

# JOYFUL LIGHT

*Joyful Light is a semi-annual publication of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius,  
3605 Perrysville Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214 (412) 321-8383*

## Byzantine Catholic Seminary *A Center for Learning*

*"It has been a blessing. I love my classes here," Anthony Dragani replied when asked about his classes at the seminary.*

As Byzantine Catholics know, over the past 52 years most of the priests of the Byzantine Catholic Church were educated and formed at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Many people do not know, however, that others, besides priests, study Byzantine Catholic theology and spirituality within the walls of the seminary. Anthony Dragani, a Ph.D. candidate at Pittsburgh's Duquesne University, is one such person.

"The professors at Duquesne respect eastern theology and the teachings at the seminary," Anthony said recently. "I want to be a Byzantine theologian, and I can't do that without a knowledge of Byzantine liturgy. So, I take a course, unavailable at Duquesne, at the seminary with Father David Petras; it's my second course with him. He has been immensely helpful to me as I prepare for my dissertation. He is my all-time favorite professor."

Anthony, a native of Indiana, Pennsylvania, and a parishioner at Monroeville's Church of



Anthony Dragani

the Resurrection, is not the only graduate student at the seminary. Currently, in addition to the seminarians, 11 other students study at the campus on Observatory Hill. Among them, some are cross-registered, like Anthony, from Duquesne University. Others include Masters of Arts students, deacon candidates, and cantors.

"Our first priority, of course, is to form the men who will be the priests of the Byzantine

Catholic Church," said Father John G. Petro, rector of the seminary. "However, we recognize the needs of others who wish to study Byzantine theology in its various forms, and we want to provide opportunities for these people. We see ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century becoming a Center of Learning for the Byzantine Catholic Church where anyone interested in our tradition can learn about its theology, its spirituality and its beauty."

# Rector's Message



In our last message to you, we reported that we had prepared and submitted application materials to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as part of a process to become authorized to become a degree-granting institution. We are happy to say that a five-person evaluation team from the Department of Education visited the seminary during the week of October 1, 2002 for a very thorough review of our programs, personnel and processes. Each member of the team (whose photo appears in this publication) received a copy of the application materials before the visit so that they could thoroughly review it. They then spent two full days interviewing our faculty, staff, seminarians and off-campus students. On Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, the team leader, Monsignor David Rubino, presented a preliminary report to myself, Father Jack Custer (Dean) and Advisory Board Chair, Betty Radvak Shovlin. While we await the formal written report and recommendations, we feel confident that we are moving in the right direction based on the favorable initial response of the evaluation team. We are only able to make this progress because of our fine faculty, staff, student body, and supporters such as you. We are very grateful to all of you who trust and believe in the seminary as it continues to strive to serve our Church.

## Father John G. Petro, Rector

## Kevin Marks – Destined for the Priesthood

*What do you want to be when you grow up? An astronaut? A doctor? A policeman? Well, for Seminarian Kevin E. Marks, the answer was, "I want to be a priest."*



Kevin Marks

According to his family, Kevin grew up "playing church and priest" at home. Kevin's home parish is Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church in Hermitage, Pennsylvania.

Throughout his youth, Kevin was an altar server and involved in many parish activities. He was greatly inspired by his former pastor, Fr. John J. Borodach. With such a beginning, one might say Kevin was destined to become a priest.

Following graduation from high school in 1996, Kevin entered the seminary to undertake an eight-year seminary program toward the holy priesthood. He completed the first half of this journey in May of 2000, graduating from La Roche College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies and now is in his third year of theology.

Kevin continues to serve as a night chaplain at Pittsburgh's Allegheny General Hospital and also teaches religious education to high school students at St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church, Upper Saint Clair, PA. He cites the late Metropolitan Judson Procyk as a major

influence during his seminary career thus far, saying, "He always showed great support and care on a personal level and is a true model."

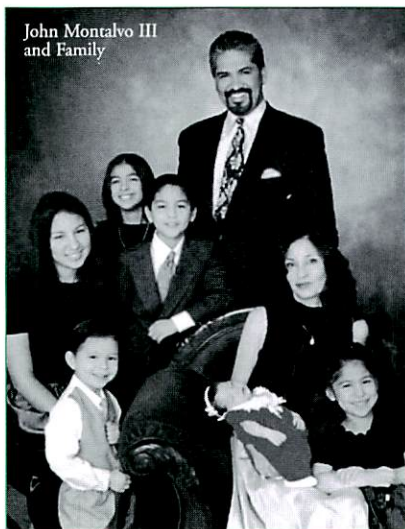
When asked what experience in his life best exemplifies God's love, Kevin replied, "There have been many such experiences in my life. I am thankful for my family and friends and the fact that God is with me in my journey towards the priesthood. I have met so many wonderful people and made many friendships. I am also very grateful for the many years of kindness and support from my pastor and the parishioners of my home parish."

When asked for his favorite scriptural passage, Kevin quotes Luke 10:41 – 42, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion and she shall not be deprived of it."

Kevin, who has a special affinity for chant, says, "I enjoy doing it." He would like to minister in the Pittsburgh area after his seminary education because of his familiarity with the area and the proximity of his family and friends.

# John Montalvo III

## *Building a Life of Service*



About the Advisory Board of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, the rector, Father John Petro, recently said, “We have one of the best advisory boards in the Byzantine Catholic Church. These people are talented, hard working, collaborative, generous, and spiritual, particularly those like John Montalvo.”

A deacon candidate for the Eparchy of Van Nuys, John Montalvo III also serves as treasurer for the seminary’s Advisory Board. “It means I make sure members’ travel and lodging expenses are

paid,” said John, who also serves as a member of the Finance and Development Committee.

A highly spiritual person as well, John is in his fourth year of the diaconal formation program, having completed its residential portion this past summer. He attributes his success in the program to his wife and children, who, he says, “have been supportive of my vocation, even to the point of becoming ‘a widow and orphans’ during the two weeks that I attended the summer residential program.”

As a deacon, John says his ministry will be “one of service whether it is liturgically in assisting the bishop or priest, or pastorally in teaching and visiting the sick. As a deacon who will continue to work in a profession outside the parish, I hope to be a witness of that service to the community at large.”

John was born in Covina, California, and graduated from the University of Southern California. He is married to his “lovely bride, Theresa,” and they have six children: Mercedes, 14; Melissa, 11; John IV, 9; Viviana, 6; Gregorio, 4; and Michelle Anastasia, 1. The family resides in Scottsdale, Arizona, where John is president of United Southwest Construction, and they attend St. Stephen Pro-Cathedral, Phoenix, Arizona, where he serves as subdeacon.

John hopes to help create a “center of Byzantine spirituality” at the seminary while focusing upon presbyteral formation. About that vision, John says, “With the various programs now being sponsored by the seminary—the Metropolitan Cantor Institute, Deacon Formation Program, and now recently the master’s degree with a specialization in Byzantine theology—that vision is becoming a reality. With the seminary on track in becoming financially self-sufficient as a result of the overwhelming support of all the faithful of the Metropolia, I hope these programs can be expanded to attract more of the faithful so that we can assist our leaders, the bishops and clergy, in building up the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States.”

## *Father Tom Wesdock*

### *Serving God’s People*

*“I always dreamed of being a priest and serving God’s people, helping them to grow in their faith and love of God. In the past two years I have had that experience. It’s been great so far.”*

Father Tom, a native of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, completed his studies at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in 2000 after having received a bachelor’s degree from the Pennsylvania State University.

“I had a very good education at the seminary,” Father Tom said. “It taught me a lot about spirituality and theology, and particularly about pastoral ministry. The Field Education Program, especially in the two years spent at Allegheny General Hospital, were invaluable in preparing us for our future ministry.”

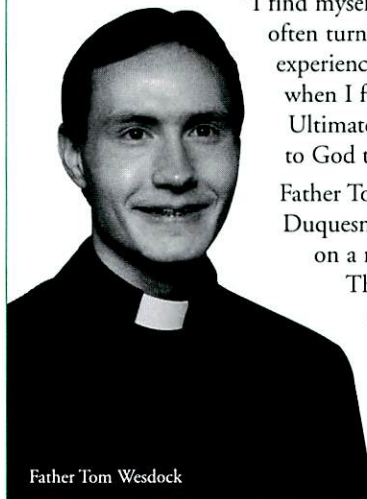
Upon completing his work at the seminary, Father Tom was assigned to St. Mary Church in Youngstown, Ohio, as assistant pastor.

“I was blessed to be able to serve with Father Ycoback, God rest his soul. I learned much about the everyday life of a parish from him and much about the will to serve God’s people. Father Ycoback taught me a great deal.”

Father Tom was assigned in December 2001 to a dual role at St. John’s Byzantine Catholic Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church in Morgantown, West Virginia.

“I find myself very busy and often turning to my seminary experience and to my family when I face difficulties. Ultimately, though, I turn to God to find strength.”

Father Tom is now enrolled at Duquesne University working on a master’s degree in Theology through the seminary’s recent affiliation with the university.



Father Tom Wesdock

### **With Deepest Apologies**

In publishing our Donor Report we neglected to list Nicholas Soley for his generous gift to our Seminarians Circle (gifts up to \$999).

*Thank you, Nicholas, for your kindness and patience.*

# Metropolitan Cantor Institute Opens First Session

Forty-eight students and five faculty members gathered in the seminary chapel for Divine Liturgy on Saturday, September 21, 2002 to begin the first session of the Metropolitan Cantor Institute (MCI). After the celebration of Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Basil greeted the students and faculty and encouraged them in their vocation and ministry to the church.

The students of the MCI then divided into four groups with each attending four classes: Music Theory, Voice Building, Liturgy, and Chant Repertory. This year's sessions featured a "first:" two professional voice instructors—Professors Coreen Poklembo and Richard Teaster—working with smaller groups of students, providing more individual attention to each participant.

The students of the Metropolitan Cantor Institute represents over twenty parishes in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, as well as parishes in the Eparchies of Parma and Van Nuys. Students opt to pursue either a Certificate in Church Music or a Diploma in Church Music.

For more information about the Institute, please phone Professor. J. Michael Thompson at (412) 321-8199 or e-mail him at [chantermt@aol.com](mailto:chantermt@aol.com).



## Evaluation Team Visits Seminary



A team from the Pennsylvania Department of Education visited the seminary in October 2002 to review its faculty, curriculum, facilities, processes and procedures. The team, which is pictured here with the rector, Fr. John G. Petro, included (left to right):

Msgr. David Rubino, *Chair*  
Ms. Carol M.D. Gisselquist, *PA Dept. of Education*  
Fr. John G. Petro, *Rector*  
Fr. Thomas Acklin, *St. Vincent Seminary*  
Ms. Linda L. Wagner, *Gannon University*  
Dr. Elizabeth Strenkowski, *CCAC*

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