



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

All Saints 2014

Dear Friend,

We at Gregory the Great are not trying to change the world. We are only trying to change our students. We seek to convert them through conversation that they may turn into true soldiers of Christ. By the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, it is our prayer that they may then partake in the awesome challenge to be the Lord's witnesses, and preach the Gospel to all nations—and perhaps even convert the world as they draw new voices into the conversation begun here.

My predecessor, Mr. Howard Clark, once told me that life is a series of conversions, a series of returns to the truth that we fallen beings only too often lose sight of. This statement by Mr. Clark has become my touchstone in carrying on this school with so many good men. Standing amid worldly cacophony and confusion, we strive together to have a conversation, to convert ourselves every day, to better understand the high heavens that we stand under. Looking up in wonder and awe at the peace which passeth understanding, as at the stars, we know that we stand together as members of a much greater and grander kingdom—a kingdom where we long to work and play in the shadow of our God, being daily His delight, as He is ours, and rejoicing before Him always.



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



These young men of the Catholic Faith are being given the life-changing chance to join in a great conversation and a great conversion: to taste a vibrant culture, a true community of friends, dedicated to rejoicing in the truth of things together, which is the purest educational experience. This culture is built upon those old-fashioned pillars that have upheld the human spirit for centuries—music, imagination, poetry, nature, and an ordered, optimistic worldview. This is education by delight, and it is the art that is drawing these boys of St. Gregory's up as they grow in virtue, wisdom, and, most importantly, the happy life.

I thank you sincerely for helping us to have this school, allowing our students to embark on the adventure of their lives. I pray that God will keep us close to Him and His Wisdom this year as we strive together, as we seek together, and hopefully as we find together He Who is Love. May we then rejoice with the poet in the words of that lovely nursery rhyme that is also a philosophy of life:

*The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.*

Though we are truly kings as sons of the King of Kings and are as happy as such kings ought to be, it is a fact that we are not as rich as kings. Our fundraising challenges are weighty this year, and we are happily laboring to cover the costs of scholarships and educational activities. Please join our community in converting these forty-two hearty and happy souls to Christ and make a gift to the academy today.

May God bless you.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Rugby Sevens Comes to Gregory the Great Academy

Head coach Garret van Beek has enthusiastically inaugurated a new, intense form of rugby at the Academy this fall. Known as “sevens” because it employs seven players rather than the usual fifteen, it also features much shorter time periods.

The Academy has joined the State of Pennsylvania’s Rugby Sevens Tournament League and will be playing against teams from throughout the state. Complementing Sevens is a well-organized conditioning program, focusing on strength, speed, agility, and quickness. The Highlanders will also participate in an indoor soccer league this winter and carry on its highly successful Rugby fifteens tradition this spring.

Joining coach van Beek will be veteran Highlander coach Andrew Beebe (Class of 2003) and newcomer John Bascom (Class of 2009). Bascom captained the Highlanders through the undefeated 2009 season, leading them to the much sought after EPRU championship. At the helm for the Highlanders, are their captain, Stephen Wagner, as well as fellow senior, David Prezgia, both of whom were members of the 2012 State Championship team. Under their leadership, the Highlanders will



Sophomore Dominic Valentine prepares to place the ball in the scrum.

uphold the values we instill in our students, both on and off the field: strength of character, unselfish sportsmanship, and discipline in the face of adversity. Gregory the Great Academy has taken 2nd place in 2 of 3 tournaments, proving (once again) that the proper balance of hard work, good will, and sheer determination, will result in the proper balance on the scoreboard.



Above: The Highlander squad practice on campus using new rucking pads, a generous gift from a donor.

Right: Head Coach Garret van Beek gathers the team together at a 7’s league tournament in Harrisburg, PA.



Expanded Guild Program Returns

This year Gregory the Great Academy is continuing and expanding the guild program begun last year. A guild is formed when a teacher finds in himself the desire to share some skill he values, an enjoyable and useful activity that fosters love for beauty and goodness.

In short, a guildmaster's goal is to give the boys the experience of an art or a craft taught for



Freshman Matthew Davidson, Junior Kyle Kerstiens, and sophomore Aidan Kelly work on their illuminated manuscripts.

the enjoyment of the thing itself. Each student is enrolled in a guild rotation. In one rotation students may be making embossed leather wallets in a leatherwork guild, painting illuminated manuscripts in another, while in another rotation students are carving wood blocks for printing, learning to draw from life, baking bread and roasting coffee beans, or practicing woodland survival skills. This program is central to the Academy's philosophy of experiential learning and answers a boy's natural desire to have a hands-on project that yields a beautiful result.



Senior Jean-David Lejeune participates in the Bushcraft Guild fire-building challenge.

Parents' Day 2014

On Sunday, September 28, the students and faculty of the Academy were very happy to host their first annual Parents' Day. The day gave the Academy faculty an opportunity to mingle socially with the parents, grandparents,

brothers, and sisters of the boys. The boys with their parents and families have always been thought of as forming the larger family of St. Gregory's, and on Parents' Day this larger community was made joyously visible.



Dormfather Ben Strong leads a sing-along on the school veranda, regaling visiting parents on Parents' Day.



Sophomore Kolbe Costello meets and greets a young visitor.



Academic Dean Luke Culley converses with the Niles family, who traveled from their home in Oklahoma to visit the school and their senior son, John.



Families gathered in the school auditorium to enjoy a lively juggling show performed by the St. Julian Juggling Troupe.



The students and faculty of Gregory the Great Academy 2014-2015 - 42 students and 13 faculty members - assembled on the campus grounds.



Karen Beebe teaching the Sophomore Scripture class on the instruction floor of the main lodge. Besides teaching Scripture to the lower form and Rhetoric to the juniors, Mrs. Beebe also serves as the academy registrar, secretary, and in-house mother (as needed) to our boys.



Above: Luke Culley teaching the Junior Church History course, a new class offered this year at the academy. Mr. Culley also teaches Senior Humanities and Rhetoric and leads the St. Julian Juggling Troupe. As academic dean, Mr. Culley is on the front-line of curriculum development, extra-curricular events, and teacher guidance.

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