

# Vocations dilemma: 'Where do we go from here?'

IEVC, ARCHIEPARCHIAL VOCATIONS COMMITTEE MEET, ADDRESS MOST DIRE NEED

by Darlene Fejka

Meetings of the Intereparchial Vocations Commission (IEVC) and the Archieparchial Vocations Committee (AVC) convened at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa. on September 24 and 15, respectively. Engaging in common dialog vital to the future of the Church, both bodies focused on vocations efforts and strategies on both metropolitan and archieparchial frontiers.

The IEVC, which meets semi-annually, included in its September meeting discussion of the Commission's ongoing Vocations Leaflet Series, which was initiated in February of this year. The three leaflets distributed thus far – Consecrated Life, Priesthood

(Presbyterate), and Family life – have been well-received and useful to the ongoing campaign for vocations, according to IEVC members. Three additional leaflets will be produced and distributed, the next of which will feature the Diaconate.

The IEVC also welcomed Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM to its discussions. Sister Barbara Jean is Vocations Director for the Sisters of St. Basil Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province in Uniontown, Pa.

Chaired by Bishop William, Eparch of Passaic, IEVC members include Vocations Directors and Assistant Vocations Directors of each arch/eparchy: Archpriest Dennis M. Bogda and Rev. Kevin E.

Marks (Pittsburgh); Very Rev. Edward G. Cimbala and Rev. Salvatore Pignato (Passaic); Archpriest Dennis M. Hrubiak and Reverend Joseph Marquis (Parma); and Reverends Robert M. Pipta and Michael O'Loughlin (Van Nuys).

Members of the Commission are also scheduled to attend the annual convention of

families are not developing their spirituality to the fullest if they are not attending Divine Liturgy on a regular basis.

Citing societal changes and secular influences, Father Andrew Deskevich speculates that for these reasons "people just aren't as dedicated to the Church as they used to be." As difficult as it is to accept, Father Andrew infers, the unfortunate fact remains that most people feel that "we can't change society." Darlene Fejka reluctantly agreed. "We can't change society - but it's okay if society changes us . . . and we just accept that."

Sister Barbara Jean, who related frustration over the difficulty of uttering 'the V-word' - especially at youth rallies - muses, "So, how then do we call people to a vocation mentality?"

Educator Amanda Trapp, a parishioner at St. John the Baptist Church in Lyndora, Pa. and the youngest member of the Committee was a counselor at the recent Pre-Teen Camp held this summer at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, Pa. "The pre-teens had a whole evening about vocations. Deacon Luke [Crawford], Father Tom Wesdock and Sister Celeste [Strohmeier] spoke. It was so nice to hear them tell their [vocation] stories, and the kids enjoyed it too."

Archbishop Basil commended the AVC for their work and dedication to the vocations effort, and posed one final question to the Committee: "Where do we go from here?"

Action items include a replay of the "Called by Name" recommendation program (of which, reminded Father Dennis, Seminarian Will Rupp of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Erie, Pa. is a product); continue implementation of the "Harvest Helpers" parish vocations ambassador program; increase Church visibility and outreach via various print and electronic media, especially Internet.

The greatest vocations concern, however, remains the integrity of families. Says Amanda Trapp, "Reaching out to parents is important. Parents have to encourage their kids to be involved in the Church. Kids need to be taught to stop and think, pray and talk to God to ask what their calling is."

The next meeting of the AVC is scheduled for Monday, November 17. ■

“Kids need to be taught to stop and think, pray and talk to God to ask what their calling is.”  
– Amanda Trapp

## 'Seminary? who, ME?'

YOUNG MEN 16-25  
INVITED TO  
EXPERIENCE SLICE  
OF SEMINARY LIFE  
OCT. 24-26

The Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius is hosting a "Come and See Weekend" for young men ages 16-25 who may be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the Byzantine Catholic Church. The weekend begins Friday evening, October 24 and concludes Sunday afternoon, October 26, 2008, at the Seminary, 3605 Perrysville Ave. in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Activities will include sharing meals, recreation and liturgical services with seminarians and staff, introductions to the seminary program, a tour of Pittsburgh and 'dinner on the town.' Guided meditations on vocational themes will be offered and there will also be time for personal prayer.

Young men seeking further information or wishing to register for the Come and See Weekend should contact Father Jack Custer, Academic Dean of the Seminary, at 412-321-8383 x14 or Jackcus@verizon.net. Deadline for registrations is October 17, 2008. A weekend for men over 25 is scheduled for Feb. 6-8, 2009. ■

the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD) Sept. 27 – Oct. 2 in Denver, Colo.

At the meeting of the Archieparchial Vocations Committee, AVC Chair Archpriest Dennis M. Bogda presented an overview of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh's vocations efforts since the initiation of "Chosen from Among the People: A Five-Year Strategic Plan for Vocations" in August 2005. Director of Vocations for the Archeparchy, Father Dennis guided discussion on a number of vocations concerns, including family involvement, parochial efforts, effective usage of media, inter-office collaboration, and overall visibility.

In addition to Father Dennis and Archbishop Basil, AVC members present at the meeting were: Father Andrew Deskevich, Darlene Fejka, Sister Agnes Knapik, OSB, Dorothy Mayernik, Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchick, OSBM, Deacon Paul Simko, and Amanda Trapp. Unable to attend were Father Kevin Marks and Father Tom Schaefer.

"'Build praying families' is what the Holy Father said," quoted Archbishop Basil. "There are many, many broken families," he stated with great concern, pointing out that in many cases, children may be at church two weeks out of the month with one parent, and for the other two weeks are with the other parent and not at church. AVC members concurred that



### WEEKEND OF DISCOVERY

for young men  
16 to 25

Friday - Sunday  
October 24-26, 2008

at the  
Byzantine Catholic  
Seminary

Pittsburgh, Pa.



... he decided to go to Galilee,  
and he found Philip.  
And Jesus said to him,  
"Follow me."  
- JOHN 1:43