

# 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

November 2020

## From Our President

While this has been a very challenging year and the future is still unclear, for CDU there have been bright lights, as only those with faith discover that God always brings greater good from suffering.

One obvious effect of the pandemic for CDU has been the recognition of online education as another fully effective form of higher education. While it has not been the standard model in the United States, all institutions have been forced to embrace it, and many more students and parents are discovering the benefits of distance education. While we continue to work hard to improve our marketing and admissions, we are seeing significant growth in new students and enrollments. Our marketing is emphasizing our history as pioneers in this field and our 20 years of experience in online education.

We were approached after Easter by the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) to partner in offering a four-week course to faculty on how to teach effectively online. We are now in our fourth series of classes, working with faculty from five Catholic universities in Lebanon. What a privilege for us to work with highly credentialed faculty who are hungry to improve their teaching effectiveness with distance education. The international faculty show great enthusiasm for distance education and their hope that it can be incorporated into their universities permanently. We all agree that hybrid instructional models are the ideal solution for the future. Without the pandemic, I doubt we would see such growth in the practice and endorsement of distance education.

Another significant endorsement of CDU's model came in early June when the Association of Theological Schools fully accredited CDU as the first exclusively online university accredited by ATS. More and more ATS-accredited schools are adding distance education, but CDU has now made history with ATS.

The 2020 Gala has turned out to be a very different kind of annual fundraiser. While we were planning to honor Bishop Barron with the Founders Award, the pandemic forced us to cancel the Gala because of restrictions on large gatherings in Washington, D.C. Bishop Barron has graciously agreed to join us in person on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at the St. John Paul II National Shrine. Professor Helen Alvaré has graciously agreed to postpone her service as emcee and mistress of ceremonies until then as well. In the meantime, we need your support for 2020. The Gala is a major fundraising event for the University. Please consider a sacrificial gift this year.



Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

## Former Faculty Member Joins NCCL Board

The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) has named Director of the Diocese of Portland's Office of Lifelong Faith Formation, Lori Dahlhoff, EdD, to its board of directors. Dahlhoff, who has more than 20 years of experience in catechetical ministry at the parish, diocesan, and national levels, has served the diocese in her current position since 2017. Prior to her arrival in Maine, she served as an adjunct faculty member at CDU. She designed and instructed an online graduate course titled "Principles of Catholic Education." Join us in congratulating Lori and praying for her in her new role.

Faculty and Staff participated in an Ignatian meditation retreat at the San Damiano Spiritual Center in White Post, Virginia, on September 28th. CDU Professor Dr. Carole Brown, Director of the Sioux Spiritual Center in South Dakota, did a masterful job creating and leading the program.



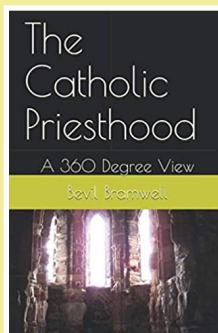


## Pope Francis Honors Board Member

On September 19th Pope Francis honored CDU Board member Theodore J. Musco with the Papal Bene Merenti Medal for longtime service to the People of God of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Musco now serves as Vice President of RENEW International, a ministry that revitalizes spirituality in millions of Catholics through small group programs. Join us in congratulating Ted for his papal recognition and new role in serving the Church.

## The Catholic Priesthood: A 360 Degree View

Professor Rev. Bevil Bramwell, OMI, has published a new graduate textbook on the philosophical and theological aspects of the priesthood. The bishops and their assistants, the priests, participate to different degrees in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This book focuses more on the priest, exploring the rich and profound theological background of the priesthood as well as the shattering distraction of scandal. The liturgy, spirituality, the intellectual life, and even the life of Saint John Vianney, the Patron of Pastors, are also covered. *The Catholic Priesthood: A 360 Degree View* can be purchased on Amazon.com.



## The Pandemic Will Not Stop CDU's Remarkable Progress

While demand increases for distance learning programs, ministries to the underserved are exploding, and university enrollments continue to grow, CDU has been forced to cancel the 2020 Gala because of safety concerns in the Washington, D.C. Though we cannot hold our biggest fundraising event of the year, we cannot cancel the needs of those we serve. We need your help now more than ever to keep this great work going. We aim to raise \$200,000 by the end of November through our Overcoming the Pandemic Together Appeal. We also hope you will attend the 2021 Gala, when we honor Bishop Robert Barron.

During the most productive and challenging year in the University's 37-year history, CDU has made remarkable progress

**During the most productive and challenging year in the University's 37-year history, CDU has made remarkable progress and won new recognition as a pioneer and leader in online education.**

and won new recognition as a pioneer and leader in online education. CDU's graduate school was accredited this spring by the Association of Theological Schools. Through a partnership with the International Federation of Catholic Universities based in Paris, CDU is training international faculty to teach online. CDU is also partnering with

Father Robert Spitzer, SJ, and the Magis Institute to certify Catholic school teachers in science-based apologetics to help counter secular confusion about God and science. CDU is also partnering with Catholic Faith Technologies to offer affordable online catechist certificate programs. Please join us in supporting our Overcoming the Pandemic Together Appeal. To donate, visit [cd�.edu/donate](http://cd�.edu/donate) today.

## Student Helps Lead Pandemic Response at Hard-Hit Hospital

Charles Aviles of the Bronx, New York, is working toward his AA degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Catholic Studies while working as the director of life safety, fire safety, and emergency management for Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, which has experienced significant loss of life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lincoln Hospital serves one of the poorest communities in the USA and has the third busiest emergency room in the nation. Charles served as the incident commander during the pandemic, working in the command center, and was then infected with COVID-19 and out of work for 15 days. Upon returning to work, he headed the Mass Fatality Program, where he tried to handle all of the decedents in a dignified manner during very difficult circumstances.

Charles has been married for 30 years and has four children. He has completed 11 courses in just over 2 years. Charles' path

to Theology began when he took catechist courses through the Archdiocese of New York after learning about CDU on the archdiocesan website. "I have ministered for the confirmation class, RCIA, and a Bible study in my parish," he says. Currently 53 years old, he will be eligible for retirement in 5 years as a NYC worker. "My goal is to earn my Master's degree by the time I retire and then work for the Archdiocese of New York in some capacity, hopefully teaching theology," he says. Charles would also like to join the diaconate program at some point.

"CDU has been an incredible blessing for me," he says. "The flexible programs have allowed me to manage a very high level position in the hospital with an enormous amount of responsibility. I work long hours and 6-7 days a week, sometimes 16 hour days because of staff shortages. It would be impossible for me to earn a degree in a classroom environment."





## New Courses Offer Fresh Learning Opportunities

Three exciting courses are debuting in fall 2020. THEO 552 Sacraments and Liturgy, taught by Marcellino D'Ambrosio, not only covers the theology and history of each of the seven sacraments and its basis in both the Old and New Testaments but extensively deals with the history of worship in the Catholic Church. Despite elements of the sacred liturgy that have always remained constant, many Catholics do not fully appreciate how much liturgical diversity there is in the Body of Christ. This course is meant to increase that appreciation as well as to explain why Vatican II made the liturgical reforms that it did.



Marcellino D'Ambrosio

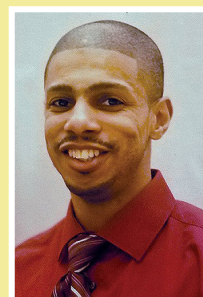
THEO 541 Theology of Church is taught by Father Bevil Bramwell, OMI. The theologian Henri de Lubac called the Church "the convergence of all of the mysteries." The mysteries of God, the missions of the Divine Son and the Divine Spirit, Christ, man, and world meet to constitute the Church. This course will help faithful students see how they participate in the great mysteries of salvation, the results of

the missions of the Son and the Spirit. They will learn how to participate in Christ's presence in the faith community and in the Church's mission to the world. The course explains the various elements of the Church of Jesus Christ through the mission of the divine Son. It also describes the operation of the accompanying mission of the Holy Spirit to realize the Church.

COSCI 101 Computer Essentials, taught by Fausto Franco, enables students to learn and master applications such as MS Word, Excel, and Powerpoint for practical use in daily life and business. Students will also explore the basic teachings of the Church regarding technology itself and the integration of technology and communications to further the New Evangelization and the life of the Church. This course is useful for any student but especially for students who require three credits in the mathematics distribution area for the AA or BA degree programs.

## Meet Our Newest Faculty Member

Fausto Franco, MEng, MA, is teaching COSCI 101 Computer Essentials. Born of immigrant parents from the Dominican Republic and raised in the Bronx, New York, he currently resides in



Albany and is a parishioner at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Americas. Professor Franco works in Information Technology with a focus in Cyber Security as a business information security officer for the state government. He is active in Hispanic youth ministry for the Archdiocese of New York and is also a member of the Locos por Jesus ministry that travels to the Dominican Republic on mission. He has traveled throughout the United States and abroad to give talks and evangelize. Fausto also plays baseball in the Albany Twilight League, one of the oldest amateur baseball leagues in the country. Please join us in welcoming him.

## University Is Blessed with a Strong Board of Trustees

We are pleased to announce that The Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of Wheeling Charleston, joined the Board of Trustees this year. A compassionate, humble leader, Bishop Brennan has a history of serving immigrants and the poor. His first motto "To Teach All Nations" has transitioned to "Living in Truth and Love." He naturally embraces CDU's mission to bring others joy through the Truth and serve those who serve as well as the underserved.

The Honorable Janice Obuchowski joined the Board in October. President of Freedom Technologies, Inc., and a graduate of Wellesley College and the Georgetown University Law Center, she brings years of experience in U.S. government and private sector leadership. She has served as the U.S. Ambassador to the World Radiocom-



munications, an Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the Department of Commerce, and has held several positions at the Federal Communications Commission. She has served on several public Boards of Directors, including those of Inmarsat PLC, Orbital Sciences Corporation, CSG Systems, Inc., Stratos Global, and Qualcomm, and is also an active member of the Order of Malta Federal Association.

In addition, CDU enthusiastically welcomes back Dr. Joseph Braddock and Dr. Margaret Melady to the Board of Trustees.

We will miss Jean Halle, whose Board term has ended after 9 years of contributions to academic, financial, and digital lead-

ership. Please join us in thanking Jean for her meaningful contributions.

(L-R) Janice Obuchowski, Dr. Joseph Braddock, Dr. Margaret Melady, Jean Halle

## “My Very Self You Know”

Outstanding theses written by CDU graduate students are published in the online magazine *Digital Continent*. The latest issue features a well-written thesis by Daniel Kelly titled “My Very Self You Know.” The thesis is a scholarly treatment of the philosophy of the human person in the Catholic tradition with a special emphasis on the writings of Karol Wojtyla before he became Pope St. John Paul II. He examines how the philosophy of the human person of Wojtyla fits in with how a human person discerns his/her personal vocation to serve the Lord. You can read Daniel’s thesis by visiting <https://cdu.edu/digital-continent2/>.



Daniel Kelly

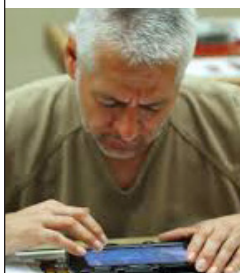
## Welcome, New Team Members!

We are proud to introduce the new Director of Admissions, Todd Nolan. Todd is a graduate of CDU’s MA (Theology) program. He has 10 years of experience in teaching high school theology, youth ministry leadership experience in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and most recently, expertise as a student success advisor and adjunct faculty member at Ave Maria University.

Todd Nolan



Also, Sherry Shipley joined the staff as Bursar in October. Both Todd and Sherry bring extraordinary experience and talent to our team. Please join us in welcoming them.



## Support to the Underserved

Support for our incarcerated brothers and sisters is soaring.

The CDU prison ministry continues to innovate to digitally embrace the incarcerated Church. With your support, we have served 280,000 free courses with an outstanding 90% satisfactory completion rate. CDU is especially grateful for recent grants from The Order of Malta Federal Association and The Most Reverend John Dougherty. Many of those behind bars not only have a passion to learn more about their faith, they have a heart to serve others in their community. CDU is creating new digital courses and reorganizing those currently offered into certificate programs to support incarcerated evangelists for the faith. CDU is grateful for team members Ulises and Diana Hubbard, Maria Alejandra Palacios and Dr. Marlon Torres for working to translate courses into Spanish. CDU also appreciates Doug Sandvig and the Order of Malta prison ministry team for creating a digital rosary program that has launched with amazing success. Together, we are making strides in reaching incarcerated Catholics and we are just realizing the digital potential for service to the underserved.

## We Welcome New Alumni President George Muñoz

New Alumni President George Muñoz brings vast leadership experience to CDU. George is a recent graduate of the MA (Theology) program in addition to being a graduate of the Harvard Law School, the Harvard Public Policy School, DePaul University, and the University of Texas. Currently the principal at Muñoz Banking Group, LLC, and a partner at Tobin and Muñoz Law Firm in Washington, D.C., George has extensive experience in corporate governance. He also serves on the Board of Trustees at the National Geographic Society, Laureate Education, Inc., Walden



George Muñoz

University, Marriott International, and the Altria Group. He has also served as President of the Chicago Board of Education, President of a federal agency overseas private investment corporation, and as Chief Financial Officer of the U.S. Treasury Department under President Clinton. George lives in McLean, Virginia, and enjoys raising his two sons, Mario and Manuel, with his wife Kathy.

We hope that you will enjoy connecting with George as we work together to ensure a bright future for CDU as a world-renowned Catholic online university.