



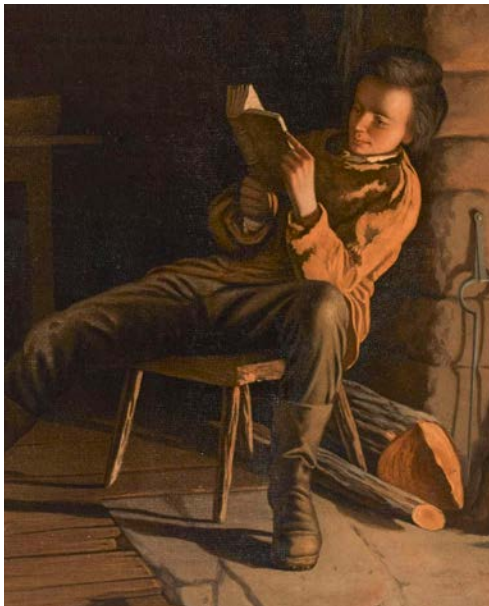
# The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

September 2020

Dear Friend,

I am not really used to people calling our school normal because our school isn't really what you would call normal. Nowadays, boarding schools are typically seen as abnormal—let alone a boarding school that offers a poetic education, traditional Catholic liturgy, juggling, folk music, rugby, and farming. But during our opening weekend, so many parents came up to me to express their gratitude and relief that their son would be able to have a normal educational experience this year—one without onerous restrictions and in classrooms that are not overshadowed by anxiety. I suppose we are the normal ones after all.



*Eastman Johnson, Boyhood of Lincoln, 1868*



Luke Culley  
Headmaster

It is good to be normal and to be going back to normal. I am pleased to tell you the news that, after an untimely and unfortunate dismissal last academic year, our building is humming again with boisterous, boyish life. Through the grace of God, we are at maximum capacity and our students are so happy to be back among their friends and getting back to school.

While we plan to stay sequestered on our beautiful rural campus to enjoy our friends, our studies, and our property, we will be busy raising hundreds of chickens, dozens of pigs, and developing our craft guild programs. With a lively new crew of dormfathers, we look forward to a year engaging our boys in practical carpentry, bushcraft, leatherworking, agriculture, and drama. Though the world remains largely shuttered, good, true, and beautiful things are happening here.

Thank you for standing by us as we return to our mission of providing these boys with a solid, Catholic formation and make them ready to face a world that needs young leaders who are not afraid to do essential things for our culture and our Church. Their joyful labors will not remain on our campus but will bear fruit in the world. Please make a gift today for these boys as, together, we do what we can to be a beacon of normalcy. Thank you for your prayers and support.

In Christ,

Luke Culley  
Headmaster



## Chess Education

Is chess good for man? Our new dormfather, Anthony Mioni thinks so. Man's good, according to Aristotle, consists in happiness rooted in virtue, that is, action calculated toward the good. The virtue of prudence, therefore, encompasses all the virtues for it is the prudent man who judges changeable situations to achieve happiness. The thought process involved in a chess game is similar, causing players to think about the end and base decisions on achieving an end. In some ways this kind of thinking is similar in Euclid's geometry which uses reason to follow an argument. Chess uses reason to follow a course of action, strengthening the mind's ability to judge. Mr. Mioni wrote about chess for his senior thesis at the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, and we are pleased to see him offer a course in the



art of chess this year. Under his instruction, the boys will learn the fundamental strategies of this ancient game and grow in that strength of thought that lends itself to a virtuous life.

## Academy Fields

Academy Fields is the agricultural endeavor at Gregory the Great Academy. The farm exists to create a place where young men, faculty, and friends of our school can partake in the Divine task to redeem all of creation as humble, hard-working, intelligent, resourceful, and responsible stewards, and to create a space where man can rest in the praise of God the Creator. Redemption of our land. Redemption of our animals. Redemption of our bodies. Redemption of our minds and our hearts to God. This year the boys will raise Cornish Cross chickens, laying hens, a herd of pigs, and a herd of hair sheep. Under the leadership of two farm prefects and farm foreman, John Burger, the boys do chores on rotation every morning in field, barn, and pen.



## Why Romance Is for Boys

Freshmen read *Treasure Island* when they come to the Academy because it is both a book for boys and for men—because it is romantic. We are often naïve in our expectation that the romance will provide a sentimental kaleidoscope of clichés. The old romance, true romance, however, deals with the rise and fall of chieftains, with murder,



friendship, and insurmountable odds. True romance, unsullied by the mawkish, restores our understanding of what true intrigue is, true appeal, true gravitas, and a true moral universe. Our children suffer from a pervasive insular existence. More than ever, there is a need for romance because it is remedial, because it is real. Books like *Treasure Island* don't pander through virtual reality but challenge us to encounter actual reality in its most vivid and livid colors. It grounds us, forcing us to stare in the face of evil, and join Jim Hawkins' childlike determination to thwart it like a man. And that is what makes it a dream come true.

*Thank you to Sawyer Shaifer's family for their recent donation of a striking vintage poster from the Brandywine River Museum featuring N. C. Wyeth's painting of Billy Bones overlooking Black Hill Cove from Treasure Island. The print will grace the Academy's newly renovated Reading Room.*

## A Word from Our Chaplain

Glory to Jesus Christ! I am so grateful to be ministering the sacraments again to our boys after what seemed like an eternal hiatus. Thank you all for your prayers and support during our journey through the desert! I want to let you know that we pray regularly for our benefactors, families, and alumni here at the school, as well as any special intentions you might have. If you look on the back of the enclosed reply card, you will find an area for prayer requests. I highly recommend taking advantage of this opportunity as I firmly believe the prayers of our boys are powerful indeed! May God bless you and know that you have an army of prayers behind you.



*Fr. Christopher Manuele elevates the Holy Cross during the Exaltation of the Holy Cross ceremony at the Academy. The community marked this great feast day with a beautiful Divine Liturgy, a solemn procession, and a delicious roast pig from our herd.*



The student body and faculty gather on the front steps of the school after a rousing orientation ceremony. We welcome our returning and new students who hail from across the country who have come to make their souls strong for Christ. Please pray for the boys as they joyfully undertake the challenges of this academic year. Without your support, their adventure together would not be possible. Join us in our glorious mission and take a stand for all that is good, true, and beautiful. St. Gregory the Great, pray for us.

