

# 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*

## Two Degrees Conferred at Seminary



*Fr. Eugene and Diódoro*

Following a Moleben in honor of SS. Cyril and Methodius, patrons of the Seminary, Very Rev. Eugene P. Yackanich, Administrator of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, conferred diplomas upon two graduates of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary on May 2, 2011. Faculty, staff, family and friends attended and rejoiced with Deacon Diódoro Mendoza and Christopher Singel as they celebrated their completion of study.



*Fr. Eugene and Chris*

Diódoro Mendoza, a seminarian from Our Lady of Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church in Las Vegas, NV, completed four years of theology and received his Master of Divinity degree (MDiv) - *cum laude*. He summed up his four years of study and formation at the Seminary by saying: "These past four years have drawn me closer to God...a communion with God that has been fostered through academic studies and developed in and out of a liturgical and spiritual formation.

The lived experience of seminary life allowed me to discern further God's will for me. The beauty of such experience is that one doesn't walk alone. We are in community, more so, we become a family, a family of formators and educators that sincerely have your best interest in mind, and a family of brothers, all striving to respond out of obedience to do God's will in one's life. I will never again experience an educational and spiritual formation like these past four years. They have not only been a personal challenge, but a most rewarding and life changing opportunity. I look forward to the years ahead."

Summer assignments at parishes in his own eparchy likewise influenced Diódoro for "they gave me an inside look of what the life of a priest is like. I spent summers at St. John Chrysostom in Seattle with Fr. Joseph Stanichar and at Holy Angels in San Diego with Fr. Robert Pipta. These two assignments provided another opportunity to validate if God was calling me to be a priest. By participating in the liturgical life of the church, the parish functions and events, and learning the financial requirements in the operation of a parish, gave me a foretaste of what priestly ministry is like."

When asked how his learning at the seminary will help in ministry, Diódoro answered: "The seminary builds a

foundation for ministerial life, with the academic and spiritual development being an ongoing conversation. In other words, you never cease being a student. Therefore, the seminary equips you with the necessary skills, pastoral, spiritual, and psychological to help you become the priest you need to be. Just as no one is born a Christian, we become one, in an ongoing process that requires our response to God; the seminary provides the essential basics that will require you to take that further into your personal and priestly life.

In summary, Diódoro said his four years of study and formation at the Seminary were... "like a journey that has brought me closer to God and with an even greater zeal to serve him and his Church. The seminary has become a family and home, although physically temporary, it will always remain in my heart." Deacon Diódoro was ordained to the presbyterate at his home parish in Las Vegas, NV on Thursday, June 16, 2011.

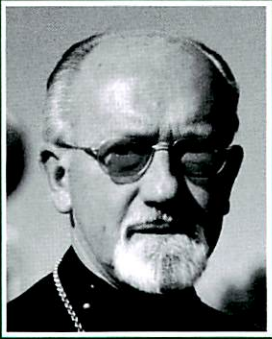
Christopher M. Singel received a Masters of Arts in Theology degree (MAT) - *magna cum laude* - with a concentration in Dogmatic Theology. Chris is a lifelong parishioner of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks, PA. He and his wife, Amanda, have one young son, Ethan Michael.

When asked what made him decide to pursue a MAT degree, Chris answered, "God's presence in my life is nothing short of extraordinary and I've always wanted to dig deeper into scripture, liturgy, the Church Fathers and Eastern Christian theology. Earning a Master's Degree gave me the chance to explore all of these areas and further my understanding of the Byzantine Church in ways I can share with others."

Chris noted that he learned something from each course that he took because of the professor. "Fr. Petro's classes grew my spirituality while Fr. Custer and Professor Collins introduced me to deeper

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# Rector's Message



The academic year ends, the graduation and the annual SS. Cyril & Methodius lecture take place, the seminarians depart for their summer assignments and life continues full force at the Seminary.

For the fourth time, an energetic group of men began their educational and formational journey in the Deacon Formation Program. Men from all four eparchies as well as from the Maronite Eparchy spent the intensive two-week residential portion of the program at the Seminary and were immersed in the world of Byzantine liturgy, theology and spirituality. Now they will continue their work throughout the year with on-going reading and writing under the guidance of their various professors.

As soon as this program was completed, the trucks arrived, scaffolding was erected and work on the restoration of the dome has begun. Inside the building, drilling and hammering continues as work is being done to build a network for all the seminary computers. All of this, of course, is only due to the generosity of you, our faithful supporters. Please know that we are deeply grateful and continue to remember you in our prayers.

Father John G. Petro, Rector

## Seminary Receives Dome Restoration Grant



*How high is that dome?*

Seminary Board of Directors Member Betty Shovlin was on hand at the Grand Concourse Restaurant at Station Square in Pittsburgh on March 2nd where she accepted a \$2,500 historic religious properties grant from the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation on behalf of the Seminary.

George Dorman, Chair of the organization's Historic Religious Properties Committee, commended Seminary supporters for their response to a dome restoration matching gift request in their annual appeal.

"The Byzantine Catholic Seminary's dome is an iconic symbol for the region, especially for the residents of Pittsburgh's

North Side," said Mr. Dorman. "We are aware of the importance of this project and pleased to make this grant as a token of our appreciation for the gifts received for this purpose through the Seminary's annual appeal."

The Kim and Miller Family Fund was the source of the PHLF grant. The Fund targets Catholic church-related structures on the North Side. The Seminary was one of only 21 religious properties to receive a grant or technical assistance for the foundation's 2011 distribution cycle.

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BYLAWS RATIFICATION

BCS Alumni Association bylaws have been mailed. Alumni are asked to review the document, check the ballot indicating approval or disapproval, and then return the ballot in the envelope provided. Acting President Fr. Thomas Wesdock thanks all alumni in advance for taking time to assist the Alumni Association in laying the groundwork for the future of the organization.

### BE A 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

# Alumni Updates

**Deacon Paul Boboige** ('03) is residing in Falls Creek, PA and has been appointed as pro-life coordinator for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

**Dave Doane** ('66) has been a psychologist in private practice in Toledo for the past 30 years.

**Fr. John Fencik** ('73) reports that he is serving at St. Mary's Church in Bayonne, NJ.

Former student **Rev. Andrew Kormanik** resides in Toronto, Ontario and is serving at the Cathedral in the Eparchy of SS Cyril & Methodius.

**John Kontra** ('63) contacted BCS to notify us that he is residing in Brunswick, OH and would like to reconnect with the Seminary. John was one of a number of alumni with whom we had lost contact and are happy to back in touch with him.

**Deacon Jeffrey Martin** ('07) is a member of the American Institute of Professional Geologists and is an environmental specialist with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. He is also a member of St. John Chrysostom Parish near his home in East Gahanna, OH.

**Paul Polinko**, who studied at the Seminary for one year, is a licensed clinical social worker who has been employed at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh for 28 years. He is published in his field and has post-graduate certification in Marriage and family therapy.

**Rev. Dr. Robert Slesinski** ('76) is the author of a series of books from Eastern Christian Publications including: *A Primer on Church and Eucharist* (2007), *The Holy Encounter* (2008) and *The Holy Transfiguration* (2009).

**John Trompak** ('84) resides in Parma, OH. He is a main frame computer programmer, member of the Eparchial Choir, a parish cantor, EFC catechist and coordinator of a three-parish combined program, and president of the Byzantine Catholic Credit Union.

## Under the Dome

**Sandra Collins, PhD.**, Librarian and Director of Online Learning, addressed the Women's Forum at Temple Ohav Shalom in Allison Park, PA in November, 2010 on "Women and Power in the Hebrew Bible." She spoke to two groups in February 2011: the Acorn Hill Garden Club (who meet at the Seminary) on plants and herbs in the Bible and to the Adult Education Forum at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wexford, PA on Women and Deception in the Bible. She attended the ATS (Association of Theological Schools) Assessment Workshop in March along with **Fr. Joseph Raptosh**, Academic Dean. She also gave a presentation entitled "Biblical Women: Our Models" at a Day of Reflection for Women sponsored by the Pittsburgh Archeparchy Office of Religious Education in May.

**Fr. George D. Gallaro**, Professor of Canon Law and Ecumenical Theology, as well Vicar Judicial of the Metropolitan Tribunal of Pittsburgh, participated at the International Congress on the Eastern Code in Rome, Italy (October 2010) and at Pennsylvania Tribunals Staff Meeting in State College, PA (December 2010). He delivered papers on February 15, 2010 at the Cyril & Methodius Conference in Sandomierz, Poland, (*Eastern Churches Sui Iuris within the Catholic Communion*), on June 9, 2010 at the Orientale Lumen Conference in South Orange, NJ (*The Ecumenical Councils: Theological and Canonical Resonances from the Past*), and on November 1, 2010 at the Catholic-Lutheran Meeting in Greensburg, PA (*On the 11th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*). He also wrote *Liturgical Spirituality of the Christian East* for *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 14 (2010)143-158; *The Ritus Sacer of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Byzantine Churches* for *The Jurist* 70 (2010)206-234; *The Seminary: A Brief History of the Place of Formation* for *The Priest* 66 (2010) n.10;

*Serenity in Iconography* for *Nicolaus* 37 (2010). 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. David M. Petras** continues his involvement with the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue and Liturgy involvement. He attended the meeting of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation last fall in Washington, D.C. and from January 6-9, 2011, he attended the meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy in San Francisco, CA. Among his publications, he lists the Ambon Prayers, by the Liturgical Commission for the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, Canada, with Ukrainian translation and "The Translation of the Divine Liturgy into English," in: *Problematička prekladov boboslužobných textov do živějazyka*, edited by Šimon Marinčák, 2010, 97-109.

**Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D.**, adjunct Professor of Liturgy and Languages at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, gave a lecture at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA, on April 10, 2011, entitled: "Textual Development of the Divine Liturgy and Reflections." **Fr. Stelyios** was also cited numerous times as a contributor and resource person to the new book authored by Fr. Steven Hawkes-Teeple, Professor of Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. The book is entitled *St. Symeon of Thessalonika: The Liturgical Commentaries*, and is the first critical edition and translation into English of two important Medieval Byzantine commentaries authored by St. Symeon.

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## *Two Degrees Conferred At Seminary*

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levels of scriptural reading. Fr. Gallaro introduced me to many great theologians and my liturgical experiences have been enriched as a result of Fr. Petras' classes. Finally, I was sad to see my classes with Fr. Raptosh end because the links between ancient philosophy and the theology of the Church Fathers is endlessly fascinating."

Future plans for Chris include continuing teaching in the Metropolitan Cantor Institute Epistle Reader Class (something he would not have considered were it not for the classes he completed at the Seminary). He also intends to discern about the Deacon Formation Program.

Recapping his years of study at the Seminary, Chris said: "If I wanted to become a rock star, I would seek advice from Bono. There is no better place to study scripture, prayer or theology than the Seminary because you are not learning from "part-time" professors. Instead, you are learning from ordained clergy and dedicated laity and religious who have given their entire lives to God and the Church – they are not simply teaching liturgy, scripture or theosis (union with God), they are living it!"

He added one more thought, "The Seminary and its classes are ideal for anyone looking to learn about their faith, grow their spirituality and explore questions with which they may be struggling."

## *SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture on CD*

Renowned scholar Dr. Robin Darling Young, Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, IN, delivered the 11th Annual SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture on Monday, May 2, 2011. A noted specialist on the History of Christianity, Dr. Young gave a most interesting and engaging talk on "Evagrius the Monk and the Care of Souls."

The Lecture is available on CD. Check [www.bcs.edu](http://www.bcs.edu) website for more information.

## *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.

## *Change in Seminary Contact Information*

Effective June 15, our website domain name has changed to [www.bcs.edu](http://www.bcs.edu). Seminary administrators, faculty and students have new e-mail addresses. These addresses may be found on our website at [www.bcs.edu](http://www.bcs.edu). Please make a note of the changes.