



# The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

October 2017

Dear Friend,

You may think this odd, but now that Gregory the Great Academy is back in its original home in Elmhurst, Pennsylvania, it seems as though we never left. As you know, over the last five years we have been a nomadic school, going from place to place, wherever we could find room, running our school out of temporary locations. But those days, happy as they were, are over and somehow distant. People sometimes have dreams in which they are doing familiar things in unfamiliar surroundings. So do the last five years seem



*The faculty and students of St. Gregory's in front of their good old brick building in Elmhurst. All are so thankful and joyful for the blessing to have our school back in the place where it was originally formed. The building, built 1921-23, is in excellent condition with its beautiful chapel, spacious refectory, good classrooms, proper dorms, commons, auditorium, and 200 acres of woods and fields.*

to me as a dream. Their memory is good, but it is also good to be awake. Your unwavering support in our determination to keep our school in existence through wilderness wanderings has brought us home again, and it has been wonderful getting a new school year started in the same old place where our school was formed and flourished in days gone by.

Though the idea of returning home typically brings with it the idea of a long-awaited rest, rest is not the word to describe what is happening here. Already, the action is high-paced, and that is how we like it. Our school eschews the very notion of bored boys, for boredom, so prevalent in our times, is one of the chief contributors to the decline in masculine drive, identity, and strength. We fill student life brimful with meaningful work, play, and prayer so that ultimately our students' lives may be fulfilled.

We have a full roster of strong and good boys this year from all over the country, and they are eagerly underway upon their academic adventures for this year. The Freshmen are reading the merry tales of Robin Hood, collecting insects in the yellow woods, and learning their first poems and songs. The Sophomores are tackling the axioms of Euclid's "Elements" while studying cloud formation and Greek mythology. The Juniors have begun their journey with Odysseus together with a course through Church history. The Seniors have shouldered Virgil's "Aeneid" and are leading the way valiantly as prefects. The newly-formed Highlander soccer squad is enjoying victories against other local high schools. The



Sean Fitzpatrick  
Headmaster



sound of the Schola drifts through the halls during Mass with the curling scent of incense. Camping, hiking, reading, running, living—our boys are home and they are busy.



You have thankfully made our busy-ness your business, for without your generous support, our work, our school, would cease. I am so grateful to all of you for allowing us to be so busy in our corner of the vineyard. Though our toils are ours, our fruits we claim together with you. You have made

all this possible and made yourself a participant in the good things we are accomplishing. Please continue to support us through your financial assistance and your prayers. We need you more than ever now that we have a beautiful home to keep in good condition together with so many beautiful souls. The owners of those souls are enjoying that home as you read this. Won't you make a gift today to help them along happily with their work?

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Fitzpatrick".

Sean Fitzpatrick

## Soccer Returns

The Academy's return to Elmhurst has allowed us to return to our school's tradition of participating in the high-school soccer league. Head Coach Garret van Beek is pleased to offer training in this competitive sport to the boys once again, and the newly-formed Highlander Soccer squad has been enjoying success on the playing field. The team is captained by Sophomore, John Bateman of Waymart, PA.



## Capital Campaign Update

As we enter this next phase of our Homeward Campaign, I wanted to let you know of a little project near and dear to my heart: **Highlander Hooleys**. One of the beautiful things about having a home is inviting friends and family over to share the blessings God has given us. But for many in our community, the trip to Emhurst is just not possible. So we will be travelling to you!

So far this year, we have visited Dallas, Kansas City, Wichita, St. Louis, Chicago, and Canada, with plans for events in Florida and Michigan. These Hooleys have been an amazing opportunity to connect with alumni, parents, and friends, spending time in conversation and celebration of the Academy. If you or someone you know may be

interested in hosting a Highlander Hooley in your area, feel free to contact me anytime to help plan the details. Thank you again for your generosity and I hope to be seeing you soon!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith".

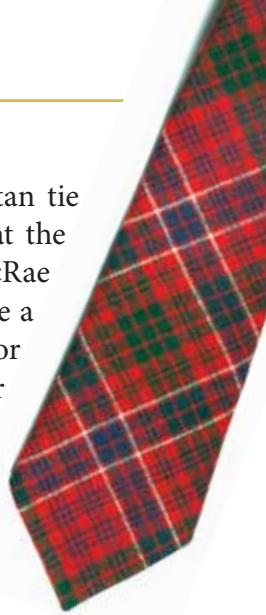
— Christopher Smith, Director of Development  
csmith@gregorythegreatacademy.com



## Tie Ceremony



The classes at St. Gregory's are given a tartan tie that represents their class and their role at the Academy. The Freshmen wear the MacRae tartan. The MacRaes, originally from Ireland, were a clan received into the Scottish Highlands known for their poets and musicians. The Sophomores wear the plaid of the MacDonalDs, famous for their strength in war and prominent in many of the school's traditional battle songs of Scotland. The Juniors and Seniors comprise the Upper Form and share the Black Watch tartan. The Black Watch were a senior regiment of Highlanders whose duty was to watch over the Highlands



and keep the peace. The all-school tie is the weathered Wallace, evoking the stalwart heroism and loyalty of the famous patriot, Sir William Wallace.

To mark the happy occasion of holding the commencement and tie ceremony in the old auditorium once again, Fr. Christopher Manuele blessed the class ties before their distribution, evoking a chivalric tradition of blessing armor, so that the ties might serve as sacramental aids in study. This moving addition to our tradition brought a new and deeper meaning to the wearing of our school colors, and offered a spiritual clarity to the life that our boys live in the pursuit of the good, true, and beautiful.



## Exaltation of the Holy Cross



Early in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, while overseeing the excavation for the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem over the sites of both Golgotha and the tomb of Christ, St. Helena discovered the True Cross. The precious relic immediately became an object of veneration, and a tradition began to exalt and bow down before the Holy

Cross and praise Christ's Resurrection on the anniversary of the basilica's dedication on September 14, 335.

On September 14, 2017 Gregory the Great Academy celebrated the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in a new way. As the Academy continues in its bi-ritual mode of education, offering a balance of Eastern and Western liturgy, a special emphasis was placed this year on this great Byzantine holy day. The boys attended a beautiful liturgy followed by a procession and a pig roast. The Academy thanks Mr. Mark Shipman for his generosity in providing and preparing the feast.



# River Valley Festival

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Gregory the Great Academy hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> annual River Valley Festival in Front Royal, VA. The well-attended folk music and family event is an important and lively gesture of community thanks and cultivation, where old and new friends of the Academy meet to enjoy fellowship and the good things of the earth. Thanks are due to the many generous volunteers that helped make this year's festival a tremendous and happy success.

