



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Graduation 2016

Dear Friend,

How many young people do you know who make a point of attending graduation at their old high school?

Though a rare thing in the world, it is very common at Gregory the Great Academy. The alumni of St. Gregory's travel great distances every spring to be present at graduation. Our students regard their high school days as some of the best days of their lives, because life at the Academy is an exercise in life itself, forming tastes, habits, and friendships under circumstances so intense they are lifelong. It is really little wonder why our graduates return year after year to witness and support a new crop of graduates as they take their leave of their beloved Academy.

The graduation ceremony at Gregory the Great bespeaks a joyful culmination. It is a ritual of parting; a time for goodbyes, for good memories, for high hopes, and for tears. The seniors march in amid faculty, families, friends, students, and alumni, led by a bagpiper



playing the school song, "The Minstrel Boy" by Thomas Moore. Taking their places before all, one of the seniors steps forward and sings Moore's "Oft in the Stilly Night," a lament over "the smiles, the tears of boyhood's years."

The chaplain then leads all in a prayer of invocation before the valedictorian's address followed by the headmaster's reflection to the class. This done, the academic dean calls each student by name to award the diplomas, after which, the graduating class stands and sings "The Parting Glass." To this farewell, the students and alumni respond. Standing in the back, they bind arms over shoulders and sing a lusty version of "Auld Lang Syne" by Robert Burns.

With this moving exchange of leaving and of longing, the chaplain intones the "Salve Regina." The pipes strike up again! The graduates march out as a lively tune plays and they are received into the arms of friends and families. Dry eyes are hardly to be found.

Gregory the Great Academy is unique because of the intensity with which it teaches its students to love. The alumni of St. Gregory's learn about love and life among friends, and that is no fleeting or flimsy experience. It drives deeply to the heart, leaving a mark, like a wound.

Without love, our school would not be excellent. Without you, our school would not exist. Thank you for your prayerful patronage. As we now prepare for another academic year, we are receiving requests for financial assistance from parents of good boys. I know I can count on you as together we offer new life and new loves to new students. For that I am grateful.

May God bless you.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster

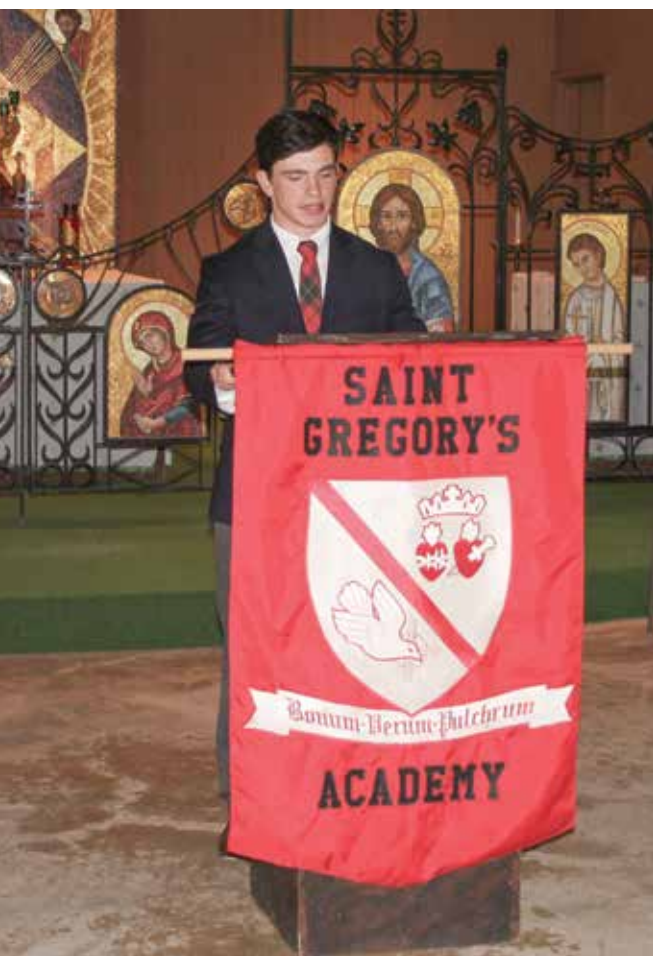


Excerpts from Graduation Addresses 2016



“The education at St. Gregory’s is dangerous, and that is precisely why it is worthwhile. The world exults in the average and the tolerant. Reject these, seniors. In the words of Charles Dickens’ Ghost, “Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse.” Troll fearlessly the ancient yuletide carol, seniors. We at St. Gregory’s desire to mount the naked height of poetry, which is God’s holy mountain. We at St. Gregory’s long to fly higher, even if we risk the flight of Icarus. It is good to be close to the gods.”
— Sean Fitzpatrick, Headmaster

Above: Senior Peter Reilly of Oklahoma leads the Class of 2016 in for the graduation ceremony. Right: Chaplain Fr. Christopher Manuele celebrates Holy Mass for graduation at the Shrine of St. Nicholas in the Pocono Mountains. Below: Valedictorian Peter Reilly delivers a moving address on the role of music and friendship at St. Gregory’s.



“Music has the power to awaken and enliven the spirit. It is spiritual. It is religious. Nations have been bound together by their songs, and the rising and falling dynamics of those nations’ music are intimately connected with the rising and falling of their ethics. The power of song lies in its ability to move the soul. This soul-swaying power of music, that power that persuades and inspires, binds souls; and it is in this forge that our Class’s friendship was wrought. Within the songs of Gregory the Great Academy are linked memories, memories that will be remembered at their sound and with their sound.”
— Peter Reilly, Valedictorian

“It is truly a blessing to be able to stand here now and know with un-shaking confidence that every member of this class is my friend. It is a blessing to be able to say that we all stand with the confidence that this camaraderie we have founded and celebrated here will prove lifelong. Ours is a friendship that has been forged in the fires of youth and joy, and hammered into shape on the anvils of the rugby pitch. Ours is a friendship engraved and embellished with laughter and jugglery. It is a friendship that has been tempered in waters: in literature, in logic, and poetry. It has been blessed in the chapel and sanctified by the Liturgy. And music, the right music, has presided over all, serving as a Divine voice, as though conducting a choir, and intoning the proper responses to His Divine mysteries. Music is the language of love, of friendship, of the merry life. Together we have heard it, together we have sung it, and we will carry it with us together even as we part ways.”

— Peter Reilly, Valedictorian



Above: Hunter Robinson is awarded his diploma by Academic Dean Luke Culley. Bottom: The graduating class of 2016 sings “The Parting Glass.” Please pray for our graduates as they head off to college, including Christendom College, Thomas Aquinas College, the University of Dallas, and Thomas More College.



Celebrating Graduation 2016



Left: The class of 2016 performed the comic operetta "The Zoo" by Arthur Sullivan for students, faculty, and families. Below Left: The St. Julian Juggling Troupe proudly presented "15 Songs and a Dead Man's Chest," an exciting show with high drama on the high seas, intricate sets, piratical costumes, sea shanties, pyro-technics, and - of course - juggling. Below Right: Graduates' families enjoyed a banquet hosted by the junior class.



Head coach Garret van Beek refereed the annual student vs. alumni rugby game on graduation weekend. The Highlanders finished fourth place in the state of Pennsylvania this year. Even so, the alumni managed a victory this year.