



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

June 2010

**F**inally, after a couple late frosts, the weather has turned decidedly warmer and we have finished planting the garden. We also now have goats (6 of them!) and a donation of two tractors and a riding lawnmower to help with the outdoor work. But what we especially look forward to is our camping trip this week (postponed from last week). We will have to tell you all about that in the next issue of *The Guardian*.

Yesterday we had a beautiful procession in honor of the Queenship of Mary. According to our custom here, all the parishioners bring flowers to place in vases at Our Lady's outdoor shrine. Then we stop there for prayers during the procession. Next Sunday we will have the most important and most beautiful of our outdoor processions — that of Corpus Christi. For this procession we will all help with constructing the outdoor arches and decorating the path.

In a few days His Excellency, Bishop Pivarunas, will come for the graduation ceremony. Then it's time to pack and say our good-byes. A couple seminarians will be staying for the summer (or at least a good part of it), so they will keep you informed during the summer months of the activities at the seminary during the summer. We particularly ask your prayers for new vocations for the coming year, and we thank you for your support and prayers during the past year. May God bless you all!

## Time really does fly

by Robert Prado, gr. 12

**A** year-and-a-half has passed since I first arrived here at St. Joseph

Seminary. Since then so much has happened. Every time I look back in retrospect, I get caught up in the whirlwind of the memories of what I have experienced here.

I had never before been a part of such a place as the seminary. After being here this long, I have come to realize that this is a truly special place; there is no other like it. I realize that it is far more than any other school, for here we have lived together like a family — we are a family.

Also looking back, I realize that I couldn't have been at a better place to finish my high school years. The teaching and education, the deep strengthening of my spiritual life, and the friendship of my fellow seminarians are just a few of the benefits I have reaped by coming here.

However, the most prominent memory of my time here, probably due to the number of times I have expected it, is the anticipation of my graduation. I have always looked forward to this day but it always seemed so far away, as if I would never get there. It always seemed that the years were too great a boundary to cross, as though time would never fly but just drag along . . . like a snail. My anticipation had only grown this last month of May, as I counted the days, and then the hours. People were always saying, "Oh, it will be over before you know it." I had a really hard time

## June calendar

- 1-2 — End-of-year camping trip
- 3 — Feast of Corpus Christi
- 5 — Senior graduation
- 6 — Annual Corpus Christi Procession
- 7 — School-wide program and awards ceremony
- 8 — Last day of school; seminarians leave for home
- 11 — Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

believing them. Yet, as I was soon to find out, they were right.

Since this is the last *Guardian* article I am ever going to write, I want to thank you for reading all of my articles. I hope you enjoyed reading them as much as I enjoyed writing them. I really can't believe this is my last one. For I am graduating — time really does . . . fly.



*The weather cooperated beautifully for our outdoor Rogation Procession.*

## The big assignment

by Zachary Odom, gr. 11

**D**eo gratias! The end of the school year is finally here. The course of studies is winding down, and I can finally see the clear blue skies of summer. After a year of homework, piled on top of homework, it is nice to just breathe and relax. It is just so good to get that feeling at the end of each school year, the feeling of accomplishment. It is also nice, especially at this time, to know that the homework gets progressively easier . . . or so I thought.

It came up very suddenly: one minute we were all sitting in our desks enjoying the pleasure of an easy day; the next minute Fr. Benedict walked in and gave us a big assignment. The assignment is for theology, and it is a report and presentation on something we have learned during the past year. The presentation has to be done on the computer, on Power Point, and it has to include at least 20 slides.

We basically have to give a class, going into detail on our topic, speaking for twenty minutes. I don't know about you, but I get a little nervous during public speaking, even though I have had a speech class. So as you can see, this twenty minute report is not helping. On top of that we have to give it in front of Fr. Benedict and the other seminarians. It's not that speaking on theology is a bad or difficult thing — it is just that I am afraid I might say something incorrect and . . . well, there goes my grade.

The homework isn't all bad though; it is really interesting learning facts about our Faith, seeing all the work that is put into the presentation, and knowing that it will pay off in the end. I thank God for the time I spent here this year, allowing me to grow in the knowledge of my Faith. I also thank Him for the many blessings he has bestowed upon me. God permitting, I will write to you next year!

## No saints on earth

by Juan Garcia, gr. 12

**H**as anyone said you are holy? Did you feel proud? There were times when a few people said I was very spiritual or holy. On many occasions I did not reply, but when the conversation was over, I realized that pride had conquered me.

Perhaps people are just trying to show their gratitude for whatever you have done for them, and that is one way to express themselves, not intending to make you feel proud. Though people look only at the exterior, God, who sees the heart, knows with what end the affair was done. Now your conscience bothers you, and whenever you are praying in common you think people are calling you a saint, and that makes you pray less devoutly. If you do not humble yourself, your prayer life could be disturbed. The best way to prevent this from happening again is to humble yourself and find the opportunity to ask him/her not to say that again.

Every Thursday we have a spiritual conference with Fr. Benedict. In one of these, I remember his talking about charitable matters in regards to your companions. A very good act to practice, he said, is *NEVER SPEAK OF SOMEBODY'S VIRTUES BEFORE HIS FACE, NOR OF HIS FAULTS BEHIND HIS BACK*. He even wrote this down on the board. (Classes are normally held in the chapel, but this one was in the classroom.)

You can always thank a person or do something for him; however, praises and lofty words in front of his face can cause the person to become proud. Moreover, if you speak of his bad deeds behind his back you could ruin his reputation and make other people dislike him, when the problem was only between him and you, not everyone else. That is why this rule should be kept in our minds — to keep friendship alive.

I also remember how St. Jerome used to write letters, exhorting others to pray and do penance for their sins, for we are all sinners. In the world there are only people who try to do good and be instruments of God's grace, but there is still a debt to be paid. In that sense, there are no saints on earth.

## Wisdom gained on my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday

by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 11

**P**lease understand, I was quite excited. Maybe you've had more than one seventeenth birthday, but I've only got one. So it was quite a special occasion for me, you see.

As it was so special to me, I spent the eve of the seventeenth annual commemoration of my birth in waiting for the day. I stayed up 'till midnight, said "Happy Birthday, Forrest," and went to bed. Then, in bed but still excited, I could not sleep and said to myself, "Great: You're seventeen — and later you'll get cake and ice cream and lots of candy — and much later you'll get diabetes — but for now, you're seventeen, so live it up."

Aha! You see where this article is going: 1) I should never have taken advice from myself, and 2) I should never have stayed up.

So later that morning I woke up feeling as if I had not woken up: limbs, locked in place without energy; brain, dizzy like an anvil had fallen on my head; and stomach, upside-down, inside-out and voicing its discomfort. Basically, I woke with a body-wide fatigue, a head-specific headache and a volcanic stomachache — I was really sick. I realized then that my illness was due to my lack of sleep, due to my staying up, due to my listening to Forrest. "Forrest!" I yelled at myself, "Why did you want to stay up so late for your birthday? Now I'm sick and can't get any cake or ice cream or candy — much less diabetes during my middle age." Infuriated at myself as I was, I remained sick.

And so I continued for the duration of my birthday. Though my limbs did loosen, they only did so in an uncontrollable shiver; though my head was healing from the

*continued on page 4*



*The priests and seminarians led the chanting of the Litany of the Saints during the procession.*



*The seminarians enjoyed a trip to the park on Ascension Thursday.*



*The seminary is finally getting a much-needed roof repair.*



*. . . another view of the roofing project.*



*Marty and Juan cut and package meat that was recently donated.*



*Our goats seem to enjoy their new home.*

## Wisdom gained

*continued from page 2*

impact of the anvil, it still felt as though someone was using it *as an anvil*; and though my stomach had calmed its volcanic upside-down/inside-out-ed-ness, it did so by erupting all my insides to my outside. It was quite fun and quite a happy birthday.

Aha! But, you see, the article does not end here. Forrest spoke up again: "It was stupid to stay up and that's why you got sick. You kept a vigil for a worldly reason. All you were excited about this day — 'seventeen', 'cake', 'ice cream', 'candy', and eventually 'diabetes' — are all worldly concerns. Did you ever think about the spiritual side: heaven, how on this one day you will be one year closer to it and God, or penance?" And then it dawned on me: my sickness was God's way of telling me I needed more penance. I resolved to do as God was telling me: to finish this day and this seventeenth year in the spirit of penance.

Still sick, I crawled into bed ready to end my one and only seventeenth birthday, when my door was thrown open and there were the other seminarians and Fr. Bernard with my beloved cake, all singing "Happy Birthday". And, in fact, it was: "Happy" because of the wisdom of penance I'd gained on my seventeenth birthday.

## Like seeds

Last year we didn't have much success with our garden. The seminarians planted and the deer feasted. One of the seminarians even woke in the middle of the night and witnessed the nocturnal feeding visits of the fauna. So this year we are prepared with a high fence. Thus our garden has been planned and planted, and we now await the results.

Doubtless, those of you who have a garden have enjoyed watching the seeds germinate and grow, and you especially enjoy eating of what you sowed. It is much the same way in the spiritual life. We work at planting (spiritual reading), watering (reception of graces from the sacraments and prayer) and weeding (mortification of our fallen nature). In time, these labors produce their fruit.

Gardening also is analogous to the labors of parents and teachers. Just as the gardener must be patient and not expect immediate results, so also parents must work "day in and day out" to exhort, instruct and correct their charges. In the end, the parent who has labored at this lofty task faithfully will be

## 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.



*Our seminarians, staff and Stella (the dog) pose for a group picture at the end of the school year.*

rewarded at beholding the fruit of such labor. We teachers also may take satisfaction at the end of the school year in what God accomplishes in the souls of our students through our instrumentality. The school year is long and fatiguing, but the results are eternal.

We thank you, our readers and supporters, for being a part of this important work of education. For it requires the cooperation of many individuals to make for a successful seminary or school. Please continue to pray for our seminary, especially for more vocations. May God abundantly reward you for your charity, as only He can. And may He deign to bless your families and loved ones. Be assured of a daily remembrance in our grateful prayers.

— Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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