

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

October 2022

From Our President

In the spring of 2021, as the Board of Trustees reflected on CDU's mission to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world, we were inspired by Pope Francis and informed by research about the impact of ministries of charity in dynamic parishes, their influence on young people, and the richness of the Church's social teaching.

At the same time, the Lilly Endowment, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, proposed a new initiative to promote and sustain theological education in the 21st century among accredited member schools of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), CDU's programmatic accreditor. The Lilly Initiative, *Pathways for Tomorrow*, offered ATS schools a three-phase grant initiative.

CDU's grant proposal, one of 80 proposals chosen, will fund the development of a new curriculum in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) for a new online Associate of Arts degree and a graduate-level online certificate for both ordained and lay ecclesial ministers. Eventually CDU hopes to include a full bachelor's degree with a concentration in CST.

The new curriculum will be practical and interdisciplinary as well as bilingual to provide an on-ramp to higher education for Hispanic Catholics. CDU will also partner with Catholic Charities, USA, and Catholic Relief Services to offer service learning opportunities to students in the programs. While the Church continues to become more Hispanic, the need for higher education and leadership is a growing need for the future of the Church.

CDU has hired a bilingual CST Program Director, Dr. Gerardo Salazar, from Houston, Texas, and has engaged consultants Dr. Peter Casarella of Duke University's Divinity School as the Hispanic Education Con-



Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

sultant, Mrs. Donna Heckler, Marketing Consultant, and Andrea Zimmerman, Instructional Design Consultant, as well as a bilingual grant writer. Father Avelino González, an ecclesiologist and priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, will prepare the graduate certificate courses. His expertise and extensive work at the Vatican will enhance the curriculum. Professor Helen Alvaré, well-known expert on the Church's teaching on life, marriage, and family, will prepare a one-credit graduate "pop-up" course on the Church's teaching on life issues and its impact on cultural trends in contemporary society to coincide with the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*.

By the beginning of 2023, the new online CST curriculum will launch, including bilingual AA degree courses, a graduate CST certificate course, and the "pop-up" one-credit graduate course. Stay tuned!

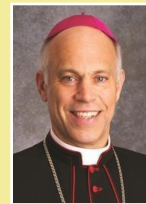
How appropriate that CDU will honor Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone at the 2022 Gala. Please join us as we celebrate the Church's Social Teaching, the witness of Archbishop Cordileone, and a new curriculum to serve Hispanic Catholics especially.

Presidential Search Underway

After nearly 40 years of service, Dr. Marianne Evans Mount is preparing to retire in 2023. Since 2008, President Mount has been instrumental in leading CDU to become the Catholic global online university it is today. Hyatt-Fennell Executive Search is seeking an innovative academic leader who is transformational, strategic, humble, and inspirational.

Archbishop Cordileone to Receive Award at 39th Anniversary Gala

Please join us on November 17th at the St. John Paul II Shrine in Washington, D.C., as we honor The Most Reverend Salvatore Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco, with the Founders Award. We celebrate his faithfulness to Church teachings



MOST REVEREND SALVATORE CORDILEONE

as we embrace the underserved and develop our new Catholic Social Teaching curriculum. The gala celebrates CDU's mission, accomplishments, graduates, and offers an opportunity to thank the many donors who support our work for the Church. Very Reverend Joseph R. Gibino, Vicar of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Brooklyn, will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you! For more information and tickets, visit www.cdu.edu/gala.

Thank you for sustaining CDU's mission. Please remember CDU in your planned giving.

Staff Member Earns MA Degree in Theology and Educational Ministry

Dan Soares recently earned his MA degree in Theology and Educational Ministry at CDU while working full time as the university's IT director. Born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, Dan was raised Catholic and was an active participant in the life of the Church, serving as an altar boy, a reader at Mass, and as a choir master and youth leader.

With a mathematical mind and a strong interest in science, Dan earned his undergraduate degree in Physics at the University of Mumbai at the age of 21. Like many other young Catholics in India and elsewhere, Dan fell away from the Church. "At the age of 23, I left to join a Pentecostal church in Bombay," he says.



Dan's parents wanted their children to have better opportunities, so they immigrated to New York with Dan, his brother, and sister in 1987. Adjusting to life in the U.S. was not especially difficult for Dan, who turned 26 the year he arrived.

Eventually, after much soul searching and study, he returned to the Catholic Church at Easter in 2013. "In the 30+ years that I was away, Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20-23) was a constant thorn in my flesh," Dan says. "I could not reconcile that with the numerous denominations around me."

Dan plans to get involved in Faith Formation at his parish in the near future now that he has earned his degree. "The knowledge I have acquired is not for my own sake, but rather to be shared with others," he says. "I look for opportunities to share my faith with others, to pray with them, to meet them wherever they may be in their journey, and accompany them."

"Getting a well-rounded education in Theology in an online setting where I could study at my own pace" is what Dan enjoyed the most about CDU. "This is a fantastic program with a great curriculum that is faithful to Church teaching and amazing professors who love the Catholic faith and are gifted teachers," he says.

New Course in Modern Philosophy

Senior philosophy faculty member Dr. Elizabeth Shaw is developing a new undergraduate course, PHIL 320: Modern Philosophy, which will debut in the Winter II 2023 term.

The course begins with a consideration of St. John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, on the relevance of philosophy to the study of theology, as well as the pope's affirmation of a modern approach to the human person. It then turns to the primary texts of several influential thinkers, including Descartes, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Marx, and Nietzsche, and traces the development of some major themes in the Western intellectual tradition. Topics include: methodical doubt, Descartes's *cogito* and proofs of God's existence, the relationship of man and society, empiricism and skepticism, *a priori* concepts, materialism, communism, and pragmatism.

On the value of a course in modern philosophy, Dr. Shaw comments: "While the so-called modern period is a point in intellectual history where some things went haywire, it also contains the seeds of many significant and rich developments. It's crucial for students to understand clearly the sources of so much of our present worldview and to appreciate important points of continuity with the earlier tradition."

The Higher Learning Commission Accredits CDU

On June 23, 2022, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) granted initial accreditation to Catholic Distance University for its undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs.

Accreditation by the HLC provides assurance that an institution meets high standards in all aspects of educational quality, institutional capabilities, and governance, and is committed to continuous improvement. HLC is the largest of six historically regional accreditors in the United States recognized by the Department of Education to accredit the nation's institutions of higher education.

"CDU is now recognized with the same accreditation as many of the most prestigious brick and mortar universities in the U.S.," says Board Chairman Steve Pryor. "This major milestone marks the beginning of the next stage of CDU's mission: to communicate the mind and heart of the Church to a wider audience."

University Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, who heads the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, says, "The news that the Higher Learning Commission has accredited Catholic Distance University offers a significant recognition to the commitment of the CDU community to academic excellence."

Students will benefit in newfound ways from HLC accreditation, which ensures a quality of education that the general public has the right to expect and that the educational community recognizes widely.

CDU also has been continuously accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission since 1986, and its graduate programs have been accredited by the Association of Theological Schools since June 2020.

We are grateful to those who generously supported CDU throughout the accreditation process.

Academic Team to Attend Fall Conference



Four members of the academic leadership team will attend the 2022

Conference of the Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI Foundation on October 20 and 21. The theme is "Joseph Ratzinger's Vision of the Church and Its Relevance for Contemporary Challenges." Those attending are Dr. Marie Nuar, faculty chair; Dr. Elizabeth Shaw, associate dean for accreditation; professor Alissa Thorell, chair of the Faculty Governance Council (FGC); and Dr. Jim Kruggel, FGC member.

CDU Grapevine Notes



On September 17th, Dr. Marianne Evans Mount was awarded Christendom College's St. Catherine of Siena Award for Distinguished Service to the Church and Catholic Higher Education. The award was presented at the college's 45th anniversary, which featured an academic convocation. President Mount, who is recognized widely as an innovative leader in the field of education, encouraged students, faculty, and staff to always make Christ present. "Like Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, to be a Christian is to be a teacher. May your knowledge and witness make Christ present wherever you go and wherever you are," she said in her acceptance remarks.



CDU embraces the return of **Sister Mary Brendon Zajac, SND**, to the Board of Trustees. She holds a D.Min. from Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology, Cleveland, Ohio, and has worked for the seminary since 2011 as assistant academic dean, registrar, professor of pastoral theology, and director of educational technology. A recipient of the *Croce Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* papal medal, she has graciously contributed her time and talents to CDU in many ways over the years.



Robert J. Smith, Esq., of Great Falls, Virginia, has retired from the Board of Trustees after serving the maximum 9 years as a member. We are grateful for his invaluable service, which included heading the Strategic Planning Committee. He will continue to serve on the Governance and Development committees.



We welcome **Kelly S. McGinn** as a member of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. McGinn is currently on the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington and Chair of its Advancement and Communications Committee. Her passion for promoting Catholic social teaching, particularly the right to life and centrality of the family, led her to a local, national, and international political career.

A *summa cum laude* graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service (1991), where she was salutatorian and a Rhodes Scholar finalist, and the University of Virginia School of Law (1996), she practiced international trade and communications law in Washington, D.C., where she provided pro bono work focused on helping refugees seeking political asylum. She and her husband, Jerry, are parishioners at St. Timothy Catholic Church in Chantilly, Virginia, and were active members of their former parish, All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas, Virginia.



Jordan Dragon, a recent graduate of West Virginia University, has joined the CDU team as an IT Analyst. He is 23 years old and lives in Shenandoah Junction, West Virginia. Jordan loves to laugh, make connections that last a lifetime, and make the environment around him better for everyone. He brings fresh ideas to our technology team.



On November 12th, Trustee **Paul Schott Stevens** will be honored at the 12th annual Mass and benefit dinner of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, D.C. He will receive the *grato animo* medal, which is presented by the Custos of the Holy Land to an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to bettering the lives of Christians and all peoples of the Holy Land and who is supportive of the mission of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Mr. Stevens served on the board of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land for 14 years and chaired its investment committee.



Returning from her well-deserved retirement, **Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, SND**, a recipient of the *Croce Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* papal medal, has rejoined the team part-time as the academic success coach for undergraduate support. Sister Mary Margaret Ann, who previously served as Dean of Catechetics, will work with new students to successfully guide them through their degree programs.

Thank You!

Sharing your knowledge with others, introducing us to your friends, and supporting us with generous donations enables CDU to serve our greatest mission to "Teach all Nations" by communicating the mind and heart of the Church online without limits, 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. Get social! Like CDU on Facebook!



Dr. Shaw to Attend Seminar

This fall, Dr. Elizabeth Shaw is participating by invitation in an 8-week virtual seminar in which a group of philosophers, law professors, and practitioners read and discuss texts on how philosophical personalism can help resolve ethical problems raised by policies and institutions in the U.S. criminal justice system. Throughout the seminar, participants are considering how human dignity and love inform an understanding of incarceration, with special attention to the practice of solitary confinement. The seminar is sponsored by the [Hildebrand Project](#).

Staff Retreat to Be Held

A staff administrative assessment retreat at Priestfield Retreat Center in Kearneysville, West Virginia, on October 11th will carry forward much of the hard work and lessons learned from our HLC accreditation journey. The day's program is intended to support CDU's culture of continuous improvement to maintain our commitment to excellence in serving our students. Our chaplain, Father Aloysius Boh, will join us to celebrate Mass. For the benefit of the broader community of students and faculty, Mass will also be live streamed.

Prison Ministry Hits Major Milestone

The digital prison ministry program has served more than 1,000,000 free course lessons to our incarcerated brothers and sisters through digital tablets. With a presence in more than 262 prisons, CDU aims to spiritually lift those most in need. The digital prison ministry program features faithful courses in English and Spanish, the Gatekeepers: Business of Living reentry program, Pen Pal requests, a virtual rosary, a Walking with Jesus stations of the cross program, a Behind the Walls video series, a newsletter, and more. We will soon launch multi-week seminars as well. These offerings would not have been possible without a generous 2022 grant and the tireless content support of members of the Order of Malta Federal Association prison ministry team.

Every prison ministry donation impacts the lives of the underserved, and we are grateful.

Don't Miss the October Apologetics Seminar



DR. ALLAN WRIGHT

Register today for **The Art of Evangelization through Apologetics**, which will be held **October 3–24**. Learn to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others in a natural and engaging way, as Jesus did, and why being a credible believer is the most effective apologetic tool.

The seminar will be taught by Allan F. Wright, an author, professor, speaker, and Catholic radio show host who has a passion for scripture and the Catholic faith.

Professor Wright says, "While articulating the truth of the Gospel, we need the relational tools to start a conversation, build trust, serve, and then propose who Jesus Christ is. To quote St. Bernadette, 'Our job is to inform, not convince.'" Visit <https://www.pathlms.com/cdu/courses/38096> to register.

CDU Partners With National Catholic Bioethics Center

In the current academic year, CDU is offering a new sequence of two undergraduate courses in Catholic Bioethics. These courses are a joint venture between CDU and the National Catholic Bioethics Center, the nation's premier institution offering resources to promote the dignity of the human person in healthcare and biomedical research.

Students will receive an introduction to the study of bioethics and healthcare ethics from the Catholic perspective. Topics include foundational issues in Catholic moral theology, including the relationship between reason and divine revelation, the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, and moral theories that impact healthcare decision-making. Students will learn to formulate appropriate, Catholic-based responses to ethical challenges they will face in their personal lives and/or future work in healthcare.

We are also excited to announce that in this first year, Catholic Bioethics will be offered to juniors and seniors at Cardinal O'Hara High School in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia as part of the brand new Early College Program (ECP). Eventually, the ECP will be expanded to give qualified high school students the opportunity to enroll at CDU and receive college credit for a variety of our undergraduate courses.