



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

September 2018

Dear Friend,

As we begin a new academic year with a fresh crop of boys whose lives are about to change, I am drawn to vivid memories of my own life-changing experiences at this school.

I had no idea how suddenly my life was to change one September many years ago. I was unpacking my luggage beneath a bunk in a strange room in a strange building. I was all alone with five empty beds awaiting other students, and my loneliness felt like it encompassed the wide world. As I placed a small picture of my family on the desk where I was to study that year, I looked out the window. I could not hold back the tears as I watched my mother and father pull slowly away down the curved drive. I had arrived at boarding school, and I was scared.

Then, with a bang, the door swung open to admit a large trunk. It scraped down the center of the room, driven by a laboring boy with a guitar on his back. He wrangled the box noisily into the area opposite mine, kicked it to the corner in victory, sat upon it, and swung the guitar round to his knee. I pretended not to notice him, hiding my sorrow, as he tuned the strings. The notes were bright. I had never heard someone tune a guitar before.

“Hey,” the boy said as he plucked and twanged. “I’m Mark.”

“I’m Sean.”

“You miss your mommy?”

I was silent, taken aback by his direct question.

“Here,” he said, emitting a shimmering minor chord, “I’ll play you a sad song.”

Then Mark played me a sad song. He sang “The Band Played Waltzing Matilda” with a doleful lilt in his voice and changed my life. No one had ever sung a song for me besides my mother in my childhood. All at once, I had an experience that I had never known

before—the forgotten custom of finding solace and solidarity in music and poetry. I came to boarding school expecting to find bookish boys, but I found a minstrel instead. Mark’s song was an overture of friendship, a gift from one who understood what I was experiencing in that moment, and its sadness was strangely soothing. I felt better. My education had begun.

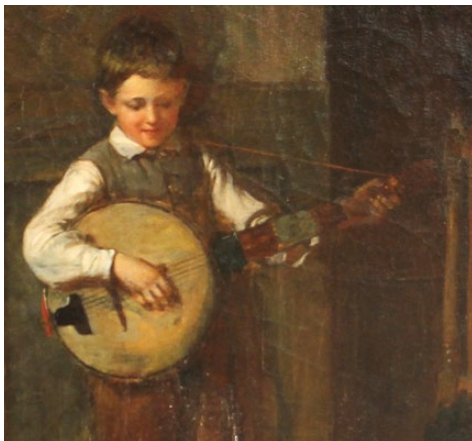
It is a rare grace and a pleasure to welcome new boys every fall, some afraid as I was, others eager and excited, and usher them into a community of friends who work and sing together as they learn the things that make boys men. We are off to a good start this year with a full house of students, a fresh dorm staff, and a seasoned faculty ready to hit the books, tune the guitars, tramp the fields, and coach young athletes. It is a mission that you share by your prayers, your faith, and your financial support. Let’s get to work.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



Homeward Campaign Update

Greetings from the Development Team.

Another summer has come and gone, and the excitement of the new school year is upon us. This will be our second full year back at our beloved Elmhurst campus and I have no doubt it will be one of our best years ever. We have 62 boys and an incredible staff who are eager to form these young souls into Catholic gentlemen.

Not a day goes by where we do not remember that you made this possible through your prayers and incredible generosity. God has been good to us *and so have you*.



As we enter into the final phase of our Homeward Campaign, here is an update for you on where we are now.

We began a journey in December, 2016 to purchase this campus, setting a goal of raising **\$1.6 million** by the end of 2018 to acquire and purchase the new campus and cover the costs of necessary updates and projects involved with the transition. This seemed like a daunting task, but we placed our faith firmly in the Lord and took the plunge.

To date, we have raised \$1,455,000, leaving us only \$145,000 from our goal. *Thanks be to God!*

Many updates have been completed on the building, including:

- boiler system upgrade
- new flooring
- major bathroom repairs
- significant repairs to the roof
- kitchen equipment upgrades

We have also begun work on a new library which will be named in honor of **Fr. Edward E. Sipperly**. Once completed, it will be a room second in beauty only to our chapel and will provide our community with a space worthy of the subjects and stories that comprise our academic program and intellectual life. *We look forward to keeping you up to date on the progress of this exciting project.*

Who would have known two years ago that we would be here? Our gratitude cannot sufficiently be expressed. We are at the finish line and we know you will be there to push us across.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.D. Smith'.

Christopher D. Smith ('03),
Director of Development, csmith@gregorythegreatacademy.com

Alumni Work Weekend

This August, we welcomed alumni back to our second annual work weekend. Alumni from classes going back to 1996 arrived on campus, along with some of their sons, ready to tackle necessary projects before the boys arrived for the upcoming school year. Old ceilings were torn out, faltering gazebos fortified, and new soccer goalposts raised on our athletic field. To see alumni return each year and give back to the school is a powerful thing, indeed. We thank them for their service and look forward to working with everyone again next summer.



Let us remind the world by our lives about the value of hard work, and the type of leisure that it brings—that leisure which some have called the wellspring of culture. But leisure can only be a basis of culture if there has been hard work that has preceded it—that has made it possible. Let us learn to work hard and work hard together with joy. It will be good. We have a good school, gentlemen, and it is bringing a goodness into our lives, but it will take work. Let's remain aware of that, and act like the good, hardworking school we are. Our school will only be as good as we are willing to work to make it good, to make it the best. So, for the sake of our school, and for the sake of ourselves, let's get to work, gentlemen.

— Sean Fitzpatrick, Headmaster
Orientation Address, 2018

Soccer Camp 2018

Gregory the Great is eager to find its way back to the competitive soccer circuit, and it jumpstarted that effort by conducting a rigorous soccer camp prior to the start of the academic year. 18 students arrived at the Academy early to participate in a week and a half of intensive training. With the first game of the season falling within the first week of school, the soccer camp provides an opportunity for the Highlanders to unite as a team both physically and mentally.

Joining this year's coaching staff are three young men who have all played soccer on the collegiate level. Brothers Jonathan and Joey Kuplack, along with Stephen Foeckler, bring a dynamic and talented presence to the coaching squad.

With Coach van Beek, they conducted a soccer camp that focused particularly on implementing a dynamic and well-structured style of play. In addition to field sessions, strength and conditioning, and game analyses, the team participated



in a clinic run by Coach Jake Guttierrez of Christendom College. Two exciting pre-season matches may signal that Highlander soccer has indeed regained its footing.



Above: Coach Garret van Beek works on passing techniques with Junior, Kevin Wagner, during soccer camp. Left: Sophomore Nate Bateman maneuvers around Senior Captain, Aidan Gibbons as the Highlander squad practices on the Academy's athletic fields.

Back to School, 2018



Top Row: Sophomore David Kuplack of Idaho dons his first class tie at Gregory the Great. Headmaster Sean Fitzpatrick reads the class roster as part of the orientation exercises and distributes ties to the students. Every year, the tartan ties are blessed by Fr. Christopher so that they may serve as sacramentals in academic labors. Middle Row: Junior, James Gaetano arrives with his mother, the fourth of his family to attend the Academy. Fr. Christopher reads the Gospel at the Opening Day Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. Bottom Row: Senior, Sebastian Adamowicz claims his area for the year. Sophomore, Damien Montfort arrives, smiling and ready for a new year and new adventures.