



# The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

September 2022

Dear Friend,

As we begin a new school year, September marks the end of an admissions season for us at Gregory the Great Academy. All summer long, we review applications, interview potential students and their parents, and make the momentous decisions regarding the new arrivals, the new members of our community.

And then they arrive, and we see the fruit of labor and grace appear before us: the boys who have filled our thoughts and conversations for so many hours. Suddenly, they become a part of our school, some smiling, some nervous, some set and determined—all ready in one way or another to take on the challenges of growing to Catholic manhood with us. As



the new boys begin to make friends and enter into the song of our school, it is a matter of joy and gravity to see them embarking on an adventure that will almost certainly change their lives forever.

I wish you could see these boys as they begin their year together. They are like so many merry monks in their monastery as they work and pray (and play) together, contributing to their own education and the education of every student here, new and returning alike. It is a beautiful thing to see a school like this in action and that is partly because it is growing increasingly rare in our culture. This is a school that lives and learns in constant collaboration to live a Catholic life and receive a Catholic formation, and it is a great consolation to know that a school like this can and does still exist in this country.

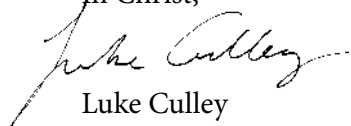
It is also humbling to be a part of changing lives in such a palpable way, and it comes about through a great deal of effort and care on the part of our admissions team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Admissions Director, Karen Beebe, for her excellent and stalwart leadership in this vital field each and every year. Her attention to detail and true interest and care for every applicant provides us with new students and new friends, even as those new students are given the chance for a new friendship with Christ.

I would also like to thank our many parents—all of you mothers and fathers—who undertake the tremendous sacrifice to send their sons to our school. It is no small thing to give such a gift, both to their sons and to us who benefit from their spirit, and it is my honor to acknowledge the great good that you parents make possible. We will do everything in our power to be worthy of your trust and your sons.

While students and parents give us the human material our school needs to rise to the call to save souls in Jesus Christ, it is you, our benefactors who deserve thanks and recognition as well for giving us another kind of life-blood. Thank you for your generous financial support that makes our mission a thriving reality. Please help us this fall—new and returning students, dormfathers and teachers—and start us off on another school year with a donation. Your gift is essential in this wonderful moment of new beginnings and new lives. May God bless you.



Luke Culley  
Headmaster

In Christ,  
  
Luke Culley



## Mexico Mission Update from Our Alumni Missionaries

Four graduates from the Class of 2022 have answered the call to serve a mission year at Santa Maria del Mexicano in Coloin, Mexico, an orphanage-school for troubled youth, and our alumni missionaries would like to share the beginning of their adventure with you.

¡Hola! Greetings from Querétaro, Mexico!

We've been here in Querétaro for three weeks now, and it's our last night in the city. We've been going to school and learning Spanish during the brief time we've been in Mexico.

It's been an awesome experience learning the language and experiencing the culture. The people are very religious and proud of who they are and it's been great to see that.

We have been singing folk songs and juggling at our school and we just implemented a new holiday, "Viernes Formàl" or "Formal Friday." Every Friday, the whole school gets dressed up for the day just like at good ol' St. Greg's.

Tomorrow we leave for Colón to start our mission helping the children of Santa María. We're super excited to see what God has in store for us.

Please keep us in your prayers as we enter into this new chapter of our lives.

¡Viva Christo Rey!

Isaac Shipman

William Howerton

Benedict Godfrey

Augustine Prieto





## A Family Farewell

Yesterday we held a farewell party for our oldest son who will next week begin his adventure at Gregory the Great Academy. With close friends and family, we began by praying a rosary, entrusting our son to Our Lady's special care, with pointed petitions for his growth in the theological and cardinal virtues, followed by a blessing with holy water by his father and godparents. After a veritable feast, Mr. Verlander gathered everyone for a sort of presentation of the gifts. He recited Thomas Moore's "The Minstrel Boy"—a poem about a boy going off to war girt with his father's sword and a harp "slung behind him." Mr. Verlander bestowed on his oldest

boy, the apple of his eye, his own rosary (our greatest weapon in spiritual battle) and his cherished guitar—each, we hope, to be used by him each day.

He was also given a binder of all our family's favorite songs, most of which we learned from the St. Gregory boys! Then we surprised our son by all chiming in to sing "The Minstrel Boy" so well-beloved and often sung by the boys at Gregory the Great. Our son then picked up a guitar and performed "The Parting Glass," accompanied by his older sister. We were pretty well in tears most of the time, but they were happy tears.

It is nine years since we discovered the existence of this one-of-a-

kind boarding school, and we have dreamed of the moment one of our boys would be old enough to go. He has looked forward also to this day, a natural and not unexpected step in the course of his life growing up so far, and so the hopeful anticipation outweighs our trepidation over the prospect of missing each other. God keep us on our pilgrim way and especially in this next year. Mother Mary, wrap us in your mantle! *Deo gratias* for His gifts and graces, we say again and again, and may we all wish our days to be bound each to each by natural piety!

— Mr. and Mrs. Michael Verlander

## Highlander Camp 2022

This past June, as the students went home for their summer break, a new batch of 7th and 8th graders came to attend the 2nd annual Highlander Camp. Twenty-six stalwart souls camped out under the stars, braved the white waters of the Lehigh Valley, juggled fire, and sang songs of love and war. These young men were overseen by the recent graduates from the class of 2022 who had just returned from their Polish pilgrimage, and the presence of these alumni counselors made this camp a tremendous—even a glorious—success. The week culminated in a 13-mile pilgrimage from the Academy to downtown Scranton, where the boys performed juggling shows all across town to raise money for their final meal together.

The Highlander Camp of 2022 made a deep impression of action and adventure on the campers, who left knowing something profound about what they might stand to acquire if they come to us as students in a couple of years. And they left with admiration and gratitude for the alumni counselors who showed by their strong leadership, pilgrim hearts, and generous joy what it means to be a member of the St. Gregory's community.

If you wish to sign up for information regarding the next Highlander Camp, email [csmith@gregorythegreatacademy.com](mailto:csmith@gregorythegreatacademy.com)







*Top left:* The campers spent a week forming new friendships and ending every evening singing songs and telling stories around the campfire. *Top center:* Rugby practice with Coach van Beek gave the boys a taste of how Highlanders tackle the basics of the game. *Top right:* On the Feast of St. John the Baptist, the campers took part in the traditional lighting of fires, sending sky lanterns into the night. *Above left:* The counselors gave one-on-one instruction in the juggling arts. *Above right:* Performing in the streets, restaurants, and squares of Scranton did not intimidate these campers one bit. *Below:* The campers and counselors weaved down the Pocono Mountains on their 13-mile pilgrimage, finding the unexpected all along the way.

