



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of Saint Joseph Seminary

September, 2025

**W**e have arrived at the beginning of another academic year at the seminary, at which time we find ourselves getting back to the routine of prayer, schoolwork, chores and recreational activities. Toward the end of our first week of school, we enjoyed our customary few days at a cabin on Lake Coeur d'Alene. We spent three days there swimming, boating, kayaking, and all sorts of other fun. During the evenings we played games to fill

in the time.

This year our seminarians come from Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Utah. Although there are only six seminarians this year (We wish there were more!), we are all united, and that is what is most important. All of us are here because we want to be here. It is attitude that is especially necessary if we are going to have a successful school year.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter, as we commence another school year. During the course of the coming months, we will tell you all about our lives and activities in the seminary. Above all, we ask for your prayers for a successful school year. May God bless each of us during this new school year, which has begun to take life.

## Is It Worth Coming Here? by Diego Diaz, gr. 9

**W**hen I was leaving the Seminary this past school year, it was bittersweet to say goodbye to all my fellow seminarians and friends. But there was also a nice part

## September Calendar

- 5 – Our secretary's birthday
- 8 – Feast of Our Lady's Nativity; Solemn High Mass; no homework
- 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; mid-quarter
- 26 – Bryson's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 29 – Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel; no homework

about leaving. I got to see my family for the entirety of more than two months for the summer, which was a nice break from all the school assignments (especially math, the subject I struggled with the most.) Being home with my family during the summer was really nice, because I got to catch up on the things they did while I was gone. For example, the annual 5K, All Saints Day, pumpkin carving contest, Sunday soccer with the boarder boys, archery state tournament, the high schoolers going to Kentucky for nationals, etc. This year, it was not as hard to leave home as it was last year—maybe because I know what this year should hold in store, this being my second time. All in all, I think that summer was the one break that I sorely needed.

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*Father Benedict and Brother Simon were privileged to visit the shrine of Blessed Theophane Venard, who was martyred in Vietnam.*

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This school year I came to the Seminary a little early. I came on Tuesday, August 19, when we weren't required to be here until August 24. I was definitely a lot more ready this year for school, maybe not as eager, but still excited. After all, this is my second year here. I feel like every time you do something new it is a lot more exciting than when you do it a second time.

This year we only have one new seminarian, Liam Isakson. Liam is for sure a great addition to the atmosphere of the seminary. Sadly, one minor seminarian from last year is not returning, but Liam helps to make up for that. I personally was very excited to meet him, and the idea of a new minor seminarian is always exciting. I would say that it is sure worth it coming to the minor Seminary.

Everyone this year seems re-energized for the new school year. You can just see that glimmer in their eyes. We have the same teachers this year as last year, with the exception that Fr. Benedict will teach math. Who knows what this year has in store? Hopefully, good things! The convent is almost done, which means that the Sisters will move into it soon. We will probably have to help with that. The Sisters must be very excited to move into their new convent. If I were them, I know I would!

I would like to thank Our Lady for letting me come here another year, St Rita of Cascia for everything she has done for me spiritually and temporally, and St Philip Neri for helping me be a good sanguine. I pray that this year will be a good school year, even better than last year. I know it will. Now, let us swell with love and thanksgiving for the One Who loves us infinitely, and joyfully join in with the Cristeros in their beautiful battle cry, "Viva Cristo Rey! Viva Santa Maria de Guadalupe!"

## **Great Organization Equals a Successful Camp**

*by Louis Albin, gr. 11*

Communication and cooperation – these qualities, as I realized this July, are fundamental to the organization of any group, however large or small. Yet when they exist, things will undoubtedly run smoothly.

This year, our annual Camp St. Joseph was held from July 20th to 25th. Everyone I've asked has agreed that it was the best boys camp here yet. This, in my opinion, was due to both the responsibility and communication of the counselors, and the cooperation and phenomenal attitude of all the campers. Both these things are equally necessary to have a fun, productive boys camp, and they were both certainly present here, even despite a chaotic week.

It all started on Sunday evening, right after dinner. All the tents having been set up, everyone was relaxing or



*The Brothers butchered the roosters.*

playing volleyball and spikeball. It was a shock when we first noticed the black smoke coming up from behind the seminary, and we were informed that the auto shop was on fire. Immediately, everyone sprang to action. The counselors were all occupied, either with keeping the flames under control until the fire department arrived, or with organizing the campers. Within only seven minutes, all the boys were

lined up on the parking lot, ready to evacuate if necessary.

It wasn't until afterwards that we realized the fire was caused by the overheating of our airsoft gun batteries as they charged. In the vital moments as everyone noticed the fire, the radios brought by the counselors were critical to the organization, which is why I mentioned communication as important. Finally, when the fire department arrived, they agreed that we had done a great job of keeping everything under control. We are thankful that no one was hurt, and the worst part was the cost of the airsoft equipment that we lost in the fire. Thanks to the generous donations of our benefactors, though, we have been able to replace a good amount of the gear.

For the rest of the week, the counselors had to get creative, since it was planned for airsoft to cover three whole afternoons. But there was no shortage of activities, including an extra lake day, an obstacle course, capture the flag, cops and robbers with water balloons, and a game with padded sticks where one had to pop balloons tied to the enemy.

Overall, I was especially impressed by the attitude of the campers. No one complained

about not being able to play airsoft, and no one even asked about how they would get their equipment back. This truly Christian behavior gives great credit to our camp, showing how the example of Fr. Philip and the other counselors can easily be passed on to form good habits in the other boys



*The auto shop building completely burned down.*

and young men as well. It was a blessing to be able to participate in and witness this at this year's Camp St. Joseph.



*Father Benedict, Brother Simon and Thiet Nguyen prepare to leave from Spokane for Vietnam.*



*Father Benedict stands in the belltower overlooking a large Benedictine monastery in Vietnam.*



*Everyone got involved in the cornhole competition at the lake.*



*Felix enjoyed taking kayak rides with the Brothers and seminarians at the lake.*



*Evenings at the lake house provided ample opportunity for indoor recreation.*



*Felix prepares to leap into the lake as Brother Anthony jumps off the diving board.*

## Initial Enthusiasm

The initial enthusiasm of students at the start of a new school year is a wonderful thing. Even though they may not be willing to admit it, most children and teenagers are happy when September rolls around. Towards the end of summer they get bored and are anxious to get back into school. (Well, maybe “anxious” is an exaggeration when it comes to teenagers, but they generally are glad to get back to the routine of school.)

Experienced teachers know that they must make a good use of this initial zeal, for it will not last. As the school year matures, students gradually lose that spark, and towards the spring a tedium sets in, as they (and their teachers) begin to count down the days to summer. Consequently, we have to capitalize on the initial gusto of young people.



*Brother Simon's patience in fishing for hours at the lake finally paid off.*

Thus, we begin the year with an emphasis on procedures and rules. Teachers know that time spent on drilling these routines into their students will pay dividends down the road. If a teacher neglects to develop a classroom discipline in the beginning weeks of school, it will be hard to reverse course and instill it later. Moreover, students crave order and appreciate knowing the boundaries set by their teachers. They want to know what to expect. The goal here is to create the optimal learning environment and to help the students develop good study habits.

This lesson in teaching skills has an application to our spiritual life. From time to time we experience an enthusiasm, a fervor or sensible consolation in the

practice of our faith. Gradually, however, it wears away and a tedium sets in to our prayer life. Spiritual directors counsel a judicious use of those periods of consolation, and patience and persistence when they are absent. In fact, we find in the lives of the saints that God tested them with “spiritual dryness.” As one author wrote: “To say Blessed be God in time of spiritual dryness is worth a thousand Blessed be God’s in time of consolation.” May we all persevere in the practice of our faith, both in good and bad times.

As we start a new school year here at the minor seminary – our 27th – be assured of a daily remembrance in our prayers for our benefactors. We need your support to continue this crucial work of the education and formation of future priests. Please pray for our seminarians and that God will send us many more. May God bless you and your families.

— *Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI*



*This beautiful shrine of Our Lady of Fatima is located in the gardens of a Cistercian monastery in Vietnam.*