



**D**eus in adiutorium  
meum intende.  
**D**omine ad  
adjuvandum me festina.





Dear Friend,

**Did you see the Christmas gift we sent you?** It's a special pilgrim prayer book illuminated by our very own, Mr. Fitzpatrick—but before I tell you why we sent it, and about a wonderful opportunity for you, let me tell you why pilgrimage is so important to us at Gregory the Great Academy.

Every year, our students travel to faraway holy sites as the crowning act of their education. And nothing could be more fitting. Education is an adventure, a journey, a pilgrimage to find goodness, truth, and beauty in the world.

Some time ago, I came across an essay by Hilaire Belloc in *Hills and the Sea* called “The Idea of a Pilgrimage” that helped me better understand what our pilgrimage is and why we do it. In one extraordinary sentence, Belloc writes:

Thus I may go upon a pilgrimage with no pack and nothing but a stick and my clothes, but I must get myself into the frame of mind that carries an invisible burden, an eye for happiness and suffering, humor, gladness at the beauty of the world, a readiness for the raising of the heart at the vastness of a wide view, and especially a readiness to give multitudinous praise to God; for a man that goes on pilgrimage does best if he starts out (I say it of his temporal object only) with the heart of a wanderer, eager for the world as it is, forgetful of maps and descriptions, but hungry for real colors and men and the seeming of things.



**A pilgrimage is an adventure in the true sense of the word.** It is a *coming toward* (*ad-ventus*) or coming into wondrous contact with creation. To achieve this contact when going on pilgrimage, we carry no money with us to experience a bit of hardship, a bit of hunger, so that in our emptiness we can come toward the taste of life both natural and supernatural. Having and then not having and then having again, we come toward knowing God as the giver of all good things.

The pilgrim challenge, then, is to be light on a heavy road. It is the balance between taking everything seriously and taking nothing seriously and can only be achieved in laying one's burdens and life itself into the hands of Christ. Only then can you acquire the seriousness called gravity and the lightheartedness called grace. **Only then can you know joy.**





When we come toward the things of heaven and earth in a spirit of glad poverty, we gain a clarity that enlarges our hearts and transfigures the world in wonder as we approach something sacred: a shrine, a church, a grave, a home—**or Christmas Day**. Like the Wise Men, Christmas reminds us of that lifelong quest to answer the call, “O Come, let us adore Him!”

For these reasons, our educational program culminates with a pilgrimage, a symbolic enactment of what our students have done *and must do* for the rest of their lives.

And for this year’s pilgrimage, we want to include YOU in a personal way.

This spring, I will take the graduating class to Poland to pray before the glorious Black Madonna at the **Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa**. The prayer book we sent you is the very one we use every year, but it has been decorated this Christmas by Sean Fitzpatrick and his talented family. I invite you to say these pilgrim prayers with us so that we might pray together for one another.

**But that’s not all.**

You will also find enclosed a prayer intention card. ***Please fill it out and send it back to us with the reply card. We will bring it to the shrine and pray for all of the intentions you list before Our Lady.***

Please remember us this Christmas as we will remember you this spring.

**I don’t have to tell you** that costs are rising, but I do have to tell you that we need you more than ever to feed our students and keep their study spots warm. Your gift will support our farm-to-

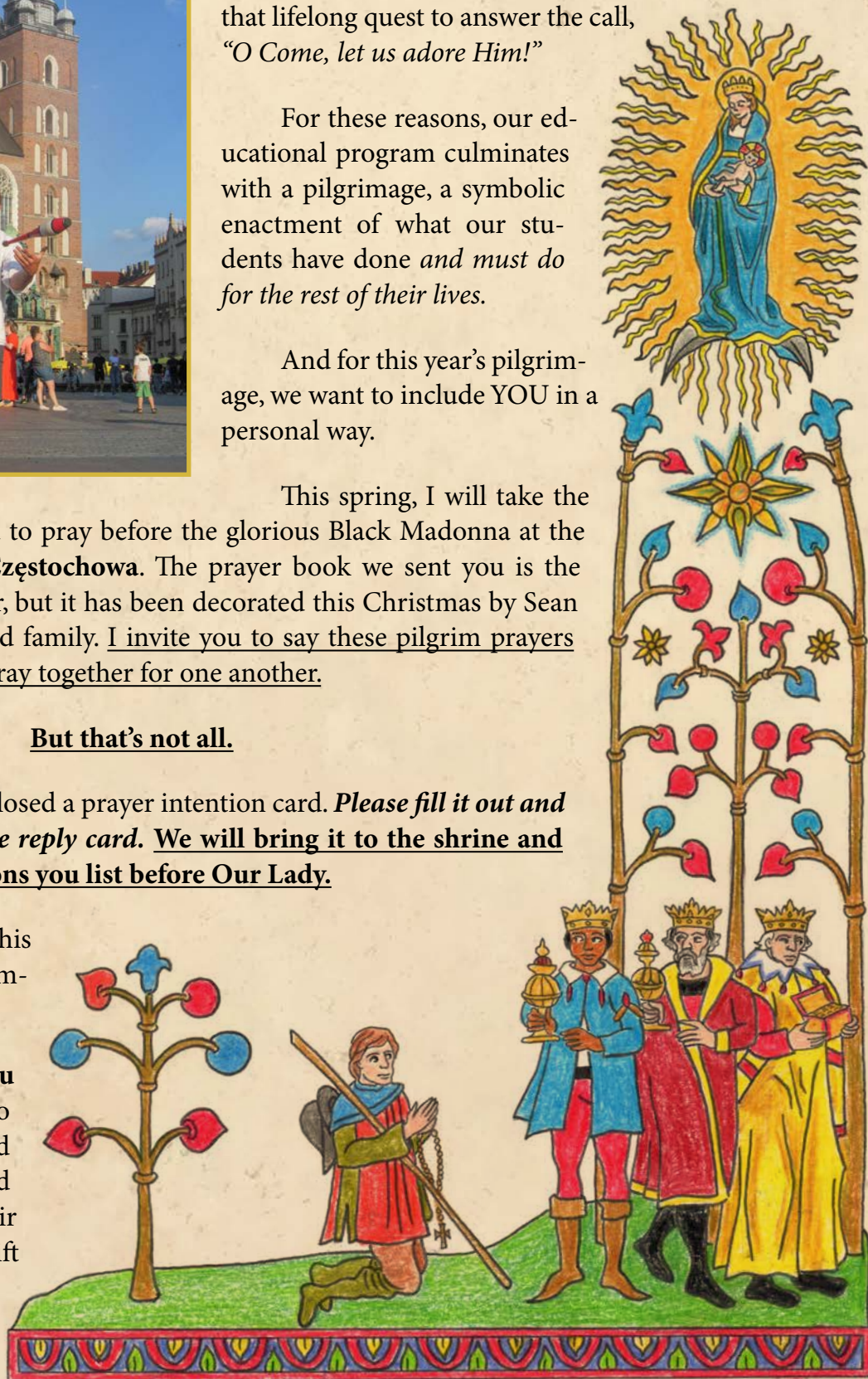






table operations, keep our building in good repair, provide materials for the classroom and chapel, and—most importantly—help cover tuition for students in financial need.

Our school must carry on as one of the few places I know of that enshrines the idea of pilgrimage in the young and undertakes this ancient, powerful mode of prayer. Pilgrimage is the answer for a world that has lost its way, and our pilgrimage as a school, as a community, must keep going on strong.

**We are relying on you.** Please send a gift to the boys of Gregory the Great Academy TODAY. With your assistance, we can bring these boys along the glorious pilgrimage of their education and off on humble pilgrimage this spring *and for the rest of their lives.*

In the Newborn King,

*Luke Culley*  
Luke Culley, Headmaster

PS: I hope you enjoy *A Pilgrim's Prayer Book* illustrated by Sean and Sophie Fitzpatrick and their daughters, Ántonia and Eve, telling the tale of a pilgrim on his way to a holy shrine, as we do every year with our students to bring the smile of God to the world. Remember to say the prayers with us come June when we take the holy road.

**PPS:** And don't forget to send us your prayer requests with your gift, and may God bless you this Christmas.

