

Archdiocese of Baltimore announces new directors

By Elizabeth Lowe

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John Romanowsky's life revolves around his Catholic faith.

"It gives meaning to every detail in my life," he said. "It is what has guided me."

Romanowsky, 44, is the new executive director of the Department of Evangelization for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He succeeds Paulist Father John E. Hurley July 1.



John Romanowsky

"I felt more and more called to engage in the new evangelization directly," he said. "I believe this is a vocation for me. It was a door that opened in response to what I feel the Lord has been calling me to, specifically to serve the church in what we call the new evangelization."

Since 2006, Romanowsky has served as associate director of the Office of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y. He is moving to Baltimore with his wife, Noemi, and their 1-year-old son, Samuel.

Once he lands, Romanowsky plans to ask questions and listen "deeply and prayerfully."

"I need to learn and immerse myself with what's there," he said.

Romanowsky plans to visit pastors and parishes to learn how his department can assist them.

"There's so many unique things to every parish community," he said. "I'm looking forward to getting out to the parishes and setting up channels of communication. This will be a process moving forward."

"I'm not coming into this ministry with rose colored glasses," he said, "but with a lot of hope and a lot of excitement, with a realistic sense of what the church is and the obstacles we face."

A native of Newport, R.I., Romanowsky, the second oldest of 10, moved to Nova Scotia at age 5.

He earned a doctorate in historical theology from The Catholic University of America, a master's degree in theology from the Dominican House of Studies, both in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor's degree in history and Russian studies from

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. The great-grandson of a Russian immigrant, Romanowsky speaks fluent Russian.

He has served as a program coordinator for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; staff worker at the Madonna House Lay Apostolate in Washington, D.C., Canada and Russia; and as program coordinator for Catholic Radio and television Network, Brussels, Belgium/Moscow, Russia.

"At the heart" of the new evangelization is the "renewal of discipleship, having a personal encounter with Christ that transforms everything in your life," he said.

In addition to Romanowsky, Archbishop William E. Lori has also announced a new director for the newly formed Office of Worship and Sacramental Formation and new directors for the Offices of African-American Catholic Ministries and Hispanic Ministry. Their biographies follow.



Ximena DeBroeck

Ximena DeBroeck began serving as the director of the Office of Worship and Sacramental Formation, effective June 2

Previously, DeBroeck served as coordinator of adult sacramental formation for the archdiocese.

From 2010 to 2013, she was an adjunct faculty member at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pa., where she taught courses with an emphasis on lay ecclesial ministry. From 2009 to 2013, she served an adjunct faculty member at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa., where she taught courses in pastoral ministry, scripture, spirituality and theology.

Additionally, DeBroeck's service has included ministering in the Diocese of Greenburg in Greensburg, Pa., as coordinator of faith formation and sacramental preparation for Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg; instructor of a diocesan-sponsored adult faith formation program; and as pastoral coordinator for the Archdiocese for the Ministry Services, USA, Lakenheath Air Force Base in Lakenheath, England, from 2004 to 2005.

The Office of Worship and Sacramental Formation has been created to serve as a primary resource for the archdiocese for the liturgical life and sacramental formation of the church. The office also works with parishes to provide sacramental catechesis for baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation and anointing of the sick. It also serves as a resource for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.



Sister of Notre Dame de Namur Gwynette Proctor

Sister of Notre Dame de Namur Gwynette Proctor began serving as director of the Office of African-American Catholic Ministries, effective June 16.

Previously, she served on the national leadership team for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, where she helped lead a broad restructuring process for seven provinces, and as executive director of the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence, Mass.

From 1993 to 1998 Sister Gwynette served as director of Our Daily Bread in Baltimore. She also designed and implemented the Christopher Place Employment Academy in Baltimore.

She worked with Bishop John Ricard, a former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore from 1984 to 1997, as one of the archdiocesan facilitators during the urban parish restructuring process and helped develop the "Fourteen Criteria for a Healthy Parish."



Comboni Missionary Sister Maria Mercedes Castillo Razo

Comboni Missionary Sister Maria Mercedes Castillo Razo began serving as director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry, effective April 7.

Previously, Sister Mercedes served as the associate director of Hispanic Ministries for the Diocese of Richmond.

A native of Mexico, she has served as coordinator of Hispanic Ministry and outreach coordinator of Social Catholic Services for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. She also served as Hispanic apostolate coordinator and as the outreach coordinator of St. Cecilia parish in Coatesville, Pa.

She has ministered in the faith formation of youth and adults and has developed programs to enrich the oneness of the Anglo and Hispanic communities.

In Richmond, she helped to institute the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' program "Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers," to create awareness and promote multiculturalism in parishes.

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