...after that you have known God, or rather are known to God, how turn you again to the weak and needy elements, which you desire to serve again? (Galatians 4:9)

The serious disposition of striving to live as God intends, that is to *participate* in His life, will certainly transform our lives from being simply natural and striving for a natural end, to being supernatural and striving for a supernatural end, which is the life of faith on earth and the Beatific Vision in heaven! This is God's will – if we love God, we will desire and strive to conform to His Will by His grace while accomplishing the *natural* duties of life, thus elevating them to the supernatural plane and offered to God out of supernatural charity.

Certainly, all must make this decision and use the generous means God has given us to accomplish this goal (the Sacraments, prayer, the practice of the virtues and counsels). Let us pray for our conformity to Christ in all things, while praying for the seminarians during these summer months *away from the fortifications of the Seminary*. Priests, religious and seminarians, despite their elevated position in Christian society, remain wounded men, weak and sinful. They too, need help (if not more help) to achieve the lofty goal of conforming to Christ, in the greater degree incumbent upon their *elevated* and privileged state of life.

For this reason, dear friends and benefactors, I ask your special prayers for us at Holy Cross Seminary over these summer months. Implore God's mercy that He not only protect the priests, brothers and seminarians from evil, but that He also bless us with abundant graces, drawing us to genuine holiness, so that we may give testimony to the true life of Christ and thereby lead others to live likewise. In this, God will be glorified more abundantly and more souls will be drawn to the life of Christ.

As we prepare for the start of another year of studies at the Seminary, I wish to thank all our friends and benefactors for the many prayers, sacrifices and good works offered for the intentions of the Seminary. Let us continue to storm heaven for many more holy vocations and to pray for the young men already preparing for Holy Orders or Religious Profession. We wish also to thank all who have come to the material aid of the Seminary. Without the generosity of the faithful, we would not have the means to attend to the needs of the seminarians at Holy Cross. Thank you and be assured of our prayers and our effort to accomplish God's Will in out duties of state for you and your intentions. May God bless you and Our Lady Immaculate watch over you and guide you to holiness in life as she lovingly tended to the needs of her Divine Son. In Christ the King,

Rev. Fr. Vicente A. Griego Rector, Holy Cross Seminary

NOTICES

The Seminary has a few special requests for help: We need to replace the carpet in the Chapel and hope to have an altar and vesting cabinet made for the St. Pius X Chapel. These projects will cost some few thousand dollars. Outdoors, on the Seminary's farm, a large paddock used for grazing the Seminary's cattle herd (which provides meat for the Seminary) needs to be recultivated in preparation to sow a new and more productive pasture. We kindly ask your generosity to help us improve the altar furnishings. Thank you very much for your generosity. U.I.O.G.D.



Southern Sentinel

Regnavit a Ligno Deus

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

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January-February 2012

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

22 January 2012

During the summer months at Holy Cross Seminary, although we take a break from classes, the training of the seminarians continues as the year starts off with a flury of activities. January keeps the priests, brothers and seminarians busy

with retreats, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, for men and for ladies, the annual priests' retreat and a boys' camp in Queensland. Fr. Curtis, who directs the boys' camp, also served as chaplain for a girls' camp organised by the Society Sisters in Rockdale. January has been a busy month of apostolate for the Seminary community.

During this time of summer apostolate, the seminarians are assigned various duties to help with the retreats and the boys' camp, as well as to maintain the Seminary house and grounds. The last half of the summer will allow some time to address larger repair and maintenance projects that must be completed before classes resume at the beginning of March for the improvement and upkeep of the Seminary buildings and grounds. Given the short time and limited resources at our disposal, we do what we can while classes are not being conducted so that during the academic year the Seminary may more smoothly continue its mission of training priests and religious.

The summer months also offer a time of rest from classroom studies as the seminarians have a well-deserved holiday in addition to their summer apostolate. The seminarians continue their training, not in the classroom of theory, but in "real life".



Giotto di Bondone, 1266-1337, Presentation of Christ at the Temple

This break from the routine of the Seminary life of studies and spiritual training takes the seminarian out of the Seminary and affords opportunity to practice what has been learned in the classroom – the training wheels are removed and they go into the world (for a short time) to exercise their virtues and learning.

The summer holiday and apostolate are meant to be times of continued spiritual growth and learning, conducive to the seminarian's return to the classroom, where he may more attentively apply himself to his studies with greater understanding of their importance and necessity – for his good and the good of the faithful.

Seminarians returning home or spending time in a Priory over the summer are meant to look at life in the world from the perspective of the vocation they are pursuing. The seminarian must necessarily *change* from a young man of the world to a mature man of God as, more and more, he realises what a priest is and what it is he must eventually *be* in the world as a priest. Indeed, the seminarian is already a man set apart from the world and living for God; he must understand this and conduct himself accordingly.

St. Teresa of Avila professed that, when she was obliged to leave her convent, her defects glared in contrast to what she perceived to be greater strength in her spiritual life while she resided in the "safety" of the convent and its discipline. Away from the rigour of a strict time-table, the fortification of her fellow nuns and the silence of the cloistered house, she saw more clearly the mettle of her spiritual progress. Her defects more readily came to the fore, giving her greater understanding where she needed to work as she endeavoured to live more perfectly the life of grace in opposition to her fallen nature.

This realisation humbly brought her to her knees, imploring Divine assistance to protect her from sin and to advance her on the road to perfection. She had no illusions of her independence and goodness. Her weaknesses manifested in these sojourns were instrumental in her determining to take more decisive steps to confront and attack her inherent weaknesses in order to be more pleasing to her God, her Love.

May our seminarians, like St. Teresa, do likewise when they go out from the Seminary and its formative routine. Circumstances will necessarily occasion the manifestation of areas for improvement as the real man, wounded and ever easily lured to evil, is no longer protected by the regular order of Seminary life. The seminarians must address their failings, fortify their virtues and solidify their convictions to live, uncompromisingly, as men of God and not merely as men who theorise on God, being more *of* this world than of heaven.

Of course, this disposition is incumbent upon all Christians. The priest is not exempt, nor are such ideals applicable only (or mostly) to ecclesiastics or religious. No! All – cleric *and* lay – must adopt, in principle, this ideal; otherwise, the corruption of mediocrity will seep into the soul and sap the very spirit of Christ from the professed Christian. This is a primary reason why so many Catholics do not achieve, or even seek, *average* holiness.

Fr. Edward Leen, in his book, *In the Likeness of Christ*, reflects upon this phenomenon: "We come to look upon the presence of ordinary sanctity as being something exceptional, and the absence of it as being the rule in ordinary Christians and even in religious." This is not a flattering observation (or admission) and it is one that should prick our conscience as we wander through the streets of life. We must ask ourselves, "Am I living *like* Christ in this act, this word or this thought? Am I doing, speaking and thinking in the manner God desires?"

O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you? (Galatians 3:1)

A simple lesson learned by the Humanity year seminarians is that truth is the equation of the thought and thing, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches in the first part of his Summa Theologica. Furthermore, ...things are said to be true in so far as they express the likeness of the species that are in the divine mind. As God has in His mind that men give Him glory by

being conformed to His likeness, we discover the truth by which we must shape our lives. This sole purpose of man is the forgotten, ignored or refused reality. The wilful rejection of this supernatural truth is to submit to the error of naturalism.

Man is hindered by all remnants of evil (wilful or not) from giving greater glory to God, which He deserves. Consequently, men who profess to be lovers of God, followers of Christ, *must* earnestly strive to be as holy as possible; otherwise, they are not truthful. Holiness is to conform, by God's grace, to the mind of God in all things – to do His will in all things.

This effort to "know" God's mind is difficult and humbling. We will necessarily begin to see our defects if we ask God to "make us holy". The difficulty is in ourselves – often, we do not genuinely ask. After an honest appeal to God's mercy, we will receive His grace, which enables us to know and be what God desires us to be. Then, we cooperate in the restoration to holiness of life for God's glory, meriting our eternal happiness. May the seminarians' studies and summer activities be occasion of this continued transformation. If not, the seminarians may be nice young men in cassocks, but they will not be true Christs.

Through this spiritual effort, the seminarian must "materialise" the virtues, a sound character and a solid conversion of life – he must live by and in the spirit of religion, which he has studied in class. The seminarian must be a man of great humility and honesty as he must plainly face his deficiencies and courageously strive to cooperate with God's abundant grace to increasingly conform to the ideal of the divine mind, wonderfully set forth for the priest in the example of Christ, Who calls him to be His representative in the world. If this ideal is not striven for in all aspects of the seminarian's days, will there be any hope that outside the helpful routine of the Seminary, such a man later ordained a priest will *then* begin to strive for this ideal?

Of course, this effort is life-long. The ordained priest (as well as the professed brother and layman in the world) must persevere in renewing his desire to please God, his Love, in all things. It is shameful when a priest, a representative of Christ, fails to live this high ideal. Men are rightly scandalised by such laxity which stunts the spiritual life of the priest as well as that of the faithful, who are largely dependent upon the priest to exemplify Christ's life, administer the Sacraments and preach the Gospel. Mediocrity prevails among Christians, both lay and cleric, when they are spiritually immature or underdeveloped. To consent to this compromise of believing but settling for mediocrity is counter to the Faith. Such an attitude would be duplicitous.

Sadly, we live in a time when two-facedness is not uncommon, if not even accepted... and this, among people who profess faith in Christ! It is not that men necessarily mean to be irreligious or duplicitous; but in fact, because of the divorce between principles and practices, we easily succumb to this "oversight". This is typically the liberal attitude, which happily marries (though invalidly) contradictory principles and practices. The illegitimate children of this unnatural union are the dispositions of irresoluteness, fickleness and lack of conviction. The liberal ideal weakens man to inactivity in the supernatural domain.

If conscience is pricked by the incompatibility and contradiction of this paradoxical union, it is assuaged by a more condemnable blending of religious sentimentality and human compassion, which easily tolerates any, even all, aberrations in truth and good morals. This is a false religious spirit.

Religion is the virtue whereby men render to God the worship due to Him. Though we can only adore God according to our limited ability, we are enabled by the merits of Christ, to give perfect adoration to God through Christ. This we believe by faith, a supernatural act dependent upon God's mercy. The priest, the religious, the seminarian, the Christian, must not sell short their lives of faith by being *only* natural; they must be supernatural and be conformed to the supernatural.