



The Minstrel

NEWSLETTER OF GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

February 2018

Dear Friend,

I would like to tell you a little story that captures a large truth about our school. Like most things that happen to me at St. Gregory's, this happened in my office—or at least, I heard it in my office.

Unfortunately, the headmaster's office at the Academy is not a place that typically rings with levity. On the contrary, its walls usually groan under the atmosphere of difficult decisions. The old desk, scarred with the labors of previous headmasters, often feels like a battlefield. The stolid chairs have upheld countless struggling boys, nervous parents, and overworked teachers. But every so often, something different obtrudes into this den of customary solemnity that makes it all very much worth it.

It was early in the morning, and I was in my office. Around the corner from the open door, a long hall runs, where I overheard two boys busy with brooms upon their morning chores. But they were not just sweeping. They were also singing. Singing together. Without shame or self-consciousness. Singing as most boys struggling in a cynical culture would never do. Here at St. Gregory's, God be praised, we hear boys singing all the time—but this was a little different.

While one of the boys was holding the tune very well, being a strong singer, the other kept falling off key. The off-key lad was not aware of his tone-deaf yet hearty contribution, but it was clear that the other boy was. I heard that he kept pausing and re-adjusting his tone to match his partner's in a subtle effort to regain concordance—which worked quite well, until the other fell flat again. And so they merrily went. As they swept and sang together, the one boy cheerily helped the song and his fellow singer along, giving brotherly support in a remarkable and beautiful little way, unaware how much encouragement they provided to me, an invisible listener down the hall.



The song these boys shared is significant—it is a sign of happiness and helpfulness, and the sound of a spirit that is fast losing place in a world of constant noise. Those boys are Freshmen. Their names are Jake and Sam. How wonderful it is to imagine how much they will learn and grow over the next three years. How blessed they are to have a school where they are free to be boys and free to become men. But those next three years are, unfortunately, not a guaranteed thing. We need you to help these boys along as they sing and work and learn and grow together. They need you if they are to have the benefit of three more good years of solid Catholic education.

Will you make a tax-deductible donation today to help make those next three years happen for Jake and Sam—and for all of our boys? Please be generous. Your gift will bring the music and the charity I overheard that morning out into a world that needs it desperately. Thank you and God bless you.

In Christ,

Sean Fitzpatrick



Sean Fitzpatrick
Headmaster



Capital Campaign Update

Greetings from the Development office.

I would like to take this opportunity to give you some exciting updates on the Homeward Campaign and also on some of the important projects your gifts have made possible for our students.

When we began the Homeward Campaign in December of 2016, we set an ambitious goal of raising 1.6 million dollars to purchase the campus in Elmhurst, make vital improvements to the building, and maintain our tuition assistance program to help deserving boys receive the unique and powerful formation offered by Gregory the Great. I am excited to announce that, to date, we have raised over 1 million dollars! Your generosity in bringing us to this milestone is an encouragement and inspiration to us all.

One of the major improvements in recent months to the campus was a complete upgrade of the hot water systems. As you can imagine, providing hot water for 60 teenage boys is no small feat, and the antiquated systems that were in place were not adequate. Our new pressure tanks, storage tanks, and modern commercial-grade heaters are highly efficient and cost effective, bringing this utility system to an excellent level of operation.



Speaking of which, we have also removed several broken-down laundry and drying machines in the dormitories and replaced them with brand new industrial units, having in place a plan to acquire new ones every year with service warranties that will last their lifetime.

During the Academy's years of absence from our old home, the main common area had fallen into a state of disrepair. Your contributions allowed us to re-floor the Commons, fix damage to the walls, and paint the vast wall-space, which over the past 5 years, had aged as well as the picture of Dorian Gray. This room is now a fitting space for boys to gather in communal activity and relaxation from the rigors of academic and athletic life.

We were also able to install all-new high-efficiency LED light fixtures in the chapel. The sacred art and architecture of our Academy's spiritual heart is now properly illuminated, allowing the students and staff to better meditate and reflect upon these uplifting treasures. These new installations will offer a significant savings as there are more light bulbs in this room than any other—not to mention the convenience of having so many hard-to-reach bulbs that will last 10 years.

These are only some of the improvements you have made possible during the Homeward Campaign. From new fire-safety systems, to rehabilitating the rugby pitch, to revamping key electrical and plumbing zones, we have made a commitment to making this new home ideal for our mission of forming boys into Catholic gentlemen. Be assured that the faculty and staff will continue to work towards that end. With your continued prayers, support, and the grace of God, we are confident we will achieve our goals together.

Christopher D. Smith ('03)

Director of Development

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Faculty member and resident artist, Andrew Smith has been heading up much of the maintenance projects at the new campus.

A Visit from Fr. Matthew Schultz

The faculty and students of Gregory the Great Academy were honored and pleased to welcome Fr. Matthew Schultz of the Diocese of Manchester, NH for a visit. Fr. Schultz, ordained to the priesthood this past May, served the St. Gregory's community for many years as a teacher and dormfather. During his tenure, he did much to help renew and further define the Salesian ethos of the dormstaff. It was a great privilege and joy for those faculty members who worked with Fr. Schultz to attend Mass celebrated by him in the St. Gregory's chapel, and to hear him address the students in his usual exuberant and ebullient manner. Fr. Schultz spoke to the boys about being good students at the Academy and also about the importance of discerning a vocation to the priesthood. Please pray for Fr. Schultz as he begins his life as a priest.



The Boys March for Life

The world is incorrigible in its insanity, and so must the sane go about as fools. As a result, the March for Life in Washington DC elicits mixed feelings from many supporters. Some feel that the March is futile but would still grieve if it did not occur. This paradox is a very poignant one, for it highlights that some things are worth fighting for even if they cannot be foreseeably won. The men and women and children who gather at Washington DC in the teeth of inclement weather are like so many Don

Quixotes, charging so many gigantic windmills. Is there a fool's hope for victory? Not in the foreseeable future. Is there a soldier's hope for glory in solidarity? Certainly. Would it be tragic if that cause were ever surrendered? Absolutely. The March for Life is just as worthy a sally as that immortal charge outside la Mancha—both done in the name of a law that is higher than man's and by a chivalry that defends the helpless. The students of Gregory the Great proudly and prayerfully participated in the March for Life this year.





Above left: Dormfather Jonathan Kuplack leads a successful roving trip with the Junior class, pictured here with Paul Hebert on guitar and Sebastian Adamowicz on fiddle. Above right: The students tour the the Lackawanna Train Museum. Below left: The boys of St. Gregory's love to visit local social spots to sing and juggle spontaneously, sharing the joy of their friendship. Below right: After a glorious tournament in honor of the Immaculate Conception, the Highlander rugby squad is in full-bore training mode in preparation for the spring season.



Sung Mass March 24, 2018 in NYC

On March 24th, Gregory the Great Academy will be singing Mass at the parish of St. Catherine of Siena in New York City. All are welcome to attend the liturgy and a reception afterwards where there will be refreshments, a juggling show performed by the students, and a short talk by one of the faculty members. Liturgy will begin at 12:30 pm.

Thank you to Academy alumnus Fr. Innocent Smith, OP for welcoming us into his parish home. If you have any questions about the event, please email: csmith@gregorythegreatacademy.com. We hope to see you there!

St. Catherine of Siena Church, 411 E. 68th St, New York, NY 10065

