

What Makes A Truly Educated Person?

What does a real education consist of? Is it good grades? Is it the number of high degrees a person earns? Some say that much of today's schooling should more properly be called training or indoctrination, and not education. Both children and professionals, of course, need some training, but should we call that education? Many highly trained professionals can still be largely uneducated. This includes teachers and university professors.

A truly educated person is one who has developed the ability to make good discernments in several areas. He or she is someone who can separate what is truly good and really true and what is beautiful, from what is evil, false and ugly. Contrary to what often passes for wisdom, these things are not a matter of personal opinion. Anyone who believes that something evil is good or something good is evil is simply wrong. Some of what passes for education today is really indoctrination in error.

True education forms the ability to judge in several areas. It fosters the power to tell reality from fantasy, the genuine from the counterfeit, logic from emotion, fact from opinion, virtue from vice, natural law from mere ideology, right from wrong, order from chaos, God's plan from secular propaganda, and true wisdom from a merely popular agenda. A good education forms the character to treasure the good, the true, and the beautiful.

The fullness of true education, carried out to its logical end, finds agreement with the revelation of the Creator of all reality. All true education, honestly pursued, leads to the fullness of truth found only in Jesus, alive in His Holy Catholic Church. Witness the many great intellectuals and seekers of truth, both today and in history who have educated themselves into the Catholic Church. Think of St. Augustine, a heretic and sinner who became one of our greatest Catholic theologians.

Today, literally hundreds of leading Protestant thinkers and theologians bring themselves into the Catholic Church every year. These are holy truth seekers who sacrifice much on their journey. Likewise many leading scientists whose training presumed atheism are acknowledging the necessary reality of a creating intelligence. The best philosophers and creative writers and artists have always been attracted to our Church.

A truly educated person is one whose education may begin in a school or university, but continues to search for truth no matter where it leads. True education always points to God who is the source of all truth, love, and reality.