

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 • www.byzcathsem.org • byzsem@attglobal.net

Archpriest David Petras has Found a Home in the Liturgy

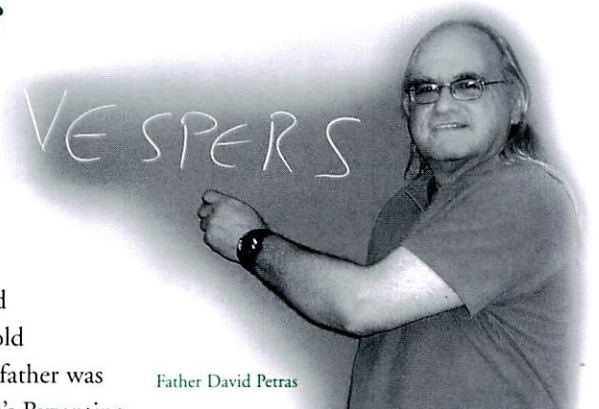
“Father David is one of the most amazing teachers that I have ever encountered. His knowledge is encyclopedic, but more importantly, he is able to communicate it in a way that is accessible and engaging.” Anthony Dragani, student at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary.

Father David M. Petras, Very Reverend Archpriest, Spiritual Director and Professor of Liturgy at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, is noted among his students for his encyclopedic knowledge, his long hair and his great belly laugh. When asked about them, Fr. David said, “About the long hair, I am at a place in my life where I don’t worry about stereotypes. As for an ‘encyclopedic knowledge,’ one just has to live long enough.” Those who know him can imagine his following that comment with a signature belly laugh, one that he says, “Father Joseph Kapusnak claims to have taught me.”

The man who once preached on laughter at the annual pilgrimage at Mount St. Macrina says we have to laugh in this age “because things are so disjointed. One has to hope that in the future things will be jointed, but not in this lifetime.”

Fr. David began his life in Maple Heights, OH where his father, Peter Petras, worked in a clothing factory and his mother, Anna, worked on gold stamping from their home. His father was volunteer sacristan at St. Eugene’s Byzantine Catholic Church, a church he helped to found, and Father David helped his dad by sweeping, dusting pews and stacking candles, among other things. His early experiences with the church helped fuel his ambition to become a priest, and, as he says, “I was determined to be a priest from the second grade. It was one of those things that never wavered.”

After graduating from Holy Name High School in Cleveland, Fr. David attended the Byzantine Catholic Seminary before beginning his studies in Rome at Pontifical Gregorian University where he was “shoved in the right direction” by noted educators such as Fr. Juan Mateos, SJ, Fr. Wilhelm DeVries, SJ., and Fr. Miguel Arranz, SJ. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Stephen Kocisko in 1967 and eventually served as pastor for twenty-four years at churches in Taylor, MI, Akron, OH and Cleveland, where his beloved Cleveland Indians play baseball.



Father David Petras

“I have been a Cleveland Indians fan for over 50 years,” Fr. David said. “I still remember the 1953 opener when Bob Lemon pitched a one-hitter against the Chicago White Sox. The 50’s, that was the decade of the Indians. Unfortunately they have had their ups and downs since then.”

Fr. David occasionally spices his hallway conversation with baseball reminiscences, but his classroom is reserved for fostering critical thinking in seminarians.

“They come in from ‘the world’ where things are very mechanical,” Fr. David said of his charges. “I try to give them a shove in the right direction, but it’s really God doing the shoving. They will be serving in the parishes, and I try to give them some of the knowledge they will need, but something more, an appreciation of the faith. We only scratch the surface, however.”

Fr. David served the seminary as a resident professor from 1978 to 1980 and as an

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Dr. John Prehatny

Dr. John Prehatny A Great Influence on the Seminary

are certainly friendly and capable, but not quite as loose as the Langley crowd! But, we, too, have had a good, productive time together, and we have become good friends.”

“Dr. Prehatny has been one of the great influences on our Board,” Fr. John G. Petro, rector of the seminary, said. “As a member of the Development and Finance Committee, John was instrumental in the planning for our 50th Anniversary Endowment Campaign and its success. He always brings a surgeon’s precision and attention to detail in our discussions.”

Dr. John Prehatny has special memories of the two years (1959-61) he spent at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia as a captain in the US Air Force.

“The original seven Mercury Astronauts were there at the same time,” he said. “John Glenn, Alan Shepard, Jr. – that bunch. They certainly were a wild, but friendly, group. We had a good time together!”

The five years he has spent on the Byzantine Catholic Seminary Advisory Board are, likewise, special to Dr. Prehatny, even though his fellow board members don’t have quite the wildness or notoriety of the Mercury Astronauts.

“The Seminary Advisory Board consists of a wonderful group of people,” he said. “They

“He always brings a surgeon’s precision and attention to detail in our discussions.”

—Fr. John G. Petro

Dr. Prehatny, who was born and raised in Hazleton, PA and was a member of St. John’s Church there, graduated from Pennsylvania State University in pre-med and attended Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, where he graduated in 1957. It was at Penn State that he met his wife, the former Helene Smith.

“Msgr. Joseph Jackanich, who built St. John’s Church and lived to be over 100, married my wife and me,” Dr. Prehatny said. “Helene is very talented. Aside from being the Director of Religious Education at our parish, Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Philadelphia, she plays the piano and gives private lessons to many of our grandchildren. Then, twice a year she coordinates recitals at our home. We all love music and are a very musical family,” said Dr. Prehatny, who also plays piano, as well as saxophone and clarinet.

The Prehatnys have five children and 21 grandchildren.” We have children in New Jersey and California and also in the Philadelphia area,” Dr. Prehatny said. “Our daughter, Charlene, is an executive with Citibank, our son, John, owns a pool service in San Diego. Our daughter, Linda (Swain), is featured on the NBC affiliate with a program called, ‘Moms on the Move.’ She expects it to go national. And, our daughters Lorraine and Barbara are very busy homemakers.”

Dr. Prehatny, who retired from his surgery practice after thirty years as Clinical Professor and attending surgeon at Jefferson Medical College and twenty-five years at Methodist Hospital, answered the call of Drexel University College of Medicine six months

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adjunct professor from 1980 to 1988 and assumed his current full time role in 1995. A true Renaissance man who is noted as a scholar, teacher, and writer, Fr. David was honored by his bishop with the title of “Very Reverend Archpriest” in 2004 in recognition of his many contributions to the Church.

“We are happy when what we are doing is working, when it is all coming together” Fr. David said. “I have been blessed to have some of those moments.”

His students certainly agree. (Then) Deacon Kevin Marks said, “I have learned greatly from Fr. David in class. He makes learning about Liturgy fun, and, as Spiritual Director, he has truly guided me in my spiritual life.”

The teacher who amazes his students without referring to notes, Fr. David was asked if his work doesn’t become repetitious. He laughed and said, “I have notes; they just don’t catch me peeking at them. Besides, if the Liturgy purports to be what it says it is, then teaching and studying it is like being at home, not a repetitive action.”

Among all who associate with him, they know that Fr. David Petras has found a home!

Noted Educator Spoke at 4th Annual SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture



Rev. Joseph Thomas Lienhard

Noted educator, Rev. Joseph Thomas Lienhard, S.J., addressed over 100 clergy, monastics and laity at the 4th Annual SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture, held on May 3, 2004 at St. Paul's Seminary in Pittsburgh. Father Lienhard's topic was:

"The Plagues of Egypt, Spiritual Interpretation, and the Old Testament in the Church."

In his talk, Fr. Lienhard explored patristic exegesis by citing examples from early

church writers, including Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo and others. He summarized by saying that Christ is key to interpreting the Old Testament, that Scripture speaks to all Christians, that we can not deny the literalness of the Scriptures but that Christ opens the "fuller sense" of them, and that interpretation is guided by the rule of faith. Fr. Lienhard called the Scriptures "a living communication, a dialogue" which gave the Fathers joy in interpreting.

Fr. Lienhard has served for many years as Professor of Theology at Fordham University in New York. He has also served as chair of the Department of Theology at Fordham as well as associate chair for graduate studies.

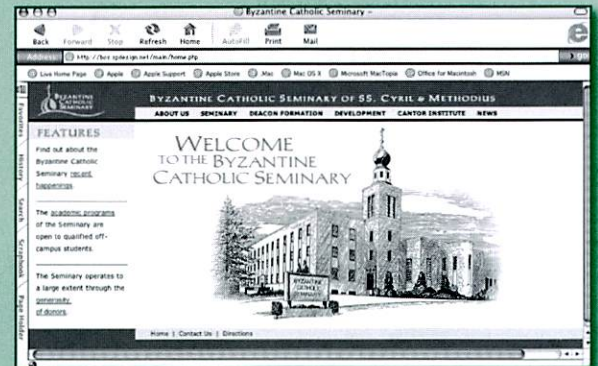
Having entered the Society of Jesus in 1958, Fr. Lienhard was ordained to the priesthood in 1971. He received an A.B. in classics from Fordham University (1964), a Ph.L., *magna cum laude*, from Woodstock College (1965), an M.A. in classics from Fordham (1966), a B.D., "*with highest distinction*," from Woodstock College (1971), an S.T.M. from Woodstock (1971), a Doctor in Theology from the University of Freiburg (1975), and a Dr. Theology, habil. from the University of Freiburg (1986).

His teaching career includes Regis High School, New York City; Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH; Boston College, Boston, MA; and St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, NY.

A member of the American Society of Church History, Fr. Lienhard has served on the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and the Catholic Theological Society of America. He presently serves on the Association Internationale d'Études Patristiques and the North American Patristics Society. He likewise has been a board member or editor for many other organizations.

The author of numerous scholarly articles, Fr. Lienhard has received many awards for his teaching, including the Lawrence G. Haggerty Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence, Marquette University and the Teacher of the Year Award, Graduate Students' Association at Fordham University.

Seminary Unveils New Website



For the past several months, members of the staff at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary have been busy creating a new website.

"We had a website that served our purposes very well and we are indebted to John Vernoski of Virginia for assisting us," Sr. Margaret Ann Andrako, administrative assistant at the seminary said, "However, we wanted to add some new things and, more importantly, we wanted to host the site nearby."

The seminary contracted with SP Design of Pittsburgh and unveiled its new site in May 2004. The site is named www.byzcathsem.org.

"The site is attractive, informative, and easy to navigate," Sr. Margaret Ann said. "We will be able to update it easily and we look forward to many 'virtual' interactions with the people around the world who have shown interest in the seminary."

Matching Gifts

Many corporations match the financial contributions given by their employees to charitable causes. If you wish to give such a gift to the seminary and are uncertain of your company's matching gift policy, please check with them or call the seminary development office at (412) 321-3771.

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John G. Petro

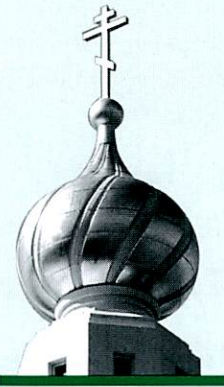
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Seminary Seeks Associate Membership in ATS



Fr. John G. Petro, rector of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, will travel to Garden Grove, CA in June 2004 where the seminary will be voted upon for Associate Membership in The Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

“The membership is another step in our five year journey to improve the seminary,” Fr. John said. “We began in 1999 with our successful endowment campaign, followed that with authorization from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to grant advanced degrees, and now we continue along the ATS path to full accreditation. I will be pleased to represent in Garden Grove the many people who have made this journey possible - the faculty, staff, advisory board and friends of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary.” The seminary can seek full ATS accreditation over a three to five year period.

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ago to become part time Special Project Manager for a “mini-medical school project” and Clinical Professor of Surgery. He has never retired from his work at Holy Ghost Church, however.

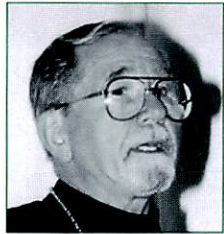
“I have been president of the Holy Name Society a couple of times,” he said, “and helped gain the handicap access in our parish church.”

When asked his thoughts about the seminary and the church, Dr. Prehatny said, “We in the Byzantine Church have such a spiritual treasure that we must have more marketing and evangelization to introduce our Church to our neighbors and neighborhoods. And, we have to get Byzantine Catholics back to the church, especially the ‘baby boomers.’ We need them to be the leaders of the future church. We have top-notch priests, but they need the help of community leaders. Also, we need to have a strong seminary where men are developed as skilled leaders for demanding times.”

“With Dr. Prehatny as a model, the seminary and the church will grow stronger, indeed,” said Father John.

LECTURE ADDRESSES AVAILABLE FROM BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY

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