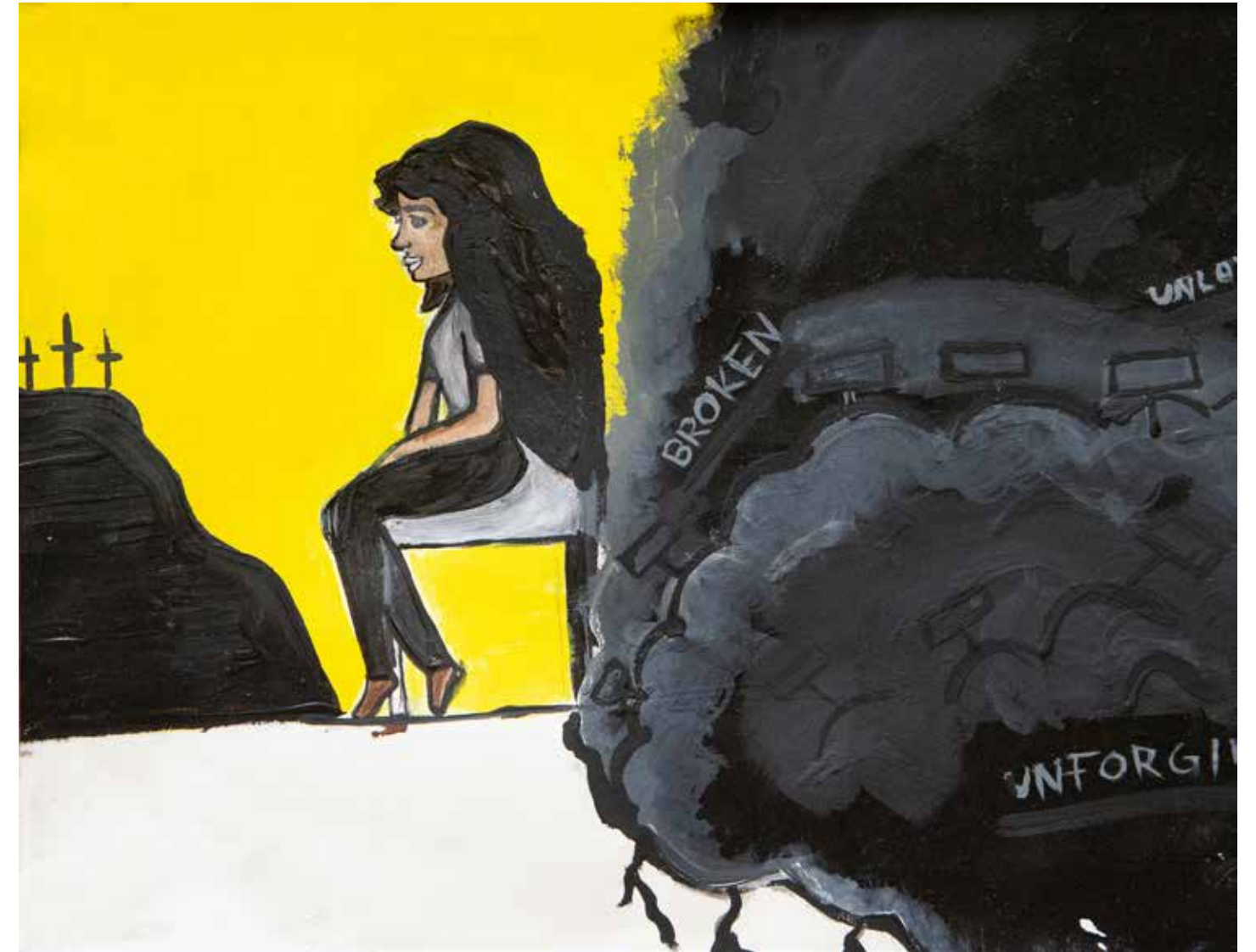
Last of all, Occam's Razor. Which theory is the simpler explanation? In the first theory, the disciples hatched a plot to pretend Jesus was still alive after seeing him be captured, tortured, and die a shameful death, with his promises of being the Messiah and the son of God all proven false. They then came out of hiding, risked the penalty for grave robbing—which would have been death—and rolled the heavy gravestone away. They managed this while all four Roman guards remained sleeping: skilled, well-trained guards, who knew that the penalty for sleeping while on watch duty was also death. The guards then somehow knew that the disciples stole the body, but decided not to round up the disciples for punishment. Finally, the disciples managed to inspire hundreds of people to lie and say that they had seen Jesus, including their enemy Paul—and then endure persecutions, torture, and horrific martyrdoms while keeping the secret. Not one of them ever recanted. Is it simpler to believe all that, or that Jesus actually rose from the dead?

Today, it is becoming harder to tell conspiracy fact from fiction. But, I hope that the principles presented here can help you determine where the truth lies. Now more than ever, we need to hold fast to the instructions given to us in 1 Peter 1:13: "prepare your minds for action, be sober-minded, and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Shea Ramquist, *Rhetoric School Humanities, Senior Thesis Coordinator, Head of Patrick House, Trinity U Coordinator*



Haley Bloomfield
11th Grade
Clay
Rhetoric Art - Mrs. Bond



Maria Cherry
10th Grade
Acrylic
Rhetoric Art - Mrs. Bond

Vision Night Address

Eli Miller

Thank you for having me back. It's always encouraging to return to a community of such faith and strength, especially in the face of our pandemic. I had a lot to think about when preparing for this evening, and it is a real honor and privilege to speak to you all, so I hope you'll forgive me for keeping it as concise as I could manage.

In my opinion, the most difficult moment of being a student at Trinity was the very last. When my peers and I crossed that stage on graduation night, we had never been challenged, but were now being sent hurtling towards a new life, a new world, and new difficulties. While I'm sure current Trinity students would assure me that they are indeed being challenged, they don't have to do their own laundry. But seriously, the academic, social, and spiritual challenges that arise from the transition into college are real, and can strike some students deeply. As far as classes go, Trinity was the best preparation I could have gotten. The high volume of dual-credit and AP courses were intense enough that some lower division courses are just too easy now. While getting that degree is by no means automatic, dual-credit classes especially have gotten me there sooner. Many of my peers graduated

with an associate's degree in hand, and I myself completed more than a year's worth of credits during high school. Academic challenges still exist, but I have felt prepared and confident in meeting them, thanks very much to my teachers at Trinity. When I first made it to UC Davis, I knew no one, didn't have communities, and was in an entirely new environment. It took direct action and real effort to fix all that. But by being proactive, I quickly found good friends, clubs, and even a church. Since then I have only excelled, much to the credit of the Lord and His grace, and the self-confidence I learned here at Trinity. Really, all of the values taught during my time here have served me well in college. Though they can sometimes be difficult to uphold, I have done my best to retain wisdom, virtue, purpose, and courage, and they have not let me down. That basis, that strong foundation, was something given to me by the Trinity faculty. The Trinity faculty and administration truly poured into me their care, consideration, and passion; discipling us, guiding us, and teaching us the eternal surety of God and Scripture. Were it not for the formative influence of such righteous minds as Dr. Phillips, Dr. Selby, Dr. Ingle, and

countless more, I might very well find myself lost, confused, and drifting further from the Lord each day, as too many Christian students are today.

That said, going to a secular university can challenge many, especially Christians. Though certainly to a better degree, even Christian universities cannot compare to high school when it comes to providing their students the same shelter and protection from that earthly world out there which gnaws at our morals and tempts our fool hearts. College life offers young adults greater freedom than they have ever tasted before, and some are overwhelmed. But parents, take heart, the Trinity faculty are invested in the faith and spiritual wellbeing of their students, your children. They will teach, train, and empower them to leave this place and suffer no doubt, but remain strong and boldly Christian in our increasingly secular culture, in college and beyond.

Besides the spiritual, college life also presents students with an academic challenge. For myself, that is pursuing a major and minor at an accelerated track in order to begin graduate studies that much sooner. A lot of fun, I know. The only reason I'm

even capable of engaging in classes and conversations multiple years ahead of other students my age is because of Trinity. Not only did the rigors and difficulties of a college preparatory workload prepare me for university classes and topics, but the classes I took at Trinity were worth college credit. Many from my graduating class completed a full associate's degree at Trinity, and even I will be a first-year junior in the spring. That especially has been helpful for me, as it saves me money on tuition and gets me closer to a graduate program, and eventually a career. And academically, the work ethic and focus I learned at Trinity have helped me succeed in classes purported to be far more difficult and time-consuming than I have found them. While some of my peers were panicking during finals week, faced by multiple exams in addition to pages and pages of essays, all due at once; I was calm, knowing that nothing - and I mean nothing - can compare to the terror of having to submit a 40-page thesis to the audit of Mr. Weichbrodt in order to graduate. But seriously, Trinity gave me skills in research, study, and focus which have made a heavy college workload lighter than junior year.

When I sat down for my first college history class, we began at the time when the first hominids crawled from the sea and slowly transformed into the humans we now are. What I'm talking about is evolution and secular education. Though these things can often seem like the boogeyman for Christian students going into college, I have a message that is more

hopeful. Though a college education is not inherently Christian like at Trinity, neither is it anti-Christian. I personally have not encountered any seething professors ready to ban Christians from their classes. What I have experienced is Christianity in the scholarly sense, presented alongside all other religions as equals. Being a history major, religion is often a neutral topic, and everyone understands that, no matter our beliefs, we are here to collaborate and learn in an academic environment free from obstacles. Sure, my classes all have evolution as the presumed theory for the origin of mankind, but thanks to the involvement of Dr. Phillips in my education, it can't bother me. Once again, it may be my own personal experience and university, but there are very few direct challenges to my faith. Rather, everyone accepts everything. When I sit down in a room of 500 peers to learn about science or history or language, my Christianity comes up just as often as the atheism, Islam, Buddhism, etc. of my peers. My classmates care far less about my religion, and far more about the group project we have due next week. In fact, rather than religion being a divide, the diversity of my classes leads to richer thought and discourse. When I sit down to discuss Russian history, it is not to battle Lenin, Marx, and Stalin, but to learn about another place, another time, another world outside of my own, so that by becoming well-rounded and well-read, I may better understand and overcome the true challenges to my faith and lifestyle which are yet to come. As Aristotle

wrote, "It is the mark of an educated mind to entertain a thought without accepting it." Though what I describe may sound difficult, and not every college experience is the same, I can assure you that I continue to thrive academically, socially, and spiritually. In 2021, Forbes ranked UC Davis as the #4 public university in the nation. While it is true that I could have instead gone to a Christian college, I feel confident that Davis is the right place for me, and Trinity has given me the strength to fear no evil which may come my way. That said, I encourage you, parents, not to fear for your child's soul should they leave Trinity for a secular university, the Lord shall not forsake them, as they should not forsake the Lord.

As I mentioned before, Trinity's education not only prepares students for a college workload, but directly contributes to their degree, now more than ever with the increasing number of AP and dual-credit courses offered here. At graduation, many of my peers left with an associate's degree already completed. I myself will be a first-year junior come springtime, and will be using all that time and money saved to pursue graduate education that much sooner. To close, I will remind you of Joshua 1:9. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." The Lord shall be with these students now, and forever. Amen.

Eli Miller, Class of '21, freshman at UC Davis majoring in History.

Rhetoric School Oratory Contest

Cultivating Courage

by Lily Caddow

Courage is often perceived as an instinct.

That at some moment you will be thrown into a test of tensity and determine whether you are a lionheart or faint of heart. It is thought that courage is a consequence of nature, when rather courage is cultivated by habit, a Product of your own discipline. Though to acquire this discipline is no easy feat.

To prepare for such a tenacious test one must take it upon themselves to stencil on the back of their eyelids the calligraphy of courageous lives. They observe, study, and imitate, that the intrepid actions of their influences might become their own.

But these students of the gallant game are not idle in their studies rather they practice. They lie not in wait for that opportune moment but seek out the very things which have caused them to tremble. This way when a man or woman of valor is required they may step into the arena having already cultivated courage as a custom.

I, myself, have stood witness to such a test and such gallant students. In fact our

very being here tonight is the product of a stubborn but excellent resolve.

Little do we know the toll it has taken to simply open the doors of our school, to as you walk down our halls, peer inside classrooms resounding with laughter and witness the love of learning abound once again.

And there is one woman in particular, by merit of being her daughter, I have had the honor to observe very closely.

And at times I neglected to notice the burden she carried, the weight of eyes ever watching bearing ceaselessly into her back, and the subtle strength to still smile despite the relentless scrutiny ever in pursuit.

Like the man in the arena, though her face is marred by dust and sweat, today we stand victorious and strive valiantly nonetheless.

My mother is a student of the gallant game. She has followed the instructions of that most persevering Paul and “surrounded herself with a great cloud of witnesses”.

How many mornings while I still lie buried under covers, she lies buried

beneath biographies of Bonhoeffer and Churchill?

How many nights has her husband, removed half-fallen glasses from weary eyes and note-ridden chapters of Esther from diligent palms?

She has analyzed the lives of lionhearts and so too developed a roaring spirit herself.

For it is pivotal in cultivating courage, to be ever so particular of who enters your mind. Every admirable action, every courageous conviction, every thought is taken captive, bestowing purpose and confidence in the spirit. Soon, they seize in anticipation that time of liberation, finally, the opportune moment, the call to action has arrived!

And I recount the times I’ve sworn I see Theodore Roosevelt perched on her shoulder as she quotes him again and again, “It is not the critic who counts! Not the spectators who know neither victory nor defeat. Be the man in the arena!”

Or in simpler terms, “do it afraid.”

So, when I feel that fatal face of fear peering over my shoulder when my spirit threatens to grow cold under his gaze,

I shut my eyes, and there, the calligraphy of her courage.

Her familiar phrases calm the chaos of my mind And suddenly I find comfort in this great cloud of witnesses

“Do it afraid!” she says. Be the man in the arena, the doer of deeds.

Not, “Be the man who does not fail, the one who does not err.”

Rather be the one who if he falls, falls from the greatest height for he was attempting something spectacular.

You will know defeat, but victory shall be even sweeter. Then as players in this gallant game, let us be the men whose faces are bruised, bloodied.

Cultivate the discipline to never be a spectator.

Never the critic who judges another’s triumph despite his never tasting it.

The coward, who in shrinking from defeat has sacrificed success.

In this test of tenacity, a good student denies not the valor of the past, but in surrounding himself with a great cloud of witnesses, takes every thought captive, that acts of the courageous may become his own.

And he will “do it afraid.”

Together let us cultivate a culture, not of cold and timid souls, of cowards who in their lives shall die a thousand times, for every day they fall fatal to fear.

We shall cultivate a culture of courageous men and women. They shall taste of death, but only once, and that sweet taste of victory is what shall linger on their lips.

Lily Caddow, junior, Trinity Classical Academy

The SerpentGianna Granger
11th Grade

A serpent slithers through the grass,

Up the tree, to she at last.

Scheming to spin a slippery speech,

To cause her for God no more to seek;

Add stress, add strain, to push and see fall,

But as he recoils, reflects, withdraws,

Is that regret, at the end of it all?

Had he not deemed it too late, when he sealed his own fate,

Could he too be saved, from his sin, from his hate?

Be him hell or human at the core,

While he has power, has God not more?

Nevertheless, he saw it best

To harden his heart and see his new start;

To bask in his sin, to soak in his spite.

Confusing his prison for warm, sweet meadows,

He creeps, he crawls, always hidden in shadows.

Ravenous, hungry, empty, numb,

Running, becoming slowly undone,

And indulging and spitting the seeds at the sun.

But if, on his day, he turns back to repent,

It may be that our Lord would forgive the serpent.

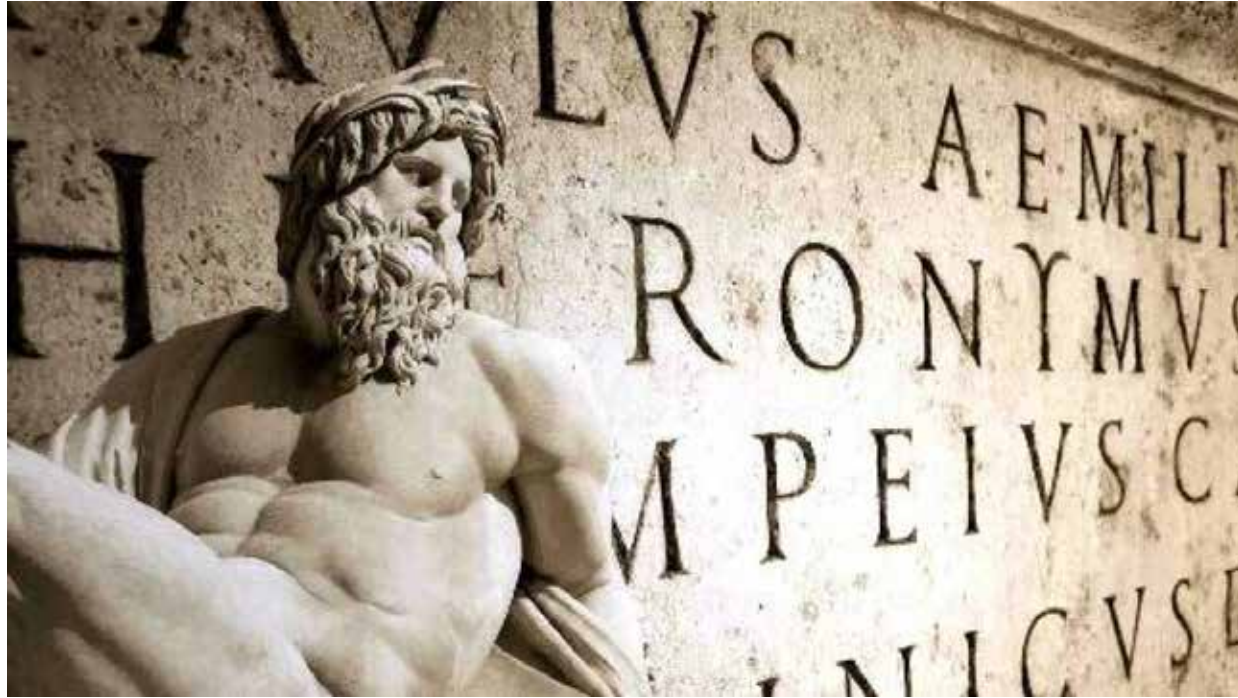
Anna Heitmann
8th Grade
Ink
Logic Art - Mrs. Stimson



Gianna Granger
11th Grade
Acrylic
Rhetoric Art - Mrs. Bond



Christopher Brown
8th Grade
Ink
Logic Art - Mrs. Stimson



Latin Myths and Facts

Why Study Latin? Isn't it a Dead Language

by Lucy Banduk

TRINITY U SPEAKER SERIES, MARCH 7, 2022

I LOVE LANGUAGES; EVERYONE KNOWS THAT. I THINK IT all started with my dad who, I guess because he was a child of two teachers, a grammar school teacher and a history and geography teacher, acquired an interest for geography, history, and languages; and with my mom who was a child of Italian immigrants in Brazil, so my brother and I grew up learning words in Italian and learning about countries and their capitals. My dad loved to teach us that. To this day, I love geography, maps, knowing where countries are located and what their capitals are. Later, I started learning English unofficially with my dad, my first English teacher, who had to learn English because he worked at an American company in Brazil as a chemist. He taught my

brother and me words, phrases, sentences. Actually, one of the first sentences I learned from him in English was “God be with you” when he said it every night when we went to bed, and what a wonderful first sentence to learn in another language, isn't it? “God be with you.”

So, I think I would like to start talking about languages and Latin by talking about God; God is always a good place to start anything anyway. We learn a lot about language in the Bible. Language has always existed. We see this in Genesis 1:3 with the sentence “And God said,” and also when God gave Adam language when He brought the animals to Adam to see what Adam would name them. God gave Adam the gift of language and the power to name things. This power to speak, to name things confirms our divine creation and God's love for us, the gift of language from

God to us, the gift that language is, and the confirmation, therefore, that we are all indeed “*imago dei*”(image of God). We learn that people understood each other because they had one language. In chapters 1, 8 and 9, we also learn that God wanted the descendants of Adam and Eve and later the descendants of Noah to be fruitful, to increase in number, and to fill the earth. However, unfortunately, because people wanted to make a name for themselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth, they built the Tower of Babel and as a consequence, God separated them by confusing their language. God separated us by means of language; having different languages was a punishment, a curse. The beautiful thing though is that God united us back again, by means of language, in the New Testament in Acts 2. When the Holy Spirit came down, people from different places were speaking different languages and yet, they understood each other. We were allowed to understand each other once again. Mr. Fudge says that “Pentecost is the anti-Babel;” Mr. Richardson says that “God restored us from the Tower of Babel. He broke the curse.”

Now, let's go back to languages in general. Because languages are definitely a huge part of our humanity and languages evolve and change according to culture, time, geography, and politics, they truly form us. As human beings who use language every day, I really believe we ought to pay more attention to languages. Language can be used to calm, to hurt, to communicate, to declare love, to declare war, to make us laugh, to make us cry, to clarify, to confuse, to name things, people, and places. Since we are able to learn to speak different languages and are able to understand each other and each other's cultures, in order to obey the Great Commission in Matthew 28 to go and make disciples of all nations, it becomes imperative that we study, admire, respect, and learn other languages.

Imagine a number for a second; 31,000. That is the number of languages that have existed in the world. God created all these languages and everything that entails, i.e., different letters or symbols, words, grammar, pronunciations, accents, rhythm, cadence. God clearly likes different languages. I find this to be incredible, wonderful,

tiring, and frightening. That is a lot of languages! I guess we love languages, too because apparently this number, around 6,500 nowadays, is not enough for some people. Really! As if we don't have enough languages indeed, people keep inventing more languages. Like Klingon and Vulcan in “Star Trek” and Dothraki and Valyrian in “Game of Thrones.” JRR Tolkien created around 15 languages in his books. Duolingo teaches two fictional languages- Valyrian and Vulcan. It's crazy. As we can see, languages, doubtless, have always been a crucial part of who we are. So, ladies and gentleman, that is why we are here this evening. We are here to discuss languages in general and we are here to talk about Latin specifically. Let's do it.

As a student and teacher of languages, people are often a little shocked and a little amazed when I tell them that I teach Latin; I am frequently asked why, the reason for it, “Isn't it a dead language? Isn't it somewhat useless in today's world? Isn't it very, very difficult?” These are actually wonderful, valid questions that must be considered and answered to the best of our ability. I would like to try to answer these questions by focusing on three myths or misconceptions and facts about Latin. Isn't it difficult? Is it useful in today's world? Why do we study so much grammar?

Questions # 1. “Isn't it difficult?” My answer is, compared to what other language? Compared to our native language, yes, due to the fact that we learned our native language naturally from our parents. However, having grown up speaking Portuguese, having studied Latin, a little bit of German, a little bit of Spanish, a lot of English, and currently studying Italian, I can say with confidence that Latin is no more difficult than these languages. I actually think that German is more difficult. In fact, English was an easy language to learn. The grammar is basic and logical. Pronunciation and spelling are difficult in English though, true, no doubt, because English is not a phonetic language, spelling doesn't always make sense. Think, for instance, about the different pronunciations of the combination “ough.” Everyone, please, I'm gonna need your help on this. Can you please pronounce the word tough, dough, bough, thought, through? Same spelling and five different

pronunciations! Latin pronunciation, on the other hand, is easier because Latin is a phonetic language, that is, the pronunciation is not different from the spelling, like Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, and even Hawaiian. I guess the conclusion is that Latin is just like any other language. And just any other language, some things are difficult and some things are easy. Therefore, saying that Latin is so very difficult and intimidating is really just a misconception.

Question #2. “Is it useful in today’s world?” Isn’t it a dead language? Well, truly, Latin is alive and well in today’s world in medicine, in anatomy, in Chemistry in the periodic table, in legal terms in Law, in quotes in books, in the scientific names of animals and plants, in the so called “big words” in English, in various expressions we all use like for example, per diem, per se, caveat, am/pm, status, intel, the words plus and minus, persona non grata, habeas corpus, affidavit, per capita, quid pro quo, in vitro, post mortem, postpartum, et cetera, circa, modus operandi (MO), in loco parentis, malum in se, malum prohibitum, if you have seen Legally Blonde, carpe diem, if you have seen Dead Poets Society, in vino veritas, if you have seen Tombstone, Latin is spoken in academia, the ATM machines in the Vatican offer Latin as an option, and finally, Latin is alive in its children, what we call the Romance languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, and even in the wild child French. Latin teaches students not to be afraid of words. One of the things students learn in Latin class is to break a big word apart and that helps them be able to decipher what the word means because of Latin and its prefixes and suffixes. So, when students study Latin, they improve and increase their vocabulary in English and they acquire a deeper understanding of the etymology of words. Furthermore, Latin is an important part of the Western civilization through the Roman Empire, its authors, like Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Julius Caesar, Marcus Aurelius, and its history. Three Romance languages are spoken in the Americas: Portuguese, French, and Spanish. When we learn all this, we acquire a better appreciation and thankfulness to Latin. Hence, for all the reasons above, we are able to start

answering, factually, “No, Latin is not a dead language, no, it is not useless in today’s world, and frankly, why don’t more schools teach it? These are also wonderful, valid questions we ought to be asking.

Question #3. “Why so much grammar?” Yes, why? Well, in Latin class, without a doubt, students learn a lot of grammar due to the fact that Latin is an inflected language, i.e, words have different endings according to how they are used in a sentence, which is very different from English. By studying so much grammar in Latin, without always realizing, students learn English grammar as well, and so, the two languages, as it happens, complement and help each other. When students and I translate different stories, passages from the Bible, Virgil’s Aeneid and Caesar’s Gallic War, for example, we often say things like, “Oh, this sounds better in English, or oh, this is awkward in English, or this passage is so beautiful in Latin, or we should use this word instead of that word, and things like that. Our students are learning to be accurate, knowledgeable, incredible translators. In terms of the Aeneid and The Gallic War, our 10th and 11th graders not only are able to work with these two books in original Latin but they are also able to compare everything about the language and the grammar of both texts (poetry and prose), and discuss which author (Virgil or Julius Caesar) they prefer to translate and why. It is beautiful, crazy sometimes, and impressive. I constantly actually see my students thinking; they are not merely memorizing information, they are truly thinking about what words to choose and what the best translation is. It is serious, solid, deep thinking in another language. Students understand that to translate a text well, one must choose the best words, must keep the grammar intact as much as possible, and must make the English sound beautiful, coherent, and accurate. It is not just saying, “Oh, this means this; that is good enough!” Students understand that there is a need to translate a text with excellence. There are many translations out there, but not all of them are good. It is embarrassing for the translator and sad for the text. One of the results is that Latin students become better English writers and thinkers and they understand English grammar more because of Latin.

It is somewhat difficult to study the grammar of our native language because it does feel a little artificial and unnecessary. We already speak it, it is our native language, so why do we need to study grammar? Well, by studying grammar and sentence structure in another language, especially in an organized, inflected language such as Latin, again, students see and understand subject nouns, direct objects, and clauses more clearly or differently, so they end up studying English grammar by studying Latin. They also understand why we need to study grammar. We acquire more control of language, sentence structure, vocabulary, ideas, and how to convey them better, more clearly, and more beautifully.

Austin Hoffman, a classical educator argues in one of his essays, “Why Schools Must Have a Latin Reading Program” that (quote) “Pragmatism has gutted education of the classical tradition. Utility cannot be the universal standard of value,” (end quote), therefore, if we want our children to become adults having virtue, wisdom, purpose, and courage in life, we have to teach them beautiful, good, true, and hard things and not teach things just because they are pragmatic and utilitarian. They should be studying languages like Latin and Greek. For all these reasons, the answer to “Why so much grammar” is that studying Latin grammar is good, important, and useful. Eventually in college or as needed in life, students will study modern languages, but the foundation that Latin gives them will be there and it will be priceless.

Furthermore, Latin, as the mother language of the Romance languages, gives us an abundance of words called derivatives in other languages. It is believed that around 50% of the words in English come from Latin. That is a big number. For example, the word “love” in Latin is “amor.” In Portuguese and in Spanish, it is “amor,” in Italian it is “amore,” in French, it is “amour.” From one word, we get variations of it in four other languages. The word “day” in Latin is “dies.” In Spanish, it is “dias,” in Portuguese, the “d” became a “dj,” “dia,” in Italian, the “dj” sound happens again, “giorno,” in French, the “dj” became a “j,” “jour.” All these words can be seen as variations, evolutions, or even

distortions of the original word “dies” in Latin and that is OK; that is how languages evolve and change. However, look at how we have the same word, basically, in 4 different languages again. The more one studies Latin, the more one starts to improve and increase one’s vocabulary, as I said earlier, the more one starts to understand the true meaning of words, and the more one starts seeing connections among different languages. It is the “aha” moment. And that is why eventually, as we know, it is neither impossible nor so very difficult for someone to speak several languages.

Remember, words change as they evolve, but the root of the word is there. Let’s come up with a few examples.

1. “porto” means to carry, so something that can be carried is portable, a person who carries things for you is a porter ... , ships stop at a port ..., to carry things into a country is to import and to carry out of a country is to export. See? From one word, “porto,” look at how many words we get from it!

2. “credo” means to believe, so if I believe you are going to pay back something you have borrowed, you have credit, a religious belief is a creed, if I am easily inclined to believe in something I am credulous, full of belief, if you believe in me, I am credible, something I cannot believe in is incredible.

3. “labor” means work, so working together is to collaborate, a woman having a baby is working, she is in labor something that takes a lot of work is laborious, scientists work in a laboratory.

4. “astrum” means star and “nauta” sailor. Astrum and nauta, so an astronaut is a sailor of the stars. Isn’t it a beautiful word?

5. “pati” mean to suffer, so when you suffer through something, you have, or you should have patience. When couples have patience together, when they suffer well together, they are considered to be compatible (It is actually a very romantic word). A couple is to have patience and suffer well together through life.

6. “pedis” means foot, so you put a statue on a pedestal, when you walk on foot, you are a pedestrian, you get your feet done, pedicure, an insect that has 100 feet is a centipede,

on a bicycle, you put your foot on the pedal.

7. "Fatuus" means stupid, and "in" means in, so if we are so much in love with something or someone to the point that we can't think clearly and have become a little stupid about it, we are infatuated. A fatuous person is a foolish person. Oh dear, you just learned how to insult someone in Latin.

8. "Cras" means tomorrow, and "pro" means ahead, forward, so when you leave something for tomorrow, for later, you procrastinate.

Remember, around 50% of the words in English come from Latin. We could be here and do this all night, finding English derivatives for words in Latin. See, now you can say that you came, you saw, and you spoke Latin.

Dr. Christopher Perrin, a classical author, educator, scholar of Latin and Greek, once made an interesting comparison between studying languages and traveling abroad. He said that when we travel abroad we learn about other customs, foods, landscapes, likes, dislikes, etc., and by doing that, we learn about our own customs, foods, landscapes, likes, dislikes, etc. by comparing things both intentionally and unintentionally. We learn and hopefully become better human beings because of it. So, when we "travel" to other languages, because we have to learn new pronunciations, new words, new grammar, sometimes an entirely new way of writing, we learn all these things about English as well as I said earlier; things that maybe we would never think about, or care about otherwise at all. Therefore, studying other languages is not simply a school requirement; it truly develops our understanding of complex ideas, sounds, systems, and ways of thinking.

Because Latin was very important for so long it is the mother of the Romance languages, it gives 50% of the words in English, it is the language of the sciences, and it is an inflected language, studying Latin is crucial and essential in the upbringing and education of a child.

As an illustration, I would like to read a few lines from the Aeneid in Latin for you to get a taste of what Latin sounds like. I will read it in Latin first and then in English.

It is a passage from book 2 when, during the Trojan War, Laocoön, a Trojan priest, is trying to warn the Trojans not to bring the fatal horse inside the city of Troy.

Primus ibi ante omnes magna comitante caterva
 Laocoön ardens summa decurrit ab arce et procul
 O miseri, quae tanta insania cives?
 Creditis avectos hostes?
 Aut ulla putatis dona carere dolis Danaum?
 Sic notus Ulixes?
 Aut hoc inclusi ligno occultantur Achivi
 Aut haec in nostros fabricata est machina muros,
 Inspectura domos venturaque desuper urbi,
 Aut aliquis latet error; equo ne credite, Teucri.
 Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

Laocoön, accompanied by a large crowd, ran down from the highest citadel, and from afar shouts:

Oh miserable ones, why so much insanity, citizens?
 Do you believe the enemy has been carried away?
 Or do you all think that any gifts from the Greeks are free from deceit?
 What about the notorious Uliesses?
 Either enclosed in this wood the Greeks are hidden,
 Or this machine was made for our walls, for the purpose of looking into our homes and for coming into our city from above,
 Or another deceit lurks; don't trust the horse, Trojans.
 Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks, even the ones bearing gifts.

Lastly, from "duco, ducere" which means "to lead" and "e/ex" which means "out," we get the word "education" meaning "leading out," and that is what we are doing as parents and teachers. We are leading our children out into the world. Let's prepare them well by teaching them some Latin.

Lucy Banduk, Rhetoric School Latin Faculty

Anjolie Galeston
 6th Grade
 Watercolor
 Grammar Art - Mrs. Stimson



Lincoln Tomlinson
 1st Grade
 Pastel
 Grammar Art - Mrs. Stimson

Friendship

Canon Yoo
9th Grade

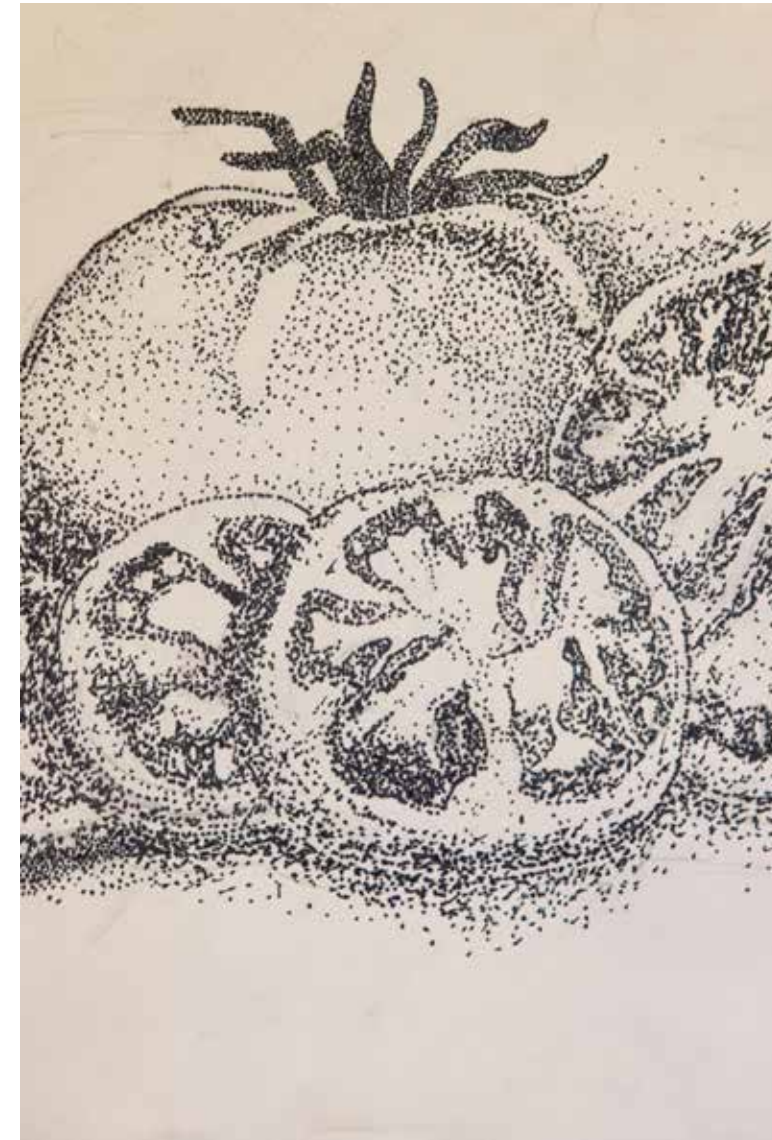
A true friend is a valuable part of someone's life. A real friend must have certain character qualities in order to be a true friend. The most important qualities of a true friend are loyalty, as a friend will never betray another; knowing how to reciprocate, since a friend should not only receive but give; and light-heartedness, because an amiable friend who values humor and levity brings joy and fun to the friendship. A true friend possesses these qualities.

Loyalty is a crucial attribute of a genuine friend. A loyal friend does not betray another, nor does he abandon the other. If a friend falls on hard times, it is the duty of a true and loyal friend to aid his companion. Faithful friends do not backstab one another, which implies that they do not gossip about each other, steal from each other, or harm one another. Loyalty is an essential part of a strong and healthy relationship.

Another important trait of an authentic friend is knowing how to reciprocate. An upright friend is not self-centered; he provides loyalty and kindness to his friends while also receiving those things from them. He does not constantly burden others with his own problems, nor does he repeatedly expect his friend to do him favors. Rather, he exhibits independence and consideration of how his actions might impact others. A steadfast friend thinks of ways to serve others and not just how others can help him.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a worthy friend is light-heartedness. A friend who is lighthearted is not easily offended and is able to take a joke. If one friend were to tease another, the other friend would not get angry or hurt by it. A sign of real friendship is when friends can laugh together, trust one another, and not be insulted. Truly, light-heartedness ensures not only a tight friendship, but also a merry one.

Because friendship is essential, a friend must have the core attributes of loyalty, reciprocity, and light-heartedness. Loyalty is a crucial part of a pleasurable companionship, as honest friends will protect one another. Knowing how to reciprocate is a trait of a supportive, kind, and giving friend. Additionally, light-heartedness ensures a pleasurable friendship, as it promotes two-sided humor and joy between companions. These three qualities are the cornerstone of an enjoyable, edifying, and enduring friendship.



Anna Heitmann
8th Grade
Ink

Logic Art - Mrs. Stimson

The Senior Thesis

The senior thesis is the culminating work of Trinity's Humanities program. It is a summative and integrative project that requires students to use the rhetorical skills developed at all phases of their learning at Trinity to develop a thoughtful and persuasive argument on a chosen topic. Their thesis and topic must be things of depth and significance about which Christians can reasonably disagree. It is intended to demonstrate the students' rhetorical skills that have been trained throughout their Trinity career, and the ability to use the ideas and arguments discussed and evaluated throughout their studies.

The Fault In Our Starships: Why Christians Should Not Support Efforts To Colonize Other Planets

Amy Dever



Space, the final frontier. Long ago in a galaxy far far away. These words bring to mind space battles, futuristic societies with advanced technology, otherworldly planets, and multiple sun setting over the horizon. I watched these as a child, enraptured by the idea of zooming through hyperspace and waking up on an entirely new

planet. Even past childhood, these ideas excite our imaginations and endlessly intrigue us. Humanity has, for ages, been enthralled with astronomy· scientists, philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, scholars, artists, even children. In the Old Testament, writers lauded the stars and the heavens, before much was even known about the planets. We can see these heavenly bodies more clearly now than before, but our curiosity has not diminished.

We know that we are limited by our current technology. We cannot yet travel to opposite ends of the galaxy through hyperspace, but it has not stopped us from yearning to attain that future. Many theorize that in perhaps a single generation humanity could become an interplanetary species. We see movies like *The Martian*, people wearing “occupy Mars” t-shirts, and

test launches for the rockets meant to get us there. So should we forge ahead into the unknown to find our purpose and our place? Is it time that we conquer the final frontier? Or perhaps, is it time that we boldly choose to stay home?

As a child I loved the idea of life on another planet. I did not realize just how much this life would cost physically, mentally, spiritually, and morally. Although it is good to explore God's creation in space, Christians should not support efforts to colonize other planets for four specific reasons. First, colonizing another planet would be harmful to us physically and mentally. “It's all fun and games until someone loses an eye,” my mom used to say when my siblings and I were playing too rough or doing something dangerous. It's all fun and games until we lose focus on our purpose and our responsibility.

We want to go explore the toxic atmosphere on other planets, ignoring the danger it poses physically, mentally, and spiritually. Studies done on potential Mars colony camp designs have proven that environment leaves participants with long-term anxiety, depression, insomnia, fatigue, cognitive impairment, and emotional instability. Psychologists at the Johnson Space Center say that the radiation colonists would be exposed to is enough to negatively impact brain structure and function of the central nervous system. Second is the spiritual harm caused by the desire to colonize other planets. Many are driven by fear of a destroyed future. Fear manipulates so much of our lives. But fear of the future should not be building a home on the red surface of our hearts. God instructs us not to fear, but to trust in him. Romans 8:24 says, “For this is the hope of our salvation. But hope means that we must trust and wait for what is still unseen.”

In an attempt to cover up humanity's fear of extinction, some argue that it is fun, adventurous, or a result of our natural instinct to expand—to become greater than we are. Let's face it, humanity tends toward what we call hubris· a pride that grows so great, it also ensures our downfall. In pursuit of creating a world for ourselves on another planet, we put ourselves and all of humanity at great risk of being overtaken by this pride. As Christians, we need to be humble so that we can accept God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth.

Colonizing another planet, though, does harm to more than just ourselves. C.S. Lewis, in discussing potential pioneers to another planet wrote this: “Our ambassadors to new worlds will be the needy and greedy adventurer or the ruthless technical expert. They will do as their kind has always done.” The only rules regarding the use of space are from the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, signed by 130 countries, which states that outer space is a domain to be used for the benefit of all mankind,

God has gifted our world with brilliant minds, strong wills, and a beautiful home.

preserved for peaceful purposes, and not to be used for the transporting of nuclear weapons. Elon Musk and other influential figures are now planning or financing efforts to colonize Mars and it raises a controversy. Is it possible to colonize another planet without exploiting, damaging, or polluting it?

One method being actively considered for making Mars more habitable is to use nuclear weapons on the planet's ice caps to release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to create a greenhouse effect similar to Earth's atmosphere. Bruce Gagnon, current coordinator for The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space estimates that it would take approximately 10,000 nuclear bombs to accomplish this. To do so much

damage from the moment we arrive is no small matter, but put in another way, the potential harm done to ourselves or another planet are small matters when we compare them to our need to be obedient to the creator of the universe.

God has gifted our world with brilliant minds, strong wills, and a beautiful home. A home wherein we can breathe, find sustenance, and enjoy the natural beauty of forests, oceans, and animals. God's word instructs us to be good stewards of this Earth. The resources intended for colonization go far in repairing the damage that our sin has done to this Earth. We can see beauty and God's goodness everywhere we look, including outer space. It is an exciting thing to imagine—to send one of our own kind to a place that has always been visible to our naked eye only as a bright dot among the stars.

It is easy to see why Christians can get caught up in this excitement, but instead of rushing off to colonize other planets, we should continue to pursue understanding of God's universe through exploration. We may keep our eyes on the stars, explore and enjoy the beauty of the universe God has created, but let us keep our feet firmly planted, so that we may take care of our home as he has called us to do.

Amy Dever is a graduate of Trinity Classical Academy Class of 2022, and will attend Gordon College and major in Linguistics.

Senior Thesis

My Big Fat Interfaith Wedding: Why Christian Parents Should Not Forbid Interfaith Marriages

Danielle Quayyum



Monica was a joyful, Catholic woman. Her husband, Patrick, however, was a nonbeliever. Despite the religious difference, Monica hoped for a happy, loving marriage. She and Patrick raised three children—two sons and one daughter. But, Monica and Patrick didn't always agree on what was best for their children. Monica wanted their children baptized, but Patrick refused. As a result, one of Monica's sons became a sinful nonbeliever. This pained Monica. She wondered, should she have even married Patrick in the first place?

The Bible speaks several times about religious intermarriage. In the Old Testament, Moses and Esther had intermarriages. Even with non-Jewish spouses, Moses and Esther fixed their eyes on the Lord to serve Him. But not all Old Testament intermarriages followed this pattern. When the Israelites intermarried with the surrounding tribes who worshipped false gods, the Israelites sinned and suffered. In Deuteronomy 7:3, God commands the Israelites, "You shall not intermarry with them,... for they would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods." Another verse that seems to discourage interfaith marriage is 2 Corinthians 6:14. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." From these verses, it appears that Scripture forbids interfaith marriage. So, if a Christian parent has a daughter like Monica who wants to marry a nonbeliever, what should they do? Should Christian parents prohibit interfaith marriages?

Although interfaith couples will

face many challenges, I argue that faithful Christian parents should not forbid their children from interfaith marriages because Scripture actually does not forbid this practice and Christian theologians have allowed interfaith marriage.

Now, it is obviously ideal for Christians to marry within the faith. Sharing the same faith in marriage allows the couple to attend church together, pray together, and raise faithful children together. So, is interfaith marriage wrong? No. Interfaith marriage is not wrong because Scripture actually does not forbid interfaith marriage. It is true that some verses caution against associating with unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." However, using this verse to forbid interfaith marriage is a common misinterpretation. This verse is not even specifically talking about marriage. Being "yoked together" is a metaphor referring to any "joint participation" that shapes one's

identity. As it follows, Paul was warning against any relationship with unbelievers that compromises the Christian faith and changes the Christian's identity.

This isn't just my personal interpretation of this doctrine. Protestant and Catholic theologians have also allowed interfaith marriage. In 1522, Protestant reformer Martin Luther sanctioned interfaith marriage because, as he argued, God intentionally joins the husband and wife together in all marriages, including interfaith ones. Luther also clarified that both believers and nonbelievers are made in the image of God, and together, they are responsible for serving Him and His creation, even in marriage. Furthermore, Pope John Paul II allowed interfaith marriage in his work "The Theology of the Body," and Catholics have used this work to grasp the truth, beauty, and goodness of such marriages.

Parents might grant that interfaith marriage is theoretically acceptable. But, isn't success in such marriages practically impossible, doomed to end in divorce? While there are instances of interfaith divorce, parents should not generalize this result to all interfaith marriages. In 2008, Dr. Janice Aron, a clinical psychologist, conducted a study on interfaith marriage satisfaction. Through a survey of over 50,000 American families, she found "no difference in marital satisfaction" between interfaith couples and same-faith couples. So, based on such studies,

interfaith marriages overall may not have a higher divorce rate than same-faith marriages. And with the growing number of interfaith marriages, it is evident that these marriages are more successful than they are not.

Still, some Christian parents may forbid their children from interfaith marriage because they will struggle to raise their own faithful Christian offspring. Indeed, this is the greatest issue in interfaith marriages. Ideally, the couple should agree to raise their children in the Christian faith. If not, there is still hope. The Christian parent must set an example with their own faithful living and pray for their children with faith, with hope, with love. No matter what the couple has decided for their children, Christian parents must trust that God will call His children to Himself.

If parents agree to allow interfaith marriage, how can they help ensure that these marriages are safe? First, parents must establish that the nonbeliever will allow their Christian spouse to freely practice their religion. And second, parents must affirm that the nonbeliever has a virtuous conscience, choosing to act for the well-being of their family.

When Christian parents forbid their children from interfaith marriages, they presume the marriage's failure. But, faithful Christians cannot view the world with the presumption of failure. Faithful Christians must trust that God will guide their children always. Faithful Christians can find

hope in 1 Corinthians 7:14 which says, "The unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband."

So, should Monica have even married Patrick in the first place? Yes. They married with the full approval of their bishop in a North African church in the year 353 AD. And the same was true of all interfaith marriages in the early church era. Monica and Patrick sadly didn't agree to raise their children in the Christian faith. But Monica maintained a cheerful disposition and prayed ceaselessly for the conversion of her unbelieving son, Augustinus. After praying and fasting and weeping for seventeen years, her son finally confessed to the Christian faith, eventually becoming the renowned theologian and philosopher, Saint Augustine of Hippo.

Perhaps you know an interfaith couple. I do. My parents have an interfaith marriage—my mother is a devout Catholic, my father, a devout Muslim. Together, they agreed to raise me in the Catholic faith. And like most marriages, my parents' interfaith marriage isn't perfect. Nevertheless, they compromise. They communicate. They love. For it is through interfaith marriages that great acceptance and unconditional love blossom.

Danielle Quayyum is a graduate of Trinity Classical Academy Class of 2022, and will attend the University of California, Merced and major in Mechanical Engineering.

Senior Thesis

The Twenty Dollar Father: A Call For the Removal of Andrew Jackson from the Twenty Dollar Bill

Michelle Boulos



What do you see when you look at the face of a twenty dollar bill? Is it the cunning champion of the common man, here to represent the once unrepresented. Or is it the ethnic cleanser, conductor of the Trail of Tears? Andrew Jackson was a man of complexity and contradictions. He symbolized the darker chapters of our history while embodying the American opportunity of success from humble beginnings. But the symbols on our currency matter. For it is a

powerful means of communication. It is a message we send around the world. A message of national identity that illustrates who we are and our common purpose. The figures that adorn our currency show who America thinks it is. So with only six bills in circulation, who should represent us?

Circulating twenty-dollar bills had once displayed images of Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland, Alexander Hamilton, and Pocahontas. It was not until the late 1920s that the slave owner, Andrew Jackson, would make his debut on the \$20. However, the records of the Department of Treasury do not state why any figures has been chosen for the bill. Through his rather controversial legacy Jackson was originally announced to be removed from the bill in 2016. But, the re-design was halted once the next administration assumed office, as it was deemed to be a change by mere political correctness. However, I believe one should recognize Jackson's denouncement as deserving, for his conscious efforts to violate

constitutionally bound systems and enact moral injustices protected even by the standards of his own time, makes him inadequate of such selective honor.

Once he was inaugurated in 1829, Andrew Jackson began the intentional reconstruction of a more powerful executive branch. He overrode Supreme Court decisions, state rights to consider legislation null and void and congress in his use of the veto. One must consider that the very notion of checks and balances is to ensure that no branch exceeds another in power. Jackson's agenda to completely transform the ways in which the government had functioned is what George Washington had warned in his Farewell Address. He had suspected that one branch may prevail over the rest and this would be "the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed." By the oath of office, it is not only Jackson's imperative task but his duty to protect the three branch system. This constitutionally bound system has been constructed

by the founding fathers to combat the threatening tyrannical leader. Since Jackson had assumed supremacy over the other branches, he does just what Washington warned against. Jackson destroyed the established governmental process. This attempt at supremacy did not go unnoticed. Once his presidency was over, Jackson would be called King Andrew as his demonstration of power without congressional approval became recognized. He was no champion for

It is the patriotic and wise man's duty to ensure that we choose the right messages to send. Currency should be embellished with promises of freedom, liberty, and happiness, not of an authoritarian. Jackson's clear betrayal to the American government and humanity demonstrates his ineligibility to be on our banknotes.

the people but a champion of himself. Jackson not only believed he was above the law but that he was the law itself. His expansion of executive power was a tool to satisfy his selfish political desires. No longer was Jackson one

component of the three branch system; he had tyrannically bent the American government. Jackson was a president literally at odds with his government.

As some may suggest that Jackson's racism is not unique in consideration of the other figures that adorn our bills; one must also recognize that his racial hatred was murderous and genocidal distinctive to solely him. At the core of his legacy, Jackson took the role of an ethnic cleanser. He initiated and fiercely supported the removal of the Indians. Even the Worcester v. Georgia case, where Samuel A. Worcester sued the state of Georgia for enforcing the Indian Removal Act when treaties had been signed to protect their rights to the land, served as an opportunity for Jackson to reconsider his actions. But Jackson mockingly retaliated, "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it."

Furthermore, Jackson's relentless hatred towards Indians struck through most. For Jackson may not have invented the scheme of relocation but he stopped at nothing to rid land of Indian presence. His determination and perseverance to pass the legislation illustrates his character most precisely. For, Jackson was thoroughly aware of what was necessary to remove the Indians from their land in Georgia and the rest of the targeted territory. He and his administration welcomed and even encouraged the deadly plan that became known as the Trail of

Tears by advocating and leading campaigns in Georgia and Alabama. There they pleaded that "The lands in question belong to Georgia. She must and she will have them." Moreover, slavery may still have been somewhat acceptable but even the Supreme Court recognized the immorality that Jackson's legislation conveyed. Through a 5 to 1 ruling in the Worcester vs Georgia case, it is abundantly clear that it was only him and his supporters that could not accept the humanity of the Indians.

It is the patriotic and wise man's duty to ensure that we choose the right messages to send. Currency should be embellished with promises of freedom, liberty, and happiness, not of an authoritarian. Jackson's clear betrayal to the American government and humanity demonstrates his ineligibility to be on our banknotes. Furthermore, His strong will was one of political and personal selfishness. As he challenged the limits of the executive branch, he unequivocally failed his duty to the constitution. Our money should resemble a country that treasures the constitution and government our founding fathers created. But Jackson's legacy was one of villainy. Whether right or left, blue or red, don't further enthrone a criminal.

Michelle Boulos is a graduate of Trinity Classical Academy, Class of 2022, and will attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and major in Political Science.

What is Courage

John Carlson

Courage is defined as “The ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous in spite of fear.” People regard firefighters as heroic heroes in society. Were firefighters born brave? They may have a God-given desire to serve their community, but their willingness to contribute is simply the first step toward conquering their concerns. Firefighters' jobs are to help those in need, and their duty when they take the job is to finish it. They learn to build the right decision-making skills as they progress from a junior firefighter in a squad to a veteran firefighter. They have established habits and intrinsic abilities as a result of their experiences.

People in the medical industry, such as nurses and doctors, are another example of bravery in action. These individuals have invested countless hours in study and training to acquire the requisite abilities. They have committed their time and energy in their professional lives to treating and caring for their patients. It is not every day that the typical person witnesses someone in serious condition or in the hands of death. For example, a mother of three who works long hours as a nurse in a Covid-19 ICU may witness the loss of life and severe illness at the expense of her own life or the health of her family.

She spends her time soothing the sick and injured when their families are not permitted to visit them. She is the family they do not have at one of the scariest and most painful times in their lives. Furthermore, every day she carries the emotional and mental burden of people's lives and well-being, while also being concerned with the safety of her own young family because she is in close proximity with a deadly disease.

What gives her the strength to go to work every day? Her devotion stems from a traumatic incident when she was a child, which required the attentive care she now provides to others. Despite the fact that she knows she can only do so much, she is compelled to emulate those who aided her. That conviction propels her to bravely arrive at work every day. For others, an adrenaline rush might provide energy and urgency to complete the task at hand. When patients are in pain or terrified, she uses her experience and enthusiasm to courageously care for them and comfort them. Furthermore, medical experts set their own worries aside to tend to the fears and concerns of their patients, while relying on the training, experiences, and passion to give them courage.

Courage is something we must cultivate, just as we would develop a

positive new routine or habit. For a variety of reasons, practicing courage is a daunting challenge. To begin with, cultivating courage entails doing something outside of your comfort zone. Although it may appear tough, the Bible instructs us to “Be strong and courageous... for the Lord our God is with us wherever we go.” We can do anything with God on our side, because God is in ultimate control, even when things do not go our way. Second, acting courageously involves a personal risk such as shame, failure, or even bodily danger. The danger can carry a severe burden, as people often think about the worst possible scenario., In reality, who cares if you stumble on your words or miss the shot? We can overcome this fear by remembering the Lord is with us. As Philippians 4:6-7 says “...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Thus, courage is something that we have to practice like a habit, and we must maintain the mindset that God is in control.

John Carlson is a Freshman at Trinity Classical Academy.

What is Courage

Chloe Critser

The bright Hawaiian sun lights up the crystal clear water. Thirteen year old Bethany Hamilton paddles out against the strong current. As she waits for her next wave a large tiger shark strikes her and bites off her left arm. This loss makes even the simplest tasks extremely difficult. Nevertheless, Bethany begins surfing again only one month later. She gets right back to doing what she loves after being brutally attacked and having her arm taken from her. Bethany Hamilton embodies courage. She said, “Courage doesn’t mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you.” Bethany never let fear stop her.

We all feel afraid, but it’s how we respond to fear that has the power to define us - our courage or our cowardice. Our virtues or our vices. Courage is necessary in everything, from small acts in our everyday lives to crucial decisions that affect everyone around us. We do not passively become courageous. We grow courage by overcoming fear.

In the midst of the pandemic, I watched my mom, who is more commonly known as Nurse Critser, exemplify courage while making difficult decisions. Sometimes, the decision that needed to be made wasn't

the one many agreed with. It took courage to stand on the right thing and make the decision that would eventually benefit everyone. We must be courageous to stand immovably as we defend the just thing. Some of the time, my mom’s courage was unnoticed by others. I have watched her overcome her fears so that she could keep everyone around her safe and healthy, regardless of whether or not she was thanked. At first, having courage is extremely difficult. But through patient practice it can become habitual. We must ask God for help to be courageous. It is not an instinct. It is a virtue that flows from faith, and it is necessary to trust God completely in order to be released from the chains in which fear holds us.

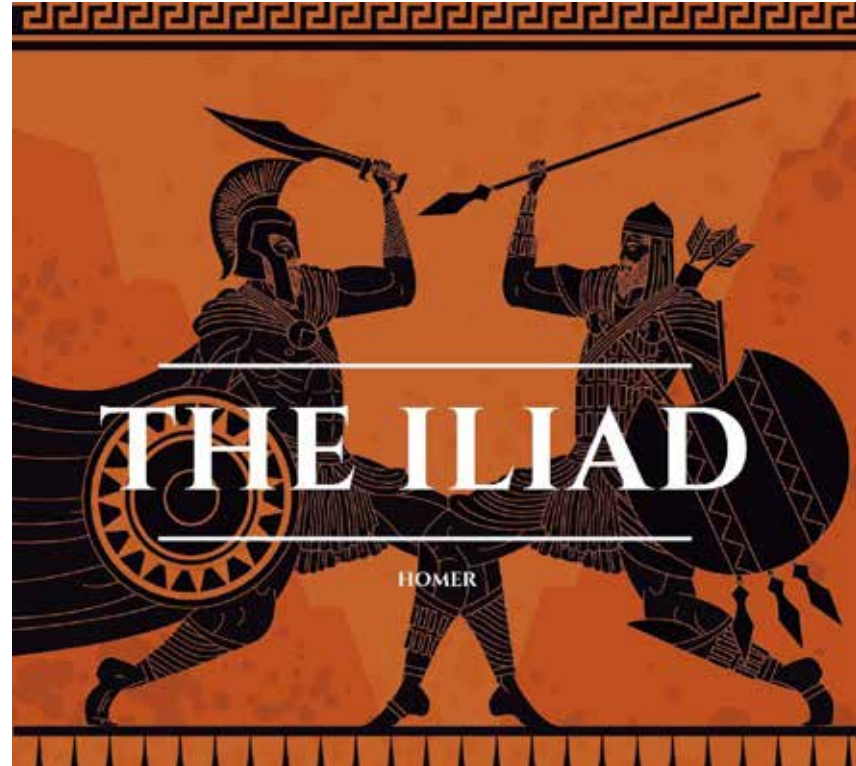
The virtue of courage requires stepping out in faith and trusting God to fill in the gaps when we fall short. Courage is trying our best to glorify God in everything, even when we doubt our abilities. God commands us to be courageous, and his Word is rich in teachings about this. Among this treasure trove lies Trinity’s school verse for this year. Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be

dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” God’s command is not only for Joshua, but rather for each one of God’s children. This is a foundation for every other command He gives us.

True courage is about obedience and conviction, the ability to say, “God, where you lead me I will go.” One step of courage can lead to another person’s freedom. When we do what God has called us and share the gospel, Jesus is freeing people through us. Our courage is not for ourselves, so we must be strong and courageous and remember that God is with us wherever we go. We must seek God in everything and pray for guidance.

Without courage, we would never take a risk. Erica Jong, an American novelist and poet, said, “If you don’t risk anything, you’ll risk even more.” If we don’t try for the fear of failing, we’ve already failed. I would rather have the courage to strike out and learn from the experience than sit in the dugout and never know if I could have hit a home run. So, may we all, with God as our guide, have courage to overcome the fears that torment us.

Chloe Critser is a Freshman at Trinity Classical Academy.



The Iliad

Mark Phillips and Chris Leigh

TRINITY PODCAST, FALL, 2021

Dr. Mark Phillips Greetings, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our new season of The Classical Academy Podcast. This is your friendly guide to the world of classical, Christian education. I am your new host, Dr. Mark Phillips. Just a little bit about me as we get started. I have had many past lives - animal surgeon, analytical biochemist, pastor, missionary, was a radio host at one time. I even did a short stint as a professional stand-up comedian thanks to Steve Martin, who got me started in that world.

Now I'm serving as Trinity's Chair of the Department of Theology and Science. Very excited about my guest today. It's Chris Leigh, Upper School Humanities teacher. He's the Dean of our House System. He's considered to be Trinity's resident foodie, master of strategy games, strong as an ox, wise as a

serpent, gentle as an angry ram. He's a founding teacher here at Trinity's Upper School. He helped set out the scope and the sequence of our Humanities curriculum. He has seen it all, so welcome. Chris, we're so glad to have you here.

Chris Leigh - Thank you.

Mark - Why do we study the great books at Trinity. People hear that and they wonder, "What are the great books? That sounds very intimidating." Why do we delve into these books?

Chris - Why read this fantastic collection of books that everybody seems to talk about? I always like to say, especially in the context of the school, you want to learn from the best. The great books are proven by time to be the best books that have endured. Everybody knows - no disrespect to Harry Potter, I love Harry Potter - pick your favorite fiction. Hopefully, I doubt it, but hopefully, Chronicles of Narnia or something like that

may make the cut, but really, you've got to wait 100 years before we know if you're even a really good book. Everybody likes you today, but we start to lose traction after a little bit of time. When we talk about a great book, we're talking about a book that's been relevant for literally longer than anyone alive knew anyone that was alive when it was written. It goes on and on and on. Some of these books, like the one we're going to be talking about today, you're talking about over 3000 years that we're still considering and still thinking about. There's something magical about that. I'm a historian, it's all about that time and space continuum. We get to think the same thoughts that they were thinking about when they were so far away. That's amazing.

Mark - Wow. Specifically, the Iliad...we are a classical, Christian school, so people say, "Wow, what does Greek mythology have to do with Christianity? What does the Iliad mean to the Christian? Why study it from the perspective of a classical school?"

Chris - Why would we need to know about Zeus or Achilles or any of that? I think, really, when it comes down to it - because we're also not Greek, - but the Iliad is probably one of the two greatest books of the Western world. Basically, if you're living in the West, you live in a world that was created by the Bible and by Homer; specifically, Homer's Iliad. That's why we read it. It is the greatest of the greats. You have to read it.

Mark - When we're approaching the Iliad, what context do we bring to our minds, to our hearts, to our very lives when we're going into the Iliad?

Chris - The Iliad is all about what it means to be a human. It's a book that starts in war, it unfolds in war, and it ends in war. There is no end to that conflict. When a seventh-grader reads that, [for one thing,] it's a fantastic way to appeal to a seventh-grader. The context that we're trying to help our students see, that we ourselves are attempting to occupy when we're looking at this book, is to understand what it means to be human in a world filled with conflict, in a world where justice does sometimes seem to fall on the side of those that are stronger than us and not necessarily to be meted out in some sort of court. To have to try and understand that there is such a thing as the right side, and if you're on the wrong side, even if you have virtues, your virtues might actually be vices because all of your goodness is in the service of something evil. That's wrong. There's so much

there to unpack in that way.

Mark - That takes us to the mind of the author, Homer himself. Before we take a short break, one more question. I know this could take an hour to answer, but who was Homer?

Chris - Homer - most myths say he was blind because it's one of those ancient bargains that the gods give us. If you are physically blind, that's because you get to see so much of what is true and real beyond the physical world. Homer - he's not even a contemporary of the events that he's writing about. He is the first greatest poet of the Western world. His story, the story of the men fighting at Troy - "Iliad" references Ilium, which is one of the names for the city of Troy, so it's not the story of Achilles; it's not the story of Hector. It's the story of Troy. His story is essentially the first Western poem written down. Sometimes you'll hear people talk about the Epic of Gilgamesh, and that's great, [but] the big one is Homer's Iliad. He is the poet. The Greeks are the ones that give us our understanding of philosophy and theater. They're going to have all of that other massive spread of what Western civilization looks like. All of them are springing from the soil of Homer and his original poem.

Chris - If you're not with Homer, then you simply are not going to be able to understand what the West really is.

Mark - Let's start with our protagonist, Achilles. Who is he, what is his state, what is the hope for his personal development, and who are some of these other characters we should be looking at, Hector and Paris and Helen and all those people?

Chris - Sure. Not surprisingly, Achilles, some of us just know him because our ankles occasionally get tweaked. He's famous for having a bad ankle because he is a demigod, a man born of a river goddess and a man, Peleus, who was awarded a special prize by Zeus, king of the gods. She dipped him in the River Styx, making him invulnerable to all damage, but in order to keep a hold of him, held him by his heel, his ankle, and that is his legendary weakness. If something can hit him there-- You would think, "Well, then just wear really good shoes."

The point is, he's basically an invulnerable superstar, truly just an impossible enemy to overcome, except for one small fatal flaw. I think you can already begin to see how he's a dynamic character that captures our imaginations. How many times have we had someone who's amazing, but they always have that

one little thing, that goofy thing that might take them down?

We have Hector, who is his opposite. Hector is just a man. When I say "just a man", I don't mean that to denigrate him, but he doesn't have a goddess as a mother, he is a man born of a man and a woman. He is the eldest son of Priam of Troy, the king of the city of Troy. He is, as the crown prince, the great defender, the best warrior on the Trojan side, man-killing Hector, as he's often called, brilliant, strong, totally doomed, cannot possibly hope to overcome Achilles, and we know that from the very beginning. The Iliad begins with this terrific line. I'm just going to do it in English because I would fail at it in Greek. It starts, "Rage! Rage! – Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles, murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses, hurling down to the House of Death so many fighters' souls, brave fighters' souls." All because Achilles has this - not anger, he's not upset. I've taught the Iliad for several years. One of the best discussions we have is, "Have you ever had rage?" Rage is not something we typically encounter. When a man like Achilles, when a demigod like Achilles encounters an emotion like that, something that burns red, that actually would lead you to...murder would probably be the only thing that we in common parlance could recognize it. If you had gone to war, which I haven't, and most of our students, of course not, but they might be able to recognize it and would speak to a civilization, a group of people that had war as part of their experience. Rage is something; Hector's up against the impossible.

Mark - Let's go into an overview, especially for those who may not be familiar with the Iliad. Let's go into an overview. What's the setting? What what's going on here in this story, the Iliad?

Chris - When we come to the Iliad, this is in the ninth year of a war that goes for ten years. As you can tell, we're coming to the story a little bit late. The story actually has its roots with the second son of the king of Troy, a guy named Paris. As the name might suggest, he's maybe not our most masculine, rough and tumble warrior prince. He comes to visit the king of Sparta, a guy named Menelaus, who is famous, not just for being the king of Sparta, but for having the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen, as his wife. Menelaus greets him and feasts him. It's a grand old time. Then, Menelaus decides to go off on a hunt and he invites Paris to go with him. Paris says, "No. I think I'm good." Menelaus leaves and he's gone for several days, comes back to his

home to discover that his guest, Paris, has absconded both with his wife and with his treasure.

Mark - Uh-oh.

Chris - I know most of us would be scandalized by that to begin with, but in the Greek world, and this is something that we can probably relate to, there is no higher sacred standard than that of hospitality. If I welcome you into my home, then you have been welcomed in. I will protect you and you should, of course, honor me as your host. That you would take advantage of me when I have welcomed you in, there is no greater sin that you would take a man's wife. In battle, that might be one thing, but to take a man's wife when he invited you into his home, you are the lowest of the low. Now, because it's the most beautiful woman in the world, turns out all of the Greeks, known at the time as the Achaeans, they've actually all promised to come to the aid of her husband should anyone ever make a move against her. Therefore, all of Greece is now engaged. They're on the hook; they've promised to the gods they will go to war, and so they set off.

There's a lot to get them to Troy, in which Achilles has a couple of different things that make him notable already...puts him on a path to have a conflict with the king of kings named Agamemnon, who's the leader of the Greeks. Essentially, they get to Troy, and now they've been fighting for nine years. You might ask yourself, "Why on earth would it take so long to fight a war? Nine years?" Well, this is in bronze age wartime. First of all, they don't have the weapons that just make killing each other super simple. It's a lot of wearing down and beating on each other. Notably, great heroes probably...and this is one of those fun things as a historian where there's some overlap... great heroes probably had armor and weapons that were made out of lighter and stronger metals like iron and possibly even steel. Achilles is known as the brilliant runner, the great runner Achilles. That's because he's fast. Speed is the difference between life and death on the battlefield. Nevertheless, it just means a long time of grueling, terrible warfare. These men have been away from their families forever. They're done with it. They want to go home. We pick up in the final year; they know that in year ten, "Finally we're going to be done. We're going to see this thing through finally, and it's going to come to an end."

Agamemnon, the lord of men, as he's described, decides to

pick a fight with Achilles. Even though Achilles is the greatest warrior in the Greek army, as we've talked about earlier, he feels like that means that he's entitled to be right against even the king. Unfortunately, the king is the king. When you're not the king, if the king says, "I'm right, you're wrong," that's just the way it is. Even mighty Achilles can't overthrow heaven in that respect.

Mark - What happens as a result of this breach?

Chris - Now, you've got the authority, the king of the Greeks, and the greatest warrior of the Greeks in a divide. Achilles says, "I'm out, fine. Go win the war on your own." He goes and he sits in his tents and he refuses to send his men. He's not going to go and fight himself. Agamemnon arrogantly thinks that he doesn't need Achilles, and so they end up in a fight with Troy. Hector, it turns out when he's not facing Achilles, Hector is able to do some amazing things. At one point, he doesn't listen to the old men of the city who say, "Please, don't go out. Please, stay within the walls and you'll be safe." They're not wrong. He would be safe, but there's no glory there and there's no chance to actually finish this fight.

He ignores their advice and he drives the Achaeans back to their ships. Then, the Achaeans have built a makeshift wall on the beach. Hector picks up a rock, and the text says, "It's a rock so big no three men could lift it, weak as men are today." Hector picks it up himself and he throws it by himself, just straight through the timber wall and it explodes in this shattering rain of splinters and fire. He breaches the wall, and screaming to his men, "The ships, the ships. Burn the ships." They're driving the Achaeans and death is there. That is the moment when Achilles' best friend, a guy named Patroclus, goes to Achilles and says, "If you're not going to save the Greeks, at least let me put on your armor and I will go save them." Achilles says, "Okay, you can put on my armor. You may get them away from the ships, but that's it. Don't fight Hector." Now, of course, anyone that's familiar with fairytales should know, anytime someone tells a character, "You can do this, but don't do that," be on the lookout for them to do that very thing.

Mark - Expect him to fight Hector.

Chris - It's almost like the history of man is being told, "Don't do this one thing, and then don't eat from that tree." Oh, wait, sound familiar.

Mark - It does.

Chris - Patroclus does put on the armor and does drive them off of the ships. Then he sees Hector. He's doing so well, and he thinks, "I could do this. I can get victory for my side." He attacks Hector. Hector lays him out and kills him. Thinking he's killed mighty Achilles, he's super exultant and praising himself to everybody, "I am awesome." Rips off the helmet only to discover he's killed Achilles' best friend. You can imagine, Hector goes from total triumph, "I have won the day, saved my city," to in the very next moment realizing, "I have done the one thing that would get Achilles to come back to the battle. I've killed his best friend. I did it, so he's coming for me." Hector is doomed.

Mark - Hector's response then, is he more forlorn for himself or for the city, or is that clear in the text?

Chris - That's a great question. I like to think of Hector as the most sympathetic, virtuous bad guy probably you've ever read about. The breach, the sin of Paris puts Troy irrevocably on the side of doom. They have been marked for doom, and the gods -- If the gods are just in heaven -- the impiety of the Trojans cannot go unanswered. Hector is a good man. He loves his father. He loves his mother, loves his city, loves his wife. There's a very touching scene where he comes in and his son, little Astyanax is afraid of the massive man of grime and war and his helmet. Hector doesn't pay any attention to Helen, won't soften for anybody, but he takes off his helmet for his little son. That's really touching.

If you know the story, you know that when it's all over, the Greeks are going to be brutal. They're going to take Hector's wife into slavery. They're going to throw his little son off of the top of the wall onto the rocks and destroy him. That's enough to make you really pity him, but there's something you need to remember - when a man who knows what is right stands on the side that is wrong, he's no longer innocent. We have lots of examples of that. Erwin Rommel in World War II, Robert E Lee in the Civil War, whatever the narrative is, there's always like - A man of great honor, men of these great virtues - but their great virtues were in the service of the evil side. That doesn't work.

Mark - How does studying the Iliad shape students? You started there, that's fantastic. I can imagine, it's wonderful.

Chris - I think, especially because we're reading it with our students when they're in seventh grade and they are themselves becoming aware of some of the larger questions that start to face

all of us as we enter into adulthood· the pull of right and wrong, honor, glory, rage, ambition; these are the many heavily-spirited urges that pull at all of us. I think that it's great for our students to see such a vivid, massive epic of characters that embody all of these characteristics in their fullness, in their absolute magnitude. To see, are there things that are admirable about each of these characters? Yes. Would you want to be any one of these characters? I think, pretty universally, almost all of us agree, we don't want to be almost anyone in the Iliad, they're almost, all of them, a little cursed. It's always some vice that is so vividly attached to their virtue, and so it's wonderful to see. The Greeks would have been telling these stories to their children, they would have memorized the Iliad for the purposes of being able to remind each other, don't be a Hector, don't be an Achilles, or do be a Hector, do be Achilles in their best virtues, but remember that those virtues carry with them the danger of failure.

Mark - It's a wonderful way to look at the Imago Dei and the fallen state, what a great thing. One last question, let's say there are some parents listening out there and their child's studying the Iliad. What would be a great question I could ask them about the Iliad?

Chris - I think one of the constant questions that we encounter whenever we read the Iliad, is that our students need to wonder who they are in the context of these stories. They need to reflect on how they respond to the call of glory, to the cry for mercy, to the impetus of honor and the opportunity for success, the danger of failure, and of course the weight of rage. I like for them, when I was teaching it, for my students to have to consider a god-like rage trapped in a human body would be a terrible thing to have to contemplate. That is what Achilles is engaging with. At the same time, we are souls, immortal souls, God-breathed souls enfolded in these bodies of carbon. Our path is not actually all that divergent from a demigod like Achilles because we were made to consider eternity. When Homer talks about the struggle of a demigod in Greece long ago, it's easy to think that that has nothing to do with us, but the demigod in Greece was a man struggling in the midst of pain and anger, seeking glory, ready to trade his life for the opportunity to have a name that is never forgotten.

I always liked to point out to my seventh-graders, you can't mock Achilles because I just said his name. It's been over 3000 years and he got what he asked for. He wanted his name to never

be forgotten, and we read his story every year as everyone always has. It is the framing work of what we understand a hero to be. You see superhero movies, you see Star Wars, you see cowboy movies, every one of these, every story that we recognize in the West has a reverberant theme from the Iliad of the hero that is doomed but nevertheless struggles. A hero who is excellent beyond all others, but is tragically selfish and more than a little, unfortunately, despicable in the way that he treats others. The cad, that lover boy Paris, who lets other people die for his selfishness. You watch the world pay for it and you wonder, where's the justice?

The gods watch it all. Every day we walk and work, and live, and think, and do in a society wherein we are pieces of that same puzzle repeating itself because Homer captured a slice of humanity in its truest sense. Especially from a Christian view, we can say, is it the fullness of God's word? Of course, it's not the fullness of God's Word, but as all truth is God's truth, Homer gave us truly what the world looks like. Apart from the Gospel, this is the world. We're in a world where Nietzsche would have, for example, really understood who Achilles was, and merely said, "Yes, you're on the lookout for the Superman, the übermensch is who we're looking for." That's who we all want to be, to be free from having to care about other people and to do what we want. The world of the Iliad is that world, but told in such a vibrant way that we can actually relate to it and see ourselves in stories that allow us to understand.

Mark - If you do not want to read the Iliad after that, then I can't help you. If you've read it before, read it again, and then answer the question - Why is this perhaps the greatest book to ever read?

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Mark Phillips, *Chair of Upper School Theology and Science*

Chris Leigh, *Rhetoric School Humanities, Dean of Rhetoric School Houses*

Jack Spector
11th Grade
Acrylic

Rhetoric Art - Mrs. Bond



Brodie Navarro
2nd Grade
Watercolor

Grammar Art - Mrs. Stimson

Covid Restrictions and Students

Bianey Carter

Imagine a group of high school students learning from home and doing their best to cope with what has happened in their lives the past year. Covid has swept them off their feet and forced them to learn in this way, but they have taken an unexpected perspective on this scenario. They have looked for the good and not the bad, the positive and not the negative. And so do I. I believe that there is a positive outlook for those who so choose to not become depressed and bombarded by all the stresses of this life.

One way the regulations have positively affected high schoolers is that we are now grateful to be able to meet with our teachers and friends. We have learned that we must enjoy and be grateful for the things we have in our reach before they are out of reach. Before Covid, we seldom appreciated holding conversations with friends and family in person, and once the infection struck our nation, oh how we longed to see each other again! Now, I am quite sure we will never take seeing each other in person for granted again. Zoom classes and remote meetings required quick improvements in the world's finest technology for us to have quickly developed into the flexible people we are today.

During this time of self-isolating, quarantine, and six feet distancing, we have had to learn an alternate way of

communicating. We have discovered so much about the internet world and other technologies that we would have never learned in one average year. There is now a greater understanding of what our future generation can achieve after discovering much of the technology that most Americans had never seen before! Who could have known that in almost two years, we would be much more technologically clever in concepts our ancestors never anticipated were possible to comprehend? As astounding as many of these technological advancements are, let us remember that God is the One who has blessed his children with such insight.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Just as Joshua needed to hear these words from God before he led Israel into a foreign land, so also do we, as God's people, need to be reminded of His hand over us today. He knew all that would happen these past few years, all who would pass away and those who would work on the front lines. But even through all of Covid, we have looked up to the One who will still provide for us all the way through, even if we face hard times. We had increased opportunities to spend time with our families in God's Word during this increase in illnesses.

At-home church services provided precious time for fellowship with the ones we love most. The restrictions and guidelines have done their best to keep us free from harm's way, but only a small number of people appreciated them. The regulations have all helped us in one way or another.

Many may say that Covid has only affected us negatively, but there are multiple positive results. Through the restrictions, we have realized our appreciation of the beautiful and unique faces the Lord created. At the same time, we have learned to grow our imaginations and stretch our knowledge of the internet world, which is now used every day in a variety of ways. But most importantly, we have remembered Who is most important to lean on in times of tribulation and triumph. So we must all appreciate what God put into the hearts of the health officials since the Spring of 2020, because they are the ones, led by the Lord, who will continue to guard our safety in the aftermath of this severe infection. And we should always keep the healthcare workers' lives safe in our hearts because each life matters, and we are forever indebted to them for their heroic actions.

Bianey Carter is a Freshman at Trinity Classical Academy.

Covid Restrictions and Students

Declan Yoo

The coronavirus has undoubtedly impacted high school students across the globe. In early 2020, a mysterious disease was discovered in Wuhan, China. Even as cases spread like wildfire across the world, none could foresee the resulting impact the virus would have on everybody. Like a sucker punch to the gut, every characteristic of our world was brought to its knees. The danger, restrictions, and guidelines hit students, in particular, like a train. The life of every high school student was drastically and indefinitely changed for the worse.

One reason COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines have negatively affected high school students is that online learning methods, like Zoom, are not adequate substitutes for the experience of in-person school. The lack of socialization with friends and the classroom environment causes a lack of focus and unnecessary miscommunication in class. The isolated setting of online school causes distractions and bad habits to emerge.

Constantly alternating from online to in-person learning based on the current protocols can be complicated and difficult for many students. Even when students go back to in-person school, the transition can be extremely disconcerting. Waking up later for online school and using a computer,

rather than being in classrooms with students and teachers, is a polar contrast to the schedule and environment of in-person school. Although school is now mostly back to normal, even current circumstances are not how things used to be.

After returning to in-person classes, standing regulations like masks, social distancing, and quarantine for certain students are reminders of the massive impact the coronavirus has had on the process of education. The virus is still around; thus, if people are exposed to it or infected by it, they must quarantine. Although the pandemic started over two years ago, these protocols have students wondering if school will ever go back to normal. What started in a market in a small Chinese town has infinitely and indefinitely transformed the world.

The world of education has been shaken and changed for the worse by an unexpected and seemingly unstoppable perpetrator. Online classes, masks, and other protocols are evidence of this. Although it may be difficult, high school students must learn to adapt to this new way of learning, as it is undeniably here to stay for the foreseeable future.

Written from quarantine January, 2022

Declan Yoo is a Freshman at Trinity Classical Academy.

The Three Loves

Samuel Robertson

11th Grade

Tis Heaven's form of love that first began,

The angels worshipped God with love and joy

And sent His Son, did God, from His right hand,

To earth that he may save, lest man destroy.

And when man formed by God took early breath,

He found no creature suited to his needs,

And mortal love which lives, though lives not death,

Into the bond of the first marriage leads.

But Satan's love spread violently to man,

And man desired sin, which brings no wealth.

The wealth of sin is sweet for Satan's clan,

The devil's only love was for himself.

And so we see love takes such forms as these,

And in life, love is found to be these three.



Jordan Hahn
10th Grade
Acrylic

Rhetoric Art - Mrs. Bond

Valedictory Address

Danielle Quayyum



Four years. 1,371 days, 32,904 hours, and over 1.9 million minutes. The past four years that the Class of 2022 has spent voyaging together, navigating the ups and downs, the blessings and the challenges, are now coming to an end. But it wasn't easy. At some point this year, it feels like we lost our drive. We began falling asleep during class and counting down to the millisecond when graduation day would arrive, wishing the time would pass by faster. But when we noticed we were falling into this pit of vices, we countered our loss of motivation with encouragement towards optimism and diligence. We began to hearten one another, even with long, inspirational texts that uplifted us to embrace the suffering and enjoy our last few

months of high school together. We began to dedicate more time to spend with each other and to motivate one another, finding activities that we not only love doing but that we also love doing together.

So what should you know about the Class of 2022? Our unwavering love for one another. When it came to tackling the big, scary things, we were there for each other, holding each others' hands, giving pep talks, and coming together in prayer at our discipleship groups. The love and encouragement that we've fostered for one another strengthened us to keep moving forward and finish the journey that we started. Along this journey, there is one important thing we cannot stress enough, and it is this.

There is no way we could have made it here today without the help, support, and love of you all—parents, teachers, administrators. Parents, thank you for dedicating yourself to dropping us off and picking us up every single day before we learned how to drive. Thank you for choosing Trinity Classical Academy for us, for intentionally picking a school that would challenge us academically and significantly grow our relationship with the Lord. You have shown us your unwavering love. Teachers, thank you for your steadfast kindness and patience. Thank you for

creating an environment in which we felt safe to share our personal stories. You have shown us your unwavering love. Administrators, thank you for all the hard work you put into making every house event, every social event, and every chapel event possible. I honestly didn't realize how much work you do until I had the opportunity to work with you this year as house captain. You have shown us your unwavering love.

When we love one another, we have each other's backs. We come alongside each other in our academics, our fun, and our faith. We build each other up. Our love is selfless. As Colossians 3:14 says, "Put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Parents, teachers, administrators, graduates—with our unwavering love for one another, we, all together, are the Class of 2022. Let us now go out and put on compassionate hearts. Let us exemplify kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness. Congratulations Class of 2022, we did it.

Danielle Quayyum is the Valedictorian of Trinity Classical Academy, Class of 2022, and will attend the University of California, Merced and major in Mechanical Engineering.

Salutatory Address

Amy Dever



Where are we? We're sitting not more than a few yards away from the classrooms in which we began our freshman year, or kindergarten for some of us, but we've come a lot farther than that, haven't we? If we've learned anything from discussions at Trinity, it's the fact that to answer any question, we must first define our terms.

So how do you define us? Ask our teachers, and they say we're the class with quiet courage, or the class that decided to carry a stuffed sloth to the other side of the country and for some reason wouldn't stop bringing places. Ask our parents, they say we're sweet, hard workers, courageous, cute etc, etc, (but they might be a bit biased). Ask our classmates, and they say we're a little crazy, often highly-caffeinated, making just about anywhere our

dance-floor, unique as individuals, but close and supportive, always making sure no one is ever left behind.

I think we can agree that most of these statements are true. But actions speak louder than words, and love—love shouts through actions.

I hope that in these four years, all of you have experienced Elise's hugs when you're having a bad day, or gotten to enjoy one of Diego's rare smiles,

We spend this day showing our endless gratitude to the people here and to the God who is always with us. They are the reason that we can look ahead to a bright, purposeful future and look back on a meaningful, memorable past.

Katie's enthusiastic 'happy birthday!'s or Kanta's and John's and Checkett's encouraging prayers and texts, or appreciated Savannah's willingness to text us individually to make sure we show up to fun stuff outside of school, or any of the other things that each person in this class does out of love for

each other. I could go on and on.

We spent so much of this year looking ahead to our futures. Together we faced college applications, rejections, and acceptances, searched for a major that would help us get to the careers we want, or help us figure out what careers we want. A few weeks in, we started tearing up just thinking about what our graduation day would bring. We did get discouraged sometimes, but we always knew there was something to look forward to, even if that thing was just surviving till graduation. It was good for us to look ahead.

As the year began drawing to a close, we reminisced more and more. We laughed over memories of Latin class shenanigans, the two years that we memorized what each others' ceiling fans looked like on a zoom square, and the bus rides to Forest Home. We thought about what we would do differently if we had to do it over again. It was good for us to look back.

The moments that were most significant to us, though, were the ones in which we could not help but be present. The night we danced on the pier in D.C. in the pouring rain, not caring that we would be soaked for the two hour bus ride back to the hotel. The night we shaved a bunch of our classmates heads, not thinking about

the senior pictures we'd be taking a month later. The night we sat around Daniella's table together editing our final thesis drafts, consuming mac and cheese, energy drinks, and sour gummy worms. The days we drove our teachers crazy by playing hide and seek in too small spaces, drawing wildly inaccurate maps of the U.S., using each other as workout equipment, taking naps, failing as diplomats in the game of diplomacy, and talking non-stop about bowling.

Today is a day of looking forward and of looking back. We hope to spend this day showing our endless gratitude to the people in this audience and on this stage and to the God who is always with us. They are the reason that we can look ahead to a bright, purposeful future and look back on a meaningful, memorable past.

But to answer the question of where we are, as we consider who we are at this point in our lives, we find that here in the present, we are sitting at a bend in the road, in the presence of the people we love.

Find joy in this moment, here, now, and in every moment that follows. Let your love for God and for others continue to be patient, kind, humble, hopeful, and enduring. Let this virtue, along with the wisdom you have earned, the purpose you have sought, and the courage that has driven you, continue to define your present for the rest of your future.

Amy Dever is the Salutatorian of Trinity Classical Academy, Class of 2022, and will attend Gordon College, and major in Linguistics.

The Passing of the Blessing

Nathan Thomas

I stand here with my classmates at the top of one of the many mountains we will climb in life. You juniors are currently climbing that mountain with the flag right ahead of you. This flag may seem close but one thing you cannot see through the fog at the top of this mountain is the multitude of obstacles you will have to overcome.

Part of climbing mountains with unexpected obstacles is doing it with people who are strong willed, faithful, and hopeful along with you.

Do not look around waiting for a leader to help you, but be the leader of your life that takes charge. Lead by example. Being a leader entails not just focusing on your goals and problems, but loving and supporting the people next to you.

I encourage you to fight through any and all unexpected obstacles you encounter together. Whether that is a thesis deadline, finals, or a tough conversation with your peers or teachers. Remember that you are not alone and you are here in community to build each other up.

I also encourage you to give your best everyday. You will not be at your best everyday, but what you can do is give your best everyday even if that is 50, 60, or 70%. The best athletes, the best scholars, the best engineers and the most virtuous people are not

at 100% all the time, but they do give their all everyday.

Part of doing your best starts in the morning. Get up. Go to school. And as my mom famously quotes every morning at 7:41 while I'm still lying in bed, "Will that 10 more minutes of sleep really benefit your day?" The answer is no. Do not fall prey to sloth, procrastination, pride and especially do not fall prey to that extra 10 minutes of sleep because it is not worth it. I can promise that on account of experience.

Senior year is an arduous process but as for my class and I, we believe that you can reach the flag at the top of the mountain that we have reached today. None of us got to the top of the mountain by ourselves. Due to the unexpected obstacles that popped up, we needed to respond by asking for help. This looked like long phone calls, long peer editing sessions, and long nights of studying.

As you embark on this endeavor, do not lose sight of the flag, do not lose sight of each other, and lastly and most importantly, do not lose sight of Christ and the beauty he has brought to you everyday.

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The Art of Self Control - Marcus Aurelius

Josueh Hoyos

The art of self control and temperance. Just like any art, it takes willpower and time to master. And it is not easy to master. Yet Marcus Aurelius calls us and reminds himself of its importance in Book four of his memoir, "Meditations." He says, "You've seen that. Now look at this. Don't be disturbed. Uncomplicate yourself. Someone has done wrong...to himself. Something happens to you. Good. It was meant for you by nature, woven into the pattern from the beginning. Life is short. That's all there is to say. Get what you can from the present—thoughtfully, justly. Unrestrained moderation." These are moving words. But oh, if only it was that simple.

What is Marcus Aurelius trying to say? After analyzing the text and defining words, I understood the meditation fully. To paraphrase it, he is essentially saying that we should not let the actions of other people or events around us affect our being, mind, and soul alike. He proceeds to say, "Something happens to you. Good. It was meant for you by nature." Nature. As Christians, let us replace this word with, "God". Some people want everything to be within their control. Yet realizing that God is in control of everything is comforting. To understand that there is a wiser, more

capable being supervising your life is comforting. It is like children being carefree, for their parents see to their health and food and all their needs. Just as a child relies on his parents, so too should we, children of God, depend on the Lord, thus allowing these unfortunate events to not affect us in any way.

**Self control is strength...
don't allow your
emotions to overpower
your intelligence.**

At times, like many others, I find myself struggling with patience and self control. I find myself irritated over foolish things, and I allow this to affect my actions and my mood. I realized how flawed this perception of inconvenience was, so I attempted to apply these wise words to my life for five days. My observations were nothing but uplifting and inspiring. Morgan Freeman once said, "Self control is strength...Don't allow your emotions to overpower your intelligence." He could not have said it better. At first, it was difficult to remember that I was doing this experiment. In the heat of the moment, a school project is the

last thing on my mind when dealing with emotions. But as these five days of forming new, positive patterns went on, I stopped myself, took a deep breath, and told myself, "Don't let this steal your joy; it's not worth it."

This little experiment helped me. I can see why Marcus Aurelius deemed it to be so very important. Even while I am finished with this project now, I will continue to try to apply these wise words to my everyday life. Maybe it can even change my life. And perhaps, it could change yours, too. For who are the ones truly successful in this life? It's not the wealthy or the famous. It's those who are happy. May we aim to be joyous no matter what, to see the beauty in life. To be joyous is to not be affected by worldly things, but to realize that there is a place for you in Paradise. Why be bothered by the temporary suffering of this world? Nothing in this life truly matters, except honoring God. This life is nothing but a tryout for the kingdom of God. If you remember that, and reflect your maker in every thing that you do or choice that you make, you will have self-control, you will be happy, and you will have achieved true success.

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Graduation
May, 2021

Wally Caddow

The mission of Trinity Classical Academy is to offer a challenging education grounded in the Christian faith and the classical tradition to produce young men and women of virtue, wisdom, purpose and courage.



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