



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

April 2009

It has been a good month for us seminarians. We began March with our annual Lenten retreat, preached this year by Fr. Gabriel Lavery who, of course, is one of our regular teachers. In the middle of the month we celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph with a magnificent Solemn High Mass. Half of us (four seminarians) served the Mass and the other half sang the Mass.

We are now preparing for the liturgy of Holy Week and Easter and finishing our school work for the Third Quarter. The weather has finally warmed up. In a couple weeks we will enjoy a much needed Easter vacation. We wish all our benefactors a most joyous Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection.

A retreat to advance

by Robert Prado, gr. 11

We are used to bells here at the seminary, and after a while do not notice them. But the tone that rang throughout our seminary on February 27th signified more than just the ordinary call to classes. This was the beginning of our annual Lenten retreat, and it was my first. Its silence was to engulf us for three most beautiful days of recollection, sermons, and spiritual exercises, and was to place us on the right path, to not just a mediocre Lent, but to our best Lent ever.

Our retreat schedule was formed around a beautiful balance of the Mass, prayer, spiritual conferences, and recreation. The conferences, given by Fr. Gabriel, were full of information and good advice, especially pertaining to Lent. The edifying stories of the Saints read during certain periods instilled in me a burning desire to follow their examples even though it be in a lesser

degree. The unwritten part of the schedule and maybe the most important is the rule of silence. This silence during retreat is essential. Without it, we defy the very purpose of the retreat — that of delving into ourselves and asking God (We cannot ask God if we are holding conversation with someone else.) to help us with the imperfections we find there. For me, keeping the spirit of silence may be the hardest part of a retreat. During the recreation periods when we were permitted to speak, we instinctively kept our voices down in order to preserve the peacefulness of the silence.

Before we knew it the bell rang once more, this time the ending bell, the last bell of our retreat — the conferences, the prayers, and the sermons all finished and put away, or were they? Absolutely not. They will stay in our minds and hearts and will push us to advance in our spiritual lives; they will remain throughout passing days telling us which way to go, echoing their advice whenever needed or called upon. No, this retreat did not end with that bell, it will go on, through Lent and much farther, constantly helping us attain our one and only goal, that of eternal happiness with God in heaven.

The heaviest cross

by Zachary Odom, gr. 10

Some people may cringe at the thought of carrying a difficult cross. Some might even complain that it is too hard for them to carry.

April calendar

- 3 — Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows: chanted Vespers
- 9-10 — Holy Thursday, Good Friday
- 12-19 — Easter Break
- 20 — Classes resume
- 22 — Seniors leave on their class trip
- 25 — Procession of the Major Litanies
- 28 — Feast of St. Louis Marie de Montfort; begin preparation for renewal of Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary

I say this because I myself have done this. But let me tell you a story that made me think twice about my previous actions.

There was a man who had a particularly heavy cross to bear. He felt his cross was too difficult and so he prayed to Our Lord to give him a different cross. One day an angel appeared to him and told him that his

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The high point on the Feast of St. Joseph was the Solemn Mass.

The heaviest cross

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prayers had been heard and that Our Lord would grant him a different cross. After saying this, the angel took the man to a warehouse where there were all sorts of different crosses. The angel told the man to set his cross down and try on different ones until he found the one he preferred. The man did this, but with each cross he tried on, he found that he had a particular problem with it, whether it be too heavy or too rough. At last he came to one that, as he tried it on, he found that he had no problem with it. He told the angel, "This is the one I want!" The angel replied, "That was the one you had on your shoulder when you walked in." Thus did the man understand what Our Lord was telling him.

Our Lord, being so kind, never gives us a cross that we cannot carry. Why should we complain when our crosses are light and sweet? What are our crosses compared to His? We should strive to imitate Our Lord in every way. We should take up our cross without complaint and follow Him, Who had the heaviest cross to bear, the burden of our sins.

Pure boredom?

by Marcellus Moylan, gr. 12

Homework — well that's normal, *Guardian* articles — one a month, chores — nothing special. But . . . when you have all of these, plus a huge breakfast with two desserts to cook for about 150 parishioners, and a dozen songs and instrumentals to practice, your weekend can get frustratingly busy. When all this hit me, I confess that I was indeed frustrated. I had to take several deep breaths, and after asking God and Our Lady to aid me, I tried to smile and take one thing at a time.

Every year we have two breakfast fundraisers. One is on the Feast of Christ the King and the other is on the Sunday nearest the Feasts of St. Patrick and St. Joseph. However, this year we did not just have the normal 3-dish meal. A few weeks ago Fr. Benedict said it would be nice to perform some songs to St. Joseph and a few Irish pieces afterwards. These we had to practice in addition to baking Blarney Stones, cheesecakes, and helping Mrs. Salgado and Mrs. Odom in food preparation.

We had several rehearsals of our repertoire with Fr. Gabriel and Mrs. Pichette. But since Juan and I are still amateurs, we tortured the ears of our confrères with hours of shrill piping, practicing on the recorder and flute *O Mary of Graces*. Despite the time we put into drilling the notes into our head, we missed a few of them at the real performance.

Fortunately everything else went fine. Fr. Gabriel and Robert did well on their duets: *The Irish Washerwoman* on the harmonica and violin, and *Let Erin Remember the Days of Old* on piano and violin. For *Danny Boy* and *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* the audience sang along. We concluded with the beautiful *Lorica of St. Patrick* and then it was over. Big

sigh . . . whew! Hang on, Marcellus. We've got a kitchen and hall to clean and *Guardian* articles are due tomorrow!

A trip to the dentist

by Juan Garcia, gr. 11

The story I am about to relate many of you have experienced. I am seventeen years old, about the time where your wisdom teeth start coming out. However, my wisdom teeth were not all the way out.

At the beginning of March, Fr. Benedict and I went to consult the dentist. The reason was that the wisdom teeth roots were tangled with the one next to them. Therefore, a surgery was necessary to take them out. After meeting with the dentist, his assistant showed me a torturing video of what would happen to me.

On the day of the surgery the nurse anesthetized me. Then the doctor came in and gave me the final shot. He told me to count to three. I began to count, but the effect was so fast that it didn't even give me time to count to two. I fell asleep right away. For me it seemed almost like fifteen minutes, although the procedure lasted more than an hour. After the surgery was done the only thing that I remembered was going out to the car in a wheelchair. I was still numb when I came out, so I couldn't feel anything, but after awhile the pain started. For three days my cheeks were inflamed. I had to take an unpalatable medication which helped but also made me dizzy.

Right now I am feeling much better, thanks to the prayers of the other seminarians and the good care I received. I would like to thank Marcellus for his kind care towards me while I was in pain. Another especial thanks to Fr. Benedict, who took the time in his very busy schedule to make all the arrangements and take me to the dentist.

Saint 64?

by José Castellanos, gr. 12

We've adopted another custom here at the seminary. When we pray the Rosary we pray it in three languages: Latin, Spanish, and English. The non-Spanish speaking seminarians under the direction of Mrs. Salgado have already mastered the prayers in Spanish. That is why Fr. Benedict decided that we should start saying the third decade in Spanish. We pray the first and last decades in English and the second and fourth decades in Latin.

A few days ago we were all (priest and seminarians) praying the Rosary as usual here in the seminary chapel at 5:10 p.m. Everything marched on as normal during the five decades of the Rosary and the Litany of Our Lady, until just before the final hymn. Fr. Gabriel was leading the Rosary, and after the Litany and some other prayers he said "St. Joseph," at which we replied "Pray for us." The funny part is that after Fr. Gabriel said "St. Joseph" and we said "Pray for us," he then said "64" and Alex, who kneels right next to me and was

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Our Solemn High Mass on Ash Wednesday served as an excellent beginning of Lent.



Robert and Zachary recently joined the seminary sodality.



Fr. Gabriel and Robert performed an Irish jig on harmonica and fiddle during the program.



The parishioners enjoyed the musical performance following the breakfast.



The snow hung around longer this year.



The seminarians could not resist the urge to throw snowballs on the final ski trip of the year.

“Saint 64”

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so deep in prayer, responded in a rather loud voice “pray for . . .” He quickly realized that Father meant ‘number 64’ in the hymn book that we use for the hymns we sing after the Rosary. It was too late. I could not resist sniffing and almost laughing. A couple other seminarians also were doing their best to contain the urge to laugh. (We of course did not laugh in the chapel, but that urge was hard to suppress.)

Oh! And another thing, after the Rosary we pray Vespers, and that day I had to lead them. Biting my lip in order to not start laughing inside the chapel I led Vespers. I was barely able to finish leading Vespers. Coming out of the chapel we all had a good laugh that lasted for a long time.

Snow soccer

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 10

At the end of our basketball season, our seminary sport transitioned into soccer. At first, we played in the gym: twelve boys and a priest hacking, jabbing, kicking - anything we could do to get the ball, all the while being cramped by tight walls and so many players. Still, we were forced to play inside, since the parking lot outside was packed with snow. We had had a surge of rare snowfalls in the middle of March — even a week’s string of downpours. So, we couldn’t play soccer in a lot covered in snow — or could we?

We did. The afternoon we moved out of the gym, the parking lot was covered with a half foot of snow. Luckily for us, we had all dressed in our snow clothes and were so excited about our wild idea that we didn’t notice the cold. And as we set the goalposts in place, the snow was still coming down!

The antics ruled our extreme soccer game. A series of slips and falls caused the loss of the ball and caused us to make a sudden shift from offense to defense. But within an instant, a second series of antics would set us all back where we started — that is, if we could keep up with them! We ran around the parking lot confused and disoriented, half of us still fixed on where the ball had been rather than where it was. At times we were caught trying to keep up with a speeding ball while being dragged down by the high tide of snow. At other times, particularly when we were trying to stop, we would fly over the ball entirely! Blinded by the falling sleet, we scored goals with our eyes half closed and our fingers

Seminary Support Club

If you are not yet a member of the Seminary Support Club and would like to become a member, you may write to the seminary at the address below. Members pledge to pray for the success of the seminary and, if able, to send a regular financial contribution for its support.

crossed! Sometimes we’d even barrel down the court without control of the ball or ourselves, colliding into one another and landing in one great big heap. There were so many tumbles in the snow, half of our soccer game was played with our bodies on the ground!

Finally, we were all worn to our limits by our extreme game of snow soccer that we could barely move anymore. But we’d had so much fun playing it, that we are waiting for the next big snowfall — and our chance to do it again.

A well-deserved rest from studies

An old saw declares: “the bow that is always bent will soon break.” Everyone needs recreations and diversions from time to time to recoup their energies, and seminarians are no exception. In fact, they perhaps have a greater need, for the studies, discipline and observances of a seminary are not easy. Fortunately for all of us, students and teachers alike, our annual Easter vacation is only two weeks away.

Vacations provide the opportunity to refresh mind and body. If spent with the right intention — that we will renew our energies to serve God even better — they become meritorious. It is a long stretch from Christmas to Easter, and our seminarians have no days off, for serving God is a full-time occupation. So the coming vacation is well-deserved.

We hope that you also will enjoy the beauties of the Easter week, attending holy Mass daily, if possible, during the octave. May we all rejoice at the singing of the beautiful Alleluia, which reminds of that joy that will have no end — the happiness of heaven.

May God bless each of you and your loved ones during this blessed time of year. As always, be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers and at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For that is something we never take a vacation from — praying for our loved ones and benefactors.

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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