

WHAT IS A SCHOOL?¹

It is ... an inn, a temporary group of scholars, all of whom will be blessed by their communal respite from life's journey. (*fcþ*)

ASCHOOL IS a time and place in which men and women—*scholars*—read, converse, and think about what is real in order to better know the truth of things. A school is thus *sacred*—a place set apart—for that leisured contemplation of the way things are that enables its members to foster that truth in their own lives, to consider being, truth, and goodness with the rest of their polity, and to ponder and incarnate the implications of their reflection and conversation; to hold each other, themselves, and their society and culture accountable to that truth, so that their understanding (their decisions and choices) increasingly conforms to what is real, or (in other words) so that their knowledge become increasingly true.

A school requires leisure (Gk. *scholia*), or, more properly, time apart from the demands and strains of everyday life in which its members can study, reflect, converse, and learn.

A school has within it three groups: (1) its perennial members, known as “senior scholars” or “tutors”, form the permanent *collegium* (Lat. “society”), a wisdom-seeking community that welcomes junior [younger] scholars into its ongoing conversation; (2) its more-or-less temporary members, its “junior scholars”, who join the community for longer or shorter periods, and some of whom may even remain to become perennial members (thus the community renews its self from within, lest the search for truth and understanding perish); and (3) the written thoughts of scholars who have gone before, thoughts that long reflection and experience have validated as having permanent value for helping others in the search for what is truly good, lovely, and worthy of praise.

When all of this occurs within a framework of faith in the God who has made us, and in whom we live and move and have our being, this search—and such a school—shall not have been in vain.

fcþ
Epiphany MMIX

¹These thoughts were originally prompted by a colleague's random remark.