



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. VII, No. 4

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

December 2005

The anticipation was palpable. When would the first real snowfall come? Yet despite our eager predictions, only three small snowfalls of one or two inches have tantalized us. Mind you, there was enough for a snowball battle each time and even, on one occasion, a snowman. Still, we keep telling the Mexican seminarians that the real thing hasn't arrived yet — something they find nearly incomprehensible.

Lately, we have started basketball practice. Our secretary is scheduling some games, and we hope that we can represent the seminary well as we compete with other schools. A couple of former seminarians are coaching us. Right now, we are just working on the basics.

Most importantly, we are now preparing for Advent. We each write up a list of extra penances and prayers that we will perform, and we then submit these to our spiritual director for approval. Please pray that we make a good Advent, and we also will pray for you. May we all prepare well to celebrate the birth of the Infant Jesus.

## The season of Advent

by Gerard Odom, gr. 10

There are many things that come to mind when we think about the season of Advent. There is the joyful anticipation of Christ's birth. There is the need for penance during this holy season. Unfortunately, there is also the thought that we will be getting lots of presents for Christmas, and we are tempted to wish that Advent would just end so that we could open them. With all of this anticipation for so many things, many people can't find the time

to stop and ponder what this season is really about.

The season of Advent was instituted by the Church mainly for the purpose of preparing ourselves spiritually for the birth of Christ. Advent is a time for doing penance and making sacrifices as an act of reparation to Our Divine Lord for our sins. Another way of looking at it is to make a small sacrifice or an act of love each day as a gift to Our Lord on His birth. Many families have the practice of doing this. The idea of Advent is to prepare ourselves spiritually for the birth of Our Lord, and what better way is there to do that than by doing some penance?

Sadly, not everyone practices the season of Advent. Instead of doing penance, many are busy holiday shopping or wrapping presents. Even worse, children everywhere are impatiently awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus. Rather than to celebrate Christ's birth, people are celebrating the fact that they might get lots of new clothes, or a new CD. No one pays attention to the real reason why we celebrate Christmas, much less do they prepare during Advent.

There is no harm in preparing for Christmas by shopping or buying gifts. There is harm, however, in making it the center of your preparation. We can prepare for Christmas by getting the necessary things to provide for our families on such a joyous occasion, but we must also prepare for the birth of the Savior by good works and practicing penance for the greater honor and glory of God.

## December calendar

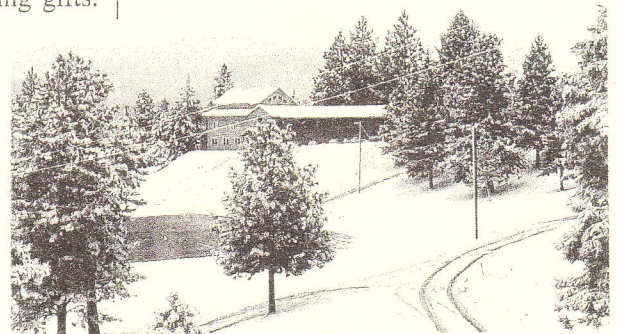
- 7 — Mid-quarter
- 8 — Immaculate Conception  
BVM; Holyday of  
Obligation; Day of  
Recollection; chanted  
Vespers
- 11 — Parish celebration of Our  
Lady of Guadalupe; Mexican  
fiesta dinner
- 12 — Feast of Our Lady of  
Guadalupe; no homework;  
chanted Vespers
- 21 — Christmas vacation begins  
after classes

## It is marvelous to know another world

by Omar Rincon, gr. 9

My name is Omar. I am one of the Mexican seminarians. I am very content to be here because it is fun to live with all the seminarians and professors and to be around the Sisters who prepare all our food. It is wonderful to be where the teachers help so much with the various things that we do not understand.

*continued on page 2*



Winter arrives at St. Joseph Seminary (this view — looking toward the church from our balcony).

## To know another world

*continued from page 1*

Math is difficult and English class is a little difficult, but I'm very happy to be with people who are so helpful every day. For this I thank Fr. Benedict who gave me the opportunity to come here. The English teacher and secretary, Mrs. Salgado, has helped me so much with the material that I am advancing in my understanding of English. Now I can understand and talk to the other seminarians. I speak much better English than when I first arrived. I am also thankful to Sr. Amada, Sr. Paulina, Fr. Raul Macias, Fra. John, and the secretary who made it possible for me to be here by getting my student visa papers.

The thing I love most is that we assist at daily Mass, receive Holy Communion, pray the Rosary and consecrate ourselves to the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also, every Friday we go to the park to play American football. During the week we also play football and other sports like volleyball, soccer and basketball. I especially like Sunday High Mass and Benediction with incense because I love to sing. For these reasons I say it is a wonderful life for me here.

## Apples, apples, and more apples

*by Caleb Short, gr. 10*

This fall gave me the opportunity to help harvest apples from the trees on the church property. We have two different jobs: people to climb and pick, and the deprived fellows who stay on terra firma to gather up the apples.

I prefer to be up in the tree because of the breathtaking view and you don't have to worry about becoming a second Isaac Newton. The only problem after all the apples are picked is trying to get past the angry fellows whose heads you've been dropping apples on. Picking apples also helps us to advance spiritually — by not throwing too many at our fellow seminarians on purpose, we get to practice temperance.

The ground dwellers have the most grueling and excruciating job. Trying to catch five apples at a time, running around like a madman trying to retrieve stray apples from the ground, and being a moving target is what this job entails. The worst thing that can happen to these individuals occurs when the 'evil monkeys' in the tree start to shake it like crazy. This results in a torrential bombardment from which there is no escape. By not murdering the seminarians in the tree after they come down we get to practice charity.

By the end of November we really had a huge stockpile of apples, and we still have a giant stockpile. Father said that each seminarian should eat at least one apple every day. With the Sisters turning apples into applesauce and apple butter, we still have plenty left to eat. But with your prayers and through the intercession of our patron St. Joseph, we might manage somehow to eventually gobble up all the apples.

## A great festivity

*by Giovanni Ortiz, gr. 9*

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the most celebrated feasts in Mexico. In the town I come from some people celebrate this festivity with a special dinner in their home and others celebrate with a neighborhood block party. But the religious people of the church celebrate it with a program organized by all the people. It starts with a Novena to the Virgin and Mass every day of the Novena. On December 12, the feastday of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the big celebration begins. Many people have a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and so many people attend Mass and receive Holy Communion.

Before Mass, during the Consecration, and after Mass, fireworks are shot into the air, firecrackers are lit and the church bells are rung. In the evening there is a pyrotechnical show of grand proportions, which the men of the town prepare for weeks in advance. A castle as tall as the church is built with an image of Our Lady at the top. She shines with a luminous crown and is surrounded with a light show — fireworks and firecrackers. Afterwards, the people have a procession through the streets of the town and return to the church to celebrate a High Mass. After the High Mass everyone concludes the celebration by enjoying the dinner that has been prepared.

## Living in Idaho

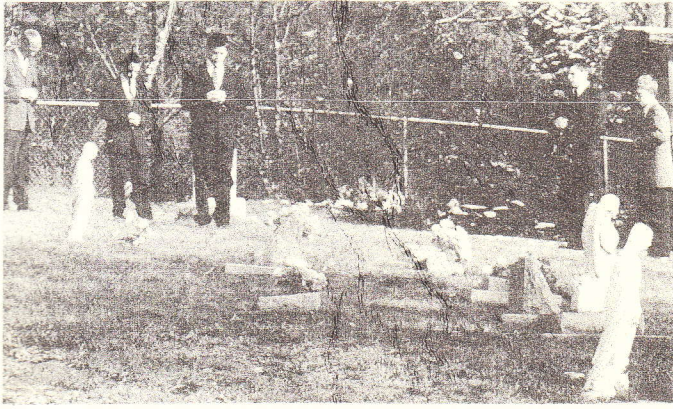
*by Jose de Jesus Castellanos, gr. 9*

What I like most about living here is the schedule that we keep. Fr. Benedict administers daily Holy Communion to us and that is good for my soul.

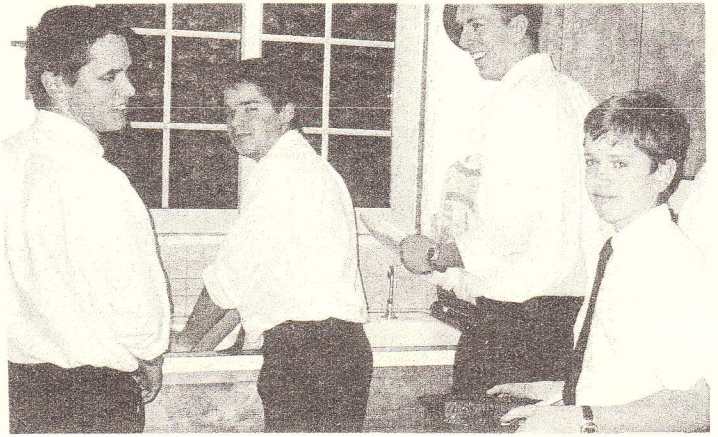
One of the fun things about living here is playing American football, even though I like soccer better. I also like it when it snows because we go outside to play in the snow, throw snowballs and build snowmen. I never thought I would see snow, but now that I have seen it I am very excited. But never have I been so cold in my life as I have been here. The other seminarians have told me that this cold is nothing compared to the cold that will come in December.

For me it is very special to have good teachers. The English teacher is my favorite because we laugh so much in this class. The material most difficult is mathematics. Computer is the easiest because we are learning to type, and the teacher has taught us the rules perfectly so I know which fingers to use on the keys. For me it is not at all difficult.

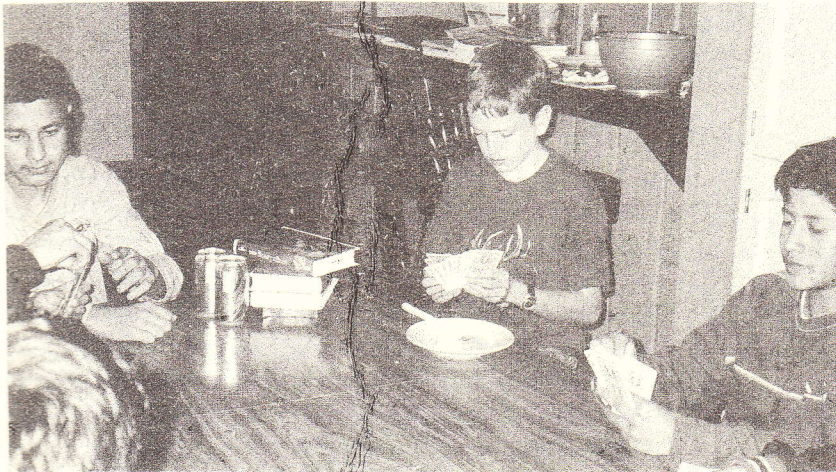
I love the convenience of living with the priests and other seminarians. All the people are kind and help in every way they can. I am grateful and have high esteem for all. I miss my family very much, but it isn't that difficult to study here. Everything is very interesting because it is all new to me, as I have never been in a different place. All the people are very charitable and when we go to church, all the parishioners say: "GOOD MORNING!"



*The seminarians pray at the cemetery during the Month of the Poor Souls.*



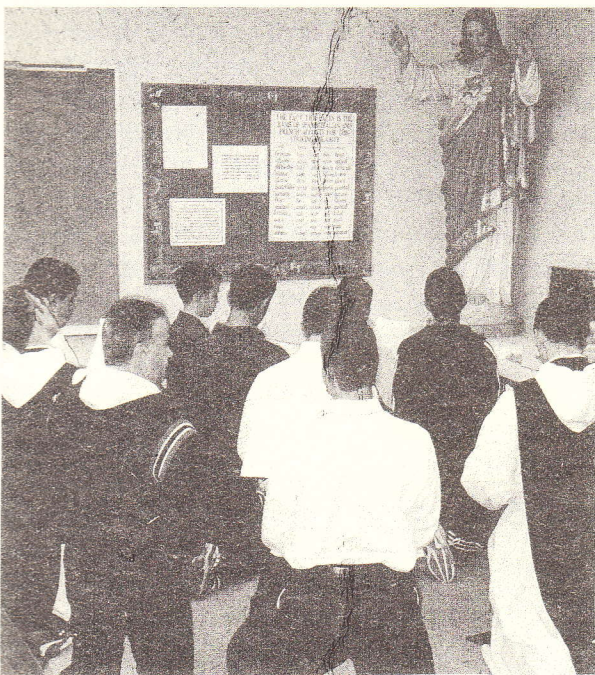
*No one likes to do dishes but at least there is plenty of help.*



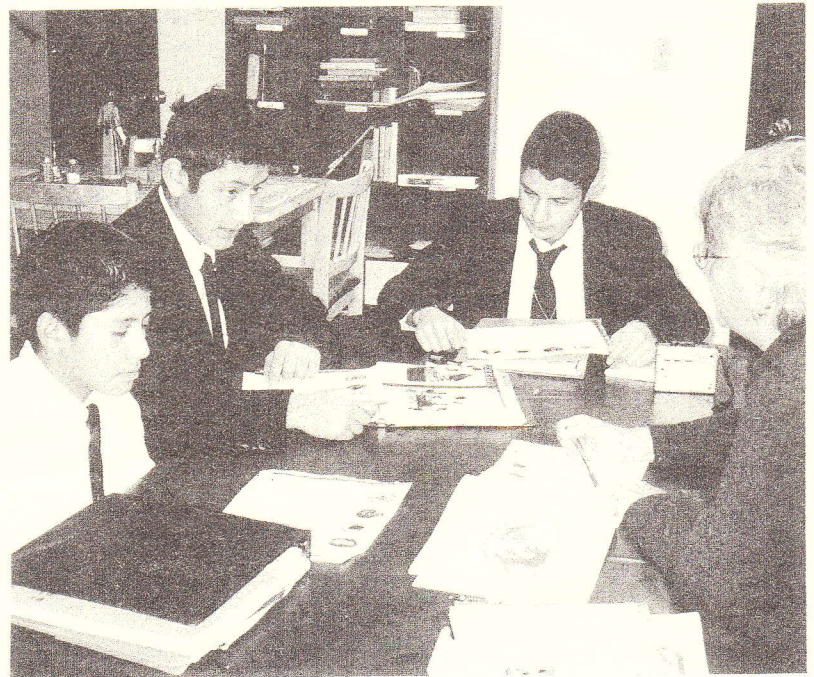
*Everyone enjoys some recreation on a Friday evening.*



*Omar stops for a breather on a recent hike along the shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene.*



*We recently renewed our enthronement to the Sacred Heart as King of the seminary.*



*Mrs. Salgado, our secretary, teaches Basic English to the Mexican seminarians.*

## Off the beaten path

by Brandon Odom, gr. 11

What all you readers out there may not know is how we write the articles you are currently reading. It usually proceeds in a three-step process: assigning, procrastinating and then panicking! The first two steps take up about 99 percent of the time given, and the second step we execute with practiced perfection. The third one, however, is the most interesting one to observe. (If you've ever helped butcher a chicken, you'll know what I'm talking about.)

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not saying we don't like writing articles. On the contrary, most of the time we enjoy writing them, just as much as you enjoy reading them. (Hey! We even get out of Latin homework when we put out the mailing.) But as you may know, we tend to exaggerate a lot in these articles. So this time I'm going to go off the beaten path and tell the truth for a change. Are you ready?

Picking topics for our *Guardian* articles is a difficult and ugly task, especially if we have a boring month. It isn't easy to write on eight different topics each month, so when a good one comes up we jump on it, and sometimes even on each other to get it. After the articles are assigned, nothing happens until about two hours before they are due. Then there is a mad rushing about, more jumping, and a great deal of arguing over who had what topic. There are some more studious seminarians who are far more productive and devote their "free time" to gloating over the panic-driven procrastinators. Again, more jumping.

This scene is repeated week after week, month after month, and in my case, year after year. Everyone has bad habits, and teenage boys are no exception, even if they are seminarians. We aren't bad, but we aren't perfect either . . . and that's the truth.

## A time for youth

Christmas has often been referred to as a time for children. The glow on their faces, the anticipation and the excitement when Christmas arrives — are all something to behold. Children can teach us many lessons, for we too should shake off the complacency that can set into our spiritual life, as the years go by and repetition brings routine. Each day ought to be for us a new and exciting opportunity to serve and love God.



## Blessed Christmas!

The priests, staff and seminarians of St. Joseph Seminary wish all our friends and benefactors a most joyous and Blessed Christmas. We will especially pray for you during the Advent and Christmas seasons.



This is one of the reasons I enjoy the work here at the seminary. I teach the seminarians, but they teach me as well. I love to see their enthusiasm, which manifests itself in different ways on a daily basis. For example, all seminarians like snow, but to see the wonder and glee of the Mexican seminarians at the sight of snow is a joy to behold.

Youth in general can teach us many lessons. We are often taken up with a sense of our own importance, our plans and ambitions. On the other hand, youth naturally portrays simplicity, trust, humility, and confidence. Perhaps that is why Christ said, "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven."

Dear friends, let us during this Christmas season meditate on the virtues of the Christ Child and on His words. May we also humble ourselves and develop a childlike joy and appreciation of the treasures of our Holy Faith. Be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers. May you all have a Holy Advent and a truly joyful Christmas. May the Divine Infant abundantly bless you and your families.

*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**