

Consortio

INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

SUMMER 2007

The weekend of March 25th - the Feast of the Annunciation

Byzantine Chapel Consecration

The weekend of March 25th was a wonderful and blessed weekend for the International Theological Institute (ITI). The Feast of the Annunciation was the occasion for the consecration of our new Byzantine Chapel. His Beatitude Lubomyr Cardinal Husar

and His Excellency Volodymyr Viytyshyn, Bishop of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. Each bishop had sent students to the International Theological Institute, or had ITI alumni working for him.

His Excellency Bishop Klaus Küng, of the diocese of St. Pölten, Austria, came the evening before the consecration to welcome the visiting bishops. He remarked that Gaming has been an important meeting place for different nations because of its unique international character. The General Vicar for Catholics of the Byzantine Rite in Austria, Prälat Dr. Alexander Ostheim-Dzerowycz, concelebrated and brought the relics for the new altar.

Cardinal Husar remarked that the presence of these visiting prelates was a tribute to the success of one of the founding principles of the ITI – to be a bridge between East and West so the Church can “breathe with both lungs”

came from Ukraine to be the principal celebrant, and His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, who is the Ordinary for Byzantine Catholics in Austria, concelebrated. They were joined by seven more bishops: His Excellency Virgil Bercea, Bishop of Oradea Mare, Romania;

His Excellency Alexandru Mesian, Bishop of Lugoj, Romania; His Excellency Vladyka Milan Chautur, CSSR, Apostolic Exarch of

Košice, Slovakia; His Excellency Irynej Bilyk Bishop of Buchach, Ukraine; His Excellency Hlib Lonchyna MSU, Apocrisario-Procurator of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to the Holy See; His Excellency Mons. Milan Šášik, Apostolic Administrator of Mukachevo Greek-Catholic Eparchy, Ukraine;



Cardinal Schönborn and Cardinal Husar at the Chapel Consecration.

His Beatitude Lybomyr Cardinal Husar remarked that the presence of these visiting prelates was a tribute to the success of one of the founding principles of the ITI – to be a bridge between East and West so the Church can “breathe with both lungs” (Pope John Paul II).

In recognition of the importance of the meeting of East and West at the ITI, Msgr. Dr. Larry Hogan, president of the ITI, received his

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Christ giving Holy Communion to Saint Peter

A Work of Art that Teaches Theology

In the mission statement of the ITI, one of the founding principles is stated in this way:

“The second pillar of the ITI, also part of John Paul II’s founding vision, is its international character, its bridge function between East and West. About 50% of the students come from Central and Eastern Europe (the majority of them are Greek Catholic), others come from Western Europe and the Americas. This international character allows a genuine experience of the universal Church, which must ‘breathe with both lungs’ (Pope John Paul II) East and West.”

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bi-ritual faculties from Rome. This allows him to celebrate the Roman Rite Mass and the Byzantine Rite Liturgy.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, students came from Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe and the Americas to study theology at the ITI. With them they brought their different expressions of the Catholic Faith - both the Roman Rite and the Byzantine Rite. As more and more students came, the need grew for a dedicated place for the Byzantine Rite.

Three years ago, permission was

obtained to renovate and dedicate a special space for the Byzantine Rite Liturgies so they could be experienced in all of their beauty. The project was done entirely by ITI students. Ioan Gotia (Romania) and Fr. Tomas Labanic (Slovakia) painted all the icons of the Byzantine Chapel according to the liturgical Canon (Ordo) so that the chapel would express the composition of a sacred space according to the ancient tradition of eastern spirituality. The Byzantine Chapel in Gaming is the only one of its kind in Austria. Other

chapels in Austria that are used for the Greek Rite were originally built for use by the Roman Rite.

Bishop Irynej Bilyk, who attended the consecration from Ukraine and had worked in the underground Church during the communist era, thanked all who had made the ITI possible. He told us that fifteen years ago it was impossible for him to imagine that he would ever be able to gather with fellow bishops from different nations to pray publicly together. He begged everyone to treasure this gift and to pray to Our Lady that it would always be possible to do so. ✂

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1. Children greet Cardinal Husar and Cardinal Schönborn 2. Bishop Bilyk and Bishop Chatur at Vespers 3. Procession of relics to the Byzantine Chapel 4. Bishop Bilyk and Bishop Mesian 5. Visiting prelates with newly ordained ITI sub-deacon Vasyl Chepelskyy (in white) and ITI President Msgr. Hogan (in blue). 6. Consecration ceremony – “Bow your heads to the Lord.” 7. Sealing of the relics in the altar 8. Bishop Virgil Bercea 9. L. to R.: Chapel Iconographer Ioan Gotia, ITI Byzantine Chaplain Fr. Juraj Terek, Chapel Iconographer Fr. Tomas Labanic. 10. Chapel Iconostasis



A Work of Art that Teaches Theology

As more and more students came to study theology at the ITI, bringing with them their different expressions of the Catholic Faith - both the Roman Rite and the Byzantine Rite, the need grew for a sacred space where the Byzantine Rite could be celebrated. On October 1, 2003, in the Kartause Maria Thron in Gaming, Austria, a space was set aside for a Byzantine Chapel. For three years, two students of the International Theological Institute (ITI) worked on this space to transform it into a work of art that teaches theology. Through the icons, heaven is opened up to man. What you see in the chapel is there to be prayed.

In creating this sacred space, ITI students, Fr. Tomas Labanic (Slovakia) and Ioan Gotia (Romania), followed the old rubrics and traditions for writing icons – with prayer and fasting. Icons are said to be “written” because they proclaim what is written in Sacred Scripture.

The iconography in a Byzantine chapel follows a certain design and there are several different levels. Only the most basic levels were able to be included in the chapel in Gaming as the space was small. The challenge was to fit the icons into the space provided.

It took over a month to decide which theological images should be represented. Fr. Juraj Terek, the Byzantine Chaplain of ITI, wanted to make sure that the Byzantine Chapel represented the unity of the Eastern and Western traditions of the Catholic Church and the mission of the ITI, to bring East and West together.

There were many steps taken to create this sacred space. First, the walls were prepared to receive the paint. The existing coat of plaster on the walls was rough, so new, smooth plaster had to be applied. This process took one whole summer.

While the walls were drying, the artists prepared drawings and sketches of the icons on paper. Once the walls were dry, the iconographers redrew the sketches on the walls. Then gilding was applied to the icons. The gilding was mainly used for the halos of the saints.

Next, more basic colors were applied using egg-tempera paint. To prepare these colors, the iconographers used an ancient technique which consists of combining natural pigments with the egg yolk as a binding medium. This preserves the color and vitality of the paint for a long time. After applying the basic colors to the sketches of the icons, the artists started to work on the details of the clothes, ornaments, and faces

of the saints. This phase was finished in August 2006.

To complete the chapel, the iconographers painted several more icons on wooden panels to make up the Iconostasis. The whole project was finished in time for the Consecration of the Byzantine Chapel on March 25, 2007. (See *Byzantine Chapel Consecration* on Page 1.)



Preparing the ceiling, sketching the icons on paper and “writing” the icons



The Pantokrator and the Oranta



The Icons in the Byzantine Chapel

When you enter the chapel, your eyes are drawn to the ceiling and you behold the *Pantokrator*—Christ the Ruler surrounded by the angels. In the Eastern rite, Christ’s Glory is emphasized. This is the first level in the chapel.

Then, your eyes travel down to the next level, and you see the four Evangelists depicted: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Looking forward, to the Sanctuary, you are greeted by the *Oranta*—Mary the Mother. She prays with us and for us and offers us her Son.

Below Mary in the Sanctuary, you see an icon showing the Apostles receiving com-



The Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

A Work of Art that Teaches Theology *continued*



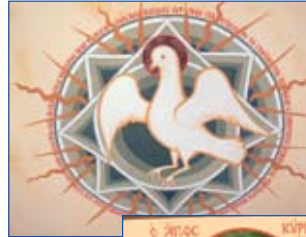
The Communion of the Disciples

munion from Christ. Christ is depicted in His full Eucharistic presence under the species of bread (Body) and wine (Blood).

In the center of the sanctuary is the bishop's chair. Above the chair is an icon of a dove that symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

On either side of the bishop's chair are two archangels dressed as deacons, symbolizing that they are serving at the heavenly altar.

Beneath the icon of the Apostles in the Sanctuary, and on the same level



The Holy Spirit and Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

When you come into the chapel and see these saints at your level, it symbolizes that you are coming into the community of the saints to pray with them.

with us, the Great Fathers of the East and West are depicted, showing the unity of East and West: St. Ignatius of Antioch; St. Augustine; St. Gregory of Nyssa; St. Gregory Nazianzen; St. Basil the Great; St.

John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Patriarch of Jerusalem; St. Josephat, Archbishop of Polock; and St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome.

Separating the Sanctuary from the rest of the chapel is the Iconostasis. St. Nicholas



The Iconostasis in the Byzantine Chapel

of Myra, Mary, Jesus, and St. Joseph are the main icons here. Only priests may enter through the front doors of the Iconostasis, called the "Royal Doors." There are side doors through which the deacons and servers enter, and on those doors, appropriately, there are icons of deacons. On the Royal Doors, there are icons of the Four Evangelists and an icon of the Annunciation, which is fitting as the Chapel is dedicated to the Annunciation, Mary's yes to God.

If you look towards the middle of the chapel and to the left, there is an icon called *Deesis*. It shows Christ in the middle, while John the Baptist is on one side proclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God", and Mary is on the

other side pointing to Christ.

When you look on the right side of the chapel, there is an icon



Deesis - "Behold the Lamb of God"

of the Wedding Feast at Cana. This icon was depicted because the ITI has a particular devotion in its studies to the theme of marriage and the family. There is a couple with Christ and Our Lady, and Mary is pointing towards jars of water and saying, "Do whatever He tells you."

The couple is shown wearing crowns because in the Eastern rite, the Crowning ceremony is the wedding ceremony. As



The Wedding Feast at Cana

you look towards the back of the chapel, you see the eschatological wall. It shows the history of salvation with icons of the Creation of Adam and Eve, Adam and Eve cast out of the Garden of Eden, the Crucifixion of Christ, and finally the Resurrection of Christ where Adam and Eve are being pulled out of their tombs and the devil is captured. In the scene of creation, Adam and Eve have royal garments, symbolizing that they are invited into the presence of God.

Beneath the eschatological wall is the entrance to the chapel. In the doorway you see an icon called *Emmanuel* depicting Christ as a little Child. In the icon you can see that the green color goes from light

to dark, symbolizing the fact that as a person studies theology he goes from the more well known to the less well known. As you study more, you penetrate deeper into the mysteries of theology. On either side of the entrance door there are two archangels: St. Michael and St. Gabriel.



Emmanuel - Christ as a little child



The rest of the chapel is filled with saints—depicted on the same level with us—that are studied at the ITI, or are its patrons: St.

Thérèse of the Child Jesus; St. Anthony of the Desert, Founder of Eastern Monasticism; St. Benedict, Founder of Western Monasticism; St. Theodore the Studite who reformed monasticism in the East; St. Demetrios; St. George the Great Martyr; St. Paraskieva; St. Francis of Assisi,

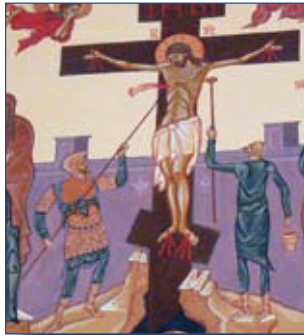
who represents the presence of Franciscan University of Steubenville in the Kartause; St. John Damascene; St. Makrina, the sister of St. Basil the Great; St. Thomas Aquinas; and Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavs. When you enter the chapel and see the images of the saints depicted on the same level with you, you realize that you are entering into the community of saints to pray with them.



The Creation of Adam



Adam and Eve



The Crucifixion

On March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, the chapel was consecrated. (See article on Page 1) Now it is not only a work of art that teaches theology, but a sacred space set aside in which to worship God. Words cannot express all that is contained in this little chapel. You must come and see it for yourself. ✂



The Resurrection of Christ



Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus



Archangel

It is not only a work of art that teaches theology, but a sacred space set aside to worship God. Words cannot express all that is contained in this little chapel.

First Chancellor's Council Dinner in New York City

The first Chancellor's Council Dinner of the International Theological Institute took place at the beautiful Lotos Club in New York City in February. Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Riley generously hosted the event. The evening began with Mass at the church of St. Vincent Ferrer, celebrated by the Grand Chancellor of the ITI, His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn. Sixty guests, including board members,



Chancellor's Council members, and other benefactors and friends came to hear the Grand Chancellor speak about the work of the ITI. The number of attendees allowed for an intimate gathering and much engaging conversation between the guests and the Grand Chancellor. This event was such a success that the ITI is looking forward to planning more! ✂



Cardinal Schönborn with Chancellor's Council dinner hosts Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Riley

Meet Professor Gintautas Vaitoska



I was born in Lithuania in 1960 at a time when the Soviet regime was becoming a little bit milder. In fact, when I was three years old, I won a lottery through my father and the prize was a book by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. The Chruschov era ended soon, however, and every free word was forbidden. Later, as an eighteen-year-old student of medicine and an atheist, I felt a hunger for the meaning of life. One evening as I watched a serene and beautiful

sunset, I realized that something was really wrong with understanding that sunset only as a random combination of mindless atoms. Psychiatry, since it was concerned with the depths of the human soul, satisfied my hunger partially, and a slow but sure journey toward God began.

After practicing psychotherapy for seven years, I went to the US to study theology with a focus on marriage and family at the John Paul II Institute in Washington, DC. There, my longing to be at least a little bit closer to the “last things” started to be fulfilled. For an “Augustinian” and a “Platonist” by nature, my journey to God fitted

well with the “inward” direction of thinking I was accustomed to in psychology. I owe much to my professors there.

I returned to Lithuania in 1996, and worked for our Cardinal in Vilnius for three years. In 1999, I came to the International Theological Institute in order to finish my license in theology. I was writing a thesis entitled, “On the Relation between Contraception and Hardness of Heart.” I was really happy when in the fall of the year 2000, Dr. Michael Waldstein offered me a position as the Assistant Professor of Psychology at the International Theological Institute. I currently teach courses on Psychiatry and Christianity, Psychology of the Couple, Child Development and Personality Formation, Homosexuality, Bioethics, Premarital Chastity and Dating, and Marital Chastity. I enjoy the fact that my studies in Psychiatry and Theology can intersect in my classes.

Since 2005, during the spring semester, I have also been teaching the Theology of Marriage and Family in Lithuania at Vilnius Seminary as well as at the Pedagogical University. During this time in Lithuania, I also practice psychiatry. I have a real passion for my first profession and the practical experience with individual patients and families allows me to feel “more incarnated” when I teach my courses in Gaming. While in Lithuania, I continue to work with International Theological Institute students whose theses I guide via internet and with short visits to Gaming.

I think our Institute is, by the Lord’s grace, a unique place to study, pray and love. We study the great masters and experience the “splendor of truth.” We see students’ faces transformed, teachers enlightened all over again

and we experience the fact that, “the leisure of contemplation,” to quote Romano Guardini, contains a “great power to transform the world.” On the practical side, I acutely feel that in our analysis of marriage, family, sex and culture, we are in the avant-garde of the New Evangelization promoted by Pope John Paul II. This is obvious from what our graduates do to promote the truth of the Church’s teaching on the family. This is also obvious from the number of children in our community. If you want to see the fruitfulness of Catholicism—and isn’t this the only hope for an ailing Europe?—come and see the chapel during Holy Mass. The leaders of our Institute have been courageously faithful to Divine Providence in providing the opportunity for students who have families to study here, with, I assure you, no harm done at the academic level!

Another precious aspect of studying here is that the International Theological Institute is the meeting point between the East and the West. We have students from Canada, the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Austria on the one hand, and Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia on the other. Europeans and Americans, those born in democratic countries and those who have just come out of oppression, have much to say to and to learn from each other. We have contemplative Americans and practical Eastern Europeans (the world is strange, isn’t it?), cool Englishmen and strict Germans—and poets from everywhere. This is our community. When you come back home, your love for *Deus et Patria* will be iron-strong after having passed through a real test. Come and see! ✂



by Aileen Coccia, *imprimatur* Mario Coccia

One Family's Journey to the ITI

Why would a family with four children sell their house and car and move to another country to get a theology degree?

The answer begins about eleven years ago. I read an article in the *National Catholic Register* entitled "Ascent to the Alps." It was about the opening of a new theological institute in Austria and a Dr. Michael Waldstein from Notre Dame University, who, with his wife and six children (at the time) were moving to Austria to help found the institute. The article elaborated on the students and their families—their costs, studies, etc. I remember showing the article to my husband Mario and exclaiming half seriously, "Hey, we could go here when you finish your master's degree!" Mario thought it was unrealistic and he was not very enthusiastic. He was studying for a master's in theology part time at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. He was also at the height of his career in pharmaceutical advertising working in New York City for the oldest pharmaceutical advertising agency in the country. Quitting, selling everything, and moving to another country was simply not an option.

A few years later, Mario was earning an excellent salary, and taking business to Europe and across the US. He even was able to transfer to a branch office in New Jersey only 20 minutes at rush hour from where we lived. Our home was finally furnished and decorated to my liking. We also attained true suburban status by owning a minivan along with our first car. However, those years were also the worst years of our marriage. We had three girls at the time and then a son, Xavier. We had terrible trouble with a colleague and terrible emotional trouble with our marriage. After a year's time, our experience enabled Mario to see just how precious his family was and how his career was taxing us all. Then, Mario's company lost a huge

account and in the end lost everything. Although Mario found another position, albeit with less glamour, his heart began turning toward a different direction. I encouraged Mario to finish his thesis. In a matter of three months the thesis was done. When he finally graduated, I said to him, "Now can we think about Austria?"

Mario looked at the cost of the ITI and our assets. Rising property values gave us a lot of equity in our house. Going to the ITI was suddenly a real possibility. We thought, "If God wanted us to go, Mario would be accepted. And if Mario got accepted, God will make it possible to go."

At this time I started making telephone calls to the ITI for information about home schooling, housing, and finances. Each conversation somehow seemed to be a "sign" to apply for admission. So, Mario completed the application and we began praying! Then, in March of 2003, Mario was accepted. We contacted a realtor, put the house on the market, and prayed for a buyer. For a while, it looked like we would not be going because no one bought the house. June came and toward the end of the month, Mario drafted a letter to send to the ITI explaining that we would not be able to come if we did not get a buyer that week, for afterward there would be no time to close the sale on the house. On Tuesday, a man came and loved the house. The next day, his wife came. The day after that, we had an offer! We then sold most of our possessions and donated some of our profit to the Church in thanksgiving for all God was doing for us. Our parents were supportive and actually proud of our decision. Everything went smoothly just like it was God in control.

The most significant decision, however, was not to study and move abroad, but wanting something else for our children and ourselves than the life we had been living. Up to that point, our life was somehow not going

in the exact direction the Lord wanted us to go. We wanted to serve the Lord and the Church

more concretely and coming to the ITI was an initial step. While Mario was studying for his degree, we learned to focus more acutely on God's will, on being a Catholic family, and on living out a Catholic marriage through the daily life and example of the families, students, faculty, and administration of the ITI and of the Kartause community.

It has not been a paradise for us, but as we know there is no paradise without the cross. Yet now, after four years here, we see how this has all been a real gift. Mario and I love each other and the children more than ever, and in a more real way—a true way. Our plan was that Mario's theological training would be for the benefit of others in serving the Church. God's plan was that the real benefit was for us, and then for others in our witness in living out our vocation in marriage and family. In a way it sounds stupid: We needed to sell everything and leave our family and friends for Mario to study theology, so that we could discover who we are. And who we are is the witness, not so much that Mario has specific knowledge of the faith. Our time here has really been a gift, free from the typical consumerist lifestyle, free from material distraction, free to grow in faith, free!

Why would a family with four (now five) children sell their house and car and move to another country to get a theology degree? By coming to the ITI, we found an answer—but that answer is still unfolding. Perhaps we will only truly know when we reach our heavenly home. ✂



Mario and Aileen Coccia and their five children.



Xavier on his bike in Austria



Focus on Recruitment



Mario Coccia, Assistant to the Dean

The International Theological Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of Mario Coccia to the full-time position of Assistant to the Dean. In addition to assisting Dean of Studies, Dr. Bernhard Dolna, with his duties, Mario will also be in charge of our new student recruitment effort. He has been asked to establish formal recruitment programs and procedures with the goal of increasing the number of applicants.

Mario and his family have lived in Gaming for the last four years while he completed the STM and the STL degrees, having graduated with the latter this past May, *summa cum laude*. During his studies for the STL in the 2005-06 academic year, he worked part-time on recruitment for the ITI. Last year, he was Dr. Dolna's part-time assistant. He thus brings to this new full-time position an intimate knowledge of the ITI and the needs and demands of recruitment.

Mario's experience in strategic marketing in the healthcare industry has also been a big asset. Prior to coming to the ITI, Mario was Vice President, Creative Director, in an agency that provided strategic planning to pharmaceutical companies. There, he developed a wide variety of marketing, communications, and education programs. (Please see "One Family's Journey to the ITI," page 7)

"God calls certain people to come to the ITI," he says. "This is the foundation of my recruitment philosophy. If our recruitment effort simply lets those people see the ITI as that to which God calls them, God will do the rest!"

A big part of recruitment—very powerful in its effect, very simple to implement, and virtually cost-free—is word of mouth through our alumni and friends.

Mario believes that the ITI is a supernatural organization to which business models apply only analogously. If the ITI's business efforts, such as recruitment, fail to seek what God is doing and to merge those efforts into His providence for the ITI, those efforts will fail—or worse, they will achieve something other than what God wants. He says, "My goal is simple: To find those students whom God has called to the ITI."

To increase the student body, the ITI will be targeting especially Western Europe, in addition to ensuring applicants from a broad number of Eastern European countries. Our incoming students this year are mostly Americans and Ukrainians, two nationalities very important to the ITI. Historically, however, the ITI has found that a broader national representation among its students only improves the ITI experience.

A big part of recruitment—very powerful in its effect, very simple to implement, and virtually cost-free—is word of mouth through our alumni and friends. Please watch upcoming issues of *Consortio* and your email this fall for more information from Mario on how you can help the ITI's recruitment effort! ✂

ITI Academic Calendar 2007-2008

Sept 3	Registration for Fall Semester Classes
Sept 5	Fall Semester Classes begin
Sept 8	Pilgrimage to Mariazell for the visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI
Oct 26-Nov 4	Semester Break
Dec 21	Last Day of Exams
Jan 14	Spring Semester begins
May 17	Graduation



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