

HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS

Very Rev. Robert M. Pipta

*“As the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we continue the mission mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ,
‘...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you....’” – Seminary Mission*

The Byzantine Catholic Church is constituted of Christians in communion with the successor of Saint Peter, the bishop of Rome, and the bishops in communion with him. Its religious patrimony, distinct from that of Roman Catholics, took shape in fourth-century Byzantium (Constantinople; today, Istanbul). Two brothers from Thessalonica – Cyril (ca. 826-869, a monk) and Methodius (ca. 815-885, later a bishop) – brought these traditions north to the Slavic peoples in the early ninth century. The brothers had been dispatched from Constantinople by Emperor Michael III in 862, in response to Prince Rostislav of Great Moravia’s request for evangelizers. Almost immediately the brothers began translating the Bible into the language now known as Old Church Slavonic and using that language in the Liturgy.

Conversion of the Slavs to Christianity

Slavic tribes had settled both slopes of the Carpathian Mountains in Central and Eastern Europe by the late sixth/early seventh centuries. St. Vladimir (ca. 958-1015), Grand Prince of Kiev, finally united various political formations to *Rus’* at the end of the first millennium. The Slavic collective designation *Rus’*, due to the Latin rendering as *Ruthenia*, gave way in the West to the term *Ruthenian*.¹ Subsequent centuries witnessed ongoing wars, Turkish invasions, the break of communion between Western and Eastern Churches in 1054, and Catholic-Protestant conflict that significantly impacted the Ruthenians

Union with Rome

A seminal event occurred in southwestern *Rus’* in 1595-1596 – the Council of Brest at which Orthodox hierarchs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth petitioned for union with Rome. The result was the Union of Brest. In 1646, Ruthenian Orthodox priests from the southern slopes of the Carpathians joined Rome in the Union of Uzhorod. The use of the Greek or Byzantine Rite by these faithful led to their being referred to as *Greek Catholic* (a term popularized by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria-Hungary, referring to the Church’s use of “Greek” in its ritual, theology, and art, and “Catholic” for the Church’s union with the Bishop of Rome) or *Byzantine Catholic*.

European Seminaries

Bishop Emmanuel Olshavsky (1743-1767) inaugurated theological courses in the Rusyn city of Mukachevo (now in Ukraine) in 1744, thereby laying the foundation for an eventual seminary there. The support of Empress Maria Theresa brought about issuance of the papal bull *Eximia regalium principum* in 1771, by which Pope Clement XIV erected the Greek Catholic eparchy (diocese) of Mukachevo. Bishop Andrew Bachynsky (1773-1809) of Mukachevo transferred his see to Uzhorod in 1780, where the town’s

castle became the eparchial seminary. The eparchy of Presov was established by the papal bull *Relata Semper* in 1818.

Political and ecclesiastical turmoil continued until the end of World War I (1918). The Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Lay in 1919 mandated to the new state of Czechoslovakia the lands of Subcarpathian *Rus’*, comprising the predominantly Ruthenian districts of northeastern Hungary. Following the end of World War II, the territory became the Transcarpathian region of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Immigration to the United States

In the meantime, Ruthenian Greek Catholics from Hungary and Galicia² began to immigrate to the United States of America in the 1880s. The first Greek Catholic church was established at Shenandoah, Pennsylvania in 1885. Greek Catholic priests entered the country. Bishop Stephen Soter Ortynsky, O.S.B.M. (1866-1916), arrived in 1907. He died in 1916 and the two Ruthenian communities (Carpathian and Galician) were thereafter governed by separate apostolic administrators for the next eight years.

In 1924, the Holy See appointed Father Basil Takach (1879-1948), who had been serving as spiritual director of the Uzhorod seminary, as apostolic exarch for Carpatho-Rusyns, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Croatians. He settled in a suburb of Pittsburgh.³ Constantine Bohachevsky (1884-1961), a priest in Lviv (Ukraine), was appointed exarch for the Galicians (Ukrainians) and resided in Philadelphia.

Training for the Priesthood

Among the problems faced by the Pittsburgh exarchate was the education of young men to the priesthood. Until the 1900s, most of the clergy were foreign-born and foreign-educated. As Americans sought to become priests, providing an education and spiritual formation for these American candidates became increasingly problematic. A temporary solution was to divide their formation into two parts – they would pursue most of their studies at Latin-Rite seminaries such as St. Vincent in Latrobe, St. Mary in Baltimore, or St. Bonaventure in Olean and then complete their studies with two years of schooling at either of the seminaries in Presov (then in Czechoslovakia, today in Slovakia) or Uzhorod (also then in Czechoslovakia, transferred to Hungary in 1938, today in Ukraine). Some were sent to Rome.

Thus, until World War II, most seminarians for the Byzantine Catholic Church in America were trained in the seminaries of Presov or Uzhorod. With the outbreak of war in 1939, candidates for the priesthood could no longer be sent to seminaries in

Europe, and an entire generation of Greek Catholic priests was trained at St. Procopius College and Seminary, operated by Benedictines of Czech origin in Lisle, Illinois.⁴ Here a special program was established for Byzantine Catholic seminarians.

Official dissolution of the Byzantine Catholic Churches by Communist regimes in Eastern Europe after the end of World War II eliminated the possibility of again training candidates in Europe. As American seminaries trained men in the Latin Rite, obtaining a proper Eastern Rite education was problematic. The construction and staffing of a seminary dedicated exclusively to the training of men for the Byzantine Catholic tradition, that would meet exacting liturgical, spiritual, and linguistic needs, was viewed as a necessity for the continued growth of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States.⁵

The conjunction of several separate developments spurred action to address the issue of ecclesiastical education within the United States:

1. St. Procopius Seminary informed the exarch of Pittsburgh that, due to the lack of accommodations for the rapidly growing number of Byzantine Catholic seminarians (over 70 were enrolled in 1948), all of the theology students could not be accepted for the 1950-1951 academic year.
2. Adequate personnel to staff an American seminary became available. Two former professors from the Uzhorod seminary were accepted into the Pittsburgh exarchy, while two other priests (from Mukachevo and Krizhevtsi, both graduates of the Urban University in Rome) were incardinated into the Pittsburgh exarchy.
3. Post-World War II prosperity facilitated the raising of sufficient funds to construct a seminary.⁶

A Seminary in the United States

The issue of education for the priesthood would come to a head early in the administration of the new exarch of Pittsburgh – Bishop Daniel Ivancho, who was appointed coadjutor exarch of Pittsburgh in 1946, succeeded to the see in 1948, and served until his resignation in 1954. He promptly identified the need for both a new cathedral and a seminary. In a February 15, 1949 pastoral letter, Bishop Ivancho announced a \$1 million fundraising drive for diocesan needs, including a seminary.⁷

Many of Bishop Daniel Ivancho's advisors opposed building a local seminary, arguing that construction of a new cathedral with greater seating capacity and a more central location in Pittsburgh would better serve the needs of the exarchate. They reasoned that providing for greater attendance at religious ceremonies and presenting the identity and splendor of the Eastern Church to Americans were of supreme importance.

Since Bishop Ivancho lacked the financial resources to undertake both projects, he was forced to choose between building either a seminary or a new cathedral. Despite the unanimous recommendation of his Board of Consultors in favor of a cathedral, the bishop decided to construct a seminary. The plan for a cathe-



Bishop Daniel Ivancho

Source: Archives of Byzantine Catholic Seminary (ABCS)

dral was postponed, and establishment of a seminary became his priority – indeed, it was an urgent necessity.

Bishop Ivancho announced his plans for the seminary's construction and operation in a June 14, 1950 pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of the exarchate:

This letter brings perhaps the most joyous Exarchate news ever yet announced to our beloved clergy and faithful in America. After more than 60 (sixty) years of discussing, hoping, waiting, and – praying, we are at last undertaking the actual work of establishing our own philosophical and theological seminary.

His Holiness Pope Pius X in his Apostolic Letter *Ea Semper* of June 14, 1907 recommended that “as soon as possible there be established a seminary for the education of Rusyn clerics in the United States of America.”

Again on the 17th of August 1914 ... the Holy See, with the document *Cum Episcopo*, insistently repeated this same recommendation. Then during the Pontificate of Pope Pius XI, the Sacred Congregation in the Decree *Cum Data Fuerit* of March 1, 1929 gave this order: “Since it is necessary to have exemplary priests endowed with zeal and prudence, learned in the sacred science and alien from political parties, let the Ordinaries take care when the opportunity presents itself to erect at least a major and minor seminary ... in America to educate the clerics of the Greek Rite”.

The experiences and observations which were gathered through the years have effected the universal consensus that the most urgent of our Exarchate is: our own seminary.⁸

The issue of where to build the seminary had been resolved only the day before issuance of the pastoral letter.



SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary under Construction (1950)

Source: ABCS

The Seminary Site

The tidal wave of European immigrants that settled in Pittsburgh in the late 19th century included many Jews from Eastern Europe – some of whom settled in Allegheny City (today, the North Side of the city of Pittsburgh).

Jacob Gusky, who had established a prominent department store at that time (Gusky's Grand

Emporium Clothing), died in 1886 and his widow, Esther, memorialized him by founding the Gusky Hebrew Orphanage. At its opening in 1891, the institution was the city's first Jewish orphanage. It was located on property at the intersection of Perrysville and Riverview Avenues in Allegheny City. By 1921, it was home to more than 100 Jewish boys and girls. But changing public attitudes and social service policies, coupled with the rise of governmental programs to serve homeless children, led to the orphanage's closing on December 31, 1943.

Shortly after establishment of the orphanage, the adjacent farmland had been acquired to form Riverview Park – and the

name was applied to the surrounding neighborhood. This former orphanage site, at 3605 Perrysville Avenue, would become the location of a seminary that would bear the name of the famed evangelizers to the Slavs, Saints Cyril and Methodius. Negotiations between the exarchate and the orphanage's representatives led to the former's selection of Arthur J. Tait, a registered engineer, to survey the property. The survey was completed on May 8, 1950 and clarified which of the many individual tracts in the Revised Plan of Watson Place would be conveyed to the exarchate.⁹

The land was acquired by the exarchate in two steps: (1) J. M. Gusky Hebrew Orphanage and Home of Western Pennsylvania executed a deed, covering two large parcels of land, to the Greek Catholic Ordinariate United with Rome on June 13, 1950 for a nominal \$1,¹⁰ and (2) members of the Volkwein family executed a deed for adjacent land to the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius on July 20, 1950 for \$51,900.¹¹

The explanation for the exarchate's use of two different entities in the land purchases lies in the fact that in the midst of the acquisitions, a new corporation in the name of the seminary was formed. The corporate name of Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius was registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on June 28, 1950, and Articles of Incorporation for a non-profit corporation of the same name were filed in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Harrisburg on July 19,



Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius

Source: ABCS



1950.¹² The very next day, the new corporation was employed as purchaser in the second real estate transaction.

Prior to acquisition of the land and formation of the corporation, Bishop Ivancho had retained the services of architect Edward J. Hergenroeder¹³ to design the seminary. He had also hired Brusca Brothers, Inc., as general contractor to construct the new building of over 600,000 cubic feet. On July 5, 1950 (the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius), the grounds of the future seminary were solemnly blessed – the first of many solemnities that would be conducted at the site.

During the annual Mount St. Macrina pilgrimage that fall, Msgr. Joseph Moili – a representative of the Sacred Congregation for

the Oriental Churches – stated that Rome was pleased with the building of the seminary and relayed a blessing on the work.¹⁴

A Seminary Opens

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius would have the unique distinction of being the only free-standing English-speaking Byzantine Catholic seminary in the United States. It opened on October 16, 1950, with temporary accommodations in two buildings adjacent to the permanent seminary building under construction.¹⁵ Forty student seminarians and a faculty of priests were present at the commencement of this new venture. The initial faculty comprised:¹⁶

Bishop Daniel Ivancho	Rector, Pastoral Theology
Msgr. George Michaylo, S.T.D.	Vice Rector, Professor of Homiletics
Rev. Basil Shereghy, S.T.D.	Spiritual Director, Dogmatic and Oriental Theology
Rev. Vladimir Firczak	Procurator
Rev. Stephen Kachur, S.T.D.	Sacred Scripture, Greek, Rusyn, Prefect
Rev. Eugene Hornyak, S.T.D.	Moral Theology, Canon Law, Choir Director
Rev. Basil Pekar, S.T.D.	Philosophy, Liturgy, Church Slavonic
Rev. Louis Sismis, S.T.D.	Church History, Latin, History of Philosophy
Rev. Stephen Kocisko, S.T.L.	Patrology
Rev. John Kocisko	<i>Socius</i> , Ascetical Theology
Rev. Valentine Orosz	Hungarian language



Seminary Construction 1950-1951

Source: ABCS



Seminary Chapel 2017



Seminary Dormitory 1960s

The faculty in those early years was composed of priests who had received their advanced degrees in Central Europe or Rome before the war. Newly-arrived immigrant priests, with impressive academic credentials, rounded out the faculty. These intellectual and spiritual links to renowned theological faculties in Rome, Budapest, Prague, Presov, and Uzhorod forged a strong sense of solidarity with the mother churches in Europe. American-born seminarians were now offered the challenging models of European erudition. Some of these early European-trained professors – including Athanasius Pekar, Basil Shereghy, the brothers Stephen and John Kocisko, Basil Smochko, Ernest Dunda, and John Bobak – would enjoy long and fruitful years of ministry at the seminary.

In addition, Very Rev. Mother Olga and the Sisters of St. Basil the Great from Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown provided the domestic needs of faculty and students.

Students were housed in what would later become the Archbishop's Residence.¹⁷ College students took their classes at Duquesne University, traveling daily to and from classes by bus. Students in the theology program attended classes in a second building on the seminary campus. Their studies continued amidst the noise of construction of the adjacent permanent seminary building. Just six days after the opening of the academic year, Bishop Ivancho blessed the cornerstone of the new seminary building on October 22, 1950. In a document placed within the cornerstone, Bishop Ivancho wrote:

May the Seminary to be erected, as is fondly hoped, upon this stone remain for a long series of years, that the faith may be propagated, piety poured forth upon the Seminarians, and after their ordination, upon the people committed to their care.¹⁸

The seminary's cost was estimated at \$750,000.

The second academic year began on October 14, 1951 with all activities now accommodated in the new building. Eighteen college seminarians, matriculated at Duquesne University, joined the community of theological seminarians.

The seminary was formally dedicated just four days later on October 18, 1951. Bishop Ivancho presided at a ceremony in the morning at an outdoor sanctuary – with the participation of 15 bishops and two abbots¹⁹ from the United States and Canada, 400 clergy, many religious Sisters, dignitaries of the Ruthenian fraternal organizations, and a large and enthusiastic crowd of 5,000 laity. Bishop Ivancho delivered a sermon in which he noted:

this Seminary, dedicated to its lofty purposes today, has sprung, or at least has been hastened into existence by the wanton destruction and devastation perpetuated by the godless communists on all Greek Catholic Seminaries of central European countries.²⁰

Pittsburgh's Latin-Rite Bishop John F. Dearden also preached and "traced the history of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite in this country and paid tribute to their sterling Catholic faith, manifested in the building of the seminary."²¹ A Civic Program was held in the afternoon featuring a number of notable officials including Pittsburgh Mayor David L. Lawrence, Pennsylvania Governor John S. Fine, Father Vernon F. Gallagher, C.S.Sp. (president of Duquesne University), and President Stephen Tkach of the Greek Catholic Union (a notable financial supporter of the seminary).

Seminary "Firsts"

Those early days produced a number of seminary "firsts."



Seminary Library 2017

Source: ABCS

- Gregorio Pietro XV Cardinal Agagianian, Patriarch of Cilicia for the Armenians, was among the first visitors on November 21, 1951. The faculty arranged an Academic Convocation in honor of this distinguished visitor.
- The seminary chapel, with design and artwork by the Rambusch Decorating Company of New York,²² was completed and solemnly blessed on February 23, 1952. The chapel was described in these words:

The new chapel features an altar, *baldachino* (canopy), Eucharistic dove in place of tabernacle, and an *iconostas* (bronze screen supporting icons, separating the sanctuary from the nave) which “in liturgical correctness and artistic perfection are unequalled in this country,” an announcement said.²³

- The following day, priestly ordinations were held there for the first time as Holy Orders were conferred on Deacons Michael Felock, Andrew Pataki, and Joseph Ridella.
- On April 22, 1952, the first of many “St. George’s Day” picnics for seminarians and faculty was held at nearby North Park.
- The first “Seminary Day” was held on May 18, 1952. These annual gatherings – designed to focus attention on the seminary and foster vocations – were held at the end of the academic year. Each included liturgical services, cultural events, and religious displays. The highlight of this first Seminary Day’s festivities was the solemn consecration of the altar in the seminary chapel. Bishop Ivancho presided at the rites, sealing the holy relics into the holy table.²⁴
- On November 16, 1952, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Nicholas T. Elko was formally installed as first resident rector of the seminary.



Baldachino
in Seminary Chapel

- A seminary choir was formed and sang responses on special occasions locally and also recorded liturgical music for broadcast over Radio Free Europe.
- The 4,500-book library was dedicated on the Second Annual Seminary Day – May 17, 1953 – by the Most Rev. Amleto G. Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. The event also marked the 40th anniversary of the canonical establishment of the first Byzantine Catholic diocese in the United States.²⁵ A Solemn Pontifical Divine Liturgy at an outdoor altar on the seminary campus opened the ceremonies. In the evening, a three-act play dramatizing episodes from the lives of Saints Cyril and Methodius was staged, with the roles played by seminarians.
- The Third Annual Seminary Day was held on May 14, 1954.



Divine Liturgy in Seminary Chapel 1959

Source: ABCS

A six and one-half hour religious program honored the memory of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The Marian Year was celebrated with outdoor ceremonies. Bishop Ivancho officiated at a 10:30 A.M. Pontifical Divine Liturgy at an outdoor altar. The afternoon sermons were delivered in two languages – in English, by Msgr. Henry A. Carlin (vicar general of the Latin-Rite Diocese of Pittsburgh), and in Ruthenian, by Very Rev. Theodore Seginak. A Marian pageant featured the seminary choir and the Holy Ghost Choir from Binghamton (NY) in a united choir of 450 voices under Rev. Michael Hrebin.²⁶

- Starting on the second Sunday in September in 1954, the seminary hosted Altar Servers' Congresses. Hundreds of boys gathered annually at an outdoor Divine Liturgy followed by lunch in the gymnasium and tours of the seminary. Many of these same servers would soon be counted among the seminarians and in turn would welcome other interested young men. The members of the Serra Club – laymen dedicated to the spiritual and material support of priestly vocations – also held rallies on the seminary grounds.
- On May 15, 1955, more than 16,000 faithful jammed the seminary grounds to attend the Divine Liturgy celebrated outdoors by Bishop Nicholas T. Elko at 4 P.M., at which Latin-Rite Bishop Fulton J. Sheen – then national director of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith and auxiliary bishop of New York – delivered the sermon. The parents of priests and seminarians were given “special places of honor” to emphasize the dignity of the vocation to the religious life.²⁷ This was the Fourth Annual Seminary Day. There were vocational, cultural, and liturgical displays. An early afternoon concert of liturgical music

was presented. Father Hrebin directed the Western Pennsylvania Byzantine Catholic Chorus of several hundred voices. The St. John Damascene Choir also sang under the direction of Rev. John Bobak.

- The first outdoor ordinations on the seminary grounds took place on May 20, 1956, when Bishop Nicholas T. Elko ordained eight priests. In the centuries-old tradition of the ordination rite, Bishop Elko laid his hands on the head of each candidate as he intoned:

May the Divine Grace which always heals the ill, fills the wanting, promote (name of candidate) to the priesthood. Let us pray for him that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon him.²⁸

Bishop Elko was assisted by Rev. Basil Smochko and Rev. John S. Kocisko, both of the seminary faculty. The 70-voice seminary choir sang the responses for the St. John Chrysostom liturgy, which was sung in Slavonic, Greek, and English. Father Vernon F. Gallagher, C.S.Sp., president of Duquesne University, preached the sermon. The ceremony took place on the Fifth Annual Seminary Day.²⁹

Enrollment

As enrollment gradually increased, two additional floors were added over the kitchen and dining room to accommodate a library and dormitory. In September 1960, 111 seminarians – the largest student body in the history of the institution – were welcomed for the academic year. Vocational weekends and days of recollection brought more potential candidates to the seminary annually. The

1960s saw the building filled to capacity and at times the deacons' class had to be accommodated in a choir area to the side of the sanctuary during liturgies.

The Chapel

The heart of the seminary has always been the chapel, with its distinctive golden icon screen, *baldachino* and intricate stained glass windows depicting the life of Saints Cyril and Methodius. With the stillness of its icons, the aroma of incense, and its prayerful atmosphere, the chapel has always exerted a peaceful but powerful formative influence on seminarians and provided a calm haven where decisions have been made, renewed, and confirmed.

Winds of Change

After the Second Vatican Council, the winds of change that coursed through the Church also blew through the seminary. For a brief two-year period (1967-1969), the theology department was closed. Challenged to rediscover the deep roots of tradition, the seminary sought to immerse itself more completely in authentic Byzantine theology and spirituality. Seminary journals such as *The Dome* and *Philokalia* were produced and published in the seminary print shop to showcase student theological work and chronicle life in the seminary. Meanwhile, new fields of study were added to the curriculum. Classes in catechetics highlighted the *God With Us* Byzantine catechetical series. Regularly supervised programs of field education and pastoral ministry were developed and a diaconal internship program was inaugurated.

In 1974, the seminary chapel was completely refurbished with new iconography written by Christina Dochwat, a Ukrainian émigré from Philadelphia, and was solemnly blessed at the annual Seminary Day in May. In 1975, the seminary celebrated its silver jubilee. The bishops of the Metropolia concelebrated the Divine Liturgy

with the priest alumni on May 5 to mark this milestone. In its first 25 years, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary saw the ordination of 166 men to the priesthood for ministry in the Metropolia.

The next decade brought many structural renovations at the seminary. The library was expanded and equipped with more areas for reading and work. Computers were purchased for student use. Pastoral seminars brought in an array of speakers to enhance the academic and formational programs. In 1981, Archbishop Stephen Kocisko established an endowment fund on the 40th anniversary of his priestly ordination and the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the episcopate.

Illustrative of the seminary's formation program was this report carried in a Pittsburgh newspaper in conjunction with an Open House held at the seminary on Seminary Day – May 1, 1983:

Their rooms look much like dorm rooms at any college, with stereos, individual decorating touches and mementos from home. The men joke and laugh as they go about their studies and chores.

The seminarians study theology for four years after they complete their college studies. Collegians attend Duquesne University, La Roche College or Community College of Allegheny County for their academic studies and the theologians take their classes at the seminary.

Their schedule includes daily liturgy, breakfast, and classes until 3 p.m. The rest of the afternoon is free until 5:15, when they gather for 15 minutes of individual spiritual reading in the chapel. After dinner, the seminarians meet again in the chapel for night prayers and a twice-weekly conference with the spiritual director. Evenings are for studying the scripture, patrology, moral theology, liturgical



Faculty and Seminarians 2016

Source: ABCS

chant, Canon law, church Slavonic, church Ruthenian and liturgy courses required. A class in homiletics (preaching) also is offered.

Wednesdays are free from noon until 8 p.m. and Saturday mornings are given to chores – they do all the house cleaning.

A TV room, weight room and bowling alley provide opportunities for recreation and an extensive library includes a rare book collection.³⁰

Despite a noticeable decrease in enrollment from the cramped conditions of the 1960s, a steady stream of candidates from around the country – including the later formed eparchies of Passaic (New Jersey), Parma (Ohio), and Van Nuys (California)³¹ – continued to emerge from the seminary to serve the Byzantine Catholic Church in America. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the seminary strengthened connections with the churches in Presov and Uzhorod by providing support for their seminarians as Communist rule weakened. Following the fall of Communism and the break-up of the Soviet bloc in 1989 and succeeding years, the suppressed Byzantine Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe re-emerged with a vigor that surprised many. Some seminarians from this re-emergent European Church were sent to Pittsburgh for formation.

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the seminary, the Council of Hierarchs established a Seminary Advisory Council. This group of talented and highly energetic laity, clergy, and religious worked to build up and promote the seminary. High among their original priorities was accreditation of the seminary, a process that was successful.

Since 1998, the seminary has hosted academic classes for the Deacon Formation program and the Metropolitan Cantor Institute. The Archeparchial Office of Religious Education has sponsored other events at the seminary. In addition, classes have been opened to off-campus students, and each year a number of clergy as well as religious and laity have taken advantage of the opportunity to continue their education at the seminary.

In 2000, its 50th anniversary year, the seminary was the recipient of a generous grant to underwrite an annual scholarly lecture that would further the purpose of the seminary as a center of learning for Eastern Catholic Churches while providing a platform for scholarly and ecumenical discussion with a wider theological audience. The SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture Series was inaugurated at the conclusion of the seminary's 50th anniversary year of celebration in the spring of 2001. The lecture series has continued to the present. See Table 1 with a list of the presentations.

Table 1: List of presentations for the SS. Cyril and Methodius Lecture Series, 2001-2017

Year	Speaker	Topic
2001	Rev. Archimandrite Robert F. Taft	Eastern Catholic Theology: Slow Rebirth after a Long and Difficult Gestation
2002	Bishop Kallistos of <i>Diokleia</i>	Orthodoxy and the Eastern Catholics: Problem or Opportunity?
2003	Rev. Thomas Hopko	Made Perfect Through Suffering ... On Christ's Humiliation and Human Deification
2004	Rev. Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.	The Plagues of Egypt, Spiritual Interpretation, and the Old Testament in the Church
2005	Professor Sebastian Brock	Two Syriac Saints for Today: St. Ephrem and St. Isaac the Syrian
2006	Professor Valerie A. Karras	Women in Byzantine Liturgy
2007	Rev. Paul McPartlan	The Promise and Challenge of Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue
2008	Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis	Remembering Sacred Silence
2009	Rev. Robert G. Roberson	Catholic-Orthodox Relations: Hopes for the Future
2010	Very Rev. John H. Erickson	Baptism in the Eastern Christian Tradition: Ecclesial Context, Faith Content
2011	Dr. Robin Darling Young	Evagrius the Monk and the Care of Souls
2012	Dr. Lewis J. Patsavos	Canonical Challenges Facing the Orthodox Church in America
2013	Monsignor John A. Radano	The Continuing Reconciliation between Orthodox and Catholics: A Key to Ecumenical Progress in the 21 st Century
2014	Dr. Sister Vassa Larin	The Saints and the "Communion of Saints" in the Byzantine Tradition
2015	Dr. Scott Hahn	The Our Father as a Synthesis of the Pattern of Scripture
2016	Very Rev. M. Daniel Findikyan	The Mystery Hidden for Ages: An Eastern, Ecumenical Sacramental Theology
2017	Very Rev. Peter Galadza, Ph.D.	Vatican Guidelines for Church Music: Eastern Christian Prospects and Problems



Come and See Weekend 2016

Source: ABCS

These lectures were open to the public and many were preserved and made available on CD and video and through the seminary website (www.bcs.edu).

With a view to greater academic standing, the seminary sought and in 2003 was authorized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to grant graduate degrees. Subsequently, in January 2008, the Association of Theological Schools granted accreditation to the seminary, approving its Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Theology degrees.

In 2009, the Association of Theological Schools conducted an interim visit and provided recommendations that became an institutional Strategic Plan to carry the seminary into the future. The Seminary Board of Directors was restructured with an eye to greater diversity, goal development, cooperative planning, and a system of evaluation. The seminary's financial status received greater priority, which resulted in an increase in its donor base as well as a documented path of steady growth. Thanks to generous donors, technological improvements included the installation of a Smart Classroom as well as enhancement of campus networking.

In 2010, the seminary graduated its first female student with a Master of Arts in Theology degree. In the same year, the seminary launched Byzantine Online, a distance-learning program.

The following year witnessed major physical improvements to the chapel, the library, and student rooms. The seminary also launched a program of priestly formation for married men. At the same time, academic requirements were reviewed and adjusted so that the seminary would remain in compliance with expectations of the Catholic bishops in the United States, the Association of Theological Schools, and the particular needs of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the United States. Tuition rates were adjusted to a per-credit system applicable to all students.

Pope Francis restored the faculty of Eastern Catholic bishops outside of the traditional Eastern patriarchal territories to admit married men to the priesthood according to the traditions of their respective Churches. Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, signed the decree on June 14, 2014. The rector observed to the secular press at that time:

It's very clear to me in my works in vocations that God is calling married men to serve as priests. With the incredible maturity they have in being married, and fathers very often ... they have potential to be excellent priests.³²

The papal decree was viewed as the latest in a half-century of steps by Rome to reaffirm the Second Vatican Council's 1964 declaration (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) that the Eastern Rites are "of equal dignity" with the Roman Rite.

In 2015, the seminary began to offer online classes for credit. These now include a Master of Arts in Theology (accredited through the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada) that can be completed in five semesters, and a Certificate in Eastern Christian Studies that can be completed in two-and-one-half years. The objective of Byzantine Online is to produce exceptional leaders in Eastern Christian theology, scripture, and dogma – and offers flexibility to those who are not able to be physically present in Pittsburgh for academic courses that mirror the in-house seminary program.

SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary observed the milestone of its 65th anniversary on October 16, 2015 by welcoming 20 young men for the annual weekend of prayer and retreat. The "Come and See" weekend of discovery was one of the most successful ever – a positive experience in the life of the seminary exhibiting its potential for allowing the Holy Spirit to enliven the call to ministerial service.

A program of Ongoing Formation was established in 2016 for priests, with a particular focus on the needs of priests seeking bi-ritual faculties, those on sabbatical, and those pursuing terminal academic degrees. A plan for making the seminary building more accessible to the physically challenged was also developed.

In 2017, the seminary became a member of the Washington Theological Consortium, which permits cross-registration in courses and provides access to the 2.5-million book library system of its member theological schools. The seminary welcomed 15 seminarians and 4 M.A.T. students at the opening of the fall 2017 academic year.

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius – official seminary of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh – is open to all Eastern eparchies in North America. As the only free-standing, English-speaking, Byzantine Catholic seminary in the United States, it is uniquely positioned for the future – as the seminary serves as a center for studies and formation, and welcomes all those interested in growing in the theology and spirituality of the Byzantine Catholic tradition.

Rectors of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius				
†			Most Rev. Daniel Ivancho	1950-1952
†	†	✠	Rev. Msgr. Nicholas T. Elko	1952-1954
†			Rev. Msgr. George Michaylo	1954-1956
†			Rev. George Bonchonsky (Acting Rector)	1956
†			Very Rev. John J. Kostival	1956-1958
†		✠	Most Rev. Stephen J. Kocisko	1958-1963
†			Very Rev. Msgr. Basil Smochko	1963-1966
†			Rev. Msgr. John Macko	1966-1969
†		✠	Rev. Msgr. Judson M. Procyk	1969-1973
†	†		Very Rev. Andrew J. Pataki	1973-1979
†			Most Rev. John M. Bilock	1979-1980
			Rev. Msgr. Raymond Balta	1980-1990
			Rev. Msgr. Russell A. Duker	1990-1995
			Very Rev. Archpriest John G. Petro	1995-2012
	†		Rev. Kurt R. Burnette	2012-2013
	†		Rev. George D. Gallaro (Acting Rector)	2013-2014
			Very Rev. Robert M. Pipta	2014-to date

† = deceased † = later became bishop ✠ = later became archbishop

Endnotes:

¹Father Ivan Mina, *The Ruthenian Catholic Church* (Pittsburgh: Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1999), 4-5.

²Galicia is a historical and geographical region in Central/Eastern Europe that straddles the modern border between Poland and Ukraine. The area was named after the medieval city of Halych – the Latinized version of which is *Galicia*. During the period of immigration to America, most of Galicia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

³The apostolic exarchy (apostolic vicariate) became an eparchy (diocese) in 1963, and an archeparchy (archdiocese) in 1969. Its successive ordinaries were Basil Takach (1924-1948), Daniel Ivancho (1948-1954), Nicholas T. Elko (1955-1967), Stephen J. Kocisko (1967-1991), Thomas V. Dolinay (1991-1993), Judson M. Procyk (1994-2001), Basil M. Schott (2002-2010), and William C. Skurla (2012-to date).

⁴In 1885, Benedictine monks from St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe (Pennsylvania) formed a new monastic community in Chicago to work among Slovak and Czech immigrants and assumed administration of St. Procopius Parish. That saint became the patron of the new foundation. Over time, the monks established a high school, college, and seminary. In 1901, the schools moved to Lisle, about 30 miles southwest of Chicago; the abbey transferred there in 1904. St. Procopius Seminary opened in 1916 to train Benedictine and diocesan seminarians; it later closed in 1967. The college was renamed Benedictine College in 1971, and became Benedictine University in 1996. See Vitus Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle: St. Procopius Abbey, 1885-1985* (Lisle, IL: St. Procopius Abbey, 1985), and *A Century of Benedictine Life 1865-1965: A Pictorial History* (Lisle, IL: St. Procopius Abbey, 1985).

⁵See Basil Shereghy and Athanasius Pekar, *The Training of Carpatho-Ruthenian Clergy* (Pittsburgh, 1951), 121-126.

⁶Basil Shereghy (ed.), *The United Societies of the U.S.A.: A Historical Album Compiled on the Occasion of the Seventh-Fifth Anniversary of the United Societies* (McKeesport, PA, 1978), 130.

⁷"Pastoral Letter" (February 15, 1949) in John Slivka, *Historical Mirror: Sources of the Rusyn and Hungarian Greek Rite Catholics in the United*

States of America, 1884-1963 (Brooklyn, 1978), 307-309.

⁸"Pastoral Letter" (June 14, 1950) in *ibid.*, 309-310.

⁹The Revised Plan of Watson Place was recorded in the Department of Real Estate of Allegheny County (hereinafter DREAC) in Plan Book Vol. 10, p. 62. The survey was necessitated due to the many lots of varying size, a vacated street, an abandoned alley, a relocated Perrysville Avenue, a widened Riverview Avenue, title to lots that had reverted to the Gusky heirs upon closing of the orphanage, and quitclaim issues.

¹⁰Deed from J. M. Gusky Hebrew Orphanage and Home of Western Pennsylvania to Greek Catholic Ordinariate United with Rome, dated June 13, 1950 and recorded June 22, 1950 in DREAC in Deed Book Vol. 3096, p. 492. While the deed recited consideration of \$1, the property was valued at approximately \$20,000.

The corporate name "Greek Catholic Ordinariate United with Rome" had been registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on January 15, 1936. Non-profit Articles of Incorporation were filed on March 11, 1936. The corporate name was changed on July 15, 1977 to "Metropolitan Archdiocese of Pittsburgh, Byzantine Rite" by Amended Articles of Incorporation.

¹¹Deed from Jacob C. Volkwein and Mary H. Volkwein, and Rudolph G. Volkwein to Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius, dated July 20, 1950 and recorded July 25, 1950 in DREAC in Deed Book Vol. 3094, p. 659. This purchase included the "brick duplex building" known as Nos. 50-52 Riverview Avenue, with an accompanying brick garage. Subsequently, some additional peripheral properties were acquired in September 1950, June 1957, May 1960, and September 1962 to expand the seminary grounds.

¹²See the website of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appearing at: www.corporations.pa.gov (accessed October 10, 2017).

The officers of the Corporation were: Most Rev. Daniel Ivancho, D.D., President; Msgr. George Michaylo, S.T.D., Secretary; Rev. John K.

- Powell, Treasurer. The Trustees were: Very Rev. Alexander Papp (Gary, IN), Very Rev. Nicholas Csopey (Wilkes Barre, PA), Very Rev. John A. Stirt (Passaic, NJ), Very Rev. Julius Gregassy, D.D. (Braddock, PA), Very Rev. John Kallok (Joliet, IL), and Rev. Nicholas Elko (Cleveland, OH).
- ¹³ E. J. Hergenroeder (1890-1970) of Pittsburgh's North Side had designed Annunciation School and Convent, North Catholic High School, St. Benedict Academy, and other buildings for Pittsburgh area Catholic parishes. See "E.J. Hergenroeder, Retired Architect," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (March 26, 1970), 27.
- ¹⁴ Slivka, *Historical Mirror*, loc. cit.
- ¹⁵ The original plan for temporary quarters called for use of the former Academy building at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great in Uniontown (Fayette County, PA). Bishop Ivancho's purchase of two buildings adjacent to the new seminary in July 1950 and their speedy conversion to residential and educational use by the seminarians and faculty permitted opening of the seminary in temporary quarters in Pittsburgh. Shereghy, *The United Societies of the U.S.A.*, op. cit., 132.
- ¹⁶ Slivka, *Historical Mirror*, op. cit., 312-313.
- ¹⁷ At that time, Bishop Ivancho was resident in the Pittsburgh suburb of Munhall. Upon completion of the new seminary building, he took up residence in a house adjacent to the seminary, and the diocesan chancery relocated to the seminary site. "New Seminary," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (October 18, 1951), 4.
- ¹⁸ As quoted in Shereghy, *The United Societies of the U.S.A.*, loc. cit.
- ¹⁹ The bishops in attendance were Daniel Ivancho (Pittsburgh-Ruthenian), Ambrose Senyshyn (Philadelphia-Ukrainian), Maksym Hermaniuk (Manitoba-Ukrainian), Neil N. Savaryn (Western Canada-Ukrainian), Isidore Borecky (Eastern Canada-Ukrainian), John F. Dearden (Pittsburgh-Latin), Edward F. Hoban (Cleveland), John F. O'Hara (Buffalo), John K. Mussio (Steubenville), George L. Leech (Harrisburg), Peter L. Ireton (Richmond), James M. McFadden (Youngstown), John P. Tracy (La Crosse), Emmet M. Walsh (Youngstown), and Henry T. Klonowski (Scranton). The abbots attending were Theodore G. Kojis, O.S.B. (St. Andrew Abbey, Cleveland) and Denis Strittmatter, O.S.B. (St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe).
- ²⁰ Shereghy, *The United Societies of the U.S.A.*, op. cit., 134.
- ²¹ "Byzantine Rite Seminary Blessed; 15 Bishops Here," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (October 25, 1951), 1, 8. Bishop Dearden's sermon was printed as "Byzantine Rite Catholics in America," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (October 25, 1951), 3.
- ²² The famed Rambusch Decorating Company was then at the pinnacle of its success in decorating more than 1,000 Catholic churches and public buildings. See Charles Dana Linn, *Rambusch: Four Generations of an American Family Company* (New York: Rambusch, 1999); Sigurd Rambusch, *A History of the Rambusch Family* (New York: Rambusch, 1965); Melody Peterson, "Viggo F. E. Rambusch, Dean of Church Architects, Is Dead," *New York Times* (December 30, 1996).
- ²³ "Consecration of New Chapel Set Tomorrow: Byzantine Bishop to Offer Liturgy on Northside Site," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (May 17, 1952), 4.
- ²⁴ "Byzantine Rite Catholics to Dedicate New Chapel: Bishop Daniel Ivancho to Preside at Colorful North Side Ceremony," *The Pittsburgh Press* (May 17, 1952), 5.
- ²⁵ "Greet Rite Library Will Be Dedicated by Papal Delegate," *The Pittsburgh Press* (May 10, 1953), 22; "Papal Delegate Conducts Anniversary Rites Here," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (May 18, 1953), 17. Prelates attending – in addition to Arbp. Cicognani and Bishop Ivancho – were Isidore Borecky of Toronto, John F. Dearden of Pittsburgh, John Mark Gannon of Erie, and Hugh L. Lamb of Greensburg,
- ²⁶ "Patron Saints of Greek Rite to be Honored: Thousands Expected at Seminary for Annual Celebration," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (May 15, 1954), 4.
- ²⁷ "16,000 See Bishop Sheen," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (May 19, 1955), 1-2. Sheen acknowledged that while he was not familiar with the Byzantine liturgy or language, he did not feel that he was a stranger or an outsider. Rather, "two things exemplify the unity that exists between the Eastern Rite and the Western Rite: the Eucharist and the Papacy [the pope as successor of St. Peter]." Several photographs of the event appear in that issue of the *Catholic*, at 9.
- ²⁸ "Eight Ordained by Byzantine Church Here," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (May 21, 1956), 11.
- ²⁹ "8 Ordained as Byzantine Priests Here," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (May 24, 1956), 3; "Eight Ordained by Byzantine Church Here," loc. cit.
- ³⁰ Virginia Miller, "Seminary to Hold Open House," *North Hills News Record* (April 26, 1983), 15.
- ³¹ The eparchy of Passaic was established in 1963, the eparchy of Parma in 1969, and the eparchy of Van Nuys in 1981. Van Nuys became the Eparchy of the Holy Protection of Mary of Phoenix in 2009.
- ³² Rev. Robert M. Pipta, as quoted in Peter Smith, "Eastern Catholics Rejoice in the Restoration of Married Priests," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (February 8, 2015), appearing at the website: www.post-gazette.com (accessed October 10, 2017).