Winona has seen rain this October, but not on Saturday the eighth, when the heavens smiled upon the crowds who came for our big day of blessing these magnificent buildings. We had expected quite a crowd of faithful, and quite a number came indeed.

The pews began filling up long before the ceremony was to commence, so we gave thanks that God had provided us with a much larger chapel than we had at Ridgefield.

Just before 10 o'clock, Father Delaplace announced that everyone must leave the chapel and wait outside in the warm sunshine. Faithful and clergy then went out of the building to await the entry of Bishop Williamson, who began to bless the outside walls while the choir chanted psalms.

This Seminary had already been once consecrated and used for the glory of God, but since 1976 it was put to some profane use, for instance to the housing of delinquent children. That is why it had to be given another blessing. At the same time, it was given a new principal patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, to whom we have a great devotion on account of his luminous doctrine.

Not a cloud in the sky disturbed our activities, while the litany of the saints was chanted. All gently processed back to their place in the chapel, while the bishop blessed the walls, floor and windows. Then at around eleven o'clock began the Solemn Pontifical Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas, with golden vestments and nearly one dozen sacred ministers assisting.

The bishop preached a powerful sermon, which left quite an impact on all present. The tragic history of this Province of the Dominican Order was explained, along with the origin and consequences of the betrayal of authority. Forewarned and forearmed by the mistakes of the past, seminarians were made to feel challenged and fortified to face the battles ahead.

DEDICATION CEREMONY

St. Peter Martyr and St. Thomas Aquinas are joint patrons of our new seminary chapel. One will teach us true zeal for the Faith, the other wisdom of heavenly doctrine. See the sermon of Bishop Williamson, who refers to these two windows on page 3.

After Mass, all the clergy with their bishop processed outside for photographs, and to meet with the faithful. Many of them had travelled a long distance for this event, and were relieved that the splendour of the sacred liturgy was matched by the glorious weather.

At lunchtime, all were invited to partake of a buffet dinner prepared in the spacious refectory. Then the visitors were free to tour the grounds and buildings, for it was the generosity of such people that had made the new seminary available for the Society of St. Pius X. Thanks to the efforts of all the seminarians in preparing the property and ceremonies, the day was most enjoyable.

After a few hours of much chatting and touring (and dishwashing for some), the second major event of the day began. Father Schmidberger, our Superior General, had flown from Canada to be here for this day. At four o'clock we gathered in chapel, where he addressed us in tones of great joy and confidence. He stressed the urgency of this work to form priests according to the mind of the Church, "We need more saintly priests; Vianney, Cesassos, Bosco..." Recalling that in North America, there are no seminaries publically forming priests in the traditional way, and realising the extreme need for such formation, Fr. Schmidberger then made the following surprising comment: "This building we dare to say, is the most important in North America!"

Our new home on Stockton Hill is truly a blessing from God, an ideal locality where many vocations should take strong root. The Latin root word of Seminary is "a seed bed". Now if you want to grow a garden of the true Faith in America, you must plant the seed of doctrine, in the soil of souls well prepared by penance, and watered by prayer. Ideally, then, your seed should be well protected from storms and wild beasts, such as are found in the contentions and temptations of the world.

After the rooms of every priest and seminarian had been blessed, we began the final official function of this first class Feast, the solemn chanting of Pontifical Vespers with Rosary and Benediction.

And then slowly people went home, many of them reluctant to come to the end of such a happy and hopeful day. They had seen a building constructed for the Faith and by the Faith — "I chose to be the lowest of the low in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners...O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man who places his hopes in Thee!"
ORDINATIONS AT LAST

When this school year began in September, two and a half years had passed for St. Thomas Aquinas seminary, without the consolation of seeing the fruit of its efforts, nor the fulfillment of the purpose of its existence: the ordination of Sacred Ministers for the altar. Archbishop Lefebvre last came to the U.S.A. in April of 1986, when he performed ordinations at Ridgefield, and many seminarians were awaiting eagerly to attain their rightful place in the clerical hierarchy.

With the consecration of new bishops at Switzerland in June, including one for the American Seminary, at last the problem was solved. And so, in October there began in Winona a series of ordination ceremonies to catch up on all ordinations which had not been possible for the last two and one-half years.

The series of ordinations began with Tonsure being given to seventeen seminarians on October 1, continued with all four Minor Orders being conferred on October 7, and will culminate in the ordination to the sacred priesthood of four or five seminarians in Winona towards the end of June.

The seven-step gradation of Minor and Major Orders whereby a tonsured cleric ascends to the priesthood, was presented in September to all seminarians that had not done the long thirty day Exercises in the summer vacation. This was done by the Society's parish priest in St. Louis, Fr. John Hogan, when he gave the beginning of the year retreat in Winona.

Tonsure: This is the first step taken as a preliminary to receiving all other orders. The word is simply a Latin derivative meaning "a cutting, or shaving", which is performed by the bishop in five places on the head of the candidates. It symbolizes several qualities the priest will need in the service of God, and officially enrolls young men as clerics of the Church, putting them on the training for the army of Christ. Firstly it reminds us of the crown of thorns on Saviour's head; we must conform ourselves to His kind of royalty. Secondly, it signifies detachment from the unnecessary things of this world; and finally it marks one out as a soldier of Christ, just like branding marks out sheep or cattle.

Usually the habit or cassock is given at the same time to make clear to all, that "sumus Christi" — we are of Christ. Just as young ladies will wear an engagement ring to tell the world, "I am attached to someone special" we our cassock proclaims the same message to the world. However, its message is also "death to all that keeps you back from God!" Seventeen were tonsured on the first of October.

PORTER AND LECTOR: Properly these are the first and second steps in the ecclesiastical hierarchy from the ancient days in the Church. The porter is given charge of the keys, the doors, the cleanliness of the house of God. It is his duty to expel any unbecoming characters and infidels out of the Church. He must have great trustworthiness, discretion, vigilance, and diligence in his sacred duties. Bishop Williamson said, "Today we would call them bouncers of the church!"

The Lector is given power to bless bread and new fruits and read the lessons at Mass, a role now taken over by the subdeacon; he must also teach catechism and have a great love for reading the Holy Scriptures. Seminarians practice for this function at mealtimes every day when a lector is appointed to read at table, loud and clear.

Seven young men were ordained to these Orders on the same day, and then another eleven on October seventh, during a most impressive ceremony. The mind of the Church is that the aspirant to the priesthood should be given his responsibilities gradually, lest the full burden come all at once overwhelm him.

EXORCIST AND ACOLYTE: Fr. Hogan had seminarians meditate on chapter nineteen of the Acts of the Apostles for the order of Exorcist. There we read that one wicked spirit would not leave, because the exorcist was not properly ordained. The demon said to this pretended, 'Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?' This shows how only the Catholic clergy may have power over evil spirits, for they have the mandate of Jesus Christ.

The Acolytes receive the highest of the minor orders. They carry the candles for the Sacred Liturgy and are privileged to be the light of Christ 'to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.'

Ten seminarians were ordained to these orders on the feast of Our Lady's Rosary.

The Reverend Doctor Malachi Martin had told us in his conference last year, that the rate of victims of demonic possessions in the North East of the U.S.A. has increased over seven hundred percent in this decade alone! Fr. Hogan said that the reason for this increase is directly the result of so few valid masses now being offered.

To be continued in the next Verbum

CLERICAL ARMY CREATED

Having been tonsured, the new clerics kneel before the Altar and await the putting on of their surplices. They now officially begin to take our Lord Jesus Christ for their lot and inheritance.

Summer Retreats

30 Days of Warfare

The first retreat to be given in the Seminary's new home in Winona was a retreat with a vengeance—the full 30-day Spiritual Exercises as originally planned by St. Ignatius himself. The retreat spanned the month of August with 19 seminarians taking part. It was given by Fr. Bournaud, Winona Seminary Professor, and Fr. J. Peek, now teaching at the Society's Seminary in France, but who taught for two years previously in Ridgefield. Fr. Peek said that he was honored and delighted to be back in the United States, of which he had such fond memories. Fr. Peek stated on the very first day, "If one of you young men come out of this retreat converted and with the desire to become a saint, the whole month will have been a success."

Seminarians were disturbed during their meditations as a faulty fire alarm system repeatedly bellowed out by day, and unexpected flying furry mammals swooped back and forth in the corridors by night—bats! On Sundays the retreat was suspended, while the seminarians organised a sporting event.

The fierce early August heat-wave was most suitable for the Retreat's first-week meditations on the fires of hell. Also suitable was a 1-0 defeat of the seminarians in a softball game played against a team of the workers renovating the seminary. Asked if he was upset, Fr. Peek simply answered, "Certainly not, mate! The whole aim of the first week is to acquire a deep sense of humility!"

In their new pasture, a shepherd and his brethren take repose.
Dedication Sermon

OUR BISHOP SPEAKS

The Psalm continues, “Jerusalem, which is built like a city compact in itself.” The Catholic Church is strong and compact but her enemies are tearing her to pieces, yet still she stands. Today the Catholic churches are being torn down by the enemies of the Catholic Faith. We were recently shown a newspaper article from Detroit reporting that of the one hundred and twelve churches in the city, forty-three are planned to be shut down. Many parishioners are weeping yet they call it “Renewal!” The enemies of the Catholic Church are hard at work. Now this building was a former novitiate of the Dominicans which is why you find the great Dominican saints in the windows down each side of these beautiful walls. These windows providentially survived the years when the building was vacant and much neglected. But it was sold soon after that when it was renovated it becomes again beautiful.

HISTORY OF TREASON

One good Dominican Fr. John O’Connor from Chicago, gave a sermon on the destruction of the Dominicans and of his province in particular. This building was part of his province, the central U.S. province of the Dominicans, the province of St. Albert the Great, which included all the central states. He tells the story of how the Dominicans were destroyed.

He goes back to 1930, when members of the Communist Party received instructions from Moscow to infiltrate the whole Catholic Church, and part of the Dominicans. This is significant because the Dominicans were writers, teachers, lecturers, and professors, and anti-Communists. In 1941, Fr. John O’Connor (who is also the author of the book “Hell’s War Against Our Children”), a certain Benedict Ashley entered the Dominican province as a Communist infiltrator. It was known before he came into the Dominicans that he was associated with the Communist party. Yet he was still accepted and became a vocation director in charge of the seminaries. For the Communists knew they must get into the seminaries first to corrupt the future priests.

In the late 1940’s, relates Fr. O’Connor, under Pope Pius XII there was a scandal in Rome about a Communist caught in such infiltration of the Catholic Church. After he was caught, he ran off with a woman of ill-repute, to cause still further scandal to the Catholic Church. This caused Pope Pius XII to send a letter to all Religious Orders to be careful of Communists, and not to let any Communists into any places of influence. Although this plot was discovered by the Pope in Rome, the superiors of Religious Orders thought that it was no danger. They were either themselves Communists or they were Liberals who thought, in this “nice” world we don’t need to worry about things like Communism. No one is against the Church. No one is trying to empty out religious houses. No one is trying to empty out this seminary. Who would think of such a thing? So, they didn’t pay any attention to the Pope.

WINONA BETRAYED

Fr. O’Connor relates that in his first year in this house here in Winona, the architect said that this building was built to last 300 years. Yet in 20 years it was empty, while the rain began to seep into the building. Further he relates how all the professors here were definitely good teachers. But teachers like these were sent away. Either there was an exchange from the house of formation or they would be told that since they didn’t have a degree they were not fit to teach. In any case, the good Dominicans were removed and the Communists took over their positions of influence.

Fr. O’Connor remembers that in the fifties, when he was in the seminary, there were forty or fifty students entering each year for the priesthood. The Dominicans had so many candidates that they had to build an extra house of studies in Iowa. The Communists infiltrated it, and promoted vice within the seminary. The result is that the house in Iowa soon had to close down because of rampant and sexual vice. Fr. O’Connor names another villain, Chuck Daum, “Father” I presume. He was another infiltrating Communist who quite deliberately re-wrote the Dominican constitution of the Province in such a way that he had all the power. What a responsibility those who allowed him to do this! What a loss of Faith! Thus the great powerful Dominicans fell because of weakness and carelessness on the part of the superiors and priests who should have been watching for any infiltrations, just as Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane told us, “to watch and pray.” Within a few years of the closing of the Iowa seminary, this house also closed down. Finally, in 1970 the Dominicans abandoned it. Hence this house stood empty for 20 years.

TRUE HAPPINESS

You wish to be happy? You look around at the modern world: you look at modern life. You look around at all the people with all this material wealth and prosperity, and you see how unhappy they are. You are maybe you unhappy yourself, and you ask yourself “how can I be happy?” I tell you and King David tells you: “I chose to be the lowest of the low in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners. Because God loved mercy and truth, He will give grace and glory. He will not deprive of good things in His house.” O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man who places his hope in Thee!”

WAR OF GOD

During the Second World War, America and Americans were given to understand that there was a war to be fought, and men were asked to enlist and fight for what was right. Americans enlisted; they enlisted in large numbers. They went all over the world to shed their blood to defend what was right. Then traitors, exactly these infiltrators, so corrupted the inside of the United States Government, that the great Generals willing to fight for what is right, like General Douglas MacArthur, were betrayed and stopped in Vietnam and Korea. They could have, and would have easily won both wars, had they not been betrayed from the inside. Americans are capable of fighting, it’s obvious. There’s red blood, there’s courage, there’s manliness. Once they know what is right they will go and defend what is right.
East Coast Help Arrives.

Mrs. J. and J.D.P.: Many Thanks!

Two old friends of the Seminary came all the way from the East Coast to help prepare for the Seminary's Dedication Day: our cook of many years in Ridgefield, Mrs. Emely Johnston, and the famous J.D.P., or John Della Penna. Mrs. Johnston was our cook for many years and now lives on the North-East coast, in Maine near Canada.

Seminarians knew Mrs. Johnston was back when they came into the kitchen one day and found all the plates all over the floor. This is Mrs. Johnston’s well-known way of telling them to put the plates where they should be. We also thank Mrs. Johnston for having come here in the summer to help organize the kitchen, and initiate our new chef, Greg Campbell. This massive operation was undertaken with the utmost efficiency, and now we enjoy a smoothly run kitchen and better disciplined seminarians!

J.D.P. is still refusing to come and live in the ice-cold Midwest, but he agreed to fly out here for the Dedication. He wanted to show his support for the work of our new bishop and to see his old friends in the seminary. On our part, we consider J.D.P. one of those unforgettable characters who contribute to our formation.

Mail—Bag

Letters to the Seminary

— Your Excellency, Dear Bishop Williamson

What a thrill to write the above salutation. How happy I was to hear that our dear Archbishop did not let us down.

—I’m so excited. Yay, yay, yay! I just read (mid-June) about the decision to consecrate bishops in the public daily paper.

— God will protect you and bless you for being faithful and marching on. We are with you, loyal and praying for you.

(MA)

— Lay people no matter how devout, can do nothing without the priest and the sacraments. We don’t have the Society here, but the fact of the Society in the world means that Satan didn’t win.

The Eastern rite still has a lovely liturgy, but since they don’t even see the work of Satan in the destroy- ing of the Western rite, they don’t see him working in theirs either.

The Society is the only one who sees the problems and is fighting them.

I’ll pray for you and the Society that you can keep up your strength in this terrible warfare for the Faith.

(MO)

— In my opinion Archbishop Lefebvre is the first individual in a position of authority and respect in the “West” to act like a REAL MAN in 40 years!

(FL)

— Enclosed is a check of $800.00 from my departed brother Cyril who just died March 21, 1988. I am 80 yrs. old and I don’t get to Mass anymore. When Cyril was living and was able to drive, we had to drive 165 miles one way to get to the true Mass. I miss this very much. I never dreamt it would ever happen that the true Mass would fail.

(MN)

— My initial reaction was like that of so many others - disappointment in Archbishop Lefebvre for disobeying the highest authority in the Church. Most fortunately, “The Angelus” articles have put in relief the true facts - the Archbishop has not split with Rome, but is, in fact, the most eloquent spokesman and faithful defender of the true Faith.

— We had been attending daily Mass, as well as on Sunday, but for some time have not been satisfied with the direction the Catholic Church is taking in this country and the world, and were further disillusioned and disappointed by the action taken by the Pope against Archbishop Lefebvre, an action which we totally disagree. (PA)

— June 30, 1988 was certainly a happy day for the Society of St. Pius X and their many followers, knowing that Archbishop Lefebvre has taken the necessary step to save Holy Tradition. We can breathe a sigh of relief that Almighty God has come to the aid of His Church.

Enclosed please find a check that I have made out to you, which you may use as you see fit. May God help you in the great task that lies before you and the priests of the Society of St. Pius X. Rest assured that I will continue to support St. Pius X Seminary to the best of my ability.

— Thank God! The true Roman Catholic Faith will be carried on until the end of time.

(MO)

— Please, please do not surrender.

—I am very grieved and distressed by the action taken by the Vatican. I’m sure they’ll live to regret such a decision.

— We are deeply thankful to His Grace, and of course to God. Somehow, this seems to validate and vindicate the decisions we made in choosing to place our Faith in the care of the Society. The comment I heard most often, was “about time!” Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU ALL, for being here for we so desperately need you!

(MN)

— Young Americans, Mother Church tells us that neither the First World War nor the Second World War was any war compared with the spiritual war being waged today for the destruction of souls, for the eternal damnation of souls. These Com- munist thinkers are now in Russia. They think they are serving Gorbachev or whoever it is; they are not! They are serving Satan! And the traitors now inside the Catholic Church, inside the American government, inside the English government, inside all the Western govern- ments; they are serving Satan, as they corrupt the morals of our na- tions. It is time for young men to enlist in the War of God! And not just any young men, but the best of young men! Here is where you can enlist. It is not going to be easy. They may well make you into a pin cushion just like they made Peter Martyr into a pin cushion. His blood flowed, your blood and my blood may well also flow. But it’s better “to dwell just one day in the house of the Lord”, even to shed my blood in the house of the Lord, than to spend a thousand days in taber- nacles of sinners, than to spend a thousand days chasing around the miseries of this materialistic modern world. You wish for happiness? Here it is—in the service of God. “I rejoiced when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord.” And I rejoiced even more when I had the opportunity to bless the house of the beautiful and fitting house of the Lord.

(OUR BISHOP SPEAKS) Continued

— Queen of Martyrs

Today we give thanks to God for granting to the Society of St. Pius X this beautiful seminary; and let us send our thanks to the Blessed Mother of God to whom the Dominicans had a special attachment. The great Dominicans all have had an outstanding devotion to the Mother of God, especially Our Lady of the Holy Rosary whose Feast it was on- ly yesterday; and the Society of St. Pius X by the grace of God also has a great devotion to the Mother of God. It is just two or three years ago that the Superior General consecrated the whole Society with all its members, all its houses, and all its effects to the Mother of God. Let us send our thanks to her, and through her, to the great God, the one God, the infinite God, who loves mercy and truth. Let us send our thank through her to Him and pray that she fill these halls of the Lord with many Americans willing to shed their blood in the name of God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.