

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

“THERE IS NOTHING THAT MAKES MEN RICH AND STRONG BUT THAT WHICH THEY CARRY INSIDE OF THEM. WEALTH IS OF THE HEART, NOT OF THE HAND.”

--JOHN MILTON

--It's December! Are you ready to peruse some Month 4 topics?

For American history, we are focusing on George Washington--learning the difference one man of virtue can make. He has been likened to the Roman general, Cincinnatus which leads us back to our study of Ancient Rome. We can't stop at Ancient Rome because so much of what the Romans had was influenced by the Greeks.

I know these are way too big of topics for a busy Christmas holiday. Touch on what you can, and maybe add it into some summer study. It's difficult to understand the context of the birth of a babe in Bethlehem without understanding the Roman world He was born into.

And then, of course, Rome leads us to a stopover in Italy, which also ties into the Christmas season as so many of the great artists of the Renaissance chose to paint the baby Jesus and the beautiful Madonna.

Our Nature topic is plants. A study of plants is going to carry over into January, so you may want to take focus on trees which, obviously, ties into Christmas. There's a short story in the Plants book in the Nature series that shows the stories a tree can tell.

The Mother's University topic is Art--which also easily ties back into the Christmas season. I did a podcast and slideshow that talks about the Madonnas in art. Look for it in Month 4 podcasts.

Have a beautiful Christmas season!

This edition of the newsletter mostly has beautiful food for thought...but do watch for some fun announcements in January! I do like surprises, don't I??

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

--“**Plants and animals don’t fight** the winter; they don’t pretend it’s not happening and attempt to carry on living the same lives that they lived in the summer. They prepare. They adapt. They perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis to get them through.

“Winter is a time of withdrawing from the world, maximising scant resources, carrying out acts of brutal efficiency and vanishing from sight; but that’s where the transformation occurs.

“Winter is not the death of the life cycle, but its crucible. Once we stop wishing it were summer, winter can be a glorious season in which the world takes on a sparse beauty and even the pavements sparkle.

“It’s a time for reflection and recuperation, for slow replenishment, for putting your house in order.

“Doing those deeply unfashionable things; slowing down, letting your spare time expand, getting enough sleep, resting ...”

(Katherine May)

--“**I have noticed when all the lights are on**, people tend to talk about what they are doing--their outer lives. Sitting round in candlelight or firelight, people start to talk about how they are feeling--their inner lives. They speak subjectively, they argue less, there are longer pauses. To sit alone without electric light is curiously creative. I have my best ideas at dawn or at nightfall, but not if I switch on the lights, then I start thinking about projects, demands, deadlines, and the shadows and shapes of the house become objects, not suggestions, things that need to be done, not a background to thought.”

(Jeanette Winterson)

--“**I opened a book and in I strode**  
Now nobody can find me.  
I’ve left my chair, my house, my road,  
My town and my world behind me.  
I’m wearing the cloak, I’ve slipped on the ring,  
I’ve swallowed the magic potion.  
I’ve fought with a dragon, dined with a king  
And dived in a bottomless ocean.

Art credit: The Hunters' Supper by Frederic Remington



I opened a book and made some friends.  
I shared their tears and laughter  
And followed their road with its bumps and bends  
To the happily ever after.  
I finished my book and out I came.  
The cloak can no longer hide me.  
My chair and my house are just the same,  
But I have a book inside me.”

(Julia Donaldson)

Art credit: Study at a Reading Desk by Frederic Leighton



--“**I started calling that girl back.** The girl who loved living, the girl who danced instead of walking. The girl who had sunflowers for eyes and fireworks in her soul. I started playing music again, hoping she would come out. I started looking for beautiful moments to experience, so she would feel safe enough to show herself, because I knew she was in there. And she needed my kindness and my effort to come to the surface again.”

(S.C. Lourie -- ‘Butterflies and Pebbles’)

--“**The reason that we protect** the environment is because there is a spiritual connection; there’s a love that we have. It’s not about quantifying stuff. That’s what the devil does. He quantifies everything. And that is what he wants us doing. Put a number on it.

“And the reason we are preserving these things is ... because we love our children.



Art credit: L'enfant a la Gerbe by Jules-Alexes Muinier

“You know, God talks to human beings through many vectors: through each other, through organized religion, through the prophets, through the wise people, the great books, but nowhere with the kind of detail and texture and grace and joy as creation.

“And when we destroy nature, we diminish our capacity to sense the divine--to understand who God is and our own potential is and duties are as human beings. ...

“All of Christ’s parables come from nature. I am the vine, you are the branches, the mustard seed, the little swallows, the scattering of seeds on the fallow ground--because that is where we sense the divine. God talks to us through the fishes, the birds, the leaves; they’re all words from our Creator.

“And that is why we preserve nature. ...

“The best thing you can do for climate is to restore the soils...”

(Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.)

The first item on Tim’s list as Belle Ame campus director was to start regenerating the soil so we can grow things. Belle Ame and WEH are all about soul regeneration. Educational practices of several decades and cultural shifts have depleted the souls of our children. Everything we are doing here is planting the right kinds of seeds to replenish nutrients and to drive out the toxic plants so that we can grow beautiful souls, which is the meaning of ‘Belle Ame.’

Beautiful souls will build a Beautiful world.

This is a community effort. I continue to invite you into our [Belle Ame at Home](#) community and [Mothers of Influence](#) community where we are connecting and learning together. Through small and simple means, great things can be accomplished.

--Today's gems from John Snider's *I Love Books*: "...as Socrates declared, poisonous ideas in the mind are more dangerous than poisonous foods in the body."

"Much imaginative literature now being written is obviously inspired by what the French call *la nostalgie pour la boue*--a homesickness for the mud. It is mercenary in motive and is poured into the minds of modern youth by a sordid-minded, shoddy-hearted school of writers who are digging the grave of art as well as of morals. Bookstores and libraries overflow with volumes that are filled with the improprieties or passages that paint in attractive light the foibles and sins of society. Such books are often best sellers, but they are also prime destroyers of the innocence and sobriety of youth."

"The study of human nature in books is solely to the end that it may be better studied in life.... It is not a substitute for real life, but an introduction to real life."

"The final test of the worth of any book is the state it leaves us in when we have finished reading it. If it leaves us with a deeper reverence for the One who made us and a more profound gratitude for His daily blessings--if it leaves us with a more gentle, tolerant, and understanding attitude toward our fellow men and a keener sense of our obligation to them--if it leaves us with a stronger desire to serve both God and man more fully in the work which the Saviour of the world has undertaken for humanity--it has been a good book for us to read."

Art credit: Half Holiday by Elizabeth Adela Forbes

--"The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world.

"There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our unique talents.

"Someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we had to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have a potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt." (Leo Buscaglia)



--I'll tell you what I'm excited about! My daughter, Shannon, found a folk school not far from us in North Carolina that is a hundred years old now and going strong. It was inspired by Grundtvig of Denmark who also inspired me in creating the Belle Ame Center. So many of the things that I have envisioned are happening on this campus in NC. That gives me hope. And I loved one of the comments I read. A participant said that it felt like coming home to Grandma's--which is just how Belle Ame feels. We'll put a WEH flair to ours. To all of you who are growing it through your membership with [BAAH](#)--thank you!!! I'm so excited for your families to come and experience what's going to happen there...and is already happening. Take a look at [folkschool.org](#).