



# Southern Sentinel

REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS

## HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

*The Priestly Society of St. Pius X*

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

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Here at Holy Cross Seminary, the first semester of studies has come to a conclusion with the final examinations of the preceding week. The seminarians eagerly welcome a short holiday of three days to rest and renew their energies before commencing the second semester of studies. At the same time, we welcome Fr. Todd Stephens from the District of Australia to the Seminary as a new professor. However, we also bid farewell to Fr. Thomas Asher, who has been assigned to the U.S. District. We assure both of our prayers as they take on the duties of their new assignments.

With the conclusion of the first semester, we, at Holy Cross Seminary, happily received the First Engagements of our second year seminarians into the Society of St. Pius X. This solemn act of engagement makes one a member of the religious family of the Society, and binds the members to the Society's mission in the service of Christ and Holy Mother Church. It is a total giving of self to serve in the Society.



*Three seminarians make their First Engagement in the Society of St. Pius X*

The engagement is an act of *oblation*, which calls for a renouncement of self in the service of others. This youthful generosity is cause for joy as this oblation gives hope of continued labourers in the vineyard of Our Lord, whereby we hope for the restoration of all things in Christ. By offering their talents, their energies and in fact their very lives in Christ's service, they make a sacrifice, an *oblation*, of themselves, putting themselves completely in the hands of Providence. Through the directives of our Superiors, we accomplish the Church's Divine mission to give glory to God and to save souls.

With this desire of the ideal to give their all, these young men, as have other members wills, their lives in a selfless act of putting God

in the first place and His will to save souls before their personal interests. They forsake their legitimate freedom to be with family and friends and to pursue honest endeavours in the world. Many liberties are renounced in order to be more entirely a disciple of Christ and a son of God, through the voice of their Superiors in faithful service of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

This spirit of self-sacrifice must animate every Christian in the varied states of life in order to be reckoned true disciples of Christ and children of God. Heroically noble and highly esteemed in theory, this ideal is often not carried out in a very faithful manner. Our wounded nature desires to settle down to a comfortable routine that requires little effort, but which "sufficiently assures" one of being on the "right" path. But Christ preached a life of virtue, and virtue is lived only by habitual effort to correspond with supernatural grace, an arduous task for weak and sinful men.

Without tenacity, effort and God's grace, we risk the inevitable slide into laxity, indifference and eventual apostasy. A false sense of security desensitises us to the danger of waning in zeal, virtue and cooperation with grace, whereby we fail to practice virtue and to prudently avoid sin and its occasions. It is necessary to regularly refocus our attention upon the true end of our lives; such daily reflection greatly helps us to maintain that necessary effort to conform our lives to that sacred pattern set before us in Christ.

We cannot waste our lives in laxity and indifference and then hope in the end to somehow muster all our energies and effort to live virtuously and then easily save our soul. An example may be drawn from the recent examinations at the Seminary.

Suppose a seminarian, after the first few months at the seminary becomes happily familiar with the routine of seminary life, accustomed to its discipline and habituated with the surroundings. Much, which at first served to strikingly remind him of that ideal of giving himself to God, becomes familiar to the point of hardly being noticed. He walks unmoved by holy images and ignores a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, indifferently treats the many cassocked clerics and religious he encounters, and rather effortlessly overcomes the usual hurdles that fill the routine events of daily life.

As the final exams approach, a sense of accountability is imposed upon this hypothetical seminarian. Having half-heartedly applied himself to reviewing and understanding his subject, he feverishly plunges into his studies. It would be a mistake to conclude that the study time was well spent if this hapless seminarian "earned" a good mark; ill-fated, if he concluded that he fulfilled his duty. Likewise, it would be folly to think that a reluctantly mediocre effort in the life of virtue is proof of truly serving and loving God. There is a need for something more profound and the true test is whether we take to heart this lesson and make it a part of our lives!

The lesson is not simply *to know and serve*, but to *be* like Christ in order to do like Christ. The saints wonderfully demonstrate this truth by becoming supernatural men, holy men. We all must undergo this transformation. The Christian life is a life-long pursuit of ever becoming more and more like Christ. We must ask ourselves: "For what do I live? For what do I spend my energies? What goals do I have in life? In what manner do I hope to go forward?" These are the test questions that are answered by the fact of our actual lives... not by what we have *said* we would do, but by what we are actually doing.

If we are going to really live Christ, then we must offer God the oblation of our talents, our energies and our will as Our Lord has done in magnificent generosity, which is the quintessential quality of the Christian life and inescapable to all who would claim to be followers of Christ. Consequently, not only are Protestants and other heretics not truly Christians (because of their doctrinal and moral aberrancy), but even the Catholic who allows himself to deviate from the pristine



*The Pax is given to the new members of the Society*

even in this life; albeit, we may presently suffer more or less. We, sinful men that we are, have great difficulty trusting God in this regard. Our inordinate attachment to natural good is one reason why we have such great difficulty grasping this truth. Foolishly, we cling to the mere dust and ashes of this created world, when we should pursue the priceless gem of supernatural joy graciously offered to us by God. Why do we not act according to our Faith, which teaches that God is good and alone can make us perfectly happy? Do we really believe Christ's word?

We cannot escape Suffering in the Valley of Tears, but sorrows can be "overwhelmed" by supernatural and perfect joy. Only if we live the life we are meant to live, will we be happy – not only in heaven (later) but on earth (now). We seem not to take seriously Our Lord's promise and example. Were we more conformed to Christ and dependent upon Him, we would have this present happiness that is but a foretaste of that which is perfect in heaven. Although absolutely perfect in heaven, happiness is obtainable even now on earth: in heaven without suffering, here through the cross. By such fidelity we resolve the mysterious paradox of suffering and happiness, death and life: *He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it.* (Matthew 10:39).

The apparent contradiction is unravelled by Christ, whereby we know God and have the means to love him, in this way we truly live and live happily. St. Augustine exclaims in wonder: "Let us, then, love not ourselves, but Him; ...let us seek the things which are his, not the things which are our own. For in some inexplicable way, I know not how, every one who loves himself, and not God, does not love himself; and whoever loves God, and not himself, he it is who loves himself" (St. Augustine, Treatise on St. John, n. 5).

The true Christian, then, only really lives when he is integrally engaged in the pursuit of loving God above all things. This love is found in the total giving of self, an act of oblation to God. This sacrificing all to be conformed to Christ in all

integrity of Christ's example. This lack of fidelity to Christ is an abandoning of a genuine pursuit of true happiness. We cannot ignore self-denial and the cross: *And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me* (Matthew 10:38).

Christ came into the world to exemplify the way we must tread in order to share in His victory over sin and death. Now, Christ's victory was not a materialistic removal of suffering, or even physical death in this life, as is mistakenly held by so many. Our Lord's triumph was that, in sharing our humanity and our human sufferings, He was perfectly submitted to His Father's Will, which made His perfectly happy. His perfect conformity to God, even in the sufferings of this life, were embraced as goods that, rather than impeded more perfect union with God, made for the greatest union – that is, possession of the perfect Love of God, which can only fill one with perfect joy... in this life, but not without some suffering. This Our Lord did by His infinitely generous act of oblation, whereby He embraced the totality of the Cross. Grace and Christ's Divine and human natures cooperated perfectly – Christ was not for an instant unhappy; however, He did suffer.

With Christ, we too may be perfectly happy, not only in heaven, but

things, is the affirmation that we *believe* Christ; consequently, we practice what He exemplifies and teaches – we live accordingly, we live uncompromised.

Conversely, we may live compromised, if we merely profess to believe *in* Christ. If we only believe that Christ is God and we do not follow His teaching and example, then do we really believe Him? Such “faith” divorces Christ’s theory and practice... there is no conformity. Without conformity between theory and practice, we will live divided and consequently, because we do not truly *follow* Our Lord, we will not have the joy He promises.

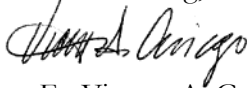
Oh, that this truth were known and embraced by all! May our seminarians be imbued with a profound desire to live Christ and Christ crucified, whereby God will be glorified and souls saved. This is the Church’s mission and the reason why we members of the Society make the oblation of our will and talents. This reality must be inculcated in the minds and hearts of the seminarians during their years of formation. One of the principal aims in the Seminary is *to educate the men who desire to devote their lives to the ecclesiastical ministry*, according to Law of the Church (Canon 1352). Please pray that our seminarians pass the real test of generosity in spending themselves to live Christ and to exemplify Him to others.

Please continue to pray for us at Holy Cross, dear friends and benefactors. With the first half of the academic year completed, we prepare for the fast approaching Ordinations in mid-August. We look forward to two Pontifical ceremonies in which we will receive new Subdeacons and Tonsured Clerics (August 15<sup>th</sup>) and a new Porter & Lector, and Exorcists and Acolytes (August 16<sup>th</sup>).

It is a blessing to have young men deemed prepared and worthy to advance in these steps to Our Lord’s Priesthood. May our seminarians and all members of the Society persevere and live faithfully our act of oblation. For the seminarians discerning their vocations, may they be ever more generous in their oblation with each step leading to the Priesthood. Pray for this intention as well as for still more men to offer themselves in this sacred service of supernatural joy.

In gratitude for your generosity and continual support, both materially and (especially) spiritually, we at Holy Cross assure you of our prayers and sacrifices for your good intentions and spiritual needs. May we all give glory to God and ever strive for holiness in life, to be truly conformed to Christ, now in this life and forever in heaven. Amen. May God bless you and may the Immaculate Heart of Mary watch over you.

In Christ the King,



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

#### **Announcements:**

- **Ordinations to the Diaconate are scheduled for 18 December 2014.**
- **Retreats:** Register at [retreats@holycrossseminary.com](mailto:retreats@holycrossseminary.com) or by post at the addresses listed above. Retreats are as follows:
  - Ladies’ Ignatian Retreat – 5 to 10 January 2015
  - Men’s Ignatian Retreat – 12 to 17 January 2015
- **Electronic subscription of the Seminary’s Newsletter** may be requested at: [website@holycrossseminary.com](mailto:website@holycrossseminary.com)