



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. VII, No. 1

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2005

Where did the summer go? In a few days the seminarians will arrive, and once again the seminary will be abuzz with activity. During these final few days of vacation the teachers are busy with preparations. This first issue of *The Guardian* for the new school year will help acquaint you with our teachers — both new and old.

Not all the work taking place, however, is in the classrooms. Our parish carpenters have been busy these past few weeks, working on several projects at and around the seminary. The most important has been the repairing of the floor joists in our chapel. Due to lack of proper protection from the dampness, moisture under the chapel has gradually rotted the wood holding up our floor. Even the walls had started to decay at their base. The repair has been a painstaking but essential process.

In addition to the work on the chapel, we also have had new patio doors installed at our dining room exit and at the end of the upstairs hallway leading to the balcony. Projects at the church parking lot and in the upstairs of the convent also keep our volunteers and staff busy.

Ready or not, however, the school year is about to begin. We ask your prayers, as always, for the success of our seminary and of this new year in particular.

Our holy patrons

The beginning of a new year coincides with a wonderful feast of Our Blessed Mother. Normally, the Church does not celebrate the earthly birthdays of her saints. Like us, they

were born into this world with original sin on their souls, and consequently, were not in the grace and friendship of God at birth. Our Blessed Mother, however, was destined from all eternity to be the mother of the Savior. Always free from original and actual sin, her birth was the cause of greatest celebration in heaven.

We begin each year with a novena in honor of this blessed birth, and we recall that all young men and women, especially those who may be called to the service of God, have need of a great devotion to the Mother of God. As we celebrate Our Lady's birth at the commencement of each new school year, we are reminded of the "spiritual childhood" of our new recruits, who arrive with youthful freshness, eager to learn and to grow in their spiritual lives. May they develop a deep, tender devotion to the Holy Mother of God.

Mary's chaste spouse St. Joseph also had a unique part in the plan of God. Humble, dedicated to his daily duties, and filled with love for Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph is an outstanding model for seminarians. His hidden life reminds us that greatness is often not recognized by the world. The years of formation in the seminary, hidden away from the world, are critical to the future success of a priest. Let us pray that our young men follow the example of this great saint, who is an outstanding model of manly virtue.

All Catholics must honor, before all other saints, the Mother and the foster father of Jesus. These two great saints, who witnessed daily the growth and development of the Child Jesus, will help all who call upon them. May they always

Seminary calendar

August:

- 28 — Orientation
- 29 — Classes begin
- 30 — Begin novena in preparation for the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity

September:

- 5 — Labor Day; no classes; Mrs. Salgado's birthday
- 8 — Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; chanted Vespers; no homework
- 12 — Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; chanted Vespers
- 24 — Feast of Our Lady of Ransom; chanted Vespers
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael; mid-quarter; no homework

help our Catholic youth to grow in "wisdom, age and grace" in imitation of the Boy Jesus.

The Father's house

"Francis, go and repair My Church, which, as you see is falling into ruins." With these words, Our Blessed Lord called St. Francis of Assisi to his life's work. The saint, thinking that his Master referred to the small church of San Damiano outside Assisi, where he was praying at the time, began to gather supplies and helpers to repair the edifice. Eventually the saint realized the full meaning of Our Lord's words, as referring to the entire Church, which was

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Father's house

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in need of a spiritual renewal. Yet we cannot but admire his zeal in wishing to repair God's house.

For Catholics the dwelling place of the Blessed Sacrament takes a precedence over their own homes. A wonderful example of this love for the house of God can be seen in the Old Testament in David's desire to build a fitting temple to the honor of God — a project completed by his son Solomon. No material was considered too precious, no expense too great for the house of God. And so, down through the centuries, Catholics have imitated this zeal for the house of God, building the most beautiful structures on the earth for their churches, basilicas and cathedrals.

Here at St. Joseph Seminary we have our own chapel and, a few hundred feet away, our parish church. Both of these buildings have seen efforts over the past few years to beautify them, and there is more work to be done. We hope this year to find a suitable altar for our parish church. Right now, work is underway on the seminary chapel building, reinforcing and replacing the supports. Eventually, the inside of the chapel will be repainted and enhanced — all in God's good time.

New staff members

Our staff at the seminary this year includes familiar faces as well as a couple new ones. Fr. Benedict Hughes, the seminary rector, will teach Theology, Latin, English and choir. In addition, he runs our local parish and travels monthly on mission circuits (to western Montana and, this year, to Boston) to provide for faithful Catholics who are without a priest.

For the past two years since his ordination, Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI, has been an instructor at Mater Dei Academy in Omaha, in addition to his priestly duties on Mass circuits. Fr. Gabriel is a welcome addition to our teaching staff, following in the footsteps of Mr. Tim Duff as our math and science teacher. He will also teach the students of our parish school, assist Fr. Benedict in taking care of the parish, and travel on weekends twice a month on Mass circuits.

Mr. Joseph Cooper is a seminarian "on loan" from our major seminary in Omaha. He will teach social studies to our seminarians, although his primary teaching duties will be in the parish school. Mr. Cooper is also adept at fixing computer problems. His presence at the seminary will allow the priests to fulfill their priestly ministrations on weekends, without leaving the seminarians unattended.

Mrs. Rosalinda Salgado will continue as our secretary. Again, she will teach computer skills to the seminarians, on top of her many tasks of keeping things going for the parish, school and seminary. Our two wonderful Sisters from Mexico, Sr. Amada de Jesus and Sr. Paulina Maria, live in the convent next door. They have an important task of keeping the seminarians happy through their culinary expertise.

All our teachers have experience and dedication but we rely on your prayers as we seek to fulfill the task of forming young men in imitation of Christ, the eternal High Priest.

Perspective of a new teacher

by Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI

Piles of textbooks, worksheets, quiz and test books, lists of students and classes, all precariously balanced on every square inch of the teacher's desk, with apparently no beginning and no end — this is the task that confronts every teacher at the beginning of each new school year (unless you're one of those extremely organized persons!). But somehow, everything comes together as the new school year gets underway.

Amidst all the preparations for school, all the hurdles to jump, there's one thought that carries the teacher through: it's all worth it! The school year is always something to which we can look forward. There are souls, children of God, ready to be guided and formed as strong and perfect Christians. This is ultimately the whole purpose of the teacher. He has the consolation of knowing that he doesn't work alone. God's grace is there, bringing fruit to the teacher's labors. This is the great consolation of teaching in a Catholic school. Graces are showered on the students from the Mass, Holy Communion, and Confession. They obtain the special intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary by praying her favorite prayer, the Holy Rosary. The whole atmosphere is a joyful one, because all understand their true purpose in life, to get to heaven.

It may only be when they graduate and go out into the world that students will appreciate the great peace that comes from being in a Catholic school. They are surrounded by those who believe the same Faith, united by that wonderful bond of the Communion of Saints. The teacher has the privilege of remaining in this atmosphere as each new generation comes through. I look forward to this new school year. It is new for another reason — it will be my first year teaching at St. Joseph's. It was enjoyable teaching in our school in Omaha. Now, I have the joy of helping prepare those whom God may lead on to the holy Priesthood!

What a great and urgent need there is in the Church for zealous youths! Pope Pius XII said: "Young people then are needed who are wholehearted in their faith and ready to spurn mediocrity and equivocation, if ever they have fallen into it. We look for young people who desire the divine life, and to have it plentifully; young people who, while they are studying, or working, speaking, praying and suffering, have the burning, passionate love of Christ in their hearts and the love of souls."

Would that parents would realize their obligation to bring their children up as saints! As Pope Pius XII said on another occasion: "Jesus wants saints among today's children. . . . We should like to think that among the little ones — as among adults — He will find an army of souls ready for any call and for any heroism."

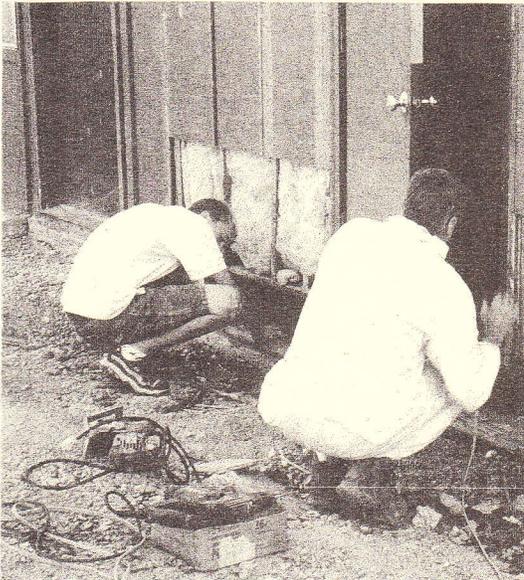
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Our teaching staff, from left to right: Mr. Joseph Cooper, Fr. Benedict and Fr. Gabriel.



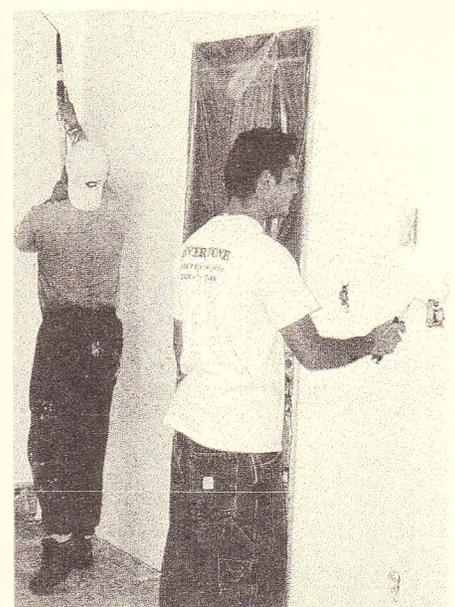
Somehow, by the time school starts, the teachers will bring order out of the chaos on their desks!



Mr. Cornel Strain, with the help of son Chris, has spent many hours repairing and replacing the floor joists in our chapel.



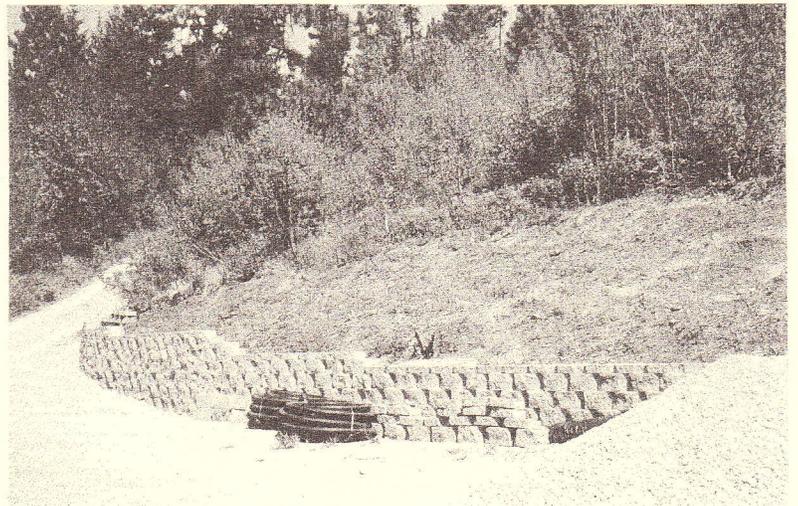
Work continues on the replacement of floor joists under the seminary chapel.



Seminarians help with painting in the convent.



Our new patio door is a great improvement to our seminary.



A new retaining wall by the church is another summer project nearing completion.

Perspective

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But let us remember, as St. Thérèse the Little Flower remarked: "You cannot be half a saint. You must be a whole saint or no saint at all!"

Seminary support

Maintenance of a Catholic seminary entails the necessary tasks of budgeting and providing for material needs. In order to help us keep our doors open, we must depend on the generosity of the faithful. For this reason, we have a "support club" composed of those Catholics who understand the importance of the work of seminaries and would like to support this work.

There are several categories of supporters. First, all members support the seminary by their prayers. This is the most important contribution one can make to the work of a seminary. Second, there are those who are able to send a monthly donation to assist with the financial needs of the seminary. Finally, there are some who are able and willing to provide a scholarship, or partial scholarship, to a deserving young man who has not the ability to pay the entire tuition fee.

By supporting a seminarian with a scholarship, or partial scholarship, the donors thus "adopt" a particular seminarian. Like parents, they assume a role in leading that particular young man to God and thus share in the blessings of his Catholic life and, God-willing, his priestly ministry one day. If you would like to support our seminary, you may use the enclosed envelope to make a donation. If you would like to offer a partial scholarship, please let us know how much you will send each month, so that your donation can be matched with a seminarian in need of that sponsorship. May God reward you!

Confident anticipation

With each passing year, I become more than ever convinced of the truth expressed in Psalm 126: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." Our best efforts must be blessed with God's grace if they are to bear fruit. We must always maintain the humble realization that we are only instruments in the hands of God. If there is any good resulting from our work, it is due entirely to the grace of God.

Do you have a vocation?

If you are a young man of high school age who has a vocation, then St. Joseph Seminary may be the place for you. Our four-year course of studies offers the regular high school curriculum, with an emphasis on Theology, Latin, choir and foreign language. A well-rounded program of daily Mass, prayer and sports complements our academic schedule. For more information, write to the rector of St. Joseph Seminary at the address below.

Seminary Support Club

If you are not yet a member of the Seminary Support Club and would like to become a member, you may write to the seminary at the address below. Members pledge to pray for the success of the seminary and, if able, to send a regular financial contribution for its support.

That is why your prayers are so essential to the success of our seminary. We all should pray daily for the spiritual success of our Catholic schools and seminaries. For this reason, we again ask you to remember us daily to St. Joseph. This powerful saint has providentially been designated our patron, and we place our seminary in his fatherly care. Please help us by using the enclosed prayer card, commending the formation of future priests to his intercession.

No doubt, the new school year will have its crosses and trials. Yet the cross is a sign of God's benediction. We must learn to bear our crosses with patience, always trusting in the loving providence of our heavenly Father. We know, too, that the devil will not rest nor leave us alone. Nevertheless, knowing the crosses and trials that will inevitably come our way, we begin a new year with high hopes and excited anticipation of many blessings.

All of you, our readers, are part of this endeavor. We are most grateful for your prayers and support, and we assure you of a daily remembrance in the prayers we recite for our benefactors. May St. Joseph bless and reward each of you.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

The Guardian is published monthly for the enjoyment of our benefactors and for the family members of our seminarians. This newsletter is free upon request.

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