



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. VIII, No. 1

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2006

It seems the summer always ends much too soon. The start of school has a way of creeping up, and we hardly realize its approach. Still, we somehow manage to be prepared when the beginning of school arrives. This past month has found us busily preparing for classes at the seminary and in our parish school, as we also try to tackle some major projects.

One big help with our summer projects has been the presence of our two seminarians from Mexico, José and Giovanni. They have spent a good part of the summer here in order to continue to learn the English language, but they have also been a big help at the seminary. Their sterling conduct also makes them a pleasure to have around. If things go as planned, we will be receiving two new Mexican seminarians next week.

While that is encouraging, there have not been the new vocations that we had hoped and prayed for from our own country. No doubt, God is calling young men to pursue the priesthood, but often His call falls on deaf ears. Sadly, the noise of this world, the attractions of pleasure and the difficulties of sacrifice often drown out the voice of God's loving invitation to serve Him. Please continue to pray for more vocations.

The past month, as busy as it has been, has not been all work and no play. There have been ample opportunities for swimming, a couple of occasions for water-skiing, a camping trip to Montana for the boys, and even a plane ride over the seminary. But now it is time for school. By the time you receive this issue, we will already have begun our classes. Please pray for our young men

and our teachers, that God will bless this new school year.

## The most important room in the seminary

The seminary is filled with rooms: classroom, dining room, kitchen, recreation room, bedrooms, library, etc. But of all the rooms in the house, none can compare in importance and beauty with the chapel, which is Our Lord's "room," His dwelling place. It is hard for us to imagine how great is our privilege in the seminary. We often go into Our Lord's own room throughout the day, we attend Mass there, we pray and receive the sacraments. The realization that the same roof that covers the chapel also shelters us is a great comfort, as well as a sobering reminder of our duty of love and worship to our Divine Guest.

Since it is so important, the chapel must also receive our greatest attention. For some time now, a makeover of our chapel has been planned. The walls have been in dire need of new paint, the carpet is worn, the ceiling has needed repair due to water damage. To top it off, last fall our foundation was repaired, which necessarily resulted in even more cracks in our walls and ceiling. At last, the repair work has begun. New windows, plaster work and painting are the first step. Then the flooring will be replaced. Eventually, we hope to locate a more suitable altar. And finally,

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## Seminary calendar

### August:

- 29 — Orientation
- 30 — Classes commence: begin Novena in preparation for the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity

### September:

- 3 — Feast of Pope St. Pius X; High Mass; seminary outing
- 4 — Labor Day; no classes
- 5 — Our secretary's birthday (Mrs. Salgado)
- 8 — Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; chanted Vespers; no homework
- 8-9 — Annual camping trip
- 12 — Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; chanted Vespers
- 15 — Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady; chanted Vespers
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael; mid-quarter; no homework



*One of the benefits of religious life is recitation of prayers together. The priests pray their Divine Office in common whenever possible.*

## The most important room

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we would like to have stained glass windows made — but there will be more on this in future issues.

All of this work is being done primarily for God's honor and glory. (Although Our Lord was pleased to be born in a stable, He nevertheless expects us to give Him our best.) Although God's glory is our first and most important goal, there are other benefits. A beautiful chapel helps us to pray better and impresses us with the importance of our Faith, especially the worship of God. Finally, in a seminary, the efforts to beautify our chapel form an important object lesson for our seminarians. God willing, they will one day be priests and will have their own churches to care for. They must learn now that the chapel claims their greatest attention.

## Seminary support

Maintenance of a Catholic seminary entails the necessary tasks of budgeting and providing for material needs. In order to help us keep our doors open, we must depend on the generosity of the faithful. For this reason, we have a "support club" composed of those Catholics who understand the importance of the work of seminaries and would like to support this work.

There are several categories of supporters. First, all members support the seminary by their prayers. This is the most important contribution one can make to the work of a seminary. Second, there are those who are able to send a monthly donation to assist with the financial needs of the seminary. Finally, there are some who are able and willing to provide a scholarship, or partial scholarship, to a deserving young man who has not the ability to pay the entire tuition fee.

By supporting a seminarian with a scholarship, or partial scholarship, the donors thus "adopt" a particular seminarian. Like parents, they assume a role in leading that young man to God and thus share in the blessings of his Catholic life and, God willing, his priestly ministry one day. If you would like to support our seminary, you may use the enclosed envelope to make a donation. If you would like to offer a partial scholarship, please let us know how much you will send each month, so that your donation can be matched with a seminarian in need of that sponsorship. May God reward you!

## Why a minor seminary?

*The following article was printed in our very first issue of this newsletter. We here offer it again for the benefit especially of new subscribers who may not be fully aware of our mission and purpose.*

Proper formation in virtue from one's earliest days is a tremendous blessing. Holy Scripture tells us: "It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth"

(Lam. 3:27). This quotation from Scripture helps us to understand the purpose of the minor, or preparatory, seminary. Here boys are trained from their entrance into adolescence in the paths of virtue.

In Session XXIII, the Council of Trent commanded that seminaries be established so that young aspirants to the priesthood could be formed in habits of piety and discipline from their earliest years. In our nation prior to Vatican II, preparatory seminaries were common, for the Church realized that boys who are called by God need an environment in which they can preserve the precious treasure of their vocation during the turbulent years of adolescence.

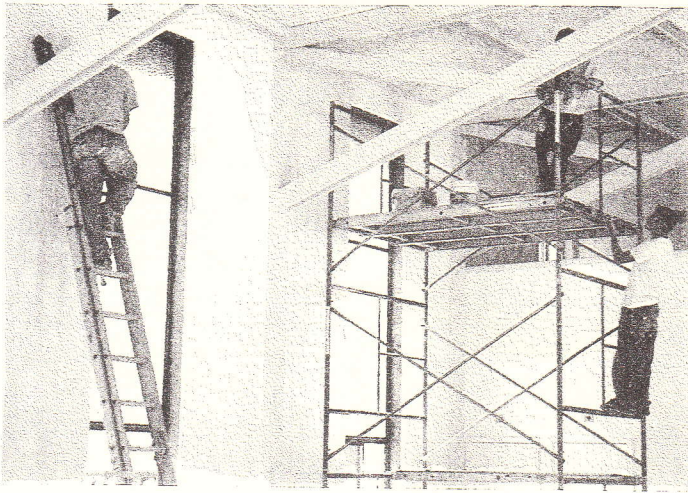
A vocation to the priesthood is often compared to a seed. When a seed germinates the small plant needs to be watered, sheltered and nourished during the early stages of growth. So too, a vocation is a delicate seed that must be nourished and protected. Not only must a vocation be protected from the foul breath of the world, but good habits must be formed in the young men who will become *other-Christ*s. During adolescence — that crucial period of physical, mental and moral development — lasting habits, either good or bad, are generally formed. In a preparatory seminary, even more than in the major seminary, a boy's mind and character are shaped, and his life receives a direction which ordinarily proves final and decisive.

What is a minor seminary like? The minor seminary is similar to other Catholic boarding schools for boys. Students have a regimented life, which includes daily Mass and prayer, academics and recreation. The studies encompass the regular high school courses in Theology, English, math, science, history, foreign language, etc., with a special emphasis on Latin and choir. Physical activity is also important, for sports offer an excellent means of character formation by their requirement for teamwork, responsibility and healthful competition. Needless to say, regular confession, spiritual direction and spiritual conferences hold a prominent position in the routine of the seminary. Personal responsibility, cleanliness, order, self-discipline and striving for excellence provide the hallmark of the seminary formation. In short, the entire program of a minor seminary has for its goal the preparation of young men for the major seminary, while it safeguards their vocations.

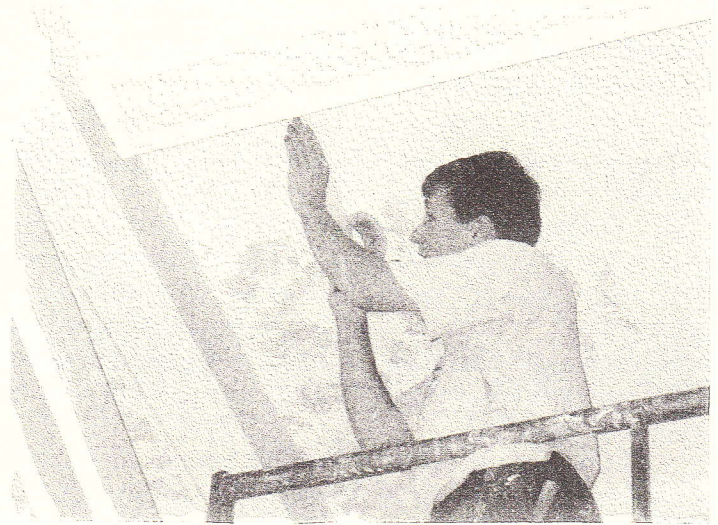
## Mother of the First Seminarian

The first month of school, appropriately, is the month of September. I consider it appropriate, particularly in a seminary, because this month has several important feasts of Our Blessed Mother. Seminarians require a special devotion to the Holy Mother of God, more than the laity, if they are going to become holy priests one day. After all, who could better understand the importance of formation for future priests than the Mother of the First Seminarian? Under the vigilant eye of Mary, Jesus developed into manhood.

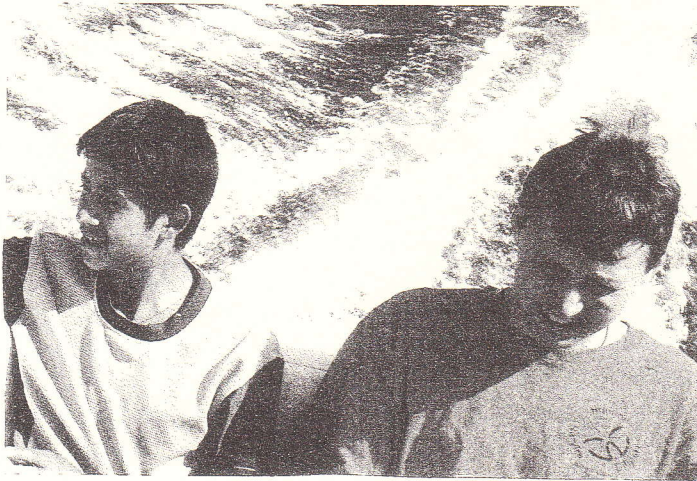
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*A major project this past month has been repairing and painting the chapel. Work on the ceiling requires the use of scaffolding.*



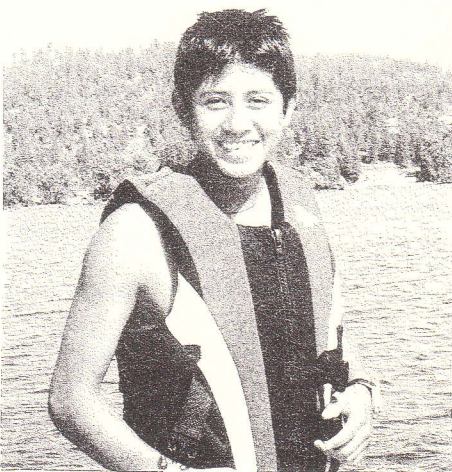
*Fr. Gabriel spent many hours repairing and texturing the ceiling.*



*We are grateful to our neighbor and friend, Mr. Paul LeStage, for taking us out in his boat for an afternoon of water-skiing.*



*One of the riders in the boat holds up an orange flag when a skier is in the water, to alert other boaters.*



*Giovanni is putting on the life vest in preparation for his try at skiing.*



*Oops! Oh well, nobody gets up on the first try.*



*And he's up!*

## Mother of the First Seminarian

*continued from page 2*

She watched in wonder as the Son of God grew in wisdom, age and grace during those hidden years at the “seminary” of Nazareth.

On the Feast of Mary’s Nativity (Sept. 8) we recall the blessed day when she was born into this world. God gazed with delight upon His perfect creature, our “tainted nature’s solitary boast.” Could we ever begin to understand God’s satisfaction upon beholding His creature, the blessed infant Mary, born into this world full of divine grace, without even a trace of Original Sin?

From the contemplation of Our Lady’s birth, we proceed to honor her holy name, the name chosen by God for His Mother (Sept. 12). The saints tell us that the invocation of the name of Mary causes hell to tremble and forces the demons to flee. We are daily beset by temptations — let us form the habit of frequently repeating the holy name of Mary.

From the celebration of these two joyful feasts of Our Lady, we turn our attention to her Sorrows (Sept. 15). This feast reminds us of her love for us, for Mary, although sinless, suffered for us, who are her children. Realizing this, how could we continue to offend her Divine Son? Our sins caused her great suffering and deep sorrow. Mary is the co-redemptrix, having united her sorrows to the sufferings of Jesus for our salvation.

And so we begin our seminary year under Our Lady’s mantle. May we always strive to imitate her virtues and to overcome sin. And may she help our seminarians to grow in wisdom, age and grace — to become daily more and more like her divine Son.

### Where do vocations come from?

A vocation is a precious gift from God, the calling of a young person to leave all things and dedicate his life to the service of God and souls. As Catholics, we understand the tremendous value of vocations. Good priests and nuns accomplish so much good for souls. Their very presence in our midst is an inspiration to young and old alike. We all benefit from their life of sacrifice and prayer.

We also know of the immense need for vocations today. So many faithful Catholics are without the Mass, without a school or even catechism classes for their children, without the inspiration derived from the frequent sight of religious in their habits. So where will more vocations come from?

We all know the basic answer to that question: vocations come from God. A vocation is His invitation, whispered in the depths of the heart, to leave all and follow Him. It is an invitation which is often difficult to perceive. Those so favored will not audibly hear Jesus inviting them. Rather, His call can be perceived through prayer and guidance. But those so called often will not heed the call, due to the sacrifices required in pursuit of a vocation. Further, that one may become worthy of a vocation, 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? Jesus gave us the answer when He 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, you do your 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 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.

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

All of you, our readers, are part of this endeavor. We are most grateful for your prayers and support, and we urge you to continue to do so. We assure you, in return, a daily remembrance in the prayers we recite for our benefactors. May St. Joseph bless and reward 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.

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