

ORA ET LABORA



A publication of **Benedictine High School** and **Saint Andrew Abbey** Spring 2024



JOURNEY TO AFRICA:
Uniting Hearts & Hands in Mission
FRESHMAN JOEY PALETTA'S AMAZING JOURNEY
LAST SUMMER *See story Page 12*

ABBOT GARY'S ADVENT REFLECTION

The Easter Spirit

ALLELUIA!! Happy Easter! (English), Šťastnú Veľkú noc! (Slovak), Veselé Velikonoce! (Czech), Wesolych Świąt! Wesołego Alleluja! (Polish), Kalo Pascha! (Greek), ¡Felices Pascuas! (Spanish), Buona Pasqua! (Italian), Cásca Sásta! (Gaelic), Glad Påsk! (Swedish), Frohe Ostern! (German), Schoni Oschtere! (German-Swiss), Joyeuses Pâques! (French), Khristos Voskres! (Russian), Īsutā, Omedetō! (Japanese), Feliz Páscoa! (Portuguese), Mutlu Paskalyalar! (Turkish), Paște Fericit! (Romanian), Gezuar Pashket! (Albanian), Eid Fash Saeid! (Arabic), Sretan Uskrs! (Croatian), Vrolijk Pasen! (Dutch), God påske! (Danish/Norwegian), Hyvää Pääsiäistä (Finnish), Kellemes Húsvéti Ünnepekét! (Hungarian), Chag Pesach Sameach! (Hebrew), Selamat Paskah! (Indonesian), Felix Pascha! (Latin), Fùhuó jié Kuàilè! (Chinese), Linksmų Velykų! (Lithuanian), Priecīgas Lieldienas! (Latvian), Srećan Uskrs! (Serbian), Heri Kwa Sikukuu Ya Pasaka! (Swahili)



Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, OSB '74

No matter where you are in the world right now, we are still celebrating Easter, Jesus Christ's Resurrection. And so, I wish you a happy, blessed, and glorious Easter season!

Do you know why Christians celebrate 50 days of Easter?

We must first of all look at what brings us to such a glorious time in our lives and in the life of the Church and world. Jesus's ministry was all about the Love of God, His compassion, forgiveness and healing of our lives and our souls, as well as the healing of our relationship with God and with each other. God's greatest gift and sign of His love for us was shown by His Son Jesus embracing the Cross and taking on our sins and the pain we have caused others as well as the pain others have caused us. We remember Jesus' Passion, and the profound events leading up to His crucifixion/execution on the Cross and the somber, fearful atmosphere that surrounded Jesus' followers. Then, beyond their wildest dreams and ours, The Miracle of that glorious Easter morning and the vivid picture of the tomb, once sealed and guarded, now standing empty symbolizing the triumph of life over death.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus is the greatest testimony of God's love for us, even when we fall or turn away from God, He is always there with us at our side and in our hearts through His Son and in His Spirit. His sacrifice overcame sin and offers all of us the hope of eternal life. After the Resurrection, Jesus spent forty days on earth before he ascended into Heaven. During this time he walked among the people, spreading love, compassion, healing, and wisdom.

On the 50th day of His Resurrection, Pentecost Sunday marks the day when the Church was born. On this day the Apostles received their Baptism by the Holy Spirit, bringing the believers into the life of the Trinity.

The Easter season and the arrival of Spring are beautifully intertwined and prolong the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. As earth awakens from its winter slumber, colorful flowers burst forth, birds sing joyous melodies, and a gentle warmth returns to the land. This renewal of life gives us hope in the victory of light over darkness through Jesus' Resurrection. It is during these weeks of rebirth that we experience an air of anticipation and wonder.

We gather as a community to embrace unity and gratitude for the interconnectedness of the seasons and the spiritual teachings that Christ brings through His Resurrection. This time of celebration embraces the eternal cycle of life and the enduring message of hope, love, and renewal.

Peace,

Abbot Gary, OSB '74

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Benedictine Family and Friends,

I am not sure what is harder to believe, the fact we are in the final quarter of the 2023/24 school year or that my alma mater continues to ask me back each day to lead this incredible place we call Home of Champions. One thing that certainly is true is that I can no longer use the excuse, "I'm the new guy." Springtime at Benedictine is a very exciting time and reminds me of my time as a student anxiously looking forward to spring sports like track, baseball and lacrosse. I also remember welcoming the warmer days where the fresh air seemed to make the days go by just a bit quicker than the dog days of winter and counting the days until the end of the school year. I am sure our students have similar feelings now that two thirds of the year is in the books, but for one group of students, our seniors and class of 2024, there is likely a whole different set of emotions as their time at Benedictine winds down. Feelings of excitement for sure, but also perhaps a bit of sadness, anxiousness and of course optimism are most likely running through their heads as they prepare for life after Benedictine.

If we as administrators, teachers, monks, staff and families of Benedictine have done our job, this group of soon-to-be graduates will certainly be prepared to take on all that life will throw at them as newly anointed Men of Benedictine. I am occasionally asked what it means to be a Man of Benedictine or M.O.B. for short. What seems like an easy question to answer, it can be difficult to put into words because it means more than just words or descriptors can capture and it is often described as a feeling or an experience that you just know. I will try to explain using some real-life examples since returning to the building where I was formed into a proud member of the M.O.B. community.

- M.O.B. are leaders in their community as are the members of the Benedictine Key Club who inspired, drove and encouraged their classmates to collect over 7,000 men's hygiene products for the Bishop Cosgrove Center, earning a day off in the process.
- M.O.B. are leaders in their profession including Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB '58, Mark Francioli '71, Rick DiGeronimo '73, Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74, and David DiGeronimo '80 who combined have nearly 250 years of service dedicated to Benedictine High School.
- M.O.B. are leaders in athletics as demonstrated by the varsity Hockey team winning back-to-back Baron Cup Championships with motivation from an incredible student cheering section.
- Being a M.O.B. is an experience like that of our entire school coming together at the Dual at the School Wrestling event in Trueman Fieldhouse. Talk about school spirit on full display, it was that times two!



Mr. Dave Schroeder '90

- Being a M.O.B. is the feeling of pride when nearly 300 students and faculty celebrate a school Mass and conclude by locking arm-in-arm singing the Benedictine Alma Mater.
- Being a M.O.B. is going on the road to Columbus, OH and meeting up with over 20 fellow alumni from various classes all sharing stories and memories of the school they love.

I can go on and on but I think you get the point by now. While it may be tough to describe, it is certainly easy to see every day and everywhere and at the end of the day everyone will agree that being a M.O.B. is very, very special. So, to the graduating class of 2024, and on behalf of all those Men of Benedictine past and present, I welcome you to this very distinct club and challenge you each to live up to the responsibility of being a Man of Benedictine.

Bengal Proud,

Dave Schroeder '90



Men of Benedictine from the Columbus area meet at the home of Dan '82 and Gina Smith for a State of the School.

Cleveland Benedictine Monks Participate in FCSLALife Convention

Written By
Father Michael Brunovsky, OSB

During the weekend of October 5-8, 2023, both Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB and Father Michael Brunovsky, OSB participated in the 43rd Quadrennial Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Fr. Michael was among the over 400 delegates to the convention participating in the sessions dealing with organizational business and voting on the measures taken and officer elections. Abbot Gary presided at the Mass on Friday morning, October 5, where he encouraged the delegates to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit in their deliberations and to remember that working together is the strength not only of any organization, but of our faith as well. He commended the delegates for giving witness to the faith and to the Slovak Heritage that are the foundations of the organization and its good works.

The Convention was significant in that it approved a change in the method for selecting the organizational president. Usually the work of the convention in voting for a nominated slate of candidates, the Board of Directors will now have the responsibility for hiring the president after a series of candidate interviews to judge their suitability to match the qualifications for this important position. President Cynthia Maleski was elected to a two-year term spearheading the transition. With the assets of FCSLALife growing, it is imperative that qualified leadership be at the helm.

The Cleveland District (Anna Hurban), through the leadership of Joyce Lechman,

chartered a bus to the Convention, allowing both Cleveland and Lorain delegates to enjoy each other's company and discuss issues instead of being concerned with driving. Other Benedictines participating were Archabbot Martin Bartell, OSB, from St. Vincent Archabbey, who celebrated the Convention Mass for Sunday; former Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB; and Rev. Edward Mazich, OSB, rector of St. Vincent Seminary. Other clergy participating were Very Rev. Msgr. Peter Polando from the Diocese of Youngstown, who is the National Chaplain for FCSLALife, and Rev. Francis Basa from the Diocese of Cleveland.

FCSLALife is one of the largest fraternal organizations in the country, founded in Cleveland, and very generous supporters of the Benedictine Order of Cleveland and many other organizations throughout the country. Its home office is located in Beachwood, Ohio.

We are grateful for the grants received from the convention donation committee: 1) Donation to the Benedictine Order of Cleveland from the FC SLA of \$15,000 for repairs to the abbey church roof. 2) Donation to the Slovak Cultural Garden (corporately sponsored by the Benedictine Order of Cleveland) in the amount of \$6,000 for repairs and replacement of damaged stonework in the plaza.



Clergy participating: Msgr. Peter Polando, National Chaplain, Fr. Michael, OSB, Abbot Gary, OSB, Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB, Fr. Frank Basa.



Abbot Gary presides at Mass and encourages Convention attendees.



Fr. Michael was able to meet up with his cousin Christopher Lichtler, who lives outside Indianapolis!

Father Justin Celebrates Silver Priesthood Jubilee

Written By Father Michael Brunovsky, OSB



In the midst of Christmas Preparations, Assumption Parish put on an especially beautiful celebration to honor its pastor, Fr. Justin Dyrwal, OSB for his priesthood silver jubilee. Both church and parish hall were beautifully decorated in Advent/Christmas themes that brought out the best of both seasons and reflected the joy of the parish community for its pastor.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Fr. Justin was baptized and raised in St. Gabriel Slovak Parish by his parents, William and Marion Dyrwal, with brothers William and James, and sister Georgine. He went to St. Gabriel's primary school and graduated in 1982 from North Catholic High School in Pittsburgh. He further studied at Allegheny County Community College and entered the novitiate at St. Andrew Abbey in 1991. After professing his vows, Fr. Justin completed pre-theology studies at Borromeo Seminary/John Carroll University and studies for the priesthood at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

After ordination on December 19, 1998, Fr. Justin served on the faculty of Benedictine High School, teaching English and Theology and working in campus ministry. On July 1, 2004, Fr. Justin began his tenure as pastor of Assumption Parish, recommended by Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB, and appointed by Bishop Anthony Pilla. During this time, Fr. Justin has diligently improved the spiritual life of the community through renewal programs, parish missions, continuing education presentations and pious attention to the liturgy. His love for the church has been seen in his commitment to refurbish the church building with a new roof and interior improvements. The recent renovation of the

sanctuary now provides a more dignified setting for the liturgy. Fr. Justin is known for his frugal business sense, yet also for his compassion, shown clearly through his dedication in ministering to the sick and the suffering, those in hospitals, care facilities and nursing homes. He has never neglected an opportunity to offer spiritual comfort and the solace of the sacraments to his parishioners. Today's challenges in Catholic education have been met by a partnership with St. Albert the Great School that makes the parish educational facilities more viable.

The jubilee festivities began with the liturgy of Gaudete Sunday in Assumption church with Bishop Roger Gries, OSB, and more than a dozen priests and brothers, parishioners, relatives, and friends in attendance. Fr. Damian Breen, a priest of the Metuchen Diocese in New Jersey, friend, and classmate of Fr. Justin's, acted as Archpriest for the liturgy and Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB, parish weekend associate, preached the homily. Afterward, a gala reception was held in the Parish Family Center where the parish celebrated in gratitude the work of their pastor and his priesthood milestone. Many tributes and toasts to his work and the prosperity of the parish followed and the appreciation of all was evident in every accolade. Congratulations, Fr. Justin, and may your ministry continue to bring the love of Christ, the strength of his wisdom and the beauty of his praise to all that you meet. *Ad multos annos!*



Festive Head Table: Seated, Fr. Justin, OSB with brother James and Rev. David Misbrenner (Youngstown); Standing, Rev. Damian Breen (Metuchen), brother William, sister Georgine, and Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB



ABOVE: Fr. Justin, OSB receives congratulations from Bishop Roger Gries, OSB.

LEFT: Fr. Justin celebrates the jubilee liturgy with archpriest Fr. Damian Breen.

Brother Gregory in the cell of Saint Benedict in the monastery at Monte Casino, Italy.



Br. Gregory's Monastic Journey

I was born Seamus Coyne, in Lakewood, Ohio. I am the fifth of nine children, with two older brothers, and six sisters. We all went to Saint Rose of Lima parish and school until they both closed. After which, we started going to Padre Pio Academy, in Lakewood, as my parents helped found the school. From a very young age, I remember feeling a call to religious life. I couldn't wait until the second grade to start as an altar server, so our parish priest said I could start serving with my older brothers when I was in the first grade. Our family was quite close with our parish priest, and I remember our parents hosting many priests and seminarians for dinner at our house as I grew up, and I remember always being very interested in being like them. My first contact with the Benedictine monks was when I started serving the Tridentine Latin Mass for Father Bede and Father Kenneth, who Baptized my youngest sister Megan as I served by his side. They both celebrated Mass at Saint Rose of Lima on the weekends.

I then went to high school at a boarding school near Scranton, PA, called Saint Gregory's Academy. There were about sixty boys living in the community, and the daily life there was based loosely on the daily life of a Benedictine monk. We started each morning, with Lauds and Mass, and then we would clean the whole school building and clean our rooms before we could get breakfast, and then classes started at 9am. After classes we would rush to rugby practice, which went from 3-5pm, and then we would pray the rosary, eat dinner, have a study hall, and an hour of free time before night prayer, before lights out by 9:30. This very regimented day was exactly what I needed in order to succeed. It wouldn't be until almost eight years later that I would fully realize what a blessing this experience was for me.

After high school, I would take two years off, working and saving for college, all the while still having religious life as my main interest as a vocation. However, I started to become quite hesitant at the idea of being a celibate, and so started to put that call on the back burners, and hope for a new vocation to grab my interest. I went to Christendom College in Front Royal, VA, and ended up failing out as a result of not having any direction, because there was no other vocation calling me, and I was too stubborn to hear God's call to the abbey. Fast forward a little bit, I finally realized that I wasn't capable of making myself happy, and decided to visit the abbey to see if God really knew what He was doing with my life. I was accepted as a postulant and entered the abbey at the age of 26, in June of 2020.

It was now that I realized how well God had been preparing me to live a life in community throughout my whole life. When the bell rang to wake me up my first day at the monastery, a switch was flipped for me, taking me back to my high school days, and I knew immediately that I could do this, and that I was finally home. God keeps all His promises for those who give up family and loved ones for the sake of His Gospel, and follow Him. I have been blessed every day to be here at Saint Andrew Abbey.

The Biking Benedictines: Fr. Thomas and Abbot Austin



BHS campus minister **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB** is the most experienced "Abbey Cyclist" in recent years because of his penchant for taking long bike rides. During the good weather months, especially the summer, he usually takes his bike out after his Sunday Masses at St. Anthony's Parish in Lorain and St. Teresa's Parish in Sheffield Lake. He has covered most of Lorain County and beyond with round trips that take several hours but are able to get him back to his parents' house in Sheffield Lake for a good supper. A typical Sunday ride can cover **30-40 miles**.

During some of his vacation days the last few summers, Fr. Thomas has been testing his endurance with destinations of longer distances such as state parks at Maumee or Mohican which require overnight lodging to cover distances of **50-100 miles**. In April of 2022, he achieved his first "Century Ride" of **102 miles** which took almost **13 hours** of biking all the way to Sandusky and back in one day. And last summer he biked to Columbus in two days, but biked back the entire **130 mile** trip in one day, a personal record.



Abbot Austin Murphy, OSB (Top photo on the left bike) of **St. Procopius Abbey** in Lisle, Illinois, the monastery from which the first monks came to Cleveland in 1922, visited St. Andrew Abbey from August 2-3, 2023 on his way to New York. He had his bike packed in his car, and **Fr. Thomas** invited him on a **25-mile** bike tour of downtown Cleveland seeing places like Tower City, the stadiums, the Cuyahoga River, the Art Museum, Playhouse Square, the Flats, as well as Lake Erie. Both monastic cyclists were in good shape for the afternoon tour since **Abbot Austin**, who is **50 years old**, and **Fr. Thomas** who is **45 years old**, are veterans of recreational biking.

Through Different Eyes

Sister Helene Skrzyniarz is a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis in Garfield Heights with a doctorate in Education who currently serves on the BHS Board of Trustees.

When I was asked to give my perspective as a BHS Board member about Benedictine High School, I thought seriously of declining the invitation, not because I felt I could not do it, but more because my introduction to Benedictine High School in 1975 was something I treasured and was reticent to share. First impressions are lasting and learning about the charisms of Benedict through the lives of the monks, with whom I worked, changed my life.

A Benedictine monk whom I respect reminded me that I had seen and continue to see Benedictine High School's effects through a different lens because of who I am: a vowed religious Franciscan who taught in Catholic schools for many years, and in public education for six years as an upper-level administrator and as a Superintendent of Schools for nine.

Most of my fellow Board of Trustees members attended Benedictine High School and remember their years there as students and athletes, but what I see as an educator is how the Rule of Saint Benedict, the witness of the monks at Benedictine High School, and Benedictine education itself forms the whole person, shaping the hearts, minds, and souls of the "Men of Benedictine" into who they are today – whole persons who are rigorous thinkers with the ability to practice right living.

Benedictine refers to itself as "Authentically Catholic." This does not mean that all the students are Catholic or even that all the Catholic students come from families that practice their faith. It means that Benedictine is proud to pass on the truths taught by the Catholic Church that have positively impacted society for 2,000 years. The most powerful witnesses at BHS, however, are the monks themselves. They are "Fathers" in a unique way to the men they teach, counselors when life gets rough, and men who truly have "the Heart of Christ."

In 1979 Abbot Jerome and the monks voted to keep the high school where it was, to serve the changing Buckeye-Woodland neighborhood, and to weather any storm. That decision stabilized and solidified the presence of Benedictine High School as "the beacon on the hill." Benedictine High School is doing much the same today with its "forward step and upward look" – It sees the future and addresses what needs to be done for the young men they teach, the region of the city that surrounds Benedictine High School, and the world.

The virtues of a Christian life of love for God, prayer, and service to others that Saint Benedict set in his Rule 1,500 years ago have guided not only the monks but also the students they teach both from their first day at BHS to the present. Although

Benedictine High School is a different entity than Saint Andrew Abbey, the core values that animate the Abbey are envisioned in both the Abbey's and the school's history and current life. The Benedictine monks have sunk deep roots into this particular place to support the transformation of individual hearts and minds. But this transformation was not done by the monks, administration, and teachers alone.

Over the years, the Boards of Trustees have worked diligently to support the Benedictine life and education one sees today through the preservation and renovation of the original high school, and through active support and oversight of the construction that has brought state-of-the-art construction and technology into the school that is rapidly approaching its 100th year of existence! Most recently the Board, supported by the Monks of the Abbey, successfully transformed the physical campus by connecting the school and the Abbey through the creation of the Rufus Courtyard that provides a clearer sense of welcome with the new entrance off the large parking lot, and enhances learning through the total updating of the science department facilities.

So, what do I think needs to improve? First, how can we get more members of the extended Benedictine family, especially the scores of alumni in the Cleveland area, to visit the campus and provide support? If my recent experiences here have affected me so positively as a non-alumnus, how much more should BHS alumni be proud of their Alma Mater and get involved. Secondly, how can we help parents and guardians of grade school students learn more about the positive and unique Benedictine way that the Catholic faith impacts this campus so they will encourage their sons to visit and learn more about us. And finally, from the Board on down, how can we be ready to take bold risks, like the decision made in 1979 to prepare our students for significant changes in the world that awaits them?

As Benedictine High School prepares to celebrate its 100th year of transforming hearts, minds, and lives in 2027, the lasting relationships among students, faculty, and staff continue to support what Saint Benedict had in mind 1,500 years ago. Benedictine education emphasizes the importance of listening with the heart through prayer, and integrating what students learn into the fabric of life. At BHS, young men are assisted daily in building a strong moral character so each may become a responsible leader who flourishes in an ever-changing world.



Just a few of the many Men of Benedictine to benefit from our hard working Leadership team

Nurturing Faith and Community:

FATHER THOMAS AND TEAM ARE BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CAMPUS MINISTRY AT BENEDICTINE HIGH SCHOOL

Written By Lynne Schroeder

Campus Ministry plays a crucial role in fostering a vibrant and spiritually enriching environment within Catholic high schools. Rooted in the principles of Catholicism, Campus Ministry serves as a beacon of faith, guiding students on their spiritual journey and promoting a sense of community, service and personal growth. We are fortunate to have Fr. Thomas and a group of students who are breathing new life into Campus Ministry which had declined during COVID-19 restrictions and needed a recovery plan.

Fr. Thomas and the team ensure that we provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Catholic teachings, engage in prayer and reflection, and participate in the sacraments. At Benedictine we overemphasize the importance of community, and Campus Ministry plays a pivotal role in nurturing a sense of belonging and togetherness. Beyond the confines of the school campus, Campus Ministry also encourages students to translate their faith into action through volunteerism.

Here's a glimpse into the ongoing initiatives of their team. Within each class, dedicated students step up as chaplains, working alongside Fr. Thomas to engage their fellow classmates. The junior and senior chaplains, in particular, shoulder significant responsibilities across a spectrum of school activities.

The students work with Fr. Thomas to prepare and execute the weekly convocation sessions. This is a time the entire school comes together for reflection, celebration, recognition and team building. They also play a role in the celebration of all our school Masses to ensure we have them well planned and executed on a monthly basis. Campus Ministry is considered to be part of leadership development, so the students also participate in Masses as lectors and servers.



*Fr. Thomas with his Campus Ministry Leadership Team.
Back Row, L-R: August Stromann '27, Will Hall '25, Jacob Shean '25, Danny Bozickovich '25, Charles Koppitch '25, Front Row, L-R: Matthew Torres '24, Jeremy Ade '26, Fr. Thomas Sanders OSB, Sean Washington '24, Cameron Huggins '26*

Playing a pivotal role, they are instrumental in supporting various retreats, with the freshman retreat serving as a crucial introduction to Benedictine life, where understanding our Hallmarks lays the foundation for a successful four-year journey. The sophomores' church



tour provides an incredible opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the beauty and sanctity of diverse local churches' architecture and history. Juniors and seniors can choose from a range of retreats, such as Cycling, Living with Benedict, Lord of the Rings, and the highly popular Mountain of God Retreat. The success of delivering a positive experience to our students relies on the support of their peers, and we express gratitude to the many students who embrace this role.

Lastly, each year we join the diocese in the celebration of Catholic Schools Week and the team works to ensure we have daily activities that celebrate and affirm our faith. This usually takes the form of spirit days, reflections, sharing, volunteerism and more.

As the Campus Ministry program is reborn, there are new plans in the future too. Fr. Thomas intends to institute a pallbearer team so that our community can be laid to rest with support from our Men of Benedictine. He also intends to collaborate with faculty more to infuse Catholic teachings into the curriculum, fostering a holistic education that encourages critical thinking and moral discernment.

Campus Ministry fosters an environment where students can forge meaningful connections with their peers, teachers, and the broader community. Our Campus Ministry serves as a dynamic force that weaves together the fabric of faith, community and personal growth. Through its various initiatives, Campus Ministry guides students on a transformative journey, preparing them not only for academic success but also for a life deeply rooted in Catholic values. The impact of Campus Ministry extends beyond the school years, shaping individuals who are equipped to face the challenges of the world with a strong moral compass and a commitment to serving others.



22nd Annual BLUE & WHITE GALA

BEFORE, BETWEEN, BEYOND

March 16th was an unforgettable evening at the 22nd Annual Blue & White Gala! With over 500 attendees, including alumni, friends, volunteers, and Men of Benedictine, the 2024 Gala surpassed all expectations. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we achieved a new record, raising over \$700,000 to support tuition assistance and scholarships at the Home of Champions.

One highlight of the night was an inspiring video showcasing our faculty and staff's impact on student success. In addition, President David Schroeder '90 gave an emotional speech highlighting his joy returning to Benedictine which then kicked off a second round of support totaling \$333,000 just in the fund-a-need portion alone!





22nd Annual **BLUE & WHITE**



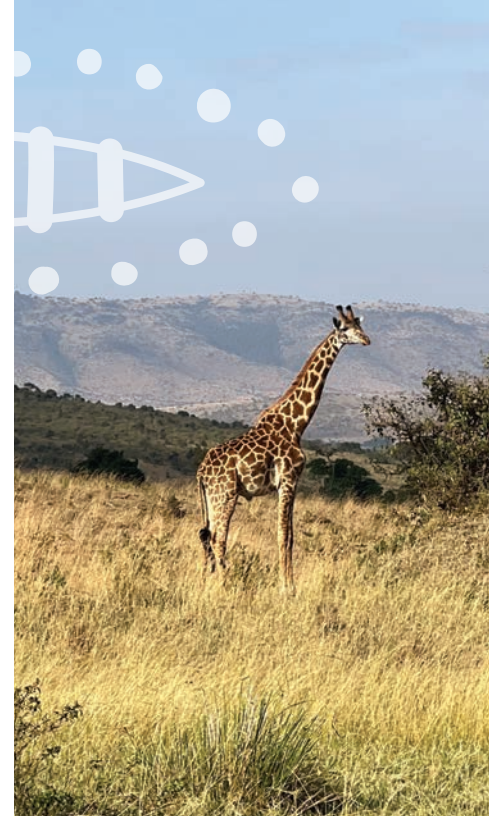


GALA

thank you!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved – staff, parents, guardians, students, volunteers, alumni, friends, and philanthropists. Enjoy the photos, and we eagerly anticipate seeing you again in 2025!





Valuable Lessons in Community & Stability

JOEY PALETTA '27 MISSION TRIP

Written By Lynne Schroeder

Not many students have the opportunity to take a fully funded mission trip to experience third world countries, but freshman Joey Paletta did just that in August 2023 when he traveled to Egypt, Kenya and Mombasa. Joey spent 2-½ weeks with fellow wrestlers from NE Ohio who traveled with local non-profit "Beat the Streets" Cleveland.

"Beat the Streets" mission is to positively alter life's trajectory for K-12 student athletes in the City of Cleveland by giving them access to youth development, mentoring and wrestling. The group is centered on the promotion and introduction of wrestling to young men and women in the City of Cleveland and surrounding areas in Ohio. They provide experience and education to underprivileged youth, including introducing them to high level wrestling programming, coaching, clinicians, tutoring, health education, travel and mentorship. The mission trip was fully funded by the generosity of their donors and benefactors. To qualify for the trip, students must submit an essay, achieve good grades, and provide two letters of recommendation. A committee reviews the submissions to narrow the travelers down.

Joey traveled with 11 wrestlers from the Cleveland area who met up with 12 students from "Beat the Streets" Baltimore to round out the travelers. While overseas, they called United States International University-Africa (USIU) in Nairobi, Kenya home. From this home base, they traveled to Mombasa and spent time in villages around Africa. They also ventured out for a safari in Kenya where their accommodations were huts in the middle of nowhere.

Joey enjoyed the experience of staying in the college dorms. While there, they invited 60 kids from the neighborhood to visit them on campus. "Beat the Streets" partnered each US student with 1-2 Kenyan students so they could learn about each other and their lifestyles. In addition to sight seeing and charity work, they conducted workshops on Leadership and Mental Health.

For Joey, this was the biggest trip he's taken and the longest time he's been away from his family, but he believed it was the chance of a lifetime that he could not pass up. Some of his favorite moments were those spent in the villages. They provided supplies and taught wrestling skills to village youth, ages 7-20. In turn, they learned about village life

and the limitations of not having modern day conveniences.

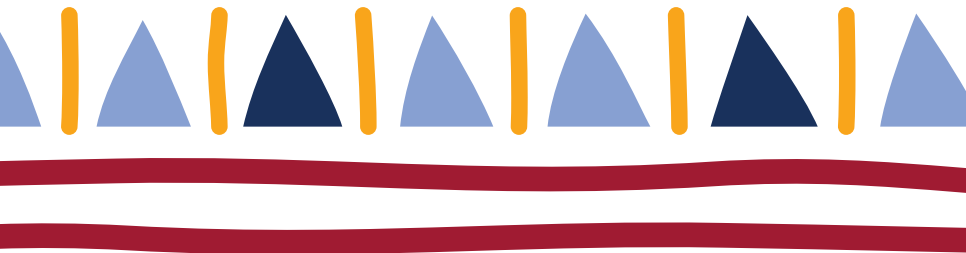
Some examples of life in the village that he shared were making fire with sticks, hunting for their food, and being limited to non-mechanical transportation. Their homes and beds were built of straw and clay with very little to offer comfort.

The group had a 17-hour layover in Egypt and made the best of it with amazing opportunities to tour the inside of a pyramid, visit the Sphinx and see the Nile River. Throughout the trip, Joey was also afforded the chance to jet ski in the Indian Ocean and ride a camel in the desert. Some of their excursions also brought them up close and personal to animals like monkeys and warthogs. Lastly, he learned about the value of money and had to research conversion rates turning dollars into shillings. At the time, 1,000 shillings was equal to \$7 US dollars.

One lesson that was not so enjoyable for Joey was that he became sick from a parasite during the trip. The illness affected a week of his trip and delayed the start of his freshman year as he recovered upon his return to the States.



Joey Paletta '27 with his brother and assistant wrestling coach James Paletta '21



In Joey's essay, he expressed a desire to grow in his personal life and gave recognition to the fact that Americans often take our privileges for granted. The most valuable lesson Joey learned from this experience was opening his eyes to the hardships of these countries, and that we should be grateful for what we have. He also values the friendships he developed with others on the trip and they now follow each other on Instagram.

This trip of a lifetime provided Joey an amazing foundation to live out our Hallmarks of Community & Stability. He now has a very unique perspective as he grows up to become a true Man of Benedictine.





Hockey Wins Back-to-Back Baron Cups

The hockey team began their season as the defending Baron Cup Champions, the first time they had held the title since 1971. The team struggled early on and started 2024 with a 7-0 loss at Mentor.

The Bengals bounced back and started putting together some quality games. They learned from 3-2 overtime losses to Mentor and Rocky River in subsequent weeks. They started to find their scoring with a 9-5 win over Hudson and a 6-1 win over Olmsted Falls on Senior Night. They went into the Baron Cup as an underdog. They began by defeating Olmsted Falls 8-1. After going down 1-0 early to Rocky River, the Bengals buckled down and scored 3 (**Ben Trombetta '24, Lex Herr '25, and Mason Rzepka '26**) in the 2nd period. Luke Dixon '24 provided the 4th goal early in the 3rd, which proved decisive, earning the Bengals a 4-3 victory.

They went back the next day, on Super Bowl Sunday, to a packed house at the John M. Coyne arena in Brooklyn to face the Mentor Cardinals. The game was tight through the first two periods, with the Bengals finally taking the lead after **Mason Rzepka '26** put in a rebounded **Ben Trombetta '24** shot with 2:23 left before the final period. **Ryan Kehres '25** came through to put the Bengals up 2-0 and then again to give them a 3-1 lead which was needed after Mentor scored again. The Bengals held onto the 3-2 lead with great defense and goaltending from **Jeremy Ade '26** (27 saves) to repeat as Baron Cup Champions.

In State Tournament action the Bengals went on to beat Elyria Catholic and Avon Lake to advance to top 16 in the State of Ohio, but ultimately lost to St. Ignatius to end their season. Great work, Bengals!

Indoor Track Competes in States at Spire

The Indoor Track Team saw some familiar Benedictine track performers compete at the indoor state meet on March 2nd. **Keion Mayberry '24** took 6th in the 400m and finished with the 9th best time in the 200m. The 4x200m finished with the 15th best time in the state. Best of luck to these guys as they transition into outdoor track in the spring!

Bowling Advances to Districts, Finishes 10th



The Bengals played consistently well all year and advanced out of sectionals with a group of seniors all contributing nicely. **Nate Zavoda, Sean Washington, Vince Amata, Wyatt Toth, and Alex Turpin** combined for a 3827 score, a nice team result but not enough to advance to states. Vince Amata had the high series for the Bengals, rolling a 598, and a 219 game high.

The Bengals had one of the strongest JV squads this year in the area, and there is plenty of success to build on. Nonetheless, we'll miss these 5 seniors.

Wrestling on the Rise, 2nd at Sectionals and 7th at Districts

The Benedictine wrestlers have become a formidable team and have proved it in the playoffs. The Bengals finished 2nd at sectionals, even without filling all weight classes. 12 wrestlers placed and 9 qualified to districts. **Chris Maloney '25, John Jones '26, Antonio Hobbs '25, and Devion Coffin '26** were all Sectional Champions. **Darnell Johnson '24, Tristan Wilson '25, Jamere Church '25, Shepard Charlton '26, and Jayzahn Jones '27** all competed at Districts as well, earning the Bengals many points and a 7th place finish.

Maloney, Coffin and Hobbs all advanced from Districts to States and represented the Home of Champions with pride. John Jones traveled as an alternate but did not wrestle.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR STATE PLACERS.



Chris Maloney

4th in the State at 175 lbs



Devion Coffin

Top 16 placer at 144 lbs



Antonio Hobbs

Top 12 placer at 126 lbs



Basketball Loses Close Playoff Matchup to Jefferson Area

The Benedictine Basketball team provided some memorable wins this season, including an early win over Lake Catholic and home wins over Shaw, Cleveland Central Catholic, and Chaney. They defeated Jefferson Area earlier in the year in the Marsha Marsh Tournament but fell to them away at Jefferson Area to end their season in the playoffs.

The Bengals were led by seniors **Kris Smith, Nehemiah Seals, Makell Byrd, Matt Torres, and Emerson White**, along with team manager **Alex English**. Thank you to them and all they have done for Benedictine Basketball.

Benedictine Swimming Returns

The Benedictine Swim Team was reborn this year, with freshmen **Caleb Gianzero, Josh Vogley, and Jacob Bales** swimming for the Bengals. They worked with Cuyahoga Heights and swam their meets at their pool but competed as the Benedictine Bengals. Great job to them and we look forward to seeing them grow moving forward.



Student Spotlight

Written By Lynne Schroeder

DANNY BOZICKOVICH

Benedictine High School has been a pivotal and transformative experience for senior student Danny Bozickovich. Inspired by his father - Wally's own positive experiences at St. Joes, Danny sought to emulate that journey and has certainly made his own mark during his four years at Benedictine. Engaging in a variety of sports such as football, hockey, and lacrosse, as well as taking on leadership roles like serving as the senior class President and overseeing the Student Advisory Board, Danny has exemplified dedication and involvement in school life. Not only has he excelled academically, consistently making the Honor Roll, but he has also shared his passion for electrical work, heavily influenced by his father and grandfather.

In the face of a myriad of post-high school options, Danny has made a deliberate and insightful decision to pursue a career in the trades rather than opting for a traditional college path. This choice reflects his keen understanding of his own strengths, aspirations, and the changing landscape of career opportunities.

Danny has always exhibited a hands-on approach to learning, finding joy and fulfillment in practical, real-world applications. This intrinsic interest in working with tools and machinery, coupled with a natural curiosity about how things are built and function, has fueled his passion for the trades. He believes in the tangible impact of his work and envisions a career where he can contribute actively to the creation and maintenance of structures, systems, or products.

Moreover, Danny is attuned to the evolving job market and recognizes the demand for skilled tradespeople across various industries. He acknowledges that pursuing a trade can lead to more immediate employment opportunities, hands-on experience, and the potential for a lucrative



As Danny prepares to embark on the next chapter of his life, he acknowledges that while specific memories may fade, the lasting impact of the people and the Benedictine community will forever hold a special place in his heart.

“The small size of the school has allowed me to form close bonds with my classmates and teachers alike. I have felt a sense of community and belonging that I know will stay with me long after I graduate. The guidance counselors have been particularly helpful in navigating schedule changes and other issues. As I prepare to move on, I am reminded that while I will not cherish any one particular memory, I will always cherish the people and the Benedictine community.”

career without the burden of student loan debt.

The decision to forgo the traditional college route in favor of trade education is a testament to Danny's pragmatic approach to achieving his goals. By choosing a path that aligns with his strengths and interests, he is positioning himself for a successful and fulfilling career, demonstrating that success can be achieved through diverse educational avenues.

Lastly, Danny is most excited about the future plans for Benedictine. "I think it is important that kids get as much exposure as possible while they are in high school. Whether it be trades, or shop class. MotoGo has done a great job at helping students explore the mechanical side of things. A little birdie told me that Benedictine is starting to open a trades program via virtual reality. I think this is a perfect opportunity for kids to learn and experience the different trades while being exposed to real life situations."





2009 Benedictine Alum is Living an Out of This World Dream



Written By Lynne Schroeder

Jarred Wilhite '09 is living out an extraordinary dream in the field of aerospace engineering. His academic journey began at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Wickliffe (now Mater Dei). In 2009, he graduated from Benedictine as the valedictorian before pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in aerospace engineering at the University of Cincinnati. Jarred is part of a Benedictine legacy that includes his uncle Lawrence ('71), dad Charles ('79), and brother Justin ('13). During his time at Benedictine, Jarred was actively involved in various extracurricular activities, such as Cross Country, Track, Jazz Band, National Honor Society, B.O.O.S.T. Tutoring Club, and Math Club.

Jarred shared that attending the Open House with his parents and his experience at Shadow Day was very influential in helping him see himself at Benedictine. Once here, he found a supportive community that nurtured his interests and passion for running, which he still has today. "The school's strong foundation in math and science courses, along with a solid college prep curriculum, prepared me well for my future endeavors," said Wilhite. He also noted that the teachers at Benedictine played a crucial role in his academic growth, providing the foundation he needed to succeed in college.

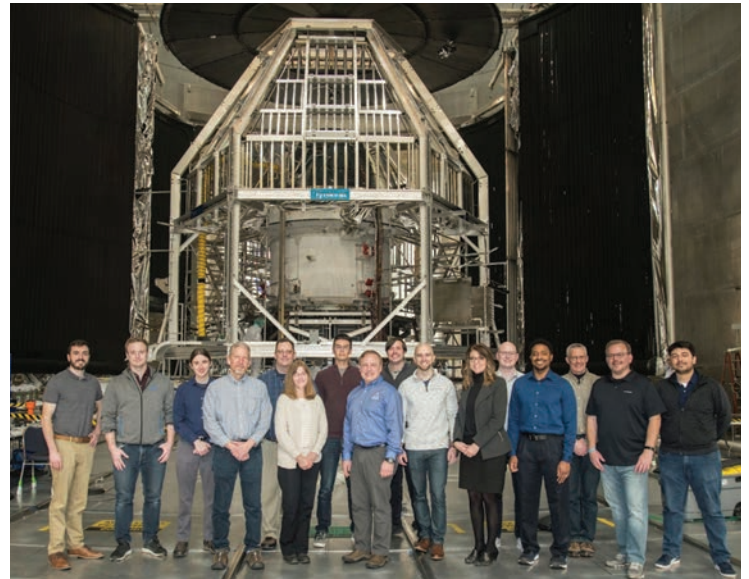
Jarred's career at NASA's Glenn Research Center, where he now works as an aerospace engineer specializing in designing and modeling aerospace vehicles and systems, is a testament to his passion for solving complex problems rooted in math and science. As an undergrad, he completed multiple summer internships at GRC through UC's cooperative learning program, where he had the opportunity to work on various NASA projects. He was hired full-time after earning his master's degree in 2016. His work in thermal analysis and testing is critical to ensuring systems and components withstand the environment of space when they are in flight.

Jarred was directly involved in the thermal vacuum testing that was done on the Orion spacecraft at NASA's Armstrong Test Facility in Sandusky, OH. This test involved placing the spacecraft into the world's largest thermal vacuum chamber to simulate a deep-space thermal environment that Orion will be exposed to as it travels farther than any human-rated spacecraft has gone before. On Artemis missions, Orion will carry the crew to space, provide emergency abort capability, sustain the crew during the space travel, and provide safe re-entry from deep space return velocities. Orion will launch on NASA's new heavy-lift rocket, the Space Launch System.

Similarly, he supported thermal testing and analysis of the cruise motor controllers on NASA's X-57, NASA's first all-electric experimental aircraft. These tests successfully validated the design, operability, and workmanship quality of the controllers, which are critical for providing power to X-57's electric motors, which drive the aircraft's propellers. His involvement in projects

like Orion and the X-57 reflects his commitment to pushing the boundaries of aeronautics and space exploration. In addition to supporting projects such as these, he is also conducting his doctoral research at Case Western Reserve University to develop an innovative thermal management system for compact, high-powered electronics.

Jarred's journey from a Benedictine alum to a key player in NASA's success highlights the invaluable impact of a supportive educational environment in shaping the future leaders of tomorrow. In his free time, Jarred enjoys spending time and traveling with his wife, Devaki, with whom he just welcomed a baby boy - Jayan, last May.



Group photo that Jarred's thermal branch took in front of the Orion spacecraft after they finished TVAC testing at the NASA ATF in Sandusky.



Photo of Jarred's GRC project team observing and monitoring data obtained during thermal cycle testing of the X-57 cruise motor controllers (CMCs).



Photo taken in front of the X-57 aircraft at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center (AFRC) at Edwards Air Force Base, C.A.

CLASS NOTES & CAMPUS HAPPENINGS

Class of 1967

Jimmy Lucsik '67

Congratulations to Jimmy Lucsik and his wife, Ruth, who will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on June 1st!



working with students on a weekly basis, they contribute their expertise to design and build out of our RoboBot. While the usual meeting place is Benedictine, occasionally, the team visits the Truline factory to actively participate in manufacturing essential parts for the RoboBot. During the field trip, tasks such as machining motor housings, crafting wheels, and honing driving skills with the test vehicle are undertaken. It's noteworthy that Truline covers all costs related to manufacturing and parts procurement, with Benedictine not contributing financially to these aspects of the project.

Class of 1976

Michael Janko '76 is Director, Global Business Continuity for the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. This past March he published *Excellence in Operational Resilience: How to Lead, Follow and Guide the Way*. His publisher, Routledge, was very interested in how he created a program at Goodyear for managing incidents, crises, and events shortly after 911. Providing essential guidance to thrive in a complex environment, this book showcases tools to take the leadership role in the process of building resilience in any organization in a timely, effective, and practical way for today's risks and tomorrow's challenges.

Truline Industries plays a pivotal role in supporting our RoboBots both technically and financially. With three Engineering Technicians dedicated to

Meet the Bengal Lunch Bunch from the Class of '68.

They never know who will show up for food, fellowship, and fun, but it's always an enjoyable group keeping memories alive. The group meets at different locations around town and is always open to welcoming new faces.



Class of 1980



Kevin Riley '80 Mr. Francioli joined Kevin at his recent retirement party at the Atlanta History Center. Kevin, a member of the Hall of Distinction of Benedictine, retired as editor-in-chief of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. He will be a consultant to the newspaper for a while and has a few book ideas he's working on. While at Benedictine Kevin was editor-in-chief of *The Bennet*. After high school, he went on to edit the University of Dayton newspaper and the *Dayton Daily News* for the city of Dayton.

Class of 2004

Joe Schaefer '04 was recently named the Defensive Backs Coach at Syracuse University. Prior to arriving at Syracuse, Schaefer spent the last three seasons at Texas A&M as a Defensive Analyst and then Outside Linebackers Coach. After leading the Bengals to the 2014 football state championship, Schaefer had stints at Maryland, Iowa State, John Carroll University, and Youngstown State University.



Class of 2006

Jahmal Brown '06 was recently named the Defensive Coordinator/Safeties coach at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Mercer competes at the Division 1 Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) level in The Southern Conference. Prior to Mercer, Jahmal spent two seasons as the Defensive Coordinator/Safeties coach at Youngstown State University. Additionally, Brown spent time at both Lenoir-Rhyne (NC) and Notre Dame College as the Defensive Coordinator.



Class of 2008

Brian Rinz '08 married Elizabeth Rose Simon on Saturday, November 11, 2023, at St. Patrick's Church on Bridge Avenue in Cleveland. Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB received their vows. In the wedding party were Brian's brothers Kevin '06 and Patrick (his twin) '08.



Class of 2016



T.J. Beltavski '16, Fr. Finbar and Fr. Michael celebrated the baptism of Theodore Joseph Beltavski Jr. at St. Adalbert Church on December 10. He is the son of T. J. and Christina with his brother Luke (BHS '19) as godfather. Pictured are Fr. Finbar, mother Christina, godmother Gianna Grecol, Luke and little T.J., Fr. Michael, and T.J.

Class of 2017

Logan Haney '17 received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Ohio University with Cum Laude honors. He worked



as a Resident Assistant for the university for 3 years. Also, in the spring of 2024, he will fulfill his 6-year contract with the Ohio Army National Guard with a rank of Specialist Four.

Class of 2019

Liam Haney '19 graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree from Kent State University's Honors College. He has started a full time position as a pharmacy technician in Las Vegas, NV.



Class of 2020

John Poston '20 is currently serving in the US Navy with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group.



John entered the Navy after completing a welding program in Cleveland, where he graduated second in his class. After a year of work in that industry he made the decision to serve his country. His military career began in boot camp at the Naval Station Great Lakes in Great Lakes, Illinois, where he graduated in the top 5% of his training group and earned an Expert Marksman award. He then completed 8 weeks of schooling at the Naval Air Station Pensacola, where he earned honors in the aviation electrician program. John was then transferred to the Naval Station Norfolk where he worked on F18 fighter jets until his deployment.

The Eisenhower aircraft carrier, otherwise known as the IKE, is currently in the Red Sea with a mission to counteract aggression and advance stability in the region. John works on the flight deck as a member of the line check, checking and maintaining the F18 fighter jets as well as launching them. He is working to complete qualifications to become a plane captain.



We are beyond proud to share that our school's literary magazine, *Adynaton*, received the rank of **Honorable Mention** in the 2023 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) program. We want to acknowledge Aiden Kenny '23, who was the editor-in-chief last year and did the bulk of the labor. We also congratulate current editors Ryan Kehres, Lex Herr, Shane Hopkins, Danny Winterich and Junior Jacob Shean for producing an exceptional publication.

Class of 2026

John Reed '26 competed in the Mid-America Oireachtas, which is a 12-state regional competition that involves the best Irish dancers. John got 7th in the U15 boys division and qualified for the 2024 National championships in Texas; he was ONE place away from qualifying for the 2024 Worlds championship to be held in Glasgow, Scotland! He and his 4 hand team dance came in 5th out of 19 teams, and his drama dance team won 1st place with a PERFECT SCORE!!



Share Your News!

New Job? Engagement? Marriage? Baby? Professional Awards and Accolades?

We are always looking for fresh ideas and new content for our readers. Send your story ideas and personal updates to lschroeder@cbhs.edu.

IN MEMORIAM of alumni and friends of Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School



Eugene Hertrick, 93, of the Class of 1947, died on 1/10/24. Gene proudly served as a corporal in the United States Marine Corps in the Korean War. He retired from AT&T (Ohio Bell Telephone) as a Project Engineer after 35 years. Gene was a devout Catholic. He volunteered for a variety of organizations throughout his life. He was an usher at St. Clare Church in Lyndhurst for 48 years. He was a lifetime member of the Telephone Pioneers; Knights of Columbus Gilmour Council #310 Moses Cleveland 4th Degree; Marine Corps League; Loyal Order of the Moose. He was a founding member of the **East Side Irish American Club** with his late wife of 64 years, Margaret.



Robert J. Jankovsky, 81, of the Class of 1961, died on 2/21/24. He worked for General Electric for 32 years and was a Parma Municipal Court Bailiff for 20 years. In between all this, he sold real estate for a short time and earlier worked for the postal service. Bob served as a councilman in Parma Hts. and North Royalton. Most of all, he loved being a cop. He was a part-time patrolman in Newburgh Hts., a reserve officer in North Royalton, and even a mall cop for a short time.



James Michalske, 82, of the Class of 1960, died on 1/2/24. He was the loving husband of Mary Jo, who died in March 2023, and father of Kevin and Karen. He was a dedicated BHS alumnus attending many school events. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Raphael Church in Bay Village.



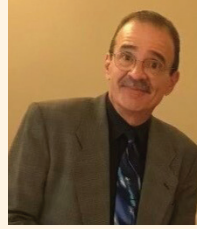
John W. Petrus, 88, of the Class of 1953, brother to Robert L. Petrus, '57, passed away at University Hospital in Cleveland on November 15th, three days shy of his 89th birthday. He died surrounded by three generations of his family. John was a member of Benedictine's **Hall of Distinction** and taught mathematics at BHS for half a dozen years in the 1960s. From Benedictine he took his math teaching talent to Walsh Jesuit where he spent the following half century!



Mathias Skowronski, 89, of the Class of 1952, died in Bay City, Michigan on 1/26/24. After BHS, he continued his academic journey at John Carroll University, where he fostered a passion for learning that would stay with him throughout his life. After completing his studies, Mathias embarked on a successful career, working at Robert Hall and the Giant Store. Later, Matt later found

joy as a long-term substitute teacher at Bangor Township Schools, positively impacting the lives of countless students.

On August 22, 1959, Matt married the love of his life, the late Barbara Michalek, in Cleveland, Ohio, at St. Andrew's Abbey, with Msgr. Casimir Skowronski, Matt's cousin, presiding. A faithful member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish (St. Vincent de Paul Church), Matt found solace and strength in his Catholic faith. He was an active volunteer in numerous community organizations and the Red Cross.



Patrick Walden, 62, of the Class of 1979, died on 2/17/24. He was a loving father, grandfather, son, brother and uncle. His brother Michael (BHS '81) passed away in 2019. Patrick worked as a Business Development Representative at Advance Door Company. He was a proud graduate of Benedictine High School and loved to support his Bengals. Patrick was the type of person to drop anything he was doing to help out others in need.

A constant volunteer to serve meals to the homeless during the holiday season and many other events.



Ann Marie Zelenka, 79, passed away on 10/5/23. She was the sister of three deceased BHS alumni: Joseph '58, Robert '63, and David '72 and the aunt of Joe Zelenka '94 and Michael Zelenka '97. Ann was a loyal supporter of St. Andrew Abbey. She taught second grade for over 40 years, mostly at St. John Nepomucene in Cleveland where she prepared over a thousand children for their First Holy Communion and directed the annual Christmas Eve Pageant.

RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between November 30, 2023 and March 1, 2024. May they all Rest in Peace.

	Name	Deceased
Class of 1947	Eugene Hertrick	1/10/2024
Class of 1952	Mathias Skowronski	1/26/2024
Class of 1953	Mark Muldoon	12/31/2023
Class of 1953	John Petrus	11/15/2023
Class of 1953	William Soltes	1/2/2024
Class of 1955	Jerome Kolenich	12/18/2023
Class of 1956	Thomas Misiak	12/2/2023
Class of 1957	Joseph Galdun	2/1/2024
Class of 1957	Frank Zippay	2/6/2024
Class of 1958	Ralph Plavac	1/1/2024
Class of 1960	William Davis	12/10/2023
Class of 1960	James Michalske	1/2/2024
Class of 1961	Kenneth J. Gajda	2/15/2024
Class of 1961	Robert J. Jankovsky	2/21/2024
Class of 1962	James Perk	12/5/2023
Class of 1963	Norbert Snopel	1/8/2024
Class of 1970	Ronald Zarko	11/16/2023
Class of 1971	Steven Adoryan	11/16/2023
Class of 1979	Patrick Walden	2/17/2024
Class of 1990	Michael Antonacci	2/8/2024
Former Abbot President	Hugh Anderson, OSB	11/1/2023
	Joseph Cszasz	1/6/2024
	Michael Opfer	1/22/2024
	Vicki Przybylski	12/15/2023
	Anne Marie Zelenka	10/5/2023

If anyone knows of other recently deceased alumni, please contact the alumni office at 216-421-2080 ext. 342 or alumni@cbhs.edu.

Joe Csaszar



In a school of men with large statures and commanding presences, he was not typical.

At 5' 6", Joe Csaszar had a sleight frame, wide glasses and tipped the scales at no more than 150 lbs. (with the glasses). Yet the long-time Benedictine history teacher was a match for anyone in terms of dedication and work. Joe died January 6 at his home of natural causes. He was 80 years old.

During his almost 30-year career at Benedictine, 1967-1996, Joe taught world and American history and government. He was known for giving his students meticulous notes. Mark Kobylinski '93, remembered Joe's "many notebooks, filled with history notes."

Joe had a way of condensing Massive amounts of information into workable outlines. Mark Francioli '71, was one of Joe's students and later became a colleague when he joined the faculty. "He took an entire era or a major war and broke it down into three to five points. He was clear and organized," Mark recalled.

Tim Riley '82, said that Joe had a way of teaching history that "made you remember it." He was known for impressing students with the significance of certain moments in history and the workings of government. Kobylinski called him a "great teacher who was wonderful in explaining the importance of history and how it impacted our lives."

In addition to teaching, Joe was a class moderator for several years and the yearbook adviser for two decades. Those yearbooks were memorable for their imaginative design and strong student voice. Joe often organized successful fundraisers so the yearbooks could print more pages and expand coverage on student activities and events of the year.

After his teaching career, Joe worked at St. Paul's Shrine on E. 40 and Euclid as an administrator and caretaker for 10 years. He frequently returned to Benedictine to help out as a proctor for the ACT test. Although he lived in Maple Heights, Joe was a parishioner of St. John's Cathedral, where he was also an usher.

Joe was laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery, in the St. Benedict's Mausoleum, where his mother rests. A memorial Mass was held for him at St. John's Cathedral January 20. Among the five celebrants of the Mass was Abbot Gary Hoover. Parishioners in attendance talked about Joe's kindness and humility. They remembered that after attending daily Mass, he would spend a half hour or so praying in front of the statue of the Blessed Mother. "He was so friendly and joyful—never had a bad word to say about anybody," one member of the community commented.

Joe Csaszar's legacy will continue in the many students who remember him fondly and respectfully. He is an example of Benedictine High School mainstays of success: dedicated lay faculty who teach by example, inspire young men, and give up worldly success to become part of the tradition of St. Benedict as educators.

Vickie Przybylski: One of a Kind



"There is no better memorial than a life well-lived." This quote from the Latin poet Seneca well sums up the life of Vickie Przybylski, police officer, wife, mother, moderator and spiritual guide for many, whose life touched so many in the Cleveland area. Married to Lieutenant Nick Przybylski, himself serving with the Cleveland Police, Vickie became an officer herself, serving the citizens of Cleveland for over 18 years. During this time, she became acquainted with Benedictine High School and she and Nick both were attracted by what BHS had to offer.

Their youngest son, Aiden, entered Benedictine in the Fall of 2019 and graduated in 2023.

While Aiden was busy in the classroom, Vickie took the reigns of the Parent Engagement Club and began planning many ways for parents to be involved. From ice-cream socials, to Mother-Son dances; Homecoming assistance and Open Houses, Vickie and her crew made it happen and provided much needed guidance and resources to make these events successful. The faculty particularly enjoyed her ethnic home cooking for the luncheons she prepared two times a year in teacher appreciation. Her home-made pierogi with sauteed onion and plenty of butter was always a hit as was her Polish sausage with sauerkraut. She was gregarious, fun-loving, kind and totally giving of self at every occasion.

Supporting her son and the Benedictine family, she certainly knew the value of commitment. She was an ever-present face in the school. Dressed in her uniform, she worked to support Benedictine efforts to improve campus security and provide strategy for crisis management. She worked with other parents to promote school spirit and the activities of the students. She shared her faith by making sure every student had and knew how to pray the rosary. Vickie's husband recently shared with us that her life goal was to retire from the CPD and become a Guidance Counselor for Benedictine.

Outside Benedictine, she was a loving wife, mother and grandmother, a tough cookie whose cancer diagnosis would not stand in the way of accomplishing what she felt she needed to do. Working with retreat experiences for women throughout the diocese, she was constantly available to help and share her experience with others in witness to a higher cause.

With the difficulties of returning cancer last fall, Vickie fought the good fight and was a model for all of us in the sufferings of life, even having a police co-worker serenade her with his guitar playing in her hospital room. In the words of St. Paul, Vickie "fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith." May her family experience the comfort of knowing that her well-lived life touched so many and that her greatest monument is in the hearts of the many she touched. May Vickie rest in eternal peace where there is no suffering or pain; and hear the welcome of her Savior: Well done, good and faithful servant! Benedictine surely misses you! (MPB)

SAVE THE DATE

2024/25 CAMP PROGRAMS

FOOTBALL SKILLS CAMP

June 4-5 | 6:30p-8p | Bossu Field
Open to Boys Grades 5-8
\$30/night or \$50 for both nights

SOCCER SKILLS CAMP

June 10-14 | 9a-12p | Bossu Field
Open to Boys Grades 4-8

JEROME BAKER CAMP

July 5 | 6p-8p | Bossu Field.
Open to Boys Grades 4-8.
FREE, limited to 110 Campers.

 **benedictine**
Guiding Young Men through Faith, Tradition, and Leadership

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SCHEDULE BENGAL FOR A DAY

Visits are open to 7th
and 8th grade boys

There are openings
now through May 17th

Visit our website or
scan the QR code to
learn more



cbhs.net 



Knock Day Class of 2028

The Admissions team and Benedictine student volunteers recently organized a memorable Knock Day event for the incoming early admissions Class of 2028. This special occasion saw 67 enthusiastic young men being greeted at their doors with acceptance letters, along with a yard sign and a box of Benedictine gear. The following week these same students gathered at Invite Back Night for a chance to meet their fellow classmates for the first time. The excitement and joy of welcoming these new students to the Benedictine community was palpable, setting the stage for their upcoming journey on campus this Fall. The effort and thoughtfulness put into this initiative undoubtedly left a lasting impression on the incoming students, fostering a sense of belonging and anticipation for the adventures that lie ahead at Benedictine.



MESSAGE FROM THE COO

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It was so special to see our record-breaking crowd of over 525 guests at March 16th's Blue and White Gala. Alumni, friends, parents, guardians, and Catholic philanthropists joined together to celebrate the mission of Benedictine High School while generously providing financial support to aid in our students' growth in mind, body, and spirit. Thanks to each of you who joined us, as well as those who participated remotely. Wow!

A month before the Blue & White Gala, we held two impactful admissions initiatives to welcome our newest Bengals, the Class of 2028. You've seen some photos in this publication's issue from our **Bengal Knock** – a personalized approach to welcome all of our accepted students by dropping off an acceptance letter, BHS apparel, and a yard sign to each young man's home. We pride ourselves and the Benedictine experience on being a family and "everyone knowing everyone." We stayed true to that testament as over 20 of our current students, faculty, and staff stacked their cars with welcome packets to hand-deliver to their new Bengal Brothers.

A week later, the school welcomed back those accepted students for Invite Back Night – the program consisted of remarks from administration, fellowship with coaches and faculty, and a meal to celebrate the young men and their families' commitment to joining the Bengal Brotherhood.

Our rich tradition allows for these new opportunities of the Bengal Knock and Invite Back Night to come to fruition due to the generosity and financial support you provide. You are not only making commitments to the students representing the classes of '24-'28, but also to the men who came before these classes and those that will follow these classes, as well.



Mr. Chris Lorber '04

With the cost to educate a student being close to \$25,000, and with tuition set for the 2024-2025 academic year at \$14,900, bridging the financial gap with outside assistance is critical to allow for us to do what we do. Your assistance can continue to provide the same experiences and smiling faces we witnessed on both the Bengal Knock and Invite Back Night for many years to come.

To learn more about how you can impact the lives and overall experience of our students and continue to keep our nearly 100-year mission strong, please contact me at your convenience.

Yours in St. Benedict,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chi L '04".

Mr. Chris Lorber '04
Chief Operating Officer

BengalSGO
BENEDICTINE HIGH SCHOOL
Scholarship Granting Organization

WAYS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

1. Participate in our **Annual Fund** by visiting www.cbhs.edu/donate. All gifts matter!
2. Make a contribution to **BengalSGO** – our Scholarship Granting Organization – eligible to those who have an Ohio tax liability up to \$750, and \$1,500 for couples who file jointly.
3. Identify Benedictine High School as a beneficiary through your **Estate Planning** and **Will**.
4. If you are 70 ½ years of age or older, you can use all or part of your **IRA distribution** to Benedictine High School with no tax obligation!

ORA ET LABORA

St. Andrew Abbey / Benedictine High School

2900 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44104-4898

Change Service Requested

**Ora et Labora: A publication of
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and Saint Andrew Abbey**

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**SAVE
THE
DATE**
JUNE 14-15

Reunion Weekend

JUNE 14:

- Mr. Benedictine
Dinner 4 pm
*with new format and new
school display*
- Stag Night 6 pm

JUNE 15:

- 4's & 9's Class
Planned Events

*If you're interested in planning
a class event contact Tom
Bennett at bennett@cbhs.edu.*