



# The Good News

300 South George Street, Charles Town, WV 25414 ♦ 1-888-254-4CDU ♦ [www.cdu.edu](http://www.cdu.edu)

The mission of Catholic Distance University is to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world. Using distance education, the university educates teachers and learners worldwide in Catholic theology, the liberal arts, and faith development for the growth of faith, ecclesial service, and leadership for the New Evangelization.

A Publication for CDU Donors & Friends

February 2020

## From Our President

The start of a new year should begin with hearts full of gratitude for the many graces of the previous year that have helped build great hope for our dreams in the new year. Our dreams for 2020 began with a move January 15 to a larger campus in Charles Town to accommodate a growing staff and services to a growing student body.

One of the most significant additions is a new chapel and a chaplain assigned to CDU from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Father Cody Ford, who will offer Mass for the staff and help to strengthen our identity as a Catholic university. For those of us who have worked at CDU for many years, it was a welcome sight to unveil the altar donated by Bishop Welsh from the Diocese of Allentown in 1994 and the tabernacle donated by the Vice-rector of Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1995.



As many of our students know, the university will host evaluators in March for full programmatic accreditation in theology by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission, our regional accreditor in Chicago, for full regional accreditation in April. We have been working toward these goals for five years while continuing to maintain the accreditation standards of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, our long-time national accreditor since 1986. Students and alumni will participate in these upcoming visits to help ensure accreditors of the quality of a CDU education that meets all the standards of each accreditor and fulfills a beautiful mission that is part of the new evangelization. Our students inspire us to achieve these credentials and confirm their historic accomplishments.

These visits have a historical dimension that has been a driving force among the CDU community, especially the leadership of the Board of Trustees. CDU is the only independent, nonprofit Catholic university that was founded to do distance education exclusively in 1983 and continues that tradition through our fully online programs today.

It reminds me of a compliment by Archbishop Christophe Pierre (Papal Nuncio) who reminded us last year at the 2019 Gala that CDU has broken new ground in education by using technology exclusively for 36 years to reach the underserved with theological education and catechetical formation. As he said, we cannot continue to do things the way we have always done them.

We are praying that 2020 will be the year that CDU breaks new ground as a full regionally and programmatically accredited Catholic university serving students globally, exclusively, and fully online. Please join us with your prayers and continuing resources to help fulfill this dream for CDU and for the Church.

## New Address

CDU has moved to a larger campus. Please note our new address:

**300 South George Street  
Charles Town, WV 25414**

Phone and email contact information remains unchanged. You can continue to reach us at 304-724-5000 or [cdu@cdu.edu](mailto:cdu@cdu.edu). Stay connected with CDU! Share your news and update your contact information to include your cell phone and preferred email address. It's easy, just visit <https://cdu.edu/stay-connected/>.

## Meet CDU's New Chaplain!

We welcome our new Chaplain, Rev. Cody Ford. Father Cody will be offering Mass in our new onsite chapel every Thursday. Father is an associate pastor of St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town, WV.



**Are You a Follower? CDU has 6,200 followers on Facebook. If you are not one of them, please join us for important announcements and daily Bible verses you should know and love.**



### Dr. Josh Hood Named Digital Humanities Fellow

Congratulations to long-time Greek and Latin professor Dr. Josh Hood for being named a partial fellow in the Digital Humanities at Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute for the upcoming semester. Dr. Hood received the fellowship for his excellence in teaching ancient languages and skill in teaching online. Digital Humanities is a long-running, many faceted project to use modern computing, databases, and interactive software to improve and modernize teaching and research in humanities and humanities-related fields including theology, philosophy, and ancient languages.

### Pronto Takes Communication to the Next Level

To facilitate communications between students, faculty, and alumni, CDU is adding Pronto, an app that works with Canvas, to move discussion forums directly to smartphones. Pronto is an interactive application that can function like text messages, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Periscope live-streaming all rolled into one. CDU students will soon also be able to form their own interactive groups for focused communication in particular areas of interest.

## CDU ranks among the best!

According to Online Schools Report released in January 2020, online education is getting bigger and better—and giving traditional college campuses a run for their money. Leading education researchers have predicted that online education will surpass traditional learning within a decade.

In addition, theology is a popular online degree. There are over 50 bachelor's and 50 master's degrees offered online. Online Schools Report ranked the top MA theology degrees available today using six data points to determine the quality of the online program. Three data points focus on the quality of the school, and three

focus on the quality of the individual program. OSR included these programs in the ranking because their students graduate with minimal debt and have a great support system while in school. These schools are dedicated to delivering a quality theology degree online.

Out of all the accredited Christian theology schools, CDU's MA Theology degree ranked #11. CDU is the second top Catholic theology program offered online. CDU is ranked before University of Dallas (#17), Liberty University (#19), St. Joseph's College of Maine (#23), and Franciscan University of Steubenville (#31).

.....  
**Out of all the accredited Christian theology schools, CDU's MA Theology degree ranked #11. CDU is the second top Catholic theology program offered online.**  
.....



### Faculty Members Attend Conference

Four faculty members, Dr. Peter Brown, Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Dr. James Kruggel, and Prof. Steven Najera, traveled to lovely San Diego, California, to attend the annual joint conference of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion. The conference pro-

vided an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, friends, and peers from other universities and to hear presentations from professors all around the world on the latest developments in Biblical and theological scholarship.



## Dr. Marie Nuar Promoted to Faculty Chair

In January, faculty member Dr. Marie Nuar returned from Rome to begin working at CDU full time as faculty chair, a role that combines teaching and administrative responsibilities. Dr. Nuar has spent over 11 years overseas, living mostly in Rome and Cairo and Old City Jerusalem.

She holds a doctorate in Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome, an MA in Theology and Christian Ministry from Franciscan University of Steubenville, an MA in Jewish Studies from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and an STL in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Dr. Nuar also has a license in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome and is proficient in Arabic.

“I really like the interaction and sharing what I have learned with students. To me, learning information without sharing it is like a lake that has an inflow but no outflow. It becomes stagnant and in the extreme, dead, like the Dead Sea,” says Dr. Nuar.

Dr. Nuar taught as an adjunct professor of theology at St. John’s University, Rome campus and as an adjunct professor for The

Catholic University of America’s Rome campus. She also enjoyed working as a guide for the excavations beneath St. Peter’s Basilica.

With expertise in Judaism, Islam and Christianity, she says, “the details can make a large difference. For instance, all three religions would posit that the world and humans are created by a benevolent God, that there are objective standards that he puts forth for what is right and wrong, that human beings have freedom to follow these standards or not, but that they will be judged accordingly.”

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**“I really like the interaction  
and sharing what I have learned  
with students.”**

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

“The difference lies in Christianity’s belief in the Incarnation,” she explains. “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that He, made man, might make men gods” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc. 57, 1-4*.) She adds, “And that makes all the difference.”

### Planned Giving

**As you review your tax and estate plans for 2020 and the future, please consider making a charitable rollover gift from your IRA. Stock or mutual fund transfers are also a tax-beneficial way to donate. Contact your advisor or Annie Hager at [ahager@cdu.edu](mailto:ahager@cdu.edu) for more information on these advantages. CDU is grateful for your support.**

## Course Update

SCRPT 662 The Synoptic Gospels has been updated with newly written lectures, audio lectures, and online discussions.

This course, taught by Father John Worgul, offers an in-depth study of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke that present the life, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. The course also explores the differences in these three gospels. CDU is committed to continuously improving curriculum for its students.

## CDU Pursues ATS Accreditation

Catholic Distance University is hosting a comprehensive evaluation visit for initial accreditation by the ATS Commission on Accrediting from March 16 to 19, 2020. The purpose of this visit is to verify that the school meets all applicable Commission Standards of Accreditation.\* Comments regarding how well the school meets those standards and/or demonstrates educational quality may be sent to the ATS Director of Commission Information Services ([accrediting@ats.edu](mailto:accrediting@ats.edu) or 412-788-6505) at least two weeks before the visit. Comments may also be sent to Mary Kate White, Director of Communications ([mwhite@cdu.edu](mailto:mwhite@cdu.edu) or 304-724-5000, ext. 717). All comments will be shared with the onsite evaluation committee. To read the standards, access this URL: [\\*https://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/standards-of-accreditation-161130.pdf#page=bookmarks](https://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/standards-of-accreditation-161130.pdf#page=bookmarks)

## Dr. Gara's Biology Course Promotes Faithful Teachings

We are excited to welcome Dr. Catherine Gara to the faculty as an undergraduate biology professor. Dr. Gara holds a doctorate in biology from The Johns Hopkins University. She is a freelance science writer who specializes in "translating" scientific research into lay language. She also has a broad range of professional and volunteer teaching experience from the elementary to undergraduate levels. In March 2019, Dr. Gara will teach General Biology, a course that will combine an exploration into the order and complexity of living beings by studying the

continuum of life's components from molecules to organisms. She will do this in a manner that is mindful of the dictum of Augustine and Aquinas that God is known not only through the Book of Revelation but through the book of nature as well.



Appropriate attention will be given to the theological ramifications of topics, including evolution and assisted reproductive technologies. Students who complete this course will be able to apply their knowledge to better understand their moral dimensions and gain a new appreciation for the world around them.

### New Part-time Staff Members Are Welcomed

Please join us in welcoming Mrs. Kathleen Mallow-Sager, who is now assisting CDU part-time in graphic design and website support. Kathleen holds an MFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MA in Teaching from Mount St. Mary's University.

Mary McKay, a 2018 CDU MA in Theology graduate, is now engaging and supporting our students as an additional student life coordinator. Married for almost 43 years, Mary has 4 adult children and 6 grandchildren and volunteers in a variety of adult faith formation endeavors at two different parishes.



Mary McKay

"CDU prepared me well to serve the New Evangelization," she says.

**Thank you!** Sharing your knowledge with others, praying for us, 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!

### Gala Fun!

The Gala on November 16, 2019, at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C., was a huge success. We are thrilled that you celebrated with us. More than 250 of our friends and supporters gathered to honor The Most Reverend Christophe Pierre, the Diocese of Brooklyn, and our graduates. If you missed seeing the photos, visit <http://cdugala2019.shutterfly.com/>. You can download photos without charge. Call Annie at 443-257-6022 for assistance. We hope you are making plans to join us at our 2020 Gala. Look for the "save the date" announcement soon.

