



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Easter 2014

Dear Friend,

As you can imagine, there were times not too long ago when I felt a certain kinship to those who stood at the tomb of Jesus on Good Friday. The school where I had been a student and where I had taught for ten years was gone. Then came the hope of a new beginning. I, like Thomas, had my doubts. I wondered if we would be successful in establishing Gregory the Great Academy—in finding what had passed away somehow alive again.

By the grace of God and your generous support, we have been successful. Gregory the Great Academy is alive and well. However, it is one thing to secure a building where boys can live and be educated. It is one thing to assemble a dedicated staff. It is one thing to train a rugby team. It is quite another thing to capture a spirit: that spirit that characterized St. Gregory's Academy and which this new school was to keep alive.

Would we be successful in rekindling that spirit? In *truly* resurrecting our school from the dead?

Earlier this year, I witnessed something that answered this question in a most unexpected way. We had just finished lunch and I was crossing the refectory amid a bustle of boys stacking dishes, cleaning tables, and gathering books. Then in the middle of this healthy hubbub, I saw two boys—both freshmen, both named Thomas—arguing with each other. It was not an angry argument; but it was an ardent argument.

So earnest was it that it arrested my attention. These two students, both smartly dressed in white shirts and tartan ties, were engaged in discussion about the effect of poverty on human civilization. The one Thomas claimed that societal corruption was an inevitable result of poverty. The other Thomas contended that poverty did not necessarily breed corruption. On they debated with both gravity and logic; with retort and rationalization for their respective positions—the first Thomas juggling three brightly colored balls as he spoke, while the second Thomas twirled around his opponent on a unicycle.

We were successful.

But this success, joyful as it is, is only a battle in a war yet to be won. We still have need to set funds aside to provide financial aid for worthy students from large families. We still have need to

save up for a down payment on a permanent home. We still have need to reach out to you for support. Without your assistance, without your prayers, we would not be changing the lives of these Thomases, these future apostles, who—together with their fellow students—are arming themselves to be bearers of the Light of Christ in a new Dark Age. During this Eastertide, please consider making a gift to Gregory the Great Academy and help us form a new army of leaders for the Church.

May the blessings of the Risen Lord rest upon you and your family.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



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Headmaster



P.S. Now is the time. Seize the day with us and make Gregory the Great Academy part of your charitable giving; and thereby make yourself part of the mission to resurrect the art of classical education in the Catholic tradition.



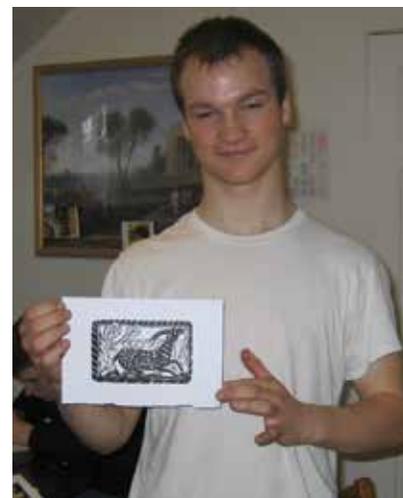
The Guilds at Gregory the Great

This year at Gregory the Great Academy, we have instituted a number of guilds that meet every week. Our initiative is inspired by the guilds of the Middle Ages, which were fraternities dedicated to the perfection of a given craft or fine art.

In the **Martial Arts Guild**, Liam McCarthy teaches the Japanese art of hand-to-hand grappling, holding, and throwing tactics known as *Jujitso*. Andrew Smith, our resident sculptor, inducts students into the ancient art of wood-block etching and printing in his **Wood Carving Guild**. In Ben Strong's **Leatherworking Guild** students learn how to make books out of leather and to emboss them beautifully. In the **Film-making Guild**, Sean Fitzpatrick teaches students how to storyboard, dramatize, and shoot a silent film. Nick Dalimata's **Cabin Guild** guides young men in how to build foundations out of stone, to cut down trees and shape them into beams with axes, and to do everything necessary to make a beautiful cabin in the woods.

These Guilds are intended to initiate students into a few of the manual arts, both ancient and new, that every youth should be acquainted with if he is to become a man in full, a man as "handsome" as he is wise.

(Right) Junior Caleb Kress displays a print he made from his wood carving in Andrew Smith's studio.



Above: Dormfather Ben Strong shows his guild how to stain leather.



Right: Senior Luke Romanchuk tosses Sophomore Greg Zuranski in the Martial Arts Guild.

The Ukulele Program



The Lower Form gather for music class with their ukuleles. Back row, left to right: Kolbe Costello, Thomas Audino, Mark Grenier, Greg Zuranski, Kyle Kerstiens, and Anthony Mioni. Front row: Vincent Audino, Thomas Urgo, Aidan Kelly, and Dominic Valentine.

Over the past year it has been a joy to add the ukulele to the music curriculum at Gregory the Great Academy. While the ukulele may have an unfortunate reputation as a frivolous instrument or as a staple of dreamy Hawaiian music, it is in fact a true folk instrument that is used in many places to teach music and has enjoyed over a century of life in American culture.

The ukulele, because it is a relatively simple instrument to learn and play, is used at Gregory the Great Academy to teach music theory and rhythm as well as solo and ensemble performance practice. It gives every student the ability to play along during our many folk music sessions. In short, the addition of the ukulele to our folk music program has been a real success because now every student can play an instrument, and has gained a fundamental understanding of how an instrument works.

-Matthew Williams
Music Director

Songs of Experience: Poetry at the Academy

Poetry defies definition because it is both too wide and too deep to be contained. At Gregory the Great we do not try to place it in a neat category, or to lay it out for study “like a patient etherized upon a table.” We teach it by experience. Our students memorize great and good poems without having recourse to pinned-down print; instead, they learn, line by line, from the living voice of a teacher. They learn truly by heart — They fill their minds and hearts with noble words, with “the best words in their best order.”

After memorizing a Shakespeare sonnet, or a Psalm, or “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” — to give examples of a few the juniors and seniors have by heart, students and teacher discuss and delight in the poem’s images, figures, tone, rhythm, and in the connections it draws to some universal truth about love or faith, country or family, the end of the world or the beginning of life.

After memorizing the perfect and wonderful words of poets, perhaps the best experience of poetry is writing it yourself. Juniors and seniors in our Creative Writing Class have been writing one a week since

January, and in February we had the privilege of a visit from the poet, Mark Anthony Signorelli. Mr. Signorelli read from his and from others' poetry and conducted a workshop as part of Poetry Night. Students read their own work or recited a memorized poem and faculty members awarded junior Caleb Kress first prize for his poem, "The Shining Crystal Mountain."

The Shining Crystal Mountain

by Caleb Kress

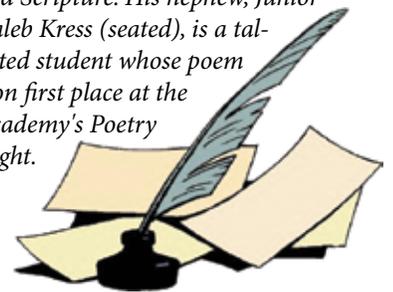
White forms were falling from the facets of the sky,
The icy blanket rustled as the bitter wind blew by,
The small birds sang melodious as a shadow crossed the land,
And the mighty ocean rumbled as it crushed the rocks to sand.

By the edge of the forest the white powder slowly rose
Like a storm on the horizon or a wave that slowly grows.
As I sit here by the window and I gaze into the night,
White crystals brightly glisten as they reflect the moonlight.

The wonders of the world were resurrected in the sight
Of the shining crystal mountain as it glistened in the night.



Mr. Luke Culley, Dean of Student Life, teaches Humanities, Poetry, History, and Scripture. His nephew, Junior Caleb Kress (seated), is a talented student whose poem won first place at the Academy's Poetry Night.



GREGORY
THE GREAT
A C A D E M Y

Please support Gregory the Great Academy by sending your tax-deductible donation today!



Br. Gabriel-Marie of the Annunciation, M. Carm., Class of 2007

“I pray all is well at Gregory the Great Academy. I am proud to have been a student at St. Gregory’s Academy. They were some of the best years of my life and without them I would not be who I am today.”



The 2014 Highlander Rugby squad with coaches Andrew Beebe, Ian Costello, Garret van Beek, and Nicholas Dalimata.



(Upper left) Juniors Joseph Thrun, Stephen Wagner, and Joseph Smith gather for Humanities class with Mr. Culley.

(Lower left) Ben Strong leads his Algebra class. Mr. Strong has been an excellent addition to the Gregory the Great community this year, being an enthusiastic teacher and jack-of-all-trades who is always willing to share his expertise with the boys, from repairing a vehicle to preparing a haggis from scratch.

(Upper right) The St. Julian's Juggling Troupe practice their routines in preparation for a show.