



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

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From Our President

The mission of CDU, “to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world,” implies that evangelization and theological education must serve a variety of academic levels to meet the needs of a universal Church. While our accreditors focus on CDU’s academic degree and certificate programs, we believe that noncredit courses and certificates are also integral to the mission. Our story includes partnerships with U.S. and international dioceses to educate catechists, lay ecclesial ministers, parents, permanent deacons, youth ministers, and those who aspire to serve the Church in some capacity as a volunteer or paid professional. The majority of diocesan students take noncredit courses. A number of noncredit continuing education students find their way to our academic programs.



Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

On February 7th, a new digital platform for CDU’s noncredit continuing education courses and certificates launched that offers an easy and attractive mobile-friendly registration process and a growing selection of redesigned courses. Our launch coincides with Pope Francis’ document on the institution of the Ministry of Catechist promulgated May 10, 2021. The Holy Father mentions the role of the Second Vatican Council in giving the Church a renewed appreciation for the importance of the laity in the work of evangelization. While challenging a lay catechist to “be a witness to the faith, a teacher and mystagogue, a companion and pedagogue who teaches for the Church,” he reminds us, “Only through prayer, study, and direct participation in the life of the community can they grow in this identity and the integrity and responsibility that it entails” (Directory for Catechesis, 113).

CDU’s story includes many lay catechists around the world, including incarcerated catechists, who look to CDU for their formation and education in the Catholic faith. We celebrate the launch of the new platform and curriculum of noncredit courses in support of Pope Francis’ institution of the new lay ministry of catechist in the universal Church.

Try a New Online Continuing Ed Course

Our new, mobile-friendly continuing education platform featuring updated courses and certificate programs opened for registration on February 7th. We’ve reduced the course price by nearly 50% to offer a special introductory rate of \$89 for students from dioceses that do not currently partner with CDU. Browse the site today at <https://www.pathlms.com/cdu>, and be sure to bookmark the page for easy access.

“I live far away from the school that I teach in, and as much as I’d like to go to after school workshops, I find that after a whole day of teaching, all I want to do is get home. It is wonderful to be able to take courses this way. I am SO thankful for CDU.”

-Joan Forgione

Join Us for a Compelling Online Seminar This Summer

Proclaiming the Reality of God: Compelling Evidence of God’s Existence (June 13–July 4, 2022) provides an opportunity to strengthen your faith and develop objective and persuasive reasons for belief that are valuable for sharing with those who may doubt the existence of God. This seminar is offered on our new continuing education platform for an introductory price of only \$89 and can be taken from any mobile device, laptop, or PC. The 3-week seminar is taught by Steven R. Helmer, president of the Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America (CAINA) and author of *The Reality of God: The Layman’s Guide to Scientific Evidence for the Creator*. Sign up today at <https://www.pathlms.com/cdu/courses/38058>.

Engagement with Incarcerated Catholics Soars

CDU's continuing education digital tablet program for incarcerated Catholics continues to break through prison walls. In just 3 ½ years, nearly 800,000 free Catholic courses have been taken. That's an average of more than 600 courses daily! Thanks to our partners, and your support, 46 CDU courses (9 in Spanish) are available in 189 prisons across 29 states. Courses offered in Spanish will continue to grow in 2022 through the support of The Order of Malta Federal Association and The John C. Fricano Foundation.

We are excited to announce that the 12-part digital course "Gatekeepers" will be launched and reaching our incarcerated brothers and sisters by March. Gatekeepers, a robust program full of resources and videos, focuses on teaching the business of living a successful post-incarceration life. This re-entry program helps individuals to establish relationships within the community and to identify and overcome any challenges that may arise as they prepare to move back into society. The course covers four aspects of living: occupational, educational, personal, and spiritual. It is Gatekeepers belief that when you do things from your soul, you will feel joy.

An audio/visual version of the Stations of the Cross is under development to be ready in time for Lent. The new course is based partly on the "Way of the Cross" led by Pope Francis in a prison on Good Friday 2020. This Stations of the Cross experience includes a short meditation by prisoners, family members, and people who have experienced loss due to violence.

Both of the new programs are the fruits of hours of expertise and resources from dedicated Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta's Prison Ministry Committee.

Recognizing that many prisons do not offer digital tablets, CDU remains committed to offering incarcerated Catholics correspondence courses as well. Thank you for your prayers and support of CDU's programs that serve underserved Catholics everywhere.



Digital Library Expands and Student Engagement Increases

The online library is expanding and making improvements at a rapid pace. Librarian Stephanie Garrett is working hard to increase resources and student engagement, which recent studies show has a direct impact on student success and retention.



New library resources have doubled library visits in the first month since acquisition. A sample of the new resources include:

- *Ecumenical Trends Online*—Published six times per year by the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute and the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, this journal features articles on ecumenical and interreligious movements around the world.
- *Oxford Dictionary of Christian History*—Over 6,000 A-Z entries on theology, churches and denominations, patristic scholarship, the Bible, the Church calendar, popes, archbishops, saints and mystics.
- Bloomsbury Digital Publishing's *Theology & Religion Online*—This resource includes access to:
 - * *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary & Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries*
 - * *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 2nd Revised Edition*
 - * *New American Bible Online*
 - * Handbooks on Catholic thought and other reference volumes
 - * Hundreds of eBooks, museum images and an interactive timeline.

Since September 2021, Garrett has also developed screen capture videos to answer student questions and walk them through how to effectively use library resources and search strategies. These videos also allow the librarian to create a more personal connection with the students.

Student engagement is on the rise as students can interact with the online librarian through Canvas, Email, Google Meet, and Pronto. Garrett is offering co-curricular events to teach note-taking techniques, mind mapping, and storyboarding to help improve research organization and paper writing skills. Students are also participating in course-integrated instruction that is designed to support students' needs to accomplish a particular assignment such as a course term paper.

These new acquisitions and support resources respond to a goal in CDU's strategic plan. They will help to align our online library with the standards of the American Library Association and Association of College Research Libraries and ultimately achieve a state-of-the-art online library. In our quest for excellence and continuous improvement, student interactions with the library are logged, rated, and assessed to determine future needs. In light of these improvements, there is much more to come.

CDU's Enrollment Growth Defies the National Trend

CDU was blessed to witness 12% growth in the number of students in the degree programs in the 2020–2021 academic year. In Fall 2021, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollments declined by 3.1% across the nation from the previous Fall. We are grateful for your prayers, referrals, and confidence in the university.

We Welcome Chaplain Boh

CDU has a new chaplain, Rev. Aloysius Nkwain Boh. Father Boh is a priest of the Diocese of Kumba, Cameroon. He was born in Njinikom, Northwest Region of Cameroon, West-Central Africa.

He started his educational career in Cameroon at Bishop Rogan Minor Seminary as a prospective seminarian, spent another year at Saint John Mary Vianney Spiritual Center, and continued with his priestly formation at Saint Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary. He earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and theology in 1997 and 2001, respectively. After graduation, he was ordained as a priest in Kumba, Cameroon. He served as an associate pastor, parish pastor, and director of the diocesan pastoral office in the Diocese of Buea before moving over to the newly created Diocese of Kumba in 2016.



Father Boh came to the United States in May 2017 seeking medical attention following a motorcycle accident that occurred while he was carrying out pastoral work. During his recovery in the States, his home was bombed by government security force helicopters. Due to the unrest and ongoing genocide in Cameroon, Bishop Agapitus E. Nfon recommended that he stay in the United States. He applied for U.S. political asylum in early 2018 and is waiting for his case to be heard.

The Most Reverend Mark Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, welcomed him as an associate pastor at Saint Joseph the Worker Parish, Martinsburg, before transferring him to his current position as administrator of Saint Bernadette Parish, Hedgesville, WV.

Father Boh's experiences are a blessing to our global university. With a joyful heart and a passion for education and the underserved, he will be at home at Catholic Distance University.

Thesis Tackles Tough Questions about Biblically Inspired Texts



Some familiar parts of the New Testament that Christians are accustomed to hearing on Sunday morning may not be original to the text. These include the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7-8), the appendix of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), and the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:20). If these portions were added to the Bible later by scribes and not written by the Bible's original authors, can we still say they are divinely inspired? Stephen May (MA in Theology, 2018) wrestles with the theological status of these famous passages in this outstanding MA thesis! Read his thesis in the Advent 2021 issue of Digital Continent at <https://cdu.edu/digital-continent-2/>.



Professor Fausto Franco and his wife Natalie welcomed their new baby boy on January 26, 2022. Little Felipe Andres and his mom are doing well. Franco (MA in Theology, 2019) teaches COSCI 101: Computer Essentials. Join us in celebrating their growing family.



We congratulate Francis Cabildo (BA in Theology, 2021) on his new position as Director of Worship at Our Savior Parish in Los Angeles and the University of Southern California Caruso Catholic Center.



Brandon Harvey has joined CDU as an English Professor teaching Introduction to Literature. This new course will familiarize students with some of the most magnificent works of the great authors of the past. They will also converse about

them to explore the ideas of today. With the addition of this course, BA degree students can now complete all nine of their required English Language Arts credits at CDU. Harvey holds degrees in theology and is in the process of completing a doctorate in the Great Books of Western Civilization. He has experience teaching children, teens, college students, and men in formation for the diaconate and formerly served as headmaster of a Chesterton Academy. He currently resides in the Archdiocese of Omaha. Besides teaching and speaking, Harvey regularly serves as a theological/editorial consultant for authors, publishers, screenwriters, producers, and occasionally actors.

Cynthia Stalcup (MA in Theology, 2020) has joined the



staff as Catechetical Subject Specialist and Student Life Coordinator. She also now serves as practicum advisor for the MA in Theology and Educational Ministry program.



Brian Maher



Paul Schott Stevens

Board Welcomes New Leadership and Expertise

CDU continues its pursuit of excellence with new Board of Trustee leadership and committee appointments. Bishop Mark E. Brennan will serve on the Academic Committee. Effective February 1st, Brian Maher was appointed Treasurer and Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee, and Paul Schott Stevens was appointed vice chair of the Audit & Finance Committee. He is also now serving on the Academic Committee.

Thank You!

Sharing your knowledge with others, introducing us to your friends, and supporting us with generous donations enables us to serve our greatest mission to “Teach all Nations” by communicating the mind and heart of the Church online 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 and like CDU on Facebook! Thank you for remembering CDU in your planned giving.



“Using digital technology, we build community and treat each other with virtue and charity.”

President Marianne Evans Mount, Ph.D., explains the CDU difference in an Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities interview for their "At the Helm" series. To read the interview, visit [At The Helm-Featured Profile 2021-EvansMount \(accunet.org\)](#).



CDU Makes Top 20 List for Affordability

Catholic Distance University made The Top 20 list of best online colleges that are accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Ranked by affordability, CDU was the only Catholic university to make the list.

Affordability is paramount to CDU's vision. Nine out of ten CDU graduates use their accredited theological education to serve the Church. Investing their educational knowledge to advance our Faith is a sacrificial and spiritual gift. We believe that financial access to high quality, accredited Catholic education is paramount, and students should not be burdened with insurmountable debt.

Living up to our mission to serve those who serve as well as the underserved, CDU offers the most affordable Catholic undergraduate programs in the nation.

Positive Impact of New Sacred Architecture Course

CDU's courses are transformative. Allison Howell (BA in Theology, 2021) shares her experience in the new Theology of Sacred Architecture course with Professor Erik Bootsma.

“My final class on sacred architecture, fresh in my mind and imagination, was fantastic. I look for clerestory windows, transepts, and arcades everywhere now, and am newly floored by the reminder that entering a Catholic church means entering into the physical presence of God, in a fulfillment of the Temple Presence.”

First Livestreamed Gala Breaks Records

The November 18th Gala offered a record number of supporters, graduates, faculty, staff, and students an opportunity to celebrate the university's 38th year and look toward its future. The Academic Convocation Mass, with principal celebrant Chancellor Archbishop Timothy Broglio, included a graduation ceremony for the classes of 2020 and 2021.

The Gala program featured Bishop Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire, who received the Founders Award, CDU's highest honor, for his use of the internet and social media to spread Christ's teachings throughout the world. His work dovetails with CDU's own mission to communicate

the mind and heart of the church in a digital world.

Dr. Charles Wasaff, Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, SND, and Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND, D. Min., were presented with Papal medals for

their dedication and work for the Faith.

The 2021 Gala was the first to be livestreamed so that friends across the nation could celebrate with CDU.

Watch the Gala program and Mass videos at <https://cdu.edu/bishop-barron-to-receive-founders-award-at-gala/>!

Thanks to your support, the event was the largest fundraiser in CDU's history. A great time was had by all. We look forward to celebrating with you in 2022!

