Ever the Same, Ever New

Even though the role of our Seminary is to anchor us in the faith and immerse us in the tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church, that doesn’t mean that things don’t change.

For the past year, we have been actively implementing recommendations made by the Association of Theological Schools that include developing a comprehensive strategic plan for the Seminary, expanding and diversifying our faculty and Board of Directors, improving our teaching technology and reaching out to a broader base of students.

This year, we have eight seminarians: three from the Eparchy of Van Nuys, two from the Eparchy of Parma, one from the Melkite Eparchy of Newton and one from the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. We also have a seminarian from the Romanian Eparchy of Canton who has joined us for a special year of formation. The School of Theology is made up of 16 students in either the Master of Arts in Theology (M.A.T.) or as non-matriculating students.

Four new adjunct faculty joined us this fall to teach courses in moral theology, Scripture, dogma and homiletics as well as basic theological skills and biblical language. They come from a number of ecclesial backgrounds, are well qualified with degrees from an array of prestigious universities and bring a rich diversity into our Seminary.

Under the leadership of Fr. Tom Wesdock, we are actively pursuing our alumni in the hope of making them ambassadors for the Seminary. Our alumni, in partnership with the Koch Foundation, were the driving forces in generating the funds to complete our Smart Classroom that will enhance our teaching methodologies and form the foundation of our future distance learning program.

In order to assure that we have the resources necessary to implement other elements of our strategic plan, we have hired a development consultant who is working to identify new ways to generate the resources that will enable us to pursue our mission of faith.

While methods may change, the need for our Seminary remains constant. As the only free-standing Byzantine Catholic Seminary in North America, we must find ways to enhance our programs and facility to assure that we can continue educating the future shepherds and leaders of our Church.
Rector's Message

Since 1950, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius has been forming candidates for the priesthood and diaconate; in addition, we now have a number of students seeking an advanced degree in our School of Theology. We’ve watched as our graduates became our gifts to you, preaching the Good News and serving wherever called. We, like you, have trusted in God’s providence to fulfill our mission and we have never been disappointed. You have helped us in the past with your prayers and gifts, but now we need to ask more of you.” For the past decade, we’ve experienced annual operating deficits as high as $200,000. By the grace of God, many friends have been motivated by their appreciation for our work to include the Seminary in their wills and estate plans. As a result of their planning and generosity, bequests and other forms of estate gifts have enabled us to offset all of those shortfalls.

In light of these ongoing economic challenges, we are considering embarking on a capital campaign to address needed repairs and improvements to our physical plant, as well as to assure future income to address anticipated budget shortfalls. I share this news with you now because your help will be desired if we are to have the resources to provide laborers for the vineyard of Christ.

As we embark on this challenging journey, I ask you to keep us in your prayers, and to be as generous as possible when we call on you. I thank you in anticipation of your gifts to support our effort, but especially for being that gift of an icon of Christ to all you encounter.

Father John G. Petro, Rector

Greek Catholic Union Teams Up with the Seminary

The Greek Catholic Union and the Byzantine Catholic Seminary have teamed up to offer charitable gift annuities for persons who want to support the Seminary without losing the income that gift could otherwise have generated for them.

A charitable gift annuity is a simple contract where the Seminary makes fixed payments to you (and an optional second beneficiary) for life in return for your contribution of $10,000 or more. The gift annuity offers you the assurance of payments that will not fluctuate, and that are secured by all the assets of the Seminary and the GCU. When the last income recipient dies, any remaining funds in the annuity account are directed to the Seminary as a gift.

Added benefits to the donor include a federal charitable income-tax deduction and income that is partially tax-free. There are also ways to use your gift annuity as a retirement savings plan while helping the Seminary.

To learn how you can support the Seminary with a gift that also provides income for you, please contact the Development Office at bcs.development@verizon.net or 412-321-8383, ext. 28.

Giving Back

On his 55th birthday, Fr. Joseph Bertha, pastor of St. Nicholas Churches in White Plains and Yonkers, NY, decided to give the Seminary a gift. In a letter directed to Fr. John G. Petro, Fr. Joseph wrote: “I deeply appreciate the priestly formation the Seminary gave to me and hope and pray to help in some way for this to continue.”

As a token for his appreciation for his priestly formation, Fr. Joseph made the Seminary the beneficiary of his $100,000 GCU life insurance policy.

“I was overwhelmed by Fr. Joseph’s generosity,” said Fr. John, “but as significant a commitment this is, we certainly don’t want to receive this gift for many, many years.”

The story of Fr. Joseph’s generosity will be featured in the December issue of the GCU Magazine and on the Seminary web site at www.byzcathsem.org.
Now You Can Give by Credit Card

Beginning December 1, donors will be able to make web-based gifts to the Seminary using their Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit card.

The Seminary takes this opportunity to thank TowerCare Technologies for underwriting the monthly fees associated with providing this service.

Credit card gifts can be made from our website at www.byzcathsem.org or by contacting Sr. Margaret Ann Andrako at 412-321-8383.

Under the Dome

- **Jack Miller** has joined the Seminary as its Development Consultant. His role is to oversee annual and memorial appeals, assess the feasibility of a capital campaign and establish an integrated planned giving program that will offer gifts that can also provide our donors with income and tax benefits.

  Jack is a certified fund-raising executive and has been a development professional for more than 30 years. He is principal of Miller Consulting (www.jackoutside-the-box.net) and a member of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation staff. Jack and his wife Donna of 34 years have three adult children and one grandchild.


- **Fr Stelyios Mukuris** attended the annual Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA) meeting, held at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA, from June 4-6, 2009, where he presented a paper entitled, “Reflecting on September 11-like Tragedies: An Eastern Christian Liturgical Perspective.” Present also at the meeting was the Very Rev. Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ, Professor Emeritus at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, who also delivered the annual Florovsky Lecture. **Fr. Stelyios Mukuris** also authored an introductory chapter on the basic doctrine of the Christian Faith, which will appear in the commemorative textbook, “Christianity: 2000 Years,” to be published by Millennium House Publishers of Australia this fall of 2009. The book will enjoy worldwide circulation in bookstores and university libraries.
Recognizing Commitments

The Seminary has amended its recognition policy to include persons who make deferred or planned gift commitments in a new *Many Blessed Years* society. Previously, only persons who made an immediate outright gift of at least $1,000 could designate a deceased loved-one for inclusion in our *Book of Remembrance* or be enrolled themselves after their death.

Now, anyone notifying us that they have made the Seminary a beneficiary of their will, living trust, insurance policy or charitable trust, or establishes a gift annuity, retained life estate or Seminary-related planned gift, will be remembered monthly at a Divine Liturgy for our benefactors.

More information on the *Book of Remembrance* and *Many Blessed Years* can be found at [www.byzcatshem.org](http://www.byzcatshem.org) or by contacting Jack Miller at 412-321-8383, ext. 28 or [bcs.development@verizon.net](mailto:bcs.development@verizon.net).

Alumni Chapters Being Formed

If you have an interest in helping to organize a Seminary Alumni Chapter in your community or region, please contact Fr. Tom Wesdock at [frthomas2000@atlanticbb.net](mailto:frthomas2000@atlanticbb.net) or 724-438-6027.

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.