



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

This issue of the seminary newsletter begins with a number of important events—some good and some sad.

On March 12, Fr. Ephrem Cordova will celebrate his 25th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination. I remember the day when he first joined the seminary back in 1975. When a new seminarian arrived, he was assigned a “guardian angel” to explain the schedule and the discipline of the seminary. I was Fr. Ephrem’s “guardian angel.” Since his ordination, he has labored in Arizona and Southern California. *Ad multos annos!*

This past month has also been the sad occasion of the loss of Dr. Patrick Hughes, MD, the father of Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI and Fr. Brendan Hughes, CMRI; and also the loss of Mrs. Emily Radecki, the mother of Fr. Francisco Radecki, CMRI and Fr. Dominic Radecki, CMRI.

It has been my great privilege to have known many years both Dr. Hughes and Emily Radecki, both most devout Catholics. Our Lord has said, “By their fruits, you shall know them... a good tree bears good fruit.” What a great blessing for each of these two souls to have two sons as priests. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

On March 19th, the feast of St. Joseph, Rev. Mr. Robert LeTourneau (Boston) will be ordained to the diaconate and Josef Weissensteiner (Austria), who is under the direction of Fr. Floriano Abrahamovich (Italy), will receive 1st Clerical Tonsure.

On March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, our two novice Sisters, Sr. Maria Franzisca, CMD, (Germany) and Sr. Rose Marie, CMD, (Minnesota) will take their first vows and our postulant Rebecca Short (sister of Fr. Anthony Short, CMRI) will be received as a novice sister.

On Sunday, March 8, I will be in Burlington, CO, at Immaculate Conception Church for Holy Mass followed by the ground-breaking ceremony to commence the building of a new facility for Sacred Heart Academy. The present building is too small to accommodate for growth in attendance. It is a very exciting time for our parish in eastern Colorado.



This month of March is dedicated to St. Joseph. As Joseph in the Old Testament, who pre-figured St. Joseph, was placed over the land of Egypt, and who could interpret dreams, God placed St. Joseph over His household and revealed to him in his sleep not to fear to take the Blessed Virgin and to flee into Egypt. How appropriately the Church has named him patron of the

Universal Church (the Mystical Body of Christ) as he had been chosen by God to be protector of the Christ Child. In this age when the family is so much under attack, our Catholic families can look to St. Joseph who was the head of the Holy Family for his guidance and protection. How fittingly the Church invokes St. Joseph as the special patron saint of religious as he was called to the sublime vocation of guardian of the Blessed Virgin Mary. May he watch over and protect all of our families and our religious!

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



At the Pontifical Mass on Ash Wednesday, Rev. Mr. Robert LeTourneau chants the Epistle. During the season of Lent, the deacon and subdeacon in place of the dalmatic and tunic make use of the folded chasuble which is removed during the chanting of the Epistle and Gospel.

Your Cross

by St. Francis de Sales

The everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His all-knowing eyes, understood with His Divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighted with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His Holy Name, anointed it with His grace, perfumed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all-merciful love of God.



A Masterpiece of Craftsmanship

by a seminarian

In 1896, when the little Chapel of Our Lady of Light in Santa Fe was almost completed, the architect was murdered. Only then did the people realize that in the plans he had forgotten to include a staircase to the twenty-foot high choir loft. The Sisters of Loretto, for whom the chapel was built, consulted several architects, but all agreed that, since the chapel was so small (only 25 by 60 feet), it would not be possible to use it for group worship if stairs were put in. Faced with this sad situation, the sisters sought refuge in prayer and started a novena to St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters.

Just one day after this novena ended, an old man knocked at the door of the convent with a donkey that carried his tools and belongings. Without introducing himself, the old man said he had heard the nuns needed a staircase and that he would like to do the job. But how strange were the conditions under which he wanted to fulfill the task! He asked the sisters who showed him the choir loft that he was to be left alone. He even wanted to lock the chapel, since he didn't need anyone's help. After three months had passed, he called Mother Magdalene to see his work. She was so amazed that she ran to get the other sisters. When they returned to the church together, they found it swept clean and the old man, his donkey and his tools were gone. The sisters tried to find him because he had not been paid for his work. They asked in the city if anyone had seen an old man with a donkey, and even offered a reward for information. But no one had ever seen him, neither three weeks before nor after. Thus, the question as to who the old man really was

will never be answered with certainty. However, if one just looks more closely at the stairs, one can't help but believe that there is something miraculous about them.

The most amazing thing about the staircase is the fact that it has no visible means of support, neither a center pole to wind around, nor a wall to cling to (the connections to the wall, as well as the railing, have been added afterwards for the sake of security). Also,

there is no support from underneath, which spiral staircases usually require. In addition to that, it is to be noticed that the carpenter did not use a single nail or screw, but attached everything by means of wood dowels. The two stringers attached to the thirty-three steps are perfectly matching spirals, which is all the more difficult since the staircase makes two 360 degree turns. If we observe these two stringers a little closer, we can see that they are not just one bent piece of wood, but consist of several sections of wood spliced together. All this the carpenter did having only, according to Mother Magdalene's diary, a couple



of hammers, an ancient and unusual looking saw, a T-Square and a chisel.

The wood he used was hardwood, not native to New Mexico. But he didn't bring wood with him, nor did he buy it from the lumber supplier in Santa Fe. So, the question as to who this carpenter was can never be satisfactorily answered. The whole story, nevertheless, teaches us that fervent and confident prayer is answered, sometimes even in a very extraordinary way, like in the little chapel of Sante Fe.

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

The Precious Five-Dollar Bill

Question: A clerk stole a five-dollar bill from the desk of his wealthy employer and spent it. Afterward he discovered that the bill was a rare collector's item, worth more than a thousand dollars. What was the gravity of the clerk's sin of theft, and what is to be said of his obligation to make restitution?

Answer: Objectively the clerk committed a grave sin, since a thousand dollars greatly exceeds the absolute sum for serious matter, however rich his employer may be. If he was in invincible ignorance of the extraordinary value of this particular piece of currency and believed he was committing a sin of injustice only to the extent of five dollars, the theft was subjectively venial, since the employer is described as a wealthy man. If, when he discovers the special value of the bill there is no longer any reasonable hope of recovering it, he satisfies his obligation of restitution (binding *sub levi*) by restoring five dollars to his employer, since he disposed of the money in good faith, as regards its special worth, and has become no richer from this standpoint. However, if there is a chance that he can get back the original five-dollar bill (for example, from the store where he spent it shortly before he found out its great value) he is bound to make this effort; and this obligation binds *sub gravi*, and according to the common teaching as a duty of *justice*. Hence, if he neglects to make this attempt when the recovery of the bill could be hoped for, and later it becomes impossible to locate it, he would be bound to restore the full value of the currency—that is, a thousand dollars, or at least an amount proportionate to the hope he had of recovering the bill. However, full restitution if the attempt to find the money would be likely to be gravely detrimental to him (for example, if it might lead to a lengthy prison term). On the other hand, if the employer finds out that the clerk was the thief, he could lawfully bring suit against him for the entire amount, even though the clerk disposed of the money in good faith as regards its special value and could not later recover it. And, if the verdict of the court requires restitution of the full value of the bill, the thief would be bound in conscience to pay it.

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MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha NE 68134-3356