

DRAWING THE DRAWING OUT OF ME

Virginia De La Lastra on a Pleasant Surprise

Life surprises come in all shapes and colors. In my case, they also came in lines, pencil lines. I discovered I was good at drawing, when I was thirty five years old, while studying a Master of Arts in apologetics at Houston Baptist University. But it was my professor and advisor, Dr. Holly Ordway, who discovered it first.

It all started in the summer of 2015, when I attended a G.K. Chesterton conference. While looking at the books, I complained about the unattractiveness of most editions of my favorite work by Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*. My friends, with admirable patience and kindness, asked me to sketch a cover idea. Clumsily, I sketched a very rough draft. It was a tremendous surprise when some of them asked me if they could publish that sketch. I was puzzled.

Since the fall semester was about to start, I felt grateful for my upcoming meeting with my advisor,

Dr. Ordway. She is one of those amazing teachers who knows her students, loves them, and always tells them the truth, however unpleasant. Therefore, I was sure she would be the first to let me know if there was anything to this drawing incident.

After informing her about what had happened at the conference, she asked me to bring in some of my sketches. I brought an old sketchbook with some random messy drawings in lead pencil. She took them, looked through them in silence, and finally informed me without a doubt that these were good drawings. So, we thought that if I had talent, I should start working on it immediately. (I was about 20 years late already!)

Dr. Ordway encouraged me to draw the remaining years of the master's degree. With her help, we merged the visual arts with my apologetic studies. This is how I ended up illustrating my essays and stories, studying G.K. Chesterton's art, and working with her on a thesis about how to embody concepts in the visual arts.

I have nothing but deep admiration and thanks for her. She is without doubt the best teacher and educator I have ever had. I discovered I could draw, but she was the one who drew the drawing out of me.