



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

March 2012

Having just begun the season of Lent, we are preparing to make our annual retreat in a few days. Each of us, as is the custom here at the seminary, submitted a penance program to our superior for approval, and we can say that, so far, we have begun this penitential season well. On Ash Wednesday Father explained to us the purpose of this season, as well as the reasons why we should do penance. Let us all make the effort to persevere in our penitential practices, which are so beneficial to the soul!

Although temperatures have been gradually increasing, we were reminded at the end of February that winter is not quite over. Last Saturday we received over a foot of snow, the largest single snowfall all season. We recently enjoyed one last ski trip to Silver Mountain. It was a bit windy at times, but otherwise the conditions were good. With practice, we have all improved in our skiing ability and are already looking forward to next year's ski trips!

As for other news from the seminary, two of us have started taking piano lessons. Our teacher comes to the seminary once a week for these lessons, which is quite convenient. We have to thank the priests and fellow seminarians for putting up with our piano practicing. Actually, it is quite enjoyable learning how to play.

Then there is singing. Since there are just a few of us this year, we haven't done as much singing as in the past for the liturgy; nevertheless, we sing daily in our chapel, especially at night prayers. Each evening we conclude with the seasonal hymn to Our Lady. On Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, we use the solemn tone, as we process with

candles to Our Lady's shrine. On the other days we use the simple tone. It is amazing how quickly even the new seminarians learn these beautiful chants. Also, when we sing Compline, the seminarians take turns chanting a solo called the Lesson. Also, this month we will resume regular choir rehearsals, which were interrupted after Christmas.

All in all, our life is a busy one, and the time passes quickly. During this month of March we have extra daily devotions to our patron St. Joseph. We are especially praying for more seminarians. Please join us in praying to him for that intention. And may you all have a grace-filled Lent.

The life of God in us through charity

by Patrick Gilchrist, gr. 8

In its widest and highest sense, charity includes love of God as well as love of man. The obligation to perform acts of charity is taught both by revelation and by reason. Once Christ was asked which is the greatest commandment, and He replied that the greatest is to love God with all one's heart, mind, soul and strength, and the second is to love one's neighbor as oneself. Holy Scripture also teaches that "Charity covers a multitude of sins." And so, accept God's grace, be charitable, and He will be willing to

March calendar	
2-4	— Annual seminary retreat
9	— Feast of St. Dominic Savio; sodality ceremony
19	— Feast of St. Joseph, seminary patron; no classes
21	— Fr. Benedict's feastday
22-23	— Third Quarter Exams
26	— Feast of the Annunciation BVM; chanted Vespers; Fourth Quarter begins
30	— Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows; chanted Vespers

forgive you many of your wrongdoings.

In the Epistle for Quinquagesima Sunday, St. Paul says: "If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have charity, I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge,

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A recent snowfall did not deter us from an outdoor procession on Candlemas.

The life of God in us through charity

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and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing.”

We see that throughout scripture Christ was nothing but charitable, and He said, “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” As we all know, it is impossible to be perfect as God is, for we are finite creatures created by an infinite Being. So sometimes we ask ourselves: if it is impossible to be perfect why does God command us to be so? A good friend once put it like this: we are all mirrors and we must try to reflect God as best we can by keeping our mirrors clean. The more we reflect Him the more we are perfect or are showing His glory.

The mirror is our soul. When we sin we fog up the mirror with the influence of the world, bad companions and uncharitableness. Although we can still see the reflection of God in the mirror, it is less illuminated with His glory. When we commit mortal sin we totally drench the mirror in mud and filth and so we cannot see any reflection at all. When we go to confession we take a cloth and a bowl of water and wipe away the mud and then we are able to see the reflection of God.

Let us, then, keep our souls clean by practicing charity. In this way, God will live in us. For at the Last Supper Jesus told His apostles that by loving one another they would be loved by the eternal Father with the same love in which He was beloved.

Preserving the purity of our soul

by Jordan Hartman, gr. 9

When you were born your soul was stained with a darkness attributed to your very first parents. Our fore-mentioned parents were, as you know, Adam and Eve, who disobeyed God’s command and thus gave us the stain of original sin on our souls. It is the duty of the current parents to see that the stain is removed through the priest’s administration of the sacrament of Baptism.

It may seem unfair that, whether we like it or not, we have this mark, and it must be rubbed out or it will keep the gates of Heaven closed to us. But there are three different ways to obtain the effect of this sacrament. The three are called Baptism of water, desire, and blood. The first is the sacrament of Baptism; the second is when through no fault of his own, a person dies without the sacrament but he fervently and desperately wished to have it and so obtained its effect. And the last is if one dies for God or for the Faith, he can be admitted into Heaven, even if he had not received the sacrament of Baptism.

So Baptism is really the beginning of your life. You are born again through this most wonderful sacrament and your soul is pure and pleasing to God. When you look at a newborn baby you may think how innocent and sweet it looks, and indeed the babe is. It has not been tainted by the world and

has not seen or experienced the horrors and troubles that the earth brings with it. So just think how wonderful is its innocence after Baptism, being free from all actual sin as well as cleansed from original sin!

In order to preserve that wonderful innocence, we must strive to safeguard our purity of soul and treasure it as if it were a gem worth more than anything earthly, and not expose it to any possibility of being tainted. It must be safeguarded, like valuables in a safe that is made fire-proof and is usually hidden away, or a vault holding things of great importance kept safe by guards and monitored by cameras and sound surveillance. You would think someone was crazy who brought his safe full of money out of the protection of his house and was just carrying it around leisurely. (I know the safe would be extremely heavy, but bear with me). Thus we should never put down our guard or expose our soul to an occasion of sin which could lead to a venial or even a mortal sin, which would make our safe a stolen one.

We can protect our souls with different weapons and defenses called natural and supernatural virtues. Although it is quite easy to receive the wonderful sacrament of Baptism, the hardest and yet most important part is preserving our soul clean and pleasing to God in order to gain eternal happiness.

The rhythm of light and night

by Aedan Gilchrist, gr. 12

This last month has been rather interesting for me, as I have been taking on the task of learning the piano and gaining the ability to read sheet music for the first time in my life. What a joy it is to give my creativity a new avenue to express itself, relieving frustrations and crosses and giving me a logical, in-depth, but most relaxing view into the world of melody and rhythm. Unbelievable is the main thought I have when learning the secrets of those figures once meaningless to my eyes, now making perfect sense and forming perfect order from the motion of my hands, the music of my dreams.

God is unquestionably the Creator of music, for its complexity, for its simplicity. All this beauty has made me wonder, how can music, requiring the use of the higher nature of man, stir the waters of his lower nature? Well, music stirs our nature by rhythm. Everything that we know in the world has a rhythm. An example of rhythm would be our heart beat. How interesting — the heart has a constant pounding beat, hammering away at its work to sustain us in life. By the heart’s beating the higher nature (the mind which is the seat of the soul) is sustained together with the body until death.

Our Lord warned us to be watchful over our hearts, for that is where our evil flows from, but also our good. Where I am going with this thought is that the music is in rhythm with our heart as it always has been, but more so in rhythm with the passions hidden within the dark depths of the heart. Music is the key to the Pandora’s box. Once opened the black decay consumes our heart and what was once an organ of love

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Serving practice before the ceremonies of Candlemas: Father explains to Aedan the rubrics for the thurifer.



The seminarians have been using our piano much more lately.



Riding the chair lift to the top.



Patrick waits for the other seminarians as he prepares to ski down the hill.



Evening recreation helps us to relax after a long day of prayer and study.



This picture of our church was taken from our seminary after a recent snowfall.

The rhythm of light and night

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becomes the organ of lust. This darkness is released into the stream of life and soon begins to intoxicate the entire body, the black ink making its way to its goal, the mind. Inebriated with the darkness the mind loses its direction, for the light of grace becomes harder to find in the mind's eye when it is covered with thick black tar.

While music can be the cause of spiritual cancer, it can also be a preventive. Good music is a powerful weapon, along with prayer to the Blessed Mother, against the vile beast of impurity. Listen to music that elevates your soul and consumes your thoughts and entire being. Prayer is the best solution against temptation, but we are obligated to use whatever means we can to defend ourselves, and I believe the best natural weapon is music. I believe that if you are able to learn an instrument you should, for the ability was given to you by God for the salvation of your own and others' souls.

Music is a gift given by God to all men, either in the form of being able to produce it or maybe just the ability to enjoy it. We should then use it. Listen to music that is good for the soul; don't be fooled. That does not mean only Gregorian chant. No, there is a wealth of genres of wholesome music for you to choose from and explore. But a word of warning: be careful in your choices. Ask a priest or a Catholic of good moral fiber for some ideas of music to appreciate, but also remember that the Church has guidelines too. Again, I cannot emphasize enough to choose carefully what you allow into your heart and mind.

Of books and dreams

We all recall the catechism teaching about dreams. We are not to believe in dreams, which come from our uncontrolled imagination. Often they are ridiculous; sometimes they are even dangerous. The best solution for bad dreams is to promptly forget them, by turning our attention, upon waking, to prayer.

But there have been a few choice souls to whom God spoke in dreams. We recall the patriarch Joseph in the Old Testament, who had dreams concerning his election and was later able to correctly interpret the dreams of his fellow prisoners and of Pharaoh. St. Joseph also had revelations from God in dreams, such as the reality of Our Lady's divine maternity and the instructions to flee into Egypt. In more

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.

modern times there is the incredible example of St. John Bosco, who is one of the special patrons of our seminary.

During the past month we have been using a book on the dreams of Don Bosco in our table reading. In these interesting dreams God made known to him future events and often even the state of soul of his students. Invariably, when he saw various boys of the Oratory in his dreams, he would later tell them privately of the state in which he beheld them, and they would be forced to confess that his dreams were perfectly accurate. On one occasion, he had a dream of hell with various boys falling into that miserable pit. When he asked his guide whether those boys were lost, he was told that they would be lost if they were to die in their current state of soul. You can well imagine how this and other dreams caused a sensation among the boys of the Oratory!

In that particular dream the saint asked his guide what those boys had to do to escape damnation. The guide replied: "They have superiors; let them obey them. They have rules; let them observe them. They have the sacraments; let them receive them." In this short instruction are contained all the advice needed for seminarians (and all youth) to improve their spiritual lives and to save their souls.

I highly recommend this book and/or any other good spiritual book for use during Lent. Let us recall that in prayer, we speak to God; through good spiritual reading, God speaks to us. May you all have a good, holy Lent and grow closer to God through prayer, meditation and spiritual reading. Truly, this season is one of great benefit to the soul, for those who spend it well.

As always, we thank you for your support. May God bless you abundantly during this Lenten season and always. Be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

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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