

For family, friends, & alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CISTERCIAN IRVING TEXASNTINUUM

Fall 2018

Creativity, Camaraderie & Character

Reinventing Cistercian
Summer Programs

From Zirc to Dallas and back again

Fr. Bernard Marton
crosses the globe

Annual Report
2017–18 School Year



Michael Humphries,
Director of Summer Programs

Remembering Cistercian with a Planned Gift



*Lynn and Mark
Roppolo '88 at their
children's baptisms
in 2004 and 2006.*



Generations to come...

Cistercian has been a part of our lives since Mark was a student at the School with Fr. Henry for his Form Master. All four of our children were baptized in the Abbey Church by Fr. Peter, and we are delighted that our three boys now attend the School.

We have included Cistercian in our estate plans with the hope that it continues to be a blessing for our family for generations to come.

MEMORARE
SOCIETY

To remember Cistercian with a planned gift, contact Erin Hart.
469-499-5406 | ehart@cistercian.org



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Head of Middle School

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Assistant Headmaster
Head of Upper School

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Director of Admissions

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Director of
College Counseling

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and Alumni Relations

André Bruce
Director of Athletics
and Physical Education

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Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission and education policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other activities.

Letter from the Headmaster

Blessings on Both Sides of the Atlantic

"(Lord), Keep on loving those who know you, doing good to the upright of heart."
(Ps 36:11)

I feel like the author of this psalm who, with a profound sense of marvel and gratitude for the greatness of God's



Fr. Paul McCormick

deeds all about him, pleads that God please "keep on" providing such blessings.

I hope you too will enjoy reading about how Cistercian's summer program,

long an important and necessary staple of student remediation, has undergone a dramatic transformation, now also encompassing a plethora of amazing enrichment opportunities and even reaching down into the third and fourth grades. Spearheaded by a dynamic lay faculty member, Michael Humphries, and a marvelous team of fellow faculty and alumni, may the Lord keep this great summer labor of love going for future talented and intellectually curious boys.

In our second feature, one will find

the tremendous work that Fr. Bernard, now as Prior of Zirc, is doing to support and encourage the tenuous but tenacious Cistercian community in Hungary. Along with his many other responsibilities, he has even helped initiate this past year an exchange program enabling a recent Cistercian graduate to experience a month in Hungary. May the Lord keep on supporting Fr. Bernard's ministry of deepening and strengthening the bonds between our two communities such that both are more abundantly enriched.

Finally, in addition to the always popular class updates, this issue contains a column by **Smokey Briggs '84**, who with wit and piercing insight recalls the value of a young person's boredom, as well as the sage advice of **Fr. Roch**, who challenges us to turn everything in our lives into a blessing by learning to see things from God's perspective.

God bless you all, and all my best wishes for an authentically joy-filled and blessed Advent and Christmas!

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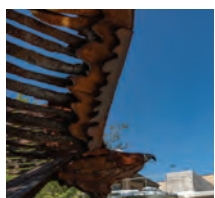
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News & Notes

The English Department's latest additions

After Chris Medaille's retirement at the end of last year, the English department hired two new faculty members: Denise Williams and Scott Laurange. Williams, who taught previously at Corinth Classical Academy and Immaculate Conception Catholic School, was sold on the School when a Form IV student told her he would argue for the "inherent goodness of man" during a demo class. She is teaching Form II and Form IV English. Laurange, who taught for thirteen years at Nolan



Scott Laurange and Denise Williams

Catholic High School, finds the school grounds beautiful and refreshing: "God is present in every space." He is teaching Form I English Lab, Form VI English, and co-sponsoring *The Informer*.

Solar Panel Project competes for 'Project of the Year'

Solar Builder Magazine announced its top candidates nationwide for "Project of the Year," and Cistercian was one of sixteen finalists chosen for the solar panels installed on the roofs of the gym and science building last spring. "Our beautiful campus



is a tremendous blessing, and we do not take it for granted. And we take seriously our duty to be good stewards not only of our 82 acres, but of our planet," said **Tim Parker '90**, Director of Facilities. Beyond the initial cost savings, the panels

come with an interactive display and curriculum allowing students to gain hands-on experience in tracking the School's energy consumption.

New Form Master for the Class of 2023

Tim Parker '90, in addition to his responsibilities as the Form V Biology teacher and Director of Facilities, was named Form Master for the Class of 2023. "Given his tremendous experience and success in mentoring students through the years," explained Fr. Paul, "Mr. Parker brings considerable talent and skills for shepherding these young men through graduation and beyond." Br. Raphael, recently ordained a deacon, will serve as Form Chaplain and Assistant Form Master for the class.



Br. Raphael and Tim Parker '90

Mr. Munguia and Mr. Haaser celebrate teaching milestones

Mr. Roberto Munguia and Mr. Bob Haaser are still going strong as they reach new touchstones in their careers at Cistercian. Mr. Munguia has spent 40 years in the classroom, teaching and developing the arts curriculum at the School: "I've had a wonderful view of Cistercian's blossoming arts program, and I look forward to what might come next." He currently teaches art to Forms I-III and an Upper School elective.



Bob Haaser and Roberto Munguia

Mr. Haaser, in his fiftieth year, is the longest-serving lay teacher in the School's history. "It has been a wonderful opportunity," said Mr. Haaser, "to work with so many good boys and families – a true blessing!" He is currently teaching Form IV History, a genealogy elective, is an Assistant Form Master and admissions committee member, and will help coach Middle School baseball in the spring.

New clubs on campus

Seniors **Matt Acuña** and **Jonny De la Cruz** spearheaded a new club in the Upper School this fall, *Unum Sint*. In addition to monthly luncheons open to all students looking to cultivate friendships across grade levels, they will hold meetings to exchange views on social and political issues of the day, deepen awareness, and build community. Club members also helped host this year's Form I Orientation Day to introduce new students to campus and plan to speak regularly in the Middle

School about the importance of respect and appreciation of diverse backgrounds.

For introducing Upper School students to the world of medicine as a potential career, seniors **Jimmy Garda**, **Will Parker**, **Campbell Keating**, and **Anthony Farhat** recently formed a Medical Club with **Tim Parker '90** as sponsor. They plan to invite practicing physicians, sometimes alums, to visit quarterly about their particular specialties, with time afterward for Q&A. "It has been fantastic to learn the ins and outs of various medical practices," said Garda, "and to get to know the doctors on a more personal level."

New format for law and finance elective

Utilizing the experience and expertise of local alumni, Cistercian has offered a popular law elective twice in the past. Last year, **Tyler Bethea '03**, Managing Director and Senior Partner Advisor with Crow Holdings Capital, suggested that **Shae Armstrong '98**, coordinator of the elective, add finance topics to the spring elective. Working together closely, the two brought twenty Cistercian alumni and alumni parents to campus to teach topics in their specific areas of law or finance, such as contracts, mergers and private equity. The elective also provides an opportunity for students to network with alumni and learn from their real life experiences.

Alumni in law who taught elective

Jeff Tinker '97
Tony Johnston '05
Vincent Ansiaux '93
Stefan Zane '96
Shae Armstrong '98
Kevin Spencer '85
Sean Hanna '96
Alex Frutos '87
Peter de la Cerda '96
Barry McCain '02
Jordan Campbell '04
Robert Dunikoski '95

Alumni in finance who taught elective

Bayard Friedman '03
Zach Heard '05
Brent Hogan '00
Peter Thompson '13
Ford Albert '13
Joel Schubert '02
Tyler Bethea '03

CPS alumni attorneys get together

Alumni attorneys in the area have been meeting quarterly. They are looking to expand the network outside of the DFW Metroplex to form local chapters in other markets. If you are interested in staying in touch with other alumni attorneys, contact **Barry McCain '02** (BMcCain@dykema.com), **Shae Armstrong '98** (shaearmstrong@gmail.com) or **Alex Frutos '87** (afrutos@jw.com).

Fr. Gregory visits the Big Apple

At Fr. Peter's invitation, Fr. Gregory is taking a sabbatical year in New York City designed to further his ongoing studies in art history. Manhattan's museums (The Met, Guggenheim and the MoMA) provide rich venues for deepening his understanding of and appreciation

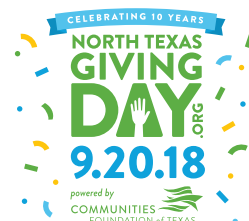


Fr. Gregory at The Met

for a wide variety of topics such as Chinese and American art, the Dutch Masters, and Eugene Delacroix. Fr. Greg is in residence at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church where he also performs pastoral ministry — celebrating Mass, hearing confession, and offering spiritual direction.

Cistercian sets new record on North Texas Giving Day!

It was another stellar year for Cistercian as parents, alumni and friends generously donated \$760,122 to Sustentation and Scholarships from 800 individual gifts (up from \$672,681 and 767 gifts last year). "The response of the Cistercian community was amazing again this year," said Sustentation Chair Kent Clay. "The current parents are always generous supporters, but Fr. Paul really inspired the alumni to join in the effort. At the end of the day, success is best measured by how invested the community is in the School, and the numbers reflect that." Cistercian, the top finisher on North Texas Giving Day for the past three years, came in a very close second this year.



Senorita Kennedy receives graduate degree

Tara Kennedy, Spanish teacher in the Upper School, earned her Master's in Spanish Literature from UNT this fall. She defended her thesis — "The Law of Historic Memory in Spanish Cinema & Novel" — with colleague Nancy Obels-Robinson in attendance. Currently, seven full-time faculty members are pursuing either a master's or a doctoral degree in their respective fields.



Senorita Kennedy defending her thesis

News & Notes

New Student Exchange Program

For eleven years, a rising senior from the Szent Imre Gimnázium in Budapest has been selected to come to Dallas each August for a month-long visit to Cistercian. This summer represented the first time that Cistercian was also able to send one of our own recent alums,

Matthew Dorn

'18, to Hungary in exchange: "There were many differences between the two schools. Imre is coed and much bigger (with five 35-person forms per grade level), but they are fundamentally the same." He lived in Budapest with five different host families over the course of a month while attending classes at Szent Imre and visiting sites in Prague, Vienna and Venice as well. "It definitely broadened my horizons," Dorn concluded afterward. "This exchange should certainly continue for many years to come."



Matthew Dorn with Fr. Bernard Marton and Gábor Zsófi at the abbey tower in Zirc

Greg Graham's EWTN interview

Cistercian's Director of Technology, Greg Graham, was featured in September on EWTN's *The Journey Home*. In the one-hour television program, Graham described his personal journey both in discovering the Catholic faith as well as his path to Cistercian.

"I thought I was going to figure everything out," said Graham, who offers a philosophy elective about the existence of God, "but I soon realized the need to trust in an authority with a divine guarantee, the Catholic Church." Graham also teaches a senior seminar that addresses the ethical and philosophical questions raised by technology.



Greg Graham on *The Journey Home* set

Cistercian Community Business Directory available now

The Cistercian Community Business Directory located at <https://school.cistercian.org/business-directory/> is a new initiative where alumni, alumni parents and current parents can advertise a business or find a service provider. Businesses included so far range from accounting, finance and insurance to medical, dental, real estate and beyond. To include your business in the directory, simply go to the web page and sign up.

A new Admissions video

A new eight-minute video, *The Cistercian Experience: Ardere et Lucere*, showcases the sights and sounds of campus life for those who want to know more about a Cistercian education and honors the themes of the previous admissions video, while featuring current faculty, students, parents and alumni, as well as the many new facility improvements. Current Cistercian parent Mary Leahy provided video production services, collaborating with Fr. Paul, Jim Taylor, and Fr. Anthony to communicate the spirit and values of Cistercian. The video highlights four aspects of the Cistercian experience: Classical Education, Form Master System, Athletics, and Student and Community Life. Mr. Taylor said, "The video reveals the wide range of activities available, from the middle school boys acting in the school play to upper school students participating in a robotics competition. It is very nice to have this updated for admissions." The Admissions video is one of several new videos featured on the school website. Visit Cistercian.org to watch and share with friends.



The new video highlights four aspects of the Cistercian experience: Classical Education, Form Master System, Athletics, and Student and Community Life.

College Matriculations

Class of 2018 sets new record, continues trend toward STEM fields

The Class of 2018 was the smallest to graduate in recent history with just 38 students, and they applied to fewer schools than each of the past five classes, submitting 299 applications to 104 different institutions last year. Many schools received applications from Cistercian students for the first time in over 10 years or for the first time ever. Sixty-seven percent of their applications merited an offer of admission, and this fall, 22 different institutions received Cistercian students.

"I'm very proud of the way this class approached this process," said Chris Blackwell, who completed his first year as Director of College Counseling at Cistercian. "They were deliberate in crafting well balanced lists in the fall, which afforded them many options to choose from in the spring."

For the third year in a row, the number of students preferring to attend in-state

schools exceeded 40 percent, with exactly half of the class choosing to attend schools in Texas. Sixty-nine

percent of the class will be attending private universities, six of which are Catholic.

Anticipated future majors lie heavily in the areas of STEM or business with 85 percent pursuing studies in these fields. This continues a trend, interrupted last year by the Class of 2017, in this direction. Of the remaining students, one will be majoring in political science, another in journalism, and four are undecided.

85%
Planning to major in STEM or business-related field

Even with the smaller size and fewer schools applied to, the Class of 2018 set a record for the most scholarship dollars awarded to an individual class, amassing over \$11 million in merit awards, breaking last year's record number of \$8.75 million. Six different students received full-tuition or full-ride scholarships to schools.

Marshall Comeaux '18 was named Cistercian's first 40 Acres Scholar at UT Austin. All of his school costs will be covered along with a stipend for additional academic exploration in Plan II or the Business Honors Program.

3 Number of schools where a Cistercian student has never enrolled

4 Number of athletes playing for their school's team

Jake FitzGerald '18 received a full tuition Trustee Scholarship to the University of Southern California. Creating some in-family rivalry, his twin brother, **Ben FitzGerald '18**, is attending Notre Dame.

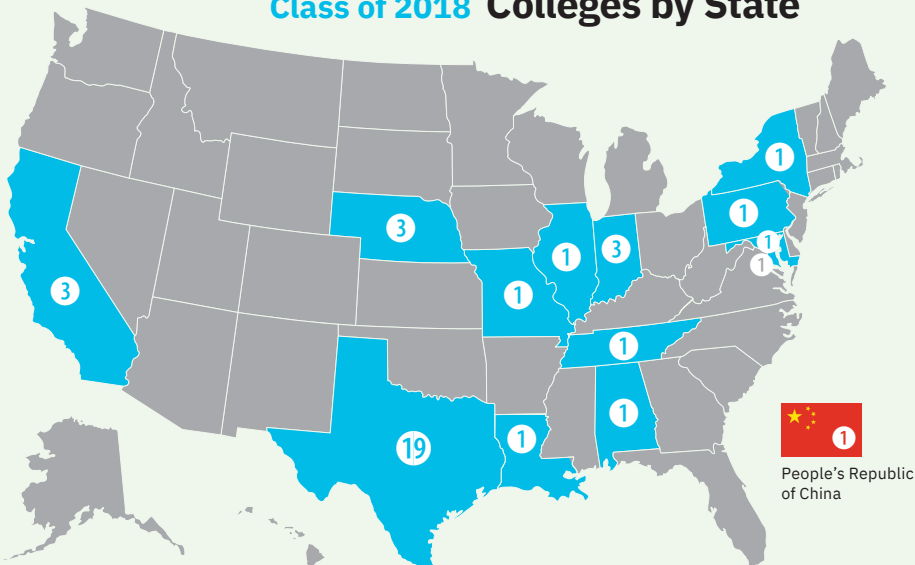
Three students were recruited for their athletic ability and are playing varsity sports in college: **Michael Jaquez '18** (baseball, UD), **Max Schieferdecker '18** (football, WashU), and **Sid Reggie '18** (football, Lake Forest College).

Three students are pursuing military service after college: **Connor Blend '18** NROTC at Penn, **Conner McConnell '18** NROTC (Marine option) at Vanderbilt, and **Michael Garnett '18** is attending the United States Naval Academy.

Three students are attending schools where no Cistercian graduate has ever enrolled: **Evan Bird '18** at NYU Shanghai, **Charlie Lipscomb '18** at UAB, and **Sid Reggie '18** to Lake Forest College. Finally, five students from the Class of 2018 chose to attend the University of Dallas, the alma mater of their Form Master, **Fr. Augustine Hoelke '00**, which is more than any single class in Cistercian's history. •

\$11,149,992
Scholarship dollars awarded to Class of 2018

Class of 2018 Colleges by State



Colleges

Creighton University (3)
Fordham University
Georgetown University
Lake Forest College
NYU Shanghai
Purdue University
Rice University
Santa Clara University (2)
Southern Methodist University (4)
Texas A&M University (5)
The University of Texas, Austin (2)
The University of Texas, Dallas
Tulane University
United States Naval Academy
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Dallas (5)
University of North Texas
University of Notre Dame (2)
University of Pennsylvania
University of Southern California
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis



Creativity, Camaraderie & Character

Reinventing Cistercian Summer Programs

Story by Dr. Tom Pruitt
Photos by Jim Reisch and
Br. Raphael Schaner

When it comes to summer fun, how many school-age kids are able to spend their days launching water balloons from a giant slingshot with a precisely calculated trajectory, swinging away at a homemade dragon piñata inspired by a young monk's tale of St. George's slaying that "monstrous worm," concocting Alka-Seltzer "fizzy bombs" with the head of the science department, and reciting poems from memory or singing in Latin with a music director who also happens to

have a PhD? Well, Cistercian's Summer Programs provided over 300 kids from 50 schools these experiences, and so much more, this past summer!



Six years ago, Cistercian transformed its long-running summer school to include a monthlong Rec Camp for boys in grades three through six and an expanded Academic Program offering a wide variety of enrichment opportunities for grade five through high school. The traditional Sports Camp was also revamped for young men in grade six through high school by integrating strength and conditioning and focusing on developing key skills in a variety of sports. Assistant Athletic Director Craig Sklar, who has managed a successful summer program in Plano, was instrumental in outlining a format for the Sports Camp that would utilize counselors. While many local private schools offer summer camps, Cistercian's unique approach utilizes the particular skills, talents and experiences of our own faculty, coaches and young alumni. Each individual program focuses on encouraging boys to do what boys do best—being physically as well as intellectually active. It is not an accident that the boys are introduced to learning experiences that encourage them to remain busy with their hands and bodies even as they satisfy their seemingly unquenchable curiosity. They do all this while being taught the same

Rec Camp



virtues and being exposed to the same values of character formation that Cistercian students experience throughout a regular school year.

Michael Humphries, a veteran faculty member at Cistercian and the father of five young children, developed this vision for a Summer Program when Fr. Paul McCormick, Headmaster, named him Director of Summer Programs six years ago. Humphries was given the charge, freedom and resources to begin making it a reality. Every year since, he and his team have tweaked, refined and improved the program, summer after summer, such that it is now enjoying record success, not only with the number of campers but also the number of area schools represented: private, parochial, public, Montessori and homeschool. Even a casual, passing conversation with Humphries reveals just how passionate he is about his objectives for Summer Programs. “We want to extend the mission of the school, to extend *ardere et lucere*, but do so using slightly different methods. Because of the shortened time frame, we must pack everything into four weeks and work with even greater intensity.” Each activity is constructive and designed to teach real skill while encouraging the boys to work hard and take pride in their accomplishments. “We’re not trying to be efficient by merely producing an end product that looks nice—a grade, an origami construction, a science experiment—but one in which the boy has the primary role in creating. Our goal is to offer true ‘re-creation’ activities that reinvigorate the spirit by offering an effective combination of play and work that is rewarding in itself.”

Humphries starts his summer planning in the fall by



Our goal is to offer true ‘re-creation’ activities that reinvigorate the spirit by offering an effective combination of play and work that is rewarding in itself.





very basic goal is to try and reconnect these young men with “good, old-fashioned fun using simple games.” For some, however, such a goal can require a dramatic change in mind-set, for the young, alum counselor as well as for the camper himself. Heyne, for example, recalled one recent project—constructing and operating a simple carnival game. “The challenge was to infuse the simple, repetitive action of the contest, which on the surface may seem boring, with a little imagination so that it suddenly becomes quite enjoyable. The real lesson is that introducing an active imagination can, in fact, make just about any activity fun.” Humphries emphatically agrees. “All boys will make paper airplanes, but the ones who learn how to make theirs fly a certain way or make a particular turn will not only have fun, but will also see the beauty of the physical science and feel the reward of focused trial, error and correction. Life

is always more fun when you apply your intellect creatively and with focused effort.”

For Dr. Martina Kroll, who taught a basic “chemistry” course last summer, part of the “fun” of participating in the summer programs is being free to simply guide

students as they explore their surroundings. “I want to teach my students to start from scratch and to use the simple, everyday materials they find all around them,”

reaching out to faculty, current Cistercian families as well as alumni families so they know about all the opportunities available through the camps. He wants to provide a resource for other children from the rest of the diocese as well.

The counselors’ chief ‘job’ is to model the key virtues of attentiveness, following directions, sharing, getting along and patience.

To ensure that a variety of schools are represented, a program was initiated five years ago to offer one full scholarship to be awarded by the principal of each of the elementary schools in the diocese. “Principals are beginning to look forward to this gift each year as one more way in which they can help their students,” notes Humphries. “This partnership allows Cistercian to be a great resource to our neighboring schools in our shared mission of forming the next generation.” During the spring semester, Humphries and his team have already begun making any needed refinements to improve, add or delete different activities and classes for the coming summer as well as hiring the best personnel to oversee camps.

Jon Paul Heyne ’06, the Assistant Camp Director for the past four years, stresses that in this process a





explains Kroll, the head of Cistercian's science department. "If they can learn to think in such practical terms, science will suddenly become a habit with endless possibilities." Boys need these opportunities to experiment using different tools and materials. "The messy, knock-about process is actually what is most important." Summer Programs are designed to provide the time, space and tools for a young person to focus attention on the "messiness" of learning, far more than can be squeezed into the regular school-year curriculum.



Similarly, campers are challenged during "Funday Friday" to delve further and creatively into any activity they've pursued that week. "Any kid would be excited if you handed him a balloon magically twisted into a pirate's sword. It is much more exciting, however, for a camper to take home *his own* balloon creation and tell his parents 'I made this!'" recalls Joseph Watt '17, one of the counselors at last summer's Rec Camp. He recalls campers getting carried away and creating a whole suit of armor with their twisty tie balloons!



The common denominator in all these activities is the focus on reinforcing the underlying skills and traits of character that can help these young men grow in confidence and succeed as students, regardless of where they attend school during the regular school year. In a single morning they might experience the thrill of skillfully launching water balloons, the challenge of learning or mastering chess, and just a little while later, collaborate with others to fashion Legos into a weapon powerful enough to breach the walls of their counselor's "castle."

The campers' joy and excitement in this particular approach to learning is most evident on their faces and in the enthusiasm of their voices as they talk about their various exploits at home. "This was a great camp for my son!" notes a mom of a fourth grader after his second year at camp. "He has made some great friends





from other schools. And, amazingly, he likes to share everything he learns during the day. Once, as we were driving home from a July 4th fireworks display after a long day at work, he asked, 'Can I sing to you in Latin?' How could I possibly

say no? He loves it more than any other camp he has ever attended!"

Another mom explains that it is rare for her and her husband to see their son so enthusiastic about learning. "What he enjoyed most was the high expectation, the camaraderie, and the strong Catholic presence. He was challenged to think and was never self-conscious about being intellectually curious."

An integral part of the success of Summer Programs can be attributed to the college-aged alumni whom Humphries hires to oversee and work with the boys. Over the past six years, he has invited 48 alumni back to campus as counselors, many of whom come back each summer during their breaks from college studies to work in the program.

"Mr. Humphries clearly seized upon the opportunity of further forming these young alumni," insists Heyne. "In his training sessions, he always sets a high bar, expecting them to go well beyond mere crowd control. They are encouraged to go a step further, using their own imaginations to make the commonplace exciting and motivating even the most resistant campers to enjoy a simple, non-technological game." In fact, for campers and counselors alike, the entire day is spent "unplugged." Ann Berard, mother of counselor Jake Berard '16 and camper Jamison '25, said, "I don't know which son got more out of the Summer Programs."

"The counselors' chief 'job,' " explains Humphries, "is to model the key virtues of attentiveness, following directions, sharing, getting along and patience." He also insists that the counselors familiarize themselves with all of the intricacies of the complex daily schedules, carrying walkie-talkies throughout the day to coordinate effectively. The counselors must also teach the value of mental toughness, perseverance and resilience



We strive for every boy who spends time on our campus to continue their studies with a little more grit, a little more imagination and creativity, and to leave with some great memories and an even more authentic love for learning.





in the face of obstacles—whether working through the logic behind a difficult puzzle or enduring the tedium of sawing the various pieces for their trebuchet. The effect the counselors can have, and have had, on their young charges is quite profound. A single, well-timed and spirited high-five can make a camper's entire week.



While Fr. Paul is very pleased with the success of the revamped Summer Programs, he is especially grateful for Humphries' effectiveness in reaching out to the young alumni. "Mr. Humphries is giving the alumni counselors a wonderful opportunity to give back to the School in perhaps the most substantial way, by helping form and encourage many other young people in the very same tradition in which they themselves have been formed. It is truly the School's motto, *Ardere et Lucere*, being realized so soon after graduation."



In addition to reaching out to students and young alumni to deepen their ties with the school, Summer Programs is a powerful way the school has of serving an even broader community.



"Some of our campers," Humphries observes, "may ultimately end up at Cistercian after a summer or two at camp, but many will continue their regular studies elsewhere. Regardless, we strive for every boy who spends time on our campus to continue their studies with a little more grit, a little more imagination and creativity, and to leave with some great memories and an even more authentic love for learning."

Ariel Santiago '25 recalls starting this

Sports Camp



school year with ten guys he already knew through Summer Programs. After three summers at Cistercian, he felt particularly comfortable and confident in the classroom. "I think it was one day during my second summer that I heard some of the older kids talking about their experiences at school, and I decided I wanted to go here too. I knew I wanted to do what they were doing."

Vincent Micheli '23, a six-year veteran of the summer programs, was among the very first group of third graders to come through Rec Camp. The youngest of four Cistercian brothers, Vincent grew up in and around Cistercian, so the appeal was to get a head start and to experience the school in a different way. Now in the Fourth Form, Vincent recalls unexpectedly drawing upon his summer rec experiences during his preparation for his Eagle Scout Award. "I took a course on leadership, and we learned the EDGE method (Educate/Demonstrate/Guide/Enable). Well, I just kept thinking about the Cistercian rec camp. That is exactly the way the counselors were teaching all summer. I watched them demonstrate all these principles every day, and now I'm trying to follow their lead to become a better leader myself."

The formation of young men, *Ardere et Lucere*, happens one young man at a time. Cistercian's Summer Program is making its mark in that same way. As camp concluded, one camper's dad wrote a note saying, "We're pleased that he had such fun. But we're even more grateful for the transformation your camp enabled. We don't know of any four-week period where he's matured so much." •



I watched them demonstrate all these principles every day, and now I'm trying to follow their lead to become a better leader myself.







Mr. Humphries is giving the alumni counselors a wonderful opportunity to give back to the School in perhaps the most substantial way, by helping form and encourage many other young people in the very same tradition in which they themselves have been formed.



From Zirc to Dallas and back again

Bob Greenfield

A voice rings out from the end of a long hall in the Cistercian Abbey of Zirc, Hungary: “Hello, Papa!”

The young monk’s greeting evokes a smile and a wave from Fr. Bernard Marton of Our Lady of Dallas Abbey. ‘Papa’ isn’t his official title in Zirc these days — Prior, the position just below Abbot, is — but it’s an apt greeting, and it describes what he’s been doing and will be doing for the next few years.

“It stirs my heart when I realize that I’m walking the same hallways that my brother (Fr. Henry) did when he was a novice here in 1943,” Fr. Bernard reflected before returning to Hungary in early September. “It’s just very meaningful for me as the youngest Hungarian to come to the United States and the first monk to be ordained into this Irving monastery, that I can now go back and help resurrect the Abbey of Zirc.” In a way, Fr. Bernard is a man of two countries. Although he acknowledges Texas as his home now, the pull of his homeland is undeniable. To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination last summer, he celebrated two Masses — one in Irving and the other in Hungary.

This isn’t the first comeback for the Zirc Abbey. In the middle ages, the monastery was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks, and more recently, its doors were shuttered and the monks cast out by the Communist regime in the 1950s. Recovering from the Communist suppression after 1989 was not as simple as finding the keys to the locked abbey doors, welcoming back the former residents and developing newfound supporters. Rejuvenating and revitalizing the ethos of a truly monastic community will only come about from a concerted and ongoing effort. In the end, what Fr. Bernard is working so hard to achieve is the restoration of the unique character and qualities that the Abbey of Zirc established in its founding constitution. That,



Fr. Bernard, after saying Mass at the Abbey Church of Zirc, holds a 19th century Russian icon he received.

it seems, will take some doing by many good people, and a large amount of God's grace.

In a very real way, Fr. Bernard's mission in Zirc is an act of giving back, or repaying part of the great debt owed to the Cistercians of Zirc. As Abbot Peter puts it: "It is a blessing that we are able, thanks to Fr. Bernard, to help our founding abbey."

Fortunately, the old saying 'Be careful what you wish for' didn't come to mind in 1996 when Fr. Bernard first broached the idea of becoming a temporary guest teacher in Hungary.

"The answer was 'no' because we needed Form Masters in Irving. At that time, we didn't have a lot of young men coming into the monastery, so I stayed," he said.

Of course, since fleeing the Communist crackdown in the mid-1950s at the ripe old age of 15, Fr. Bernard had returned to his homeland from time to time, visiting relatives and reclaiming some of his lost childhood. During some of these visits, he would lecture at one of the schools under the auspices of the Zirc Abbey, and he began to wonder whether he might be able to be a guest teacher for a semester at a time on a regular basis. Unfortunately, and not for the first time, circumstances in Irving in 1996 dictated that he had to postpone his dreams.

After graduating from Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas and attending the University of Dallas for a year, Anthony Gyuri Marton heard God calling him. He became a novice in the monastery where his brother, Fr. Henry, was a monk and was given his new religious name, Bernard.

"My major at UD was biology. I always wanted to be a biology teacher," Fr. Bernard explained. "Prior Anselm (who wouldn't be elected Abbot until 1963 when the monks' residence in Irving was officially made a Cistercian Abbey) thought that was a good idea because they needed a biology teacher in the prep school. He gave me five-plus years to complete my studies (the first five for theology and two more for biology). He wanted to accelerate the process, so I started looking for a school where

I could get my degree in biology."

At the University of Cambridge in England, he found a program where he could study the intersection of ethics, philosophy, theology and biology. Perfect, the young Br. Bernard thought. He applied, was accepted and began planning his move into St. Edmund's House. His excitement didn't last, though, and his dreams were abruptly diverted.

"Prior Anselm told me that I had to come home to the monastery from Rome where I had been working on my doctorate in sacred theology,

because the school needed Form Masters and someone to teach French. I had learned some French while I was in Switzerland, and I could work on my master's degree in French at SMU while I taught," he remembered.

Immediately, he plunged into teaching and attending classes at SMU twice a week. Despite a few hiccups along the way, he eventually earned his master's. The fall of 1968 marked the first of his six assignments as Form

Master (classes of 1977, 1984, 1987, 1994, 2004 and 2012). No one else has shepherded as many classes through the school. In the early days, he wore many hats, just like the other monks and lay staff.

"I was a bus driver and Director of Transportation, managing the other bus drivers and plotting our routes. I was janitor, coach, college counselor, Assistant Headmaster at one point, and Headmaster. And I was actually a Form Master and Headmaster for nine years at the same time. I wouldn't recommend that to anyone," he said.

He served as Headmaster for the school from 1981 until 1996, when Fr. Peter Verhalen assumed that leadership position. That's when Fr. Bernard first asked if he could periodically serve as a temporary teacher in Hungary. But this was before the great flowering of vocations to the monastery which began in 2003 when three young men would enter the novitiate every year for five consecutive years. Of those, 11 would go on to be ordained. However, these vocations would only bear fruit long after Fr. Bernard had completed his fifth rotation as Form Master with the class of 2004.

"I asked again at that time if I could go to Hungary, but the school needed me here. Of course, I was disappointed, but on the first day of school, one of my little First Formers, Santiago Martin Morales, ran up and hugged me tightly. He looked

Fr. Bernard's mission in Zirc is an act of giving back, or repaying part of the great debt owed to the Cistercians there.

up and said, 'I am so happy you will be my Form Master.' Later, at the first parent Form Meeting, I decided to share this story with the parents. And I felt that in all honesty I had to tell them about my disappointment. I told them how Santiago's hug had sparked something in my heart, and I promised them that their sons would have everything from me that I could possibly give. I'd give them everything I had."

Fr. Bernard positively beams when he recalls those eight years with the class of 2012. It was quite an exceptional class, he says. And much to his relief, Fr. Bernard wasn't asked to become the Form Master of the incoming class of 2020. Maybe, just maybe, he'd be able to spend more time in Hungary helping the mother Abbey of Zirc.

Finally, in January of 2015, the time was right. Fr. Bernard signed on for a full semester as something of a roving instructor in all five of the schools that the Zirc Abbey operates. While speaking in English, he taught French and Latin language classes and took responsibility for several Form Master periods. By the end of a busy semester, he was looking forward to returning home to Irving and teaching a few electives on a part-time basis over the next few years before settling into retirement. He was 74 at the time. Once again, though, his path was diverted by a greater need, "a dire need" according to Abbot Peter.

Fr. Bernard is helping the monks rebuild the community and establish a monastic way of life.

"At that time, the community of monks in Zirc was very fragile," Abbot Peter said. "The older monks were in their eighties, and under the Communist suppression they had been dispersed and had been living apart for 40 years. One drove a taxi, another was a tour guide in a national park of sorts, and others worked for the diocese. And then they suddenly asked to come back together to live in the abbey again. In addition to the older monks, there are now several monks in their forties, but

the challenge for all of them has been to rebuild the community and establish a monastic way of life. That's what Fr. Bernard is helping them with, and he's really the only one from our monastery who can do it. I'm optimistic for them, but they will need God's grace, as all of us always do."

The challenges faced by the monks of Zirc came to a head in January of 2016 when Abbot Sixtus' term expired. After his canonical



Abbot Bernát



Prior Bernát is installed as Abbot in the Abbey Church at Zirc in September, 2018.

Founding Fathers

Those Hungarian Cistercian monks who made the long and perilous journey from their home abbey in Zirc to Irving in the 1950s may not have mastered English by the time they set foot on these shores, but they knew their call. They had taken priestly vows, including a vow of stability, which was not so much to the Zirc Abbey as a place, as it was to a certain kind of monastic life, one that would ultimately begin to blossom even in the hot Texas sun.

Their leaders, including **Fr. Anselm Nagy**, first Abbot; **Fr. Damian Szödényi**, first Headmaster; **Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy**, teacher, Headmaster and eventually Abbot, set the Abbey of Our Lady of Dallas and the School on a course they have maintained to this day, one that has followed the compass established in Zirc more than 300 years ago.

There were great teachers, Form Masters and Headmasters among them, such as **Fr. Roch Kereszty**, **Fr. Julius Leloczky**, **Fr. Henry Marton** and his brother **Fr. Bernard Marton**, **Fr. Melchior Chladek**, **Fr. Matthew Kovács**, **Fr. Placid L. Csizmazia**, **Fr. Victor Falubíró**, **Fr. Thomas J. Fehér**, **Fr. Pascal Kis-Horváth**, **Fr. Aloysius Kimecz** and **Fr. Balthasar Szarka**, who have inspired generations of young men at the School.

Others from this group of founders, such as **Fr. Christopher Rábay**, **Fr. David Balás**, **Fr. Lambert Simon**, **Fr. Louis Lékai**, **Fr. Ralph March**, **Fr. Odo Egres**, **Fr. Leonard Barta**, **Fr. Rudolf Francis Zimányi**, **Fr. George S. Ferenczy**, **Fr. Moses Nagy**, **Fr. Benedict Monostori** and **Fr. Gilbert Hardy**, were instrumental in establishing the University of Dallas from its founding in 1956.

It is providential that the Cistercian monastery of Our Lady of Dallas is now in a position to help, in turn, revive its mother Abbey in Zirc. A visit to the crypt is a solemn reminder of the debt owed these courageous and holy men who left their beloved homeland to make Irving their lasting legacy and final resting place.

Cistercian Abbey in Zirc, 1912



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Resources from the archives

Several articles in the *Continuum* archives recount the perilous journey of the monks from Hungary to Texas, as well as the early days of the School.

Pioneer Days at Cistercian December 2002
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12-02.pdf>

Unlikely Texans December 2005
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12-05.pdf>

Out of the Ashes December 2006
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12-06.pdf>

Generation Gap Winter 2009
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12-09.pdf>

The Spirit of Merici Special Edition 2010
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/09-January-Merici.pdf>

Murky Water Spring 2015
<https://school.cistercian.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2015SpringContinuum.pdf>

The archives can be found at:
<https://school.cistercian.org/publications/continuum-archives/>

visitation and conversations with each monk, the Abbot General of the Cistercian Order decided the community was not ready to elect a new abbot. Instead of overseeing an election, he appointed Abbot Sixtus as prior administrator for three years. During that time, he declared that the monks should take advantage of outside help to rebuild their community and to prepare for an abbatial election. He also asked Fr. Bernard to remain in Hungary to join the team of advisors, which included the abbess of a Cistercian convent, Mother Olgi, and two lay consultants highly-experienced in community building. This group began meeting every month with the monks of Zirc.

"We got off to a rocky start," Fr. Bernard recalled. "After several contentious meetings, Abbot Sixtus asked for a vote of confidence and decided to resign when he did not win a clear majority. The Abbot General hurried back from Rome, and after three days of meetings with the monks, he decided to accept Abbot Sixtus' resignation."

The rejuvenation process was at a standstill. Without a shepherd, it would flounder. The Abbot General approached Fr. Bernard and asked him to take the position of Prior Regent even though he had already passed the mandatory retirement age for Cistercian superiors. After consulting with Abbot Peter, he declined the offer. The Abbot General then turned to one of the younger Hungarian monks, Fr. Bernát (Bernard in English), who agreed to serve the one-year term beginning in June 2017. The counselors, including Fr. Bernard, would continue their work as well.

It was a purgative year. The counselors met with the monks monthly, making recommendations and suggestions. Slowly, most of the monks bought into the process, but several could not and decided to leave the monastery to become diocesan priests.

The remaining monks could see the positive results of the community-building process and seriously applied themselves to it.

The end of Prior Bernát's one-year term marked yet another crossroads. The Abbot General returned for the possible election of a new abbot, and at this time, Prior Bernát was elected Abbot Bernát. All of the wounds had not yet healed, however, and the monks wanted to continue the community-building process. They also asked that Fr. Bernard stay on as Prior for three years. After making a few stipulations, such as two monthlong respites each year in Irving and the possibility of reviewing the arrangement at any time and for any reason, Fr. Bernard became Prior Bernard of the Zirc Abbey. He returned to Hungary in early September for the installation of the new abbot.

Fr. Bernard's Zirc story brings to mind the lines of Isaiah 6:8: Here I am... send me. "I say to myself, I am present (in Zirc), Lord. I am present in this place, to these people, to this monastery. I am available at all times. I am here to do what I can," he said.

That "being present" placed Fr. Bernard in the midst of a host of challenges, some mundane and others that go to the heart of what it means to live the life of a Cistercian monk in the Abbey of Zirc.

The practical, daily challenges had to be addressed first. Those concerns meant improving the quality of the meals served, maintaining the vast facilities of the abbey along with its schools and satellite priestly residences, and keeping a watchful eye over expenses and income. All of these and more contribute to the quality of life in the monastery. Fortunately, the strengths of the two Bernards, as Abbot and Prior, complement each other and make for an effective administrative



When he is back in the States for visits, Fr. Bernard can be found directing carpool and socializing with parents — always with his yardstick.

team. Where one might possess those practical, business-oriented skills that keep the abbey on an even keel, the other would excel at the softer human skills, the ready smile and encouraging words that lift the spirits of the monks. As a result, the abbey is simply a happier place these days.

Certainly, the practical challenges must be met, but Bernát and Bernard face other questions that will have an even greater bearing on the survival of the community. At the top of this list is vocations. The ranks of the monks in the abbey are thin. Currently, 15 monks have taken their vow of stability to the Cistercian community of Zirc, but only five live in the monastery. The rest are dispersed throughout the region at some of the five schools run by the community, at several parishes including the largest in Budapest, and at a university in Sweden where one monk is studying English. Monks are scarce in all of the abbey's schools, but in one, where no monk resides, the administration has placed a mannequin dressed in a Cistercian habit and scapular at the end of a hallway so the students will be able to recognize a Cistercian monk.

Still, there are glimmers of hope. In addition to a 22-year-old who recently indicated that he would like to become a novice, a high school student has expressed interest in entering the monastery. And a retreat for vocations was held in the abbey last August.

Even if the survival of the abbey were assured, recovering the vision of Cistercian monasticism embodied in the Zirc Abbey's constitution is another matter. In fact, Our Lady of Dallas Abbey is closer now to that vision than the Abbey of Zirc.

There is no cookie-cutter model that Cistercian monasteries follow. Each abbey has a certain degree of freedom to respond to historical demands and to implement its own vision. For example, the life of some

Cistercian monasteries is centered on living in community, focusing on prayer and manual labor such as farming. In contrast, the Zirc Abbey and several Austrian abbeys emphasize direct service to the church by educating the young and working in parishes.

"We inherited our monastic way of life from Zirc," Abbot Peter explained. "That life consists of three essential pillars: we are monks, which means we live and pray in community; we are priests, which means we engage in pastoral works; and we are teachers, which means we teach. We're very fortunate here in Irving that we have been able to actualize this ideal because we have the monastery where we live and pray together, and the prep school and a university where we teach, all in one place. The Abbey of Zirc is trying to recapture that ideal, but it's difficult because of the distances."

The monastery at Zirc has no school on its grounds and is at least two hours from the abbey's largest school in Budapest. Four of the monks live in the rectory of the largest parish in Budapest with 24,000 parishioners. Unlike the Irving monastery where the monks pray the Divine Office, celebrate Mass together, and share meals daily, the monks of the Zirc Abbey only come together in their monastery on special occasions.

"The monks of the Zirc Abbey have been running schools for more than 250 years," Fr. Bernard said. "That's not going to change, but now we're working really hard to combine all three aspects of our monastic life — teaching, pastoral work, and living and praying together as a community — as we have done in Dallas, but it's more difficult in Zirc because of the distances that separate the monks."

Returning the Zirc Abbey to its pre-Communist roots might be the greatest gift the Cistercians of Texas could ever give back to their mother abbey. •

We inherited our monastic way of life from Zirc.



Some of the Cistercians present for the Abbatial Benediction of Abbot Bernat of Zirc, Sept. 15, 2018

Sports

Another winning season for Hawks Football

Entering the 2018–19 football season with 16 seniors and several key returning underclassmen, the Cistercian Hawks had high hopes for an SPC Championship run. **Harry Crutcher '19, Jimmy Garda '19, Sam Clay '19** and **Campbell Keating '19** served as captains and were responsible for getting the team off to a strong start in their first game against reigning TAPPS 4A State Champion, Colleyville Covenant. The Hawks blistered the Cougars 72–13 while piling up 557 offensive yards. **Aidan Click '19** threw for 172 yards and two touchdowns; Clay caught five of those passes for 110 yards and two touchdowns; while Crutcher and Garda led the rushing attack with 358 yards.

The Colleyville Covenant game set the tone for the offense's entire season as the Hawks averaged 218 yards per game on the ground for 30 touchdowns. Garda took over the offense after Click was lost for the season with an injury in the second game of the year. Garda finished the season passing for 1,303 yards with nine touchdowns, rushing for 919 yards with 16 touchdowns, and racking up 72 receiving yards and a touchdown.

The ground game was not the only impressive unit for the Hawks. The defense

also had an outstanding year, allowing under 20 points per game and less than 60 yards rushing per game. Opponents had nowhere to run with **Alex Banul '20** making play after play on his way to a team leading 67 total tackles. Banul was given an enormous amount of support by classmate **Jack Schieferdecker '20**, who was second with 44 total tackles. **Robert Lahrman '19** made it difficult for opposing quarterbacks to feel comfortable in the pocket, compiling five sacks and 12 tackles for loss on the season. Offensive standout Garda also had four interceptions from his safety position.

The most crucial game of the year was at Hawk Field in week nine versus the Trinity Valley Trojans. Head Coach James Burk believes that this was the victory of the season, because the Hawks had not beaten Trinity Valley in ten years and this win kept the team's playoff hopes alive. Behind 237 yards on the ground, the Hawks dominated throughout, 34–15. As they had done all season, the offensive line of **Nate Sanchez '19, Matthew Wynne '19, Matt Donohoe '20**, Keating and **Aidan Chance '21** opened huge holes for their teammates to run freely and score at will.



Cistercian finished the season with another winning record under Coach Burk at 6–3. Although there was no appearance in the championship game, there were still many team and individual successes. Crutcher finished his career as the all-time leading receiver in school history with 2,123 yards and 23 touchdowns. He also finished his career second in all-time yards by a non-QB with 4,368 total yards and 53 total touchdowns. Clay finished the season with a top-ten total for an individual season in receiving yards with 1,318 yards. He also added ten touchdowns for the year. Crutcher, Garda, Donohoe and Clay were awarded All-SPC recognition for their efforts this season.

Cross Country mixes youth with experience as they gear up for SPC

Coach S.L. Roane, who just completed his fourth season as head coach of Cistercian's cross country team, believed his team's best-ever performance at the SPC Championship was going to come this fall. The early results confirmed what he had believed entering the season. The Hawks did not place lower than fifth in any meet they attended prior to their SPC North Zone Meet (there have been no fewer than 27 teams at any of these meets). Team captain **Max Rogers '19** served as the leader for this group with a strong work ethic that saw his times improve dramatically this season. **Alex Smith '21, Bradyn Smith '19, Luke Rakowitz '22, John LeSage '20, Nico Walz '20** and **Ethan Ramchandani '21** are other team members who Coach Roane has identified as leaders with a tireless work ethic.

The cross country team, behind this leadership, was victorious at the Waxahachie Woodhouse Invitational where they competed in the 4A division against 12 other schools. They also took second in the DBU Patriot/Orville Rogers XC Opener, finishing behind UIL 6A competitor, Frisco Independence.

These strong performances set the Hawks up nicely for the North Zone Meet in October. With all five of the top runners

under 18:35 on average, the Hawks were hitting their stride at the right time. Another top-five finish led by LeSage at the North Zone Meet gave this group growing confidence heading into the SPC Championships held across town at St. Mark's.

Coach Roane had seen each of his previous three teams improve their finish at



the SPC Championships, and this team was no different. LeSage was the top runner for the Hawks once again, leading the Hawks to a ninth place overall finish. The cross country program is certainly on the rise under Coach Roane, and several important members of the team will return next year. The Hawks will look to use this momentum to vault themselves even higher in the standings for 2019.

Class Reunions



45 Year Reunion '73



30 Year Reunion '88



20 Year Reunion '98



10 Year Reunion '08



40 Year Reunion '78 In May, the class successfully accomplished a \$40K challenge, which will support Fr. Roch's Scholarship Endowment Fund.



25 Year Reunion '93



15 Year Reunion '03



5 Year Reunion '13 with Fr. Paul at Golf Tournament

Boredom

a child's best friend

The other day I looked out the window to see my 10-year-old son Charlie lying on a flatbed trailer, doing absolutely nothing. He would swish a fly now and again, so I knew he was alive.



Smokey Briggs '84

It was a rare, cool, partly cloudy September day in West Texas with cottony clouds scudding across a crisp, blue sky.

Maybe he was watching the clouds, picking out

ships and dogs and such, or wondering whether those clouds looked the same to a T-Rex 60 million years ago.

Or maybe he was just bored.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are of the long, hot, sometimes boring, days of summer.

Looking back on those days, I have come to the conclusion that one thing I do not want my children to miss out on is a little boredom.

That probably sounds odd, especially in this age of helicopter parenting where parents seem to need to plan every waking moment of their children's days.

I cannot stand to be bored. Not for long. Boredom has always been a great motivator for me. Hand me a little bit of boredom and I will find a way not to be bored.

This was a lesson my grade school teachers learned the hard way, since I did not always relieve my boredom in a teacher-approved manner.

We lived on a small farm/cow-calf kind of place for much of my childhood. It was a wonderful place for a boy to live, filled with creeks, creatures, trees and fields.

Despite such a plethora of opportunities to not be bored, boredom did occasionally overtake me, especially in summer.

Early on I learned not to voice to any adults, "I'm bored."

Somehow grownups and I did

not agree on what made for a lack of boredom, and hoeing the garden or shoveling stalls were not my idea of good cures for boredom.

I cannot ever remember being bored for long. My memories are of long moments in a hayloft contemplating the dust filtering through the sunlight that blazed through the cracks, or sitting under the Black Walnut tree that shaded our back porch — moments that quickly ended in my finding something to do.

Something-to-do.

Those are magic words.

Something-to-do ranged from following a bumble bee back to its underground lair, to wandering down to the creek to build stick and mud replicas of Civil War ironclads and rehashing river battles between North and South.

Sometimes something-to-do was a book, read in the shade of that walnut tree. Other times it was a fort built on the banks of the creek, or a makeshift tree house. Once I took an old lawn mower apart.

My "somethings to do" were only limited by imagination, which was vast. (I won't go into the details of the bicycle/parachute/barn roof incident).

But, it was an imagination stimulated by the cattle prod of boredom.

I sometimes wonder what my memories of those long days of summer would be if I had grown up in the age of the smartphone.

While amazing devices, I think one of the unseen evils of smartphones is the virtual elimination of boredom.

I'm speculating here, because I do not use a smartphone.

Observing smartphone users, it appears that any moments of time people might have to be "bored" are completely mitigated by staring into a wee-small screen looking at jokes and cartoons, or typing to their friends with their thumbs.

More and more I see this happening with children as well.

What if, I wonder, rather than having to

use my imagination and the real world to relieve my boredom, I could have simply gazed into an electronic thing and been, "entertained," for hours on end.

I know the electronic world is entertaining. I go there myself some days on my laptop, usually with the intent of acquiring serious information, but far too often finding I have spent the past several hours allowing myself to be entertained.

Generally, I'm not looking at captioned pictures of cats, reading jokes or carrying on long conversations via email, and certainly I cannot carry my laptop about with me as I sojourn about my world.

More, I'm a grownup, much more capable of making disciplined, rational choices than I was when I was 10 or 11 or 12 (or 20).

What childhood memories would I possess had such a boredom-dissipating device always been at hand?

What forts would never have been built, what adventures not had, what games not played, what things not imagined? What habits not developed?

How would my mind have developed? Looking back, most of the joy I have found on this earth flowed from my active participation — not passively watching something.

Who would I be today without that foundation of actively relieving my own boredom by finding something to do through my childhood — a habit that has continued throughout my life.

Not the same me, I am fairly sure.

Certainly my memories of childhood would be vastly different, and I doubt for the better.

I glanced out the window maybe 20 minutes later. The flatbed trailer was empty. Off to the left I spied Charlie, armed with homemade shield and sword, trading blows with mesquite bush warriors I suspect were Persians, given his recent reading of a child's version of the Greeks at Thermopylae.

So, I will endeavor to make sure that Charlie has plenty of opportunities for the cattle prod of boredom to goad his imagination and stir him to actively dispel that boredom on his own.

There will be plenty of time to passively look at captioned cat pictures and read jokes when age has relegated him to a rocking chair, and his mind is full of memories of the active life he imagined, and then lived. •

Community Calendar

December 21
Alumni/Alumni Parent Christmas Party

January 19
Jim & Lynn Moroney Award Dinner honoring Luis Barbero '91

January 26 and February 2
Admissions Testing

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, Texas 75039

Turn Everything into a Blessing

In many primitive tribes, ancient myths and cultures, we find the story of humankind's original happiness, the Golden Age, when man was close to the god(s), did not have to die and lived in peace with the animals. Christians know



Fr. Roch Kereszty

from the Bible that God has created man and woman for Paradise, for a blessed, happy existence: friend of God and steward over nature. The first conscious sin, however, resulting in an avalanche of individual and corporate moral evil, brought about suffering and death, the foretaste of eternal death.

God, however, did not abandon us, but rather met us where we felt most abandoned, in our suffering and dying. The Son of God dying with us (crucified along with two criminals who represent our whole fallen human race) showed us how to turn the road to hell into a road to heaven. If we suffer and die with Christ, sharing in his love and trust of God, then our bodily death will open up for us the door to eternal life, to the very joy of the Son of God.

Most of us know all this intellectually, yet often our prayer life centers on begging for favors we need here on earth. We dream about 'living happily ever after.' This in itself is quite natural: God is our

Father and he loves if his children ask him, even for foolish things. And sometimes he fulfills even our most childish desires. No one can outdo him in generosity and tender love. But obviously he gives us only good things — 'eggs rather than scorpions,' 'a fish rather than a snake,' even if we are blind to see the difference at all. All that he gives, every detail he arranges in our lives, is so that we may turn it into a blessing which leads us closer to our final goal, communion with God.

A crisis occurs, however, when we evaluate what is happening to us only from the narrow and uncertain perspective of our lives on earth. Then some of us might stop to pray: "God ignored all my pleas. If he does not care about me, why should I waste my time with prayer? He might not even exist." We can respond: "In fact, your God does not exist. You treated God as your own puppet. You tried to control him and he ignored you. 'Your ways are not my ways and your thoughts are not my thoughts' — says the living God. Throw out the idol you have made for yourself so that the true God may enter your heart."

Christian faith opens up our horizon to the infinite dimensions of God's design and of our vocation to eternal life. In that light everything is a potential blessing, an occasion of grace, whether a joyful or sorrowful event, gain or loss, failure or success, health or illness. He invites us to unite our life, our joys and sufferings with

the joys and sufferings of the Son of God. We seek healing, but we all must eventually endure pain out of love for God, and we offer especially the pain caused by other human beings for their change of heart. Feelings of anger, resentment and hopelessness might still irritate us for a while but by short prayers, no longer at times than a sigh, we take out the venom of our negative emotions and so turn the curse into a grace. God can use even the memory of our repented sins for healing, for the deepening of our sorrow and of our joy because we have experienced his infinite mercy.

The key, then, for turning everything in our lives into a blessing is to adopt the perspective of God who alone knows what we need if we are to become ready for true life. •

I must add a word about the current crisis in the Church. All of us who love the Church because it is the Body of Christ and who know that, according to St. Bernard, wounding his ecclesial Body hurts him more than the sufferings of his personal Body, are asking 'what we can we do in this grave crisis?' I found the videos of Bishop Barron and a part of our Fr. John's August 18 sermon very helpful (found under Sermons on Abbey website: <https://www.cistercian.org/abbey/sermons/br-john.html>). Here is the link to Bishop Barron's Resources on the Sexual Abuse Crisis | Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/bishop-barrons...on...sexual-abuse.../5879/>

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