



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. I, No. 6

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

February 2000

The past month has brought snow, snow, and more snow! We hardly finish shoveling the walks and cleaning the snow off the car, when it snows again. The accumulation of snow on our steel roof eventually leads to an avalanche of snow and ice falling from the roof with a thunderous noise. Most of the seminarians, however, don't seem to mind. After all, snow means sledding and snowboarding. And skiing. They are anxiously awaiting our forthcoming outing to the ski slopes in another week.

All the seminarians returned on January 5, well-rested and ready to resume their studies. Well, at least well-rested. We had a High Mass on the Feast of the Epiphany to start things off in this New Year. We also sang a High Mass in honor of Saint Joseph on the 19th of January for our benefactors, and are now preparing for the Mass and ceremonies of Candlemas.

As this issue goes to press, one of our seminarians prepares for postulancy. We will explain the significance of that ceremony in our next issue.

Our daily routine

by Wade White

A vital aspect of the seminarian's life is the daily routine. The daily schedule, the rules and assignments of duties are often referred to collectively as "the Rule." The Rule is very important in keeping discipline and order, for without these we would have chaos. We greet the day with Mass, and our first food is that of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. Mass and breakfast are followed by classes and then chores, after which we have free time. In the evening, after the Rosary, there is supper, dishes, study, recreation, and then night prayers. Gradually, these recurring activities become a matter of routine, a sort of second nature.

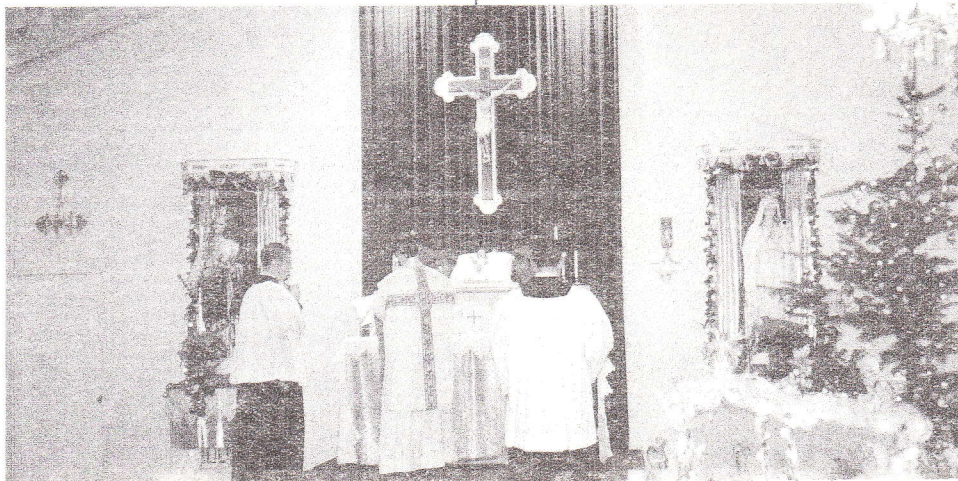
If we accept the Rule with confidence and obey it with docility, we will safely reach the goal at which we are aiming. Our goal is not only the sacred character of the priesthood with its powers and obligations, but also the knowledge, piety, virtue and grace, without which a

priest cannot live up to his great dignity and worthily fulfill his sacerdotal office. The daily routine prepares us for these goals.

Most anyone would consider the Rule a burdensome obligation. On the contrary, we appreciate it as a most valuable help in the important work of our preparation for the holy priesthood. Especially after our recent vacation, we can all see the value of having such a daily routine to manage our time and keep our souls spiritually fit.

We obey the Rule, therefore, not under compulsion, nor from fear of punishment, but out of a sense of duty, springing from our own conscience, as St. Paul says: "Not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (Romans, 13:5). We obey it, not because we are seen by our professors, but because we are seen by God. We obey it, not even to please our superiors, but to please God by doing His divine will. "Not serving to the eye, as pleasers of men, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart" (Ephesians, 6:6).

There is an old saying in seminaries and religious houses: *Keep the Rule and the Rule will keep you.* By determining the employment of our time in matters of study, prayer and recreation, the daily schedule protects us against the careless, forgetful and fickle dispositions to which young men of our age are particularly exposed. The Rule shields us from the enemy of our soul by directing and absorbing our activity, by strengthening our will through repeated efforts, and by



Mass is offered in the chapel during the Christmas season.

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The value of vacation

by Charlie Rodriguez, gr. 9

The purpose of vacation periods is to give back to the body the repose and alleviation deprived of it during the strict schedule of study and prayer. Vacation allows us to enjoy ourselves at the home that became closer and dearer to us while we were away. It also provides us the opportunity to thank our parents for their support in our decision of pursuing the priesthood and also to relieve our minds burdened by the long, tedious hours spent in observing the regulations and rules of the seminary. Soon, after reviving our physical alertness and vigor we return to the seminary for a fresh start and eagerly await another opportunity to grow, both spiritually and academically.

There are other opportunities to be taken advantage of while on vacation. In the absence of our spiritual advisor, we are able to test the good habits we have gained. This is a good way to know how well we have grown in knowledge and virtue. Vacation is a time to find out if we will be loyal in fulfilling the obligations of priestly life. During this time, we can build upon weak points and perfect strong ones.

Vacation not only is part of our preparation for eventual ordination, but it also gives us personal experiences that will make our work more satisfactory in the priesthood. Moreover, our bodies require and deserve vacation. After all, they have served us immensely in the past months. These are some of the reasons why I believe vacation is important.

The most important reason for vacation, however, is family. While we are away we realize what we had and begin to greatly yearn for it. Some of the things we regret that we took for granted are more appreciated at this time. Our families love us and will support us always. We will always be sure to use vacation time well, really well.

Chores

by Francis Abernathy, gr. 10

Saint Joseph's Seminary is a great place, but even a place as great as this gets dirty. There is something about being a teenage boy that clutter follows wherever you go. It seems wherever we go, mud, snow and trash follow. It's impossible to escape them. I guess that is why we have chores every Tuesday and Thursday.

Everything has to be cleaned: the chalkboards have to be washed, the floors mopped, carpets vacuumed, the trash taken out and, of course, the bathrooms need to be cleaned. That is the job I really detest, so, naturally, I have been assigned to it since school started.

I've cleaned the bathrooms so much that I can finally tolerate it, but it's still a horrible ordeal.

Now that it's winter, firewood has to be brought in for our wood stove. Snow is really a wonderful thing, but it still has to be shoveled. It seems to mostly accumulate on the seminary sidewalk, and after you've spent 20 minutes getting it all shoveled, another ton of it falls off the roof right in front of the chapel door and the work starts all over again.

God gives us chores for a reason though, and it's comforting to know He is watching us and probably smiling as we turn around to re-shovel the sidewalk in front of the chapel door. Still, we can't help asking ourselves why Adam had to go and eat the forbidden fruit that got us into this mess of having to work. Anyway, chores help us to gain merit for heaven, and I think heaven is definitely worth it.

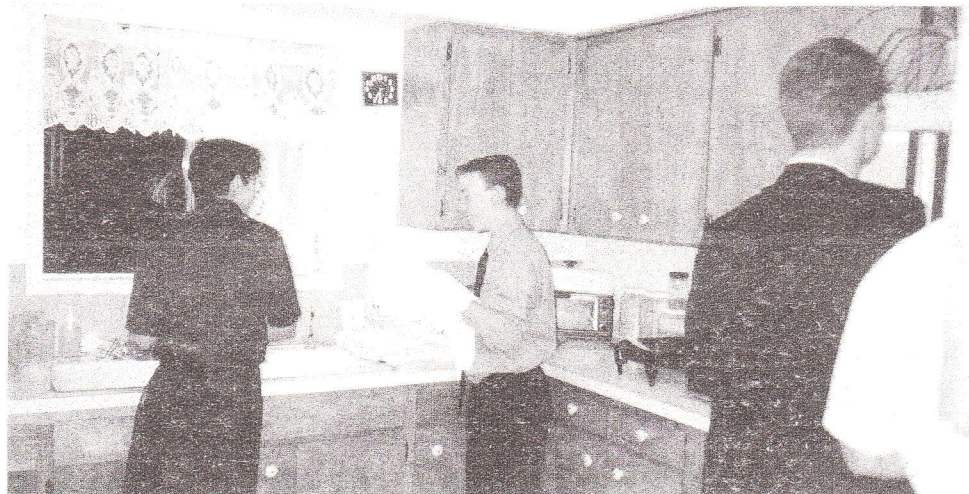
Doing the dishes

by Kevin Cox, gr. 10

Washing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen is not every seminarian's dream of how to spend his time. In fact, some positively dislike the task. Actually, doing dishes isn't so bad because we don't do them by ourselves. We have two teams that do the dishes after breakfast and dinner. Fulton, Francis and Phil do the breakfast dishes, and Wade, Charlie, Isaac and Kevin do the supper dishes. After lunch each seminarian does his own dishes.

Of course, the way we eat here, doing dishes is not a bad price to pay our cook so she won't have to clean up. How fast we do them though is a different story. Some of us like to get it over with, while others like to prolong the agony and take their time until father gets after them to get finished.

Chores, especially this one, are good for a young man to learn to do. After all, we won't always have our mothers and sisters around to do the dishes. But whether we dislike doing dishes or don't mind the chore so much, we still all ask the same question: "Why can't we get a dishwasher?" Father's invariable reply is: "Why? We already have seven of them!"



With a little bit of teamwork, dishes are done in no time at all.



The seminarians sing carols during their Christmas program.



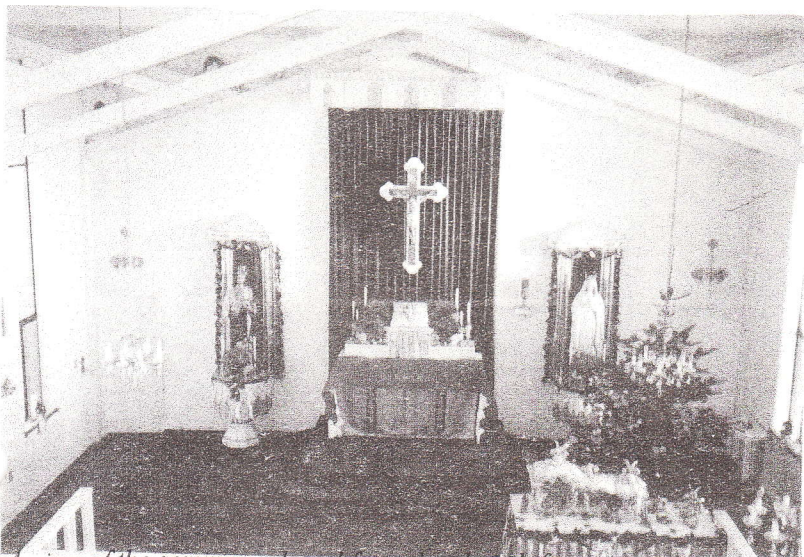
One of the seminarians checks the daily schedule on the bulletin board.



Seminarians enjoy sledding down the snowy hillside next to the seminary.



The children from Mary Immaculate Queen School take the stage during their Christmas program.



A view of the seminary chapel from the choir loft.



The schoolchildren portray the manger scene.

Routine

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accustoming us to place duty above our whims. It refreshes our heart with sentiments of peace, security and joy which naturally flow from the consciousness of duty fulfilled, of order preserved and of work carefully and successfully done. Above all, it prepares us for the struggles of this life, where, in the words of Holy Scripture, "an obedient man shall speak of victory" (Proverbs, 21:28).

Shoveling snow

by Fulton Abernathy, gr. 9

As you watch snowflakes fall softly, gently sparking in the light of the sun and moon, your first thought is how beautiful it is. Of course, that thought usually comes to those fortunate people who are sitting inside sipping a mug of hot chocolate next to the fire. Those people will usually look outside, then look back at the marshmallows bobbing around in their mug, snuggle down in their chair and say, "Winter is so beautiful."

On the other side of the window is a poor soul who is tramping about in the snow wearing a pair of heavy snow boots, while he drags behind a snow shovel. He tries to find the place where he had stopped shoveling, but the constantly falling snow has just camouflaged the once clear walkway, making it look just like everything else. After muttering to himself, the poor soul prepares to resume his shoveling where he had started.

Of course, there is always the thought of mutiny in one's head, but such thoughts are dispersed by the smiling face that sticks out of the upstairs window and asks how you're doing.

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.

The poor fellow answers "Fine," and the head goes back into the building. He begins to shovel the walk again, and as he passes the window, he looks inside and sees the toasty fire and someone snuggled in a chair. His first thought is "how beautiful it is inside." The person in the chair looks up and smiles. So your natural reaction is to start shoveling again, only this time without turning around and looking back at the walkway.

February

February is an odd month, not only with its 29 days this year, but in the liturgical calendar as well. Especially this year, with an unusually late start to Lent, the month seems somewhat bare. We begin with the blessing and procession of candles on the Feast of Our Lady's Purification. Soon comes another feast of Our Lady — that of Our Lady of Lourdes. There are the feasts of St. Matthias, St. Gabriel, and a few others, but in between we have a large number of ferial days.

Ironically, the seminarians are now studying the beauties of the Liturgical Year in theology class. Holy Mother Church knows how to delight us with the annual cycle of feasts, the celebration of which contains so many lessons. During this month we will sing several votive Masses and prepare for the liturgical ceremonies of Lent and Holy Week. I hope also to finally have time to teach the seminarians how to chant Vespers of Our Lady, something they have been asking to do.

We again thank you for your continued encouragement and support, including the many Christmas cards we received. We assure you of a daily remembrance in our prayers and at Holy Mass.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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 Theology, Latin, 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.

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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