



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. IX, No. 6

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

February 2008

We did not waste any time after our return from vacation in getting back into the swing of things. Our first task was to learn the chants for the blessing of Epiphany water, which occurred on January 5th. We then celebrated the feast of the Epiphany with a high Mass and special ceremonies. During the Epiphany week we opened our gifts, as we continued to celebrate the Christmas and Epiphany seasons. Now we are looking forward to the ceremony of the blessing of candles, which concludes our celebration of the birth of Our Lord.

Although we are busy finishing assignments and studying hard for our semester tests, we still found time recently to go skiing—a new experience for two of the seminarians. We all had a great time and hope to be able to go skiing again. The cold weather continues and there is plenty of snow, so that should be possible.

Our basketball season has been going well. We have won half our games, but most of all, everyone really enjoys playing, whether we win or lose. So, as you can see, we are keeping busy. The time just flies by, as we realize we are already half way through the year. Please pray for us and for more seminarians to our seminary. God bless you.

Let us know her

by Nino Molina, gr. 12

We have spiritual reading every night. We are assigned to finish one book every month and then go on to another spiritual book. I recently finished *The Glories of Mary, Part I* by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori. This

was my fifth spiritual book. Moreover, this is the book that I liked the best. It is because it talks about Mary and describes the *Hail, Holy Queen* prayer.

In the first chapter, I encountered a magnificent section; it says Mary is a Holy Queen. Her crown was both on earth and in heaven. When I read this section, my heart beat fast, my body was warmed up and I did not want to stand, work or eat, even to sleep because I just wanted to read and read the book. Sometimes I got tired but through the prayers contained at the end of each chapter, I got the strength to continue. I did not want to discontinue my reading but we have a schedule to follow. That is why I read only around thirty pages every day.

I thought I already knew Mary but when I read this book, it gave me a lot more knowledge about her, and above all, about her virtues.

The name *Mary* is so sweet, especially to the penitent sinner. In addition, she is the peacemaker between God and men. She also helped to repair the destruction made by Adam and Eve. If you are looking for hope, come to Mary and she will brighten your life from the darkness as well as change an imperfect life for the better. Furthermore, she is our protectress against temptation and the devils.

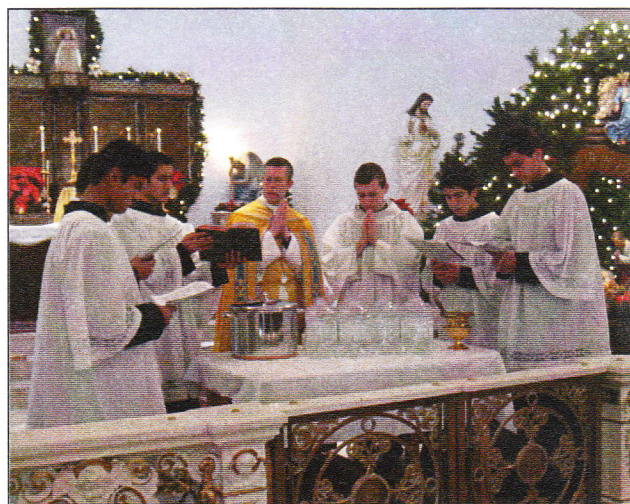
If you want to live in Heaven, in which

February calendar

- 2 — Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Candlemas ceremonies
- 6 — Ash Wednesday
- 20 — Mid-quarter
- 22–24 — Annual Lenten retreat
- 27 — Feastday of St. Gabriel of Our Mother of Sorrows; no homework

happiness is eternal, the first thing to do is to know Mary, have devotion to her, and above all, let her work in your life. Thus you will obtain Heaven because she is the key or gate of Heaven.

I recommend this book to you and to anyone who professes to follow Mary as well as to those who are ignorant of her virtues. I hope the book will spread throughout the world and people will be able to read it—not just to read, but also to practice the lessons it contains.



Here Father chants one of the blessings over the Epiphany water.

Snow's dark side

by Marcellus Moylan, gr. 11

Last week we went to the Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area on the Montana/Idaho border. It was the first time skiing for Nino and me. Having those long things attached to our feet felt very awkward. Nino crashed twice before even getting onto the lift. Poor Gio was assigned to teach us. He took us to the easiest trail. Despite that we both crashed about five times each. Once — Gio said it was so funny — I crashed and Nino slammed into me from behind. When we finally got to the bottom, Gio went his own way so Nino and I took the same trail. We fell fewer times. Then Nino went to other paths. But I decided to run that trail until I did it without falling. This took five tries and when I finally did it, it was awesome. So, snow is great fun!

Great fun, that is, until the next day, Saturday, chore day. I was assigned to shovel the stuff, which had fallen off the roof and piled three feet high. It took nearly three hours to clear in front of six doors and get it off the stairs. When I finished it was almost two o'clock. Now I just needed to help Juan finish at the church, and afterwards I would have ample time to do the loads of homework piled on me over the weekend, or so I thought.

Meanwhile, Giovanni had been laboring on the roof of the grade school for about four hours. It appeared that he only had a little more to do, so I offered a hand to speed up the job's termination. However, the snow, two and a half feet deep, stubbornly refused to slide off easily. It began raining ice on us. Gio got very cold, went in, and was replaced by José and Juan. Even with three people working together, it still took another seventy minutes to complete the job. I think they are still there: two huge piles of snow seven feet high, just a step below the roof.

The blessing of Epiphany water

by Juan Garcia, gr. 10

During this past Christmas season we had many beautiful ceremonies. The first and most beautiful was Christmas Midnight Mass, which I enjoyed very much, as I sang with the choir. Later on we had two more special days, the Vigil of the Epiphany and the Epiphany Mass, which were really nice too. We worked on many things to prepare for those days.

Before the sun came up on Christmas Eve we started to prepare all the things necessary for Midnight Mass. We spent all day working on the projects that Fr. Benedict had for us to do. We didn't finish everything, but fortunately we accomplished the main things. During Christmastide Fr. Benedict blessed some objects that people brought up to the communion rail after Mass and also had the blessing of children. But he also mentioned to us that he was going to have a special blessing of water and salt for the Epiphany. He never had done this before in this parish, although Father said he had done it before at Mt. St. Michael.

For this solemn blessing we practiced the *Te Deum Laudamus* and other proper melodies for the next day. After Mass on Saturday the seminarians assisted Father in blessing the Epiphany water. We dressed in our cassocks and prepared everything for the blessing. First, we went out and knelt at the foot of the altar for the Litany of the Saints. Then we chanted several psalms and chants. After this, we proceeded to the small table where there were containers of water and salt. After the blessing of the water mixed with salt, we returned to our places to chant the *Te Deum Laudamus*. This was followed by the final verses and orations. So, you see that it is a long process to bless Epiphany water. Also, it was a very beautiful ceremony and I hope to be able to assist in this blessing next year.

A customary celebration

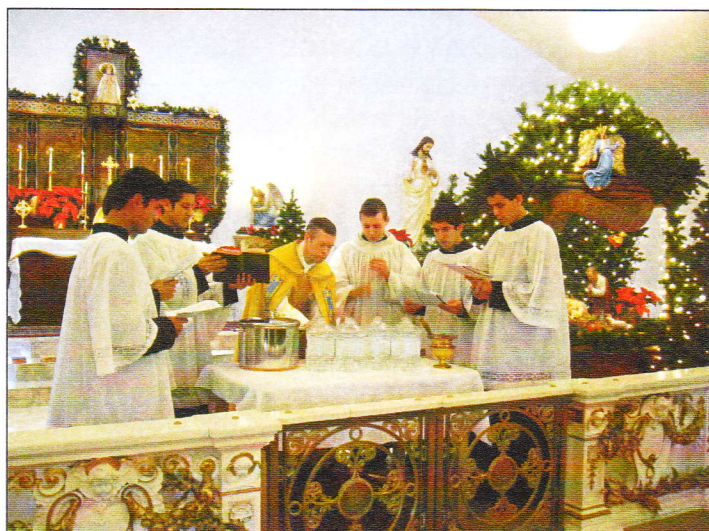
by Giovanni Ortiz, gr. 11

After two weeks of nice relaxation, we are sadly once again in school dealing with all the classes and homework that our teachers give us. However, it's very surprising for us to see how the time goes by incredibly fast. It seems to me that yesterday we were just starting Advent, and all of us were trying to fulfill our Advent penances. Fr. Benedict also gave us a couple talks concerning our resolutions for this New Year. He told us how we should grow spiritually as we grow in knowledge. All of this happened so quickly that when I realized it, everybody was already packing up their stuff to go home over the holidays. But not all of us got to go home — a few spent their vacation with friends and benefactors.

Well believe it or not, the holidays went by in just a blink of the eye. When we were finally all back together again at the seminary, each one of us was eager to tell of all the enjoyable things we did on vacation. There was a lot of talk for quite a few days.

There was also another good thing besides telling about our trips and sharing our experiences with one another. This is the little Epiphany celebration that we have every year. We observe this celebration sometime during the week after the Epiphany. All of us, including the nice people who make up the staff at the seminary have a really nice, appetizing and succulent dinner together. Then we gather around our Christmas tree to exchange gifts. Each person provides a gift for the one whose name he picked at the beginning of Advent. The opening of gifts is the most exciting part because everyone is trying to guess what they got and who provided their gift. Then, after everybody is through opening gifts, we have ice cream for dessert and watch a movie to finalize our little celebration.

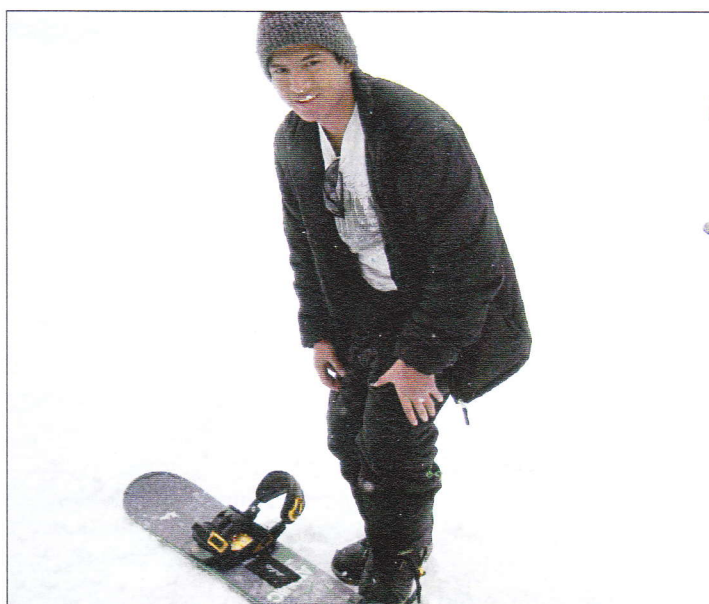
We are looking forward to the next Christmas and Epiphany celebration. Finally, I hope that all your resolutions may be fulfilled according to the way you want them to be and remember that you are in our prayers. May God bless you and Our Lady keep you always.



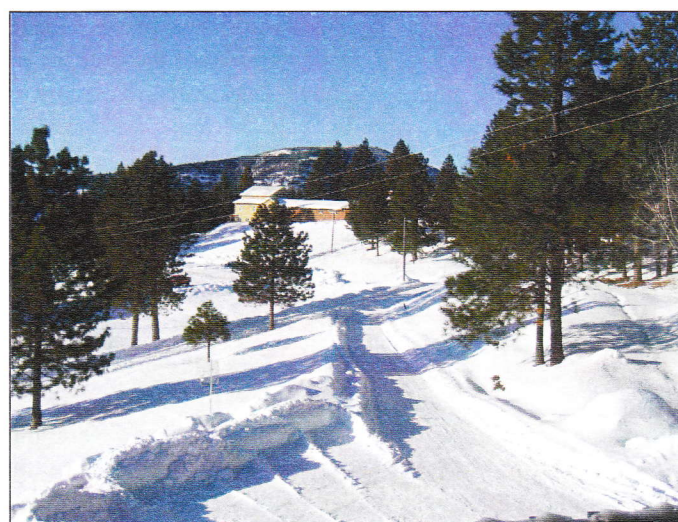
Here the seminarians participate in the blessing of Epiphany water.



This year's Christmas/Epiphany party was enjoyed by all.



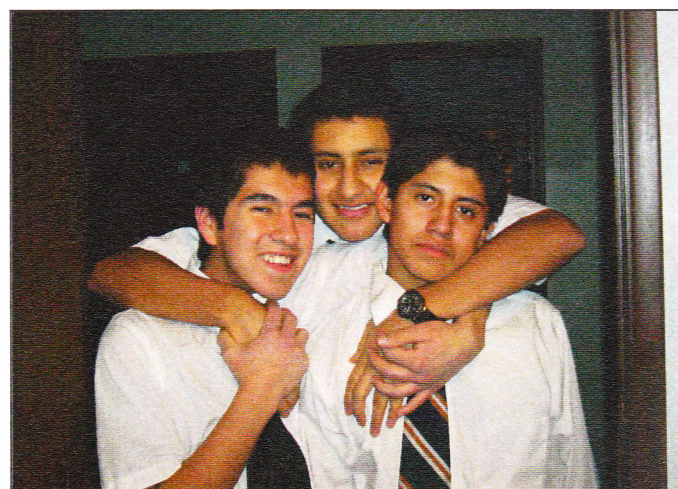
Some seminarians use snowboards, others use skis.



Here you see a typical winter view of our property looking westward from the seminary toward the church.



Nino (left) and Marcellus (right) did very well on their first attempt at downhill skiing.



"Los Tres Amigos"

Our recent ski trip

by Angel B. Gamboa, gr. 10

On Friday, January 11, we went skiing which everyone really enjoyed. We went to the border between Montana and Idaho. It took us one and a half eternal, endless, perpetual, lasting (and if I only could think of more adjectives I would surely mention them) hours to get there. But at any rate, every time we go skiing it seems like it takes ten times as long to get there than the time that we spend skiing. Just by thinking that we have to leave in just a couple hours, we get frightened.

Well, I might be exaggerating a tiny little bit. Don't you think? However, it is pretty sorry to think about going back home. After having all that fun, when the moment of returning home arrives and everybody is in the van, the very first thing that everybody does is to thank Fr. Benedict. Afterwards, we start talking about how many times we fell, and we laugh at each other for a little bit; but as soon as ten minutes or less pass by everyone is sleeping, except Fr. Benedict (who is the driver) and, most of the time, myself.

When we get home we have some recreation and then after our night prayers we all get a nice relaxing sleep. That is how we have lots and lots of fun. After thanking Fr. Benedict, all of us go and thank God for all his blessings and graces.

So all of you, dear friends, let us all remember to be thankful to God and really do what we are supposed to do, with only one firm purpose: to be always pleasing to God.

Ever ancient, ever new

Holy Mother Church is most wise. In her liturgy we find the perfect blend of stability and variety. We annually observe the same great feasts, yet we never tire of them. Perhaps this variety, the "spice of life," provides the element which makes the Liturgical Year seem ever fresh, ever new.

One of the things that contributes to this enjoyable variety is the annual date of Easter. Incidentally, one of my favorite ceremonies of the Epiphany is the solemn chanting of movable feasts. The deacon ascends the pulpit and informs the congregation, in an ancient and moving chant, of the various dates in the current year of those feasts which are dependent on Easter. The feast of Our Lord's Resurrection is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon, following the vernal equinox. It is this date which annually regulates all the movable feasts.

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 Theology, Latin, 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.

This year's Easter is the earliest of our lifetimes. The last time that Easter was on March 23rd was in 1913. The next time will be in 2160. The earliest possible date for Easter is March 22nd. The last time Easter was observed on that date was 1818. The next time it will occur so early will be in 2285 (presuming that the earth is still around!).

This is fascinating trivia, but the Liturgical Year is far more than such interesting facts. It is like a beautiful tapestry of colors, pictures and scenes which dazzles the eye of the beholder. Each year we celebrate the various feastdays of Our Lord, Our Lady and the saints. We are thus reminded of the great truths of our Faith and its practice.

Every priest must love this magnificent Liturgy. Here at the seminary we strive to instill this appreciation into these young minds and hearts. An understanding of the meanings of the various colors, the beautiful chants, the ceremonies unique to a particular day — all help to develop the proper liturgical spirit among seminarians. As Pope Pius XII put it in *Mediator Dei*: "Make it your special care, therefore, that the clergy of the rising generation, while being trained in ascetics, theology, canon law and pastoral studies, shall be correspondingly taught to understand liturgical ceremonies, to appreciate their majesty and beauty, and give careful study to the rubrics" (#211).

May we all grow daily in our appreciation and love for Holy Mother Church and her sacred liturgy. We pray daily for you, our benefactors and friends, and we ask your prayers and support for our work of forming the priests of tomorrow. May God bless you and your loved ones.

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.

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