



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

February 2009

As soon as we had returned from vacation, the ceremonies of the Epiphany were upon us. The solemn blessing of Epiphany water was held on January 5, with the other ceremonies the following day. Later that week we opened our gifts. Soon, it was time to get down to business and finish papers, projects and tests for the First Semester.

In mid-January we welcomed a new seminarian, who joined us for the Second Semester. His name is Robert, and he comes from California. Robert met Forrest during the Christmas vacation and learned about our seminary from him. We also enjoyed an evening with the priests who had gathered at Mt. St. Michael for their semi-annual priests' meeting. It is truly a joy for us to visit with them and ask them questions about their seminary days.

The weather has been unusual lately. After a partial melting to our snow pack in early January, it has turned colder. What is unusual is the amount of fog we have experienced, which freezes on the trees and turns them into crystal-coated masterpieces.

As we continue to enjoy the beauty and activities of winter, we also realize that Lent is just around the corner. Let us all plan our penances and resolve to make a good Lent, not only in atonement for our sins, but also for a world that so greatly needs to make reparation. May God bless you all.

Candlelight processions

by Marcellus Moylan, gr. 12

It's just past nine on Sunday night. In the little chapel there is a seminarian kneeling in the back beneath the light switches and the rest are in the front

pews. Fr. Benedict is the only one standing as he imparts the nightly benediction. Then the solemn intonation of a hymn to Our Lady begins the procession. The electric lights are put out and the darkness is broken only by the light of a dozen candles, two shining before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, and the others in the hands of those now moving slowly to the back of the chapel. The beautiful and enchanting Gregorian notes resound off every angle in the room as the procession turns into the aisle making its way to the sanctuary.

Without interrupting the flow of movement, a bow is made to the King in the tabernacle. Around the right corner of the altar rail all stop and — following Father — fall to their knees, releasing the final words of the prayer to the Mother of God. An oration and the versicle "*Divinum auxilium maneat semper nobiscum. Amen.*" are the last words one hears before the grand silence is initiated by three sharp rings of the Grand Silence bell.

One by one the flames are extinguished by a puff of breath or a pinch of the fingers. Kisses are laid on the foot of Our Lady and petitions asked before the statue of our guardian St. Joseph. The tapers are returned to their box on the pew as some retire and others remain in the chapel

February calendar

- 2 — Purification BVM; Candlemas ceremonies; chanted Vespers
- 3 — Blessing of throats; basketball game
- 11 — Our Lady of Lourdes; chanted Vespers
- 18 — Alex's 17th birthday
- 20 — Zachary's 16th birthday
- 24 — Mid-quarter
- 25 — Ash Wednesday ceremonies
- 27 — Fr. Gabriel's feastday

talking to Our Lord, finishing their private prayers. The last one to leave cups his hands and gently blows out the candles in front of the Virgin's statue.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays the same procession is made, but what is better is that on those nights one of the priests hears confessions. How consoling it is to lie in bed, after confession with a clean conscience, and the knowledge that Jesus has forgiven your sins!



The seminarians sang a High Mass on the feast of the Epiphany.

Closer to heaven

by Angel B. Gamboa, gr. 11

Ever since his creation, man has been attracted to music. Many people look upon music as an exit from reality into a world of peace and solitude. Others look upon it as simply one more distraction or amusement that this world has to offer us. I look upon it in a slightly different manner from the first of these views.

During this last year, I began to play the piano, more out of curiosity than diversion. It seemed so hard in the beginning because I did not know anything about a piano. Bro. Anthony, who used to be known as Caleb Short, taught me a few things about reading music. It was then that I became very eager to know what the great composers meant to say when they wrote their music.

One ordinary afternoon Fr. Benedict was passing by while I was at the piano. Taking pity on me in my struggle to read music, he kindly asked, "Would you like to take lessons?" I was ecstatic. You can imagine that my answer was a prompt "Yes!"

There are times when I come across a difficult piece, and it becomes a little discouraging. But then some consoling thoughts come to mind when I realize that with a little bit more effort it can be accomplished.

Looking back, I realize that I have actually improved upon some skills. From this I have learned one thing: just as learning to play the piano takes time and effort, so does our spiritual life. There are discouraging times when we fall flat on our face, perhaps even right after we make a resolution. I have learned that it only takes a little bit more effort to overcome a certain fault. It does not matter how many times we fail; what matters is that we persevere. I look upon music as a step closer to heaven.

Have confidence

by Juan F. Garcia, gr. 11

During the second quarter of this year, we were assigned the project of writing an article about the public life of Our Lord from a book by Archbishop Alban Goodier, S.J. The chapter that I chose is "The Raising of Lazarus."

Lazarus' family was from Bethany in Judea. He had two sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha had her own home and was financially independent. Mary, on the other hand, was a little wild and more modern. Many scripture scholars have concluded that Mary was the Mary Magdalene who loved the world and the pleasures in it. She committed sin but she became a penitent and loved Our Lord to the point of wiping His Feet with her hair. This was how Jesus met Lazarus.

When Lazarus died, Our Lord showed us many facts. He always gave lessons, but through the raising of Lazarus there is a lesson that continues to be very edifying for our times. At the arrival of Jesus, Martha came to meet Him and told Him that if He had been there her brother would not have died. At

this Our Lord said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believes in Me although dead, shall live, and everyone that lives and believes in Me shall not die forever."

From there they went to the grave and Jesus asked that the rock be moved. Martha objected to removing the rock from Lazarus' grave even though Our Lord had done many things for them. He encouraged her and asked her once more if she believed in Him. By this we should all see how often Our Lord gives us so many graces and yet we do not have confidence in Him. Then He went and called Lazarus to come forth. At that moment Lazarus obeyed Him. The raising of Lazarus is considered one of the greatest miracles of Jesus, after His own resurrection.

We should always have trust in Our Lord, even more so in these times of disorder in the world. As good Catholics we should obey His Holy Law and pray for our leaders and our enemies, as well as for our relatives and friends.

Prayer over criticism

by Alex Odom, gr. 12

"But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." Luke 6:27 "Do not judge, and you shall not be judged; do not condemn, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven;" Luke 6:37

I am ashamed to admit that I have not taken this teaching of Our Lord to heart. Of course I love all those who are dear to me. I would have to be utterly heartless not to. But the love I must also possess for my enemies is oftentimes, if not all the time, missing. Allow me to explain.

I have been very disparaging towards our recently elected president whose name I shall not mention. Criticism upon criticism about everything from his ideals to his name would escape my mouth. But, in pointing out someone else's fault, I myself was at fault. I was wrong to criticize him.

Now, every Catholic has the responsibility and obligation to recognize and be wholly opposed to sin and evil. However, we must never hate those who are sinners, no matter how horrible or abhorrent their sin. They have a soul, a soul that God loves and greatly desires to save. Being lovers of God, we ought to desire what He desires. Since God desires all to be saved, including those who harm us or our country, we must desire their salvation as well.

Which do you think is more beneficial towards their salvation: criticizing them or praying for them? I think the answer is quite apparent. It follows then, that rather than criticize our new president, we ought to pray for him and also for our government and country. And if how much I criticized him were directly related to the amount of prayers he needs, then he must need numerous prayers.

Thinking this over, I've decided to choose prayer over criticism, and I hope you choose the same. May God bless you and our country!



Part of our Epiphany ceremonies is the presentation of gifts by three boys dressed to represent the Three Magi.



We observe the traditional blessing of chalk on the feast of the Epiphany.



Everyone enjoyed the opening of gifts.



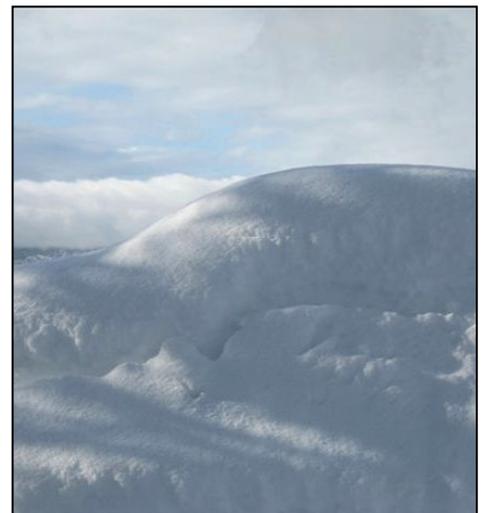
Everyone enjoys the opportunity for a sing-along around the piano.



We have a new gate to mark the entrance to our cemetery.



The snow-covered grounds around the seminary are magnificent in winter.



Believe it or not our pickup truck is buried under this mound of snow.

A painful delay

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 10

As the last week of the December school schedule drew to a close, the seminarians knew that Christmas vacation was drawing closer. I hadn't seen my family in four months, and a short flight would bring me to them. We'd had record snows that week and some flights had been canceled; still, my plane was scheduled to depart. So, in the middle of a snowstorm, we left for the airport.

By the time I arrived at the airport, huge lines had formed behind the airline counters. Other flights had been canceled, but mine was still scheduled. I got in line and waited. Eventually, the intercom (which I will teach you to loathe) buzzed that my flight had been canceled "due to the snowstorm." With nothing left to wait for, I went back to the seminary.

Later, I was notified that, since I had lost my flight, I would take another flight two days later. I had a flight and no snow was scheduled for that day, but I would have to find a seat on stand-by. Being the holiday season, waiting stand-by meant that I might just "stand-by" while the full plane took off without me. Though I could get on, my chances were slim, but I had no other choice.

So I faced the airport a second time. The lines were still long, but we had arrived early. I got a stand-by pass and walked through security with time to spare. By the time I got to the gate, hordes were already waiting on my flight. It seemed that my chances were really slim. Then the intercom yelled to the whole horde to line up for boarding. After it yelled enough to make the horde disappear, it yelled out my name. I disappeared through the gate.

Then I just sat there. The plane wasn't moving. After an hour, the intercom screeched that the airplane's computer was down and that it couldn't fly. It ordered the horde and me to exit the plane. The airline found another plane for horde and me, although it would arrive three hours late.

Then I sat there again. Three hours later, the intercom yelled that we'd have to wait another hour. After that hour, it yelled that we'd have to wait an hour more. Finally, (by then I'd learned to hate that intercom) after six hours of waiting, the horde and I were allowed to board. After a "short" two-hour flight, I was finally home with my family.

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.

Heavenly beauty or barren desolation?

It never ceases to amaze me how beautifully the seasons of the year reflect and commingle with our observance of The Liturgical Year. About this time, even those of us who enjoy the snowscapes begin to look forward to spring. The cold winds, the bleak trees, the dead vegetation — all point to the coming rebirth of nature.

Yet winter lasts. Appropriately, at this time of year we observe Lent, that season of fasting and penance and sorrow for sin. I say *appropriately*, for the barrenness of nature in winter reminds us of the devastation in the soul caused by sin. Nothing is so ugly or causes such a blight as sin. And it is sin that caused Our Savior's terrible passion and death.

Let us all resolve to practice penance during Lent in expiation of sin and for the love of our dear Lord. But let us also remember more than anything, to give up sin for good. What a beautiful thing is a soul, made in the image and likeness of God. In the state of baptismal innocence the soul shines with unearthly beauty. Venial sin besmirches this beauty, while mortal sin utterly drives away the Holy Ghost and His grace. May we never lose sight of the gravity of sin, lest we lower our guard and make peace with the only thing that can separate us from God — sin.

Again, we thank you all for your prayers and financial support. Be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers and Masses. We will especially pray that this coming Lent will be for you a time of abundant grace.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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