



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

February 2021

The past month has been quite a busy month. Soon after our return we came to the end of the Second Quarter, which we celebrated with our first ski outing. We also had a second ski outing before the end of the month.

Now we turn our attention to making a good Lent, which arrives in just a few weeks. But before that we will join in the parish pre-Lent celebration, which includes a potluck dinner and talent show. We are all working on something—songs, instrumentals or skits—to share with the parishioners. After all, we have to uphold the name of the seminary, especially since a group of seminarians won first place last year!

For the liturgy this month, we have the special ceremonies of Candlemas and Ash Wednesday. We also will sing a High Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Our main goal in choir, however, will be to learn well how to chant Sunday Vespers, as we will do that each Sunday of Lent.

Finally, at the end of this short month we will have our annual retreat.

For some of the seminarians, it will be their first time on retreat, while others of us have experienced how to make a retreat before. Here at the seminary there is an annual weekend retreat on the second weekend of Lent. Please pray for us that we make a good retreat. Be assured that we also will pray for you, that you may have a

grace-filled Lent. Our human nature doesn't like penance, but we all know we need it. So let us all make a good Lent!

## The Best Time of the Year

by Jonathan Lehnen, gr. 9

As Lent is fast approaching, it is good to consider what the Church sets before us in this very holy season. She sets before us a more somber time of year, with purple vestments for Mass, fasting, penance, sacrificing, etc. She sets before us a time of prayerful meditation on the Passion and death of Our Lord, Who came to save us all and showed us the true way to heaven.

We should not look at this time of year as loathsome and the worst time

**February Calendar**

- 2 – Purification BVM feastday; Candlemas ceremonies
- 11 – Procession for the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes
- 13 – Parish Talent Show and pre-Lent celebration
- 17 – Ash Wednesday
- 24 – Mid-quarter
- 26-28 – Annual Lenten retreat

special feast of Easter, at which we will be able to participate with more joy if we faithfully carry out our Lenten resolutions than if we hardly did anything during Lent.



Brother Alphonsus holds the book for Father during the blessing of Epiphany water.

of year. Yes, our human nature tends to sigh as the season of Lent approaches, because of the penances and fasting we will have to do. Yet, nevertheless, we should look at it as the best time of year, for it is a great opportunity to become holier, more saintly, and more pleasing to God. It is also a splendid preparation for the

I can relate of my own experience, as I would sigh when Lent was near and lazily not keep many resolutions I had made. Once Easter came I would be happy that “the worst time of year” was over and yet feel rather guilty that I hardly kept my resolutions. As I have grown older, however, I have come to realize what a dumb fool I was to pass up all those good

opportunities to get closer to heaven. So Lent is a very good time of year, for we can get closer to heaven. Let us not pass up this great opportunity of doing sacrifice and saving our souls. We see how the Church is basically “forcing” us, so to speak, to get to

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## The Best Time of the Year

heaven! Isn't that great? Don't we all want to get to heaven? If we do, this IS the perfect season to do it. But we should not do it just during Lent; we should do it our entire life. If we all persevere, in the end, we will be saved. May we all meet merrily in heaven!

## Saint Margaret of Cortona

*by Thiet Vincent Nguyen, gr. 11*

It is truly incredible how wonderful God's work is in every soul, even the most outcast and rejected ones in this world. He provides every means for them to live only for Him and become His holy saints in eternity. There are many among the blessed in heaven who were once regarded as sinners and failures but who cooperated with God's grace to rise above their nature and live the rest of their lives devoutly and penitently.

St. Margaret was born in Laviano, a little town in the diocese of Chiusi, Italy. As the only child of her father and mother, she was very spoiled. Many of the men in her town admired her beauty. Soon she found herself living in a castle, not as her master's wife, but as his mistress. Eventually, she bore him a child. After nine years living a life according to her liberty-loving nature she found her master dead, covered with maggots after a cruel assassination near the castle.

Having nowhere to go, she had no choice but to return to her father's house and beg for his forgiveness. He forgave her and Margaret was taken back with her child. She repented her sins and desired to live the rest of her life only for her Creator. Many times when the congregation gathered for daily Mass in the parish, she stood up and made public confessions of all the sins she committed throughout her life. And soon enough, Margaret was driven out of her father's house, for her father was not pleased that she brought shame upon her family.

Afterwards, she found shelter in a Franciscan monastery and there began an earnest life of penance. She gave away all her luxurious jewels and fine clothing to the poor and clothed herself with rags. She deliberately injured her face with many bruises, so that men would no longer care to look upon her. She soon retired to a cottage of her own and was admitted to the Third Order of St. Francis. Margaret came to Cortona as a penitent at the age of twenty-seven and died there at

the age of fifty in 1297.

We must pray the rosary every day for the conversion of many sinners in our time, when hundreds of thousands of souls are being condemned to eternal fire. God's grace works in every soul. In His infinite kindness, He grants His help to all those who amend their lives, even the greatest sinners, to repent and live the rest of their lives for His glory. The only question is: will the soul cooperate and ask for God's help?

## Our First Ski Trip

*by Matthew Mendieta, gr. 8*

In the previous month of January the seminarians went on two skiing trips. I had never gone skiing before these two times. I enjoyed myself very much.

We had to get up at 5:20 am, because we wanted to get there as early as possible. So, we had Mass at 6:00



*Father gives an explanation before opening the Epiphany gifts.*

am, then right after our fifteen minute thanksgiving for communion we put our bags in the two vans and we were on our way! The hour-long drive was filled with a quick breakfast and we also prayed our daily rosary.

When we arrived, Fr. Philip received the tickets and then we took the twenty minute gondola ride. The gondola ride was a really breathtaking experience since we were 30 feet in the air and we could see all of the gargantuan mountains enclosing us.

When we got up the mountain we obtained our ski poles, boots and skis. After we put them on we posed for a picture. Afterwards we broke into groups with our partners. Since it was my first time skiing I went with Fr. Philip to the beginner's hill, called the "bunny hill." This is where I learned the basics of skiing. I was really anxious to get the basics down so I could ski with everybody else for I was one of only two who were skiing for the first time.

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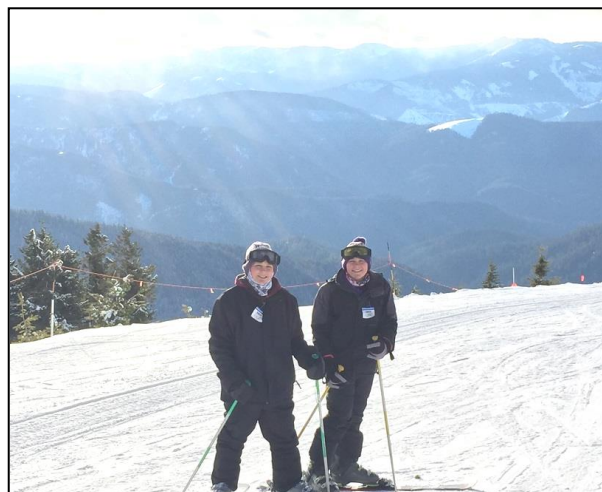
*We play football, even in the cold.*



*Before their dinner with the priests, the seminarians joined in with Vespers.*



*Our evening Rosary in the seminary chapel was illuminated by the Christmas lights during January.*



*The twins prepare for another run down the slopes at Silver Mountain*



*Jesse delivers his prepared speech to his fellow seminarians.*



*During the Mass on the Epiphany, Matthew prepares to incense the congregation.*



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## Our First Ski Trip

After a lot of falling and determination I finally was getting decent at skiing. There was a large selection of trails and hills to ski down. The older seminarians were extremely bold and went down a lot of sheer mountains. Some of



*The weather was perfect for our first ski trip.*

them went down the “Black Diamonds,” which are the most perilous slopes, and I am happy to say that they finished without any injuries.

There was great weather for this ski trip, and it was a lot of fun. All I can say now is thank-you to the priests and to all those who supported us at our fund-raiser in November, which made this trip possible. With grateful hearts, we pray daily for all our benefactors.

## Room Inspection

Seminary formation is not only a matter of fostering the spiritual life and learning Latin. The entire routine is designed to instill life-long habits that will make a future priest successful in the sacred ministry. One of these indispensable habits is that of order and neatness.

Each seminarian has a small room with a bed, dresser, closet and desk. Perhaps because they are

small, the rooms can easily become messy, if the seminarians are not diligent in keeping them clean and organized. To help them to do so, we have regular room inspections. Sometimes I announce the inspections in advance; at other times, they are surprise inspections.

This school year I have not had as many inspections as would be desirable, so that is something I intend to do as the year rolls on. Especially with the older seminarians, there is not much of a need for correction. They have learned in past years to maintain a neat and tidy room, and this practice has become a good habit. With others, however, there is room for improvement.

So, as you can see, seminary formation is beneficial in many ways. The ideal seminarian is not only pious, obedient, and diligent in his studies. He also has acquired good habits which will enable him to become a good priest who will serve Holy

Mother Church and lead souls to heaven. Please continue to pray for us as we work on these goals!

Again, we thank you for reading our newsletter and for your interest in and support of our seminary. May God reward your kindness, and may He lead many more young men to come to our seminary. May He also help our current seminarians to become “other Christs.”

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*The Sisters and staff members joined us for our Epiphany celebration.*

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