



# THE GUARDIAN

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Monthly newsletter of Saint Joseph Seminary

October, 2025

This past month of September has been mostly spent shifting back into the routine of seminary life. After our annual trip to the lake-house, school began in earnest, and everyone had to get used to doing homework again. It's always hard to get reaccustomed to the seminary schedule, but this year the transition seems to have gone well, thankfully. The new school year is the perfect time for a renewal of the seminary spirit, and this summer has successfully motivated everyone to make this a great year.

The most important part here at the seminary, of course, is our spiritual formation, and as usual we unite our physical actions to internal devotion. This month we sang five high masses, including one in honor of Our Lady and one in honor of the Holy Ghost, asking His guidance for this school year.

Now we prepare ourselves for the upcoming Fatima Conference. In addition, we will pray the Rosary each day with the Blessed Sacrament exposed. October, after all, is the month of the Holy Rosary. We thank you for all your support, and we ask you to keep us in your prayers.

## Our Lady, the Perfect Model

by Leo Mansfield, gr. 10

Today, I am writing about Fr. Aloysius's sermon that was given two weeks ago on Sunday, September 14th. The sermon was mainly about carrying your crosses and keeping your resolutions. Nowadays, people complain too much about their crosses and resolutions; they always follow the easy path. People now complain more about who took the last granola bar than the saints did when they were being scourged. But we shouldn't complain; we lose many graces from it, and we have many examples. These examples are the saints. All the saints are great models of these virtues, like St. Philomena, St. Louis De Montfort, St. Rose of Lima, St. Therese, and the holy martyrs, etc.

The best example among them is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Recently we had the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the sermon just reminded me how much Our Lady had to go through. She probably had the heaviest crosses ever, and yet she never complained

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## October Calendar

- 3 – Father Martin's feast day
- 7 – Feast of the Most Holy Rosary; outdoor procession; chanted Vespers
- 9-11 – Attend Pontifical High Mass and events of the Fatima Conference
- 16 – Mr. Gerard Keaveney's feast day
- 26 – Feast of Christ the King; renewal of seminary enthronement
- 28 – Henry's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; Brother Jude's feast day
- 31 – End of the First Quarter



*The religious priests and brothers kneel behind the seminarians in chapel during our common prayers.*

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about them too! It helps us realize all the little crosses and things we complain about every day, and how much we act like it is the end of the world when something small does not go our way. Even after knowing this, we still complain, even though our crosses are not nearly as heavy as Our Lady's was! Her biggest crosses were the seven sorrows. Even though it was hard, Mary went through all her sorrows patiently. We must be patient like Our Blessed Mother; we must embrace our suffering and carry our cross with Christ. We must imitate Mary's purity, humility and patience.

But why do we need our crosses? As was said in the sermon: "We need our crosses to atone for sin." Sometimes they are given as a test. We must carry our cross, like Christ carried His cross for our sins. It sounds like we must always be sorrowful when we carry our crosses, but we can find joy in carrying our crosses; the saints are proof of that!

**A Mother's Love in Vietnam**

by Bryson Tucker, gr. 12

**B**ehold thy mother." These are the words of Our Lord that were directed to St. John at the Foot of the Cross. These words were not only addressed to St. John, but also to the whole human race. Christ is telling us in these words to take His mother as our own and to treat her as good sons and daughters would. We should love and praise Our Blessed Mother and fly to her when we are in tribulation.

This love however is not one way. Just as we love Our Lady, she also loves us. One way she shows us this love is by granting to some of her children the grace of getting to see her in all her heavenly glory. This is known as an apparition. Some greater-known apparitions of Our Lady happened at Guadalupe, Lourdes, and Fatima, which I'm sure most people have a basic understanding of. One lesser-known example, though, is Our Lady of La Vang, an apparition that happened in Vietnam in the 1700's.

The story of Our Lady of La Vang begins in 1798, when emperor Cảnh Thịnh made a law forbidding the Vietnamese Catholics to practice their religion. This law was enacted because the emperor saw the Catholic religion as a destruction of the Vietnamese way of life, that being pagan. In this period more than 10,000 Catholics were martyred for their faith.

Some Catholics who sought to escape from this decree fled to the woods of La Vang. One day during their stay in the woods, this devout group of Catholics gathered by a tree, in their usual manner, to pray the Rosary. Suddenly, there was a bright light radiating

by the trees. A lady appeared more beautiful than anyone had ever seen! She was wearing a traditional Vietnamese dress and was holding a child in her arms. These faithful Children of Mary recognized this lady to be the Mother of God, holding Our Lord in her arms.

In multiple apparitions, Our Lady comforted her children in their hardship and taught them to use leaves to make a certain tea to heal them of their sickness, as they were becoming sick. She also promised graces to anyone who would pray at that spot of the apparition. After the persecution ended, the Catholics went back into the towns and started to spread the devotion. In 1820, a group of Buddhists was converted and built a little shrine where Our Lady had appeared, in her honor. Unfortunately, this chapel was destroyed in 1885 in yet another persecution. Jumping all the way to 1961, a new cathedral was built and dedicated by Bishop Ngô Đình Thục.

That is the story of Our Lady of La Vang. This story serves as a reminder of Our Blessed Mother's love for us. We should follow the example of those zealous Vietnamese Catholics, who chose to flee to the woods instead of giving up their faith. We should not

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*Here is an image of Our Lady of La Vang, honored in Vietnam.*



*Sr. Mary Veronica watches as our milk-cow Mabel welcomes her new calf into the world.*



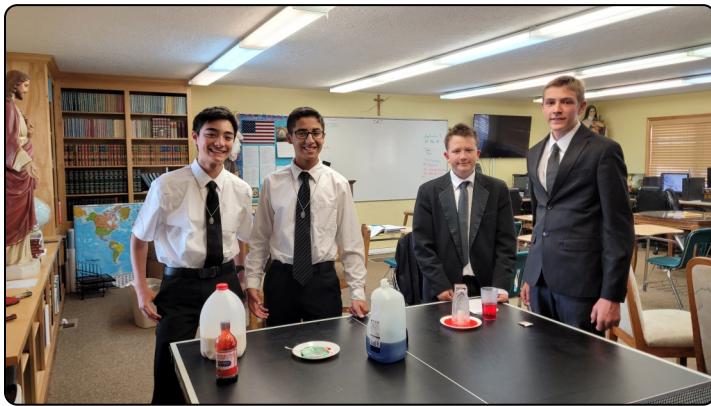
*After harvesting the plums the seminarians hitch a ride on the bucket of the skid steer.*



*We celebrated the feast of Our Lady's nativity with a solemn High Mass.*



*The brothers and seminarians sang the High Mass for Our Lady's nativity.*



*The seminarians work on simple science projects during physics class.*



*Every First Saturday we have a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament exposed.*

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let anything get in the way of our faith. Those who were being persecuted prayed the Rosary in the forest, so shall we not be overjoyed to pray the Rosary in the comfort of our homes and churches? Our Lady appeared to them when they were praying, but we have the opportunity to pray in front of Our Lord Himself, kept in the Tabernacle. We will not always be rewarded in this world, but if we live our Catholic faith as we should, we will have rewards in the next life.

## The Friends of the Cross

**S**ince the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross occurred on a Sunday this year, we priests were provided with the perfect opportunity to speak about the importance of carrying the cross (as one of the seminarians mentions in an article in this issue.) This important topic reminds me of the wonderful booklet by St. Louis Marie de Montfort called “A Circular Letter to the Friends of the Cross.” Have you read it?

There is an interesting story that accounts for the origin of this writing. St. Louis had planned on giving a parish mission in Rennes in 1714, when his Jansenist opponents successfully had him silenced. Forbidden to preach, he decided to make a retreat instead. On the last day of his 8-day retreat, he wrote this beautiful writing which points out that the true followers of Christ

carry their crosses with patience. In fact, he states that there are only two groups of people in the world: the followers of Christ and the followers of the world. Sadly, the latter group is far more numerous than the former.

A meditation on this subject in *The Imitation of*

Christ (book II, chapter 11) is pertinent to this topic. The author states that: “Jesus has now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few that are willing to bear His cross. He has many that are desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He finds many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence. All desire to rejoice with Him; few are willing to suffer with Him.” How true!

Here at the seminary we remind the seminarians of



*Two of our former seminarians were received as postulants into the religious congregation on the feast of Our Lady's nativity.*

the importance of carrying their cross and not complaining. We have a seminary rule for the boys to follow, and it includes the following: “The seminarians shall always obey superiors promptly, cheerfully, and without complaining.” We particularly emphasize the part about not complaining. One who murmurs pulls down the whole group by his negative attitude. Further, when we carry our cross without complaining, we gain more merit and we find that it is easier, when we are not weighed down by self-pity and complaining. May we all ever remember the words of Jesus: “If thou wilt be My disciple, deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow Me.”

We encourage you to use the enclosed intention card to send us the names of your departed loved ones. These cards are placed on the altar and those listed are remembered in our daily Masses and prayers throughout the month of November.

Thank you for your support and prayers. May God reward you, and may He grant that we may all be united one day in our heavenly home. For, let us always remember, that is the purpose of our existence.

— Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI



*Bryson works on a senior project of homemade hot sauce.*

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