

Cappadocian House of Studies in Art and Nature

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Feast of the Annunciation, 2017

An Educational Model . . .

... dedicated to making Jesus Christ known and loved in the world.

... unfolding within a Christian community of prayer, study, hospitality, and teaching.

... encompassing Patristic Theology; Sacred and Traditional Arts; and Natural History.

... for the purpose of cultivating a practical sense of beauty, order, and form that can be brought to bear on any human work.

Proposal Abstract

The following proposal presents the rationale for a new kind of education that combines elements usually kept separate in conventional institutions. The Cappadocian House of Study, devoted to this **new educational model**, is a Christian community of prayer, study, and work radically committed to evangelical hospitality and teaching, where people can come to be formed in a way that will enable them to take up their own lives with renewed strength, creativity, and hope.

- The **aim** of the house is set in the context of the Eastern Orthodox understanding of deification and communion. Through a life of worship and service to others, study can be part of the transfiguring process of being conformed to Jesus Christ through participation in his Cross and Resurrection.
- The **distinguishing characteristics** of the house are a filial devotion to the Fathers of the Church as a way to enter into the heart of the Tradition; an embrace of the Byzantine Liturgy as the School of Christ set against the backdrop of natural cycles of time; a commitment to principles of the ascetical and contemplative life as understood by the Eastern Fathers; with

an emphasis on how the fruits of such a life find expression in beauty and form.

- The **plan of studies** is described in general terms as consisting in Patristic Theology; the history and practice of Sacred and Traditional Arts; and Natural History, especially through such hands on studies as field biology and gardening. The purpose of this plan of studies is not to convey a set body of knowledge as much as to cultivate patristic habits of mind and heart and a practical sense of beauty and harmony that can be brought to bear on any part of reality and any human work.
- The proposal suggests that the Cappadocian House **begin with:**
 1. the **formation of an association of Christian faithful** committed to these ends
 2. the **acquisition of facilities** that would enable it to begin its work, including:
 - a chapel suitable for celebrating Byzantine Vespers, Matins, and Divine Liturgy
 - kitchen and common area where the whole community can gather and practice hospitality
 - educational space: classrooms, library and reading room, workshop, studios, and garden.

The Cappadocian House of Study is dedicated to making known in the world **the Son and Word of God** through Whom all things were made and Who for our sake became flesh and dwells among us. The Cappadocian House of Study seeks to provide an educational experience that will contribute to the **new evangelization** of the world in our times.

Joel I. Barstad, Ph.D.
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Proposal for a Cappadocian House of Study

Preface

I wrote the first version of this proposal in 1994 while I was working and teaching at The Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I felt and saw a need for new and daring approaches to the intellectual life. Conventional academic institutions, including Catholic colleges and universities, could not provide the integration of spirituality and learning that I desired for myself and for which I saw a hunger in students I worked with.

What they and I needed was a way to live Jean Leclercq's "love of learning and desire for God" together as a single enterprise. I longed to experience what Louis Bouyer calls the "erudite monasticism" of the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, and their heirs, including the great Benedict of Nursia.

To that ideal I added an insistent thirst to overcome certain conventional and traditional oppositions, among them the separation of intelligence from sanctity, of study from worship, of the liberal arts from the arts of subsistence, of the speculative from the practical and creative. How could I hope to know the Word without bowing before Him in worship and then giving Him a birth in the materiality of my life? And how could I be happy unless that birth took place here, in my life? Both academe and the Church had accepted and institutionalized dichotomies that I experienced as wounds, the pain of which cried out for an alternative.

With the support of my spiritual director, Fr. Robert Pelton of Madonna House, with the encouragement of others like Lucille Dupuis of Our Lady of Tenderness, and with the help of my friend Michael Marko, I made the effort to imagine and articulate an alternative. The purpose of that proposal was to solicit the counsel of my mentors and friends, to help me discern whether the Cappadocian House was a worthy star by which to steer my life.

Fr. Pelton encouraged me in my hopes for the Cappadocian House. "Just put it all in the hands of the Mother of God and leave it there," he wrote. Others to whom I showed it responded positively to the ideal expressed, but most also warned of the difficulties and counseled patience. So I put it in the hands of the Mother of God and left it there.

In 1996 I took a position with a small publishing company in Denver and began acquiring a new kind of experience. In August of 2002 I returned once again to full-time teaching as a member of the faculty of the Archdiocese of Denver's seminary, St. John Vianney Theological Seminary.

The joy of being in the classroom again as well as the encouragement of friends has prompted me to revise this proposal. Although the seminary is dedicated to the integral formation of men within an ecclesial context, many of the traditional dichotomies are well entrenched. I still see a need for a Cappadocian House of Study.

The Cappadocian House of Study is a Christian community of prayer, study, and work radically committed to evangelical hospitality and teaching, a place of memory, art, and healing, where people, young or old, can come for a season to encounter a living Christian tradition of life and learning that will enable them to return to their own lives with strength, creativity, and hope.

In 2003 I revised the proposal to discern before God whether it is now time to take practical steps toward realizing this hope. It was not.

Now in 2017 I am looking at it again. The personal thirst that first animated the

idea of the Cappadocian House has to a large extent been slaked, at least as an existential impetus to action. I no longer feel an agitated need to pursue such an education for myself, but the need in the world for such a place is more evident to me than ever. This is largely the result of my experience teaching at Saint John Vianney Theological Seminary. The Spirituality Year, a non-academic propaedeutic year that seeks to teach habits of prayer and healthy community life, has been a successful and important element in the formation offered. But it is only one year and it is only available to seminarians. Moreover, it is a *spirituality* year and does not have the full scope envisioned for the Cappadocian House.

In other words, I still think it is a good idea, and I would like to give it one more round of consideration before letting it go. This letting go has a concrete exterior meaning: there are library and artist resources that I have gathered over the years because of this pursuit and which I can get rid of if I bid farewell to the Cappadocian House as a future possibility. An analogous interior house cleaning is also necessary. If the Cappadocian House is not going to be real project, I need to unburden my conscience of it.

J.B.

Feast of the Annunciation, 2017

The Aim

The Son of God became man so that men might become sons of God. The goal, then, of Christian life is *theosis*, the divinizing communion in the life of the Holy Trinity accomplished in the Godmanhood of Jesus Christ and extended to us by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Life in Christ—becoming sharers in His divinized humanity and life-giving Spirit, and so becoming co-heirs and adopted sons of His Father—is the meaning of Christianity. In the mysteries of the Church, and in the fraternal life that is meant to flow from a common sharing in these mysteries, we touch the richness of the Kingdom of God, the fullness of life. The touch and savor of that blessed communion is the beginning and end of every good work.

Our Lord says, “Without me you can do nothing.” Every morning we must calm our hearts and in the stillness of His presence embrace these words, placing our hope in His goodness, asking that through our work we may come to know and love Him more, and that through us He might make Himself more known and loved in the world. Such, according to St Paul, is the eternal plan of the Father: to bring all things together in Christ as the head, both the things of heaven and the things of earth. Before anything was created, He existed; through Him all things were made and He holds all things in unity. In history He is the font and root and cornerstone of His Father’s Kingdom. The Church is His body, and He its head. Through the grace of His Spirit all creation enters into the unity-in-love of the Holy Trinity.

To enter the Kingdom and share its glory, I must be conformed to Christ's image. Our Lord, though divine, did not cling to His equality with the Father, but emptied Himself and became a servant; having become man, He humbled Himself yet further and accepted death on a cross. I must likewise empty myself and become a servant to all; dying to myself, I must take up my cross and follow Him. Thus only can I hope, as St. Paul urges, to shine in the world like a bright star, offering to others the Word of life. For then it will not be I who shines, but Christ who lives within me.

Set more fully within a life of worship and service, work and study can lead deeper into the mystery of the eternal Word through Whom all things were made and Who for us became man. Driven by love for that Word, we come to a fuller knowledge of the patterns of love that He has woven into all things and by which the Spirit draws all things into the unity of the Kingdom. Through art and craftsmanship we speak words of our own that can bear witness to that Word beyond words Who runs through all things; in this way we help others catch a glimpse and taste of His beauty. Through a truer self-sacrificing love we can go still further and share in the creative speaking of the Word itself.

Disciplined by life with others who share this aim, we can hope to become instruments played by the Spirit. Like the holy Theotokos, we can become hearers and doers of the Word and thereby, icons of the divine communion.

The Leading Characteristics

This aim of becoming hearers and doers of the Word does not distinguish the Cappadocian House; it belongs properly to every baptized person, to every Christian church, monastery, and family. But there is a need for places set apart where men and women can be schooled in such an aim together with practical means and patterns of life that foster it, a need for places of healing and formation, houses of study where "study" has its original sense of "zeal" and "diligence," zeal in pursuit of experiential wisdom rooted in the Gospel. "Study" need not be restricted only to book-learning and the acquisition of knowledge, but extends to the acquisition of other arts, skills, and virtues.

The Cappadocian House of Study would not offer a conventional academic education, but one that can be pursued before or after college, or for some, instead of college. It would not try to replace college for those who need the kinds of training and credentials that colleges and universities provide. It would be a place of evangelical hospitality and creativity, of prayer, memory, and culture, from which sooner or later those who come would leave equipped to shape their lives on the pattern of Christ, the Word made flesh.

Patristic

Christ is present in His Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Holy Tradition is the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church, shaping and nurturing it through the instruments of living continuity: Holy Scripture, the Liturgy, the teachings of Church Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils, the Creeds, the Holy Icons, and the lives of the saints of all times. To study the Scriptures together with the lives and writings of the Fathers is the easiest entry into the inner spirit and coherence of these various instruments, but it is not enough merely to study the Fathers; we must be taught by them, to allow them to beget in us the mind of Christ.

By studying with the Fathers, one learns how to read the Scriptures and participate in the Liturgy. One learns by apprenticeship the art of a faith seeking understanding and of an understanding that yields in silence to the mystery of the One who transcends all knowledge. One learns the ascetical disciplines that purify the heart so that the mind can discern the things that truly are and the God who has revealed Himself to us. From the Fathers one learns, above all, that there can be no separation of theology from spirituality, of study from ascesis, of the intellectual life from the life of prayer or from the life of loving service to the least of Christ's brothers.

Liturgical and Agrarian

The Liturgy is the School of Christ, the school above all schools, where He is the true subject and real teacher living in the heart of His Church. The Liturgy in its full flowering, with all its seasons and hours of prayer, is the primary means by which the Church recollects herself and shows us her Beloved. It is the synthesis of Holy Tradition. In it Scripture and Sacrament and Creed and the memory of the saints are woven into a marvelous pattern of prayer and worship. This rule of prayer is the rule of faith, and faith made active through love bears the fruit of good works by which Wisdom is glorified in her children. The heart of the Liturgy is the remembrance of Christ, the perpetual reliving of His life, rooted in the Eucharistic celebration of the Paschal Mystery, not merely as a recollection of a past deed, but as an ongoing presence. Christ is ever present in His Church. Out of this abiding presence the remembrances and disciplines unfold, and back into His presence they lead.

The Holy Mysteries are themselves celebrated within the daily, weekly, and seasonal cycles of the Church's liturgy. Here the organic rhythms and patterns of the natural order are taken up into the Event of Christ. Freed from the tyranny of the elemental forces that govern the endless cycles of life and death, these natural patterns become signs of the age to come, of the truth of things even now because of what Christ has already accomplished in His own flesh. Here there is no worship of the cosmic powers that enslave man through the fear of death, but the remembrance of Christ and His saints and the anticipation of the

coming Kingdom. Paradoxically, this reconfiguration of natural patterns and the death they entail does not lead to a denial of them, but to a deeper affirmation and embrace of them in their full significance. Reconfigured by the Cross their true meaning becomes clear, and they themselves become crosses that lead to the Resurrection. Apart from Christ the sacrifices demanded by nature are vain and alienating; in Him they become salvific.

The Mystery of Jesus Christ—His person and all that He accomplished, His Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on His Church—is the redemptive event that sanctifies and transfigures the natural order. The ambiguity of nature with its mingling of life and corruption, goodness and sin, hope and despair, finds its resolution in this Mystery. By death Christ conquers death and on those who are conformed to His death in Baptism, and eat and drink of His Paschal sacrifice, He bestows His life. Thus the ambiguous order of fallen nature is not destroyed from without but sanctified, transfigured, and thus transcended from within. If Man is that level of nature where nature becomes aware of itself in relation to the Infinite Mystery that lies beyond it, then the Church is that level of nature where nature becomes betrothed to the Infinite through the divine Sonship and Godmanhood of Jesus Christ. The Holy Mysteries are the means by which each person is drawn into this event and made one with Christ and so a partaker of the divine nature itself.

Much of modern culture and “progress” has concentrated on fleeing the toil, labor, and vulnerability of man left alone with a nature that only reluctantly yields him the means to live. This flight has not had as its aim the succor and sustenance of man within the cycles and patterns of nature, but the overthrow of the patterns themselves or at least as lasting an escape from them as possible. Yet, the abiding presence of Christ in His Mysteries and the true succor that flows from Him bear witness that man is not alone with a hostile nature. Nothing can separate us from the love, mercy, and compassion of Christ or of the saints who surround us. Indeed, if we abide in Him, the sufferings we endure can only unite us more closely to Him and to the others.

Consequently, the Liturgy, and especially the Byzantine Rite, teaches best when lived with a full awareness of the natural order of times and seasons. And the Gospel’s call to self-sacrificing love is most vivid when lived against the backdrop of natural patterns of sacrifice. An agrarian way of life, in which one embraces and integrates one’s own life within the organic rhythms of life, death, and sacrifice found in the non-human nature around us, when lived within the memory of Christ, is a means of taking up one’s cross and following Him. It is a way of life in which one can live with a more immediate awareness of the web of life and death on which man’s mortal life depends. But, what is more important, if a person takes up this way of life with others in a household of faith, he weaves his life together with theirs, a human web within the larger web of nature; and the labors and sacrifices of each on behalf of the others become an education and witness to the self-sacrificing love and service that distinguish the communion of the Church, its unity-in-love.

The essence of an agrarian way of life does not, I think, lie in agriculture merely, but in an economics of recognized limits, mutual dependence, and self-sacrifice in imitation of natural patterns of giving and receiving that do not aim at mutual benefit through exchange but at communion rooted in the mutual gift of self. The agrarian mind is attentive to the underlying patterns and ways of nature that flow from the Word; it looks for the most natural and sustainable way of adapting itself to those patterns, thus securing its life on the foundation of the Divine Art. An agrarian approach to life understands limits and the harmonies they create; it seeks the wisdom to harmonize its own needs within those limits and to express its own life in synergy with the rest of creation even when, as it always will, this synergy requires self-sacrifice and suffering. An agrarian mind knows and does not seek to deny the reality of death; it marks time by both the rising and the dying of the light. When the Word became flesh, He did not abolish the evenings and the mornings of this mortal life; He fulfilled them by His own Death and Resurrection. A time will come when they will cease, but until then, they can be faced with hope.

In fact, liturgical morning and evening prayer, especially in the Byzantine rite, puts the natural cycle of evening and morning at the center of human consciousness; and precisely there juxtaposes the memory of Christ, the Light of the World, Who is the Father's definitive answer to the darkness of sin and death. We turn to the East as we pray, looking in memory and hope toward the Light from on high; and thus we have the courage to embrace the natural cycles of life and death in their full reality. Whether one's hands ever touch a plow or not, an agrarian and liturgical outlook is an effective antidote to the distracting unreality of modern industrial and utopian visions of progress. To live with the earth, even in the heart of a city, is to live an honest remembrance of one's own death and a realistic affirmation of life's meaning.

Ascetical, Mystagogical, and Creative

Those who pursue a contemplative life should not seek to liberate themselves from natural patterns of mortal, bodily life. Specialization in intellectual work can come too quickly, especially if it comes with the price of alienating one from the "servile" arts by which we feed and clothe and house ourselves and our brothers and sisters, or from the ornamental arts that add grace to truth and enable the works of our hands and lips to serve the thirst of the soul as well as the needs of the body, or from the experiential knowledge of what it means to lay down one's life for another.

According to the Fathers, before one can behold the truth, one must be purified of the passions that cloud and darken the mind. This process of purification is the Active Life (*praktike*),¹ the practice of prayer, fasting, and virtue that renders

¹The Eastern Christian distinction between Active and Contemplative is different from the distinction commonly made in the West. Medieval Western writers spilt much ink discussing which mode of religious life was superior, the Active life dedicated to works of mercy or the

the soul fit to receive knowledge of the things that are. The Contemplative Life (*theoretike*) begins by searching out the reasons or *logoi* of created beings, but it has its final goal in the knowledge of the Holy Trinity, who, though beyond being, is revealed in Christ. As this spiritual knowledge takes root in a person's heart, it informs and shapes the words and work that proceed from that heart.

The aim of this ascesis and contemplation is to make each person an icon, a mirror in which the image and likeness of God are once again clear, an instrument upon which the Spirit can play whatever melodies He might choose, a window made transparent to Christ dwelling within.

This process is evident in the mystery of the Annunciation. The angel of the Lord comes to Mary in the silence of her prayer, she receives his word in the purity of her sinless heart, and as a consequence of this encounter the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. This movement is also found in a Byzantine iconographer. Purifying himself by fasting and prayer, he contemplates the persons and mysteries handed down in liturgical texts and in the traditional patterns that govern their expression in color and form; and as he writes the icon his own sensibility and skill, through its very docility and receptiveness toward the Tradition, gives a new and fresh birth to the ancient word. This is a fitting model for learning, and the Liturgy is its natural environment.

The aim of book-learning, and other studies, within such a context is mystagogical. In the first place, this means that study *leads* one deeper into *the mystery* of Christ. In the second place, mystagogical learning cannot be content with a merely doctrinal catechesis but cultivates the same typological habits of mind by which the Fathers practiced their mystagogy and by which they contemplated Scripture. The prayerful meditation on Scripture, *lectio divina*, is in fact the primary activity in their conception of theology and the contemplative life. The typological practice of the *analogia fidei* gives the mind a flexibility and stability that enables it to perceive the truths of the faith ever more deeply and to express them ever more beautifully and adequately. In the third place, these typological habits can be cultivated in an analogous way in the contemplation of the forms of natural things and in the patterns of their relations so that enlightened by the mystery of the Word Incarnate the mind can also contemplate and serve Him in His creatures.

The condition for this contemplation is *hesychia*, the quiet stillness of an undistracted heart, attentive and open to the depths of God and neighbor. Not only is silence a necessary condition for entering into the mystery, but it is implied in the very notion of "mystery." For the word or form that expresses and manifests the hidden, present Word falls short of what it reveals, falls silent before One and Three who are beyond speech. True human words rise out of silence and return to it; they are veils that cover the Truth even as they reveal it.

Contemplative life, cut off from the world, dedicated to prayer, or some mixture of the two. In the East Asceticism (Action) and Contemplation are not lifestyles that can be practiced separately; they are necessary aspects of a single education of the heart and mind for life in Christ.

In communicating the Word to others, one should not reduce the notion of “word” to what is merely verbal and conceptual. The Word is also written in color and form and spoken in tone and rhythm and in whatever forms of proportion and harmony one gives to matter in order to convey the content of one’s inner subjectivity to others. This principle extends from the art of painting an icon to the art of neatly making a bed: in all the works of hands and lips one should strive to communicate to others the beauty and peace of Christ.

Book-learning can be combined with studying the sacred arts of chant and iconography and hymnography, not so that everyone becomes a master cantor or iconographer, but so that the sensibility for harmony gained by practicing the sacred arts and other traditional arts can be applied by analogy to all the arts of making and doing that constitute daily life. In this spirit every work and deed becomes a prayer addressed to God and an icon set before men.

The beginning and end of this creative effort is the Liturgy, in which the Word offers Himself, in and with and through His people, to the Father as a sacrifice of praise. Between the beginning and the end lies the middle of all other work; and beyond beginning, middle, and end, stands the rich stillness of the Kingdom.

Plan of Studies

The educational aim of the Cappadocian House is not to convey a defined body of knowledge or a particular canon of texts or specific arts, but to cultivate patristic habits of heart and mind that can be brought creatively to bear on any part of reality and any human work.

Patristic Theology

Patristic theology as understood here is not a branch of historical theology; it is a personal and experiential *way* of learning and living the mind of the Church as she strives to know and teach Christ. Prayer, both personal and liturgical (including fasting), and spiritual direction are essential. But prayer is deepened by reading the Scriptures and the Fathers with filial attention. This reading can be divided into several areas:

- Liturgical studies—the mystagogical works of the Fathers, as well as liturgical texts and hymnography
- Scriptural studies—the homilies and commentaries of the Fathers, as well as the fruits of modern scholarship that can be integrated† into the spiritual reading of Scripture
- Conciliar Theology—the dogmatic works of the Fathers that contributed to the definitions of the Faith, especially of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

- Philocalia studies—classic texts of the Hesychastic tradition, especially those gathered in *The Philocalia*.

Sacred and Traditional Arts

Studying the arts is a means for recovering an experiential sense of symbol and metaphor, which is, in turn, an essential part of acquiring a patristic mind open to the sacramental character of reality. Among the wide variety of human arts, we will concentrate on two general areas:

- Arts of space and light—architecture, painting, weaving, pottery, metalworking, and so on
- Arts of time and sound—music and poetry

Readings in the history of the Christian practice of these arts will give a framework for the detailed study of particular arts. Which particular arts will be studied will depend on the interest of the members, as well as available resources and opportunities. Liturgical arts will have pride of place—architecture and painting, chant and hymnography—but room can also be given to other traditional arts as well—poetry, folk music, calligraphy and illumination, textile arts, pottery, metalworking, and so on.

The detailed study would include both reading and practice, not with the aim of training professional artists but for the sake of contemplation. Practice unifies, internalizes and personalizes the knowledge gained from reading and meditating on the aims and meaning of traditional craftsmanship. A deeper contemplation of the mystery represented by an art is possible when practice is added to meditation, just as chant and singing can bring about, and then express, a deeper unity between the singer and the words sung.

The study of each art will include, to the extent possible, the traditional means of preparing the materials used. For example, the study of iconography would include gathering and grinding pigments and preparing boards; the study of weaving would include the shearing, carding and spinning of wool; the study of calligraphy and illumination would include the making of parchments, papers, inks, and pens; the study of chant would include a physiological understanding of the human voice as well as the mathematics and physics of tone and harmony. This attention to the preparation of materials used grounds one's awareness of one's art in an awareness of the divine art upon which it depends and within which it unfolds.

The study of the arts would concentrate especially on understanding traditional principles of design and symbolism that govern form, composition, and ornament, giving them grace, harmony, and truth. Christian Celtic art, for example, is a rich tradition drawing together and synthesizing elements from many sources: Celtic, Latin, Byzantine, Scandinavian; and finds expression in many media: stone, metalwork, manuscript, and textile; and it retains a wide appeal even

today. Russian Byzantine iconography has a strong tradition of composition, symbolism and technique that preserves a profound awareness of the mystery of the Incarnation.

While the emphasis in the course of study is on retrieving Christian traditions, this retrieval need not be done in a slavish fashion, nor is the aim a merely conservative traditionalism. Imitation and repetition are the means for learning a traditional art. As with learning a language, however, one may begin but does not stop with repeating what others have already said; imitation and repetition prepare one to enter into a conversation in which one also has things to say. The aim is communion and the freedom that comes, first, from understanding others and, then, when one has something to say, from having the means to make oneself understood.

Natural History

Modern science has strong analytical tools for exploring the composition of natural things, separating their parts and breaking them down to their constitutive elements. The Cappadocian House is not primarily interested in the knowledge derived by these means, but in coming to know the *logoi* of things as expressed in their natural, integral activity. We are interested in understanding plants and animals as living and interrelating wholes. We are more interested in delighting in forms and discerning patterns of behavior than in manipulating internal workings.† We want to cultivate an experience of observing particular creatures within their particular places; and we want to become aware of individual plants and animals as members of “kinds” and understand the interdependence of these kinds within their environment. Beyond that we also want an experience of man’s role in cultivating and fostering the lives of such creatures. The two areas of study suggested by these aims are:

- Ecology and field biology
- Gardening

Geology and astronomy also lend themselves to the kind observational experience that we are interested in. As with the arts, the aim is not to become professional scientists but to increase our capacity for knowing reality in its actuality and totality as a step in coming to know the Word through Whom all things were made and in Whom all things are brought into communion with the Divine Life.

Where to Begin

An Association of Christian Faithful

The Cappadocian House can begin simply as a private association and grow organically under the direction of the Holy Spirit, as long as it has the support

of a bishop who understands its aims and will watch over it so that its growth stays healthy and true to the Holy Spirit.

In this association members would commit themselves to one another and to the Lord to pursue the ideals of the house, especially to gather for common prayer, mutual support, and common hospitality toward guests and students, as well as to make a personal commitment to study in the sense described above. Such an association would, however, need a place adequate for the expression of its common life.

A House of Prayer

At the heart of the Cappadocian House would be its life of prayer. As with other aspects of its life, the liturgical life can begin simply, proportioned to the needs and abilities of its members. The house needs a chapel (or a parish church supportive of its aims) where members, and others who may wish to join them in this liturgical life, can gather for Byzantine Vespers, Matins, and Liturgy.

Also, the house should be situated and set up so as to provide its members and visitors an atmosphere of gentle silence, so that a spirit of prayer can diffuse itself through all other activities.

A House of Hospitality

Hospitality is the Christian virtue of receiving and affirming, for Christ's sake, those who have no claim on one except their common humanity. Hospitality educates us to God-like charity. Charity is the foundation of all Christian relationships, within families, between teachers and students, among friends, even one's relationships with strangers and enemies. Like forgiveness, one cannot receive it without also giving it.

The primordial gesture of hospitality is sharing a meal. Members should be committed to practicing hospitality in their own homes, but they will need a common place where they can all gather to eat and talk and share hospitality with their guests and students. In time they will also need rooms and facilities for housing guests and students.

A House of Study

The willingness to accept and teach students is itself a kind of hospitality in which the teacher makes room for another within his own process of learning. The members and students of the house will need space devoted to study: classrooms, a library and reading room, workshops, studios, and a garden.

Conclusion

The organization and plan of studies proposed here represent a starting point for a new kind of educational experience. This experience would not convey a set body of knowledge or texts or arts in the way that conventional academic institutions might. Rather, it seeks to foster certain patristic habits of heart and mind that can be brought creatively to bear on any part of reality and any human work.

It is an education for life in the world, not the world in its pejorative sense, but the world of created things known and loved. It is an experiential education in the balance of giving and receiving that is the source of creativity and culture. This education does not seek to determine beforehand the use to which it will be put, but to provide a paradigmatic experience of a way of living in relation with God, other people, and the natural world that can be extended analogously to the tasks that students will meet as they go on to embrace their own lives.

Such an education requires the nurture of a Christian community of prayer, study, and work radically committed to evangelical hospitality and teaching. The Cappadocian House aims to be such a community; it aims to be a house of memory, art, and healing, where people, young or old, can come for a season to experience a wholesome pattern of life and encounter a living Gospel tradition that will enable them to return to their own lives with strength, creativity, and hope.