

# WISDOM OF THE GREATEST BOOKS

*An Introduction to Kolbe's Greatest Books and a Preview of the World's 101 Greatest Authors*



## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GREATEST BOOKS OF WORLD CIVILIZATION



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Education and the dignity of man

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Companion series to the Greatest Books

The Greatest Books on DVD: **35**  
A multimedia educational tool



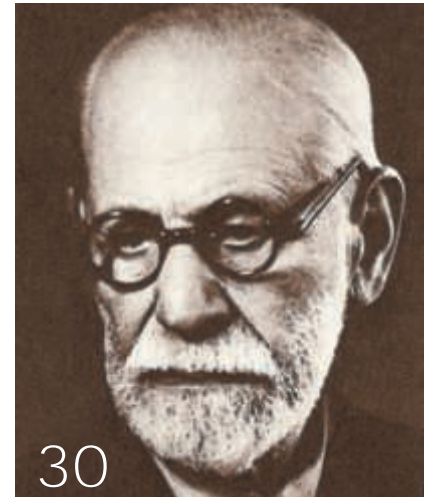
THE KOLBE FOUNDATION



**John Paul II's** Personalist philosophy permeates Kolbe's educational program



**Aquinas** and the greatest authors



**Freud** and the great authors



**EWTV** Personalities & Kolbe lecturers teach the Greatest Books on DVD

Cover Art: St. Maximilian Kolbe from Monastery at Niepokalanow



# WHAT ARE THE GREATEST BOOKS?

Dr. David Marzak, Director

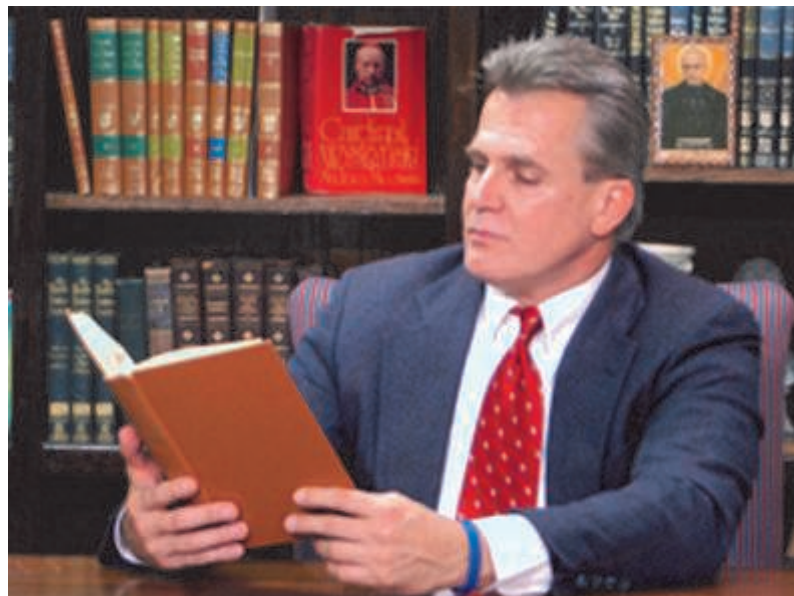
**K**OLBE'S GREATEST BOOKS are indispensable components of liberal education because liberal education—unlike training and schooling—culminates in wisdom, and *The Greatest Books* are an accumulated treasury of wisdom, which is a contribution of Christian civilization and men of good will to the modern world.

They are called “greatest” because of the formative impact they have had as a tour de force of our civilization, because they masterfully deal with the greatest questions the human mind is capable of thinking about and because they are central to the education of free human beings.

Because man is a free being made in the image and likeness of God, he has the ability to be the most noble creature on earth. This image and **likeness is manifest in man's highest faculties:** spirit, intellect, and will. When human beings properly develop and exercise these faculties the result is phenomenal creative expression in the arts, sciences, and humanities, which are contained in *The Greatest Books*.

Here in 101 color coded volumes are the writings of eminent statesmen, philosophers, poets, saints, and scientists, the greatest thinkers and exemplars of humankind; men and women dedicated to the development, penetration, and diffusion of ideas that have shaped the legal, ethical, moral, and spiritual codes, which are the bedrock of our civilization.

BROWN - MATH & SCIENCE  
GREEN - LITERATURE, POETRY,  
EPIC NARRATIVE  
BLUE - ECONOMICS, POLITICS,  
HISTORY & JURISPRUDENCE  
BLACK - PHILOSOPHY  
PURPLE - THEOLOGY  
RED - SPIRITUAL CLASSICS



“The Greatest Books are an accumulated treasury of human wisdom.”

These masterful writings have enlightened popes and kings, statesmen and generals, along with countless others everywhere. They form the record of our civilization and the story of its development.

*Kolbe's Greatest Books* are an integral part of liberal education devoted to the acquisition of intellectual skills and to the truth and wisdom, which help set men free to live a good life in pursuit of happiness. In every age men and women seek clarity and understanding of perennial questions asked about God and man, heaven and hell, wisdom, justice and charity, virtue and vice, human suffering, the best form of government, the use and abuse of power and authority, the meaning of life and death, and other fundamental questions, which perplex the human soul.

In Shakespeare and Dostoevsky human nature combats pride, ambition, envy, and lust; in John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila human nature seeks highest perfection; In the *Federalist Papers* aristocracy and democracy engage in a crucial battle; in Newton and Einstein man struggles to understand the cosmos; in Freud and Augustine man endeavors to understand himself; Aquinas and Dante explore virtue, sin, grace, redemption, and final judgment.

When most current novels and best sellers are no longer remembered, the Greatest Books will still be cherished and read by millions as they have been for over two thousand years. ●

# LIBERAL ARTS & LIBERAL EDUCATION



By Dr. David J.P. Marzak

**L**iberal arts have been an integral part of higher education for over 2,400 years; nevertheless, the term "liberal arts" is confusing and often misunderstood. The liberal arts are not a form of political education for the propagation of liberal ideas associated with liberalism. Rather, the liberal arts, like any other arts, are apolitical skills acquired for various purposes. For example, fine arts are skills associated with the expression of beauty; martial arts are skills of fighting; vocational arts are skills of craftsmanship.

Liberal arts, like these other arts, are also skills, however, they are skills of the mind, which include reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, judging and applying. These skills must be acquired through much effort so that the mind may be exercised, developed, and strengthened into a dynamic asset always at a

person's command and disposal. Because they are *liberal* arts, they are extraordinary skills linked to the human quest for freedom. Ultimately, they are arts or skills of the mind involved with liberating or setting a person free. Liberal education is education that liberates the mind from demagoguery, political manipulation, prejudice and myopia. In

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**"Becoming a human being is precisely the main purpose of the whole process of education."**

Pope John Paul II

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a word, liberal education is education for freedom.

Liberal education contributes to three elements in the life of every human being, the necessity of work, the responsibilities of citizenship, and the free choice each person has to grow more hu-

man. According to Pope John Paul II, "Becoming a human being is precisely the main purpose of the whole process of education." Moreover, "any viable solution to our social problems must be sought in the direction of making life more human."

In this process of becoming more human, the liberal arts are indispensable. No one can decide for himself whether or not he or she is going to be a human being. The only question is whether he or she will be an underdeveloped and ignorant human being or a well developed and wise human being, one who received an education cognizant of the dignity of man and the mystery of human nature, one that aids self-discovery, increases understanding, and helps a person develop all his/her unique human potentials.

Because the liberal arts are skills of the mind, they culminate in prudence and wisdom; however, no one is born pru-

dent or wise; prudence and wisdom are acquired by much human experience and intellectual effort. For this reason, the liberal arts are indispensable; they are the tools by which the mind is trained to develop rational power and through which it discovers the truth and grows in wisdom that is the end or purpose of the mind. If the human mind it is not nourished and strengthened through proper intellectual exercise, it will atrophy like an unused muscle. In this, the mind is not unlike the body. If the body is to be kept healthy and grow strong it must be exercised. The unexercised and underfed mind weakens just as the body does.

Although the liberal arts prepare a mind for a life of freedom culminating in wisdom and the pursuit of happiness, they are not a panacea. Liberal education is not moral or religious education, it is intellectual education for free men and free women. If a person is to be free, his/her mind must be free.

The liberal arts are practical arts because they prepare the mind for any endeavor in any field

that might be pursued by any human being; they are an indispensable asset for living a good life, which all human beings have a right and an deontological obligation to pursue.

*The Greatest Books* are the essential instruments for the liberal education of students and especially of adults who have matured through

life's experiences and who daily encounter the problems, challenges, issues and ideas with which *The Greatest Books* deal. ●

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**"No one is born prudent or wise; prudence and wisdom are acquired by much experience and intellectual effort."**

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THE KOLBE FOUNDATION

# THE GREATEST BOOKS OF CIVILIZATION

AUTHORS AND THEIR TITLES



1

Gilgamesh 2750 B.C.

The Epic of Gilgamesh

2

Hammurabi 2500 B.C

The Code of Hammurabi

3

Homer c. 800 B.C

The Iliad  
The Odyssey



4

Sun Tsu c. 600 B.C

The Art of War

5

Confucius c. 600 B.C.

Confucian Analytics  
The Great Learning  
Doctrine of the Mean



6

Hippocrates c. 500 B.C.

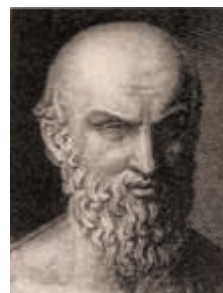
Father of Medicine

Oath  
Air, Water, and Places  
On Ancient Medicine  
On Fractures  
On Articulations

7

Aeschylus 525-456 B.C

Prometheus Bound  
Orestia  
Agamemnon  
Libation Bearers  
Eumenides  
Choephoroe



*The consummate leader  
cultivates the moral law,  
and strictly adheres to  
method and discipline;  
thus it is in his power to  
control success.*

Sun Tsu

# HIPPOCRATES

## FATHER OF MEDICINE



Natural forces within us are the true healing powers within us

Let exercise come before meals not after

Where ever the art of medicine is loved, there also is love of humanity

With purity and with holiness pass your life and practice your art

Fat men are more likely to die suddenly than the slender

Everything in excess is opposed to nature

Old people have fewer diseases than the young, but their diseases never leave them



Painting by Robert Tom



*A short saying often contains much wisdom*

Sophocles

*The wise learn many things from their foes*

Aristophanes

*Ignorance is bold and knowledge reserved*

Thucydides

*An empty vessel makes the loudest sound, so they that have least wit are the greatest babblers*

Plato



8

Sophocles 496-406 B.C

Oedipus Rex  
Oedipus at Colonus  
Antigone  
Philoctetes

9

Euripides 485-406 B.C

Medea  
Bacchae  
Hippolytus

10

Herodotus 484-425 B.C

The Histories

11

Thucydides 460-400 B.C

History of the Peloponnesian War

**Greatest of the Greek Historians**

12

Aristophanes 445-385 B.C

The Clouds  
The Frogs  
Birds  
Peace  
Acharnians

13

Plato 428-347 B.C

The Republic  
Apology  
Laws  
Phaedo  
  
Crito  
Euthyphro  
Statesmen  
Protagoras

Sophist  
Symposium  
Timaeus  
Phaedrus  
  
Gorgias  
Meno  
Ion



# Wisdom of

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## PLATO & SOCRATES

*If I were sure God would pardon me, and men would not know my sin, yet I should be ashamed to sin, because of its essential baseness.*

Socrates

*Wise men speak because they have something to say: Fools, because they have to say something.*

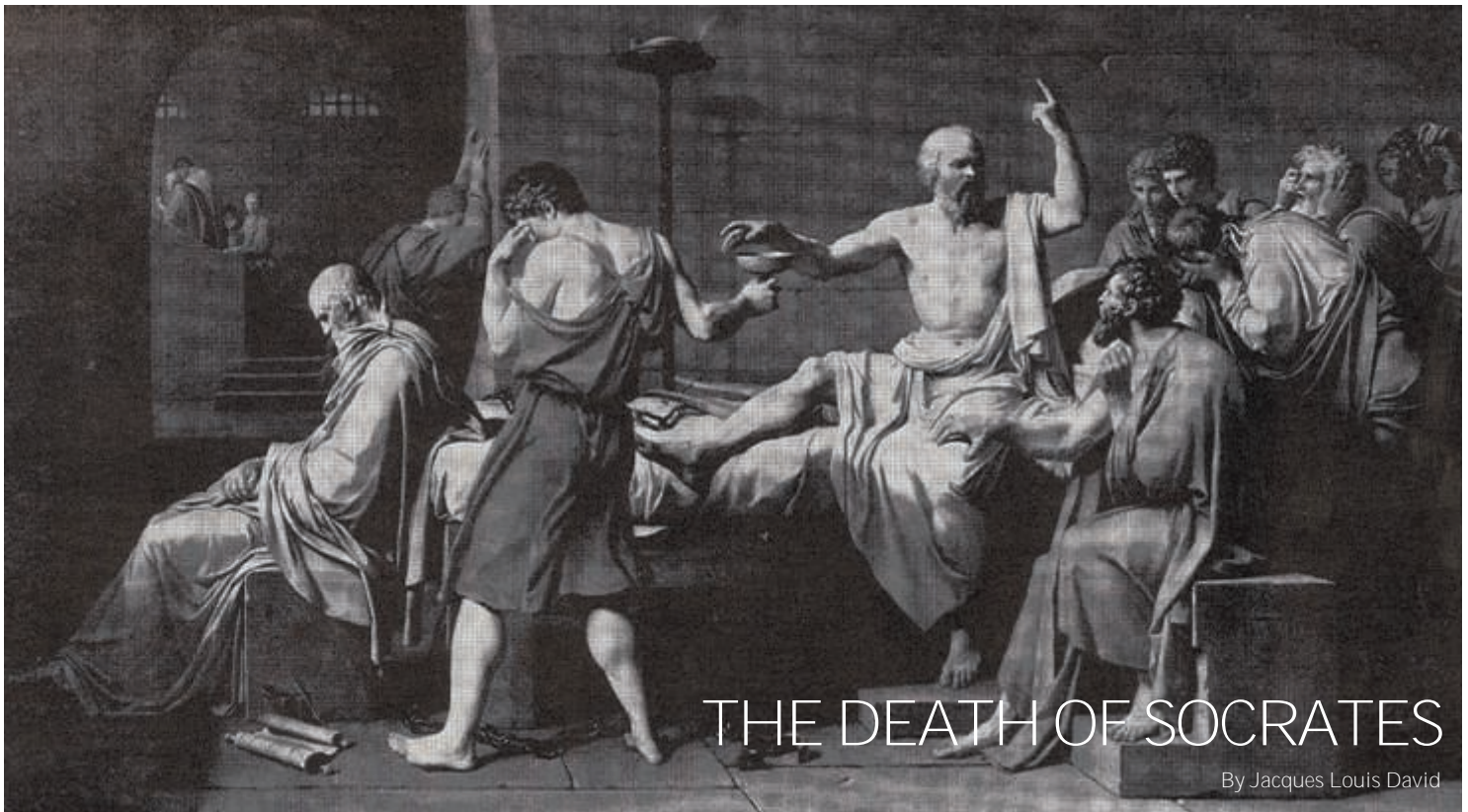
Plato

*They who provide much wealth for their children but neglect them in virtue, do like those who feed their horses high, but never train them to be useful.*

*As one man is pleased with improving his farm, another his horse, so I m daily pleased in growing better.*

Socrates

*Be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death.* Socrates



THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

By Jacques Louis David



14

Aristotle 384-322 B.C

*Educated men are as much superior to uneducated men as the living are to the dead.*

*We should, as far as possible, make ourselves immortal and strive to live by that of ourselves which is most excellent.*

*All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.*

Aristotle



Aristotle educating Alexander the Great

Poetics  
Rhetoric  
Athenian Constitution  
Ethics  
Metaphysics  
Poetics  
Politics  
Rhetoric  
Soul  
Categories  
Interpretation  
Prior Analytics  
Posterior Analytics  
Physics  
Parts of Animals

15

Euclid c. 300 B.C  
*Father of Geometry*

The Element



Euclid

16

Archimedes 287-212 B.C

On Conoids  
Parabola  
Geometric Solutions

17

Cicero 106-43 B.C

Government and the Rights of Man  
Dream of Scipio  
Brutus  
On Friendship  
On Old Age  
Orations  
On Mixed Government  
Gods and the Commonwealth  
Tusculan Disputation  
Offices  
On Duties



# the history and wisdom of the World's Greatest Books

18

Virgil 70-19 B.C

The Aeneid

19

Justin Martyr 100-167

The Apology

20

Plutarch c. 46

The Lives of the Noble Grecians and  
Romans

The Training

21

Flavius Josephus 37-100

Discourse to Greeks on Hades

Against Apion

Antiquities of the Jews

Jewish Wars

22

Tacitus 56-117

On Germany

Germany and Agricola

23

Galen 129-216

On Natural Faculties

24

Eusebius 260-340

Ecclesiastical History

Oration in Praise of Constantine

Constantine the Great

25

St. Athanasius 298-373

Father of Orthodoxy

Life of St. Anthony

Defense Against Arians

Apologia before Constantius

On Incarnation

26

St. Basil the Great 330-373

Father of Eastern Monasti-

Address to Young Men Reading Greek  
Literature



*"About this time lived Jesus, a man full of wisdom, if indeed one may call him man. For he was the doer of incredible things and the teacher of such as gladly received the truth...he was the Christ on the accusation of the leading men of our people, Pilot condemned him to death on a cross; nevertheless those who had previously loved Him still remained faithful to Him. For on the third day He again appeared to them living, just as, in addition to a thousand other marvelous things, profits sent by God had foretold."*

Book XVIII  
Jewish Antiquates  
Flavius Josephus







St. John Chrysostom

27

St. Ambrose 339-397

Doctor and Patron of Learning

Exposition of the Faith

Selected Letters

Repentance

28

St. John Chrysostom 347-407

Golden-Tongued Doctor

Commentary on Epistle to the Romans

Homily on Fasting

Homily on Power of Demons

Homily on Errors of Separated Brethren

29

St. Augustine 354-430

Doctor of Grace

City of God

Enchiridion

The Confessions

Rule

Christian Doctrine

On Free Choice of Will

On the Holy Trinity

# WISDOM OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Men go abroad to admire the heights and mountains, the mighty billows of the sea, the long course of rivers, the vast compass of the ocean, and the circular motion of the stars, and yet pass themselves by.

It is a duty of good education to arrive at wisdom by means of a definite order.

Every sin is more injury to him who does than to him who suffers it.

There is nothing so laborious as not to labor. Blessed is he who devotes his life to great and noble ends, and who forms well-considered plans with deliberate wisdom.

If we ask what it is to live well—that is, to strive after happiness by living well—it must assuredly be to love virtue, to love wisdom, to love truth, and to love with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind: Virtue which is inviolable and immutable, wisdom which never gives place to folly, truth which knows no change or variation from its uniform character.



# ST. AUGUSTINE



Doctor of grace



Venerable Bede

30

St. Patrick 387-493

Confessions

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick

31

Leo the Great 461

Doctor of the Church

173 Letters Dealing with Doctrinal Issues

97 Ninety seven sermons including Christmas, Epiphany, the Ascension, Easter, Pentecost, Lent and Holy Week.

32

Boethius 480-524

Consolation of Philosophy

33

St. Benedict 480-547

Doctor and Patron of Europe

The Rule

34

Pope Gregory the Great 540-604

Doctor of the Church

Pastoral Rule

Register of Epistles

Lives of St. Benedict & St. Scholastica

35

Venerable Bede 672-735

Father of English History

Ecclesiastical History of England

36

Einhard 770-840

Life of Charlemagne

37

St. Anselm of Canterbury 1033-1109

Father of Scholasticism

Cur Deus Homo

Monologium

Proslogion

Reply to Gaunilo

Why did God become Man



Charlemagne



# the history and wisdom of the World's Greatest Books

38

St. Bernard 1090-1153

**Doctor Mellifluus**

On Loving God

The New Knighthood

Steps of Humility

39

Song of Roland c. 1100

Anonymous

40

St. Francis of Assisi 1182-1280

Little Flowers

Opuscula

41

St. Albert the Great 1206-1280

Cleaving to God

**Doctor Universalis**

42

St. Bonaventure 1221-1274

**Seraphic Doctor**

**Mind's Road to God**

Blessed Virgin Mary

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

43

Joinville 1224-1317

The Life of King St. Louis

44

St. Dominic 1170-1221  
& St. Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274



**The Angelic Doctor**

Treatise on God as First Principle

Summa Theologiae

De Regimine Principum

On the Teacher

Summa Contra Gentiles

Esse et Esentia

Posterior Analytics

Sacred Doctrine

*Treatise on Man*

*Treatise on Law*

*Treatise on God*

*Treatise on Trinity*

*Treatise on Faith*

*Treatise on the Sacraments*



St. Bernard and the New Knighthood

**B**ECAUSE philosophy arises from awe, a philosopher is bound in his way to be a lover of myths and poetic fables. Poets and philosophers are alike in being big with wonder.

*Thank God for the gift of faith, for if reason were the only way to know God, mankind would long be in the thick veil of darkness and ignorance.*

*The gift of knowledge makes for the correct management of temporal matters and shows how to lead good lives in the midst of wicked persons; understanding enables us to study the Creator; wisdom affords us the contemplation solely of eternal truth and delight in it.*

St. Thomas Aquinas



*And at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men assayed to pull at the sword that would assay; but none might prevail but Arthur, and pulled it out afore all the lords and commons that were there, wherefore all the commons cried at once, We will have Arthur unto our king,*

King Arthur



*I am the king's good servant, but God's servant first.*

St. Thomas More

45

Dante Alighieri 1256-1321

The Divine Comedy

46

Geoffrey Chaucer 1347-1400

Troilus and Criseyde

47

St. Catherine of Sienna 1347-1380

Discretion

Divine Providence

Obedience

Prayer

Doctor of the Church

*Knowledge must precede love, and only when she has attained love, can she strive to follow and to clothe herself with the truth.*



48

Thomas a Kempis 1379-1479

Imitation of Christ

49

St. Joan of Arc 1412-1431

Trial Transcripts

50

Sir. Thomas Mallory d. 1461

King Arthur

51

St. Thomas More 1478-1535

Utopia

Comfort Against Tribulation

52

St. Ignatius of Loyola 1491-1556

Spiritual Exercises

Ratio Studiorum

53

St. Teresa of Avila 1515-1582

Way of Perfection

First Woman Doctor

Interior Castle

# the history and wisdom of the World's Greatest Books

54

St. John of the Cross 1542-1591

Doctor of Mystical Theology

Ascent of Mount Carmel

Dark Night

A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul

55

St. Robert Bellarmine 1542-1621

Champion of Orthodoxy, Doctor

Treatise on Civil Government

Seven Last Words on the Cross

56

Nicolas Copernicus 1473-1543

Dedication to the Heavenly Bodies

Johannes Kepler 1571-1630

Epitome of Copernican Astronomy

57

William Shakespeare 1564-1616

Romeo and Juliet

Tempest

Merchant of Venice

Coriolanus

Twelfth Night

Henry V

Othello

Caesar

King Lear

King Richard

Hamlet

Macbeth

Richard II

*What a piece of work is man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties. In form and manner how admirable in action how like an animal in apprehension how like a god. The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals*

*Hamlet*  
William Shakespeare

58

Francis Bacon 1561-1626

New Atlantis

Novum Organum

William Harvey 1578-1657

Motion of the Heart and Blood

59

St. Francis de Sales 1567-1677

The Devout Life

Doctor of the Church, Patron of Writers

60

Ven. Sr. Mary of Agreda 1602-1665

Mystical City of God

61

Blaise Pascal 1623-1662

Pensees



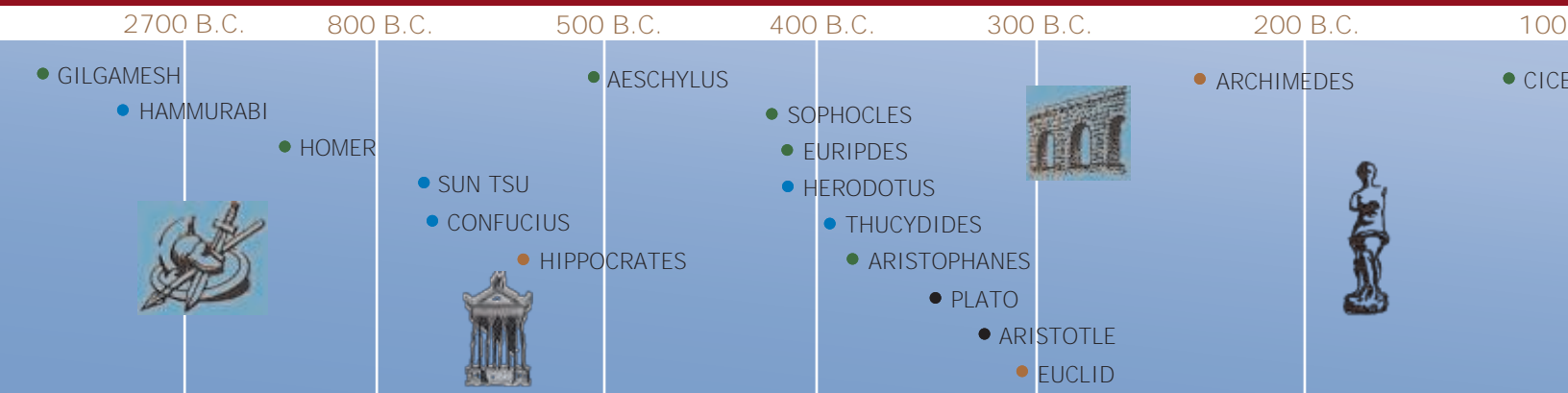
*All the world is a stage and all the men and women in it merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.*

William Shakespeare

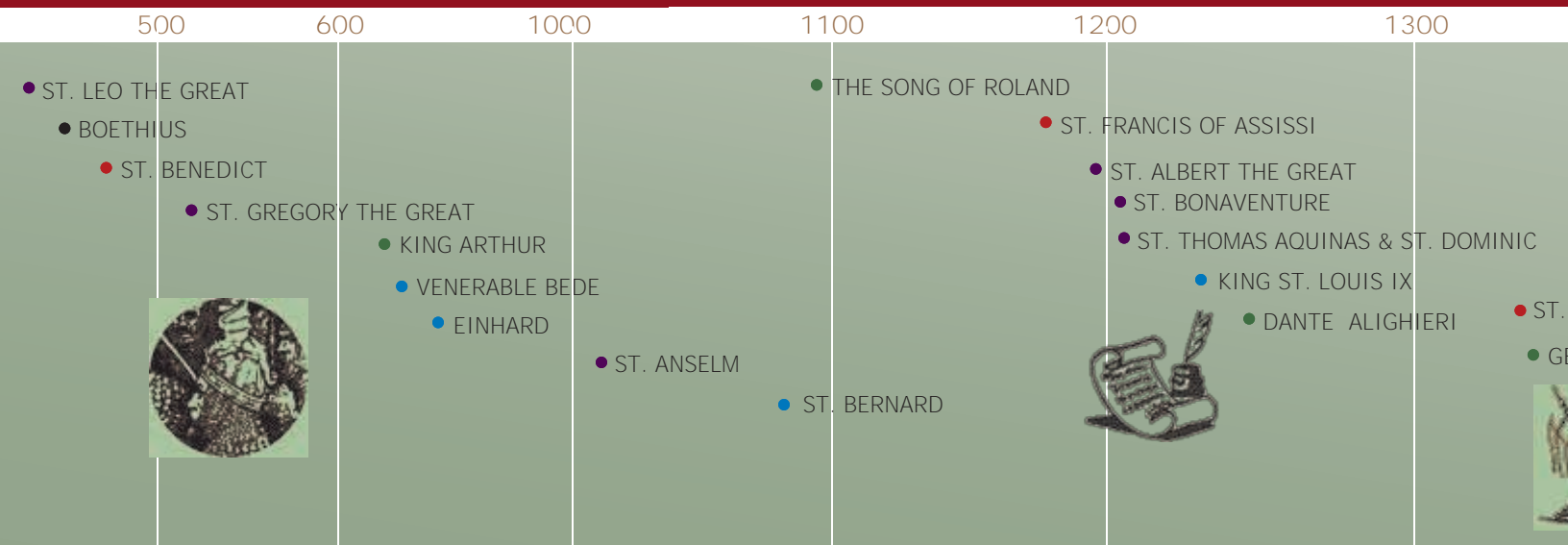




# THE ANCIENT WORLD



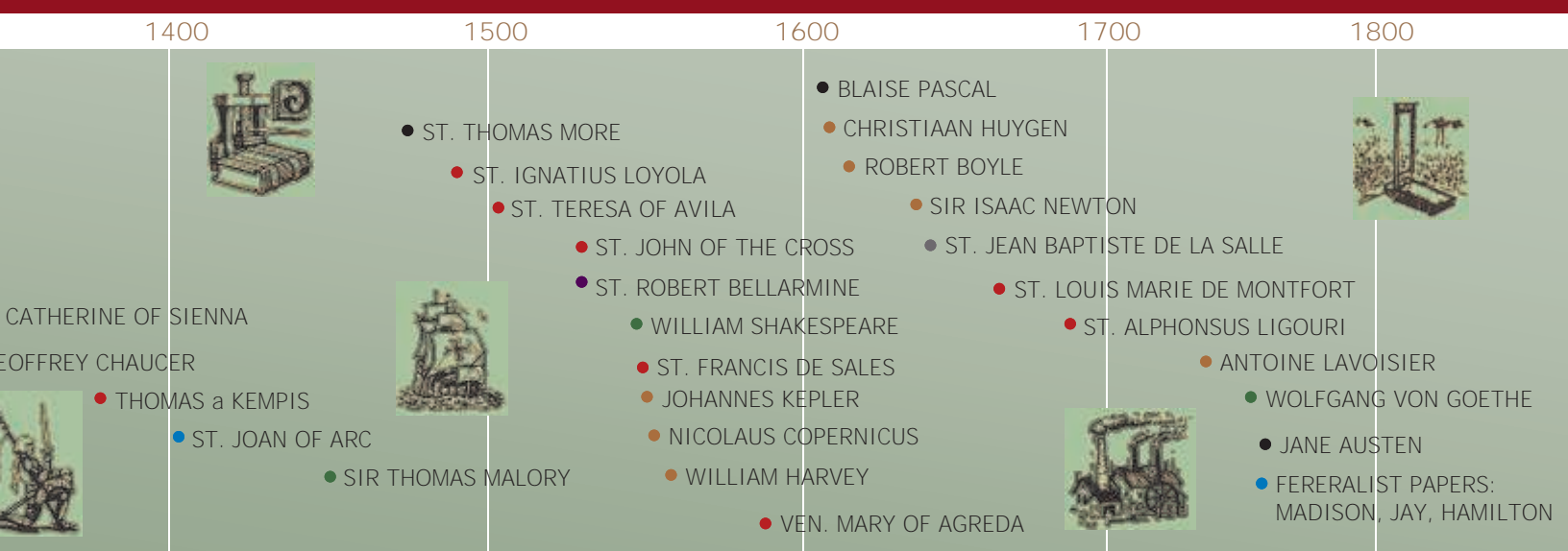
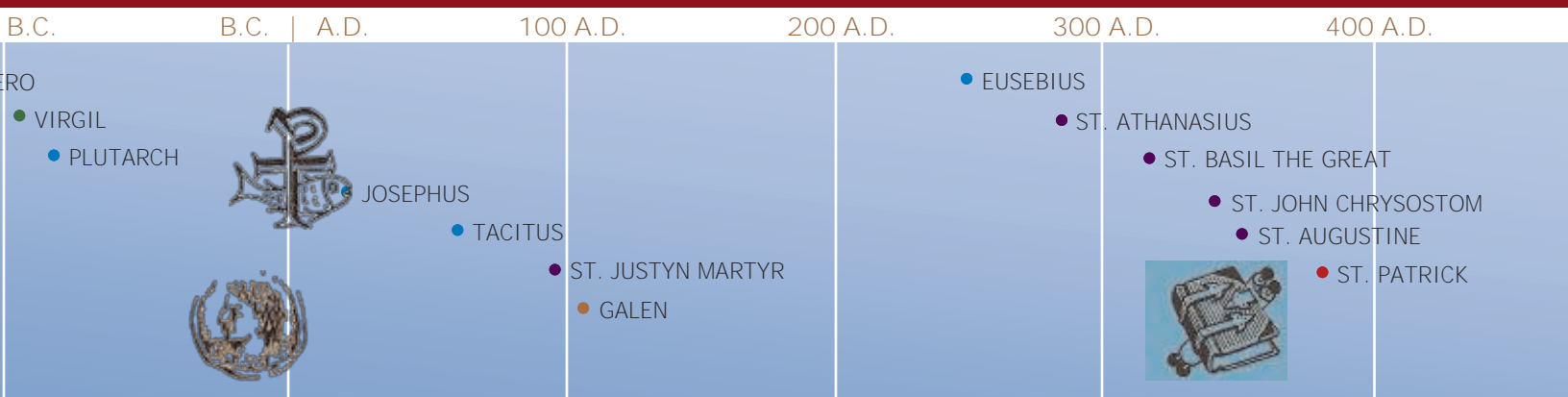
# THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

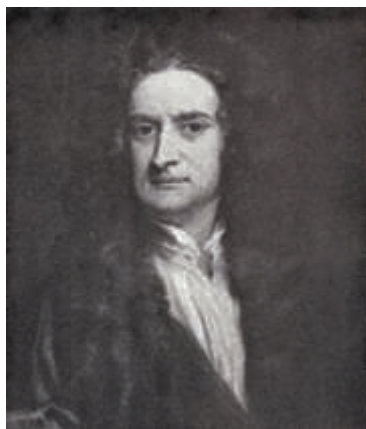


# THE MODERN WORLD



**GREATEST BOOKS  
OF CIVILIZATION**  
*A Chronology of the  
World's Greatest Authors*





*The instinct of brutes and insects can be the effect of nothing else than the wisdom of a powerful ever-living agent.*

Sir Isaac Newton



Abraham Lincoln



*Ignorant men raise question that wise men answered a thousand years ago.*

Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe

## 62

Robert Boyle 1627-1691	Treatise on Light
Christiaan Huygens 1621-1695	Experiments with Colours Experiments with Touching Colours

## 63

Sir Isaac Newton 1642-1727	Principium
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## 64

Jean Baptist de la Salle 1651-1719	Conduct of Christian Schools
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## 65

St. Louis de Montfort 1673-1716	Secret of the Rosary Friends of the Cross Love of Eternal Wisdom True Devotion The Secret of Mary
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*The more we honor the Blessed Virgin, the more we honor Jesus Christ, because we honor Mary only that we may more perfectly honor Jesus; since we go to her only as the way by which we are to find the end we are seeking, which is Jesus.*

## 66

St. Alphonsas Ligouri 1696-1787	Uniformity with God's Will Doctor of the Church, Patron of Confessors
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## 67

Antoine Lavoisier 1743-1794	Elements of Chemistry Chemical History of a Candle
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Father of Chemistry

Farrady 1791-1867	Experimental Research in Electricity
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## 68

Wolfgang von Goethe 1749-1832	Legend of Faust
Christopher Marlowe 1564-1593	Legend of Faust

## 69

Jane Austen 1775-1818	Pride and Prejudice Sense and Sensibility Mansfield Park Emma
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# the history and wisdom of the World's Greatest Books

70

Jay, Hamilton, Madison c. 1780      The Federalist Papers

71

Alexander Dumas 1802-1870      The Count of Monte Cristo

72

Cardinal John Newman 1801-1890      Idea of a University  
Apologia Pro Vita Sua  
Grammar of Assent  
Development of Doctrine



73

Alex de Tocqueville 1805-1859      Democracy in America

*It seems as if the rulers of our time seek only to use men to make things great; I wish that they would try a little harder to make great men; that they would set less value on the work and more value on the work man.*

74

Abraham Lincoln 1809-1865      Douglas Debates  
Speeches

75

Pope Leo XIII 1810-1903      Rerum Novarum  
& Modern Papal Social Teachings      Aeterni Patris

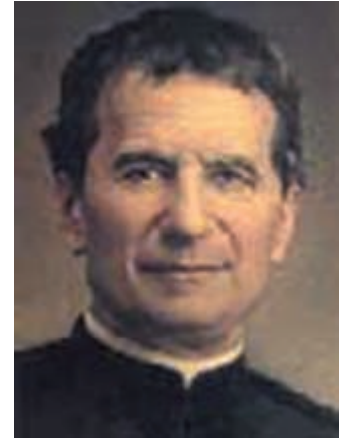
76

Charles Dickens 1812-1888      Tale of Two Cities  
Oliver Twist  
David Copperfield  
Great Expectations  
A Christmas Carol



77

St. John Bosco 1815-1888      Secret of Don Bosco  
Reason Religion and Kindness



“There are two systems which have been in use through all ages in the education of youth: the preventive and the repressive. The repressive system consists in making the law known to the subjects, and afterwards watching to discover the transgressors of these laws, and inflicting, when necessary, the punishment deserved. According to this system, the words and looks of the superior must always be severe and even threatening, and he must avoid all familiarity with his dependents.

Quite different from this and I might even say opposed to it, is the preventive system. It consists in making the laws and regulations of an institute known, and then watching carefully so that the pupils may at all times be under the vigilant eye of the Rector or the assistants, who like loving fathers can converse with them, take the lead in every movement and in a kindly way give advice and correction; in other words, this system places the pupils in the impossibility of **committing faults**”

St. John Bosco  
The Preventive System



'Baptism of the Russ' A theme Portrayed in Vladimir Soloviev's *Russia and the Universal Church*.

78

Herman Melville 1819-1891  
Moby Dick  
Billy Bud  
Benito Cereno

79

Cyprian Norwid 1821-1893

80

Fyodor Dostoevsky 1821-1881  
Crime and Punishment  
Brothers Karamazov  
The Idiot  
The Possessed

81

Gregor Mendel 1822-1884  
Plant Hybridization and Germ Theory  
Louis Pasteur 1822-1895  
Theory of Fermentation  
Extension of the Germ Theory

82

Lew Wallace 1827-1905  
Ben Hur, A Tale of the Christ

83

Henryk Sienkiewicz 1846-1916  
Quo Vadis

84

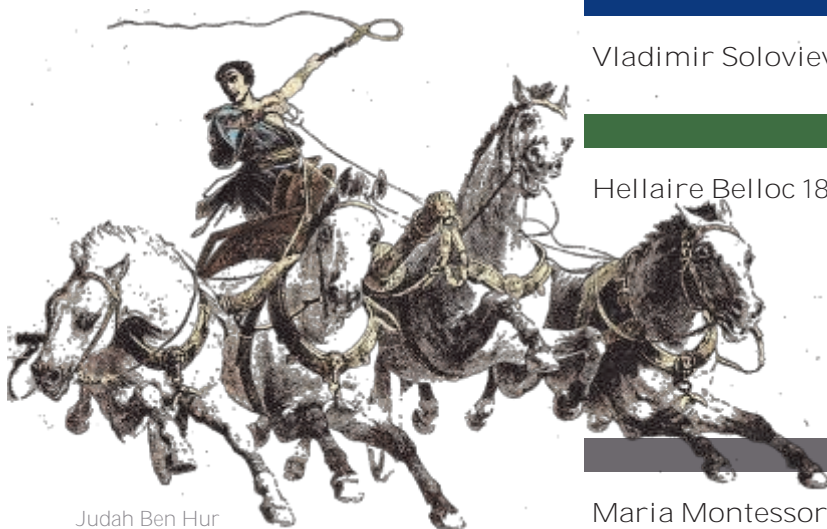
Vladimir Soloviev 1853-1900  
Russia and the Universal Church

85

Hellaire Belloc 1870-1953  
Europe and the Faith  
The History of England  
The Path to Rome  
The Servile State  
Characters of the Reformation

86

Maria Montessori 1870-1952  
The Montessori Method



Judah Ben Hur

# the history and wisdom of the World's Greatest Books

87

St. Terese of Lisieux 1873-1897  
*Doctor of the Church, at age 24*  
 Poems  
 A Story of a Soul

88

G.K. Chesterton 1847-1936  
 Heretics  
 Orthodoxy  
 Everlasting Man

89

Albert Einstein 1879-1955  
 Special Theory of Relativity

90

Sigrid Undset 1882-1945  
 Kristin Lavransdatter  
 Christmas and Epiphany

91

Jacques Maritain 1882-1973  
 What is Man  
 Christianity and Democracy  
 God and Science  
 Reflections on America  
 Art and Scholasticism  
 Introduction to Philosophy  
 Reforms  
 Intuition in Art

*Man can doubtless enjoy purely intelligible beauty, but the beautiful that is connatural to man is the beautiful that delights the intellect through the senses and through their intuition.*

Art and Scholasticism

92

Booker T. Washington 1886-1915  
 Up from Slavery

93

T.S. Eliot 1888-1965  
 Wasteland  
 Prufrock  
 Ash Wednesday  
 Murder in the Cathedral  
 The Three Magi  
 Middlemarch  
 Cocktail Party



Suppose that a great commotion arises in the street about something, let us say a lamp-post, which many influential persons desire to pull down. A grey-clad monk, who is the spirit of the Middle Ages, is approached upon the matter, and begins to say, in the arid manner of the Schoolmen, "Let us first of all consider, my brethren, the value of Light. If Light be in itself good--" At this point he is somewhat excusably knocked down. All the people make a rush for the lamp-post, the lamp-post is down in ten minutes, and they go about congratulating each other on their unmediaeval practicality.

But as things go on they do not work out so easily. Some people have pulled the lamp-post down because they wanted the electric light; some because they wanted old iron; some because they wanted darkness, because their deeds were evil. Some thought it not enough of a lamp-post, some too much; some acted because they wanted to smash municipal machinery; some because they wanted to smash something. And there is war in the night, no man knowing whom he strikes. So, gradually and inevitably, to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, there comes back the conviction that the monk was right after all, and that all depends on what is the philosophy of Light. Only what we might have discussed under the gas-lamp, we now must discuss in the dark.

G.K. Chesterton



# T.S. ELIOT WASTELAND



Thomas Stern Eliot's *Wasteland* expresses disenchantment with the post-war period seemingly unable to connect with the cultural traditions and civilization which gave rise to modern Europe.

The *Wasteland* is a sterile world in search of redemption symbolized by the Holy Grail.

T. S. Eliot, a member of the Church of England, is known for intellectual integrity and his exploration for the meaning of human history, critique of social and cultural questions and the idea of a Christian society.



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Mahatma Gandhi 1889-1948

**Freedom's Battle**

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Christopher Dawson 1889-1970

Patriotic Family in History  
Is the Church Too Western  
Christianity and Humanist Tradition  
Church as Soul of the West  
Intuition in Christian Philosophy  
Confucian Tradition  
English Catholicism and Victorian England  
The Rights of Man  
Early Development of Rome  
On Jewish History  
The Nature and Destiny of Man  
Religion and the Romantic Movement  
Study of Western Culture  
The Tradition and Destiny of American Literature  
What has Grown Old will be Made New

*The central conviction that has dominated my mind since ever I began to write is the conviction that the society or culture which has lost its spiritual roots is a dying culture., however, prosperous it may appear externally. Consequently, the problem of social survival is not only a political or economic one; it is above all things religious, since it is in religion that the ultimate spiritual roots both of society and the individual are to be found.*

Christopher Dawson  
Enquiries, 1933



*Political freedom cannot last without provision for free unlimited acquisition of knowledge. Truth is not long retained in human affairs without continual learning and relearning. A political order is tyrannical if it is not rational.*

Robert Maynard Hutchins

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St. Edith Stein 1891-1942

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*St. Padre Pio prayed for the book's success and proclaimed, "It will have success while the author is living, but will have its greatest success after his death."*

**St. Padre Pio's prophecy on  
The World's Greatest Secret**



# THE HOLY BIBLE



## THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW  
MARK  
LUKE  
JOHN  
ACTS OF APOSTLES  
ROMANS  
1 CORINTHIANS  
2 CORINTHIANS  
GALATIANS

EPHESIANS  
PHILIPPIANS  
COLOSSIANS  
1 THESSALONIANS  
2 THESSALONIANS  
1 TIMOTHY  
2 TIMOTHY  
TITUS  
PHILEMON

HEBREWS  
ST JAMES  
1 PETER  
2 PETER  
1 JOHN  
2 JOHN  
3 JOHN  
ST. JUDE  
APOCALYPSE

## THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS  
EXODUS  
LEVITICUS  
NUMBERS  
DEUTERONOMY  
JOSHUA  
JUDGES  
RUTH  
KINGS I  
KINGS II  
KINGS III  
KINGS IV  
PARALIPOMENON I  
PARILIPOMENON II  
ESDRAS I  
ESDRAS II

TOBIAS  
JUDITH  
ESTHER  
JOB  
PSALMS  
PROVERBS  
ECCLESIASTES  
CANTICLE  
WISDOM  
ECCLESIASTICUS  
ISAIAS  
JEREMIAS  
LAMENTATIONS  
BARUCH  
EZECHIEL

DANIEL  
OSEE  
JOEL  
AMOS  
ABDIAS  
JONAS  
MICHEAS  
NAHUM  
HABACUC  
SOPHONIAS  
AGGEUS  
ZACHARIAS  
MALACHIAS  
I MACHABEES  
II MACHABEES





# LIBERAL EDUCATION A UNIVERSAL RIGHT



All men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among them are the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

*American Declaration of Independence*

fundamental bedrock values foundational to democratic societies are contained in this historic political statement about the rights of man. All human beings possess a right to life and the liberty or freedom to use that life to pursue happiness. The commitment to human rights and a democratic form of government carries with it a corollary commitment to increased educational opportunity.

American educational reformer, Horace Mann, recognized this basic tenet when he stated that *"the establishment of a republican form of government (representative democracy) without well-appointed and efficient means for universal education of the people is the most rash and foolhardy experiment ever tried by man"*

If a state is bad, like a Nazi or Communist state, it makes men bad in order that they may be tractable subjects of a bad state . . . . It may be what society wants. In pragmatic terms, in terms of success in the society, it may be a good system. Although it may be a system of training or instruction, or adaptation, or meeting immediate ends, it is not a system of education. No, the purpose of education is to improve men. If education makes them bad it is not education, but something else. Society is to be improved by improvement of the individuals who compose it. The individual is the heart of society (1976, Hutchins).

The proper object and primary end of education in a democratic society is the development of each individual person. Its real aim



is to make a human, the liberation of the human person. According to Jacques Maritain, **"All of the civil and political rights enjoyed by people in democratic societies, including the right to an education, ultimately rest on the respect for human dignity in each individual."**

The decision to form a democratic society requires an educational theory and practice concomitant to these ideals. Free men, as opposed to slaves and serfs, have always received a liberal education, an education intended to humanize and to liberate them, to set them free to pursue higher things beyond mere survival. Consequently, we find democratic societies placing a premium on education for all citizens. The idea that the best education for the few, the aristocracy, is also the best education for the many is regent in democracies. Because all citizens are valued, a premium is placed on human development.

One of the greatest ideas America has given the world is the idea of education for all. Early in the American colonial period, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison that "the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty is to educate and inform the whole mass of people." In democratic societies attempting to implement this ideal, an inevitable question arises, viz.; will this idea mean that everyone can be educated or merely that everyone has to go to school?

# LIBERAL EDUCATION A UNIVERSAL RIGHT

Unfortunately, we often mistake training and schooling for education. The ancient Greeks and Romans differentiated between education and training. Training imparted skills (vocational or servile arts) intended for slaves. The liberal arts (education for free men) were the exclusive domain of the aristocracy. They imparted skills necessary for proper use of leisure time and for participation in the political affairs of the polis. Vocational education imparts skills for earning a living but not the requisite skills for living well. Because every person is a human being before he is anything else, (a human being before being a carpenter, a human being before being a doctor, a nurse, teacher or any other profession) he requires an education that will make him a better person before training necessary for getting money.

Being a better person will help make a better carpenter, a better doctor or nurse, one that is responsible, confident, honest, polite, diligent and loyal, that is, one having characteristics highly sought by employers but difficult to find because we focus too much on jobs and not enough on human formation. Acquiring job skills no matter how important this might be, does not make a better person. It usually makes for mere acquisition of material means and no higher end than mere survival.

Human beings require an authentic education devoted to their inherent dignity as men and women created in the image of God. They require an education that provides the arts necessary to achieve the fulfillment of their human potential in a lifelong pursuit of happiness. Liberal education provide these general human skills needed by everyone. Vocational training provides specific job skills needed for a few.

Therefore, vocational training should not precede liberal education or worst neglect it all together. The end of education is the **development of man**. "The development of man is the whole purpose of the whole process of education" (Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Ex-*

*ercens*).

In the past, educators and political leaders have made the mistake of over emphasizing vocational training necessary for earning a living and the social aims of society. Although these are important aims they tend to dehumanize and diminish human dignity leading to a life of drudgery more fit for animals than human beings.

Lech Walesa captured the idea well in his autobiography, *A Way of Hope*:

*"People had to get up at four or five in the morning and travel to work on a train packed to the roof, they slaved away until six or eight in the evening and then went home only to fall asleep on their chairs, in front of a bowl of soup or the television. They worked from dawn to dusk every God-given day and in frightful conditions: in rain, wind, and freezing temperatures, or else in suffocating heat, breathing the fumes given off by lead paints and toxic concentrations of welding gases, deafened by the ceaseless din of hammer and vibrations of the polishing machines. Anyone who doesn't know what is meant by the expression 'rat men', should come to the ship yard and see how the men crawl on their stomachs with their rust scrubbers inside long pipes just wide enough for a man's body, covered in rust and sweat, or how they creep, armed with their acetylene blow torches, to work under the tankers' petroleum tanks. Then they'll see what's meant by exhausting human labor, inhuman labor that ruins a man's health."*

Alexis de Tocqueville recognized the poignancy of this social fact at the dawn of the Industrial revolution:

*"While the workman concentrates his faculties more and more upon the study of a single detail, the master surveys the extensive whole, and the mind of the latter is enlarged in proportion as that of the former is narrowed. In short time, the one will require*

*I wish that they would try a little harder to make great men; that they would*

# Liberal education treats everyone as an aristocrat



Thomas Jefferson, Founder of University of Virginia

*nothing but physical strength without intelligence; the other stands in need of science, and almost of genius to assure success. This man resembles more and more the administrator of a vast empire--that man a brute [a "rat man"]. What is this but aristocracy."*

Regarding the aristocracy, Jefferson wrote to John Adams,

*"I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talent. There is also a pseudo-aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talent; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, trusts, and government of society. Indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom to manage the concerns of society. May we not even say, that form of government is the*

*best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristocracy into the offices of government?"*

Jefferson recognized the necessary relationship between education and democracy. In fact, he asked to be remembered as the founder of the University of Virginia rather than as President of the United States. He recognized that in a democracy people are citizens; not vassals or slaves. As citizens, they possess an inherent right to an education that enables them to achieve their God given ends and purposes in life.

For the sake of the new democratic society that is being built, it is more than ever necessary that education be the education of man, and education for freedom, the formation of free men for a free commonwealth. . . However great the need for technicians may be, it would be an irremediable mistake not to return to the primacy of liberal education (Maritain, 1943) .

If we fail to understand the differences among education, training, and schooling and consequently fail to implement educational reform including a broad provision for liberal arts, political democracy is a delusion, and the pseudolists (who argue that only they require a liberal education and everyone else a utilitarian one) are right.

Liberal education treats everyone as an aristocrat and respects the dignity and the ability of each to achieve their fullest potential, given appropriate adjustment, before beginning specific vocational training.

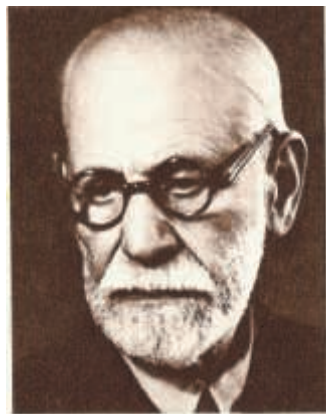
Consequently we either rethink the relationship between education and democracy and among education, human freedom, and human dignity or we resign ourselves to a condescending elitism that assigns some a life of freedom and others a life of toil and drudgery lacking the light of inspired learning, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom which are the right of every person to acquire. ●

*set less value on the work, and more upon the workman.*

Alexis de Tocqueville



# THE GREAT BOOKS OF THE WESTERN WORLD



What are the Great Books and why are they part of this series?

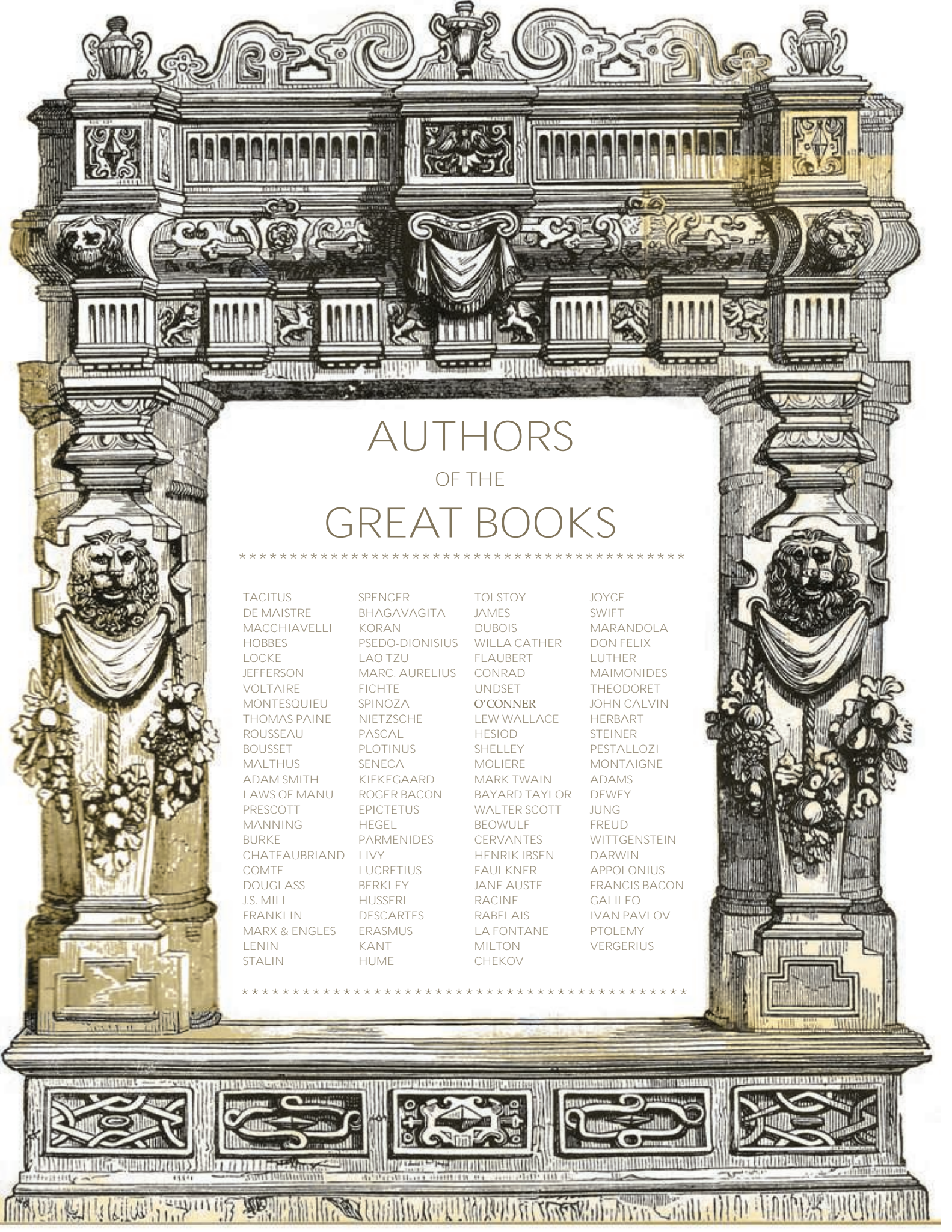
**T**he *Great Books* are a companion series to *Kolbe's Greatest Books*. They are patterned on the *Great Books of the Western World* edited by Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler. While *Kolbe's Greatest Books* are all part of Judaeo, Greco Christian tradition or part of the secular natural law tradition, the *Great Books* are often antithetical to this tradition; however, they are indispensable because they masterfully explore many of the perennial ideas; they are an integral part of the Christian story and of western civilization; because they contribute to our understanding, stimulate thinking, discussion and collegial dialogue and are considered part of the repertoire of every educated person. Catholic culture cannot be formed in isolation. Since it is not realistically possible to insulate our students from the force of antithetical ideas dominant in the world, we should endeavor to educate them so that they can think and make sound judgments for themselves and feel comfortable handling diverse intellectual traditions and challenges because their education has included dialectical discussion as part of their higher studies. Dialectical dialogue, exploration and critical discussion of great ideas should be conducted in a spirit of esteem, respect, and openness even when disagreement is great. We would go a long way to healing divisions if such dialogue were promoted and engaged in by mature people taught to respect the dignity of every participant, even of their adversaries. Because the *Great Books* are often antithetical to ideas expressed in the *Greatest Books*, they help students develop dialectical thinking skills, judgment, and evaluation essential to higher education. Consider that the *Great Books* include such avowed enemies of Christianity as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Darwin, Machiavelli, and Rousseau, (among a host of others) atheists, agnostics, anti-Christians, and revolutionaries. It seems the height of human folly to leave young students alone to discover truth in this pastiche of bewildering thinkers unaided by



*I feel that the irrational forces in man's nature are so strong that the rational forces have little chance of success against them. A small minority may be able to live a life of reason, but most men are more comfortable living with their delusions and superstitions than with the truth.*

Sigmund Freud





# AUTHORS OF THE GREAT BOOKS

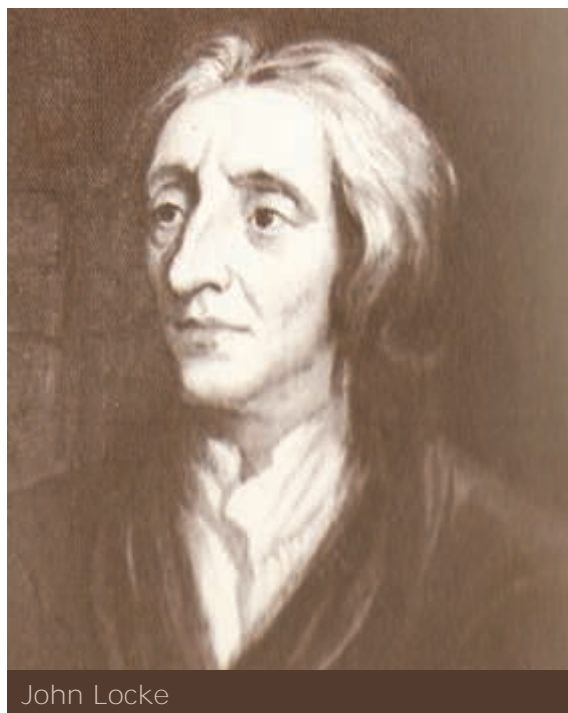
TACITUS  
DE MAISTRE  
MACCHIAVELLI  
HOBBS  
LOCKE  
JEFFERSON  
VOLTAIRE  
MONTESQUIEU  
THOMAS PAINE  
ROUSSEAU  
BOUSSET  
MALTHUS  
ADAM SMITH  
LAWS OF MANU  
PRESCOTT  
MANNING  
BURKE  
CHATEAUBRIAND  
COMTE  
DOUGLASS  
J.S. MILL  
FRANKLIN  
MARX & ENGLES  
LENIN  
STALIN

SPENCER  
BHAGAVAGITA  
KORAN  
PSEDO-DIONISIUS  
LAO TZU  
MARC. AURELIUS  
FICHTE  
SPINOZA  
NIETZSCHE  
PASCAL  
PLOTINUS  
SENECA  
KIEKEGAARD  
ROGER BACON  
EPICTETUS  
HEGEL  
PARMENIDES  
LIVY  
LUCRETIUS  
BERKLEY  
HUSSERL  
DESCARTES  
ERASMUS  
KANT  
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CERVANTES  
HENRIK IBSEN  
FAULKNER  
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RABELAIS  
LA FONTANE  
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JOYCE  
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MARANDOLA  
DON FELIX  
LUTHER  
MAIMONIDES  
THEODORET  
JOHN CALVIN  
HERBART  
STEINER  
PESTALLOZI  
MONTAIGNE  
ADAMS  
DEWEY  
JUNG  
FREUD  
WITTGENSTEIN  
DARWIN  
APPOLONIUS  
FRANCIS BACON  
GALILEO  
IVAN PAVLOV  
PTOLEMY  
VERGERIUS





A venerable intellectual tradition available to them via *The Greatest Books* and by master teachers who know these books, the truths they contain and the arguments arrayed against them from opposing camps represented in the *Great Books*.

Consequently, *The Great Books* form a **part of Kolbe's series to be respectfully approached** after students have had a solid formation in their own tradition including studies of history, theology, social science, philosophy, and literature from a perspective of faith and reason, *fides et ratio*.

We need not cower to those who claim that such an education in the Catholic tradition including faith and reason is tantamount to indoctrination rather than the freedom and emancipation toward which liberal education aims.

*Faith is not indoctrination, faith is enlightenment that keeps one from being indoctrinated.*

Such an education including faith and reason is the highest surety of intellectual formation and freedom. When coupled with higher dialectical studies of the Great authors the education is fine tuned and well

rounded, open to insight and contributions as well as antithetical challenges coming from many different directions.

This is a more proper way to form minds in truth and wisdom than to leave them vapid and void of an intellectual bulwark that has withstood the test of time and continues to grow as a living organism increasingly important to the spiritual and practical affairs of humanity.

We ask, how a young and underdeveloped mind in the state of natural intelligence (mere memory and fanciful imagination unaided by reason) rather than acquired intelligence (advanced intellectual virtue including understanding and wisdom) aided by faith can survive long in this raging sea of ideas, deception, fine argumentation and cunning unaided by teachers, schools, colleges, and universities devoted to the truth and having masters of ideas, philosophy, theology, science, and mathematics to help guide average students from intellectual shore to intellectual shore without suffering shipwreck? Is it a good thing to turn out immature and underdeveloped minds to pasture in fields occupied by Machiavellian lions and foxes?

We are open to a free market place of ideas but insist nonetheless, that to avoid the nihilism that often arises in a free arena of ideas where all are considered equal or essentially correct, that participants in discussion of these ideas be required to demonstrate their positions either by empirical verification or logical demonstration with examples from the primary texts.

Because the mind is easily deceived by multiple subjective problems which cloud intellectual inquiry including, on the one hand

1. an overly intense mixing of nationalism **and faith as if one's faith were subordinate to one's political perspective**
2. an intellectually and spiritually underdeveloped devotionism that subjects strenuous spiritual and intellectual endeavors of leaders to the caprice of sentimental forces overly committed to voices and visions, and



3. a faith perspective devoid of any serious intellectual formation and lacking the requisite humility necessary to attain wisdom.

And on the other hand

1. an overly intense commitment to an ideological perspective, which turns one into a subservient machine of a political power willing to commit evil to achieve a supposed good.
2. the chicanery of half truths and the **skewing of evidence to support one's myopic ideology**, even to the extent that one begins to believe his own half truths and becomes fanatically committed to a crusade, peaceful or not, for their implementation of these half truths, and
3. The problem of error masquerading as truth in piety

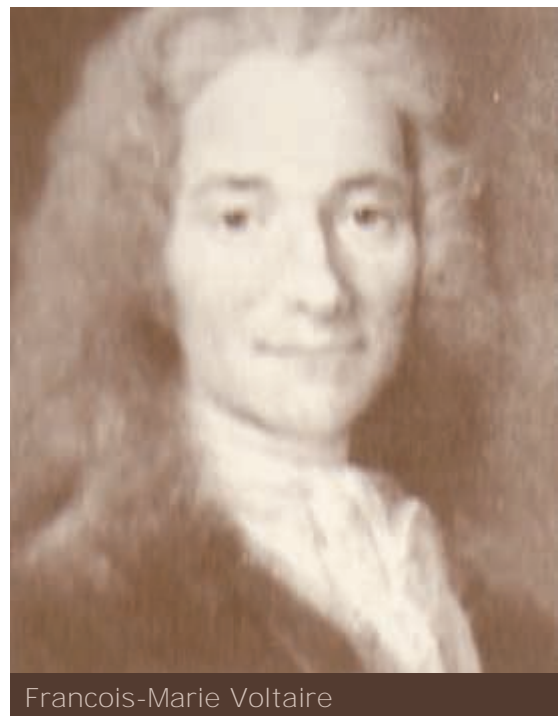
To avoid these and other related challenges to the peaceful pursuit of wisdom and human happiness, we insist that teachers as well as students be challenged to support their words by either empirical verification or logical demonstration. In authentic education reason is regent. Aquinas calls law a dictate of reason; it cannot validly be a force of the will as Hitler and totalitarian rulers would have it. Law is a rule of reason it is **not a dictate of the will. If a teacher's lesson** is to be valid it must have the force of reason behind it.

Even in a democracy, educators must be wary of these challenges. Education can be as destructive to human dignity in a democracy as it can be in a totalitarian state. **Liberal education, Maritain stresses, "is not an education that inculcate slogans in children and regiments them for democracy in the manner that a fascist education inculcates fascist slogans in children and regiments them for service of a fascist state. To train along lines inspired by animal training is precisely the special mark of the totalitarian states. . . .Let them keep it! They will die of it!"**

If will is the first principal of law and discussion then inevitably we end up with

the proposition that might makes right. The teacher uses his/her position of dominance to force his/her position even if unsubstantiated or challenged by a critical question posed by a student. All people have a voice and should freely exercise it; power when licit is to be respected, but by itself it does not and cannot arbitrarily determine matters of right and wrong. In a college or university setting right and wrong, truth and falsity are substantiated or unsubstantiated by the presentation of demonstrated arguments supported by empirical verification or logical demonstration taking place in a collegial spirit of mutual esteem and respect for the dignity of all participants to the discussion.

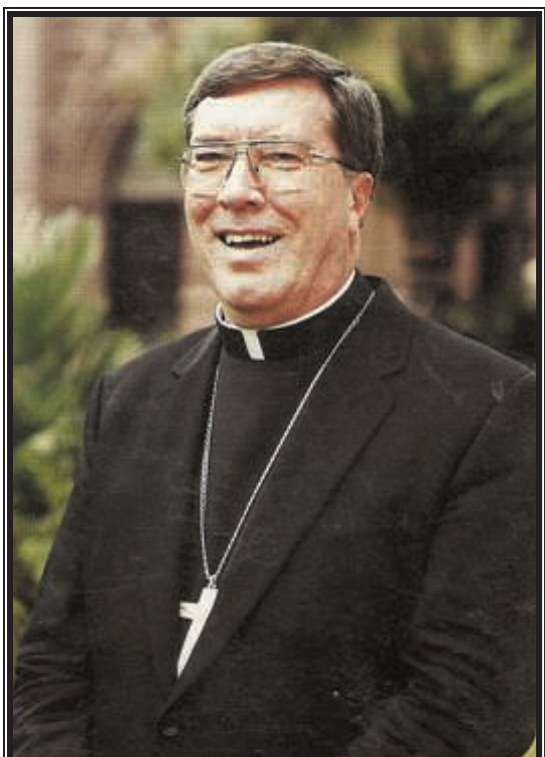
The *Great Books* introduce students to the broad western intellectual tradition after they have explored and become conversant with their own Christian tradition including classical antiquity and Judaism; they provide opportunities for the development of thinking, dialogue, and conversation that makes for an exciting venture in higher education within a framework of dialectical conversation, which enhances discussion and treats each participant as a fellow sojourner in pursuit of wisdom and ultimately of happiness. ●



Francois-Marie Voltaire



Saints, Doctors, Fathers, Bishops and Greatest Books Authors Discuss the Mystery of the Blessed Sacrament



**Robert Joseph Baker**  
Bishop of Birmingham USA

**Kolbe's Greatest Books** are an expression of the Church's perennial wisdom made assessable to the modern world using current multi-media technology in the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Patron of The Kolbe Foundation.

This series contains a life-time of reading and nourishment for mind and spirit. I anticipate many blessings for students of the Greatest Books and for the international mission of The Kolbe Foundation to expand Catholic higher education and to help build a civilization of wisdom and of love.

For these purposes, I gladly impart my apostolic blessing and exhortation in support of this timely series and to all involved with this educational work for the New Evangelization. ●

Bishop Robert J. Baker  
Episcopal Moderator of The Kolbe Foundation





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