

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The (Bonaventurian) Christological Ground of Frances Cabrini Pedagogy and the Liberal Art Model of Education of the Heart

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## Abstract

This article attempts to recover the original intent of the first American saint, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini's pedagogy, "to educate the heart." It also highlights her contribution to the liberal arts model of education and her cultural relevance to education in the United States. To articulate these thoughts, this article will lay out the theistic and the Christological grounds of Cabrinian pedagogy of educating the heart, to affirm its goal of transcendence and God as the finality of knowledge. It will locate the theistic and the Christological grounds of the pedagogy within the Franciscan intellectual tradition. It will proceed to argue for the truth-seeking and the dialogic goals of Cabrinian education, as a model of liberal arts education. It will conclude with an argument for the cultural relevance of liberal arts education and the theistic orientation of the social justice initiatives of Cabrinian education.

**Keywords:** Frances Cabrini, Education, First Principle, God, Subjectivity, Truth, Liberal Arts, Connaturality, Sociality, Social Justice.

## 1. Introduction

How should we educate? To answer the question, it will be helpful to investigate the etymology of the verb, educate. It is derived from the Latin word, *educere*, which literarily means to "draw out." I will describe a "draw out" as a disembarkation from intellectual provinciality and relativism, and the disposition of the self towards transcendence, the finality of knowledge.

Plato's allegory of the cave (Plato's Republic, VII 515a-520b) offers an interesting analogy for a good understanding of a "draw out." In the allegory, Socrates led Glaucon to imagine about some persons bound in chains since they were born. They could not move. They could only see what was in front of them—a wall. They were bound in an underground cave with fire behind them. Since they were bound and could not move their heads, they only saw what was projected to the wall in front of them by the fire behind them—the shadows of the real behind them.

Socrates imagined the release of one of those bound. He imagined that their new freedom would trigger some discomfort. The light of the fire, the sighting of the real and the true would dazzle them. The new experience would make them prefer/reminisce the "comfort" of their previous circumstance, the provinciality of the cave, and the limitation of boundedness, since truth, the real, and the new freedom would be uncomfortable, while provinciality would be safe. However, should the released person persist through the initial discomfort of knowing the real from phantom, would they not consider themselves happy to have been freed from prison? Socrates quizzed. Would they desire the honor of the beauty that was among them when they were in prison, in the cave?

The Socratic/Plato's allegory could yield many interpretations. However, in this article, the cave and boundedness are understood as ignorance, idolatry of relativism, the inability to access truth, and the mistakeness of substituting truth for phantoms. Since truth and the real, as objective reality must

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be differentiated from phantoms and can not be manipulated or reduced to human provinciality, those seeking the truth must be drawn out of their intellectual caves. The instrument of the draw-out is the light of reason (and a facilitator). However, just like the brightness of the fire was discomfoting to the released prisoner, the process of a release from an intellectual cave comes with its initial discomfort. This is the case because wanting to know, desiring education, and searching for the truth requires intellectual metanoia. It demands the divestment of the self from the previous indoctrination and an appreciation of “deconstruction.” It requires the problematization of held belief systems, an attraction to thinking and learning how to think, and the continuous rethinking of held conclusions.

So, how did Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini conceptualize her Socratic “draw out?” Peculiar and particular to Mother Cabrini’s pedagogy is the education of the heart. However, the phrase has been subjected to various interpretations, some of which diverge from the pedagogical goal of the patron saint of immigrants and the first saint of the United States of America. As such, in answering the above question this article will lay out the theistic and the Christological grounds of Cabrinian pedagogy of educating the heart which affirms the Cabrinian interest in transcendence and God as the finality of knowledge. It will argue for the truth-seeking and the dialogic goals of Cabrinian education as a model of liberal art education. It will conclude with an argument for the cultural relevance of liberal arts and of the theistic orientation of Cabrinian education. [1]

## 2. To Educate the Heart: The Franciscan-Theistic Ground

Mother Cabrini’s education model was informed by three pillars: her experience of love in her family, her school training with the Daughters of the Sacred Heart at Arluno (Italy), and her extensive and varied life experiences. As such, it is not surprising to know that God and a profound religious faith ground her “pedagogy of love.”[2] Without minimizing the importance of natural sciences and skills formation, Mother Cabrini teaches that the feel for God and affectivity must inform the education environment.[3] Affectivity and love must proceed from the educators, whom she describes as witnesses to the inseparability of moral and scientific education, and God as the finality of the education.[4]

Wherever God is the finality of education, there is the attention to interiorization and the priority of the

soul. Within that tradition, the soul, (within which the psychic is) occupies the second level of being, that is, after the being of God. The soul yields to its true nature and nourishes itself when its attentive to itself and to God. But it subverts itself when it is too attentive to matter, to the exterior. Matter and its various capabilities, like sensation, etc., serve the psychic, the soul. As such, the soul only minimizes itself when it is entangled with the sensation of matter instead of rising beyond it to God, the unchangeable being. [5] It would be that for the psychic and the soul to nourish itself, its search and its object must be something higher and better, that is God. Until it makes God its final end, the psychic/soul is restless, and it finds no peace.[6]

While the process of knowing and the number of objects to be known are variegated, knowing God ties together the various disparate objects the psychic should know. However, being drawn out of the intellectual cave for the purpose of knowing God has its challenges. God is beyond corporeality. As such, the knowing process demands some abstracting activities, which are less interactive and animated. So, how does one engage such? The pedagogical ideas of Mother Cabrini’s education of the heart provide some answers. [7]

Mother Cabrini favors an epistemological model that combines mental activity and affectivity processed through natural animation and natural mirrors. She loved and promoted the model, which she got from the Franciscan (Francis of Assisi) intellectual traditions. [8] It is about knowing God’s nature through the nature of created beings. Knowing in this regard is intellectual, appetitive, and affective. It begins with an acknowledgement of God, as the first principle of being, from whom all illuminations and beings descend.[9] God as the first principles separates the Franciscan idea of origin and finality of being (and by extension Mother Cabrini) from any form of deist-materialism. It continues the Augustinian narration of divine substance.[10]

Since everything that proceeds from the first principle, all that is, are vestiges/mirrors of the first principle, creation offers a window through which the first principle can be known to a certain degree. For through “the mirror of things perceived through sensation, we can see (God), not only through them... but also, in them as he is in them.”[11] This lens, which lends itself to Saint Francis of Assisi’ “Canticle of the Brother Sun” notes that while the physical and all creation demonstrate the beauty of God, the source

of all good, they are windows and lenses to arrive in God. [12] That all creatures have God in them, and they lead to God not only alludes to the being of God as the highest good but also that God as “that than which no greater can be thought” sanctifies all creatures. [13] As such, while God is in all beings and can be known through sensation, that is, appetitively, to stop at the level of knowing creation without proceeding to its source is an intellectual and spiritual error. [14]

To know appetitively is apprehending through the five doors of human senses: sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smell. While the doors are sensible/ corporeal in nature, the data they provide are processed through the psychic part of the soul. In other words, “from the exterior organ into the interior organ and from this into the apprehensive faculty.”[15] The appetitive nature of the five senses makes learning through them pleasurable. The pleasure, nonetheless, must be proportional to the extent that the senses retain their qualities as windows and vestiges. In other words, since what is perceived is a window, excessive immersion into such distracts from the real and enables a vestige to assume the quality of the real. This means that proportionality in this regard will entail knowing that the beauty of creation subsists in that which is beyond it. Creation in itself is not beautiful without the one that makes it beautiful. Hence, to stop at creation in contemplating its beauty and good, violates the logic of proportionality, the medium nature of creation, and exaggerates the generated nature of creation. For “the species that is apprehended is a likeness generated in a medium that is then impressed on the organ itself. Through this impression, it leads to its source, namely an object to be known.”[16]

What does it mean to refer to creation and all things appetitive as generated and as medium? Saint Bonaventure distinguishes what generates from what is generated by the simplicity of their beings. For Bonaventure, unlike what generates, that is, a simple being, what is generated, like plants, animals, and humans, have composite structures.[17] For example, when we say a person/plant exists, we refer to the various elements that constitute their beings, like body and soul for the human person. But when we refer to the existence of the soul as an entity in itself, outside of the materiality of the body, we refer to it without other elements other than being a simple being, a soul. While the soul is the closest thing to the simple being that generates, it is not that which generates principally. Although the soul is the source life to the body, something outside of it gives it life.

Since the soul does not generate itself, we cannot refer to the soul as that which generates (in the real sense) because something else causes the soul.

As it is with the human soul, which is the closest in nature to that which generates, so also it is with other created beings. What gives life to other created beings is that which causes the soul to be. As such, all beings generated shares some essential similarities with the principal generating being. It is due to those similarities that generated beings become mirror/vestige/medium of their principal cause. It can be inferred that since what is generated shares “something” with what generates, what is generated can know to some extent the nature of the being that generates principally through other generated beings. As such, all creation and all beings generated are legitimate media to know that which generates. Implicit in this argument is that all generated beings simple and composite in nature possess in some manner the capacity to know through other generated beings the nature of the being that generates principally. Otherwise, there will be no ground to refer to the sun as a brother, moon as a sister, and animals as fellow creatures.[18]

### **3. The Education of the Heart and the Franciscan Christology**

But then, how does this narrative of knowing God through creation relates to the Cabrinian “to educate the heart”? The Cabrinian emphasis on educating the heart is drawn from Mother Cabrini’s devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as such, to educate the heart has a Christological foundation.[19] Considering her devotion to Saint Francis of Assisi, it is assumable that her Christology is Franciscan.[20] In Franciscan Christology, the eternal generation of Jesus in the Father, which makes Jesus co-substantial in splendor with the Father is emphasized. So, also is the second nature of Jesus, his human nature, which was formed by the power of the Holy Spirit during the visit of the angel to the Blessed Virgin Mary.[21] The importance of Jesus lies in the fact that while it is true that various creatures have provided some ideas about God, they have done so in fragments. As such, God decided to reveal Godself fully in the person of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3). What God revealed in Jesus that was not fully comprehended through the various media is God’s affectivity. Although God’s affectivity was anticipated through various means and in the prophet Hosea’s experience/metaphor of marriage to the harlot, Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. (Hosea 1:1-3), it was not fully revealed until the coming of Jesus Christ.

All experiences and actions of Jesus that led to his crucifixion revealed God's concrete revelation of the depth of God's affectivity. With and in Jesus, the abstraction of knowing God as God, and the difficulty of such mental exercise has been doused. With Jesus, what is to be known about God is no longer a mental exercise in speculations. Instead, it is that knowing God who is love is an invitation to perform love. Love as that which cannot be known without performing it makes the becoming of man by God a direct consequence of the love of God and an exemplar by God on how to love. It means that the performance of God's love, in this instance, becoming/dying as man, lies in the narrative of God as love since love necessarily diffuses itself. That love diffuses means that it naturally manifests and outpours itself. As such, in Jesus, God's love which has been pouring and diffusing through creation reaches its fullness, merging the source of the medium, with the medium, climaxing, anti-climaxing, and then climaxing. By climaxing, the love of God became en-fleshed, by anti-climaxing, the en-fleshed love died in order to demonstrate the climax of loving, which is the disposition to give everything, even life. With Jesus, the anti-climax mode of loving (death) became a climax in which love out outpours itself vehemently without being exhausted. In Jesus, what is to be known is the one through which to know; what is lost in love is regained; what outpours itself, refills itself; as such, nothing is lost in love.

This performance of God's love is what we have come to know as "kenosis." Using the thoughts of St. Paul, it means God's self-emptying. It includes the becoming man by God, the humbling of God-self by God, the taking the form of a slave, and God-man-slave's obedience of love to the point of death (Philippians 2:6-11). The thoughts of Saint Bonaventure help fill up the gap left by St. Paul's narrative. That the life of Jesus was not just linear from birth to death. It was filled with some serious interpolating performances of love. The culmination into death was preceded by Jesus' exercise of plenitude piety in love for sinners, his friends, his tears for his friends and for those who failed to heed his voice. So, God's love was fully concretized in the solicitousness of Jesus Christ.[22]

In Jesus, the idea of affectivity and its performance meets intellection. What was thought, imagined, and conceptualized was performed habitually. Love, which some of the ancient thinkers had thought and wrote about was reimagined to guide and centralize all forms of knowledge by Jesus.[23] In other words, in Jesus, the lure of the soul and its imagination/

thought align with activities of the one in which those mental operations take place. As such, in Jesus, we have the exemplar of how the sensibilities of the heart and the intellection of the soul inform performance as the fullness of knowing.

The intersection of the intellect, the lure of love, and the performance of both, exemplified in Jesus grounds the Cabrinian to "educate the heart." The "heart," which operates as the substitute for the soul has the capacity of become. The becoming of the heart/soul is the constant realization of itself, its destiny, its worth, and its continuous morphing into that from which it came. The becoming of the heart, the soul, also called the mind is yielding of itself towards its source, which is a process. The unfolding of the process and its maturity impact the corporeal part of the human person. In other words, as the soul/heart/mind learns to yield towards its source, so does the body learn from the soul to yield itself towards performing the yield exemplified in Jesus. It implies that by nurturing the heart/soul to yield to its source, the soul learns to behold the highest form of intellection first through vestiges and in vestiges, represented and imagined through other sciences (psychology, biology, etc.), and later above those vestiges. [24] As such, to educate the heart is not sentimentalism, it is moving the soul/heart towards the highest level of intellection in graduality until the soul comprehends the highest knowledge in a Christlike manner. In other words, the heart/soul morphs into God and performs the various stages of intellection until the performances reach its fullness in God. In the education of the heart, these performances also happen with the learning of various sciences. However, those sciences do not function in isolation. They are part of the process towards learning the finality of intellection. As such, in education of the heart, sciences converse with theology to coordinate and centralize them toward their finality in God.

It would mean that for Cabrini's pedagogy to be true to its Franciscan root, the various fields of knowledge it teaches cannot be autonomous. To major in a field of study within the Cabrinian context requires one to investigate and study the source of all knowledge, and the implications of studying the source of all knowledge. Otherwise, how would education be that of the heart without knowing the triune functions of the heart/soul as operation site for affectivity, intellection, performance? How would education be that of heart if the heart is not educated on the source of its capacity to carry out those operations? How would education be that of the heart, if it does not search for the truth of its source?

#### 4. To Educate the Heart: The Cabirnian Pursuit of Truth

With its theistic-Christological values, Cabrinian education promotes the study of human values and their sources through its liberal arts courses.[25] Through these courses, especially its theology and philosophy, Cabrinian pedagogy uses the “draw out” learning pattern.

To search for truth, the required “draw out” must be deontological and political.[26] To be characteristically deontological and political, a draw out becomes a *dialogos*. *Dialogos*, in this instance, means that education/learning is an engagement, an encounter in its process and its expected outcomes. It is overall an exchange, which can also operate as a polarity between two or more, where both/all parties are immersed in the process for the sake of truth. The human capacity for *dialogos*, as learners and teachers, suggests they have the capacity for truth beyond non-human beings, and as such, subject and whole to themselves. Since they are subjects, they *dialogue* through reciprocity of being, mutual affirmation, and connaturality.[27] Reciprocity of being and mutual affirmation are prerequisites for education. Without these conditions, what appears like education is in reality “taming” or at best, “ideologizing.”

Being a subject, that is, possessing subjectivity (potential agency), is the starting point of education, which differs from subjectivism. The former is in being, in relation to its source described above, while the latter is in mental attitude, in disaffiliation with its source. Subjectivism as a mental attitude is the pathway to intellectual relativism and alienation. It isolates actions and absolutizes the experiences of those actions. It conceives personal consciousness as a total exclusivity and author of value. In contrast, subjectivity is invested in self-knowledge of the whole, of the real person, as an objective significance, while also aware of its connaturality and the relatability of their experience with those of others. As such, subjectivity is conscious and functions as a part, not as exhaustion of the whole.[28]

Also, the subject, although whole to themselves, is composite, with the capacity to transcend the limitation of the self, and as such, excels in social processes, physically, mentally, and transcendently. Transcendently, because their experiences and the content of their learning (formal and informal) are not just materially experiential, they have transcendental value. For example, to judge something as good requires one to know the nature of good. To know

the nature of good requires the ascent of the heart/mind from the limitation of temporality towards transcendence. Yielding towards transcendence is the consciousness that all performances should morph the person into their source. In like manner, knowing the nature and value of honor, justice, temperance, etc., as forms of good cannot be reduced to personal, cultural, and family “caves,” and idiosyncrasies. Instead, to know these values, the mind gets beyond that provinciality and attests to the sociality and transcendence of the human person. As such, human value judgment, like distinguishing good actions from evil actions and arriving at their difference, demands human intersubjectivity and social transcendence.[29]

Implying from above, the value of human action is not an isolated entity; it has a dynamic relationship between/among subjects and possesses or points to transcendental value. The values of human actions enable their perception of their innerness and the knowledge of the self through the self and the knowledge of the self through the other. It means that the value of an action is dependent on the outcome of the process of *dialogos*. A *dialogos*, which is a triangular form of encounter between the transcendental nature of a value, the self and other subjects. To minimize this process into a duo-angle or uno-angle encounter alludes to poor *dialogos* and produces poor “draw out.”

This dialogic value of education and its truth-seeking value challenges the relativism of truth and the narrative of disconnected fields of study in the academia. Relativism of truth or the culture of “my truth” is intricately linked to a lack of the right *dialogos* and the culture of the priority of the individual, which repeatedly contradicts the dialogic sociality of existence and knowledge.

The problem with the absence of triangular *dialogos* is not limited to innocuous exaggerated (personal) opinions masquerading as truth. Rather, it has occasioned serious ethical issues in human history. For example, many accounts of genocide, murder, and other heinous crimes against other persons cannot be separated from the problem of relativizing the meaning of existence, the limiting of the *dialogos* process to a duo-angle or a *mono-logos*. Whereas existence as truth is objective and social. It is not only true to the subject but also objective, that is, social. That I exist, that is, I am, is true. It is true because “I exist” is a social reality with all that exists, humans, non-human beings, and the source of existence. As such, that I exist is perpetually in a triangular dialogic and

exchangeable process. On the truth that I am, I exist, lies other truth. Since the truth of “I exist” grounds other truths, other truths are in themselves social and dialogic. To deny the ground of this chain of truth by another subject will not necessarily become the truth, even though may become an ideology. Ideologies are not necessarily true. Rather, they are the prism through which a person/group sees the world. As such, they need to be subjected the triangular *dialogos* to test their validity.

Implying from above, the culture of “my truth” may not go far enough in its intended goal of self-affirmation. It would seem to contradict what it intends to affirm since self-affirmation, that is, subjectivity, includes the affirmation of the other, not the alienation of the other. Moreover, it prioritizes the “differentia” between the self and other bodies. It visualizes and analyzes the world primarily from such ‘differentia’ in a way that makes “differentia” its primary locus of being. [30] But when reality is ideologized and visualized through such strong prism of human differentia, truth becomes unexchangeable and primarily relative. As such, facilitating a common interest, for example, the common good in any human organization, or even teaching a subject to a group of persons becomes an unreasonable task since there is no basis for common understanding or dialogic/exchangeable truth. But if the common good is the social condition for the spiritual and material flourishing of all, there must exist some binding elements and exchangeable truths in all humans that make it reasonable to have an umbrella social condition for their flourishing.[31]

The capacity for exchangeable truths in all human beings, that is, to pursue truth with other persons are what make dialogue reasonable and possible. To pursue truth with other humans is reasonable and required because human epistemic growth is gradual. Human knowledge of the world and of themselves is never fully realized at birth. Rather, persons come to the knowledge of themselves and of the world in graduality. It means there would be different moments of truth realization between persons. The chronological difference in the realization of the truth does not make truth relative or unexchangeable; instead, it makes nurturing a necessity. Nurturing referred to, that is, teaching, which is integral to Cabrinian pedagogy, grounds the exchangeability of truth.

The Cabrinian mechanism of teaching and nurturing the young towards the realization of truth is not ideologization. Instead, it is an exchange, a pursuit, a search for the truth because what is being sought,

the truth, is independent of the teacher. In Cabrinian pedagogy, teaching is bringing the learner to the realization of the truth and the teacher to the affirmation of the truth. This exchange enables both the teacher and the learners to become participants in the process since the teacher also learns or relearns in some sense. Moreover, it enables the teacher to see themselves in the epistemic inadequacy of the learner. As such, the teacher and the learner are discoverers, although to a different degree.

That a teacher and a learner, despite being at different levels of epistemic stage participate in the learning process affirms that participation, that is, *dialogos*, is a human property that corresponds to the social nature of the human person. In participation, human beings are able to choose actions with other persons for the benefit of themselves and others. Even when those actions do not directly benefit them, the actor experiences fulfillment since to benefit others is a contribution to the common, to improve their genus. This is why Cabrinian education prioritizes the common and the community. It emphasizes the importance of “I- Thou” relationality.[32]

Cabrinian “I-Thou” reflexivity and intersubjectivity insists that “It is not good for a man or a woman to be alone, they need a helper like themselves” (Genesis 2:18). As such, Cabrinian education while resisting relativism of truth, the subjectivism of the human person, also resists the loneliness of person, especially those who have been forgotten and neglected by the society. It does this, by seeing reality through the other and acting with the other. However, the Cabrinian seeing through the other is not the erasure of the subject like in the Marxist state; it is of intersubjective relations. Without negotiating the importance of the person, their experiences, their local, and their immediate context, Cabrinian education promotes human friendship, neighborliness, and social charity-charity meaning the triumph of love; love meaning self-giving in the name of God. While the Cabrinian intersubjective pedagogy is grounded in the God of Jesus Christ, it is also a critique of the world that has become individualistic and monadic.[33]

## 5. Conclusion - The Distinctiveness of Cabrini University and its Liberal Arts

So, as a distinctive narration of Catholic education, what value does Cabrinian education add to the educational structure in the contemporary world? It challenges the over-secularization of education and the education that disintegrates the holistic nature

of the human person. While it fosters intellectual creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity, Cabrinian education also further (a) the search for an integration of knowledge, (b) a dialogue between faith and reason, (c) an ethical concern, and (d) a theological perspective and the relevance of God-discourse.[34]

In Cabrinian education, the relevance of God-discourse comprises of faith-seeking understanding, issues about evolution/creation of the world, and ethical foundationalism. While other areas of God discourse thrive, God and ethics appear to be dominant in Cabrinian education. Regarding God and ethics, that is, God as the foundation of values, Cabrinian education continues with the idea of education as a “draw-out” described above to engage the meaning and the source of good like justice, equality, and human dignity. In other words, the Cabrinian “draw-out” insists that ethical values cannot be seriously engaged without God-discourse, without metaphysics. It emphasizes that the source of all values is beyond matter and the materiality of the person. As such, to search for the meaning and origin of value, seekers must be mobilized beyond the caves of their opinions, ideology, shadows, and preferences towards that which enlightens. This type of search is the real task of liberal arts education. As such, with this insistence and its model of liberal arts, Cabrinian education challenges the non-relevance of the study of God articulated in positivism/positive education.[35]

Moreover, God is an important topic in Cabrinian education. Since every institution provides an intellectual witness, the Cabrinian expected outcomes to its study of God, values, development of culture, and sciences culminate in the institution of social justice. Its idea of justice is integrative. It is interested in the earliest Western traditions on the meaning of justice (*Plato’s Republic* - II-357a-363a). It investigates its meaning in the Christian traditions (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q29, I-II 56.6, II-II 58.4). It brings all of those into conversation with secular policy idea of justice (John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality*). This implies that in its search for meaning, with its focus on God’s revelation and using philosophy as a partner, it provides a middle ground between secularism and sectarianism-between aggressive secularization and aggressive anti-intellectual fideism.[36]

## 6. References

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12. St. Francis of Assisi, “Canticum of the Sun,” <https://franciscanfriarscresson.org/the-canticum-of-the-sun/>. Accessed January 2024.
13. Saint Bonaventure, “The Soul’s Journey into God,” 102. Bonaventure continues the Augustinian and St Anselm’s idea of God as the greatest good and substance. See Saint Anselm, “The Proslogion” in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, eds. Brian Davies, G.R Evans (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 87.
14. Efrem Bettoni, *Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Angelus Gambatese, O.F.M. (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1964 ) 62-63. The Bonaventurian Franciscan intimately connects the intellectual activity with the spiritual activity of the soul.
15. Saint Bonaventure, “The Soul’s Journey into God,” 71.
16. *Ibid.* 72
17. *Ibid.*, 69-71.

18. St. Francis of Assisi, "Canticle of the Sun."
19. Maria Bargbaallo, MSC, *Good Christians, and Good Citizens- The Educational Model and Mission of Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini* (Codogno, Italy: 2013), 18.
20. Mary Louis Sullivan, *Mother Cabrini: The Italian Immigrant of the Century*, 141.
21. Saint Bonaventure, "The Tree of Life" in *Bonaventure*, trans. By Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 126-127. For Bonaventure, no human person came close to replicating Jesus' performance of love other than St. Francis of Assisi. See Bonaventure, "The Life of St Francis- Legenda Maior" in *Bonaventure*, 181.
22. Saint Bonaventure, "The Tree of Life," 136-138.
23. One of the works of the Roman poet, Catullus captures the interest, understanding, and the importance of love to the ancient world. Catullus' poem, which speaks to his split emotions at the departure of his girlfriend reflects the attempt of ancient people in dealing with the meaning and implication of love. To his departing girlfriend, Catullus wrote "Puella mea me non amat. Vale, puella!... Ira mea est magna! Obduro, mea puella- sed sine te non valeo" (My girl does not love me. Goodbye, girl. My anger is great. I must be firm. But without you, I am not strong). See, Frederic M. Wheelock, *Wheelock's Latin* (New York: HarperCollins:2011), 20.
24. Saint Bonaventure, "The Soul's Journey Into God," 111.
25. By liberal arts, I refer to those courses and disciplines invested in human values and ethics and point to the holistic frame of the human person.
26. The political refers to sociality of education, drawn from the social nature of the human person. The political also alludes to the justiciability and importance of education. As such, the political nature of a "draw out" challenges all form of structural and cultural boundedness that limit access to good education for those at the margins of the society. In this instance, the Socratic underground cave mentioned above is symbolized in those obstacles facilitated by oppressive structures against access to good education. These structures could be government inefficiencies in their deliverables or/and the divisiveness in the political climate that enables the otherness of persons considered as oppositions, or/and the over-privatization/monetization of education that reduces access of poor children to good education. These different expressions of the cave-boundedness are responsible for the problem of out-of-school children and the lack of access to good education for hundreds of millions of children. In Africa (Eastern and Southern only), there are about 48 million out-of-school children and youths. The number almost equals the combined population of some European countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Sweden). In the United States, out of school, children and youths are about a million, which is significant for a nation like the United States. However, unlike Africa, other factors other than political alienation may be responsible for the lack of access to good education in the United States. For example, the continuous decline of interest in formal schooling in the global north. See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.UNER?locations=US>. Accessed April 2023. See, <https://www.unicef.org/esa/stories/46-million-school-aged-children-out-of-school-across-esa>. Accessed March 2024. Nonetheless, considering the contemporary framing of economic structures, social mobility is intimately linked with the acquisition of some levels of formal and good education. This explains why the countries with high number of out-of-school children are those with weak educational standards and are some of the poorest in the world. The unjusticiability of access to a good education has three implications: poor value formation process for out-school children since schools' social structures are value-formation machinery. II: The denial of the technological and intellectual knowledge crucial to the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. III: The denial of the social implications of human dignity and social nature of the human person- which are access to essential information and mental development of the person. Clearly, lack of access to good education excludes people from social participation, social mobility, social engagement, and appreciation of values and ideas. This makes lack of access to good education a cultural/value land mine. This explains Mother Cabrini's concerns about the danger of an uneducated generation of young minds. See Maria Bargbaallo, MSC, *Good Christians, and Good Citizens- The Educational Model and Mission of Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini*, 16.
27. My idea of connaturality leans towards the Thomistic/ Jacques Maritain ideas of non-conceptual, intuitive, inclinatory, and affective knowledge shared by beings of the same genera. See Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2015).
28. John Paul II, *Acting Person* (Dordrecht, Boston: D. Reidel, 1979), 57-59.
29. Also, the connection between subjectivity, actions, and transcendence affirms the sociality of truth and education. Humans, who are communicative, inter-subject, I-Thou, enjoy being together because their individual being in itself has a correlative nature
30. I distinguish differentia from uniqueness. Differentia implies the opposite of the other, but uniqueness



- implies a type within a genus. For example, a lion is a type in the genus of wild cats. A man is different from a mountain. I traced the origin of the prevalence of differentia among persons to the philosophy of Rene Descartes but, most importantly, Auguste Comte, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche. However, it is pleasing to see that some research in cognitive science are challenging such strong idea of differentia from the perspective of determinants of cognitive abilities. On existentialism and the origin of individuality, see Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995). On the sociality of cognition, see John Doris, Shaun Nichols, “Broadminded: Sociality and the Cognitive Science of Morality” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Cognitive Science*, eds. Eric Margolis, Richard Samuels, and Stephen P. Stich (Oxford, New York: Oxford University, 2012).
31. Pope Paul VI, “Gaudium et Spes,” No, 26, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) . Accessed January 2024
  32. I use the Buberian “I-Thou” in a Buberian fashion (all actual life is an encounter), albeit situated within the Catholic intellectual tradition. As such, the “Thou” functions as “you” – the other, and “You”- the divine, and a relationality that makes the “I” see the “You” in the “I.” and in “you.” See Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Free Press, 1958, 1970), 10.
  33. Anna Rowland, *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 130.
  34. John Paul II Ex Corde Ecclesiae, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apc\\_15081990\\_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html) 1, 15
  35. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was interested in the new order of education and a new “spiritual” power capable of replacing the theists/theologians and reorganizing Western civilization. The new “spiritual” power and the new education would be placed in the hands of scientists. Comte identifies three ways of educating: theological or fictitious, metaphysical or abstract, and scientific or positive. The theological stage is the human point of departure, while the metaphysical is transitory, and the scientific is definitive. In the first two ways, the mind was in a vain search in its search for the absolute. But with positivism, the mind is concerned with reality, that is, phenomena and the laws that connect them. Comte argues that the toddling mind (primitive) starts by being theological (fictitious) and then graduates to the level of the metaphysical (youthful and medieval) before it reaches maturity (adulthood, modernity, and positivism). The mature mind is the mind that engages in natural philosophy, which is positive philosophy and education. It is the mind that understands that there is no knowledge except in observed facts. As such, the business of positive education is to understand the circumstances of phenomena and connect them by natural relations of succession and resemblances rather than engaging in a fruitless search for the first and final cause of things. See, Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (London: G. Bell & sons, 1913), 1-Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 167-179.
  36. John Cavadini, “Why Study God: The Role of Theology at a Catholic University “in *Commonweal* (October 11,2013):12.