



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of St. Joseph Seminary

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Last week four young men gathered from several different states to begin a new school year at the seminary. (We are still hoping for the arrival of two more seminarians in January.) After initial introductions Father gave an orientation to the seminarians, passing out the schedule and explaining the rules. Then, on Monday morning, the classes began.

In a short time the boys adapted to the routine of seminary life, although many aspects are still new to them. In addition to the classes and prayer schedule, they have helped in picking the abundant plums and pears in our orchard (a bumper crop this year). But there has also been plenty of time for fun—around the seminary, at the lake and at the park.

The seminarians get along well together, and, of course, they

should, for they are all here for the same reason. They have all come in order to grow in learning and in the prayer life, to seek to know God's will in regards to their vocation, and to develop good habits. They already have an excellent start, thanks to coming from good, Catholic homes. Let us all pray for them and for more vocations. "Send forth, O Lord, laborers into Thy harvest!"

The Purpose of a Minor Seminary

Proper formation in virtue from one's earliest days is a tremendous blessing. Holy Scripture tells us: "It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. 3:27). This quotation from Scripture helps us to understand the purpose of the minor, or preparatory, seminary. Here boys are trained from their entrance into adolescence in the paths of virtue.

A vocation to the priesthood is often compared to a seed. When a



Happy seminarians started their classes last week.

September Calendar

- 3 – Labor Day outing; no school.
- 5 – Our secretary's birthday
- 8 – Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; special observances
- 12 – Feast of the Holy Name of Mary; chanted Vespers
- 15 – Feast of the Seven Sorrows BVM; chanted Vespers
- 24 – Our Lady of Ransom; chanted Vespers
- 24 – Mid-quarter; no Homework
- 29 – Feast of St. Michael the Archangel

seed germinates the small plant needs to be watered, sheltered and nourished during the early stages of growth. So too a vocation is a delicate seed that must be nourished and protected. Not only must a vocation be protected from the foul breath of the world, but good habits must be formed in the young men who will become *Other Christs*. During adolescence – that crucial period of physical, mental and moral development – lasting habits, either good or bad, are formed. In a preparatory seminary, even more than in the major

Continued on page 2

The Purpose of the Minor Seminary

Continued from page 1

seminary, a boy's mind and character are shaped, and his life receives a direction which ordinarily proves final and decisive.

What is a minor seminary like? The minor seminary is similar to other Catholic boarding schools for boys. Students have a regimented life, which includes daily Mass and prayer, academics and recreation. The studies encompass the regular high school courses in Theology, English, math, science, history, foreign language, etc., but with a special emphasis on Latin and choir. Physical activity is also important, for sports offers an excellent means of character formation by its requirements for teamwork, responsibility and healthful competition.

Needless to say, regular confession, spiritual direction and spiritual conferences hold a prominent position in the routine of the seminary. Personal responsibility, cleanliness, order, self-discipline and striving for excellence provide the hallmark of the seminary formation. In short, the entire program of a minor seminary has for its goal the preparation of young men for the major seminary, while it safeguards their vocations.

The Danger of Man's Pride

by Thiet Vincent Nguyen, gr. 9

Imagine this world without Internet, smartphone technologies, huge constructions, or highly automated cars. It would be a very different world. It's the 21st century. Who would not live without these conveniences in the modern world?

Human development has advanced exponentially from century to century. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 when he was 29 years old. That phone has morphed into a portable smartphone inspired by Steve Jobs in the early 21st century. Henry Ford, the man who "put America on



The seminarians could not resist the temptation to squirt water at one another.

wheels," developed the Model T "Tin Lizzie" in the early 1900s. He probably wouldn't believe that his invention from \$300 has now reached up to tens of thousands of dollars.

Along with these excellent inventions, many negatives are adding up, including the matter of survival ability, thinking ability, immorality, and especially the loss of spirituality. The human race has distanced itself from Our Lord. There have been researchers claiming that 60% of the children below the age of 18 are preoccupied with an electronic device for as much as a quarter of each day. Many people also work seven days a week, forgetting that Sunday is the Lord's Day.

Today, many atheists are intemperately making attempts to prove that there is no God. Darwinian evolution is being taught in every public school just to show that modern science has a better perspective about the existence of human life than the Bible. Throughout America, public schools are informing students with modern beliefs and practices, indifferentism to abortion, social apathy, and false gender education.

Many scientists and inventors today try to prove that they're greater than God by creating new inventions, but they've all failed, for they cannot invent something with a spirit, real organs, cells, or feelings. But God can do everything. Developments are necessary for the world; however, many developments can draw men far away from God and lead them to great arrogance. We have to remember

that often in history, from the beginning until now, men have always tried to overtake God and have been heavily punished, for example, Noah's ark and the greatest flood in the history of the world.

As the world is now moving toward the future very fast, men should make efforts to check their pride, learn humility and show obedience to Our Lord, and ask Our Lady the grace they need. For we have to remember—nothing will be as expected without the will of God, for He is almighty, our one and only God.



A crane was needed to lift the trusses into place on the roof of the church.



Night prayers in the chapel always conclude with the antiphon to Our Lady.



Can you guess the name of the most popular game at the seminary?



There was plenty of opportunity for canoeing at Lake Coeur d'Alene.



The first class of the day is Latin.



Can you spot the seminarian in the pear tree?

Our Glorious Patrons

In His youth, Jesus was perfectly subject to Mary, His Mother, and St. Joseph, His foster-father. Seminarians who aspire to become *Other Christs* ought to develop a particular devotion to these two saints. Appropriately, as a new school year begins, we enter the month of September, a month filled with lovely feasts of Our Blessed Mother. Who could better understand the importance of formation for future priests than the Mother of the First Seminarian? Under the vigilant eye of Mary, Jesus developed into manhood. She watched in wonder as the Son of God grew in wisdom, age and grace during those hidden years at the “seminary” of Nazareth.

On the Feast of Mary’s Nativity we recall the blessed day when she was born into this world. A few days later we celebrate the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, reminding us that God chose this name for His immaculate Mother from all eternity, and that we should often invoke reverently that Holy Name. The feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary reminds us of her love for us and of the terrible cost of our sins. The feast of Our Lady of Ransom (Our Lady of Mercy) reminds us of the tender solicitude of our heavenly Mother for all her children.

And so we begin a new academic year under Our Lady’s mantle. May we always strive to imitate her, however feeble our efforts. May she help these young men to grow in wisdom and grace, as they grow in age, so that they become daily more and more like her divine Son.

Let us also not forget Saint Joseph, the other member of that Holy Family. Like Our Blessed Mother, he too observed with wonder the growing divine Child. Saint Joseph meticulously fulfilled his role as superior, bread-winner and guardian of both the Holy Mother and her divine Child. Saint Joseph is a hidden saint but a great one. After Mary herself there is not a greater saint in heaven than her spouse, who was chosen to be the protector of the great High Priest, Jesus Himself, during His youth.

Our seminary is blessed to have this great saint as our special patron. A minor seminary is, in some respects, like the home of Nazareth. Hidden away in the seclusion of the seminary, like Jesus in the home of Nazareth, the seminarians strive to learn and imitate the ways of Christ. Who better can assist them in this task than Saint Joseph? May he help our young men to follow the pattern of Christ.

Another Year of Grace

As we begin our 20th year at Saint Joseph Seminary, I look back on the past years—the many boys who have

spent a year or more here, including those who have spent their entire high-school course in the minor seminary. There have been several that went on to ordination and others that are in the major seminary, on their way to the priesthood. And there have been many who decided that the priesthood was not their vocation, but for whom the time spent here was a grace of spiritual formation that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

The work of formation of youth requires patience and persistence, as parents know very well. It is a work to which we dedicate ourselves, for God’s honor and glory. Since each soul that He has created is precious in His sight, our time is well-spent here, whether there are few or many seminarians. At the same time, it is unfortunate that there are not more vocations to the minor seminary.

And why are there so few vocations today? We have written on this topic in past newsletters, but let us briefly review the reasons. First, we can cite the spiritual dangers to which our youth are exposed through movies, television and modern music, which even otherwise good parents sometimes allow their children too much freedom in accessing. It could also be the numbing and detrimental nature of video games, which can have a hypnotic effect on the minds of modern youth. It could be exposure to bad companions, who gradually instill worldly ideas into our youth. It may also be due to a lack of family prayer, especially the family Rosary, which parents ought to consider indispensable. Finally, it may be that the youth are willing and even desirous of following God’s call, but the parents are unwilling to part with their children.

Whatever the reasons, vocations from American youth seem to be much too few for the needs of the Church. We must pray daily for more vocations and that those of our Catholic youth who are called by Christ will open their hearts to His invitation.

Finally, at the beginning of a new school year I would like to thank you for your support and your prayers for the welfare and success of the seminary. Our work is utterly dependent on Almighty God for its success. To the degree that it has been successful over the years, it is only by the grace of God and the support of the faithful. “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” I am sure that this new school year will not be without its crosses and trials, but with God’s grace and your help, we will continue to fulfill His holy will for the good of the souls that have been entrusted to our care. Be assured of our prayers for you and our grateful appreciation.

Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI