

seminary was also devotion to the text, that is, the text of Holy Scripture. Because of that devotion to the text, I was made a teaching fellow for my two years at St. Louis University. Art and philosophy have now come together later in my life as I seek to better understand the first principles of beauty.

My penultimate chapter with the humanities began ten years ago. I retired a few years early from full-time parish work and the drawing power of the visual arts led me to ten years of nearly full-time art and craft. We retired to the Washington coast and built our own house with our own hands. We also opened an art gallery in our little seaside village and helped direct the arts program for the community.

That brings me to what looks like my ultimate and final chapter with the humanities, as I begin to serve Luther Classical College as her president. I wish I still had that picture I drew of the cat.

I thought it was pretty good. It probably wasn't, but it lives on in my life as a steppingstone to my love for the humanities and my devotion to the students of Luther Classical College and leading them to that same love for the humanities.

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THE PRESIDENT'S LOVE FOR THE HUMANITIES

BY THE REV. PRESIDENT TIMOTHY ROSSOW

Rev. Rossow is President of Luther Classical College and a lifelong student and enthusiast of art, the humanities, and all things which are true, good, and beautiful.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS PAGING THROUGH THE WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA AND SAW A PICTURE OF A CAT THAT LOOKED LIKE *HIS* CAT.

He asked his mother for a pencil and piece of paper so he could draw the kitty from the book. A love for the humanities was born at that moment. That little boy was me. We had almost zero discretionary funds in our family growing up but my mother sacrificed so that her children could have access to the world through an encyclopedia. I wish she was alive today to see that her sacrifice contributed to her son being elected president of Luther Classical College, a school devoted to promulgating a study of the world, Lutheran culture and the humanities.

Humanities are the heart of classical education. They are the study of "human things." They are a summation of culture and include such disciplines as history, literature, philosophy, languages, the arts, and

religion. Once you add mathematics and science, you have the classical curriculum. At Luther Classical College we follow the Lutheran classical curriculum which means we test the human things against the divine things found in the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions.

We cherish the humanities because they cultivate the highest wisdom, virtue, and rhetorical skills in our youth and enrich our lives into our mature years. For sure, Christ is our life. He is our culture. He would be enough for us even if there were no humanities but His Gospel inspired an amazing culture of “human things” in the West and it is our duty not only to live in His Gospel kingdom, but also to preserve a civil and humane society. Cultivating the best philosophy, literature, arts and the other humanities, is a key to preserving society. That is what Luther Classical College does. That is what higher education in the West did until the subjective turn in the 20th century when college and university studies lost its emphasis on studying the creation of God and myopically focused solely on the narcissistic view of the self and its many invented genders.

The encyclopedia got me studying God’s creation. The drawing of that cat as a five-year-old was a portend of how the visual arts would be my anchor to the humanities throughout my life. My early experience with the humanities was through the visual arts. My school district in north central Iowa had excellent art teachers and I benefited greatly from that excellence.

The same mother who sacrificed herself to get an encyclopedia for her boys was influential in getting me to Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, known for its visual arts program where my love for the

humanities continued. I entered college as an art major and left as a Humanities major with a curriculum full of poetry, art, literature, music, rhetoric, history, and what would become two great loves of mine, the history of art and philosophy.

Once I met the lady I would marry, I started taking more seriously the internal call to the ministry I had for a while, as I realized that life as an artist may not provide the income needed to support my family. That internal call led me to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri where the humanities curriculum at Seward was a great preparation for studying the art of being a pastor. That internal call was fulfilled when I received the external and divine call first from Immanuel Lutheran, Dearborn, Michigan and then to Bethany Lutheran, Naperville, Illinois. I served both congregations as senior pastor. We humanities majors have a saying: we are the last to be hired but the first to be promoted. That is because the study of human things is a lifelong class in problem solving. My humanities training in problem solving was an important skill for leading two large congregations and will serve me well as the leader of Luther Classical College.

At Concordia, Seward I was introduced to the pursuit of first things, philosophy, particularly the disciplines of metaphysics (what is real?) and epistemology (how do we know what is real?). That led me to a Masters of Philosophy at St. Louis University. The philosophy department there was dedicated to the texts of the great philosophers, just as the classical curriculum of Luther Classical College is dedicated to reading the primary sources. The philosophy department at St. Louis University welcomed students from Concordia Seminary with open arms because the devotion at the