



# The Good News

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A Publication for CDU Donors & Friends

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## CDU's 35th Anniversary

The recent Feasts of the Ascension of Jesus and Pentecost are two great feasts that help us to contemplate the new evangelization and CDU's mission to serve the Church in fulfilling Christ's command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you..." (Mt. 28:19-20).

As I reflect today on CDU's upcoming 35th Anniversary I am struck by God's providence in CDU's history. As an institution established by a diocesan bishop in 1983 to serve the universal call to holiness of the Second Vatican Council through education and formation worldwide, CDU's unique instrument was distance education to accompany lay people especially, as well as religious sisters, brothers, and clergy, along their demanding paths of vocation and service. The remarkable stories of our graduates have demonstrated the power of the transformative encounter with God's word, using technology to connect teachers and learners rather than classrooms and campuses. We had no idea then that distance education would soon discover the internet, mobile technology, and digital networks as instruments for the new evangelization.

While CDU's method was viewed by many with suspicion, our talented students continued to enroll because they knew CDU was their only option to enable them to serve the Church. Today, not surprisingly, there are very few colleges and universities that have not jumped into the competitive world of online education. They have discovered what CDU has known all along: that in the world of adult learning, the online student experience has distinct advantages, especially in the field of theological education and faith formation.

CDU remains the only Catholic university whose singular focus and expertise for 35 years has been to serve students at a distance who graduate with hearts to serve and a desire to give back. In the words of Pope Francis, *"If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life"* (#49, *The Joy of the Gospel*).

Thank you for making 35 years a gift of grace for thousands and thousands of brothers and sisters throughout the world who continue to be touched by our graduates who have been transformed in the love and truth of Jesus Christ at a University "new in ardor, new in expression, and new in methods," the vision of St. John Paul II for the new evangelization in 1983.



## Don't Miss CDU's New Seminar

*Why Would a Loving God Allow Evil, Pain, and Suffering?*

Offered July 23-August 13, 2018

If God loves us so much and is so powerful, why does He allow us to suffer from the effects of evil human behavior, physical and emotional pain, and natural disasters? This three-week online apologetics seminar explores how the greatest Christian thinkers of all time have dealt with the problem of pain and the mystery of suffering.

Understanding the purpose of suffering should lead us to become better instead of bitter. As such, this apologetics seminar will support participants as they undertake the spiritual works of mercy to comfort the afflicted, counsel the doubtful and instruct the uninformed.



CDU students joined Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in April. Back row: Jim Brady, Lorrell Brady (student), Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Gerardo Parada (student), Lorena Parada. Front row: Eileen Kinsall (student).



# CDU’s DEAC Outstanding Student of the Year

Michael Grasiniski worked in account management when he sensed that God was calling him to a different path. After a long period of discernment, he matriculated at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

“After a year in the seminary, I wanted to finish my BA, but it seemed impossible due to time, money, and location. CDU was a true grace, and it provided the perfect opportunity to finish my undergraduate education in the area of greatest interest to me,” he says.

Class discussions helped Michael learn to articulate what he knew, which was sometimes more challenging than he expected. “A true test of what one knows is how simply one can explain it,” he says. “This became a great exercise in learning how to synthesize extremely complex thoughts.”

He now clearly articulates the interplay of faith and reason. “Both faith and reason are necessary, and they in no way negate one another,” he explains.

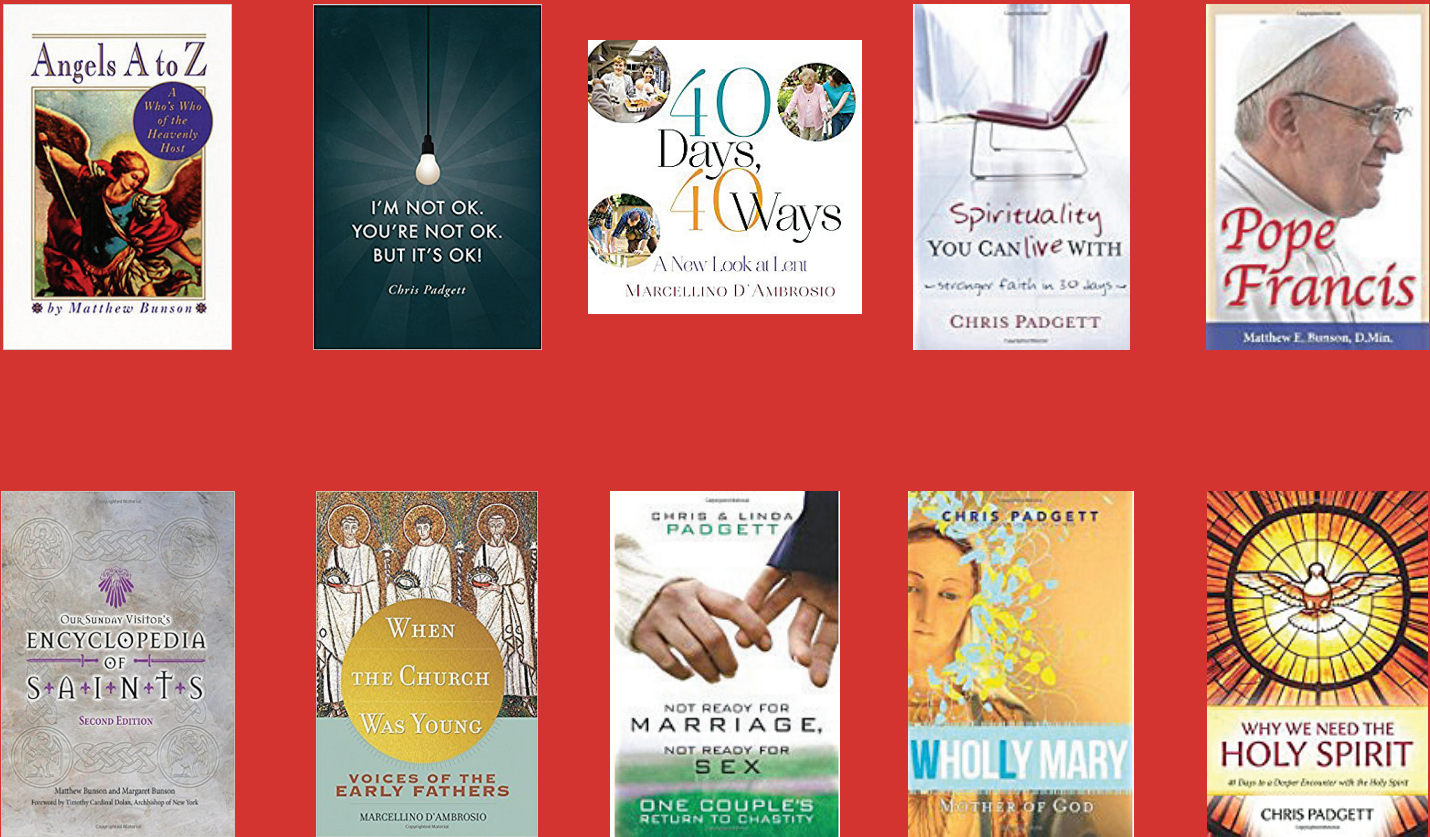
In an increasingly secular world, theology is useful in responding to contemporary challenges. “We live in a world where man’s fundamental identity has become lost, and it is the practice of theology that can respond to this identity crisis,” Michael says. “Theology explains the deepest yearnings of man’s heart and thus is able to respond to the many challenges facing modern man. *Gaudium et Spes* explains this perfectly in that theology, as viewed through the lens of the Magisterium, can answer the many questions that trouble man today.”

“I’m very grateful for my opportunity at CDU,” Michael says. “Coming from a business background, I can see the immense value a school like CDU will continue to have in a world that is quickly changing and lacking orthodox Catholic schools.”

Michael believes “We receive a vocational call from God to bring the light of Christ to others, and at the same time, this mission is a gift.”



# Summer Reading Books by Our Faculty



## Presenting Faith in the Modern World: Dealing with the Hard Questions

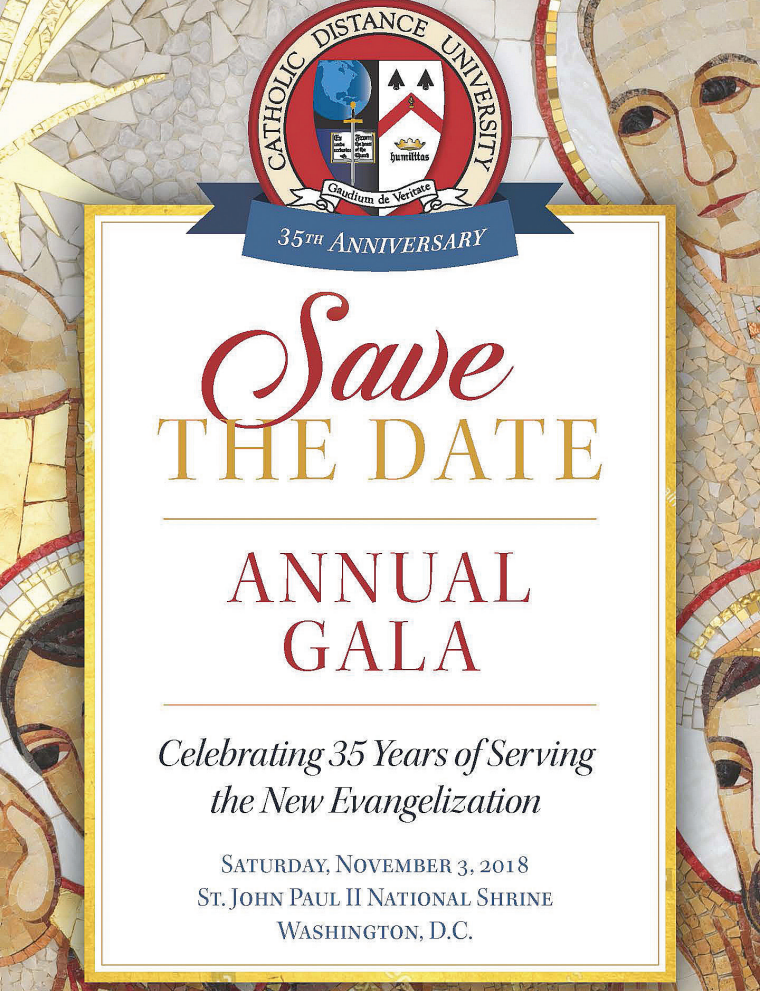
*“In a society increasingly marked by secularism and threatened by atheism, we run the risk of living as if God did not exist.”*  
–Pope Francis

**Presenting the Faith in the Modern World: Dealing with the Hard Questions** introduces students to the application of Catholic teaching to real life situations in contemporary Western society. Students will engage with both contemporary secular and religious views at odds with Catholicism and learn to dialogue pastorally and constructively with those who hold contrary viewpoints. Theology 440 and 460 is offered to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Enroll online at [www.cdu.edu](http://www.cdu.edu) today.

The course is taught by Professor Christopher Padgett, a lay evangelist, teacher, prolific author, and musician who travels the world giving missions and concerts.

He is a frequent guest on EWTN and has been heard on prominent Catholic radio stations and highlighted in several Catholic magazines.



## Graduate’s Research on the Message of Pope Francis Is Fascinating and Informative

Read the Master of Arts (Theology) thesis of Denise Spivey, *Pope Francis' Key to a Life of Witness to Obedience Is Mercy* in the new issue of *Digital Continent*. Readers will learn how individuals and experiences in Pope Francis' formative years shaped his mission and message of God's love and mercy. This fascinating thesis is just one example of the theological research conducted by students in CDU’s MA (Theology) program. *Digital Continent* is a web-based magazine dedicated to CDU's MA students and their outstanding efforts at amateur theological scholarship. Visit <https://cdu.edu/digital-continent-2> today.



### Free Webinar

Join CDU Professors Alissa Thorell, Steven Bozza and Fr. Bevil Bramwell on June 6 at 8 p.m. for a frank discussion with Dr. Matthew Bunson about marriage today.

With the redefinition of marriage, escalating divorce rates, rampant cohabitation, and wholesale confusion about what God intends marriage to be, today’s couples and families face many obstacles to living as authentic witnesses to the Sacrament of Marriage. Some are even asking if marriage will survive as an institution or if it remains relevant today.



# Graduate Shares New Revelations on the Shores of Galilee

Jesus called his disciples and performed many of the great miracles we read about in Scripture in Galilee. In 2009, an archeological dig along the coast of the Sea of Galilee yielded a First Century Synagogue where Jesus taught. Inside the synagogue they also found four high quality purification baths and The Magdala Stone, a discovery many archaeologists call the most significant archaeological find in the past 50 years.



The Magdala Stone is a central feature in the synagogue and it contains various symbols that scholars have interpreted as objects found in the Temple of Jerusalem. The Magdala Stone is a model of the Temple of Jerusalem, indicating the centrality of the Temple in the lives of Magdala's residents.

CDU MA graduate Jennifer Ristine (Class of 2009) is a consecrated woman of the Regnum Christi Movement. She serves as director and spokesperson of the Magdalena Institute, which was established to promote the dignity of the human person with an emphasis on women. "CDU gave me a good theological foundation and knowledge of sources that I can go back to again and again," she says. "When I have organized ecumenical events that involve persons from different faith backgrounds, I am aware of the basic fundamental principles that I want to transmit, that are universally common, yet rooted in revelation and essentially Judeo-Christian values."

Jennifer oversees tours of the site, integrating archaeological discoveries with history, scripture and prayerful reflections. In addition to conferences and retreats, she organizes symposiums showcasing the "feminine genius," inviting speakers across religions to show women's contributions to culture and often highlighting a woman in the Bible. The discoveries at Magdala confirm the already commonly held belief that Mary Magdalene was a wealthy woman. Several indicators of the presence of a higher social class or wealth have been discovered in the town. Scripture scholars have long agreed, from interpretations of Luke 8:2-3, that Mary must have been a woman of means to support Jesus and his disciples in their ministry. These discoveries negate the image of Mary Magdalene portrayed in popular culture: that she was a poor prostitute on the street.

As Jennifer shares her education with others, she stresses that "CDU isn't a mere intellectual exercise, the courses are meant to touch our daily lives. CDU inspires profound Christian living and evangelization of culture that's present in the values of CDU."

## Get Social



"Like" Catholic Distance University on Facebook

## CDU Alumni Update

*"We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly ... but encourage one another." Hebrews 10:24-25*

We continue to build enthusiasm in our alumni community and encourage one another on our faithful journeys. We hope all of our graduates have received their lifetime membership certificates, which were mailed in March.

The Alumni Association Committee wants to understand your needs and plan resources and activities accordingly. We are grateful for the valuable information received from the spring email survey and are eager to hear from more of you soon.

If you are a graduate who has not received an alumni association certificate or survey, please contact [Ahager@cdu.edu](mailto:Ahager@cdu.edu) to be added to our alumni communications email list.

As a faith-centered alumni community, we are stronger together. Reconnect with CDU today.



## Thank You!

Sharing your knowledge with others, introducing CDU to your friends, and supporting us with generous donations enables us to "Teach all Nations" and communicate the mind and heart of the Church online across the globe. We are grateful because we cannot fulfill His Plan without you!