



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



THE MISSION OF Catholic International University

is to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in support of the New Evangelization. In pursuit of Truth, the university educates learners globally through personal and relational online programs in Catholic theology and faith development, liberal arts, science, and technology, to foster faith, leadership, and service for the Church and the world.

Cover Photo: (Front row, left to right) Academic convocation Mass celebrants Bishop of Arlington Michael F. Burbidge; University Chancellor and Archbishop for the Military Services, USA, Timothy P. Broglio (principal celebrant); Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston Mark E. Brennan; and Bishop Emeritus of Arlington Paul S. Loverde. Graduates in attendance are shown in the back row, with President Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre in the center, and Board of Trustees Chairman Stephen Pryor to her right.



Message from the President

DR. MARIA SOPHIA AGUIRRE

As our 40th year comes to a close and we transition to our new name, Catholic International University, we renew our commitment to communicate the heart and the mind of the Church, the joy of the truth, and the reason for our hope, through personal and relational online education that is accessible across the globe.

This has been a year of transition and growth. In October 2023, the Board of Trustees approved our 5-year strategic plan, "Building the University of the Future," which will extend the impact of the university, ensure financial sustainability, enhance internal

organization and research capability, and lead to strategic articulation agreements. Planning is underway to develop new programs in education, integral economic development, integrated technologies and ecclesial administration and management, in addition to expansion of our theological and liberal arts offerings. Our exceptional faculty will explore these subjects while nourishing both the minds and hearts of our students, and our graduates will be prepared for new career opportunities in professional fields where their formation in Christian anthropology and ethics will bear much-needed fruit.

An appropriate point of departure for our university's renewal is *Ex corde ecclesiae*, the apostolic constitution on Catholic colleges and universities, in which St. John Paul II affirms who we are and, therefore, what we do as an institution. He reminds us of the broader significance of the historical fact that universities were born "from the heart of the Church," which is the theme of this annual report and something that our faculty, staff, and students will explore throughout the coming year. Why is this idea so important? At the present moment, our culture is becoming richer in technology but poorer in its regard for humanity. As Pope Francis reminds us, understanding the wisdom of the heart of the Church is fundamental to grasping who we are and the distinctiveness of our contribution as a Catholic university.

Our community of faculty, staff, and students shares in *gaudium de veritate*, that joy of searching for, discovering, and communicating truth in every field of knowledge. This approach to education inspires unity, creativity, and ingenuity of love, bringing the children of God together. Our goal is to prepare students to address the great issues of our time by drawing upon the wisdom of Jesus Christ and the Church in each of our programs.

Thanks to the grant from the Lilly Endowment that we received in 2022, our AA in Theology degree program in Spanish has been complemented with new Spanish and English MA in Theology degree programs with concentrations in Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Our students are putting CST into practice, enriching their parishes and communities, and sharing their gifts in ways that reflect God's love and help to accomplish His work on Earth.

As we develop the university of the future, we are reaching more intentionally across the globe to embrace new students, in multiple new languages of instruction, to bring the richness of the Christian intellectual tradition to new places and generations. Along the way, we will reflect seriously on three questions Pope Francis has

posed to all Catholic universities: *What is the purpose of the learning we impart? What is the transformative potential of the knowledge we produce? What and whom do we serve?*

Our university also serves the Church and the world through continuing education and prison ministry programs, which offer incarcerated students renewal of mind and a deeper relationship with God. We will be diversifying the continuing education program, and plans are underway for improving and expanding the reach of our engagement with the incarcerated. As of April of this year, we have delivered 2.14 million lessons to these students, in 404 prisons across the United States. We continue our collaboration with the Order of Malta Federal Association, and have also begun working with EWTN and Hallow to develop and enhance our service to these students.

Our name will officially change in June 2024. By leaving "distance" behind and embracing "international," we are intentionally signaling our aim to serve more broadly. I am honored to be entrusted with expanding the impact of our mission and vision, and I look forward to walking with you on this great journey.

A LOOK BACK AT 2023

Board of Trustees Appoints New President in July

The Honorable Maria Sophia Aguirre, Ph.D., a distinguished professor of economics and researcher in the field of finance, family, and economic development, was appointed the third President of Catholic International University on July 1, 2023. The university's Board of Trustees unanimously elected Dr. Aguirre following a national search launched after longtime President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount announced her wish to retire at the end of the 2022–2023 academic year.

Dr. Aguirre has 30 years of teaching and research experience. Prior to her appointment, she served as a tenured Ordinary Professor of Economics, and now Professor Emerita, at The Catholic University of America, where she also held a number of leadership positions. She is a Fulbright scholar, and previously held appointments at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

After completing Accounting and Business Administration degrees in Argentina, Dr. Aguirre worked in accounting and commodities trading in Chicago for several years before earning an M.A. and then a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Notre Dame with concentrations in monetary and fiscal policies and international financial

markets. She has represented countries, including the Holy See, in international organizations, and served the U.S. President and Secretary of State as a presidential appointee confirmed by Congress in the capacity of Commissioner and Adviser for two presidential terms. Dr. Aguirre has testified before Congress in the U.S. and in several other countries, and has lectured and published extensively both domestically and internationally.

Since leaving government, Dr. Aguirre has worked to develop and implement Integral Economic Development (IED), an interdisciplinary approach to economic analysis that recognizes the role of social relationships—first manifested by the family—as key drivers of economic activity. Dr. Aguirre's research, and the two master's programs in IED she founded at The Catholic University of America, have led to successful collaboration with a variety of business leaders, academicians, technologists, and policy makers on six continents, improving the lives of millions of people in the developing world. Prior to her arrival at Catholic International, she spent a year at the University of St. Thomas in Houston conducting research on applying IED to artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

"In searching for a successor to our great President, Dr. Marianne Mount, Catholic International struck gold in recruiting Dr. Aguirre," said Catholic International's Board Chair, Stephen Pryor. "Sophia Aguirre is a visionary academic leader with a track record of successful academic innovation, as well as pioneering economic research that is Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in action. As Catholic International implements its new CST curriculum in the U.S. and Latin America, her international experience, fluency in Spanish, and research background will be game changers," Mr. Pryor said.



Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre speaks with Pope Francis about Catholic International University's plans to serve the Church and the world more broadly.

Fortieth Anniversary Gala: Honoring the Past and Looking to the Future

Catholic Distance University honored the past and looked to the future at the 40th anniversary gala, held November 17, 2023, at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. Supporters, alumni, faculty, trustees, and staff of the university gathered for the historic event, which generated the highest revenue in the university's history. Tickets to the annual fundraiser sold out weeks in advance.



Michael P. Warsaw Receives Founders Award

At the gala, Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio presented Michael P. Warsaw, EWTN Global Catholic Network CEO and Chairman of the Board, with the Founders Award, the university's highest honor. As head of the world's largest religious media network, Mr. Warsaw has contributed significantly to Catholic education, formation, and evangelization. EWTN has partnered with Catholic International for many years, given both institution's commitment to evangelization and service to the Church. Mr. Warsaw oversees the network's strategic direction and mission around the world. In 2017, Pope Francis appointed him as a Consultor to the Vatican's Dicastery for Communications.



Michael P. Warsaw, EWTN Global Catholic Network CEO and Chairman of the Board, received the Founders Award at the 40th anniversary gala.

President Emeritus Honored by the Holy See

For her longtime leadership in the realm of Catholic distance education, President Emeritus Dr. Marianne Evans Mount was named a Dame of The Order of St. Gregory the Great, the highest honor a layperson can receive from the Catholic Church. Pope Francis' personal representative, Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, presented the award to Dr. Mount at the 40th anniversary Gala, accompanied by Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio.

During her 40-year career at Catholic

International, she held various leadership roles, finally serving as president from 2008 to June 30, 2023. In addition to her role as President Emeritus of Catholic International, Dr. Mount currently serves as a Consultor to the Holy See's Dicastery for Culture and Education in recognition of her many contributions to the innovative realm of Catholic distance education. "Dr. Marianne Mount is a jewel in the crown for Catholic education," said trustee Hon. Susan R. Malone. "She'll be remembered for being the first. She had a vision for the future, for Catholic education."

Cardinal Pierre presented Dr. Mount with an eight pointed cross, suspended from a red and gold ribbon and a crown of laurel. The center of the cross bears an image of St. Gregory on the obverse, and on the reverse the motto *Pro Deo et Principe*, "For God and Ruler." Pope Gregory XVI established the Order of St. Gregory the Great in September 1831; it is one of five orders of knighthood of the Holy See. Admittance is bestowed upon Roman Catholic men and women—and rarely, non-Catholics—in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and to the Roman Catholic Church, through their

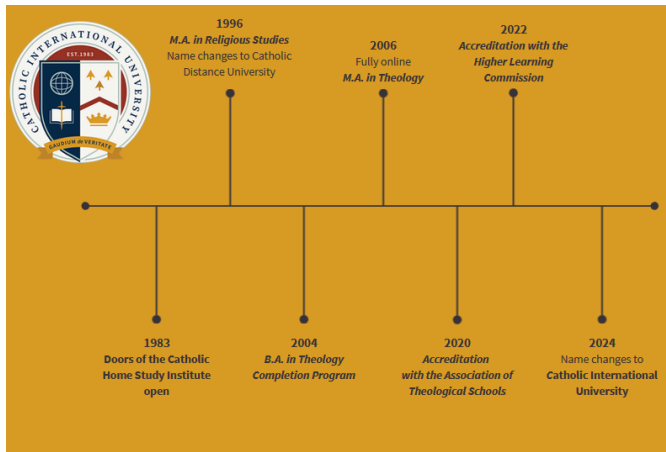
unusual labors, their support of the Holy See, and their excellent examples set forth in their communities and countries.

Dr. Mount's "unusual labor" was the growth of Catholic International from a catechetical institute offering correspondence courses to an exclusively online, highly rated accredited university that enrolls students worldwide. "This is an example of the mustard seed parable lived out magnificently," said trustee Kelly McGinn, reflecting on Dr. Mount's accomplishments.



President Emeritus Dr. Marianne Evans Mount, a Dame of The Order of St. Gregory the Great, is pictured with Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. They presented the award at the 40th anniversary gala.

From Catechetical Institute to Global Trendsetter



Speaking of the institution's founding, Dr. Mount said, "We had a lot of opposition. No one really thought you could form people by correspondence. It had to be face-to-face, and we proved them wrong."

Since offering its first accredited degree program in 1996, a Master of Arts in Religious Studies, the university has educated thousands of students, and many continue to serve the Church. Alumni are employed in a wide variety of fields, including education, business,

healthcare, medicine, and law, and some have become deacons, priests, and members of religious communities.

Speaking of Catholic International in a video presented at the gala, Father Robert J. Spitzer, founder and president of the Spitzer Center, said of Dr. Mount, "You've not only educated generations of people in faith and reason, you've formed a cadre of evangelists through that education that's going to extend your mission far beyond what you ever dreamt of."

Dr. Mount is credited with being the driving force behind the university's growth and success. "Marianne took that football and ran to a goal post that was far beyond what anyone expected," said longtime Catholic International supporter Treena Rinaldi. She is the niece of Bishop Thomas J. Welsh, the first Bishop of Arlington and founder of Catholic International. He recruited Dr. Mount to be one of two initial staff members.

When she retired in 2023, the university had just launched a new program in Catholic Social Teaching, both in Spanish and English, with support from a nearly \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment. Under Dr. Mount's leadership, the university, which had been accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission since 1986, also secured accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission in 2022, and The Association of Theological Schools in 2020.

In reflecting on the contributions of Dr. Mount, Chairman Stephen Pryor said, "Marianne Mount has been a remarkable servant leader who has devoted her entire professional career to advancing the mission of Catholic International. Under her leadership, Catholic International has built a reputation as a pioneer in online theological education that is completely faithful to the teachings of the Church. As she hands over the reins to Dr. Aguirre, the Catholic International community looks forward to an exciting future as a global trendsetter in online Catholic education."

Looking to the Future: Seizing the Moment

Addressing the university's supporters, President Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre spoke of her vision for the university of the future, and the need to unleash its full potential for research, teaching, and formation.

"The world really needs Catholic universities to be a beacon," said President Aguirre. "It is the perfect time for Catholic International to take its strength and expand its academic offerings and geographical reach to further serve our Church and our world. If we don't seize the moment, it will be gone."

In 2024, she explained, Catholic International will diversify its offerings, with programs that are highly in demand. The university will offer impactful degrees that communicate the mind and heart of the Church beyond theology. One of these fields is integrated technologies, a subject that may at first seem outside of the university's wheelhouse. "There is great need to prepare people capable of engaging in these new technologies while being firmly rooted in a sound Christian anthropology and a solid intellectual and spiritual formation," she explained. "Scientists working in this field clearly see the need for universities such as ours to fill this void and are excited about working with us," Dr. Aguirre said.

"The new degree programs will help our students increase their impact by preparing them to take leadership roles in fields in great need of recuperating the meaning of the human person, of social life, and culture," she said. "We want to develop a solid research agenda fostering collaboration between faculty and students, across cultures and countries."

She then announced plans to rebrand the university with a new name: Catholic International University. "Working together, and praying together, we can build the university of the future to serve the Church and the world," President Aguirre said.



President Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre addresses gala attendees and briefs them on plans for the university of the future.

Recent Graduates Travel from Near and Far for Academic Convocation Mass

Just before the gala began, the academic convocation Mass was held in honor of the university's recent class of graduates. Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, served as principal celebrant and homilist, joined by concelebrants Bishop of Arlington Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston Mark E. Brennan, and Bishop Emeritus of Arlington Paul S. Loverde, as well as priests and deacons. Recent graduates from abroad and across the United States attended the Mass, which was followed by a ceremony during which President Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre presented diplomas to the graduates.



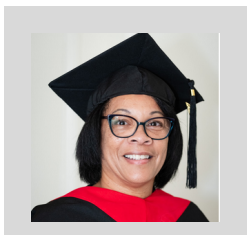
JAN BARTELSON

Jan Bartelson (MA in Theology, 2023) traveled from Plaffeien, Switzerland, to attend. He has a computer science background and worked as an expert in e-learning for a number of educational institutions, and now serves the Church as a pastoral assistant and catechist in a pastoral unit comprising five parishes.



DR. GERALD STACIE

Dr. Gerald (Alvin) Stacie (MA in Theology, 2022), a registered accountant, traveled from Curaçao to attend. "Catholic International supported me during my journey of strengthening my faith and becoming a better person," he said. He appreciated the quality of the program and the professors, and the self-study format of the classes. He also enjoyed the pilgrimage trip to Italy with Professor Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio.



MARIA MARIGNY

Maria Marigny (MA in Theology, 2023) of Stafford, Virginia, hopes to work with disadvantaged children when she retires from her 20-year career with the Department of Defense. She is also a retired Army veteran with 20 years of service, and a wife of 27 years with four adult children.

NEW TRUSTEES



AMY BURNS SMITH

Amy Burns Smith joined the Board of Trustees in October 2023. She is a global marketing and communications executive with extensive experience in helping corporate, government, and higher education institutions fulfill their respective missions. She has served as Vice President, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer for Clemson University and Texas A&M University. Prior to her time in academia, Ms. Smith served in senior roles at Raytheon, Burson-Marsteller Public Relations, Clemson University, The Coca-Cola Company, Intel, SAP, American Express, the U.S. Treasury, the U.S. Secret Service, Federal Reserve, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. As Director of Communications for the U.S. Army's Program Management Office in Iraq, she was awarded the Joint Civilian Meritorious Award for outstanding service supporting humanitarian projects.



DR. MICHAEL PENCINA

Dr. Michael Pencina, Ph.D., joined the Board of Trustees in October 2023. He is Duke Health's Chief Data Scientist and serves as Vice Dean for Data Science, Director of Duke AI Health, and Professor of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics at the Duke University School of Medicine. His work bridges the fields of data science, healthcare, and AI, contributing to Duke's national leadership in trustworthy health AI. Dr. Pencina develops data science strategies that span and connect academic research and clinical care, and develops and implements quantitative science strategies to support the School of Medicine's missions in education and training, laboratory and clinical science, and data science. He co-founded and co-leads the national Coalition for Health AI (CHAI), a multi-stakeholder effort whose mission is to increase the trustworthiness of AI by developing guidelines to drive high-quality healthcare through the adoption of credible, fair, and transparent health AI systems.

NEW TRUSTEES



VERY REVEREND
JAMIE WORKMAN

Very Reverend Jamie Workman joined the Board of Trustees in January 2024. Father Workman is a convert to the faith and was received into the Catholic Church in 1997 at Saint Robert Bellarmine Chapel at George Mason University. He graduated from George Mason University in June 2000 with a B.S. in Business Management, and attended Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He was ordained to the Priesthood for the Diocese of Arlington in 2006. Father Workman served as Parochial Vicar at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Alexandria from 2006 to 2009 and at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More in Arlington from 2009 to 2010. He earned a Licentiate of Canon Law in 2013 at The Catholic University of America, and served as Bishop's Delegate for Canonical Affairs in the Diocesan Tribunal from 2013 through 2018 and then served as Diocesan Chancellor for two years. In 2020, Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge appointed Father Workman as Vicar General. He is a founding Board member of Commissioned by Christ and has also served as Chairman.



Catholic
International
University

NEW STAFF

New Registrar Brings a Wealth of Experience



REGISTRAR LOIS OWEN

Lois Owen was hired as Registrar in June 2023. She previously worked in higher education in the Registrar's office at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine and as an administrative coordinator at Brown University's Department of Education. She also worked in the classroom as a teacher at a classical Catholic school in the greater Philadelphia area. Ms. Owen earned her BA in Literature from Ave Maria University and her MA in Teaching from Brown University. She has done service projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, Ukraine, and in Jerusalem in the Holy Land, where she worked for the Terra Sancta Museum and taught English. Ms. Owen also serves as a kitchen volunteer at Priestfield Retreat Center in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Accomplished Director of Admissions Joins the Staff



DIRECTOR OF
ADMISSIONS
REBEKAH SMITH

Rebekah Smith was hired as Director of Admissions in April 2024. She has 12 years of experience working in higher education admissions, with increasing responsibility at each post. Mrs. Smith previously worked as Director of Enrollment Management for The George Washington University's School of Nursing, where she earned an Impact Award for her accomplishments in 2021, and she also has worked in admissions at Houghton University and Robert Wesleyan University. Most recently, she served as Business Manager for the Institute of Catholic Culture, but is excited to return to admissions, for which she has a passion. Mrs. Smith actively volunteers at St. Bridget of Ireland Catholic Church. She holds a BA in Religion and Philosophy from Robert Wesleyan University.

Prison Ministry Program Grows Exponentially



SISTER DOLORES
KEYSER
*Director of Prison Ministry
Programs*

Catholic International began offering free faith-based continuing education courses to incarcerated students in 2019. By April 1, 2024, they had taken 2.14 million lessons in 404 prisons across 40 states. The courses are offered through a partnership with Edovo, which makes educational content available on tablets in prisons. Catholic International offers the only Catholic catechetical content available, and the courses now include audio files in English and Spanish from Hallow, a popular Catholic app. The 83 courses available—62 in English, and 21 in Spanish—cover the Catechism, Christian morality, the New Testament, Sacred Scripture, and more.

Catholic International also provides content for the Gatekeepers' "Business of Living" video series, also on the Edovo tablets, which prepares the incarcerated for successful reentry into society. Over 5,600 have completed the series, which launched in March 2022. Catholic International also develops content for the Order of Malta, which shares a devotion to prison ministry and financially supports the university's prison ministry program.

With support from the Order of Malta Federal Association, Catholic International developed a digital version of the Stations of the Cross in English and Spanish, and all of the artwork was created by death row inmates in Tennessee. An Advent video program was developed for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia during the Covid lockdowns, when the incarcerated could not receive visitors. Through the Order of Malta pen pal program, which Catholic International promotes, compassionate pen pals from the Order of Malta are paired with the incarcerated.

Sister Dolores Keyser, director of the Prison Ministry program, became involved in prison ministry through her order, the Eudist Servants of the 11th Hour, which ministers to prisoners in Mexico and throughout the United States. Prior to taking her vows, she had a 37-year career in information technology with the federal government. She finds her work making new courses available to incarcerated students rewarding, and enjoys that it keeps her in touch with IT.

*What students
are saying*

"I really appreciate having such a wide variety of courses available in this type of setting, i.e., prison. Thank you!"

"I have taken all of the courses on my Edovo tablet here at Montana State Prison. I am new at this religion stuff, but I am learning."

FACULTY RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Director of Liberal Arts Education Programs Explores the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Dr. Ann Brodeur, Director of Liberal Arts Education Programs, is a medieval historian who specializes in the social and religious history of Europe. She obtained her M.A. in Medieval and Byzantine Studies from The Catholic University of America and her Ph.D in History from the University of Toronto. In her research and writing, she explores the health of communities, particularly how they form, maintain, and weaken, and she studies the mechanisms that strengthen communal ties—and just happens to study them in the medieval context. In the past, she has researched the ways in which bishops, in particular, sought to encourage social solidarity across social and economic groups in their local churches by means of indulgences for the poor, for the infirm and leprous, for hospitals and hostels for unwed mothers, and for educational initiatives. Long before Catholic Social Teaching was articulated and codified, the Church was reaching out "to the margins" to bring them into the heart of the Church, and indulgences were one way they sought to accomplish this work.

In the past five years, however, Dr. Brodeur's research and public presentations have focused on education in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Each year she teaches a popular course on the History and Philosophy of Western Education. The course examines the ideals and practices of the western educational tradition, especially the way it understood the ends of the human person and society and the purpose of education, beginning with the philosophical and religious traditions of ancient Athens and Jerusalem and the consequent Christian synthesis.

Dr. Brodeur's current research and writing interests spring from her experience with this class. "More and more people are interested in the roots of western educational tradition in the liberal arts, especially as they become more aware of the deep flaws in modern educational thought, and this has encouraged me to write more on the content and pedagogy of medieval education, as well as on the thought of St. John Henry Newman," she says. "It is an exciting time to be working for the renewal of Catholic schools across the globe, and Catholic International is poised to be at the forefront of that effort!"

President Evaluates Economic Development Projects that Seek to Improve Life in Central America

Throughout her career as an economist, researcher, and a professor of economics, Catholic International President **Dr. Sophia Aguirre** has formulated and implemented Integral Economic Development (IED), a revolutionary new economic theory and methodology. Through a more accurate understanding of the human person—one that acknowledges the person's fundamental social nature—IED has been able to generate more efficient and sustainable economic development outcomes across fields and around the world, improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of persons.

Dr. Aguirre is currently evaluating two ongoing economic development interventions in Central America. The first intervention, *Guatemaltecos por la Nutrición*, is a five-year multifaceted nutritional intervention to improve chronic malnutrition in children under five years old, as well as to improve maternal health in select rural regions of Guatemala. *La Cervercería Centro Americana*, in partnership with other organizations and relevant governmental authorities, is implementing this intervention in northwestern Guatemala.

The other economic development project seeks to improve educational outcomes of children in Central America, such as increasing the literacy and mathematics rates as well as critical and analytical thinking, by training primary school teachers on the appropriate introduction of technology in the classroom. *Conecta Aprende* is an educational intervention implemented by OneLaptop per Child (OLPC) and Fundación Zamora Terán (FZT).

In February, at the beginning of the Honduran school year, principal investigator Dr. Aguirre and her evaluation team traveled to Honduras, where *Conecta Aprende* volunteers from FZT in Honduras were trained by the IED team, and baseline data collection from students, parents, and teachers began.

In comparison to its neighboring countries in Central America and the Caribbean, Honduras has high rates of poverty and unemployment, and hunger and malnutrition are widespread. Honduras' gross domestic product per capita is lowest in the region after Nicaragua and Haiti, and the adult literacy rate is 89%, according to World Bank data from 2019.

The three-year evaluation conducted by Dr. Aguirre will help to determine if *Conecta Aprende* is truly making an impact on the children, their families, their schools, and their communities and will support OLP-FZT in their work. Improving children's literacy rates, mathematical skills, and readiness for higher education will prepare them for brighter futures and expanded employment opportunities, and ultimately benefit the entire nation.

The evaluation team will return to Honduras in October 2024, near the end of the school year, to collect post-intervention data for the first year of the intervention's implementation. Data will be collected in the fall of 2025 and 2026 as well.

The IED methodology uses an integrated framework for economic analysis to more accurately measure the outcomes and impact of an intervention. The person-centered methodology also promotes proactive participation on the part of economic agents and seeks to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Shannon Griffin, who also works at Catholic International, is the team's associate investigator, and Victoria Elwood, a college student, serves as the research assistant.



At select schools in Honduras, children and teachers are receiving laptops and training from FZT-OLPC to improve educational outcomes. Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre's evaluation team is measuring the results of the intervention.

Faculty Member Publishes Guide for Catholic Religious of the 21st Century



REVEREND BEVIL
BRAMWELL, OMI

In 2023, longtime faculty member Rev. Bevil Bramwell, OMI, published the *Handbook for Catholic Religious*. "This is a book about the theology of religious life following the magisterium, specifically Vatican II, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. The text offers some of the things that one needs to know before starting out on the road to religious life," Father Bramwell says. He explains that a particular problem for religious in the 21st century is that they are trying to pray, live, and work in an age that is antagonistic to such a life. If religious life is ever separated from its relation to and expression of the life of Christ, then it is no longer religious life as the Church understands it. For this reason, Fr. Bramwell addresses the existential challenges that face serious religious every day, calling upon the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Benedict XVI, and John Paul II. Other chapters focus on community life and the intellectual life of religious. The book is available from Enroute Books and Media.

Dr. Elizabeth Shaw Presents at Hildebrand Project Colloquium



DR. ELIZABETH SHAW

Interim Provost and Associate Dean for Accreditation Dr. Elizabeth Shaw is an associated scholar of the Hildebrand Project, which promotes the thought of Christian personalist Dietrich von Hildebrand. In November 2023, she gave a response to a paper presented at a colloquium on the work of Dietrich's wife and fellow philosopher, Alice, at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The event was organized in honor of the 100th anniversary of Alice von Hildebrand's birth and first anniversary of her death. As Dr. Shaw notes, "The value of themes and insights of personalist philosophy cannot be overstated. They are quite relevant to our work at Catholic International and will help to provide a coherent and unifying framework as we expand our offering of academic programs." Dr. Shaw also serves as associate editor of *The Review of Metaphysics*.

Cardinal Newman Society Eucharistic Fellow Publishes New Book



DAVID BONAGURA,
JR.

Faculty member David Bonagura, Jr., was named a Fellow for Eucharistic Education by The Cardinal Newman Society in September. The fellowship program was developed in support of the U.S. bishops' three-year Eucharistic Revival. Mr. Bonagura's fellowship focuses on the importance of teaching the Eucharist within all levels of Catholic education and integrating that teaching across the curriculum. In a recent article in *The Catholic Thing*, he wrote that "the Eucharist is the source and summit of Catholic education," and provided ideas for teaching about the Eucharist beyond just the theology classroom, for example, by covering Eucharistic miracles in science class.

He also published a new book in 2023, *Jerome's Tears: Letters to Friends in Mourning*, making St. Jerome's poignant letters of consolation to friends who had lost spouses, children, relatives, and friends available for the first time in English. He first read St. Jerome's letters while working on a thesis for his graduate degree. "I thought Christian readers of all kinds could really benefit spiritually from Jerome's approach to grief," Mr. Bonagura says. What strikes him most about the letters is that they balance narrative, imagery, elegance, and precision. "He brilliantly wields Scripture in every letter, offering persons, images, stories, and wise sayings from both the Old and New Testaments to help comfort the bereaved," he says.

Professor of Catechetics Speaks and Writes on a Variety of Topics



DR. TAMRA FROMM

Dr. Tamra Fromm, Professor of Catechetics, was a contributor to the *Living the Word Catholic Women's Bible* published by Ave Maria Press in 2023. She wrote introductions to the books of Joshua, Judges, Esther, and Ezra/Nehemiah, as well as a commentary on Paul's address to the Areopagus. In response to this publication, she participated in two podcasts with editor Sarah Cristmyer. In a podcast entitled "Reaching the Unchurched in a Culture of Relativism" (August 10, 2023), she discussed her doctoral research on young adult "nones," the epistemological and cultural context of American young adults, and how Paul's methods in the Areopagus can be a model for evangelization.

In her second podcast, "Making Sense of Violence in the Old Testament," she offered a framework for reading the "dark passages" of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, and how to view them in light of Christ's teaching. She was invited to speak on the topic "How should Genesis be read?" on the Mysterious John podcast, where she explained the Catholic approach to reading the first 11 chapters of the Bible, and how faith and science can be compatible.

In October, she was a guest speaker on the topic of "Catechesis" for the Radio Maria England Credo series, hosted by Tim Hutchinson. During this podcast, she discussed the magisterial teaching on catechesis, the difficulties in catechizing in a postmodern culture, and how to respond to the growing number of religious "nones."

Dr. Fromm is currently working on an article on the connection between biblical literacy and markers of evangelization among lay Catholics, a study that was funded by the Catholic Biblical School of Michigan.

Faculty Member Promotes Reverence for Life and Catholic Perspective on Bioethics



STEVE BOZZA

In addition to teaching bioethics and moral theology courses for Catholic International and serving on the Faculty Governance Council, Steven Bozza is Director of the Office of Life and Family for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Before his service in Philadelphia, he was the Director of Respect Life/Family Life for the Diocese of Camden. He was recently invited to serve on the Editorial Board of the *American Journal of Biomedical Science and Research*.

He holds a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies from St. Charles Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, and has completed his doctoral coursework in bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome, Italy.

Mr. Bozza has authored several publications that take a practical approach to applying Catholic moral principles to the medical needs and dilemmas of the faithful. To this end, he has also produced several short videos that address these issues in a clear, concise, and pastoral manner.

His service in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia includes bioethical consults and networking with the National Catholic Bioethics Center and the Catholic Medical Association. Three areas of ministry that are specific to his interests are post-abortion healing through Project Rachel, Natural Family Planning methodologies through the Couple to Couple League, and NaPro Technology and ministry to same sex-attracted persons through Courage International.

Dr. Ana Machado Hired as Director of Theology Programs



DR. ANA MACHADO

Dr. Ana Machado was recently hired as Director of Theology Programs. She holds an S.T.D. from the Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Italy, where she has been a researcher on the Theology faculty since 2023. She earned her S.T.L. in Dogmatic Theology from the same university in 2021, and received the best student award in that program. Dr. Machado also earned a Ph.D. in Governance and Organizational Culture from the University of Navarra, Spain, in 2020, and an M.A. in Economics from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal. Her research has focused on Catholic Social Teaching as it applies to governance and organizational culture. She has presented widely at conferences, and is the author of a book published by EUNSA in 2022, *Cómo motivan los valores. La teoría de Schwartz y su aplicación al contexto del trabajo (How Values Motivate. Schwartz's Theory and Its Application to the Work Context)*, and has also published several book chapters and journal articles. Dr. Machado serves as a review board member at *Humanistic Management Journal*.

New Catholic Social Teaching Programs Prepare Graduates to Serve Others

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities (ACCU), only 37% of Catholic universities currently offer degrees in theology and philosophy. At a time when many are eliminating their theology programs, Catholic International expanded its theological offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, particularly with a focus on Catholic Social Teaching. These new programs, supported by a nearly \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., are equipping students with the practical skills needed to use their understanding of theology and Scripture to serve those in their parishes and communities who are in need of support.



**DR. GERARDO
SALAZAR**

*Director of Spanish Language
Programs*

In the Fall I 2023 term, the AA in Theology with a concentration in Catholic Social Teaching launched. The program is designed especially for Hispanic Catholics, who will make up the majority of the U.S. Catholic population by 2030. All courses in the online program are taught in Spanish to ensure wider access to higher education for students who may not be fluent in English or prefer to learn in their primary language. Upon earning the degree, students will be prepared to serve as lay ecclesial ministers in Catholic parishes and pursue further academic study. There is great need in the Hispanic community to develop well-educated leaders for the Church of the 21st century.



**DR. REV. AVELINO
GONZÁLEZ-FERRÉR**

Graduate faculty member

In the Fall II 2023 term, a graduate certificate program in CST launched, with classes taught in English but with options for reading and writing in Spanish. The graduate program was developed by Dr. Rev. Avelino González-Ferrér, a priest in the Archdiocese of Washington, and is targeted to ecclesial ministers who seek to deepen their understanding of CST to better serve their faith communities. Many Catholic pastoral leaders feel insufficiently knowledgeable when faced with the challenges of immigration, racism, poverty, and family breakdown. The curriculum draws upon the Church's broad and deep intellectual tradition to provide the wisdom and insights needed to address these issues within local parishes.

In the Spring 2024 term, the Master of Arts in Theology with a Concentration in Catholic Social Teaching launched, also under the leadership of Rev. Avelino González-Ferrér. The curriculum focuses on the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching and is ideal for those who wish to teach, serve in parish or diocesan leadership, work in the non-profit sector, and those who wish to grow personally and professionally.

In the Fall 2024 term, the Spanish version of the Master of Arts in Theology with a Concentration in Catholic Social Teaching will launch.

Undergraduate Academic Offerings Expanded in 2023

The BA in Theology degree completion program expanded into a full BA in Theology degree program. A full complement of general education and Theology courses enables students to complete all of their coursework at Catholic International. Students may transfer in up to 60 previously earned undergraduate credits toward the degree if desired.

BA in Theology students can now choose to minor in Philosophy, History, or Sacred Scripture. The Philosophy minor in particular rounds out the university's rigorous theological education in faith and reason. A strong foundation in Philosophy is an advantage for students in nearly all professions and areas of study, as encouraged by Pope John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*.

Program Will Prepare Clergy and Lay People for Church Leadership



MR. MARIO ENZLER

*Director of Ecclesial
Administration and Management
Programs*

The new Master of Arts in Ecclesial Administration and Management, to be offered beginning in Fall 2024, will prepare clergy and lay people in the U.S., Latin America, and Italy to work in administrative leadership roles in parishes and other Church institutions. The program was developed in response to requests from Vatican officials, as those engaged in leading the mission of the Church, both priests and lay people, often lack the necessary education to effectively manage financial and personnel affairs.

The curriculum is designed to fill the gaps in knowledge that exist, and is built around four pillars: theology and canon law, personnel management and strategy, finance and accounting, and communication. In addition to coursework, all students will complete an applied research project intended to integrate the skills and concepts covered in the curriculum as well as resolve two case studies that will engage them with specific challenges encountered in the work of administration, including crisis situations. In its first year, the program is expected to draw 40 students from the U.S. and 20 from Latin America and Italy.

Mario Enzler, Director of Ecclesial Administration and Management Programs, has developed successful educational programs in Ecclesial Administration and Management and conducted workshops for clergy, religious, and lay people all over the world. He previously served as Dean of the business school at the University of St. Thomas in Houston and taught at The Catholic University of America. Early in his career, he joined the Swiss Guard and served under St. John Paul II for three years as a soldier and conductor of the Swiss Guard Band. He then enjoyed a long career in investment banking and corporate finance, and managed Vatican investments as a senior financial executive at UBS, a large Swiss investment bank. He holds the European equivalent of a Master in Arts (*Laurea Magistralis*) from the Conservatorio F. dall'Abaco, Diploma di Tromba, Verona, Italy, and obtained his CFA and IAF while working in the banking industry. Mr. Enzler has served three popes, including as Financial Advisor to the Amministrazione del patrimonio della sede apostolica and as Strategic Advisor to the Pontificia commissione per la tutela dei minori. His passion for the Church and business, and deep roots in the Catholic ecclesial community, make him ideal for leading this much-needed program.

New Program in Liberal Arts Education Addresses the Need for Well-Formed Teachers



DR. ANN BRODEUR

Director of Liberal Arts Education Programs

A Catholic liberal arts education begins with an authentic view of the human person as created in the image of God to share in his divine life. School leaders are recognizing that to recover the Catholic liberal arts educational tradition and nurture a school-wide revitalization process, they need to hire teachers prepared for this important mission. However, many of today's teachers are not well-formed in the faith.

Catholic International's new Master of Arts in Liberal Arts Education program will prepare teachers and school leaders who are steeped in the Catholic liberal arts educational tradition and formed in the habits of mind and life needed to accomplish this important goal. The new MA program will launch in English in Fall 2024, but will eventually be offered in both Spanish and English to reach international audiences, particularly in South America, Latin America, and India.

The revitalization and renewal of Catholic education is a global phenomenon. According to the Global Catholic Education Report (2020), K-12 enrollment in Catholic schools across the globe almost doubled from 1980 to 2020, with most of the growth concentrated in Africa, India, and South and Latin America. Even in the United States, following a nearly 60-year decline, Catholic education has seen a resurgence in the past decade. The number of schools teaching a Catholic liberal arts curriculum has grown exponentially, with classical academies springing up across the country as parents seek faith-based, academically rigorous programs for their children.

The new MA program, headed by Dr. Ann Brodeur, Director of Liberal Arts Education Programs, will prepare school leaders and teachers to form and transform generations of young people to greet the challenges of the modern world with creativity and optimism. The curriculum she has developed responds directly to St. John Paul II's resounding call from *Ex corde ecclesiae* to Catholic university faculties and students to commit themselves to "the ardent search for truth and its unselfish transmission to youth and to all those learning to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better."

Through its work with educators in the Americas and beyond, the MA in Liberal Arts Education will carry out St. John Paul II's exhortation that "a Catholic University [should enable] the Church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture."

AA Degree Offered in Spanish Helps Students Access Quality Theological Education

The new AA degree in Theology with a concentration in Catholic Social Teaching, taught in Spanish, launched in Fall 2023. The program brings the heart of the Church to the forefront. Students learn about the teachings of the Church in relation to the common good, the dignity and transcendence of the human person, principles of the moral life, and the relationship between faith and reason. Already, students in the program say they are benefitting from their classes.

Armida Ramirez of Dixon, California, enrolled in the program for the opportunity it afforded her. "As a single parent with a great desire to continue my studies, Catholic International was the best choice for me, affordable and flexible with an amazing curriculum in Spanish." She works part-time at St. Mary's Parish as a Faith Formation Coordinator and is in charge of the Catechism program, and for the last 15 years she has coordinated Bible study and Prayer groups. She also conducted training for the liturgical ministries.

She says, "My studies at Catholic International have helped immensely. I have a better understanding of people's attitudes and behavior. I feel that I have grown in love, understanding, and patience."

"What I like most about Catholic International is the support we get from the staff and the great teachers," Armida says. "They are not just knowledgeable, but also people of faith, and most importantly, truly Catholic."

"What I like to share about my walk with God, is that He had this blessing waiting for me, and Catholic International was like an open road in the middle of the desert. I feel in my heart that this will take me to a Promised Land."



Leybi Lima

Leybi Lima, from Guatemala, works full-time as a senior analyst in the Government Contracts Department of a major New York City investment bank. On Saturdays, she works part-time managing the flea market for her parish, St. Nicholas de Tolentino in Queens. After trying to complete her education for many years, she learned about Catholic International's AA program at the annual Charismatic Renewal Conference from program director Dr. Gerardo Salazar. The program's focus and courses appealed to her, and she decided to enroll.

Leybi is a member of her parish's pastoral council and a pastoral leader in the Hispanic community. "At the Diocesan level, I am a member of the Diocese of Brooklyn Charismatic Renewal Coordinating Committee, and I also represent my diocese at the RCC Regional level," she says. She was the diocesan leader of the V Encuentro, and also helps the Hispanic Diocesan Committee.

"So far, everything I have learned has served me in all parts of my life, in my professional life as I have learned Excel, etc., but also in my spiritual life," Leybi says. "Everything I am living and sharing with the other students has also helped me to grow in community with other brothers and sisters from other movements and also helps me share my charismatic spirituality."

"I think Catholic International is helping me in my spiritual life," she says, "to be more effective, to grow, and have a more mature faith." "I am very grateful to God, for bringing me to this community, since I do not see it as a university, but as a community of spiritual growth that also provides knowledge," Leybi says.



Deacon Christian Nieves

Christian Nieves is a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend, at St. John the Evangelist parish in Goshen, Indiana. In service to the Lord, he preaches at Mass, ministers to the elderly, homebound, and those in the hospital, and founded a food bank with the help of other volunteers. He also leads Bible study in the county jail. He also works full-time in customer service for a company that paints RVs and motorhomes.

"When I found Catholic International on social networks, it made me happy to find a Catholic university that accepted me and especially in my native language. For me, this opportunity is changing my life, and I am very grateful to Catholic International for everything achieved," he says.

Deacon Nieves pursued studies at Catholic International for the opportunity to form leaders for ministries of his parish and to enrich his own ministry. He has seen very good results in his homilies and public-speaking ability. "I received formation to be ordained, but what I received was not enough. I think that to serve the Lord in ministry, it is necessary to be formed and constantly continue to be formed," he says. "The times in which we live are different and worrying, and it is necessary to prepare ourselves to be able to fight head-on the evil that we face lurking in our communities."

He appreciates the help and understanding of the professors and advisors, and says that because the professors are Catholic, they can share their wisdom with the students in a way that makes direct and instant connection. "The teachers are very dynamic," he says. "We never finish learning about the beauty of our Holy Catholic Church."

High School Students Earn College Credits through Catholic International

In September 2023, Catholic International opened its doors to high school students through the Early College Program. Qualified high school juniors and seniors can now take classes at Catholic International at a 50% discount. The program is especially attractive to Catholic homeschool families seeking to enroll their teens at a Newman Guide institution.

Catholic International also updated its partnership agreement with the Angelicum Academy, which runs an online Great Books program for high school students. Through Catholic International, their juniors and seniors can earn a fully accredited degree from a respected Catholic university at a significant discount – and the credits count twice, toward high school and college!

Juniors and seniors from the Angelicum Academy can transfer 30 credits earned from the Academy to Catholic International's online AA degree program and complete the remaining 30 Catholic International credits needed for their AA degree at a 50% discount. Up to 30 additional credits may be transferred by Angelicum Academy Great Books Program students wishing to pursue an online BA degree with Catholic International, leaving only 30 more credits needed for their BA degree.

In the words of TAA President Pat Carmack, "We believe this will prove to be a huge development in Catholic education in the U.S."



Online Library Expands Resources in Multiple Languages

The Online Library greatly expanded its ability to serve students and faculty in 2023. Over 52,000 ebooks in theology and philosophy are accessible now, thanks to a demand-driven acquisition agreement signed with Proquest. This agreement provides students and faculty with more ebooks while saving money at the same time, since Catholic International only pays for the books patrons request.

The Library is now bilingual, with a "sister site" in Spanish. All English language LibGuides that make up the library site are being translated into Spanish, and the library newsletter is published in both English and Spanish. Through a subscription to Digitalia Hispanica, students and faculty can access Spanish ebooks and journals in religion, philosophy, and literature in both text and audio formats.

In July 2024, the Library will become multilingual with the addition of an Italian language "sister site" and resources in Italian to support the Master of Arts degree program in Ecclesial Administration and Management.



GRADUATES GIVE BACK

For 40 years, Catholic International has produced graduates who use their education in theology to make a difference in the lives of those in their parishes and communities. Here are a few of their stories.

Women's Ministry Uses Sacred Art as a Path to Prayer, God, and Community



KATIE WEISS

Founder of Behold Visio Divina

Katie Weiss (BA in Theology, 2015) is the founder of Behold Visio Divina, a growing ministry that uses sacred art and prayer to help women understand their God-given dignity. In the process of contemplating art—and bringing their human experience to it—the women involved in Behold's community come to know God, the saints, one another, and themselves better.

Katie grew up in a large Catholic family, and attended Franciscan University of Steubenville for a year before entering religious life. Despite feeling deep love for her Dominican community in Tennessee, she struggled with fear and anxiety, which made prayer difficult. One day, she spent a long time quietly contemplating the painting the *Annunciation*, which features Adam and Eve in the background, and Mary and the angel Gabriel in the foreground. The act of simply resting in something beautiful helped her break through the sense of fear and shame so many of us feel before God. Following this experience, she was able to pray to our Blessed Mother, and realized she was being called to come back into the world.

After leaving the order, she enrolled at Catholic International. "I benefited so much from Catholic International," Katie says. "I really appreciated the flexibility, and being able to pursue my education from home without the added expense of traveling to a distant city." At Catholic International she took a seminar on Lectio Divina, a method for praying the Scriptures that encourages practitioners to listen to the Lord's voice through open receptivity to His Word. "It provided a prayerful atmosphere and guidelines on how to pray," she says, and gave her a deeper appreciation for the intimacy of prayer.

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Later, in 2016, Katie participated in the first Forum offered by the GIVEN Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to activating the gifts of young adult women for the Catholic Church and the world. After attending the 5-week program, which used art as a focus for prayer, she found she had experienced a journey from head to heart. "I am drawn to art because there is no other purpose than to enjoy it," Katie says.

Her experiences at Catholic International and the GIVEN Institute inspired her. "The Holy Spirit made clear it was supposed to be something more," she says, which led her to found Behold to help women encounter the beauty of God and themselves, and to go forth into the world sharing this beauty.

Behold offers in-person and virtual events, which have been increasingly popular since the COVID shutdowns of 2020. Small groups meet for prayer time together, and then gather to discuss topics related to art, femininity, faith, and life. Katie finds lots of motivation from women struggling with a number of difficult situations, from miscarriage to cancer diagnoses, particularly through Behold's Faith Over Fear group, which specifically helps women in crisis. Behold also offers Lenten retreats, watercolor workshops, museum days, and has published nine prayer books, including *Faith Over Fear*, *Made in His Image*, and *Encountering Christ: From Trust unto Surrender*.

Katie, who is married and has a 9-month-old son, frequently speaks about prayer, theology of the body, beauty, healing through art, and feminine genius. Her workshops have been featured at the Frassati Fellowship of New York City, the Edith Stein Project, and Franciscan University. We are constantly being called to conversation, and the Lord is always making Himself available, Katie says. "Don't be afraid to go deep." To learn more about Katie's ministry, visit Beholdvisiodivina.com.

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Double Graduate Composes Liturgical Music for International Audiences



TODD MESLER

Todd Mesler (BA in Theology, 2016; MA in Theology, 2020) says that what he loves to do is to "paint the text with music." He writes music and text that is doctrinally correct in a way that can bring the fullness of faith to congregations. Todd has always loved his Catholic faith and music. As a 13-year-old, he started to play the guitar and was quickly invited by his parish's music director to participate in a music ensemble. Since music had come so easily to him, he knew that he needed, and wanted, more education in the faith. After starting at a local university, Todd

finished his bachelor's at Catholic International. Then he achieved his master's at Catholic International as well. Todd is now studying for his doctorate in sacred music. His education at Catholic International was spectacular, setting the stage for his work in music, he says. Catholic International's program provides "faith in a realistic and thorough way for everyone." Todd is director of liturgy at the Simply Liturgical Composers. He directs composition for liturgical music, which can be a monumental task at times. In a recent project, he wrote the music for the Psalms for every day of the Mass (for all schedules: A, B, and C), which meant writing music for 750 different psalms. With the music composed, any parish can cantor any Psalm, any day of the week. Todd's work is not only available in the United States, it is often used internationally in New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Mexico, to name a few countries.

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Ministry Helps Others Pursue a Life of Holiness



CHRISTINA SEMMENS

Christina Semmens' (MA in Theology, 2008) path has taken many winding roads, including those that led to Catholic International and the work she does today. Part of the first class to receive its entire Master's degree online, she deeply appreciates that Catholic International gave her a holistic understanding of the faith. It was not just the pieces, such as Scripture or liturgy or social justice, it provided a fullness of faith that she cherishes to this day.

Christina started the apostolate "Say Yes to Holiness," which helps people pursue a life of holiness and do things in union with the mind and heart of the Church. She was sick with Covid in 2020 when her book, *Say Yes: Discovering Purpose, Peace and Abundance in Daily Life*, was released. The book answers the questions of why and how we should live a life in which we put God first. Christina's book quickly morphed into a full-blown apostolate, now vibrant with videos, podcasts, coaching accompaniment, and mentorship. Christina's passion is to help people discern what they are to do. Her apostolate "provides them tools to be able to flourish."

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Teacher Hands on the Faith



MELISSA REYES

Melissa Reyes (MA in Theology and Educational Ministry, 2023), a Catholic middle school teacher in California, says that Catholic International helped her to grow into the theologian she has always dreamt of becoming. "I'm so thankful to God for Catholic International and all the faculty and staff who helped me achieve my degree," Melissa says.

"What I most enjoyed was being able to encounter the genius of each of my professors," she says. "Each one offered something so unique to my theological inquiries and taught with such insight and depth of each branch of theology."

Melissa says that her education taught her Truth in God, and that she is the messenger of Jesus, who is the Teacher. "I am able to pass on to my students the study habits and truths of our Catholic faith in a safe academic environment, where God is first, and where education is key to attaining truth, beauty, and goodness."

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Hospice Chaplain Brings Peace to Patients and Their Families



DAVE STECHSCHULTE

Dave Stechschulte (BA in Theology, 2019) is on a path that few are willing to walk, that of a Hospice Chaplain. He works with critically ill patients and their families every day. True, this role can be overwhelming, but Dave knows that his faith runs deep and importantly, that "God is weaving good out of everything I see." Like so many people that God has tapped on the shoulder, Dave never really expected to be in this role. After entering a seminary and discerning the priesthood, he decided to get married and to serve the Lord through spiritual service. Through his time in

seminary, working as a hospice nurse, earning his nursing degree, and then his bachelor's degree in theology from Catholic International, he was able to understand the Catholic faith far more deeply and what it truly means to be a follower of Christ. That knowledge and understanding is critical for Dave every day as a lay hospice chaplain. The shift to hospice chaplain was a natural move for him. Reflecting on John 14:27, Dave offers that if there is anything that he has learned, it is that those who have faith have peace at the end of life.

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Convert to the Faith in Texas Becomes a Deacon and Dean



DEACON DAVIN WINGER

Davin Winger (MA in Theology, 2010) of Amarillo, Texas, is a permanent deacon and Dean of Business and Technology at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. He grew up in the Church of Christ, in the small town of Gruver, Texas, and married a Catholic woman. After they had a child, he began to ask the questions that so many new parents ask themselves. Why did he believe what he believed, and what did he want to impress upon his future child? That led him to searching online about the Church of Christ and Catholicism. Davin was

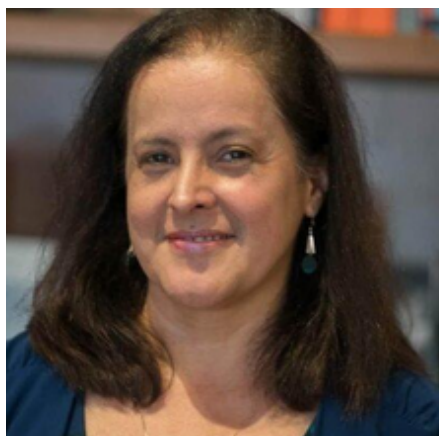
a farmer, as his family had always been. But on quiet days, when the weather did not allow for farming, Davin would study the internet, searching for answers. Davin stumbled upon a priest from Paducah, Kentucky, and called him out of the blue. After a wonderful chat, the priest sent him a copy of the Catechism, telling him to read it.

One thing led to another, and Davin came into the Catholic Church in 2001. He was still searching, trying to determine what else to do, when he found Catholic International online in 2004. In 2006 he decided to quit farming altogether. He gave himself a year to exit the business and began to apply for jobs with the church. A small university in Oklahoma not far from him was seeking a finance teacher. Davin had run a successful farming business for 25 years, so why not give that a try? He joined the university and started to teach business classes but did need his MBA to keep teaching. Davin worked on his MBA as he worked on his Masters in Theology at Catholic International.

Recognizing the need to minister to those who speak Spanish in the Diocese of Amarillo, he started taking Spanish classes. Eventually he went to Mexico to enter a language immersion program. Now he can even lead a Mass in a nearby Spanish church. For all that Davin has accomplished to draw others to the faith, perhaps what is most gratifying of all is that his oldest son, Ryan, was called to the seminary at the age of 32. He is currently at St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana.

GRADUATES GIVE BACK

Master's Graduate Joins Student Life Staff



MARITZA MEJIA

Maritza Mejia's (MA in Theology, 2022) journey, like so many in the faith, simply kept unfolding. She never planned for this journey to occur but is ever grateful for her path. Maritza is from Colombia, and her husband is from Nicaragua. Twenty-nine years ago, they were married and came to the U.S. As she raised her two children, she wanted to be part of their education, so she volunteered in her children's public schools and in their catechetical program. Eventually, she began teaching. For 14 years now she has been a catechist, teaching primarily 6th and 7th graders as they prepare for confirmation.

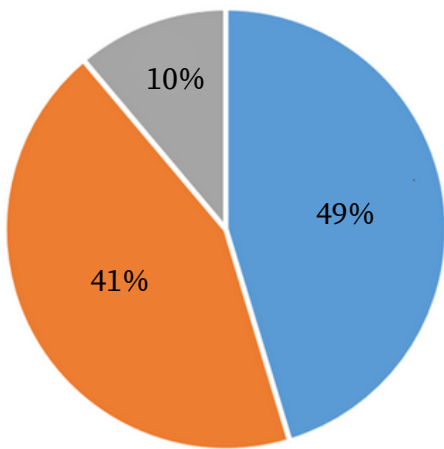
When COVID hit and lockdowns occurred, Maritza began to explore how she could deepen her prayer life and learn more about her faith. She embarked on the Master's in Theology at Catholic International. She values her degree, and finds that her teaching has improved, she now knows the strategies to use and where the resources are. In addition, she is constantly revising her lessons based on what she has learned from her coursework.

But what Maritza values the most is that through her studies in theology, she learned to let God guide her to serve Him. Her studies were not just about becoming more knowledgeable, they led her to pray to praise God, to serve Him, in ways that are new for her.

Maritza now works at Catholic International as Academic Advisor and Student Life Manager for Spanish Programs. She also helped translate information into Spanish for the AA degree program in theology. "I am totally blessed by this opportunity," she says.

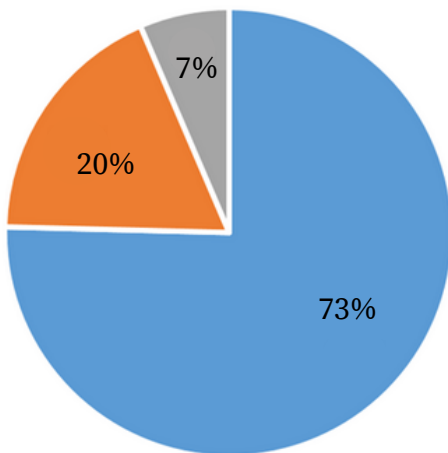
2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

IN THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2023, Catholic International's revenue totaled \$2,313,122 and expenses totaled \$2,333,063. Expenses funded a presidential search, the launch of new academic programs, and the hiring of new staff and faculty to accomplish the work of the strategic plan adopted in October.



REVENUE

Tuition and Fees	_____	41%
Contributions & Grants	_____	49%
Fundraisers	_____	10%
Total	_____	\$2,313,122



EXPENSES

Programs	_____	73%
Administration & General	_____	20%
Fundraising	_____	7%
Total	_____	\$2,333,063

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