



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

January 2011

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be well into our Christmas vacation. Four of us are traveling home, while the other three will remain at the seminary. We all will enjoy our vacation, and we hope that you will as well.

Of course, the greatest joy of Christmas is the Midnight Mass. We will have the opportunity to serve the Mass and to be the closest to Our Lord, after the priest. Then, at Holy Communion, we will receive the Infant Jesus. He will be born in us, just as He was at Bethlehem. For now (a few days before Christmas), we are decorating our church, chapel and seminary, and practicing the liturgy. Before we know it, Christmas will be here.

We also look forward to the activities of January. After the semester finals, we have our first ski trip. There is plenty of snow this year, making for great skiing. We will have to help our new seminarians learn how to ski, but likely, they will pick it up easily.

Another event of January that we all enjoy is the priests' meeting. We have the chance to meet the bishop and priests from all around the country. You never saw so many priests together at one time. They usually come up to the seminary for an evening, and it is a real highlight for all of us.

We hope that you all will enjoy your Christmas and New Year's Day, and that the coming year will bring you many blessings. We also will pray for you and we thank you for your support.

New Year's resolutions

by Robert Kowalczyk, gr. 9

At the start of a new year many people in our country make

resolutions for the New Year, from building character, to getting over bad habits. It would be good for us also to make similar resolutions for God's glory. We should leave behind a life of sin and start a new life for the glory of God. We should strive for a life of penance and seek never to offend God again.

To resolve never to offend God again, we must have a proper motive — we must truly mean it from our heart. We must ask ourselves, what motivates us to offend God? Then, we must root it out at its source. We must avoid all occasions leading to the sin. True contrition means we are willing to go to the extreme to end the life of sin. True sorrow afflicts us until we have drained every last drop of fallen human nature from our souls through acts of mortification. Such acts would include intense prayer to the four ends, and depriving our minds of certain joys through penance. Temptation can be avoided and graces gained through the use of ejaculations and short prayers constantly throughout the day.

Resolutions of the New Year can also include changes in character. We can make positive changes in character by being more caring, trustworthy, respectful, diligent and honest. To be more caring means to be more appreciative of what others do for you, become more polite, and do your best for those in need. We can become more trustworthy by being more responsible and a reliable worker. Respect means we are humble and do not put

January calendar

- 5 — Classes resume; blessing of Epiphany Water
- 6 — Feast of the Epiphany; High Mass and special observances; evening feastday dinner and opening of gifts
- 18–20 — Semester exams; Priests' meetings at Mt. St. Michael
- 21 — Semester break; end of second quarter; Ski Day
- 24 — Second semester (third quarter) begins

anyone beneath us, but it also means to admonish bad habits. We will be more diligent by giving our best in study, chores and athletics, and by becoming more persistent in our fields of work. Honesty means that we are more fair in our dealings — we don't cheat, lie or take advantage of others in certain cases.

As we look over this list, we certainly can all improve in any of these areas. However, we must always be aware that resolutions can make us a more proud person in the mind, so we

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On December 8 we visited the Sacred Heart Mission which the Jesuits built with the help of the Coeur d'Alene Indians in the 1800s.

New Year's resolutions

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must be on our guard. Lastly, we must keep in mind that we will never be perfect in this life, and we will always have faults.

A praise to Our Lady

by Juan Garcia, gr. 12

Are you part of a Sodality or a member of a Third Order or Confraternity? Then the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception can be a pious practice and a powerful devotion to our Blessed Mother that you adopt and oblige yourself to recite daily. Perhaps most of you are not aware of this devotion. It is an abridgment of the normal Office prayed by priests and monks.

The recitation of the Little Office is divided into the ancient Roman hours: Matins, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Here in the seminary since its inauguration in 1999, our superior started a Sodality for the seminarians. In this, one of the requirements is the daily recitation of the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The others are: an extra effort to be a good example and follow the rules, to pray the daily Rosary, to bow our heads at the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and to wear the Miraculous Medal. (We pray the Rosary every day anyway, but sodalists promise to do so daily without fail, even when they are not at the seminary.)

This devotion to Our Lady of praying the Little Office has proved to give peace and protection over the house where it is recited. "O terrible as the embattled array" are the words quoted from the psalmist in the Prime of this Office. Mother Mariana, a Conceptionist nun in Quito was once disturbed by Satan as he tried to stop her from her devout and regular recitation of the Office of Our Lady by saying: "I shall use all my power to prevent the praying of this accursed Little Office, for by it, my forces are weakened and I am destroyed."

Convents or monasteries similar to the one where Mother Mariana lived, prayed according to the method followed by the ancient time, and so they would wake up around 4:00 in the morning. Here, however, because of our studies and our need for adequate sleep, we combine our prayers into four periods. In our morning prayers we pray Matins and Prime; at noon we recite Tierce, Sext and None. After the evening Rosary we pray Vespers, and before retiring we pray Compline.

Thus, we fulfill our daily devotions to our Blessed Mother. You can never give too much honor to her. Hyperdulia is the special homage to Our Lady which recognizes her as a creature, but a creature holier and nobler than any angel or saint. Thus she is closest to God and is our advocate. You too can join this devotion that there may be peace in your home. This can be one of your resolutions. May Our Lord, through Mary, fill you with His grace in this New Year.

My first snowfall

by Mathias Nwankwo, gr. 12

I thank God who has made it possible for me to see the lingering snow since my entrance into the seminary. Since I came, I was bombarded with questions from others like: "How prepared are you for the coming snowfall?" (especially from our cook Miss Mary Antonia, Mr. Vincent, a working benefactor of the seminary, the priests, the seminarians and the parishioners). Indeed, I was put into great confusion, but later, I came out with consoling courage that I could handle it.

So I began to anticipate the snow. When the snow first appeared on mountain top, I decided it was time to prove my bravery, by being the first to get the snow to the seminary. Unfortunately, I was insulted by the snow on a Sunday afternoon when I climbed up the hill, but returned empty-handed to the seminary.

Then came the annual contest to guess the first snowfall, with a free homework pass as the prize. The person to guess the particular day that a snowfall of at least two inches, lasting at least twenty four hours, would get the free homework pass. As a means of consolation, I told myself: "This is my chance!" Well, Fr Benedict won, and I came in second. I wasn't happy, because I realized that I was in the same group as the last person that didn't guess correctly! Then I gave it another try.

Sledding began. Indeed, my first sledding experience was a disaster — I ended up tumbling and saluting the snow with my head. But I recalled the saying: "The failing of a man is not the end of his life." I went in memory thinking with some tactics on how to conquer the giant (snow). Here comes the final race on sleds from the church down to the lower school. I was shivering and marveled when I made it the first time. Making it the second time, I said it's not yet good enough. We lined up the third time, and Juan said "Go!" We left. Having passed everyone on the way, with a heart full of joy, I delightedly raised my arms. Landing at the lower school, I jumped up with full morale. With a slow motion, I marched up sluggishly, but happily, to the seminary.

Finally, we seminarians, have been trying our best in shoveling and keeping clean the steps leading to the church, along with clearing the snow all around the church and seminary. We thank God that at least there is no news of broken bones!

Onward to heaven

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 12

Recently, several of us accompanied Fr. Benedict to Montana, in order to sing for and serve a funeral. This opportunity served as a strong reminder to us of the reality of death. Stepping outside, a little into the exterior darkness, if you will, before an afterlife's weeping and gnashing of teeth, how wonderful the world without appears! What pleases the

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We have been enjoying the beautiful winter scenes around the seminary this past month.



Aedan was happy to head home for Christmas, especially since the weather had closed some airports for a period of time.



Recently we added a wallpaper border to the front entrance of the seminary.



Robert was a big help in measuring, cutting, gluing and installing the wallpaper.



Juan and Mathias decorated the tree which they had cut on our property.



The finished product!

Onward to heaven

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worldlings experience: their gluttonies, greeds, and lecheries. How happy they seem. How *boring* we seem.

We do not feast: we fast. We do not horde: we give alms. We do not dress in indecent attire: we are modest. Thus, labeled “boring,” we are passed off as austere ascetics at best, or as lunatics at worst. But the worldlings do not understand just how *morbid* we are.

We live to die. Our entire faith is proven true only in death. Death is the only gate to heaven, and heaven is the only reward worth our seeming *boringness*. Thus, we Catholics live to die. Our everyday fasting, almsgiving, and modest dress are all lived in preparation for a good, sinless death. The martyrs suffered martyrdom *to die* and get to heaven. Saints’ feastdays commemorate not their earthly birthdays but their *deathdays*. An entire month is dedicated to the dead. Whole chains of doctrine, especially those of heaven, hell, and purgatory, are only realized after death’s effect. Catholicism and we Catholics are immersed in what the world would call *morbidity*!

But still more *morbid* than all these is the Catholic funeral: the assistance of Catholics to the dying one before death, and the eulogy, absolution, and Catholic burial after. Worse in the world’s eyes is the reaction of the living to the death of fellow Catholics: we seem to pray more for the deceased person than we did when he was alive! But even more absurd to the worldling: we are happy for the deceased Catholic! Sayings like “He died a good death” or “He’s in a better place now” or “I’d like to die like that” are often on our lips after death’s effect. So *morbid* are we, that some of us look so forward to death as to have already staked their plots in their local Catholic cemetery. How *morbid* we are!

Yes, “How morbid we are.” But, unlike the worldlings, our morbidity, though deathly now, will not bring an eternal death to us later. We’ll die once and live for an eternity. So, onward to death and onward to heaven.

“The bow that is always bent . . .”

The story is told about St. John the Evangelist, that one day a hunter encountered him in the woods. The apostle was amusing himself, fondling a partridge, at which the hunter expressed surprise. After all, St. John was the famous apostle

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 Latin, theology, 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.

who leaned on Our Lord’s breast at the Last Supper. Surely, such trivial diversions were beneath him! But the apostle responded, “The bow which is always bent will certainly break.” (See [The Reign of Jesus through Mary](#), p. 181.)

This valuable lesson reminds us that we are all human and have need of rest and relaxation. Vacation periods are invaluable for recharging our batteries, so that we can devote ourselves with all the more effort and attention to our duties. Teachers, as well as students, have need of vacations.

And so we find ourselves entering our first major vacation period of the school year, the Christmas Break, which lasts for about two weeks. Every year I make out a list of things I hope to get done during this time, and each year very little of it gets done! But then, the most important thing is always accomplished, and that is that I get the necessary rest and recuperation so badly needed.

So I look forward to this beautiful Christmas season for more reasons than the wonderful spiritual feasts that we celebrate. May it also be for each of you a wonderful time of grace, of spiritual joy, and of rest. And may the Christ Child bless you and your loved ones in the New Year of 2011. Please continue to pray for our seminary.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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