



THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XII, No. 1

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2010

Although we began classes last week at the seminary, the painting project is still incomplete. The classroom is done, as well as some of the individual dormitory rooms, but there remain the entry way, stairwell, the large upstairs hallway and other bedrooms to be completed. Consequently, some of our seminarians are staying at night in a small house we have on our property, instead of in the seminary proper. This project will take a few weeks to complete.

As we have done in the past, we spent two days last week at a cabin on Lake Coeur d'Alene, enjoying some time together before beginning the school year. Fortunately, this "camping trip" coincided with the last of the really hot weather, as the temperatures have turned decidedly cooler — a reminder that the relaxing days of summer are past; it is now time for study.

Two of our new seminarians have arrived, while a couple others are not yet here. In next month's issue we will tell you about our student body. The beginning of a new school year is always an exciting time with different studies, new seminarians and the chance for a new beginning. As always, we ask your prayers that we will correspond with the graces of the seminary and will always do the holy will of God. In turn, we promise to pray for you and your families.

Spouses of Christ

The success of St. John Bosco in training boys at his school, known as the "Oratory," is well known. Despite this success, however, the saint continually refused requests to start similar boarding facilities for girls —

that is, until Pope Pius IX asked him to do so. He one day said to the saint, "Are you going to ignore half the population of the world and only work with the other half?" Put in this logical fashion, St. John Bosco could no longer refuse the requests of so many to train girls, and so he instituted, with the help of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello, a congregation of Sisters to do for girls what he was doing for boys.

Here at the "City of Mary" in northern Idaho, we have not only a minor seminary but also a parish school for boys and girls of all ages. There has been one major problem over the years, however, and that is the lack of religious Sisters to teach the children. The benefits of Catholic Sisters will likely never be fully appreciated. While young women enter a convent primarily for their own sanctification, they also labor in teaching children and in doing so many other things for the Church and souls. Moreover, their modest and prayerful demeanor is a constant edification to all the members of the parish.

Although we have had religious Sisters teaching in our parish school in the past, we have not had this blessing during the past five or six years — until recently. Under the guidance and direction of His Excellency, Bishop Mark Pivarunas, we have established here at Mary Immaculate Queen parish a congregation of teaching Sisters, known as the Oblate Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A former religious who was forced to leave her convent due to its embracing the Novus

September calendar

- 8 — Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; reception of Sister postulants; chanted Vespers; no homework
- 12 — Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; seminary outing
- 15 — Feast of the Seven Sorrows BVM; chanted Vespers
- 24 — Our Lady of Ransom; chanted Vespers; Mid-quarter; no homework
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael the Archangel; feastday celebration; no homework

Ordo will now be joined by two new postulants. God-willing, their congregation will grow as young women who are being called by God to a life of service become aware of this new congregation. We ask you to remember this intention in your prayers, that our congregation of Sisters will grow and will do great work for Holy Mother Church and for souls.



To change the hanging sanctuary lamp at our church, we first have to use the winch to bring it down to a suitable level.

The Hands of Christ

Not only do we need religious Sisters to operate Catholic schools and to fulfill various other works of the apostolate, but there is also a tremendous need for religious Brothers. Not many Catholics understand the vocation of a religious Brother. They often ask, "Why doesn't he become a priest?"

There are young men who want to serve God yet do not believe themselves called to the priesthood. It may also happen that they do not have the intellectual capability to master all the things a priest must learn. Other reasons, as well, lead a young man to choose the vocation of a religious Brother.

Like St. Joseph, Brothers play a more hidden role than the priests, but one which is by no means unimportant. Brothers perform carpentry work, fix cars, do laundry or sacristy work, serve Mass, teach classes, supervise boys, cook meals, mow the grass, and accomplish just about anything else that needs to be done in order to free priests' time for their vital work for the welfare of souls. Brothers have often been referred to as the "Hands of Christ," because Our Lord also fulfilled the tasks of manual labor during His hidden life at Nazareth.

While the minor seminary is primarily intended to prepare young men to pursue the vocation of the priesthood in the major seminary, we also direct those who do not have a priestly vocation toward the beautiful life of a consecrated religious Brother. We must all pray daily for more vocations to the priesthood, the Brotherhood and the Sisterhood, for they all cooperate with God in working for the salvation of souls and the welfare of Holy Mother Church. May God send us many more Brothers to help the priests with their work.

Support a seminarian

One of the necessary preparations for a new academic year is budgeting. Although the generosity of our supporters has made the work of the seminary financially possible for the past 11 years, donations have gradually decreased over the past few years. With the rising costs of food and other necessities, finances have become more of a concern.

As you can imagine, most of our seminarians come from large Catholic families. Consequently, our tuition rates must be geared to what they are able to afford. We supplement this income with donations received from our supporters, who understand the importance of this work and want to do their part to promote the work of our seminaries. If you are able to send a regular monthly donation, however small it may seem, we would greatly appreciate that support.

Further, there are some deserving young men whose families cannot afford the entire tuition amount, modest as it is. At the same time, we would not want to ever turn away, for financial reasons, a young man who is called by God to the priesthood. To help resolve this difficulty, we have instituted a scholarship program for our seminary. Through this

program, donors who are financially able and willing to do so, contribute the cost of maintaining a seminarian each month. Those who would like to participate but are unable to afford the entire amount would contribute a part of the monthly tuition fee. This scholarship would then be matched with a deserving seminarian, who would thus become that donor's "adopted" seminarian.

Similar programs have been in place in the Church in the past. Without such support, the work of seminary training could not continue. Imagine the blessing of being able to bring a young man to the altar of God as a priest, particularly a young man who would otherwise not be able to become a priest! If you are interested in this program, please contact me, as there are still some seminarians who need a part of their tuition paid through the scholarship program.

God's perfect creature

Every year we begin the school year with a novena in honor of Our Lady, in preparation for the feast of her Nativity. This feast of Our Blessed Mother, along with others which follow it during this first month of school, is a reminder to our seminarians of the importance of developing a deep devotion to our heavenly Mother. For who could better understand the importance of formation for future priests than the Mother of Jesus? Under the vigilant eye of Mary, Jesus developed into manhood. She watched in wonder as the Son of God grew in wisdom, age and grace during those hidden years at the "seminary" of Nazareth.

The month of September brings us several important feasts of Our Blessed Mother. On the feast of Mary's Nativity we recall the blessed day when she was born into this world, having been conceived without the stain of original sin. A few days later we celebrate the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, reminding us that God chose this name for His Immaculate Mother from all eternity, and that we should often invoke reverently that holy name. The feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary reminds us of her love, and of the terrible cost of our sins. The feast of Our Lady of Ransom (Our Lady of Mercy) reminds us of the tender solicitude of our heavenly Mother for all her children.

This heavenly mother and queen is greatly loved by God. He gazes with delight upon His perfect creature, our "tainted nature's solitary boast." St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that God could have created a greater heaven and a greater earth, but He could not have created a more perfect human being than Mary. Imagine the pleasure of an artist after he has completed a masterful painting. After weeks, perhaps months, of laborious effort with brush and paint, he finally steps back to admire his artwork. What satisfaction he feels in beholding the completed product of so much planning, sweat and labor! Can this description even begin to compare with God's satisfaction upon beholding His creature, the most Blessed Virgin Mary?

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Two of our newest seminarians are learning how to play chess.



Mr. Vincent helps the seminarians to reinstall the classroom lights after the painting is complete.



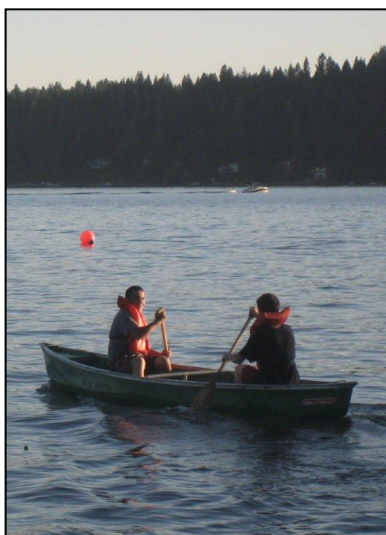
Our chickens are finally full-grown and ready to produce — just in time for the new school year.



The two largest pigs head to the butcher shop, soon to be followed by the remaining pair.



The water was just right for swimming during our recent camping trip.



The seminarians had a great time with the canoe on Lake Coeur d'Alene.



Nothing like a campfire in the evening on the lakeshore!

God's perfect creature

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And so we begin a new seminary year under Our Lady's mantle. May we always strive to imitate her, however feeble our efforts. And may she help these young men to grow in wisdom, age and grace — to become daily more and more like her divine Son.

Our wonderful patron

We must not forget St. Joseph, the other member of that Holy Family. Like Our Blessed Mother, he too observed with wonder the growing divine Child. St. Joseph meticulously fulfilled his role as superior, bread-winner and guardian of both the Holy Mother and her divine Child. St. Joseph is a hidden saint but a great one. After Mary herself there is not a greater saint in heaven than her spouse, who was chosen to be the guardian of the great High Priest, Jesus Himself, during His youth.

It was no accident that our seminary was named for this great patron, for a minor seminary is for adolescent youths who believe they may be called to the priesthood. Hidden away in the seclusion of the seminary — much like Jesus in the home of Nazareth — they strive to learn and imitate the ways of Christ. Who better can assist them in this task than St. Joseph? May he help our young men to follow the pattern of Christ.

"Come, follow Me."

Everyone always wants to know how many seminarians we have, and where they come from. Since there still are two boys who have not arrived, we will give you a full report of this year's student body in our next issue. Unfortunately, however, it looks like the foreign students will outnumber the Americans.

I say this is "unfortunate," not because we are reluctant to train foreign seminarians — far from it! In fact, it is exciting that we have young men from several different countries who may one day return to those countries to bring their fellow countrymen back to the true Faith. But it is unfortunate that there are not more American seminarians.

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 Latin, theology, 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.

I wrote at some length in our last issue of the problem of getting American boys to follow vocations. There are several reasons for this lack of vocations among our own youth. It could be their early exposure to movies, television and modern music, which even otherwise good parents allow their children too much freedom in accessing. It could be the numbing and detrimental nature of video games, which can have a hypnotic effect on the minds of modern youth. It could be exposure to bad companions, who gradually instill worldly ideas into our Catholic youth. It may also be a lack of family prayer, especially the family Rosary, which parents ought to consider indispensable. Finally, it may be — as I mentioned last month — that the youth are willing to follow God's call, but the parents are unwilling to part with their children.

For whatever reason, vocations from American youth seem to be much too few for the needs of the Church. Yet, St. Thomas Aquinas assures us that God always grants sufficient vocations to satisfy for the needs of the Church. If that be so, then what is the cause of this dearth of vocations? It is that the majority of those who are called turn a deaf ear to the voice of the Master, "Come follow Me." We must pray not only for more vocations, but also for those of our Catholic youth who are called by Christ, that they will open their hearts to His invitation.

So we ask that you pray daily to St. Joseph for our seminary. We are blessed to have such a wonderful and powerful patron in St. Joseph. Let us beg his help in this work of the seminary. May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph bless and reward each of you.

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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