

Archeprarchy impressive at top vocations fair



Office of Vocations Director Father Dennis M. Bogda was one of over 100 presenters who attended the Vocations Fair for Priestly and Religious Life at Franciscan University of Steubenville this past February 24. Materials provided by the Archeprarchy, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary and the Greek Catholic Union were made available to visitors to the display, which also featured a new 8-foot tall panel (also see pg. 10) in addition to videos of Archieprarchical events.



Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM is visited at the Sisters of St. Basil table by Lucia Bortz of Franciscan University of Steubenville's Pre-Theologate Program, which coordinates the Vocations Fair.



Several students of St. Joseph High School, Natrona Heights, Pa. pose for a photo at Franciscan University of Steubenville's Priestly and Religious Life Vocations Fair following an interview with Archieprarchical Office of Vocations Director Father Dennis M. Bogda (center).



Father Dennis Bogda (second from left) takes a break to pose for a photo with FUS students David Poindexter, Douglas Jaglowski, Constantine Kolitsos and Jonathan Telles during their visit to the Office of Vocations table.

by Darlene Fejka

Discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life is a colossal responsibility, involving not only the individual in discernment, but also thousands – if not millions – of lives and souls which potentially could be affected by such a decision. Continuing the mission of the Archieprarchical Vocations Committee, whose “Chosen from Among the People: A Five-Year Strategic Plan for Vocations” was inaugurated on August 6, 2005 by Archbishop Basil, the Office of Vocations recently participated in one of the country's largest vocations fairs.

Franciscan University of Steubenville (FUS) held its annual Vocations Fair for Priestly and Religious Life on February 24, 2006. With over one hundred tables set and staffed by priests, brothers and sisters who have already answered “the call,” Finnegan Fieldhouse was transformed into a hub of vocations information. The event at the Ohio school, located in the unique tri-state corner where West Virginia, Pennsylvania and the Buckeye State meet, drew hundreds of students, families and other interested individuals eager to explore the realm of religious vocations.

The Byzantine Catholic Archeprarchy of Pittsburgh was represented in two locations at the fair. Along with the Office of Vocations, the Sisters of St. Basil also were present to greet and meet visitors to their respective tables throughout the day, which began at 11:00 a.m. and concluded at 5:00 p.m. These tables were the only two representing Eastern Catholic vocations at the predominantly Latin Catholic event.

The Office of Vocations unveiled a newly designed display panel which was used for the first time at the FUS Vocations Fair. The eight-foot tall panel was made even taller and more impressive as it perched upon the Archeprarchy of Pittsburgh's display table, engaging those who entered the fieldhouse with the omnipresent visage of the icon of Christ the Pantocrator, an image which was taken from the interior of the dome of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Munhall, Pa.

The message of the display piece is “Byzantine Catholic LIFE. We're hiring for a higher way.” A colorful, stylized version of the Byzantine Catholic Vocations logo, created by DZ Design Associates of Pittsburgh, appears at the bottom of the panel. A general brochure outlining basic information about the Byzantine Catholic Church and duplicating the display panel image on the front was also created for distribution at this and future vocations events.

“We wanted a more youthful look for this piece,” explained Office of Vocations Director Father Dennis M. Bogda, who along with Administrative Coordinator Darlene Fejka staffed the impressive display. “It really commanded a lot of attention.”

Representing the Sisters of St. Basil, Vocation Directress Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM was stationed at the opposite end of the fair. “Everyone seems so friendly here,” remarked Sister Barbara Jean about the University, which was established in 1946 by

the Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular (TOR).

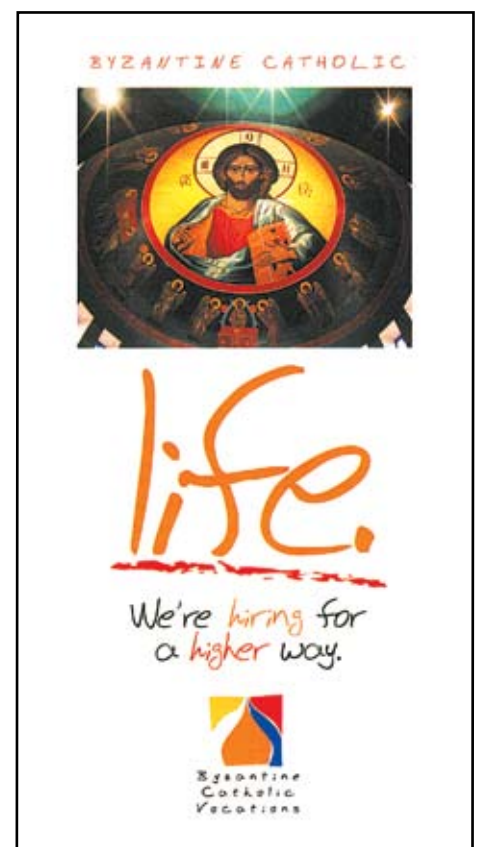
Offering informational brochures as well as her own friendly smile, Sister Barbara Jean also displayed a video presentation on the Annual Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the Sisters of St. Basil table. “It is certainly a conversation starter,” she said, adding that because passersby were intrigued by the images of Pilgrimage (especially the icons and the beautiful grounds of Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa., site of the annual pilgrimage and the Sisters' Monastery), it provided a perfect opportunity to introduce visitors to the Sisters' charism - the distinct way in which members of a religious community are called to follow Christ, and the way in which they live their calling.

Members of the junior and senior classes of St. Joseph High School, Natrona Heights, Pa. experienced many charisms firsthand. Not only did their school sponsor a field trip to the FUS Vocations Fair, but they also required the young men and women to engage in field work during their trip.

Father Dennis gladly shared his vocation story and answered questions posed by an enthusiastic group of young men from St. Joseph's as they stopped by the Archeprarchy's table. “How old were you when you first began to think about a religious vocation?” and “What attracted you to this particular order?” were two of the questions asked of the priest, who is also pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Lyndora, Pa.

“I was about your age,” Father Dennis replied to the teenagers. “I was a sophomore in high school when I really started thinking seriously about my vocation.” The attraction to the Byzantine Church was natural, he continued to explain. “It's in my blood, so I knew where I was destined to go.”

Attracting representatives from numerous states and countries around the world, the Vocations Fair for Priestly and Religious Life at Franciscan University is largest of its kind in the U.S. The Archieprarchical Office of Vocations is planning to attend the next fair, scheduled for October 2006.



The Archieprarchical Office of Vocations recently introduced a new display panel and informational brochure featuring the above design.