



# THE GUARDIAN

December begins the season of Advent, which means that Christmas is right around the corner. We hope to make a good Advent by performing some sacrifices during this important liturgical season. Of course, we are all looking forward to going home soon to see our families during Christmas vacation!

Before we leave for Christmas we will have a Christmas program, presented by the parish school here at the City of Mary. We seminarians will also present several Christmas carols and hymns. We also have been chanting Vespers and High Masses. Our choir class with Father Philip occurs twice a week, and we all enjoy learning new hymns and chants. Hopefully, our presentation at the school program will go well.

So far, there has been no snow (other than a couple early snowfalls over a month ago.) Finally, it has started to turn much colder, so we know that snow will not be far behind.

You can be sure that we are ready for the winter, even though it will mean shoveling. We hope all of you enjoy this beautiful time of year, and we pray that the Infant Jesus will bless you with many graces.

### Et Verbum Caro Factum Est

*by Thiet Vincent Nguyen, gr. 10*

In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John, 1:1-14). Our Blessed Redeemer, in His infinite mercy for our salvation, came to dwell among us around 2000 years ago. After our first parents committed the first sin of the human race, God promised that there would be a Redeemer, Who would bring salvation to mankind. He would dwell in the womb of a Virgin and she would be called blessed for all generations: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy

head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Genesis, 3:15).

Our Almighty Lord, in His divine Wisdom, had chosen for Himself the family of surpassing holiness and purity, that no earthly family could compare with. He destined Our Blessed Mother to be His mother since the

### December Calendar

- 2 – Classes resume
- 9 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception BVM
- 15 – Christmas program
- 20 – Half-day of school; Christmas Vacation begins after classes

beginning of time for her magnificent beauty and her excelling perfection. Her abundance of virtue surpasses all women in this entire world, as depicted in the Gospel when the angel Gabriel appeared to her with his reverent salutation: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women” (Luke, 1:19-31). She is so perfect that every time we say the *Hail Mary*, or even invoke her name, the demons scream in terror.

Every man on this earth needs the warmth and the nourishment of both his father and mother. Our Lord elected St. Joseph out of all other men in this world to be His foster father and the spouse of His Blessed Mother. It is he who, out of perfect obedience to God, led the Infant Jesus and the Blessed Virgin to safety in Egypt at the persecution of Herod. His power of intercession with God is so great that Holy Mother the Church proclaims him to be her protector.



*The seminarians served the parish breakfast on the third Sunday of November.*

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## **Et Verbum Caro Factum Est**

So great were the virtues of Our Lady and her sweet spouse. They, who were filled with joy in hearing of the coming of the Savior, prepared Him a warm stable in their hearts. Sadly, as time moves on, many people who claim to be Christians today fail to seek the virtues of St. Joseph and Our Blessed Lady. They have mostly forgotten the true meaning of Christmas and the purpose of the season of Advent. In replacement of spending time in prayer together in preparation of the coming of the Savior, many families are starting to spend more time going to shopping centers or places of earthly entertainments.

This is, of course, the most joyful time in the liturgical calendar. However, along with the spirit of happiness, there must be also the spirit of preparation for one's soul. This should be the time to reflect upon what we should do to prepare for the coming of Our Lord and to make atonement for our sins throughout the year by our penance and prayer.

As this year approaches closer to its end, let us examine how much spiritual progress we have made. Have we been diligently obeying God's will and learning to love Him and His Blessed Mother by loving our own neighbors? Let us also make way for our Infant King with the spirit of preparation. Let us make resolutions for this upcoming year that by the grace of God, we will become His faithful disciples by carrying out his teachings into actions—loving our neighbors, fulfilling our daily duties, and advancing in our spiritual lives. By doing this, we shall hope that one day, He Who has come to redeem us shall bring us to eternal happiness.

### **Puns in the Minor Seminary**

*by William Davis, gr. 9*

For this article I will write about the puns we say in the minor seminary and their effect on us. Well, I guess that I will start at the very beginning. All of this pun-making, and the pun-ishment inflicted by it, was started by a certain seminarian making one pun on his way up to Idaho. And since this was in a van bringing quite a few seminarians, one of them heard this pun and decided that he had to beat it. Then and there we all started making puns, most of them ridiculously bad, and others that nobody understood. There were a few seminarians in particular who made a lot of jokes in that fateful car ride. And of course, it didn't stop once we arrived at the seminary but has continued today.

But all of this pun making reminds me that we all

need our little light-hearted moments. Not many people can live their lives completely sullen and dreary, at least not very full lives. And I am sure that we have all had those moments when we laughed so hard that we cried, or couldn't even breathe. At least I know I have. But these puns are something else. They have the knack of being so stupid that they are good, or that they are so completely boring and dull that nobody recognizes them as jokes.

I guess that I should now tell some of the better jokes that have been said here.

One of the best goes like this: "What did the pony with the sore throat say? I'm just a little hoarse." But it was a high school student, not a seminarian, who came up with that one. An example of a minor seminary pun is: "Why are eagles so holy? Because they're birds of pray." Now that is a pretty silly joke, but a lot of them are even worse, if you can believe it.

This makes me think of the importance of puns here. For we can often try to be so serious about life that it makes everyone around us miserable, and that is very bad. So the way I see it is that wholesome jokes are an almost necessary thing in the minor seminary. Then again, you have to distinguish between an appropriate and good joke, and a joke that is not uplifting. So yes, in my opinion, the puns that we say here in the minor seminary, although most of them are incredibly stupid, are beneficial to the atmosphere at the City of Mary. But that is just my o-pun-ion.



*The pumpkin in the middle of the table has a carving of Saint Joseph and says "Ite Ad Joseph."*



*On the feast of Our Lady's Presentation we had a Solemn High Mass.*



*There has been no shortage of work for our Saturday chores.*



*Gabriel helps with installing the Christmas lights on the church.*



*Little do these piglets know that they are being fattened for the seminary table!*



*The High Mass on All Souls Day was one of our recent High Masses.*



*Seminarians are busy studying vocabulary during English class.*

## “Come And I Will Refresh You.”

by Gabriel Davis, gr. 10

Every morning at the sound of a bell, we drag ourselves out of bed and enter God's house, the chapel, to hear Mass. In turn, on receiving Holy Communion God enters our house, our soul, and hears our every need and petition. He listens with patience, He consoles us in our worries and strengthens us to persevere. The opportunity to receive Our Lord two hundred seventy-five times within the school year, if multiplied by the fifteen minutes Our Lord is present in our soul, is a total of more than 65 hours, or about three days spent actually with Jesus Christ. How could this tremendous grace not impact your soul! This reason, surpassing all others, is why we have joined the minor seminary.

It is impossible to delve into the endless mines of the Mass and the Holy Eucharist. The deeper you dig the more hidden treasures you will find. This analogy, and many other ideas I got for this article, were from these two brilliant books: The Hidden Treasure by St. Leonard, and The Blessed Eucharist by Ft. Michael Muller. If out of this article I end up only convincing a few to read or reread these books, I will be most content. I cannot recommend these books highly enough.

Every ten years in Oberammergau Germany is held the most famous reenactment of Our Lord's Passion in the world. The play is performed by more than two hundred actors. Consider now, that every day we are able to go to this same performance, but with Jesus Christ himself. What a profound thought. Why then does God not just physically reveal himself to us in order that our faith may be unwavering? Because God in all His majesty is still a model of perfect humility. I will quote Father Muller in his book on the Blessed Sacrament: “In truth, Thou art an humble God, my God, and I am a proud creature! Thou seek humiliations, and I fly from them.”

Visit Our Lord as often as you can, and you will notice your soul's growth and your love of God increase. For how can you love someone you do not know? I will end on a promise Our Lord made to all those who would visit and converse with Him, either in chapel or in thought: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew, 11:28).

## The Story of Our Lady of Gaudalupe

by Anthony Harris, gr. 9

It was a Saturday when our Lady appeared to Juan Diego and told him to go and tell the Archbishop of Mexico that she wanted a chapel built in her honor. Juan Diego went to tell the archbishop what he had seen and heard. At first, the archbishop did not seem to believe him and sent him away.

Juan was again intercepted by Our Lady on the way back to his home. She told him to go the next day to the archbishop and tell him the story of his second meeting with her. The next

day was a Sunday so, after Mass, he went straight to the archbishop and told him the story of his meeting with the Lady.

The archbishop listened patiently while he told his story. When Juan finished telling the story, the archbishop asked for a sign and then sent him away. Juan went again to see our Lady and told her how the archbishop had asked for a sign. Our Lady told him that he should come back the next day and she would provide a sign.

Back at home he spent the day helping his sick uncle and was unable to visit Our Lady. The next day it was clear that his uncle would not live much longer, so Juan went to get a priest to administer the last sacraments to him. He avoided the hill that the Lady had appeared on, because he thought she would slow him down on his urgent mission but to no avail. She intercepted him and told him not to worry about his uncle because he was cured and on the hill that she had appeared would be the sign that he wished.

On that hill he found flowers! Juan filled his tilma with them and brought them to Our Lady who arranged them with her own hands. Juan brought the flowers to the archbishop and dropped them at his feet. The archbishop immediately knelt down and asked him to look at his tilma which had the impression of Our Lady of Guadalupe on its surface.

Juan's tilma still survives today in Mexico. It has puzzled scientists who have studied the tilma, which has been intact for 500 years and normally would have fallen apart before then. Scientists who have studied the eyes of our Lady have perceived that they are like real human eyes. In 1921 the tilma also survived a bomb placed in a flower vase on the altar.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PRAY FOR US!

## Journey to the Altar of God

Again this December 12<sup>th</sup> there will be ordinations to the priesthood in Omaha. Last year the minor seminarians were able to attend the beautiful ceremony, but that will not be possible this year. At any rate, the ordination of a priest is a momentous occasion for the entire Mystical Body of Christ. Even one more priest means another daily Mass somewhere in our country, as well as a greater distribution of the life-giving sacraments.

But the ordination of a man to the priesthood is only the culmination of a long road of studies, prayers, self-denial and striving for holiness. That journey begins in one's youth, which is why a minor seminary is so important. The habits that are formed in a young man will last a lifetime. So we ask your daily prayers for the boys and young men in our seminaries, that they will truly become other Christs.

We wish you all a blessed Advent and Christmas season, and we promise a remembrance in our daily prayers to that end. May the Divine Infant bless us this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*