

# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

January 2006

**R**ight now — a few days before Christmas — the seminary is humming with activity as we finish our schoolwork, decorate the seminary and church, and prepare to leave for vacation. Soon we will be off to places like Texas, Colorado and Mexico, for a few weeks respite from schoolwork. We are eager to once again be with family and friends and hope you enjoy your Christmas time with your families.

Believe it or not, the abnormally cold temperatures of the past three weeks finally gave way to warmer weather. When? On the first day of winter! Go figure. As long as the snow is still around and piled high when we return in January, then we don't mind the warming trend. Last winter was a disappointment since we were unable to go skiing. This year, the Mexican seminarians are particularly anticipating the experience of skiing and snowboarding.

As we begin a new year, it is a good time for all of us to make some resolutions. What will the year of 2006 bring for us? We do not know what blessings and crosses are in store for us, but we do know that time is a precious gift of God. Our teachers keep reminding us that our time here at St. Joseph Seminary will pass quickly, and so far, they certainly have been right. We hope to learn and to grow spiritually in this New Year. May God grant each of you many graces in 2006.

## Our weekends

by José de Jesus Castellanos, gr. 9

**O**n Saturdays and Sundays the three Mexicans and one American are the only students at the Seminary. After

Mass on Saturday we have breakfast and then begin our chores. Customarily, we remove the snow from the steps leading to the church, we carry firewood to the Sisters, we sometimes clean the windows, or whatever else Fr. Benedict tells us to do. It is very amusing because when we work we play. For example, when we work in the snow, we play with snowballs.

After work we have prayers and lunch, and then we play or study. At 5:20 p.m. we recite the Rosary. After the Rosary we have dinner. When dishes are done, we play pool, ping-pong or cards.

On Sundays we recite the Rosary before Mass. Upon returning to the Seminary we have breakfast and then we clean up. We then have free time until 5:45 p.m., when we pray *Vespers* and have dinner. After that, I always like to play chess with Fr. Benedict. I also like calling my parents on Sunday. They ask me how I am, and tell me that everyone back home asks about me. I tell them not to worry about me because here, with Fr. Benedict, I am well and happy.

December will be different, because a charitable benefactor has provided Giovanni and me with tickets to go to Texas for Christmas. I am a little nervous because we are going to go alone and we do not yet understand a lot of English. By the grace of God we will be fine.

## Pass the buck

by Chris Strain, gr. 12

**Y**ou've probably been in a situation, when you were younger, where one of your siblings

## January calendar

- 4 — Seminarians return
- 5 — Classes resume
- 6 — Epiphany Feastday; High Mass; no homework
- 9 — Seminary Epiphany celebration and exchanging of gifts
- 10-12 — Priests' meetings at Mt. St. Michael
- 17 — Basketball
- 18-20 — Semester Exams
- 20 — End of Second Quarter
- 24 — Basketball
- 26 — Skiing outing

was sick and you got their cold, right? Well, this is exactly what happened here at the seminary. I got sick. It wasn't really that bad, but you know how it is — you just have to blame someone. So whom did I blame for my cold? That's right, you guessed it: *Gerard*. He'd gotten sick over the weekend and brought his cold to school, so naturally

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*At the seminary there are many hills for sledding.*

## Pass the buck

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we just had to blame him, especially since he'd given four of us *his* cold.

"It wasn't me," he retorted in his usual manner, as he immediately passed the buck. Next thing, we find out it wasn't him, but his younger brother, who then again passed the buck. It seemed like it would go on forever, until we realized it was a friend visiting from out of town who started the whole thing.

The next thing that occurred here at the seminary was the wonderful event of a sprained ankle. We were playing "Capture the Flag," of all things, when someone sprained his ankle. Yep, I was the victim. It was a really cold day and everyone on my team was tagged and in jail, so I was all alone guarding the flag. I stepped on an uneven piece of ground and my ankle went "Pop!" and I was down. Fortunately, it wasn't more than a bad sprain; unfortunately, it was just before basketball season. I could've blamed Fr. Gabriel, whose idea it was, but that wouldn't be charitable. We all know it was Gerard's fault. After all, he was the closest one to me. So I passed the buck. Gerard takes it really well, so it wasn't long before we were laughing and I was better.

## Fasting, for breakfast

*by Alex Odom, gr. 9*

Here at the seminary, there are many tasks that we seminarians are obliged to carry out, and one of these chores is being the weekly lector. "What does it mean to be the lector?" you might ask. Well, that is where this article comes into play. I am writing to tell you about the duties of the weekly lector.

Each week there is a lector assigned, and we go in order from oldest to youngest (as always). The lector's first and most difficult duty is waking up. After that, when we are all in chapel, the lector leads morning prayers, *Matins*, and *Prime*. When Mass is over, and we are all eating breakfast, the lector reads from our spiritual reading book, which right now is Under the Shadow of His Wings. The lector cannot eat until someone else is charitable enough to finish his food quickly — this is never Gerard — and take over reading until the end of breakfast. When the lector finally gets to eat, he reaches the counter only to find that half-a-piece of toast and sips of water are all that await him. Hey, bread and water are better than nothing!

At noon, the lector leads *Tierce*, *Sext*, and *None*, and our other noon prayers. Everything else is fine until dinnertime, when the lector continues the daily reading from the New Testament. Even though you're normally the last person to go through the line, it is just heart-wrenching to see all the food just disappear before your eyes, especially the bread.

The lector has to do this for a whole week until a new and glorious week arrives and another seminarian has to take the

job of lector. Then that person has to deal with no food for breakfast except bread and water.

## For whom the bell tolls

*by Brandon Odom, gr. 11*

Recreation at St. Joseph Seminary is almost certainly the best used and most valued time of the day, other than that invaluable time spent at Holy Mass. Even though we have two hours of free time after school, we all seem to look forward with more eagerness and impatience to evening recreation. But as every rose has its thorn, this happy time also comes with a price: all homework has to be complete.

Sound easy? Most times it is, but occasionally there's a day when the time seems to rush by, to the great disadvantage of an unfortunate, homework-laden student. The bell sounds, sending the joyful seminarians off to recreation, reminiscent of the Pied Piper leading the children of Hamelin to their doom. But that one ill-fated soul is left to his studies. I am usually the one left behind, but I admit being a procrastinator.

Now you're probably all wondering why we take so much pleasure in evening recreation. Well, if you were to ask us, we wouldn't be able to answer you because we don't really know. Maybe it's the fact that the day is almost over and we want to get as much satisfaction as possible out of the time remaining. Or maybe the reason is that it's evening and it's easier to relax during that time because things have slowed down significantly. At any rate, don't ask any of us because you probably won't get a satisfactory answer.

As for what we do during recreation, well, we are all different. We play pool, a favorite here at the seminary and, alas, the cause of many a skirmish. Another pastime, and one of Father's favorites, is chess. We also play ping-pong or cards. Some seminarians even go for walks around the property or to the cemetery. On special feasts or very special occasions we will watch a video.

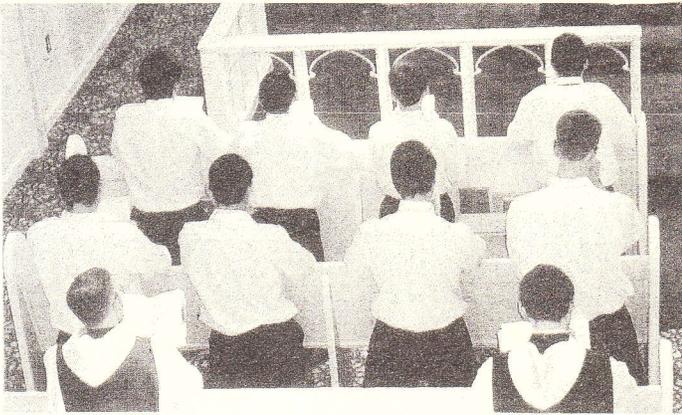
Regardless of what we do during recreation, we always seem to enjoy ourselves, and we will never know why. But who cares? I'm not going to be picky. Well, there's the bell.

## The basketball game

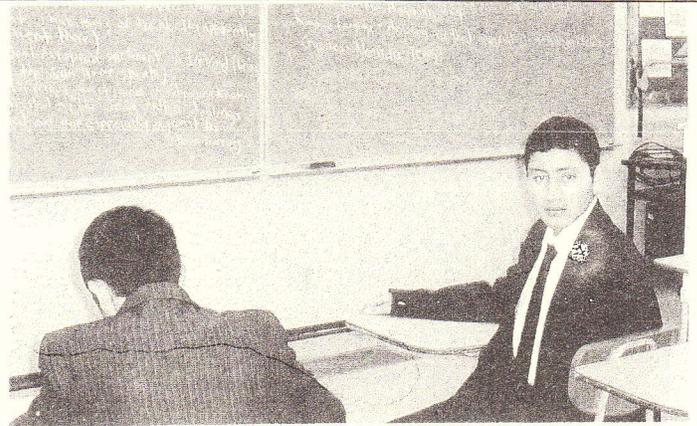
*by Giovanni Ortiz, gr. 9*

I would like to write about the games that we have been playing with different school teams from Spokane and Coeur d'Alene. We have not had good results, but perhaps the results do not matter, because what is important is the eagerness with which we play and because we do it as the team *St. Joseph Sentinels*. In spite of the fact that Fr. Gabriel coaches us and we practice a lot with passing, shooting baskets, warming up and practicing plays, at the moment of the real game I think that we are too nervous to do these things well.

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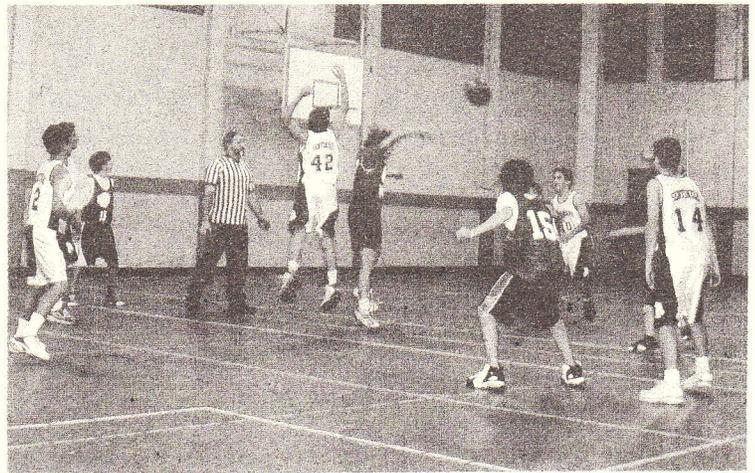
*Common prayers in chapel are an indispensable part of our daily routine.*



*José ponders whether or not he is ready to begin the next class.*



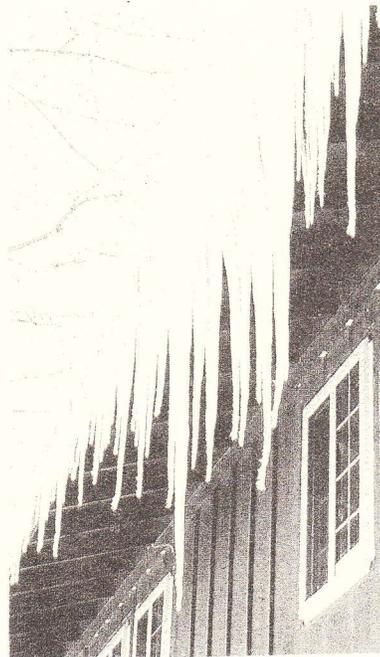
*Giovanni loves his new experience of sledding.*



*Basketball games are fun, even though we have yet to win.*



*Our new apple cider press has been getting plenty of use, with all the apples from our harvest.*



*The icicles hanging by the laundry room windows are over six feet in length.*



*Parish workers continue installing new siding on our seminary, even in the cold weather.*

## Basketball

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In my stay here practicing this sport, I see that the rules are very different than in Mexico. I also do not understand the instructions of the plays, while all the players, coaches and referees take the rules very seriously. Perhaps they coach us and take us to competitions in order to provide us entertainment and a healthy physical condition. It is good for our physical and mental development, and we hope to be good players in the future.

## Introibo ad altare Dei

*by Caleb Short, gr. 10*

Serving at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a wonderful privilege which even the angels envy. Being so close to the altar of God, making the responses on behalf of the faithful, and presenting the Oblation for the Sacrifice are some of the joys of serving. It used to be that only an ordained acolyte could serve at Mass. Since the number of acolytes was very small, laymen were allowed to serve at the Holy Sacrifice. This should show us how great a privilege is ours. All of us who are privileged with being able to serve at Mass should then take the utmost care in fulfilling our duties with perfection.

All of the seminarians know how to serve Mass. As soon as morning prayers are over, the two who are scheduled to serve go into the sacristy to vest. After finding a cassock and surplice that fit (sometimes this takes awhile), we set up for Mass. Shortly, Mass begins. From here until the end of Mass one must focus to avoid making any errors. But sometimes, even very good servers make mistakes. At times I've forgotten to ring the bell before the Consecration or tripped on the bell causing an out-of-place DING-DING-DING. St. Dominic Savio once accidentally tripped on the steps and dropped the missal! (Ouch.)

It has been said that people have been repulsed from the Catholic Church just because of servers who served poorly. All altar boys should pray to St. John Berchmans, the patron saint of altar boys, so that they may serve worthily.

## A precious gift of God

By this time of year, the seminarians have melded into a cohesive group with a great spirit of unity. Familiarity

## Blessed New Year!

The priests, staff and seminarians of St. Joseph Seminary wish all our friends and benefactors a prosperous New Year, filled with the choicest blessings of God's loving providence.

necessarily results from the daily common activities. They have gotten to know one another well. There is the normal good-natured kidding and use of nicknames. Although this could lead to divisions and animosities, in their case it has not.

Each passing year brings a new group, each with its own "personality," its own characteristics, every seminarian contributing to the whole. It is difficult and even dangerous to say that any one group is the "best yet," but I must confess being tempted to say that of this year's seminarians. They work well together and show great maturity. From time to time a teacher must be gone from the classroom, only to find upon returning that they have been diligently using their time to study. They get along well, despite the exaggerated claims of certain authors in various articles of *The Guardian*! They enjoy one another's company and are making the most of their time here.

That is the key — to make the most of our time here, on this earth. The old adage *time flies* could not be truer. As we look back upon the span of years we have lived, whether many or few, they seem but a dream. Soon, our Redeemer will summon us before His judgment seat to render an account of how we have spent the time He has given us. So many graces, so many opportunities for merit, so many marks of God's loving goodness — how have we used them?

May this New Year be for each of us, a time of grace! Let us use well the time that is left for us on this earth, for someday, perhaps soon, time for us will be no more. Please remember in your prayers, a recently departed parishioner from Mary Immaculate Queen Parish and a benefactor of our seminary, Mr. Carl Mazurik. *Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord!* We daily pray for all our benefactors, both living and deceased. We are grateful for your support. May God grant many blessings in this New Year to 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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