



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

December 2011

The snow came early this year, and even though it eventually melted, the cold weather cut short some of our customary autumn chores. We did not quite get all the apples harvested this year (although we picked enough to press 15 gallons of cider!). A local moose doesn't mind, however, as we have lately seen her in the orchard on several occasions, looking for windfalls from the apples that remain.

The colder weather reminds us that Advent is now here, with Christmas just around the corner. Advent is one of our favorite seasons at the seminary, with the beautiful seasonal hymns of expectation, the sacrifice bowl together with our own chosen sacrifices, and the daily lighting of the Advent wreath — a custom we faithfully observe every year. We also are singing Vespers on the Sundays of Advent, which means a good amount of time is spent in singing practice.

To help us sing better, Father has hired a local music teacher who gives us a class every Monday. We are preparing some songs for the parish Christmas program and learning to develop our singing abilities. We are also working on basketball skills, with the help of a couple men of the parish, to get ready for our basketball games.

Even though Advent is longer than usual this year—a full 4 weeks—we know that it will go by all too quickly. We are often reminded that our Christmas joy will be in proportion to our Advent preparation. So we urge all of you, our readers, to make a good Advent, avoiding the distractions of the world as much as you can, and spending time in prayer, spiritual reading and meditation. May we all prepare well for

the celebration of Our Lord's birth, and for His re-birth in our hearts on Christmas.

## The choice before us

by Jordan Hartman, gr. 9

Can you imagine a place where there are no troubles or worries? No hunger, thirst, sickness or sorrow? No sweltering hot or blistering cold weather? No pain, fear or death? Well, you would be getting very warm if you imagined heaven, because that is a hint of what it would be like.

But even this, together with the bliss, sweet aroma, music, and sights of heaven cannot compare with the reward of the Beatific Vision. It is the only thing that will make us truly happy, and we cannot truly begin to think how happy it will make us. St. Paul tells us in one of his epistles after having a short vision of heaven, that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

## December calendar

- 2 — Mid-quarter
- 6 — Feast of St. Nicholas
- 8 — Feast of the Immaculate Conception; Holy Day of Obligation; no classes
- 9 — December outing
- 13 — Basketball game
- 18 — Christmas program
- 21 — Christmas vacation begins after classes

We can gather from this that heaven is greater than anything on this earth.

And to think that some would trade all God has created for them in paradise for the evil pleasures of this world! They would have the base pleasures of sin rather than the unending joys of heaven. Sin — which, with everything else on this planet will perish,

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Patrick tries to keep his balance on a snow-covered road by the seminary.

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## The choice before us

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disintegrate, or fade away abruptly and will bring sinners, shackled in their chains of vice, to the fires of hell where they will suffer with Satan for eternity! The devil craves for our souls and will stop at nothing to get them. He hungers so greatly for them because we have a chance to gain what he has lost through his own fault. And he will surely devour our souls if we do not persevere.

Really, sin is such a horrible thing to think of when we look at it in the perspective, not only of losing the joys of heaven, but also of losing the company of the angels, the saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary, who ardently wish to have us with them to praise God, and who pray for us continuously and love us greatly. To deliberately consent to something so rank as sin, to disobey God, and to destroy all that they have done for us and perhaps all that we have done for ourselves, all for the vile, short pleasure that sin brings, is indeed sickening.

So let us not be among those who would trade the everlasting peace and wonders of heaven, but rather let us be among the triumphant who, after death, stand at the right hand of Our Lord and hear the sweet words of Jesus, which were so longed for in our souls that are flaming for love of Him: "Come, ye blessed of my Father; possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

## A model for teenagers

*by Patrick Gilchrist, gr. 8*

I recently read a book on the life of St. Dominic Savio. The story begins in northern Italy in a little town called Murialdo. On the outskirts of the town the Savios lived in a small cottage barely big enough for their family. Dominic's family members were his slightly grumpy mother who loved him dearly but was often irritated by his charity, his father who would give his life for his son, and his tattle-taling sister who loved him in a typical younger sister fashion.

As a boy of eleven Dominic moved to St. John Bosco's oratory in Turin, Italy, where he was gently led to great heights in sanctity. His was a pure soul, always willing to defend the commandments not only against his own fallen human nature, but also that of his friends. He defended purity among his friends by destroying anything in their hands that might be dangerous to the soul, such as books, magazines, etc. He also stopped the boys from being spiritually poisoned by a strange man who was seen outside the oratory.

There are many incidents in the life of St. Dominic that show the amazing amount of God's grace working inside his soul, and they show how well he cooperated with these graces. One of these incidents occurred when Dominic was walking in the back yard one day and saw a group of boys huddled in a tight circle. Dominic's conscience aroused him when he saw a boy glance back and look around suspiciously.

He walked up to them and, before they realized it, he had snatched the magazine from their hands and said, "Let's have a look at that," ripping it into shreds in front of their eyes.

The other boy, amazed at the boldness of Dominic, turned around and asked, "What did you do that for?"

Dominic fiercely returned, "God didn't give you eyes to look at that garbage."

"We were only looking at it for the jokes."

"It wouldn't be much of a joke if you went to hell."

"We didn't see any harm in it."

"Worse for you. Your eyes must be getting used to the dirt."

This story tells us that St. Dominic was not only a very smart boy, he was high in the grace of God and should be the model of all teenage boys today.

## Thankfulness in the little things

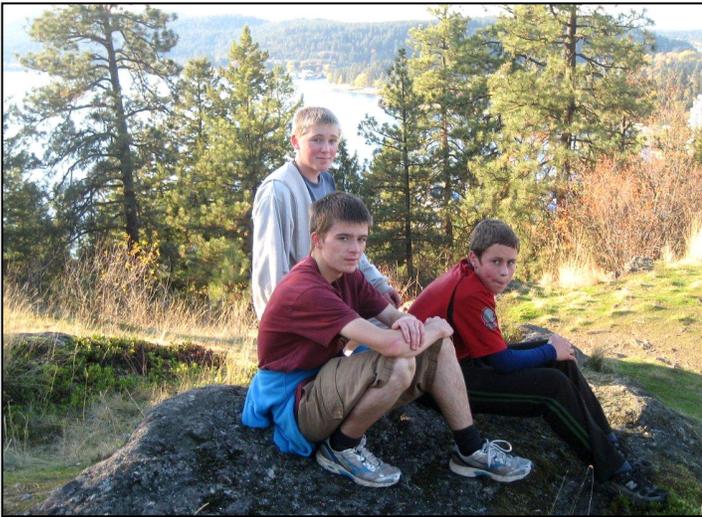
*by Aedan Gilchrist, gr. 12*

This past month has again been a beautiful lesson. We are often told we should give thanks to God, and hopefully, as Catholics, we try to do this the best we can. But what I have just learned is that we must also be thankful for the gift of being able to overcome temptation, however big or small the danger may be. Always, Our Lord is there with you and me, with His hand on our shoulder saying, "Be good, My child, for My grace is sufficient. Do not fear your test, but take joy in the cross I made for you." Thanks and praise be to Christ my Lord, for He gives me strength. Thanks be to Christ, for He encourages me to fight rather than run.

When harassed by the devil or self I understand it appears to be hard, but there is no need for us to fear, for we share a secret. That secret is Mary. What a joy to know our Mother! Most people today have no clue who the maiden dressed in blue is, but what's important is that you and I do know. So let's go to Mary in everything, and all things hard will become easier according to God's Holy Will. Thank God always for every little grace.

When giving thanks we greatly please Our Lord, for when proper thanks is given, we show our appreciation and honor Our Lord's Sacred Heart. Gratitude is a great comfort to the bruised and abused hearts of Our Lord and Our Lady.

I recall how in the past the saints would show their love for God by their many acts of charity, but especially in devotion to the Holy Eucharist. St. Dominic Savio had the holy custom of splitting his week up into two parts. The first was in preparation for receiving Our Lord; the second part was in thanksgiving. What I believe Dominic did was not only to pray to God, but also to offer everything to Him in the spirit of thanksgiving — everything ranging from daily duty and suffering, from being able to resist temptation or just enjoying his recreation. So, with everything you do, do it in preparation for receiving Our Lord, for He will grant you more if you are grateful in the most perfect way, by receiving Him into your heart.



*Seminarians on a fall outing by Lake Coeur d'Alene.*



*Patrick turned 14 recently.*



*A breakfast fundraiser for the seminary.*



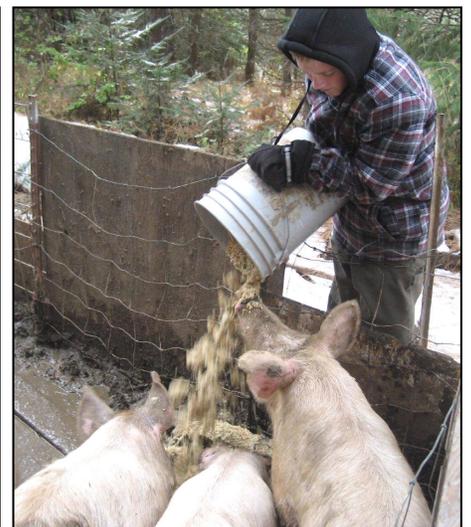
*Aedan is a good dish washer, and is always ready to assume the task.*



*Raking leaves was just one of our fall chores.*



*This curious moose came right up to the seminary door!*



*Little did these pigs know that Jordan was giving them their final meal before slaughter.*

*“Drop down dew, ye heavens from above and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior.”*

Isaias 45:8

## O Come, Divine Messias!

The season of Advent is one of joyful anticipation of Our Lord's birth. While every liturgical season contains its own beauty, its own treasures of grace, Advent is unique. Its charm lies in the joy and confident expectation of the fulfillment of God's promise that He would send the Messias.

During Advent we call to mind the earnest longing of the just men of the Old Testament. How ardently they yearned for the fulfillment of God's promise, given first to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise after their fall. To live this season in the spirit of the Church, we must likewise imagine our poverty and emptiness without Christ. What would our life be like without the Mass and sacraments, especially without being able to receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord in Holy Communion?

Yet, we know that He has indeed come into the world. While we prepare to commemorate His blessed birth, we also must prepare for His rebirth into our hearts, for that is what Christmas is truly about. What good would it do us if we celebrate the birth of Jesus without also welcoming Him into our hearts? Consequently, our Christmas Holy Communion becomes the focal point of our celebration of His birth.

To spend Advent well, we must avoid the spirit of the world. We must ask ourselves what there is in us that may be displeasing to Our Lord, that we might eliminate it. Are we worthy to be called Christians, followers of Christ? Or are we perhaps still too attached to this world, too worldly? Advent is a time for quiet preparation through prayer, spiritual reading and meditation. Those who spend it in such a manner experience the spiritual joy of Christmas. May we be among their number!

Be assured, dear friends, that you and your loved ones are remembered in our prayers during this season of Advent. We thank you for your prayers and support. May God deign to bless us with more vocations, more young men who are willing to heed God's call, renounce the world and serve Him in the holy priesthood!

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*The Advent wreath is one of our favorite customs this time of year.*

## 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.

## 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.

*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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