



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XXII No. 4 Issue #256

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

December 2020

Three of the seminarians have families in the area, so they went home for the four-day Thanksgiving Break. The rest of us enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving meal at the seminary, thanks to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Drewsen, who are great cooks and prepared the meal for us. We particularly enjoyed the time off school with extra free time and recreational activities.

During November we had a fund-raising parish breakfast to support our

also busy with preparing for the Christmas program.

Next week the priests will go to Omaha on a brief trip to attend the ordination ceremony. We wish that we could all go along with them, but at least we can pray for the deacons who will be ordained priests on December 12. What a wonderful thing—to have three new priests to offer the Mass and lead souls to God!

Let us all pray for them and for more priests. Please also pray for us

December Calendar

- 4 – Mid-quarter
- 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception BVM; no classes
- 12 – Ordination ceremony in Omaha
- 13 – Christmas school program
- 18 – Half-day of school; Christmas Vacation begins after classes



Father Philip supervises the preparations for the parish fund-raising breakfast.

seminary. We also made pies to sell as part of the fund-raiser. That was a big project that took the whole day one Saturday, but it was fun. At the end of the day, those that worked on the pies said their feet were very sore from standing in the kitchen all day.

Now we have entered the season of Advent. This is a very important season to help us prepare for Christmas. As usual at the seminary, we have various sacrifices that we perform, to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child. We are

that we will know our vocation and have the grace to follow it. May you all have a most joyous Christmas!

Our Relationship with the Blessed Sacrament

by William Davis, gr. 10

As you have been told before, we wake up at 6:20 and are in chapel by 6:45 am. This is the first of our several listed visits to the Blessed Sacrament. We pray our morning prayers and then attend the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass, which we have the amazing privilege of attending every day. We also visit the chapel at Noon, at 5:00 pm, and at 8:45 pm. These are the visits prescribed in our schedule, but we are greatly encouraged to make at least one unscheduled visit on our own.

We are very, very privileged to live less than 100 feet away from the chapel. We could literally just open a door and we would be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. That is one of the best things about being in the minor seminary—that we are next door neighbors with our Eucharistic Lord. But, as the saying goes, “familiarity breeds complacency.” It is hard to keep it in your mind that Jesus Christ is less than 100 feet away when I am noisily carrying my books to and from the classroom, or preparing for recreation, or chasing after someone who stole my snack. But when I do go into chapel, it makes me feel just a tad bit proud that I live in such close proximity to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The reason we are here at the minor seminary is to discern our vocation,

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Our Relationship with the Blessed Sacrament

but our all-time goal is to grow in union and love with our Divine Lord. And what better way to do this than by visiting Him in His humble house. Indeed, the Holy Eucharist is a mystery of God's infinite love. For we have the opportunity to be with Our Lord in His home many times a day, and if you ask me, there couldn't be a much more profound privilege with which we seminarians are spoiled.

In the Footsteps of St. Eustace

by Thaddeus Kuck, gr. 11

Before coming to the minor seminary I would always go to my Grandpa's farm for the whitetail deer hunting season. Gabriel and I prepared for hunting a little bit last semester in May. We did some scouting and then built a tree stand. The season started on October

tenth, but we didn't get our license and tags until October twenty-ninth.

The season ends December first. Both Gabriel and I have trail cameras. We have caught not only deer, but also elk, moose, coyotes, turkeys, grouse, and squirrels. There were only two

bull elk and six cows but they were huge. There was only one family of moose but there are tracks and scat all over. Last year there were flocks of turkeys but not as many have come up this year.

I just bought a grunt call, a doe can, and a rattle bag. These have worked very well. Every time I used them deer came in. Normally three does and two bucks. One of them is at least an eight pointer. One night we saw them soft-sparring right next to the gym in the middle of the volleyball court. Gabriel, Joseph, Matthew, and I have been going out every day after school until about 4:30. It gets dark here pretty early, compared to Omaha. On Saturdays and Sundays, we can hunt for four hours.

As you can see we don't have much time to hunt. I am excited about Thanksgiving Break. We are going to have a five-day weekend and we will be able to hunt all day

on Wednesday and Friday. I am the only seminarian who has ever field-dressed and processed a deer. I have only gotten four deer in my entire life. Thankfully, Mr. Drewson offered to help us process the deer. I have been praying to St. Eustace, a martyr from the first century. The Church has numbered him among the Fourteen Holy Helpers and declared him the patron saint of hunters. Through his intercession I will be helped not only spiritually but also when I am hunting.

Our Lady's Favorite Privilege

by Jesse Sand, gr. 12

We are now starting the month of December and will soon be celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th. On this day we celebrate the fact that Mary was conceived in the womb of St. Anne. People often confuse this feast with the Annunciation when Jesus Christ was conceived in Mary's womb on March 25th.



On a weekend meal the boys sometimes all crowd around the same table for conversation.

Although the feast of the Immaculate Conception may seem like a more recent addition to the Church, it was celebrated before Pius IX declared its solemnity. For in the centuries prior to 1854, the feast was celebrated as the Conception of Mary. Since the

Church cannot promote error, the sanctity of Mary's conception must have already been acknowledged.

The Immaculate Conception is one of Mary's greatest privileges from God. By it, from the first moment of her existence she was free from any stain of original sin and had abundant graces infused into her soul. This grace from God was necessary for Mary's future office as Mother of God. If she had been conceived in sin and then purified immediately afterwards, Mary would have been under the dominion of the devil at one point in her life. What an embarrassment this would have been to Christ, if His own mother had at one point been in sin. Thus, as Christ was the perfect Child, He respected His

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Good weather allowed for cleanup of fallen trees on the cemetery hillside.



There was a good turnout for our fund-raising breakfast.



There have been plenty of exciting games during the Ping-pong tournament.



The pie-making took up the whole day one recent Saturday.



Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament concludes the First Saturday Holy Hour.



The seminarians now have basketball practice with Coach Prado every Monday.

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Our Lady's Favorite Privilege

mother and gave her this special gift to make her worthy of being the Mother of God.

Aside from this privilege, Mary has received many others. One of them which should be very consoling to us, is that she is the spiritual mother of all mankind. No matter what state of life we are in, Mary as a perfect mother will help us if we only ask her. As this special feast of our mother draws near let us continually call upon her whenever we are in need. O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

Pies for Our Ski Trip

by Joseph Strain, gr. 10

The first three full months of school have gone by very quickly and soon we Seminarians will be packing our bags for Christmas vacation. And when we return, we will indeed be returning to the normal school schedule, but we will also be going skiing. The money for the ski trip is from our recent seminary-support breakfast; many people attended and made generous donations. But we seem to have begun a new seminary custom that began last school year. This new custom that we started last year and continued to do this year is pie-making. Let me tell you about these delicious pies that we sell for our future ski trips.

One year ago we made a profusion of sample pies to sell at that seminary breakfast. Many people had samples, and some bought pies that day, but many more people left orders on a sheet of paper for the pies that they would like us to have ready for them to pick up the following Sunday. During the next week we went to the store a couple of times to pick up ingredients that we did not have at the seminary at that time, but we also bought some more ingredients so that we could make a few pies for ourselves.

If there are extra pies, these will be taken over to the church to sell to those who did not get a chance to place an order. And we are sure that they will enjoy the pies at their Thanksgiving dinner with their family and friends, just as we will here at the Seminary.

Everything seemed to happen in almost the same manner this year, just like last year. But this year we have more hands to help with the pie-making, and more mouths to feed on Thanksgiving. In the end, we all will be enjoying the first month of the New Year at Silver Mountain skiing down the slopes. Until then, we will continue our schedule and prepare for Christmas vacation; and do some shopping for Christmas presents to give to our family when we return home.

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.

Four Times a Day

In Psalm 118, the psalmist prays: "Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice." Given this number of seven, monks in monasteries would often go into the church at seven times (or hours) of the day to pray. This led to the arrangement of the Divine Office, which priests pray every day, into seven "hours."

Accordingly, many other offices, such as the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, are also divided into the seven canonical hours. Here at the seminary the boys get adjusted to this arrangement by using a much simpler office. The Office of the Immaculate Conception is probably the shortest office to pray, but it is a most beautiful prayer. Each of the hours honors Our Lady's favorite privilege, making reference to various persons and events in the Old Testament which typified Our Blessed Mother.

The seminarians do not go into the chapel for common prayer at seven different times, however. Some of the hours of the office are combined. Thus, they pray Matins and Prime at morning prayers; the "little hours" of Tierce, Sext and None are prayed at Noon prayers; Vespers is prayed with the Rosary before supper; and Compline concludes night prayers.

It is a wonderful custom to honor Our Blessed Mother with this beautiful office, which is also used by the members of the Confraternity of Mary Immaculate Queen. Let us all honor Our Lady under this beautiful title and privilege, especially by often invoking her, who was conceived without the stain of original sin, the only human creature to have been so honored by God.

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

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI