



**SEMINARY OF CHRIST THE KING**

**Parent's Handbook**

2015-16



Dear Parents of seminarians,

The faculty of the Seminary of Christ the King would like to thank you for cooperating in your son's discernment and formation by considering and encouraging his entrance into the high school seminary. We would like to begin these considerations for parents with some words of Saint John Paul II:

“Dear parents ... I earnestly exhort you to continue more and more to be among the men and women who deeply feel the problems of the life of the Church, who shoulder these problems and are also able to transmit this sensitivity to their children, with prayer, reading of the Word of God, and living example. Normally a vocation is born and matures in a healthy, responsible and Christian family background. It becomes rooted precisely there and draws from it the possibility of growing and becoming a strong tree, laden with ripe fruit. Certainly, it will be necessary to cooperate in harmony with the diocesan seminary and to proceed at the same rate in the delicate task of educating and training aspirants to the priesthood. The seminary, in fact, exercises a unique and determinant role. But everything starts from the family and in the last instance everything is conditioned by it.

Therefore, you too, dear members of the family, take part in the vocation of these boys. You, too, in a way, can and must reply to the Lord: “Behold. . . let it be done to me according to your word”, by granting him, or rather giving to him, the fruit of your mutual love. And be certain that for the Lord and for his Church it is worth committing oneself to this extent.” (John Paul II *to Families and formators of the Pontifical Minor seminary in Rome*, December 20, 1981)

“As long experience shows, a priestly vocation tends to show itself in the pre-adolescent years or in the earliest years of youth. Even in people who decide to enter the seminary later on it is not infrequent to find that God's call had been perceived much earlier. The Church's history gives constant witness of calls which the Lord directs to people of tender age. St. Thomas, for example, explains Jesus' special love for St. John the Apostle “because of his tender age” and draws the following conclusion: “This explains that God loves in a special way those who give themselves to his service from their earliest youth.”

The Church looks after these seeds of vocations sown in the hearts of children by means of the institution of minor seminaries, providing a careful though preliminary discernment and accompaniment. In a number of parts of the world these seminaries continue to carry out a valuable educational work, the aim of which is to protect and develop the seeds of a priestly vocation so that the students may more easily recognize it and be in a better position to respond to it. The educational goal of such seminaries tends to favour in a timely and gradual way the human [moral], cultural and spiritual formation which will lead the young person to embark on the path of the major seminary with an adequate and solid foundation. “To be prepared to follow Christ the Redeemer with generous souls and pure hearts”: this is the purpose of the minor seminary ... The students “under the fatherly supervision of the superiors – the parents too playing their appropriate part – should lead lives suited to the age, mentality and development of young people. Their way of life should be fully in keeping with the standards of sound psychology and should include suitable experience of the ordinary affairs of daily life and contact with their own families.” (John Paul II *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, #63)

## **Mission Statement of the High School Seminary of Christ the King**

The high school Seminary of Christ the King is the only high school seminary in Western Canada. As a seminary, our program focuses on helping young men to grow in holiness, to discern, and to prepare for the Catholic priesthood and consecrated life.

We are a Group 1 independent school of the B.C. School system. Our academic program follows the British Columbia curriculum, with the inclusion of religious studies and Latin. While our academic standards are high, the most important and unique aspect of our program is the spiritual, personal and community formation of the young men who attend here. Applicants are screened before being allowed to attend the seminary and must express a strong, personal and free interest in discerning and preparing for the priestly and/or religious vocation. Students must also indicate through their personal history an ability to grow within the seminary community – all students board at the seminary.

Through personal spiritual direction, community structure, prayer and interaction with others, the seminary provides an atmosphere where young men can grow in their spiritual lives and in their ability to relate to others in ways that would prepare them to be mature, responsible, future leaders.

## **Why the high school seminary?**

Many boys are not ready to leave home during their teenage years. No one can replace the love, affection, care and teaching role of parents for their children. It is at home that a child learns his identity as a person made in God's image, one called to love and to be loved. But for those boys who are called by God, are given a special gift to grow in their relation with Him and with others, and are ready to accept this call and gift, seminary life is a unique opportunity for their growth with God and with others.

When you as parents consider your son's attendance in the seminary, it is important that you do not see your main decision as only, "whether or not I can entrust the care of my son to those who run the seminary." We, the faculty of the seminary, cannot replace your role as parents. The entrustment that should be the centre of your discernment is your son's relationship to Jesus, who has entrusted your son to you as parents and to us as the faculty of the seminary. "Test the spirits to see if they be of God". (St. John & St. Benedict) Your, and our, main discernment with respect to your son's coming to the seminary should be: "is my son moved by Jesus to make this step; and if he is, is he ready to follow this call?"

The following considerations are practical guidelines regarding issues that arise for every seminarian, hence for parents of seminarians. We hope that these

guidelines will be of help in answering some of your questions and concerns and in aiding you to prepare your son for entrance into the seminary and helping him once he has entered.

Over and above all practical matters is the importance of the spiritual life of your children. It is expected that before a boy attends the seminary he has developed a habit of prayer. The seminary's daily routine is structured around liturgical and personal prayer. If a boy is not "acclimatized" to prayer at home, his entrance into the seminary will be more difficult. Boys who wish to apply to the seminary should be praying a daily Rosary and attending Mass as often as possible during the week. If these practices are not already part of your son's rule of life please help and encourage him – growth in the love and praise of God is the greatest gift you can offer your children.

### **PRACTICAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR ENTRANCE**

#### **Washing clothes:**

Before students come to the seminary they should have been washing and caring for their own clothes for some time. The seminary has a coin operated washer and dryer for the students. Seminarians need to know how to keep white and colored clothes clean. They need to be used to keeping their clothes folded neatly in the drawers of their room. The seminary provides use of irons and ironing board. Please teach your sons how to iron their dress shirts and pants.

#### **Basic sewing:**

Each student should know how to make basic repairs of his clothes and replacing buttons, etc. Please show your sons how to use a needle and thread.

#### **Attitude towards work and obedience:**

Perhaps the most important practical "skill" you can aid us in, is the cultivation and insistence among your sons of an uncomplaining attitude towards, responsibilities, obedience and work. If your son is not obedient at home it is unlikely he will be so at the seminary. A person's growth in loving obedience and diligence is a necessary stepping-stone for responsible maturity in his relationship with God and with others.

### **KEEPING CONTACT WITH YOUR SONS**

Seminarians do not have access to the internet, hence, to email, in the seminary. Regular contact with your sons should be through written letters. Such communication may seem rather old-fashioned, but, in our experience it has proven to be the most personal and constructive form of regular communication between seminarians and their families.

The seminary has only one pay phone that is available for the students' use. Students receive calls from their families on this phone. Because there is only one phone for the whole student body there are two general rules for phone use in the seminary:

- **Students may not make or receive phone calls** during scheduled activity times: prayer times, study periods etc. In the appendix of this booklet is a copy of the daily order of the seminary. **Please consult this time schedule before you call or arrange for your son to call you.**
- If there are other seminarians waiting for the phone, there is a five minute time limit on the use of the phone.

### **Dealing with Homesickness.**

The experience of homesickness is normal and healthy and most seminarians experience it. When and how boys experience homesickness varies. Some will experience it very early during the first few weeks of school, most will struggle with it after the first home weekend or vacation time, some will not experience it until the second semester, after the Christmas holidays and during the month of March are common tough times! Finally, among the seminarians there are the rare few for whom homesickness never seems to strike too violently.

When it comes, the experience usually comes in waves; as the wave crests, the sense of being away from home is felt most strongly, and the boy may feel, think and express his experiences in ways that seem like his whole world is falling apart.

As mentioned before, this is a normal and healthy experience. It is part of every child's moving from his childhood dependence on his parents to a more mature interdependence with them.

When a boy is experiencing homesickness we do not suggest excessive phone calls. Phone communication at these times usually makes the situation worse. The problem with phone calls is that the boy is not in the physical, real presence of his mom or dad; he is listening to and speaking to an electrified voice. All the personal elements of the communication are left up to his imagination. He will fill them in as his feelings of homesickness dictate. This is why the phone call will often increase his troubles.

We suggest that the boy first goes to the chapel to bring his feelings to Jesus and Mary, get a good night's sleep, and call home the next day when his feelings have subsided somewhat. Parents' firm and loving support is very important both for their peace of mind and the boys emotional stability and growth.

### **Responsibilities while away from seminary.**

Students in the high school seminary, and those who seriously desire to attend the seminary, should have an ordered rule of life not only while at the seminary but also while at home or away from the seminary. The following are the basics expected of seminarians while away from the seminary: Every day they should attend Mass if Mass is available. They should pray Morning prayer, Midday prayer, and Evening prayer (all taken from their Christian Prayer book) every day. They should pray the Rosary, preferably with their families, and spend 15 – 30 minutes of spiritual reading and quiet

time every day. They should get to confession about twice a month.

You can help your own and family's spiritual growth by encouraging, challenging you son, but most helpful is if you and your family adopt some or all of the prayer times together.

#### **School Ceremonies/Parents' Days.**

Three times during the year the high school has school ceremonies that are combined with parents' days. Two of these, mid-October and late-March, coincide with the distribution of term report cards. At these times the seminarians present dramatic and musical performances for their parents, families, the rest of the seminary community and the monastic community. The high school students spend a lot of time preparing for these events and performances. These are also privileged times for parents to meet with teachers and discuss their son's development. **It is of great importance to the seminarians that their parents and families attend these events.**

#### **Transport to and from the Seminary:**

The seminary is not responsible for transport to or from the seminary during home weekends or holidays. Presently we have some local Knights of Columbus who offer rides to students who are flying or the taking the bus in or out of Abbotsford. Students who wish to make use of the service provided by the Knights must book their flight or bus arrival and departure times with consideration for those providing the rides: pickup and drop off times from the

seminary are between 7:30 AM and 8:00 PM.

Similarly, the seminary is not responsible for transport to or from the seminary for ordinary medical or dental care, except in the case of emergencies.

#### **Arrival at the beginning of the School Year.**

School starts on the Wednesday after Labour Day with a family orientation day, pot luck lunch and registration. Students and families should arrive between 10:00 and 11:30 AM a schedule for the day is sent to each parent. If circumstances necessitate that students arrive before this date arrangements must be made well in advance. Like any large family, the monastic community has a lot going on at this time preparing for the new school year. We appreciate your cooperation in arranging for your sons to arrive on time.

#### **Holidays and Home Weekends:**

**It is of utmost importance that students arrive and depart within the times set on the school calendar.** Students are to be back at school at 7:30 PM at the latest after home weekends and school holidays, and may leave only after 3:00 PM classes are finished at the beginning of such holidays. It is better for students to arrive early than to arrive late. If a student is late more than once on his return after home weekends or holidays he will not be permitted to return home on the following home weekend.

### **Knights of Columbus Elocution Contest.**

The high school seminarians **may be participating** in the K of C elocution contest this year. We will let you know if they are. This competition is held at Traditional Learning Academy in Coquitlam: 1189 Rochester St. Coquitlam, phone: 604 931 7245. This event happens on a Friday and Saturday in Late April or early May. Seminarians from the Vancouver area are asked to travel to and from the event from their homes. Since many of the seminarians are from out of province, we ask that those families from the Vancouver area who are able to help us by accepting an extra boy or two for the weekend, or assisting us with transport to and from the seminary.

### **POLICY FOR STUDENT'S ACCEPTANCE AND RETURNING**

The high school seminary program is designed to facilitate the growth in holiness, discernment, and development of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Most boys who come the high school seminary are in the "not sure" position with respect to their discernment of their vocation, and God's will in this regard. Many boys are accepted on the basis of their demonstrated interest in things of God in general, in the priesthood and religious life in particular, and in their ability to grow within the seminary community.

During the school year, through interaction with other students, faculty, regular prayer and community life and

spiritual direction, most students will discern quite quickly their desire and capacities to continue in the direction of seminary life.

Throughout the year the rector of the seminary meets individually with each student. Students are assessed on how seriously and actively they discern their relationship with God and His call, how they are growing within and contribute to the seminary community, as well as their classroom conduct and performance.

**All students are accepted for one year at a time.** Given the daily seminary routine of prayer, community life, study and work, it is usual that new students will take a few months to adjust to such a routine and be significantly affected by it. After the first few months new students are able to enter into the daily seminary structure in a life-changing manner. Having settled in, students will quite naturally begin to lean in one of two directions with respect to seminary life. Some will feel and respond to a desire to enter deeper and deeper into the new life they have been given. These will not find it an unreasonable burden to spend extra time visiting Jesus in the chapel on their own or getting up earlier for extra prayer; these boys start to become aware of the areas in their life that they need to improve; they learn to accept tasks asked of them. Others, though happy at having settled in, will be content to be comfortable with the routine. These latter will usually enjoy being in the seminary since the disciplined routine, the joy of the community, and the peacefulness of the prayer life, have helped them to be freed

from the experience of boredom and inner anxiety, have given them a more spiritual and reasonable control of their lives.

This latter group of students, often supported by their parents, may desire to continue in the seminary in light of all the positive benefits they have received and changes they have seen in their lives. Often, they have become comfortable, perhaps for the first time in their lives, with who they are in the presence of God, within a community of friends, and may be treated with special respect at home and at their parish because they are seminarians. They may express their desire to return to the seminary as “I want to keep growing”, “I want to come back next year so I can figure out if I really want to be a priest”, “I want to return so I can try harder and do better in my studies and in my spiritual life”.

We appreciate the fact that these latter students have grown and changed significantly during their year in the seminary. We watch their behaviour and discuss with them their thoughts and desires as they express and discern their motivations for being in the seminary. Most students who are not interested in personally engaging in seminary life or do not feel called in the direction of the priesthood or religious life are able to decide on their own that the seminary is probably not the best place for them to continue their studies. However, if at the end of the year it seems to the rector and the faculty that a student shows little or no interest or aptitude to personally engage and grow in the seminary community and has no inclination towards the priesthood or religious life, yet still

would like to return, we will ask him to apply to another school for the coming year.

We have found over many years that to encourage or to allow such students to continue in the seminary – those who do not display in their behaviour and in their convictions a desire, or ability, to continue to “fight”, to push themselves in their struggle to grow, in the spiritual life, in their community life and in their studies – that they simply do not continue to grow. Instead, they tend to stagnate. Some students need more parental care, a care that no one other than parents and near relatives can give them. When we discern that a student needs be asked to go to another school we do not see this as a negative judgment in their regard, rather as a positive moving forward in their life decisions and directions. There is an old saying among fishermen: “when you’re looking for fish, it’s just as important to know where they aren’t as to know where they are”.

As we are discerning what is best for your son we will contact you and appreciate your enquiries and suggestions.

The discernment that the seminary fosters is not only in the direction of priesthood and consecrated life. Every human person must make life decisions, decisions upon which he can go forward in faith, hope, and love. No one enters or continues on the journey of life alone. When we are young we may have a tendency to see our direction mainly in terms of moving from a state of dependence on our parents and those around us to a state of independence: where we can make our own choices and direct our own lives. It is true that we all must grow from a state of



childhood dependence; but true growth is not to be found in independence, it is found in interdependence. We have been created and destined for a life of communion with God and with each other. It is the growth towards this life of communion that we encourage for all students at the seminary.

**Final Consideration:**

We hope this booklet has been helpful in formulating and presenting ways in which we can work together with your sons in their growth and formation.

We don't pretend to have all the answers or all the skills in order not to make any

mistakes. We are also learning as we grow with Jesus, each other, and those who are entrusted to our care. We appreciate insights and suggestions from parents, and are grateful to them for the gifts of their children and their families.

Please do not hesitate in asking for more clarification, making any suggestions with respect to the above issues and any others that you may have.

In Christ,

*Staff of the Seminary of Christ the King*

## APPENDIX

### Weekdays:

#### MONDAY - FRIDAY

5:45 am	Rise
6:05	Morning Prayer followed by Meditation
6:30	Conventual Mass – breakfast – house chores
8:00	Study
8:30-11:40	Classes (with Break at 10:00-10:10)
11:45	Midday Prayer in Minor Seminary Chapel followed by noon meal
1:15 pm	Spiritual Reading
1:30-4:00	Classes and physical education
4:45	Study
5:30	Vespers in Minor Seminary Chapel (Abbey Church on Saturdays)
6:00	Supper followed by community time until 7:00
7:00	Activity period
7:30	Study
8:30	Rosary (7:30 – 8:30 Fridays Holy Hour, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament)

### Weekends:

#### SATURDAY– Weekday order with no classes or study hall except:

7:30am	Housework
10:25	Spiritual Reading
10:45-11:45	Study Hall
11:50	Midday Prayer in Abbey Church
2:00-4:00	Community activities (work period)
8:15	Rosary

#### SUNDAY

6:30 am	Rise
6:45	Morning Prayer in Minor Seminary Chapel – meditative reading
7:10	Breakfast
8:30	Spiritual Reading
9:00	Silent Prayer or study
10:00	Conventual Mass
11:50	Midday Prayer in Abbey Church
12:00 pm	Noon Meal 4:30 Vespers and Benediction
2:00	Group Lectio
6:00	Supper followed by community time until 7:00
4:30	Vespers and Benediction
7:30	Study
8:15	Rosary and Confessions

### Home Weekends, Christmas and Easter Holidays:

- ❖ **Oct. 9-12** Thanksgiving holiday: 3:00 p.m. Friday to 7:15 p.m. Monday.
- ❖ **Nov. 6-9** Remembrance Day Home weekend: 3:00 p.m. Friday to 7:15 p.m. Monday.
- ❖ **Dec. 18** Christmas vacation begins at 3:00 p.m.
- ❖ **2016 Jan. 3** 8:00 p.m. Students return.
- ❖ **Feb. 5-8** Home weekend from 3:00 p.m. **Friday** until 7:15 p.m. **Monday**.
- ❖ **Mar. 3-6** Home weekend from 3:00 p.m. **Thursday** until 7:15 p.m. Sunday.
- ❖ **Mar. 27** EASTER SUNDAY. Vigil of the Resurrection begins at 10:00 p.m.

Saturday. Easter vacation begins after the Vigil Mass (about midnight); those who wish to go home then may do so. Mass on Easter morning is at 10:00 a.m.

- ❖ **Apr. 3** Easter vacation ends. Students return 8:00 p.m.

### Parents' Days:

- ❖ **Nov. 1** All Saints Day annual Elocution Contest at 2:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Dec. 6** Advent Program begins at 2:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Mar. 20** Palm Sunday, Oratory Contest at 2:00 p.m.

It is very important that parents and families attend the parents' days. Your sons prepare for months for each performance, it means a lot to all of us if you attend.

## CLOTHES LIST

GENERAL CONSIDERATION : In order to foster a spirit of Christian simplicity necessary for seminary life, we encourage all students to foster non-worldly attitudes towards clothes. Dress and sports clothes containing overt or ostentatious **logos or brand-name labels are not permissible in the seminary for any occasions**. If you already possess such clothing we suggest you obtain more simple wear.

Students require **two pair of black dress shoes** – they must be **black**, and **thin soled**.

SUNDAY WEAR: Good clothes and shoes for Sundays and feast days. This is either a suit or else a jacket and trouser combination: any good combination is acceptable. Colours permissible for dress pants for Church and class are **black, dark blue, and gray**. Dress shirts for Church and class wear must be **white; each boy should have at least 3 white dress shirts, 4-5 are recommended**.

SCHOOL WEAR: Clothes for chapel, classes always require white dress shirt, tie and dress pants. Jeans and trousers of denim type material are not acceptable as school wear.

FOR SPORTS: Needed – among other things – are gym shorts, T-shirts, runners, a pair of gym shoes to be reserved for use in the gym, soccer boots. **Each student requires roller hockey blades, helmet, gloves and knee protection as well as 2 hockey sticks**. Physical Education periods are usually held outside.

OLD CLOTHES: for various outdoor activities and work periods.

BED SPREAD Etc.: A machine washable bed-spread (twin bed size), preferably bright-colored. The seminary supplies sheets, pillows and pillow slips, and blankets (though students may bring their own if they prefer). **Students have access to coin washers and dryers**: the machines use Canadian Loonies, 1\$, one for each run of washer or dryer.

MISCELLANEOUS: Towels, soap, bathrobe, pajamas. **Every boys should have a good supply of handkerchiefs: 10 is suggested**. **Students are not permitted to use toilet paper as handkerchiefs**. It would be good to have a sleeping bag for occasional outings.

**Each student must bring a USB stick to save his homework assignments on**. It is not permitted to bring music, movies or programs on these devises.

## **BOOKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

BOOKS: The textbooks for most high school subjects are supplied by the Seminary of Christ the King; but such things as workbooks and texts for Religion and Music class will need to be purchased. These can usually be obtained at the seminary Bookstore. New students can expect to spend about \$250 – \$320 on books, for they will need to buy a number of expensive books for choir and church use. Returning students are usually under \$50

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: Students should bring regular school supplies – binders, paper, pens, pencils. The seminary bookstore carries ordinary school supplies such as paper, pens, pencils, and stationery but it is best, and cheaper, to bring them. Students should have a good supply of pens

(including one or two colored ones) to avoid borrowing. Each student requires a pocket calculator for math and science.

DICTIONARIES: The seminary supplies English dictionaries in the junior years of high school. The senior students should have a good dictionary of their own. French and Latin dictionaries are recommended and may be obtained at the Bookstore.

SUNDRIES: The Bookstore also has sundries like soap, toothpaste, etc.

## **SEMINARIAN COMMITMENTS**

The following is a brief presentation of the commitments we expect from each high school seminarian. Please take the following requirements seriously and begin to prepare for seminary life right now. If you don't feel that you can live up to the commitments expected by seminary life, perhaps you are not ready to come to the seminary at the present time.

The mission of the high school seminary is to provide a stable environment and atmosphere where young men can grow in the life that Jesus Christ is calling them to live. By growing within the community of the seminary, seminarians are aided in their discernment of their vocations.

You may not be sure if Jesus is calling you to the priesthood or to the religious life, so we cannot expect of you a commitment to be such. We do expect a faithful respect, serious effort, and openness towards such vocations.

We expect that you are committed to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

We expect that you are committed to and believe yourself able to grow within the seminary community and under the direction of the rector and faculty.

We expect a firm commitment towards Jesus Christ and His Church, and behaviour patterns in agreement with seminary life.

Candidates for the seminary must regularly attend Mass and receive the Sacraments of Communion and Confession while away from the seminary. Sunday participation at Mass and daily Rosary and part of the Office is a bare minimum, if available weekday Mass should be attended.

You should be willing to be "different" for Christ. You should ask yourself, "Do I want to be a Seminarian?" If your answer is yes, are you willing to be and to be seen as different as you learn to follow Jesus as a seminarian, or is fitting in with the rest of the world, being thought of as 'cool', more important to you? If the latter, it is likely that you are not ready for seminary life.

If you do want to come to the seminary you are already choosing something different from most other young men. This should extend to other areas of your life as well.

Since the seminary is a place where you come to grow in your ability to communicate with God through silence and prayer, electronic entertainment equipment such as ipods, ipads or similar devices are not permitted.

The use of hair gel, spray or dye and anything of this sort is not allowed. If your hair style demands such cosmetics we suggest you get a hair cut. We'll give you one if you want!

Sports and dress clothes containing large external logos or large brand names, as well as any kind of platform shoes, are not permissible in the seminary.

### **COMMITMENTS IN THE AREA OF CHASTITY:**

As a young man committed to discerning God's call to the priesthood or to the religious life, the seminarian must, in his thoughts, words, and behaviour express a commitment to sexual purity.

Foul language, slang expressions, and jokes related to sex have no place in the life of any Christian, and doubly so for the seminarian.

As one discerning a priestly or religious vocation, you should not be dating or relating to girls in such a way that would indicate a priority in developing such relationships.

As a seminarian your behaviour within and without the seminary should express your commitment to seeking your vocation. The content of movies, television programs and magazines that you use for entertainment should be in accord with the truths of your Faith. Your example to others in this regard is very important. People know you are going to the seminary and expect that your behaviour will express your Christian Faith.

We do not expect that you are a saint and it is important that you don't think that everyone coming to the seminary is a saint. You are coming to grow, to grow, by God's grace, into a saint! And we will, by the grace of God, grow together. The seminary is a kind of family; every family has its tensions because each child is unique with his strengths and weaknesses. It takes time to learn how to work with and accept our own and other people's weaknesses and gifts.

Of highest importance to you is the prayerful realization that if you discern you are called to come to the seminary and you want to respond to that call, then know that what you are entering into is not something you can turn your back on in the future without serious spiritual and human consequences. Whether you are called to the priesthood or to the religious life is not the most important thing, though that is part of what you are coming to discern. In the seminary we receive the Eucharist, spend hours in prayer, live in community, are taught and guided by religious every day. We try to live the way, the truth, and the life of which Jesus is King. To enter on this way at the seminary is a great opportunity for any young man, but carries with a great responsibility. Nothing gives greater purpose, peace and joy than following Jesus with all our heart, mind and strength. To grow in holiness, to be in such a relation with Jesus and to do His will is the greatest good we can want and ever hope to fulfill. Do you want this? If you do, then welcome aboard. We have a great journey ahead of us and a good crew traveling with us. But prepare yourself for a fight!

Please offer some special prayers for the coming year. We are all looking forward to a very fruitful school year. If you feel that you are able to comply with the commitments listed here, please put your thoughts in writing and **send me a short note on the matter.**

**Calendar for 2015-2016 Academic Year  
Seminary of Christ the King HIGH SCHOOL**

**2015**

Sept. 9	Students and families arrive between 10:00 – 11:30 AM.
Sept. 10	Solemnity of the Dedication of the Abbey Church.
Sept. 11	Student orientation day.
Sept. 14	Feast of the Holy Cross, first day of classes
Sept. 29	Feast of SS. Michael and the Angels: Father Abbot's name's day. No Classes
Oct. 9-12	Thanksgiving holiday: 3:00 p.m. Friday to 7:15 p.m. Monday.
Oct. 13-16	First-Term Exams.
Nov. 1	All Saints Day. <b>Parents' Day</b> begins with the Elocution Program at 2:00 p.m. and offers an opportunity to meet the staff.
Nov. 2	All Souls Day.
Nov. 6-9	November Home weekend: 3:00 p.m. <b>Friday</b> to 7:15 p.m. <b>Monday</b> .
Nov. 13-15	<b>Vocation Live-in</b> : Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.
Nov. 22	Solemnity of Christ the King: patronal feast of the Seminary.
Dec. 6	Advent Program begins at 2:00 p.m.
Dec. 8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. No Classes
Dec. 14-18	Second-term examinations.
Dec. 18	Christmas vacation begins at 3:00 p.m.

**2016**

Jan. 3	8:00 p.m. Students return. Second-semester fees are payable.
Jan. 6	Solemnity of the Epiphany. No classes.
Jan 28-31	Students' retreat: Thursday evening until Sunday morning.
Feb. 5-8	Home weekend from 3:00 p.m. <b>Friday</b> until 7:15 p.m. <b>Monday</b> .
Feb 10	Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 12-14	<b>Vocation Live-in</b> : Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.
Mar. 3-6	Home weekend from 3:00 p.m. <b>Thursday</b> until 7:15 p.m. <b>Sunday</b> .
Mar. 8-11	Third-term Exams.
Mar. 20	Palm Sunday: <b>Parents' Day</b> beginning with Oratory Contest at 2:00 p.m.
Mar. 24	Holy Thursday Regular classes. Easter Triduum begins with Mass of Our Lord's Supper at 7:30 p.m.
Mar. 25	Good Friday. Day of Recollection
Mar. 27	EASTER SUNDAY. Vigil of the Resurrection begins at 10:00 p.m. Saturday. Easter vacation begins after the Vigil Mass (about midnight); those who wish to go home then may do so. Mass on Easter morning is at 10:00 a.m.
April 3	Easter vacation ends. Students return 8:00 p.m.
April 5	Solemnity of St. Benedict.
April 8-10	<b>Vocation Live-in</b> : Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.
May 2	St. Joseph the Worker. No Classes
May 5	Ascension Thursday. No Classes.
May 23	Victoria Day. Seminary track meet.
June 6-9	Final examinations.
June 11	School closing and awards at 2:00 p.m.
July 8-10	<b>Vocation Live-in</b> : Friday evening until Sunday afternoon. Students return September 7 for the 2016 - 2017 school year.

**Phones:** Office (604) 826-8975 ext. 6249  
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### Letters to Parents:

The following is a letter sent to a mother who wrote to Fr. Peter expressing her and her husband's concerns and hurt over their son's replying to questions from his grandparents and uncle and saying that the seminary felt more like his main home than his family home. The parents felt hurt that his feelings did not seem to match their own and wondered if it was because they were not good parents.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is doing very well and continues to grow.  
 I thank you for your question. Since last year, \_\_\_\_\_ has expressed his own concerns about his feelings. He feels guilty that he doesn't miss his family the way he used to. This is quite a common experience with boys as they grow closer to God and God comes closer to them. It is not in any way a reflection on your family not being loving or good, it is quite the opposite. The best illustration of this experience, from a mother's side, is when Mary lost Jesus and found Him in the Temple. He was doing His Father's will and, likely was not missing His mother as He followed His Father's call to go to the Temple. This hurt Mary immensely. Not because she didn't know that Jesus had a special mission that was beyond her plans and understanding, but because she thought that she would have Him and be able to care for Him for many years still before He would have to leave her. But already, at 12 years old, His Father was taking charge and guiding Him. Just last week a grade 12 boy came to talk to me about the same problem about his feelings and how he desires more to be in the seminary than to be at home and how his mother does not say anything but "she gives signs" that she is worried. I told him to think of it this way: If he had fallen in love with a princess and had the opportunity to prepare to be the son in law of the King and was at a special training school to do this, his mother would not likely be concerned that his affections and

interests seemed to be away from home. She would understand that he was in love, that his heart was being filled with new possibilities and interests and that the object of that love was someone that was worthy of his attention – as a mother and as a woman, she would understand.

I think we tend to forget that God is a Person, The Person. We forget that every heart has been made for Him, so we think that if someone is being wooed by Him and is responding to Him, which makes his affections shift from his natural family, then it must be something that has gone wrong with the family or the boy is getting caught up in his own ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ is still growing he is experiencing God, others, and getting to know himself. He loves going home and loves his family. I know that he is not in any way calling into question the goodness of his family, if anything he is calling into question himself as he gets to know himself in relation to what God is trying to do with him.

In Christ,  
 Father Peter osb

### Letters of St. Catherine of Siena to grieving mothers.

Taken from St. Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters, Trans and Edited by Vida D. Scudder, (London, J.M. Dent & Community,



1906). The numbers in square brackets are the page numbers in the text.

**186] To Mona Lapa, her mother, before Catherine return from Avignon.**

Catherine succeeded in her great aim. In September, 1376, Gregory actually started for Rome. Her mission being ended, Catherine set forth on her homeward journey on the same day as the Pope, though by a different route. But her progress was interrupted at Genoa, where, owing to illness among her companions, she was detained for a month in the house of Madonna Orietta Scotta. Her prolonged absence seems to have been too much for the patience of Monna Lapa, who was always unable to understand in the least the actions of her puzzling though beloved child. Catherine, though lifted into the region of great anxieties and great triumphs, was yet always tenderly mindful of the claims of home. Very daughterly, very gently wise, is this little letter to the lonely and fretful mother, written when the saint had just passed through those exciting and decisive months at the Papal court.

*In the Name of Jesus Christ crucified and of sweet Mary:*

Dearest mother in Christ sweet Jesus: Your poor, unworthy daughter Catherine comforts you in the precious Blood of the Son of God. With desire have I desired to see you a true mother, not only of my body but of my soul; for I have reflected that if you are more the lover of my soul than of my body, all disordinate tenderness will die in you, and it will not be such a burden to you to long for my bodily presence; but it will rather be a consolation to you, and you will wish, for the honour of God, to endure every burden for 187] me, provided that the honour of God be wrought. Working for the honour of God, I am not without the increase of grace and power in my soul. Yes, indeed, it is true that if you,

sweetest mother, love my soul better than my body, you will be consoled and not disconsolate. I want you to learn from that sweet mother, Mary, who, for the honour of God and for our salvation, gave us her Son, dead upon the wood of the most holy Cross. And when Mary was left alone, after Christ had ascended into Heaven, she stayed with the holy disciples; and although Mary and the disciples had great consolation together, and to separate was sorrow, nevertheless, for the glory and praise of her Son, for the good of the whole universal world, she consented and chose that they should go away. And she chose the burden of their departure rather than the consolation of their remaining, solely through the love that she had for the honour of God and for our salvation. Now, I want you to learn from her, dearest mother. You know that it behoves me to follow the will of God; and I know that you wish me to follow it. His will was that I should go away; which going did not happen without mystery, nor without fruit of great value. It was His will that I should come, and not the will of man; and whoever might say the opposite, it is not the truth. And thus it will behove me to go on, following His footsteps in what way and at what time shall please His inestimable goodness. You, like a good, sweet mother, must be content, and not disconsolate, enduring every burden for the honour of God, and for your and my salvation. Remember that you did this for the sake of temporal goods, when your sons left you to gain temporal wealth; now, to gain eternal life, it seems to you such an affliction that you say that you will go and run away if I do not reply to you soon. All this happens to you because you love better that part which I derived from you – that is, your flesh, with which you clothed me – than what I have 188] derived from God. Lift up, lift up your heart and mind a little to that sweet and holiest Cross where all affliction ceases; be willing to bear a little finite pain, to escape the infinite pain which we merit for our sins. Now, comfort you, for the love of Christ crucified,

and do not think that you are abandoned either by God or by me. Yet shall you be comforted, and receive full consolation; and the pain has not been so great that the joy shall not be greater. We shall come soon, by the mercy of God; and we should not have delayed our coming now, were it not for the obstacle we have had in the serious illness of Neri. Also Master Giovanni and Fra Bartolommeo have been ill.... I say no more. Commend us.... Remain in the holy and sweet grace of God. Sweet Jesus, Jesus Love!

**189] To Monna Giovanna Di Corrado Maconi**

Monna Lapa was evidently not the only mother in Siena who fretted over the long absence from home of Catherine and her spiritual children. Monna Giovanna, of the noble family of the Maconi, longed for the presence of Catherine's secretary, her beloved son Stefano. This is the second letter which Catherine wrote in the effort to reconcile her. We cannot be surprised if she murmured. Stefano had known Catherine for a few months only when she bore him off with her to Avignon. Their relations dated from January, 1376, when at his entreaty she healed a feud of long standing between the Maconi and the rival house of the Tolomei. From this time he attached himself to her person, and his devotion to her made him an object of ridicule to his bewildered former friends. He was, by all accounts, a singularly attractive and lovable young man – sunny, light-hearted, and popular wherever he went. Catherine from the first loved him, as she avows in this letter, with especial tenderness. She made him her trusted intimate, and from now until shortly before her death he was in almost constant attendance upon her, or when away was still occupied in her affairs. Catherine was evidently on intimate and affectionate terms with the rest of the Maconi family also; but it is not strange if Monna

Giovanna developed a little motherly jealousy, as she saw her brilliant son not only absorbed by this new friendship, but borne away to distant lands. Catherine's letter is as applicable today as then, to all parents whose misguided tenderness would seek to hinder their children in a high vocation.

190] *In the Name of Jesus Christ crucified and of sweet Mary:*

To you, dearest sister and daughter in Christ Jesus: I Catherine, servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, write in His precious Blood, with desire to see you clothed in the wedding garment. For I consider that without this garment the soul cannot please its Creator, nor take its place at the Marriage Feast in the enduring life. I wish you, therefore, to be clothed in it; and in order that you may clothe you the better, I wish you to divest yourself of all self-love according to nature and the senses, which you feel for yourself, your children, and any other created thing. You ought to love neither yourself nor anything else apart from God; for it is impossible that a man can serve two masters; if he serve the one, he does not give satisfaction to the other. And there is no one who can serve both God and the world, for they have no harmony with each other. The world seeks honour, rank, wealth, sons in high places, good birth, sensuous pleasure and indulgence, all rooted in perverted pride; but God seeks and wants exactly the opposite. He wants voluntary poverty, a humbled heart, disparagement of self and of every worldly joy and grace; that personal honour be not sought, but the honour of God and the salvation of one's neighbour. Let a man seek only in what way he may clothe him in the fire of most ardent charity with the ornament of sweet and sincere virtue, with true and holy patience; let him take no revenge on another for any injury his

neighbour may show him, but endure all in patience, seeking only to pass sentence on himself, because he sees that he has wronged the Sweet Primal Truth. And what he loves, let him love in God, and apart from God love nothing.

And did you say to me, “In what way should I love?” I [191] answer you that children and everything else should be loved for love of Him who created them, and not for love of one's self or the children; and that God should never be wronged for their sake or any other. That is, do not love through regard to any utility, nor as your own thing, but as a thing lent to you: since whatever is given us in this life is given for use, as a loan, and is left to us so long only as pleases the Divine Goodness which gave it us. You should use everything, then, as a steward of Christ crucified, spending your temporal substance so far as is possible to you for the poor, who stand in the place of God; and so you ought to spend your children, nourishing and educating them ever in the fear of God, and wishing that they should die rather than wrong their Creator. Oh, make a sacrifice of yourself and them to God! And if you see that God is calling them, offer no resistance to His sweet will: but if they welcome it with one hand, do you reach out both like a true loving mother, who loves their salvation; do not desire to shape their lives to suit yourself – for this would be a sign that you loved them apart from God – but with any state to which God calls them, with that be you content. For a mother who loves her children according to the wickedness of the world, says many a time: “It pleases me well that my children should please God; they can serve Him in the world as well as anywhere else.” But it happens often to these simple mothers, who want to plunge their children in the world, that later they possess those children neither in the world nor in God. And it is a just thing that they should be deprived of them, spirit and body, since such ignorance and pride

reigns in them that they want to lay down law and rule to the Holy Spirit, who is calling them. Such people do not love their children in God, but with sensuous self-love apart from God, for they love their bodies more than their souls. Never, dearest sister and daughter in Christ sweet Jesus, could he clothe himself in Christ crucified who had not first divested [192] him of this.

I hope by the goodness of God that all this will not apply to you, but that you will give yourself and them to the honour and glory of the Name of God, like a true good mother, and so shall you be clothed in the Wedding Garment. But in order that you may clothe you the better, I want that you should lift your desire and heart above the world and all its doings, and that you should open the eye of the mind to know what love God bears to you, who has given you, for love, the Word, His Only-Begotten Son; and the Son in burning love has given you life, and has sacrificed His Body that He might cleanse us with His Blood. Ignorant are we and wretched who neither know nor love so great a benefit! But all this is because our eyes are closed; for were they open, and had they fastened themselves on Christ crucified, they would not be ignorant nor ungrateful in the presence of so great a grace. Therefore I say to you, keep your eyes ever open, and fasten them fixedly on the Lamb that was slain, in order that you may never fall into ignorance.

Up, sweetest daughter, let us delay no more! Let us recover the time we have lost, with true and perfect love; so that, clothing ourselves in this life with the garment I spoke of, we may rejoice and exult at the Marriage Feast in the enduring life – you and your husband and your children together. And comfort you sweetly, and be patient, and do not grow disturbed because I have kept Stefano so long: for I have taken good care of him, for by love and tenderness I have become one thing with him, therefore I have treated your things as if they were my own. I

think you have not taken this in bad part. I wish to do whatever I can for him and for you, even to death. You, mother, bore him once; and I wish to bear him and you and all your family, in tears and sweats, by continual prayers and desire for your salvation.

I say no more. Commend me to Currado, and bless all the rest of the family, and especially my little new plant, that has just been planted anew in the Garden of Holy Church. Be it commended to you, and do you bring it up for me virtuously, so that it may shed fragrance among the other flowers. God fill you with His most sweet favour. Remain in the holy and sweet grace of God. Sweet Jesus, Jesus Love.

### **My Priesthood and a Stranger : William Emmanuel Ketteler (1811-1877)**

Each of us owes gratitude for our lives and our vocations to the prayers and sacrifices of others. One of the leading figures of the German episcopacy of the 19th century, and among the founders of Catholic sociology, Bishop Ketteler owed his gratitude to a simple nun, the least and poorest lay sister of her convent.

In 1869, a German diocesan bishop was sitting together with his guest, Bishop Ketteler from Mainz. During the course of their conversation, the diocesan bishop brought up his guest's extremely blessed apostolate. Bishop Ketteler explained to his host, *"I owe thanks for everything that I have accomplished with God's help, to the prayer and sacrifice of someone I do not even know. I can only say that I know somebody has offered his or her whole life to our loving God for me, and I have this*

*sacrifice to thank that I even became a priest."*

He continued, *"Originally, I was not planning on becoming a priest. I had already finished my law degree and thought only about finding an important place in the world to begin acquiring honour prestige and wealth. An extraordinary experience held me back and directed my life down a different path.*

*"One evening I was alone in my room, considering my future plans of fame and fortune, when something happened which I cannot explain. Was I awake or asleep? Did I really see it or was it just a dream? One thing I do know, it brought about a change in my life. I saw Jesus very clearly and distinctly standing over me in a radiant cloud, showing me his Sacred Heart. A nun was kneeling before him, her hands raised up in prayer. From his mouth, I heard the words, 'She prays unremittingly for you!'*

*"I distinctly saw the appearance of the sister and her traits made such an impression on me that she has remained in my memory to this day. She seemed to be quite an ordinary lay sister. Her clothing was very poor and rough. Her hands were red and calloused from hard work. Whatever it was, a dream or not, it was extraordinary. It shook me to the depths of my being so that from that moment on, I decided to consecrate myself to God in the service of the priesthood.*

*"I withdrew to a monastery for a retreat, and I talked about everything with my confessor. Then, at the age of 30, I began studying theology. You know the rest of the story. So, if you think that I have done something admirable, now you know who really deserves the credit – a religious sister who prayed for me, maybe without even knowing me. I am convinced, I was prayed for and I will continue to be prayed for in secret and that without these prayers, I*

*could never have reached the goal that God has destined for me.”*

*“Do you have any idea of the whereabouts or the identity of who has prayed for you?”* asked the diocesan bishop.

*“No, I can only ask God each day that, while she is still on earth, he bless and repay her a thousand-fold for what she has done for me.”*

The next day, Bishop Ketteler visited a convent of sisters in a nearby city and celebrated Holy Mass in their chapel. He was distributing Holy Communion to the last row of sisters when one of them suddenly caught his eye. His face grew pale, and he stood there, motionless. Finally regaining his composure, he gave Holy Communion to the sister who was kneeling in recollection unaware of his hesitation. He then concluded the liturgy.

The bishop who had invited him the previous day came and joined him at the convent for breakfast. When they had finished, Bishop Ketteler asked the Mother Superior to present to him all the sisters in the house. Before long she had gathered all the sisters together, and both bishops went to meet them. Bishop Ketteler greeted them, but it was apparent that he did not find the one he was looking for.

He quietly asked the Mother Superior, *“Are all the sisters really here?”*

She looked over the group of sisters and then said, *“Your Excellency, I called them all, but, in fact, one of them is not here.”*

*“Why didn’t she come?”*

*“She works in the barn,”* answered the superior, *“and in such a commendable way that, in her enthusiasm, she sometimes forgets other things.”*

*“I would like to see that sister,”* requested the Bishop.

A little while later, the sister who had been summoned stepped into the room. Again Bishop Ketteler turned pale, and after a few words to all the sisters, he asked if he

could be alone with the sister who had just come in.

*“Do you know me?”* he asked her.

*“I have never seen Your Excellency before.”*

*“Have you ever prayed for me or offered up a good deed for me?”* he wanted to know.

*“I do not recall that I have ever heard of Your Excellency.”*

The Bishop was silent for a few moments and then he asked, *“Do you have a particular devotion that you like?”*

*“The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,”* was the response.

*“You have, it seems, the most difficult task in the convent,”* he continued.

*“Oh no, Your Excellency”* the sister countered, *“but I cannot lie, it is unpleasant for me.”*

*“And what do you do when you have such temptations against your work?”*

*“For things that cost me greatly, I grew accustomed to facing them with joy and enthusiasm out of love for God, and then I offer them up for one soul on earth. To whom God chooses to be gracious as a result, I have left completely up to him and I do not want to know. I also offer up my time of Eucharistic adoration every evening from 8 to 9 for this intention.”*

*“Where did you get the idea to offer up all your merits for someone completely unknown to you?”*

*“I learned it while I was still out in the world,”* she replied. *“At school our teacher, the parish priest, taught us how we can pray and offer our merits for our relatives. Besides that, he said that we should pray much for those who are in danger of being lost. Since only God knows who really needs prayer it is best to put your merits at the disposition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus trusting in his wisdom and omnipotence. That is what I have done,”* she concluded,

*“and I always believed that God would find the right soul.”*

“How old are you?” Ketteler asked.

“Thirty-three, Your Excellency,” she answered.

The Bishop paused a moment. Then he asked her, *“When were you born?”* The sister stated her day of birth. The Bishop gasped – her birthday was the day of his conversion! Back then he saw her exactly as she was before him now. *“And have you any idea whether your prayers and sacrifices have been successful?”* he asked her further.

*“No, Your Excellency.”*

*“Don’t you want to know?”*

*“Our dear God knows when something good happens, and that is enough,”* was the simple answer.

The Bishop was shaken. *“So continue this work in the name of the Lord,”* he said. The sister knelt down immediately at his feet and asked for his blessing. The Bishop solemnly raised his hands and said with great emotion, *“With the power entrusted to me as a bishop, I bless your soul, I bless your hands and their work, I bless your prayers and sacrifices, your self-renunciation and your obedience. I bless especially your final hour and ask God to assist you with all his consolation.”*

“Amen,” the sister answered calmly, then stood up and left.

The Bishop, profoundly moved, stepped over to the window in order to compose himself. Sometime later, he said good-bye to the Mother Superior and returned to the apartment of his bishop friend. He confided to him, *“Now I found the one I have to thank for my vocation. It is the lowest and poorest lay sister of that convent. I cannot thank God enough for his mercy because this sister has prayed for me for almost 20 years. On the day she first saw the light of the world, God worked my conversion accepting in advance her future prayers and works.”*

*“What a lesson and a reminder for me! Should I become tempted to vanity by a certain amount of success or by my good works, then I can affirm in truth: You have the prayer and sacrifice of a poor maid in a convent stall to thank. And when a small and lowly task appears of little value to me, then I will also remember the fact: what this maid does in humble obedience to God, making a sacrifice by overcoming herself is so valuable before the Lord Our God that her merits have given rise to a bishop for the Church.”*