



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

May 2010

The past month has been a whirlwind, it seems. It began with our annual trip to western Washington, which had to be shortened due to one of the priest's having a funeral. Then it was back to school and our routine. We have been doing plenty of outdoor work and also spending more time on our tree fort. Recently, we had the annual Forty Hours' adoration.

Now we have entered the final full month of school, as the time quickly passes. During May we will observe our regular customs: May altar with fresh flowers each day (each seminarian taking his turn to provide the flowers), May altar in the church, evening public Rosary each day, daily May crowning, etc. We all love the month of May and pray that our devotion to Mary will increase.

It is during this time also that we daily recite prayers in preparation for the act of Total Consecration to Mary on May 31. Those seminarians who wish (as it is optional) will prepare to make their consecration for the first time, while others prepare for a formal renewal of that consecration.

Soon it will be time for graduation and the end of school — time to say our good-byes to one another and to another school year. We hope to profit to the utmost from this final month of classes and seminary formation. As always we ask your prayers and assure you of ours in return.

Food for the soul

by Zachary Odom, gr. 11

It is during the week in the seminary. The time is just after the 7:00 a.m. Mass, when all of the seminarians and Father are assembled in the dining hall

for breakfast. The blessing of the food is said, and the seminarians from seniors to freshmen line up in front of the aromatic food that is laid out on the kitchen counter. The mouths of the seminarians start to water as they see the feast of toast, eggs, bacon, or any other meat, and potatoes strewn across the counter. They all stare at the food and begin to go through the line taking all that their hearts desire.

One seminarian picks up a plate and is about to go through the line when all of the other seminarians remind him: "Aren't you lector this week?" (Here at the seminary we take turns being lector each week. The seminarian who is lector has certain tasks like leading prayers and reading at meals.) At this the seminarian addressed smacks his forehead, puts down his plate and says, "Yes, I am." Hurriedly, the seminarian rushes back to the dining hall, picks up a book, which is usually a spiritual reading book or the life of a saint, waits for the signal from Father, and begins reading.

As the seminarian who is lector continues reading his stomach grumbles from the smell of the food, and as he takes a breath from reading the lines of the holy book, he tries at least to taste the food through the aromatic vapors emitted. Finally, after what seems like an eternity of suffering to the poor lector, another seminarian or priest who has finished eating relieves the lector seminarian of his duty and allows him to scavenge

May calendar

- 1 — Feast of St. Joseph the Worker; High Mass for seminary benefactors
- 5 — Mid-quarter
- 11 — Rogation procession
- 13 — Ascension of Our Lord; Holyday of Obligation; no classes
- 17 — Forrest's 17th birthday
- 26–28 — Spring camping trip
- 31 — Feast of the Queenship; outdoor procession and chanted Vespers

through the remaining scraps of the breakfast feast.

As you can see, being lector is a hard job, having to starve not only during breakfast, but dinner as well. But it is not without its benefits. We read many fascinating things about the saints

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One of the seminarians prepares the altar for the opening Mass of the Forty Hours' Adoration.

Food for the soul

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during the morning readings and at night we read a chapter from the Bible.

I love learning about the saints, their struggles through life, and how they conquered them. The books on the lives of the saints show that they were normal humans, people like anyone else, but they (the books) also show that anyone, including a sinner, can become the greatest of saints. I enjoy learning about Christ and his many miracles, and the prophecies concerning Him, but I also delight in reading the Books of the Old Testament: the Babylonian Captivity, Esther, the Machabees, Job, etc.

It may be hard to suffer through reading in the mornings, missing for a time the nourishment of our bodies, but what we gain through the readings of the lives of the saints is much more precious — food for the soul.

Hay caramba!

by Juan Garcia, gr. 12

Seventy-five degrees during the day, and at night fresh and cool is how God has permitted the weather recently. It seems like we are going to have a hot, dry summer. The snow we had has not been sufficient to keep the ground moist. I guess “Global Warning” was “a little off” this year, at least in the northwest. For most of us, the weather was unexpected and although many of us complained, it has its good side — an early spring.

To begin with, before the grass began to grow and the trees had not yet bloomed, we organized a work party day. We raked every possible and visible hillside, planted four trees, sowed grass seed and fertilized the lawn areas. Some of the parish ladies planted some flowers and a delicious lunch was provided. A lot was accomplished on that first day.

Now, while we let nature do her work with sun and rain, we have been working on some other projects at the seminary. Four little pigs that grow noticeably each day and who try to bite my shoes when I go inside the corral, are for now in my charge.

Another big project we’ve been working on is building a fence for our garden. Each year we try to grow a garden. Lettuce, radishes, carrots, onions, squash, pumpkins, peas, tomatoes and corn are the main vegetables, but last year the deer got most of it. But not this year! After doing and redoing — and redoing — holes for the posts, we are going to have a fence. I said “redoing and redoing” because they were not well done the first time. Fr. Bernard wants the fence to be done properly, so we had to dig the holes again. As to the lonely two feet holes that were dug in the wrong place, I’ll plant some tomatoes!

A very strange article about a strange subject

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 11

Readers will recall the “gong of God” that wakes us up in the morning. I rise to my chagrin, not because of lack of sleep (necessarily) or because of the earliness of the hour (6:20 a.m.), but because I must soon make my bed.

Ridicule me not! I’ve meant what I’ve said.

I absolutely hate making my bed.

And rhyming aside, my to-not-ever-make-a-bed-because-I-think-it’s-dumb opinion is due to a traumatic experience of my youth — which I can remember only in monosyllables. (I was four, one syllable words were all I knew). The conversation of mother and son went thus:

“Wake up.”

“No.”

(fifteen minutes later) “Wake up.”

“O.K.”

(another fifteen minutes of not waking up: I was duplicitous at four.) “Wake up!”

“O.K.!”

“And make your bed.”

(still drowsy) “No.”

“Why not?”

“Why?” (I was talkback-y and temperamental at four.)

“I said so.”

“O.K.” (I gave up: I was short of temper at four.)

And so I went from this time of my youth to less-youthfulness, to adolescence, to pre-adulthood, and now to post-pre-adulthood at the minor seminary. As a rule, the seminarian makes his bed every morning. And as a rule, the seminarian spends five minutes per day making his bed: two sheets, hospital fold, bed spread, fancy pillow fluffing — we are quite obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ly about our beds. But on-the-other-handed-ly, in consequence to a breach of this rule, the violating seminarian is condemned to dishes!

Readers will recall the tragic youth’s tale: the insistence of his mother, the child’s chagrin and four-year-old’s question: “Why?”

Condemn myself to dishes? Certainly, no, sir.

But I say the boy’s question deserves a fair answer!

Rhyming doubly aside, why? A bed remains a bed, a sheet remains a sheet, whether made or unmade. What is the personal consequence of non-adherence to this rule? None. So there’s nothing to it! A bed is made to be slept on, a sheet, to be slept in! But no bed, no sheet, was made to be made!!

It takes five minutes a day to make a bed. That’s one/two hundred and eighty-eighth of a day, or thirty hours per year (more than a whole day [twenty-four hours]) or two thousand, two hundred and eighty-one hours and fifteen minutes per

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The children line up before Mass on the morning of their First Holy Communion Day.



Several years ago the seminarians started building Fort Chabanel and have added to it every year since.



The seminarians have enjoyed working on their tree house.



Robert holds the post steady as Zachary uses a level to make sure it is straight.



We spent most of a Saturday digging holes and placing the fence posts.



It was very windy on the bridge over Deception Pass.

A strange subject

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lifespan (seventy-five years), which accumulates to about four thousand, five hundred and sixty-three (rounded-up) Rosaries.

Who would wish to make his bed above saying the Rosary? (!)

Hmm?

Personal appearance, you say? Self-esteem? Discipline?: terrible to lose for not making a bed. Orderliness? Hygiene? Slumber comfort?: perhaps six to-be-losts give an adequate answer. And I refuse to lose. I will make my bed and keep my six goodies — especially slumber comfort.

Hmm?

Dishes, you say? — For questioning the rule?

*Oh, I wish I'd not ever said what I'd said,
About breaking the rule of making my bed!*

The finest vista

by Robert Prado, gr. 12

I enjoy road trips. The reminiscing of old ones or anticipating future ones. The latest addition to the reminiscing category was our trip to western Washington.

On this annual Easter road trip we did little else but drive, drive, and did I mention drive? Two days that led us a thousand miles around the state up and down to no particular destination, other than those which we encountered along the way. Would I say this trip was worthless? Of course not! It was a road trip that showed us nearly the entire landscape of Washington. The flatlands were conquered, the Cascades crossed, the Columbia River spanned, and Seattle breached, all in a day. The second, showing us even more as we explored Whidbey Island, and stood atop Deception Pass; not in the least was this trip worthless.

It is all so fascinating to me: the continuous canvas that the Infinite Artist has created, flashing by the window for miles on end, hours unending. Like no other work of art this one is forever changing and moving, as the car's wheels roll on. The Grand Canyon can pass by one day, and the next the Grand Tetons; there are no limits to His masterpiece, there are no limits to the finest vista that is a road trip. The very freedom of either turning left or right, to San Francisco or Lake Tahoe, relieves the pins and needles of cramped legs. The speed, the

direction, and the decisions are all up to the "road trippers" making a road trip the ultimate way to view our country.

All it takes is a backpack, and a pair of wheels (a few grand would also help). Be it north, south, east, or west, the finest vista will show you all. It is the only way to realize the land we live in, the masterpiece that is our country; the masterpiece that is God's country.

Honoring the best of all mothers

Every child of Mary — and may we all be accounted as such — thrills to welcome again Our Lady's month. Devotion to Mary is something we Catholics have imbibed from our Mother, the Catholic Church. It is a devotion that is nurtured with each Holy Communion, each Rosary, each act of piety and profession of Faith. Pity the poor souls outside the Church who do not understand what it is to love and venerate our heavenly Mother. And pity as well those Catholics who are void of a true devotion to Mary.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort cautions his readers to be wary of those critical persons who reject the simple piety of humble souls. In their pride, he tells us, "They cannot see, without uneasiness, simple and humble people on their knees before an altar or an image of Our Lady." We must also be on guard against scrupulosity, which causes one to think that he is somehow giving too much devotion to Mary, as though Our Lord is offended by the honor we give His Mother!

No, let us stay far from the advice of such misguided souls, and say rather with the saints, "We have not yet praised, exalted, honored, loved and served Mary as we ought. She deserves still more praise, still more respect, still more love, and still more service" (*True Devotion*, paragraph 10). May this year's month of May be for each of us a month in which our devotion expands with childlike love. Yes, make a nice shrine in your home, a "May altar." But remember, that a true devotion is not merely external — it must be primarily interior. May Our Lord give us toward His Mother a heart full of tender love, like that of a child for its mother. For truly, Mary is the best of all mothers.

May Our Blessed Mother bless you and your families during this month, dedicated to her. And may she reward you for your support of our seminary. Please continue to pray for us, especially for the intention of worthy vocations to our seminary.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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