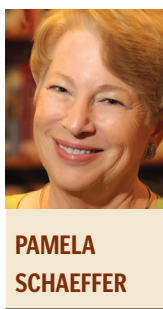


THE HUMANITIES FEED, ENGAGE OUR HEARTS

To me, and surely to many of you, a professional life apart from those enterprises we number among the “humanities” is unthinkable. That’s why, presumably, they are named as they are — not only do art, literature and music enrich our lives, they are unique to the world we know as “human.” So, in putting together this issue of *Health Progress*, with its lineup of articles about medical education and the professional pipeline, I was pleased to learn that medical education, and even the medical admissions test, is giving greater weight to the role of the humanities. The trend is good news for Catholic health care, which has always set medical care within its human — and sacred — context.



**PAMELA
SCHAEFFER**

Recently, I stumbled onto a book that expressed better than I ever could the ways the humanities enrich and shape and change us. At a local library, this book was turned outward for display and the title caught my eye, hinting as it did at two of my strongest fascinations: human transformation and the written word. I quickly made my way

through that volume, titled *Morning, Noon and Night: Finding the Meaning of Life's Stages Through Books*, and immediately bought two more books by the author, Arnold Weinstein.

Weinstein is a professor of literature at Brown University — the Edna and Richard Salomon Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature, to be precise. He writes eloquently, and specifically, of the ways in which great works of art serve as bridges to self-discovery, reconnecting us with ourselves, with the “hidden melody, texture and form of our lives,” and in so doing, connect us more deeply to others. This is why we read; why we visit museums; why we listen to music.

In particular, experiences of pain, even vicarious experiences through art, ultimately help us to become more compassionate, more fully human, more attuned to the dark and light in ourselves and others, and to the sacred moments in our lives.

“I call this book *A Scream Goes through the House*,” Weinstein writes in the introduction to one of the three works I read, “to signal the staggering *reach* of feeling and pain, to denote its role

as pathway and journey.

“Art writes large and luminous the penitential experience of illness, and in so doing, it opens the prison. The great wealth of artistic testimony about emotion and disease, about breakdown, about doctors and health, translates directly into *our wealth*, and such riches are all the more precious given the impoverishment of body and mind that illness (and even aging) can bring on. ... But make no mistake about it, these discoveries are no less valuable even when we are well ... art and literature also, quite wonderfully, draw us out, hook us up (imaginatively, emotionally, neurally) into other circuits, other lives, other times.”

Moving on from these more universal concerns to the specific contents of this issue, we think you’ll find a wealth of information and inspiration on “professional pipelines” for Catholic health care in articles related to the theme. I also call your attention to the feature on page 55, in which Kelly Carroll, JD, explores the nature of Catholic identity in the context of nonprofit and for-profit health care, materially adding to the discussions underway among CHA members.

Finally, I would like to share with you some wonderful news as follow up to our previous issue, where a personal account of the loss of William Joseph, a newborn son, appeared. The article was titled “Patient-Centered Care through A Couple’s Eyes: HeartPrints Eased the Grief.” Its author, Laura Richter, was expecting another child when she wrote the article, and on Feb. 13, 2012, she and her husband, Paul Schamel, welcomed Abigail Kathleen Schamel into the world.

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