

The Good News

300 South George Street, Charles Town, WV 25414 ♦ 1-888-254-4CDU ♦ 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

September 2021

From Our President

August 2021 has been noteworthy at CDU not only because of our 38th Anniversary on August 22nd, but in particular because of the press release issued by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education on August 3rd: Vatican Releases Rules for Online Learning for Ecclesiastical Universities.

We at CDU knew that the Congregation for Catholic Education was preparing recommendations for Pope Francis regarding the use of distance education in ecclesiastical universities. During a brief visit to Rome in late November 2017, I met with Archbishop Zani and his staff to share our expertise in online teaching pedagogies and student support. I am sure that the continuing developments in distance learning at the Vatican reflect the positive contributions of CDU.

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (December 8, 2017), reflects his commitment to educating the peripheries including prisoners, migrants, the homeless, monks and contemplative nuns, and even busy bishops. This echoes CDU's mission to serve the underserved and to educate the hearts of those who serve them. Those of us privileged to work at CDU for many years have marveled at our inclusive learning community and the students who find their way to us. The first graduate degree awarded by CDU, around the Jubilee Year 2000, went to a French woman in Paris who uses a wheelchair for mobility and has since earned her doctorate. CDU has awarded bachelor's and master's degrees to prison inmates through our correspondence curriculum and educated a number of contemplative nuns, brothers, and priests through our online MA degree program in Theology. Today we have a growing pastoral MA degree program for Catholic educators and directors of religious education that is offered completely online and in service to dioceses, especially the Diocese of Brooklyn's Holy Spirit Institute.

In the words of Archbishop Zani, "There are many professionals who would like to acquire some theological, philosophical, or anthropological formation, and they are knocking on the doors of our institutions; we can't ask them to attend like young students who are just beginning their academic journey."

CDU is at home in the digital world. We congratulate our students and graduates who accepted the invitation to be pioneers with us in Catholic higher education. They reflect the power of CDU's theological education that educates the human person with rigor and holistic formation, yet offers the freedom and flexibility that is essential today.



Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

October Seminar Focuses on the Art of Evangelization

Allan F. Wright, an author, professor and international speaker, has a passion for scripture and the Catholic faith. A popular guest on Relevant Radio and host of a show on Radio Maria, he will instruct a three-week online seminar, The Art of Evangelization through Apologetics, October 4-25. Gain the confidence to share the Gospel in an engaging and natural way and appreciate why being a credible believer is the most effective apologetic tool. Sign up today at <https://cdu.catalog.instructure.com/browse/continuingeducation/seminars/courses/tthe-art-of-evangelization-through-apologetics-1-ceu-theo-n021>.



"Best for Vets" Recommends CDU

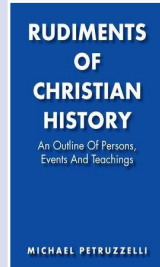
The Military Times "Best for Vets" list, the largest and most comprehensive ranking of colleges for military service members and veterans, helps them make important educational decisions. CDU made the list this year and is ranked above The Catholic University of America and Mount St. Mary's University in the private, non-profit category. CDU is truly a great value!



CDU Offers Accessibility, Flexibility, and Great Value To achieve our global mission to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world, CDU must be accessible, flexible, and affordable. CDU's innovative 24/7 online education platform is available anywhere and anytime, which provides our busy students with the flexibility they need to complete coursework according to their schedules. Since 9 out of 10 graduates serve the Church, affordability is crucial. In an economy of rising costs, CDU's undergraduate tuition has remained unchanged since 2013. At \$305 cost per credit hour, our undergraduate tuition is the lowest of any online Catholic college or university offering theological study in the United States. Graduate tuition is highly competitive as well, particularly for programs that are accredited by The Association of Theological Schools. We could not achieve our mission without friends like you. Thank you for your continuing support.

Student & Alumni News

Grad Publishes Guide to Christian History *Rudiments of Christian History: An Outline of Persons, Events, and Teachings* is a new book by Michael Petruzzelli (MA in Religious Studies, 2001), an educator who holds several degrees and taught theology at a Catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., for 10 years. The book was published in April by Christian Publishing, Inc. Written in the format of an informal outline, Petruzzelli's book presents a summary of some of the major topics of the 2,000-year+ span of Christian history. He provides various interpretations of causal relationships of key events, insight regarding historical persons who significantly impacted the course of Christian history, and a concise explanation of basic Christian teachings and theologies. You can review a synopsis of the book on YouTube or purchase the book in bookstores on Amazon.



Alumnus to Be Ordained a Deacon Recent graduate Asadur M Minasian, who earned his MA degree in Theology in July 2021, will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons by His Excellency Bishop Mikael Mouradian, Eparch of the Armenian Catholics in the U.S. and Canada. The event will take place at St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, September 12.

Let the Perpetual Light Shine upon Her After a life filled with blessings, CDU graduate May Gay Moore, 78, entered eternal life on August 11, 2021. A wife and mother, May's greatest interest and passion was her Catholic faith. She taught CCD and in the RCIA program at the Little Creek Catholic Chapel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. She earned her Master of Arts degree in Theology at age 64, an accomplishment of which she was immensely proud.

Theology of the Body Is a Game



Gian Parham (BA in Theology, 2021) of Benque Viejo del Carmen, Belize, teaches adults and youth in two Catholic high schools and also serves as national coordinator of the Theology of the Body (TOB) teachers' training program.

As national coordinator, Gian promotes the TOB program in all of Belize's Catholic Schools. He has conducted workshops with all administrators and principals about the need for the TOB and conducts ongoing training sessions with school faculty and staff. TOB clubs are now being established at Belizean high schools that will be led by trained youth leaders as well.

"Girls are learning that they are valuable and worth waiting for. They have learned they deserve respect and true, authentic, sacrificial love because of their God-given dignity," he says. "The young men are realizing that the image of manhood society is illustrating is a false one. They are learning that true men must grow in virtue in order to die to self and protect the women around them, first and foremost from themselves. Young men are being challenged to grow in responsibility and to love in an authentic way." He points out that TOB is not just helping to reduce teenage pregnancies in Belize, but it is also

Thesis Focuses on St. John Paul II's Insights into the Christian Family



Elizabeth Gillson recently graduated from CDU with a Master of Arts degree in Theology. Her thesis, "Recalling God's Design for the Family: A Review of John Paul II's Theology of Family as Expressed in Familiaris Consortio," has been published in the Summer 2021 issue of Digital Continent.

Gillson shares insights from John Paul II on the Christian family. Professor Chris Padgett's review exclaims, "In an age confused and often at odds with Catholic teachings of marriage and family, I found Gillson's thesis an excellent reminder that the Catholic Church continues not only to uphold the integrity of its teachings in this critical area but also adapts them to meet modern challenges." Enjoy reading her thesis at <https://en.calameo.com/read/00616140268a1fa7fd06d>.

Elizabeth and Michael, her husband of 25 years, are raising their 10 children in the Diocese of Arlington. She is pursuing a career in theological writing and research. You may also read her scripture reflections for youth at achildscatholicscripturestudy.com.

Bishop Barron to Receive Founders Award at November Gala



We are excited to be hosting a traditional Gala this year! Please join us on November 18th at the St. John Paul II Shrine in Washington, D.C., as we honor Bishop Robert Barron with the Founders Award and welcome him to the CDU community. His special address will be the heart of our program. This annual event is held to celebrate CDU's mission, accomplishments, graduates, and to thank the growing number of donors and benefactors who support our work for the Church. CDU Advisory Board member Professor Helen Alvaré of the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University and well-known author and speaker will serve as our emcee

for the evening. Dr. Joseph V. Braddock will be acknowledged as our first trustee emeritus, and Dr. Charles R. Wasaff; Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, SND; and Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND, will be awarded Papal Medals for their outstanding service to CDU and the Church.

Your presence and support are vital to our bold plans for the future. We look forward to seeing you as we join Bishop Barron in reflecting on the gift of media and technology to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ! For more information, please visit www.cdu.edu/gala.



Life Changer for Youth in Belize

helping to lower the abortion rate.

Gian has been married for 24 years and is blessed with two beautiful children. During the day, Gian teaches English Literature and TOB to seniors at Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School. At night, he teaches adults Computer Science and TOB at Saint Ignatius High School Evening Division.

“For me, teaching is not a job. It is a passion, a vocation, something I am called to do,” Gian says, adding that he is truly blessed to share his God-given gifts with both the teens and adult students he has come to love. “The joy that comes from interacting with the young as they search for what is true, good, and beautiful is deeply moving.”

“Many of the teenagers I work with are living destitute lives, and having made my own journey through the fire, I am humbled that God would use me as a witness and beacon of hope that ‘with him all things are possible.’”

“I am grateful to be, as St. Theresa of Calcutta puts it, ‘but a pencil in the hand of God,’” Gian says.

“I am proud to be named among the alumni of CDU! *Gaudium de Veritate!*” he adds.

Study Sacred Architecture This Fall



New faculty member Erik Bootsma, licensed architect, lecturer, and commentator, will teach HUM 260/ THEO 290 and THEO 590 Theology of Sacred Architecture in the Fall II term, which starts October 25th.

The course introduces the history, theology, and symbolism of Catholic sacred architecture and focuses

on how the development of Catholic sacred architecture and theology has affected the shape, configuration, and use of the Catholic Church throughout various architectural styles and eras.

Mr. Bootsma holds a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and is a registered architect in the state of Virginia. He has been in private practice since 2014 focusing on ecclesiastical architecture.

He is also the author of numerous articles on architecture, and his work has been published by First Things, Crisis Magazine, Catholic World Report, Adoremus, and the Catholic News Agency. He has also lectured at the Catholic Art Guild and at the University of Notre Dame, Franciscan University of Steubenville, and The Catholic University of America.

New Five-Term Academic Calendar Adopted

Beginning with the 2021-22 academic year, five terms will be offered instead of six, which will allow for more breaks between terms and several recesses throughout the year, including one during Holy Week. This change was made in response to student feedback indicating a desire for final exam periods that do not extend into the next term and greater accommodation for the many students who assist with sacramental and liturgical preparation just before Easter.

Now, just one summer term will be offered rather than two.

Preparing the Incarcerated for Re-Entry

Drawing upon tremendous success in working with local ex-offenders, Gatekeepers—a nonprofit based in Hagerstown, Maryland—is producing a video series that will take their “Business of Living” re-entry program into state and federal prisons. The 14-part series prepares the incarcerated for reentry into society with step-by-step instruction. This innovative program is being digitally reproduced and distributed by CDU’s digital prison ministry team in partnership with the Order of Malta Federal Association’s prison committee and will be offered online in prisons this Fall.

CDU’s educational outreach to the incarcerated, which began 38 years ago, continues to be strong with the loving support of Marguerite Trainor. Serving prisoners with Catholic courses has a profound impact on lives as exemplified in recent notes from students.

“These few words are to express my thanks for all your work and assistance with my religious education. May God continue to bless you and the ministry... On May 5, 2021, I was officially received into the Order of Preachers... I am expected to make my life promise in about one more year... Becoming a Dominican and working for God has been the best thing that has happened in my life!”—Mr. Harold R., O.P.

“Your institution is the center of my life. You have brought me to a place in my life which I had never envisioned, and for that I am grateful. There won’t be a time in my life in which I will not be learning with you and from you.”—MS

We are grateful to be able to serve the incarcerated Church and for the donations and grant support that enables us to serve the underserved.

Online Open House Webinar Offered

On Tuesday, August 17th, CDU held its first Live Zoom Open House for prospective students. The event offered an opportunity to learn about CDU’s programs, courses, and what sets CDU apart from other online universities from admissions director Todd Nolan, dean Dr. Pete Brown, faculty chair Dr. Marie Nuar, Professor Chris Padgett, and Student Life director Mary McKay. Q&A sessions were held in two breakout sessions for the graduate and undergraduate programs, and prospective students used the chat feature to introduce themselves. This live opportunity to interact with prospective students was successful and will now be offered three times per year.

New Board Members

We welcome Michael Miotto to the Board of Trustees. He is an innovative IT executive with state-of-the-art experience in multiple industries, including higher education. Most recently, he led Ford Motor Company through the Industry 4.0 revolution by enabling industrial IoT, cloud computing, virtual/augmented reality, and artificial intelligence fueled by big data and analytics. He has also served as CIO at American Public University System and Credit Acceptance Corporation and CTO at e-Chemicals and MRM Digital Ad Agency. We look forward to benefiting from his extensive expertise to keep CDU on the cutting edge of technology.

CDU welcomes Brian Maher to the Board of Trustees. After a 33-year career with the Exxon Corporation and post-merger ExxonMobil, Maher's vast executive-level financial management experience will benefit CDU. Maher is an honors business graduate of Dartmouth College and received an M.A. in International Economics from The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy. Maher serves on multiple boards and lives in Naples, Florida, and Basking Ridge, New Jersey, with his wife Shelley.

We Welcome New Team Members

Dr. Elizabeth Shaw was named associate dean of accreditation. She currently teaches philosophy and is also associate editor of the quarterly journal *The Review of Metaphysics*.

Stephanie Garrett is our new librarian. With more than 30 years of business, development, and leadership experience, she will engage and support students while growing the digital library. She previously served as executive director of Tenn-share, a Tennessee library consortium in Nashville. Garrett has a Master of Science degree in Information Sciences from the University of Tennessee and also earned a BA in Theology from Aquinas College in Nashville, where she graduated with honors.

Cynthia Stalcup, a 2020 honors graduate of CDU's MA in Theology and Educational Ministry program, joined the staff as catechetical subject specialist and Student Life coordinator. Stalcup has been active in parish youth ministry since 1992 in the Diocese of Arlington. She currently serves as a catechist at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Ashburn, Virginia, and is also CDU's Outstanding Graduate of the Year.

After nearly 20 years as Dean of Catechetical Programs, Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, SND, has returned to the Sisters of Notre Dame in Chardon, Ohio, for a well-deserved retirement. She also successfully led accreditation efforts and has left a legacy of joy.

Our Sisters Will Be Missed

Sister Rebecca Abel, theological librarian since 2015, retired recently as well. The online library blossomed under her direction, and she showed great devotion to serving students. We wish her a blessed retirement with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana.

Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND, DMin, Assistant Academic Dean at St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology, retired from the Board of Trustees in June. Her experience in accreditation greatly benefitted CDU, and we are grateful for her selfless hard work.

Dr. Charles Wasaff Retires from Board of Trustees

A retirement celebration for Dr. Charles R. Wasaff was held on June 10th and hosted by the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington. Dr. Wasaff, a trustee since 2012 and chairman from October 2017 until March 15th, was honored for his strategic leadership. As the first elected lay chairman of the Board of Trustees, he led CDU through rigorous accreditation processes, and accreditation with ATS was granted under his tenure. By developing a powerful board and instituting an advisory board, he assembled a team that rivals those of the most prestigious universities and positioned CDU for future growth. Under Dr. Wasaff's leadership, CDU developed a new MA degree program in Theology and Educational Ministry and a Catechetical

Coordinator Certificate program. He oversaw articulation agreements with American Public University System and Shepherd University and encouraged CDU to partner with the International Federation of Catholic Universities. Reflecting the love of Christ, he recognized that we have the tools and expertise to educate not only those who serve but also the underserved. This vision gave rise to CDU's Mission Diocese Scholars program, which enables areas without local Catholic universities to employ CDU graduates to evangelize and inspire the peripheries. He also initiated CDU's digital prison ministry program. Jesus says, "you will know them by their fruits."

We are grateful to Dr. Wasaff for the bountiful harvest he created for CDU.



Dr. Charles R. Wasaff (left) with Chairman Stephen Pryor