



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

November 2010

Where did all this stuff come from? Lately we have been cleaning our basement and carport. It has been no small task, what with the accumulation of a couple old refrigerators, scraps of wood, old insulation, and an assortment of other odds and ends. So much had accumulated in fact, that we were unable to park our vehicles under the carport. Now, thanks to everyone's hard work, our basement and carport are tidy and orderly.

The past month has also found us playing flag football (which we enjoy, even when we don't win — which has been more often than not!), harvesting apples and pressing apple cider. The abundance of apple trees on our property means plenty of apple crisp, apple sauce and apple cider, much of which goes into the freezer.

As the weather turns colder, we will continue our daily visits to the cemetery and pray for our beloved dead. For we remember that we will be in their position one day, dependent on the suffrages of others. Let us then do all we can to help the Poor Souls while we are able.

## The little things

by Aedan Gilchrist, gr. 11

This is the first time I have had the chance to write an article for *The Guardian*. I have been in the minor seminary for just one month. It has been difficult being away from my family, but I take comfort in knowing that I am being watched out for.

First, there is our Blessed Mother, who has been a great comfort to me in my troubles. But there is another very close to me that I wish to write about today, St. Dominic Savio. This young,

but very strong saint, was once introduced to me a long time ago by my sister Stephine, but instead of embracing the young saint, I ignored him and just put the prayer card on my shelf and left it.

So for this saint to reappear in my life makes me wonder if he is looking out for me. Well, this time he is playing a much bigger role in my life. I have now a special devotion to him, and he has become my favorite saint. I firmly believe in the resolution he made at his First Holy Communion: "death before sin." Trying to live a holy life as he did and preferring death over sin is what we should all try to do, because it is our most loving duty to God.

How do we live a holy life as did St. Dominic? We make sure we fervently pray to Our Lady every day, get to confession as often as possible and better prepare ourselves when going to receive Our Lord, having a special intention every time we receive Him.

The last but very important point is to strive for perfection in the little things. Offer up every little thing in your life. Offer up your meals, leisure and work, and say things like "Blessed be the names of Jesus and Mary." It may not seem like much, but God hears and sees everything we do. Striving for

## November calendar

- 1 — Feast of All Saints; Holy-day of Obligation; no classes
- 2 — All Souls' Day; special observances for the Poor Souls; Second Quarter begins
- 4 — Final football game
- 12 — Seminary outing
- 24 — Seminary Talent Show
- 25–28 — Thanksgiving Break; no classes

perfection means to do your best all the time in everything because you wouldn't want to offer up anything less than your best to God. And this is why we should do our best to watch out for sin, for sin is not something you want to give God.

Whatever your age, be like the young St. Dominic and offer up everything to God. Be willing to sacrifice the pleasures of this world — St. Dominic did and he is now unbelievably close to God — so close in fact, that in one of St. John Bosco's

*continued on page 2*



*The Conference guests visited our seminary on the last day of the Fatima Conference.*

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## Little things

*continued from page 1*

dreams he appeared as God's ambassador. These pleasures we sacrifice can be something as simple as not eating something you really want to eat like, say, a cookie or a piece of cake. You can offer this sacrifice to God and not only show love and receive grace, but also gain more self control. This in turn will help you to love God more.

Here are the resolutions St. Dominic Savio made at his First Holy Communion:

- I will sanctify the Sundays and holydays.
- My friends will be Jesus and Mary.
- I will go to Confession more often and to Holy Communion as often as allowed.
- I prefer death rather than sin.

It has been a delight to write for you and I hope this helps.

## God's time is the best

*by Mathias Nwankwo, gr. 12*

Aristotle stated: "An unexamined life is not worth living," because he saw that this world is full of evil deeds. Some people serve idols, such as money. Others pray for awhile, but then give up prayer, simply because it seems that no answer comes from God. They do not realize that when asking a favor from God, you must have humility. Remember, also that Almighty God might give you trials, even misfortune, to test your faith in Him.

Abraham was made the father of many nations. His name was great; those who blessed him were blessed and those who cursed him were cursed. His wife Sara delivered a child at an extreme old age, all because of the faith and humility he had in God.

There is also the Latin saying *Cantare est orare* (to sing is to pray). Some people find it difficult to sing, either closing the mouth or humming the song without knowing that when you are singing devoutly to God, you are equally praying for the second time. Hymns can serve as a means of giving our prayers more effectiveness. Remember that the Israelites used prayers and praises to break down the walls of Jericho.

Lastly, I will not fail to recall the saying in the seminary that "the voice of the bell is the voice of God." This simply means we ought always to respect the sound of the bell when it calls us to prayer or other activities, by knowing what it is for, and by being in the appropriate place at the appropriate time. Mostly, the bell is used in the church, especially during benediction and the Consecration.

There are also bells for classes, and they add great impact. They give decorum to the class and signal the time of changing of classes or announcing the morning assembly. But all the bells remind us to use God's time to our advantage.

## When the world ends

*by Juan Garcia, gr. 12*

You have probably heard of expectations of the Mayan calendar prophecies concerning the *End of The World*. Many people worry and try to accomplish what they can before this future event. Others do not even care. But however the case may be, they do not seem to think about the Last Judgment.

From Scripture and even scientific proof we know that all on the earth, eventually, comes to an end. Our Blessed Redeemer, in teaching us the truth, and preparing us for salvation, often reminded us to be ready, "For you do not know the day nor the hour." The key word here is *ready*, and *ready* does not mean procrastination or "almost ready," but ready to give an account before God's tribunal.

Whether the world ends today or tomorrow does not matter. The world for us does not end when the trumpets shall sound. The world ends when we die, and have to stand before the Judge. Are we ready?

As we reflect on the words of Our Lord, which you can find in the Gospel of the ten virgins and some others, we should remember — especially during this month of November — the souls in Purgatory whose world has ended and who await the world to come.

## Slaving over the keyboard

*by Forrest Nguyen, gr. 12*

Shame on you, Reader! You read our lousy articles with a certain alacrity, either for ridiculous laughter or superficial gleanings of meaning. You look at our absurd pictures with a certain curiosity, either for voracious interest or sheer lazy zeal for avoidance of reading our articles. But did you, do you, ever think of the difficulty of writing these lousy articles, or posing for these kooky pictures? No.

We slave for you, Reader. For days without play, nights without rest, aspects without smiles, we toil over our articles, soon to be your articles. In choosing topics, we writhe, winding our minds about an abstract we have yet to conceive: a topic yet unpublished, a topic creative, original, and entertaining. In writing — turning creative abstracts into meaningful concretes — our words are deliberate and full of effort, though still inadequate to express the thunderous mechanics of our creativity and our zeal for your reading enjoyment. We would, if only we could, write better, write purer, write stronger, write louder! If only we could!

For you, Reader, we humble ourselves. In pictures without posing, without preparation, without foreknowledge of or acknowledgment of our consent to the picture, we are too often seen at our worst. Mid-movement, mouths open, eyes in blink. In a word, kooky. Is this not our worst? If we are taken by the camera without the camera in mind, is this not our worst? As such, are we not to be humbled by our worst?

*continued on page 4*



*Juan harvests the apples from one of our many trees.*



*Mathias and Robert help Juan operate the cider press.*



*The seminarians enjoyed attending various events of the Fatima Conference.*



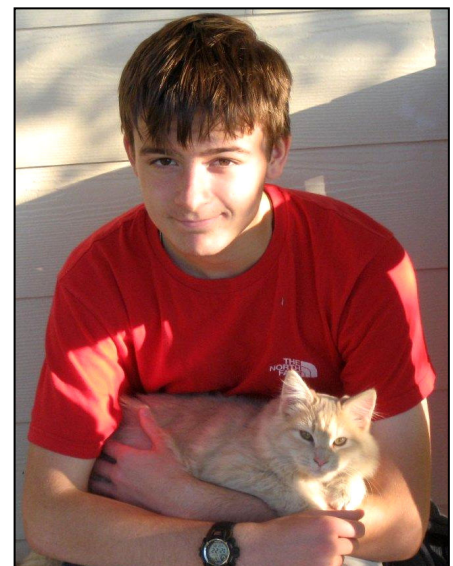
*During October we daily recite the Rosary before the opened tabernacle.*



*Zachary and Mathias are all in a blur as they pursue the ball carrier.*



*The weather was beautiful in late October when Forrest repainted the railing on our deck.*



*Aedan holds Peluso, one of our cats.*

## Slaving over the keyboard

*continued from page 2*

And yet we take pictures. And yet we offer ourselves each game, each chore, each outing to *The Guardian's* blinking but blind eye. And yet we are presented in each issue, grotesque and humbled and wholly without complaint — all for you, Reader! For whom but you, Reader, would we humble ourselves so?

In all calm: Reader, we love thee.

Could you not love us more? Could you not appreciate our articles — your articles, Reader — beyond your ignorance of our diligence? Could you not see our pictures and bring for an instant to your mind the thought of how we, ignorant of cameras, sacrifice ourselves to torments by camera?

For now you know our love for thee, Reader.

## All for Mary

*by Zachary Odom, gr. 12*

As you know from past issues of *The Guardian*, we have a sodality for all seminarians who would like to join. The sodality practices certain devotions to Mary, such as the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, and those inaugurated into the sodality receive the Miraculous Medal. Furthermore, those who are members of the sodality meet on the first and third Sundays of the month to study and discuss the virtues of Our Lady and other topics of our Faith. We also choose an apostolic action to practice until our next meeting.

It was during one of these meetings that we picked the apostolic action of saying an extra rosary every day, and of making a visit to the cemetery. Since the walk up to the cemetery is a good distance we decided to say our rosary on the way. We soon found out that saying and doing are two different matters altogether. No, we didn't omit saying our rosary and walking up to the cemetery, but we did wait until the last minute of the day to do it. Yes, in the dark of night we walked the dim, narrow path up to the cemetery, all the while praying the rosary, tripping over things we couldn't see, and jumping slightly at the sounds off in the forest around us. Upon reaching the cemetery we would enter and pray for the departed souls in Purgatory, then solemnly leave.

Yes, I admit we were usually not punctual in saying our extra rosary. Yet isn't this true of all of us? We sometimes

neglect our spiritual practices and good works, opting for the easier road, or waiting until we have no time left. Let us make a better effort to put the spiritual things first in our lives.

## Gratias agimus tibi

The month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls. During this month we daily recite devotions for these departed brethren, Requiem Masses are offered and we visit our cemetery to pray for the faithful departed. But November is also a month when we recall God's many blessings and our consequent duty of expressing gratitude for them.

In November we observe the secular holiday of Thanksgiving — a time for families to be together and to call to mind God's blessings. While this day is not a liturgical feastday, it nevertheless is a good reminder to us of our duty of always thanking God for His many benefits. All we are and all we have, sin excepted, comes from God. Whether it be home, food, clothing or other material things; or the much more important spiritual blessings of God's grace, the Faith, sacraments, Mass, etc. — all are gifts of God's bounty.

In the liturgy we find frequent mention of this duty of gratitude, which is one of the four ends of prayer. Before the preface are said the words *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro* ("Let us give thanks to the Lord our God"). This is followed by the words of the preface, which always begins by stating that it is truly right and proper that we should always and everywhere give thanks to God. This is only our duty, for we are utterly dependent on His goodness. Furthermore, remember that our loving Father expects our thanks, as we see in the Gospel story of the ten lepers. If we are grateful, we deserve future benefactions; if we are ungrateful, God will withdraw His gifts and give them to someone who appreciates them and thanks Him for them.

We also thank you, our benefactors, for your prayers and financial support. Over the past few months, contributions have been down, and it has been more difficult to pay our bills. Thus we stand in need of your assistance, so that we can continue this important work of preparing future priests. May God reward your generosity, and may He continue to bless you and your families — such is our daily prayer for you.

*Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*

*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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