



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

# JOYFUL

# LIGHT

Fall 2018

*Joyful Light* is a semi-annual publication of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius  
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## Pastoral Pillar of Formation - Revisions

By Sr. Marion Dobos, O.S.B.,  
Director of Pastoral Formation

The Program for Priestly Formation (P.P.F.) promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is specific regarding the broad exposure to pastoral service a seminarian should receive during his time in the seminary.

In a recent article in *Origins*, a publication by Catholic News Service (April 2018), Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S. said, "Pope Francis wants priests not to be managers or mere functionaries of the sacred but rather to be priests with inclusive and compassionate hearts who show forth the tenderness of God."

In keeping with these directives the Pastoral Program for seminarians at Ss. Cyril and Methodius has been recently revised to include a more extensive participation in the active ministry of the Church.

In addition to participating in parochial ministry the seminarian will be required to get experience in Cultural Sensitivity, Ecumenism, Respect for Life, and Ministry to the Poor. These experiences will provide a gradual and integrated approach to Pastoral Ministry, producing men who are willing to be disciples and missionaries in a Church that faces great cultural, spiritual, and educational challenges.

## "Breathing with Both Lungs"

By Seminarians of St. Paul Roman Catholic College Seminary



At the heart of priestly formation is coming to a greater knowledge and experience of the Catholic Church. To be a great priest, one must first be a great Catholic. Crucial to being a great Catholic is what Saint Pope John Paul II called "breathing with both lungs". By this he means breathing in the air of the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Western Catholic Church. In order to do this, we the seminarians from St. Paul Seminary, the Roman Catholic College Seminary for

the Diocese of Pittsburgh, came to visit Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary on September 28. We participated in the Liturgy of Daily Vespers in the Melkite tradition of the Byzantine Rite, shared a meal with the seminarians and their formators, and were given a tour of the seminary.

During vespers, we experienced the beauty of Eastern liturgy, found in the chanting, the iconography, and the various rituals that accompany it. Over dinner, we discussed the differences between our rites, and more importantly, what we hold in common. Many of our brothers who were unfamiliar with the Eastern Churches were very surprised to find that married men can be ordained! However, in spite of many differences found between the East and the West, we found that seminary life is rather similar between our two houses of formation. We are all men seeking to discern the Lord's will, and to be formed into priests of Jesus Christ. We look forward to the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul (Jan. 25), when the Cyril and Methodius seminarians come to visit us here at St. Paul Seminary to get a taste of the Church of the West!

## Seminarians Begin 2018 Academic Year

Metropolitan William Skurla, President of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, welcomed staff, faculty, and students to a new year of mentoring, teaching, and learning at a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the Seminary Chapel on Monday, August 27, 2018.

This opening liturgy followed a week of orientation which included focus on the four pillars of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral), a building clean-up day, and an in-house retreat. In his homily, the Metropolitan encouraged the community to remain both humble as well as faithful as they seek to rise above the failures of the Church.



## Rector's Message

*Glory to Jesus Christ!*

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary is currently engaged in the daunting process of “self-study.” This journey includes assessing the effectiveness of every aspect of our program, gathering data, making recommendations, and giving commendations. It is the third to be conducted here so that the Seminary may retain its accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools (A.T.S.).

We welcome the benefits of the self-study which does not limit itself to the academic courses, but extends to the four pillars of Seminary Formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. A.T.S. standards also venture beyond the academic into these other realms, and it is constantly found that Catholic seminaries are well ahead of par when it comes to their capacity to form seminarians in all four areas.

Surely you share my concern in learning more of the sinful, illegal, and sometimes gravely malicious acts of some Church leaders. Such failures and sickness in the Church make a process of Seminary self-study all the more welcome. Human and spiritual formation pertain most directly to what is needed to help future Church leaders rise above the faults of some of their predecessors. Our commitment to protecting the young and vulnerable sees that such disordered behavior is not only limited to Church leaders, but to almost any organization that mentors youth.

For now over four decades, United States Catholic seminaries have expanded their formation to give needed attention to human (or personal) formation and to have a healthy balance of both personal and communal aspects of spiritual formation, while continuing to test a student's capacities in academic and pastoral areas. Seminary staffs and faculties typically include not only priests, but male and female professors, psychologists, and individual spiritual directors and formational advisors.

I'm eager for each of you to know that the Byzantine Catholic Seminary has embraced an ongoing process of self-assessment that it may produce the most mature, stable, holy, and honorable future Church leaders.



*Father Robert M. Pipta*

## Under the Dome

**Sandra Collins, Ph.D.**, Director of Information Services and Professor of Scripture, presented her paper, “The Pleasure of Sarah,” at the Eastern Great Lakes meeting of the American Academy of Religion meeting in Akron, Ohio in March. In addition, she chaired the Old Testament Section presentations. In April, she was awarded the 2018 Distinguished Alumna (Academic) by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. As part of the award, she presented a talk entitled, “Continuing to Gather for Faith, Family and Fellowship.” In June, she was an invited speaker at the Mercersburg Society Annual meeting in Lancaster, PA. Her talk was titled, “A Wandering Aramean: the Eastern Christian in Context.” She continues to serve as a review columnist for *Library Journal* as well as *Women in Judaism*.

**Fr. David A. Fisher**, Adjunct Professor of Spiritual Theology, has become a preacher for *Cross Catholic Outreach* which raises funds for the “poorest of the poor”, providing food, housing, clean water, schools, and medicine in the poorest dioceses and missions in all parts of the world. Founded eighteen years ago and a member of the Pontifical Council for Unum, over 95 percent of all donations go directly to the poor.

**Matthew Miner, Ph.L., Ph.D.**, Professor of Philosophy and Moral Theology, had two papers published in the journal *Nova et Vetera*, entitled: “Revisiting Maritain's Moral Philosophy Adequately Considered” and “Intelligence and Morality: Translation and Comments on an Article by Fr. Ambroise Gardeil, O.P.”; at the American Maritain Association, presented two papers, one was entitled “Getting the Middle Term Right: Cenoscopia, Ideoscopia, and the Formal Objects of Sciences” and the other, “Analogy and Methodology: Maritain and an Example of the Proper Method of Metaphysics”; and, at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, presented a paper entitled, “Saint Thomas and the Thomists on Logic as a Science.”

**Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D.**, Professor of Liturgical Studies and Languages, gave a paper at the 2018 international Yale Liturgy Conference, from June 18-21 at Yale University, New Haven CT. The conference title was: *Full of Your Glory: Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation*. His paper was entitled: “God in the Midst of Gods: A Theocentric *Κοσμοθεωρία* in the Basilian Anaphora and the Prothesis Rite.”

**Fr. Robert Pipta**, Seminary Rector, represented the Seminary's rebranded *School of Diaconate Studies* at the Eastern Catholic Deacon Congress in Scranton, Pennsylvania on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. Great interest in the Seminary's program emerged in the course of his visit from deacons, deacon candidates, and those discerning diaconate.

## 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual St. Nicholas Charity Dinner

**Sunday, December 9: Moleben at 3 PM  
Dinner at 5 PM**

St. John the Baptist Cathedral Center, Munhall, PA  
Information available on the Events page of the GCU  
Website-[www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com) or call 1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.  
Benefits the Byzantine Catholic Seminary

# Clinical Pastoral Education

By Reader Paul Varchola West

As part of Priestly Formation at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, seminarians are required to participate in what is known as Clinical Pastoral Education, commonly referred to as C.P.E. This program allows individuals to attain skills in hospital chaplaincy through participation in an intensive clinical (professional) internship.

This summer, along with fellow Eparchy of Passaic seminarian Reader Timothy Farris, I was fortunate enough to have been a participant in the C.P.E. program at U.P.M.C. Shadyside (Pittsburgh) Hospital.



C.P.E., a clinical internship, is foundational to my priestly formation. A great deal of what is learned pertains to the nuts and bolts of day to day hospital workings. One is afforded the opportunity to work along with the medical staff, learning a great deal about medical treatments but also about bedside manners and how that, at times, is just as helpful as the treatments themselves. There were times when medical staff would ask me how a patient is doing or ask if I had any insight as to what could help this patient either spiritually or emotionally. Chaplaincy is a truly valued resource for both spiritual and medical needs. My C.P.E. experience allowed me to see an aspect of the medical world that one does not often get to witness. Additionally, one attends various staff meetings, participates in clinical case studies, learns about patient charting and how to read medical charts including basic privacy laws and professional boundaries as well as simply how to navigate a hospital and to become familiar in an acute care setting.

Most significantly, C.P.E. is an ecumenical experience where one encounters people from every imaginable faith background - from Catholics to Protestants, Jews and Muslims, atheists to the fallen away and unchurched - as well as age, race, and socioeconomic status. In the pastoral visit, one must exemplify both Scripture and the teachings of Jesus Christ through actions, compassion, understanding, love, and forgiveness. The intern becomes a hand to hold, a listening ear, a fellow with whom to laugh, a shoulder on which to cry and, most importantly, becomes someone to simply be present for a person who is in need of nothing more than a friend to sit with them in silence. One also learns that, at times, the pastoral visit is more for the family than for the patient.

The program at U.P.M.C. Shadyside was an intense, 400 hour program that lasted ten weeks and I am grateful for every second of my summer that was spent in that hospital. In addition to gaining professional experience, I was able to meet many great patients, many of whom I will never forget, and gained a few new friends who were my co-interns. Overall, I am truly blessed to have been a participant in a C.P.E. program and find it essential to both my Seminary experience and my future ministry.

Editor's note: Both C.P.E. interns, Paul Varchola West and Timothy Farris were ordained readers by their bishop, His Grace, Kurt Burnette of Passaic, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August. (see photo above)

# Subdiaconate Ordination in Ohio

By Sbdcn. Nathan (Symeon) Adams

On Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> 2018, I was tonsured and ordained to the minor orders of Candle Bearer, Cantor, Reader, and Subdeacon at the Shrine of our Lady of Mariapoch, located in Burton, Ohio. I was ordained by Archbishop Cyril Vasil, Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

Two remarks just prior to the ordinations most stuck with me. Firstly, one seminarian reminded me that while it is true that the works of the minor-orders are already practiced by un-ordained altar servers, the subdeacon is ordained, so graced by the Holy Spirit, so as to accomplish this office. Secondly, another seminarian pointed out that all of the ordinations move the ordained progressively closer to the holy altar, that is, towards the mysteries.

The progress towards the holy altar requires a more serious calling to purity. I was exhorted, "As you read the Holy Scriptures, strive for virtue day by day. Never allow anything to disgrace the order you have received as you await a higher order. Live peacefully in righteousness and holiness...." If the



exhortation to be righteous and holy is encouraging, the affirmation of the sub-deacon is invariably humbling: "You have appointed your servant *Nathan* worthy to minister to your holy Church." As I stood before the icon of Christ, my eyes covered by a servant's towel, I could only peer into the eyes of Christ in his holy icon. Face to face, like a horse with blinders, there was nowhere else to turn. I was called to serve at His holy altar. I simply said to the Lord, "I know myself to be unworthy, but I do accept the responsibility You have given me." Please pray for me as I progress towards the Lord's Holy Mysteries in my final year of seminary.

## 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](mailto:development@bcs.edu).

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## Request a Speaker

One of our greatest assets is our diverse and internationally known faculty who are subject experts in their particular fields. As a part of our institutional vision, our instructors also seek to fulfill our vision to “enrich the life of the Church and to engage the world in theological reflection, dialogue and witness.”

Many of our faculty are available to speak to local schools, churches, clubs and community organizations. For ideas on prospective speakers, we invite you to explore the Faculty Directory and its list of faculty ([www.bcs.edu/faculty-directory](http://www.bcs.edu/faculty-directory)). *Note: not all faculty are local to the Pittsburgh area; if not, it is noted on their Request a Speaker page.*

To request a faculty speaker, please contact them via the “Request as Speaker” tab on their page in the Faculty Directory. They will respond and let you know their availability.

