The radical idea that it’s not all about me
by Tom Bradshaw

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

Please stop to consider how radical Jesus’ words truly are, that anyone who wishes to follow him must deny himself and take up his cross. The call to deny ourselves includes giving up things that the world urges us to expect, to demand, and to fight for—even the things that seem the most necessary.

Jesus took the idea that food, clothing, and shelter are top human priorities and turned it completely on its head. After asserting that God would take care of those matters, he commanded his followers not to worry about them but to “Seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness” (Mt. 6:25-34; Lk. 12:22-31). In doing so, he was challenging commonly held assumptions by pointing out that earthly priorities produce pale profits when compared to the heavenly glories that await those whose focus is aimed at the things of God. Likewise, we ought not to cling to popular notions of security, identity, belonging, or purpose as our highest priorities. No matter how much this kind of approach may be dressed up with Christian language and ideas, self-interest still lurks at the core.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation were making this point about priorities when organizing helpful Q&A articles to train people to view life biblically. Following Ecclesiastes 12:13, the initial question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asserts that “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” Similarly, the very first question of the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that “My only comfort in life and in death is that I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.” In both cases, we are being taught from the very beginning to look away from ourselves and toward the Lord.

Constant reminders that we are not our own make a healthy tonic to rampant self-centeredness. Otherwise, if our “basic needs” are first and foremost, then anyone who appears to be in the way of our enjoying a happy life will be viewed as a threat to be removed rather than an opportunity to show the love and forgiveness of Christ. If our first concern is protecting ourselves, relationships will lack the necessary commitment. If our highest objective is “looking out for Number One,” it will tend to lead us away from the path of love and sacrifice at the very times when it is most difficult and yet most necessary.

Along the journey from kindergarten to high school graduation, we not only seek to convey what self-denial looks like on the road to following Christ, but also the untold blessings and increased gratitude that result. Together we enjoy the far-reaching benefits of addressing conflicts biblically and delight in seeking and receiving forgiveness. As teachers and students, we all learn that in order to live happily together, the evil of self-love must be plucked from our hearts by its roots. Being called to look first to our Heavenly Father and the life to come, we can even embrace trials with joy because of the humility, obedience, and submission it encourages.

The path to the greatest gain is to give up the most. This is following Christ.
More than 100 students and volunteers participated in the annual Latin Olympika held for the first time at Cedar Tree, Saturday, March 7. Three schools with Latin programs traveled to our campus, a total of 84 student in grades 5 through 8 on 19 teams to compete in various games and final rounds.

“We participate in the Olympika to enhance our Latin program, Kathy Hansberry explained. As the Grammar Latin teacher and organizer of this year’s event, she added: “We love how it has encouraged our students and their parents. There are very few schools that teach Latin in the Pacific Northwest. Finding schools who share our teaching of Latin has helped students understand the fun and value of studying the Latin language and the Roman culture.”

In addition to providing written tests on history, derivatives, culture, and mythology, the Latin Olympika held a certamen which is a knowledge bowl type competition where teams hit a buzzer to answer questions about Latin and Roman history. Each team participated in 3 rounds of preliminary competition answering questions from the National Junior Classical League, followed by finals watched by all teams.

Trophies for the first place certamen were awarded at each level, as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd place ribbons for placement on the written tests. Ribbons were also awarded for participation in the certamen finals.

Cedar Tree teams were fortunate to win at both levels, but there were great opportunities for some of the other schools to win as all the schools had teams in the finals, Mrs. Hansberry reported.

“I witnessed great sportsmanship and ethical decisions made by our students, and one student said, ‘We lost that round and got only 20 points, but it was really fun.’”

Other fun included free time between competitions on a beautiful warm and sunny day in which students could enjoy the playground and relaxed company.

“Our volunteers were key in making this such a positive event,” she said. “I appreciate all the wonderful help we got from directing people to classrooms, to grading written tests to preparing coffee.”

CT hosts the Latin Olympika for first time
The dedication of the house built with the help of 24 Cedar Tree high school students and seven chaperones was an emotional one as a single mother received the keys for her and her teenage daughter, Friday, April 10. As Owen Carlson, a junior who made the Spring Break service trip for the second time, reflected, “Tears almost came as I realized how we actually helped change a life by coming and building a house.”

Tears flowed from Matilda, the Christian mother and member of the church of the bi-vocational pastor who led the construction of the house. Although her neighborhood stands without running water or electricity, she rejoiced in all that God had given her through His people.

As students spoke about what they learned their first day back to school after the trip, many said they want to practice more gratitude for all they have here and see people as God does.

Organized by Keith Cupp, a CT parent whose passion for serving in Mexico is contagious, this third service trip by CT students was the largest yet. Students not only helped move block, dig a pit for an outhouse, mix cement, and roof a house, they also scraped walls, and sang at the dedication, Easter services and the Wednesday night meeting of Matilda’s church (pictured below). And like those of the previous two trips, organized every other Spring Break, students enjoyed the fellowship around meals, climbing a local “mountain” to view God’s creation, and interacting with neighborhood children.

The Boat, showed above in a cropped image, was painted by junior Lia VanderPloeg and will be entered into a national art competition among sister classical schools. Left, 24 high school students sing in Baja, Mexico, over spring break.
Cedar Tree
exists to provide an excellent classical Christian education that cultivates minds and nurtures hearts for effective, Christ-centered living.

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Cedar Tree depends upon the prayers and generosity of God’s people. We thank Him for His continued grace in sustaining our labor to cultivate Christ-centered wisdom and eloquence.

SHERLOCK HOLMES
The Case of the Jersey Lily
By Katie Forgette

A FUNDRAISING BENEFIT FOR Cedar Tree Classical Christian School
The evening will include light refreshments, highlights of our fine arts program, and an opportunity to partner in giving.

Friday & Saturday April 24 & 25
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January Theme Day

Cedar Tree’s Upper School students participated in the school’s third theme day of the year on January 30. The theme centered on the characters from Lewis’ Chronicles of Narnia.

Students enjoyed a day to dress up as their favorite characters and fellowship with each other through a catered lunch. As Mr. McIntosh, the Upper School Student Affairs Director said, “The purpose of theme day is for students and teachers to experience joy in a more creative setting.”

Some of the more notable costumes included Max Gossman’s representation of Mr. Tumnus, Samantha Gossman’s Aslan, and Sarah Breigenzer’s White Witch. Sarah said that she enjoyed dressing up as the White Witch and appreciated the nice break from wearing uniforms. Each theme day calls for creativity. This month’s theme day revolved around the “Ides of March,” and many togas were draped.

—Bethany Foster, R3

High school students enjoy each other during an evening cruise.
Students Learn Devotion & Discipline

Almost half of Cedar Tree high school students are student athletes while other students are dedicated musicians, dancers, thespians, community volunteers, or employees after school. These extracurricular activities require many hours devoted to training or practice. Students are challenged to balance the demands of their chosen extracurricular activity with the academic rigor of Cedar Tree studies.

I sometimes question if sports are worth the extra hours, but I persevere because I love the game. Student athletes, musicians, dancers, thespians, employees, and service volunteers must walk a tight line of dedication to both their extracurricular activities and their study time.

Just as our parents and teachers have sacrificed for us to be part of Cedar Tree, we have all made sacrifices for something we love, and that puts all of us in the same battle to fight together.—Owen Carlson, R3