



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

All Souls 2018

Dear Friend,

Every boy loves a good ghost story, and one of the charms of living in an historic building like ours is the ghostly lore that has passed down through our community for years from forgotten, faraway origins. These traditions arise mainly from the time when this building was an orphanage nearly one hundred years ago. Every boy at Gregory the Great has heard the whispered rumor of the nun who sweeps the ill-lit sacristy hallway. Every boy has tried to piece together the cryptic clues that suggest that there was a morgue somewhere at sometime. Every boy has watched for Three-Fingered Willy's lantern glowing against the Water Tower window.

Our school, the very building itself, room after room, breathes with memories. Thousands of people have passed through this place and that passage is mysteriously enriching. It is palpable, and the students feel it. And though they enjoy telling tales of haunted closets and secret passages, there is an aspect to living and working and praying within weathered walls that is of real consequence. Time imparts an atmosphere of poignancy and permanence which affects attitude.

When boys study in the old sun porch, there is a nobility of age and design that elevates the mind. When they pray in the old chapel frescoed with a style of painting long gone, it transports the soul. The solidity of brick, the clank of radiators, the hardness of terrazzo, the loftiness of ceiling, the creak of hardwood, the endurance of slate, the craftsmanship of a former era—all of these things contribute to making education more engaging, more efficacious, more uplifting.



In short, the sense of antiquity plays a large part in the lives of our students. An especially prominent instance of this occurs on All Souls Day, when the boys process to a back corner of the campus where there is a cemetery dating from the orphanage days. It is quite small, set in a wooded area, and has three unmarked common graves and a single tombstone over the resting place of a twelve-year-old boy named George Gimbar.

Praying for all faithfully departed souls around this tomb as autumn leaves fall, the boys sense that they are part of something greater, that they themselves have a part to play before their turn comes to depart. The bell rings in the distant cupola, calling the boys back to lunch. Leaving the cemetery, they amble through the dried goldenrod as the Water Tower rises over the bluff to the east. Winter is coming, bringing rough rugby practices and snowballs and sleds. The education we provide these boys requires an environment of goodness, truth, and beauty. Our building and grounds provide the reality and the aura of these transcendentals, where the past and present intermingle to change the future. Our capital campaign to complete our purchase of this wonderful property has almost achieved the goal of \$1.6 million. We are only \$100,000 away. Will you make a tax-deductible gift this year and help us secure for generations to come this home of remarkable historical significance in Catholic education?

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



Robin Hood Days



Every autumn, the boys of Gregory the Great Academy, bristling with arms, bound with belts, and laden with pouches, bags, axes, tents, ropes, and whatnot, make their way under the greenwood tree as fiery colors flare across the Pocono Mountains. It is time for Robin Hood Days—three days spent in woodland sport, in camping and eating and singing out in the forest. This year, the merry boys slaughtered and cleaned two score Cornish hens, which they raised themselves, to roast over an open fire and feast upon with harvest corn and kegs of birch beer. And when the archery tournament and quarterstaff bouts were accomplished, when Holy Mass was celebrated beneath the boughs, when the ballads of merry England had been well sung, when all were covered in mud and glory, when all were full with meat and drink, the boys huddled round the fire and listened as *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* were read to them.



5th Annual River Valley Festival

This year we celebrated the 5th annual River Valley Festival in Front Royal, VA, and we are pleased to announce it was an incredible success. The Festival is an alumni-led initiative in which they seek to share the joy and beauty they received from the Academy with a larger community by creating a forum for true festivity. The Festival also supplements the fundraising required for boys to receive that same powerful education. Over 2000 people attended this year's festival and were treated to juggling shows from the Academy boys, delicious food and drink, and a wide array of folk music. Festival goers also enjoyed an edifying talk from Christendom College philosophy professor, Dr. John Cuddeback, on "The Boarding School Option."

We thank all of our friends, new and old, for making this the best River Valley Festival yet, especially the staff of alumni and volunteers who make this celebration possible.

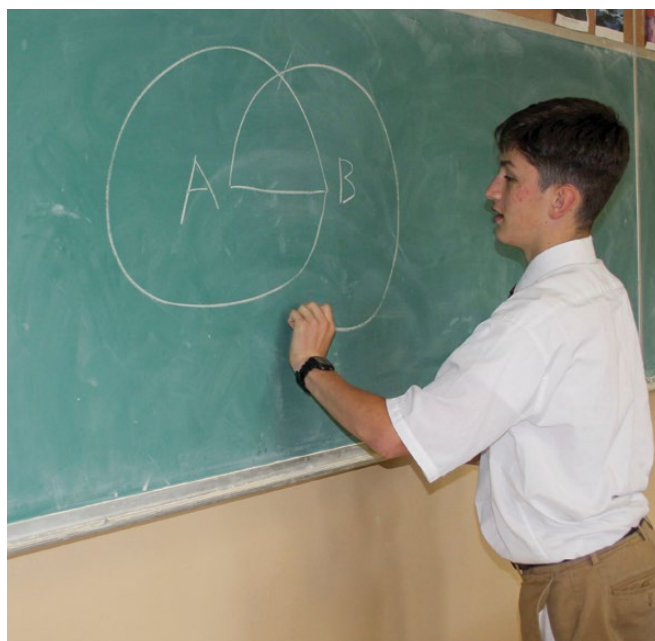


A Fallen Comrade

Remembering the souls of the faithful departed is a duty for all Christians to practice throughout the year. With the falling of the leaves and the Feast of All Souls upon us, our minds naturally turn towards this supernatural calling.

This year we are especially praying for the soul of alumnus Paul Coleman who fell asleep in the Lord this summer after a long battle with cancer. Paul attended the Academy from 1999 through 2002. He was a wonderfully joyful young man who brought happiness to all those who came into contact with him. He leaves behind his wife and young daughter. Please keep Paul and his family in your prayers. *Requiescat in pace.*





Clockwise: Mr. Paul Prezgia teaches the upper-level Latin students on the sunporch. Sophomore Jacob Poulos of Utah constructs Euclid's first proposition. Fr. Christopher Manuele leads a grand procession on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross - a day which included a fire-lit, outdoor feast. All the students at Gregory the Great learn to serve and sing in both the Byzantine and Latin traditions of the Catholic Church. Junior students enjoy Homer's "Odyssey" as the lead text of the Humanities program.