



# THE GUARDIAN

Vol. I, No. 1

Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 1999

Welcome to our first issue of *The Guardian*! This seminary newsletter is named for the patron saint of our seminary, who was the Guardian of Jesus and Mary. May he intercede for our seminarians and teachers to ensure the success of this enterprise.

## Why a minor seminary?

Proper formation in virtue from one's earliest days is a tremendous blessing. Holy Scripture tells us: "It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. 3:27). This quotation from Scripture helps us to understand the purpose of the minor, or preparatory, seminary. Here boys are trained from their entrance into adolescence in the paths of virtue.

In Session XXIII, the Council of Trent declared that seminaries be established so that young aspirants to the priesthood could be formed in habits of piety and discipline from their earliest years. In our country prior to Vatican II, preparatory seminaries were common, for the Church realized that boys who

are called by God need an environment in which they can preserve the precious treasure of their vocation during the turbulent years of adolescence.

A vocation to the priesthood is often compared to a seed. When a seed germinates the small plant needs to be watered, sheltered and nourished during the early stages of growth. So too a vocation is a delicate seed that must be nourished and protected. Not only must a vocation be protected from the foul breath of the world, but good habits must be formed in the young men who will become *other-Christ*s. During adolescence — that crucial period of physical, mental and moral development — lasting habits, either good or bad, are generally formed. In a preparatory seminary, even more than in the major seminary, a boy's mind and character are shaped, and his life receives a direction which ordinarily proves final and decisive.

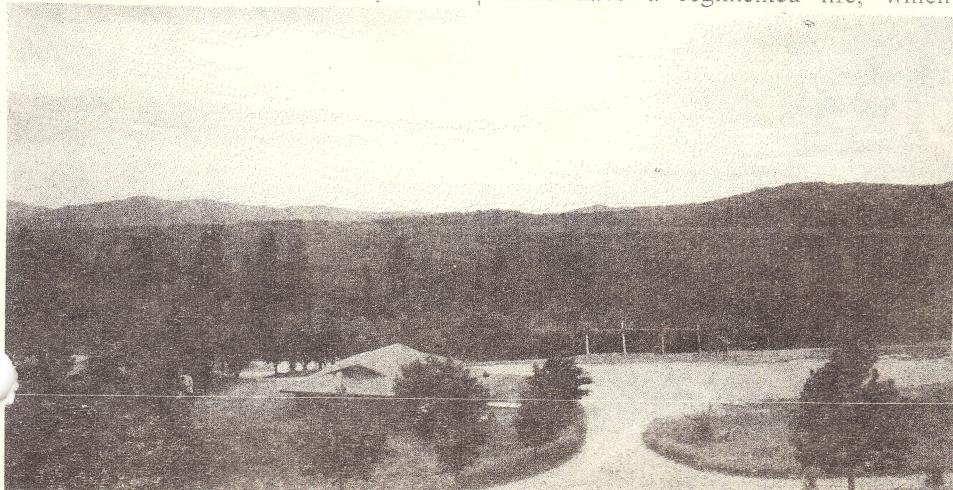
What is a minor seminary like? The minor seminary is similar to other Catholic boarding schools for boys. Students have a regimented life, which

includes daily Mass and prayer, academics and recreation. The studies encompass the regular high school courses in Theology, English, math, science, history, foreign language, etc., with a special emphasis on Latin and choir. Physical activity is also important, for sports offers an excellent means of character formation by its requirements for teamwork, responsibility and healthful competition. Needless to say, regular confession, spiritual direction and spiritual conferences hold a prominent position in the routine of the seminary. Personal responsibility, cleanliness, order, self-discipline and striving for excellence provide the hallmark of the seminary formation. In short, the entire program of a minor seminary has for its goal the preparation of young men for the major seminary, while it safeguards their vocations.

## Mother of the First Seminarian

On September 8 we will begin classes for the inaugural group of seminarians at St. Joseph Seminary. It is certainly fitting that we should commence our first school year on a special feastday 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. God gazed with



View to the West from minor seminary balcony.

delight upon His perfect creature, our "tainted nature's solitary boast." St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that God could have created a greater heaven and a greater earth, but He could not have created a more perfect human being than Mary. Imagine the pleasure of an artist after he has completed a masterful painting. After weeks, perhaps months, of laborious effort with brush and paint, he finally steps back to admire his artwork. What satisfaction he feels in beholding the completed product of so much planning, sweat and labor! Can this description even begin to compare with God's satisfaction upon beholding His creature, the blessed infant Mary, born into this world filled with divine grace, without even a trace of Original Sin?

And so we begin our seminary 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.

## Saint Joseph too

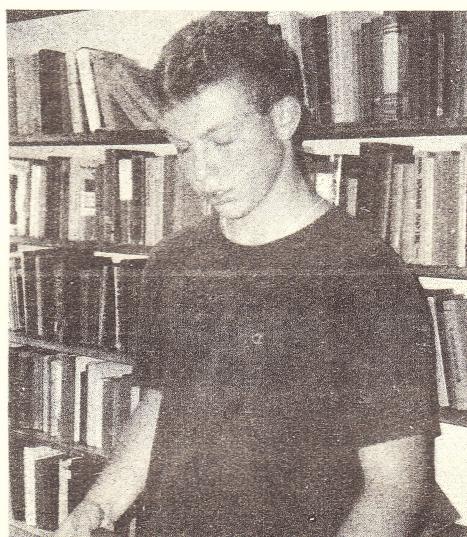
We must not forget St. Joseph, the other member of that Holy Family. Like Our Blessed Mother, he too observed with wonder the growing divine Child. St. Joseph meticulously fulfilled his role as superior, bread-winner and guardian of both the Holy Mother and her divine Child. St. Joseph is a hidden saint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

That is why our seminary is aptly named. A minor seminary is for adolescent youths who believe they may be called to the priesthood. Hidden away in the seclusion of the seminary — much like Jesus in the home of Nazareth — they strive to learn and imitate the ways of Christ. Who better can assist them in this task than St. Joseph?

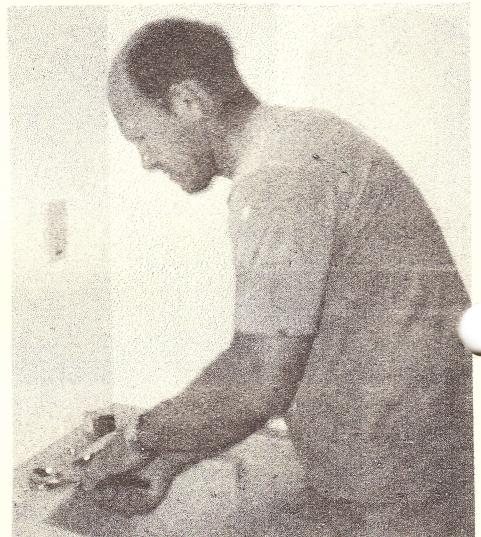
Incidentally, I cannot recall having ever seen a picture of St. Joseph with a



*View of seminary during remodeling.*



*A seminarian sets up books on library shelves.*



*Bro. Sebastian repairing faucets in seminary restroom.*



*The Auxiliary Guild prepares a support club mailing.*

teenage Christ, say about 15 or 16 years old. Wouldn't that be a beautiful picture? There are representations of Jesus working in the carpentry shop, in which He appears to be about the age of 12, but never, it seems, as a teenager. After all, Jesus did pass through all the stages of development, including the period of adolescence, under the tutelage of St. Joseph. May this saint help our young men to follow the pattern of Christ.

## Brother Sebastian, CMRI

Speaking of St. Joseph... The religious Congregation of Priests and Brothers of Mary Immaculate Queen, which runs St. Joseph Seminary, has several Brothers among its members. Like St. Joseph, they play a more hidden role than the priests, but one which is by no means unimportant. Brothers perform carpentry work, fix cars, do laundry or sacristy work, serve Mass, cook meals, mow the grass, and accomplish just about anything else that needs to be done in order to free priests' time for their vital work for the welfare of souls.



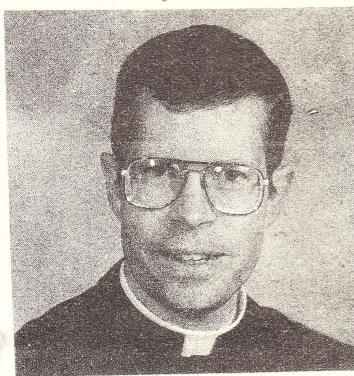
Bro. Sebastian, CMRI

One of our veteran Brothers is Bro. Sebastian Kosch. Bro. Sebastian has been in the religious life for more than twenty years. During that time he has helped to build or repair churches, or worked on other projects in Spokane, Omaha, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and lately at St. Joseph Seminary.

During the past month Brother has used his talents to prepare a former convent building for its new purpose. Among other things, he has built shelves for the library, replaced flooring, installed lights and bathroom fixtures, plastered and painted walls, hung doors, etc. Without his dedicated efforts, we could not possibly open the seminary on schedule. Thank you, Br. Sebastian! May God reward you abundantly.

## Meet our staff

The following is a brief description of our staff members and the classes they will teach this year at St. Joseph Seminary.



Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

A member of the Religious Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen, Fr. Benedict made his first profession of vows in 1974 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1979. In the early years of his priesthood, Father traveled the country extensively, giving lectures on Our Lady of Fatima and the changes in the Church.

Father has also taught in St. Michael's Academy for 20 years, teaching Theology, Latin, English and mathematics to high school students. He also taught for two years at Mater Dei Seminary in Omaha. Fr. Benedict holds a Master of Arts Degree.

Fr. Benedict is the rector of St. Joseph Seminary. He will also teach Theology, Latin, English grammar and mathematics to the seminarians.



Mr. Mark Mazurik

Mr. Mazurik holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Gonzaga University in Management Information Systems with a minor in Computer Science. He is currently employed as a software developer with Volt Technical Services, Inc., in Spokane, Washington. Mr. Mazurik also previously taught in St. Michael's

Academy for four years, on the elementary and high school levels. (On the high school level he taught all levels of math, physics, chemistry, computer science and Latin.) He also completed five years of studies toward the priesthood, before pursuing his career in business.

In St. Joseph Seminary, Mark will be teaching science and geography during the first semester and health and English literature during the second semester. He will also be a welcome addition with his computer knowledge, in helping the seminarians learn the use of the computer. We welcome this outstanding layman to the staff of St. Joseph Seminary.

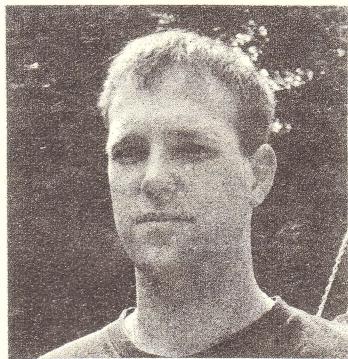


Mrs. Athena Abernathey

Mrs. Abernathey graduated from the University of Montana with a bachelor of arts degree in biology. Athena taught biology and was music director for a year at Loyola Sacred Heart High School. She is also the mother of eight children. An accomplished pianist, she has played the piano since age 8, and has given piano lessons

since age 16. Mrs. Abernathey will teach choir and music appreciation at St. Joseph Seminary.

*continued on page 4*



Mr. Joseph Strain

Mr. Strain graduated from St. Michael's Academy in Spokane in 1994, and has had further education in business management. His interests in horseback riding and other western sports led him to establish his own thriving business — making bull whips. In the six years since he began, Joe has produced thousands of

quality whips. With the spread of his reputation as a whip-maker have come requests for special-order whips to be used in Western films. Mr. Strain will teach physical education at St. Joseph Seminary, and will also assist, as needed, as a substitute teacher.

In addition to the above-mentioned teachers, there will be other staff members, such as a cook and elective teachers, whom we hope to profile in future issues of *The Guardian*.

### The priest factory

In his autobiography Fr. Paul Marx, founder of Human Life International, tells an interesting story about the parish in which he grew up. St. Michael's Parish in St. Paul, Minnesota, was founded by pioneering Benedictine monks in 1857, in a German Catholic enclave. Over the years so many vocations came from this parish that Archbishop Murray of St. Paul declared his belief that it had no equal in America in the production of vocations. By 1947, the year in which Fr. Marx was ordained, twenty-four priests and over one hundred nuns had come from that one parish! We can easily see why it was called the "priest factory." (Incidentally, Fr. Marx had a brother who was also a priest and two sisters who were nuns.)

What is of particular interest in this story, however, was the influence of minor seminaries in the development of vocations. According to Fr. Marx, when a Catholic high school was finally built for the parish, vocations dried up. How does one account for the drastic change? Fr. Marx states: "I think one

explanation for all the vocations before the Catholic high school was built was that the young often went away to minor seminaries or Catholic boarding schools" (*Faithful for Life*, p. 10). It would certainly be fascinating if we had specific figures to indicate the contribution that minor seminaries have made toward vocations to the priesthood in our country.

### Thank you!

Before signing off, I would like to thank all our benefactors. The response to our appeal for support has been very generous. We are most grateful for your contributions, especially now as we incur various start-up costs. Be assured of our daily prayers!

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

### 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 Theology, Latin 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.

### 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.

*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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