



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2004

From the rector

There is nothing quite like the beginning of a new school year, especially in a seminary. Even though they might not want to admit it, the students and teachers are glad to be back to the familiar routine. Summer vacation, as much anticipated as it always is, can become boring over time. The seminary routine brings us back to a busy and productive life, which in turn brings spiritual and academic growth.

All teachers know that some of the best work of each school year is reduced during the first two months. During the First Quarter the tone for the year is set; habits are formed which are difficult to change once a routine has set in. That is why we teachers expend the greatest efforts, right from the starting blocks, to set the proper tone for the school year. Once this has been done, everything becomes much easier.

In this first issue of our newsletter for the new school year, we review the purpose of our seminary. It is important that we keep our perspective and often remember why we have a minor seminary. We also must always keep in mind the value of vocations — the need to pray for vocations and to foster them in the hearts of our youth. As always, we thank you for your support of this work, for your contributions and your prayers. May God bless and reward you. Please continue to pray for us.

“Spes messis in semine”

Our motto at St. Joseph Seminary serves as a daily reminder of why

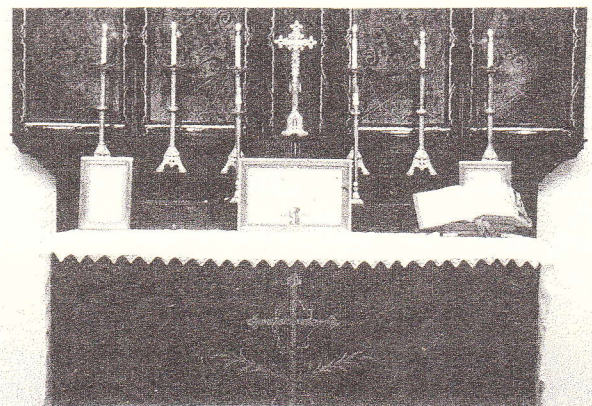
we have a minor seminary. *Spes messis in semine*, meaning “The hope of the harvest is in the seed,” has often been applied to seminaries. The word “seminary” comes from the same root as *semine*, meaning seed or young plant. The Latin *seminarium* is translated seedbed or nursery of plants.

The larger meaning of the Latin dictum is that the success of the harvest of souls which the Church seeks is entirely dependent on the laborers. But the laborers will be capable to the degree that they have been prepared from their youth for the delicate task of saving souls. We could not possibly say too much about the importance of forming the young in discipline, the practice of virtue and the love of God from their earliest years. If we are to have holy priests, they must be well-formed from their youth.

This then is the purpose of our seminary — to train young men in the practice of virtue, to instill into them habits that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. You members of the faithful are an important part of this program, for Our Lord Himself tells us that we must “Pray the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest, for the harvest is great but the laborers are few.” Thus, it is your task to pray for vocations and for the work of seminaries, and to support this work as far as you are able.

September calendar

- 1 — First day of classes
- 5 — Our secretary’s (Mrs. Salgado) birthday
- 6 — Labor Day
- 8 — Feast of Our Lady’s Nativity; chanted Vespers
- 15 — Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows; chanted Vespers
- 17–18 — Annual Camping trip
- 24 — Feast of Our Lady of Ransom; chanted Vespers; Peter’s 17th birthday
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael (no homework); Fr. Benedict’s 25th anniversary as a priest



The altar is prepared at Mary Immaculate Queen Church where our seminarians serve Mass.

The purpose of a minor seminary

It would be hard to conceive of a greater blessing — after Baptism and the Faith itself — than that of a solid Catholic formation in one's youth. True, the lack of such a formation does not rule out a good Catholic life, for we all have free will. Nevertheless, it remains true that we are most likely to follow the path we have become accustomed to in our youth. Holy Scripture tells us: "*It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth*" (Lam. 3:27). If a solid formation in virtue is advantageous for all, it is indispensable for a priest.

In our last issue of *The Guardian*, we printed some quotations of the saints on the priesthood. Yet as wonderful a thing as the priesthood is, the individual priest must always strive for virtue, in order that he may live up to the high calling which he has received. He must strive to become another Christ in reality, not just in name. The accomplishment of this goal is the work of a lifetime. The devil always works and our fallen human nature doesn't die. So the priest, like the laity, must work out his salvation. He will have a much easier time of accomplishing this task, however, if he has the foundation upon which to build the edifice of a solid spiritual life. Laying that foundation is the work of the seminary.

In what does this foundation consist? Let us look at some of the qualities that priests must have — qualities that are nurtured during the years of seminary training.

Love for the holy sacrifice of the Mass. A priest daily offers the spotless Victim in the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary. As the saints tell us, the world could easier exist without the sun than without the Mass. Yet the saints also tell us that priests, who so frequently offer Mass, have a great responsibility. Lest they become careless in the routine of offering the daily Sacrifice, they must develop a deep love for the Mass and the Holy Eucharist. This love must grow and develop in the seminary, as they daily assist at Mass, often serve the Mass, and frequently visit Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

The spirit of prayer is also a quality that every priest must possess, if he is to be a holy priest. Jesus Himself, the great High Priest, regularly communed with His Father, often retiring from the crowds that He might have greater leisure to do so. The seminary, removed from the noise, distractions and activity of the world, provides the perfect atmosphere in which to develop one's prayer life. Above all, Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is only a few feet away in the chapel, to which the seminarians can repair whenever they wish to converse with the Master.

Regularity is an essential habit for a priest if he is to live his vocation. By regularity, we mean the discipline of a daily life that revolves around Mass, prayer, study, work, meals, recreation, etc. The seminarian follows the daily schedule, which helps him to order his daily life in such a way as to

avoid any waste of time. Every moment is precious, especially when one's life is consecrated to the service of God.

Self-discipline is a by-product of this order. Perhaps the greatest fault of youth, especially in our age, is the inability to say *NO* to sin. The priesthood particularly calls for the discipline necessary to stand by one's convictions, to resist evil tendencies, to persevere in good. All of this is impossible without that self-discipline which the seminary fosters.

Detachment from the world is particularly vital today. The "world" has always been the tool of Satan, the "prince of this world." A priest demonstrates by his manner of dress that he totally rejects the world and its allurements. These allurements are especially attractive to the young, and thus seminarians must learn early on to shun the vanity of the world and to overcome worldly tendencies and habits.

Diligence in study is of vital importance to a priest. He must learn much about the Church and its teachings, if he is to properly guide souls. This learning never ceases. It begins in the seminary, but it continues throughout the life of the priest. The seminarian must develop the habit of striving for excellence in his studies. He does not seek to excel merely to obtain a good grade or to please others. He is developing his God-given intellect, that he might be able to use it for God's honor and glory.

These qualities are some of the good habits that young men develop in the seminary. Everything in their daily life is arranged to facilitate their growth, on both the natural and supernatural levels. This, then, is the purpose of the seminary. Today's seminarians are tomorrow's priests. Let us pray that they become models of Christ-like virtue.

Prayer to know one's vocation

Oh my God, Thou art the God of wisdom and good counsel, Thou who readest in my heart a sincere desire to please Thee alone and to direct myself in regard to my choice of a state of life, in conformity with Thy holy Will in all things; by the intercession of the most holy Virgin, my Mother, and of my Patron Saints, grant me the grace to know that state of life which I ought to choose, and to embrace it when known, in order that thus I may seek Thy glory and increase it, work out my own salvation and deserve the heavenly reward which Thou has promised to those who do Thy holy Will. Amen. (Indulgence of 300 days, once a day.)

The Beautiful Hands of a Priest

We need them in life's early morning, we need them again at its close;

We feel their warm clasp of true friendship, we seek them when tasting life's woes.

When we come to this world we are sinful, the greatest as well as the least.

And the hand that makes us pure as angels is the beautiful hand of the priest.

At the altar each day we behold them, and the hands of a king on his throne

Are not equal to them in their greatness; their dignity stands all alone;

For there in the stillness of morning, 'ere the sun has emerged from the East,

There God rests between the pure fingers of the beautiful hands of a priest.

God bless them and keep them all holy for the Host which their fingers caress;

What can a poor sinner do better than to ask Him Who chose Thee to bless?

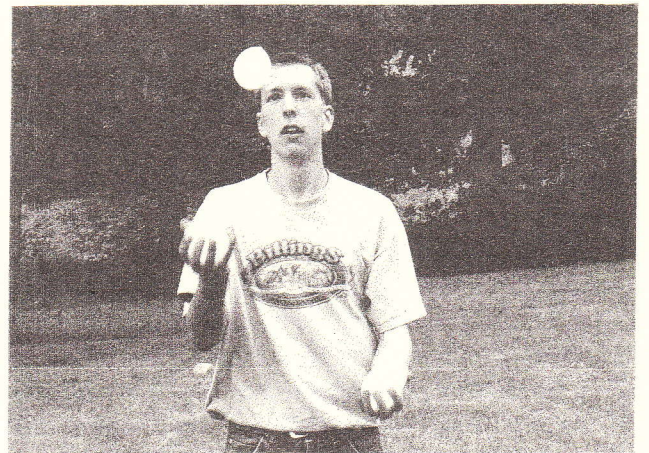
When the death-dews on our eyelids are falling, may our courage and strength be increased,

By seeing raised o'er us in blessing the beautiful hands of a priest!

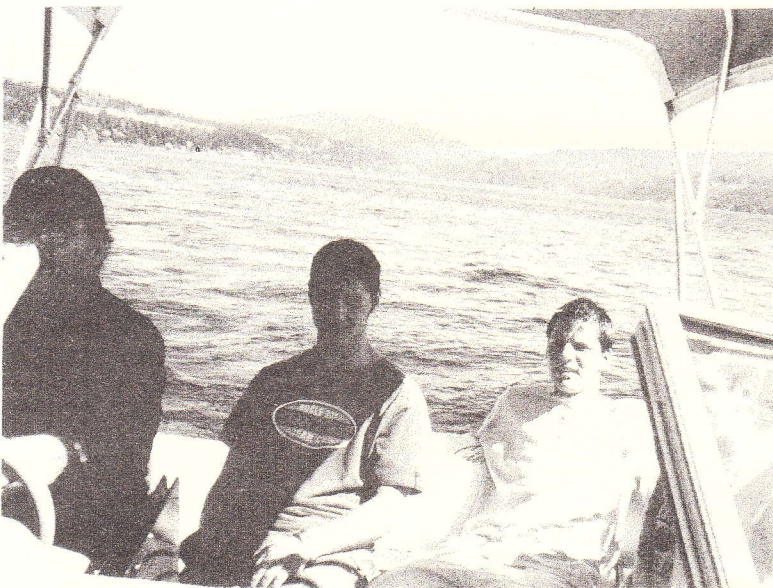
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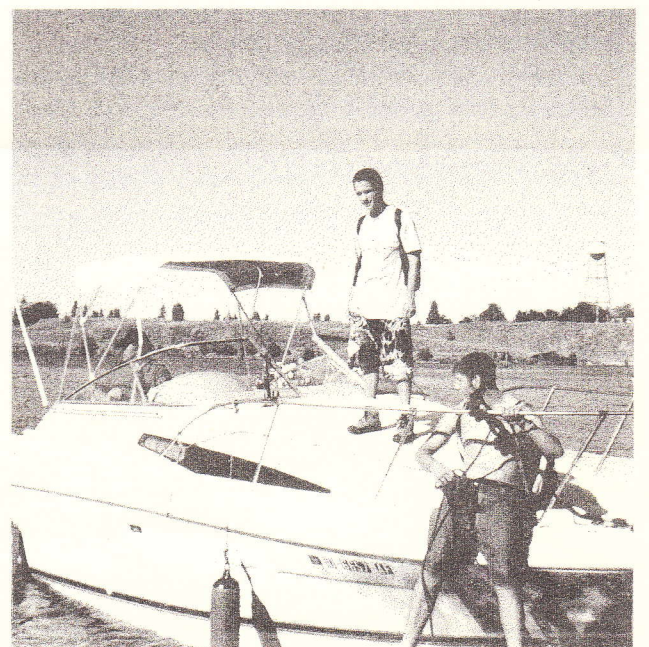
Here is a scene from the school picnic in June — students playing Frisbee.



Chris juggles water balloons at the school picnic.



Mr. Sullivan, the father of one of the seminarians, takes Father and some of the seminarians on a boat excursion on Lake Coeur d'Alene.



Everyone helps with docking the boat.

Where do vocations come from?

A vocation is a precious gift from God, a calling to a man or woman to leave all things and dedicate his life to the service of God and souls. The Gospel gives us several instances of vocations. There are, of course, the stories of the calling of the various apostles, who "*left their nets and followed Him.*" Then there is the story of the rich young man. When he asked Jesus what he must do to gain the kingdom of heaven, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. That wasn't enough. He wanted to know what more he could do. Then Jesus "*looking upon him, loved him*" and told him to sell all he had, give the proceeds to the poor and then to come and follow Him.

This story gives us an insight into what a vocation is. First, it is an act of loving predilection on the part of Christ Himself: "*Jesus, looking upon him, loved him.*" Second, there is a call, which often is difficult to perceive. Our youth today will not audibly hear Jesus inviting them. Rather, His call can be understood through prayer and guidance. Third, a vocation requires a great sacrifice — the sacrifice of one's own liberty and possessions, the sacrifice of the opportunity to marry and have a family. Finally, a vocation requires that the person so invited "follow Him." Years must be spent in training to acquire the virtues necessary to become Christ-like, to worthily represent Christ to the world.

We all know how desperately vocations are needed. Even one vocation represents many souls that can be brought back to God by the prayers, sacrifices and labors of the priest or religious. What can we do to obtain more vocations? Pray. There is no other means given to us than this. Jesus said, "Pray the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest." Each vocation is the result of many prayers for this end. Certainly, we also must support the work of seminaries, which rely on the financial help of benefactors to maintain their operation. But primarily we do our part by prayer.

Finally, a word must be said to those parents who desire to be blessed with vocations among their children. There can be no greater blessing for a family than to have one or more of its members called by God to His service. Parents who understand this truth ardently desire such a blessing. What can they do to

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.

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.

obtain it? Of course, they must pray — and pray daily — that God will call one of their own to His service. They also must provide the atmosphere in the home that will allow a vocation from God to be recognized and to flourish. They must carefully eliminate any occasions of sin that could come through the media or from harmful companions or amusements. They must lead their children to God by good example as well as by their encouragement. And they ought to instruct their children in the value of a vocation and urge them to pray daily to know God's will for them. On the other hand, parents must be careful to not push their children toward a religious calling. Remember, a vocation comes from God, not from the parents.

Let us all do our part to pray for vocations and to encourage those youths who are seeking to pursue what they believe is the will of God. Lord, grant us many holy priests and religious!

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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.

St. Joseph Seminary
15384 N. Church Rd.
Rathdrum, ID 83858-7650