



The Good News

115 West Congress St., Charles Town, WV 25414 - 888-254-4238 X727 - Fax: 304-724-5017 - www.cdu.edu

A Publication for CDU Donors & Friends

Summer 2017, Vol. 1, No. 1

A Message from Dr. Mount



Welcome to the inaugural edition of CDU's newsletter. In addition to our digital newsletters, we promise to share the good news in our new quarterly newsletter.

As I reflect on more than thirty years of fulfilling a vital mission to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world, I am reminded of the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict at Catholic University in April 2008: "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News."

CDU's identity as a Catholic institution of higher education is to "serve the underserved in the Church by educating those who serve." What our graduates continue to demonstrate is their strong commitment to proclaim the Good News as an outpouring of their CDU education.

This year we are especially grateful to our mission scholars who have been recipients of scholarships CDU has awarded to Mission Dioceses. It is good for us to be reminded that nearly half of Catholic dioceses in the US are without adequate resources to serve the needs of their diocesan family.

Many dioceses do not have any institutional presence of Catholic higher education. CDU, as an online university, is a pioneering witness to the "effective and profound evangelization and communion" achieved through web-based technologies for education.

CDU grads excel and serve

Supporting student achievement is paramount at CDU, and it shows. In a 2016 survey, 100% of graduates stated they had achieved their learning goals. CDU measures effectiveness in many ways, but our most important indicator is that graduates and alumni are inspired to share with others and use their knowledge, gifts and talents in the service of the Church.

Unlike at other online universities, eight out of ten of those enrolled in the MA in Theology program graduate and receive degrees. Our 2016 MA graduates achieved an average GPA of 3.65, and 90% are serving in Church-related ministries.

Clarissa Hutcheson, a recent Master's graduate, shares her goals and CDU experience. "In order to experience Christ more fully in my life, as well as to share the teachings of the Church confidently, I needed more education in the faith. As a full-time working director of catechetical ministry, a wife, a mom and now a grandmother, I needed affordability and the flexibility of being educated in theology while living my life. Thanks to CDU, I was able to complete a Master's degree while fulfilling the multi-faceted vocations He has for me in this life."



The 2016 graduates in the BA in Theology completion program earned an average GPA of 3.63. Nine out of ten students enrolled not only earned their degrees, they finished in an average of 3 to 3.5 years. Most students who enroll in the program are either seeking a Church-related ministry or desire to study the Faith more deeply so that in the future they can participate in volunteer ministries in their parishes. At the time of graduation, nearly six out of ten students had obtained theological Church-related ministerial positions, and the others expressed the desire to serve in volunteer or teaching ministries in the near future. CDU is committed to successful outcomes for our students, the Church and God's plan. Share our good news.

Thank you, Sister, for your 50 years of service!

Join us in celebrating Sister Mary Margaret Ann's Golden Jubilee of Profession as a Sister of Notre Dame. Sister is CDU's full-time dean of catechetical programs, as well as liaison officer overseeing accreditation. We thank God for her gifts which continue to enrich CDU.





MISSION POSSIBLE!

Scholarships to educate leaders in Mission Dioceses

Many of the ninety US Mission Dioceses do not have local foundations or Catholic universities to meet the basic educational needs for faith development. Fortunately, CDU's highly credentialed faculty, with proven digital expertise to reach and educate geographically and economically isolated students, can meet this need.

Heather Kimmerly, a current CDU scholar, is dedicated to expanding the resources in her Mission Diocese of Fairbanks. She plans to share her MA in Theology education with teachers and families.

Heather currently serves as the director of religious education at St. Nicholas Parish in North Pole, Alaska. Right next to Santa's headquarters, Heather makes sure Christ's presence is known by delivering faith formation services to families, children and adults. The area is decked with candy canes and all the trimmings, but has limited internet, no cable and spotty satellite service. She uses town hot spots to study. Challenges are common in the Fairbanks Diocese, where a plane or boat is essential to visit other communities.

People who settle near Heather are diverse, non-traditional and independent minded. They don't usually take the well-worn path. She says, "I am bilingual with a master's in education, I never thought I would be studying theology." After experiencing a strong calling during a bible study about Moses, Heather turned over her life to God. "That's how I came to CDU. I have seen Dr. D'Ambrosio speak in Alaska before, and I can't believe I'm in his classroom now." Well-educated leaders like Heather are essential for taking God's Word to Catholics spread across 410,000 square miles of rough Alaskan terrain. Heather is studying at CDU to follow God's plan in the Diocese of Fairbanks.



CDU is committed to supporting underserved communities. The scholarship awardees are chosen by each Mission Diocese to fill its greatest needs. Mission scholars will join the growing number of CDU graduates who serve the Church throughout the world. Contact CDU to support the Mission Diocese Scholarship Fund.

July apologetic seminar explains key reasons to be active in the Church.

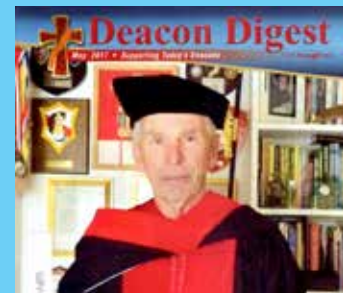
Many people today consider themselves to be "spiritual" but not "religious." Surveys show two-thirds of those who do not attend church believe that God exists and consider themselves to be Christian, yet they see little value in attending Mass. This likely includes some of your own family and friends. Learn to credibly, convincingly, and compellingly explain and share why we need the Church, the sacraments, and the Mass.

Enjoy the online seminar "Why Do We Need the Church?" with instructor Steven R. Hemler, president of the Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America (CAINA) and author of *The Real of God: The Layman's Guide to Scientific Evidence for the Creator*.



Enroll at www.cdu.edu today! This 3-week seminar is in progress. Join in!

CDU graduate wins Stephen Award!



Deacon Bill Smith, DMin., MA in Theology (2008), has been awarded the first "Stephen Award" by

Deacon Digest. The Stephen Award, named for St. Stephen, deacon and Martyr, is open to all 16,000 deacons in the USA and is presented for diaconal service.

Bill, a deacon serving the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, was selected for his service as a volunteer chief of staff of the Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative which serves California prison inmates and juvenile hall inmates in Los Angeles County.



Educating the Incarcerated

“Mercy overcomes every wall, every obstacle, and can instill new life and hope in others.”—Pope Francis

CDU has served the incarcerated church since 1984 by offering paper-based courses that feed both the spirit and the intellect. CDU’s expertise in in-depth, on-demand distance education is a natural fit and has proven effective for prisoners.

Many have taken inspiring continuing education courses that have deepened their relationship with God and provided a new sense of purpose.

Many of CDU’s incarcerated students have used their education to evangelize fellow inmates, spreading the Word of God’s great love to those mired in hopelessness and despair.

“CDU courses are a marvelous resource that provides me with the knowledge needed to serve the Lord to the best of my ability.” – Pierre O.

Some inmates, like Paul J., simply wish to share what they have discovered with others. “I have enclosed \$20 to help another prisoner access CDU courses,” he writes.

CDU’s courses have helped inmates to become chaplain’s assistants who evangelize and minister to their fellow inmates when priests and chaplains are unavailable. Plus, many chaplains are not Catholic. Contact CDU if you wish to support our prison ministry or know someone in need.

CDU’s Gala and Graduation Convocation Mass will be held Saturday, November 4th, at the Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel.

CDU is proud to announce our 2017 Founder’s Award Recipient, **FR. ROBERT J. SPITZER, S.J., Ph.D.**

Father Robert Spitzer is a Jesuit priest and is currently the President of the Magis Center and the Spitzer Center. You won’t want to miss the opportunity to meet and help us honor Father Spitzer at CDU’s Gala.

Former President of Gonzaga University, Father Spitzer is an amazing leader, personality, writer, and teacher. You may recognize him from “Father Spitzer’s Universe” or another of the 7 series he has produced for EWTN.



You have probably seen one of his many TV appearances on: Larry King Live (Stephen Hawking debate), the Today Show (debate on euthanasia), The History Channel in “God and The Universe,” a multiple part PBS series “Closer to the Truth,” and the Hugh Hewitt Show. He has published 8 books and wrote the online *Encyclopedia of Reason and Faith*. He has also authored many scholarly articles and made hundreds of presentations to learned societies and government agencies both nationally and internationally.

With his academic specialties in philosophy of science, Father Spitzer had an award-winning teaching career at Georgetown University, Seattle University and Gonzaga University.

Along his journey, Father Spitzer also founded seven major national institutes! Father Spitzer is a valued contributor to CDU. He designed the graduate course *The Evidence for God from Contemporary Physics and Philosophy*.



What are CDU grads doing today?

CDU graduates hear God's call. More than nine out of ten of our MA degree graduates are currently serving in Church-related roles, and more have expressed the desire to do so after they retire. CDU's MA graduates share their knowledge in a variety of roles that serve others.

Graduate **Tara Star** of Brockport, Pennsylvania, is a Director of Religious Education for her parish. Tara said that CDU did more than prepare her for her role, "The theological and Church history knowledge I acquired at CDU helps me run our formation program. CDU also made me realize the depth of faith that exists and has existed for 2000+ years, in not just my own heart, but in the Church. The connections I made within CDU have shown me the true charitable and missionary spirit of the Catholic Church. The Lord truly has opened my eyes, ears, and heart, to see, hear, and love like Him. My realization of that is all from CDU." Tara represents the majority of CDU graduates who share in the ministry by teaching others.

Melicia-Marie Antonio explains how her CDU Master's degree helped her teach others as a philosophy and theology professor for young, lay consecrated women preparing for their life of ministry in Monterey, Mexico. "I understate myself when I say that my CDU courses helped me become a better teacher: I often took my CDU notes into the classroom and taught from them! Even the writing and dialogue techniques I learned in the classes were transferred to my real-life job."

Today, Melicia is working towards a doctorate in moral theology at the Pontifical University in Rome. She says, "I can still affirm that my CDU classes were among the best I have received in my life. The professors helped me to open up my horizons and have confidence in my ability to learn." "They also stressed the importance of bringing theology to your knees praying about what you have learned and letting it transform you. These are lessons I continue to transmit in a variety of small ministries I help with and that I hope to pass on to my students once I have my doctorate and begin teaching again."



Melicia-Marie Antonio



Adrian Marcellus

Many graduates fulfill their mission through the written word and communications roles. **Adrian Marcellus** in Kuala Lumpur says, "As the guest editor of a Catholic Publication in Malaysia for 2017, my MA from CDU provides the necessary theological knowledge which enables me to faithfully perform my role." Adrian works for Catholic Asia News.

Todd Nolan from Ada, Michigan, is a columnist for the international website Catholic Stand. 17% of CDU grads work in Catholic media. Some graduates create their own platform, like **Diana Ruzicka** from New Market, Alabama. She authored the book *Apostolate for Redemptive Suffering*.

CDU graduates serve:

61% facilitate adult education, Bible study, or other parish ministries.

28% are directors of religious education or faith formation coordinators.

17% work in communications media for the Church.

17% are pursuing doctoral studies for advanced Church positions.

14% are teaching the Catholic Faith in educational institutions.

8% are Deacons or living consecrated lives.

6% are involved with prison ministries.

Paloma Cabetas of Silver Spring, Maryland, unites Christians as the co-director of the Focolare Movement of North America. Paloma emphasizes that "CDU has been an enormous help in my new role. In a lay leadership position that puts me in contact with very diverse people, my studies at CDU have given me a solid basis in Catholic Theology, Philosophy, and Scripture from which I can dialogue with others with a new confidence, better able to explain the tenets of my faith. CDU offers the quality education and flexibility that allows people with busy schedules like mine to advance their studies."



Paloma Cabetas

Robert Braswell of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, understands the Church needs the support and knowledge of volunteers. He serves as a volunteer member of his parish executive committee and pastoral council.

Not forgetting underserved Catholics, Dr. Araceli Lardizabal, from Atascadero, California, counsels Catholic post-abortive women, as well as incarcerated persons and their families. **John Alber**, a director in the Austin Diocese's Cursillo Movement, also reaches out to prisoners as an RCIA teacher in Texas.

CDU graduate **Deacon Gerald Roersma** shares his passion for scripture with the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan. "I learned a great deal in my studies, not only what is written in Scripture, and what it means, but more in-depth matters like how it was handed down, how it was understood in the

past, and how it is today. I'm grateful to my professors and CDU for the education I received. "They have certainly helped me in preparing my homilies," he said.



Deacon Gerald Roersma

CDU student gets creative to earn a Catholic Art Education

Jacqueline Renee Del Curtos had always desired a Catholic higher education for her mind and a technical artistic education for her hands. She enrolled in CDU's BA in Theology completion program so she could join the Russian Academy of Art Program in Florence and apprentice for 6 months with a Catholic artist, James Gillick, in England. CDU gave Jacqueline academic opportunity to earn a Catholic degree while technically studying art around the globe. She is now teaching art and taking on commissions. Jacqueline shares her vision for a recent commissioned painting for a mission parish in French Camp, California. It is called "My Good Shepherd."



1. Coat of Arms, Vatican City
2. Immaculate Heart of Mary
3. Official seal of San Joaquin County
4. Madonna lilies: a symbol of purity and innocence, representing the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
5. Beaver: tribute to historic French Camp Fur Rush, referred to as "castoria," meaning "beaver."
6. Peacock: a symbol of immortality and the Resurrection. Ancient beliefs that the peacock did not decay after death ultimately became a Christian symbol of hope in eternal life.
7. California Poppies
8. Hand Gesture: sign of blessing. The gesture containing two raised fingers gained popularity as a Christian symbol in art after Constantine's issue of the Edict of Milan in 313 AD.
9. Palm Branch: The palm branch evolved from an ancient Roman tribute into a symbol of victory over the bondage of sin.
10. Coat of Arms, Florence, Italy: tribute to where artist studied. The Florentine fleur-de-lis contains stamens interposed between its petals.
11. Sacred Heart of Jesus
12. Official seal of the Diocese of Stockton
13. Pomegranate: a symbol of prosperity and fertility in different cultures since antiquity because of its bountiful seeds

STUDENT PROFILE:

Aiko Foster-Sutherland is a busy mother, business woman and CDU student, pursuing her BA in Theology. She studies 7,630 miles away on the other side of the globe.

Tell us about where you live.

“Naha, Okinawa, Japan is a small sub-tropical island ... the most remote place in Japan!”

Why did you choose a CDU education?

“I chose to deepen my faith through studying at a school passionate about the Catholic faith. CDU is well-established and friendly for people who have a job. CDU’s professors are highly educated, eager to help, and keep my passion for God burning.”

Since you are in a foreign country, do you feel a connection or sense of community with faculty and other students?

“Yes, I do. I have been through different stages of my life while I have been a student at CDU such as a promotion at work, moving between countries, giving birth to my daughter, and starting my own businesses. It’s been very challenging to stay focused, but the faculty and other students have been inspiring to me. They are from different backgrounds. Studying at CDU helps me to realize God calls us regardless of our background and nationality. I met some students who are in the same boat as me, and they motivate me when I feel overwhelmed.”

What unique educational challenges are you experiencing in Japan?

“The population of Christians in Japan is less than 1%, so I don’t have a lot of people to share what I learn. It can get lonely sometimes, but being connected to other students at CDU helps.”

“I want to be used for God... Pray for me that I will reach out to the souls of Japanese people.”



Jennifer Vincent is a model CDU student whose passionate desire to deepen her faith overcomes the challenges of multiple priorities. Her journey was recognized with...

CDU’s 2016 Outstanding Student of the Year Award

While actively engaged in her parish, teaching elementary religious education, and nurturing her six children, Jennifer pursued her goal to earn a Master’s degree in Theology. Graduating with a 3.92 GPA in 2016, she immediately landed her dream job as a Pastoral Associate for the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory in Texas.

In her new role, she is in charge of multiple ministries. Jennifer says that coursework in sacred scripture and Church teachings has been invaluable for developing parish programs that address the needs of the faithful while staying faithful to the magisterium of the Church.

Jennifer recognizes that her degree has opened doors beyond anything she ever dreamed possible just five years ago. She credits CDU for providing not only an outstanding online program, but also a community of learners who support even the less technologically savvy students!

CDU graduate is ordained a priest

Rev. Christopher B. Etheridge, IVE, of the Institute of the Incarnate Word, was ordained in May 2016. Father Etheridge is the dean of studies at the Ven. Fulton Sheen Seminary and parochial vicar at St. John Baptist de la Salle in Chillum, MD.

“My experience in the BA program was such a positive one that it was almost natural to consider CDU as my choice for a Master’s program,” Father Etheridge says. “One of the great advantages of studying at CDU is that I know for sure that **what I am taught is the same truth that has been handed on and guarded by the Church for centuries.**”

He continues, “The integrity with which CDU aims to teach the faith was also a major draw for me, considering that in our modern era the devil works with greater subtlety. **Seeking the truth means seeking the fullness of truth, without compromise.**”

He offers the following advice to other students who are considering studying at CDU. “**The online format is certainly a great convenience for people with busy schedules, but don’t let that be the only motivating factor; see the eternal advantage to studying at CDU.**”





Dr. D'Ambrosio with students Christina Steele, Sue Ellen Young, and Mario Lanza at the River Jordan.

Students learn in the Holy Land

The holy places in the land where the Savior walked speak so powerfully with Holy Land travel led by Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio (CDU professor and New York Times best-selling author). Lessons are shared on location for ten days in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Carmel, Cana, and Galilee. Students gain insight into the Bible that can only be captured by being in the land. They learn about the Fathers of the Church, including Origen, Eusebius, Justin, Jerome, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Students come face-to-face with the Crusades and Muslim-Christian

relations as they learn about Church history and interreligious dialogue.

"This trip is a sacred pilgrimage, learning experience, and vacation all wrapped into one," says Dr. D'Ambrosio.

It's a spiritual journey leading to a spiritual breakthrough that can also be fun and fascinating at the same time," explains D'Ambrosio. Sue Ellen Young agrees, "It was an amazing Adventure that continues to bear good fruit!" The trip to the Holy Land includes sailing on the Sea of Galilee, climbing Mt. Tabor and walking in the footsteps of Jesus.



The Lord's Prayer is presented in more than 100 different languages

Participants trace Christ's path, carrying crosses to offer at the tomb. One can also renew the sacraments through baptism and confirmation at the Jordan River, marriage in Cana, anointing of the sick at the site of the transfiguration, and confession. Christina adds, "It was truly a mountaintop experience, a way to reignite the holy spirit in my life and assess my role as a disciple."

"Dr. D'Ambrosio was amazing intertwining Scriptural stories and insights from the local guide, who was able to bring the historical and cultural background to life. Learning biblical events and the parables made the New Testament come to life. It was the experience of a lifetime and so much More Spiritual than I expected!" says Christina Steele.



Learning on a boat in the Sea of Galilee

The next Holy Land adventure course begins on December 27

and concludes on January 6, but it really doesn't end. Your return will mark a new beginning - you will never read the Bible or participate in the Eucharist in the same way again.

Visit www.cdu.edu to enroll and explore Holy Land and Rome courses.



Dr. D'Ambrosio answers questions at the Mt. of Beatitudes.

CDU offers new courses. Visit cdu.edu today!



The Catholic Theological Tradition | Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio

Ignite your passion, curiosity and appetite to learn more about the Catholic Faith with a survey of Christian theology as it developed historically from the end of New Testament times to Vatican II. Examine several debated key issues in each epoch, meet some of history's most famous [and infamous!] theologians, and come to understand their sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary, ways of thinking about God. Master the chronological framework that gives coherence to all theological history and knowledge, while learning about critical moments in Church history. This new course includes 58 compelling videos, interactive student Q&As, an interactive timeline, selected readings, class discussions, and assignments researched and led by Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio. A comprehensive overview of the Catholic Faith, this **new course is a pre-requisite for a graduate-level study.**



Ethics | Dr. Aaron Urbanczyk

Students will explore moral philosophy and the concepts of good as applied to human action in the new undergraduate course Ethics (Phil 311). What does it mean for humans to live a moral life? Questions like this one will be considered as students read the primary texts of certain philosophical masters of ethics, including Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Kant.



Applied Catholic Spirituality | Dr. Carole Brown

Learn to apply the practical skills needed to enrich your spiritual life! Applied Catholic Spirituality will begin with the teachings of Christ recorded in the Gospels and explore the three stages of spiritual life, St. John Paul II's teachings on personal conversion, as well as the rich variety of Christian practices illustrated in the lives and teachings of the saints. This course is offered at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. This course is offered in our Fall II term.



Scripture and Salvation History | Dr. Peter Brown

Journey through the Bible to understand critical interpretive issues. Wrestle with disputed questions as you learn to view the Bible as a unified and coherent story with profound implications for today. Scripture and Salvation History covers the story of creation and the fall, through God's promise to Abraham, the covenant with Israel at Sinai, Deuteronomy, and the eventual collapse of the Davidic Kingdom under the Deuteronomic covenant. The course crescendos with the solution to the problems of the law in the Old Testament and the eventual fulfillment of God's promises through the person and work of Jesus Christ and his Church.

Thank You!

Sharing your knowledge with others, introducing us to your friends, and supporting us with generous donations enables CDU to serve our greatest mission to "Teach all Nations" by communicating the mind and heart of the Church online without limits, across the globe. We could not do it without You!

Stay connected!

Update your contact information to include your cell phone and preferred email address.

Get social!

Like CDU on Facebook!



Dive into one of CDU's continuing education courses this summer!

"The professor shared an amazing amount of information, videos, scientific facts and theological and philosophical evidence in the class 'Proof of God's Existence.' I have been blessed by having taken this course." – Elaine, Continuing Education Student

Did you know that if your parish is a CDU partner, your non-credit continuing education classes are subsidized? Please urge your diocese to become a CDU continuing education partner and share the joy of the truth with your diocese. Explore on-demand continuing education courses at www.cdu.catalog.instructure.com and register with a friend today.



CATHOLIC DISTANCE UNIVERSITY

115 WEST CONGRESS STREET
CHARLES TOWN, WEST VIRGINIA 25414