



*The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter*

## ST. GREGORY'S ACADEMY

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**Dear Friend,**

**Fall 2005**

Sometimes I am asked what makes St. Gregory's Academy different from other schools. You may wonder yourself why parents are willing to even consider the financial and emotional sacrifice it takes to send their sons from as far away as Alaska to this little school in the hills of Pennsylvania. We do not boast an up-to-date building filled with the latest educational equipment that modern schooling deems necessary. Our halls are uncarpeted. Our classrooms are spartan in comfort. Our students have no access to the internet or television.

As you would see if you visited here, a spirit of genteel poverty is apparent wherever you look. The classroom-hallway floor may be covered with mismatched tile, but its walls are lined with beautiful paintings illustrating twenty centuries of history. The classrooms may lack all but the most basic features of desks and bookshelves, but the windows are graced with curtains instead of institutional blinds. These attributes of the building manifest the spirit we hope to instill in our students. God has entrusted us with this place to carry out His work - our job is to care for and even beautify it so we can hand back to Him a work of which we have been worthy stewards.

You know, of course, that it's not the surroundings that matter most. It's the people - the chaplains, the teachers, the staff - that are the school's greatest asset and that make St. Gregory's worth the sacrifice parents face sending their sons from home. It's those who teach, not only in the classroom but also in the hallways, in the refectory, the dorm rooms, on the playing field, in the chapel by the witness of their lives - they are the ones who give St. Gregory's the chance to show our students how to live a life of sacrifice happily ordered by obedience to God.

One of our teachers, Sean Fitzpatrick, is profiled in the following pages. I have no doubt that he could be making a higher salary elsewhere and be gaining recognition of his talents in the larger world outside St. Gregory's Academy. He, like the rest of the staff, puts the spiritual good of others before the material needs of his family and himself. We are blessed to have such dedication.

But it is our responsibility to pay a just wage to these laborers in the vineyard, so they may continue their work. Without your help this is simply impossible. Can I rely on you to join us in this important work - the formation of youth by the example and the teaching of Jesus Christ? And in appreciation for your support of the Academy by a donation of \$35 or more I will send you the latest CD the boys of St. Gregory have put together - INTROIBO. May God bless you for your generosity.



The Freshmen Class of 2005-2006

In Christ,

*Howard Clark*

Howard Clark, Headmaster



If you were to stand outside the Academy on a fall morning, you might need to step aside as a young man armed with easel and sketchbook leads a pack of students up to the field behind the school. He and the boys will spend an hour drawing the nature that they have read about in their Natural History class. How better to penetrate what God has rendered than to attempt to render it yourself?



Or if you were to visit St. Gregory's after study hall and swing by the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor auditorium, you might find boys on stage and this same bearded man roaming the floor with script in hand. Now he is quietly watching. Now he is calling to the actors from the back of the room. Now he is on stage animatedly gesturing to them. He is at once calm, energetic, and confident. With a leap off the stage he bids the actors to continue and returns to his observation.

In town later at night a young lady of four months is rocked to sleep by a devoted father. The mother looks on with a smile while the baby is placed in the crib that has been ingeniously carved with illustrations from the tale "The Bremen Town Musicians." The child lies in the lap of beautiful artistry, constructed and carved by none other than her father who kisses her good night. It has been a good day for artist-teacher-father Sean Fitzpatrick.

Sean hails from Ottawa, Canada, where he was born and raised. At St. Clement's where the Fitzpatricks attend Mass, Sean found an arena for the imaginative play that characterized his life at home. At that lively parish Sean would direct his young fellow-parishioners in plays, bringing his talents to the public eye. By then he was also drawing humorous caricatures for *All Things Considered*, the newsletter of the Ottawa Chesterton Society. These talented sketches earned Sean quite a bit of attention from readers of this famous Catholic writer and apologist.

For high school, Sean headed south to attend a little-known school in Pennsylvania, St. Gregory's Academy. Needless to say, his talents followed him. Sean breathed life into the halls of St. Gregory's by directing four plays and producing a short film featuring his classmates as cast. After graduating in 1998, second in his class, Sean decided to attend Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California. There he excelled as a student, actor, director of plays, and official coordinator of student activities. And it was there that he met a lovely young lady who would later become his wife—Sophie Hileman Fitzpatrick.



Sean Fitzpatrick with wife, Sophie, and daughter, Antonia.

Sean graduated from Thomas Aquinas in 2002. While some graduates take "time off" after graduation to get their bearings and chart their lives, Sean did not. His first move upon graduation was both surprising and resolute. He returned east and joined the faculty of St. Gregory's where he is now entering his fourth year as teacher, writer/director of plays, activities coordinator, and husband and father.

Many have observed that sarcasm and mockery are the dominant forms of humor among the teenagers of today. A cold climate of irony and derision chills the hearts of the youth. This is a tragic state of affairs that must be remedied if an education is to be realized. It lies on the shoulders of those who have been blessed with a taste of joy to pass this joy on.

For others, the performance of pure drama and comedy is unsophisticated and silly. Unless the play is pervaded by darkness and the laughter by irony it is far too ridiculous to participate in. Delight has fallen to snickering. True feeling and joy have been lost in the postmodern mind. This, too, is a sad state of dramatic affairs and is in need of remedy. With the love of God comes joy. If this joy is lost how then are we to come to love?



Pure drama and the whole-hearted playing of a part are activities which fly in the face of the current cynicism. To lose self-consciousness and engage in happy "play" unshaken by thoughts of how one might be perceived is to defeat irony and assume delight. When the laughter that ensues is merry, not mocking, a victory has been won.

Mr. Sean Fitzpatrick approaches all his activities as staff member with a playfulness that excites delight. He will often "dress up" for his students as a character of a novel he is teaching. How better to become acquainted with Huckleberry Finn than to meet him when you come to class in the morning? Students about to read *Treasure Island* are sent outside with a map of where their books are buried. How better to become acquainted with Jim Hawkins' adventure than to actually become a character in it?

Over the past three years, Sean has adapted plays from major works, written scripts himself, and directed boys in their performance. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and Bentley's *Trent's Last Case* have all received standing ovations from proud families and friends. The plays themselves move with an energy and humor that one would be hard pressed to find anywhere else. Part of this may be due to the actors' own personalities and the vibrancy of the dormitory in which they live. But most of it flows from another source.



For joy to be conveyed in this current climate of cynicism it must be taught by a teacher like Sean Fitzpatrick. In the play *The Man Who Was Thursday* Sean was faced with a problem in a critical scene. How can a high-speed car chase be enacted onstage? Here many would throw up their hands at the idea: "It is too ridiculous to attempt such a thing. They would laugh at me if I tried to do it." But "Mr. Fitz" was not afraid of such talk. And see! There are the players, sitting on chairs, the man in front holding a paper circle attached to a stick that somehow brings to mind a steering wheel.

Masked men in black sit under the driver and passengers wielding painted cardboard "wheels" under the actors' legs. More masked men stand backstage holding drawings of a tree, a house, and a lamppost. And suddenly they are off! The wheels spin round and round, the driver steers, and the scenery changes behind as they pass now a tree, now a house, now a lamppost, now another tree. The audience sees it all, but in that brief moment they see more. A convertible really is racing through the countryside, the landscape really is changing. Those watching laugh uproariously for the sheer fun of it all.

Such is the spirit of Sean Fitzpatrick in the work that he does. As director, teacher, husband, and father, Sean brings a distinct energy and laughter with him. We at St. Gregory's Academy are grateful for his joy.



# FALL 2005

## INTROIBO



Music group by St. Gregory's Academy

*Introibo ad altare Dei,  
Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.*

Now available is **INTROIBO**, a new recording by the boys of St. Gregory's Academy, singing in the joy of their youth. The album features musical selections from sacred and folk traditions.



**Above:** Academy students on the Auriesville Pilgrimage to the Shrine of the North American Martyrs.

**Below:** Jonathan Kuplack, Class of '07, advances his teammates down the Academy's Highland Field.

### "I WANT TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE SCHOOL"



Dan Reitzig, '08

In its effort to restore the Christian culture, Saint Gregory's Academy seeks to instill in its students the principles of hard and honest labor. Complementing their spiritual, intellectual, and physical formation, the students work in a spirit of Christian charity, and of service to the community. Various daily tasks, entailing everything from cleaning to construction, teach the students the spirit of self-sacrifice, and of love for the common good. Occasionally, of their own accord,

students will undertake projects that express their gratitude to the school. Last year, for example, the senior class decided to strip, sand, and refinish all the tables in the refectory, dedicating a week's leisure to their restitution.

At the beginning of this year, sophomore Daniel Reitzig, a nominee for the honor of Eagle Scout in Troop 102 of Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania, approached Mr. Dan Davidson, the Academy's Athletic Director, with a noble proposal. "I want to do something for the school," he said, and inquired about the school's needs. After some deliberation, they determined that the installation of some bleachers at the athletic field would aid in mustering spectators at sporting events and induce them to raise their heartening voices in unified cheer. Furthermore, this contribution would allow the Academy, in Christian hospitality, to offer its guests, the viewers from the visiting team, comfortable seats.

Inspired by the idea, Daniel who was aided by his father and a family friend, designed the bleachers, which upon completion will measure 18 feet in length, 15 feet in width, and 6 1/2 feet in height. He will construct the bleachers entirely from wood, which he will then stain and varnish to withstand the harsh weather. Daniel is currently fund-raising for the project, the estimated cost of which is approximately \$3,500.00. When completed, however, the bleachers will comfortably seat one hundred people.



The Senior Class of 2006 will present *The Screwtape Apprenticeship* in May; a play adapted by Sean Fitzpatrick from C.S. Lewis' celebrated book.