



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. VIII, No. 12

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

August 2007

The past month has been a quiet one at the seminary. The seminarians who have remained for the summer are keeping busy doing farm work and lawn care. The priests have made their annual retreat and have maintained their mission travels to various Mass centers. The boys' camp was held in July (Look for a full report in our September issue of *The Guardian*!), and then, in August, we will begin preparations in earnest for the coming school year. As always, we count on your prayers for our seminary.

## The need for an interior life

by Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI

Why do so many children give up the practice of virtue or even the Faith as they get older? I believe it is because we trust too much in the dispositions they have when younger and fail to excite them to great virtue. In short, we fail because we do not see the need of the *interior life*, a life of prayer, self-denial, and union with Jesus and Mary. We do not get the children to practice it; we are content if they show an external piety, often founded on mere sentimentality, and which does not go very deep. We do not lead an interior life ourselves, and we can only inflame others with the love of God if we are first inflamed ourselves.

We must understand the harm that arises from a home without the interior life? In such a home prayer is regarded somewhat like the monthly bills: necessary but rather inconvenient; we would be quite happy if we could do without it altogether. Of course, the parents have no intention of giving up

prayer, but it remains a mere decoration like the statues in their home. They fail to look upon prayer as the source of any supernatural fruit in their lives. The sacraments become a matter of routine as well. To miss soccer practice or Sunday football is out of the question, but urge them to pray and they say they have no time. The family rosary, if prayed, is said so rapidly we would think they were afraid the house was going to collapse any minute.

In other homes, the lack of interior life is covered up by a plethora of devotions: saints, private revelations, or other things which appeal to the senses. These are all good in themselves, but in some they become an end rather than a means to an end. They are so occupied with external devotions that they almost entirely ignore the interior life. Thus they never correct their faults and are unbearable to others. Such a home life is sufficient to suffocate the spiritual life in children.

In both types of homes described — above, — the parents, of course, still greatly desire their children to be good Catholics; yet they fail because they neglect the means. What can we say of the children who have little interior life? When younger they will be pious, but this piety is of the cheap plastic kind that cracks under stress. It is based mostly on sentiment. The boys will be the first to drop their pious practices. During their teen years they decide that

whatever is unmanly or sentimental is unsuitable for them. So much for their piety, founded as it was on sentimentality. A young lady will remain attracted to a sentimental piety longer than a boy. There will be signs of her decline: growing disrespect, vanity and a preference for the immodest fashions of the day.

Of course, not all families are as bad as I have described, but it is sad to note these characteristics in some Catholic families. It is fair enough to let the facts speak for themselves. Vocations are not likely to come from families lacking an interior life and we have indeed seen a devastating decrease in the number of vocations today. The mother of the well-known 19<sup>th</sup> Century Vaughan Family knew this well. Jesus in the Holy Eucharist was the source of holiness in her family. She made a holy hour every day. Of her 13 children, all five girls

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*Our beautiful outdoor procession on Corpus Christi was a fitting way to conclude the school year.*



## The interior life

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became nuns, and six of the eight boys became priests; two of these priests went on to become bishops and one became a cardinal. These vocations cost her 7,305 hours of prayer!

St. Maria Goretti, whose feast is on July 9<sup>th</sup>, is another wonderful example of someone who lived a pious life. Her mother trained her in a solid prayer life which made her obedient, kind, and pious. She learned a deep love of God and knew how to deny herself. With this she had the courage and strength to give up her life rather than her virtue of purity. To the man who sought to tempt her to sin she firmly replied, "No! It is a sin. You will go to hell!" She lost her life after he stabbed her 14 times. Hers was no mere sentimental piety.

Is it too much to suggest that we must be more interior? Let us begin with ourselves. Sanctity breeds sanctity. But we must be sure to start; a mere wish is not enough.

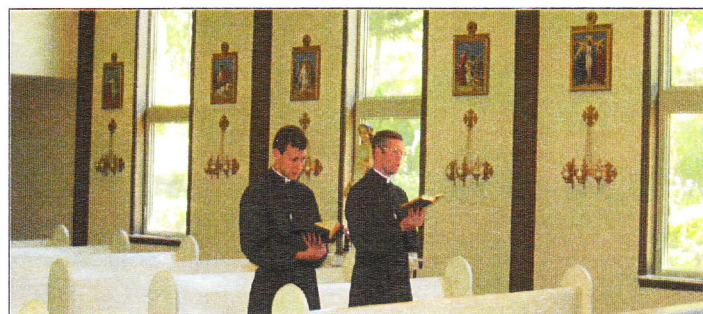
## Model of priests

Each month brings us the feastdays of wonderful saints and mysteries of our Faith to honor. August is no exception. Among other saints whose feastdays occur during August, St. John Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars, holds a prominent place for priests and seminarians.

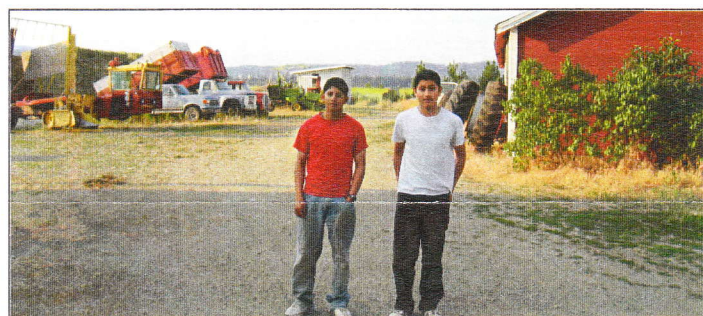
This humble priest, whose ordination was an arrangement of Divine Providence, did far more than the learned priests of his day to promote the salvation of souls. His heroic penance, devout prayer life and love for the Blessed Sacrament earned the grace for the conversion of many sinners. He is a reminder to us of the value of the labors of even one priest who is generous with God. May God grant us many John Vianneys!

The feastday of the patron of parish priests, coming as it does a few weeks before the beginning of a new school year, also serves as an important reminder of the value of this work — the education and training of future priests. You all have a part in this work, and we greatly appreciate your prayers and financial support for the success of our seminary. Be assured that we pray daily for our benefactors. May God bless you and your families.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*The priests recite the Divine Office in common.*



*José and Giovanni work on a nearby farm during the week.*



*Juan has done plenty of lawn and garden work this summer.*



*The seminarians try to coax Bosco to join them for a swim.*

*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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