



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XXVI No. 4 Issue #304

Monthly newsletter of Saint Joseph Seminary

December, 2024

November has been a busy month at the seminary, as we made the effort to gain many indulgences for the Poor Souls. We also sang several Requiem High Masses and visited the cemetery. We also sang or served for the Solemn High Mass on the feast of Our Lady's Presentation.

Last week we had a fund-raising parish breakfast to support our seminary. We spent many hours before in preparing for the breakfast and in making pies to sell. All the seminarians pitched in, so the work was done in good time. We are grateful to all the parishioners who participated in the breakfast and bought our pies.

Most of the seminarians remained here for the short Thanksgiving break. We are most grateful to Mrs. Ashley Tucker for cooking a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner for us! It was a most enjoyable few days of free time and relaxation, and now we turn our attention to the final 3 weeks before going home for the Christmas vacation.

Advent is an important time to help us prepare our hearts for Christmas. As is the custom at the seminary, we each wrote a list of some extra sacrifices and prayers to perform during the season of Advent. We will also have our usual

sacrifice bowl and daily Advent wreath prayers. May we all prepare our hearts well for the Advent of the Christ Child!

We pray that all of you, the members of our spiritual family, will make a good Advent and have a most joyful Christmas.

meals deliciously irresistible, would seem quite unusual in the sense of preparing for the common everyday guest. Fittingly enough, this preparation was not just for your average passing visitor. This was for the king. Would you not also act in this manner if someone of such high stature



The Requiem High Mass on All Souls Day was one of our High Masses this past month.

Anticipation for Arrival

by Marcel Mansfield, gr. 12

Expectancy and preparation. Yes, that was all that could be felt in the excited atmosphere of the quaint little house. Confused and puzzled by such happenings, one might wonder why so many arrangements were being made, or why the people inside were waiting with such great wonder and anticipation.

At first glance, seeing a family tirelessly labor to make rooms incredibly tidy, windows immaculately clean, floors and furniture spotless,

and authority would come and visit the humble dwelling place of your little home? Out of respect, would you not strive to make your abode as worthy and presentable as possible to host such a mighty guest? Although naturally we may act this way and think with amazement at the greatness of this royal visitor, he is nevertheless just an earthly king. What then should be our reaction and preparation for the coming of the King of Kings?

Such is the nature and spirit of the season of Advent. Unlike the harder penances of Lent, which are for the

Continued on Page 3



Work continues on our new convent, despite less than ideal weather conditions.



Saturday chores include fall garden work.



Leo decides to have a little fun while raking leaves.



Making pies in the kitchen in our parish hall.



There is never a lack of activities for recreation periods.



The seminarians spent most of the day on a recent Saturday preparing for the parish breakfast.

December Calendar

9 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception (High Mass)

12 – Ordination ceremony in Omaha

16 – Novena for Christmas begins

20 – Christmas vacation begins after classes.

31 – Louis’ 16th birthday

Continued from Page 1

Anticipation for Arrival

mortification and discipline of the body in atoning for our sins, Advent's penances are a means in which we mortify ourselves in a less severe manner in order to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Infant Jesus.

Just think! The One Whom the whole world could not contain, a God of infinite majesty and power, humbled Himself as a helpless little child in order to prove His love for us. Being the infinite source of purity and holiness, Our Divine Savior's act of coming into the world in order to save and live among us, is in itself, the greatest show of Our Lord's unending love for us. Should we not then, in the very least, strive to make our souls as presentable as possible to receive the Christ Child into our hearts? How ashamed we should feel if such an omnipotent God of infinite purity and love should come into our unprepared and soiled souls.

Thankfully, we have been given this wonderful season of Advent to have that time of repentance and sacrifice to prepare ourselves for the arrival of the Divine Child. We should strive then to make the best of this season, and do little acts of love to mortify ourselves in order that the Divine Infant Jesus may come down and find a humble, loving, and well prepared dwelling place for Himself in our hearts. What will you do to prepare yourself for the coming of the King?

A Divine Paradox

by Louis Albin, gr. 10

We are told that, among all His perfections, God is both infinitely just and infinitely merciful. How, one may ask, can both of these qualities apply equally to Him? As it is hard to measure infinity in the terms of a finite world, these attributes would be more easily compared using the picture of man's eternal fate. It can be shown that God's infinite justice and infinite mercy are equally present in each of the three places man could be sent upon death – heaven, purgatory, and hell.

In the case of heaven, it is easy to show the concurrence of both perfections. God has shown infinite justice, as each man there receives a reward proportionate to his own merits. Meanwhile, infinite mercy is what has given us the

opportunity to gain heaven in the first place, through the mystery of the Redemption.

For souls sent to purgatory, God's infinite justice can easily be seen, as each must expiate there the punishment due to sins committed. On the other hand, purgatory's existence itself depends on the infinite mercy of God. To quote from the famous book *Purgatory*, by Fr. F. X. Schoupe: "[I]f Paradise were opened to [the souls], they would precipitate themselves into hell rather than appear before God with the stains with which they see themselves disfigured." Purgatory, then, was made to save souls from the fires of hell to which they would be subjected otherwise. Thus, purgatory, as well, shows how God's mercy and justice in fact complement rather than conflict with one another.

But what about hell? Certainly one can see justice there, as the confined receive punishment for the mortal sins which



The convent construction zone, as seen from the seminary balcony at sunset.

they committed. Is there mercy, however, in that terrible place where souls suffer in burning flames for eternity? As strange as it may seem, this is, indeed, an act of God's mercy. It would be torturous for anyone with even the smallest stain of sin to withstand the Beatific Vision for just a moment. Thus, even the worst pains of hell are no worse than standing unworthily for all eternity before the One Who has created us.

As you can see, God shows infinite justice and mercy to all, without either quality contradicting the other. Of course, this all hinges upon the mystery of the Redemption. We should especially reflect upon this during the season of Advent, as we prepare for the coming of Our Lord. It is He who has given us our hope of salvation.

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 on the bottom of the last page. Members pledge to pray for the success of the seminary and, if able, to send a regular financial contribution for its support.

The Lion Heart of the Church

by Brendan Rabjohns, gr. 12

When we hear the name of St. Thomas Becket, we think of the martyr for the rights of the Church. Sadly, we do not think of the great austere man who practiced the Christian virtues to a heroic degree. This is what the saint was before he was a martyr and during all the trials.

Now St. Thomas did not begin life scourging himself and spending long hours in prayer. The early days of this saint were spent like the early days of thousands of similar children. He went to a school run by priests and from thence to the great center of learning, Paris. After working for his father for a few years, St. Thomas entered the service of the Church and became a deacon. He rose to be the Archdeacon of Canterbury, where he met and befriended Henry II, before Henry was crowned king.

Henry II, in the year after his coronation, made St. Thomas the Chancellor of England. St. Thomas continued to be a deacon and served Henry II exceptionally well and faithfully for six years. All came to respect him as a wise and just man, even the French whom he beat in various battles. Then Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in 1161. Although he was a deacon, St. Thomas had been a good friend of the King and aided him in enforcing various taxes on the Church. With this in mind, St. Thomas was to be Archbishop whether the man in question wanted it or not.

In the year 1162 St. Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury and leading primate of England. This is when the severe practices of this saint became known. Before this time, to show what his private mortifications were would be vain and useless. Once he became Archbishop of Canterbury, he was the ruler of monks and must set an example of holiness and austerity for them. He laid aside the articles of richness which he wore when he was Chancellor and donned the tunic of a monk. He slept on the ground by his bed and scourged himself frequently. He said Mass with tears in his eyes and chanted the Divine Office with his monks. In everything he carried himself as a man of God.

Henry II heard and was disturbed by such performance on the part of the Archbishop. He came to regret his decision within one year. The punishment of various favorites of Henry with the refusal of compliance infuriated Henry with dire results. The Archbishop fled to Alexander III to appeal his case against trumped up charges and returned only after six years of exile to be martyred by Henry II, as he had foretold. His unflinching defense of the Church was the reason for his death, which elevated him over all the other bishops in England. Only one bishop followed his noble

example, and he is now called St. Hugh of Lincoln. If only we, like St. Thomas, could be mortified and faithfully serve Christ unto death!

Food for the Soul

We must nourish our bodies, so that they can maintain their functions and keep us alive and well. Likewise, we must daily feed our souls. How? We provide sustenance for our spiritual life through prayer and reception of the sacraments, which are nourishment for our weak will, that we might be strengthened to resist temptation and do the will of God. But what about food for the mind?

Our mind is enlightened to know the will of God through good reading and spiritual conferences. Here at the seminary we have an abundance of these different means. Each week the seminarians have a conference on some aspect of the spiritual life. Of course, they hear a sermon every Sunday and sometimes during the week. They also have theology class each day to better learn our precious Catholic Faith.

In addition, there is spiritual reading, a wonderful means of enlightenment and spiritual growth. The seminarians are required to read at least 15 minutes each day from an approved book. They choose these books from a list of required spiritual reading. They are required to read a book each month and write a report on it at the end of the month.

Furthermore, there is spiritual reading at meals. As we nourish our bodies, we listen to the assigned lector read, which provides nourishment for the mind. All the boys take turns at this reading. (Of course, we don't have a reading at every single meal.) Over time, we complete a good number of books during table reading in the course of the year. These readings are a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration.

So, make sure you are feeding your soul. Daily spiritual reading is a must for anyone who wishes to advance in the spiritual life. You might want to ask your pastor for suggestions on good books to read, if you are unsure of what to read.

May this year's Advent and Christmas be a source of grace for each of us and may our Divine Infant King bless you and your loved ones this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI