Four Graduate Degrees Conferred at Seminary

Left to right: Benjamin Crow, Deacon Brian Escobedo, Deacon Michael Mandelas, Steven Galuschik

Following the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Metropolitan Archbishop William, Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, conferred diplomas upon four graduates of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary on May 9, 2013. Board members, faculty, staff, family and friends were in attendance as diplomas were conferred upon Benjamin Crow, Steven Galuschik, Deacon Brian Escobedo and Deacon Michael Mandelas.

Benjamin Crow, a seminarian from St. John Chrysostom in Seattle, WA, completed four years of theology and received his Master of Divinity degree (MDiv). He summed up his four years of study and formation at the Seminary by saying: “The years of Seminary study have been a difficult and challenging process. It is a process that has taught me many facts and skills... I see the value in my experience in how it has pushed me to grow and develop both in my relationship with Jesus Christ and in my personal development.”

During his time at the Seminary, Ben particularly enjoyed his study of Liturgy, and he appreciated the insights he learned from classes on the Divine Liturgy, Divine Praises and the Mysteries (Sacraments). “Studying these topics that have immediate reinforcement in the daily liturgical services at the Seminary have made them stand out,” he said.

Ben’s summer assignments in parishes helped him to see the practical side of ministry and the application of the theological studies. Working with parishioners and patients at the hospital helped Ben to refocus on what was important in his studies and “the purpose for which I came to Seminary.” Summing up how seminary learning will help in ministry, Ben replied, “If a vocation is a seed, then Seminary is where it has germinated. Seminary has gotten me started, but mainly it has shown me the directions I will need to continue to learn and grow in the future.”

Steven Galuschik also received a Master of Divinity degree. For most of his life, Steven’s home parish was St. Andrew Church in Mentor-on-the-Lake, OH. Just prior to coming to Seminary, Steven joined St. Nicholas Church in Orlando, FL.

Steven summarized his four years of study by saying, “I do not think a brief summary would suffice. I began the Seminary studies as a young boy and I exited as a young man. The spiritual maturity of a minister is important for a person who is going into ministry.” Steven likewise enjoyed the Liturgical Theology areas of study, for he considers that it provides a way for the people of God to have an encounter with Him.

“My time at the Seminary was invaluable. I have learned so much in all of my classes. All that I have learned in the Seminary will help me in my ministry in one way or another,” Steven said. Steven feels that the classes at the Seminary will not only help the people to whom he ministers grow closer to God, but it has also helped him in his own relationship with God.

Deacon Brian Escobedo received a Master of Arts in Theology degree (MAT). His thesis was entitled, “A Pastor’s Guide to Commonly Asked Questions of his Parish Faithful.” Deacon Brian comes from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Albuquerque, NM. In answer to why he decided to pursue an MAT degree, Deacon Brian replied, “I desired to help my bishop with evangelization in the West, and in order to assist him, I

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It's been a busy six months here at the seminary – from replacing roofs, to graduating half the students. Out of eight resident students this year, four graduated with Master of Arts in Theology or Master of Divinity. With half of our resident students leaving, I was a little discouraged about next year, but then more than four applicants are coming to replace them! Imagine that. We will have a larger population in 2013-2014.

Our annual SS Cyril and Methodius lecture this year was a scholarly presentation by Msgr. John Radano. He teaches at Seton Hall in New Jersey, and worked for many years at the Vatican in the same office as our own Fr. George Gallaro.

We look forward to expanding our library to the third floor, now that the roof has been replaced. It will almost double the space in our library. And we “make haste slowly” to make the building more handicap accessible.

Fr. Kurt Burnette

Msgr. John Radano Shares His Experience of Catholic and Orthodox Dialogue

Monsignor John A. Radano, Adjunct Professor, School of Theology at Seton Hall University, delivered the 13th annual SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture, on Monday, May 6, 2013, at the Kearns Spirituality Center, in Allison Park, PA.

Msgr. Radano opened his talk with a warm recollection of his first visit to the Seminary, on the occasion of the National Liturgical Conference held in Pittsburgh in 1960, where he first encountered some of the anxiety and tensions which existed between Eastern and Western forms of Christianity. In light of that, his talk, The Continuing Reconciliation Between Orthodox & Catholics: A Key to Ecumenical Progress in the 21st Century, reflected upon the considerable historical witness to Orthodox-Catholic efforts at dialogue and reconciliation. His thoughts were given in light of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), which was the context in which this reconciliation began.

Beginning long before Vatican II, with the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910, Msgr. Radano traced the magisterium’s efforts at rapprochement with Eastern Christianity. While recognizing that difficult issues still persist, the focus in more recent discussions has concentrated on points of agreement rather than practices that divide the two Christian bodies. He pointed in particular to a Eucharistic liturgy at St Peter’s Basilica in 1987 where Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios made common confession of the faith by reciting the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed together in the original Greek. This unifying act was repeated by this same pope and Patriarch Bartholomew in 1995 and 2004 when Bartholomew I visited Rome, and then by Bartholomew I and Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 in Rome. Such public moments attest to the powerful impetus within the Western Church to journey towards unity with her Eastern brothers and sisters.

The event concluded with an array of insightful comments and motivating questions, posed to Msgr. Radano by several of the attendees in the audience, clergy and laity alike. Also present were Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh and Bishop John Kudrick, Bishop of Parma Eparchy. The audience included faculty, staff, and seminarians from the Byzantine Catholic Seminary. Several guests from the greater Pittsburgh area, as well as friends and supporters of the academic community, Catholic and Orthodox, likewise attended. Following the lecture, the guests enjoyed refreshments and fellowship with one another.

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.
Call for Byzantine Seminary Theses and Dissertations!

As one of the special projects for the new year, the Library has made it a priority to catalog all the existing theses and dissertations in their collection. These items, many of them quite unique, represent a kind of literature that tends to fall off the radar except for the most diligent researchers. However, with the addition of automated catalogs, it’s now easier for users to see what the library has in both depth as well as breadth of data and research, including these sometimes esoteric pieces of research and analysis. And, more importantly, it helps showcase the wide array of projects and research interests represented by our recent MDiv and MAT graduates.

In addition to the materials already on site, the Library is interested in hearing from any graduates of the program who would like to have their theses or dissertations included in our collection. This includes research that was done here (MAT or MDiv projects) as well as theses or dissertations done after completing their work at the Seminary. We welcome hard copy as well as electronic (Microsoft Word or PDF) documents.

Please feel free to contact the librarian, Sandra Collins, at scollins@bcs.edu if you have any questions.

Fr. David M. Petras Retires

After a total of almost 30 years with the Seminary, Fr. David Petras is retiring. He was a resident at the Seminary from 1978-1980 and then an Adjunct Professor from 1980-1987. After a time away from the Seminary, he returned in 1995 and has been with us since then as the Director of Spiritual Formation and Director and Professor of Liturgy.

The highlight of Fr. David’s time at the Seminary, he said recently, has been the opportunity to teach and impart knowledge and wisdom on candidates for priestly ministry. Fr. David has spent countless hours with these candidates as they engage in the Seminary’s integrated program of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Fr. David has played a critical role in the paths of many priests.

As he retires, he will move to Phoenix, AZ where he will continue reading and writing and working on the Intereparchial Liturgy Commission…and perhaps watch the Cleveland Indians in spring training. We thank Fr. David for being such an integral part of Seminary life for over 30 years. He has been a student, professor, director, author and friend!

Under the Dome

Dr. Sandra Collins spoke at Mt. St. Macrina in December 2012 as part of their Pre-Christmas Days of reflection and prayer. In May, she participated in the Adult Forum at Calvary Episcopal Church in Shadyside; her talk was entitled, “Mrs. Zebedee.” Her first book, Weapons Upon Her Body: the Female Hero in the Hebrew Bible was published by Cambridge Scholars Press in January.


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needed to be better grounded and educated in our faith." He found
his two years of study at the Seminary to be “challenging but fruitful”
and especially enjoyed his study of Spirituality and Church History.

Deacon Brian would encourage any man who is discerning
a vocation to attend the Seminary. He said that whether or not
a candidate decides to continue on, he will be a better and more
educated man of faith for his time here. “This will provide great
fruit for you and those around you the rest of your life.” Deacon
Brian feels that he is now well grounded in the various aspects of
pastoral ministry and will be able to utilize it in Evangelization
and further growth of the Church.

Deacon Michael Mandelas also received a Master of Arts in Theology
degree. His home parish is St. John Chrysostom in Seattle, WA.
Deacon Michael has always been a firm believer in continuing
one's education throughout life. As he was looking into graduate
schools of theology, he decided that the Seminary would best suit his
ministry desire because he wanted to be immersed in the ethos of a
learning experience that addressed the richness of our Church.

During his time at the Seminary, he has been able to delve into
the theological, spiritual and liturgical treasures where the focus
is from the Byzantine perspective. Deacon Michael now has a
greater appreciation of Sacred Scripture and states “that if read with
attention, great wonders will be opened up as well as challenging
questions.” He said that he has come to see that Canon Law is
primarily a ministry concerned with the welfare of the soul. The
area of greatest surprise to Deacon Michael was to see the great value
of understanding the fundamentals of “thought” by studying the
great classics of the philosophers and Fathers of the Church. He
also has admired the way they are intertwined within our theological
developments. This intertwining led him to write a thesis entitled,
“Forgiveness: The Innate Need of Man.”

Reflecting on his time at the Seminary, Deacon Michael said that he
appreciated the educational environment and the way the learning
continued long after class was over. He enjoyed the discussions
as they continued in the hallways and refectory during meals.
“Although it required me to leave my wife and children for two
years, the reward of new insights and understanding was well worth
it,” he remarked.

Now that he has graduated, Deacon Michael plans to share through
his preaching and catechetical work what he has learned and
experienced with the hope that it might inspire others to learn more
about God. He said that his learning experience has made him thirst
even more for his God.

Benjamin Crow, Deacon Brian Escobedo and Deacon Michael
Mandelas all graduated magna cum laude.

Matching Gifts
If you or your spouse 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 benefit.