



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

April 2015

Easter is now here and the days of penance are over. The extraordinary graces that accompany Lent, if the period is observed correctly, are overwhelming, and we should all be refreshed spiritually and ready to take on whatever else the world and Satan have to throw at us. On the other hand, we cannot completely abandon our practices of mortification. For instance, if you found that a certain penance was helping you to overcome a particular vice, you should continue in the fight until you have won, lest all your hard work be for naught.

The past month of March, the month of our blessed patron Saint Joseph, was full to bursting with activity. Of course, there was the feast day of Saint Joseph itself, which was a “no-school” day for us. The day before, we went on an ice-skating outing. It was a first time experience for some of us, and a physically exhausting one for all of us. It goes without saying that we all had a great time!

Wrapping up another quarter brought with it a flurry of tests, which we all diligently prepared for. Toward the end of the month, we had another all-night adoration of the Holy Eucharist exposed in the monstrance. It is a most beautiful experience to be able to spend a whole hour alone in silence with our Lord, especially since it was one of His pleading wishes to His apostles in His moment of agony here on earth: “Can you not stay awake one hour with me?” At the tail end of the month, as you know, was

the beginning of Holy week, the wonderful ceremonies of which all the seminarians practiced and served for.

The first week of Easter is our Spring Break. There will be an Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday on the Church grounds around the Seminary, providing an opportunity not only for the families of the parish to get together, but also for the children to have a good time. In addition, now that spring is on its way, there will no doubt be plenty of hard work ahead of us, such as spring cleaning, mowing the lawns, planting the gardens and many, many other things.

We wish you all a blessed Easter and, as always, we want to thank in a special way all of our very generous benefactors. Probably the best way we can thank you is by our sincere prayers, and we hope that you will not forget us in your own prayers. May God bless you abundantly at this joyful season.

Perseverance

by Joseph Prado, gr. 8

The end of the school feeling. Every math lesson, every Latin assignment – they always seem to get longer and harder. For me, I just say to myself, “Only April and May, and I am through.” I find it hard to work on my papers and studies, especially when I have to do homework instead of doing hobbies I love.

Ah...summer. I have to snap my

April calendar

- 2-3 — Holy Thursday/Good Friday
- 4 — Holy Saturday; Easter vacation begins
- 5 — Easter Sunday; no classes all week
- 13 — Classes resume
- 24-26 — Annual Forty Hours Devotion

daydreams short always. This is a good lesson in teaching me how to persevere. It also shows that persevering is much easier when you have a good goal waiting for you when you’re done. For me in school, my goals are good grades, summer, and seeing my relatives again.

This is an example for persevering in this life: so that we may reach heaven. Heaven and its bliss are goals for all of us. But in order to reach heaven, we must go through a time of trial. Our time here could be short, or long, but no matter the length of life, we will have a weighty share of

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The weather was perfect for our Palm Sunday procession.

Perseverance

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sufferings – fallen trees that need to be lifted from the straight and narrow way to salvation.

This earth is so shallow; the happiness here is so thin and weak, compared to the joys of paradise with God. To be with the saints: St. Peter, St. Thomas Aquinas, with many of the holy pontiffs. How sweet the cross could be, if we focused solely on the eternal and the will of the Creator. But sadly, how flawed, weak, and sinful we are.

Now that Lent is over, hopefully all of us can look back and say we persevered in our penances all the way to Easter Sunday. We should all pray for perseverance – never to give up on our goals, especially heaven. Let us keep our eyes forward to Heaven as we struggle through this valley of tears.

The Trek of Souls

by Jordan Hartman, gr. 12

Imagine that a spiritual map sprawls endlessly out before you from horizon to horizon and slowly takes shape, morphing into reality. Green rolling hills, monstrous mountains, deep, dark forests, bright, open glades all taking form, a gust of wind stirring every feature into subtle life. First, a beautiful and balmy land spreads out directly before you. This is the region of beginnings. The time you will spend amidst these spiritual lands will be even more wonderful than anyone realizes who dwells in it. Only when they leave will they begin to comprehend how utterly terrific these lands are.

Beyond this is wilderness – not completely devoid of consolation, but full of dangers lurking everywhere, ravenous and savage. These horrifying and deformed beasts, against which you must use vigilance and fortitude to ward them off at all times, are called temptations. Struggling and fatigue will be your lot while in this spiritual realm. The path you must take will be hard to find and fraught with peril and not in the least conducive to traveling on. The wilderness is four or five times longer than the first spiritual realm you will have experienced.

When at length you have completed your journey through these hostile lands, you will arrive at a territory, magnificent to behold: light, open woodlands echoing with chuckling springs of pristine water, the thick scent of trees and flowers permeating every inch of its lofty, green expanse. But at the same time, these lands are treacherous and rocky. Their beauty can, in an instant, be turned into misery. Violent, dark tempests are not uncommon to the mountainous area which can transform even the brightest day full of sunshine into shadow and abjection.

The last territory is a mystical mountain range, high in the sky amidst the clouds. Only chosen souls can breathe the atmosphere here. It is a land of courage and bravery, feats of heroism and superhuman detachment from the world. Trials abound in this vast realm, but the souls who reach this point are intrepid travelers with seemingly dauntless perseverance. Each and every one of them would be a blessing to have at your side to help you in your spiritual journey.

Thus is the map to heaven for traveling souls seeking perfection described by Father Faber in his book [Growth in Holiness](#).

The Season of Joy

by Mark Vincent, gr. 10

Imagine yourself in an imperial court, facing a judge who throws the sentence of death at you, so that he can remain a friend of other men. That very thing happened about 2000 years ago to the son of a carpenter, Our Lord Himself. He was confronted by the confused face of Pilate who didn't know what the truth was. But Pilate's idea that it was best not to displease men and be disgraced in the eyes of Caesar was wrong.

At Pilate's verdict, he received exclamations of sincere approbation from the Pharisees and those who had been stirred up against Jesus. But this praise from the Jews would weigh heavy on him at Judgment Day. This instance shows us how truly weak mankind was—and still is.

By the time you have received this article, it will probably be anywhere between Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday, so I think I will focus mainly on the topic of the Resurrection. In our morning table readings we have been reading Abbot Gueranger's Liturgical Year centered on Passiontide. It was saying that every year, when Passiontide started, the princes of Europe would throw wide open the cell doors of prisoners who had not committed a capital crime. They did this so that the men in jail could attend the ceremonies and make extra sacrifices to prepare for the glorious feast.

It's amazing to hear about all of the zeal that Catholics had in the Middle Ages. It was very important that everyone go to the ceremonies and be able to prepare well for the feast of Easter. We Catholics know that Easter is a very special feast, but let's look at how so many others view it. Many non-Catholics and even modern “Catholics” have completely changed the concept of what Easter is all about. They think that Easter is all about Easter Eggs, candy, and a nice day at the park. We also celebrate, but we celebrate the victory of Jesus Christ over death.

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Our annual Lenten retreat was a source of grace for all.



We posed for a group picture after the St. Patrick's Day talent show.



Everyone pitches in to put out the monthly mailing of the Guardian.



Two seminarians serve a Lenten High Mass for Fr. Anthony.



The seminarians assist as Father blesses the palms.



Pierce and Joe help to serve the parish breakfast.

The Season of Joy

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Jesus has suffered so much for us, there should be a day when we give Him all the attention He deserves. Yet whatever efforts we make, we cannot come close to accomplishing this duty. We owe God an inexhaustible debt of gratitude for the many benefits which we have received from His goodness.

Now is the time to look over our past Lent to see how well we have spent it. The more faithfully and devoutly we have accomplished our sacrifices and good deeds, the happier we will be when Easter arrives. So let us spend these last few days of Lent well in preparation for this great feast. As it is supposed to be the season of joy, I hope that you have all made a good Lent and have a joyous Easter Sunday. May God bless you all on this great feast!

Poor Human Nature

by Joe Vines, gr. 8

I am weak. There is no truer statement than this. God has done so much for us from the Garden of Eden to the present day. We owe everything to Him who suffered and died for us the ignominious death of the Cross. We are all human and we all make mistakes often, so let us try to make up for our faults.

Adam and Eve were the first humans. They were perfectly happy in the Garden of Eden until they met sin. The serpent deceived Eve and tempted her to eat of the forbidden fruit, and she ate. Adam and Eve now found out what sin was. They were ashamed and hid themselves from God. Sometimes, I like to think, "Aw man, if only they didn't do that, I wouldn't have to deal with Mondays and getting sick, etc." But would have I done better? Probably not.

God created us with a free will which we could use as we want. He didn't want us to be created as little angels who only think of Him and who don't know what sin is. No, he wanted us to be strong and avoid the most luring temptation so that we would truly be obeying him without Him forcing us. God will welcome us into the joys of Heaven if we conform to His Will and obey His divine law.

There are souls in hell because they loved the pleasures of this earth more than the pleasure of Heaven. It's only common sense to choose Heaven over Hell – this is a pretty obvious statement. Why give up your soul over the

short time we have on earth instead of living in a place where you're always happy and always seeing God? I know the reason: many souls are afraid to break away from their sin because the pull is so hard.

The only thing that will keep us from giving in is prayer and sacrifice to Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the holy saints. I try to say every day to Christ some prayers for the grace to overcome temptation and in thanksgiving for the graces He has given to me.

All in all, the meaning of life is to get to Heaven, and the only way to do that is to pray for the grace to overcome our weakness. I pray that I will get to see you all in Heaven. May God bless you and Mary keep you!

"The Joy of Youth"

Where do vocations come from? The answer, of course, is from multiple sources: from devout families, from good Catholic schools, etc. While the grace and will of God is the ultimate source of vocations, He nevertheless uses various instruments to make known His will. For many boys, one of the primary means He uses is the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Many priests found their first attraction to the priesthood when they began to serve Mass. As the Psalm expresses it, "I will go in unto the altar of God, unto God who giveth joy to my youth." For this reason, one of the more important duties for a priest is that of properly training young altar servers. It can be a tedious work, yet one that is not without its rewards.

Pious boys look forward eagerly to the opportunity to serve Mass. They delight in being so close to the priest, so close to God. They also often volunteer to help in the sacristy and delight in setting up the altar. Parents who pray for vocations from among their children will always be supportive of the aspirations of their sons and encourage and help them to learn how to serve Mass. For this reason, we have added lessons on serving Mass on our web site (www.minorseminary.org). Let us pray that our altar boys will experience the joy of going unto the altar of God in their youth.

As always, we thank you for your support and your prayers. May God bless you and your families with His grace, and may He deign to send more vocations into His harvest.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI