

THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

September 2001

Welcome!

Once again, the rush is on — to get ready for school. Somehow, no matter how well I plan, there are a number of summer projects that remain to be accomplished during the final two weeks of summer vacation. Fortunately, I have Bro. Sebastian here to help with some of these projects, which include the enlargement of our dining room by moving one of the walls.

Of course, there is also the cleaning and organizing of the seminary, assembling of textbooks, class preparation, and a host of other tasks. One way or another, with a flurry of activity and lots of help, the projects usually get done and everything is in order when school begins. Let us hope that the same happens this year.

In this first issue of our third year of operation, I have decided to reprint some articles that appeared in past issues of *The Guardian*. There are many subscribers to our newsletter who have recently been added to the mailing list and who have not read these articles. For those who have, I hope that their review is just as enjoyable as if you had not read them before.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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."

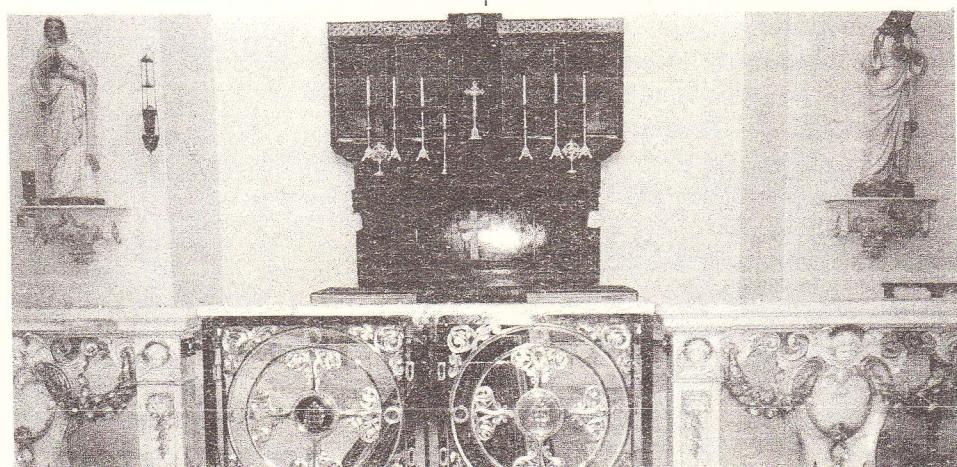
What is of particular interest in this story, however, was the influence of minor seminaries on the development of vocations. According to Fr. Marx, when a Catholic high school was finally built for the parish, vocations dried up. How does one account for the drastic change? Fr. Marx states: "I think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

September calendar

- 3 — Seminarians arrive; orientation
- 4 — First day of classes
- 7-8 — Annual camping trip
- 12 — Holy Name of Mary — chanted Vespers; Kevin's 17th birthday
- 24 — Our Lady of Ransom — chanted Vespers
- 26 — North American Martyrs feastday — no homework
- 27 — Philip's 17th birthday
- 29 — Feast of St. Michael — Father's anniversary

in our country over the years. Let us not just sigh for the return of the "good old days," but do what we can to foster vocations, for "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."



After many hours spent in refinishing by dedicated volunteers, the gates of our new altar rail at Mary Immaculate Queen Church were finally installed.

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 decreed 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 Christs. During adolescence — that crucial period of physical, mental and moral development — lasting habits, either good or bad, are 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., but 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.

Support a seminarian

One of the necessary preparations for a new academic year is budgeting. Although the generosity of our supporters has made the work of the seminary financially possible now for two years, we do have concerns for the new year. As you can imagine, all of our seminarians come from large Catholic families, many of whom cannot afford the entire tuition

amount, 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 instituted a scholarship program for our seminary. Through this program, donors who are financially able and willing to do so, contribute the cost of maintaining a seminarian each month. 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.

Similar programs have been in place in the Church in the past. Without such support, the work of seminary training could not continue. Imagine the blessing of being able to bring a young man to the altar of God as a priest, particularly a young man who would otherwise not be able to become a priest! If you are interested in this program, please contact me, as there are still some seminarians who need a part of their tuition paid through the scholarship program.

The Hands of Christ

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. Brothers have often been referred to as the "Hands of Christ," because Our Lord also fulfilled the tasks of manual labor for most of His life in Nazareth.

One of our veteran Brothers is Bro. Sebastian Kosch. Bro. Sebastian has been in the religious life for about twenty-five years. During that time he has helped to build or repair churches, or worked on other projects, in places such as Spokane, Omaha, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and, of course, at St. Joseph Seminary. During the past two weeks Brother has used his talents to perform a number of projects at the seminary — something he has done now for the past couple of summers. Without his dedicated efforts, we could not adequately prepare for the new school year. Thank you, Bro. Sebastian! May God reward you, and may He send us many more Brothers to help the priests with their work.

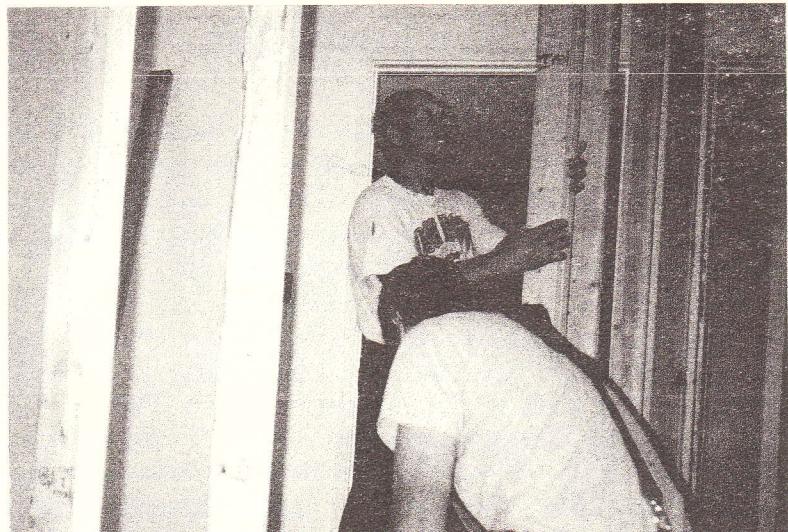
Mother of the First Seminarian

Our school year begins in September, a month filled with lovely feasts of Our Blessed Mother. It is certainly fitting that we should commence each recurring year during this month, when Jesus' Mother is so honored. For who could

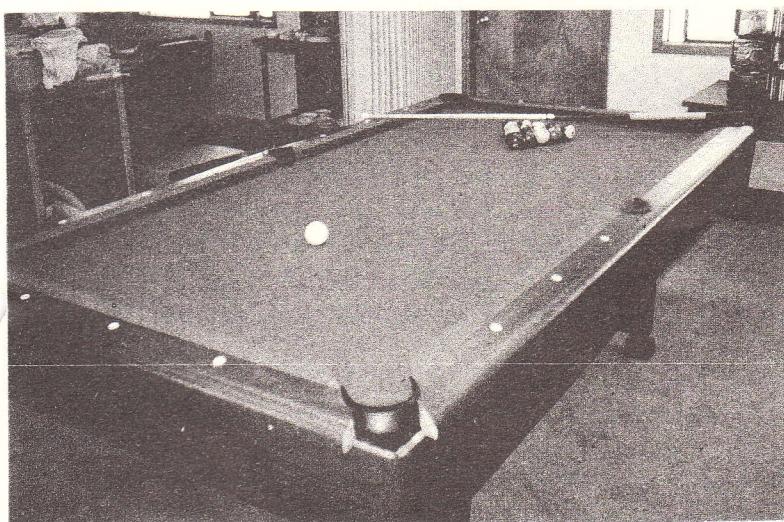
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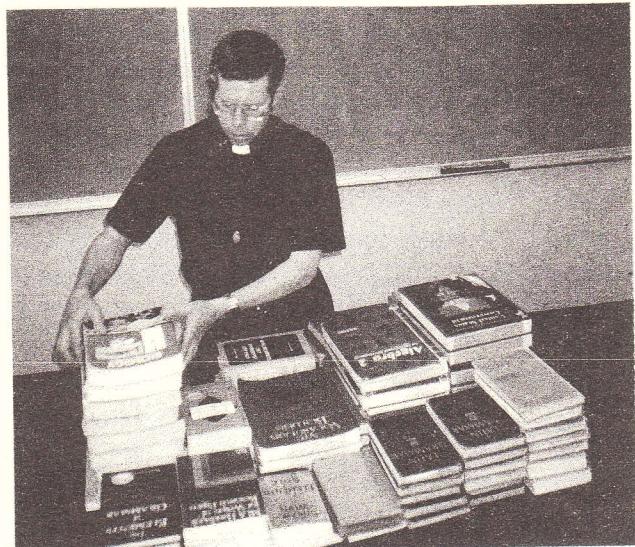
Mr. Cornel Strain puts in a new wall to expand our dining room.



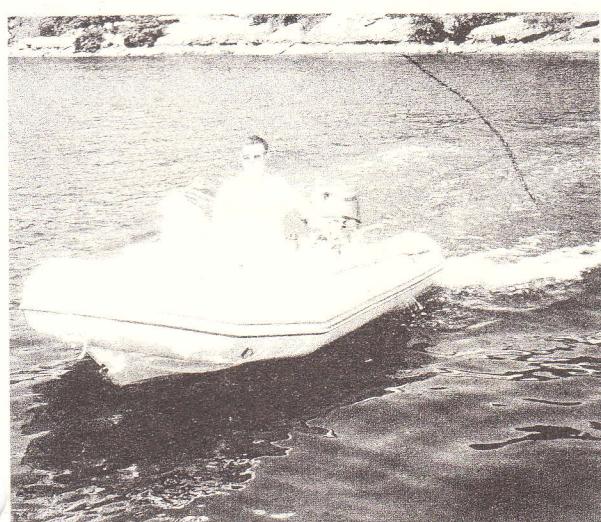
Bro. Sebastian has been a big help with various projects.



The seminarians will have a new means of recreation — a pool table picked up for a bargain at a local yard sale.



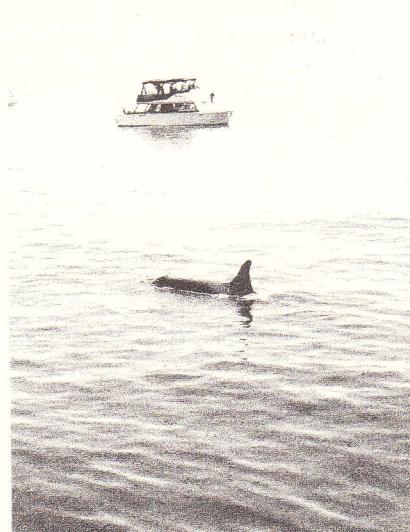
Father gathers the books for the new school year.



Father enjoys a few days of R & R among the San Juan Islands of western Washington.



Searching for Killer Whales off the west coast of San Juan Island.



A whale surfaces for air.

Mother of the First Seminarian

continued from page 2

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, 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.

This heavenly mother and queen is greatly loved by God. He gazes with 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 most Blessed Virgin Mary?

And so we begin a new 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.

A new and better year

I would like to thank again all those who have supported our seminary in the past. We could not have maintained the seminary now for two years without your help. Oftentimes the future looks bleak, but it is your support and encouragement that keep us going.

I would especially like to thank you for your prayers for the welfare and success of the seminary. Not only each of us individually, but our enterprises as well, are utterly dependent on Almighty God for their success. The 126th Psalm expresses this thought beautifully in the words: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." Our seminary has thus far been successful only by God's help. I am sure that this new school year will not be without its crosses and trials. We can be sure, too, that the devil will not rest and leave us alone.

So we ask that you pray daily to St. Joseph for our seminary. We are blessed to have such a wonderful and powerful patron in St. Joseph. Let us beg his help in this work of the seminary. May St. Joseph bless and reward each of you.

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, 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.

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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