



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

April 2011

Given the late date for Easter this year, we still have three weeks of Lent. Our Lenten season has been going well this year: we started with the annual retreat and have also had two all-night vigils. These vigils are greatly appreciated by all of us. There is nothing like the peace experienced while spending an hour in the dark of night, with Our Lord exposed in the monstrance and the chapel glowing from the light of many candles.

So far, it has been a wet spring. But the sunny days in between have been greatly appreciated, and we are starting to get outdoor projects done. We now have received a batch of four piglets to fatten up for the freezer. Rafael feeds them each day and keeps an eye on them. These little critters are always trying to get out of the pen. Today one of them succeeded, but his liberty was short-lived when Juan caught him.

We also have had help from our parishioners and benefactors who have completed some long-standing seminary projects. Mr. Vincent built attractive new bookshelves to accommodate all our books in the classroom. Mr. LeStage carpeted our inside stairs, and Mr. Strain finished all the trim and baseboards in our entryway and stairwell. The entryway of the seminary is now finished and presents an attractive entrance to visitors.

We wish you all a good, penitential conclusion to Lent and a happy and blessed Easter. Even though we are allowed to go home for Easter week, most of us will stay at the seminary. We look forward to the traditional vacation trip of Easter week and to the other activities that have been planned. We also will continue to pray for all of you.

Spiritual growth in Lent

by Abram Sharkey, gr. 11

Every morning at the seminary we have Mass, and during this season of Lent our attention is centered on the life of Jesus Christ. We are reminded by the violet vestments at Mass of the resolutions we have made for this Lent. They are to do penance. These penances are not required to be so big that everybody will notice, but rather small penances—those that are exercised without anyone but you and Christ noticing.

These small penances and mortifications are a great benefit to the spiritual welfare of our souls, bringing us closer to Jesus and Mary, and helping us to overcome temptations which assail us. During this time of Lent we have the opportunity to grow spiritually, to develop a greater love for Jesus, His holy Mother, and St. Joseph—a greater love that is influenced by THE greatest love, which Christ demonstrated by His death on the infamous gibbet of the Cross. So let us use this season wisely dear reader, and try to present our Creator and Sovereign Lord with the praise, love and homage that are due to Him, so that by practicing prayer, mortification and penance in this life, we will reduce our time in Purgatory in the next.

Prayer is the key

by Mathias Nwankwo, gr. 12

Prayers have aims, which are: Adoration, Thanksgiving, Petition, and Reparation. With no exception, all these aims of

April calendar

- 1–9 — Annual ping-pong tournament
- 10 — Passion Sunday
- 15 — Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows; chanted Vespers
- 21–22 — Holy Thursday and Good Friday ceremonies
- 24 — Easter Sunday
- 24–30 — Easter vacation
- 25 — Procession of the Major Litanies
- 28 — Christian's birthday; begin preparation for renewal of Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary

prayers are supposed to be done perfectly well so as to give us the complete graces we deserve.

Are not sins disgusting: loss of faith, bad companions, divorce, and so many others? Principally, seeing these evils

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During Lent we chant Vespers every Sunday.

Prayer is the key

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undermining the world today, you probably find lack of prayer or haphazard prayer their originator.

Looking to the Bible, we find that Our Lord tells us that we “must always pray and not lose heart” (St. Luke, 18:1). Think of this: Our Lord, who is the Redeemer of the whole human race, practiced prayer, even to His last hour on the Cross. Then how can we, poor creatures, resist or become tired of praying when it seems there is no answer from God. Don’t we know that we are the most fortunate people to have been granted, by God, this grace of prayer? Aren’t we happy that God grants us a means to obtain everlasting life? Oh, I think we are so special in God’s eyes. Meanwhile, we are to take these praying routines sequentially and make sure we come out with flying colors, especially during this period of Lent.

One more thing we should keep in mind is that certain souls are isolated in Purgatory. Brethren, is this Lenten period not the best time to loosen the chains detaining them? Have pity on them for they cannot obtain heaven themselves. Keep in mind that if they finally receive heaven through our prayers, they shall surely keep us in theirs.

Poisons to the soul

by Aedan Gilchrist, gr. 11

There are many Catholics today inadvertently exposing the corruption of the world to their children by not paying more attention to what video games they allow into the home. The video games now being produced are becoming more and more of a spiritual threat.

For starters, they are highly addictive and this can be a problem because they cause children to waste hours on these games. This weakens their resistance to addictive things like sin. Not only is there this weakening through addiction, but these games also expose young souls to bad language, misuse of God’s name, immodesty and false theories of morality, such as the idea that “ends justify the means.” The controller in your hand is the chain, keeping you locked on the evil, while the devil gets into your soul through your eyes and ears without your even noticing. The devil is a clever mixer of poisons, which he uses to weaken us, and then when we have no strength left he chokes the life out of the soul.

Now the best way to protect yourself is to not eat the poison of the devil by playing video games that have things that you know go against what is right. The next important thing to do is to pray to our Blessed Mother for strength against worldly desires. All desires that are not of the things of God are shallow and will quietly lead you to misery in this life and in the next. So stay away from bad games — your soul is worth more than 60 bucks. Your soul is worth the death of God on the Cross. Don’t belittle your worth.

Go to Joseph

by Zachary Odom, gr. 12

Once there was a man who was a servant to a king. He was both good and faithful. So much so, that this king bestowed a great favor on him. This was that the king always called this man his father, and even ordered his subjects to say that he was the son of this man. The king, however, bestowed an even greater favor on this man. He gave this man as husband to his mother. Now this servant of the king lived for many years. There were happy times for this servant, but there were also times of fear. There were times of fear because there were other kings who sought the life of his king. This servant however, protected his king and his wife from harm. For this, the king bestowed on this servant the greatest favor of all. The king himself served this man and granted anything his good and faithful servant asked of him. Moreover, he exhorted all his subjects to take their wants to this servant, that whatever they asked of the king through this servant might be granted them.

This is an interesting story isn’t it? It’s incredible really, that a servant would be called father by his king, and would even be served by him. What a great man this servant must have been, that his king would bestow on him such favors, and would even grant favors his other subjects asked through this servant. Would we ourselves not ask this servant for favors from the king, that we might not have to approach the king in all of his courtly grandeur? Yet we are in just this situation as Catholics. We serve Our Lord do we not? Our Lord is a great king, and became man through Mary, whom he gave as a spouse to St. Joseph. St. Joseph was called *father* by Our Lord, and was even called the father of Jesus by his fellow man. God himself was subject to Joseph while he was on earth and obeyed his every order. And when St. Joseph died, God bestowed the greatest favor on St. Joseph: He grants whatever St. Joseph asks. He even exhorts us to go to Joseph and to ask the favors we seek of God through him.

If God exhorts us to go to Joseph, then why do we not? We will receive whatever we ask from him, because he is so powerful with God. This is even verified by St. Teresa who said that she never failed to receive what she asked of St. Joseph.

We should all cherish a devotion to St. Joseph, not only because he is the foster father of Christ, but because he was a model for Christ. He was head of the Holy Family and showed Christ how to live. He taught Christ, and through our devotion to him, he will teach us too.

But what shall we receive from having a devotion to St. Joseph? To name only a few of the many graces we will obtain through our devotion to St. Joseph, we will receive the grace of a happy death, because St. Joseph had the happiest death of any saint, dying in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

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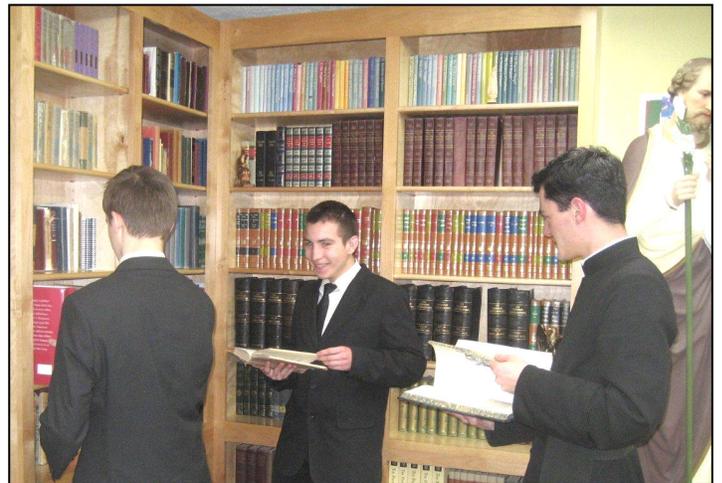
Fr. Michael Anaya, the retreat master, prepares to expose the Blessed Sacrament for the all-night Eucharistic vigil.



The receiving of blessed ashes at the beginning of Lent is a solemn reminder of our need to do penance.



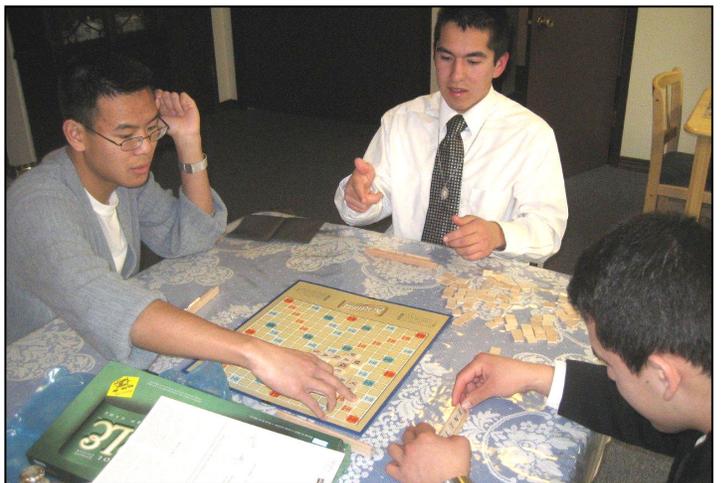
During the annual retreat we have table reading at all the meals.



Our new bookshelves are a beautiful and practical addition to the seminary.



The seminarians prepared and served a breakfast to parishioners during March in honor of St. Joseph and St. Patrick.



The seminarians play a game of Scrabble — in Spanish.

Go to Joseph

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Moreover we will receive the graces to remain pure and chaste because St. Joseph is a great model of purity. Finally, through our devotion to St. Joseph we will obtain the grace of living like St. Joseph. We will be just, pure, and humble like he was, but only if our devotion to St. Joseph is true.

So please, I exhort you dear reader, to establish a devotion to St. Joseph. I exhort you like the pharaoh exhorted his people during the time of famine, to take their cares to Joseph. I exhort you with the resounding echo of God to His faithful Christians living today. Go to Joseph. Take your cares and needs to him, for he will not fail you. Go to Joseph.

God's will in chronological form

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 12

As a building is built, as a plan is executed, as a saint is sanctified, so is the seminary structured. Structure — without it, a building would be rubble; a plan, disoriented; and a saint, anything but. So with the seminary: structure makes priests. Without it, a mere man could never be formed into a second Christ. Thus, necessarily and structurally, the seminary — especially the minor seminary — has structure: the schedule.

Following the schedule is like having a personal guide to heaven. In it, the seminarian finds God's will. As the superior is the representative of God, his will is God's: obeying him is obeying *Him*. In the schedule is the reminder of what God's will is for the seminarians at every hour of the day. If the schedule indicates rising, he rises; prayer, he prays; play, he plays — all with the knowledge that the superior's will in the form of the schedule is God's will.

But an explanation on structure through schedule would be incomplete without an insight into our routine. Like his patron St. Benedict, our rector, Fr. Benedict, has divided the day according to the Latin adage *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work.) Thus, our time is divided between praying and working. At dawn, noon, dusk and just before bed, we gather in chapel for prayer: Mass, Rosary, Office, and morning and night prayers. Between orations, school, chores and homework fill most of our remaining time. Still, we're teenagers! Some hours in the day are also allotted to relaxation and recreation. Nevertheless, always we are busy structurally doing God's will in the schedule, so always we are growing spiritually.

But an explanation on structure would be incomplete, without an exhortation. Recall the building, the plan and the saint: all need structure. As we all aspire to sainthood, we all need structure. Still, not all of us have the blessings and benefits to be had from attending a minor seminary, but all can pray and all can work and all can sanctify these everyday occurrences. For each individual, God has a *specific* will, so for each individual there is a schedule in doing God's will. Let us always do God's will, and we will eventually find ourselves in an eternity with Him for having done it.

Pleasant growing pains

Where are we going to put them? This is a question posed to me recently, with the arrival of new seminarians. I have always said that there is one problem I would like to have — not enough room for all the applicants to the seminary. This past month St. Joseph has brought us two more seminarians, and with them the need to find rooms. We cleared out one room that had been used for storage. We also moved all the library books downstairs to our new bookshelves. That gave us the needed rooms.

Our 10 minor seminarians share the building with two priests and one cleric. Every room is taken, so if we receive any more seminarians, some of the seminarians will have to share a room. Of course, while we are grateful for new applicants, we also must always bear in mind that quality is far more important than quantity. We need young men who are pious, obedient, charitable and industrious, to become the priests of tomorrow. Let us all continue to pray daily for that intention.

Now we turn our attention to the coming Holy Week ceremonies. These liturgical observances are a great way for the seminarians to develop a love for the liturgy — a quality that every priest must have. They all help with preparing the altar and sanctuary, singing the chants, and, of course, serving. It is a taxing week but also a great joy for a priest or seminarian. May we all imbibe the spirit of Holy Mother Church during this year's Holy Week, and ever grow in appreciation for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the liturgy.

We are most grateful for your support and prayers. May Jesus, who has loved us so much that He died for us, bless each of you and grant you all the joys and blessings of His resurrection.

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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