



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

October 2015

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to tell you that the 2015-2016 academic year is underway with excitement and activity at Gregory the Great Academy. Our student numbers have grown, our faculty has welcomed some familiar faces back to the teaching roster, and our spirits are high and strong—and all thanks to your prayers and support.

The students have begun participating in state rugby tournaments in the same stride as they have undertaken the happy challenges of tackling the classics of Western Civilization and the complexities of the natural sciences. Old songs are echoing once again under the stars as young faces flash on the edge of campfires. By the grace of God and your good help, our work to form souls for Christ has been rekindled for another year.

Meanwhile, the glorious fall colors are kindling in the trees around our sequestered campus in the Pocono Mountains of Northeast Pennsylvania, preparing to close a season in splendor even as we begin ours. There is poignancy in this—that we, as a school, awaken even as the world falls asleep. As a teacher, I am always looking to creation for illustration of the goodness and glory that we are introducing to our students, and there is a sign in these respective cycles. Our school is here to withstand the challenges of a wintry world, to survive with cheer when the going gets rough, and to be happy in the gifts of human and divine friendship despite the motions at large to quell Catholic culture. Gregory the Great Academy is a stronghold where boys become men and it would not be so if it were not besieged by perils and trials. There is nothing to be gained if there is nothing to overcome—and winter in these mountains is no joke!

We are so grateful to you for making our good trials possible. Your generosity gives us the means to provide food, shelter, and warmth for our boys, which in turn, allows us to focus upon the challenges of spiritual and intellectual formation. That being said, winter is coming again. Please remember the boys at St. Gregory's in your charitable giving this year. Your gift unites you to our mission to give these boys the experience of victory in Christ. Thank you and God bless you.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



The Wonder of the Natural World

This year, a freshman class comprised of students from New York, New Jersey, Colorado, and Oklahoma have migrated to the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania. As these freshmen are being introduced to life within the walls of St. Gregory's, their Natural History class is introducing them to the abundant life and wonders beyond those walls. Each week of the course challenges the students to experience something new and exciting, but the methods of study and observation remain constant throughout the year.

For example, to learn about the habits of the goldenrod fly, the students first read about its lifecycle from an egg to an adult. This begins when the female lays an egg inside a goldenrod stem. When the egg hatches, the larva begins to eat the goldenrod, causing it to form a ball-shaped growth called a gall. The larva lives and feeds in the gall for up to a year, eventually pupating and emerging as an adult. With this information, the freshmen take to the woods and fields in search of galls.

Once found, they are observed on the goldenrod and then taken back to the classroom where they reveal their secrets. The boys observe the larva and its pre-made passage to the outer gall wall, made in anticipation of its becoming an adult.

The tactile knowledge gained through such experience makes the reading come alive. This impresses on the mind the reality of the natural event, providing what the printed word can never adequately convey. Finally, the students will review the text and compare it with their direct observations. All together, these exercises provide a lasting and meaningful impression of the goldenrod fly and



The Freshman Class observe and learn about the anatomy of a turtle with their teacher, Mr. Garret van Beek.

its strategies for survival, preparing students to observe it again when the cycle renews and nature repeats her story.



Jean-Henri Fabre

The true beginning of any scientific endeavor is wonder. As witnessed by the history of science, wonder is often its ultimate end as well. From Thales contemplating the motion of the heavens to Fabre's endless hours spent observing the customs of insects, the story of science is punctuated by men who observe, wonder, and offer imaginative explanations for natural phenomena.

Once the wonder of the student is awakened, many problems that bedevil educators—discipline, boredom, motivation—are solved. Wonder is a root that nourishes the whole student stimulating fruitful activity both in and out of the classroom. A student who has begun to wonder will pursue the answers unbidden by the teacher, will raise questions unasked by the teacher and will eventually become his own teacher. If we search the life story of any great man of science, we will find a sacred moment in his youth when the flame of wonder was kindled, and it is this flame that endured and spread providing the ardor and light of his mature discoveries.

The Natural History class at Gregory the Great Academy seeks to inculcate these intellectual virtues of observation, wonder, and imagination into our students. Besides learning specifics of the studied specimens, the freshmen will be left with an overarching appreciation and interest in this world that manifests its Creator.

Mark Costello, RIP

Gregory the Great Academy mourns the passing of longtime friend and benefactor Mark Costello, Labor Commissioner for the state of Oklahoma. Mr. Costello, the father of both an alumnus and a current student of the Academy, passed away on August 23, 2015. Please pray for the repose of his soul and for his wife and children. May eternal light shine upon him.



New and Returning Faculty Members



Stephen Fitzpatrick

Gregory the Great Academy is happy to announce the return of Mr. Stephen Fitzpatrick to the teaching faculty. Mr. Fitzpatrick graduated from Saint Gregory's Academy before earning a BA in the Liberal Arts from Thomas Aquinas College and an M.A. in Theology from the University of Scranton. Mr. Fitzpatrick previously taught at Saint Gregory's Academy from 2004 until 2012. For the 2012-2013 school year he taught at a classical charter school in Colorado and for the following two years he worked as a teacher and developer at a private Catholic school in Ottawa, Canada. Mr. Fitzpatrick is thrilled to re-join the Saint Gregory's community and to be a part of this educational adventure. He is teaching Latin 1, Geometry, Physics, Theology, and Folk Music.

Also joining the faculty this year is Father Christopher Manuele. Father Christopher graduated from Thomas Aquinas College before beginning his seminary studies, graduating in 2005 with an MA in Divinity.

The following year Father Christopher was ordained a priest in the Eastern Catholic Church for the Melkite Diocese of Newton. He has served parishes in Alabama, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Father Christopher is a long-time friend of the school and has taught previously at the Academy. We are very pleased to welcome him back to our community.

Clayton Lang joins the dorm staff for the 2015-2016 school year.



Clayton Lang

Clayton hails from southern California and is the second of nine children, one of whom is a current Sophomore at the Academy. Mr. Lang graduated from Saint Gregory's in 2010 and went on to study at Wyoming Catholic College and the Franciscan University of Steubenville where he captained their rugby team. He teaches Latin II and assists with the rugby program.



Fr. Christopher Manuele

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

Van Fundraiser Successful!

We would like to thank all of you who contributed to our van fund. Through your generosity, we have purchased two fifteen-passenger vans. These vans will be used to take the boys to various events ranging from sports matches to educational field trips. We are now able to transport the entire student body. Thank you for your support!





The St. Julian Juggling Troupe perform for families and friends. Over sixty guests came to the fall Open House, traveling from many states to enjoy the events of the day, which included Divine Liturgy, brunch, a lecture, a juggling performance, and a Q&A session.

