



THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of Saint Joseph Seminary

March, 2025

As we enter the month of March, our thoughts are directed to the important season of Lent. We all want to make a good Lent, so we have been thinking of what we will give up during this season. As usual, we write a list of sacrifices and give them to Father for approval. We also will have our annual Lenten retreat. Let us all resolve to make a good Lent.

March is also the month of our holy patron. Here at Saint Joseph Seminary we have extra prayers every day in his honor. We also are praying for more vocations to our seminary through his intercession, and we hope that you will do the same.

At last, the weather has turned warmer, and we are all looking forward to spring. In addition to trips to the park for recreation, spring means outside chores, like preparing the grounds for Easter and the usual outdoor processions that are coming up. After a long winter, the anticipation of spring weather here is palpable.

We also continue our daily activities, including the table tennis and pool tournaments. These and other activities help to relieve the intensity of studying Latin and our other classes. We keep busy every day and enjoy our daily round of Mass, prayers, classes, chores and recreation. (Well, maybe we don't actually enjoy doing homework!) Please remember us in your prayers, as we remember you. May God bless you all.

A Perfect Saint for Lent

by Brendan Rabjohns, gr. 12

One of the greatest saints of the Catholic Church is St. Patrick. He converted almost all of Ireland in his lifetime and enkindled such a fire of faith that war, famine, and the simple passage of time could not extinguish. Fittingly for Lent, St. Patrick practiced severe penances and inspired thousands to copy his example during this very season.

St. Patrick was born of Roman par-

March Calendar

- 4 – Saint Casimir's dinner senior fundraiser
- 5 – Ash Wednesday
- 7-9 – Annual Lenten retreat
- 16 – St. Joseph/St. Patrick fundraising breakfast
- 17 – St. Patrick's Day Talent Show
- 19 – High Mass in honor of Saint Joseph, our seminary patron
- 21 – Father Benedict's feastday; end of Third Quarter
- 24 – First Day of the Fourth Quarter

ents in the late fourth century. Taken by pirates, St. Patrick was forced to serve as a shepherd boy in Ireland for six years. The hard life of a shepherd matured the youth, and God gave him great graces during this time to prepare him for his future mission.

Eventually, Saint Patrick escaped to Roman territory and was reunited with his family for a few years. He soon left his home to become a monk. After a number of years in this state, he was ordained and later consecrated bishop by Pope St. Celestine. Undaunted by the failure of previous missionaries to Ireland, Pope St. Celestine sent St. Patrick to convert the Irish.

Through the grace of God, St. Patrick won permission from the king to preach in Ireland, where he traveled up and down the country. The success that accompanied his preaching cannot be ascribed to anything but the

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Brother Simon led the seminarians in singing two songs for the Talent Show.

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rigorous penance and prayer that the saint practiced. Each day St. Patrick would recite the one-hundred and fifty psalms, the last fifty being recited while standing in cold water. Frequently throughout the day, the saint would stop and make the sign of the Cross hundreds of times.

One of the most famous practices of St. Patrick was his Lenten retreat. When we think of even a simple Lent in his day, we are thinking of a very different Lent from the one to which we are accustomed. In the fifth century, one meal was taken per day and that, only after the Hour of Vespers. Added to that privation, there was no meat, wine, or dairy taken during Lent. All these things make one simple Lent a serious affair, let alone spending hours in prayer as St. Patrick did.

Our season of Lent is indeed sanctified by following the example of the Apostle of the Irish. Thousands of Irish have followed in small ways the Lenten practices of St. Patrick. We too can follow the glorious example of this saint and sanctify the holy season of Lent.

Not Under a Bushel

by Marcel Mansfield, gr. 12

Across the many events that appear during the school year, there is not one that can quite compare with the preparation and anticipation which a recent Saturday brought. Although the third Saturday of February in most parishes is just like any other day on the liturgical calendar, it is nevertheless one of the most nerve-racking days throughout both semesters here at the seminary. Struggling to get our acts together, we minor seminarians always spend the preceding days leading up to this event in practicing our skits and other performances. Well, what is this day? If you have not already figured it out, this day, or rather this evening, is none other than the Annual Parish Talent Show.

Having started a few years ago, the Annual Parish Talent Show at Mary Immaculate Queen Parish is a fun-filled event where all parishioners are invited to display their God-given talents. Whether it be singing, poems, skits, or playing a musical instrument, it is always interesting to see the different performances and musical pieces that have been long prepared for this action-packed evening. Apart from being the eventful program that it is, the talent show is also celebrated with a parish potluck dinner, hosted every year in the parish hall.

In addition to the parishioners' contributions to the talent show, the minor seminarians also put in their work and participate with whatever they think will be fun to share. Although we are told to prepare and practice well ahead of

time, we always seem to manage to wait until the very last minute to start working on our skits.

Without a doubt, the Annual Parish Talent Show is a day that always brings great memories that will last a long time. Thankfully, the talent show is not really a pressure-packed event, but rather it is a laidback period where everyone can get together and have a good time. With our Irish Talent Show happening later in this month of March, it is important to reflect and remember that all our talents and abilities do not belong to us, and that it is only through the grace of God that we have them. We should not hide them and be sorrowful, however, but should use our abilities to the fullest in order that we may give more honor and glory to God. For did He not say, "Let your light shine before all men"?

Signpost to the True Faith

by Louis Albin, gr. 10

Everyone knows the four marks of the Church – the signs given to her by God, that she may be recognized. These are one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. Yet the second of these, likely the most important in prov-



The seminarians entertained the parishioners by performing several skits.

ing the truth of our Faith, is sadly often overlooked. It is by this mark that we prove ourselves to be most Christ-like, along with being members of His Church.

We are told in the study of Church Law that the supreme law of the Church is the salvation of souls. Considering this, how can we claim to be a part of Christ's Church if we do not show the signs of this salvation we hope to attain? These proofs are, in particular, obedience, humility, mortification, and charity, among other Christian virtues. Those mentioned here are also the ones specifically examined when the Church investigates the truth of private revelation. Overall, these are the qualities which define the

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Would you like to support the Seniors this year on their endeavor to travel to Europe?

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The seminarians get their exercise shoveling snow at the church.



Shoveling snow off the shed roof is just one of the necessary winter chores.



The Gator is handy for milking and other chores.



Our Candlemas procession was brief, but beautiful, in the winter weather.



Games are popular in the evening on Friday, after a stressful week of school.



The nativity scene could still be seen in the church during our First Saturday Benediction.



The seniors help prepare sausages for their fundraising dinner.



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holiness of the Catholic Church.

But how does this apply to us? First impressions are important. When we meet someone who is considering joining the Catholic Church, what we say and how we act are important factors in determining whether or not they follow through with this resolution. Such was the case with the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It is said that he was considering joining the Catholic Church but did not do so because of the bad behavior and irreverence of certain altar servers. We must be careful to not scandalize others or give a bad impression of our Faith.

On the other hand, we can positively encourage curiosity about – and eventually conversion to – the Faith by simply living a holy life. Sadly, many Protestants now see religion as merely a social get-together, which for many of them, it is. What is unique about the Catholic religion, from the standpoint of non-Catholics, is the extra works of piety that Catholics have performed, from praying the daily Rosary to suffering martyrdom for Our Lord. It is this sort of thing which is likely to raise

Especially in a seminary, that joyous outlook is of paramount importance. When the seminarians are happy and content, their days pass with continuous growth in virtue and learning. I must say that I am pleased with the morale among the young men here.



We celebrated Leo's 15th birthday in February.

There are many demands on the time of the seminarians. In addition to their studies, they take turns milking the cow, helping in the kitchen, and performing other chores. In the midst of all these tasks, however, I never hear complaining or self-pity. Moodiness can spoil the atmosphere of a seminary and adversely affect everyone in the house. Fortunately, we don't have that problem here, and that is a testament to these young men and to the families that nurtured them.



Hitching a ride on the plow truck

curiosity and questions about the Faith, along with our hopes of conversions. Let us try, therefore, to imitate the holiness of the Founder of our Church, that we may edify others and draw them, as well, to the true Fold of Christ.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

We all know that a cheerful outlook lightens the load of the cross. As Jesus said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Matthew, 11:30).

As we enter the penitential season of Lent, let us remember the importance of joy, even in the midst of our penances and crosses. On the first day of Lent we read the Gospel passage in which Our Lord admonishes us to "not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting." When we maintain a positive, cheerful outlook, it is much easier to carry our cross, fulfill our daily duty, and sanctify ourselves. As the Church says, *Sursum Corda* – Lift up your hearts!

We thank you for your prayers and support. If you are able to make a Lenten financial sacrifice, we would appreciate your help during our annual Lenten Alms Drive. These extra donations help us to pay the bills and keep our seminary going. May God reward you and may He bless you and your families at this holy Lenten season!

— Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI

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