

The Seminary has likewise received many material blessings, which have made it possible to complete a number of much needed improvements in our kitchen and dining area over the summer months. Our walk-in refrigerators have been completed sanitised and refurbished and storm windows and fly-screens installed in the refectory. Thank you very much for your generous contributions!



Light pours in through the new windows in the Refectory

The work of spiritual and physical restoration continues; hence, we continue to beg your prayers and kind support. We assure you and your family of our fidelity to the pursuit of holiness (which is rightly expected of Christ's priests and religious!) and our prayers of gratitude. May God bless you with greater zeal and devotion and may Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Joseph comfort you along the dolorous way of the Cross in the struggle to accompany Our Lord and Saviour lovingly in this season of Lent.

In Christ the King,

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



Gutting the walk-in Refrigerators



The newly refurbished Refrigerators



Southern Sentinel

Regnavit a Ligno Deus

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Today, the Seminary resumed its work of training seminarians and religious with the start of the new academic year. It is essential for all men, and especially for those in the Seminary, to bear in mind that we are here simply to adore God. However, this most necessary principle of life is easily forgotten as we permit our attention to pursue less noble objectives, fall sway to self-serving or seeking the easy way and indulging our concupiscence. For this reason, Holy Mother Church annually obliges the Christian wayfarer to apply himself seriously to a rigorous programme of "re-focusing" our sights on our last end and the Reason why we seek it. The Season of Lent is a time to discipline our faculties and to better know the love of God.



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Failure to renew and advance in this objective would lead to our succumbing to the weakness of our fallen nature. We risk forsaking our eternal inheritance for a mere temporal souvenir. What folly! Esau of old abandoned his birthright for an easy meal – countless millions throughout the ages have followed suit despite the pitiable example of Esau’s lack of foresight.

Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Mk14:38) Why indulge the flesh for a time and forsake the spirit (*and the flesh*) for eternity? As believers, since we acknowledge that the *spirit is willing and the flesh is weak*, we must *responsibly* undertake the Lenten work of discipline and mortification; otherwise, we ignore the duty of love – to ever seek greater union with the Beloved. And this would effectively abandon the soul to the folly of the flesh. Only in dying to this world, is the Christian born unto the eternal life of God. *And Christ died for all; that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.* (II Cor 5:15)

As man strives to adore the good God, the Adored sanctifies the adorer, who gradually discovers and possesses true and lasting happiness. However, the induction of the corporal nature into this lofty ideal is not an easy process since our sentient nature finds “proof” of happiness in immediate and palpable pleasure. The idealistic austerity of Lent promises a distant and mysterious spiritual joy while notably enduring immediate and certain discomfort, which is appealing neither to our wounded nature or our rebellious flesh.

This ideal must be cultivated in the garden of our soul, so that the grace of God takes root and Christ lives unrestricted in us. In this we conform to the ideal of St. Paul: *And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me.* (Gal 2:20). Despite our weakness, failures and sinfulness, we must persevere in trying to realize this ideal, which God’s grace and mercy prompt us to pursue. This is the supernatural labour of the Christian Lent.

A mechanical or formulary “devotion” is not so much a supernatural labour as it is an natural endeavour. Devotion devoid of attention and affection is hardly devout. The very expression “mechanical devotion” is paradoxical. How can one profess sincere love, conviction or devotion if one thoughtlessly reads a prepared script or mouths words of “praise” in order to fulfil some “dreadful” obligation of adoration?

Sadly, our devotions and religious practices do become routine and quite empty when they are reduced to mere legalistic and perfunctory functions that *must* be performed. In such cases, the obligation is reduced to a brutish fear of punishment. A corrupted notion that we *must* “get through the prayers or else... God will send us to hell” seems often to be the motive of many “religious duties!” This is not a true understanding or love of the true God and His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic religion.

The true motive of our generosity in the Season of Lent is that God sent His only begotten Son to redeem and sanctify us so that we may be saved from our sins and our rebellion. The Offended has performed the act of reconciling the rebellious offender, who is neither capable of repairing or repenting without God’s intervention and help. What unfathomable mercy!

After examining ourselves and our response to the call for penance and confidence in God’s mercy, we may reconsider our religious duties and the degree of our integrity in the effort of conforming our lives to that of Christ. We may begin to understand that simply “going on retreat” will not ensure my conversion – I must follow through with good resolutions wisely made; our daily prayers do not “make us good” – we must cooperate with actual grace lavishly showered upon us in the course of each day; we do not necessarily fulfil God’s Law by simply attending Holy Mass – as we are commanded to love God with our whole heart, body, soul and mind... We realise that much more than mere physical presence is due to God’s honour and glory.

The possibility of our falling into an empty routine in our religious duties and devotions is frightening. However, without a persistent effort in vigilance and renewed zeal in our spiritual life we, like the Apostles on the night of Our Lord’s Passion, will succumb to a pitiful slumber in our prayer life. Let us awaken at the sounding of the trumpet and go to the battle of zealous devotion for the love of God. Prayer, the lifting of our mind and heart to God, is a union with Him through our highest faculties and God’s gift of grace – we know and love God as we consider His Truth and desire His Goodness. These acts of devotion are professions and manifestations of our genuine love of God.

Have mercy on us, O Lord! How patiently You suffer our weakness!

We have little to fear, but our giving in to our weakness. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?* (Ro 8:31) We are made invincible and assured victory, if we will but rise to the occasion and walk with Christ in all confidence – for He is our strength: *And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.* (II Cor 12:9)

May these humble thoughts fill our minds and hearts as we truly strive to give glory to God and to find our eternal happiness. In this time of Lent, may we all recognize our responsibility, especially that of the priest, the religious, the seminarian and the postulant, to seek a life of contemplation and conformity to Christ in all things. Please pray for us at Holy Cross Seminary as we pray for you.

God certainly has responded to the many prayers, sacrifices and acts of virtue offered for priestly and religious vocations so urgently begged in the Crusade for Vocations last September through December. This year Holy Cross happily receives seven new candidates into the Seminary and Novitiate! Two young men enter the first year of studies, we have three Pre-Seminarians, and two more will begin the Brothers’ Postulancy. Deo gratias! Please join us in giving thanks to God for His many graces and do continue to pray that God will preserve these young men in their good resolutions and send us many more holy vocations.

Your generosity in last year’s Crusade and your continued resolve to live virtuously will certainly merit many graces from heaven whereby the gift of priestly and religious vocations come to fruition. Let us continue in our generosity in adoring God by virtuous living.