



# Southern Sentinel

*Regnavit a Ligno Deus*

## HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

*The Priestly Society of St. Pius X*

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June 2020

No. 140

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

19 June 2020

Please excuse the delay in writing and sending this issue of the *Sentinel*. It is not necessary to tell you about the disruptions to daily life which the corona virus situation has caused. Even if the Seminary has been less affected than most people and institutions, still, some disruptions and delays do occur. I would very much like to thank the faithful for their generosity towards the Seminary during these times of economic uncertainty, and I pray that God will reward you for so kindly remembering us. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your prayers and support over the last five years. This will be the last time that I write to you within the *Sentinel* because Fr Robert MacPherson will be taking over as rector of Holy Cross on 15 August. Father is well-acquainted with the Seminary since he has been with us here in Goulburn for the last three years, and we are very fortunate to have him stepping into this position.

As I said, we are living in unexpected and uncertain circumstances. We can legitimately hope that life will soon return to normal, but since it will never be our place, as members of the Church Militant, to lead a leisurely life of calm predictability, perhaps some lessons should be drawn from recent events to guide us in our future moments of unforeseen disruption.

First, let us be clear that God is always the Master of events. Although this truth would not be disputed by anyone reading this newsletter, perhaps we tend to think of His mastery over the world in terms which are too passive. When events take us by surprise or shake our peace of soul, we may think of God as standing alongside these events, keeping an eye on them, and being ready to intervene powerfully when we ask Him. This image has some truth in it, of course, but it does not do complete justice to God's absolute sovereignty over the world. God does not sit idle while the world burns until, roused by the prayers of His frightened friends, He steps into the





*The 2020 Holy Cross Seminary Community. Absent are two seminarians who were unable to return to Australia due to Covid-19 restrictions. Please pray for them during this difficult period of separation as they try to continue their studies “long distance”.*

arena of events. He is the One Who is supremely active *at all times*, and nothing exists or happens unless He chooses to employ it for His own merciful purposes. His merciful will is the ultimate hidden, coordinating influence in this world.

This being the case, let us also recognize that we are sometimes prone to designate something as a problem primarily because it disturbs our sense of the “normal” or upsets the order of things with which we are comfortable. Without wishing to deny the very real problems which exist at every level in modern society, let us honestly examine ourselves on whether we prioritize these problems in the same way that God does. Do our preferences and our ideas colour our judgement and condition our reactions so that they remain at the merely natural level? The natural order of things is good, and we surely neglect it at our peril, but its real purpose is to serve man’s supernatural interests. So God can and does allow natural evils—even economic and political evils—because He knows how to use them in order to make us serious souls once again. This does not mean we should indulge a morbid taste for the apocalyptic. But if God judges it opportune to allow a certain evil, we surely do Him an injustice if we focus our attention firstly on remedying the *natural* disorder rather than the *supernatural* disorder which the natural evil was meant to give us occasion to remedy. Cannot each of us remember an occasion when we cried to God to put an end to a situation which, with the benefit of hindsight, we later came to recognize was not a problem – but a *solution* to a problem?

## New Speaker System for the Chapel, “Cry Room”, Refectory ... and Kitchen



*A new appliance is installed in the seminary kitchen.*



*A speaker joins Our Lady above the MI corner in the “cry room”.*

Thanks to the generosity of the Seminary’s parishioners, installation is nearly complete on the Seminary’s new speaker system. With overflow crowds becoming a common sight at Sunday Masses, many were finding it difficult to follow the Mass and to hear the sermon. Despite a prompt beginning of the works once the funds were collected, the project was delayed by the unforeseen “project” of stabilizing the collapsing roof above Our Lady’s Chapel as well as by a few smaller emergencies. But soon the community will no longer be disturbed during study time by the drilling of holes through concrete walls in order to enable the routing of cables under floors and over ceilings. Br Patrick will have the opportunity to listen to edifying sermons even as he prepares the mid-day community meal on Sunday mornings. It is hoped that soon everyone (not just Br Patrick) will find it easier to draw profit from the Sunday Masses and sermons.



*The perennial tradition of the Church, directly from St Peter.*

To remain on the merely natural level will make us short-sighted. It will also render us powerless. Understandably, we want answers in uncertain times and to know “what is really going on” so that we can “do something”. But, ultimately, what is *really going on* is that God is using new circumstances to push forward His agenda which is the salvation of souls. What He wants us *to do* is to cooperate with Him by acting on the supernatural level. Natural efforts might also be needed, but unless they are placed within a supernatural framework, they will add nothing divine to the atheistic culture of our time. We will not be advancing the only agenda that really matters. “*For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day,*” (Eph 6:12-13).

Therefore, in all times and all circumstances, let us make two practical resolutions. First, let us allow *nothing* – neither an external circumstance nor an internal reaction – to bring us down to the merely natural level. Such a loss of altitude would render us utterly ineffectual in the spiritual combat. We can detect this drop in altitude if we monitor two things: our peace of soul and our fidelity to the most *concrete and hidden* demands of virtue. Whenever the desire to “do something” awakens strongly within us, we will need to keep a constant eye on these two spiritual gauges. Second, in the choice of means which may be useful for the interests of souls, let us never sacrifice a supernatural means for a natural one nor a more essential means for a less essential one. This mistake is easy enough to make when under the influence of a natural inclination or an unmortified enthusiasm. By avoiding this snare, we will remain within the framework of grace and under the influence of God’s activity without which we can achieve nothing. Secure within our place in His order and nourished by His graces, we can safely aspire to do great things in His service—*whatever* the external circumstances may be.

Regarding the January retreats, the dates are included below. The format of the men’s and women’s retreats – to which we invite veteran retreatants – will be different from the normal Ignatian format. Further details are available on our website.

With our gratitude for your generosity and with the assurance of our prayers,

*Daniel Themann* †



Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the seminarians were not able to take their normal June holidays. Therefore, activities were organized at or near the seminary, including a Filipino feast prepared by the seminarians from the Asian District. A list of volunteers for assignment to the Philippines will surely be drawn up soon!

**Upcoming Events**

- 17 December** Ordination to the Priesthood and Deaconate.
- 4-9 January** Men’s Retreat
- 25-30 January** Ladies’ Retreat



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