



# The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

January 31, 2024  
Feast of St. John Bosco

Dear Friend,

I wish you could have seen the Christmas juggling show this year! Called *The Little Juggler Boy*, it is the story of a boy who faces the existential decision of whether to juggle for worldly applause or follow the Wise Men's Star and juggle for the Child-God in Bethlehem. It was full of absurd humor, rowdy Christmas caroling, and awe-inspiring juggling feats – a rumbling tumbling jest that formed into an ever-widening smile of joy. The show had the paradoxical quality of a tale that is ancient in wisdom yet abounding in the hilarity and wit of young boys.

At first thought, it might seem strange to couple juggling, magic tricks, and acrobatic feats with religious truth. But what could be more fitting? For is not God's Incarnation as a little Child the most joyous jest? Is not His death and Resurrection the most magnificent magic trick? And is not His balancing of Godliness with humanity the most difficult and splendid of acrobatic feats?



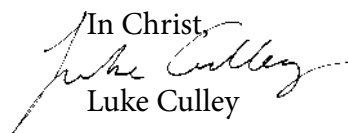
Luke Culley  
Headmaster

Our students and our school are not the first to observe this marriage of the playful and the sacred. In the mid-19th century, as a young boy, John Bosco learned to juggle, do magic tricks, and walk the tightrope in order to delight and instruct his neighbors in the Good News of Jesus Christ. He would set out all of his props and then hold off his jugglery until the audience had first sat for his sermon.

As young John's sense of vocation developed, leading him into the priesthood, he knew that his calling was to teach boys how to embrace the fullness of their being by learning to become joyful sons of God. And as he followed that call, he ended up revolutionizing education by teaching the simple but oft-forgotten truth that the key to education is winning over the heart. And to win the heart of a boy, the teacher must to some extent re-enter the life of boyhood. John Bosco did that with gusto, tumbling heart and soul into the rough and boisterous world of boyhood, walking the tightrope that stretches from the boy's heart all the way to the Father of Lights.

We, too, strive to keep that difficult balance by ensuring that a holy education is a merry affair at our school. John Bosco warns against making an obsession out of order: "Don't worry about a small brief outburst of enthusiasm; join in the noise. If the noise is by chance, necessary for the merry-making, whip it up. Joy is indispensable. Let it be everywhere; in the school and in the church." The example and writings of Don Bosco are a mainstay in our mission and animate moments that range from boys chanting in the chapel like monks to the same boys cavorting like clowns during a juggling show.

Of course, striking this wholesome balance would be impossible without you. Thank you for supporting our students as they grow in wisdom, friendship, and virtue, and as always, we remain grateful for your continued support in these winter months. Mary Help of Christians, pray for us!

In Christ,  
  
Luke Culley



# Don Bosco's Teachings in Action

ST. JOHN BOSCO'S PEDAGOGY is based upon rational, religious, and kindly guidance, and that is why we have dormfathers living and working and teaching in the trenches with the boys. The men who have taken up this duty and responsibility this year are extraordinary as a group and as individuals. (Pictured left top-to-bottom: Kolbe Costello, Tommy Thompson, Jack Davis. Pictured right top-to-bottom: Declan Hamilton, Patrick Alvis, Franz Alexie Forrester.) Through their sacrifice and diligence, they are channeling the presence of our patron, Don Bosco. We thank our courageous, creative, and merry dormfathers for their energy, their example, and their enthusiasm. **The following are quotes from St. John Bosco that animate our dormfathers' aim and approach.**



## Best to Be Busy

*"Boys should be kept constantly occupied. After they are through with their school or shop duties we should entice them to join the choir, the band, or the Knights of the Altar."*

## Two-Way Street

*"An educator should realize that these fine lads are smart enough to sense the good done to them and innately open to sentiments of gratitude."*



## Kindness Is Key

*"If one is to do good, he must have a little courage, be ready for sacrifice, deal affably with all and never slight anybody."*





## The Power of Prevention

*"The preventive system consists in watching carefully so that the pupils may at all times be under the vigilant eye of the assistants, who like loving fathers can converse with them, take the lead in every movement and in a kindly way give advice and correction."*



## Love Out Loud

*"Without confidence and love, there can be no true education. If you want to be loved, you must love yourselves, and make your children feel that you love them."*

## Go to God

*"How often an exhortation to visit the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady, to go to confession, or to do some good reading is the beginning of a lad's eternal salvation!"*





## A Message from the Chaplain

The formation at Gregory the Great Academy was inspired by two great men: Don John Bosco and Dr. John Senior. Dr. Senior, desiring to restore all things in Christ, articulated an education according to four pillars that inform the ethos of our pedagogy: the first, intellectual, to perfect the mind; second, the spiritual, to enlarge the spirit; third, the social, to temper the soul; and fourthly, the athletic, to tame the passions.

*The truer and more perfect way is to captivate the heart of every boy by the attractiveness of the good.*

But St. John gives St. Gregory's its truest form: the Salesian method of moral formation under the rubric of Christian friendship. Undoubtedly, order and discipline may arise in an institution from a system of servile fear and punishment. But the truer and more perfect way is to captivate the heart of every boy by the attractiveness of the good and confirmed by the discipline of virtue which inspires a wonder for all that is true. It is the more difficult path, but the only one which merits everlasting happiness. Thank you for supporting this holy Academy where virtue is prized above all in the friendship that Don Bosco exemplified and the friendship Our Lord offers to all of us.

— Fr. Christopher Manuele



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