



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,

What supernatural joy our newly ordained priests experienced when they ascended the altar of God as Christ's representative and in the Person of Christ offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the first time. The years of spiritual formation and study in the seminary were so many small steps to reach their goal to become an alter Christus—another Christ.

This same supernatural joy filled the hearts of the parents, brothers and sisters, and relatives of our newly ordained priests. What a blessing to have a member of your family become a Catholic priest! Memories were made this past December which will never be forgotten for those who were privileged to be present for the ordinations and First Solemn High Masses.

All of you, friends and benefactors, even though not present, had a very important part in these

wonderful events. It is by your prayers and financial support that our seminary is able to receive seminarians who would ordinarily not be able to financially support themselves during their years of formation. For this we are most sincerely grateful and wish to reassure you of our prayers and remembrance during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Epiphany season is a wonderful time for us to reflect on the importance of cooperation with the grace of God in our lives in imitation of the Holy Magi. When God manifested to them by means of a star the Birth of the Divine Messias, they faithfully corresponded to this divine revelation and their perseverance was rewarded. In like manner, we must follow the star of our precious Catholic Faith in these times of spiritual darkness and heed the words of Christ, "He who shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved."

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



Fr. Tien Le offers his first Solemn High Mass on the Feast of St. Lucy, with Fr. Christopher Gronenthal as assistant priest



Fr. Stephen Sandquist offers his first Solemn High Mass on December 15th, with Fr. Benedict Hughes, CMRI as assistant priest.



Fr. Jeremy Saunders offers his first Solemn High Mass on December 15th, at St. Joseph's Church in Wayne, Michigan, with Fr. Francisco Radecki, CMRI as assistant priest

The Shrine of the Three Kings

by a seminarian

On January 6th, we celebrated the feast of the Epiphany on which we commemorated the manifestation of Our Divine Savior to the Holy Magi, who travelled all the way from the east to adore the Divine Infant King. We marvel at their cooperation with divine grace to recognize the wonderful event of the Birth of the Son of God and their perseverance to follow the star that led them to Bethlehem. The Holy Magi, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar are honored as saints and their relics are preserved and venerated in the Cathedral of Cologne.

The city of Cologne was founded in 38 B.C. by Agrippa, the son-in-law of the Roman Emperor Augustus. Originally, Cologne was a frontier post of the Roman Empire which had the Rhine River as its northern border against the hostile Germanic tribes. In 1268, on top of the ruins of the former temple of Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensis (the original name of Cologne), the foundation stone of the famous Cathedral of Cologne was laid. It is one of the largest cathedrals in all of Europe.

In 1327, the consecration of the east end took place. However, in 1560, funds for the construction ran out, so the south tower was left unfinished until the nineteenth century, and it is still under construction today.

Like all Gothic architecture, this Cathedral reminds the faithful, by its upward driving forms, that we are on a pilgrimage toward God. This effect is caused by the spires, the arched windows, the flying buttresses and all the slender pinnacles.

The greatest treasure of the cathedral is the previously mentioned shrine of the Three Kings which is of pure gold and which includes a wooden box with the relics of the Three Kings. The sides of the shrine show figures of Old Testament kings and prophets; above them are angels and Apostles. One end of the reliquary represents the crucifixion, and the other end portrays the adoration of the Magi.

The intercession of the Holy Magi is invoked by the faithful for a safe and secure journey. Holy Magi, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, pray for us!



The relics of the Three Holy Magi resting in the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany



Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

SUNDAY MORNING CONFESSIONS

Question: What is to be said of the obligation of pastors to have confessions in their churches on Sunday mornings? There are many different views and customs on this matter. Some priests refuse to hear confessions in the church on Sunday morning, others hear before Mass, others hear up to the offertory, while in some churches, staffed by a large number of priests, the opportunity is given the faithful to go to the confession during the entire Mass.

Answer: It is difficult to see how a pastor is justified in laying down a hard and fast rule that confessions will not be heard on Sunday morning. For a parish priest is bound in justice to hear the confessions of those of his flock who reasonably ask this service (Can. 892 § 1). Now, it is certainly a reasonable request on the part of a person who is anxious to receive Holy Communion, yet was unable to get to confession Saturday afternoon or evening, to ask to receive the sacrament of Penance on Sunday morning.

It cannot be denied that in practically every parish in the United States there are people who have a just reason for going to confession on Sunday morning. In the country parishes there are always some who live a great distance from the church and who could not make the long journey on Saturday and again on Sunday. In the city parishes there are some who have to work on Saturday afternoon and evening. It would seem to be a grave neglect on the pastoral ministry if a parish priest regularly refuses such persons the opportunity of confessing on Sunday morning.

Of course, there will be abuses if confessions are heard regularly on Sunday morning. Some, who could easily come to confession the previous day, will take advantage of this opportunity to “streamline” their devotions by receiving both Penance and the Holy Eucharist in the briefest possible time. However, the fact that there will be some abuses does not exempt the priest from a duty so important as giving deserving members of his flock the opportunity of confessing their sins on the only occasion available to them. The priest is, indeed, fully justified in taking measures to limit the Sunday morning confessions to those who cannot come the day before. He can frequently announce that the opportunity is intended only for such members of the parish, and even personally admonish those who he knows are transgressing this ruling. In a small parish where there are very few persons who have not the opportunity to confess on Saturday, he can even wait for individual requests before entering the confessional. But in a parish where there is a considerable number of persons able to come to confession only on Sunday morning there should be a regular time assigned for the confessions of any who present themselves.

The most desirable system is to have confessions before the Mass; and naturally this is the only procedure possible where only one priest is available. It is interesting in this connection to recall that the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore exhorted pastors to be on hand for confessions, not only on Saturdays and the vigils of Feasts, but also on Sundays and Feast days in the morning before the first Mass. This sentence was added: “It would be a most grave crime if through the negligence or sloth of a pastor even one of the faithful were deprived of this sacrament.”

When there are several priests and the Masses are close together, an effort should be made to have all the confessions heard at least before the offertory. For, it is a disputed point whether or not a person going to confession can at the same time be considered as hearing Mass. At any rate, if the confession is going on at the time of consecration, the priest should suggest to the penitent that he pause and center his attention on this most solemn portion of the Holy Sacrifice.

Adsum, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

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