



Catholic Distance University

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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



Message From the President

Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

None of us could have predicted that 2020 would bring a worldwide pandemic that upended in such significant ways our families, friendships, work, culture, education, accreditation, and even the practice of our faith. However, as the story of our Annual Report unfolds, we share the lived experience of the only fully online Catholic university whose doors remained wide open and welcoming throughout the pandemic. Our story in 2020 reveals the prophetic wisdom of Pope Francis, “In particular, the internet can offer greater opportunities for encounter and this is a good thing, it is a gift from God” (World Communications Day Message, 2014).

ONE OF THE STORIES THAT STANDS OUT to me is Deacon Adam Walk of Brisbane, Australia, who earned his MA in Theology during 2020. As you read his story, he describes what he liked best about CDU—the community. CDU is a pioneer in fostering human presence in distance education. The university understands that geographical distance between teachers and learners demands a pedagogy that is highly interactive yet flexible, requires a competent, faith-filled faculty accessible and well-trained in on-line teaching, and a university committed to student success that supports high retention rates. If you want assurance that you will fulfill your educational goals, come to CDU!

ANOTHER INSIGHT I WISH TO HIGHLIGHT is CDU’s mission to serve the underserved, to reach the peripheries with theological and religious education that transforms lives. When Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI addressed Catholic educators in 2008 in Washington, DC, he reminded us that education is integral to the mission of the Church. Pope Francis in his inspiring personal reflection on the state of our troubled world today recently commented:

“I have always thought that the world looks clearer from the periphery, but in these last seven years as Pope, it has really hit home. You have to make for the margins to find a new future”

(Let us Dream, p. 11)

While he develops this theme, CDU understands the wisdom of the peripheries; for nearly thirty-six years, we have welcomed many great students who live on the peripheries of Catholic higher education who hunger for knowledge of our loving God. In the Annual Report you will encounter our flourishing educational ministry to the incarcerated, the story of MA student Lucas Jacobson, who depends on a wheelchair for mobility during Minnesota winters because of cerebral palsy, Mrs. Ute Eble, a military wife who has served the military community and their

families as a director of religious education. Ute recently earned her MA in Theology. You will meet AA degree student, Charles Aviles, director of safety and emergency management at Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, serving on the front lines of battling COVID-19 in an impoverished part of New York City.

We have touched on some of the special stories of 2020, hoping that in these vignettes you too will catch the “Joy from the Truth,” our motto borrowed from St. Augustine.



Chancellor Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio congratulates graduate Cierra Holt at the 2018 Academic Convocation Mass.

WHILE WE HAVE RECENTLY ENDURED the loss of one of our treasured friends and visionary leaders, Dr. Joseph V. Braddock, we have also welcomed new board members and new board leadership. I recall the wisdom of Job: “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

WE THANK DEEPLY AND PRAY OFTEN FOR all of our generous benefactors who enable us to serve our mission of communicating the mind and heart of the Church in a digital

world. Your support enables us to reach the peripheries because of our pioneering work in distance education, God’s gift to the world that became so valuable during the pandemic. With milestones in leadership, planning, accreditation, and global engagement, especially our IFCU partnership to educate international faculty, we begin the new year with gratitude for so many signs of a healthy, thriving, pioneering university. May God continue to bless the CDU Community!



ATS Grants Accreditation to Graduate School of Theology

ON JUNE 2, 2020, THE ASSOCIATION OF Theological Schools (ATS) accredited Catholic Distance University's Graduate School of Theology for an initial period of 7 years. Founded in 1918, ATS accredits more than 270 graduate schools of theology and most Catholic seminaries in the United States and Canada. CDU is the first exclusively online Catholic university to achieve ATS accreditation.

Chancellor and Vice Chairman of the Board Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio said, "The Catholic Distance University community and its Board of Trustees rejoice in the ATS accreditation for the next seven years. This vote of confidence for our Graduate School of Theology is a tribute to very diligent work and academic excellence, as well as a stimulus for increased effort and an ever deeper commitment to faithful theological education."

President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount said, "This accomplishment is a gift to the CDU Community and to all who will come to CDU in the future. I thank ATS for its commitment to accreditation standards that objectively evaluate schools based on their mission and academic outcomes, not the modality of educational delivery. CDU is honored to join so many highly respected Catholic seminaries and Christian theological institutions in Canada and the United States. We look forward to joining a community of scholars who will help to enhance our work and motivate us even more to make Jesus

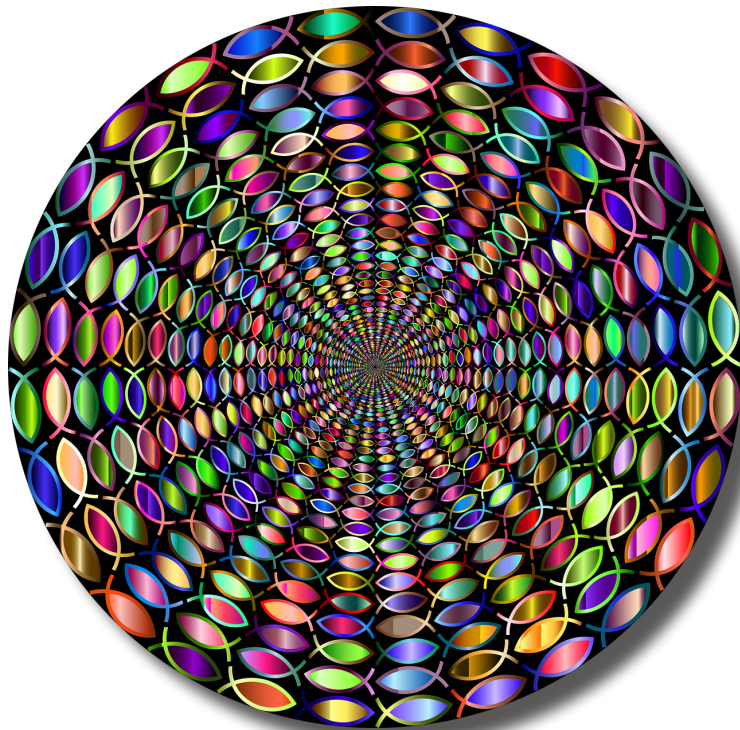
Christ more present today through our mission to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world." Dr. Mount has been with CDU since 1983 and has served as president since 2008. She completed a four-year term as a public member of the Board of Commissioners in June 2020.

The Graduate School of Theology provides a transformative learning experience in the digital space and develops leaders and teachers for the new evangelization in the 21st century. Its two degree programs and three certificate programs are offered completely online. Ninety percent of Graduate School of Theology alumni serve the Church in some ministry, including as youth ministers, directors of religious education, catechists, school teachers, liturgy directors, professors of theology, parish administrators, religious sisters, and diocesan staff. Others use their education to work in the public, non-profit, or private sectors in a variety of fields including education, healthcare, and business.

Collectively, ATS member schools enroll approximately 74,500 students and employ more than 7,200 faculty and administrators. The mission of ATS is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public. Member schools are committed to the following shared values: diversity, quality and improvement, collegiality, and leadership.

New 2021-2024 Strategic Plan Adopted

IN 2020 THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE, LED BY Robert J. Smith, Esq., and Dr. Margaret B. Melady, worked with a Task Force comprised of Board and staff members to develop a new 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, which was approved at the October 16, 2020, Board of Trustees Meeting. Three priority areas of strategic thinking were identified: Sustainability and Growth, Organizational Effectiveness, and Program Development. Strategies were developed to attain the goals of the plan, which were organized by these three areas of strategic thinking. A key goal is to eventually grow enrollments to cover the cost of education, and in the next 3.5 years to cover 70% through enrollments. The plan also focuses on infrastructure and staffing as well as expanding and strengthening academic programs and partnerships to meet the needs of current and future students.



New Trustee Bishop Brennan Blesses CDU Headquarters

CDU STARTED 2020 WITH A MOVE TO A LARGER HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. ON March 2, 2020, Bishop Mark Brennan of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston visited CDU's new offices at 300 South George Street in Charles Town, West Virginia. The new space, which is double the square footage of the former headquarters, offers a chapel, large meeting rooms, a library, and adequate space for the growing staff. After offering Mass in the chapel, Bishop Brennan blessed the building and enjoyed lunch with the CDU team.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston partners with CDU to provide continuing education to its religious educators and Catholic school teachers.



Bishop Mark Brennan with Board members, staff, administrators, and faculty of Catholic Distance University.

Free Courses Offered During a Very Different Lent

CDU OFFERED FREE CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES DURING LENT AS PART OF ITS response to the global pandemic. A choice of one of two courses was offered: Christian Prayer and Introduction to Scripture and the Gospel Message. Nearly 600 people from throughout the United States and around the world registered. Countries and regions represented included Qatar, Brazil, British Columbia, Vancouver, Alberta, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, and Saipan (Marianna Island). Over 100 of the students introduced themselves. Here are a few of the student introductions:

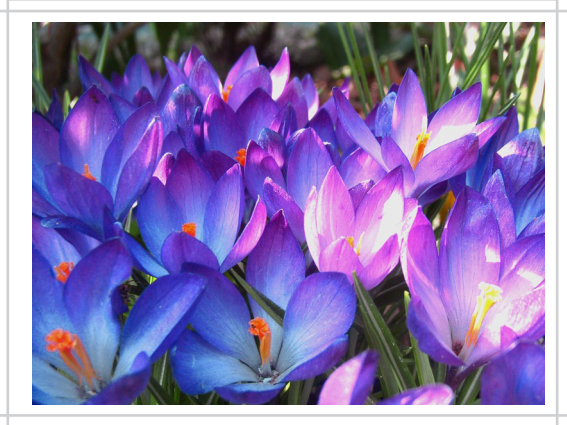
"I am a retired RN and am presently a candidate in RCIA at my local parish (Saints Peter & Paul-Rocklin, Calif.). I feel this course will help fill in some basic catechesis which will help me in my journey to full communion with the holy Catholic Church."

"I currently serve as Co-director of Faith Formation and Evangelization for the Diocese of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. I have wanted to try CDU for some time so this was an exciting invitation for me. I am looking forward to learning more and engaging in this program. I am trying to make the most of this time of uncertainty."

"I am currently working as a teacher for Fundamentals of Faith at the Senior High School of University of St. Tomas, Manila. I hope to increase my knowledge in our Catholic Faith, particularly Sacred Scripture. Thank you and God bless everyone."

~Q. from Quezon City, Philippines~

"Hello, my name is E., from Brazil. I got to know CDU when I lived in Philly in 2017. I serve in a Parish in my Brazilian hometown (Ribeirão Preto -SP): catechesis, music, tithe and extraordinary eucharistic ministry. I hope to grow even more in love with the Church."



"I'm a 6-year convert to the faith coming into the church at the Easter Vigil 2014. I was previously an Episcopalian but had not practiced any faith since my college days in the early 1960s. My husband was a cradle Catholic but had not practiced his faith in over 40 years. We now attend Resurrection Catholic Church in Jacksonville, FL in the Diocese of St. Augustine. I am in love with my new Catholic faith and cannot seem to learn enough about it."

"I am a Catechist in Our Lady of the Rosary Parish Doha, Qatar, a Lector and also an active member of Legion of Mary. I am very interested in enhancing my faith and this is why I enrolled in this short course."

"Hello, my name is G. from Italy. My faith journey started 5 years ago, after a pilgrimage to Santiago De Compostela. I started that journey as an agnostic--as many people do nowadays. After a long walk of 1 month, 750 km, something in me changed. I arrived in Santiago and understood something important: it was not the end of a journey, it was just the starting point of my journey. This course represents another step. Thank you for the opportunity."

"My name is Q. I am from Vietnam. Currently, I am working with minority kids in education. I've come to this course to learn more about the Bible and to know more about my God."

"Hello, my name is F.H. I am a senior at Stuttgart High School, located on the US Army base in Stuttgart, Germany. Currently, I am an assistant teacher for the CRE Edge class (6th and 7th grade). I will be attending Belmont Abbey College in the fall and plan to double major in Catholic Education and Theology so I can become a religion teacher."

CDU Partners with IFCU to Offer Online Teaching Course Worldwide

WITH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC FORCING universities accustomed to in person classes to suddenly switch to online courses, Catholic Distance University and the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) partnered to offer IFCU faculty members worldwide a course titled Teaching in a Digital World.

CDU's faculty members eagerly shared their knowledge with colleagues around the world from Spain, the Philippines, Belgium, Chile, Sierra Leone, Puerto Rico, Palestine, Congo DR, Indonesia, Spain, Italy, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, India, and Mexico, and other countries. The only exclusively online Catholic university, CDU has been accredited to offer distance education since 1986 and has delivered online programs for 20 years. Faculty members are well versed in best practices in online teaching and have many years of successful teaching experience in the online environment.

The 4-week, 10-hour course, which was offered several times in 2020, features Dr. Marie Nuar, Dr. Peter Brown, and professors Alissa Thorell and Kathy Vestermark

presenting various elements of online teaching. President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount taught the theory, research, pedagogy, and theology of distance education. Other topics covered included practical techniques of best practices for successful teaching online, course design, use of media, interaction, and student support. During the course, participants were able to develop a course of their own design on the Canvas learning platform and had many opportunities to dialogue with CDU faculty.

Many faculty members accustomed to classroom teaching find the online environment a challenge both for themselves and for their students. Teaching in a Digital World was designed to impart faculty members with the expertise and knowledge they need to teach online with confidence while fostering interaction, engagement, and strong learning outcomes for students.

The course was such a success that it will be offered six times over the next two years to faculty members at Catholic universities worldwide.

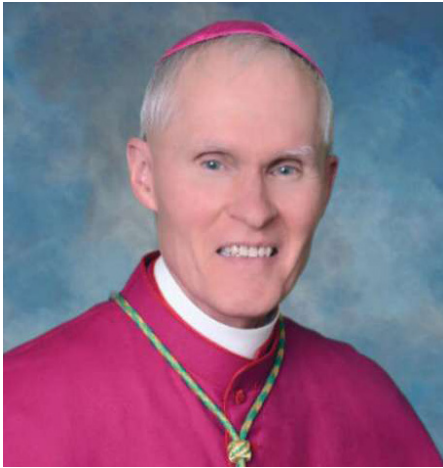
CDU is blessed with a highly competent and engaged Board of Trustees that offers a variety of professional talents to ensure a bright and sustainable future.

Pope Francis Honors Trustee



On September 19th, Pope Francis honored CDU Trustee Theodore J. Musco with the Papal Bene Merenti Medal for longtime service to the People of God of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Mr. Musco now serves as Vice President of RENEW International, a ministry that revitalizes spirituality in millions of Catholics through small group programs

New and Returning Trustees



THE MOST REVEREND MARK E. BRENNAN, Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, was appointed to the Board of Trustees as an ex officio member in April 2020. A compassionate, humble leader, Bishop Brennan has a passion for serving immigrants and the poor. He naturally embraces CDU's mission to serve the underserved and educate learners worldwide for the growth of faith, ecclesial service, and leadership for the new evangelization.



THE HONORABLE JANICE OBUCHOWSKI was appointed to the Board of Trustees on October 16, 2020. President of Freedom Technologies, Inc., and a graduate of Wellesley College and the Georgetown University Law Center, she brings years of experience in U.S. government and private sector leadership. She has served as the U.S. Ambassador to the World Radiocommunications, an Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the Department of Commerce, and has held several positions at the Federal Communications Commission. She has served on several public boards of directors, including those of Inmarsat Plc, Orbital Sciences Corporation, CSG Systems, Inc., Stratos Global, and Qualcomm, and is also an active member of the Order of Malta.



CDU enthusiastically welcomed back DR. MARGARET MELADY and DR. JOSEPH BRADDOCK to the Board of Trustees in June. Sadly, on February 6, 2021, Dr. Joseph V. Braddock passed away. A highly accomplished and generous trustee, Joe was first appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2010. CDU was blessed with Joe's many years of leadership, insight, and commitment to CDU.



Farewell

JEAN HALLE'S Board term ended in June after 9 years of contributions to academic, financial, and digital leadership. We are thankful for her meaningful contributions to the growth of CDU and the Church.

My Memories of Joe Braddock (1929–2021)

By Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

JOE'S DEPARTURE LEFT FOOTPRINTS OF God's predilection for him that are no surprise to me and fill my heart with even more gratitude for his friendship.

St. Joseph in his special year must have accompanied Joe in death as he did in life. Joe had the privilege of dying on a Saturday that honors our Lady who has a special love for those who are so special to her divine Son. Joe's quick and humble departure reminded me of simply stepping over the threshold of eternity into the arms of God in a brief moment that did not require the usual illness and decline that normally accompanies human mortality. Joe Braddock was no ordinary person.

Joe was Joe and knew God here and in eternity. Although he did not always understand why things happened the way they did, he was humble and recognized that God was in charge. When good things happened to CDU, he knew they were miracles and not of our doing.

It was only a few days ago that Joe and I talked by phone about developing a more robust curriculum in cosmology to educate the world about the necessary connection between science and faith. Our Board of

Trustees met via Zoom January 15 with Joe's presence among us so visible and attentive in his plaid flannel shirt listening to the lively conversation. He was quiet during the meeting, but we all knew we would benefit from his wisdom when he was ready to share his thoughts.

I told Joe frequently that he was my St. Joseph at CDU. He was quiet but always stepped up at the right time. He was a doer with a great sense of humor who was ready to act if he thought it would help. In many of our conversations we would end up commiserating on the exceptional outcomes of online education as compared to the high cost of brick and mortar, and we would laugh about his summary of the pedagogy of brick and mortar—the 4 P's: the professor, the pointer, the podium, and the "poop." He compared money to manure—they both make things grow, he said.

He would remind me that CDU would be a great success—he knew what it was to grow a business and empathized with our struggles, always reminding me that it was not because of my leadership that we struggled. He said in jest that he would tell Bertha in the early years that if he could mortgage

her and the children he would do that too. He was committed to CDU's success. Often he told me we were just too far ahead of our times.

CDU's Board of Trustees reflected the mark of Joe's leadership. He nominated two gifted Catholics who were instrumental in the success of his business and who have been instrumental in the growth and success of CDU. I once told Joe that he gave us his best in Charlie, Dr. Charles Wasaff, who became the first lay board chair of CDU in 2017 and John McCabe, Esquire, who became Chair of the Governance Committee. He agreed.

One of my fondest memories will be the many meetings Joe hosted at the Potomac Foundation. He called us the Futures Committee. We would strategize about CDU's future and take the time to listen and explore our ideas about next steps. Joe's most significant decision in CDU's history was his motion to move CDU to Charles Town, West Virginia, made at the end of the October 14, 2014 board meeting and unanimously approved. Joe never hesitated in his commitment to the future of CDU. He helped launch the first comprehensive fundraising initiative to help pay for investments to meet additional accrediting standards. He and Bertha donated a third

of the cost of CDU's first professional student information system in 2011; in addition, Joe wrote a grant proposal to the Knights of Columbus that resulted in a grant of \$150,000 to help ensure CDU's investment in technology.

CDU honored Joe and Bertha with the Founders Award at the 2011 Gala. When Joe became ill during the Gala, Bertha accepted the award and gave a short but inspiring ac-

ceptance speech, simply reminding us that Jesus Christ gave us the great commission to "Go and teach all nations," and that is what CDU does, she said, and why they support CDU.

Joe and Bertha Braddock defy the Gospel parable about how hard it is for



a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. They were continually on the go, always with an apostolic mission. Bertha volunteered with the Missionaries of Charity every week while Joe worked with CDU. They supported their bishops, the Order of Malta, Catholic Charities, funded scholarships, served on boards of museums, hospitals, and the local symphony, hosted dinners, and Bertha chaired fundraising galas while also finding time to paint and travel along with doting on her beautiful grandchildren.

In one of my last conversations with Joe, he talked about uncorking the champagne and looking forward to a beautiful celebration of our accreditation milestones—something we must do, he said, because we are a miracle. We never imagined that Joe would not be at the party. Now, as I miss those conversations with Joe that I never really thought would end, I know in my heart that when

the time comes for our party, Joe will be there. He has been our St. Joseph, giving us so many reasons to trust in God’s love and providence for the mission of Catholic Distance University to “teach all nations” through distance education that communicates the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world.

MAY GOD BLESS DR. JOSEPH V. BRADDOCK!



Stephen D. Pryor Elected Chairman of the Board

AT THE JANUARY 2021 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, Stephen D. Pryor was elected to serve as chairman of the Board of Trustees effective March 15, 2021. He succeeds Dr. Charles R. Wasaff, who has been a CDU trustee since 2012 and chairman since October 2017.

“CDU has a life-changing impact on its students in terms of the growth of faith and service to the Church. We are excited about the opportunities ahead to extend the University’s reach and share its expertise as a pioneer in Catholic distance education,” said Mr. Pryor.

President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount said, “I am thrilled to welcome Stephen Pryor as our new Board Chair effective March 15, 2021. CDU has been blessed with extraordinary board leadership in the work of retiring Board Chair Dr. Charles Wasaff. That tradition will continue with Stephen Pryor.”

“Steve brings remarkable corporate success with a deep commitment to the Catholic Church and the mission of Catholic Distance University. He is a strategic thinker with

great insights about current opportunities and CDU's strength as the only and exclusively online Catholic university whose expertise in theological education impacts all areas of knowledge. I am privileged to work with him,” she continued.

A highly accomplished business executive with a long history of service to the Church and Catholic organizations, Mr. Pryor brings a wealth of experience and visionary leadership to the role of chairman. He retired as president of ExxonMobil Chemical Company in 2015 after more than 43 years of ExxonMobil service. Before his appointment in 2008 as president of ExxonMobil Chemical Company, he was president of ExxonMobil Refining and Supply Company and president of ExxonMobil Lubricants and Specialties Company. He also served as vice president of Exxon

Mobil Corporation from 2004 until his retirement.

Before the merger of Exxon and Mobil in 1999, Mr. Pryor was executive vice president of Mobil International Marketing and Refining and president of Mobil Asia Pacific. He joined Mobil Corporation in 1971 in the U.S. Marketing



Division and went on to lead marketing/refining and chemical business units in Cyprus, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

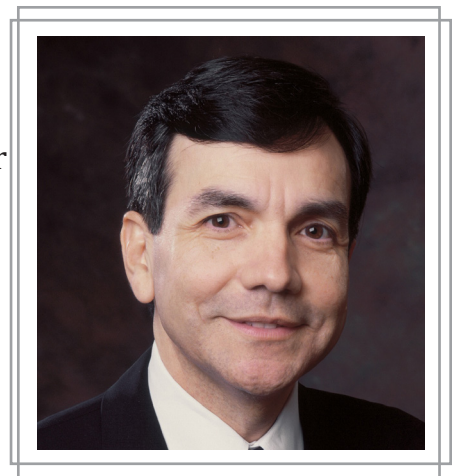
Mr. Pryor is a trustee emeritus of Lafayette College and former vice chair of the board. He is a director and retiring board chair of The Immokalee Foundation and a director of the Foundation for Government Accountability. He earned a BA in Biology from Lafayette College and an MBA from Harvard University.

With CDU's Graduate School of Theology having received accreditation from The Association of Theological Schools, and with the adoption of the new strategic plan, CDU is poised for growth in both its student body and educational offerings. The Board and staff look forward to Mr. Pryor's service to the university as Board chair. He was first elected to the Board of Trustees in October 2017.

Welcome to New Alumni President George Muñoz

GEORGE MUÑOZ GENEROUSLY ACCEPTED the role of alumni president in 2020. Mr. Muñoz brings vast leadership experience to CDU and is a graduate of the MA (Theology) program in addition to being a graduate of Harvard Law School, the Harvard Public Policy School, DePaul University, and the University of Texas. Currently the principal at Muñoz Banking Group, LLC, and a partner at Tobin and Muñoz Law Firm in Washington, D.C., Mr. Muñoz has extensive experience in corporate governance. He also serves on the board of trustees of the National Geographic Society; Laureate Education, Inc.; Walden University; Marriott International; and the Altria Group. He has also served as president of the Chicago Board of Education, president of a federal agency Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and as chief

financial officer of the U.S. Treasury Department under President Clinton. He lives in McLean, Virginia, and enjoys raising his two sons, Mario and Manuel, with his wife, Kathy.



As alumni president, Mr. Muñoz will personally engage with alumni and has generously offered to match his peers' donations. His work will help ensure a bright future for CDU as a world-renowned Catholic online university.

Ordained Deacon in Australia Earns MA Degree

ORDER OF MALTA MEMBER DEACON

Adam Walk of Brisbane, Australia, recently completed his MA in Theology at CDU to meet the academic requirements for becoming a deacon in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. He is also a financial economist with a PhD from Griffith University with a busy career that involves lots of travel.

Ordained in November 2019, his first year of service has been an unusual one. “Being in the midst of a pandemic, it has been a very strange first year of ministry as a deacon,” Deacon Walk says. At this time last year, he wasn’t expecting to be assisting at online Masses without an assembly. His ministry is quite broad. He is a part-time police chaplain, he and his wife do pre-marriage and newly married ministry together, he is involved in governance roles within the Archdiocese that use his professional skills, and he serves at the parish where he is appointed assisting with Mass, as RCIA instructor, and as a member of the Pastoral Council.

When asked what he enjoyed most about CDU, Deacon Walk says, “There are several aspects. The first—and this might sound

like a strange answer when talking about an online institution—is community. I have never met a single one of my professors or fellow students in person, but I can say that I felt like I was part of a community that is both faithfully Catholic and eager to learn.”

“This was encouraged by the professors—the second great aspect of CDU—who were passionate about their subject matter and committed to the learning experience of their students,” he continues. “As someone who has studied most of his adult life in one form or another—face-to-face and online, undergraduate to doctoral level—I can say that I have never had a better collection of teachers than I had at CDU.”

Deacon Walk appreciated the flexibility as well, which allowed him to maintain his professional work and travel schedule. “It was great to have so many teaching periods, because it allowed me to progress quicker than I otherwise could have,” he says. “I completed PHIL 508 Philosophy for Theology in five cities: Brisbane, Melbourne, London, Oxford, and Rome, with a lot of time on planes for reading!”



BA Grad Lives What She Has Learned

ROSANNE TERESE KOURIS of LaPorte, Indiana, is currently the coordinator of the Office of Family Life for the Diocese of Gary, Indiana. Obtaining her BA has enabled her to develop and expand programs and events offered by the diocese to enrich marriage and family life, including marriage preparation, natural family planning, marriage enrichment, women's Bible studies, and an annual Women's Conference. As the director of the diocese's Rachel's Vineyard ministry, knowledge and insights obtained through her studies have given her a richer platform from which to minister to those in need of post-abortion healing.

Mrs. Kouris is also the head of the Savior of the World Children's Center, a home for orphaned and indigent children in Sierra Leone, West Africa. She oversees the operation of the home, organizes fundraising, and

edits a newsletter. She and her husband have legally adopted five orphaned children from the Savior of the World Children's Center, who now live with them in the U.S. Rosanne is very active in the pro-life movement.

CDU's Outstanding Graduate for 2019, Mrs. Kouris graduated summa cum laude, with a 4.08 GPA. The DEAC, CDU's accreditor, honors an outstanding graduate each year from its member institutions.

Of her time at CDU, Mrs. Kouris says, "Catholic Distance University is an excellent online university with rich and diverse courses, knowledgeable and caring staff, paired with solid Catholic theology. The interactive class structure made learning stimulating and gratifying, inspiring me through challenging courses, and motivating me to complete my degree."



Rosanne Kouris and her husband (left center) are pictured in Sierra Leone, Africa, with children at the Savior of the World Children's Center, from which they have legally adopted five children.

BA Grad Continues into MA Program

LUCAS JACOBSON OF NEW HOPE, MINNESOTA, earned his BA degree in Theology in 2018 and is now pursuing his MA degree in Theology and Educational Ministry. A full-time student, he decided to pursue the study of theology because he figured that if he is going to spend eternity with God, he better get to know something about Him now.

“What I really enjoy about CDU is that one can obtain a degree in Catholic Theology online,” Mr. Jacobson says. “I have a physical disability, Cerebral Palsy, and use a wheelchair for mobility. I live in Minnesota, and the snow in the winter is hard for my chair to maneuver.”

“For those who have a hard time going out in the community, [the online option] is very beneficial,” Mr. Jacobson says. “Additionally, one can receive instruction from very knowledgeable instructors [who] are authentic individuals, living out the Catholic faith they teach about. This is very inspiring.”

He began his studies in the first year federal financial aid was made available to students at CDU, which has helped to put his educational goals within reach.

Eventually Mr. Jacobson hopes to pursue a career as a Theology professor for an online higher education institution. He



has also considered the possibility of motivational speaking or pursuing a doctorate if a fully online program can be found but says he will see where God leads him.

“I sense that God has been calling me into a deeper relationship with him through his mother, Mary, so that I can lead others into their own relationship with God as someone who has personal experience of it,” he says.

Mr. Jacobson is thankful to those who have helped him along the way. “I am very grateful for everyone who has supported me, including the CDU professors and staff.” He encourages everyone to think about who has helped them throughout their lives and to thank them in some manner.

Student Helps Lead Pandemic Response at Hard-Hit Hospital

CHARLES AVILES OF THE BRONX, NEW York, is working toward his AA degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Catholic Studies while working as the director of life safety, fire safety, and emergency management for Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, which has experienced significant loss of life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lincoln Hospital serves one of the poorest communities in the USA and has the third busiest emergency room in the nation. Mr. Aviles served as the incident commander during the pandemic, working in the command center, and was then infected with COVID-19 himself. Upon returning to work, he headed the Mass Fatality Program, where he tried to handle all of the decedents in a dignified manner during very difficult circumstances.

Mr. Aviles has been married for 30 years and has four children. He has completed 11 courses in just over 2 years. His path to Theology began when he took catechist courses through the Archdiocese of

New York after learning about CDU on the archdiocesan website. "I have ministered for the confirmation class, RCIA, and a Bible study in my parish," he says. Currently 53 years old, he will be eligible for retirement in 5 years as a NYC worker. "My goal is to earn my Master's degree by the time I retire and then work for the Archdiocese of New York in some capacity, hopefully teaching theology," he says. Mr. Aviles would also like to pursue the diaconate program at some point.



"CDU has been an incredible blessing for me," he says. "The flexible programs have allowed me to manage a very high level position in the hospital with an enormous amount of responsibility. I am on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and my position is

very challenging; being a city hospital we are terribly underfunded and understaffed. I work long hours and 6-7 days a week, sometimes 16 hour days because of staff shortages. It would be impossible for me to earn a degree in a classroom environment."

In Her Own Words: MA Grad Reflects on Growth in Knowledge and Faith

IN 2017 I WAS LIVING WITH MY HUSBAND and four children in Hawaii where the Army had sent us. While my youngest son was only two years old at the time, I started thinking about what kind of job I wanted to have when he started Kindergarten. In what I can only describe as a “Holy Spirit moment,” I realized with great clarity that I should shift gears away from my background in business administration towards working in Religious Education. This would build on my previous experience as a corporate trainer and my volunteer experience at several military chapels where I had been active as a Catechist and as a leader in women’s ministries.

The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA (AMS) requires that all DREs and CRECs obtain a basic certificate in Catechesis, but I chose to go for a graduate certificate. Ever since I started learning about my faith on an adult level during my pre-cana religious education, I have loved growing in knowledge and being challenged to grow in faith.

I researched different Catholic universities but chose CDU because the whole program was designed to be exclusively online, a major benefit for military families who move

often and have crazy schedules, because of its existing partnership with the AMS, and because of the course descriptions. The application process was easy, and very soon I started my first course, THEO 503: The Catholic Theological Tradition, with Dr. Marcellino D’Ambrosio. I realized that I had found a “home,” and because I enjoyed studying theology so much, I applied to switch from a graduate certificate to the MA in Theology and Educational Ministry degree program.

During my different classes, I found several classmates who were connected to the military including some on active duty joining from downrange. It helped me to feel understood when I shared about my work. Military chapels are unique in that most of the time, different Christian denominations and even other religions share buildings and resources.

My studies helped me tremendously by letting me understand what the other denominations’ viewpoints were and how to defend the Catholic position firmly but charitably. THEO 640: Presenting the Faith in the Modern World was one of my most impactful courses in this regard. Another challenge in the military community is that the soldiers and fami-



lies come from all of the different corners of our immensely diverse Catholic faith. In addition, frequent moves and the stressful life of training and deployments make it harder to build community and to form a team of well-trained Catechists. What helped me be successful was the emphasis on kerygmatic Catechesis and the conversion of the baptized that I took away from my courses SPIR 501: Applied Catholic Spirituality and RELED 560: Principles of Catholic Education. Now that my husband has retired from the military and we moved back to his hometown, I work at the civilian parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary in Indianapolis, IN. When

I interviewed for the position, the Director of Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis told me how highly he thinks of CDU.

CDU has certainly prepared me by providing me the necessary theological knowledge and practical skills to be a Director of Religious Education, but what I appreciated the most is that the school and faculty went beyond that and helped me to not only grow in knowledge but in my personal faith as well. While I am still far away from sainthood, I am a better disciple now than before I attended CDU.—*Ute Eble, MA in Theology and Educational Ministry (2020)*

Reaching Hearts Behind Prison Walls

INCARCERATED CATHOLICS ARE NOT immune to the impact of COVID-19; the pandemic has only increased their isolation. Despite the challenges, many of our brothers and sisters behind bars are using their time to learn and grow in their faith thanks to CDU's online prison tablet education program, which is now in 100+ prisons across the nation. Enrollments in free digital courses offered on these tablets grew 110% in 2020 to 345,000 free lessons taken.

CDU offers 30 courses in English, seven in Spanish, and three certificate programs to the incarcerated. A new course from the Order of Malta on praying the rosary has been very well received. The Order of Malta Feder-

al Association also hosts a pen pal program to support incarcerated students through their experience of imprisonment.

We plan to continue developing new courses to keep incarcerated students engaged and growing in faith. Since many prisons do not have Catholic chaplains, CDU is developing online certificate programs to form faithful leaders behind prison walls to support this ever-growing, isolated population.

We are grateful for your support of the underserved and particularly thank the Order of Malta Federal Association, Ms. Kathryn Pryor, and an anonymous bishop for their generous support of the CDU Prison Ministry program in 2020.



Assessment Reveals Growth and Results

UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES are regularly assessed using multiple strategies that include both direct and indirect measures of student learning. CDU's degree programs produce their intended outcomes, are educationally effective, and produce satisfied students who are well-equipped to teach the Faith. The results of the latest assessment are a testament to our mission to communicate the mind and heart of the Church in a digital world using distance education.

MA (Theology) students who graduated in 2020 achieved an average GPA of 3.90 over an average of 4.9 years. Eighty-nine percent of those who graduated from 2014–2020 are currently in Church-related ministries. For the 2019–2020 terms, students successfully achieved each MA program outcome, and the retention rate was 93.3% for the MA (Theology) degree program and 100% for the MA in Theology and Educational Ministry degree program.

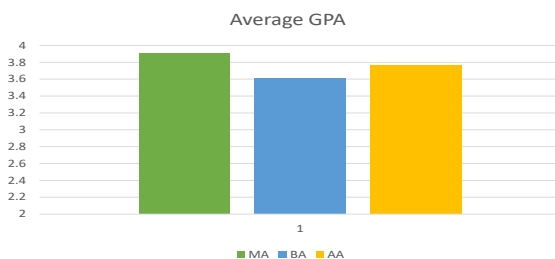
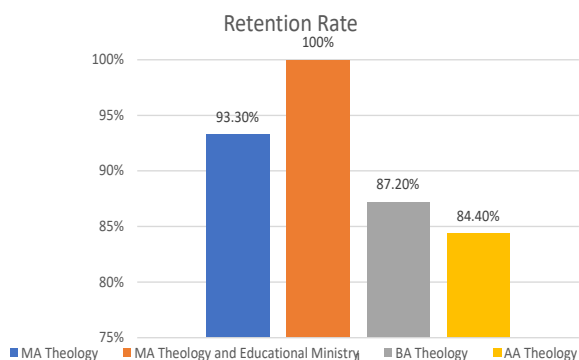
The 2020 graduates of the BA in Theology degree completion program fulfilled program requirements with an average GPA of 3.61 over an average of 3.8 years. Most students who enroll in the program either are seeking a Church-related ministry or desire to study the Faith more deeply to participate in volunteer ministries in their parishes in the future. Of the 2016–2020 alumni, 80% of

undergraduate alumni are working or volunteering in Church-related ministries. For the 2019–2020 academic terms, students successfully achieved each BA program outcome, and the retention rate was 87.2%.

In 2020, those who received the Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Catholic Studies were awarded the degree with an average GPA of 3.76 over an average of 3.8 years. For the 2019–2020 terms, students successfully achieved each AA program outcome, and the retention rate was 84.4%.

One-hundred percent of students completing end of program surveys in 2020 stated that they had achieved their learning goals, would recommend CDU to another, expressed satisfaction with their studies, and indicated that they are equipped to teach the Faith.

From fall 2019 to December 2020, the number of program students increased 11.2%. Beyond the numbers, outcome must ultimately be measured in the way that alumni use their gifts and talents in service to the Church — whether that be formally or informally. Perhaps the most significant effectiveness statement is that CDU has been an accredited distance education institution for more than 37 years, being the first to offer online Catholic education in the United States, and is committed to educating students in Catholic theology, catechetics, and evangelization for years to come.



Father Bramwell Publishes Book on the Catholic Priesthood



PROFESSOR REV. BEVIL BRAMWELL, OMI, published a new graduate textbook on the philosophical and theological aspects of the priesthood titled *The Catholic Priesthood: A 360 Degree View*. The bishops and their assistants, the priests, participate to different degrees in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The book focuses more on the priest, exploring the rich and profound theological background of the priesthood as well as the shattering distraction of scandal. The liturgy, spirituality, intellectual life, and even the life of Saint John Vianney, the Patron of Pastors, are also covered. *The Catholic Priesthood: A 360 Degree View* can be purchased on Amazon.com.

Dr. Josh Hood Named Digital Humanities Fellow

LONG-TIME GREEK AND LATIN PROFESSOR DR. JOSH HOOD was named a partial fellow in the Digital Humanities at Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute. Dr. Hood received the fellowship for his excellence in teaching ancient languages and skill in teaching online. Digital Humanities is a long-running, many faceted project to use modern computing, databases, and interactive software to improve and modernize teaching and research in humanities and humanities-related fields including theology, philosophy, and ancient languages.



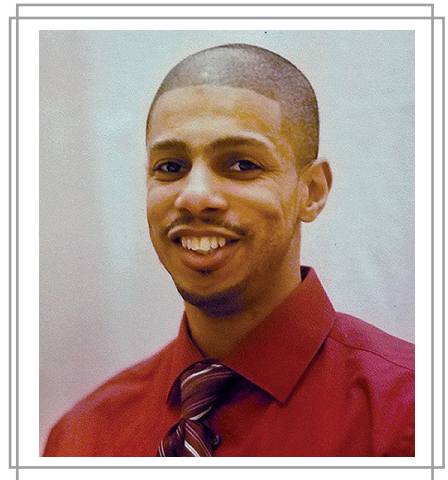
Retreat Held for Faculty and Staff

FACULTY AND STAFF participated in an Ignatian meditation retreat at the San Damiano Spiritual Center in White Post, Virginia, on September 28, 2020. CDU Professor Dr. Carole Brown, Director of the Sioux Spiritual Center in South Dakota, did a masterful job creating and leading the program.



New Faculty Member Teaches Computer Science Course

ALUMNUS FAUSTO FRANCO teaches undergraduate course COSCI 101 Computer Essentials. In addition to his MA (Theology) degree from CDU, he holds an MEng in Computer Systems Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The oldest of four children born of immigrant parents from the Dominican Republic and raised in the Bronx, New York, he currently resides in Albany and is a parishioner at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Americas. Professor Franco works in Information Technology with a focus in Cyber Security as a business information security officer for the state government. He is active in Hispanic youth ministry for the Archdiocese of New York and is also a member of the Locos por Jesus ministry that travels to the Dominican Republic on mission. He has traveled throughout the United States and abroad to give talks and evangelize and also plays baseball in the Albany Twilight League, one of the oldest amateur baseball leagues in the country.



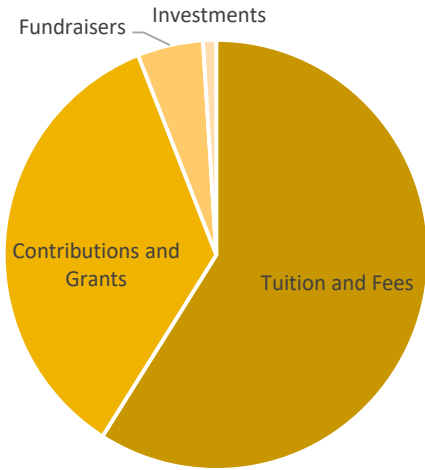
Former Faculty Member Joins NCCL Board

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP (NCCL) has named Director of the Diocese of Portland's Office of Lifelong Faith Formation, Lori Dahlhoff, EdD, to its board of directors. Dr. Dahlhoff, who has more than 20 years of experience in catechetical ministry at the parish, diocesan, and national levels, has served the diocese in her current position since 2017. Prior to her arrival in Maine, she was an adjunct faculty member at CDU and designed and instructed an online graduate course titled "Principles of Catholic Education."



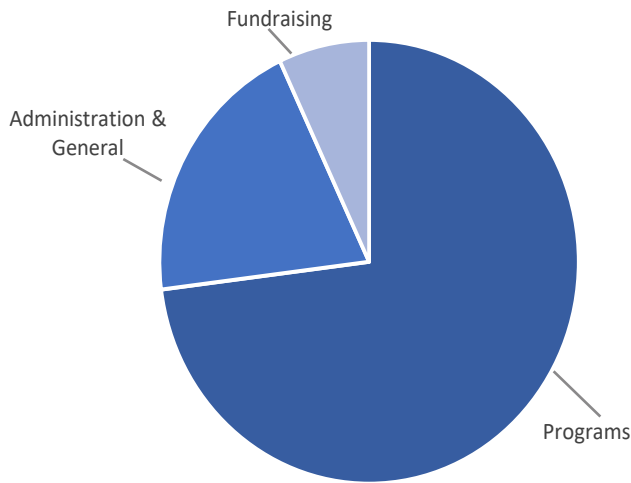
2020 Financial Report

IN THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020, CDU's revenue totaled \$1,766,517 and expenses totaled \$1,755,676. Included in investments, investments of \$352,228 were made to enhance marketing efforts, move to a larger facility, invest in information technology, expand the online library, improve the student learning experience, offer federal financial aid through Title IV, and pursue full accreditation with The Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission.



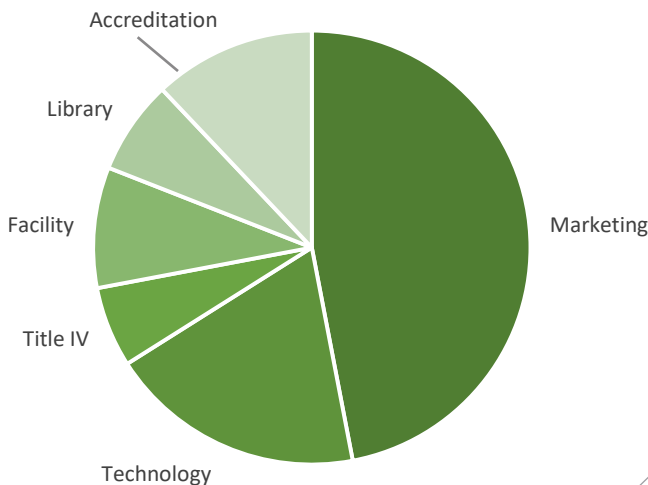
Revenue

Tuition and Fees _____	59%
Contributions & Grants _____	35%
Fundraisers _____	5%
Investments _____	1%
Total _____	\$1,766,517



Expenses

Programs _____	73%
Administration & General _____	20%
Fundraising _____	7%
Total _____	\$1,755,676



Incremental Investments

Marketing _____	47%
Technology _____	19%
Title IV _____	6%
Facility _____	9%
Library _____	7%
Accreditation _____	12%
Total _____	\$352,228

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"I am an alumnus of CDU."—Daniel Kelly

"Knowing that Catholic Distance University (CDU) is an organization driven to serve and support all peoples in expanding their knowledge of Christ and growing closer to Him through knowledge of His teachings. This is an organization that provides love of Christ with a love of all peoples and denominations. This is evident in the case of our incarcerated brother and sisters who take CDU's Continuing Ed classes and through the responses of CDU's many students in sharing their thoughts with CDU upon completion of courses."—Sr. Dolores Keyser

"Your leadership, your Board members (Bishop Burbidge, Bob Smith, Alan Holmer, Charlie W.) and your mission to bring Christ and formation to prisons & around the world."—Arthur Bennett

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"I received your email and remembered the classes I've taken. Actually, I think it was the Holy Spirit."—Gail King

"I'm a recent grad who is very grateful for all the good work done by CDU."—Cindy Stalcup

"I am a graduate alumna."—Analda Anglin

YOUR GIFT OF PRAYER AND SUPPORT

Through the year's unprecedented challenges, you helped us to reach, teach, and bring the Church to the isolated, underserved, and even our brothers and sisters next door. You are part of our story and our future, and we are grateful.



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