



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly Newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

March 2015

The month of February is now past, and, as you well know, we are two months into the new year. As always, we should be constantly seeking to improve in the spiritual realm and fulfilling our resolutions of the year as time slips so quickly away. In addition, we are delving more deeply into the liturgical season of Lent. Of course we have all adopted a well-balanced penance schedule during this period, and no doubt we are all striving heroically to keep up with them. I might also add that it is especially important to practice mortification of the palate, this being the key to conquering all the other senses.

February has had a few major events in it such as Ash Wednesday and the blessing of throats on the feast of Saint Blaise. The ceremony of Ash Wednesday signifies our acknowledgment of our total dependence on God during Lent and gives us a blessing to persevere during the season. "Remember man that from dust you came and into dust you shall return." This is the prayer recited by the priest when administering the ashes in the shape of a cross on the forehead of the recipients. On the feast of Saint Blaise, two blessed beeswax candles are held up to the throats of the recipients and the priest says a prayer over them. The prayer is said and the blessing bestowed for the avoidance of all maladies of the throat.

March is the month of Saint Joseph, as I'm sure you know, and as such we at the seminary get the day off from school. Hurray! Also in this month is the feast of Saint Patrick the great apostle of Ireland. On the Saturday before his feast, we prepare a breakfast

for the parishioners on Sunday after both of the morning Masses. This, while being an enjoyable tradition, is also a fund-raiser for our ski trips and for our end-of-the-year school trip.

We hope you all have a spiritually profitable Lent and we ask you all to pray for our vocations and for the vocations of other boys who have not yet come here. Thank you for reading this issue of *The Guardian* and have a blessed Lent. — A Seminarian

The Penitent's Time

by Vincent Prado, gr. 11

Lent is a time for penance and for prayer. Why is this so? Well, there are a few reasons why we perform works of self-denial during these forty days. There is one reason which I will write about.

Therefore, why do we practice penance in Lent? Well, I believe the main reason is to strengthen our will against temptation. When I was younger, I never realized the importance of Lent. But now that I am older, I notice that when I perform mortification during Lent, it is very beneficial in time of temptation. For example, when you want to eat a snack that is really delicious and you say no, what this does is it strengthens the will. For when you are tempted to do something wrong, your will being already fortified by the denial of food and the like, you will find that you have the power to resist it. So the more things you give up during Lent, the more fuel your soul will have to fight.

It's only logical. Little things like giving up listening to secular music, or giving up something like coffee is extremely helpful to anyone. But

March Calendar

- 6-8 – Annual Lenten retreat
- 14 – Joseph's 14th birthday
- 15 – Seminary-sponsored Parish breakfast
- 19 – Feast of Saint Joseph, Seminary patron; no classes
- 26-27 – Third Quarter Exams
- 27 – Last Day of Third Quarter
- 29 – Palm Sunday

probably the best thing to give up is food. We all love food and especially food that is delightful to the taste. So if we deny ourselves some food seasoning or something of the like, we are denying our craving for taste. As an example, you could give up foods with sugar in them.

Another thing that I love about Lent is just the liturgical season itself. With the somber colors and the mournful hymns, it is as if it draws the sorrow and mournfulness right out of you.

And what makes it even better is that there is the feast of Easter, not excluding Holy Week, to look forward to.

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Every Friday during Lent we pray the Stations of the Cross.

The Penitent's Time

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Speaking of Holy Week, the days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, are without a doubt my favorite both for serving and for simply attending.

And so, dear readers, take advantage of this profitable season. Do penance and mortify yourself so that you may strengthen your will. If we do these things we will obtain greater holiness. Just a step in reaching eternal glory.

Saturday Chores

by Pierce Ledet, gr. 11

There is an old Irish saying: "Manual labor is a monster!" Every Saturday after Holy Mass and a quick breakfast, we all change into work clothes and head outside with Fr. Anthony. All day we do whatever needs to be done around the Seminary.

One dreary, wet, Saturday morning, we went up the hill to cut and gather firewood. Fr. Anthony had his chainsaw and he would cut up some trees that had been felled weeks before, into more manageable logs. We Seminarrians would then carry the logs down the hill to the trailer where we put the logs to be driven to the seminary and unloaded.

Another time, we were going to build boxes for the chickens to lay their eggs, and as the measurements were being drawn up, we chanced upon some old milk crates and decided to use those instead of building boxes from scratch out of wood. For the chickens to be able to get in them easier, we added some perches to the milk crates and secured them to the wall of the chicken house.

We have been working on shoveling gravel because when the snow plow pushed the snow off the road, it would also take off a little gravel from the road. All winter long it accumulated onto the side of the road and so, our job was to take the gravel, put it into buckets and cover a dirt road leading up the hill so that it will look nicer and help when it rains.

Our latest project was to install a new altar in the Chapel. Of course, it would not fit through any of the doors, save one. The one door the altar fit through led from outside to upstairs and there was no way down once there. We were all thinking about what to do when Fr. Anthony had the idea to lower the altar from the choir loft! Everything was prepared, and we were about to attempt it when Father was looking at the sliding door and noticed that it would not be very difficult to remove it. And so, saving us a lot of dangerous work, we took the sliding door out and carried the altar back down the stairs and then through the opening.

Even though some people do not care for hard work, I personally enjoy that good feeling at the end the day, that feeling of accomplishment. Work is also good to stay in shape and keep your body strong. Let us all, then, remember in this

season of Lent to not turn away from work or hardships and to always offer them up to God.

Advantages of Unusual Weather

by Mark Vincent, gr. 10

The seasons are changing here as they should not at this time of year. Flowers are emerging from the thawed, snow-less soil. The sun is in full bloom and is drying out the earth. The air is ripe for archery, which we practice a few hundred yards from the seminary.

We practice at a range Fr. Anthony set up for us, which consists of two poles on which to hang our bows and hold our arrows. Opposite the shooting end stands the red, discarded carpet fastened to a wooden framework. The users of this range are Joe, Vincent, Fr. Anthony, Pierce, and myself. Pierce and I have recurve bows; Fr. Anthony and the others use compound bows. I have five wooden arrows I made myself, and Pierce has about a dozen arrows. Fr. Anthony keeps his arrows in his PVC construction quiver decorated with patches of different colors of duct tape slapped on different ways forming an artistic representation of camouflage.

We all can usually find a few minutes every day to practice a bit. When Pierce gets tired of shooting, he can usually produce his set of throwing knives which he has recently begun to learn how to use. I do my shooting after I do my pig chores every afternoon, which take about twenty minutes. We all thoroughly enjoy practicing and practice as if it were our last time every chance we get.

Aside from archery we also have going on our annual table tennis tournament, in which everyone, I am sure, is thoroughly engrossed. Pierce and I have not played for very long yet and are not as good as the others, but we are learning quickly. None of us, of course, are as good as the Chinese in the Olympics, but all of us are getting the chance to show off our own style. Everyone wants to win the contest for the sake of getting the prize — a free homework pass. Every one of us has a strong will to win and Vincent has gone so far as to vow that he will not lose a single game.

Each seminarian is playing every other seminarian in about three games a person until the deadline next week, when the scores will be added up and the homework pass will descend upon the person most deserving of it. May the best seminarian win! Even though all six of us are having so much fun with competition and recreation, taking advantage of unusually warm weather, we cannot forget to take every chance we can to fill the inventory of penances we have decided upon. The better of a Lent we make, the better we will feel when it is over.

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Father Anthony offers Mass on our new seminary altar.



On Sundays we chant Compline from the Divine Office.



The work brigade removes the loose gravel pushed onto the grass by the snow plow.



Heated games in our annual table tennis tournament often draw spectators.



Roller blade hockey in the gym has become a favorite winter recreation.



Mark keeps the pigs fed, until they are ready for the butcher.

The Sources of Villainy

by Jordan Hartman, gr. 12

What does one do when trying to solve a complex problem or assuage a quarrel? First, you find out what the root of the problem is. Once you find that out, it is easier to fix the problem and all the little rivulets that perhaps have sprung from that problem. It is much the same in the spiritual life.

When evils start springing up in your life and you are encompassed by the black hordes of Satan's minions, you just have to take them one at a time instead of getting overwhelmed and then just giving up, which is exactly what the devil would want. Of course, I'm not implying that you can commit other sins while focusing on conquering your predominant faults. This would defeat the purpose and be to your demise. It would be so because if you fail to overcome the little temptations, it is so much harder to overcome the bigger ones. So you have to prioritize while still resisting all sins.

But as I was saying before, in order to solve a problem, you have to find the root or cause of the problem. Many writers of spiritual books say that pride is the root of all evil. It may not be your predominant fault, but it certainly is the cause of very many evils. In fact, the boldness required on the part of a Catholic to willfully commit sin is directly related to pride because you refuse to follow God's will and you deliberately follow your own. Even if the sin isn't one of pride, it is most likely brought about because of it. Here it is important to remember that we are naturally inclined to sin and, left to govern ourselves, we would almost assuredly chose the wrong path every time, the path that leads to eternal perdition.

Pride is so subtle a fault that it can even thrive where it is assumed to have been astutely avoided. Or it can spring from the false motive of doing something virtuous. Pride also has many different names such as vanity and envy. When taken over by pride, it is difficult to reverse the effects by practicing the opposing virtue, and pride itself may hold you back from setting your spiritual life straight.

In conclusion, pride is a very dangerous sin which must be avoided at all costs. But, should you fall into this sin and it becomes habitual, entangling you in its manifold vines of evil, you need only remember to kill it by severing it at the roots. This will undoubtedly be hard and often painful, but it is equally necessary, for God detests the sin of pride which was the first sin ever committed. We must abandon our own will and replace it with the will of God if we wish to achieve spiritual perfection and ultimately everlasting salvation.

“A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalms, 50:19).

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.

St. Joseph

Our seminary privilege – to be named after Saint Joseph – becomes more appreciated with each passing year. This great saint is not only a perfect model for us, but also a powerful intercessor with Jesus and Mary. Since they obeyed him on earth, they are now only too happy to do his bidding in heaven. In addition, they are indebted to his loving care for them on earth, and are eager to reward him now, by granting his requests.

Therefore, *Go to Joseph*, and you will not be disappointed. Indeed, if there ever was a time when his powerful intercession for the Church was especially needed, it is today. Also, as Saint Joseph watched over the education and upbringing of the great High Priest Jesus Christ, he must also have a keen interest in the formation of young aspirants to the priesthood. We commit our seminary to his loving care, as we seek to honor him throughout this month.

On another note, I cannot fail to thank my sister Marie for her help over the years. Little did she know, when I asked her 16 years ago to prepare the set-up of our monthly newsletter, how many long hours of work would be required. Yet it has been a labor of love. Now, it is time for others to take over the work of putting together this newsletter. In your kindness, say a prayer for all those who have helped me to get each monthly issue in the mail for the past 186 issues. God-willing, there will be many more.

Finally, be sure to check out our seminary website (www.minorseminary.org), which will help you to keep up on the latest news from the seminary. We are grateful for your interest and support in our seminary life. Please continue to pray for our seminary, and especially for more vocations. May God reward you, and may He grant each of us many graces during this holy season of Lent.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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