



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XIII, No. 8

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

April 2012

It has been a busy month. Early in March we were surprised by the presence of a woodpecker in our chapel! It seems that he somehow got into the attic and then, not being able to get back out, he pecked through some dry wall in the ceiling and flew into the chapel. Even though we opened all the windows and took out the screens, he wouldn't fly out. Eventually, he became exhausted and fell to the floor, where he was picked up and put back outside.

On Laetare Sunday we maintained a seminary tradition of sponsoring a parish breakfast, which was a great success. There was a lot of work to do to prepare in advance, serve the breakfast, and clean up afterwards. Thanks especially to Mrs. Salgado and to Mary Antonia for their help in cooking!

We also had been busy about that time in making St. Joseph cords, which were blessed and distributed to the parishioners. There was a High Mass for his feast and then we went bowling. We found out that we need to practice our bowling skills, but it was nice having a day with no classes and no homework!

Now we have finished the Third Quarter and are preparing for Holy Week. This is a wonderful week of grace at the seminary, as everyone is involved in preparing for and in serving the liturgy. Of course, we are also looking forward to having some time off during our coming Easter vacation, to help us prepare for the final two months of classes.

We wish all of you a most blessed and joyous Easter. May we all rise with Christ, after our Lenten penances, to a new and more spiritual life.

The carpenter's woodpecker

by Aedan Gilchrist, gr. 12

For the past two years on the 9th of March, the feast of St. Dominic Savio, my chosen patron, I have received various favors from God. I am sure these graces are due to St. Dominic's intercession. An example of his intercession was at the start of last year's Lent. I wanted to make the best Lent I've ever done, and so I suppose to encourage me, it started on his feast day.

It seems that St. Dominic and Our Blessed Mother are really looking out for me. This year, I was rather feeling "down" for quite a few days until the feast of St. Dominic. After attending Mass I continued with the usual schedule. Then Fr. Benedict gave me something to place in the sacristy. While in the sacristy (behind the altar in our seminary chapel) I heard an excitably loud noise in the church. I thought it was Sister shaking some kind of blanket, but in the church?! So I went out to see and at first found nothing.

Standing there for a moment, I puzzled about the mysterious source of all the noise, after which I began to proceed back to the dining room for breakfast. And there it was, the source of all the trouble — a bird. I found a woodpecker perched right next to

April calendar

- 5-6 — Holy Thursday, Good Friday ceremonies
- 8 — Easter Sunday
- 7-15 — Easter Break
- 16 — Classes resume
- 25 — Procession of the Major Litanies
- 26 — Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel; chanted Vespers
- 28 — Feast of St. Louis Marie de Montfort; begin preparation for Holy Slavery

St. Joseph. What a beautiful bird! It was a mouse-brown color with a red tear running down its right cheek and with a perfectly-formed beak as thin as a needle. After a few seconds of examining this wonderful creature, I thought, "How did it get in? Well whatever, I have to capture this

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Aedan assisted Fr. Benedict as he baptized one of our high school students.

The carpenter's woodpecker

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beautiful bird and put him outside.” I made a few attempts, but all failed as the bird flew to the top of the chapel and stayed there for the remainder of the morning, resting and facing Our Blessed Lord.

After a few lessons I returned to the chapel, and after considering the bird for some time I realized it just had to be a strange blessing from God. To explain how this bird is a grace, I'll let you in on a little secret: dear St. Joseph has been asking me for a long time to pray to him more. And what do I find, of all places, in the chapel? I find a woodpecker by his statue! Not only that, but it just happens to be the bird that would most likely annoy a carpenter such as St. Joseph. I believe the message to me was to be St. Joseph's woodpecker. St. Joseph wants me to pray to him so much that I may become (if it is actually possible) an annoyance to him. On the same pedestal on which St. Joseph rests, there is also a statue of my birth patron St. Philomena; she has been the other saint who has been asking me for devotion. I believe it to be too much of a coincidence to be an accident — two champions of purity to aid and protect me. Thank you God and St. Dominic for the push. I needed it.

With this lesson learned I then moved in on the bird, after praying to be able to capture him. He fell from the rafters and I was able to pick him up off the ground. Of course, I hesitated to grab him at first, and then instantly thought of my lack of faith, as I had just prayed to be able to capture him — another lesson for me to trust in God more. Fortunately, God was kind and allowed me to capture the bird. The captive woodpecker struggled just a few seconds, after which I was able to hold and soothe the beautiful creature. Thank you, God and my patron saints, for the many lessons that day.

Between the lines

by Jordan Hartman, gr. 9

When you are between the lines, you are in the most crucial point of the day-to-day battles that will occur throughout your life. It is the space of time before sin but during the temptation. The temptation itself, of course, is not a sin. Even Jesus was tempted. But it is while this occasion of sin is before us that we must respond quickly. If the temptation is allowed to occupy our minds for long, then it may soon become a sin. Toying with the temptation would be fatal — you must cast it away at once just as if you were holding a poisonous reptile.

Another thing to look out for is that horrible trap that the devil likes to use which is the deception of time: “I have plenty of time to go to confession; just one little sin, that's all. . . .” But the interesting thing about that trick is that we do not know how much time we actually have. Do you think the devil will leave you alone after this “one little sin”? The answer is no. After the pleasure of that one little sin is gone,

you will be more susceptible to fall into other sins. And to top it all off, if you live long enough to get to the confessional, the devil will heap the embarrassment and guilt upon you, so that you won't confess your sins or at least not all of them. Then you are in danger of making a bad confession. But we can close the door to all these problems if, while we are in the state of sanctifying grace, we conquer that little temptation which is nagging at us and stay on the other side of the line.

But obviously we are not alone in this struggle. Think of all the help we have at the tips of our fingers, waiting for us just at the end of a short prayer or ejaculation. We needn't say a whole rosary every time we are tempted, but a few Hail Mary's or an Our Father with the right intention would suffice.

Or, if you are looking for a more powerful time-consuming occupation, then mental prayer and spiritual reading are great helps. Surely, with all the assistance from Our Lady and the saints, our guardian angel must shake his head and wonder just what we were thinking when we fell into sin. After all, Holy Scripture tells us: “God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with temptation will also give you a way out, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor., 10:13).

Really, we have a plethora of heavenly graces available to us, and it would be our own fault if we do not take advantage of them. So take part in the torrential abundance of celestial blessings that you may stay on the right side of the lines and not find yourself in between them. But never lose heart in the fight, and remember, as a saint once said: “God wants to help you more than you want to be helped.”

Frequent confession

by Patrick Gilchrist, gr. 8

We all know from our catechism about the Easter duty. We must receive Holy Communion during the Easter time and go to confession at least once a year. Some of you may be wondering, “When is the Easter time?” Well, it is from the first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday.

The definition of confession is: “The sacrament by which sins committed after baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest.” Weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly confession (but never a longer period than that) is considered frequent confession. Confession is called a “sacrament,” not simply a function or ceremony, because it is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace to the soul.

The Council of Trent teaches that venial sins may be confessed with profit to the soul, for in the sacrament of penance the priest has the power of Christ to remit them. It also declares that, as a means of regaining grace and justice, penance was at all times necessary for those who had stained their souls by mortal sin.

Frequent confession also brings forth deeper contrition, contrition that brings out the right kind of fear, not the fear of

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The woodpecker perched on the beams in front of the tabernacle for a couple hours.



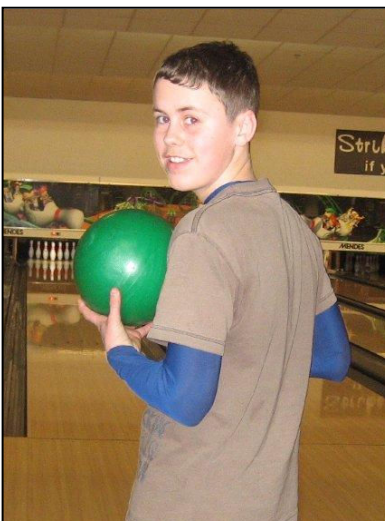
The seminarians prepare to release the bird back into the wild.



On Sundays we cook our own breakfast, giving our cooks a break from their daily chores.



The seminarians recently cleaned out the chicken coop and goat pen and spread new straw.



Patrick prepares for his turn at the bowling lane.



We spend a lot of time making "blarney stones" for the parish breakfast.



Our Laetare Sunday breakfast was well-attended.

Frequent confession

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going to hell but the fear of God and of offending Him. The confessions of someone's failings in detail is an act worthy of satisfaction in itself, which would otherwise never be made.

Penance is a supernatural moral virtue, which induces the sinner to detest his sins and incites him to offer satisfaction for them and to amend his life in the future. The sacrament of penance was instituted by Christ when, being raised from the dead, He breathed on His disciples saying, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." Let us resolve to use this wonderful sacrament often, for frequent confession is a great means of grace.

The great work of God

Of all the works that a priest does, undoubtedly the most important is the worship of God. Yes, teaching youth, preaching, giving blessings, counseling, and so forth are all good and necessary, but the greatest work is performing the Liturgy. According to Pope Pius XII in his encyclical Mediator Dei, the Sacred Liturgy is the public worship of God by His Church. It is comprised of three parts: the Sacrificial Liturgy (the Mass), the Sacramental Liturgy (administration of the sacraments), and the Liturgy of Prayer (the Divine Office).

Even if a priest did nothing else than to offer Mass and recite his Divine Office daily, as perfectly as possible, he would be doing a divine work, one that is highly pleasing to God and brings God's blessings down upon mankind. For the works of the Liturgy are offered to God on behalf of all members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

It is for this reason that Holy Week is of paramount importance in the life of a priest (or a future priest). In seminaries much time is spent preparing the servers and rehearsing the proper performance of the Liturgy. Even small details, conscientiously performed out of faith, give much honor to God. While at times exhausting, the liturgical rites of the Church are also a great joy for a priest and servers, who know that in faithfully fulfilling their roles, they are giving honor and glory to God.

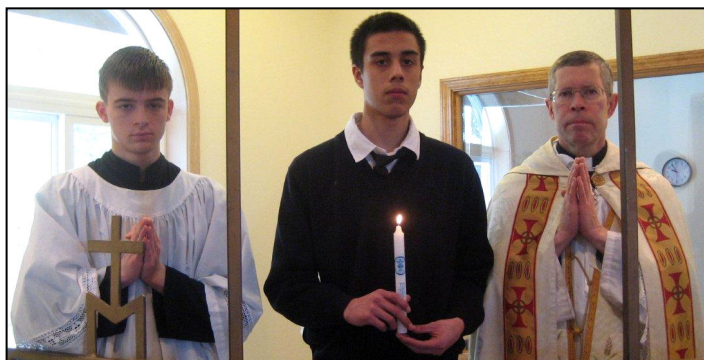
You laity should make the effort to devoutly attend as many of the Holy Week ceremonies as you can. Use your missal so as to derive the greatest possible benefit. Above all, remember that by uniting with the priest, you are worshipping God, through the performance of the Opus Dei, the great

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.



On the feast of St. Joseph one of our high school students received the sacrament of baptism.

work of God. May we all treasure the sacred Liturgy and always assist at it devoutly.

Allow me to take this opportunity to wish all of you, our friends and benefactors, and your families the greatest abundance of graces during this Holy Week and Easter. May God abundantly reward you for your support of our seminary. (I especially wish to thank all those who generously responded to our annual Lenten Alms Drive. A high Mass will be offered for all these donors.) May we all enjoy one day the unending Easter of heavenly glory.

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