



THE GUARDIAN

Two days before Ash Wednesday we enjoyed our second skiing trip. This was followed the next day by our final basketball game — a game that was particularly exciting, as we pulled out a 2-point victory over our main rival. That evening we had the final game of the ping-pong tournament, which had lasted for 2 weeks, using a double-elimination format. There were many exciting games throughout the tournament.

Lent began with a solemn High Mass on Ash Wednesday. The beauties of the Lenten liturgy remind us of the sorrow we must have for our sins, because of the Passion of Our Lord. Now we are preparing for our annual Lenten retreat, which includes an all-night vigil of adoration, during which we take turns spending an hour with the Blessed Sacrament.

It has been raining a lot lately, and now it is snowing — a reminder that winter is not quite over. But we are all looking forward to warmer weather, and we are sure that you are as well. May we all make a good Lent, which will lead us to a joyful celebration of Easter.

A mother above all others

by Alex Odom, gr. 12

The 25th of March is the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this joyous feast in the midst of Lent, we commemorate the most wonderful event of all time, the Incarnation.

As she was kneeling in prayer late one night, Mary was visited by a heavenly messenger, St. Gabriel. He announced to her that she would be the Mother of God. Troubled, yet ever

obedient and faithful to God, Mary replied, "How *shall* this be done?"

(By saying *shall*, she showed that she did not doubt the ability of God to accomplish a thing of such incredibility.) When the angel explained to her that she would conceive by the power of God she exclaimed, "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word.*" The moment Mary uttered this *Fiat*, the Son of God was made flesh in her womb, taking to Himself a human nature and becoming the Redeemer of men.

This was the moment promised to our first parents when they were expelled from the garden of paradise, the flame of hope that burned on through their descendants. This was the moment that the chosen people longingly anticipated for four thousand years. This moment marked the beginning of man's salvation. This moment would be the focal point of history, and only one person on earth knew of it: Mary. On this feast day we honor her, for without her consent, without her humble *Fiat*, the Incarnation would never have taken place. Not that God depended on her consenting: God is dependent on no one. No, God knew from all eternity that she would consent, but He willed that only when she consented would this incredible mystery take place. Ah, the love of God to do this for us poor sinners.

So let us on this blessed feast give thanks to God: to God the Father for giving His only Son for our salvation; to God the Son for becoming man and suffering for our salvation; to God the Holy Ghost through Whose power this mystery

March calendar

- 1 — Conclusion of our annual Lenten Retreat
- 15 — Annual seminary-sponsored parish breakfast & musical presentation in honor of St. Joseph & St. Patrick
- 19 — Feast of our seminary patron St. Joseph; High Mass; no classes
- 25 — Annunciation of BVM; chanted Vespers
- 26-27 — Third Quarter Exams
- 30 — Fourth Quarter begins

was accomplished. Let us also honor our Blessed Mother on this feast which is so dear to her heart, for on this day she became the Mother of God.

A first-time skier

by Robert Prado, gr. 11

When I came to the seminary last month one of the main subjects of conversation was that of our ski day. I had never been skiing before so I was

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Marcellus assists with the distribution of candles on February 2nd.

First-time skier

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very excited to try it. When the day finally came, the excitement was at its peak.

It was a perfect day with blue skies, and brilliant sunshine. We arrived at the lodge early, rented our skies, and after much trial and error managed to get them on. This being done, I embarked on the quest of making it to the ski lift. With the help of my patient companion Marcellus, I caught the lift and started up the mountain. It dropped us off at the "bunny hill", where I fulfilled Marcellus's prophecy by falling numerous times. The inspiring motivation and careful coaching of my partner, however, spurred me on, and I knew I could only get better and grow in confidence.

With this experience now behind me and with a little practice, I agreed to try something more difficult. This is where I got hooked on the thrill of skiing, for there is nothing like hurtling down a mountain at terrifying speeds on two skinny struts of wood.

By mid-day we had skied two of the three levels of difficulty on the mountain. The last level, called a "black-diamond," has the steepest and most difficult types of terrain. We felt it was time to try one so we picked the slope called "No Alibi." This was the highlight of my day and also the most exciting. The speed we attained on this run far surpassed any speed we had attained before. After six straight hours of non-stop skiing we decided to call it a day.

Skiing is one of the most thrilling things I have ever done in my lifetime. I will never forget it and I can't wait to do it again.

A joyful memory

by Angel B. Gamboa, gr.11

On February 6th I had the good fortune of accompanying Fr. Benedict on his mission to the Northeast. We left the seminary at around 4 p.m. on Friday morning. Our plane finally landed in Boston at around 5:00 p.m. Fr. Benedict said Mass shortly after we landed. And so Friday went by very quickly; the many hours in the plane did not actually seem too long because I had some homework to do—to be more exact, a lot of homework.

The next day Fr. Benedict said Mass in Rhode Island. Later, two kind parishioners gave me a brief but very enjoyable tour through Boston. We then had the enthronement to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the house of one of the parishioners. As soon as the ceremony was over, we had an exquisite dinner which has become one of the nicest memories of my life because we enjoyed the company of our fellow traditional Catholics. Delicious cake followed the dinner, and with it, more conversation and banter. Before I realized it, evening had again arrived, and the second day was gone.

On Sunday we had Mass in Boston and something to eat afterwards. As soon as we were done Father and I set out for our next parish, which took about a two-and-a-half hour drive. When we arrived there we had Mass again, and I had the privilege of serving both Masses. We also ate very pleasantly there and then set out on our way back to Boston. Although the days were just as long, they seemed drastically shortened but nevertheless enjoyable and at the same time, full of that simplicity which brings peace to the soul.

On Monday we again started the day with the Holy Sacrifice. After breakfast, I accompanied the Sisters to visit a shrine and do some errands. Once we were back, Fr. Benedict and I found some time to take a short walk and stopped at a little Italian restaurant for lunch. Then it was time to go back to the airport.

All the people were so welcoming that I did not feel like a stranger at anytime and it almost seemed as if everyone knew me. I learned many things on that trip and was encouraged and edified by the faith and devotion of all the people. In the future, I shall always remember this little trip as a great blessing and a nice break from the routine of seminary life.

The reward of faith

by José Castellanos, gr. 12

Here at the seminary we read a book every month, and this month I'm reading the book entitled *The Glories of Mary*, by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori. If you've never read it, I really recommend this book because it is a book par excellence. I want to share with you a story from that book.

There was once an unpretentious priest who loved Our Lady very tenderly. The priest had a very keen desire to see Our Lady in person, although it almost seems impossible that the Blessed Virgin Mary would appear to somebody just to satisfy his or her curiosity. The priest had an enormous amount of faith and, as the saying goes, "faith can move mountains." He never gave up. He continued to pray to be able to see her. One night while he was kneeling and praying an angel came through the wall and told him that Our Lady had heard his prayers and she would grant his wish. But there was one condition, that he would receive complete blindness after seeing her. The priest knowing that this was what he had desired for a long time said, "Yes, I accept the condition; the only thing I want is to see my Blessed Mother, and gaze at her!"

A few days elapsed and the priest was kneeling and praying as usual in his room when Our Lady appeared to him. By now, the priest had become a little reluctant about losing his sight and not being able to see all of the beautiful things which God has made for us. Therefore, he closed his right eye and maintained his left eye open. A pervasive feeling of bliss came over him when he saw her. She was beautiful and bright as the snow glistening in sun. He tried to open his right eye

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As you can see, there was still plenty of snow on the ground for our Candlemas procession.



Our shrines to St. Joseph, both at the church and at the seminary, receive a lot of attention, especially during March.



We always pray before our basketball games.



Another foul shot by José is on target.



Alex finally turned 17 this past month.



A crowd gathered to watch the final match of this year's ping pong tournament.

The reward of faith

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as soon as he could to see her with both eyes, but she had disappeared. His consternation was great and he was sad and sorry for himself, not because he had lost the sight of his left eye but because he had his right eye closed and he wasn't able to see Our Lady with both eyes.

He prayed and did penance asking to be able to see Our Lady once more. He said that this time he would accept total blindness in order to be able to see her. Our Lady was very pleased with this so she appeared a second time. He saw Our Lady and he was willing to give up his sight this time, knowing that he would give up seeing everything else. For he knew that seeing Our Lady is enough to make anybody not want to see anything else (except of course the beatific vision). But Our Lady wanted to reward him for his faith, devotion, and love. So instead of allowing him to lose the sight of his right eye, she cured the left one.

The higher Mass

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 10

Holy Mass is beautiful. In every Mass, God Himself comes to us and beckons us to come to Him. Isn't the descent of the Creator to His creatures beautiful? And while every Mass is beautiful because of this, its beauty is increased in the High Mass with incense. And on the feast of the Purification, I was privileged to assist at one, the most beautiful Mass I had ever attended.

I had seen High Masses with incense before, but never in private and never as close as in the side chapel. I had even served a few, but I was nervous and couldn't focus on the sacrifice itself. But in the side chapel I was alone: God, me and the beauty of the Mass. I was so close it was an ecstasy. At the first *Dominus vobiscum*, just before the celebrant ascended the altar, I knew that God was coming to sacrifice Himself for us. The beautiful thought of God's arrival and His sacrifice moved my soul to ascend the altar as well. United in spirit with the priest, I was ready to meet my God. It was the most beautiful Mass I'd ever attended, because I felt at one with the Sacrifice.

On the outside, everything was just as magnificent. Four other seminarians and our rector served God's coming. The noble look on their faces as they moved about the sanctuary was inspiring — especially the intricate movements of the thurifer and master of ceremonies as they glided to the

celebrant's side. And the chants of the choir were just as uplifting. Each performed his part so well, that it added to the beauty already present at the coming of Christ. At the Gospel's *Dominus vobiscum*, after the choir's chanting of the Gradual, there was a solemn silence as the whole church and servers listened with reverence to the Word of God.

Finally, at the Consecration, God came. The bells, incensing thurible, and awestruck faces of the servers added to the beauty of His arrival. God was here and my heart was racing. I prayed to receive the now-present God, and from the grand silence of the church, so was everyone else. At Holy Communion, our prayers were answered as we received our Creator. Afterwards, the *Dominus vobiscum* stated that not only was God with us, but now also within us. And that made it the most beautiful Mass I had ever attended.

“The same is that which purgeth away sins . . .”

The month of our glorious patron St. Joseph is upon us. At the seminary we recite additional devotions to this great saint during March, and we read at table a book on his virtue and powerful intercessory role. Just as Jesus obeyed his foster-father on earth, and Mary her chaste spouse, so now in heaven they delight in granting his requests. May we all devoutly honor this great saint, and may he deign to bring us closer to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

During the season of Lent we all perform penances in honor of our crucified Savior. There are many different ways of performing penance, all of which can be grouped into the three great works of penance: prayer, fasting and almsdeeds. As we have done in the past, we again appeal to you to make a sacrificial offering to our seminary for our annual Lenten Alms Drive.

We especially thank all who have supported the work of our seminary, the work of training future priests. God will surely reward the sacrifices you have made to support such works of the Church. “*For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting*” (Tobias, 12:9). May God bless each of you during this season of Lent. Be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers and at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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