

July 15, 2020

The enchantment that we find in children and the manner in which many families and many communities organize their lives around their children is a rather new phenomena.

Children in the ancient world were chattel, economic commodities more than valued little people.

Family planning was simply infanticide so a child could be conceived and given birth to simply as a means of generating income by being sold into slavery or worse.

The children of kings and priests might fare a bit better but there was nothing very special about childhood as childhood as every other stage of life in the general population was valued as a mean not an end.

Jesus made a dramatic gesture in welcoming children not as some kind of benevolent protector but as a stark reminder that his teaching was designed to challenge all of the assumptions and conditions of the ancient world that tried to create a hierarchy of values on external circumstances or superficial differences and that God's kingdom was not synonymous with the hierarchy of values embedded in the religious and political systems of the day.

I understand and believe that our conversation about "returning to school" has enormous consequences no matter what we do or do not do.

I cannot imagine the extent of the damage being done to little ones who are deprived of social interaction, healthcare, nutrition, and simple safety that being in school affords them.

I have no doubt that distanced learning is a lost cause for many and fundamentally inferior to the human interaction that takes place in and around schools for everyone.

The damage that will result from another prolonged isolation will be unprecedented in all places but especially among the poor. The descents into poverty of so, so many in countries that had fledgling growth of some into somewhat sustainable lifestyles are irrevocably lost.

Whatever happens will not be good, one can only hope that it will not be as bad as it could be.

The bubonic plague that wreaked havoc with the world in the 15th, 16th, and into the 17th century when it was finally over ushered in a new age of creativity and human flourishing which came to be called, The Renaissance.

The plague did this by causing the deaths of enormous numbers of people resulting in more food available for the survivors so that the increased protein and carbohydrates in their diets helped develop and grow their brains and they were able to produce so much more than their ancestors of just a generation or two before.

I do not know, nor have I heard any single guiding principle or concern in the reports of plans to reopen educational institutions at any level. I do not know if it is possible to formulate one.

Maybe all we can do is endlessly speculate until we know.

I think it most necessary that humility be cultivated and shared and I hope that all involved in planning whatever happens in our schools, we grow in humility with one another.