



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Feast of St. John Bosco, 2015

Dear Friend,

You know how important the teenage years are, but did you ever imagine the importance of these formative years is rooted in danger? Adolescent boys are creatures on fire. According to Dr. John Senior, the word “adolescence” is derived from a word meaning, “to burn.” Governing the fires of adolescence is everything in education: to fight and refine these fires so that they do not become the uncontrolled fires of barbarism. Fire is never a safe commodity, but it is a necessary one, and in running the risk of forming the fiery spirit of human beings, education essentially involves danger.

The question of danger is one to be taken very seriously when educating boys, and it actually involves a species of neglect. Dr. Senior wrote that the proper education of boys employs what he called “benevolent neglect,” allowing boys to take chances, to risk success and failure, and thereby come to the knowledge of who they are as men. Education without danger is a



deadly thing for boys, leaving them to measure out their lives in likes and tweets, emasculated to the detriment of the times. Adolescent boys have an intrinsic and intense desire for physical experiences and their emotional corollaries. Incident and involvement are driving forces in their psychology, with appetites and interests fixed on encounters that flirt and fence with the dangerous. This is what makes boys tick, and it should be the tempo of their formation. The education of boys, at its best, is chiefly about maintaining and managing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical risk, so that boys can learn and grow through the danger they crave in an atmosphere of benevolent neglect.

Danger in education manifests itself in the art of drawing boys beyond their comfort zones into new realms. This pedagogy is an attitude of friendship: congratulating a boy after he shares his thoughts on a Shakespeare sonnet before his peers; recognizing another when he bloodies his nose on a rugby pitch; thanking them for singing their prayers at Holy Mass. None of these things are easy—or safe—for a teenage boy to undertake without hesitation. It requires an act of self-sacrifice to share the privacies of the mind and the privations of the body. But if they can be brought to, and *into*, those moments when they leap out of themselves, there are few things they cherish more.

In sports, studies, and socializing, good results are the outcome of toil, dedication, and discipline. Confronting and testing the whole person hones the fires of the soul, as opposed to extinguishing them, letting them burn without raging. All worthy ends in this life require kindling and coaxing, requiring both patience and practice; and, of course, it must be remembered that nothing worth doing, including education, is free of peril.

We need you to help us run the risk of educating boys in a world where so many are lost to neglect. Won't you please support our cause and make a gift to Gregory the Great Academy today? As Dostoevsky wrote, we are all responsible for the well-being and salvation of one another. Will you run the risk? Will you respond to your call?

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



The Path to Lasting Joy

It seems that there are three main paths people follow in pursuit of happiness. One path is base pleasure: things that bring instant gratification, but not prolonged happiness. The second course is postponed happiness, which forgoes immediate pleasure in exchange



Declan Hamilton
Ridgewood, NJ.

for the chance of someday being happy. The third route is sustained happiness, which is rooted in goodness. I've lived in environments that endorse the first two paths, and based on my experiences, I do not believe there is any true and lasting joy to be found from following them. I have found that by following the third path, by looking on all things, work or play, as a source of joy, real happiness can be attained in everyday life.

When I think of a place where I'm content and happy, one particular place comes to mind. I attend a boarding school in the Pocono Mountains. We are far from city lights, free from the distractions and troubles of the world. We aren't a large or wealthy school. We live in a constant state of glad poverty, oftentimes going without many of the things that other people would consider necessary. We rarely mourn for what we do not have. We don't waste a second crying over spilled milk because we don't have any milk to spill.



At Gregory the Great Academy, in place of skyscrapers we have ancient trees, red, orange, green, and gold, in their fall colors.



Above: "The Meeting of Dido and Aeneas" by Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland. Efforts are made in providing students with excellent and vivid illustrations of the stories they read.

Right: Rugby is an essential component of the education at the Academy. From its beginnings at Rugby School in England, the famous headmaster Thomas Arnold employed it as a tool for the formation of good character. The self-sacrifice, resilience, and composure necessary to excel at the game lay the groundwork for Christian manhood.



Rather than glaring electric lights, we have the stars shining brightly from the heavens. Instead of the sound of cars and trains, we are sung to sleep each night by the songs of birds and cicadas.

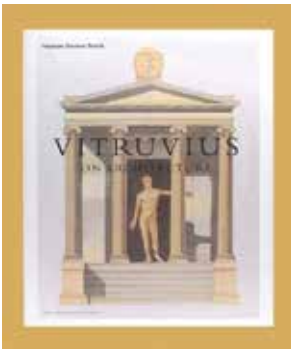
I have heard Virgil's epic, *The Aeneid*, unfold before me in my Humanities class, and I've shed salt tears for Dido, who ended her own life by falling upon the sword of her lost love, Aeneas. Here there is a red maple, in the shade of which my Physics class and I have gathered, contemplating the propositions of Ptolemy and Copernicus. We have tried





to prove and disprove their ideas using only what we can see in the world around us with our naked eyes. At the Academy I have even read Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture* and so learned, among other things, how the ancient Romans would fortify a city against assault.

At Gregory the Great we do not rely upon technology to have fun, for we possess no electronics. Instead we try to cultivate the lost art of imagination for our entertainment. I'll never forget the time spent in our dilapidated gazebo, which rests atop a hill overlooking miles of dense woods, discussing poetry. Or when all the faculty and students stood, one by one, in front of the fire in the commons for poetry night. Here our sport is rugby.



We practice all year and in any weather, solidifying the bonds between the students. On game days I have woken up at five in the morning to the drone of bagpipes.

This school has encouraged me to pursue knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of bettering myself, and not just to do well on a test. This place has educated me on how to appreciate what I have. It has shown me how to notice the beauty



of the world that surrounds me and to love the different aspects of nature. Most importantly the Academy has taught me that life is not a competition for worldly power. Nor is it a tiresome rotation of work, food, and sleep with free time being your only solace. Life, to me, is an ever-changing adventure where every day I awaken to a different quest with exciting new challenges and obstacles awaiting me.

— Declan Hamilton
Class of 2015

Celebrating Our Lady's Immaculate Conception



Above left: The Freshman Class enjoy their first banquet on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Above right: Sophomore Thomas Urgo and Senior Joseph Valentine bear Our Lady's image in a procession to the rugby pitch for games held in her honor.



Freshman Joseph Kimpton of Post Falls, Idaho, passes the ball in the annual Rugby 7's Tournament in honor of the Immaculate Conception. The student body is divided into teams of sevens which compete for victory in the cold of northeastern Pennsylvania.



Mr. Christopher Check of Catholic Answers visited the Academy as a guest lecturer and delivered rousing talks on the Cristero Wars of Mexico and the battle-joys of the Catholic Faith. Mr. Check's addresses were well-attended by families and friends of the Academy, reflecting the vibrant community that surrounds the boys.

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