



*Joseph examines the murky waters of natural science.*

## SHOULD WE TEACH MORE SCIENCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?

### INTRODUCTION

A few months ago a young man, a pupil of the elite Our Lady of La Salette Academy in Idaho, U.S.A., while visiting Veritas Academy, voiced his concern over the teaching of sciences in traditional Catholic schools. This young man was a keen scientist and regretted the lack of attention given to the sciences.

Compared to most schools, it would be fair to say that traditional Catholic schools do not devote as much time or as many resources to the teaching of the natural sciences (biology, chemistry and

physics), but should they do more?

### SCIENCE IN MODERN SCHOOLS

It is clear that in many schools today the sciences are being taught in a way that actually opposes Catholic faith and morals. In general, the sciences are portrayed as yielding the highest form of knowledge (Revelation and metaphysics are completely ignored) and realities that cannot be measured by science (i.e. the spiritual order) are deemed not to exist at all. In effect they are used as a vehicle to promote atheistic materialism and some of

the moral aberrations that usually accompany it (contraception and abortion are the most striking examples).

The sciences are often placed in opposition to the humanities too, again because of the way they are taught. A snob might say, “Sciences are not real education, just preliminary job training.” An inverted snob might reply, “Whado ya wanna study English and Latin for—complete waste of time.” The error on both sides is to regard the sciences as only having a utilitarian end which differs from the end of humanities which is entirely intellec-

# Veritas Academy



*"We did it! We managed to take out the heart and lungs in under 45 minutes."*

tual.

In reality, the natural sciences are actually as much liberal arts as literature and languages. They might commence with the observation of concrete particulars, but in their pure state they terminate in universal knowledge. The problem, again, is the way they are taught in modern schools and universities.

## ANSWERING THE QUESTION

And so should traditional Catholic schools give more time and resources to the sciences? The answer must be nuanced. If our schools are not forced to follow a restrictive ideological and utilitarian syllabus and if they have the resources, then most certainly they should teach more of the sciences. The reasons are several.

They may be taught easily in a way that conforms to the perennially effective educational praxis of the *trivium* (the "grammar" is induction and classification, "dialectic" is analysis and deduction and "rhetoric" is synthesis (formulation of

theories).

Furthermore, the natural sciences give a child a knowledge of nature which is nothing less than the knowledge of the reflected attributes of God. In theology especially, an understanding of the natural order is indispensable for the understanding of the supernatural order, for we can only know the supernatural order by analogy with the natural order.

Finally, for those who wish to make their living as scientists, medical doctors, technicians or engineers, the natural sciences should be taught to provide a foundation for their professional education in later years.

## CONSOLATION

This article is probably not very consoling for the young man from La Salette because he will probably remain scientifically deprived at his traditional Catholic school, but perhaps the following words of consolation might help: Keep your head down, excel in the humanities at your school and then take time out after high school to catch-up in the sciences. There are many bright scientists and engineers in the world, but very few of them have a rounded education in the humanities too.  $\Omega$



*Standard 4 & 5 Girls learning some of the properties of liquids.*



*Dominic (without goggles!) ignites some Magnesium watched by the other boys.*



*Bernard and Joyson try to find the difference between a millilitre and a cubic centimetre.*



*"Right boys, now we have taken the organs from one patient, the idea is to put them into another and make them work again."  
Mr. Jack Fox attempts the first heart and lung transplant at Veritas Academy.*