



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Lent 2016

Memento homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.
Remember man, thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.

Dear Friend,

What would you think if I wished you a happy Lent?

At Gregory the Great Academy, we teach our students that just because Lent is a time of sacrifice, that does not mean it is something to be glum about, despite the seemingly-dismal Ash Wednesday pronouncement. These words are something to rejoice in because they point to the Hereafter. The dust is not the end. That would certainly be defeating. The point of Lent is not defeat, but victory—joyful victory. Lent is a season of austerity, but not morbidity. It is a sober time, but not a somber time.

The principle Lenten works are almsgiving, prayer, and fasting; and the principle Lenten attitude is one of inward communion with God with outward cheer. But that cheer is not a hypocritical show. The delight of doing good for its own sake is the most rewarding and uplifting of practices. It bestows joy because it is the basis of sanctity: a foretaste of heaven on earth, and heaven—as everyone knows from their Penny Catechism—is the place where God wants us *to be happy* with Him forever.



Lent is rooted in the brightness of springtime. The word “Lent” is etymologically related to the word “lengthen,” referring to the lengthening of days as the world shakes off wintry darkness and turns to the dawn in the eastern, or Easter, sky. Lent, as a time of penance and self-examination, should be viewed as an awakening out of hibernation into the dawn of the world and the Word. Everyone is called to be made anew into the comprehension and participation of the creation and Resurrection—which is something to be glad about.

Though we are required to suffer through Lent, so too should we laugh through Lent. There is no such thing as a sad saint. It is in suffering that the human soul finds the deepest spring of contentment. God gives the gift of joy to share, and Lent is the time to share, to give, and to make other people happy. Though you keep your left hand from knowing what your right hand is doing, do let your neighbor know that you are happy. This is the essence of Lent.

As you consider your own Lenten almsgiving this year, please remember Gregory the Great Academy.

Though our boys are doing well this year, we still have much to accomplish if we are to end the year well. As you can imagine, the bills associated with the winter weather are steep. We are relying on you to help us keep the fire of our community burning brightly. Without your support, this little school where the joys of God are learned, loved, and lived in Lent would cease to exist. Please make a sacrificial gift today to allow our school, your school, to continue in its mission to bring students to the glories of God. Thank you for your generosity.



In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



Rhetoric at Gregory the Great Academy

Junior Rhetoric students practice the progymnasmata, fourteen exercises developed in Greek and Roman schools of rhetoric and employed by teachers well into the Middle Ages. One of these exercises, the chreia, is designed to amplify a proverb in eight sections: encomium, paraphrase, cause, converse, analogy, example, testimony, and a brief epilogue exhorting the audience to heed the wise words. Here is a sample of some of our students' essays.

Wealth is useless on the day of wrath, but virtue saves from death. Prov. 11:4

Solomon was one of the wisest men who ever lived, and his wisdom shows in this proverb. He understands what is truly important, both for a king and for an average person.

When you are in a dangerous situation and the chips are down, money will not get you out safely. It is your force of character, especially your will to do what is right.

If you live righteously, then God will always be there to help and strengthen you. Virtue not only saves you from physical death, but from spiritual death.



Many people do not understand what is really important. They spend their whole lives trying to become rich and powerful, but they don't realize that money will only take you so far. You cannot buy eternal life. But if you understand that virtue is what matters, like Solomon, then you can be confident in Christ no matter what happens.



On the other hand, Proverbs 10:15 states that “the rich man’s wealth is his strong city, the ruination of the lowly is their poverty.” He means that while money is not the most important thing, it is still important. If you have money you can help the less fortunate and support yourself so you can do God’s will. Money is good as long as you use it well.



In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man dined well, wore beautiful clothes and was powerful. Lazarus, however, sat naked, alone, and starving. When they both died, Lazarus went to Heaven and the rich man went to Hell. The rich man had money, but not virtue. If he had been generous with his wealth, he would have become virtuous and earned his eternal reward.

Supporting this truth, our dormfather Mr. Bascom quotes the proverb that states, “A sluggard is like a piece of dung; all who see him wipe their hands.” Mr. Bascom means that you cannot become truly successful without virtues such as diligence. You may be wealthy, but you will not be liked by anyone, and you will not please God. You have to acquire virtue to please Him and become truly successful in having His blessing.

— John Paul Fitzmaurice
Granger, Indiana

Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man and he will love you. Prov. 9:8

So insightfully does Solomon speak of instruction. Truly, scoffers despise instruction. And why? Only because they feel called out for perpetrating some act done in the sight of others. In contrast, as Solomon sees, the wise man who is reproved rejoices at a newfound insight. He rejoices because he sees the good in the advice, while the scoffer hates it because his pride is injured. Solomon might be the first man to recognize this contrast, and for this we should give him credit!



A man who has constructive intentions might correct a flippant friend who has only malevolent words. The friend, in outrage, points out a real flaw in his wiser friend. While the words were given in malice, the wise man loves the friend for his true and helpful remark.

Solomon may have had a wife who, on occasion, would scoff and gawk spitefully at people. Solomon might have called her out on this. Humiliated, she probably retorted some stinging truth about her accuser, but the man received it gladly for he saw its truth.

Solomon gives the contrast to this proverb himself. He points out that the wise man of good intention gladly receives this criticism, since it furthers his path to righteousness, while the heedless scoffer perceives only attack on himself.



This is like a boy who, one day in the schoolyard, tells a fellow to study, as he is behind in class, but the lad hates him for this and storms off. Another friend of the advisor tells him to stop telling off those who have not ears to hear. The boy sees the truth in his friend's words and loves him the more for saying them.

An example of this could be found in an exchange I had with my brother Joe. One day as the two of us were doing dishes and I was acting critically about our system, he called me out and asked why I did not simply work harder to keep up. I met his proposal with shame. I saw his point, but rather than give way, I responded in anger. But later I was very grateful to Joe.

Joseph of the Old Testament told his brothers of his dream where God foretold Joseph's rule over them. The brothers met this tidings with hatred, and sold him as a slave. Later, in Egypt, Joseph interprets yet another dream and gives counsel to wise Pharaoh, who then loves Joseph and makes him ruler. He does this because he sees the truth and goodness of Joseph's prophecy.



Truly, we should all seek perfection in all we do. We must then actively avoid the temptation of being scoffers in the crowd. In all things we must seek wisdom and allow our ways to be refined. We must constantly seek to respond with love to criticism and to embrace whatever truth lies therein, lest we become the scoffer, consumed with pride and deaf to instruction.

— David Hahn
Stuebenville, Ohio

Education as a Way of Life



Upper left: Chaplain Fr. Christopher Manuele celebrates the Presanctified Liturgy of St. Gregory the Great for the boys during Lent.

Above: Dr. William Fahey, President of Thomas More College, New Hampshire, delivers an energetic Immortal Memory Address at the Academy's annual Robert Burns Supper.



Upper right: Junior Vincent Duhig aims a shot for the Highlanders during an indoor soccer league match.



Mr. Andrew Wilson Smith teaches classical architecture to the senior students.



The boys sing in celebration of our patron, St. Gregory the Great, at a formal banquet.

Below: The students of Gregory the Great Academy process in song to the fields to play an all-school rugby tournament in honor of the Immaculate Conception.

