



Smith Preparatory Academy

A Vision for Building a Classical Abbey
for the Next Thousand Years





I. Introduction

For over 30 years, Smith Preparatory Academy has labored to cultivate a community of virtuous scholars. It aims to establish a student body that loves God’s truth, goodness, and beauty, advancing God’s kingdom in every sphere of life. Our mission has always been to provide students with the highest quality Christian classical education, to cultivate Christian virtue, and to promote the recovery of Christian humanism.

As we look toward the future, Smith Prep seeks to build a modern abbey on 10-20 acres in Central Florida to house our K-12 classical Christian school. In the spirit of classical monastic abbeys, this new home of beauty and permanence will unite a classical Christian education, spiritual formation, and cultural preservation. Alongside the hundreds of students that will attend each year, the campus will be a cultural center for the community, drawing visitors to its museums, artisan workshops, animal husbandry, library preserving classical texts, walking trails, prayer gardens, sacred art, and central chapel. Educators, pastors, and theologians will gather to teach our student body, dialogue with one another, and seek rest as they enjoy the monastic virtue of hospitality in the school’s guesthouse and refectory. Ultimately, all those seeking God will be drawn to this living abbey due to its beauty and spirited engagement with the pertinent questions of life.

II. The Vision: A 5th-Century Monastic Model for the 21st Century

In the 5th century, as the Roman Empire fractured, Irish monastic communities became islands of light in a sea of darkness. These abbeys, like Clonmacnoise and Iona, preserved Scripture, copied ancient texts, and cultivated the arts. They kept the embers of Christian civilization alive through prayer, study, and craftsmanship. Smith Prep envisions a modern expression of that same spirit: a Christian community of learning built on land devoted to the glory of God and the formation of souls. This abbey will be grounded in the classical Christian tradition, emphasizing the formation of the soul through the liberal arts and the Great Books of the Western tradition.

III. The Campus: A Living Abbey for the Modern Age

The future campus of Smith Prep will serve as a permanent home for the formation of hearts and minds. Its physical design will draw upon the beauty and simplicity of Christian monastic architecture.

- **Stone, timber, and cloistered courtyards** symbolizing permanence, stewardship, and the reclaiming of Paradise
- **Central chapel and bell tower** symbolizing prayer at the heart of learning
- **Gardens and cloister walks** for meditation and conversation
- **Sacred art** that reflects the Incarnation and the good of creation

The design will reflect the harmony of nature, theology, and craftsmanship. As a place of pilgrimage for students, teachers, and Christian thinkers alike, it will embody the motto: “*Ad Gloriam Dei et Cultum Hominis*,” meaning “To the Glory of God and the Cultivation of Humanity.”

IV. The Centers: Academia and Culture

Each academic area will correspond to a domain of human flourishing, echoing the unity of faith and reason.

A. The Humanities Hall

The Humanities Hall will be a center for literature, history, philosophy, theology, and languages. Here, students will read the Great Books, discuss the pertinent questions of life, and see how Christ interacts with every culture and discipline.

B. The Science and Mathematics Hall

Modeled after the medieval *studia naturae*, this center will explore God’s created order, including biology, chemistry, astronomy, and mathematics, through wonder and empirical discovery. Outdoor classrooms and a working garden will reconnect students to the rhythms of creation.

C. The Arts Center

The Arts Center will be a dedicated space for fine arts, music, and drama. Following the classical belief that beauty shapes the soul, this center will host exhibitions, concerts, and productions that glorify God and elevate the imagination.

D. The Common Arts Guild

A hallmark of Smith Prep’s distinct vision, this will include:

Gardening and animal husbandry

Blacksmithing and metalwork

Woodworking and carpentry

Pottery and sculpture

Cooking, sewing, and homesteading skills

These “arts of life” will form students who know how to work with their hands as well as their minds. This will train them to connect the material and the spiritual, echoing the Benedictine ideal: “To labor is to pray.”

E. The Gymnasium

In the gymnasium, students cultivate virtue through embodied practice, courage, humility, and perseverance. It reminds students that the body and soul are united in the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. Community and joy will be fostered as students work together, compete honorably, and celebrate shared effort. By teaching stewardship of the body as a gift from God, the gym becomes a laboratory of virtue and a living expression of incarnational education. What is learned in the mind and heart is practiced in motion to the glory of God.

F. Classroom Museums

The school’s classroom museums will transform ordinary learning spaces into immersive environments of wonder and history.

- ***The American History Room*** will be filled with authentic artifacts, documents, and maps that tell the story of a nation rooted in Providence.
- ***The Classical Studies Room*** will be adorned with ancient replicas, coins, and statuary from Greece and Rome to bring the ancient world to life.
- ***The Art and Music Wings*** will house rotating exhibitions of historical paintings, sculptures, and student works in a gallery open to the public.

These curated classroom museums will serve our entire community, offering an educational and cultural resource for families, homeschoolers, and visitors. By opening our doors after hours, Smith Prep will extend its mission beyond the classroom walls, allowing the local community to experience beauty, history, and truth firsthand.

V. The Hospitality: Rest, Renewal, and Study

Smith Prep's modern abbey will seek to engage educators, pastors, and theologians in addition to its student body.

We envision:

- **Residencies and sabbaticals** for teachers and pastors seeking rest, reading, and reflection
- **Colloquia and symposia** for theological and cultural engagement
- **A small guesthouse and refectory** for visitors to dine and converse, to revive the ancient Christian tradition of hospitality.

This will be a retreat where the weary thinker can find conversation about the important questions of meaning and destiny while enjoying hospitality and rest.

VI. The Land: A Sanctuary of Learning

Our prayerful goal is to acquire 10-20 acres of land in Central Florida—space enough for buildings, gardens, and outdoor classrooms. This land will serve as both sanctuary and seedbed.

Features will include:

- **Walking trails** and **prayer gardens** for contemplation
- **A chapel at the center**, oriented eastward toward the rising sun
- **Small outbuildings** for artisan workshops
- **Agricultural plots** for students to cultivate
- **A library and scriptorium** preserving classical and Christian texts

As with the medieval abbeys, the land itself will be a teacher, inviting stewardship and meditation on the goodness of God's creation, eliciting gratitude.

VII. The Purpose: Preserving Culture, Forming Souls

Our modern world suffers from fragmentation: technological distraction, ideological division, and the loss of meaning. Smith Prep's campus will stand as a countercultural act of hope:

- **To preserve Christian culture** through education rooted in the liberal and common arts
- **To form future leaders** who can think with clarity, love deeply, and live faithfully
- **To offer hospitality and rest** to scholars, pastors, and educators seeking renewal

We believe the future of civilization depends on restoration, the re-rooting of education in eternal things. The living abbey will take inspiration from Cassiodorus (c.485-c.585), a Roman senator who, in a time of upheaval, retired to found the monastery of Vivarium in southern Italy. He argued that when cities fall and libraries fall silent, we must build again, in faith. He encouraged the church to build cloistered halls, carve quiet libraries, gather faithful students, and copy sacred texts, so that the torch of truth is not extinguished.

While the world rages, Cassiodorus believed that its ruin is the opportunity for the Church to plant a sanctuary of learning, hospitality, and renewal. As St. Benedict did in the ruins of Rome, we too seek to build amid turmoil. As the monks of Ireland did, we too seek to preserve what is true, good, and beautiful for the generations that follow.



VIII. The Invitation: Join Us in Building a Legacy

The dream of Smith Prep’s new campus is beyond mere nostalgia. It is the belief that Christian education can once again be a wellspring of culture, art, science, and virtue. The building of this new campus is a spiritual act of preservation and faithfulness.

Smith Preparatory Academy has set an initial goal of raising **\$2.5 million** for land acquisition, architectural planning, and initial building development.

We invite you to join us in creating a home that will serve generations to come: a beacon of beauty, wisdom, and holiness in the heart of Florida. Let us, together, build a modern abbey, where our minds are illuminated by truth and our sensibilities ruled by rightly ordered loves, to think clearly, love rightly, and live faithfully as citizens of the City of God.

“And they shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” —Isaiah 61:4

IX. How to Give

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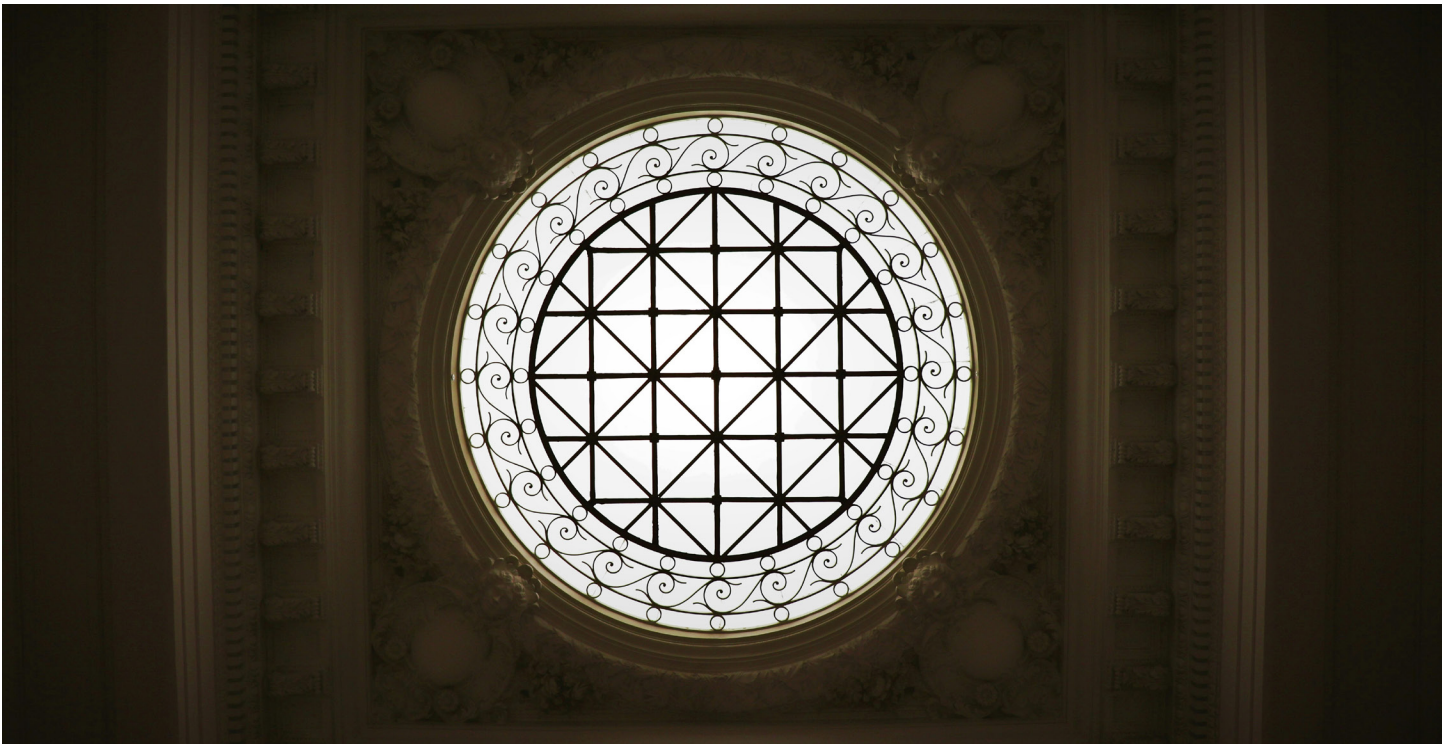


To donate by check, please make it out to Smith Prep Education Foundation Inc., and mail it to:
P.O. Box 521522, Longwood, FL 32752

The Smith Prep Education Foundation (SPEF) is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax-deductible and, unless otherwise designated, will support the school’s most pressing needs.

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SMITH  PREP

CULTIVATING CHRISTIAN VIRTUE, RECOVERING CHRISTIAN HUMANISM