



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

All Saints 2019

Dear Friend,

“That sounds like extreme education!” said a friend of mine when I described what life was like at the Academy. Reflecting for a minute, I realized he was right. For our education has a tendency to keep spilling out of the classroom – into the dorms, onto the fields, into the woods, and across the pond.

A glance at our recent schedule supplies some examples: October began with an epic celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary commemorating Don Juan of Austria’s astonishing and miraculous naval victory against the Turks at Lepanto. At Gregory the Great



we are not content to learn the history of the event (which we did learn from an outstanding lecture delivered by Dr. Sladky) nor are we content to hear the matchless poem written about the event by G.K. Chesterton (which we did hear at the victory banquet through Mr. Burger’s unforgettable recitation of it).

No, we need to go farther, we need to actually fight the battle again. And so we did. According to ancient school tradition, second floor (the Turks) fought third floor (the Christians) in an epic naval battle on our own pond with boats made of cardboard — and thanks be to God, the Christians won!

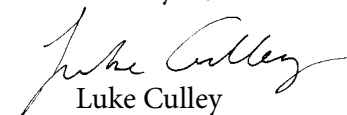
Following close on the heels of the Feast of Our Lady are Robin Hood Days, held in our own Sherwood Forest. There the boys re-live the cudgel play, axe throwing, knife throwing, camaraderie, and feasting that they read about as freshmen in that profound and delightful book, Howard Pyle’s *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. Robin Hood is a character in a book and not strictly speaking a saint, but he is a good preparation for the November

Feast of All Saints. Robin teaches us to love the good things of God’s creation like meat pies and autumn leaves, to scorn the pretensions of the worldly and selfish, to love justice and protect the humble. Both Robin Hood and Don Juan are chivalric, and chivalry, that highest of human attitudes, is akin to sanctity.

When November arrives we celebrate the Feast of All Saints with a great banquet to bring vividly to our minds the heroes of our Faith. Throughout the ages these heroes have nourished the Body of the Church through their unquenchable love and joy: their love for God and for their neighbor — a love stronger than death; a love strong enough to enable some to joyfully shed their own blood to share in the living sacrifice of Christ, through Whom life and joy come into the world.

We are grateful to God for His blessings and to you for your continued support of our adventure in “extreme education.” We ask you to remember us in your prayers and with your donations so that we may strive to raise up good young men for God and His Church. Without you, our generous friend, none of this would be possible.

Thank you,


Luke Culley
Headmaster



Luke Culley
Headmaster



Robin Hood Days



Every year at Gregory the Great Academy, there is an event called “Robin Hood Days,” when students and teachers march with bows, belts, knives, and flags under the greenwood tree and live together as merry men for several days. After setting up campsites, kitchen, and chapel, the boys feast on roasted meat washed down with birch beer as they compete in woodland sports: archery, knife and axe throwing, whittling, wrestling, quarterstaff bouts, fire-starting races, and relay games. These are days of laughter, songs, fires, food and drink, stories, games, hearty cheers, communal prayer, and conversation beneath the stars in imitation of that bold outlaw, Robin Hood.

There are certain characters in fiction that are too real to be fictional, too good not to be true. They must, in some way, exist. Just as we might cherish the idea of Long John Silver drawing ale for the saints at the inn at the end of the world, we must cherish the idea of a heavenly presence that men call Robin Hood: the patron saint of the merry life, which is the precursor to an ultimate merry-making, free from earthly cares.

Like the blessed in heaven, Robin Hood plays in the presence of the Divine in an unsullied, invincible domain; a warrior who fights knowing an epic inside-joke: that the battle is already won, and so laughs as he swings his staff, looses his gray-goose shaft, and flies before the foe. Robin Hood gambols in the great game of human redemption with a confidence and courageousness that we all must learn to win our own eternal suit of Lincoln green.



Highlander Soccer 2019

Congratulations to the Highlanders soccer team for completing another season with remarkable success. Their accomplishment of finishing first in their district and placing third in the postseason is a joyful affirmation of the hard work, perseverance, and fraternal devotion that makes our athletic program integral to our Catholic formation. Every day on the sports field, the boys live the virtues they read about in books as they play the beautiful game of soccer. The field of play is where glory can be won through daring, discipline, and unstinting sacrifice for the good of the whole team. And in the stands, the rest of the student body cheers on the team by singing and shouting a panoply of fight songs, game songs, even love songs (as the occasion calls for it), interspersed with soccer chants and Latin incantations to the accompaniment of drum and bagpipe – all under the bold leadership of seniors garbed in kilts. The season was won by every student at Gregory the Great Academy, and we thank them and their coaches for their glorious achievements.



Andrew Campbell Baird, R.I.P.

Andrew Campbell Baird came to St. Gregory's Academy from Neenah, Wisconsin in the fall of 1997. He excelled in all aspects of life at the Academy: spiritual, academic, and athletic. Andrew was a regular on the honors list, he served at the altar and sang in the schola, and he played on the varsity soccer and rugby teams. After graduating from St. Gregory's, Andrew attended Thomas Aquinas College and then returned to St. Gregory's as a dormfather and soccer coach. After a year of giving back to the school that had given him so much, he returned to Wisconsin to be with his ailing mother. Over the years, Andrew often visited the school which always remained very close to his heart. In May of 2017, Andrew was diagnosed with cancer and in February of 2019, he fell asleep in the Lord surrounded by his friends and family. Andrew always strove to bring Christ to everyone he met, especially in brief everyday encounters with strangers. Andrew planned on entering the seminary if God blessed him with a recovery. Please pray for the repose of his generous, loving soul that he may, God willing, pray for ours in heaven.

— Stephen Fitzpatrick ('00)



Please pray for the repose of the soul of Andrew Baird ('00), pictured here (on the right) six months before he passed away. With Andrew is his friend and classmate, Stephen Fitzpatrick, author of this memorial.

Giving Thanks for a Beautiful Education



Clockwise from above: The students process to the tolling bell on All Saints Day bearing the holy relics of unknown saints acquired from a pilgrimage in Italy. The Reyher family of Honey Brook, PA enjoy brunch on Parents Day prepared by the students. Headmaster Luke Culley gives a presentation on the philosophy of juggling on Parents Day. The students joyfully re-enact the Battle of Lepanto on October 7 with a cardboard armada on the Academy's Lake Devillers.

