



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

December 2021

November has been a busy month at the seminary. In early November we made many visits to the Blessed Sacrament for the Poor Souls, including an all-night vigil of adoration. We also sang High Masses of Requiem and, of course, recited daily prayers for the faithful departed.

Last week we had a fund-raising parish breakfast to support our seminary. We spent the day before in preparing for the breakfast and in making pies to sell. All ten seminarians pitched in, so the work was done in good time. We are grateful to all the parishioners who participated in the breakfast and bought our pies. This fund-raiser will be used for our skiing trips this winter!

As was the case last year, our Thanksgiving dinner was at the seminary, provided by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Drewsen. Some of us also joined in the cooking effort, and the meal was delicious. Father also invited some of the parishioners to join us, so there was plenty of company.

Now we turn our attention to the season of Advent. This is an important time to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. It is the custom at the seminary for each of us to write up a schedule of some extra sacrifices and prayers to perform during the short season of Advent. It is not as penitential a season as Lent; nevertheless, we must perform some penances if we wish to have a holy and joyful Christmas.

We pray that all of you, our spiritual family, will make a good Advent and have a most joyful Christmas.

Valedictory Christmas as a Minor Seminarian

by Thiet Nguyen, gr. 12

Well, the time has finally come. This Christmas is my last Christmas as a high school seminarian. As the Book of Ecclesiastes states: "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." It's surely fitting for me to contemplate about this particular quote as time moves on so quickly in the course of one's lifetime. We truly have sadness in our own lives, so do we have delight. I would certainly be disheartened to spend my last Christmas here as a minor seminarian, so would I be undoubtedly rejoicing when I'm no longer pressurized by

December Calendar

- 1 – Jorge's 17th birthday
- 3 – Mid-quarter
- 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception BVM; no classes
- 17 – Christmas Vacation begins after classes

realize how quickly time moves; how many blessings I've received from Almighty God including my appreciation of Christmas as a Catholic, my family, loved ones and friends; and how little do I thank Him. There is my first Christmas, when I first learned to sing Christmas carols in Latin. There is my second Christmas, when I spent some memorable time with my family and



Father Philip gives Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the seminary.

homework and the early morning bell.

As I look back on the memories of Christmas as a minor seminarian, I

my good friends, Gabe and William Davis and Gabriel Riley. There is my

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Valedictory Christmas as a Minor Seminarian

third Christmas, when I served for the first time Christmas High Mass with incense. For my fourth Christmas, I watched for the first time Christmas High Mass live-streaming. Due to distance, I was not able to attend Mass where my family lives in the state of Georgia. At last, my final Christmas in high school years has come. I will certainly miss the atmosphere of friendship and intimacy of Christmas when I finally make my departure from this place, which I've learned to love very much.

Christmas has always been a season of joy, of bonding, and warmth for it is the season of the coming of Christ. Our Divine Savior, out of His infinite love for men has come down to dwell among us to bring forth our redemption. He was born not in a golden crib but in a poor manger; nor was he born in a palace, but in a humble stable on a cold night at Bethlehem, tenderly watched by Saint Joseph, His beloved foster father, and Mary Our Blessed Mother. Let us appreciate His great love for us and all the blessings He has bestowed upon us, especially the delightful time we have with our families, our friends and loved ones. May we all prepare our hearts during the next few weeks for the advent of Jesus Christ, our Savior. To all the readers of our seminary's newspaper, may God bless you with a very holy and joyful Christmas.

Cantate Dominum Canticum Novum

by William Davis, gr. 11

Joy to the World, Adeste Fideles, Angels We Have Heard on High—these are all hymns we know and sing with glee during the joyous time of Christmas. At least for me, a big part of the distinguishing features of Christmastide are the beautiful hymns we sing. It lends a very charming, and, for the most part, exuberant feeling to December in particular, and to winter in general. Indeed, it seems that when Christmas music is played during spring, summer, or even most of autumn, it is considered a faux pas at best. This brings to my mind an event that occurred a couple weeks ago.

We had just started learning songs for Advent when Father Philip found a book of sheet music for Christmas songs. Well, this got me thinking about that happy time of year, so I decided to get some Christmas music and listen to it, despite the fact that it was still 3 weeks before Advent would even begin! I was pretty proud of myself for having

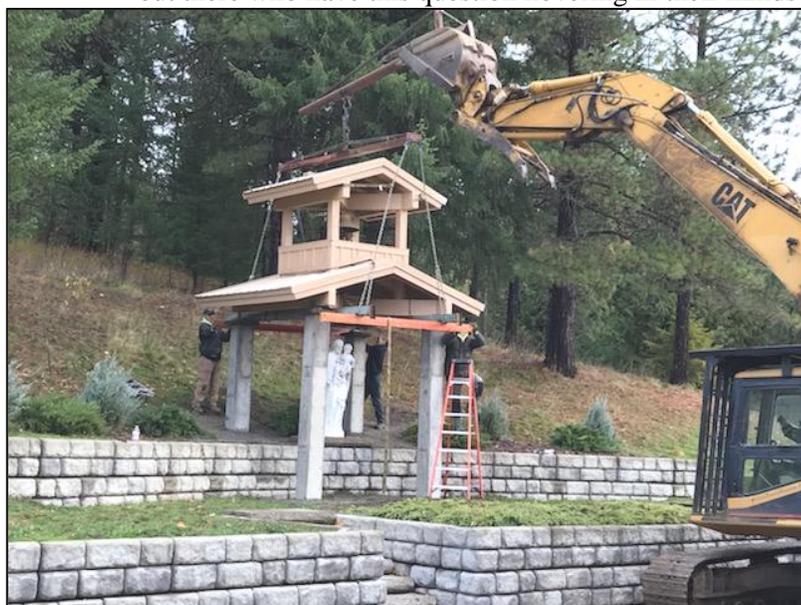
had such a “good” idea. It only occurred to me that this would bring a veritable anathema upon my head from my own family when Gabriel and Father Philip, my brothers, heard me listening to it. I barely made it out of the basement alive, and I now regret having gone down there to ask them a question. But to make matters worse, the following Sunday Gabriel told my sister about the matter, and I was righteously blown out of the water by her on the phone for having listened to Christmas music before Advent. I completely understood their just wrath, but I do wish that I had thought of what time of the year it was before I had started listening to Christmas carols.

Now, I'm sure what happened to me doesn't happen too often. It does, however, give an example of the sense of what the right time and place is for certain songs, and Christmas songs especially. It seems to me that most large stores simply obliterate the idea of Christmas music being special, since they start playing their jingles the day after All Saints Day. Christmas music should be special. I think it should be special enough to save throughout the year, so that you can really and truly appreciate its beauty and joy when we celebrate the happy feast of the Nativity of Our Lord.

The Busy Schedule

by Joseph Strain, gr. 11

Many of you, if not all of you, already know what our schedule is. But what do you all know about what goes on here after 3:00 pm? If there are any people out there who have this question hovering in their minds



The workers installed the upper portion of the old bell tower over the statue of Saint Joseph in front of the seminary.

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Everyone enjoys the experiments that are conducted during Physics class.



Joseph carved a beautiful image of Our Lord for the pumpkin-carving contest.



Some of the seminarians make use of our piano during free time.



The seminarians held a fund-raising breakfast in November.



We have only had a few inches of snow thus far—no doubt there will be plenty more as winter settles in.

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The Busy Schedule

at this moment, I will tell you what happens.

Monday through Friday, after school, the chefs assigned for the day go and see if they have everything that they need to prepare for dinner, while the others head off to do projects with Fr. Philip. There are some who will go right away to their rooms to get a head start on their homework so that they have time in the evening to possibly play games.

Also, added to the weekday schedule, on Tuesdays and Thursdays we do a brief cleaning of the house and some other small chores for about 20 minutes. There are two crews of three people, one crew cleans upstairs while the other cleans downstairs. The other four do the assigned chores that come up every now and then.

Every day, Rosary is at 5:00pm in the seminary chapel, followed by dinner with a reading from the New Testament. When the evening crew does dishes, two people will go down to milk Matilda and make sure that she and Bobby have enough hay and water. When it is 6:15 at the seminary, a silent study hall commences that goes on until 8:00, at which time we are allowed to have some recreation before night prayers.



The statue of the Sacred Heart was placed in front of the church for the feast of Christ the King.

Forty-five minutes later is spiritual reading. Every month we have a book to read and we must write a report on that book. Some of us try to get one book ahead each month so that we have extra time to work on our book report. We will read our books for 15 minutes before praying night prayers.

In closing this article, I will mention the 3 days on which night prayers are different. On Sunday, we have spiritual

reading at 8:30 and pray at 8:45, and we chant Sunday Compline. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have a small procession while chanting the Salve Regina. But since Advent is here, we are now chanting the Alma Redemptoris Mater. Depending on the Liturgical cycle, we will chant a different hymn to Our Lady before retiring.

Come Lord Jesus, Come!

The variety of the Liturgical Year provides a beauty that inspires and charms the soul. Interspersed throughout the year are different seasons, different themes. We never seem to tire of the various seasons and feast days, since they occur only once a year.

While all the seasons have a beauty all their own, one of my favorites is Advent. There is something unique about the penitential yet joyful longing for the coming of the Savior's birth that closely parallels the yearning we should have for union with Him in heaven. It has often been said that Christmas is especially a season for children, but must we not all become like them if we would enter the kingdom of heaven?

Advent contains its own unique scriptural passages and lovely melodies which embody the spirit of the season. Sadly, however, the world—and even many Catholics who are caught up in its spirit—pass over the season entirely. So anxious are they to shop and celebrate during this period of spiritual preparation for Christmas, that they entirely lose out on the blessings of the season. When Christmas does arrive, they are tired of it. They want to throw out the tree when we are just beginning to celebrate.

Let us not follow the fashion of the world! Spend this season in quiet recollection and extra spiritual reading. Make some sacrifices, that you might prepare room in your heart for the spiritual birth there of Jesus by dying to self. If we spend this season as we ought, our joy at

Christmas will be a truly spiritual joy, which will animate and sustain us in our trials in this vale of tears.

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