

For family, friends, & alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CISTERCIAN CONTINUUM



Spring 2023

IN MEMORIAM

Fr. Roch Kereszty, O. Cist.

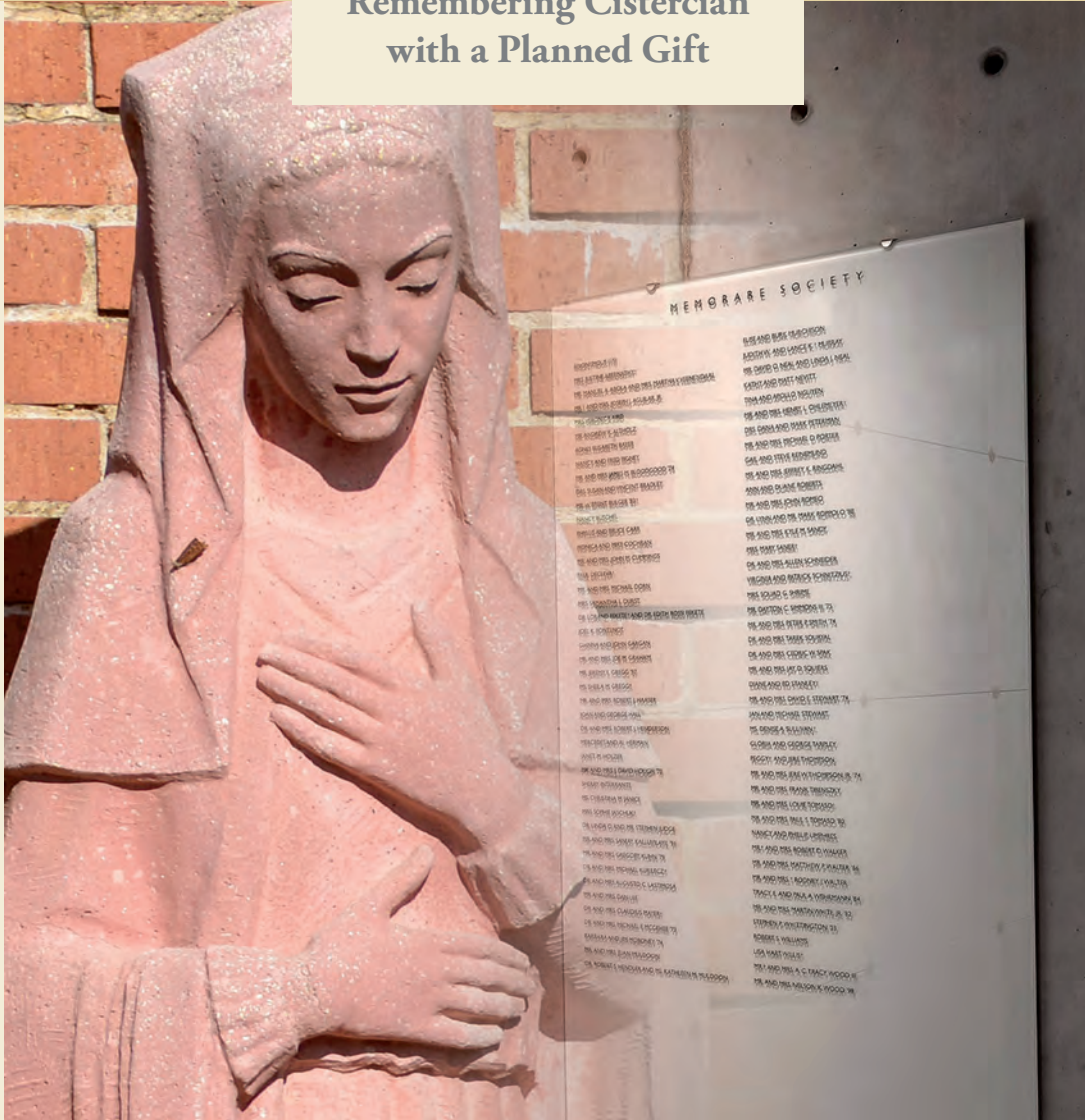
1933–2022



**BETTING ON
EACH OTHER**
We're all in...

**FIT FOR
LIFE...**
Cistercian athletics
on the rebound

Remembering Cistercian with a Planned Gift



The Memorare Society was established in 2005 to honor individuals, couples and families who have made long-term commitments to the Cistercian Abbey or School through planned gifts, such as bequests, retirement assets or insurance policies.

Today, 108 individuals or couples are connected to the Abbey or School as members of the Memorare Society.

The Memorare Society allows us to thank and recognize donors. Members are listed on a plaque in the Abbey Crypt to remind the monks to include these individuals in their daily prayers, along with the deceased monks and their families.

MEMORARE
SOCIETY

To remember Cistercian with a planned gift, contact Erin Hart.
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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

"We placed our trust in one another and invested completely in the whole. We went all in."

With these concluding words, the authors of our feature article on Cistercian's graduating class of 2023 (written for the first time by *seniors themselves*) encapsulate the experience in which each member eventually came to embrace the ancient maxim *Carpe*



Fr. Paul McCormick

Deum. Their philosophy of living each moment to its fullest is exemplified in their many achievements—academic, athletic, and extracurricular—

but most especially in the bonds of brotherhood they formed and now take with them to colleges across the country.

It is a lesson modeled by a similar brotherhood found among the Cistercian coaches featured in our second article. Rebounding from the pandemic and the cancellation of the spring and fall 2020 athletic seasons, the HAWKS have since claimed a variety of championships and set several personal bests. This is

due in no small part to the tremendous experience and skill of our coaching staff, along with their contagious resilience and enthusiasm. Under new Athletic Director **Jack Dorn '05** and with a renovated lower gymnasium and new cross-country trail (also highlighted), the future is bright for Cistercian athletics.

Along with our traditional news articles and class notes, this issue also includes a touch of humor from alumnus and current teacher **Patrick Spence '08**, who ponders how Pope Francis's injunction for the shepherd to smell like the sheep is realized (perhaps too literally) at Cistercian.

Finally, on our back cover—a space long reserved for his unique spiritual wisdom—one will find a poignant rerun of a past column from our beloved Fr. Roch. As he remains sorely missed, we include a link to access all of his previous *Continuum* pieces. Fr. Roch was clearly a prime example of one who "invested completely in the whole" and "went all in."

Fr. Paul

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by Stephen LeSage '23 and Kiefer Soo '23



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Bob Greenfield



In Memoriam

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Cover photo by Jim Reisch

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News & Notes

Hillary Award

The Tom Hillary Award was presented to **Dan O'Toole '23** at this year's athletic awards presentation. 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. "Dan defines coaching clichés about leadership, toughness and determination. His leadership is demonstrated through action more often than word, and through his actions he instills a confidence and fearlessness in his teammates that is evident from the sideline and stands," said **Jack Dorn '05**, athletic director. "He does not seek glory or accolades, and those who coach him or play alongside him walk away knowing they saw greatness. He is a fierce competitor."



Argentinian Student Exchange Program and fresh perspectives

This is the fifth year to participate in the exchange program, and sophomores **Coleman Griffith '25** and **Bobby Quinn '25** hosted Benjamín Salto and Juan Pablo Bruzone in February.



Even with the snow days, they were able to get out and about to see various sites in the Metroplex: the Fort Worth Stock Yards, AT&T Stadium, Six Flags, and plenty

of Cistercian athletic events! Griffith and Quinn are looking forward to reconnecting with their Argentinian friends in June. "I want to expand my knowledge of the Spanish language and practice my conversational skills. As an exchange student, I will be immersed in a whole new level of culture," said Quinn.



The statue outside of the abbey was restored this spring.

JWAC competes in Academic WorldQuest competition

In February, Cistercian's Junior World Affairs Council (JWAC) chapter gathered at the University of Texas at Arlington for the Dallas World Affairs Council's Academic WorldQuest competition. This was the second year for Cistercian to compete at the event and the second year for a team member to be chosen for "20 Under 20," part of the Global Young Leaders Program sponsored by the Dallas World Affairs Council. **Keegan Cobleigh '24** was honored as part of "20 Under 20" Class of 2023. "I am happy with how the boys competed, especially for our rookie competitors who stepped up this year," said Lisa Hernandez, JWAC sponsor. "I look forward to seeing what the next group is able to accomplish as our founding members are heading to college."



Feed My Starving Children two-day campus event

Cistercian hosted Feed My Starving Children in February and packed more than 70,000 meals for children in Honduras.

Faculty, students, alumni and their families joined together in



the Cistercian gymnasium to assemble rice, soy, vegetables and vitamin powder into individual meals to be boxed and shipped. Feeding the hungry, one of the seven corporal works of mercy, offered a wonderful Lenten exercise. "This is

the second time we've hosted a packing event, and it is wonderful to see so many members of our community collaborating in different ways to pull it off," said Fr. John Bayer.

Jeopardy clue
on the April 25th
episode. Answer:
What is Trappist?

OUR LADY OF DALLAS
ABBAY IS CISTERCIAN,
NOT THIS OFFSHOOT,
SO DON'T GO
EXPECTING BEER

Victory at the Diocesan Middle School Religion Bowl

The Diocesan Middle School Religion Bowl proved again to be a nail-biter! Thirty schools from across the diocese selected one student from each of grades five through eight.



To prepare for the tournament, each team member was responsible for covering different categories of knowledge: church history, Scripture, sacraments, basic catechism,

popes and saints. Their work paid off with a victory at the end! One of our student competitors said, "It was an extraordinary experience to attend and retake first place!"

Cistercian Scout earns 138 merit badges

Eagle Scout **Vincent Micheli '23** has earned all of the 138 badges offered by the Boy Scouts. Fewer than half of one percent (roughly 500 scouts) have earned all available merit badges, and Micheli actually has 139 (one was later renamed). Fr. Paul commended Micheli's efforts: "As a former scout, I am all the more amazed by and proud of Vincent's most incredible accomplishment. It speaks volumes about his unique passion for scouting and his fierce tenacity in setting lofty goals for himself and laboring, methodically and creatively over many years, to attain them."



Past Booster Club President Breakfast

In February, Past Booster Club Presidents gathered for breakfast, fellowship, and talks from Fr. Paul, **Jack Dorn '05**, and Erin Hart about renovations to the first floor of the gym, among other projects on campus, that will be funded by our capital campaign, *Formation Beyond the Classroom*. It was wonderful to have these dedicated men and women all together and back on campus!



Fr. Christopher's Ordination

In a glorious break in February's unpredictable weather, Bishop Burns presided over Fr. Christopher Kalan's ordination to the priesthood. If you missed the festivities, videos of



Fr. Christopher's Ordination and First Mass are available on the CistercianDallas YouTube channel. Along with his priestly duties, Fr. Christopher is teaching religion and computer at the School and helping in the technology department.

2023 Jim and Lynn Moroney Award Dinner

With family, friends and his Form Master, Fr. Julius, on hand to celebrate with him, **Matt Walter '86** was introduced by classmate **David Patrick '86** as the recipient of the Jim and Lynn Moroney Award. Matt expressed his gratitude for the School: "Cistercian has played a significant role in my life for a long time. In fact, rarely does a day go by that I don't draw upon something that I learned or experienced at Cistercian. It is the touchstone, the barometer against which all things are measured."



Cistercian Quiz Bowl finishes strong at National Small School Championship

This has been a successful year for Cistercian's Quiz Bowl teams. For the first time, Form III students participated in local quiz bowl competitions, and the middle school qualified again for the National Middle School Championship. Our upper school



team participated in eight tournaments, placed again and again, and many received individual awards. Special recognition goes to the Cistercian A team (**George Birdsong '26**,

Drew Durgin '26, **Ryan Fang '24** and **Christian Oh '26**) who took 7th at the National Championship and the Cistercian B team (**Bennett Tschoepe '26**, **John Paul Jacob '24**, **Neel Perumandla '24**, and **Rafael Ramirez '24**) who took 11th place. Dr. Mindle said, "We expect to be even stronger next year and look forward to another stellar season."

News & Notes

Fusion Corps competes at Worlds

Last year, Cistercian's Robotics team, Fusion Corps 6672, was part of the winning alliance that won the FIRST Robotics Worlds competition. As a result, the team automatically qualified to return to this year's Worlds Competition in Houston where they placed eighth in the Einstein Field Worlds Finals. According to one metric, the team ranked 44/3295 in the world, 40/2687 in the US, and 4/156 in Texas.

Fusion Corps brought home its share of awards from multiple competitions this season: the Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors (FIRST at Texas Waco District Finals); the Autonomous Award sponsored by Ford (FIRST in Texas Fort Worth District Finals); the Excellence in Engineering Award (FIRST in Texas State District Finals); and the Innovation in Control Award (FIRST in Texas Milstein Division event).

Congratulations to the robotics team, Fr. Mark and Dr. Kroll, and all the extremely generous volunteer mentors and donors. The leadership and support of seniors **Nico Chio '23, William Coulter '23, Ryan Jackson '23, Matthew Nguyen '23, Andrew Oliver '23** and **Kiefer Soo '23** will be missed!



Dallas Happy Hour

The CEO and founder of Tecovas, **Paul Hedrick '06**, graciously hosted a packed house of alumni and alumni parents at a happy hour in March at his Dallas store. Headquartered in Austin, Tecovas offers handmade boots for men and women as well as western apparel and accessories.



Cistercian hosts colloquium

For the third time, Cistercian hosted an interscholastic colloquium celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's 1623 *First Folio*, the first printed collection of Shakespeare's plays. To honor Shakespeare's legacy, the colloquium focused on two plays from the Folio: *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. High school students from Cistercian, Jesuit, Hockaday, Oakridge, and Fort Worth Country Day presented



original essays on the two plays. In addition to essays, the colloquium featured two acting workshops, a presentation on film adaptations

of *Hamlet*, and a keynote lecture by Dr. Travis Curtright, the founder of the Shakespeare in Performance program at Ave Maria College. An added bonus was a copy of the *First Folio* on display along with costumes from the Kenneth Branagh production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

BraveArt 2023

BraveArt returned with the theme of *Play*. Students were encouraged to remember the creativity of their childhood. Workshops ranged from martial arts to screenprinting and digital art to theater games. The Art Board even put together a scavenger hunt during lunch to keep the spirit of play throughout the day. The seniors honored Fr. Raphael, their Assistant Form Master, with their metalworking piece, the Archangel Raphael (see cover photo).



Form I conducts field study

Late in April, Form I visited the John Bunker Sands Wetlands in East Texas to explore, collect water samples, and test the water for pH balance, O₂ levels, and macrobiotics. The "Wetlands" lived up to its name, given the constant rain throughout the morning. The fifth graders had a wonderful time learning outside the classroom.



Upper School tackles Shakespeare

In their spring production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, upper school students did not rely on over-the-top concepts to make Shakespeare come to life. Rather, through excellent understanding of the language and playful staging, the group of talented actors delighted in the classic rom-com. Original



Jim Reisch

music composition by **William Greene '23** took the production to the next level. **Luke Herda '23** commanded the stage as Benedicke, and

Jonathan Sanford '24 stole hearts as Claudio. After studying *Much Ado* for the Shakespeare Colloquium hosted by the School, this production was a nice cap to the year. "I look forward to the arts growing and thriving at Cistercian. Our students are brilliant and talented, and I can't wait to see what they will create in the coming years," said Mrs. Tasia Magill, head of the fine arts department.

Alumni College Panel

Following Christmas break, five Cistercian alums returned to campus to serve as panelists in a discussion about the college experience with juniors and seniors. **Anthony Farhat '19**

(Southern Methodist University),

John Paul Spak '19 (Cornell University),

Ethan Barhydt '20 (Notre Dame),

Joel Kattady '20 (Columbia University), and

Hogan Jones '20 (Saint Louis University) gave advice about the college search, development of the college essay, proper mindset throughout the process, and how to discern a final decision. They commented on their collegiate academic and social life, surprises and challenges they encountered, and their preparedness coming out of Cistercian.



Graduates playing at collegiate level

Connor Lipscomb '23 and **Nicolas Sobenes '23** will continue their athletic careers at Hendrix University and Southern Methodist University, respectively. Lipscomb, a three-year

varsity starter in football for the Hawks, will play defensive line for the Hendrix Warriors. Sobenes, a four-year member of the 3A Champion Hawks swim team, has been awarded a scholarship to swim for SMU.



New capital campaign in full swing

Cistercian has embarked on a \$15 million capital campaign called *Formation Beyond the Classroom*. The campaign will allow us to renovate the lower level of the gym where the locker rooms, coaches' offices, weight room, equipment room and



Eric Hart

trainer's space are located, establish a premier 3.1-mile cross-country trail in memory of **Steven S Reinemund, Jr. '99**, renovate the Stations of the Cross Trail, build a new theater with a wonderful outdoor space by the Arts Building, and renovate the space where

the current theater is located to create a computer lab and two flexible classrooms that will provide an additional larger space to be used on campus. Another benefit of this space is

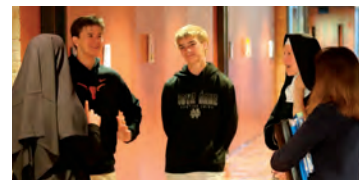
that the current flex lab will be completely devoted to the robotics team. This campaign stresses the importance of forming well rounded students and remaining competitive in our own Cistercian way among DFW private schools.



Some of the projects are already underway, such as the gym renovation (pictures available at <https://school.cistercian.org/capital-campaign/>) as well as the renovation of the Stations of the Cross Trail. To date, \$5 million dollars has been raised.

French nuns visit Cistercian

Mother Emmanuelle and **Sr. Diane** from the Cistercian Abbey of Boulaur in France visited Our Lady of Dallas for a week in April to develop the relationship between the two monasteries. They enjoyed some of the high points: FISH spring party set-up, Cistercian's last home baseball game, and a tour of the Fort Worth Stockyards complete with lunch at Joe T. Garcia's. They spoke at the Abbot's Circle Dinner and visited with students in French and theology classes.





BETTING ON
EACH OTHER
We're all in...

by Stephen LeSage '23 and Kiefer Soo '23

If you walked by the senior classrooms this year, particularly in the fall, you would see a large group of us huddled around a few desks, as is to be expected in a Cistercian classroom. Our activity, however, might be surprising to an observer. It was not usually a conversation about an upcoming social event or football game, a group brainstorm about a particularly challenging math problem, or a discussion about college essays. Instead, we were gathered around a few sets of sixty-four checkered squares and thirty-two figurines. To say the game of chess took our class by storm at the start of the year is an understatement. It rapidly became part of our day-to-day routine at school, and our infatuation grew to the point where our Form Master only semi-jokingly referred to our interest as an obsession. To us, though, the eagerness with which we took up the game was nothing new. It is hard to predict what exactly will grab our attention, whether it be Edna Mode from *The Incredibles* or a centuries-old game of strategy; regardless, what has become commonplace is the intensity with which we invest in subjects of interest.



Despite the fact that less than a decade has passed, it is already hard to remember moments from our first few years at Cistercian. Still, occasional adventures shine like spotlights in a generally foggy memory, most notably among them two instances from our third year: a tire on a hill and the Texas History trip.

Retreats in middle school are not like their upper school counterparts; they are instead geared more toward preparation for a particular event (like Confirmation in Form IV) and offer more tangible



Stephen LeSage '23



Kiefer Soo '23

lessons. Typically, students almost knocking over a telephone pole in the middle of the woods is not on the retreat agenda. In our defense, however, the question must be posed: what else were we supposed to do during lunch? To us, an old tractor tire sitting on top of a hill at the retreat center across the

street from the School was far more entertaining than a makeshift basketball or football game. We quickly had the last thing our chaperones expected us to mess with surrounded and upright as we prepared to march it down the hill to its doom. Of course, this could not be done until we had someone *in* the tire; one of our more compact classmates, Stephen Dorn, was enlisted as the pilot. With a good shove, the tire was off, gathering speed down the grassy knoll as we tried to herd it along. We expected it to roll down onto the field in front of the facility. Unbeknownst to us, the tire had a mind of its own. As it came down the first hill, it turned toward a gully containing a row of power lines for the retreat house. We had only enough time to pull Dorn out of the rotating wrecking ball before it plunged into one of the power lines below.

A few months later, we embarked on the Texas History Trip, and, as with all Forms before us, we made our presence known on the bus. Whether with chants of chaperones' names, loud exclamations prompted by card games and passing vehicles, or continually smacking the pull-down footrests as we loudly encouraged each other to "pedal for food," the energy remained high from the start. I assume most of the chaperones expected us to have calmed down by the time we arrived at a Tex-Mex restaurant the second night, but this was an opportunity to make more memories. A mariachi band started to play shortly after we arrived (right after we began pouring salt



Confirmation



Texas History trip

packets into each other's water glasses). As the meal ended and our chaperones began to feel relief that the day was over, whispers began to circulate around the tables: *it's Chris Rieke's birthday*. As the tables were cleared and the band finished another song, we chose to act on this interesting, newfound information. The first notes of the next tune were instantly recognizable. As a mariachi version of "Happy Birthday" began to serenade patrons, we lifted Chris from his chair and carried the birthday boy across the dining room so that everyone knew just whose big day it was! The chaperones quickly escorted us out. Still, the icing was already on the cake for those of us who were bold enough to celebrate our classmate so vocally. As you may have guessed, it was not Rieke's birthday.

While these may not be the best examples of great character that our class can display, they do show our philosophy since our beginning: even in trivial moments like a retreat lunch or early road-trip dinner, *carpe diem* was our constant refrain. We never missed an opportunity to *seize the day*, and anything that caught our interest could become a centerpiece of our Form's activity for months. While opportunities to completely invest were purely fun and games for the first few years of our Cistercian existence, we soon learned to transform hardships and struggle into moments of unity.



You are a Form, and that's important for me to relate to you now. This place is about all of you... Don't be afraid of weakness. My own absence at this time has to do with my own weakness... Through a lot of prayer and reflection, I realized that I could no longer ignore the difficult things with which I've been struggling for a long time, even before I came to Cistercian. That's why I want to reiterate that all of this is not because of you. Our times together were a lot of fun and probably more formative for me than they have

been for you."

With these words, sent to a rising Form IV class over summer break, Fr. Justin bid farewell to Cistercian. Fr. Justin had strived to embrace our hyper middle-school energy with a shy yet cheerful smile and did his best to relate to our hobbies (which, at that time, were Pokémon cards, Star Wars, and ricocheting off walls). His support as we had worked through the first few years of Cistercian and begun to forge friendships was all we thought of when we heard the news, and his

departure took us by complete surprise. In the middle of the summer, we suddenly realized that our eight-year journey had taken an uncertain turn.

No matter what Fr. Justin could say to try and alleviate concerns about our future, we still felt uneasy entering Form IV, and nervous energy rarely mixes well with young teenagers. While our countless pranks and rambunctious attitude had only created laughs and good memories before, our teachers were dismayed as we grew more difficult as the year progressed. Our uncertainty with the School and the future of our class weighed in the back of our minds, and others were concerned about how our Form would evolve.

Maturity comes in many ways, and we definitely needed it. Some mature as a result of small experiences and lessons, but others require a greater shock to gain perspective and see the importance of right action. Going into the summer before sophomore year, our class was messy and fraying, but in an instant, we bonded into a family. That summer, we were spread out far and wide, but our entire will and spirit flooded back to Dallas for a classmate and his mother. The event itself is a more personal story, but the circumstances, supporting moments, and aftermath impacted us. The text messages, prayers, and the giant card we made for our classmate were symbolic of what happened to our Form that summer. Through tragedy, we saw goodness worth striving for and found common ground. We had lacked a true focus for years; instead, random events, ideas, or happenings caught our eye, and we ran with them. Through suffering, we learned the power of unity. We put our shaky past behind us and focused on moving forward as one. We were all in.

While the importance of our brotherhood was taught to us by suffering, the necessity of living each moment to the fullest together began to resonate with the Form. In school, athletics, and extracurriculars, our renewed "all in" mentality began to manifest itself.

In class, freshman and sophomore years went by



Freshman baptism

normally until Mr. Saliga's American History course provided a further catalyst for our buy-in to the classroom. The tangents of art and writing that he provided to us opened massive class discussions and a hyperconsciousness to what we were investigating. This is potentially best exemplified by our papers on Hudson River School artworks. Many of us chose the last painting in Mr. Saliga's PowerPoint of options because it contained many of the school's distinguishing characteristics, but the day the paper was due, Nico Chio came into the room in a frenzy proclaiming the painting was a "red herring" and was not painted by a Hudson River School artist. His concern spread rapidly across the Form, but it also led to a vibrant discussion about whether the papers about this work of art would be docked points. The debate began as a concern over grades but quickly became a discussion about the nature and essence of a painting. The impact that history class made was evident in the thirteen cumulative 4.0 GPAs at the end of the year and continues to show itself with the five students who share the title of valedictorian for the Class of 2023: Mateo Creixell, Luke Herda, Stephen LeSage, Matthew Nguyen, and Matthew Sickler.

is in seventh grade), but the winter and spring seasons were manifestations of our potential. Our expectations and complete investment in sports carried over into high school. With nearly a fifth of the class lettering in a varsity sport freshman year, it was safe to say we were determined to realize our goals.

Still, as is always the case, we faced our share of adversity. Kiefer Soo, one of the top Tae Kwon Do fighters in the nation, and Colby Mechem, a four-year varsity basketball standout, both suffered back injuries in the first two years of their upper school careers. Mateo Creixell suffered a nearly blinding eye injury in a practice for his club soccer team, and Tarun Senthil Kumar battled injuries for years while playing varsity basketball. Each injury was a blow to our Form, and each one could have driven the hurt athlete into depths of isolation and regret. Instead, the unity we had built from our previous losses was the tie that kept us together. The resolve we built brought success to every program. Dan O'Toole, Nonso Unini, and Connor Lipscomb (committed to Hendrix for football) guided the football team to a state championship appearance in junior year. Varsity basketball finished third in the SPC tournament led by Bryce Ardemagni, Charlie

Moore, Mac Schneider, and Nate Stecklein on the court and with Mechem and Senthil Kumar offering insight from the sidelines. Diego Prida, Parker Green, and Ryan Smith led an incredibly young soccer team to an undefeated season and an SPC Championship. Swimmer Nicolas Sobenes (committed to SMU) worked with Nicholas Ringdahl and Matthew



Senior BraveArt metalwork sculpture—Archangel Raphael—in honor of Fr. Raphael, Chaplain and Assistant Form Master



Sports have played a significant role in our class, starting even before the traditional Form III school seasons. YMCA soccer teams met every Sunday at the School and would consistently roll through opponents for undefeated seasons. The same held true for parent-organized basketball and baseball clubs. Third form came around, and we naturally held lofty expectations. Football was humbling (as it always

Sickler to bring the Cistercian Aquahawks a second winter SPC Championship. Meanwhile, Soo found a new sport to dominate as he helped lead the track team with Alex Dabbous during the spring. The 4x100 (JP Roppolo), 4x400 (Roppolo and Stephen LeSage), and 4x800 (LeSage) teams garnered all-SPC recognition at the championship meet, along with several individual throwers and runners (Lipscomb and Soo). Expectations were high, and success was not guaranteed. Every member of every team showed up, though, and bought in to actualize the potential that we believed we had, culminating in championships.



Off the playing field, we invested massive amounts of time and energy into the activities in which we were interested. William Greene, Carter Soderberg, Kai Jameson, and John Paul Hays used every late-start Monday during senior year for their “Miracle Melodies” volunteer work with the Notre Dame School of Dallas. Vincent Micheli, earning every merit badge offered by



Miracle Melodies at Notre Dame School

the Boy Scouts of America, headlined a group of eleven Eagle Scouts in our class. The robotics team, led by Ryan Jackson, Andrew Oliver, Matthew Nguyen, William Coulter, Kiefer Soo and Nico Chio, won the World Championships in junior year and reached a #8 world ranking this season.

We like to take credit for our achievements, but every athlete, valedictorian, or Eagle Scout would immediately point to a teacher or coach if they were asked about their success. Likewise, while our Form galvanized internally and created bonds, our efforts had their leaders. With the loss of Fr. Justin, our group began to stray from the path that Cistercian works so hard to pave for its students, but the hole left by him was filled to overflowing by Tim Parker '90 and Fr. Raphael Schaner.

Mr. Parker was a central thread in the fabric of Cistercian's community long before he took over the



Eagle Scouts

reins of the Class of 2023. As director of facilities, he has the vital responsibility for the upkeep and development of Cistercian's campus. This did not mean that Mr. Parker was not in touch with the student body. In fact, as a biology teacher and former freshman basketball coach, he had been central to the Cistercian experience for upper school students for a long time and enjoyed a unique synergy with each incoming freshman class. “It was fun for me to see the guys in a different light as a coach, and it was helpful for them to see me differently than in the classroom,” Mr. Parker recalls. “The rapport I developed with students in the classroom extended to the basketball court, and the energy from the court carried over into class.” Everyone who has taken freshman biology with Mr. Parker appreciates his unwavering effort to engage with every student in the classroom, even if order-establishing, flying Expo markers were necessary to achieve this end. His deep involvement in so many aspects of Cistercian provides him with a valuable perspective on how to nurture the learning environment for every student.

While Mr. Parker's active leadership role in the upper school was crucial, his perspective as a former Cistercian parent and alumnus guided his approach as Form Master to the Class of 2023. In many ways, Mr. Parker's greatest strength was what came naturally to him. As a father and alumnus, he empathized with the challenges we faced, made each of us feel included and valued, and approached us with a sincere, down-to-earth attitude. With his reassuring and hearty pat on the back, his comforting guidance, and an occasional corny dad joke or two, he was our Form's backbone.

Above all, Mr. Parker was there for us. From navigating Zoom-connection drops and online classes during freshman year, to managing split classrooms across campus and post-pandemic chaos in sophomore year, and helping us cope with the stress of college applications during senior year, Mr. Parker went above and beyond to be there for every one of us. This was his mission from the very outset when he became Form Master that summer after third form.

In Fr. Raphael, our class had more than just a spiritual guide; we had a friend and older brother. Living in a devout Catholic family, Fr. Raphael grew up with daily mass. Growing up on a farm required getting up

early, which transitioned well to monastic life. “Coming from a big family, I really treasured having the heart of a big brother. Looking to my younger siblings to see how I could help and guide them really equipped me for my work here with students and my life in the family of the monastery.”

Offering Abbey workdays, Chaplain Chats, an ear to listen, and advice when needed, Fr. Raphael was the architect behind the scenes, keeping our Form’s foundation strong in Christ while ensuring we built our friendships on this sturdy base.



In searching for a theme for the Class of 2023 as I started writing this article, I turned to a more recent event as a starting point. Our senior retreat was not what we expected. We certainly were excited and willing, open to ideas and the possibility that it could hold more than previous retreats, but I think few of us expected the efficacy of those two days in the woods of East Texas. Equally surprising was the power that a smaller moment of the retreat held for us. Upon arriving, we were tasked with a scavenger hunt and meditation—certainly not activities we expected to be doing as second-semester seniors. Instead of a letdown to start the day, however, our scavenger

hunters brought back lizards, fungi, and massive logs from the forest. Then came the meditation. Lying flat on a concrete patio with thin rays of winter sun cutting the general chill of the day, Mr. Saliga led us through thought and breathing exercises. As he put it later, the entire area was humming with energy. Everything held still in that half hour of meditation. Every one of us was completely invested in the moment, along with the belief that our classmates would take the opportunity just as seriously. We placed our peace and belief in those around us, and the results were electrifying.

Our Form has enjoyed adventures and endured hardships from start to finish, leaving a great, undulating history that would require dozens of pages to adequately explore. Here, only a few stories are mentioned, but they reflect the great array of personalities and interests that give the Class of 2023 depth and dimension. With a common thread difficult to find, I believe the achievements of our class and so many smaller moments point the way. Athletes, writers, musicians. Eagle Scouts. Two collegiate athletes. Five valedictorians. Robotics, swimming, and soccer champions. A more-than-assistant Form Master. A Form Master and Form with a connection so strong that the fact they met only five years ago seems unlikely.

We placed our trust in one another and invested completely in the whole. We went all in. •



Jim Reisch

Class of 2023

FIT FOR LIFE...

Cistercian athletics
on the rebound



Bob Greenfield

Jim Reisch

During the fall and winter athletic seasons, varsity soccer went undefeated—again—and won the SPC 3A championship. The varsity football team lost a heartbreaker in the SPC 3A championship game on a last-second field goal. The varsity basketball team finished third in thrilling fashion. The varsity swim team won the SPC 3A championship. After the winter sports season wrapped up, the track team headed into one of their best seasons in more than a decade with a first place win at the Tom Landry Relays and then again at the Cistercian Hawk Relays. Added to that, Connor Lipscomb '23 beat a 40-year-old school record in discus with a throw of 147'4," and then Ryan Spurl '24 bested that new record with a throw of 157'6."

All this comes on the heels of the demoralizing and disruptive years of COVID—but these Hawks are resilient.

"Not having football in 2020 really took my son back, and losing that season was more impactful than I thought it would be," said Kevin O'Toole, father of Jack '16 (football and basketball) and Dan '23 (football and basketball). "But athletics at Cistercian teaches the boys how to get through adversity; how to work together as a team. You know, grit has been somewhat devalued recently, but student-athletes at Cistercian learn it; they earn it. They come to appreciate their sports and how to honor their teammates."

Form Master Fr. Lawrence Brophy '01 experienced in a very visceral way the effects of the lost season on his boys. "It had a traumatic, lingering effect.



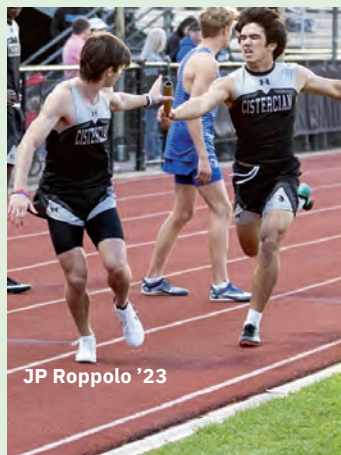
Football captains at the start of a game.

It was a very real physical injury that had to heal. We were reminded of the importance of athletics when we saw the effects that not having them had on morale. It was as if you had a three-legged stool and you took away one of the legs, the stool wouldn't be very sturdy or steady. If you're trying to form well rounded young men, taking away the physical part of their development is a significant loss. Not having it reaffirmed how important it is."

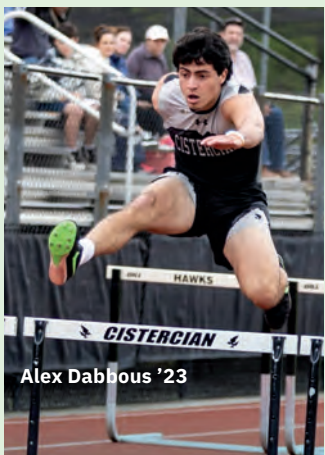
For André Bruce, assistant athletic director and assistant varsity football coach, dealing with COVID was difficult, but the healing, both personally and for the community at large, began right away. "COVID could have been divisive for the Cistercian community. I had to remember the art of civil discourse. We all had to listen to different opinions and react from a place of understanding so we could move on. The whole experience reminded us how athletics draws an entire community together. It is a source of connection for all of us and a source of pride for the young men competing in a sport."

And now, moving forward, the athletic department faces a bright future under Jack Dorn '05, athletic director and head varsity basketball coach. "This is an exciting time for us, a time of transition. With the renovations to the facilities and this year's huge successes on the field and court, in the pool and on the track, we're really excited. The split of the SPC conference into 3A and 4A divisions is going to give our athletes a better opportunity to be recognized for their hard work," said Dorn.

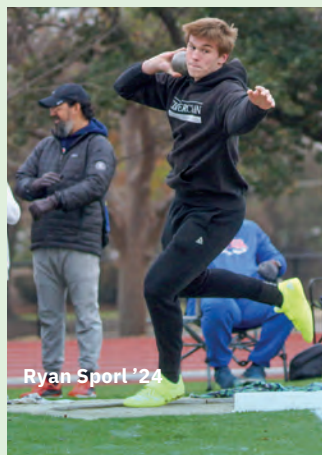
Splitting the conference into divisions means that schools with similar enrollments, facilities, and athletic prowess will play against each other, resulting in more evenly matched competition and a greater chance for the smaller schools, like Cistercian, to experience more athletic success.



JP Roppolo '23



Alex Dabbous '23



Ryan Spurl '24

Hawk Grit

Long after the wins and losses have been tallied and the trophies are gathering dust in the trophy case, the life lessons learned by Cistercian athletes will be remembered because they've been molded into their characters.

"We didn't care how great—or not—we were," recalled Ian White '10 (basketball, football, track). "We knew we were going to give it a good fight every time we stepped on the field or the court. We had a chip on our shoulders. We were usually at a disadvantage because of the size of our classes, the size of the School, and the size of our bodies. But in a room full of our teammates, we would never acknowledge we were up against it. We didn't use that as an excuse or a crutch. When we beat a team that may have been more talented than us, it was very special."

Or, as Matt Donohoe '20 (football, basketball, baseball, track, golf) said, "When we won, we knew we hadn't won because we were good, but because we were a good team. Being the underdog, which we usually were, drove our teams together. We had to form a brotherhood of sorts. We couldn't rely on one or two elite players. We had to rely on each other."

Longtime coaches, faculty, and staff members have witnessed the transformative changes the athletic program has not just on the athletes themselves but on the entire student body.

"We try to build granite out of what we start with," said Jim Taylor, baseball and football coach, and earth sciences teacher for the last 25 years. "Hopefully, the boys end up with the grit it takes to

fight and represent their school in a certain way. A while back, another Cistercian coach told me about a compliment he received from an opposing coach after a game. The opposing coach said, 'Your boys play hard; they play the way Tom Hillary would want them to play.'"

The legendary Tom Hillary, one of the last three-sport lettermen at SMU, was head basketball coach from 1979–1980 and head football coach and AD from 1984–2000. He left a legacy of tenacious athletes who played with class and respect for their opponents, their school, and their sport.



Principal coaches '96–97: Steve McCarthy, Art Senato, Mark Gray, Dan Lee, Tom Hillary



Coach Burk with football team

"The kids at Cistercian play hard, they are respectful, and they give everything they have and then some," said another longtime coach, Mark Gray, head varsity baseball coach and assistant football coach for 29 years. "I got to coach under Tom Hillary for six years. We learned a lot from him. I think about him all the time. I remember one of my first varsity baseball practices as his assistant coach. I was getting after the kids, riding them a bit, and Tom pulled me aside. 'We don't coach like that here,' he said. These coaches would do anything for the boys."

Compete with Class

"Developing these boys into young men is what concerns us here," said James Burk, assistant athletic director and head football and strength and conditioning coach for the last 10 years. "Along the way, we develop relationships with the kids. This School is like no other place in the world, and I've been around a few over the years. I've never stayed as long at any other school as I've stayed here."

"Cistercian is not going to abandon what it is, its moral



Diego Prida '23



Celebrating soccer championship

code, to win at athletics. It's not going to treat a student any differently because he's an athlete," said Daré Odeyingbo '15 (football, basketball, track). "There's a healthy balance here between academics and athletics, between work and play, although two-a-day practices for football were anything but play. That was work, but it was a different kind of work. Still, you can't get to school early or stay late for practices and consider what you're doing a hobby."

The coaches in the athletic program at Cistercian teach values as much as—if not more than—they impart athletic skills or techniques.

"Being part of a team teaches humility, hard work, resilience, leadership and the importance of mentoring the younger guys that are coming behind you," said Liam Flanigan '10 (football, basketball, baseball). "We were coached to do things the right way. If someone was being cocky or over-celebrating on the field, we'd get pulled aside for a talking-to by one of the coaches. They'd make sure we understood that we don't do that sort of thing at Cistercian."

The athletes soak in the spirit and a sense of tradition and respect for the place they represent.

J.P. Walsh, head varsity soccer coach, health instructor and school counselor, whose soccer teams have gone undefeated these last two years, had this to say about Hawk spirit: "I love that my former players attend practices when they are in town and stay in touch to find out how the current team is doing. The boys feel connected to the program even after they graduate. When we won the championship this season, it was great to have so many alumni in attendance. Before leaving the field, I had 29 text messages from those who had watched the livestream or seen the result online."

Chemistry Outside of Chemistry Class

Several former Hawk athletes and coaches pointed out that the small class sizes and the eight-year Form Master structure of the School unifies the boys and brings them closer to each other. That spills over onto the sports field.

"We become so tight and familiar with the guys in our Form over eight years," said Addison White '09 (football, basketball, track). "But sports gave us



Stephen Cox '23



Carter Kenny '25, Dillon Pitts '26

another way to interact and spend time with the guys in another context besides the classroom or the hallways. It makes you form a stronger connection that's not feasible in the classroom alone. I don't think I ever cried after taking a test, but I cried in the locker room with 40 other guys after losing a playoff football game that would have sent us to the championship. The bonding that takes place on a team is unique."

"Unlike most schools, the boys here are all in the same classes. They're all in the same calculus class, for example. They can't dodge any class. The boys



Coach Dorn with basketball team



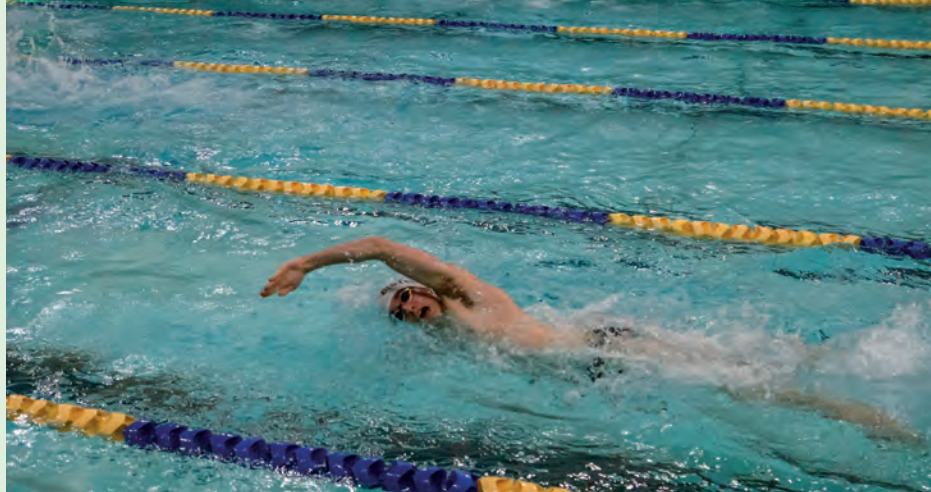
Ryan Spurl '24

are here for the academics, but also the spiritual and physical sides of their development," said Tim Parker '90 (athlete, coach, alum parent, Director of Facilities, Form VIII Form Master, and biology teacher.) "Sure, they have a greater opportunity to play sports at Cistercian than they might somewhere else, but we try to make sure that the athletes value the nonathletes in their Form. It happens organically, and the boys naturally root for each other. This speaks to the ideal of developing the whole person and the whole Form."

Hawk Spirit, Community Spirit

The spirit, commitment, and enthusiasm enkindled by athletics at Cistercian doesn't stop with the first 11 football players, the top five basketballers, or the strikers on the soccer team. It extends all the way to the end of the bench and beyond, throughout the entire student body and the whole of the Cistercian community.

"I had friends who never moved up to the varsity level but kept playing JV basketball as long as they could, because they simply enjoyed playing. It



was the fun of the sport regardless of the outcome that kept them going,” said White. “And after our practice, we would stay to watch our friends play... that unbridled enthusiasm that the student body and fans would show for the players was just amazing. When I was playing, we could be awful or we could be kicking butt; it didn’t matter. The students and fans in the stands would be going nuts.”

So much of student life at Cistercian revolves around the athletic program. Besides the games and competitions themselves, hardly a week goes by without some sort of gathering that pulls the community together. The football season, of course,

playing field or court.

“Every class is represented on the Council which meets once during each athletic season,” Fr. Paul McCormick explained. “We really wanted to get the students involved so they could help plan and understand why we do certain things and have certain policies. The boys then carry that information back to their Forms. Right now, the Council is helping us with the redesign of the Hawk logo, and they are working on some changes to the athletic banquet at the end of the year. The Council is helping their classmates—athletes and nonathletes alike—identify with the School more wholeheartedly.”

Sitting with other parents in the stands at athletic events year after year tends to build special and long-lasting bonds.

“It’s like being in a small town; like the entire small town would come out to root for its teams,” said Andrea Clay, mother of four alum athletes. “You end up knowing everyone—the boys, the parents, the coaches—everyone. You develop a real intimacy with that group. When my dad died, a lot of the people who came to console me at the funeral were my Cistercian friends, the moms and dads, and the boys.”

But it’s not just rooting for their own sons that draws parents into the community.

“The athletic program is indispensable,” said Kent Clay, former Booster Club president and father of four alum athletes. “Sports gives parents a chance to get to know one another and socialize. You find yourself cheering just as much for the other kids as you do for your own. It builds community. The priests are the ones who set the tone; they set the example of sacrifice that’s

ATHLETICS WITHOUT BORDERS

The coaches are certainly the mainstays of sports at Cistercian, but not by a long shot are they the only ones involved. The list of official and unofficial contributors to the athletic program is extensive, ranging from the PE instructors, trainers, and doctors to cheerleader sponsors, booster club officers, parent volunteers, and even a few ad hoc helpers who are often spotted in monk attire.

Official Athletic Department

Jack Dorn '05

Athletic director, basketball, football, baseball

André Bruce

Assistant athletic director, football, golf

James Burk

Assistant athletic director, football, strength and conditioning, track

Mark Gray

Baseball, football

Jim Taylor

Baseball, football

J. P. Walsh

Soccer

Phillip Agtarap

Trainer

Dennis Harris

Track, cross country, PE, strength and conditioning

Tim Hamstra

Football, basketball, track

Greg Walls

Football, basketball, baseball, PE

Part-time coaches

Mickey Dorn

Basketball

James Waits

Cross country, basketball, baseball

Pete Mätter

Tennis

Jeff Veazey

Swimming

Bobby Sillers

Tennis

Unofficial Members of the Athletic Department

Bob Haaser

History, baseball coach

Fr. Anthony

Monk, baseball helper

Br. Ephrem

Novice, basketball helper

Gerald Edwards

School security, track and field coach

Andrejs Krumins

Science, soccer coach

Fr. Matthew

Monk, soccer helper

Br. Daniel

Novice, soccer helper

Renee Phillips

Counselor, tennis coach

Fr. Gregory

Monk, swimming helper

Dr. Matthew Nevitt '97

Physician, part-time team doctor

Booster club officers

Cheerleader sponsors

Concession stand volunteers

part of athletics. They are the role models. Their attitude pervades the whole community.”

The community building that comes from the athletic program hasn’t happened by accident. The coaches and administrators have fostered it by example and by parent-oriented activities such as Coach Burk’s Father/Son Retreat and his Mom’s Clinic.

“I started the Father/Son Retreat so that the senior players on the football team and their dads could do something that has nothing to do with

football,” Burk said. “I just wanted to give them an opportunity to deepen their relationship and talk through some questions that might not normally come up. I’ve gotten feedback years later from guys and their dads who were still thinking about some of the issues from the retreat.”

“It was a very good experience,” said O’Toole. “There was nothing forced

about it. Coach had some really good questions or prompts that my son and I talked about. It was laid back, and that made it more effective. The dads had some questions for the coach about the type of offense or defense the team was going to run, but it was mostly about the dads and their sons.”

Of course, mothers have a completely different set of issues.

“I hope the moms come away with a better appreciation of what the boys learn,” Burk said. “It’s funny, but some moms don’t know what position their son is going to play, so I go over the Xs and Os with them a little bit. But I also tell them about all of the safety measures we take to protect their sons and minimize injuries. They appreciate that, I think.”

“The thing I liked most about the Mom’s Clinic was when Coach Burk suggested we write a note to our sons to put in their locker,” said Jacquie O’Toole, (Jack ’16 and Dan ’23). “I think the younger moms told their sons to have fun and have a great season, but the other senior moms and I were

really affected, trying to come up with the right words to say to our seniors to tell them to enjoy their last year. This was the first of many lasts we were to experience at Cistercian. It was very touching for me to write that note.”

More than Wins and Losses

Athletic success at Cistercian involves much more than the cumulative number of wins during any season or over any period of time.

“We have a winning culture here at Cistercian,” said Walsh. “It’s not just about winning or losing. It’s about the journey we go on, the bonding, the chemistry, the relationships. It’s about how you live your life. We watch these boys grow up right in front of us.”

And for the athletes, they have their special memories.

“What makes all those practices and all that sacrifice worthwhile are those moments on the team bus traveling to the games, the team meals, those times after the big game in the locker room with your friends...it’s about building that brotherhood, those relationships outside of game time,” said Odeyingbo. “It’s sharing the successes and failures, the ups and downs, the tears and the laughs. I played a lot for the Hawks, but even for me now, nine years removed from Cistercian, very few of my best memories are on-the-field memories. Those special moments, when you say to yourself what’s made it all worthwhile, are those moments that you shared with your teammates.” •

Bob Greenfield is the father of Rob ’92 and Michael ’99. His wife, Jackie Greenfield, is a retired CPS English teacher.



Jose Fabregas '26



Cross country team



Mark Gray HAWK FOR LIFE

“I’d tell the boys that not every day is a good day, but there’s good in every day,”

said Mark Gray, retiring varsity baseball coach and varsity football offensive line coach. “Then one day, a senior on the baseball team said that back to me at the start of practice. I asked him what good he had found in his day. ‘Coming to baseball practice,’ he said.”

No one whose path has crossed Gray’s over these last 29 years either as a parent, colleague, or player would be surprised by that story. He’s that kind of guy.

“Men sometimes don’t feel it necessary to speak on their emotions or appreciation for another man as it relates to friendship. Our masculinity sometimes prevents us from expressing ourselves in this way or being transparent about our emotions. I’m not afraid to say that I love Mark Gray. I’m proud to have developed a friendship with him, and my life has been profoundly impacted by him,” said André Bruce. “He’s kept me grounded; our conversations keep me rooted. He won’t be easily replaced. There will never be another Mark Gray at Cistercian.”

Gray became a Hawk in 1994 when

he joined the baseball staff as a part-time coach. He went full time in 1997 and became head varsity baseball coach in 1998. What’s kept him at Cistercian all these years? “The boys,” he said without hesitation. “It’s all about the boys. They work hard; they’re respectful. They’re always in that underdog role, but they give you everything they’ve got and then some. They’re fun to coach.”

Along the way these last 25 years, Jim Taylor, varsity baseball pitching coach, has been Sundance Kid to Gray’s Butch Cassidy. Mark refers to him as his co-head coach of baseball.

“Mark and I talk about why we’ve been here this long, and part of it is we both have so much profound respect for the people who have come before us — Hillary, Haaser, all of them,” Taylor said. “Mark has been like a brother to me, a friend and a parent figure. He helped shape me over the years. He’d do anything for anyone, and he has!” Gray was a groomsman at Taylor’s wedding.

From the perspective of a parent, coach, teacher and administrator, Tim Parker ’90 thinks of the coaches as teachers outside of the classroom. “They teach with words and actions and who they are,” he said. “We want the coaches to model for the boys what it is

to be a man.”

Mark Gray has been a unique model for almost three decades.

“He’s got a certain old school charm—a certain slowness about him,” said Taylor. “He’s so patient. He’s always there for the boys.”

That patience and the way he runs practices has endeared him to his players.

“I’m really sad that he’s retiring,” said Matt Donohoe ’20. “I loved playing for Coach Gray. One of my favorite parts of practice was being with him. He never got mad or yelled at us. The only time he would get on us was for our level of effort, but that was the only time.”

“Mark is like the glue that holds it all together—the players, the coaching staff, everything,” said James Burk. “He’s so even keeled, so meticulous. He’s really sharp and has good insights.”

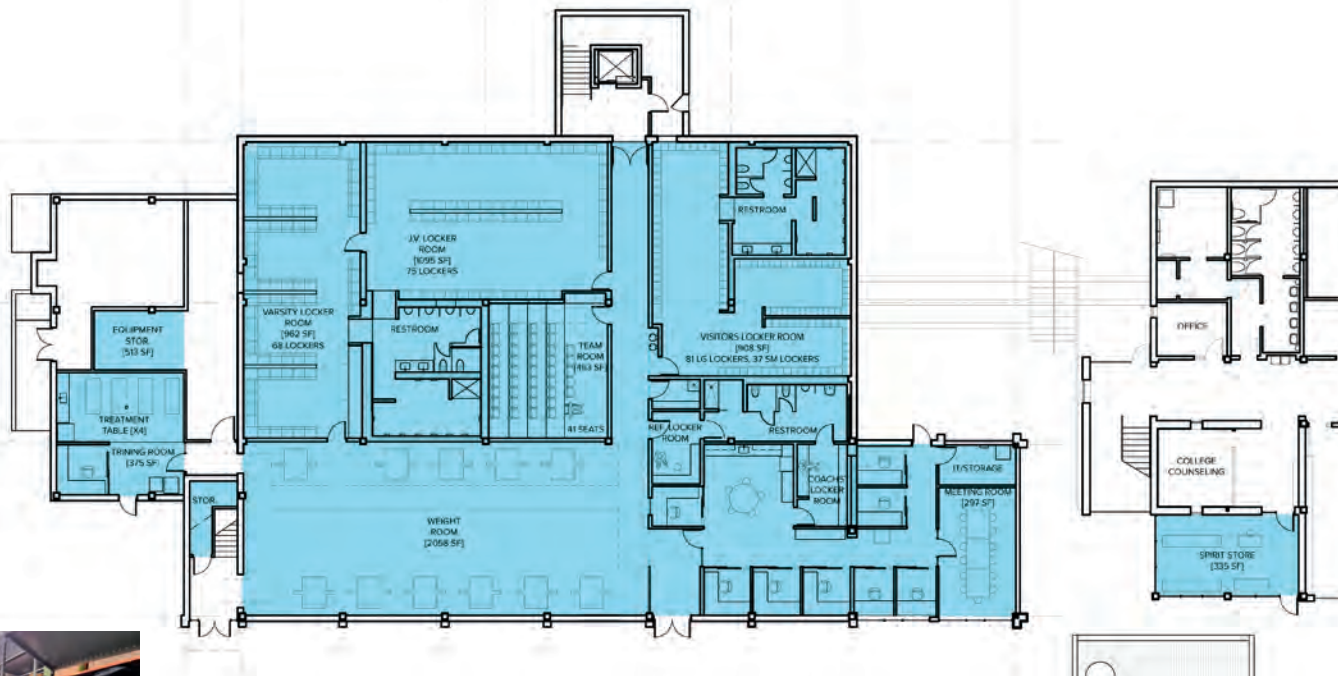
One football season some years ago, Burk realized that one of his senior players would not be able to participate in the Father/Son Retreat with his teammates because his father had died when the player was quite young. Burk thought of Gray. The player attended the retreat with Gray at his side. “I was honored and glad to do it,” Gray said. “It was a great weekend for all of us.”

Of course, if you listen to him tell it, Gray’s being at Cistercian has more to do with someone else than it has to do with him.

“Me being here this long—it was God’s plan. It didn’t happen by chance, but I’m sure glad He did it this way,” he said. “But you have to have a good wife too. Mine should get all the accolades, not me.”

And what would Mark say to the players he’s coached and the students he’s seen mature in front of him?

“Have a strong mindset, wake up every day knowing it’s going to take effort, discipline, focus and commitment, not only on the ball field, but also in life.” •



ATHLETIC FACILITIES RENOVATIONS

Making changes... ...but not too many

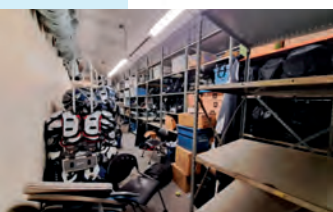
Bob Haaser, longtime teacher, administrator, coach and—in his heart of hearts—Hawk cheerleader extraordinaire, has had a front row seat for what may seem like many changes over the past 50-plus years. But mostly, he’s observed what has remained the same.

When Bob joined Cistercian in 1969, he had no office. One wasn’t available. In 1972, the first gymnasium was built, and he finally was able to move into his own office. “Bill Coombes, the head football coach and athletic director, and I got the two offices on the first floor of the gym,” he recalled. “And now, we’re blowing out all the walls and doing all this work. It’s almost as if we’re starting over. But it’s appropriate, because 50 years is a long time and this is more of a rejuvenation than real change.

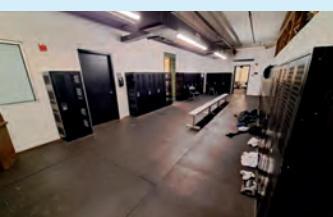
“For me, the major renovations to the athletic department’s facilities symbolize good things ahead for Cistercian sports, so the future of athletics is exciting. But will anything really change? No. The monks will make sure of that. They have a program that was brought over from Hungary, and that’s going to remain stable. We are here to help build boys into strong young men. Athletics is a part of that puzzle, but just one part. We will continue to emphasize the other important components of academics, spirituality, social development, and community service.”

Appropriately enough, the rejuvenation has begun where Haaser began his career as a Hawk—on the ground floor of the gym. •

Construction photos below by Jim Reisch



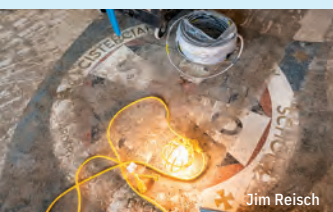
New team meeting room under construction



New weight room



Storage, lockers, meeting area and training room before renovation.



An interesting find was the original school crest on the old gym floor.



New lower gym entry

Fr. Roch Kereszty, O. Cist.

1933–2022

Fr. Roch Kereszty was born in Budapest, Hungary, on February 6, 1933, to retired army officer Ödön Kereszty and biology teacher Margit Csighy. By the age of 14, he was sure he wanted to be a priest, and, through the influence of his teachers at the Cistercian School of St. Imre in Budapest, he eventually entered the Cistercian Abbey of Zirc. At the time, however, the monastery had been closed by the Communist government, so his formation took place literally in the woods nearby and through clandestine meetings of an “underground” novitiate. During the tumultuous time that followed the uprising of 1956, Fr. Roch and other young monks escaped



Hungary. He found his way to Rome where he lived out his dream of studying theology. Along with other students, Fr. Roch was present in those dynamic years leading to the opening of the Second Vatican Council. He was ordained to the priesthood in Sankt Pölten, Austria, on October 2, 1960. After this adventurous youth and period of profound study, on May 1, 1963, Fr. Roch came to join his Hungarian brothers in the new Cistercian monastery of Dallas, where he began a faithful ministry in which he persevered for the rest of his life.

Fr. Roch’s theological studies bore fruit in a lifetime of important work as a teacher and writer. He taught courses at all levels of theology, from fifth-grade boys at Cistercian to graduate students at the University of Dallas; moreover, with important textbooks on Christology, the Eucharist, spiritual life, the nature of the Church, priestly life, and with other writings, he established himself as one of the preeminent Catholic theologians of his time. Inspired by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Fr. Roch aimed to speak of theology in a stalwartly orthodox but spiritually open way; the mysteries of the Christian faith were not abstract ideals but true experiences and encounters with the Person of Jesus Christ calling the soul to life. Fr. Roch was dedicated to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in academic and official ways and through many personal relationships.

Fr. Roch never viewed his profession as a career; his intellectual life and scholastic work were always part of his greater mission to draw all God’s children back to their loving Father. Fr. Roch lived out St. Paul’s words: “With such affection



for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us.” (1 Thess 2:8). To countless people—children, students, alumni, married couples, priests, friends of all faiths, and those with none—Fr. Roch became an invaluable and beloved spiritual guide and friend. He was never a passive listener, but he demanded to know exactly what you were doing with your life and would always tell you what he thought of

it. When a former student would show up after years away, he would say, “You scoundrel! Where have you been?” and promptly open his heart to all the deepest joys and sorrows of his visitor. Beyond his rough exterior—the imposing presence, the deep, loud monotone of his voice, the face that turned to a scowl whenever he tried to smile—was a man deeply in love with all that was good in those around him and whose hopes for others always exceeded their own. He knew that teaching alone is never enough; rather it is by passionate insistence and loving devotion to others that we can help them on the path to God.

In the monastery, Fr. Roch served for many years as Novice Master. Under his charge, the monastery ushered in a new generation of monks who entered after the year 2000, several of his own former students among them. He knew how much he had gained from the Cistercian Order and his fellow monks, and he was eager not to squander any of God’s gifts. With the unflagging zeal of a true apostle, he passed on what he himself had heard and experienced.

In his last weeks, Fr. Roch was confined to bed but was surrounded by a stream of visitors young and old. Even when he could no longer speak, he would look into your eyes and begin mouthing words. He died peacefully on December 14, right after the Cistercian students finished their first day of final exams and on the eve of the feast day of Bl. János Brenner,

a Hungarian Cistercian martyr murdered in 1957, to whose cause Fr. Roch was especially devoted.

Fr. Roch is survived by his sister Zsuzsa and his nephew Andras, both of Budapest, and by his community of Cistercian monks. The Rosary, Vigil, and Mass of Christian Burial were held in December at Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey.



Memorials can be made to The Fr. Roch Kereszty Scholarship Fund at Cistercian Preparatory School, <https://www.cistercian.org/giving>. •

Class Reunions



Great Cistercian Road Trip 2023



Washington, D.C.



New York

Winter Sports

Varsity Soccer wins SPC 3A Championship

With leadership from senior captains and SPC All-Conference selections **Diego Prida '23** (team MVP), **Parker Green '23**, and **Ryan Smith '23**, Coach J.P. Walsh's squad finished 17-0-1, scored 97 goals, and gave up only seven. The Hawks took care of Oakridge and FWCD in the SPC quarterfinal and semifinal with 2-0 victories, leading to a tough final match with Oklahoma City Casady. The Hawks struck first on a free kick from **Raad Nino '26** to **Andrew Novoa '26**, who spun in the air and directed a header to the far post. Casady scored later and sent the game to overtime. In the first OT period, **Marc Maalouf '25** headed the ball to **Patrick Sporn '26**, who quickly found Novoa, who crossed to **Patrick Garda '24**, who cracked a shot to the far post. The diving goalkeeper got a hand on it, deflecting

the ball to **Dean Nevitt '26**, who buried it into the top of the net for the 2-1 lead. The Hawks defense held firm with great goalkeeping from **Mateo Creixell '23** and timely clearances by **Michael Peterman '24** and **Jacob Liu '26**. When the whistle blew, the fans rushed the field to celebrate the championship.

Swimmers clench SPC 3A Championship

The AquaHawks finished the SPC Championship 25 points ahead of second-place Greenhill. **Nicolas Sobenes '23** led the 200 medley and freestyle relays to victory and won the 50 free and 100 butterfly. **Tom Gambow '24** finished second in the 200 IM and 100 backstroke and played a key role on the winning 200 medley and freestyle relays. **Nicholas Ringdahl '23** placed third in the 200 individual medley and second in the 100 breaststroke. **Matthew Sickler**

'23 brought more points with the 200 free, 100 butterfly and 400 free relay. **Drew Durgin '26** swam personal bests in the 100 free and 100 backstroke. **Billy Neylon '24** dove for a silver medal.

Gabe Ramos '24 swam with a broken hand to help the relays and score in the 50 free; **Sam Rogers '24** overcame a sore shoulder to score in the 100 butterfly and anchor the 400 free relay; and **Ash Harrison '23** scored in the 200 freestyle, 100 breaststroke and swam a great leg in the 400 free relay. "All of these swimmers supported each other, swam hard, and lived up to our team motto, 'The Heart of a Champion,'" said Coach Jeff Veazey.

Hawks Basketball finishes third in SPC 3A Championship

With eight returning players, varsity basketball coach **Jack Dorn '05** led his team to a 14-14 finish and a 3-4 finish in SPC play. With veteran players **Colby Mechem '23**, **Dan O'Toole '23** and **Bryce Ardemagni '23**, the Hawks' schedule tested their strength and gave **Charlie Moore '23**, **Mac Schneider '23** and **Grant Nevitt '24** experience entering SPC play as the fourth seed. The Hawks beat Trinity Valley in the first round but fell in the semifinals to Oakridge. They faced adversity against John Cooper but won the third-place game on a buzzer beater by Schneider. •



3A Boys Soccer Champions 2022-2023



3A Boys Swimming and Diving Champions 2022-2023



Hawks basketball

Spring Sports

Tennis on path to success

Hawk tennis took on a fresh, energetic look with new head coach Pete Mätter and new assistant coach Bobby Sillers at the helm. Despite losing the strength of **Josh Hays '25** to injury early on, the Hawks played beyond expectations. Freshmen starters **Jose Fabregas '26**, **Jacob Liu '26**, **Garrett O'Neill '26**, **Liam O'Neill '26**, **James Marlowe '26**, and **Peter Bui '26** provided depth behind **John Paul Hays '23**, **John Stigall '23**, and **Ryan Fang '24**. The doubles teams won 80 percent of their matches with Hays, Marlowe, Liu, and the O'Neill brothers while Bui won all of his singles matches in the number three spot! The team entered the 3A SPC Championship with confidence and a fifth-seed spot. In an almost three-hour battle against St. Andrew's, the eventual champion, the Hawks lost 2-3. "The future looks bright for the Hawks with

a great nucleus of freshmen and some upcoming players to challenge them. There is absolutely no substitute for the experience we gained playing some close, tight matches this season. Watch out SPC," said Coach Sillers.

Spring baseball highlights

With leadership from **Bryce Ardemagni '23**, **Stephen Cox '23**, **Christopher Lobmeyer '23** and **JP Roppolo '23**, varsity baseball battled their way back from a 0-4 conference start to a fourth seed in the SPC Championship Tournament. Their best game of the season was a conference game vs. Fort Worth Country Day. It was a back and forth battle, down 2-0, up 3-2, down 6-5, but in the bottom of the 6th, the Hawks cemented their lead, thanks to key hits from **Owen Putnam '24**, **Jamison Berard '25** and Ardemagni, and stellar defense from Cox, **Dillon Pitts '26**, **Joshua Reaves '24** and **John Peterman '25**. **Owen Kane '25** started the game, and **Vaughn Irish '25** got the last six outs from the bump to preserve a 9-7 victory. "A pleasure to coach, these guys worked hard at practice, had fun, and never gave up when we were down in a ballgame. They were a fun group to be around," said Coach Mark Gray.



Jacob Liu '26



Christopher Lobmeyer '23 and Joshua Reaves '24

Track and Field takes fourth in SPC

With the new SPC structure and experienced throwers, the Hawks were confident they would do well in the championship meet. Early in the season, throwers **Connor Lipscomb '23**, **Aiden Harrod '23**, **Ryan Spurl '24** and **Cade Burk '25** qualified, Lipscomb broke Cistercian's discus record set 40 years ago by **Rod Walter '83**, and Spurl bested Lipscomb's new record with a throw of 157'6"! **Bobby Quinn '25** qualified in the 200, triple jump, and 4x100, and **Kiefer Soo '23** qualified in the triple jump, both hurdles, and the 4x100. With **Stephen LeSage '23**, **Coleman Griffith '25** and **Matthew Brown '26** qualified in the 400-meter dash, the team was ready for the SPC title run.

The Hawks gained steam as the season progressed with first-place wins at the Tom Landry Relays and the Cistercian Hawk Relays. The culmination of their season was a fourth-place finish in the SPC Championship and strong team and individual performances. Medals include: LeSage, **Marc Maalouf '25**, **David Fernandes '25** and **Will McHugh '26** in the 4 x800 relay; LeSage, Maalouf, Quinn, and **JP Roppolo '23** in the 4x100 relay; **Ben Refakis '24**, Quinn, Brown and Roppolo in the 4x100 relay; Lipscomb (first) and Spurl (second) in discus; and Spurl (second) and Lipscomb (third) in shot put. •



Bobby Quinn '25

The Odor of Sanctity

There's no better-looking church in DFW than Gary Cunningham's 427-block limestone masterpiece, but right now there are better-smelling ones. We are dealing with skunks. We've always dealt with skunks. Skunks are even our school colors. But this time it feels worse, because it's in the church. Let me start at the beginning.



Patrick Spence '08

There's a long tradition that holiness is somehow fragrant. St. Paul describes the faithful of Corinth as "Christ's incense offered to God." More mysteriously, he says their lives will be "to some the odor of death unto death, but to others the odor of life unto life." His point may be that when we live a good life, those who are seeking God will find its fragrance pleasing, while "them that perish" will find it more skunky.

The popular medieval legend *The Voyage of St. Brendan* is based, like all medieval legends, on dispassionate research and painstaking empirical validation. In it, the hermit Mernoc and the monk Barinthus sail from an Irish monastery to the promised land. When they return, Barinthus's monks ask him where he's been the last two weeks, and who does he think has been doing his chores? He chides them, "Do you not know by the fragrance of our garments that we have been in the paradise of God?" Then everyone sails off to paradise, but my point here is that, at least in medieval sailors' tales, sanctity has a pleasant, floral smell.

And this brings us to the distressing situation under the abbey church, where skunks have taken up their abode. Theirs is not "a pleasing odor, acceptable to the Lord." Unless maybe the smell of skunks is acceptable to their Maker, sort of the way that the smell of diapers is not pleasing, but ultimately *acceptable* to Mom and Dad. But to the rest of us, the skunks are more of an "odor of death unto death."

How do you deal with skunks? Online you'll find encouraging recommendations about citrus peels (save one for your Negroni and enjoy it while you watch the skunks leave!), coyote urine (because let's face it, that orange-peel thing was a little too good to be true), really bright lights (who likes those?), and so on.

None of these worked, so we called in Trapper Tom.

The last time we called Trapper Tom was when a huge rat snake installed itself in the drop ceiling of JP Walsh's office. Occasionally it leaned down its head to tempt him. "Sssss. Did Fr. Paul really say you couldn't order new soccer warm-ups this year? What will basketball do with that?" Just as Walsh was reaching for the school credit

card, a 1993 AmEx linked to a numbered account in the Hungarian Virgin Islands, Trapper Tom burst in wearing safari clothes but no shoes and telling everyone "not to scream like a girl." I should clarify at this point that while the talking rat snake and the Hungarian Virgin Islands are jokes, Trapper Tom truthfully does not wear shoes at any time, including out in the woods where he does most of his trapping. In many ways, Trapper Tom is the real story here.

"He just stuck his head right up in the drop ceiling," Walsh recalls. "If the snake had been there, it would have bit him in the face, and he didn't care at all. He has no fear."

Fr. Paul asked if the snake was poisonous, and Trapper Tom barked, "No such thing as poisonous snakes! Just venomous." The difference between "poisonous" and "venomous" is a quiz-bowl question to most of us, but in Trapper Tom's world it's what keeps you alive. That and a total lack of fear, which large rat snakes can sense.

But even Trapper Tom's shoeless courage hasn't

overcome the stench of the skunks. Genesis warns us that the serpent is the most subtle of all the animals, but I can testify that the skunk is maybe the third least subtle, behind the superb lyrebird and a fourth-former eating chips in Latin.

Why is it taking so long? It's tough not just because of the smell, but because, in the chapel of all places, the smell feels so morally loaded. It smacks of divine judgment. An ecologist could probably explain it in terms of proximity to water and insect availability, but when you're in the chapel, it's hard to shake the feeling that the smell really reflects your own shortcomings, maybe something you got away with a long time ago.

So here I will offer an alternative interpretation.

A few years ago Pope Francis was urging a group of priests to stay close to those in need. He told them, "Be shepherds who smell like your sheep." ("Stink like your sheep" is what he would have said in the time of St. Brendan.)

When we think of Mother Teresa on the streets of Kolkata, is our first image of someone who smelled good? Would we guess that Damien of Molokai, who cared for the lepers of Hawaii, stayed completely fresh? What about Lazarus after three days in the tomb?

Maybe the holiest people among us are actually the smelliest. •

Note: The Continuum is happy to report that soon after this article was written, a select group of First Formers played their recorders for several minutes in front of the abbey church, driving the skunks into the Trinity.

"There will be
not a fragrance
but a stench."

ISAIAH 3:24



FORMATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

*Enkindling Character and Leadership through
Athletics, the Arts, Technology and Faith*



While Cistercian is known for its high-honors academics, our students also discover their talents, build character, and develop leadership skills outside of the classroom.

This capital campaign will allow Cistercian to remain a top-tier school in the DFW Metroplex and advance the monastic vision of educating the 'whole person.'

GYM'S FIRST FLOOR

Renovate locker rooms to replace the original pipes from the 1970s and better utilize the gym's first floor with a new suite of coaches' offices, a larger team room, and an expanded athletic training room.

CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIL

Establish a premier 3.1-mile cross-country trail that winds through Cistercian's 82 acres with different topographies for cross-country training and meets. Create an outdoor gathering space for the entire community to enjoy at the start/finish of the trail. This will be a memorial to Steven S Reinemund, Jr. '99.

NEW THEATER AND PORCH

Build a new theater and porch next to the Arts Building with the latest theater technology, adequate backstage storage and workspace, and dressing rooms. A multifunctional space for student social events, performances, dining, and even the Homecoming Dance!

SPACE FOR TECHNOLOGY

Repurpose the existing theater space to include a Form I science lab, a dedicated computer lab for the production of *Exodus* and *The Informer*, and a digital photography lab. This will allow the Flex Lab space to be dedicated solely to Cistercian's growing robotics program.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS TRAIL

Renovate the Stations of the Cross Trail to provide a safer walking path. An open piazza will welcome classes and groups to gather at the trail beginning, and benches at each Station will provide a place for guests to pray.

Please consider a tax-deductible gift or pledge by making a gift online at <https://cistercian.org/FormationCampaign>. To learn more, contact Erin Hart, Director of Development, at 469-499-5406 or ehart@cistercian.org.



August 16
First Day of Class

October 27
**Homecoming Game vs.
Greenhill**

December 16
Alumni Christmas Party

The Call of the Disciple

What if I asked you, “What do you think is the greatest possible, non-material treasure that a Christian can possess already in this life?” Some of you might say, it is my faith, others might point to all the three divine virtues, faith, hope and charity. Still others



Fr. Roch Kereszty

might mention sanctifying grace which transforms us into a child of God and provides the entrance ticket to Heaven. I would say all these are invaluable treasures, but there is something infinitely greater than all these, that in fact is the source of all these treasures: the presence of Jesus Christ Himself within us. He made this promise: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word and My Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our home in him” (Jn 14:23. Cf. also 1 Jn 3:6, 3:24, 4:12, 4:15).

Finding a home within us is the goal of God’s plan with mankind: He created us and He sent His Son among us as a true and simple human being; for this reason He died for us so that He might become nourishing food and life-giving blood for us and thus enable us to welcome Him in our body and soul so that we might be

more perfectly transformed into Him by each Holy Communion.

Even though we know this fact in theory, we live most of our lives as if Jesus were far removed from us in Heaven, and had more important things to attend to than being present in us. As a result, we leave our guest alone, since we rarely return home, to our own hearts. Exciting sounds, thrilling movies, garrulous friends keep us busy. At every waking moment we need something new and stimulating. How could we have energy and time to welcome Christ in our hearts and listen to Him?

Perhaps we ignore Him because we are afraid that in His presence we would have to change—change our thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Yes, in fact, we would need to change—but for the better. It is not about assuming a rigid and unctuous posture, nor putting on a façade. All we would have to do is be ourselves: admit our sins and request a gentle “radiation treatment.” Let the radiance of His love burn out the cancerous growths in our hearts and make us shine with Christ’s own light and love. God loved King David as he was dancing with abandonment before the Ark of the Covenant. We should also alternate “dancing,” rejoicing and joking with awe and adoration.

We cannot outdo Jesus in generosity.

If we provide a home for Christ within us. He will also provide a home in Himself—a safe shelter of peace and tranquility. The words of St. Bernard will prove true also in our lives: “Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia: The calm God calms down everything.” Unexpected upheavals may come and shake us but they will not destroy us nor can they take away our place.

If we make a home for Christ, he will stretch our heart wide open so that it might become a home for all those who come to us for help but especially for those who are entrusted to our care. There are too many shipwrecked human lives, poor and affluent, estranged from themselves and from their own families, children and adults, who have never experienced unselfish love in their lives.

Then, at the moment when our earthly life comes to an end, we will not find ourselves alone because Christ will accompany us on this final journey. As we fall asleep in death, we will awaken to the dawning of the day that never sets and to the “morning star rising in our hearts” (2nd Pt 1:19). •

Fr. Roch offered spiritual guidance and words of wisdom for years on the back page of the *Continuum*. The article above is from Fall 2010 and still resonates today. To allow readers to revisit this knowledge, we have compiled Fr. Roch’s articles on the website at <https://school.cistercian.org/roch/>. These articles can be searched by topic or printed in their entirety.