



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

August 26, 2014
Martyrs Adrian & Natalia
No. 51

To All Rectors and Priests-in-Charge in the Diocese of the Midwest

Glory to Jesus Christ!

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Alexander, *Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of the Midwest, the members of our Diocesan Council have agreed to ask all parishes of the Diocese of the Midwest to collect funds to assist our diocesan seminarians during the month of September 2014 — “Support Our Seminarians Month.”

I remember life at the seminary, and how much I appreciated the financial support I received from my home parish, which then was Holy Transfiguration in Livonia, and also from the Diocese of the Midwest.

Why is it so important that we support our seminarians, especially with so many other ministries and groups asking for our dollars? The answer comes from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians:

“And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him Who is the head, into Christ...” (Ephesians 4:11-15)

Of course, these words are applicable to all levels of parish life. But they apply especially to those who are going to seminary. We live in a time where traditional Christian groups seem to be declining in membership, especially in the industrial urban areas of the Midwest. Mega-churches seem to be booming

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in growth. How should the Church address these dynamics? A good seminary education is one answer. We need to show our appreciation for our seminarians and their families as who make the commitment and sacrifice to pursue this educational formation.

From my experience, seminary gave me the ability to properly understand and articulate the teachings and practices of the Orthodox Church through experiencing the daily rhythm of worship, education, and community service while there. It didn't prepare me for everything, but it gave me a solid foundation on which to build. It helped me to see that many of the modern issues we encounter today in our world are nothing new to the life of the Church.

My education enabled me to obtain a fuller understanding of who we are as the Church, what we do as the Church, and why. In between worship and course work I realized the importance they had in properly forming educators, musicians, composers, and potential candidates for the diaconate and priesthood.

What can we do during the month of September to show our financial support? We have many people in our parishes with good ideas. Whether it is a special collection, a car wash, bake sales, or doing walk-a-thons. I am sure you can come up with something that works for you.

This year we estimate 10 students will be attending our seminaries. Last year Support Our Seminarians Month raised \$18,693.90. How about we aim for \$20,000, this year? Take care, and may the blessing of the Lord be upon you all.

In Christ's service



Archpriest Paul Gassios
Administrator



Before His Ascension, Our Lord commissioned His disciples to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

SUPPORT OUR SEMINARIANS!

■ While all of God’s People are called to proclaim the Good News to those who would receive it, our clergy have been given the special task of “equipping the saints for ministry” by planting the seeds of faith and nurturing spiritual growth. ■ For three quarters of a century, our seminaries have devoted themselves not only to imparting *information* about our faith, but to pursuing the *formation* of those called to the ordained ministry. ■ Our diocesan seminarians have chosen a truly difficult and selfless path, especially in terms of funding their studies and related living expenses. ■ **September 2014** has been designated “**Support Our Seminarians Month**” in the Diocese of the Midwest, culminating in “**SOS Sunday**” on **September 28**. Please be generous as we join together to help lighten our seminarians’ financial burdens. ■ **All funds will be given directly to our seminarians!**



SEPTEMBER 28 IS SOS SUNDAY!

Please send your donations to the
Diocese of the Midwest
927 North LaSalle Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60610



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