For family, friends, & alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CONTINUUM

Spring 2019

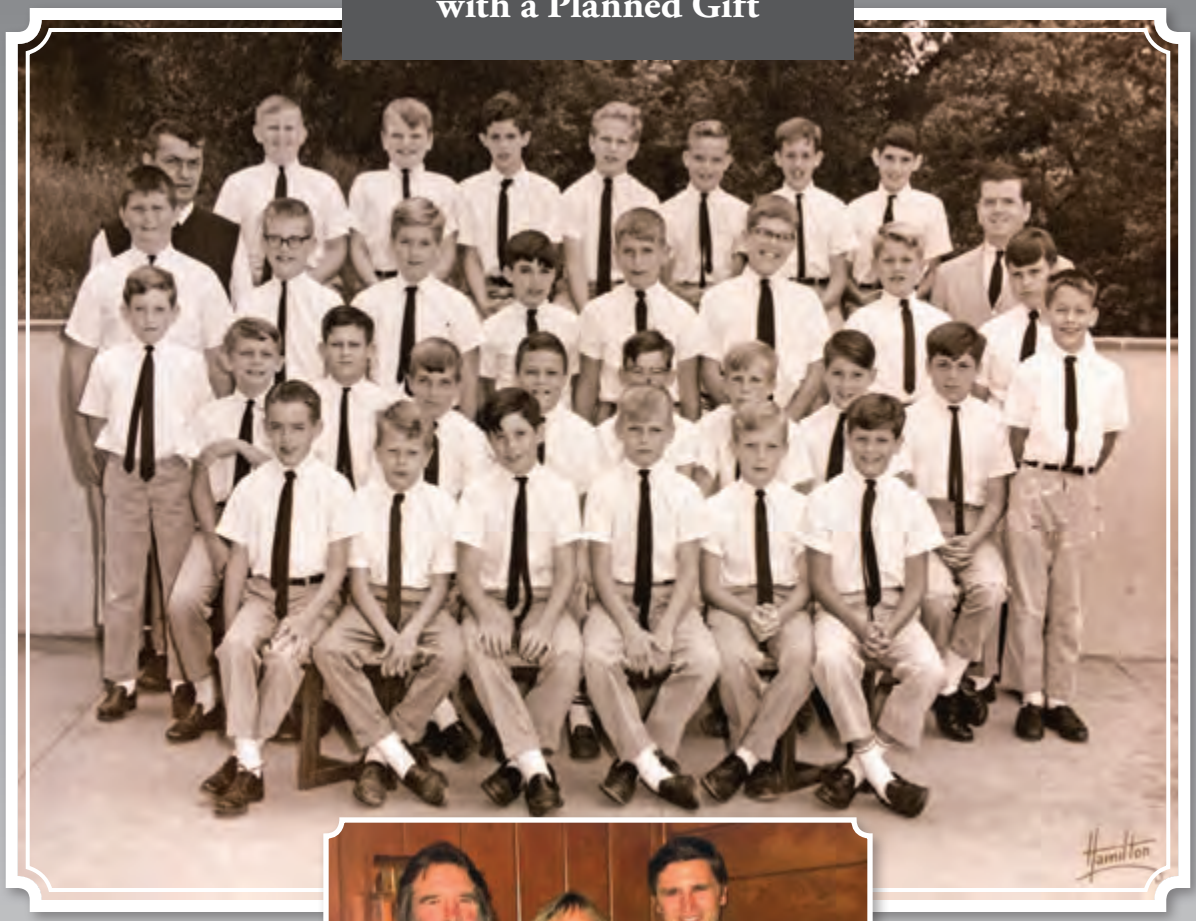
50 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

Some Things Change Here, Others Endure

Bonds of Friendship

Learning the Lessons of Unconditional Love in the Class of 2019

Remembering Cistercian with a Planned Gift



Class of '73

Mike, Kathleen, Joey and Molly McGehee

Because of what I received, I give.

There is no way to express my gratitude for the invaluable lessons I was taught at great pains by the fine monks.

I hope they can continue to provide this experience for all those lives they touch.

—Michael F. McGehee '73

MEMORARE SOCIETY

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CONTINUUM

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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

Cistercian's Riches, Both Old and New

"Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old." (Matt. 13:52)

Our feature article on this year's graduating class, Cistercian's 50th, and the accompanying letter by **Charlie Williams '70**, representing our original graduating class, remind me of this wonderful passage of Scripture where Jesus describes the riches, both old and new, that one can draw from the common storehouse of our shared and ongoing tradition.

Fr. Paul McCormick

The newness of riches is manifest throughout Dr. Tom Pruit's masterful description of the unique journey of the Class of 2019, shepherded by a youthful, first-time Form Master, Fr. Ambrose Strong, who seemed to mature right alongside his boys. Yet, as Williams aptly notes, despite even the span of five decades, there remains the remarkable riches of stability "with the people, traditions, attitudes, tough academics, strong athletics and an unbreakable Cistercian pride and spirit" that characterize this class as much as it did his own and, for that matter, all those in between.

In this issue's always humorous and poignant column, *Afterthoughts,* **Jess Clay '13** captures, as only he can, how this profound awareness of shared riches, old and new, bubbled to the surface in lively conversation with fellow "Texpatriates" from four different decades, with whom Erin Hart and I gathered recently in Boston.

Finally, in addition to the always popular class notes and photos, this issue concludes with sage advice from **Fr. Roch**, who reminds us that faith in Christ "opens up the door to the infinite dimensions of God's world."

May you and your families enjoy a blessed coming summer as you too bring forth and enjoy many riches, old and new, from the storehouse of God's mercy.

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News & Notes

Confirmation Sunday

Fr. Abbot Peter Verhalen '73 with the students of Form IV on Confirmation Sunday in late March.

Fr. Lawrence '01 Earns his PhD in Math

While wearing many hats during his tenure as Form Master for the Class of 2021, **Fr. Lawrence Brophy '01** has also been hard at work earning a PhD in mathematics at UNT. This spring, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on 'Multivariate Prophet Inequalities,' earning high praise from the committee as a true expert on the topic.

Reflections Wins Gold Crown — Again!

Reflections, Cistercian's literary magazine, earned the prestigious Columbia Scholastic Press Association's Gold Crown Award, one of only ten in the nation to do so. This is the seventh win for the School! The editors were **Evan Bird '18** and **Matthew Dorn '18**, with **Fr. Stephen Gregg '01** serving as sponsor. "I'm very happy that *Reflections* was recognized," Dorn reflected, "but this award really belongs to all the students who allowed us to include their art and writing. Keep making beautiful things!"

Fr. Stephen Gregg '01

Dr. Mark Shrime '92 Speaks to this Year's Graduates

At this year's Commencement, alum **Mark Shrime '92**, MD, MPH, PhD, FACS, addressed the Class of 2019, Cistercian's 50th graduating class. Recently named Director for the Center for Global Surgery Evaluation at Harvard Medical School, Shrime spent the current academic year as a visiting professor at Princeton's Center for Health and Wellbeing, his alma mater. Shrime has garnered national media attention for his work with Mercy Ships, an organization that uses hospital ships to bring lifesaving medical treatment to people in need, as well as for garnering a spot on *American Ninja Warrior.* Bob Haaser, Shrime's Form Master, was thrilled to have one of his own give the commencement address, especially in his own 50th year of teaching at Cistercian and on the very night of his 70th birthday!

Dr. Mark Shrime '92

Robotics Finishes Strong in their Third Year

Under the direction of **Fr. Mark Ripperger**, Cistercian's Robotics Team, Fusion Corps, continued to perform very well in their third year of competition. They took first place in the North Texas tournament and later placed eleventh in state competition, earning an opportunity to compete in the world competition in Houston. While there, they competed against hundreds of teams from other countries and from across the United States, placing ninth in their division and making it all the way into the semifinal round. Still a very young team, they are ranked #36 in the nation.

Barbero is the 2019 Jim & Lynn Moroney Award Recipient

In January, **Luis Barbero '91** was honored as this year's Jim & Lynn Moroney Award recipient. Introduced by longtime friend and classmate, **George Cruz '91**, Luis's unique personal story and astounding degree of generous and selfless service to Cistercian and countless other organizations helped make for a wonderfully memorable and inspiring evening.

Jimmy Garda '19

Hillary Award

Jimmy Garda '19 was presented with the 2019 Tom Hillary Award at the Athletic Banquet on May 10. Voted on by the coaching staff, this honor is given to a senior who plays multiple sports at a high level with "sportsmanship, leadership, and character" while maintaining "a high level of achievement." Coach James Burk notes that "despite his stature and size...Jimmy is one of the toughest, most durable athletes I have ever coached."

MLK Day of Service

For the third year, Upper School students rolled up their sleeves for a Day of Service to honor Martin Luther King Jr. In the morning, Forms V, VI and VII set a record packing 41,256 meals for Feed My Starving Children while Form VIII worked hard at the North Texas Food Bank. Later that afternoon, students continued their service through various local philanthropies, including Hope Supply Co., Dallas Ramps, Spokes for Folks, Habitat for Humanity and St. Vincent de Paul.

Odeyingbo Heading to the NFL

Daré Odeyingbo '15 became the first Cistercian graduate ever to play professional football for the NFL when he recently signed a contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers! A standout running back and defensive end at Cistercian, Odeyingbo played four years at Vanderbilt University in the Southeastern Conference where he recorded 10.5 tackles for loss and 3.5 sacks in one of the toughest college football conferences in the country.

Deacon Eduardo Barajas Fills Chaplain's Role for Texas History Trip

The annual Texas History Trip is always the biggest highlight of the school year for Form III. Typically, a monk accompanies the boys, either as form master or history teacher. This year, however, lay people filled both of those spots for the first time since 2006. Form Master Gary Nied took advantage of this opportunity by inviting a third form father, Deacon Eduardo Barajas, to accompany the class and celebrate the liturgy. "Since the beginning of the church, deacons have had a special role in holding and communicating the mystery of the faith," said Mr. Nied. "It is really wonderful that Deacon Barajas had an opportunity to explain his vocation to the boys." In addition to serving as a chaperone, Deacon Barajas celebrated a Communion Service with the class at Mission San Jose in San Antonio.

Crypt Design Honored

At the recent AIA Dallas Chapter Design Awards, alum architect **Gary Cunningham '72** received the Honor Award for his design of the Abbey Crypt. The crypt was among nine projects recognized from the 72 that were submitted. Thank you, Gary, for this beautiful addition to the Abbey Church!

News & Notes

Argentinian Student Exchange Program Offers Students Different Perspectives

In Cistercian's third year to participate in the program, two Argentinian students joined **Ankit Lulla '21** and **Thomas Leahy '21** and the sophomore class for nearly a month of classes and various outside activities in February. Ankit and Thomas will reciprocate with a visit to Argentina in June. "I am very excited to spend a month abroad," said Leahy, "so I can improve my Spanish skills and meet people from another culture."

Catholic Foundation Awards Grant for Audio-Visual Upgrades

Cistercian received a $25,000 grant from The Catholic Foundation to update its AV system by installing laser projectors in each Middle School classroom over Christmas Break to go along with those already in place in the Upper School. Veteran art history teacher **Peter Saliga** noted, "The closest thing I have to jumping into a time machine with my students is engaging the art and music of generations through crisp, colorful, and larger-than-life images of the great works of artists like Caravaggio and Delacroix, or tuning in to watch world-class performers render Revolutionary composers like Berlioz or Beethoven real and immediate."

Law and Finance Groups Host Happy Hour and Honor Greg Novinski '82

At a spring happy hour held at the Old Monk, a number of alumni involved in law and finance surprised **Greg Novinski '82** by honoring him as the very first recipient of the "G. Novinski CPS Attorney Alumni Award" for his help in establishing this alumni organization as well as for his continued support of the program. In addition to offering networking and mentoring opportunities for fellow alums, this group will teach a joint law and finance elective again next year to Cistercian upper school students.

Junior Chosen for Medical Mission Trip to Sierra Leone

Ethan Barhydt '20 was chosen for a summer internship at Sierra Leone's Southern Eye Institute where he will work with **Tom Lewis '73** and his wife, Dr. Cathy Schanzer. The Institute provides free services ranging from diagnostic examinations and eyeglasses to cataract surgery. "I'm very grateful to the Southern Eye Institute for giving me this opportunity to participate in the mission trip," Barhydt said, "and I look forward to all the experiences I'll have and the friendships I'll make."

Alumnus Sam Meier '99 Shares Insights with Students

Cistercian alum **Sam Meier '99** returned to campus to dialogue with Form III-VIII students about the need to protect themselves and their future marriages from the dangers of pornography addiction. An experienced counselor on this topic, Meier has been featured on EWTN's *Life on the Rock, Our Sunday Visitor* and the *National Catholic Register.* He and his team are based in the Diocese of Kansas City and have worked with youth since 2007.

Feed My Starving Children Campus Event for Students and Alumni

Community Service sponsors, Fr. John Bayer and Tara Kennedy, capitalized on enthusiasm from the MLK Day of Service by arranging for two additional Feed My Starving Children events on campus in March, adding another 102,000 filled, boxed, and loaded food packages for hungry children throughout the world. Current middle and upper school students and their families were joined by a number of alumni families in what Fr. John said was one of the largest community service events ever held on the Cistercian campus.

College Counseling Conducts Workshop and Connects with Alumni

Chris Blackwell, Director of College Counseling, arranged a college interview practice day for seniors to meet with a handful of professional alumni and alumni parents. "The parents asked me thought-provoking questions," said **John Paul Spak '19**, "that helped with my admission interviews." Mr. Blackwell has also been visiting colleges across the country and caught up with two of our alumni studying currently at the Naval Academy, **Oscar Parmenter '17** and **Michael Garnett '18**.

Display Promotes Faith and Science

Cistercian's new solar panel display in the Science Building educates students about the technological processes behind the solar panels added last year while also underscoring, with references to both Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis, the complementary character of science and faith properly pursued as well as responsible environmental stewardship.

Cistercian's Pro-Life Club Attends March in D.C.

An impressive Cistercian contingent of 31 Upper School students and 15 chaperones headed to Washington D.C. in January for the annual National March for Life. Highlights of the trip included the Pro-Life Vigil Mass celebrated at the National Basilica, the rally on the National Mall, and the march to the Supreme Court.

Middle School's *Imagine* Performance

Middle school students fit their parts perfectly in this year's musical, *Imagine.* Director Seth Magill and the parent volunteers also did a tremendous job.

Third Annual Senior Seminar Night Wows

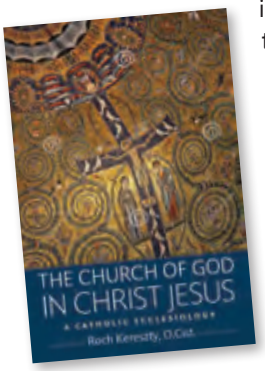
On April 24, as the culmination of the high school experience, Cistercian invited a number of local university professors and other academic professionals to campus — to listen, to question and to critique the various research projects and presentations of our seniors. Students presented on a wide variety of high-level topics from Albert Camus to Milton Friedman; from Socrates to Darwin; and from a study of various Neurodegenerative Diseases to the intricacies of 3D printing and computer construction. Seniors who had worked with the language faculty throughout the year made their presentations and answered questions exclusively in French or Spanish.

Archivist Celebrates 80th Birthday

Mr. Rodney Walter is busy archiving photos in the School's library. He took a break from his work to celebrate his 80th birthday in late November.

Fr. Roch Publishes Latest Book

Fr. Roch recently published *The Church of God In Christ Jesus: A Catholic Ecclesiology*, a textbook on the theology of the Church. Instead of looking at the Church merely as an institution, he focuses on the reality of the Church as the 'People of God.' Fr. Roch also discusses the "relationship of the Catholic Church to other Christian churches and ecclesial communities." In praising Fr. Roch's "accessible, straightforward prose," John C. Cavadini, a Professor at Notre Dame, adds that this book "will serve as an excellent textbook in undergraduate and graduate classes for years to come."



Bonds of Friendship

Learning the Lessons of Unconditional Love in the Class of 2019

Dr. Tom Pruit
Photos by Form VIII parents

"If you do *anything* to get in trouble with him, you'll be in a lot *more* trouble at home!" said Nancy Erickson to her son Jon '12, then a Fourth Former in Br. Ambrose Strong's religion class. Jon and Br. Ambrose were cousins, and this was Br. Ambrose's first teaching assignment in the prep school. Jon recalls how, during one class in that first semester, the rest of the class inched forward until they had the young monk completely surrounded, thus providing him, Jon remembers with a grin, with his first Cistercian "circle of friends."

Looking back, it was the first of many such circles of friends. "I feel my story is one written in the heavens, from the very beginning growing up in Fort Worth to my entrance into the monastery. I am doing, I think, what I was created to do." At the heart of that deep conviction of providential guidance is his reliance on the power of friendship, and his trust in the institutions which helped shape those friendships. "I have become a better person through the institutions that have nurtured me—from the care lavished on me by my teachers and mentors to the delight and comfort I have taken in my friends."

Two of those friends, Fr. Thomas Esposito and Michael Humphries, attended UD with Ambrose, and went abroad with him for the UD Rome semester. They recall endless pranks, mostly played on Ambrose rather than by him, as well as a long list of misadventures, particularly during the pilgrimage they, along with a couple of other friends, took before the start of the Rome semester.

Out of those experiences a bond of friendship formed which continues undiminished to this day. "One of the great delights of working at Cistercian has been the continuance of that friendship as each of us pursues his own path at the school and abbey. It remains a strength for each of us," Humphries observed at the end of a conversation in which he and Fr. Thomas reminisced about a friendship they clearly relished.

Ambrose's lighthearted, easy-going manner and his gift for making connections would become an essential element of his success as a Form Master. Yet, the graces of his priesthood gave a deeper purpose to that natural ease with people, graces which he became aware of in large part due to the patient mentoring of then Abbot Denis, who, during Ambrose's years at UD, would speak with him after Mass on Sundays. These informal chats gradually grew in length and intensity. "Looking back on my 'chats' with Fr. Denis, I can see now that what I was getting was a four-year course in spiritual direction. The wisdom in those talks continues to this day to be a blessing for me."

His discernment of a priestly vocation was followed by the realization that he was also being called to the life of a monk rather than that of a diocesan priest. "The thought of having a community of brothers with whom I shared a common life had a genuine appeal. I saw my life as a priest becoming more complete in a monastic setting." However, he

Celebrating Fr. Ambrose's 30th birthday during Form II and affectionately giving him the nickname "Frambrose."

had given no thought to that other important aspect of Cistercian life, that of teaching. "Even though it may seem hard to believe, teaching was not even on my radar. It wasn't until I had my first real taste of life as a classroom teacher that I decided, not only that I enjoyed it, but that I had a real knack for doing it." Perhaps as a special bonus, it just so happened that the first two classes he was assigned to teach were those of his two Erickson cousins, Jon '12 and Robert '14. That experience simply reinforced on another level the strong familial sense which characterized his own life in the monastery almost from the beginning.

The Class of 2019 has a reputation for being fun-loving, and that fun often took the form of some sort of competitive sport. When asked where he thought that playfully competitive edge came from, David Navarro reflected that, besides the obvious fact that they are boys in an all-boys school, their special blend of playfulness and competition could, in part at least, be traced back to their Form Master. "In First and Second Form we played soccer in a YMCA league, and Fr. Ambrose would come out to our practices, but not just to watch. He played and he played to win; there was no easing up. He wanted us to toughen up—and eventually we did." John Garda, father of Jack '15, Danny '17, Jimmy '19, and Patrick '24, recalls his first real encounter with Fr. Ambrose. He invited the young monk out for lunch and a golf game. Not sure what he might be able to talk about or how much instruction he might have to offer on his golf game, he was astounded by the ease and range of his conversation, and even more astounded by his golf game. "He didn't warm up, hit any practice balls or use the putting green, but marched out and shot a 39 on the front nine and an 81 overall. Jimmy was in awe, and so was I. And I still am—for lots more reasons than just his golf game!"

The ever-competitive Fr. Ambrose takes the lead ahead of Sam Clay, Patrick Dundon and Campbell Keating.

The class went on to become one of the most athletically accomplished classes in recent memory, with a high percentage of the class playing a wide variety of varsity sports, but especially football, basketball and soccer. James Burk, the head football coach, remarked that "this class was an athletically strong class to start with, and playing together since freshman year gave them the experience going into senior year that helped them exceed their physical gifts; the team, with these guys, was greater than the sum of its parts." J. P. Walsh, the head soccer coach, observed further that they were passionate. "These guys never shied away from being in charge; they were always willing to take ownership of their play on the field. And they were tough. They fought through injuries, took hits and bounced right back up."

Yet, when asked if he thought he, or anyone else in this athletically talented class, derived his identity from sports, Harry Crutcher, who plans to play football next fall for Washington and Lee University, replied without hesitation. "Nobody in the class gets his identity from sports, but sports has allowed many of us to grow close, and that bond takes us way beyond sports. Hopefully, sports has helped make us into better people." Crutcher also pointed back, for at least some of their athletic success, to their Form Master. "He was always egging us on. When he played with us during our Y League basketball practices, he was, at least when we were in fifth and sixth grade, the best player on the court—and he wanted us to know it. But all that cockiness had a purpose; he wanted us to toughen up, to get better, and to do it while we were all having fun. There was always a lot of laughter."

Their special blend of playfulness and competition could, in part at least, be traced back to their Form Master.

Coach Burk perhaps said best what all the coaches observed about the spirit of this class. "These guys really love one another; they embrace that deep commitment fully. Their mutual respect creates a culture where they both hold each other up and hold each other accountable. That bond made them a very special group to coach." Jack Dorn, the assistant varsity basketball coach, also pointed out that

he never saw any divisions among them. "There was no ostracism expressed toward any player. They accepted each other's faults and quirks. Don't get me wrong—they were always very competitive and enjoyed making fun of one another, but there was never any malice. They really cared for one another."

"Go out and play."

There was, it seems, a method in Ambrose's madness. Though he could not have known how important that quality of 'play with a purpose' was going to be in the life of his Form, he did see it as an important means for bringing the Form together in those early years. But the role it would play in providing both a momentary escape from, and more importantly, a valuable source of healing for the tragedies which were to come, was significant.

"What was all the sacrifice for? Why did we do all that work?" was the cry echoing through the senior hall when the first wave of early college admission decisions were announced. Though the students who had applied to a more modest list of schools were generally pleased, those who had applied to the most competitive universities were not. The boys could not know at that point that during a Form Master's meeting later in the spring acceptances to Stanford, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, UPenn, MIT and Cornell, among others, would be celebrated. But at that point in the fall there were few outright acceptances, some denials, more deferrals, and a lot of anger—at the process and at the school. Some in the class felt betrayed. Matthew Sawtelle saw the anger as the result of "the expectation that the decisions would be merit-based—and obviously we had worked hard and were deserving so the thinking went that if there was failure, the fault must lie somewhere outside us." David Navarro added that "we went into the process somewhat blind, and we couldn't see that we all had other really good options. We only came to see that later." Tom Worth saw it more dramatically. "When we didn't get in to our first choice schools, we asked 'What do we have left?' and the answer, which we had fallen back on since about sophomore year, was that 'at least we have each other.'"

They had begun to see the future and knew that these guys would always be a part of it.

Their definition of success, by their own admission, proved too narrow, though it took much of the winter and early spring to broaden its scope from "most highly ranked" to "best fit." By the first of April, most of the final decisions had come out, and even by the narrower definition of success, the class had done well. However, in one remarkable Form Master meeting in early April, each member of the class stood up and announced where he had been accepted and where he thought he would end up. Each decision was celebrated with genuine enthusiasm by everyone else in the room; the feeling of deep mutual respect was palpable. "It was clear that we had turned a corner. The 'all is lost' attitude of the fall had been replaced with a genuine joy in each other's success in finding colleges to which we felt suited," Worth noted, and added that the fall back affirmation that 'we have each other' seemed to have taken on new meaning, or at least a new context. "We had come to accept that the word 'deserve' and the word 'college admission' shouldn't be uttered in the same sentence." Sawtelle weighed in on this remarkable Form Master's meeting as well. Admitting that it is easier to be congratulatory when you had as much success as they finally did have, he also thought that the focus had shifted. "Maybe where you went didn't matter so much; all the guys in that room that day felt that everybody could flourish wherever they ended up going." Now they seemed to "have each other" in a way that went beyond the boundaries of the school; they had begun to see the future and knew that these guys would always be part of it.

Tragedy brought out another side of the young priest—and of his Form.

His easy laughter is infectious; wherever two or three seniors are gathered, his laughter seems to follow. As First Formers they hung from his habit, and now they hang out in his office or cluster around him in the classroom. Whatever fears the parents may have had concerning his youth and inexperience were soon allayed by the powerful effect of his presence. "By a kind of sneaky intuition or osmosis, Fr. Ambrose seems to know what state we are in, and his constant good example we just kind of take for granted," said one member of the class. "He just gets us." The fact that he was so young when he started with the Form gave him the advantage, when he chose to use it, of being "a member of the class." One father noted that during those first few years "he acted more like the big brother who has had to step into the role of the father." He preferred the role of big brother, but learned quickly how to play the other role effectively as well.

Jack O'Neil, left, and Max Rogers carry the injured Samuel Hernandez across the finish line, who also had to be carried to his car.

Tragedy brought out another side of the young priest—and of his Form. "My dad was my superhero, and no one could replace him, but Fr. Ambrose, with his strong, consistent presence helped me through some tough times," recalled Jonny De La Cruz, who lost his father in eighth grade. "I will always remember working with him in the abbey courtyard as a First Former; his easy manner made my adjustment to my new school so much less stressful. Later, his serious conversations with us to stay firm in our faith—and then urging us to go out and play—always helped me keep my perspective. Like a good father he always has a way of lifting your spirits when you need it most."

On March 23 of this year, Eric Easley, in the company not only of his family, Scout troop and leadership, but also of Fr. Ambrose, Fr. Paul, Fr. Augustine, and a number of his Cistercian classmates, celebrated his attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout. It was an accomplishment which gave him a satisfaction that went far beyond Scouting. "My dad was the whole reason I got into Scouting. He went on every campout and attended every activity, and his constant guidance kept me going through the whole advancement process. Becoming an Eagle Scout means a lot more to me than just achieving the highest rank in Scouting. It is a very concrete way I have of honoring my dad, and that makes me very happy."

"The whole reason I applied to Cistercian was because, after my father's passing, my mother wanted to place me in a school environment in which there was a strong male presence," recalled Jack Corrigan. "Having a single father figure, who was called the Form Master, a man who would follow my growth over the entire eight years, was, I think, the most important factor in her choice of Cistercian. And then to be surrounded by a lot of other male role models who would be my teachers and coaches gave my mom even more reason to like the place." Though no one could replace Jack's father in his life, there were others who stepped forward to act as effective substitutes, and Jack admits, even on the tough days, that he has benefitted greatly from his mother's foresight.

The Junior Retreat gave the whole Form a chance to do some serious reflection together on the losses which had been visited upon them. The heavy burden felt by those five families was also felt by the whole Form, and their keen awareness of suffering taught them an important lesson, more important, in fact, than anything they were learning in the classroom. "These incredibly difficult tragedies did not scar the class or erase our personality; they just kind of woke us up," remarked Jack O'Neil. "We were already a pretty cohesive group of guys, but we operated most of the time at school in a jovial and superficial way. We suddenly realized that what had happened to our friends could happen to any of us. We were all in this together." This brought about a desire to level the playing field, to put everyone on an equal footing. "We wanted to get things back to normal as quickly as possible for these guys. The

last thing any of them wanted was to be given special treatment, to be treated like a china doll." They were able to talk about this special aspect of their class freely at the overnight retreat, and its emotional impact left them resolved to become even more committed to one another.

Following his father's death on New Year's Day of his junior year, no one expected Sam Hernandez to come to any of the remaining soccer practices over Christmas break. The team would just have to find a way to beat a very tough Oakridge team without him. Yet, Sam knew the game's importance for their season, and when he unexpectedly showed up ready to play, his courage and devotion to the team energized everyone. As a starting defenseman, Sam played through the first half as well as he'd played all year. But during the team huddle at halftime he glanced up into the stands, and despite all the cheering from many of his classmates and his entire family, the finality of his father's death suddenly overwhelmed him. The second half started without him, and though he was sorely missed on the field, Coach Walsh put no pressure on him to return. As Coach Capasso sat with him, offering what comfort he could, he finally gained control of his emotions, took a deep breath, stretched, and returned to play out the remainder of the game, helping the Hawks win the victory. "I don't know how Sam did it," Capasso said after the game, "but I watched him become a man that night right before my eyes."

Form III soccer team

Once you've grieved with a classmate over the death of his father not once but three times... they become your brothers.

For the five boys who lost their dads, nothing will really ever be the same "normal" they once knew, but they can at least rest in the assurance that their classmates have their back and work to reinforce the idea that they are "all in" for each other. James Toliver observed that in Middle School the talk about "the Cistercian brotherhood" started, but he didn't really believe it. "I mean, these guys in my class were my friends, I guess, but I certainly didn't consider them my brothers. But once you've grieved with a classmate over the death of his father, and not once but three times, then, yes, they become your brothers. The next time it might be me that needs them."

One teacher remarked that there didn't seem to be any serious cliques in the Form, and that, for all their teachers' complaints that they were not particularly diligent in reading their assignments and taking notes in class, whenever they engaged in class discussion, they did so with the rare combination of genuine passion, intelligence and civility—and their remarks often turned into a real conversation among a significant group within the class. Perhaps the key to understanding this rare balance lies in the civility; they neither shout each other down nor create strawmen which they can then obliterate. They actually listen to one another. When asked about where he thought that rare quality might come from, Matthew Sawtelle reflected, that "it is because above all else, or maybe beneath all else, we all actually

Samuel Wilcox assists Fr. Ambrose during Mass at the top of Wheeler Peak, New Mexico.

care about one another, and therefore work hard to take each other seriously." It is that love for one another, which cuts across all the social, economic, political and personal differences in the class, which defines their specific version of the elusive "brotherhood thing." Perhaps that love grew out of the combination of a lot of naturally fun-loving personalities giving heed to Fr. Ambrose's emphasis, early and often, to 'go out and play' with the necessity of facing the reality of death head on. Their childish play began to transform into serious play, as they learned to hold on to each other through thick and thin. In their classroom conversations (which often continue afterwards), many opposing opinions can be aired—and 'zingers' can be hurled, with gusto, back and forth—but nothing ever becomes so serious that it can rupture the bond that undergirds all.

Patrick Dundon remembers how important Fr. Ambrose was throughout middle school in helping him cope with his father's death, but the burden, and the lessons he was learning, were largely private. However, with the death in Fourth Form of Jonny De La Cruz's dad, he suddenly saw a silver lining to his own loss. He reached out to Jonny, and then later to Eric and Sam, and he found himself developing an inner strength which he knew would make his own father proud. The junior retreat gave everyone a chance to express their solidarity over all the suffering the class had been through, which further strengthened Patrick's resolve to continue to turn his own tragedy into a blessing for others. The summer after junior year, Patrick was finally able to let go of his father's ashes,

and accompanied by his siblings, he fulfilled his father's wish that his ashes be taken to a favorite spot on a beach in Long Island. "I don't think, without the full support of the class and Fr. Ambrose, and strange as it may seem, without the role which the other tragedies played in helping me come to terms with my own, that I would have been in the proper frame of mind to do what I did."

The Class of 2019, at the insistence of their Form Master, had eight years filled with extra outings and adventures—to various Texas state parks, to the Arbuckle Mountains in Oklahoma, to the Davis Mountains, to the Arkansas Ozarks for a kayaking trip. He wanted them to experience the natural world, to get away from their "technology" and enjoy each other's company as well as, generally, the company of their dads. One of the most memorable was their trip to northern New Mexico in the summer after their sophomore year. They set their sights—or rather Fr. Ambrose set their sights—on climbing to the top of Wheeler Peak, the tallest peak in New Mexico. At the last minute he threw in his Mass kit, thinking that it might be really cool to have Mass at 13,100 feet. The climb, especially the last hour and a half, was grueling and difficult—switchback after switchback over loose rock in a high altitude which forced the climbers to stop every few minutes to catch their breath. There was a lot of grumbling and threats to turn back. But Fr. Ambrose kept climbing and smiling and encouraging them to persevere. Clearing the last ridge and reaching the top brought them into a spectacular view in every direction. Once he had caught his breath, Fr. Ambrose began to set up for Mass. Max Rogers remembers the scene well. "As we reached the top, all I could think was 'This is awesome!' It was as if all the lessons he had tried to teach us about loving the natural world around us, about sticking out the hard times and persevering to the end, about loving God regardless of what was going on in our lives, were coming together right here, at 13,000 feet." The homily was, apparently, not as spectacular as the scenery, but the lesson was learned nonetheless as the Mass concluded in the dismissal: "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your life," to which there was a hearty "Thanks be to God!" in response. •

50 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

Some Things Change Here, Others Endure

Charlie Williams ’70

An Open Letter from the Class of 1970 to the Men of 2019

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Class of 1970, the very first graduating class from dear old Cistercian, I bring greetings to the men of 2019, the fiftieth class to graduate. Fifty years is a long time. In this letter to you guys, we thought we’d take a look at how Cistercian has changed in the half century between our two graduating classes. Look at the early years and compare them to the present. Who had the better of it? What did we miss out on had we matriculated here over the past eight years instead of five decades ago? And what did your class miss during those bizarre and wonderful years between 1962 and 1970?

Guy in the middle is a renowned surgeon in Tucson. Go figure!

Dr. Emeric DeGall teaches us the very European sport of arm-lifting.

Some things stay constant at this place. Incredible staff continuity, as Fr. Paul noted during a recent chat, which is telling in and of itself. Combine that stability with the people, traditions, attitudes, tough academics, strong athletics and an unbreakable Cistercian pride and spirit. We started it all, and you and your predecessors have brought it far beyond what we and our founding teachers and parents could have imagined. After graduation, the love and pride you have for this place grows with every year. We know. We are proud to see eyebrows raised when we tell others we went to Cistercian. You smile when you see a Cistercian sticker on a car. That history and reputation is on you guys. You have built it. Well played. We’re proud of you gentlemen.

A couple of preliminaries to get out of the way. First, we are not crotchety old men. Grandparents, yes. But Cistercian does not suffer crotchety. We are still sharp, funny and inquisitive, thanks in no small part to Cistercian Prep. So you have that to look forward to. And we’ve held up pretty well physically, thank you. It’s safe to say that, at age 67 or so, neither we nor you will ever look as good as Bob Haaser or as bad as Mick Jagger.

Next, I have taken the liberty at times to call the monks by name, rather than using “Father.” We did it back then and I bet you do too. *Never* as a sign of disrespect and *never* to their faces though, right

boys? Admiration and affection better describe that habit...and it's two less syllables.

To be clear, this letter is about two graduating classes – yours and ours. It is not a history lesson on Cistercian Prep School. For that we would refer you to Class of '74 alumnus David Stewart's outstanding, comprehensive and witty *Cistercian Preparatory School, THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS,* published in 2012. If you haven't read the book, you owe it to yourself to do so.

So let's see who really did have the better of things at CPS betwixt us. Teachers, places, events both at Cistercian and in our respective worlds. Maybe some takeaways from us, looking back on all these years. Maybe some observations that might be useful to your class as to what the future may hold. I am your guide, Charlie Williams, Class of 1970. Here goes...

Cistercian Prep—The Place Itself

Some things *really* change!

The place you walked into back in 2011 bore no resemblance to what we encountered on that first day at Cistercian in 1962. None. Zero.

Our school was a house. Really. As First Formers, we found ourselves in the master bedroom for most classes. Mass was celebrated just off the front room. The next year, our classroom was the living room. Then the guest house. Fr. Melchior kept a framed bat on the wall, turtles in the bathtub and fruit flies, which bedeviled the rest of the staff. Ursuline was across a footbridge over White Rock Creek, but the timing was way off. Our addled ten-year-old brains had not grasped the critical concept of *girls* just yet. At recess we bolted through woods, across creeks, vacant fields and worn out tennis courts with no discernable presence of discipline. Wild American boys. Bewildered Hungarian priests.

Ah, the phenomenon of 10 year olds in neckties. Morning lineup at the old school on Walnut Hill Lane.

It was weird. It was wonderful. If this was what Cistercian was going to be like, sign us up. And the relative lack of discipline kept on going for the next few years to the consternation of the frustrated and brilliant men and women who were struggling to impart a little *ardere et lucere* to us. We got enkindled I guess, but we were a tough bunch to enlighten. Heavy and easily mimicked Hungarian accents. A vague European feel. You gentlemen never had it so great as we did in those years.

Wild American boys. Bewildered Hungarian priests.

But fast forward to high school. The Class of 2019 takes this round hands down. What a place Cistercian has become. The finest facilities and coolest campus anywhere. Renowned academic excellence. We are justifiably proud when we visit the old alma mater. A science building, real library, art building and an auditorium for Pete's sake. And superb athletic facilities to complement top-tier sports teams. On the other hand...

We had the "new school" in '65 or so. The middle school now. A nice looking place, as you all know and, as Fr. Bede mused, far from our homes, way out in the woods on the banks of the Trinity. Not bad. Well done Cistercian! But certainly not the Cistercian you boys are accustomed to. We had no gym. The school's first gymnasium was started as we bid goodbye. A cruel twist. We used the UD gym. Now we DID have bombardment. The school built a ten foot high cage for it. Like WWE or MMA. Back in the woods. It was savage. During a recent conversation, Rodney Walter recalled looking on with worry as thirteen-year-old boys hurled volleyballs and basketballs at each other's faces. Rodney then did a fine impression of one of us getting knocked senseless.

When football finally came about for the first time in August of 1969, we had no locker room. We had no weight room. We had no stadium. No home games. We had no cheerleaders. We had no COACH for heaven's sake! Ours had fled in exasperation just before two-a-days. They recruited a math teacher and some UD guys. A sophomore named Haaser was the best of the bunch.

So despite the madness we enjoyed back in the day, the Class of 2019 trumps us. As Fr. Ambrose said about his arrival at the school, the table was

Abbot Anselm Nagy saying Mass at the old school around '64, aided by highly skilled altar boys.

already set for him through the work of all those heroes who built this place over the last 50 years. The table was set for you, too. We just didn't have... a table.

So is there anything to be drawn from all this? Well, memories fade over time, but Cistercian memories, not so much. It's remarkable how rich those recollections are 57 years later. You'll enjoy them more with each passing year. Treasure 'em.... and hang on to all that old Cistercian stuff!

Cistercian The Institution—You, Us, Teachers and More

When it comes to comparing the entire Cistercian experience between our respective classes, it's a push. Many things changed over the years as Cistercian grew and progressed. But in many ways the Men of '19 and the Class of '70 run in strange parallel. Let's look at it from several angles.

Girls. We do not have girls in our school. Didn't then. Don't now. Never will. So how have we always been able to attract them? You guys have perfected the art, judging from your cheerleaders and the scores of young ladies at Cistercian football games I attend. It was the same back then. Nobody had ever even heard of this school (and sure couldn't spell it), and still our dance cards were pretty full. I don't get it. But then, I do. Somehow the word got out that we were, and are, all kind of smart and kind of funny. Somehow, we were a little different from guys in other schools. It might not have actually been the case, but what the hell we ran with it. Fist bumps all around.

Memories fade over time, but Cistercian memories, not so much.

Our mentor and Form Master, a pensive Fr. Melchior circa 1968.

Here's an observation looking back over the years that I think my comrades would share. Smart, considerate, and a good old sense of humor will almost always win the day. Judging from our experience, if you boys keep those virtues intact, you're going to find, hold on to (if they'll have you) and marry very smart, funny and considerate young women. Go figure! Life is good.

Curriculum. As Fr. Paul, Fr. Abbot Peter (a tough linebacker on our '69 team), Fr. Ambrose and Rodney each described the death march of a curriculum you fellows endured, from day one of First Form until you graduated this spring, I broke out in a cold sweat. The rumors are true! This place is hard!

"Honors math" in fifth grade says Fr. Paul. Not fifth form...fifth grade. Good grief! Everything is "honors" this and "honors" that. Senior seminars. Fr. Peter recalled your first years reading not "readers" but being thrown into thought-provoking literature, thanks in no small part to Dr. Pruit. Very impressive men. To my recollection, "honors" never appeared in our curriculum, unless you count the four smartest guys in our class whom Fr. Denis wisely culled from the rest of us riffraff for advanced math in high school. Once again, as Fr. Ambrose suggested, the table was set for both your form master and your class. From First Form on. Decades of tweaking and molding and perfecting an intense and rigorous curriculum like Cistercian's pays off. You guys are well prepared for the next step. As Fr. Peter said wisely, you all were better prepared coming in and better prepared going out.

Then there was us. Recall the oft used word "discipline" above. Add an unruly undisciplined group of brutes, beasts and animals like us (an overmatched and very kind Fr. Thomas used those very words to describe us) to what amounted to an untested experiment of a curriculum and, well, strange things happened. Like fencing. For a grade on our report cards in First Form. This was a curriculum less intense and rigorous, and perhaps more... fun! Fencing was cool. Put swords in the hands of ten-year-olds, and all bets are off. Dr. Emeric DeGall was our fencing master. Some in our group actually became really good and competitive at it in the later grades. Regrettably, adding swords to the equation also ran head-on into the discipline part. Act up and it was a foil (the Cistercian weapon of choice) to your backside by DeGall. May you never know such pain.

Fr. Abbot Anselm exhorts us to make the old alma mater proud. Graduation 1970.

Another quick word on the medieval methods (many were tried) used to quell our disregard for respecting our elders. Fr. Bede, our first Form Master and one of the smartest and kindest priests ever to come our way, resorted to squeezing all five of our fingers together at the tips until red, then bashing a heavy metal serrated ruler down upon them with vigor. We did pay a price for our wicked ways. And we kept our fingernails short!

And all the usual suspects in a Hungarian model of a school. Biology, math, history, theology. And Latin just like you boys. Except we were better at it, I bet. The Mass was in Latin then, and we altar boys were immersed in it. Bede would throw in a mind-boggling, fifteen-minute Mass each day or week and our "mea culpas" sounded like an auctioneer.

Children of the '60s, about to take on a challenging world.

By the way, how did we all get into college? Especially us. You are blessed with a tremendous admissions program. Us? In 1970 no one had ever heard of Cistercian. A trip to see the Benedictines in St. Louis by Frs. Melchior and Denis, and a marathon trip to colleges by Denis, thankfully got the word out and the ball rolling. Just in time!

In 1970, no one had ever heard of Cistercian.

Those Who Taught Us. Or tried. We missed out on the young monks at Cistercian. Our loss. There's a vibe at CPS now that wasn't quite there back in '70. Again, Fr. Paul pointed to the great, almost unbelievable stability of this faculty. All seasoned by the curriculum mentioned above.

You all missed out on an amazing, dedicated group of lay teachers and nuns at CPS. And of course, the Cistercians. You may have had some of the pioneer monks yourself. Heroes of patience, tolerance and academia like Frs. Roch, Julius, Bernard, and Abbot Denis.

A word about two of those guys. Fr. Roch recalled his personal struggles when we grew out of rote acceptance and into intense and sometimes antagonistic theological exchanges. Roch was and remains special. So, too, our contemporary Fr. Bernard. If you want a man to emulate, boys, start with Bernard's intellect, fitness and great humor.

In addition to those priests mentioned above, we had brilliant Cistercian instructors (including a couple of cigar-chomping monks). They paved the way for us. Our beloved Fr. Damian, the school's first headmaster. And our Form Master (after Fr. Bede in the First Form) Fr. Melchior, God rest him, who was firm but funny, a fascinating biology teacher, and our true friend and comrade for all our lives. Form Masters are like that. You'll see.

And lest we all forget, we missed out on the greats in the years between us (you may have had them during your stay). Our class never enjoyed Novinski, Newcomb, Munguia, Sitton, Hillary, Fr. Gregory and many others.

As time separates you gentlemen from Cistercian, you'll look back and appreciate what these people did for you. More so with each passing year. One of our guys, Tim Johnson, recalled what Melchior said that first biology class...that his job was to teach us to think like scientists. TJ provided another apt assessment of what CPS taught all of us and what we all learned... how to come up with solutions. How to look at things from different angles and how to solve problems

A NASA scientist gets rapt attention. We were witness to the birth of space exploration.

with confidence, both in college and throughout life. That's really our charge men. Our debt to Cistercian. Use what it has given us. Walk through life taking everything in, and never stop learning. Absorb. Be sharper today than you were yesterday and sharper tomorrow than today. Look for different opportunities to put what we've learned into play. That's what the school and all of these teachers would expect of us. On that count I think the Class of '70 has done passingly well over these last few decades. You will too.

Frs. Melchior and Matthew try to corral us... Ski Camp was a highlight of every winter.

The Boys. Then and Now. We wore neckties. All the time. We stood on the corner waiting on green buses. Ten-year-olds... on the corner... in neckties. A bit humiliating, thank you, but we made it through. Now you wear cool white or black polo shirts. Some things are just not fair. But then again, we had a smoking lounge. And rocketry to match your robotics. And ski camp. And like you, the Texas history trips thanks to Rodney Walter who suffered through the crazed first years of that endeavor.

It's about a great life experience shared. Cistercian creates a lifelong bond. For us it has continued to this day. I can say the names of every one of my classmates in under ten seconds. That might be a little tougher for you guys with 42 of you rather than 18, but you get the gist. We are still very, very close. We mourned, together, the loss of two of our very best, David Dolan and Tom Martin. We are brothers actually. Do not let yourselves drift apart. We found that as years pass there comes a great comfort in knowing that your buddies from Cistercian are a call or email away. Fr. Paul recently talked of the importance of maintaining our community and of the remarkable closeness the Cistercian experience has built for us and you.

Letter Award

CISTERCIAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

This is to Certify that

CHARLES WILLIAMS

has been awarded the

School letter in FENCING

for the season of 1963-1964

FENCING MASTER

MANAGER

We were brilliant athletes! A Letter in Fencing in 1963!

Our World and Yours. The world you live in is very different than ours in the '60s and '70s. But all of us have been blessed to live in unique and interesting times. When young men and women were, and are, called upon for critical discernment, opinion and thought. Times that can sometimes border on chaos, that challenge our ability to draw firm conclusions about which side we are on and where we go from here. With your gray matter well-honed by Cistercian, you have a great advantage. You'll make this world a much better place for your kids and grandkids. Hopefully we did.

You came to Cistercian during a special time, the country having elected its first African American president and with much promise for the future. You also arrived during harrowing economic times, which have eased, thankfully. As you leave you are challenged with a country more polarized than ever in memory. A world of considerable mayhem. We did not have school shootings. Or terrorism. Tough challenges ahead.

Here's something important we have in common. At the time we graduated, the Cowboys had never gone to a Super Bowl during our lifetimes. Strangely

Photos by Jim Reisch

the same goes for you. The year after we left Cistercian, they were there. It's time for history to repeat itself.

Now back to our world and yours. Technology. It's mind-boggling to many of us. The first handheld calculator came out just after we left. Ever heard of a slide rule? Rotary phones, no cells. No personal computers. No internet. No social media. But Fr. Abbot Peter reminded us of the very real anxiety and potential harm social media presents for all of you. We never feared our words going viral.

Now while you all live in challenging times, take solace in the fact that when it comes to teenage anxiety, our eight years were tough. As kids we stood in downtown Dallas watching the Kennedy motorcade, minutes before he died. Not long before that a young Fr. Denis arrived at the Abbey on his first day, knowing not a word of English, and looked on as others watched the Cuban Missile Crisis unfold on TV. In the early grades we had air raid drills, bomb shelters and the threat of "bombers coming over the poles." We all faced the very real possibility of going to Vietnam. Back home Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. It was Watergate and Nixon's resignation soon after. Shouting arguments between priests and students refusing to take things at face value anymore. Weird and trying times.

Now we did land on the moon the summer before our senior year. And the early years of rock, and Woodstock that summer, and two weeks later the Texas International Pop Festival in Lewisville. 150,000 of us. The bolder among us skipped a little school for it. Even Fr. Roch snuck over. Pretty amazing. Look it up (not Roch… the Festival).

So there you have it. In the fifty-year span between our two classes, many, many things have changed, and yet in many ways we're the same as you. Fr. Peter said there is a "connecting sense of community and faith" among all of us. We're all in this for life boys, our little band of brothers. As you travel life's road over the coming decades, don't let the old alma mater down. Look left and right and absorb and learn with open eyes and minds every minute. The world before you offers a true and unbelievable lab for Cistercian thinkers. Like you, we were all blessed with a well planned and well ordered jumping off point at Cistercian. Take full advantage, and you'll be leaders of men.

We're all in this for life, boys, our little band of brothers.

Around 1967, from top left: Johnston, Osten, Fr. Melchior, Galt, Slaton, Witbeck, Williams. Next row: Atkinson with drawn on sideburns, Hall, Martin, Kurilecz. Next row: Brennan, Wood, Sarosdy, Healy, Coyle. Next row: D. Thomas, Bush, Dolan, Sullivan, Johnson. In front: Pritchett, Foley, Hough, Grinnan, J. Thomas.

We envy you and the adventures before you. Full throttle men. As the great Dr. Seuss once said, "Boys, you'll move mountains! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So get on your way!" We wish you the very best, gentlemen.

With kindest regards, we remain

The Proud Cistercian Preparatory School Class of 1970

Sports

Hawks Reach Second Best SPC Finish

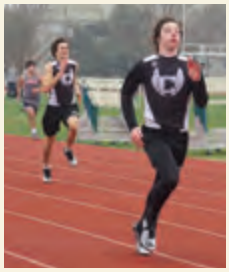
Coach Craig Sklar knew that the 2018-2019 basketball season could be one of the best with many returning players. Leading scorer **Harry Crutcher '19**, starting point guard **Sam Clay '19**, and most-improved player **Jack O'Neil '19** were back as seniors along with seven classmates. Clay (third in all-time career assists) and O'Neil served as captains while Crutcher (sixth in all-time career scoring) continued to set the pace. **Robert Lahrman '19** led the team in rebounding, and **Gio Bertocco '19** provided a huge spark off the bench. The Hawks started with a 56-33 win over Greenhill positioning the team to qualify for the SPC Tournament and a first round matchup against St. John's which Cistercian won 53-45. The win was followed by a rematch with Oakridge in the SPC semifinals. Unfortunately, the Owls won 68-60. Cistercian finished SPC tied for seventh place with an overall record of 21-9.

Soccer Wins SPC Consolation Championship

Coach J. P. Walsh started soccer season one man down with **Aidan Click '19** out for the duration with a torn ACL. With perseverance and tenacity, the Hawks rose to the occasion to fill the void. **Jimmy Garda '19** and **Samuel Hernandez '19** led the team as captains, while **Matthew Wynne '19** provided a strong physical presence. **Jakob Quarles '22** played the most minutes of the newcomers, while **Stephan Salhab '20** and **Hogan Jones '20** started every game. Garda and **Reefe Harrison '20** led the offense in goals and assists, respectively. Hernandez's contributions on defense allowed keeper **J.B. Hudnall '21** to secure several shutouts. According to Coach Walsh, the most impressive win of the season came right before SPC when the team defeated Fort Worth Nolan, a large 6A TAPPS program. The most satisfying victory was their second win over Oakridge on the season, which secured the Consolation Championship at SPC and lifted the team's overall record to 13-4-2.

Newcomers Lead the Way in Track

Coach James Burk begins every track season by setting goals: improve every week, set personal records at each meet, and qualify for SPC. If goals are reached, the season will be a success. This year's captains, **Max Rogers '19** and **Campbell Keating '19**, ensured that teammates worked hard in practice. Keating and **Charles Treadway '21** led the Hawks in points earned, while **Nico Walz '20** and **Devon Comstock '22** improved steadily to qualify for SPC. In all, six athletes competed in SPC and beat ESD and Oakridge.

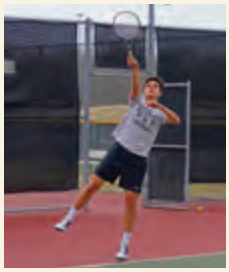


Freshmen Shine Bright for Baseball

After losing six seniors last year — three of whom had started since they were freshmen — from a team that went 12-8 and made an SPC appearance in 2018, Coach Mark Gray knew there would be gaps to fill. **Sebastian Currlin '19** returned and had the best batting average while pitching and playing two field positions. **Sam Reimer '19**, **John Paul Spak '19** and **Jack Schieferdecker '20** also returned to make significant contributions. Reimer, the team's most improved player, started every game in left field. Spak, returning after undergoing shoulder surgery in the off-season, played in every game at right field or DH. Schieferdecker batted cleanup and remained solid behind the plate. Two freshmen, **Alex Ardemagni '22** and **Eli Sanford '22**, earned starting positions. Leading the team in ERA and home runs, Ardemagni's season culminated in a complete game shutout against Greenhill that included 11 strikeouts. When he wasn't pitching, Sanford batted second and started at shortstop. A 10-10 record doesn't tell the whole story of what this team accomplished, but the coming seasons look bright.

Tennis Advances to SPC Tournament

The tennis team, under the guidance of Coach Skip Boyden, had a perfect balance of new talent and returning experience. Captains **Jose Baquero '19**, **Christopher McCallum '19** and **Eric Easley '19** led the doubles teams while **Nico Lopez '20** held the number one singles spot for most of the season. Newcomers **Ankit Lulla '21**, **Ethan Baek '22** and **Christopher Hardin '22** played pivotal roles rotating between the number two and three singles spots. A 5-0 sweep of Fort Worth Country Day gave the team confidence that they could compete. Although they lost the first round in SPC play, they challenged St. Stephen's as Lopez played inspired tennis from start to finish.



Underclassmen Lead the Way to SPC for Aquahawks

With only two seniors (**Tom Worth '19** and **John Paul Spak '19**) left to anchor the Aquahawks, Coach Jeff Veazey challenged the underclassmen to step up this season. **Sam Gambow '20** did his part as leading scorer in all meets combined and at SPC. **Mark Van Kirk '21** and **Joseph Spak '21** also qualified for SPC. Newcomer of the Year **Leo Ontiveros '22** displayed tremendous grit and determination in his first season with the Aquahawks. •

East Coast Alumni

Boston

New York City

Washington, DC

Alumni Gather

Class of '97

Class of '00

Class of '05

Class of '14 — 5th Annual "Black Friday Brunch"

Class of '17

Class of '18 Alumni Christmas Party

Thanksgiving in April

On the north side of the Boston Common, there is a large bronze memorial in honor of the city's founders. The bas-relief depicts a pair of early Puritan settlers—with tall hats atop their heads and buckles on their shoes—as they shake hands and stand on their newly-claimed land. I have walked past it many times without giving it a second thought, but in early April, I paused to briefly marvel at it alongside Erin Hart and Fr. Paul.

Jess Clay '13

We had decided to walk to the Boston-area Cistercian alumni dinner because it was a warm day. This detail is worth noting because, in Massachusetts, a warm day in early April is a meteorological phenomenon far rarer than a cold day in hell. Evidently Fr. Paul and Erin had brought the Texas spring with them as they began their trip down the Eastern Seaboard. Over the course of three days, they would travel from Boston to New York City to Washington, D.C., hosting alumni events in each town.

We were lucky to have them up to Massachusetts. Their itinerary had initially included only the Big Apple and the Drained Swamp. However, a fellow improper Bostonian and I had buttonholed Erin at the alumni Christmas party and pitched her on the idea of starting their trip in the cradle of Yankeeland. She remained unconvinced until we assured her and Fr. Paul of our major forthcoming gifts to the development office, to be delivered at an unspecified date in the future. They booked flights to Boston shortly thereafter, and now that spring had sprung we found ourselves walking to Joe's American Bar & Grill together.

Around six o'clock, the rest of the Cistercian crowd began shuffling into the restaurant. As we sat around the dining table, Erin suggested we introduce ourselves to the group by giving our names, class years, form masters, and reasons for being in New England. She also asked us to share our most quintessential Cistercian memories, which led to four decades' worth of bottled-up anecdotes being uncorked. The following two stories are representative of the genre and entirely true, though names have been omitted to protect the faculty:

During senior theology, one side of a form had ambitiously attempted to make a waffle from scratch. This involved plugging a waffle iron into the wall, pouring batter into the heated iron, cooking the waffle, and removing it. The waffle was then doused in syrup and passed from one corner of the classroom to the other, with each boy taking a bite along the way. When the world-renowned theologian behind the teacher's desk wondered what the smell was, the class successfully attributed it to the construction work going on outside.

During science class, the monk teaching the course decided to demonstrate the effects of liquid nitrogen to a room of enthralled middle schoolers. He froze a banana before smashing it with a hammer, then froze an apple before letting it shatter on the floor. For his pièce de résistance, *he submerged a live goldfish in the liquid nitrogen as the class gasped. He then dropped the goldfish in a bowl of water, and confidently explained that the fish would revive shortly. Unfortunately, only one side of the fish thawed. Over the course of the next half hour, the boys looked on in abject horror as the half-frozen fish swam in circles before it stopped swimming entirely.*

The stories which followed these one-upped each other and are generally unprintable. However, I have been informed that Cistercian has begun collecting and recording the stories from these alumni gatherings for an anthology. The final edition will be donated to the Secret Archives of the Vatican in perpetuity, and its title will subsequently be added to the Index of Forbidden Books.

As I listened to all the stories across all the years, I was stunned by the commonality and continuity of our experiences at Cistercian. From the oldest alumni to the youngest, we had shared coaches and teachers. We knew which rival schools we had all played against and which books we had all read. Even now, despite all the different lives we had built for ourselves in our years since leaving Texas, the foundation remained the same. Erin later described the evening as a family dinner, and so it was – the sons of so many Hungarian fathers, now gathered together to break bread.

In reflecting upon our dinner and the bonds we shared, I found myself thinking of the Pilgrims who preceded us in Plymouth, not far from where we dined. I remembered a famous quote attributed to H.U. Westermayer, which I usually only contemplate in November: "The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving."

Nobody at the alumni get-together was so impoverished, but we were still pilgrims of a sort—men who had left their hometowns for new lives in New England, to see what we might find. Some of us were there in passing, and some had settled there for good. But I was glad Cistercian had set aside a day for all of us Texpatriates to come together. As we gathered and gave thanks over a meal, we were reminded of all we had to be grateful for and to whom we owed our gratitude. I thought back to the memorial I had stood in front of on the walk to dinner. I recalled the scene of Boston's founders shaking hands, and I thought about the handshakes we ourselves had shared as we parted after dinner. I marveled at it, too. •

Community Calendar

June 10-July 5
Summer Rec Camp for Grades 3-6

August 15
Priestly Ordination of Br. Raphael

August 20
Opening Ceremonies

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, Texas 75039

Faith: A Blinder or Light?

Agnostics and atheists are convinced, or at least act convinced, that faith is a blinder which restricts our field of vision and blunts our minds, because we must think and say what the Church teaches us to think and say. Catholic, they say, equals narrow-minded.

Fr. Roch Kereszty

Simone Weil, however, herself a former agnostic, writes that God loves those who reject him for the sake of truth. Being Truth itself, he will soon reveal himself to such people—as in fact he did to Simone Weil. Many former unbelievers claim similar experiences. They rejected God because they sought the truth, 'the full truth and nothing but the truth.' But now they say that the discovery of God extended their vision to a height and depth, width and length beyond any limit. St. Bernard describes the object of faith in these terms:

What would faith not find? It reaches what is inaccessible, grasps what is unknown, comprehends immensity, apprehends the end of history; in its immense lap, faith includes in some way eternity itself. I say with confidence, I believe the eternal and blessed Trinity whom I don't understand and I hold by faith what my mind does not grasp.

In order to grasp the importance of faith in general and the boundless vision of Christian faith in particular, we need to start from below, with the act of the most elementary "natural" faith: I believe that my senses and my intellect are capable of knowing material reality. I cannot move outside my senses and intellect to examine from a higher viewpoint if my senses and intellect really reach something outside of themselves or rather play a subtle game with me: they make me believe that I know the universe, when in reality I know only the categories of my own mind.

Let us take a look now at personal relationships: what would happen to me if I did not believe in the word of my parents, my spouse, my children, my friends or any other human being? I still could study their medical charts but I would not know the real self of anyone. Banished from the world of sane men and women, I would end up in an asylum. I can know the minds and hearts only of those people whose word I accept as true. The solidity of my knowledge of people depends on the solidity of their word, their truthfulness.

If we need faith to know the material world and the world of human beings, how much more do we need faith in order to know the mind of God, his plan for the human race and for each one of us personally? In this realm of knowledge I have not found a better way than to rely on the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. The long line of truthful men and women, beginning with the fishermen of Galilee, bear witness to Jesus' truthfulness. I have studied the life of many men and women who followed Jesus faithfully and whom the Church calls saints, and I found their genuine humanness most convincing and their power of love irresistible. Time and again, through twenty-one centuries, these people renewed the world around them, radiated hope and joy to innumerable men and women.

Faith in Christ, then, opens up the door to the infinite dimensions of God's world which is hidden within us and surrounds us. We have access to the reality of the risen, glorious Christ and to his angels and saints, great giants and the immense throng of small saints, who had lived unrecognized on earth.

Moreover, what Christ did and suffered did not sink into nothingness through the trapdoor of history. It is always present to God, who transcends time. In every Eucharistic celebration we truly enter through faith into God's eternity and partake of Christ's sacrifice on the cross to which we are called to unite our gift of self.

But even in our daily meditations we participate in the events of Christ's life that become contemporaneous to us. Through faith we truly look at him in the manger, we walk with him, share his meals, listen to his reprimands, see him raising the little girl of Jairus, stand under the cross with Mary and worship the risen Christ with Thomas: "My Lord and my God!" •