

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.bcs.edu • office@bcs.edu

Summer and Beyond at the Seminary



First row: Steven Galuschik, Deacon Brian Escobedo, Lewis Rabayda, Bishop Gerald, V. Rev. Eugene Yackanich, Deacon Michael Mandelas; Second Row: Deacon Musil Shihadeh, Kenneth Malley, Benjamin Crow, John Russell, Michael Bezruchka, Timothy Weber.

When the seminarians depart in May, that does not mean that the staff who remain are free for the summer. Many things occur during those four months, and as one has often commented, it seems even busier than when the students are here! The summer of 2011 was not any different.

The Deacon Formation Program took place for two full weeks in June with twenty men from all four of the Ruthenian Eparchies and one from the Maronite Church. With all these men present in addition to the faculty and staff of the program, the building is buzzing with activity.

When the Deacon Program ended, the summer projects began. The day after the program, scaffolding began to go up. The major project of the summer was the restoration of the dome on the Seminary. The deterioration was much greater than

expected. When the contractors were able to get up close, they discovered that the dome was cracked all the way around the base. Mortar had eroded from the joints to such a degree that it was possible to put your fingers all the way into the joints. It took about two months to complete the work, but it is fully restored now. You may recall that this project was the priority of our Christmas Appeal last year. Those donations and a matching gift were helpful to finance this endeavor.

Another big project of the summer was the installation of a server and the networking of all the computers in the Seminary. As you know, because of the thickness of the walls, it is quite a task to pull wires through all the areas of the building. The sounds of drilling and hammering punctuated our days for close to two months. This project is now completed.

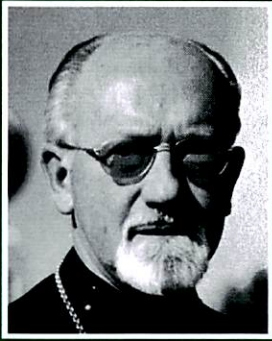
A surprise of the summer was the acquisition of new and gently-used carpeting from one of the office buildings in the city. We received enough to carpet the reference as well as the circulating rooms in the library, the rare book room and the periodical room. Additionally, at the request of the students, we developed a group study room for those who wish to work together on a project without disturbing the others in the library. We were also able to acquire eight study carrels for the library so that students may have a personal space to work and to keep their books and other items necessary for their academic pursuits.

For the past two years, the faculty has been hard at work with a curriculum review. The Association of Theological Schools studied our curriculum and strongly recommended that we reduce the number of credit hours for the Master of Divinity Degree (MDiv). After careful consideration and much discussion, the curriculum has been reduced from 157 hours to 120 hours. This gives the students much more time for reading, research, reflection and writing. In a parallel move, the Master of Arts Degree in Theology (MAT) now requires 60 hours for completion. This is also in response to the ATS recommendation, and it brings us in line with other similar schools. This curriculum change was completed in early fall.

This year we have another new experience for the Seminary. For the fall semester, we have a scholar-in-residence. Fr. Johannes Oravec, OSB, is a monk from Jerusalem who spent two months at the Seminary this summer doing research. He is originally

(Continued on page 4)

Rector's Message



Every year brings its special blessings and challenges. One of the blessings this year is the variety of new students, especially in the Master of Theology program. They come from diverse backgrounds and they look forward to serving our Church in a number of ministries in the future. The challenge is that there are no new seminarians from our entire Metropolia this year. This must be a concern for all of us and an incentive to actively encourage vocations to the priesthood in our parishes. Actively speaking to people about vocations is the proven way to best inspire men and women to consider the diaconate, the priesthood and the religious life.

Another blessing is the on-line courses that we are offering. As you will notice in a more extensive article in this issue, we are responding to the call to reach out to those who cannot physically be present in the Seminary but who are interested in growing in their faith and in their knowledge of the theology, spirituality and history of our Church. Each of you can become an ambassador for the Seminary by considering taking an on-line course and encouraging others to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

And, as always, we are deeply grateful to all our benefactors whose support allows us to continue to develop new programs and offerings for our Church.

BCS Alumni Approves Bylaws

By a vote of 53 to four, BCS alumni have ratified bylaws for the Byzantine Catholic Seminary Alumni Association (BCSAA).

"I want to thank all of the members of the Alumni Association for their recent vote on the new bylaws," said acting president Fr. Tom Wesdock. "This is a historic occasion in that a foundation has now been laid for the continuing future development and growth of an active Alumni Association.

"With these bylaws, alumni have expressed their wishes and desire to continue the mission of the alumni association

in support of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary for many happy and blessed years to come."

The vote was the culmination of a two-year process to define and locate alumni, identify a steering committee, create an alumni communication process and develop a structure under which BCSAA could operate in a way most responsive to the needs of its alumni.

Ballots were mailed to all known alumni in July and responses received through August. A copy of the ratified bylaws can be found on the alumni page of the Seminary

website. The next step in the formation of the BCSAA is to elect a governing board that will oversee implantation of an alumni program.

If you are interested in serving as a member of the governing body alumni council, please contact the alumni office at 412-321-8383, ext. 28 or e-mail office@bcs.edu.



BE PART OF OUR FUTURE!

If you would like to remember us in your will, our official title is Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius.

BCS Online Courses Continue

In Judges 6, we read the story of Gideon, who asked God for a sign of His abiding presence. Gideon throws out a fleece as a way to find out if God is indeed with him or not. The sign will be whether or not the fleece remains dry when the ground is wet and then the next day, is wet when the ground is dry. And indeed, this does occur. For Gideon, these are both signs that God was with him. Thus, Gideon was encouraged to go forward and conquer the Midianites through God's grace.



In a similar way, *Byzantine Online* was launched like a fleece. When it started in September 2010, *Byzantine Online* offered a single course and waited to see if anyone would respond. Five students and two auditors initially registered for Introduction to Sacred Scripture, the first online course. Although the course broke even financially, it was deemed enough of a success that another course - Introduction to Liturgy - was offered in Spring 2011 and then another, Patristic Reading - in late Spring 2011.

In less than a year, *Byzantine Online* finds itself launching not one but two courses a semester. The fall courses, Theology of Divine

Liturgy and Women in the Old Testament, have 25 registrants combined.

Through our online format, *Byzantine Online* has been able to reach people from as far away as Texas, California and Canada as well as one student who is from the South but is stationed in Iraq. And, those who have participated have by and large responded with great enthusiasm to this experience. Said one liturgy student, "I would like to thank you for providing a well organized informative class. I learned an incredible amount about the liturgy." Said another, "I have never taken an online course before, but I gained both in understanding of the material as well as knowledge of the subject and the technology!"

Like Gideon's fleece, *Byzantine Online* has become for us both a sign of God's abiding presence as well as an opportunity to make His presence real to others. Like the Midianites, we are conquering; only our enemies now are distance and inaccessibility. Through these online courses, we have the chance to reach out and touch those who might not otherwise have the experience of coming to the Seminary for classes. For more information and to see the upcoming courses for spring, check our website at: <http://online.bcs.edu/uncategorized/more-online-courses-at-byzantine-catholic-seminary/>.

Under the Dome

Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D., adjunct Professor of Liturgy and Languages, was elevated to the ecclesial office of Protopresbyter by Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh on Pentecost Sunday, June 12, 2011.

The **V. Rev. Protopresbyter Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D.**, signed a publishing agreement with Holy Cross Orthodox Press this past summer, for the publication of his doctoral dissertation as a book. The book is due out by the summer or fall of 2012 and is entitled: "Economia and Eschatology: The Mystagogical Significance of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy's Prothesis Rite in the Commentaries of Sts. Nicholas Cabasilas and Symeon of Thessalonike."

Fr. George D. Gallaro, Coordinator of Seminarian Life and Professor of Canon Law and Ecumenical Theology, participated at the 20th Conference of the Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches in Athens, Greece (September 2011), and at the 47th National Melkite Convention in Newport Beach, California (July 2011). He wrote *Revisiting the Sainly Founder of Grottaferrata: Nilus the Calabrian* for *Nicolaus* 37 (2010) 293-300 and *Priestly Identity and Vocation* for *Vocations and Prayer* 20 (2011) 22-24. He also translated from Italian, Vincenzo Poggi, *How Charon's Life*

was Entwined with the Christian East: Memoirs Autobiographiques for *Logos* 52 (2011) 89-108, and Attilio Vaccaro, *Southern Italy and Its Byzantine Matrix* for *Nicolaus* 37 (2010) 301-311. Several other shorter articles have appeared in *Sophia*, the Journal of the Eparchy of Newton, MA, *Byzantine Catholic World*, the newspaper of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, and *New Star*, the newspaper of the Eparchy of Chicago.

Fr. Joseph Raptosh, the Academic Dean, has been chosen and trained by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) to be one of their official visitators for accreditation reviews of member schools. He has been appointed to the visitation team for Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in November.

In June and again in September, **Professor Sandra Collins, Ph.D.**, gave two presentations at Duquesne University on online and research resources as well as another at the University of Pittsburgh, also in September. She also had two entries on the biblical books of Esther and Lamentations – included in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Judaism and Jewish Culture*, Judith Baskin, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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(Continued from page 1)

from Slovakia, and his doctoral dissertation was on Modern Russian Religious Thought. He is now doing research for a second doctorate and is a fine presence and wonderful example of a healthy community person who is also a true scholar. He can be found in the library working most every day. Fr. Johannes brings a new dimension of study, prayer and healthy Christian living (and a great sense of humor!) to our students and staff.

Committees composed of nearly thirty people have been busy studying the data and writing their reports for the Self-Study for the re-accreditation of the Seminary. The first draft of the report is just about completed, and the editing will be finished by spring 2012. Once again, Dr. Betty Radvak-Shovlin has agreed to direct the process, and she brings her vast experience and masterful way of guidance to this project, and we are confident that we will prepare a worthy Self-Study.

We have begun this year with much energy and enthusiasm; we also realize how much work needs to be done. For this, we ask your daily remembrance in prayer of all our students, staff and faculty.

Mark Your Calendar



Mark your calendar for the SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture. On Monday, May 7, 2012, the internationally acclaimed scholar, **Dr Lewis Patsavos** of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA will deliver the annual lecture.

Matching Gifts

If you or someone you know works for a company with a matching gift program, your gift to the Byzantine Catholic Seminary can be doubled or tripled. Please check with your company's Human Resources Department for this option.