



# The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Summer 2020

Dear Friend,

I've attended many graduations at our school, but never one like this.

Thirteen seniors stood on the stage last June before their teachers, schoolmates, and families. The bagpipes droned and hearts leapt up as these young men joined the ranks of our alumni. This graduation was different, however. This was a culmination, as every graduation is, but this culmination was not made significant by a hard-fought rugby season, or the rigors of a week of finals, or the intensity of a thesis defense. This graduation was a culmination of studying far from school and friends, as all these rites of passage were left undone.

Still, this *was* a culmination. These young men worked hard and bravely through a



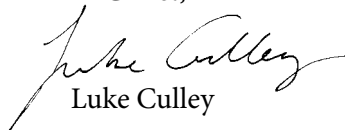
very unexpected and unfortunate turn in their senior year. Much was lost, but in that loss was a great lesson, and therefore, a great gain - and the graduates understood the lesson of that loss. After valedictorian John Snyman concluded his remarks, after the diplomas were awarded, after we all sang "Auld Lang Syne" and "Salve Regina" together, the seniors processed out with tears in their eyes and closed themselves off in a side chapel to be together one last time. After standing for a time in silence with their arms around each others' shoulders, they all took turns ringing the bell in the cupola.

Please enjoy getting to know these graduates a little in the pages of this newsletter. They are a fine group of young men and we are very proud of them. They go out as living monuments to stand strong for the traditions of our Catholic Faith and the eternal truths enshrined in a classical education. They go sure in their faith, and sure of what is good, true, and beautiful. Let us pray that they bring that assurance wherever they go for the rest of their lives. I hope they will always be strong in sadness and circumspect in loss. I hope they will always respond to trials like a bright bell on high. As that bell proclaimed they were not conquered despite the cancelation of their senior year, so may they live their lives.

The witness of these graduates who stood strong and valiantly under trying circumstances is especially important in these days where our culture, our heritage, and our religious freedom is under attack. The tradition of truth and the glory of the history of the Christian West is being torn down as if it never existed. But Christian culture will endure the new iconoclasm of the "cancel culture." It must.

Together, we are upholding the traditions and truths that really matter. Thank you for all your support. Please pray for our graduates, and please make a gift for the current students of Gregory the Great Academy as we all prepare to resume our mission in September with a fresh start and renewed determination. Thank you and may God bless you.

In Christ,



Luke Culley



Luke Culley  
Headmaster

PS. Make sure to look at the back page of this newsletter to see how you can participate in our Homer Raffle!



# Meet the Class of 2020



“In your work, in your play, in your contemplation, in your laughter, in your prayer you have been made translucent to a wisdom that will suffuse the rest of your days if you choose to deepen it through memory, inquiry, and prayer. And you have found that the proper home for wisdom is friendship: friendship not only with each other, but friendship with all the students, and even with your teachers, friendship with your parents and your family, friendship with all of Creation, friendship with God.” — Luke Culley, Headmaster

## Anthony Audino

**Hometown:** Clifton Park, NY

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Lord of the Rings*

**Prefectship:** Classrooms

**Favorite Song:** “Drink the Night Away”

**Thesis Title:** “Mount Doom: 135 St. Gregory’s place, Elmhurst Twp, PA 18444”

**Next Year:** Christendom College



## Peter Bennett

**Hometown:** Waukesha, WI

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *Treasure Island*

**Prefectship:** Stairwells

**Favorite Song:** “Men of Harlech”

**Thesis Title:** “The Beauty of Brotherly Virtues”

**Next Year:** Working a job before college



## John Bateman

**Hometown:** Waymart, PA

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *Quo Vadis*

**Prefectship:** Dishes/Kitchen

**Favorite Song:** “The Town I Loved So Well”

**Thesis Title:** “Every Man Ought To Be a Farmer”

**Next Year:** Apprentice for a timber framing company



## Billy Fay

**Hometown:** Birmingham, AL

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Odyssey*

**Prefectship:** Bathrooms

**Favorite Song:** “The Foggy Dew”

**Thesis Title:** “A Justification for the Crusades”

**Next Year:** University of Dallas



## James Gaetano

**Hometown:** Salisbury, MD

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Song of Roland*

**Prefectship:** Third Floor Hallways

**Favorite Song:** “The Patriot Game”

**Thesis Title:** *The Characteristics of True Manhood*

**Next Year:** Training as a certified insurance adjuster



## Kevin Howerton

**Hometown:** Rocky Mountain, NC

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Ballad of the White Horse*

**Prefectship:** Second Floor Hallways

**Favorite Song:** “Jock Stewart”

**Thesis Title:** “The Purpose of Virtue in Pagan Epic Poetry”

**Next Year:** Christendom College



## Vincent Prezzia

**Hometown:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Aeneid*

**Prefectship:** Refectory

**Favorite Song:** "The Foggy Dew"

**Thesis Title:** "Leisure, the Basis for GGA Culture"

**Next Year:** Franciscan University



## Francis Rataj

**Hometown:** Birmingham, AL

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Rule of St. Benedict*

**Prefectship:** Farm

**Favorite Song:** "Flower of Scotland"

**Thesis Title:** "The Path Less Taken"

**Next Year:** University of Dallas



## Colby Robinson

**Hometown:** Edmond, OK

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Odyssey*

**Prefectship:** Kitchen

**Favorite Song:** "The Town I Loved So Well"

**Thesis Title:** "Robin Hood: The Chivalrous Man"

**Next Year:** University of Dallas



## Max Valentine

**Hometown:** Washington, DC

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Lord of the Rings*

**Prefectship:** Refectory

**Favorite Song:** "Annie Laurie"

**Thesis Title:** "The Four Greek Forms of Love Expressed Through Song"

**Next Year:** University of Dallas



## Leo Wagner

**Hometown:** Alpharetta, GA

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *Greek Gods and Heroes*

**Prefectship:** The Chapel & Second Floor Bathrooms

**Favorite Song:** "Jock Stewart"

**Thesis Title:** "The Man of Sport"

**Next Year:** Volunteer mission year with the Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy



## John Snyman

**Hometown:** Locust Grove, OK

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Lord of the Rings*

**Prefectship:** Farm

**Favorite Song:** "Is There for Honest Poverty"

**Thesis Title:** "A Man of Sport Is Fit To Be a Man of Virtue"

**Next Year:** Missionary in Peru



## Andrew Willson

**Hometown:** Fort Defiance, VA

**Favorite Curriculum Book:** *The Persian Expedition (Anabasis)*

**Prefectship:** Commons

**Favorite Song:** "Rolling Down To Old Maui"

**Thesis Title:** "Christ: The Fulfillment"

**Next Year:** Christendom College



"This school has taught us through life, liturgy, work, study, leisure, and play what it means to be a Christian man living our lives deliberately according to His Will, even as the sky grows darker yet and the sea rises higher. With the grace of God and the gifts given to us at this school, I feel confident as I stand with my class and face the world. I am honored to have this opportunity, on behalf of my class, to say thank you to all here present who made it possible for us to have experienced this life-changing school."

— From the valedictorian address

# Bring Homer Home!

Statues are being razed across the nation. Help us raise a statue to take their place! And win one for yourself!

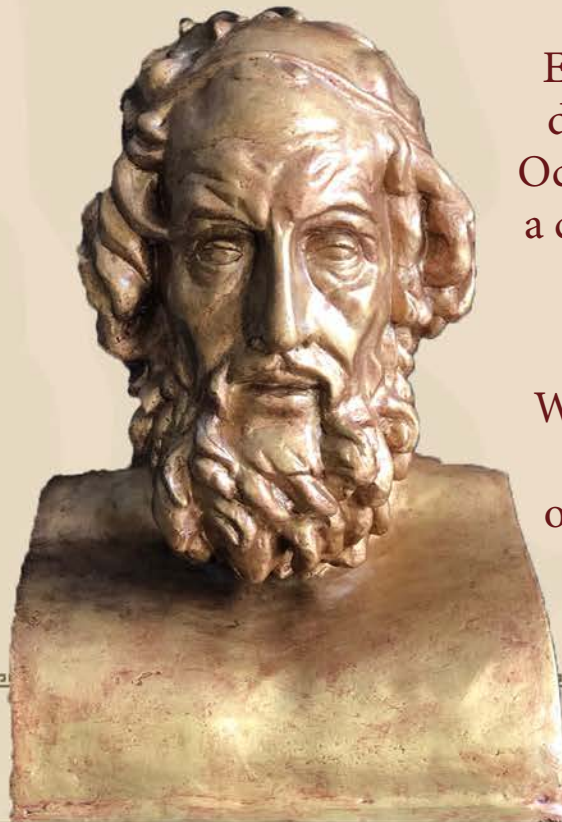
During their time at the Academy, the boys are not only introduced to great works of literature and history, but also beautiful art and architecture which turns their minds towards higher realities. One of these works of art is our bronze statue of the ancient Greek poet Homer, sculpted by our resident artist and alumnus, Andrew Wilson Smith.

We are planning to establish a new and honored space for Homer, an outdoor classroom where the boys will not only be in the presence of this great work of art, but also find him overlooking the glorious vistas of Northeastern Pennsylvania. We need your help to make this a reality!

Win your own copy of Andrew Wilson Smith's "Homer."

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Donate \$100 & receive two entries! There is no limit!



Every \$50 you donate before Oct 15, gives you a chance to win!

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Winner posted Oct 16 on our website & Facebook.

Fill out the enclosed donation card, or visit [gregorythegreatacademy.com/support](http://gregorythegreatacademy.com/support)