



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2012

Dear Seminary friends and benefactors,

The past month has seen the usual flurry of activity to prepare for a school year — but not before we priests had an opportunity to make a retreat. Every summer we set aside at least three days for this important spiritual exercise, dedicating all our time to prayer, reflection, spiritual reading and spiritual conferences. We were joined for the conferences by our religious Sisters here, as they were also on retreat.

The blessings of a retreat cannot be too highly esteemed. A retreat is indeed a foretaste of heaven, where we set aside all mundane cares, even important ones, to concentrate on what is truly the most important thing in our lives, the welfare of our immortal souls. The daily tasks of teaching and guiding youth can be taxing, not only physically, but also spiritually and emotionally. The retreat allows us to recharge our batteries — to fill up the reservoir of our spiritual lives, so that we can once more give to others. It was truly a blessed time here.

Following the retreat we began in earnest to complete plans for the school year: finalizing the schedule, gathering or ordering the textbooks needed, cleaning and organizing. Fortunately, we have had the assistance of two of our major seminarians. With all the help, I can say that I feel confident of being well prepared for this new school year. And that is very important! To start off a new academic year well prepared allows us to set a solid foundation for the entire year. The first few days are always the most important. If the proper tone is set early on, it saves much time and effort later.

We also have a new addition here — two, in fact. We now have two puppies. They will keep the seminarians entertained and will also force me to get out and walk more. Sometimes we teachers can get so bogged down with work that we spend too much time at our desks. A good walk and fresh air can do wonders. So now I have no more excuses!

Our first week of school came off well, and we will top it off with our usual trip to the lake, a sort of “get-acquainted” trip for our new group of seminarians. (We will tell you about that in our next issue.) Then it is down to business as we pursue the purpose of our seminary: to form young men’s minds and hearts after the example of Christ, the eternal high Priest. As always, we count on your prayers. Be assured, in turn, of a remembrance in our daily prayers and Masses here at the seminary.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*

## The seminary Rule

When the minor seminary began 13 years ago, there were various tasks that would be completed as time allowed. One of these was the writing of a seminary rule. For some reason, this project was constantly put on the “back burner” for a later time. After all, with continuous admonitions and reminders of the rules of the house, it wasn’t really essential. Well, finally we have our own seminary rule.

## September calendar

- 3 — Labor Day; seminary outing; no classes
- 5 — Our secretary’s birthday (Mrs. Salgado)
- 8 — Feast of Our Lady’s Nativity
- 9 — Jordan Hartman’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 11 — Thomas’ 13<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 15 — Feast of the Seven Sorrows BVM; chanted Vespers
- 26 — Mid-quarter; no homework

At the same time, a rule is a most desirable component of a religious institution. Each religious order and congregation has its rule, and it is this rule that embodies the particular spirit of the order. Our seminary rule includes an explanation of the virtues to be acquired by the seminarian, the spiritual practices, and the various house rules. It helps the seminarian to understand what is expected from him, and it serves as an examination of conscience, allowing him to perceive where he needs improvement in the spiritual life.

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*Classes are now in session at St. Joseph Seminary.*

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## The seminary Rule

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Our rule at St. Joseph Seminary is brief and to the point. It is more important that the rule be lived. Too much verbiage can be overwhelming and tends to diminish the value of the rule. At the same time, it is very important that all the rules and policies be spelled out clearly. Sources for our new seminary rule include the rules of several different seminaries, written in the 1950's. While each seminary has its own rule, there is nonetheless a common thread through all of them, conveying the mind of the Church on the formation of its future priests. We hope and pray that this rule will be a source of spiritual growth for our young men, a beacon pointing out to them the path they are to follow to the goal of Christlikeness.

## Spes Messis in Semine

As readers of this newsletter are aware, our seminary motto is *Spes Messis in Semine*. This Latin dictum, meaning "The hope of the harvest is in the seed," has often been applied to seminaries. The very word *seminary* comes from the same root as *semine*, meaning "seed" or "young plant." The Latin *seminarium* is translated "seed-bed" or "nursery of plants."

The larger meaning of the Latin dictum is that the success of the harvest of souls which the Church seeks is entirely dependent on the laborers. But the laborers will be capable to the degree that they have been prepared from their youth for the delicate task of saving souls. We could not possibly say too much about the importance of forming the young in discipline, the practice of virtue and the love of God from their earliest years. If we are to have holy priests, they must be well formed from their youth.

This then, is the purpose of our seminary — to train young men in the practice of virtue, to instill into them habits that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. You faithful are an important part of this program, for Our Lord Himself tells us that we must "Pray the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest, for the harvest is great but the laborers are few." Thus it is your task to pray for vocations and for the work of seminaries, and to support this work as far as you are able.

## Where have the seminaries gone?

Here at the minor seminary we continue to receive occasional inquiries from parents who are looking for a minor seminary for their sons. Usually, once we explain that we are traditional Catholics who reject Vatican II and the New Mass, they cease to be interested, as they are often solidly behind the Conciliar establishment. The point, however, is that they are searching for a seminary for their sons and in their search had stumbled upon ours via the Internet. Thus far, none of these inquiries has materialized.

This experience has led me to reflect again on the devastation caused by Vatican II. Prior to that disastrous and false council, the Church in the United States possessed an abundance of seminaries — both major and minor — throughout the country. A prospective seminarian had no lack of options in choosing a seminary. Not only were there many such institutions, but they were magnificent structures. The dioceses and religious orders spent large sums of money to insure that their future priests would be well educated. The laity, in their turn, gladly sacrificed for this purpose, knowing the value of vocations.

Now what has happened to them? The story is the same throughout the country. These buildings have been sold to developers or even non-Catholic religious groups. Sometimes they are torn down (as happened to the minor seminary I had attended, where a shopping mall now stands); sometimes they are sold intact. These beautiful buildings have been demolished, sold or lie empty, while we are reduced to a state much like that of the early Christians of the catacombs.

How tragic the loss! One recalls, however, the consoling words of St. Athanasius: "They have the buildings but we have the Faith." May we prove worthy of the gifts that have been given us, and may we one day see the return of the glory which belongs to Christ's Church on earth.

## Support a seminarian

Once again at the beginning of the new year we budget for the material needs of the coming school year. While the budget has often been tight, the generosity of our supporters has made the work of the seminary financially possible now for 13 years. Our ability to maintain the seminary, however, is dependent on outside support. As you can imagine, our seminarians typically come from large Catholic families, many of whom cannot afford the entire amount of tuition, modest as it is. At the same time, we would not want to ever turn away, for financial reasons, a young man who felt called by God to the priesthood.

To help resolve this difficulty, we have a scholarship program for our seminary. Through this program, donors who are financially able and willing, contribute towards the tuition of a particular seminarian each month. They thus become sponsors of that seminarian. Those who would like to participate but are unable to afford the entire amount would contribute a part of the monthly tuition fee. This scholarship would then be matched with a deserving seminarian, who would thus become that donor's "adopted" seminarian.

Other donors do their part by sending a regular amount each month, or every few months, based on their ability. Without such support, the work of seminary training could not continue. Imagine the blessing of having contributed towards a young man's being able to fulfill his vocation to become a priest! We ask you to do what you can to support our work, for the good of souls and the future of the Church.



*Our priests and seminarians on the first day of the new academic year.*



*Our priests enjoyed the opportunity during the annual retreat for quiet reflection and prayer.*



*During the ceremony of first vows, Father blesses the Sister's veil.*



*The Sisters pose with Father after the vows ceremony.*



*We began the new school year by inviting the families of our seminarians to a "get-acquainted" barbecue.*



*Fattening up the pigs for the butcher.*

## Our glorious patrons

In His youth, Jesus was perfectly subject to Mary, His Mother, and St. Joseph, His foster father. Seminarians who aspire to become other Christs ought to develop a particular devotion to these two saints. Appropriately, as a new school year begins, we enter the month of September, a month filled with lovely feasts of Our Blessed Mother. Who could better understand the importance of formation for future priests than the Mother of the First Seminarian? Under the vigilant eye of Mary, Jesus developed into manhood. She watched in wonder as the Son of God grew in wisdom, age and grace during those hidden years at the “seminary” of Nazareth.

On the Feast of Mary’s Nativity we recall the blessed day when she was born into this world. A few days later we celebrate the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, reminding us that God chose this name for His immaculate Mother from all eternity, and that we should often invoke reverently that Holy Name. The feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary reminds us of her love for us and of the terrible cost of our sins. The feast of Our Lady of Ransom (Our Lady of Mercy) reminds us of the tender solicitude of our heavenly Mother for all her children.

And so we begin a new academic year under Our Lady’s mantle. May we always strive to imitate her, however feeble our efforts. May she help these young men to grow in wisdom, age and grace — to become daily more and more like her divine Son.

At the same time, we must not forget St. Joseph, the other member of that Holy Family. Like Our Blessed Mother, he too observed with wonder the growing divine Child. St. Joseph meticulously fulfilled his role as superior, breadwinner and guardian of both the Holy Mother and her divine Child. St. Joseph is a hidden saint but a great one. After Mary herself there is not a greater saint in heaven than her spouse, who was chosen to be the protector of the great High Priest, Jesus Himself, during His youth.

Our seminary is blessed to have this great saint as our special patron. A minor seminary is, in some respects, like the home of Nazareth. Hidden away in the seclusion of the seminary — much like Jesus in the home of Nazareth — the seminarians strive to learn and imitate the ways of Christ. Who better can assist them in this task than St. Joseph? May he help our young men to follow the pattern of Christ.

## 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 future is bright . . .

The beginning of a new year offers a renewed opportunity to strive for excellence, to improve upon what we have done thus far. Our goal remains that of imparting a sound Catholic education to young men — youth who are growing up in a very anti-Christian age — with the hope that those who are called will follow the vocation to become priests or religious Brothers, while those who determine that the priesthood or religious life is not their vocation will become model Catholic gentlemen.

We begin our 14<sup>th</sup> year with great hopes for the future. Although we always pray for more vocations, we are grateful for the new recruits who join us this year. Their enthusiasm and eagerness — we don’t accept applicants who are coming only because their parents want to send them here — give promise that this will be a good year.

So please remember our seminary in your daily prayers. We appreciate your interest and support. Remember, that you just might be kneeling in a pew in one of our traditional chapels about 10 years from now, as one of these youths begins the *Introibo ad altare Dei*. Let us hope that will be the case! May God bless you and your families.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*

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