Summer 2026

Summer Greetings, Sophomores!

As you come off of your freshman year of high school, you officially enter the Rhetoric School at The Oaks. With that transition comes a return to the ancient world that you last visited in 7th grade. Perhaps you recall some of the things you encountered there: Aslan's creation of the world by means of beautiful words (much like the actual world's creation), Odysseus' long trip back to a waiting, faithful bride (much like the Lord Jesus' awaited return to his Church), and various and sundry stories of valiant and courageous warriors such as Cyrus the Great, Alexander, and Hannibal.

We will return to this world for your sophomore year, but by means of many different guides and texts. We'll begin with a familiar one: Homer will retell his masterful and epic tale in *The Odyssey*, which is your summer reading. More details will be forthcoming, but you may either plod through it this summer or join us for a two-day reading, affectionately known as a "Homer-athon" in late August. In 7th grade, you read approximately half of it, but this summer you are finally ready to savor the full dose.

Later in the school year we'll complete our study of Homer when we work our way also through *The Iliad*. But before and after that, our own odyssey will take us through such worthy works as Hesiod's *Theogony* ("The Origin of the Gods"), Euclid's elegant *Elements*, Plato's *Republic*, and other gems from the ancient world that have enriched human existence and been the providential means of human flourishing for millennia.

It will be a year of tapping into the substantive, but perennially human, works from the ancient world that have provoked the questions that only human beings can, and wish to, answer:

- What does it mean to be human?
- Should we read the pagan authors of antiquity, and if so to what end?
- How do the pagan authors such as Plato, Herodotus, Euclid, and Aristotle work, in God's providence, together with Moses, Matthew, and Paul to save and sanctify people, and even nations?

These and many other related questions will be on the docket for discussion and answering next year. For now, rest in the knowledge that your summer reading is already familiar to you, and that both Mr. Chastain and Mr. Tate will be your happy guides next year. From Hesiod to Moses, Plato to Plutarch, we will revel in grappling with the questions that have pleased and plagued human beings.

Gladly,

Mr. Chastain and Mr. Tate