



40 Years

# CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

*Forming Leaders to Serve the Underserved*

*Leading  
The Way....*

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*Again*

**CATHOLIC DISTANCE UNIVERSITY** (CDU) has led the way for 40 years in educating those with a heart to serve, making education accessible and affordable for all. As the only exclusively online Catholic university, our mission is to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world for the growth of faith, ecclesial service, and leadership for the new evangelization. So it should not come as a surprise that when the Church identified the need to reach the hearts of the faithful through Catholic Social Teaching (CST), with support from a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., we crafted educational programs to lead the way. These new programs are an AA degree in Theology with a concentration in Catholic Social Teaching initially taught in Spanish especially for Hispanic students and a graduate certificate program in CST initially taught in English for both ordained and lay ecclesial ministers. Eventually, both programs will be offered in both English and Spanish to ensure wide accessibility.

Simply put, CST is the Church's wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of the modern world. At a time when society is deeply divided and facing great challenges, we need to bring the Church's wisdom to the forefront like never before. In the words of Bishop Robert Barron, "CST is essential to the new evangelization and provides a lens through which to view the issues of our time more clearly."

With your support, and our experience in educating the underserved, these new programs will make a difference unlike any other. Not only will they assist parish ministries in their outreach efforts, they will also foster greater collaboration with Catholic dioceses and nonprofits that are tending to the needs of those in our communities every day.

# Our Church Is *Changing*

**THERE IS A GREAT NEED** in the Hispanic/Latino community to develop well-educated leaders for the Church of the 21st century. The Hispanic/Latino population is growing, and in fact, according to the Pew Research Center, one out of every five people in the country is Hispanic/Latino. By 2030, Hispanics/Latinos will comprise the majority of the nation's Catholic population. Our AA degree is designed to educate the future Hispanic/Latino lay ecclesial ministry leaders the Church so desperately needs.

# Serving the *Underserved*

**ALL TOO OFTEN**, those in the U.S. Hispanic/Latino community are underserved. They often face a variety of socioeconomic challenges that include lack of access to affordable education, housing, healthcare, and transportation; a language barrier; low-wage employment with unpredictable work schedules; family responsibilities; and unfamiliarity with the world of higher education. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 24% of the Hispanics/Latinos in the United States possess an undergraduate degree.

The rising presence of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States presents an opportunity for securing the future leaders the Church will need, and Hispanic/Latino Catholics desire to participate even more fully in the parish and life of the Church. But lack of a college education is a significant barrier. In fact, only 3% of priests in the U.S. are Hispanic/Latino.

# What Is CST?

**WE ARE COMMANDED** to love both God and neighbor. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II, the Church's social teaching moves along the axis of reciprocity between God and man: recognizing God in every person and every person in God.

CST is built on four key principles, with human dignity being the greatest of all:

- **Human dignity** is inherent in each person, because we are made in God's image.
- **Solidarity** is determination to commit oneself to the common good.
- **Subsidiarity** is the coordination of society's activities in a way that supports the internal life of local communities.
- **Common good** is reached when we work together to improve the well-being of people in our society and the wider world.

Often thought of as "the Church's best-kept secret," CST is rooted in our 2,000-year tradition and more recently in a series of encyclicals written by popes from 1891 to the present day and is the Church's "explicit and official grappling with contemporary social problems." This great treasure, with which too few are familiar, champions the dignity of every human person.

The teachings rely on the method known as "See-Judge-Act" to empower ecclesial communities to read the "signs of the times" in the context of theological reflection to respond to social challenges. This approach emboldens Catholic parishes to create and sustain ministries of charity to address the needs of our communities.

Many Catholics are longing for this faithful approach to the problems they face, and recent popes have insisted that parishes create these ministries of charity. As a result, our most vibrant parishes are seeking lay ecclesial ministers to effectively lead ministries of charity.



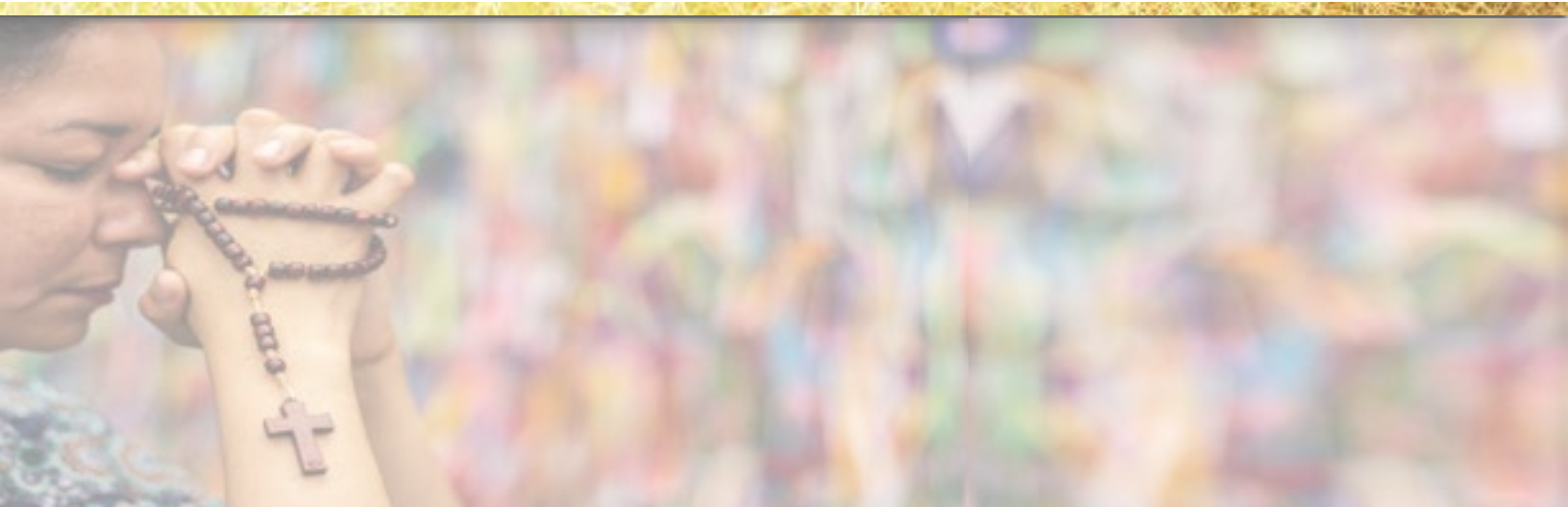


# Bringing OUR Faith Forward

**CDU HAS LONG BEEN** a leader in bringing faith education forward to Catholics the world over. With the development of a CST curriculum, we are responding to the Church's call to reinvigorate parish life, especially among younger Catholics and Hispanics/Latinos who yearn for their churches to make a difference in the lives of those in their communities. They want to see faith in action tackling the issues of our time. And they want to help.

CDU's programs are designed to educate both the ordained and lay ecclesial ministers of the Church in CST and the See-Judge-Act method, so that parishes can fully offer ministries that truly make a difference in their local communities.

Examples of these types of ministries are widespread. They may serve the young woman who finds herself pregnant, the couple who is considering divorce, or the senior who is alone and struggling financially. Many Catholic pastoral leaders—when faced with these challenges and others, such as immigration, poverty, and racism—lack knowledge of these complex issues and how the Church should minister to these realities in our society. All of these societal issues benefit from Catholic teaching and ministerial skills dedicated to providing support.





# AA Degree in Theology with a Concentration in CST

**TOO OFTEN, HISPANIC/LATINO CATHOLICS** lack the time and resources to attend a full-time, campus-based university program, and many are unprepared to succeed in a program not taught in their native language. Our AA degree in Theology with a concentration in CST will improve access to affordable, flexible online higher education taught in Spanish to provide Hispanic/Latino students the knowledge and insight they need to become active members of their parishes and share in the upward mobility that higher education brings. Graduates of the program will be equipped to serve as lay ecclesial ministers in their parishes, pursue further study, and potentially enter the seminary. There is great need as only 3% of ordained priests in the United States are Hispanic/Latino.

The affordable online program will begin enrolling students in Fall 2023. Students will receive coaching and a practicum requiring practical on-the-ground service experience through partners that include Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services.

This program provides an on-ramp to higher education specifically for Hispanic/Latino Catholics, who are eager to serve the Church. CDU is well positioned to meet the educational challenges of the Hispanic/Latino community in the 21st century and create a leadership pipeline for greater participation in our parishes and the wider Church. We invite you to partner with us to provide this transformative opportunity to expand education in the faith that has the potential to serve Catholics worldwide.

# Graduate Certificate in CST

**FOR PARISHES TO OFFER** ministries of charity that make a difference in their local communities, leaders must be trained and educated. What is Catholic Social Teaching? What is the methodology of See-Judge-Act, and how does it work to guide our ministries? How might this education support the ordained and lay leaders as they tackle significant social challenges in their communities?

CDU's graduate certificate program is designed to provide the education and support that parishes, priests, deacons, and lay leaders so profoundly need to put CST into practice in ministries of charity that have the power to transform lives and engage parishioners in doing God's work through corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The three-course graduate certificate program in CST, taught in English initially with Spanish language options, targets Church leaders who seek to deepen their understanding of CST to better serve their faith communities. The curriculum draws on the Church's broad and deep 2,000-year intellectual tradition of providing wisdom and insights to address these issues within parishes, preparing ecclesial ministers to confidently build ministries that can support the challenges their particular parish community faces.

The first one-credit "pop up" graduate course, CST 630. *Respect for Life, Sex, Marriage, and Parenting: An Integrated Catholic approach*, addresses the Church's teaching on life and was first offered in the winter of 2023 by renowned law professor, writer, and speaker Helen Alvaré.

In Summer 2024, a 9-day Summer Institute for Catholic Social Thought held in Rome, led by guide and instructor Father Avelino Gonzalez of the Archdiocese of Washington, will explore the foundations of Catholic Social Thought from the heart of the Catholic Church and the center of the ancient world. Lectures will be given on the interpretation of recent history in view of Catholic Social Thought, particularly in reference to the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.

*As Bishop Robert Barron says,*

***“Catholic social teaching is not just for us, it’s for the whole world. We need to propagate it, we need to teach it. We need to announce it from the rooftops.”***

# Accessibility for All

CDU, AS THE ONLY EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE Catholic university in the world, is known for its ability to educate students worldwide. As long as there is access to the internet, students have the ability to take classes and enroll in programs at CDU, which is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and the Association of Theological Schools. But accessibility is more than just internet connection. Accessibility is having programs that open up new opportunities and enhance one's personal and professional life. Accessibility is being able to study the faith in your native language. Accessibility is making programs affordable to enable graduates to serve the Church, lead ministries of charity, and step up for parish leadership. For CDU, accessibility includes student success coaching and academic advising that are proven strategies for strong educational outcomes and higher completion rates.



## Innovation

**ACCESSIBILITY GOES HAND IN HAND** with innovation, as CDU once again seeks to overcome the existing educational challenges to make these programs widely available. This starts with offering the AA degree program in Spanish, the first of its kind in the United States. This way, we can better reach the very people seeking to be leaders in their parishes, while simultaneously meeting the needs expressed by the Hispanic/Latino community.

Innovation continues as we look to partner with dioceses that seek faith-based CST education for their ordained and lay ecclesial leaders. Your partnership not only supports program development but paves the way for tuition assistance for applicants who lack the finances to fully fund their education but are deeply committed to serving the Church.



## *Please Help Us*

**WE NEED YOUR HELP** to deliver these innovative programs that prepare our students to be the missionary disciples of tomorrow. By offering scholarships to as many students as possible, especially at the AA level, we are not only educating them, we are also enabling them to actively participate as leaders in the Church we love and giving them an opportunity to grow in service, to grow in knowledge, to grow in spirit, and become the beacons of light the Church looks for in the 21st century.

**TOGETHER WITH YOU**, CDU is able to offer these innovative initiatives. Your support and partnership in educating the underserved is making a difference in the Church every single day. We ask that you consider joining us in this new apostolic initiative to educate Hispanic/Latino Catholics in CST and invigorate Catholic parishes. **WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE.** We eagerly invite you to join us through your prayers, your financial support, and your willingness to invite others to share in this initiative for the future of the Church. Your gift to the Catholic Social Teaching Fund will ensure that we continue to leverage our expertise in online education to make the study of CST possible for those in the Church who are underserved and for ecclesial ministers.

*Thank you for your generosity. Your gift will be used for tuition assistance to open the door to accredited Catholic higher education in Spanish for our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters especially who will be the leaders of the Church in the next decade.*

**Educational Investment Opportunities can be customized to meet your vision. Please contact Annie Hager at [ahager@cdu.edu](mailto:ahager@cdu.edu) or 443-257-6022. Your partnership is a blessing at every level.**

**\$22,000** covers tuition to educate a student in the AA degree program.

**\$10,000** covers tuition to educate an ecclesial minister in the graduate certificate program.

**\$4,000** covers tuition for 4 of the 20 AA courses required for a degree.

**\$3,000** covers tuition for 3 of the 20 AA courses required for a degree.

**\$2,000** covers the cost of all books for an AA degree student's education.

**\$1,000** covers tuition for 1 of the 20 AA courses required to earn the degree.

**\$500** covers half the tuition for 1 AA course.

**\$300** covers the technology fee for 2 AA or graduate certificate courses.

**\$150** covers the technology fee for 1 AA or graduate certificate course.

