



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Graduation 2015

Dear Friend,

Fifteen years ago, St. Gregory's Class of 2000 surprised their headmaster. During the graduation celebrations, they gave him a gift for their school: a sword. That sword, a great claymore, evoked the sword in our school song, "The Minstrel Boy," together with the Scottish traditions we cherish in song and sport. For fifteen years, that sword has gleamed where our students live—a chivalrous token from bygone brethren and a reminder of battles to come. Fifteen years since the giving of the sword, another senior class has surprised their headmaster, following the inspiration of the sword. They presented their own gift to the school they love so well: a harp. This harp, the wild harp of the Minstrel Boy, joins the sword to complete the iconography.

*One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!*



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster

You can imagine what it was like for me, once a student myself, to stand in the company of such lads, such hearts—young men who have what Burns called "the pith o' sense an' pride o' worth"—and receive from their hardy and happy hands such a symbol. The harp felt light in my hands while they sang "The Minstrel Boy,"



The Class of 2000 presents the claymore to Headmaster Alan Hicks and Assistant Headmaster Howard Clark.

despite its hardwood heaviness and its gravity as a gift. It seemed borne up by the spirit that emanated from these twelve men—men who were no longer boys. Like the Minstrel Boy, they are off to war in the world. They marched from our company as singing soldiers, as mature Catholics, as apostles.

They are apostles because they are sent forth on a mission to live their Faith openly and freely—to share the Catholic joy and purpose they have been given at Gregory the Great with all nations. That is their vocation, as it is all of ours. I have seen these twelve grow from child to man, and as their childhood was informed and infused with the good, the true, and the beautiful, so too will these realities of God guide their manhood.

These men, these apostles, were fathered by their childhood together with the experience of a classical, communal, and Catholic education. We pray that they will now give what they have received and spread the Good News like fire on a hillside. But these gifts that we pray they give, were given them not only by the Academy, but also by all of you—you who have believed with us, prayed for us, and offered your financial support. By your gifts, gifts have been given, and will continue to be given for the betterment of people everywhere. By your gifts, you are all apostles, helping to bring the Faith to new hearts and minds. I thank you sincerely.

Please continue to help us form a new corps of apostles, minstrels for the Church. Summer is a hard time for us since tuition revenue stops and we have to create a tight budget based on requests for financial aid. Please give generously. Your gift will directly affect how many students we can accept and take aboard for their journey towards apostleship.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



The handcrafted, rosewood minstrel harp given to the Academy by the Class of 2015.



Headmaster's Address, Graduation 2015

There are many words that are more than mere words. Many of the words of the Divine Liturgy are such, being laden with a power and a purpose that flies far beyond immediate meaning. Some command miracles, such as the words of consecration. Others command missions, such as the celebrant's dismissal when the Mass concludes. The end of every Mass is intended as a beginning. The word, "Mass," is derived from the word "dismissal," which is rooted in the image of many people being sent forth upon different ways on a common mission. The priest's dismissal is a restatement of Christ's dismissal to His apostles prior to His glorious Ascension which we celebrated last week: a command to those who were sent forth, who were dismissed. "*Ite; Missa est.*" "*Go; it is the dismissal.*" "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.*" This self-same "Go, you are sent forth" is spoken not only to apostles—to priests and bishops—but also to those who have become disciples. Seniors, you have become disciples, but you are not called to be disciples only. By your discipleship, you are all sent forth. You are all apostles.

Seniors, follow the Apostles as apostles yourselves, heeding the call to action that ends every Mass, and carry the word—and the Word—further by Catholic example, Catholic joy, and Catholic peace. As mature Catholics and as graduates



of St. Gregory's you are called to transition from adherent to ambassador. And you have at your beck and call secrets that the world has largely forgotten. You have a sense of community, of brotherly love. You have a taste for beauty as you found it in the good and great works. You have music. You have poetry. You are jongleurs. You have been invigorated with many good things. Go, and invigorate others. You have been given gifts that are to be shared. Do not bury the goods entrusted to you. Multiply them. Wield your weapons of hope and mirth with a crusader spirit and bring new faces and friends into your ever-widening circle—and, as good clowns of God, keep Christ as your ringmaster.

Realize this: the mission to preach the Good News was not completely realized by Christ's earthly life. It was left to His Apostles to carry on. "As the Father sent me, so I also send you... teach ye all nations." Testifying to the truth cost Christ His life, and the Apostles would find the way similarly fraught with opposition. But as the Spirit sustained Our Lord through His Passion, so too the Spirit Who had spoken through the prophets does not leave the soldiers of Christ unaided. As King of Prophets, Christ foretold the Spirit's coming: "Take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." That promise was fulfilled on Pentecost, manifested in fire, wind, and earthquake. This was the enflaming of the infant Church into full manhood, full apostleship, inspiring the brave and joyful promulgation of the Gospel. This is the character of those confirmed in Christ, and it is the character indelibly sealed upon your souls as by a fire. It is a character that applied not only to the Twelve, but to you twelve as well—and it is not for the faint of heart to bear.

This page and the following page present excerpts from the Headmaster's Address of Mr. Sean Fitzpatrick and Mr. Philip Gay's Valedictorian Address. Those who would like to read the speeches in their entirety will find them on the Gregory the Great website at www.gregorythegreatacademy.org.



Sean Fitzpatrick dismisses the graduates at the St. Nicholas Shrine in the Pocono Mountains.



Academic Dean Luke Culley awards a diploma to his nephew, Caleb Kress.

Philip Gay's Valedictorian Address

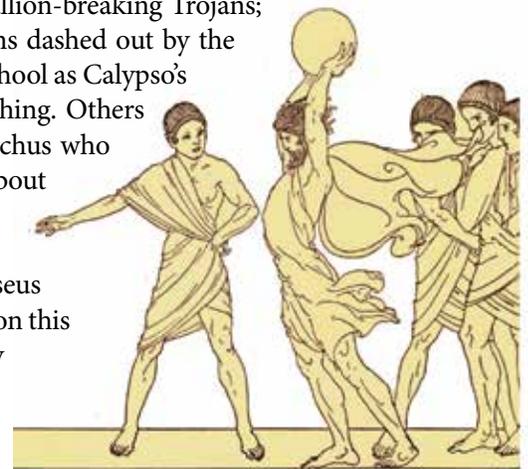
Gregory the Great Academy is a journey—a journey that in many ways embodies the epic tales we love to read and that inform the way we look at our lives and the world around us. This pilgrimage is not always as grand or elaborate as the wonders chronicled in Homer's *Odyssey*; however, it shares in similarly life-changing experiences and adventures. Just as Odysseus' goal was to reach his home, so too is it our goal as students to finish the course and return home. But we learn from Odysseus that he cannot reach home until he has been changed in some significant way.



He must return to Ithaca as a new man, having put aside his profession as a sacker of cities on the windy plains of Troy. Similarly, as students, we cannot leave until we have been affected in some way by this school—until we have become stronger by bearing up under challenge; until we have learned to live and to love no longer as boys, but as men. Every student's experience of Gregory the Great is different. To some, the journey may seem as long and treacherous as the trials of Odysseus. Rugby practice may seem as daunting as fighting the stallion-breaking Trojans; and studying as terrible as having your brains dashed out by the Cyclops. I don't think anyone thinks of our school as Calypso's island, at least—which is probably a good thing. Others might relate more to the journeys of Telemachus who had a short, simple voyage to learn more about himself, the world around him, and the man

he was called to become until he returned home, like his father, Odysseus, a changed man—no longer a boy. Whether someone has the experience of Odysseus or Telemachus, the person—the Child—is changed for the better for embarking on this journey. The whole point is that St. Gregory's provides a mold for manhood by giving the young the experience of hardship—both its rigors and its rewards.

This is the essence of the education we receive here, and it is also the essence of a true faith—to come home to ourselves both physically and spiritually.



The graduation ceremonies were held on a beautiful May day and with many guests. Above left, Sean Fitzpatrick leads the graduates with school piper, Peter Reilly. The Academy graduated twelve seniors this spring and wishes them well as they head off to college next year.



Above: The annual alumni vs students rugby match took place on a beautiful day, and saw the alumni carry a narrow victory after a spirited game. Below: The St. Julian's Juggling Troupe performed an incredible show for the graduation guests based on a cowboy motif called "The Streets of Laredo." Bottom right: Mrs. Jean Pollock embraces her newly-graduated son, John. Please pray for our graduates and that God will send us good students to take their place.



Please help us purchase two new vans!
See our reply card to make a gift.