C.P.R. Training for the Seminarians

During Orientation 2017, all Seminarians were invited to take a Heartsaver C.P.R. class. Lead by our Instructor, Sue Soltis, participants learned proper techniques through a video-based, instructor-led course that taught Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, and how to relieve choking in individuals. This course taught skills with the American Heart Association research-proven practice-while-watching technique, which allows instructors to observe the students, provide feedback, and guide the students’ learning of skills. Our community is grateful for the time spent to learn this life saving technique.

Celebrating a New Academic Year at the Seminary

A Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by Archbishop William Skurla marked the start of a new year at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, PA. on Aug. 29. Archbishop William delivered advice to the seminarians in attendance at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy which celebrated the new academic year for seminary students: “Use each and every day you have here at the Seminary because they go very quickly.” This year’s Seminary student body includes 15 seminarians and four Master of Arts in Theology (M.A.T.) students.

Guest Lecturer and Technology

Dr. Dwight W. (“Rip”) Van Winkle, professor of Old Testament, Seattle Pacific University, and specialist in the prophet Isaiah, was the guest lecturer for Historical Books and Prophets on September 28, 2017 via Skype. Dr. Van Winkle has made his career writing and teaching Old Testament and the Prophets. He holds a doctoral degree from Cambridge University and spent most of his teaching career at Seattle Pacific University. During this virtual lecture, he offered an in-depth and thoroughly scholarly seminar on reception history and the Old Testament. He delivered this virtual lecture where he had the ability to see the classroom so he was able to take questions from our students and they had the ability to see him as well. Dr. Van Winkle is also the father of current M.A.T. student Josh Van Winkle.
Rector’s Message

I can never win!
For the civilized world accepts as unforgivable sin
Any talking out loud with any librarian.

If only the most serious of our sins were raising the voice in the library – apparently a grave concern in a musicalized and fictionalized view of Iowa life in the early 20th Century. Ingeniously choreographed in the 1961 movie version of Meredith Willson’s “The Music Man,” this “professor” who calls himself Hill, while trying to woo and disorient Marian the Librarian and keeping neither appropriate library volume nor behavior, escapes her wrath descending to safety by way of a book lift.

How times have changed! Even the two floors that now contain the sacred texts, theological tomes, and rare printed treasures that constitute the Library of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary have seen significant changes over the past 65 years. The support from the benefactors of our 2014 Library Appeal has allowed for expansion to the third floor, climate and humidity controls, new computers, an online access library and, indeed, a book lift. The Seminary is thankful to God for your generosity.

Come visit our library! It remains one of the favorite stops of those touring our campus. Voices now rise above a whisper, the number of volumes has multiplied exponentially through online resources, and bar-coded books are checked out by scanner rather than ink stamp. But sorry, Harold Hill, while a relaxed environment there’s no breaking out in song, only books ride the new motorized book lift, and the lovely ladies who serve in our library are happily married.

Father Robert M. Pipta

Under the Dome

Sandra Collins, Ph.D., Director of Information Services and Core Professor (Scripture) had her article, “Collection Development: The Voices of Islam,” published in the April 1, 2017 edition of Library Journal. In addition, she appears as a review columnist six times a year in the same publication. A collection of her reviews of gender and Judaism films (I Sleep But My Heart is Awake; Loving Sophia; Hothouse: A Family in Disengagement; To See If I’m Smiling) appeared in the journal Women in Judaism 13:2, 2017. She served as conference coordinator for Byzantine Perspectives on the Theotokos, held at the Seminary in May of this year. She taught two sections (Introduction to the Old Testament 1 and Pauline Literature) at this summer’s Deacon Formation Program and she represented the Seminary at the Fall Executive Committee Meeting of the Washington Theological Consortium.

Fr. David Petras, Adjunct Professor of Liturgy, preached the homily at the Ecumenical Day of Prayer in Anaheim, CA, sponsored by the Southern California Catholic-Orthodox Clergy Association on May 19, 2017. On May 30-June 1, he attended the regular meeting of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, in Detroit, MI. He celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, by Vespers of Pentecost Sunday and dinner at St. John’s Cathedral, Parma, Ohio, June 4, and by a Divine Liturgy and parish dinner at St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Phoenix, AZ, August 27, the actual date of his ordination. He wrote the 2018 Typicon and re-wrote a new edition of the Common Typicon, published by the Byzantine Seminary Press.

Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, Ph.D., Professor of Liturgical Studies and Languages, presented a paper at the Mariology Conference hosted by the Seminary on May 15-16, 2017. His topic was: “Holiness and Wholeness: How Mary Fulfills the Sacred Image in the Divine Liturgy.” Also, he was asked to write a book review of Nicholas Denysenko’s monograph: Theology and Form: Contemporary Orthodox Architecture in America, to be published in a 2018 volume of Worship journal.

Matthew Minerd, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor, has an upcoming translation to be published: The Sense of Mystery: Clarity and Obscurity in the Intellectual Life by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

Fr. Don Bolls, Professor, taught a two week Homiletics course during summer 2017 for the Archepiscopal Deacon’s Program. He lead the “Men’s Nite Out” Retreat at Mt. Macrina on October 24, 2017, entitled Musings on Mark.

Recent Student and Alumni Ordinations

Tonsure - Reader (on July 9, 2017 at Carpathian Village, Cresco, PA):
- Richard Ballard
- Anthony Blair
- John Harden
- Robert Knapp
- Ryan Liebhaber
- John Reed
- Richard Terza

Priesthood (on October 8, 2017 at St. John’s Cathedral, Parma, OH):
- John Russell
Fr. Musil Shihadeh, Class of 2012, Currently living in Hollywood, CA and serving at St. Anne Melkite Co-Cathedral.

Describe when you first perceived a calling to the priesthood:
I first perceived a calling to the priesthood when I was a junior in college. I was praying while reading the conversation between Jesus and the good thief in Luke 23: 32-43. Our Lord gave such hope to a desperate man and I want to share this hope with as many people as I can. Also, I started to learn more about the Melkite Church and wanted to serve the Church, live, and share the Byzantine Tradition.

What did you look forward to each year at the Seminary?
I looked forward to being with the community of the faculty and students.

Favorite Book?
Of the Bible: The Gospel of St. John; B) Fiction: Ordinary People by Judith Guest; C) Spiritual (so far): The Life of St. Antony by St. Athanasius of Alexandria

Book you are reading now?
Fiction: Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens; B) Spiritual: The Diary of St. Faustina

What did you think of Pittsburgh when you were at the Seminary?
I loved spending time in Pittsburgh simply because there were many things to do in the city with the other seminarians and my friends.

Favorite exercise?
I love to play badminton

Favorite Liturgical Season
Holy Week and Pascha.

Favorite class at the Seminary?
My favorite class at seminary was Pastoral Leadership. I learned a lot about dealing with others and there is much practical application here in parish life. From a purely theological standpoint, however, I adored my Divine Liturgy classes.

Favorite meal?
My favorite meal is known in Arabic as “bezahl wal-ruz,” which is translated as “Peas and Rice.”

Advice you would give to a new Seminarian?
Remember that Christ makes the priesthood unique in each and every priest, in as much as in every baptized person; thus, look at other priests with neither envy nor shame. Allow Christ to strengthen what lacks in you, and to help you cultivate in a parish with your talents. Every priest is different and will touch the hearts of only some of the parishioners, but not all of them. And in times of despair, remember that your parish assignment is at the right time since there will be parishioners who need your one-of-a-kind presence for their ever-changing lives.

Mikael Naddaff, Class of 2021, Currently living in Pittsburgh, PA at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary

Describe when you first perceived a calling to the priesthood:
When I was in high school, I was involved in church a lot. I felt that the combination of helping people become better along with my devotion to my Lord led me to the spark of my vocation.

What are you looking forward to during your first year at the Seminary?
I have only just begun, but I most look forward to live the Byzantine liturgical calendar by worshiping with my brother seminarians.

Favorite Book?
The Lord of the Rings (trilogy)

Book you are reading now?
The Hobbit

What do you think of Pittsburgh now that you are at the Seminary?
So far Pittsburgh is a great city. Plenty of good places to eat and I am looking forward to one day seeing a Steelers game.

Favorite exercise?
Practicing mixed martial arts

Favorite Liturgical Season
Nativity

Favorite class at the Seminary?
My favorite class at seminary is Intro to Divine Liturgy.

Favorite meal?
Sushi

Advice you would give to a new Seminarian?
My advice would be to have a good habit of prayer and to always ask questions if you need help. Never be shy to ask for advice.
Library Appeal Update

In 2014, many of our generous donors contributed funds to cover the cost of various projects in our library. With these donations, we upgraded technology and software, purchased new computers, and upgraded our printing by installing a new commercial wireless printer. We joined WorldCat, the largest online library catalog in the world allowing users to search multiple online catalogs with one search and identify our holdings against other libraries across the world. The climate/humidity control installation in the main library and the rare book room has proven most beneficial. We were also able to prepare the third-floor library extension with lighting, furniture including books shelves and storage space. The library appeal funds have also allowed us to install a book lift to move books from the second/main floor to the third-floor library extension. This has saved time and energy (and a few Seminarians’ backs!). We are grateful that the library and our students—current and future, near and far—can continue to be filled with the knowledge and truth of our faith and with the grace and loving kindness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Update on Recent Appeal

In June, 2017, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary mailed our “Summer Appeal” letter which included a request for donations to cover our “Wish List.” Items on the list included lighting for outdoor spaces, bathroom updates, vestments, exterior building repairs including brick pointing, faculty development and research as well as an investment in the Seminary Endowment Fund. We are happy to report that the response to date has exceeded our goal and we are incredibly pleased with the results. By making a gift, you have enabled the Seminary to make these much-needed repairs and updates, enabled members of our faculty to further and enhance their education and you helped the future of our Seminary. We are grateful for this important assistance to us and our mission.