



# Aurora Christi

INFORMING AND CONNECTING THE CHRIST THE KING COMMUNITY

## Rector's Reflections: Looking Back on the Past Six Years

By Rev. Peter J. Drilling

Not surprisingly, as I approach the end of my six years as Rector of Christ the King Seminary, I am in a reflective mood. It has been a wild ride. No challenge in my 46 years of ministry as a priest has been quite like it. I thank the many people who have been supportive of me and of the Seminary in so many different ways. We are stronger because of you.

Where shall I begin?

A special joy of these six years has been working with our seminarians. I am delighted that the number of seminarians for the Diocese of Buffalo keeps growing, nearly doubling in the last six years, so that now we have 28 men in seminary training, including two in the college seminary of St. Mark in Erie, PA. May the growth continue.

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Fr. Peter Drilling became the President-Rector of Christ the King Seminary in 2008. Fr. Peter looks back on these past six years as he finishes out his term on May 31.

## Reflections

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Here I offer kudos to Father Walter Szczesny, who works so tirelessly and with such joyful enthusiasm as the

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Vocation Director of the Diocese of Buffalo.

I also am honored to work with our committed, hard-working candidates for the permanent diaconate and the women and men who study as lay ecclesial ministers. Collaborative formation for collaborative ministry is alive and well at Christ the King Seminary and its effectiveness is apparent throughout the diocese. It is a joy

that the Diocese of St. Catharines in Ontario also sends students to Christ the King Seminary. It has been a pleasure to work with Bishop Gerard Bergie, who is a member of the Seminary's Board of Trustees, and the seminarians and other students of that diocese.

Next, let's address the finances. The financial situation became strained shortly after I became Rector, when the world stock market took its deepest plunge since the Great Depression of 1929. But the Board of Trustees and the Seminary faculty and staff all pitched in to keep the Seminary strong. In addition, there have been so many faithful donors, who have helped with their financial support, including in the annual parish appeal, the special events (such as the Merrick Bednar Golf Tournament and the Curé of Ars Awards dinner) and the spring and fall appeals — all have been a great help! Thank you.

Within the last few years another important process took place. I refer to the regular accreditation review. Christ the King Seminary is accredited by two agencies. One focuses on seminaries and



*Ellen Koessler shares a moment with Fr. Drilling at the Curé of Ars Awards Dinner in October 2010.*

theological faculties, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. The other attends to all educational institutions at every level, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. It is a pleasure and a joy to report that both accrediting agencies have renewed full accreditation of Christ the King Seminary.

In August 2012, Bishop Richard J. Malone was installed as Buffalo's Bishop. Upon his arrival in Buffalo, Bishop Malone began to study carefully all that is happening at the Seminary, including the formation of seminarians for the priesthood, the formation of candidates for the permanent diaconate, and the formation of lay women and men

to serve as lay ecclesial ministers in so many various positions throughout the Diocese. Bishop Malone paid many visits to the Seminary in his first months in Buffalo. He saw that the campus is also a marvelous venue for diocesan meetings and retreats and workshops. As someone who has himself served on the faculty of a Seminary, both as professor and academic dean, and as a member of the Board of Trustees of two seminaries, Bishop Malone concluded that Christ the King Seminary is so valuable an asset to the Gospel of Jesus and his Church in Western New York that he wants to be sure that the Seminary continues even more strongly as we head into the future. I am happy to say that the

Bishop's announcements to this effect at various events have been met with enthusiastic gratitude and support by so many.

And now it is time for me to hand on the baton to Father Joseph Gatto. I know he will

lead the Seminary forward with great effectiveness. Many thanks to all for your support and assistance to me and the Seminary during my tenure. Please extend the same hearty support to Fr. Gatto. §



*Fr. Drilling presents the citation from the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, to John J. Hurley in 2012.*

*We need your support — to continue our mission of educating our future priests, deacons, and lay ministers. Please watch your mail and give generously to this year's Spring Appeal or donate online at [www.cks.edu](http://www.cks.edu).*

# Answering the Call

*By Michael Sherry, Executive Director of Operations*

Six years ago Fr. Peter Drilling, a philosopher-theologian and long-time faculty member at Christ the King Seminary, was asked to take up the responsibility for leading our institution during what was expected and indeed proved to be one of the most difficult and uncertain periods of time in its more than 150-year history. As anyone who knows Fr. Peter can tell you, it was not a request he relished as he understood, out of the gate, what it would entail. And he was not mistaken in his expectation. Unrelenting demands have regularly intruded upon his gift – his primary calling – to study and to teach others about the love of God in Christ.

Along with many others here at the Seminary, I have watched this man for the past six years bear the cross that his new role placed upon him. Most seminaries in our nation are struggling with vocations and finances; we have been no different. His stress and fatigue were at times palpable. It is no exaggeration to say that his faith, that is, his understanding and love for Christ and his Church, gave him the strength to keep himself and the Seminary moving forward. And because he did, the Seminary will continue with its mission to equip God's people for the work of ministry.

I had the privilege of studying under Fr. Peter back in the 90's. Over the course of these past six years I have had the opportunity of doing so once again, but this time in a different way. Much as the disciples were taught by Jesus, under the pastoral leadership of Fr. Peter I have been able to sit at his feet and observe firsthand the nobility and consistency of his life and actions with the teachings he first imparted to me some two decades ago. From the beginning of his tenure as President-Rector until now, I have been able to watch him exemplify that truth uttered by Jesus, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).

Truly, Fr. Peter has laid aside much of his life for these past six years in order to be obedient to the call placed upon him by his dear friends, the Church. On behalf of the entire Seminary community we offer our most sincere and heart-felt "thank you."

# Looking back and moving forward

Catching up with Seminarian Sam Giangreco as his pastoral year comes to a close

By Martin Haumesser

In a previous issue of this newsletter, we profiled Sam Giangreco, a seminarian in his fifth year of the Priestly Formation Program at Christ the King Seminary. At that time, Sam had just been assigned to Immaculate Conception Parish in East Aurora for his pastoral year, part of the program that



places the seminarian in full-time residency at a parish. We recently caught up with Sam to look back on his pastoral year, which ends in May, and to talk about where his priestly journey will lead from here.

"Going into it, I didn't know what to expect, but I was surprised as to how much I was learning and how much growth I needed," Sam says in reflecting on the

pastoral year. "I gained great experiences in teaching the children at the elementary school, and the parishioners have been so warm and welcoming, always giving me incredible, affirmative feedback on how I was doing."

Sam notes that Immaculate Conception pastor Rev. Robert W. Wardenski has been an extremely supportive role model who greatly challenged the seminarian to stretch beyond his comfort zone during the pastoral year. "Father Bob taught me to be a person of the people and encouraged my involvement in the parish," Sam explains. "He offered me ways to be more present to the children and teachers in the school, the parishioners at Sunday liturgies and so forth."

Among his many responsibilities, Sam taught religious education to eighth grade parishioners who attended public school, and he taught courses on the virtues to students in kindergarten through eighth grade in the Immaculate Conception school itself. Sam also continued to present reflections at Wednesday Mass, during what would normally be the priest's homily, and Father Bob was a great help in strengthening the seminar-

ian's preaching skills, pointing him to resources and books for guidance.

In addition, Sam acted as a facilitator for the parish's Good News People Program, a weekly gathering of parishioners who read scriptures, pray together and discuss their faith. Sam says this experience helped him strengthen his leadership skills in the parish setting.

Demonstrating the practical side of the hands-on learning experience of the pastoral year, Sam says his many duties helped him strengthen his time management skills. "I never really kept a calendar before, but I learned quickly how to schedule the many appointments involved with parish life," he says.

When his pastoral year comes to a close, Sam will be working in a hospital or nursing home over ten weeks in the summer, the next step in the Priestly Formation Program known as the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). At this writing, he has not yet received the specifics of his CPE assignment. Then in the fall, Sam will return to the Seminary for two more years of study that will include extensive academic studies in all areas of theology, another summer

The pastoral year offers a (hands-on) teaching experience that the Seminary cannot.

assignment, and additional field education experiences, hopefully leading up to Sam's ordination into the priesthood.

Sam says the pastoral year offers a teaching experience that the Seminary cannot, giving the seminarian a realization of what parish life is really like.

"The Seminary gives you the theological knowledge but it doesn't really click until you hit the ground running at a parish," Sam concludes. "I felt like the new guy in the beginning but now I truly feel I am part of the Immaculate Conception parish family." §



# SUMMER @ YOUR SEMINARY

## Dinner Lecture Series Returns

### **MAY 21 MARY OF NAZARETH: A FIRST-CENTURY WOMAN IN GALILEE**

*Presented by Sr. Marion Moeser, OSF*

This lecture will present the content of the New Testament that speaks of Mary of Nazareth. Additionally, recent studies on the historical, religious, and cultural background of Jewish women in first-century Galilee will be considered for further insights into the historical woman who was the mother of Jesus and spouse of Joseph. *This event is fragrance-free – no perfumes or colognes, please.*

### **JUNE 11 VEGETARIAN SPIRITUALITY: IS THERE SUCH A THING?**

*Presented by Msgr. James Wall*

Many of us have read about certain benefits of vegetarianism, but what about the spiritual and physiological benefits? Why would one want to become a vegetarian and how does one go about it? Experience a balanced vegetarian meal and learn more about the growing number of people who have given up meat.

### **JUNE 25 THE 75 YEARS WAR: PAPAL DIPLOMACY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

*Presented by Dr. Dennis Castillo*

2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the First World War. This was only the first of a series of conflicts which cost millions of lives and dominated the 20th Century. The lecture will examine the Catholic Church's response, from Pope Benedict XV in World War I to Pope John Paul II and the Cold War.

### **JULY 16 TWO JOURNEYS TO SAINTHOOD – MODERN PAPAL SAINTS**

*Presented by Deacon Gary Andelora*

This lecture will examine the life, ministry and legacy of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II. It will feature a historic review of their rise from humble beginnings to the Holy See. We will examine John XXIII culminating in the call of the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II opening the Church to modern times.

### **JULY 30 THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

*Presented by Deacon Don Weigel*

The Sermon on the Mount has been widely regarded as a “blueprint” for Christian life. What do the very familiar Beatitudes mean? What did Jesus mean by “turn the other cheek,” to love one’s enemies, to not take oaths or to not get angry? How are we to understand the Lord’s Prayer, and teachings on fasting, dependence on God, judging others and the “Golden Rule” in the context of the entire Sermon? We will explore the meaning of these teachings and discuss what it means to live them today.

*Dinner lectures are a relaxing way to recharge your faith. All lectures will be held in the Seminary’s main dining room. Dinner plus lecture is \$30 per person; lecture only is \$20 per person. Dinner is served at 5:45; lectures are from 6:45–8:30 p.m. To register, call Gayle Angelli at (716) 805-1438. Reservations are required.*

# CKS MATTERS:

## Goings-on at Christ the King

### SEMINARIANS TAKE PART IN CATHOLICS AT THE CAPITOL

The Justice & Peace and Spiritual Liturgical Committees conducted a Letters and Liturgy campaign on campus this past March.

For one week, the committees, led by seminarians Andrew Simpson and Rev. Mr. Bryan Zielenieski, had letters available for people to sign that were either in support or against the various issues that were to be presented by the New York State Catholic Conference and others to state representatives on Catholics at the Capital Day on March 19.

Over 90 letters were presented during a Mass in St. John Vianney Chapel on March 12, and those traveling to Albany received a blessing. §

### RECENT FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Dr. Dennis Castillo**, Academic Dean and Professor of Church History, presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association in Washington, DC on January 2, 2014. His paper was titled

"British-Vatican conflicts over Maltese episcopal appointments, 1936-1943." §

### ALUMNI NOTES

In December, 2013, Pope Francis named **Rev. Joseph R. Kopacz**, 63, as Bishop of Jackson, Mississippi. He had been serving as a priest of the Diocese of Scranton and pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania. Bishop Kopacz received his master's degree from Christ the King Seminary in 1977 and was ordained a priest in that same year. He was ordained and installed as Jackson bishop on February 6, 2014. §

A reunion is being planned for **Wadhams Hall** alumni, their spouses, and former members of the Wadhams Hall staff, August 8-10, 2014 at Wadhams Hall, 6866 State Highway 37, Ogdensburg, New York. Registration and payment must be received by July 21, 2014. For further information, call Rick at (802) 868-4840 or Michel at (802) 233-1638 or email wadhams@wellspringlearning.com. §

**Reverend Robert P. Ricciardi**, class of 1979, passed away on November 17, 2013.



Seminarians who were preparing to travel to Albany for Catholics at the Capitol Day receive a blessing from Rev. Charles Amico.

Rev. Ricciardi was pastor of St. Bridget Church in Cheshire, Connecticut. §

### SEMINARY RECEIVES BEQUEST FROM ALUMNUS

In 2013, the Seminary was awarded a gift from the estate of **Rev. Joseph M. Brozena**, pastor emeritus of St. Michael the Archangel Church, Old Forge, New York, who died in March 2012. Fr. Brozena, a 1958 graduate, bequeathed \$250,000 to the Seminary. We are deeply grateful for the generous gift from Fr. Brozena, and honor him with membership into the Bishop Timon Society, which recognizes those who have provided the Seminary with lifetime gifts of \$150,000 or more, and the Bishop Leo Smith Society, whose members have provided for the Seminary through planned giving, endowments, and bequests. §

### STAFF NOTES

**Sister Maureen Boyle, FSSJ**, died on February 12, 2014 at the age of 84. Sr. Maureen was a psychology instructor and formation advisor at the Seminary from the mid-70's to the mid-80's.

**Reverend Dr. Roger "Fr. Roger" Haas** died at St. John Kanty Friary, Clifton, New Jersey, on September 6, 2013. He was 72. He was under home-hospice care after a long bout with cancer. Fr. Roger was a professor of Church History and involved in formation ministry at the Seminary from 1992 through 1997.

**Sister M. Tiburtia Gorecki, FSSJ**, passed away on July 31, 2013 at the age of 91. She was a periodicals librarian at the Seminary from 1990 to 2004. Sr. Tiburtia also was a recipient of the Seminary's Curé of Ars award in 1998. §

## Bishop Malone Appoints Rev. Joseph Gatto President-Rector of Christ the King Seminary

**M**ost Reverend Richard J. Malone, Bishop of Buffalo and chairman of the Christ the King Seminary board of trustees, has named the pastor of the largest parish in the Diocese of Buffalo as the next president-rector of the Seminary.

On June 1, 2014, Father Joseph C. Gatto will take over the leadership of the seminary, ending his service to the more than 5,400 families of Williamsville's St. Gregory the Great.

"I am extremely confident in Father Gatto's ability to build on the resurgence of the seminary and its primary role as the local center for the formation of men for the priesthood, a hallmark of Father Drilling's tenure as president-rector, which will also be remembered for the growth in the formation of men for the diaconate, and the increasing number of men and women being educated at the seminary for lay ecclesial ministry," Bishop Malone said. "I am grateful for Father Drilling's dedicated service, and I look forward to the future with great anticipation as Father Gatto leads Christ the King Seminary in the development of new initiatives that will strengthen our diocese, our seminary and our parishes."

Father Gatto, who has served at St. Gregory's since 2006, is enthusiastic about his new position. "It is with much excitement and great joy that I accepted the opportunity to minister with such an incredible group of people at Christ the King Seminary," he said. "The history of the Seminary is marked by great accomplishments and I envision that the future will continue to be blessed as we respond to the ever-growing needs of our day to proclaim the Gospel."

Bishop Malone also repeated his steadfast commitment to the Seminary. "I will do all that I can to strengthen the Seminary, ensuring a vibrant future," he said. "It's a great blessing for our diocese to have such a treasure, a place where all Catholic adults can go to enrich their understanding of our own faith, come to know Jesus more intimately, and to know what it means to live out His mission in the world." §



Rev. Joseph C. Gatto



## UPCOMING EVENTS AT YOUR SEMINARY

(All events at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, NY unless otherwise noted.)

### **MAY 9, 7:00 PM**

Commencement

### **MAY 12**

Summer classes begin

### **MAY 16**

Parish Ministry Conference | The Rebuilt Church

### **MAY 30**

11th Annual Rev. Merrick Bednar Memorial Golf Tournament | The Links at Ivy Ridge, Akron, NY

### **JUNE 7, 10:00 AM**

Ordination to the Priesthood | St. Joseph Cathedral, Buffalo

### **JUNE 17-19**

Diocese of Buffalo Priests Convocation

### **JULY 6 TO JULY 9/11**

Directed Retreat

### **JULY 6-11**

Seminar Retreat – "Praying 'The Light of Faith,'  
The First Encyclical of Pope Francis"

### **AUGUST 25**

Fall Graduate classes begin

### **SEPTEMBER 8**

Fall Continuing Education classes begin

### **SEPTEMBER 27, 10:00 AM**

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate | St. Joseph Cathedral, Buffalo

### **OCTOBER 2, 6:00 PM**

Curé of Ars Awards Dinner | Hyatt Regency, Buffalo



**CHRIST THE KING SEMINARY**

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*Please join us*

**Rev. Merrick Bednar Memorial Golf Tournament**



**Friday, May 30, 2014**

The Links at Ivy Ridge  
12089 Main Road, Akron, NY

**SCRAMBLE FORMAT | ON-COURSE CONTESTS**

registration: 10:30 am | lunch: 11 am | shotgun start: 12 noon | cocktails & dinner: 5:30 pm

To benefit seminarians and students at Christ the King Seminary

Up-to-the-minute tournament info: [www.bednargolf.com](http://www.bednargolf.com)

For further information, contact Laura DeMizio, (716) 847-8373 or [ldemizio@buffalodiocese.org](mailto:ldemizio@buffalodiocese.org).