



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

All Saints Day, 2022

Dear Friend,

As part of our preparation for this school year, the faculty of Gregory the Great Academy carried out a very memorable exercise. We met every day for a week, and at each gathering, two of us gave presentations on their favorite aspect of our school. Then, over food and drink, we talked about what was said regarding this unique experiment in Catholic education and the many ways that it is beloved.

It was fascinating to consider the different things that different teachers hold dear and to hear their articulation of those things. One spoke about the transcendent experiences in teaching. Another expressed his gratitude for our technological poverty. Another waxed eloquent on our approach to manual labor. So it went on, with many aspects earnestly put forward for our appreciation and edification. (I'm sure there aren't many schools in this country whose teachers enjoy getting together for days on end talking about all the things they love about their school.)



Luke Culley
Headmaster



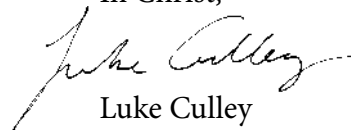
Drs. Nelick, Quinn, and Senior. (fundihpmemorial.org)

When my turn came, I shared how much I value the clear patrimony of our school, those traditions and people that began it and passed it on to us—initiatives like the Integrated Humanities Program at the University of Kansas led by John Senior, Dennis Quinn, and Frank Nelick, who taught and inspired our immediate predecessors and founders, Alan Hicks and Howard Clark. The succession that carries our mission and our ethos on to us, coming from men and movements that cherished the love of learning and the instinct of poetic knowledge, is a beacon shining over our shoulders and lighting the way ahead.

But there are lights that shine beyond these. Today is All Saints Day, and it is during signal moments in the liturgical calendar that I often look to our history and our forerunners, seeking realignment during times meant for orientation. In his book, *The Restoration of Christian Culture*, Dr. Senior defines Christian culture as the seedbed of saints. The saints are our heritage, our legacy, and there is no greater aspect of our school than remaining true to the course of salvation—to cultivate sainthood in our students.

Please renew your commitment to the cultivation of saints at our school by making a gift to Gregory the Great Academy during this season for the Holy Souls. Our boys are walking in the footsteps of giants, and we are here to help them when they might stray or falter and put them firmly on the path to heaven. Thank you for your generosity and may all the saints bless you.

In Christ,


Luke Culley



Our Heavenly Patrons



St. Benedict

During this season of All Saints, Gregory the Great Academy presents the heavenly patrons that we look to in particular to help us in our mission.

St. Benedict of Nursia (480-547)

When Benedict left the crowds of Rome for the solitude of a cave, he gained a reputation for wisdom and discipline. When the abbot died at a nearby cloister, Benedict became its spiritual father. But his strict rule was



St. Gregory the Great



St. Julian the Hospitaller

unwelcome. One evening, poisoned wine was placed before the new abbot, but when Benedict blessed it, the cup shattered. Later, a piece of poisoned bread was served to him. Benedict signed the cross over it and a raven flew through the window and carried it away. St. Benedict was both a beacon and a bastion in a dark age. He brought prayer and work to the monastic tradition, and made monasteries strongholds of culture and learning. Benedictine monasticism preserved Western Civilization as the Roman Empire crumbled, and we look to St. Benedict as a patron for this school that follows a monastic rhythm and seeks to keep safe what the world has rejected.

St. Gregory the Great (540-604)

After a career in Roman politics, Gregory became a Benedictine abbot, and after that, the pope. Assuming the papacy unwillingly in a world on the brink of collapse between barbarian invasions and plague, Gregory devoted himself as the “servant to the servants of God” by enshrining classical education, sacred music, mission-

ary work, and care for the poor. St. Gregory is our patron as a humble yet tough champion of the Church who had a fiery love for the good, true, and beautiful and the wisdom that comes like a lover’s whisper through the Holy Ghost. St. Gregory is the patron of musicians, students, and teachers, and as we offer what the ancients called a musical education, there is no better saint to guide us than St. Gregory the Great.

St. Julian the Hospitaller (4th Century)

The Academy’s juggling troupe is under the patronage of St. Julian, whose legend tells a grim tale about witches who cursed him as a baby to murder his own parents. To avoid this fate, Julian fled his home and became a hunter. But through a trick of the devil, Julian killed his parents one night when they came to his house unannounced, mistaking them for his unfaithful wife and an intruder. Repentant, Julian established a hospice and ferry service for pilgrims and Crusader knights. Besides being fortune’s fool, Julian’s mission to help people by bringing comfort along the



St. Nicholas of Myra

roads of life has made him the patron of clowns and circus performers. The pilgrim clowns of St. Gregory's invoke the name of this ancient saint before they juggle, sing, and share the smile of God.

St. Nicholas of Myra (270-343)

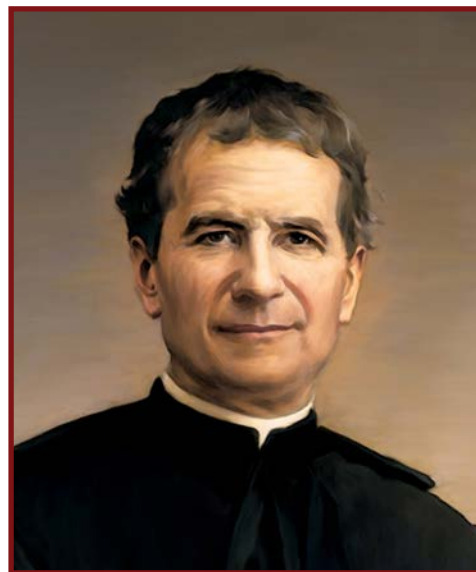
Nicholas is one of those saints whose history is overshadowed by the tall tales his zeal and piety inspired. Born in a coastal town of Asia Minor, Nicholas suffered under the Diocletian persecution before seeking ordination. He attended the Council of Nicaea as Bishop of Myra and, so it is said, struck Arius upon hearing his heresy. Whether factual or false, Nicholas's stories abound. From tossing bags of gold into poor men's windows, to resurrecting pickled boys from a murderous innkeeper's brine barrels, to saving sailors on stormy seas, Nicholas's legends are a treasure trove of holy lore. He is the patron of sailors and boys, and as our school building used to be the St. Nicholas Orphanage, and our boys' school is much like a ship, Father Nicholas is one of our favorite saints.

St. John Bosco (1815-1888)

John Bosco was a philosopher, priest, and theologian, but his vocation found culmination in gutters and alleys with street-urchins. He was a father, teacher, and friend to all boys, maintaining the spirit of gentleness and charity of St. Francis de Sales. Don Bosco founded many Salesian oratories and opened a boarding school and trade shops. John Bosco's educational methods proceeded from the heart, based upon a preventive system of reason, religion, and kindness, reinforced by a devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary, Help of Christians. We look to the joyful example of St. John Bosco for inspiration and ask his prayers for our work with young men in Catholic education.

St. Joseph the Wonderworker

As the foster father of Our Lord and the companion of workers, St. Joseph has always had a special place in the Academy's heart. The just and good carpenter who did his duty in the name of God and family was not afraid



St. John Bosco

to obey mysterious divine commands and to see the significance of dreams. The statue of St. Joseph in our chapel is a chief object of devotion, the "St. Joseph Prayer" being a constant at our school, especially in times of challenge. Petitions to St. Joseph surrounded the efforts to acquire our campus, and to this day, a medal of St. Joseph, given to us when we began our journey to find a home, is fixed to the stained glass window in the chapel featuring Joseph to honor him and call for the continued blessings of this meekest and manliest of saints.



St. Joseph



Top Left: On the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the boys carried out a spirited reenactment of the Battle of Lepanto as the two sides clashed with boats and weapons fashioned by each navy. *Top Right:* Led by Dr. Joe Sladky, the freshman class scaled the Blue Ridge Mountains. *Middle Left:* The Highlanders took part in their first sevens rugby tournament since 2019 and came out victorious. *Middle Right:* The upper form traveled to Front Royal, VA to entertain and serve at the third annual *Le Cochon Cotillion*, our fall fundraising event. *Bottom Left:* Robin Hood Days was a smashing success as the boys spent four days camping in the wilderness, competing in bouts of quarterstaff, archery, and axe throwing. *Bottom Right:* Each night the whole school sat around the fire as Mr. Burger read aloud *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*.



Attributions for the paintings on pages 2-3 are as follows (clockwise from upper left): St. Benedict from *Crucifixion and Saints*, Fra Angelico, 1441; *Episodes from the Lives of Saints Julian and Nicholas*, Masaccio, 1426; *St. John Bosco*, Unknown; *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*, Guido Reni, 1640; *Pope Gregory the Great*, Unknown, 1620