

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 • byzcathsem@verizon.net

Development Director Guides Giving to the Seminary

Ed Barr joined the staff of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in October 1999 as part time Director of Development.

“The seminary needed someone to coordinate its first-ever fund development campaign to raise a \$1 million endowment; this was a requirement of the PA Department of Education before we could be authorized to become a degree-granting institution,” Barr said, “and I was lucky to be chosen for the position.”

Barr came to the seminary after having served as Vice President of Marketing for a statewide health care organization and after having served for 14 years as Director of Corporate Communications for the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System. Additionally, he had served as a development professional for several years in both government and non-profit positions.

“I was fortunate to have been accepted to serve the seminary for these past seven years,” Barr said. “I have come to see a well organized and professional group of faculty and administrators who really care about the future of the Byzantine Catholic Church and who make do with very few resources.”

Barr has a unique perspective on educational organizations. In addition to his duties

at the seminary, he also holds the position of Associate Teaching Professor at the H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University.

“It is interesting to travel between CMU, which has thousands of students, hundreds of staff and a huge budget, and the seminary, which has far fewer people and a significantly smaller budget,” he said. “Yet, Fr. John and the seminary staff and students have most of the same concerns as their much larger counterpart. And, those in administration make so much happen with the few dollars they have.”

Barr’s primary duty is to help in bringing the seminary more of those dollars, but he has additional responsibilities, including communications; he writes most of the publications that come from the seminary, as well as many articles for the Byzantine Catholic World.

“Our donors want to know what we are doing with the money they have entrusted to us,” Barr said. “And, we want our donors to remember the serious message we communicated in our 2000 campaign, ‘If there is no seminary, there will be no

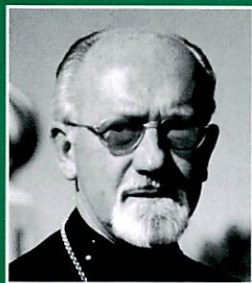


Ed Barr

priests; and, if there are no priests, there will be no Byzantine Catholic Church as it is known today.’ To keep that from happening, we need donor support now more than ever.”

“I have come to see a well organized and professional group of faculty and administrators who really care about the future...and who make do with very few resources.”

Rector's Message



The seminary has begun a new school year and our halls echo the footsteps of students who prepare to become priests as well as those in the School of Theology. We also hear the steps of many volunteers who assist us in our Self-Study for ATS accreditation. However, the seminary halls and classrooms are filled not only with students studying the rich tradition of the Byzantine Church. Students of the Archieparchial Office of Religious Education, the Metropolitan Cantor Institute, and numerous people from the community also regularly use our facility for workshops and/or meetings. After a busy summer, we find ourselves reinvigorated by the sounds, the sights and the energy of those who come to us to learn, to discover and to share.

Father John G. Petro, Rector

Fr. Wes Has Lived his Message

Rev. Mitred Archimandrite Wesley Izer, SDB has a message for us: "Let us keep ourselves focused on the Lord Jesus Christ as we live our lives, ever mindful and thankful for the treasury of blessings He grants us through our Byzantine Catholic Church. Let us not hoard what we have, but rather let us share our faith and Tradition with others." We can easily accept a message like that from a man who has lived his life in the same way.

Fr. Wes was born in East Los Angeles to Wesley L. and Consuelo A. (Perez) Izer. His family moved to Montebello Gardens, CA (later the City of Pico-Rivera). He attended St. Francis high school in Watsonville, CA—the Junior Seminary for the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB).

Both his parents worked for General Cable Corporation. After their marriage, Consuelo left work to raise their family—Wes and his sibling, Sr. Kathleen Izer, SSND (School Sisters of Notre Dame - St. Louis Province).

"When I was growing up there were no Byzantine Catholic Churches close by," Fr. Wes said. "My first Eastern experience was at the age of 5 or 6 watching television and being mesmerized by the beautiful services of a Greek Orthodox Hierarchial

Divine Liturgy on Pascha. I fell in love and was hooked from that early age on."

Fr. Wes was hooked, and a few people deepened his love of the Church.

"Sr. Mary Leona, SSND, who taught me in the 5th and 6th grades at St. Hilary School, had a profound influence on me," he said. "She saw that I had a possible vocation and was always encouraging me to explore religious life, especially with the Salesians. Fr. John Drozda of blessed memory, a member of the Salesians' New Rochelle Province, encouraged me over the years to pursue Salesian life as a Byzantine Catholic priest. And, Bishop George Kuzma taught me how to be a priest with a pastoral heart. He was my mentor, spiritual father, friend, and confidant. My seven years with him in Anaheim as a weekend Associate were the best years for me as a young priest. During the years he was Bishop of Van Nuys, I was able, with the permission of my Provincial, to work shoulder to shoulder with him."

Fr. Wes made his year of novitiate at St. Joseph's Novitiate in Newton, NJ and professed vows as a Salesian of Don Bosco in 1965, making perpetual vows in 1971. After novitiate, he attended Don Bosco



Fr. Wesley Izer, SDB

"Each person on the Council brings a uniqueness that helps us work together for the good of the seminary."

College in Newton, NJ for four years and graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy in June, 1969.

After four years of teaching in Salesian schools in California, he studied Theology at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, CA, where he completed the M.Div. program in December, 1976 and was granted an STM with a specialty in Southwest Church History in June, 1977. On May 14, 1977 he was ordained a priest.

Continued on page 4

Jim Silvestri's Studies

Lead to Action

Many students value classes where they learn information of practical value. Jim Silvestri, a Master of Arts in Theology (M.A.T.) student at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, put his recent seminary studies in Scripture to immediate use in his parish.

In the spring term of 2006, Jim needed three credits for his Scripture track to the M.A.T., and Fr. Jack Custer, his teacher and advisor, suggested some options – one was to focus on the New Testament in the Byzantine Lectionary for the Feasts of Mary the Theotokos. Jim was particularly interested in Mary, the Mother of God, and how the feasts and liturgy define her role in God's plan of salvation.

"In studying the scriptures that are used for the feasts of Mary," Jim said, "I found that

the liturgy wants to give us a message. Often the same epistle and gospel are read for the Marian feasts. These repetitions reinforce Mary's message to the faithful, i.e. listen to my Son's words and observe them."

With his great interest in the topic and after a lot of research and drafting of his paper, Jim, also a catechist, thought adults might be interested in investigating his topic. He discussed the idea with his pastor, Fr. Joseph Raptosh of the Church of the Resurrection in Monroeville, PA, who asked Jim to offer the study to parishioners this past summer.

Eight people signed up, Jim noted, and they met for two hour sessions for eight weeks at the church, focusing on eight feasts of Mary the Theotokos.

"I was pleased with the response," Jim said.

"We had a great exchange among the group of men and women. The first hour was spent in breaking open the Scriptural passages for the particular feast. In the discussions that followed, the participants clearly demonstrated how much Scripture touched their lives. I saw that there is a real thirst out there for this interchange. I felt as though my studies at the seminary proved to be a bridge between the seminary and the parish."

Jim, who at one time belonged to the Congregation of the Passion as a seminarian, said, "The seminary is the place for Byzantine Catholics to find out what it means to be a Byzantine Catholic. Study there and then spread the Good News!"

We Remember

In honor of its 50th anniversary in 2000, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary created the "Book of Remembrance" to remember those people who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Every day in its liturgical prayer, the seminary community remembers those people listed in the "Book of Remembrance" as well as all of those who so generously support the seminary with financial contributions and good works.

The handsome "Book of Remembrance" was crafted for the seminary from Pennsylvania cherry wood and Carpathian elm burl veneer. These woods were specially chosen to reflect our roots in the Carpathian mountain region of east central Europe now bearing fruit in the new world. The Book is enshrined in the lobby of the seminary and inscribed in beautiful calligraphy with the names of loved ones who sleep in the Lord.

Those who are interested in remembering loved ones in the "Book of Remembrance" may write to or call the seminary to receive a brochure explaining how to remember someone in this way while helping to support the work of the seminary.

*O God of Spirits and all flesh,
you trampled death and broke the power of Satan,
and granted life to your world. Now grant rest,
O Lord, to the souls of your departed servants,
in a place of light, joy and peace, where there is no pain,
sorrow nor mourning.*



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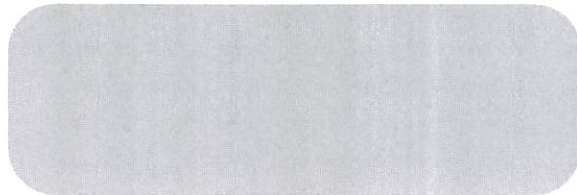
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Has Lived His Message from page 2

Fr. Wes, who has a long and distinguished career as an educator, is currently assigned to the Pastoral Center of the Eparchy of Van Nuys. In his few moments of spare time he enjoys listening to classical music and the older “oldies”—the music of the 30’s through 60’s – as well as reading about what is happening in the Church, especially the Byzantine Catholic Church. When he can, he enjoys traveling, especially to historic places, and had the chance this past August of fulfilling one dream—driving the Alcan Highway as he drove from Anchorage, AK to his new assignment in Phoenix, AZ

The seminary is pleased to have Fr. Wes as an advisor. He has been a member of the Advisory Council of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary since its inception in 1998. About his role he says, “Serving on the Seminary Advisory Council has been a rich and gratifying experience.

It is rewarding to work with a cross section of dedicated, enthusiastic and concerned clergy, religious and laity who see and understand the critical need to encourage and recommend new and various ways to keep the seminary on a continuing path to excellence. Each person on the Council brings a uniqueness that helps us work together for the good of the seminary. I think most of us are quite amazed at what our little group has been able to recommend and see accomplished over the last 8 years.”

MISSION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius responds to the evangelical mission of Jesus Christ. Its primary purpose is the spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and personal formation of candidates for ordained ministry in the Byzantine Catholic Church. It also serves as a center of learning for the Byzantine Catholic Churches in North America.

As the only free standing, English speaking, Byzantine Catholic Theological Seminary in North America, this center of learning embraces those seeking academic and pastoral formation to serve as deacons, theologians, catechists, and cantors. The Seminary also seeks to make graduate level theological studies in the Byzantine Catholic tradition available to those interested in teaching, research and advanced study. The Seminary likewise supports other educational and formational programs to serve Byzantine Catholic Churches and the wider community.