



BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY
OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS
FORMING LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH

JOYFUL

LIGHT

Spring 2018

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

Evening Fellowship with seminarians from St. Vincent College



On Friday, February 23, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius welcomed members from the Seminary community of St. Vincent's Archabbey (Latrobe, PA) for an evening of prayer, food and fellowship. The evening began with the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with Rector Fr. Robert Pipta serving as celebrant and Seminarian Fr. Deacon George Wendt of the Romanian Catholic Eparchy of Canton, OH delivering the homily. After prayer, a meal was shared in the Seminary refectory. Seminarians Timothy Farris (Eparchy of Passaic) and Kyprian Wojciechowski (Archeparchy of Pittsburgh) provided a tour of the Seminary facility. Guests were treated to a glimpse of the community's rich history as well as its academic and spiritual life for our men in formation. The evening ended with smiles on every face, fellowship in every hand, and faith in every heart.

By Seminarian Michael Kunitz
(Eparchy of Parma)

Joshua Van Winkle - A Journey to the Seminary

Five years ago, he walked in to the Jeoldusan Martyrs' Shrine, a shrine on the Han River in South Korea which is dedicated to those who gave up their lives during the Byeongin persecutions of 1866. He said to himself, "These people gave their lives, what can I do?"

Fast forward to 2018 and Joshua Van Winkle finds himself at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary as a Master of Theology student with plans to graduate this spring. But Joshua's journey to the Seminary began many years ago. Raised in Seattle, WA, Joshua graduated with an undergraduate degree in Christian Theology from Seattle Pacific University. He then went to Seoul, South Korea and spent 9 years teaching English. In 2010, as Joshua was participating in a percussion music show, he met his wife, Sarah, through "friends of a friend."

When he visited the Martyrs' Shrine and all during his time in Seoul, Joshua felt called to do more in the Church. He was mentored by a Maronite priest who helped him through the discernment process and Joshua felt a strong need to pursue further education and become involved in the Church.

Joshua and his wife moved back to Seattle in January 2015 and while they were back in the states, they visited some of his wife's family in the Beaver Falls area, just outside of Pittsburgh. During their visit to the area, they decided to stop at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary. And the rest, as they say, is history. During Joshua's visit to the Seminary, he heard testimonies, toured the campus, and realized that the Seminary was where he needed to be. So Joshua and his wife left Seattle and drove cross country and now live about a mile from the Seminary campus.

"It feels like family here at the Seminary. The spiritual environment here is invigorating," Joshua said. He continued, "The people at the Seminary – faculty, seminarians, fellow students, and staff - are what a Christian community should be. Everyone cares about Christ." Joshua appreciated the fact that during his time as an M.A.T. student, he has been formed into a theologian and a rigorous thinker and scholar. In the beginning of his studies at the Seminary, Joshua admits, "It was a bit like trying to drink from a fire hose – it was overwhelming." Now, just weeks away from his graduation, he has realized how everything that he is learning is interconnected. "All of the classes – Liturgical Theology, Dogmatics and even Canon Law, are connected in a way to make me into a better student... a better person."

Joshua says, "God has a wonderful plan for all of us. This experience has been nothing like I expected, but better than what I could have imagined."

God's plan also includes Joshua's new son, Athanasius Van Winkle, born three months ago. "My time at the Seminary has helped me as a father. Having my wife and son is, as Plato said, a full outward sign of love."



Sarah, Athanasius and Joshua

Joshua's journey continues. "My journey and especially my time at the Seminary made me appreciate the great foundation of hope on a more global scale, not just in my world." We are grateful for the time Joshua and his family have spent at the Seminary. We look forward to hearing about the next stop on his journey.

Rector's Message

Christ is Risen!

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary is looking forward to May and our 18th annual Ss. Cyril and Methodius Lecture, held at the St. John Cathedral Center in Munhall, Pennsylvania. I've been fortunate to attend several of these lectures over the past seventeen years. Archimandrite Robert F. Taft, S.J. presented the Seminary's first lecture back in 2001, and I felt blessed to be in attendance.

Our Seminary digitally archives these lectures, and I recently listened to the inaugural lecture once again. Fr. Taft's topic posed a question which is central to the Byzantine Catholic Seminary's purpose – is there a particularly *Eastern Catholic* Theology? Is there a theology that is not particularly Roman Catholic nor Eastern Orthodox, but one unique to Eastern Catholics? Albeit a loaded and potentially polarizing question, I continue to find an attempt at a dynamic answer significant for the theological study conducted at our Seminary.

Our purpose, vision, and mandate describe our Seminary environment as one of Christian unity, integrity, and missionary spirit. We hand on the Tradition of the Christian East as we help our students appropriate the knowledge possessed by the Eastern ecclesial traditions. We desire that our graduates enrich the life of the Church and engage the world in theological reflection, dialogue, and witness. I find it then necessary that we be connected to but not absorbed in Western Theology, while embracing the Eastern Orthodox sources and patrimony, all the while accommodating them to modern realities.

I'm afraid I, myself, have neither the theological expertise nor objectivity to say whether or not our Seminary should be respected in its perspective on Eastern Catholic Theology. But do we have the organization, the faculty, the theological resources, the support, the integrity, and the desire to take an honest stab at such a theology? With your ongoing support and by the grace of God I'm certain that we do.



Father Robert M. Pipta

Under the Dome

Sandra Collins, Ph.D., Director of Information Services and Core Professor of Scripture, spoke on online instructional initiatives to the Washington Theological Consortium in Washington, DC in February. Her reviews on gender and religion appeared in the December 2017 and February 2018 issues of *Library Journal*.

Fr. David Petras, Adjunct Professor of Liturgy, participated as consultor to the Commission in the Inter-eparchial Liturgy Commission Meeting in Phoenix, AZ on October 6-9, 2017.

Fr. Robert Pipta, Rector, gave a day of recollection to the faithful of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Parma. This took place on February 11, 2018 which was Cheesefare Sunday – the day preceding the first day of the Great Fast. Fr. Robert served and delivered the homily at Divine Liturgy, gave a talk, and served Vespers. His homily and talk focused on repentance, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D., Professor of Liturgical Studies and Languages, served as a consultant and co-author of an official document, dated October 18, 2017, supporting the decision of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and his Synod to revive the ancient order of deaconess for the Church of Africa. The document was warmly received by His Beatitude Theodoros and approved unanimously by the Holy Synod, and the Church of Africa will slowly begin the process leading to the reinstatement of female deacons. The document may be accessed on two websites:

- (1) Public Orthodoxy: <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2017/11/17/support-alexandria-deaconess/#more-3818>
- (2) Panorthodox Synod: <https://panorthodoxcemes.blogspot.gr/2017/10/orthodox-liturgists-issued-statement-of.html>

Matthew Miner, Ph.D., had a chapter in a book published on February 18 by CUA Press: “Jacques Maritain and the Metaphysics of Sexual Differentiation” in *The Things that Matter: Essays on the Later Work of Jacques Maritain*, ed. Heidi M. Geibel (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2018).

Recent Student and Alumni Ordinations

Deacon

(on November 12, 2017 at Holy Transfiguration Parish, McLean, VA):
Oliver Black

Subdeacon

(on February 4, 2018 at Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA):
Geoffrey Mackey and Thomas Wells

Seminary Peers



Rev. Ronald J. Hatton

Rev. Ronald J. Hatton, Class of 1995, Currently living in Danbury, CT and serving as Pastor of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

Describe when you first perceived a calling to the priesthood: In a very real way, I'd have to say 1989, when I was 37, although I had thought about a religious vocation since I was in my 20s.

What did you look forward to each year at the Seminary?

Seeing my friends at Seminary again, and praying together as a community.

Favorite Book? *The Way of the Pilgrim*

Favorite exercise? Bowling

Favorite Liturgical Season? Philip's Fast and the Nativity

Favorite class at the Seminary? Liturgy

Favorite meal? LOL! You just had to be there...

Advice you would give to a new Seminarian? Try to read more than assigned texts, especially lives of the saints and spiritual biographies.



Paul Varchola West

Paul Varchola West, Class of 2020, Currently living in Pittsburgh, PA with his wife and 2 children

Describe when you first perceived a calling to the priesthood:

If I had to peg a significant moment in regard to this it would have to be shortly after the baptism of my daughter. That is when I realized that there was a power at work more profound than anything I could possibly conceive. It was then that my mind and heart were open to this calling.

What are you looking forward to during your years at the Seminary?

I look forward to spiritual growth, developing in prayer and finding a path that allows me to walk with God.

Favorite Book? *The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence* by Carl Sagan

What do you think of Pittsburgh now that you are at the Seminary?

After living near Manhattan and in East Los Angeles, I have learned to slow a bit. It is ok to talk to people in the grocery store and I am really beginning to enjoy my time here.

Favorite exercise? Hiking.

Favorite Liturgical Season?

Pentecost. It is a solemn, yet joyful period that gives tangible meaning to the preceding Paschal season. Plus, it is the one time of year the green vestments make their way out of the closet!

Favorite class at the Seminary?

I really enjoy the interplay between Scripture, Patristics and Christology. These subjects tend to form a web that seems to capture the intellectual aspects of understanding faith.

Favorite meal?

I enjoy a good cheeseburger and French fries...such a guilty pleasure... but I'm willing to admit it!

Advice you would give to a new Seminarian?

If one cannot achieve a healthy balance between academics, prayer and self-care, the path can become difficult. Striving to keep a balance helps to keep one's self in check, which is a good thing while in seminary formation.

Class Offered: Ecumenism: Orientale Lumen

This summer, Byzantine Online is partnering with the Orientale Lumen Foundation to offer an online, one credit class called DT 105:

Ecumenism: Orientale Lumen. This online course will offer videotaped presentations of keynote speakers and discussions from the 2018 Orientale Lumen Conference (June 18-21, Washington, DC), an annual conference dedicated to Catholic-Orthodox dialogue in hopes, "that they all may be one" (John 17:21). This year's conference is entitled, "Sister Churches: Fact or Fiction among the Laity."



Orientale
Lumen
Foundation

Students enrolled in this class for credit will virtually experience the conference speakers as well as roundtable and panel discussions and prepare a paper in conjunction with faculty-led readings and discussions which focus on ecumenism. Students will learn the following:

- Engagement with current state of Catholic-Orthodox dialogue
- Familiarity with timely ecumenical topics
- Modes of dialogue with significant theological issues from Catholic and Orthodox perspectives

The cost to take this online course for credit is \$410 or audit for \$310. In addition, anyone who attended the actual conference in person but wanted to take the course and receive credit would pay half price, or \$205. Registration will open in May; the course will launch Monday, July 2, 2018.

For more information about the Orientale Lumen conference and the list of invited speakers, visit <http://olfoundation.net/conferences/>. For more information about the online class, contact Byzantine Online at online@bcs.edu or call 412-321-8383, ext. 23.

MATCHING GIFTS

Do you or your spouse work for (or retired from) a company with a matching gift program? If so, your gift can, in most cases, be DOUBLED. Maybe tripled! Please check with the company's Human Resources Department and see if this benefit is available.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive the *Joyful Light* newsletter electronically, please contact the Seminary Development Office by calling 412-321-8383 x36 or email development@bcs.edu.

Bishop Zubik and St. Paul Seminary visit Byzantine Catholic Seminary.

The February 2nd Feast of the Meeting of our Lord with Simeon provided the perfect setting for the Most Reverend David A. Zubik, DD, MSED, Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, along with the staff and seminarians of St. Paul Seminary to visit the community of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.

The Divine Liturgy of the Feast was celebrated at 5:00 pm in the Seminary chapel by the Seminary rector, Fr. Robert Pipta, and concelebrating priests. Bishop Zubik attended in choir and, along with the St. Paul Seminary community, was attentive to, engaged in, and prayerfully present for the Byzantine-tradition Eucharist.



A simple yet delicious meal followed the Divine Liturgy in the Seminary refectory. Fr. Tom Sparacino, rector of St. Paul Seminary, along with his staff and students were helping the Church breathe with both its eastern and western lungs as Seminary formational and mentoring experiences were shared, compared, confirmed, and affirmed. A tour of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary followed dinner.

This encounter was part of the annual practice of mutual visitations between St. Paul and Ss. Cyril and Methodius seminaries.

You're invited to the

Eighteenth Annual

Saints Cyril & Methodius Lecture

sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius

Hosted by St. John Byzantine Catholic Cathedral

Our Guest Speaker: Archbishop Alexander (Golitzin)

TOPIC: *The Place of the Presence of God:*

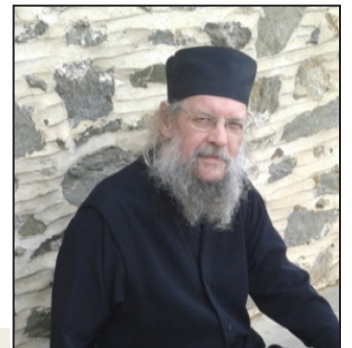
Aphrahat of Persia's Portrait of the Christian Holy Man

Aphrahat the Persian sage is the earliest writer in Christian Syriac of whom we have proof. Writing in the 330s and 340s in the vicinity of modern Iraqi Kurdistan, his works are notable for their relative freedom from the lexicon and thought world of Greek philosophy; neither does he appear to know any prominent, pre-Nicene Church Fathers. Although unacquainted with Greek and Latin patristic literature, Aphrahat clearly possessed considerable authority in the Church of the Persian Empire. Archbishop Alexander will examine the portrait Aphrahat paints of the holy man in his fourteenth Demonstration. The idea of transformation, of becoming divine, is clearly central to Aphrahat. While the language of the Greek Fathers' theosis is absent, he phrases it in an idiom much more akin to that of Second Temple apocalypses, and of the later Jewish Ezekial chariot-throne mystics of whom he was a likely contemporary.

For more information on Archbishop Alexander, please visit our website.

When Wednesday, May 16, 2018, Lecture at 7:00 pm, Reception to follow
Where St. John Cathedral Center, 210 Greentree Road, Munhall, PA 15120

This event is FREE but due to space limitations registration is required by April 30th. Please register on-line at www.bcs.edu, call 412-321-8383 or email office@bcs.edu.





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DEADLINE: JULY 20, 2018**

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The distance education arm of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary offers a range of credit courses on a rotating basis each Fall, Spring and Summer.

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- Courses mirror residential courses in content and engagement.
- Theologically diverse faculty and students are engaged in Eastern Christian scholarship.

For more information, visit online.bcs.edu.

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Byzantine Catholic Seminary
of Ss. Cyril and Methodius
3605 Perrysville Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
Phone (412) 321-8383
Fax (412) 321-9936

Rector

Very Rev. Robert M. Pipta

Writer/Development Consultant

David H. Dix

Copy Editor

Jane E. Ondovcsik

E-mail office@bcs.edu

Website www.bcs.edu



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The Byzantine Catholic Seminary operates as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Pennsylvania, and is governed by a Board of Directors under the leadership of the Metropolitan of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.



The Seminary wishes all of its friends and benefactors a most blessed celebration of our Lord's resurrection. Christ is risen!