



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. XI, No. 1

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2009

As we enter September, classes have already been in session for one week. The new seminarians (one from California and one from Florida) have blended well with the returning seminarians. By the looks of it, this year is shaping up to be a great year.

The annual Boys' Camp was a huge success. Many of the boys who joined us and had been here before thought this was by far their best camp. Some even expressed their disappointment on the last day that the camp was ending so soon. Part of the reason for the success was the full slate of exciting activities, along with well-planned spiritual exercises. We hope you enjoy the photos from the camp in this newsletter.

We also want to thank you for your interest in our seminary and for reading our articles. We hope that you will continue to enjoy reading about our activities as the year progresses. May God bless you all.

## Two perfect places — gifts from God

by Mr. Nino Molina, alumnus

*(This article was written by Mr. Nino Molina during his stay here at the minor seminary during the past summer. He is now back at the major seminary in Omaha, Nebraska.)*

Most of the things in this temporal world change, except for the Faith. For instance, animals, plants, and human beings all change. They exist and they perish, they come and they depart. Time also brings changes and makes our life change as well.

Every time I think of time, I recall my past — both in the minor seminary in Idaho and in the major seminary in

Nebraska. Now I am back again in the minor seminary for vacation. I had a lot of great times here with my fellow seminarians, from the time I arrived until this moment. When I recall all my experiences of the past two years, I differentiate between minor and major seminary life. I could say that both are amazing because the seminary is the place where you build a strong spiritual life and study the teachings of Holy Mother the Church.

God made every living and non-living thing unique. Thus various aspects of minor and major seminary life are unique. The minor seminary is more concerned with high school subjects. On this level there is more development in both the spiritual life and the physical life, which also needs some attention and care. Most of our activities in this stage were in groups, especially the prayers. In addition, the meditation was shorter. Moreover, we did these things together in order to learn how to be a good companion to every co-seminarian. Furthermore, every time of the day has a specific schedule and things to do. These are just a few of my experiences in the minor seminary for one year.

However, all that I have mentioned has a slight or big difference from the major seminary. One thing is prayer. The meditation is longer and we pray the Divine Office every day, while in the minor seminary, we did not pray the Divine Office except for occasional chanting. Additionally, we focus more on the spiritual life because without a solid foundation, the graces

## September calendar

- 5 — Our secretary's birthday
- 8 — Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; chanted Vespers
- 12 — Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; chanted Vespers
- 15 — Feast of the Seven Sorrows BVM; chanted Vespers
- 25 — Mid-quarter; no homework
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael; special observances

and blessings from God do not flow well. The subjects we take are more in philosophy and theology. Also, the studies are more on our own. The schedule outside of classes gives you more discretion for what to do. The reason is that in the future when you become a priest, you will be on your own and will need self discipline. I have only summed up the differences between the two seminaries, because they differ in many other things, such as the weather, people, scenery, activities, and so forth.

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*Every day at camp began with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*

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## What good is a good game?

by Rev. Fr. Gabriel Lavery, CMRI

“I seemed to be in the old Oratory during recreation: it was a lively scene — all movement and joy. Some were running, some jumping or getting others to jump; here they were playing leap frog, there bararotta or football. In one spot there was a group of boys listening carefully to a priest who was telling them a story; elsewhere, there was a brother in the middle of a group of boys playing games of forfeit with them. There was song and laughter from all sides; priests and brothers were everywhere, and around them the boys were romping merrily. It was obvious that the greatest cordiality and confidence existed between the boys and their superiors. . . . Valfre said to me: ‘You see, affability brings affection and confidence: this is what opens the hearts of the boys, and they manifest everything without the slightest fear to their teachers, assistants and superiors. They become sincere in confession and outside, and they are docile to all that is commanded them by their superior, of whose love for them they are fully assured.’” (Forty Dreams of St. John Bosco, pages 213-14.)

This was the opening scene in one of St. John Bosco’s many dreams. God used these dreams or visions to direct him in matters relating to the boys at the Oratory. In this dream a former Oratory boy showed St. John two visions: one of the Oratory in the past and one as it was at the time of the vision. The lesson which the vision conveyed was on the importance of associating with the boys in recreation and thus gaining their confidence. If parents, teachers, priests and superiors wish to do any good for the souls of the children in their care, they must first gain their confidence. Associating with them in recreation is an excellent way to do this. The next scene in the dream will make this clear.

The Oratory sometime later: “I saw the Oratory and all of you in recreation, but no longer were there joyful shouts and songs, no longer all that lively activity of the first scene. You could see dissatisfaction in the actions and on the faces of many boys — a weariness, dejection and mistrust that pained my heart. True enough, I did see many boys running and playing about in completely carefree fashion; but many others I saw standing alone, leaning against pillars, buried in desolate thoughts; still others were on the stairways and in the corridors or on the balconies facing the garden, so as to avoid the common recreation. There were some others strolling about in groups, talking in low tones among themselves, casting nervous and ill-meaning glances about, smiling occasionally; but with the smile went a malignant look, which made one convinced without a doubt that St. Aloysius would have blushed to find himself in such company. And even among those who did join in the games, there were some who played so reluctantly as to make it quite plain that they derived no enjoyment from their recreation. . . . Alas, yes! What a lack of enthusiasm in this recreation! And that is why

many are cold in their approach to the Sacraments; it causes their neglect of the practices of piety in church and elsewhere. . . . Hence it is that many do not correspond to their vocation; so, too, their ingratitude towards superiors, as well as their sly behavior and grumbling, with all their deplorable consequences.” (pages 214-15)

What a sad change! According to this vision, lack of joy, secrecy, gloomy looks and failure to find joy in the simple common recreations are all signs of trouble in a child’s heart. They often sadly indicate a soul which has lost God’s grace through mortal sin. St. John Bosco was told later in the dream: “Only he who has some secrets mistrusts others, for he is always afraid lest these secrets become known, and he is fully aware that if they should become public he would be covered with shame and confusion. Besides that, if his heart is not at peace with God, he will be uneasy and troubled, intolerant of obedience, easily upset over nothing at all; everything seems to be against him, and as he himself feels no love, he will draw the conclusion that the Superiors do not love him.” (page 221)

The cause of all this trouble, St. John was told, was that the priests and brothers no longer associated with the boys in recreation and did not know how to gain their confidence. St. John describes what he saw in this way: “I looked, and noticed that very few priests and brothers were mixing with the boys, and fewer still were taking part in their games. No longer were the superiors the soul of the recreation. The majority of them were walking and conversing together without any care of what the pupils were doing.” (page 216)

What is the remedy? St. John Bosco’s guide in the vision told him this: “By satisfying them in the things they like, by the participation in their boyish inclinations, they will learn to see your love for them in those things which they naturally dislike, such things as discipline, study and self-mortification; and they will learn to do these things with pleasure and love. . . . Let them [superiors] love what the boys like, and the boys will come to love what the superiors like, and this will make their work easy. In the olden days hearts were open to the superiors, and the boys loved and obeyed them; but now the superiors are regarded as superiors and no longer as fathers, brothers and friends, and therefore they are feared and not loved. So if you want that all should be of one heart and soul again, for the love of Jesus, that fatal barrier of mistrust must be removed, and filial confidence must take its place. Then let obedience lead the pupils as a mother leads her child, and peace and joy will reign once more at the Oratory.” (pages 216-17)

I wonder how much this joy, candor and peace is being lost in children today. In many homes the parents themselves lack that joy and peace in serving God. Religion becomes more of an accessory than an essential part of their family life. Then the children turn to their addiction to video games and walk around with headphones in their ears. How much, I

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*Everyone joins in praying the daily Rosary at the Boys' Camp.*



*We went canoeing down a stretch of the Coeur d'Alene River.*



*Our campers get ready to hit the Hiawatha Trail.*



*Time for a break before heading into the tunnel.*



*Every night we listened to a tale from the book Forty Dreams of St. John Bosco.*



*Once again our camp included a hike to the top of Rathdrum Mountain.*

## Gifts from God

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In my generalization, the minor seminary is the perfect place to study in high school or to begin with, because not only does it help you to proceed with your vocation to the major seminary to become a priest someday, but also it helps you to be a good Christian — and not just a Christian but a good and strong soldier of Christ. The major seminary has many crosses or struggles as you advance in your year or level, but Christ said: *“Take up your cross and follow Me.”* These crosses help to make you a good priest someday.

So do not hesitate in your vocation if God is calling you to be a nun or a priest. At this time we need more priests in order to spread the word of God and fight against the devil. Both places are excellent, because they are gifts from God. That is why everything is so ideal, for example: prayer time, meal time, recreation time, study time and so forth.

For now, I am having fun on my vacation in my former home, the minor seminary. Have a good summer and thank you. Please, pray for the seminarians in both the minor and major seminaries. May God bless you all!

## Good game

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wonder, does this set up barriers between them and their parents? Does it soon lead to distrust and secrecy? They live in an imaginary world of video games and lose that simple joy which used to be on their faces. How different from the simple games which give good physical exercise and common recreation and thus refresh the body to prepare it for the more important duty of caring for the soul. This is one of the aims of our summer Boys’ Camp. Hopefully, the boys bring this back with them and practice it in the home.

One last piece of advice: Teach your children to pray to Mary, to love her ardently. St. John Bosco taught, and experience proves it, that devotion to her obtains for a child that innocence of soul, joy and openness to superiors which characterizes a soul that is at peace with God.

## Growth in grace

You all know the old saw: “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” Well, here at the seminary there is not much room for idleness. Our packed schedule of daily activities

leaves precious little room for idle time, and that is a good thing.

Seminarians soon learn to love the routine of Mass, prayers, classes, meals, recreation, spiritual reading and rest. It is a routine that brings contentment and peace of heart as the days fly by. Almost without realizing it, they are progressing in the spiritual life and developing good habits.

Truly, ours here is a blessed life — one that provides ample opportunity to grow in God’s grace. Jesus, as a youth, is said to have grown “in wisdom, age and grace.” That is what will happen in the souls of our youth, if they are guided and nurtured properly. The young men in our seminary are truly hidden away from the world and its harmful influence during the critical time of their formation. Let us pray that they profit from the many opportunities of grace available to them and become truly Christlike.

As we begin this new academic year, I want to sincerely thank all those who support our seminary with your prayers and financial contributions. Without your support, this work could not continue. Please continue that support! Keep our seminary in operation, that we might continue to train young men to be future priests. Be assured that you, your loved ones and your intentions are daily remembered in our prayers. God, in His goodness, will not forget those who support the work of education of His priests.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*Sr. Mary Fatima made her final profession of vows on the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During the ceremony Sister received a ring, a symbol of her espousal to Christ.*

*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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