



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

July 2010

Dear friends of our seminary,

Our school year concluded with a whirl of activity. There were the wonderful outdoor processions, the final tests and school projects, the camping trip, then graduation, and, finally, closing ceremonies and award presentations. At length we bade farewell to the seminarians and settled into the summer routine.

Summer projects, in addition to various outdoor tasks, include an attempt to repaint the entire interior of the seminary — something badly needed. The last time the rooms were painted in this building was about 25 years ago. Furthermore, there has been some settling, so cracks in the walls and ceiling have to be repaired here and there. All in all, this project will take the entire summer, and may even extend into the school year, what with the various other chores and activities, such as the coming Boys' Camp.

But our summer is not all work. We are sure to take some time off for much-needed R&R. Juan will go to Chicago to visit his relatives for a couple of weeks, and Fr. Bernard is planning a camping trip later in the summer. As for myself, I was privileged to conduct a group of pilgrims to shrines in Italy for a couple of weeks in mid-June. Below you will find a summary of our trip, which truly was a source of grace. Such an opportunity reminds us of the treasures that are part of our heritage. May we grow daily in an appreciation of our Faith and all the blessings it brings us in this life and the next.

As always, we ask for your continued prayers for our seminary, especially for vocations. I cannot yet

say how many new seminarians will be present when the new school year begins. Many apply, but most of them do not follow through. Please pray for the young men who are considering the seminary, that they will follow God's call and reject the allure of the world.

Again, I thank you for your support and pray that God will bless each of you with an abundant outpouring of His grace.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

At the tombs of the saints

To journey to the tombs of the saints and other holy places has long been a part of Catholic culture. We read throughout the Middle Ages of the faithful journeying on pilgrimage. Favorite destinations were, first and foremost, the Holy Land. (The Crusades were fought, at the urging of the popes, to secure the safety of the pilgrims and their liberty to venerate the places hallowed by Our Lord's life.) In addition, many Catholics journeyed to Rome, to venerate the tomb of St. Peter, and to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, to venerate the shrine of St. James the Greater. In England, the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket was a favorite pilgrimage destination.

These travels should not surprise us, for even worldlings have their destinations. (Thus we have seen recently the many fans who traveled to Los Angeles to show

July calendar

- 1 — Feast of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus; special devotions
- 19-23 — Semi-annual Priests' Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska
- 25-31 — Annual Boys' Summer Camp at the seminary

their love for Michael Jackson, on the anniversary of his death!) We could say that the desire to express one's Faith by kneeling before the mortal remains of God's chosen ones is a part of our Catholic heritage. Even in the Old Testament we see the practice of spiritual journeys or pilgrimages, in the law requiring the Chosen People after their dispersion to journey to the temple in Jerusalem once a year, if at all possible. Thus, at Pentecost there were

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Fortunately, the weather cooperated and the rain held off until after our annual Corpus Christi procession.

At the tombs of the saints

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men “from every nation under heaven” who were present for the first sermon of St. Peter. Indeed, are we not all pilgrims, wayfarers in this world, through which we journey to our heavenly home?

Although there is evidence of Christian pilgrimage in the very earliest centuries, they became more common beginning with the reign of Constantine, whose mother journeyed to Jerusalem to find the Holy Cross. In the Middle Ages this practice became so popular that highways were constructed to the favored destination, lined with hospices and other accommodations for the pilgrims. The Protestant Reformation greatly discouraged this practice, which nevertheless continued throughout the Counter-reformation. Finally, in the 19th and 20th centuries, we find the various apparitions of Our Lady, which revived the practice, made all the easier in our time with the convenience of modern modes of transportation.

The reasons for undertaking a pilgrimage are various. It may be undertaken in fulfillment of a vow, to petition a great favor, or as an opportunity to give thanks to God and the saints for favors received. Pilgrimages also prove a means of learning more about our Faith, as we are impressed by being in the actual locations where our favorite saints lived. The Faith comes alive and our fervor is rekindled as we kneel before the sacred remains of God’s dearest servants.

The Council of Trent affirms the value of such a practice, by teaching “that the holy bodies of the holy martyrs and of others living with Christ . . . are to be venerated by the faithful, through which many benefits are bestowed by God on men, so that those who maintain that veneration of and honor are not due to the relics of the saints, or that these and other memorials are honored by the faithful without profit, and that the places dedicated to the memory of the saints for the purpose of obtaining their aid are visited in vain, are to be utterly condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned and now again condemns them” (Twenty-fifth Session).

But how does one honor the saints? First, we must learn about their holy lives. Second, strive to imitate their virtues, which pleases them greatly. Further, we honor them by praying to them and also by showing respect for their relics and images. The bodies of all Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost, having been anointed with holy oils in Baptism, Confirmation and Extreme Unction. Moreover, the bodies of the saints are sure to be with God one day, after the resurrection. Thus, we venerate them by showing respect to their sacred relics.

Another act of devotion, greatly pleasing to the saints, is to offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for the graces that he bestowed upon them. Each saint understands, far better than we can, that it was only by the grace of God that they were able to sanctify themselves. They owe gratitude to God for their creation and for all the blessings they received

throughout their lives. Humble in this realization, they delight in our giving thanks to God on their behalf.

Let me now tell you a little bit about our recent pilgrimage. We were a dozen souls, from various parishes around the country, who gathered in Rome in early June to begin a 14-day pilgrimage. During these two weeks we visited the major basilicas of Rome, several shrines of Our Blessed Mother, a couple of Eucharistic miracles, and the tombs of many saints, perhaps a dozen of whose bodies are incorrupt. Each day included Holy Mass, the Rosary and other prayers in common, as well as readings on the saints or shrines we were about to visit.

We began with several days in Rome, where we visited all the major basilicas and various other churches. From Rome we traveled to Genazzano, to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel, before continuing south to Mugnano, where is found the shrine of St. Philomena. This dear little saint made sure that we recited extra prayers, as the engine in our bus over-heated and we were compelled to wait on the side of the highway for a replacement. Finally, we arrived safely at our destination and poured out our love and devotion to the “Patroness of the children of Mary”.

The following day included a visit to the shrine of St. Gerard Majella, that favorite “mothers’ saint,” on our way to Bari, where we prayed at the mortal remains of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children and a favorite of everyone. Next, we journeyed up the eastern coast of Italy to Monte Gargano, an ancient shrine of St. Michael, and then on to the shrine of the Eucharistic miracle at Lanciano. I was surprised in our readings to learn that St. Louis Marie de Montfort had visited Monte Gargano in the 18th century, one of numerous incidents which could be cited, of saints going on pilgrimage.

As we continued up the coast, we visited the famous Holy House at Loreto. Fortunately for us, there were few pilgrims there at the time, so we were able to spend time in the Holy House to our hearts’ content. From Loreto we went to the lovely town of Osimo, where reposes the body of St. Joseph of Cupertino. In addition to praying at his tomb, we were able to visit the rooms where he lived the final few years of his life.

In Bologna we saw the incorrupt body of St. Catherine of Bologna, unique in that her body is in a sitting position! We next visited the beautiful church of St. Dominic, where his body reposes in a magnificent reliquary. In Lucca we prayed before the incorrupt body of St. Zita, patron saint of domestic workers, and also before the remains of St. Gemma Galgani, a modern saint. In Florence we prayed at the tombs of St. Antoninus and St. Julianna, among others.

Traveling south toward Assisi, we stopped at Siena, where there is the relic of the head of St. Catherine. After her death the citizens of her native city clamored for the return of their most famous native daughter. But the Romans were not about

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Beautiful floral arches adorned the path of the Blessed Sacrament.



Juan and Robert carried the thuribles for incensing the Blessed Sacrament.



After his graduation Robert addressed the gathering in our parish hall.



For our camping trip to Priest Lake, we rented a cabin this time, which came in handy when it rained.



Without the normal cooks on the camping trip, the seminarians did the cooking . . . and enjoyed it.



Marty builds a sandcastle along the beautiful shores of Priest Lake.

At the tombs of the saints

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to part with the incorrupt body of the saint. So her confessor Blessed Raymond of Capua came up with the solution of severing the head from the body to be sent to Siena, while the remainder of the relic would be kept in Rome, in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Amazingly, when the relic of her head was carried into Siena in procession, the elderly mother of the saint was among the throng that welcomed her home. Incidentally, St. Catherine of Siena was one of 25 children!

We also visited Cortona, where there is the relic, also incorrupt, of the “Magdalen of the Seraphic Order,” as St. Margaret is called. After living publicly in sin for 9 years, she repented and amended her life so thoroughly, together with the practice of severe austerities, that she merited the closest friendship with Our Lord. St. Margaret of Cortona is a model for penitents and a very powerful intercessor with God.

Assisi is a not-to-be-missed destination in Umbria. Not only do St. Francis and St. Clare repose in their native town, but there are various shrines connected with the life of the “Little Poor Man,” such as San Damiano, the Portiuncula, and Rivotorto. Despite the sacrilegious misuse of this saint of peace, in the blasphemous meeting of religions for the “World Day of Prayer” in 1986, Assisi remains a peaceful place where the memory of St. Francis is very much alive.

Before returning to Rome we journeyed to the hill-top town of Cascia. Even those pilgrims who had a tough time with the many winds and turns of the roads en route had to admit that this destination was more than worth the trouble. St. Rita, the saint of the impossible, is a favorite of many. Her life seems to be one series of miraculous events — a testimony to the power of her prayers. Not only is her body still incorrupt, but one can see to this day, in the convent courtyard, the tree that grew from the dead stick which she had planted and watered out of obedience.

At length, we returned to Rome for one final day of visiting various churches that we had missed before, including the tombs of many more saints. Thanks be to God, in spite of the inevitable crosses and aches and pains, none of our pilgrims became seriously ill, and we have all returned home safely. This pilgrimage will forever remain an inspiration for each of us, especially as a reminder to honor the saints. Remember that when you honor the saints, you honor God in

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.



While on pilgrimage Father was able to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, Italy.

and through them. After all, they are His saints, first and foremost. This is what we mean when we pray at the conclusion of the Divine Praises: *Blessed be God, in His angels and in His saints.*

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