



Special Feature (Theocentric Education)

SAGI: The Greatest Experiment

## The Value of a Theocentric Education

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**Words of Wisdom:** "Souls are perishing in the ever-shifting sands of the relative; it is the absolute they need. Nowhere will they find it but in the Gospel entrusted by Jesus Christ to His Church, which has preserved, taught, and expounded it. It has been exemplified in the lives of the best of her children" (Fr. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., Providence, Foreword, vii-viii). As Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange says, objective truth is desperately needed in society, for relativism has been gaining ground for centuries, manifesting itself most especially in what Pope Saint Pius X termed "the synthesis of all heresies": Modernism. Even a cursory glance at the state of affairs in the world will quickly inform one that relativism, among other things, is bringing about the dissolution of society. God's Love for man, however, is an objective truth, and His Love is exemplified especially in Christ's Life and Passion. Furthermore, as individual souls embrace the truth of Christ, darkness becomes increasingly displaced by light. However, "education" that is divorced from objective truth necessarily bears its consequences on the soul and then in the world. On the contrary, theocentric education places the soul in contact with timeless, universal truths, presented in the light of man's First Beginning and Last End.

### A HOMESCHOOL ODYSSEY THAT WOULD CHANGE ME FOREVER

My classmates were saying goodbye to me as I stood in front of them for the last time, and my teacher asked me if my parents were sending me to a different school. I replied, "No, I am going to be homeschooled." This is the last thing I remember about my third grade in public school. The odyssey upon which my brother and I would be embarking at the behest of my parents would be one that would change me forever: my fifth-grade brother and I were soon-to-be students of a prominent Catholic homeschool program.

Not only did I suddenly feel more independent, but I also remember being grateful that religious studies became a normal part of my school day at home. Though I could not put it into words at my very young age, reflecting now upon my homeschool's theocentric curriculum, I recall that as I matured, I came to understand that such a curriculum directs every aspect of study to its Final End, which is God. In the words of God Himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Apoc. 22:13). Venerable Louis of Granada, O.P., in his famous work, *The Sinner's Guide*, says, "Now, what is man's last end, on the attainment of which depends his happiness? That it is God is undeniable; for since He is our first beginning, He must necessarily be our last end" (Chapter 28).

The riches of such a homeschool curriculum include one's increasing familiarity with Sacred Scripture as well as the timeless doctrinal and moral teachings of the Church; further, the focus of all the subjects in the curriculum is such that it is ultimately directed to one's better knowing, loving, and serving God. More specifically, the history I learned was much more than a simple collection of names and dates *sans* context; rather, it was an unbiased and meaningful relation of important events and how they all tied into salvation history and God's work in man. The literature was comprised of primary texts from the great writers, spanning centuries, which illustrate themes relevant to mankind's condition throughout the ages. The language component that I chose to study was Latin, which would eventually allow me access to many theological works that have not yet been translated. Other subject areas were equally meaningful and necessary for a well-rounded Catholic education.

## **A CATHOLIC AND RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE DOMINICAN ORDER**

Being immersed at a young age in such a comprehensive and theocentric education, which continued until my graduation from high school, played a significant part in forming a solid foundation for me as a Catholic; moreover, it was instrumental in leading me to pursue a life which is particularly theocentric—the religious life in the Dominican Order.

The Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominican Order, was founded by St. Dominic in the early thirteenth century to combat the heresy known as Albigensianism. St. Dominic worked to form a group of Friars Preachers devoted to prayer, study, and preaching to further bring light and truth into the world for the salvation of souls. The motto of the Dominican Order is *Veritas* (Truth). Such a motto expresses the devotion of Dominicans to the pursuit of truth in all things. One of the most famous Dominicans is St. Thomas Aquinas, who composed history's greatest theological synthesis, the extensive *Summa Theologiae*.

As a Dominican, I am grateful for having received in my early years a solid education upon which I continue to build, for what I received enriches my life of prayer and assists me in my theological studies. I am grateful to my parents for having made the decision to homeschool my brother and me because, in addition to our studies being very academically demanding, God, more importantly, was the center of our education.

## **A SPECIAL MESSAGE**

Youth everywhere need guidance — not merely guidance in intellectual pursuits without a view to education's Final End, but, rather, one which forms the whole person: a guidance directed towards the Creator, to Whose beauty and majesty all creation testifies. When we begin to see that education is much more than mere academics, and additionally should be pursued for the greater glory of God, then we will also begin to see it for its true worth.