

# The Cistercian Informer

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CISTERCIAN  
HOMECOMING  
2016  
DANCING THROUGH THE DECADES



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# The Final Exam for the Class of 2017

Though we all have our different reasons for going to Cistercian, whether it be religious or just the fact that the school is close to home, everyone can agree that academics is a huge part of why we chose to attend Cistercian. The academic curriculum of our school is well renowned and is something that we should all take pride in upholding. At the same time, looking back on it as a senior, there are some areas in which I wish it could've been different.

First, I would like to take this time to thank all the teachers who have taught me and the senior class throughout the years. We wouldn't be where we are today without you all. I still have many cheerful memories of my time spent in the middle school classrooms; from reading *Lord of the Rings* with Mr. Nied in Second Form to completing our Rocket Project with Fr. Mark in Third Form, I remember it all rather fondly. As I transitioned to high school, the courses became a bit tougher and not always as enjoyable at times, yet our teachers always found a way to somehow keep us interested and engaged in the subject throughout the year. The academic curriculum at Cistercian has more than prepared my classmates and I for our lives ahead of us in college. The study habits that we have formed here will be carried on with us into our collegiate careers and will help us navigate the turbulent seas that lie ahead. For all the students below us, trust me, I know how you feel right now. I was in your position at one point in my life. All of us seniors know how tough Cistercian can be at times, but it will pay off in the long run.

On the other hand, I would like to point out one issue that I have with our academics: our rigid, inflexible class schedule. I realize that, as a school, we are quite limited in regards to our courses since we are so small compared to almost every other school in the Dallas area. However, there are certain subject areas in which some students excel, and others aren't as strong. It would have been nice if I had an opportunity to take a more challenging class in one subject area and keep another subject on a more basic level. Not only did this bother me throughout my years at Cistercian, but also, the only classes I truly had the freedom to select were my electives and my senior seminar. Cistercian has always had a long standing tradition of maintaining a rigorous, rigid class schedule, so it is doubtful that much will change in the future. Still, it would have been nice to have a little more flexibility in my class schedule, and this is something I wish I had in high school.

Overall, Cistercian academics is what you want to make of it. You can either push and challenge yourself to be engaged in the material, or you can slack off and choose not to care. The first way is more fruitful, and, in the end, you will feel both satisfied and accomplished. To all the students below us, enjoy your time here. It goes by faster than you think and once it's gone, you can't get it back. Until next time, this is Nicholas Williamson and the Class of 2017, signing out!

*Nicholas Williamson, '17, is not actually the son of William.*

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# The Final Curtain for a Class of Actors

Last weekend, senior Brendan Flood blew us all away with his cover of "My Way" during the Spring Coffeehouse. As a tribute to the senior class, it reminded me that in a very real way I face the final curtain. For the last three years theater has been a home for me. I say this not only because of the many hours I have spent backstage during tech weeks, but because the returning cast members have become like a family for me. Luke Maymir, Craig Beurlein, Brendan Flood, Nicholas Williamson, Demetrius Rowland, Kyle Meliza, and Anna Grace Votteler have all seen me at my best and worst. None of us will be pursuing a life in theater next year, and few of us will likely ever be on stage again, but we've all grown from these experiences.

Theater teaches you many things. Not only do difficult roles require hours and hours of memorization work, but they also demand confidence in doing so. You develop speaking skills; good cadence and projection are key. Being able to capture the attention of a room becomes essential. Most importantly, theater helps people learn to work with others and around hard schedules. Things don't always work out in the way that you imagined and you must work around that. A stage production is ordered chaos, and I know that the organizational lessons will stick with me for life.

Looking back on these years, I find it funny that theater has become so important to me. Mike Garnett and I literally auditioned as a joke. We had no idea we would be joining the cast of *The Government Inspector*, let alone have significant roles in it. A couple of years later, drama has become one of my favorite parts of high

school and one of the things I will always remember fondly.

Theater also encompasses my biggest regret of the past four years. I wish I had done more. I wish I had tried it out earlier. I wish I had been a part of productions during the fall. More than anything, I wish I had worked on the Ursuline musicals.

I say all of this to send a message to my younger Cistercian brothers. Don't waste your time, and if you want to do something, pursue it. Even if you aren't completely sure that theater is for you, go try it! You might say, "I'm more of a math and science guy," or, "Ball is life," but don't sell yourself short. Walt Whitman once described man as a "multitude". As humans, we are capable of so much and are all multi-faceted. We all have a creative side, and that should be exercised.

If you find that you enjoy theater, or are already involved, then go into it full bore. Try to do the spring play every year, do the Ursuline musicals, and, if you love it, look for productions outside of Cistercian. I would also recommend the drama elective, and participating in the ISAS Arts Festival is something everyone should experience. Do all you can so that when you face the final curtain, there are no regrets.

*Fielding Brown, '17, has been the lead actor in the majority of his theater productions.*

## The Final Countdown for '17 Athletics

I'll never forget the day the 2011-12 7th grade Hawks football team tied the perennial powerhouse Prestonwood Christian Academy Lions, 16-16. The tie, a win in our books, was special for many reasons. There had been YMCA league teams for basketball, soccer, and baseball, but none for the great game of football. The inaugural athletic event of our careers was for many people the first organized football game ever played. The draw was the fruition of a grueling week of practice (in shorts t shirts, mind you) and the realization of all our dreams. We defied expectations and "beat" a team with probably a few NFL first round picks. This moment went down in history for the most improbable "win" in Cistercian athletics history. Reggie Miller singlehandedly takes down the Knicks, The Eagles ousts Giants, and Cistercian tames the Lions.

A few months passed and we continued to make history, but not the good kind. We finished the season with 0 wins, 7 losses, and the one tie. We had registered the first winless season of football for any team in recent memory; the soccer and basketball team's had a similar fate. By the end of the year many of us were dejected, dumbfounded about where we went wrong. Within many of us, there was a feeling that despite our hard work, there was some outside force that prevented us from achieving our goals. This thought is nothing new to any Cistercian student, regardless of whether or not they are an athlete. However, the remedy to this problem is closer than one thinks.

Cistercian athletics is an integral part of every student's extracurricular life. Unlike various larger schools, there is a distinct camaraderie among boys that have known each other for at least 3 years that gives us an advantage over opponents. Athletics give students a chance to step away from the classroom to blow off steam, build even more chemistry among classmates, and a vessel to display other interests. While we are all working hard in the classroom, this effort should and often does carryover to the field. I use the example of our class, deemed talentless, to illustrate how a good attitude, persistence, and sacrifice can yield great results. We went from 0 wins in 7th grade to leading this year's football team to an 8-3 record and appearance in the SPC Championship game for the first time in over a decade. As it turns out the hapless group of 7th grade soccer players would similarly lead the soccer team on a deep run into the playoffs. I say all this not to brag about the talent that our class has, but rather to show, as Kevin Durant once said, "Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work." This quote fits well in regard to the journey the Class of 2017 has been on. To all the classes that don't have a trove full of athletes; congratulations! You are a standard Cistercian. Whether you are getting bad grades or struggling athletically, my advice is the same: don't be deterred, plan a few small goals before creating one big one, and reach out to others. The great thing about this community is that you are never alone; there is always one someone next to you consoling you or cheering you on in your achievements.

*Emmanuel Adesanya, '17, is not actually the subject of the song O Come, O Come Emanuel.*

# The Editor's Final Letter

Friends, Students, Cistercians,

I can still remember my first day at Cistercian. I remember going up the concrete stairs, through the doors, and up the red-tile stairs before I reached my first classroom. I have walked through the red-tiled hallways innumerable times in the eight years that I have now been at Cistercian. In that time, the school has become a second home to me. It is a place where I have a whole new set of brothers and mentors. It is a place where boys enter and men leave. It is a place where a son is always welcomed with open arms. All of these aspects and more lead me to the same conclusion that the Exodus staff reached: it's different here.

There are many places that share some aspects of Cistercian. There are many small high schools across the country, even small, all-boys high schools. In addition, there are many religious high schools across the country, both coed and single-sex. However, Cistercian holds three aspects that very few other schools can boast of. Cistercian is small, religious, and goes for eight years. I believe that the combination of these three elements shows what is truly unique about Cistercian.

The faculty at Cistercian is committed to the deep formation of each of the students. The size of the school makes for much better relationships with the teachers, and it creates a strong support network throughout the class. At other private schools, class sizes are often increased beyond capacity so as to increase the school's revenue, but at Cistercian, the faculty and administration have always put the healthy formation of the students first. The religious aspect of the school is very valuable, even for the non-Catholic students. Whether or not a person agrees with the religious views of the Cistercians, no one can deny that they are very wise and holy men. For Catholics, the theology classes and weekly masses offer an incredibly strong background in faith that is almost impossible to find elsewhere.

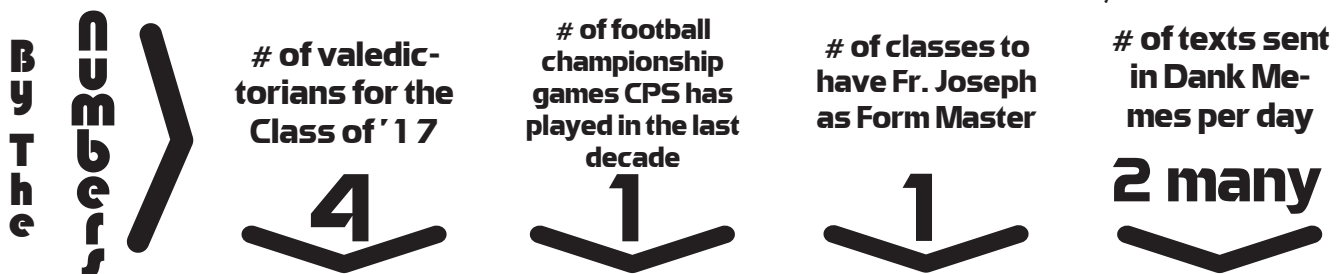
Finally, the fact that Cistercian runs for eight years shows how truly important a student's formation is to the school. Middle school does not often seem like that important of a time, but the development of good character will help greatly with all of the troubles that come with high school.

In the end, what makes Cistercian different is the commitment shown by all of the faculty. The Form Masters are not simply administrators to hand out rules; rather, they are mentors who want nothing more than to be able to help each of their students. The teachers care about each student far beyond simply learning the material. Teachers will often ask about how extracurriculars are going, and some teachers become the closest mentors that some students have. Each teacher brings a new dimension into the formation of the students.

Unfortunately, Cistercian will be losing one of these dimensions next year. Coach Dotson is a quintessential Cistercian faculty member. He is widely considered to be one of, if not the, most committed mentors at the school. He is famous for masterminding "Olympics" in PE for Forms I and II. He is known by the football team as passionate and invested, often making players get to practice early for extra lessons. When asked what has kept him going for over the past decade, he responded "You guys." The thing he wants each of his students to remember is that it's never too difficult. Coach Dotson encourages us to push ourselves past our boundaries and into the best men we can be. His enthusiasm and dedication will be greatly missed and I wish him the best for the future.

My hope for the future classes of Cistercian is that they fulfill their potential. There are many opportunities placed in front of you at Cistercian, opportunities you won't find anywhere else, and they often go ignored. I encourage you to enjoy your time, if not for the classes, then at least for the people, because your time will be gone before you know it. I challenge you to accept what Cistercian is offering you and to push yourself to become the best man you can be.

Sincerely,  
Luke Maymir, The Editor-in-Chief



If interested in writing for *The Informer*, come to the Library Classroom for activities.