



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XIV No. 5

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

January 2013

By the time you receive this newsletter, Christmas will have passed and we will have entered a new year. Soon, we will return to the seminary from vacation with our families, and the normal routine here at the seminary will once again hold sway. One big change, however, is that we expect a new seminarian to be with us when classes resume. We will tell you all about him next month.

One of the highlights of January is always the priests' meeting. We usually spend one evening in their company, and it is amazing to learn about their work. It is rare that one finds so many priests together at one time!

We must also admit that this month has been anticipated for another reason: snow skiing. The newer seminarians who have not been skiing before can't wait, and those of us who have some experience look forward as well to another season. By the looks of all the snow we have recently received, it is going to be a good year for skiing.

Above all, we hope to grow spiritually, as we enter a new year. We promise also to pray for all of you and ask your prayers in return for us and for our seminary. May God bless each of us in this year of 2013.

## 'Tis the season of joy

by Thomas Pulliam, gr. 9

What do children and young teenagers (13-16) think of when someone says the word *Christmas*? They probably think of toys and what they are going to get for Christmas. But what should they actually be thinking of? They should be thinking of what Our Lord went through to come into the world to redeem us. He was not born in

a nice hotel or a comfortable, warm house. He was born in a very crude, freezing stable where he had very little shelter from the icy wind. He was laid in a manger with straw for His bed and no coverings.

We know the story of the Three Wise Men and how they knew that Our Lord was not another newborn of little importance but that He was the King of kings. We know how they brought Our Lord gold, frankincense and myrrh. The gold symbolizes His Kingship, the frankincense represents His divinity, and the myrrh represents His future sufferings and death.

We know how Our Lord was also visited by little shepherd children and their fathers. They all came and adored Our Lord while the Angels sang *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, which means "Glory to God in the Highest!" The praise the Wise Men and the shepherds gave should make us marvel at the greatness of the love of God for His miserable creatures. In return, we should give Him a thousand-fold the honor that the people present gave Him, because He has redeemed us.

This is not the only event we should think of. We should also think of the days and the months after His birth. We should think of the Epiphany (when the Wise Men actually came) and the Presentation of Jesus in the temple and the Purifi-

## January calendar

- 5 — Seminarians return; Blessing of Epiphany water
- 6 — Feast of the Epiphany; Solemn High Mass
- 7 — Regular classes resume
- 10 — Annual exchange of gifts
- 16-18 — Semester Exams
- 18 — End of First Semester
- 22-24 — Semi-annual priests' meeting
- 25 — Ski outing

cation of Our Lady. These are all different and very joyous events. The birth of Jesus is obviously when He came into the world, the Presentation

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*Fr. Benedict was able to attend the ceremony of ordination on December 12, in which two of our former seminarians received the diaconate.*

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## Season of joy

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was when Jesus was presented to Simeon, who then gave the prophecy of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady.

I want to conclude this with the thought that we should not think so much about presents, but more about the birth of Our Lord.

## Forces of man vs. forces of nature

*by Michael Doll, gr. 10*

The statistics of man-made forces are astounding. But what is even more astounding are the statistics of natural forces. The forces of nature exist in enormous amounts. Men have been able to outdo nature in small amounts, but they will never outdo her completely. The comparisons that I will go through will give you an idea of the massive amount of energy that exists on our planet. The following examples are a few natural phenomena created by God which may be used to benefit man.

Let us start with explosions. The largest known man-made explosion is the detonation of a hydrogen bomb which explodes with the force of 3,000 atomic bombs. Nuclear science isn't just used for destruction; it is also used to produce electricity. Man wasn't able to outdo nature in this next example. Krakatoa, the largest known volcanic eruption in recent history (1883), was estimated to explode with the force of 10,000 atomic bombs. When the explosions ceased, 11 cubic miles of earth were missing.

My second comparison is ambient air temperature. The temperature of volcanic gas can reach 1600° Celsius. Now here again men have been able to outdo nature in small amounts. The temperature of a steel mill's blast furnace can reach 3000° Celsius, almost twice that of a volcano; but it's a small furnace in comparison with a volcano. Now try imagining how hot that is when huge iron tongs bigger than your family car are glowing red hot from just taking a massive chunk of steel out of the furnace in about five seconds. To give you an idea of just how hot it is, there was once a man who fell off a catwalk into a kettle of molten iron. He disintegrated as soon as he hit the fiery liquid. Now try imagining the fire of hell, hundreds of thousands times hotter, and yet the souls detained there never burn up. They just keep burning for all eternity.

My third and last comparison is about the force of water. Men have used water to operate steam engines and steam turbines and also to make hydroelectric power. In nature water is a major component of erosion. Waterfalls erode the shelf over which they fall. Ocean waves erode the coastal shores. Glaciers don't just erode things, they grind things such as giant boulders to powdery dust under their enormous weight.

Some may wonder why I wrote this article. I wrote it because God and science are so closely linked. That is why a true scientist cannot long stay away from the true Faith.

## Christmas traditions

*by Jordan Hartman, gr. 10*

Christmas time is here and, as is the custom, people begin to decorate their homes, yards and trees with bright little ornaments, lights, figures and a fraternity of dazzling trinkets which glow and sparkle. However, most don't know the symbolism behind these flashy decorations. Either for sake of tradition, or a desire for the Christmas spirit, or not wanting to be looked at strangely by others — but hopefully for the coming of the Christ Child — people deck their houses inside and out with these oddly-shaped adornments, sing carols and bake Christmas goodies.

Almost always you will find a Christmas tree gracing the living room, or at least somewhere in the house. It is the embellishments on this tree, and particularly the tree itself, which hold the bulk of symbolism. The most obvious is, of course, the star that rests on the very top of the tree. It is meant to be the star of Bethlehem. The red and white stripes of the candy canes that dangle on the evergreen branches represent Jesus' human and divine natures and their shape represents a shepherd's staff.

Have you ever wondered why we use certain colors during the time of Christmas? The first is red, which symbolizes the blood of Christ offered in sacrifice for our sins. The second is green which is the color of life that He gave to us through His death. Evergreens in the middle of winter are symbolic of the hope that new life will come even after the cold of winter. To a world that was dead because of sin, Jesus Christ brought new life. The circular, green wreaths which are hung on doors, symbolize the eternal nature of God. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, without beginning or end.

Having candles in the windows is another symbolic tradition which originated in Ireland where it had been made illegal to practice Catholicism. Priests, if caught, would be executed. Consequently, they traveled by night, secretly celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass in homes. When night fell during Christmas time, Irish Catholic families would leave their doors unlocked and put candles in their windows. This was to signal the priests that they could come and take refuge in their house.

We truly have many beautiful traditions, and yet have little knowledge of them. If you could step back and realize the meaning behind the unique objects which you use to garnish your home, then I am sure you would not only appreciate putting them up and taking them down every year, but also direct your mind toward the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Have a Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year!



*Rev. Mr. Nino Molina, one of our former students, received the diaconate in Omaha on December 12.*



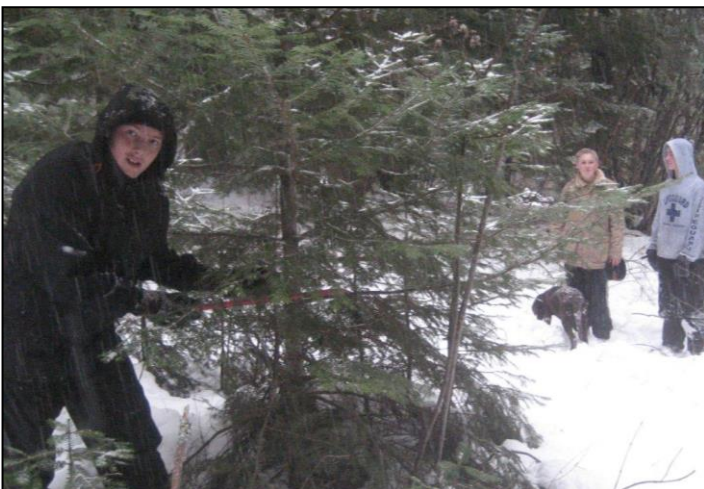
*The seminarians served recently for the funeral of a departed parishioner.*



*Several of the seminarians were privileged to serve at Mid-night Mass.*



*One of the seminarians is on his way from the seminary to the church on Christmas Day.*



*Michael chose our Christmas tree this year from among the firs on our property.*



*Cleaning snow off the cars after a snowstorm is a regular chore during the winter.*

## The dramatic snowfall

by Dominic Pulliam, gr. 9

It was a huge snowfall for us. All you could see was a few yards in front of you. It was also very cold and wet. Since my brother Thomas and I come from Colorado Springs, we don't get a lot of snow. So we had as much fun in the snow as possible. The first night it snowed it was three or four inches. So we got ready and went sledding all around the property — or at least where the best hills were. Since the other seminarians who live up here were used to the snow, they thought it was boring and didn't come with us when we asked them to. But nonetheless we still had a great time. We only have one sled. It's small and I'm surprised that we could fit. Every morning our tail bones would hurt because it's so small.

After the next day when the ice on the road was frozen, we took the sled and went to the top of the hill next to the church, slid down to the lower school, crashed into the building and laughed so hard that we hurt. We did that over and over again until it started to get boring. Then we made a couple of ramps that were small but you could fly off your sled. I didn't expect to fly but I did and it hurt. But you learn to love the pain. After that we would try different hills on the property.

When the blizzard settled and the snow was about 10 inches, Thomas and I had a lot of fun building tunnels in the snow berms left by the plowing. The berms were 6-8 feet tall and wide. So we are working on tunnels and forts so that when the other seminarians come, we can pelt them with snowballs. And for a backup plan we can hide in the tunnels and ambush them if they try to come in. We still need to make up a name for our fort/tunnels. All I know is that it will take a long time and some muscle. I hope the snow won't melt over Christmas break, so that we can continue it and maybe get some pictures for you.

And that was the Dramatic Snowfall. And it still continues. I mean the snow continues and so does the fort/tunnels.

## Living with the Church

Of great importance here, as at any seminary, is the liturgy. Our seminarians serve Mass frequently and sing high Masses or parts of the Office. But of great interest and grace are the special liturgical celebrations. One of these, the solemn high Mass with priest, deacon and subdeacon, has been quite infrequent until now.

## 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 Latin, theology, 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.

This situation has changed, fortunately, with a new addition to our seminary: His Excellency has assigned one of the newly ordained deacons, Frater Anthony Marie, CMRI, to the minor seminary. He will help out with various tasks here, as he continues his preparation for the priesthood. We welcome Frater Anthony and look forward to regular solemn high Masses. I hope that all of our seminarians will be able to learn the various parts so that they can eventually take turns serving any role with little or no practice.

Another important liturgical event for us is the feast of the Epiphany. Coming immediately after our vacation, it includes unique ceremonies, such as the solemn blessing of Epiphany Water, the solemn announcement of movable feasts, the blessing of chalk and the blessing of gold, incense and myrrh.

We also have another custom here on the Epiphany, which is not strictly liturgical. Three young boys from our school dress as the Magi. Before Mass they process up the aisle and present the priest with 3 gifts, symbolizing the gold, incense and myrrh. Inside these objects are pieces of paper, on which are written out by the children the sacrifices they performed during Advent. That is their gift to the Christ Child.

Of course, every month and every season has its own special liturgical and devotional celebrations. These things help us to live our life in union with our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church. What a beautiful life is ours, when lived in the spirit of the liturgy! Be sure to use your missal and appreciate the beauties of the liturgical year, living a devout Catholic life in union with the Church.

May God bless each of you and your families. You can be assured of our prayers for all our benefactors, that God will bestow His blessings upon you during this new year of 2013. Thank you for your support.

*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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