



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

February 2024

**I**t has been a busy month! We had the blessing of Epiphany water shortly after returning from our vacation, followed by a solemn High Mass for the feast of the Holy Family. Later that week we had our annual gift-opening in honor of the gifts offered by the three Magi to the Christ child.

January also included a ski trip and the visit of the bishop and priests during their annual meetings. Now our attention has turned to the ceremonies of Candlemas on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. We are learning the melismatic chants for these special ceremonies. We will also be chanting Vespers each Sunday of Lent, as usual.

We are working on our skits and songs for this annual event.

How quickly the first half of the year has gone by. It is a reminder to us to make the most of our time here in the seminary, for our years here will go by quickly. Please continue to pray for us that we will profit from our formation in the minor seminary. We daily pray for you and your intentions.

## Checchino

by Brendan Rabjohns, gr. 11

**W**e have many saints from long ago, but we also have some closer to our own age. One of these more recent saints is St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, called Francis Possenti in the world or “Checchino.”

## February Calendar

- 2 – Purification BVM feastday; Candlemas ceremonies
- 3 – Blessing of throats; Benjamin’s birthday
- 10 – Annual Talent Show and pre-Lent Parish Social
- 11 – Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes
- 14 – Ash Wednesday ceremonies
- 21 – Mid-quarter
- 23-25– Annual Lenten retreat
- 26-27– Annual Stanford Achievement testing



*The seminarians either served or sang in the choir for the two funerals we had in January.*

Since Lent starts early this year, we also need to think about what we will do for Lent. We will have our usual sacrifice bowl, in addition to the penances that we each choose to perform. But before Lent begins we will attend the parish Talent Show.

As the son of a magistrate, he went to the college of the Jesuits with many of the children of the upper classes of Spoleto, which in turn made him acquaintances with almost all the upper class families of Spoleto. With all these high-placed friends, his winning ways,

and his talents, not to mention quick wit, he could have entered almost any profession and made a success of it.

Due to the weak health of St. Gabriel, during two different serious illnesses, he had made a promise to Our Lady to become a religious. He had forgotten these promises, but he was reminded of his faithlessness in an anniversary procession to Our Lady. When the icon of Our Lady passed him, he heard an interior voice say, “Francis, why do you remain in the world? It is not for you. Follow your vocation!” After first asking his confessor, St. Gabriel asked his father for permission to become a Passionist.

After overcoming the difficulties that his family placed to his becoming a Passionist, he entered the order on September 21st, 1856. He died in 1862 as a saint. How did he become a saint in such a short time? In less than six years he became a saint, when we struggle for

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## Checchino

years to become just a pious Catholic. He became a saint by doing what he was supposed to do as perfectly as possible. He set his eyes on the levels of highest sanctity and struggled as hard as he could to achieve it.

The example that we can draw from the life of St. Gabriel is that of fervor. He fervently tried to perfect himself at every opportunity that was placed in his path and noted all his faults, so he could form resolutions to overcome them. As a child of Mary, St. Gabriel practiced a tender and fervent devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, which we can copy in our own lives. St. Gabriel tried to become a saint; we should too, if we hope to succeed.



*Everyone enjoys the annual gift-giving tradition during Epiphany week.*

## Winter Fun by Henry Harris, gr. 10

This winter has been a sad one for snow here in northern Idaho, but it has still been a very fun one for us seminarians. The snow this year has been minimal, but we made use of it when we could for sledding and for many other crazy things that we thought of. We have quite a few sledding hills to pick from at The City of Mary. The first hill comes off the side of the church and goes down into the parking lot, but our favorite hill is the one by the pigpen. We made a ramp at the bottom and launch off of it and try to catch a football thrown by another seminarian.

We also started digging a large snow-cave using any tool that we thought might help. We used a shovel, a hammer, a crow bar, a dustpan, and many other tools.

Just recently the remodeling of the gym was finished so we are able to enjoy playing all of the indoor games that we have missed for so long, such as dodge ball, basketball and my personal favorite, hockey. Our annual ski trip is

coming up this week, so we are excited to hit the slopes!

So, as you can see, even though we haven't gotten much snow this winter, we are still enjoying what we have. A special thanks to Brother Thomas for plowing all the roads at the City of Mary, for helping us make the ramp for sledding, and for making huge snow piles to dig caves in.

## The Most Despised Man in America

*by John Biehl, gr. 12*

“And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy, 3:11). More often than not, a good indicator that you're carrying out God's will is the reception of mass persecution and ridicule from the world. Although not all the time, this indicator allows us to distinguish the good from the bad. So over the past 8 years, I have found that an extremely well-known and controversial person supports this very idea. This person happens to be none other than the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

Donald J. Trump, – a “racist, bigot, xenophobic, white supremacist, election conspirator, tax evader, cheater, bully, and misogynist.” The list is interminable, and yet, it's all a big lie. He is not perfect by any means, but these unsupported slanders, aimed at uneducated, gullible, and ignorant college students, are meant to adulterate the reputation of Mr. Trump, a man whose bold, patriotic spirit and hatred of corruption infuriates

those who wish to see our country die. Perhaps the most astounding aspect of this entire smear campaign is the fact that it's not working, and I would argue, is actually having the opposite effect.

It is almost amusing to witness the anti-Trumpers stumbling over themselves, trying to find some dirt on Mr. Trump, throwing allegation after allegation at him, and panicking if it doesn't have the desired effect. Around 10-20 lawsuits have been filed against him, and 4 of these cases are desperate attempts to stop a possible re-election. He has been impeached twice, betrayed by his own officials, and possibly cheated out of an election. Mr. Trump has even been arrested and had a mugshot taken of him (which instantly made him a hero of the people, and more famous than he already was).

Despite all of these bogus shenanigans, it doesn't seem to be working out too well for Trump's enemies. According to Time.com, Donald Trump was the most googled person in 88 countries. His mugshot, which I encourage you to take a look at, has literally been put onto every item imaginable. He even has his own social media platform. The anti-Trumpers just don't understand—the more you attack a man such as this, the more he will fight back and

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*The exterior of our church is well-illuminated during the Christmas season.*



*The seminarians look forward to the visit by the priests during their January meeting.*



*Some of the younger seminarians made their own igloo in one of the large piles of snow.*



*The annual blessing of Epiphany water is a solemn and inspiring ceremony.*



*Time for a group photo before the priests have to leave to return to Mount Saint Michael.*

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## The Most Despised Man in America

the more popular he will become.

Let us not be mistaken: Donald Trump is not indestructible, nor is he perfect. He requires our prayers for his conversion, as well as his general well-being. He cannot and will not succeed without God. Trump is an obstacle to corruption, socialism, communism, and the like; that means he's got enemies, and lots of them. Nevertheless, that has not and will not stop him, even if he really is the most despised man in America.



*Several seminarians volunteered to dig the grave for a recent burial in our cemetery.*

## A Time of Penance

Lent starts particularly early this year—on Saint Valentine's Day, of all days. Lax Catholics dread the season of Lent, for it is a time for penance and avoidance of worldly amusements. We faithful Catholics, on the other hand, know that it is a most valuable and necessary season.

Let us recall the words of Jesus: "Unless you do penance, you shall perish." We all have a fallen human nature, and it strongly inclines toward evil. We have evil tendencies within us, the sources of sin, also called the seven Capital Sins. These disordered inclinations

must be controlled, if we hope to save our souls. Penance is a good means of helping us in this spiritual warfare.

We know that we need the penitential practices of Lent, as much as we might dread them. On the other hand, we have the example of Our Lord, the most innocent of beings, who willingly suffered and died for us. Let us keep in mind the lessons of His Passion, as a motivation to make a good Lent.

One of the best devotional practices during Lent is the Stations of the Cross. The seminarians pray the Stations every Friday of Lent. We also encourage them to make the Stations on their own in our seminary chapel. It is a wonderful practice, to which a plenary indulgence is attached. Why not make the Stations at your own parish church, or even privately in your home, when you are able?

Finally, let us especially remember the importance of our prayer life. During Lent we should strive to concentrate better on our prayers, especially the Rosary. Abstaining from food—especially sweets and other delicacies—helps us to focus better on our prayers. Let us also remember to pray for one another, for we are all members of the Mystical Body of Christ, working toward the same end of gaining heaven! Please also remember in your prayers our young men in the seminary. Let us also pray for more vocations to labor in the Lord's vineyard. Thank you for your support. May God reward you.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*The seminarians took advantage of the winter snow for sledding on the hills of our property.*

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