



The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter

## ST. GREGORY'S ACADEMY

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# Winter 2007



## Dear Friend,

The Catholic Faith is a precious gift given to us by Christ which we in turn are obliged to hand on to our children. I was movingly reminded of this truth while watching the Academy students as they participated in the liturgy for Candlemas. Each student approached our chaplain, kissed the offered candle, then kissed his hand before taking it in his own. What a striking image of the task of Catholic education! It is our privilege to hand on the light of faith to the next generation of Catholic faithful. Christ has given over the light of faith into our hands, and now he is dependent upon those same hands for its future communication.

This handing on is the meaning and challenge of tradition, a word which has its Latin roots in the notion of "giving over." Beginning with Christ, and spanning the many generations of Christendom, the light of Christ has been given over to us, primarily by the anointed hands of the bishops and their priests, but also by the supporting hands of simple faithful such as you and me.

At St. Gregory's we have a distinctive way of handing on the light of faith which we call the poetic mode. Just as the light that graces the top of the candle feeds on the honey transformed into wax by the bees, so the light of faith is nourished best by the delights of poetry and music. On the next page, junior Francis Pouliot reflects on a song which has a large place in our school tradition - "The Minstrel Boy." Traditional songs such as this one which sings of the faithful harp praising the minstrel's homeland, prepare young hearts for the higher praise of man's true homeland.

That we may continue to hand on the light of faith, I ask you to give to us with open hands. If our school is to remain accessible to all Catholic students, especially those from working and middle class families, it is essential that all those who can, assist us in meeting our financial burdens.

With the season of Lent upon us, please consider giving your alms to St. Gregory's Academy so that we can hand on the light of faith even to those who could not otherwise afford a Catholic education.

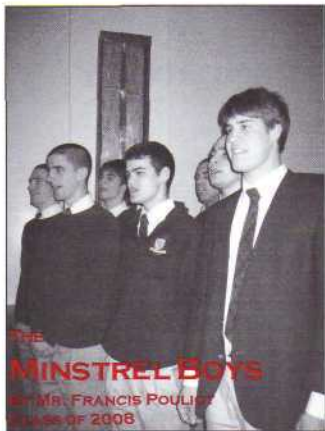
In Christ,

*Howard Clark*  
Howard Clark, Headmaster

P.S. Through the generosity of Mr. Howard Walsh of Keep the Faith, I have a special offer to those of you who can make a donation of \$100 or more - a series of audio tapes presenting Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's Dublin Retreat. They would provide a good Lenten exercise for you and your family.

P.P.S. Be sure to read about a special new tax incentive on the back page of this newsletter and see our reply card for information on the Mustang Raffle.





The minstrel boy to the war has gone,  
In the ranks of death you will find him.  
His father's sword he hath girded on,  
And his wild harp slung behind him.  
"Land of song," cried the warrior bard,  
"Though all the world betrays thee,  
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard;  
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

The minstrel fell, but the foeman's chains  
Could not bring that proud soul under,  
The harp he loved never spoke again  
For he tore its cords asunder;  
And said, "No chain shall sully thee,  
Thou soul of love and bravery!  
Thy songs were made for the pure and free;  
They shall never sound in slavery!"



Dear families, friends, and benefactors of St. Gregory's Academy,

As a third year junior here at the Academy I was delighted, and a bit surprised, to be asked to write a newsletter article about the significance of our school song, "The Minstrel Boy." This song, written by the poet Thomas Moore, has been the official song of St. Gregory's ever since the school's beginning.

I believe that the founders of St. Gregory's Academy understood "The Minstrel Boy" as our school song because they believed that the theme and wisdom contained in its lyrics would give the students a good model to know and imitate. The Academy's founders saw in the words of this song the very boy that they hoped to form young uneducated teenagers into. In my opinion, this great song can and does relate to us, the students of the Academy, on three different and important horizons. First, it is an example to us as young men striving on the road to perfection as saints. Secondly, it embodies our school's warrior spirit of being a 'Highlander' on the field of battle (the rugby pitch), in the dormitories, and for the rest of our lives. Thirdly, the song calls us to be what we call a 'lad-mate,' meaning someone who is always ready and willing to sing joyously with his friends.

"The Minstrel boy to the war is gone." The first line of our song truly describes the mission of St. Gregory's: to make us, her students, saints. The song tells us that the minstrel boy has gone to war. The war he fought was a physical battle between his fatherland and its foes. But this verse speaks to us, who are preparing to fight an even more important war: the battle for our souls. Here at St. Gregory's we are preparing ourselves for that war when we go to Mass, when we play rugby, when we study for a test, when we attend class. In everything we do, we are getting ready to march off to defend the holy Faith of our fathers. This is the most important thing that St. Gregory's does – it gives us a strong grasp on our most precious Faith and a love for our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. To win the war against our spiritual foes it is important first to remove ourselves from those tantalizing yet deadly distractions of this passing world. We must learn to "die" to the world as the minstrel boy dies in our song. However, this death is not defeat, it is victory and glory. For it is in "dying" that we come closer to our Lord who is the source of eternal life. At St. Gregory's we withdraw ourselves from all the superfluous accessories of those powers who wish to divert us from our goal.

This is why when a boy comes to study at St. Gregory's he leaves behind most of the extra comforts he has at home. Life at St. Gregory's is designed to strengthen and condition the soul for the most important battle, where we must "die" to ourselves and to the world, in order to be ready to face our ultimate trial. That is why a big part of our life here at St. Gregory's is devoted to charitable works, like lifting up the spirits of old people in the nursing home with song. We try to do as the minstrel boy did; we gird on our fathers' swords to fight the good fight—with our musical instruments on our backs, we wield the sword of Faith while singing praises to our Maker.

As the minstrel boy was fearless in the face of his enemies, so we try to imitate him by fighting for our Lord even when most of the world has betrayed Him. We will stand and fight courageously as the minstrel boy did, in defense of our final homeland, our "land of song"—Heaven. St. Gregory's trains us to live out this resolution in our lives by daily prayer and by participating in the most holy sacrifice of the Mass. St. Gregory's will form us into strong Catholic men so that when we leave here we will be in the world but not of the world, and be prepared to live and die for God as the singing soldiers of Christ. In our school song, the minstrel fell but the foeman could not conquer his spirit, and neither will we be conquered. The formation and education of St. Gregory's will help us and our Faith to be victorious in the end.

The second virtue we learn from this song is that of perseverance. This is seen in the minstrel boy's unconquerable spirit, which we imitate and which never allows us to surrender even when faced with suffering and perhaps even failure. This heroic attitude manifests itself strongly in our athletic program. Ours is a small school and it is hard to compete athletically against larger schools, but still we are tough and always put up a good fight. The courageous spirit of the minstrel boy inspires us as the St. Gregory's Highlanders, and will not let us give up, no matter how hard it might be or how tired we are. We are almost always the underdog among our sports teams. With "The Minstrel Boy" as our standard, we follow his lead and struggle to losses, victories, and glory.

The third and final way we interpret our school song is in stressing the importance of music here at St. Gregory's. We sing as classmates, teammates, and 'lad-mates.' Song is an integral part of our curriculum and formation, and this for several reasons. Most importantly, we sing in praise of God, chanting in the manner of our great patron at Mass and in hymns. As minstrel boys, we sing as St. Gregory the Great taught us—to give honor to God. As that minstrel boy did before us, we sing to encourage our army, our brothers in Christ, and to cheer our team along to fight against the adversary with courage and pride. Finally, we sing the same songs that he did, namely the traditional songs of the highland tribes; a strong people, who fought against their attackers with bravery and resolution.

"The Minstrel Boy" is a song of inspiration, exhortation, and a standard for all students at St. Gregory's Academy. We will always sing this song with unity, pride, and joy. The message of the minstrel boy invites us to be warrior-saints, singing in the Name of God while holding fast and even fiercely to His goodness, truth, and beauty. May He permit our song to outlast and overpower the bombastic noise of the world so that we might all assemble again together in His holy halls—without the loss of a single brother—to fill them with our joyous refrain.

**Francis Pouliot, '08-  
Official Piper for the  
S.G.A. Highlanders**





## St. John Bosco Banquet

The students at St. Gregory's Academy celebrated the feast day of St. John Bosco on January 31 with an Italian style banquet and a tremendous juggling performance in honor of this great patron of the school. The Troupe of St. Julian, led by Mr. Luke Culley, and the hosting freshmen class made the feast day a great success.



### Special New Tax Incentive - Use Your IRA as Never Before by Giving to St. Gregory's Academy

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 encourages financial support of charitable organizations in the United States. According to this act, people 70½ years old and older may have up to \$100,000 this year given directly to a charitable cause like St. Gregory's Academy with **NO TAX LIABILITY**. In fact, the amount that you donate may be deducted from your taxable assets, thus **REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF TAX YOU PAY**. Anyone who qualifies may take advantage of this, even if a spouse has already done so with another IRA.

For those with other retirement packages like 401(k)s etc., ask your advisor or administrator to transfer funds to an IRA and then have them sent. This act covers **ONLY** gifts sent directly from the retirement account - **DO NOT** withdraw this money and send it yourself, have your IRA administrator do it for you and mention that this is under the "Pension Protection Act of 2006." Your administrator will know what that means and how to protect your money, reduce your taxable assets, and help St. Gregory's Academy all in one act.

Remember, **all that is required** is that: 1) you be 70½ years of age or older, 2) make the gift on or before December 31, 2007, and 3) the yearly gift from that account be less than \$100,000.

**PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING ST. GREGORY'S ACADEMY IN THIS WAY, AS IT ALSO HELPS YOU, OUR BENEFACTORS.** Thank you.