



2024



Report on Catholic Mission



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Since its founding by Rev. Edward F. Sorin, C.S.C., on November 26, 1842, the University of Notre Dame has sought to be at the center of Catholic intellectual life. Notre Dame's Catholic character informs its every endeavor: from the nature of the education it offers, to the kinds of discussions and inquiries that take place at the University, to its service to the Church.

Notre Dame's Catholic character is grounded in its Holy Cross identity. As "educators in the faith," Holy Cross priests and brothers anchor the University's Catholic character, working to fulfill the vision of the Congregation's founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, to "make God known, loved, and served."

This report provides a small sampling of the research, teaching, and service occurring on campus and around the world to fulfill the mission of Notre Dame and the expectations of Catholic universities that have been articulated by the Church. These expectations took form in an apostolic exhortation issued by Pope St. John Paul II in 1990, titled *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The exhortation was adopted by Catholic bishops in the United

States in 1999, and states four attributes that comprise Catholic identity at an institution such as Notre Dame.

— 1. —

a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;

— 2. —

a continued reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;

— 3. —

fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;

— 4. —

an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.

The following is not an exhaustive listing of every way in which the University maintains its Catholic character; it would be impossible to detail everything Our Lady's University has done, is doing, and will do. Rather, the report provides a small sampling of the good work people are doing across campus and around the world to fulfill Pope St. John Paul II's vision for Catholic institutions of higher learning and Father Sorin's vision for Notre Dame.

The Congregation of Holy Cross: Anchors of the Mission

Holy Cross priests and brothers anchor the University's Catholic character and spirit. Of the members of the Congregation on campus, 45 live in residence halls, and nine serve as rectors. Twenty-nine Holy Cross religious teach in the classroom in some capacity.

This is the essence of the Holy Cross model of education: forming students both inside the classroom and beyond it.

"The Congregation of Holy Cross at Notre Dame is blessed to be able to participate in the work that Blessed Basil Moreau began many years ago, and to serve both the University community and the wider world through our varied vocations," said Rev. Austin Collins, C.S.C., Vice President for Mission Engagement and Church Affairs.

Members of the Congregation of Holy Cross view education as a work of resurrection. In a broken world, filled with sickness, racial strife, and discord, education can serve as a transformative endeavor for those who are suffering, and it can provide important avenues for growth, learning, and joy. In light of the problems that our society currently faces, education offers redemption and helps to enrich our communities.

Today, members of the Congregation are found across campus, working in administration, serving in chapels, living in residence halls, and teaching in classrooms. They gather for meals and common prayer, oversee the daily operations of campus life, celebrate Mass, counsel students, and provide instruction in everything from science to social justice to the liberal arts.

Since its founding, the Congregation has been working to fulfill the vision of its founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, to cultivate the hearts and minds of students.

In the troubled times following the French Revolution, a young priest named Basil Moreau assembled other priests to educate and revitalize the Catholic community in the region

around Le Mans, France. Shortly thereafter, he accepted responsibility for the Brothers of St. Joseph, a group founded 15 years earlier. In 1841, Blessed Basil united the priests and brothers within a single association, the Congregation of Holy Cross, and the community began to grow internationally through its educational and missionary activity.

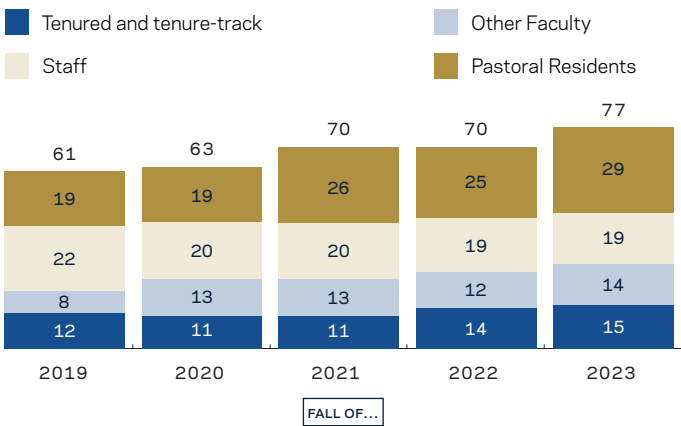
In one of the Congregation's first missionary efforts, Father Moreau sent Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., and a group of brothers to the American frontier in the early 1840s to found a university.

Today, priests and brothers of the Congregation continue to animate the University of Notre Dame with their mission to be "educators in the faith."

holycrossusa.org

C.S.C. PRIESTS AND BROTHERS ON CAMPUS

Count



Note: Personnel at Notre Dame's off-site locations are included. Postdocs are counted as "Other Faculty."

Notre Dame Selected to Join the AAU

In June 2023 the Association of American Universities (AAU), a consortium of distinguished research universities, extended an invitation to the University of Notre Dame.

"While Notre Dame has long been known for its undergraduate education, we have striven to be a preeminent research institution with superb graduate education, all informed by our Catholic mission," University President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., said. "We are honored to be invited to join the AAU and heartened by the AAU board's recognition of our progress as a research university, and we look forward to participating in this august organization."

Since 2007, research funding at Notre Dame has grown 194 percent, with major funding from the Lilly Endowment Inc., Unitaidd, USAID, the National Science Foundation, and Department of Defense.

"AAU members are distinguished by the quality of their education and research. It is a testament to our higher education system that we have this many leading research universities in every corner of our country."

CAROL L. FOLT, AAU BOARD CHAIR

In the University's new 10-year strategic framework, research remains a top priority. One of the four goals for the next decade outlines a need to "advance human understanding through scholarship and research that seeks to heal, unify, and enlighten." The University will do so while remaining true to its Catholic character and mission.

The strategic framework says: "We are poised for even greater success, through research that contributes to our understanding of ourselves and our world and discoveries that enhance human well-being. We believe we can be excellent in all research we undertake and truly distinguished in select areas. By pushing forward into the unknown and harnessing discoveries for service to the world, we seek to deepen our understanding of God and creation and serve humanity."

The AAU also welcomed Arizona State University; George Washington University; the University of California, Riverside; the University of Miami; and the University of South Florida.

"I'm excited to invite these six diverse institutions to AAU," said Carol L. Folt, AAU board chair and University of Southern California president. "AAU members are distinguished by the quality of their education and research. It is a testament to our higher education system that we have this many leading research universities in every corner of our country. Congratulations to the faculty, staff, and students for this recognition of their hard work and their leadership in research and education. We look forward to our joint efforts to continue to transform lives through higher education."

The AAU was founded in 1900 and is composed of America's top research universities. There are currently 71 members, who, according to the AAU website, receive the "majority of competitively awarded federal funding for research that improves public health, seeks to address national challenges, and contributes significantly to our economic strength, while educating and training tomorrow's visionary leaders and innovators."

University Leadership Visit to Rome

In a January 2024 visit to Rome, University leadership had a full itinerary of rich and distinctive events, including awarding honorary degrees. The highlight was a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis. There, the Holy Father offered a detailed reflection on the role of a Catholic university in the greater mission of the Church, and how Notre Dame has uniquely fulfilled that mission.

He said, “From its foundation, the University of Notre Dame has dedicated itself to advancing the Church’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel through the formation of each person in all his or her dimensions. Indeed, as Blessed Basil Moreau said, ‘Christian education is the art of helping young people to completeness.’ And not only with the head, but with three languages: the head, the heart, and the hands. This is the secret of education: that we think what we feel and do, we feel what we think and do, and that we do what we feel and think.”

**“A university proclaims its values through
those it chooses to honor.”**

JOHN MCGREEVY, PROVOST

He continued, “The whole university community is called to accompany others, especially young people, with wisdom and respect along the paths of life and help them cultivate an openness to all that is true, good, and beautiful. This involves the establishment of genuine relationships between educators and students so that they can walk together and understand the deepest questions, needs, and dreams experienced in human life.”

As part of that accompaniment, Pope Francis asked a demanding question of those present: “Do you help young people to dream?”

His sentiments about truth, goodness, and beauty were also reflected in the honorary degree recipients. At an academic convocation at Notre Dame’s Rome Global Gateway earlier that week, three distinguished leaders were awarded honorary doctoral degrees for their improvements and inspiration in the world. As John McGreevy, provost of Notre Dame, said in his opening remarks, “A university proclaims its values through those it chooses to honor.”

The first recipient was Roberto Benigni, a renowned Italian actor, comedian, poet, and filmmaker, known for his film *Life is Beautiful*, his performances of the works of Dante, and his commitment to bringing biblical texts back into public view.

Another Italian, Barbara Jatta, director of the Vatican Museums, was also awarded an honorary degree. She offered the convocation address, sharing including how beauty can lead to richer faith.

The final degree went to an Irishman, Bishop Brian Farrell, L.C., secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. In his remarks, he referenced Notre Dame’s Tantur Ecumenical Institute, which relates to his dicastery. He noted Tantur has been “thriving because of the wise and courageous management of Notre Dame.”

The visit was not all business. Attendees were invited to celebrate Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, the prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, presided. Cardinal Farrell is also the Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church and the brother of Bishop Brian Farrell. After Mass, guests were honored to receive private tours of the Vatican Apostolic Library, thanks



“The whole university community is called to accompany others, especially young people, with wisdom and respect along the paths of life and help them cultivate an openness to all that is true, good, and beautiful. This involves the establishment of genuine relationships between educators and students so that they can walk together and understand the deepest questions, needs, and dreams experienced in human life.”

POPE FRANCIS

to a warm welcome from Archbishop Angelo Vincenzo Zani, archivist and librarian of the Holy Roman Church. The tours of the library, which is not typically open to the public, launched with a presentation by Notre Dame alumnus Stephen Metzger, the scribe of Latin manuscripts there.

In sum, the visit comprehensively realized the mission that Notre Dame International underscores: to bring Notre Dame to the world, and the world to Notre Dame.



The Nature of Education Offered to Students

As a Catholic university, Notre Dame is inspired by the spirit of Christ to create an authentic community dedicated to the truth, the dignity of the human person, the message of Christ, and the education of the whole person. Respecting both the Catholic tradition and the University's own roots, and

as articulated in its mission statement, Notre Dame endeavors to be "an environment of teaching and learning that fosters the development in its students of those disciplined habits of mind, body, and spirit that characterize educated, skilled, and free human beings."

**"The mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart.
While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise
do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven."**

BLESSED BASIL MOREAU



ALL THANKSGIVING TO
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
1972

Fostering intellectual, moral,
and spiritual growth.

The University of Notre Dame continues to carry out its educational mission in the spirit of Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, by fostering

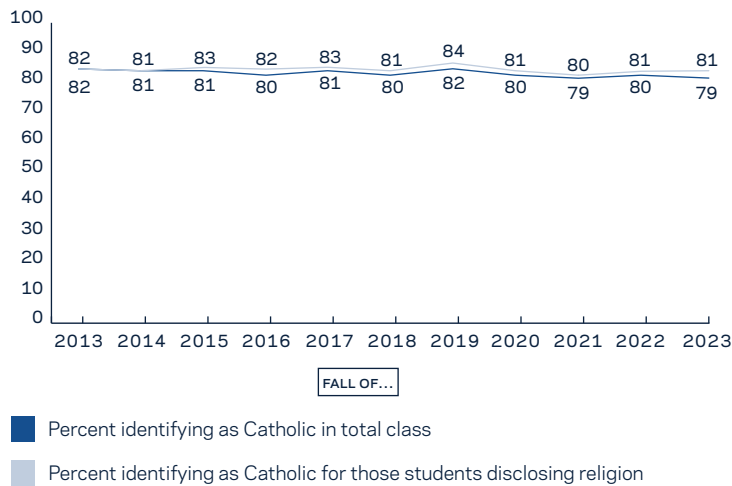


THE NATURE OF EDUCATION OFFERED TO STUDENTS

intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth in its students, both those who are Catholic and those of other faiths. As part of its Catholic mission, Notre Dame strives for inclusion

of all members of its community, and works to create an environment of mutual respect.

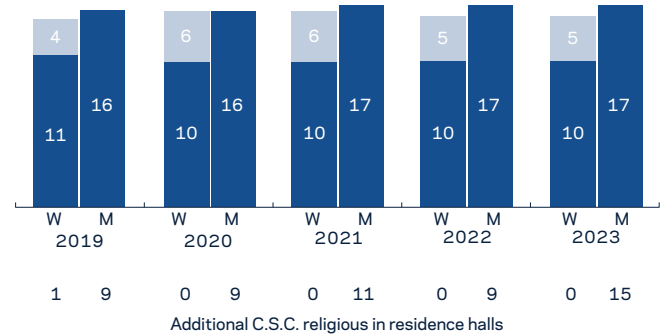
CATHOLIC STUDENTS (INCOMING UNDERGRADUATES)



Note: Survey data suggests other four-year Catholic colleges average about 50–55% Catholic.

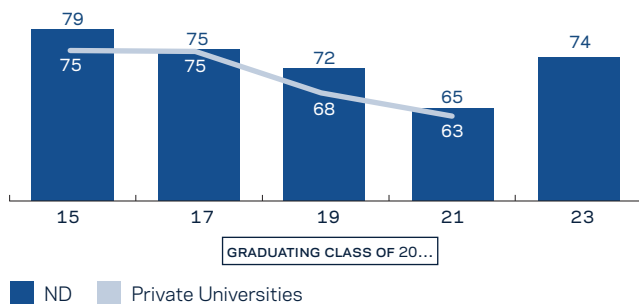
RESIDENCE HALLS WITH C.S.C. RELIGIOUS

Count of undergraduate residence halls



PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE BY SENIORS

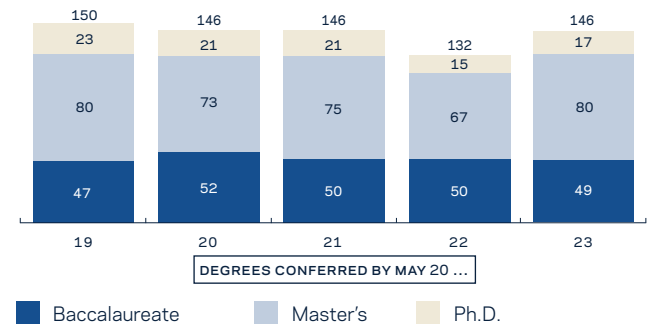
Percent of graduating seniors reporting having participated in volunteer or community service activities in the past year (CIRP College Senior Survey)



2023 survey data not available for private universities.

THEOLOGY DEGREES AWARDED

Counts of baccalaureates completing majors offered by the Department of Theology
Counts of post-baccalaureate degrees awarded in Theology programs



Note: Includes degrees conferred in Early Christian Studies master's program, which is jointly offered by the Classics and Theology departments.

Notre Dame Theology Department Ranked No. 1



In the QS World University Rankings by Subject, Notre Dame topped the list in the category of “Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies,” edging out competitors including Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge, KU Leuven, and Yale.

“It is most fitting that a premier Catholic university, such as the University of Notre Dame, should have a theology department that is internationally recognized for its academic leadership.”

REV. KHALED ANATOLIOS, THEOLOGY CHAIR

The QS rankings are released in order to help prospective students understand the leading institutions in each given category. This year’s rankings considered 54 subjects, 1,500 institutions, and 15,700 different academic programs.

To rank the programs, five indicators are considered: academic reputation, employer reputation, research citations per paper, international research network, and H-index, which measures the productivity and impact of an academic department. Within that metric, Notre Dame’s theology department received a total score of 93.1 out of 100.

“This ranking is an expression, above all, of the high international reputation of our faculty and the scholarship they produce,” said Rev. Khaled Anatolios, the John A. O’Brien Professor and Chair of the Department of Theology. “It is most fitting that a premier Catholic university, such as the University of Notre Dame, should have a theology department that is internationally recognized for its academic leadership.”

Notre Dame’s Department of Theology is guided by the ideal of “faith seeking understanding.” The department focuses on six areas of study: moral theology, world religions and world church, history of Christianity, liturgy, biblical studies, and systematic theology. The department teaches undergraduate, M.A., M.T.S., M.Div., and Ph.D. students. Because the University requires that every undergraduate take two theology courses, the theology department is responsible for educating the majority of students during their time on campus.

The department remains Catholic in its religious tradition, which it expresses through the composition of its faculty, the nature and content of curricula, and its responsiveness to the intellectual and pastoral needs of the Church, while attending to diversity, ecumenism, and interfaith dialogue.

Father Anatolios said, “A theology department that is internationally recognized for its scholarly achievements is in an excellent position to engage the rest of the University in the dialogue between faith and reason that is at the heart of a Catholic university.”

Pasquerilla West Celebrates Women's Empowerment Week

For students at Notre Dame, “residential life endeavors to develop that sense of community and of responsibility that prepares students for subsequent leadership in building a society that is at once more human and more divine,” according to the University mission statement. In concert with this mission, Pasquerilla West Hall developed Women's Empowerment Week in 2020. The event seeks to support and empower not just the women in Pasquerilla West, but the women whose lives they touch as well.

Grace Waddell '25, the Women's Empowerment Week commissioner in both 2023 and 2024, said, “The goal of the week is to engage in discussions and events that help women and their allies build inclusive and helpful systems in a variety of contexts. I firmly believe that it is important for women to support and challenge other women so that they can grow in positive and fruitful ways.”

Though the event is relatively new, Waddell explained that it drew from existing hall culture:

“Since the very beginning of my time as a resident in Pasquerilla West, I have loved how the residents always rally around one another and help each other succeed in their goals. For me, this is something that has made our dorm community special and feel like home. I think that Women's Empowerment Week strives to celebrate this aspect of our dorm community and share it with the rest of campus,” she said.

“Women's Empowerment Week aims to build a community in which all members can thrive. We aim to build community for the residents in Pasquerilla West as well as provide inspiration and tools to strengthen other residence hall communities on campus. Women's Empowerment Week aims to help women feel more confident, which would likely lead to more women taking on leadership roles and more responsibility in academic and professional environments.”

Previous Women's Empowerment Weeks have featured an allyship social, a women of color panel that discussed unique challenges for minority women, a self-defense class, and a brunch with a panel of inspirational women nominated by PW residents. The residents also collected clothing and toiletries

for St. Margaret's House, a day center for women and children impacted by economic poverty. In the past, the week has also included letter-writing to inspirational women and virtual gatherings when COVID-19 protocols required it.



Though many of the week's events are geared to PW residents, the outcome can spread much further. Waddell said she hopes empowering women will spread to the whole campus:

“Women face a unique set of challenges that often make it more difficult for us to succeed in many aspects of life. These challenges are often propagated as a result of long-standing systems and expectations in society, but these systems are often only able to continue as a result of biases and prejudices against women,” Waddell said, citing her own experiences of gender discrimination. “Acknowledging these barriers and equipping the residents of Pasquerilla West Hall to better overcome them is something that is critical for the residents, as well as for the wider campus community. To quote Malala Yousafzai, ‘We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.’ We cannot expect to make Notre Dame the best university that it can be if we are not empowered to be the best that we can be.”

Looking forward, Waddell believes the event will evolve over time to reflect the questions and interests of the women of Pasquerilla West Hall.

Researchers Honored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) elected five Notre Dame faculty as lifetime fellows, a prestigious honor in the scientific community. The AAAS is a global scientific community with members in 91 countries that seeks to “advance science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all.”

The AAAS also publishes *Science*, the leading global science weekly, along with a family of subject-specific journals.

The five faculty members were recognized for their achievements in their individual disciplines, but the awards also underscore Notre Dame’s commitment to research. The University’s strategic framework acknowledges that continuing to invest in science and engineering is essential for a Catholic university. Study in those fields helps answer the profound questions that trouble humanity, and progress contributes to the good of all.

The honored faculty represent a wide variety of disciplines and research endeavors, and are each being honored for the innovation and novelty they have brought to those fields of study. The faculty honorees are:

Patricia Champion, a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and the director of postdoctoral studies in the College of Science, is an expert in molecular genetics of mycobacterial pathogenesis, especially in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Her research aims to better understand bacteria and how they cause disease. This knowledge will eventually inform the creation of vaccines and therapeutics to prevent infection

and disease. Champion is also an affiliate member of the Eck Institute for Global Health, the Berthiaume Institute for Precision Health, and the Boler-Parseghian Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases.

The AAAS seeks to “advance science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all.”

Jon Camden, a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and the director of undergraduate studies, researches the optical properties of nanoparticles and ultrasensitive detection methods. He is also affiliated with the Berthiaume Institute for Precision Health, ND Energy, ND Nanoscience and Technology, and the Warren Center for Drug Discovery.

Yih-Fang Huang is a professor of electrical engineering and the senior associate dean of engineering for education and undergraduate programs. He researches statistical communications and signal processing. He is also affiliated with ND Energy.

Ahsan Kareem is the Robert M. Moran Professor of Engineering. He uses computer models and experiments to predict the impact of natural hazards on the built environment, including tall buildings, long-span bridges, and wind turbines.

Rebecca Surman is a theoretical nuclear astrophysicist and professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. She is interested in the origins of the heaviest elements, and studies extreme galactic events like the deaths of massive stars or the collisions of compact objects like neutron stars and black holes.

This group will join a long list of Notre Dame faculty past and present who have been members of the AAAS. Notre Dame's first AAAS invitation was in 1874 to Rev. Joseph Celestine Basile Carrier, C.S.C., a renowned French botanist who curated thousands of specimens from around the world. He also served as the first director of Notre Dame's science program and as an Army chaplain during the Civil War.



Patricia Champion, professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and director of postdoctoral studies in the College of Science

Creating Innovative Sustainability at St. Bakhita's School, Uganda



78

GRADUATES

10%

AWARDED FUNDING

MICROGRANTS OF

100,000

UGANDAN SHILLINGS (\$27 US)

Wendy Angst, teaching professor in the Mendoza College of Business

In the fall of 2022, the first cohort of 78 Innovation Scholars graduated from St. Bakhita's Vocational Training School in rural Kalongo, Uganda. This historic event opened the doors of self-sufficiency and opportunity to the girls who worked to not just graduate, but also keep the school open.

Just a few years ago, St. Bakhita's was on the brink of closure when Wendy Angst, a teaching professor in the Mendoza College of Business, first heard the St. Bakhita's story. Angst presented it to her Innovation and Design Thinking class, an experiential learning course that requires students to learn by doing. She asked the students to design entrepreneurial projects that could help St. Bakhita's become self-sustaining within five years.

"Coming from industry, I've always valued experiential learning projects as a part of my teaching. So when I began teaching Innovation and Design Thinking, we would do projects with a range of different organizations, from Fortune 500 companies to local nonprofits," she explained. "The projects were always structured around the students doing hands-on work, collaborating with the client, and then going to the client site and presenting the recommendation, and then the project would end."

The first group of students traveled to Uganda in March 2020. To date, nearly 50 Notre Dame students have made the trek to St. Bakhita's. Once there, undergraduates can tour the school, interview St. Bakhita's students, and gather a firsthand understanding of what might serve the school, its students, and the community. From there, the Notre Dame students

brainstorm ideas to address the needs they encounter. Ideas have ranged from a tree farm to combat deforestation to beehives to create and sell honey, a peanut butter business, an on-site restaurant, and a development center for the children of students, which Notre Dame's School of Architecture is helping design. Each semester, the undergraduates are allotted \$15,000 to prototype, test, refine, and implement the ideas, all while prioritizing the need for the innovations to contribute to the school's self-sufficiency.

St. Bakhita's students are also working toward self-sufficiency. The 78 recent graduates, who left with skills in tailoring, hair dressing, agriculture, catering, agroforestry, computers, financial management, and entrepreneurship, were given microgrants of 100,000 Ugandan shillings, or \$27 US dollars. The top 10 percent were awarded additional funding and enrollment, much like an incubator.

This fall the Mendoza College of Business launched a new 15-credit impact consulting minor, which focuses on hands-on consulting experiences, using Professor Angst's Innovation and Design Thinking class as a model. The minor now allows students to have an extended period of involvement throughout their academic career. Students are asked to address the world's most pressing problems, ranging from gender equity to poverty to climate change, through domestic and international collaborations.

Enrolled students will embody Mendoza's mission to grow the good in business.

Connecting to Notre Dame's Mission: Sorin and Joyce Seminars

The University of Notre Dame's mission statement asserts, "The University of Notre Dame is a Catholic academic community of higher learning, animated from its origins by the Congregation of Holy Cross. The University is dedicated to the pursuit and sharing of truth for its own sake. As a Catholic university, one of its distinctive goals is to provide a forum where, through free inquiry and open discussion, the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity."

Opportunities to encounter and ponder Notre Dame's mission are critical for Notre Dame's success. To that end, the Sorin Seminar for Faculty and the Joyce Seminar for University Administrators provide opportunities for faculty and administrators to spend time reflecting on the mission of the University.

The Sorin Seminar, instituted by the Office of Mission Engagement and Church Affairs in 2016, is a colloquium for faculty across all schools and departments to engage with different ideas relating to the Catholic mission of the University and learn more about the foundations of Notre Dame. Through presentations from senior faculty members and panels featuring colleagues from across the University, seminar participants have the opportunity to meet colleagues and discuss their teaching, research, and service. The seminar includes presentations and panels from various faculty members regarding different issues that are relevant to faculty from around the University, including the history of the Congregation of Holy Cross, ecumenism and pluralism at Notre Dame, and the role of faculty in student formation.

Sorin Seminar participants have ample opportunity throughout the seminar to engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration and discussion. To date, more than 100 faculty have participated in the Sorin Seminar. Overwhelmingly, participants share that the seminar helps them to feel more connected to the mission of the University.

Compelled by the success of the Sorin Seminar, the Office of Mission Engagement and Church Affairs began the Joyce Seminar in March 2023. The Joyce Seminar provides



Meghan Sullivan, the Wilsey Family College Professor of Philosophy and director of the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study, speaks to a Sorin Seminar alumni group.

administrators with the resources and space to reflect and discuss Notre Dame's mission, its core values, and the history of the University during a day-long retreat with colleagues in their division. More than 75 administrators have participated in the Joyce Seminar since March 2023. Joyce Seminar participants have consistently expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to encounter Notre Dame's mission in a new way and learn more about how to apply the mission of the University in daily work.

The overwhelming success of both seminars has prompted the Office of Mission Engagement and Church Affairs to begin strategizing ways to offer both seminars more often. A greater understanding of the history and mission that give Notre Dame life and breath is imperative to the success of the University, and the work of the Sorin and Joyce Seminars is critical to achieving this understanding.

Related in Love: Foundations of Theology Class Takes a Personal Approach

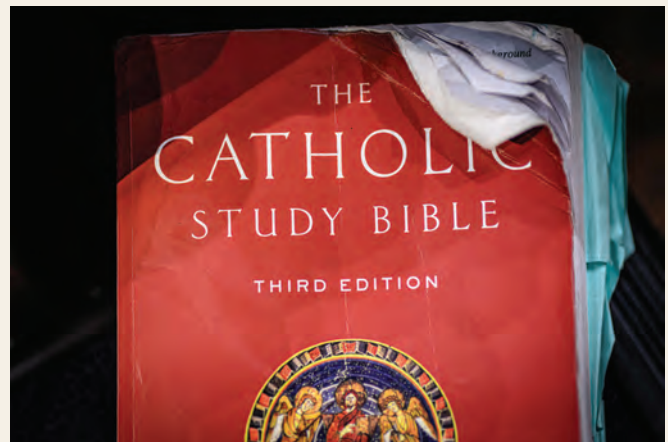
All students at Notre Dame take Foundations of Theology at some point in their academic careers. For 250 students in Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C.'s class, their experience looks a little bit different than most of their peers. Despite the number of students in the class and the large lecture hall in which Foundations is taught, Father Grove's class is intensely personal for students because of its carefully thought-out structure, which extends beyond the classroom and into their residence halls.

Over the course of the semester, students read and write reflections on class materials designed to spark discussion on questions including "what is theology?" "who is Jesus?" "who is Israel?" and "who is the Church?" A running theme in the answers to these questions is a phrase that Father Grove often repeats: "to be human is to be related in love." Over the course of the semester, students explore the implications of that claim in their academic and personal lives.

In the first class of the semester students are assigned seats grouped by residence hall. In a class of this size, most residence halls have seven or eight students in the class, a number that lends itself well to discussions outside of class. Those discussions, or "conversations of purpose," are a key element of the course that connects the intellectual and personal aspects of theology for the students. For extra credit, students can participate in hall-based discussion sections, organized by peer mentors who live in their hall. Each discussion section meets once a week throughout the semester and asks questions informed by the course and related to their personal lives. Ninety-five percent of the students enrolled in the class participate in these discussions each semester and discuss questions about their relationships and lives of faith.

Their peer mentors are not the only students first-years can turn to as resources. In the fall of 2023, 13 graduate students from the theology department served as teaching assistants and provided each student with individualized feedback on each piece of writing they turned in for the course, from essays to reading responses. Each teaching assistant is assigned a set of residence halls for which they hold office hours, grade papers, take in-class attendance, and make themselves available for any and all questions.

Father Grove's office hours are open to all students in the class and are generally very well attended. Over a two-hour period of office hours, he routinely has 45 students stop by, sometimes filling his office to the point that they are sitting on the floor and windowsill, and gathered in the hallway outside. Before tests and longer papers, he hosts what he calls Hummus Office Hours, which he prepares for by making 35 pounds of hummus and ordering pita bread from a local grocery store. This year, Hummus Office Hours have taken place on the west side of South Dining Hall. Students gather to discuss questions, eat hummus, and talk to Father Grove and their TAs. There are routinely 150-175 students reviewing at any point during Hummus Office Hours, which helps to build a sense of community among the large group of students.



While the goal of this class, and all Foundations of Theology classes taught at Notre Dame, is to serve as an introduction to theology as a discipline for all students, carefully planned out "supersections" like this bear fruit in other ways as well. The number of theology majors and minors at the end of the 2022-23 academic year was 642, a much larger number than it was 15 years ago. Through courses like this one, Notre Dame's Department of Theology is able to introduce students to the lifelong implications of studying theology on both academic and personal levels.



Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C.



The Types of Discussions, Debates, and Inquiries that Take Place at the University

Notre Dame is committed to creating a culture of inquiry imbued with the lived experience of Catholicism. While the University seeks to attract and retain greater numbers of Catholic scholars, scientists, and artists, it also believes that faculty members of all faiths are absolutely indispensable to promoting scholarship, building community, provoking debate, and ensuring a diversity of perspectives at Our Lady's University. As Notre Dame endeavors to fulfill its vision to be a great Catholic university for the 21st century and one of the preeminent research institutions in the world, seekers of truth who hold a variety of beliefs and

opinions are vitally important, especially if it is to meet the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* requirement that a Catholic university exists as a "privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture."

"Being both a University and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative."

EX CORDE ECCLESIAE







A Catholic Response to Artificial Intelligence

In fall 2022, OpenAI released a demo of its technology ChatGPT. Within months, the technology had taken off. Millions were using it to write essays, automate customer service, generate ideas, and more. While artificial intelligence isn't new, this is perhaps the first time it's been so widely available and accessible. Reservations aside, AI isn't going anywhere. Now the question becomes: how do we use it well?

John Behrens, director of technology initiatives for Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters and a former vice president of AI development for Pearson, is entrenched in these questions. Behrens also manages the New AI Project at Notre Dame, a collaborative effort to understand questions pertaining to AI use and development.

"The fundamental issue is that the technology and its applications are evolving faster than those in the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts can keep up," Behrens said. "But we need to support education at all levels to get there. The questions society is facing because of AI are not only ethical but involve all the liberal arts: What are the economic impacts? What are the psychological impacts? What questions does this human-like fluency in language raise for issues of philosophy and theology?"

To address those questions, the New AI Project is hosting faculty and staff development opportunities like lunch-and-learns and department meet-and-greets, in addition to courses on AI in the College of Arts and Letters such as *Generative AI in the Wild*; *Algorithms, Data, and Society*; and *AI for Good*. For alumni and friends of the University, there are webinars available through ThinkND and one on YouTube titled "Education and the New AI."

Behrens said, "Notre Dame has a unique opportunity to bring to bear the full range of the liberal arts to help society tackle these issues."

Across campus, experts in the Mendoza College of Business are also considering the ramifications of AI. Ahmed Abbasi, the Joe and Jane Giovanini Professor of IT, Analytics, and Operations, noted that while AI is a new concept, historic data from other technologies can help us predict the impact of AI.

"AI presents tremendous opportunities for organizations and society," Abbasi said. "Historically, we've seen major economic disruptions due to technology dating back to the agricultural and industrial revolutions. In the long run, these disruptions have improved the human condition. Now with the knowledge economy in the digital age, we find ourselves in an era of brilliant technologies, with AI having the most profound implications of them all—the potential to positively disrupt the future of work, productivity, and accessibility at an unprecedented pace."

In some ways, these issues played out publicly with the SAG-AFTRA strike last summer. While writers were concerned about AI being used to write or rewrite scripts, many actors were disturbed by a stipulation that the studios could use AI scans of deceased actors without permission by their estates or the guild. This is just one example of the need for a balance between innovation and precaution, and to have regulation and governance frameworks in place.

"The key components of the framework are to create a culture of governance, and then to map, measure, and manage—all with the goal of supporting responsible AI tenets such as fairness, privacy, and transparency," Abbasi said.

As a result of AI innovations, in May, an addition was made to the Academic Honor Code that addresses generative AI and academic integrity. The statement acknowledges the potential use of AI in the pursuit of truth, of wisdom, and of understanding, and outlines how it can and should be used. It stipulates that individual faculty have the authority to decide the role of generative AI in their courses, and students are required to adhere to those requests.

AI is also powering a lot of good at Notre Dame. Professors have ongoing research on AI and the opioid crisis, on the role of AI in water or wildfire recovery, and on using AI to combat disinformation. Additionally, in 2022, during the Rome Call for AI Ethics: A Global University Summit held at the University, Notre Dame joined with eight other universities in signing the Rome Call for AI Ethics. The Rome Call is a commitment to promote an ethical approach to AI, seeking to advance shared

responsibility to create a humanity-centered approach to digital innovation and technological progress.

With the right approach, AI may well help solve the issues that most plague society, as long as it is used wisely and ethically.



The Census Tree: A Digitized Database to Link Census Data from 1850 to 1940



Kasey Buckles, professor of economics and gender studies

Genealogy sites like Ancestry.com are known for being hobby projects, but Kasey Buckles, a professor of economics and gender studies, along with a multi-university team, is harnessing that kind of crowdsourced genealogical data to benefit research.

Buckles has long worked with BYU economist Joseph Price.

Their most recent study on intergenerational mobility, or how one's birth situation defines their life, required longitudinal data. While it was straightforward to track that data for white men via traditional methods like census records, for women, immigrants, and minorities who may have changed names, it posed roadblocks. That's when the team realized they could lean into the work of amateur genealogists at FamilySearch, a free, not-for-profit genealogy website originally started by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With 12 million users and 1.4 billion profiles, the dataset is rich and extensive, but there can be gaps. The duo believed some of these gaps could be filled with help from an algorithm.

Buckles and Price formed a team of undergraduates and doctoral students from Notre Dame and BYU, along with one doctoral student from Cornell, and funding from the National Science Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation. The result is Census Tree, a digitized database that leverages genealogy research and machine learning to link census data from 1850 to 1940.

"This effort will link people across the censuses in a way that allows you to see them through the course of their life, and to

see how their experiences—their early life, world events, public policies—have shaped them in a way we haven't been able to do before," Buckles said. "Our innovation is our connection to people doing their own genealogy research. I think this is an exciting symbiotic relationship between the public and academic researchers."

In the case of Buckles and Price, they're already reaping the benefits. They used the new data in their study on intergenerational mobility and presented it to the National Bureau of Economic Research's Summer Institute. They hope other researchers, across other disciplines like history, sociology, and anthropology, will benefit from the now public data as well.

"There is so much that can be done here and we couldn't possibly do it all," Buckles said. "I am as excited to see what other people do with the data as I am to work with it myself. This really feels like a contribution that is going to be far beyond any one paper that I might write."

"This effort will link people across the censuses in a way that allows you to see them through the course of their life, and to see how their experiences—their early life, world events, public policies—have shaped them in a way we haven't been able to do before."

KASEY BUCKLES, ECONOMICS PROFESSOR

Disseminating Knowledge with Podcasts at Notre Dame

Notre Dame has long offered a number of audio offerings that employ the expertise of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. As technology has changed, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Notre Dame's podcast options have increased in response to demand.

"As the pandemic forced people to become savvier with technology to stay connected, podcasts have become an important tool," said Beth Grisoli, assistant vice president of strategic communications. "At Notre Dame, we have roughly 20 different podcasts that cover research, scholarship, and spirituality. Because they are accessible to anyone at any time, they support our mission of education and outreach to a world in need. They allow us to develop new ideas, facilitate informed civil dialogue, and deliver verified knowledge."

For *The ThinkND Podcast*, the CASE Award-winning podcast from the Notre Dame Alumni Association, more than 6,000 listeners have tuned in on subjects pertinent to leadership, faith, art, and science. The long-running series has corralled experts to speak on everything from how to spot a good wine to how to live a good life. Recent episodes include topics like raising resilient children and AI and education. All conversations are available wherever you stream podcasts, on a web browser at think.nd.edu, or on YouTube.

The *Notre Dame Stories* podcast from the Office of Public Affairs and Communications leverages the top news, research, and storytelling opportunities to share the University's efforts to be a force for good. Drawing from the office's expertise in longform storytelling, the podcast is known to annually release a multi-episode series on topics like Notre Dame's relationship with Ireland, the University's history in Jerusalem, and the work of the Law School's Exoneration Justice Clinic.

There are also podcasts that are more focused in their subject matter. *Black@ND* has long offered a platform to discuss the experiences of African Americans in the Notre Dame

community. The McGrath Institute for Church Life has more than 90 episodes of its podcast, called *Church Life Today*, hosted by Lenny DeLorenzo, director of undergraduate studies at the McGrath Institute and concurrent professor of theology. It covers issues most important to the Church like the real presence in the Eucharist, the roles of film and television in evangelization, and how parents can have a productive Lent.

Meanwhile, Grotto Network, a digital medium for young adults, has three podcasts: *Good and Decent*, which highlights the stories of ordinary people; *Don't Say Ad*ting*, which teaches basic lessons applicable for early adulthood; and a newcomer, *Jesus' Favorite Podcast*, a series that talks about Jesus's favorite things alongside the people who seek Him.

Another newcomer to the game is *The DEI Podcast with Max Gaston*, hosted by Max Gaston, the director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Notre Dame Law School. It covers everything from unconscious bias to perspectives of underrepresented Black men in law school.

There are hundreds of podcast episodes for exploration and reflection. For the answers to questions about how to find community amid loneliness, the similarities between the Koran and the Bible, and Catholic social thought, there are Notre Dame podcasts that offer insight, expertise, and accompaniment.



The Chesterton Archives Encourage Scholarship at the London Global Gateway

In his essay "On Running After One's Hat," G.K. Chesterton writes, "There is an idea that it is humiliating to run after one's hat; and when people say it is humiliating they mean that it is comic."

Mr. Chesterton's hat is on the move no longer. Now it, along with a number of other personal possessions and writings, resides in The Chesterton Archives at Notre Dame's London Global Gateway.

Considered one of the most influential Catholic writers of the 20th century, Chesterton created a corpus of writing spanning journalism, poetry, fiction, theology, and philosophy. He penned 80 books, 200 short stories, 4,000 essays, hundreds of poems, and a number of plays. His best-known work is a series about a fictional priest-detective named Father Brown.

Chesterton's connection to Notre Dame predates the 2022 dedication of his collection. In 1930, the renowned Catholic author spent a month on campus as a visiting professor. In between his lectures on Victorian history and literature, he witnessed the blessing of Notre Dame Stadium, attended a football game, and dodged Prohibition's grasp by drinking ale in the basement of Sorin Hall. That year he was given an honorary degree.

Along with the hat, visitors to the Global Gateway can also see a substantial history of Chesterton's works, drawings and doodles from the writer, a toy from his childhood, his spectacles, walking sticks, and more. The collection was amassed by Aidan Mackey, a British bookseller and Chesterton expert. Mackey said he acquired the memorabilia bit by bit over



the course of decades, and he created a store of memories by befriendng many of Chesterton's closest colleagues and friends. Now he has given his life's project to Notre Dame.

"To watch as the Trustees and Notre Dame have arranged the collection's elevation to so prestigious a home as the London Global Gateway is, for me, warming beyond measure," Mackey said.

Now scholars from around the world are invited to Notre Dame's London Global Gateway to study about and from the legendary writer.

G.K. Chesterton

One of the most
influential Catholic writers
of the 20th century

80

BOOKS

200

SHORT STORIES

4,000

ESSAYS

Solutions to Improve Drinking Water in Developing Countries



“We discovered that communities actively participate in the management of existing water projects, so we propose that two neighbor communities collaborate, pooling their demand, to increase the potential supply for both communities.”

ALFONSO PEDRAZA-MARTINEZ,
MENDOZA PROFESSOR

In his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis assessed the state of the Earth, our common home, and offered a powerful and urgent call to action to better care for creation. In the first chapter, he discussed the availability and safety of drinking water, stating:

“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor.”

Many nongovernmental organizations are responding to this call to provide water to the world’s most vulnerable, but with limited resources, placement of the water projects is critical.

Alfonso Pedraza-Martinez, the Greg and Patty Fox Collegiate Professor of IT, Analytics, and Operations in the Mendoza College of Business, is a specialist in humanitarian operations and disaster management. He, along with collaborators from several NGOs and Indiana University, looked at this problem in Tigray, Ethiopia.

“Building water projects is expensive and funding is scarce,” Pedraza-Martinez said. “NGOs must select locations for new water projects while navigating tight budget constraints and very limited access to data on demand locations.”

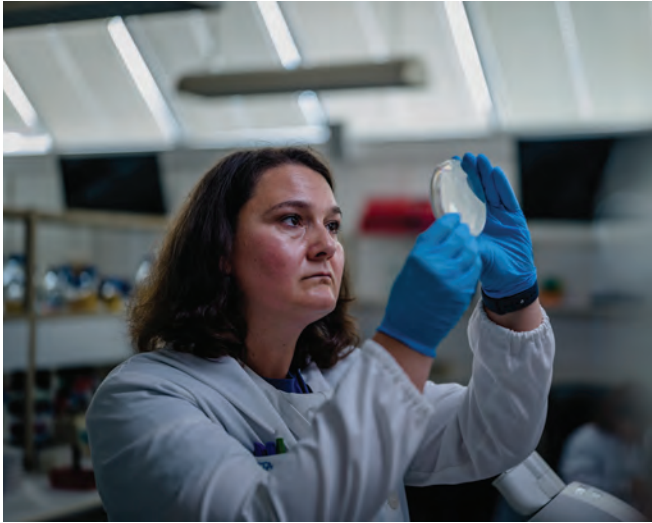
Working with **charity: water**, an American nonprofit that works to provide community-owned water projects, and Relief Society of Tigray, an Ethiopian NGO, the team created a dataset to optimize the locations of future projects in Tigray.

“We discovered that communities actively participate in the management of existing water projects, so we propose that two neighbor communities collaborate, pooling their demand, to increase the potential supply for both communities,” Pedraza-Martinez said.

“When Ethiopian communities (*kebeles*) collaborate to access water as a single, larger community, it removes geopolitical boundaries for water purposes,” Pedraza-Martinez explained. “It gives people who live on the outskirts of one *kebele* the option of walking a shorter distance toward another to use a hand pump or other water source, rather than walking a longer distance to find one in their own *kebele*. If there is cooperation, this solution is very effective to reduce distance and increase equity.”

The results have been published in the journal *Production and Operations Management*, and will be shared with other MBA programs as a case study. Meanwhile, **charity: water** is applying the framework to help determine locations for new water projects in Malawi and the Central African Republic.

Fighting for Those with Cystic Fibrosis



Marta Martins, professor of microbiology at Trinity College Dublin

In Ireland, one in 19 people carry the gene for cystic fibrosis, making it the country with the highest prevalence rates in the world. And so, when the Naughton Fellowship encouraged Notre Dame researchers to partner with an Irish colleague on a project, Notre Dame engineering professors Rob Nerenberg and Al Cerrone believed cystic fibrosis was a fitting cause.

Neither are cystic fibrosis experts, so they sought to collaborate with Marta Martins, a professor of microbiology at Trinity College Dublin. Together, the trio is looking to improve treatment for cystic fibrosis by better understanding its causes and challenges.

Cystic fibrosis affects the body's cells, tissues, and glands that make mucus and sweat. The excess mucus leads to chronic infections that whittle away at essential organs like the lungs and pancreas. With repeat infections come repeat antibiotics, rendering antibiotic resistance a chronic worry for patients and their families.

A phenomenon called the bioacoustic effect, in this case through low-frequency ultrasound, was suspected to help the efficacy of antibiotics without increasing dosage. To understand if and why this happened, the experts applied their diverse expertise.

With Nerenberg's research on biofilms, or clusters and colonies of bacteria, similar to those in the lungs of CF patients, and Cerrone's specialty in the mechanics and durability of materials, they were able to offer a mechanics-centric approach. Martins then could offer expertise on microbial defense, specifically on bacterial efflux pumps, which they hypothesized are impaired by ultrasound, rendering it an effective treatment supplement. Together, the diversity of their approaches has led to a productive understanding of how and why ultrasound might be a helpful treatment option.

"It has been highly motivating and productive since it started," Martins enthused, saying this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration is something she loves. "I find it interesting because it is combining something that is already there. Ultrasound is not something that was invented now, so it has been there. And low-frequency ultrasound has been there, but I think their novel approach is actually to try to understand what it's doing and try to understand that in combination with antibiotics."

Martins believes this is only the start of their partnership and is optimistic about what they can accomplish. "This initial project, it's a trampoline for something bigger."

Together, the trio is looking to improve treatment for cystic fibrosis by better understanding its causes and challenges.

Equipping Ukrainian Students to Preserve Culture Amid War

Amid the uncertainty of the 1991 Soviet Union collapse, Catholic universities in post-Soviet territories took the stance that they could teach and instill morality, dignity, and justice to the fledgling democracies. To do so, they needed to rally together for support and community. Twenty years ago, with the help of Notre Dame and the Nanovic Institute, Catholic universities in post-Soviet territories formed the Catholic Universities Partnership, a collaboration that facilitates conversation and an exchange of values and resources.

For the past 20 years, Notre Dame has had a rich relationship with the members of the Catholic Universities Partnership. One of the universities in the partnership is Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU). Archbishop Borys Gudziak, who serves as president of UCU and Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, received the Notre Dame Award in 2019 and delivered the 2022 Notre Dame Commencement Address.

Michael Pippenger, Notre Dame's vice president and associate provost for internationalization, reflected on Notre Dame's support of Ukraine and Ukrainian Catholic University:

"Catholic social teaching challenges us, invites us, exhorts us to be in solidarity and to protect the dignity of every individual person. When our colleagues' country was invaded, and their education and their family lives and their professional lives were all put in jeopardy, we felt a call to act."

That action first came in a statement from Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., and then in a comprehensive package designed with administrators from UCU.

Pippenger said, "They talked to us about the need to support faculty and students, and to imagine ways in which the horror of war could be turned into something that could be studied and could be a mechanism for resilience for the university to come out stronger than ever at the end of this conflict. Hearing that from them allowed us to imagine a package of initiatives that would support the entire university, helping it to continue to flourish."

Among the robust package of initiatives, which won the 2023 Institute of International Education Heiskell Award for Strategic Partnerships, were faculty-specific grants for Notre Dame and UCU professors to collaborate on a course, curriculum, or project.

Ian Kuijt, a prehistoric archeologist and anthropology professor, and Bill Donaruma, a filmmaker and professor in the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre, proposed to travel to Ukraine and teach students in UCU's School of Journalism and Media Communications how to document and preserve their own culture before it could be destroyed.

As Kuijt explained, "Ukraine is a war about culture. The Russian invasion is not just a military invasion, it is an attempt to destroy Ukrainian heritage and culture."

"Russia has targeted an enormous range of cultural heritage in Ukraine, including everything from churches to museums, to libraries, to schools, to hospitals," he said. "There's no doubt that the Russian government at this point, as exemplified by Putin, is trying to rebuild the Soviet era and to rebuild what existed there in the 1950s. So as part of that, it's a matter of eradicating Ukrainian language, poetry, song, culture, history, all of these different pieces, because by erasing it there's the potential, at least in terms of the Russian military, to unify, in their minds, what has taken place, to unify this geopolitical world that doesn't exist anymore."

In March 2023, the Notre Dame professors traveled to Ukraine. Alongside the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, they taught students to document and tell the stories of bombed churches, of museums being boxed before they're plundered, and of their personal experiences. They showed them how to use technology like photogrammetry and drone videography. In the process they enriched an already strong bond between the schools, which Kuijt contends will continue for many years.



Local Partnership Seeks to Address Leaky Drinking Water

112,000
CUSTOMERS

GALLONS OF WATER LEAKED PER YEAR

365 million

In South Bend, once every two years, a person is hired to walk the city's pipe infrastructure, listening for leaks. With 112,000 customers, it's an inefficient process that wastes water and money.

"Currently, South Bend loses around 365 million gallons of water a year to leaks, and the only process to detect leaks is the biannual survey where one person goes around for 500 miles of pipes listening for leaks," explained Ishani Basak '25. "Our project is trying to automate that using an embedded system."

Basak is an intern with Notre Dame's Center for Civic Innovation (CCI), a group in the College of Engineering that looks for opportunities to collaborate on issues pertinent to the South Bend and Elkhart communities. In Basak's case, he is working with HydroDigital, a South Bend-based design consultancy that leverages technology to help better manage water usage, and is led by Luis Montestruque '04 Ph.D.

Montestruque envisions a sensor that is mounted to pipes to measure vibrations. Vibrations connected to a leak would trigger an alert sent to water employees who could assess and manage the issue immediately, rather than waiting for someone to find it. Though technology of this nature exists, Montestruque hopes to make it more cost effective and accessible. That access could help mitigate the trillions of gallons that leak nationwide every year.

Last spring, Notre Dame students helped validate the technology in their Industry and Community-based Innovation Projections course with CCI. They then turned their attention to developing a working prototype for the technology and its accompanying machine learning algorithm, and to fully document the city's existing water systems.

The project was then kicked back to HydroDigital to scale and implement. Should the project succeed, it would save money, time, and water, a coveted resource the world so deeply needs.



Service to the Catholic Church in a Manner Appropriate for a University

As a Catholic university, Notre Dame is aware of its privileged responsibility to place itself in service to the Church. To demonstrate how the pursuit of truth is put to use in a life of faith, the University is committed, as envisioned in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, to serve the Church by including the

study of serious contemporary problems among its research, by communicating to society those ethical and religious principles that give full meaning to human life, by serving others for the promotion of social justice, and by modeling cooperation between disciplines in common research projects.

“I pray that we will be people who see the world and its problems with a steady, honest, unflinching gaze; that because of our faith in God’s goodness, we will apply all our knowledge and skill to a thoughtful, fair, balanced analysis of those issues; that we never flag in seeking solutions ... that we will have the courage and conviction to act when action is called for, and that we inspire others to act as well.”

REV. JOHN I. JENKINS, C.S.C.



Building a Culture of Life: Women and Children First Initiative

On June 24, 2022, when the decision for *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* was released, effectively overruling *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the pro-life movement renewed its belief that abortion is just one component of a truly pro-life culture.

Notre Dame's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, a leading scholarly center for Catholic moral and intellectual tradition, and its Women and Children First Initiative have dedicated research, teaching, service, and advocacy to such a culture, where whole families receive adequate attention and support.

O. Carter Snead, director of the de Nicola Center and professor of law at Notre Dame Law School, said, "It is incumbent upon us in this post-Roe moment to convene an array of brilliant leaders from a variety of disciplines and viewpoints who share our commitment to building a world in which mothers, babies, and families are cared for and protected as they deserve."

The initiative has included a series of webinars on topics like "Caring for Women and Children," lectures, and roundtable discussions including "Building a Civilization of Love," which featured a diverse group including a pro-life Democratic senator, a lawyer and former assistant solicitor general of Texas, a policy expert, and an obstetrician. Their discussion focused on the needs and challenges in the wake of *Dobbs*.

In June, the annual Notre Dame Vita Institute hosted 50 pro-life leaders in an intellectual formation program to better equip them for effective advocacy. And in January, the center's largest effort rallied more than 600 students, faculty, and staff from Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College to attend the annual March for Life in Washington, DC, the first such event since the *Dobbs* decision, and nearing the 50th anniversary of *Roe*.

"This year's March for Life marks the first time that pro-life supporters from around the nation will gather together to celebrate the end of *Roe v. Wade*, clearing the way for a



"... clearing the way for a future in which all people of goodwill can work together to find new ways to support mothers, children, and families."

PETRA FARRELL, DE NICOLA CENTER

future in which all people of goodwill can work together to find new ways to support mothers, children, and families," said Petra Farrell, culture of life program manager at the de Nicola Center. "We are proud to represent Notre Dame at the national march and to give voice to the University's commitment to proclaiming the dignity of all human life, at all stages and in all circumstances."

In sum, the initiative will be a comprehensive and interdisciplinary effort for a range of audiences, both academic and public. It endeavors to advise, to teach, to study, and to support in the quest for a truly pro-life world.

As summarized on its website, "Through this initiative, the de Nicola Center supports Notre Dame's role as a leading witness to the sanctity of every human life, proclaiming the radical hospitality at the heart of the pro-life movement in which all are welcomed into the human family in love, friendship, and support."

Notre Dame Vision Sows Seeds for Vocations

A 2015 study by Notre Dame sociologists Nicolette Manglos-Weber and Christian Smith, titled “Understanding Former Young Catholics: Findings from a National Study of American Emerging Adults,” cited that half of Catholic teenagers lose their Catholic identity by their late 20s. How can the faithful stem that tide?

Notre Dame Vision, a five-day experience for high school students, offers a lively, authentic, and approachable place to explore relationship with God, the gifts God has given, and how participants can use those gifts to serve others. In essence, the program sows the seeds of vocation.

Notre Dame Vision began as a response to an invitation from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to find ways to help young people consider vocation. Vision has grown into a week-long conference on Notre Dame’s campus for high school students to discover and renew their faith lives. In tandem, Vision also offers a conference for campus and youth ministers that offers time for personal renewal and tools to refresh their ministry. Now, more than 20 years since its inception, Notre Dame Vision, which now resides in the McGrath Institute for Church Life, celebrated its 20,000th registrant in 2023.

Over the years Vision participants have testified to experiencing renewed prayer, love, and community. They have been witnesses to well-known speakers, rich theological discussions, fun-filled community building, and mentorship from college students who are a large part of Vision’s continued success.

Undergraduates from Notre Dame, Saint Mary’s, and Holy Cross College are referred to as mentors-in-faith. Mentorship comes largely through accompaniment in every step of the journey—from working in the residence halls where Vision participants stay, to facilitating small groups, to sharing their own faith journey. To mentor and minister effectively, they are

required to enroll in a three-credit theology class, workshops, retreats, and reflection groups.

Craig Gould, the program director of Notre Dame Vision, said, “This formation plants seeds for a new kind of imagination to grow the minds of our college students, that faith is not something abstract, but a concrete reality that redefines how we live and orient our lives.”

Many of the mentors credit the experience to their own spiritual growth. Tirza Ryan, a 2015 Notre Dame graduate and 2013 Vision mentor, credits her time with Vision to her faith life even a decade later:

“My summer as a Vision mentor helped shape the rest of my Notre Dame experience and continues to inform all areas of my life. What I learned both through the class and my time as a mentor changed how I approach liturgy, and how I support and dialogue around liturgical experiences for my family. Going through the process of accompanying both teens and other mentors in simultaneous yet differing roles became something that impacted me later on as a resident assistant, as a graduate clinician, as a practicing SLP [speech-language pathologist], and as a wife and mother.”

With 20,000 registrants, and hundreds more mentors, the reach of Notre Dame Vision’s ministry is impressive, and perhaps has sown seeds that would not have bloomed otherwise.

Scott Boyle, director of outreach for the McGrath Institute and Vision, is one of the more than 1,250 college students who have served as a mentor-in-faith. He said, “It’s truly humbling to be a part of a program with this kind of impact. As a former mentor myself, Vision empowered me to re-engage my faith and see possibilities for my life I could never have imagined. I can’t wait to see the impact Vision will have on our next 20,000 students.”

2023 Week of Unity Program in Jerusalem



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held annually in January, was celebrated with special vigor this year in Jerusalem by the Tantur Ecumenical Institute. With the ongoing war in the region, and hostages held in Gaza, Christians gathered to express their solidarity with each other and with those who suffer. The annual week featured services, prayers, and songs hosted by nine different church communities: the Greek Orthodox Church at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Anglican Cathedral of St. George, the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, the Latin Patriarchate's Church, the Cenacle or Upper Room in Mount Zion, the Syrian Orthodox St. Mark's Church, Ethiopian Orthodox, and the Greek Catholic Church of Annunciation. While these denominations have differences in beliefs, they gathered together in an effort to showcase the strength of the communal Christian faith.

Rev. John M. Paul, S.J., the rector of Tantur, said, "Christians are less than 2 percent of the population of the Holy Land. While a small minority, it is important that we be a united community of faith to speak out, advocate, and maintain the Christian presence (the living stones) in a land that has seen the exit of many local Christians over the years because of the complexity of life in the Holy Land. While small, we need a strong presence, especially in a time of war, since the ministries each Christian church undertakes make a huge difference in the life of many."

The nightly gatherings were organized according to the host organization's religious tradition, but often included scripture and Gospel readings, followed by a sermon about the importance of Christian unity, intercessory prayer, and song, said Father Paul. Those who attended included representatives from the various churches, lay people from the congregations, and representatives from other religious groups with footprints in the Holy Land.

"As Christians we are a people of hope with a desire to be a 'unity with rich diversity.' As Pope Francis mentioned: 'unity does not [imply] uniformity.' Each Christian church in the Holy Land prays and gives voice to the need for greater human unity and human compassion and human rights through our prayer, our support of each other in conflict. While each church maintains its unique identity, there is an ongoing dialogue of friendship and attendance at various events that deepen the friendship and collaboration between these churches," Father Paul said. "Much goes on unnoticed and unpublicized through simple dialogues, visitations, and participation in religious as well as secular events."

That commitment to ecumenism is particularly important at Tantur. The Tantur Ecumenical Institute sits along the Way of Hebron on a plot that was put under Notre Dame's care more than 50 years ago by Pope Paul VI. The University was invited to create an ecumenical center for study and dialogue, an oasis of peace in a land rife with dispute. Notre Dame has remained a hospitable and understanding presence ever since. The institute was created in the wake of the historic meeting between Pope Paul VI and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople in 1964. In that meeting, the first of its kind in a millennium, the two leaders of faith agreed to turn toward dialogue, peace, and unity, rather than division and pain. That type of bridge building remains at the core of Tantur's mission and programming, ranging from a weekly ecumenical lecture series to Taizé prayer.

Providing Support to Various Higher Education Efforts within Indiana Prisons

Notre Dame's Programs for Education in Prisons (NDPEP) is a multi-department, multi-institutional collaboration offering those who are incarcerated in Indiana prisons an exceptional liberal arts education. In addition to offering an education, NDPEP provides career development and re-entry assistance while providing valuable research opportunities for Notre Dame students and faculty. To date, 177 associate and bachelor's degrees have been conferred.

"NDPEP exemplifies the University's mission rooted in Catholic social tradition in a couple of ways: In making a commitment to the democratization of education by bringing college to prison, NDPEP is promoting the dignity of people on the margins. A world-class liberal arts education equips students with the intellectual skills and virtues to pursue meaning and purpose in their lives," said Michael Hebbeler, managing director of NDPEP. "Additionally, the communities cultivated among classmates and professors inside prison, as well as the networks built on the outside through our reentry efforts, are driven by our belief in the common good that can only be realized if each of us are participants."

NDPEP launched in 2022 as an umbrella to house several existing prison initiatives within the Center for Social Concerns, such as the Moreau College Initiative, the Women's College Partnership, the Indiana Prison Liberal Arts Network, and Shakespeare in Prisons Program. It also houses external partnerships like the Inside-Out Exchange Program and the Bard Prison Initiative.

The Moreau College Initiative (MCI) began in 2012 when Notre Dame and Holy Cross College partnered with Westville Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison. Through MCI, students could obtain an associate or bachelor's degree from Holy Cross while incarcerated, or in-person once they were released. In 2017, Westville started a writing center inspired by Notre Dame's University Writing Center, which allowed incarcerated students to tutor their peers in the program.

Westville was also the site of the first Shakespeare in Prisons course hosted by Notre Dame.

NDPEP also took over administration of the Women's College Partnership, which launched as a collaboration between the Bard Prison Initiative and Marian University. It provides college education to women at the maximum-security Indiana Women's Prison in Indianapolis.

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ASSOCIATE/
BACHELOR'S
DEGREES

The success of those programs led to the Indiana Prison Liberal Arts Network, a state-wide plan that allows Notre Dame to extend its reach and to partner with other institutions of higher education to offer even

more liberal arts degrees to those who are incarcerated. For its part, Notre Dame agreed to serve as the training facility for interested institutions and offer leadership conferences, research seminars, training workshops, networking, and impact assessment. Participants hope to continue to build on that success at a national level.

Hebbeler said, "With its institutional partners, NDPEP is positioned to enhance this work in both the state of Indiana as well as the national Catholic landscape of higher education. To this end, we are launching the Indiana Prison Liberal Arts Network to catalyze collaborative efforts in the areas of college in prison, reentry, and multidisciplinary research that advance our work throughout the state. Additionally, we are in the planning stages of creating a national network of Catholic colleges and universities to strategize on best practices and share resources that enable existing programs to deepen their mission and new programs to be launched."

Research on Religious Detachment in Younger Generations

Presently, it's not unusual to hear someone describe themselves as "spiritual" and "not religious." A belief in God no longer necessarily means communion with a traditional religion. Christian Smith, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Sociology, sought to understand why.

"We know from survey data and other studies that younger adults in the United States have become detached from traditional religion—even in ways baby boomers have not," Smith said. "This project tries to understand what happened."

Smith was selected as the pilot Pizzo Family Senior Research Fellow, a program that allows a faculty member with a research question pertinent to the Catholic Church to spend one year developing an answer alongside a group of students. Students who are part of the program spend fall semester on campus and spring semester at the Rome Global Gateway, concluding with a symposium that brings their findings to academics and Church officials.

"We're engaging people in the Church—especially in the Vatican—for a day to have a big conversation about what the research project is about," Smith said. "If this succeeds, Notre Dame faculty, as scholars, are learning things that can contribute to the knowledge of leaders in the Church—things they should know and be interested in learning about and hearing about."

He continued, "Nobody has put it all together, but I hope our research and its findings will help the Church come to grips with the profundity of the situation, the dire straits it's in. There is a pope right now who seems to have some sense that things need to change. As a sociologist, I'm not here to tell the Church what it needs to do. I'm just trying to provide fact-based information on what's going on in the world."

Smith's team included six undergraduates and one graduate student. The year-long experience offered them a unique peek into academia and the full lifespan of a research endeavor.

"Much of what undergrads usually consume is the final results of research. Here, they're getting thrown in from the beginning to see the process unfold over time," Smith said. "Very few undergraduates in the country get this big-picture, long-term experience."

"If this succeeds, Notre Dame faculty, as scholars, are learning things that can contribute to the knowledge of leaders in the Church—things they should know and be interested in learning about and hearing about."

CHRISTIAN SMITH, SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR

For Smith, he relished teaching the same group of students for a full year, a rarity in academic life.

The group presented its findings, titled "Has Western Christianity Become Obsolete?: Shifts in Deep Culture and Young Adult Indifference," in April 2023 in a two-day symposium at the Rome Global Gateway.



Providing Economic and Business Education to Worldwide Church Officials

The Catholic Research Economists Discussion Organization (CREDO) is an international group of economists who study and foster relationships between the Catholic faith and economics. To do so, members draw from Catholic social thought and concepts of dignity, freedom, solidarity, and the common good. The group also provides a welcome community in which members can wholeheartedly fill their vocation to be economists and a beacon for the Church.

In the 10 years since its establishment, CREDO has grown to include nearly 700 economists from universities including Notre Dame; Duke; Cornell; University of California, Berkeley; Washington University; and the University of Pennsylvania. The group has a job board for Catholic and Christian economists, a repository of resources to help incorporate Catholic social thought and economics, and a number of mentorship opportunities. CREDO also sponsors conferences, lectures, Masses, and seminars at the Gregorian Pontifical College in Rome. The summer seminar, held at Notre Dame, serves as an introduction into Catholic social thought for students and faculty in economics or finance. Catholic social thought is then integrated into economic subjects such as utility theory, business ethics, wages, markets, globalization, poverty, and development.

CREDO often works with and co-sponsors events with the Lumen Christi Institute, a group at the University of Chicago that seeks to enrich universities and their students through the application of Catholic social thought.

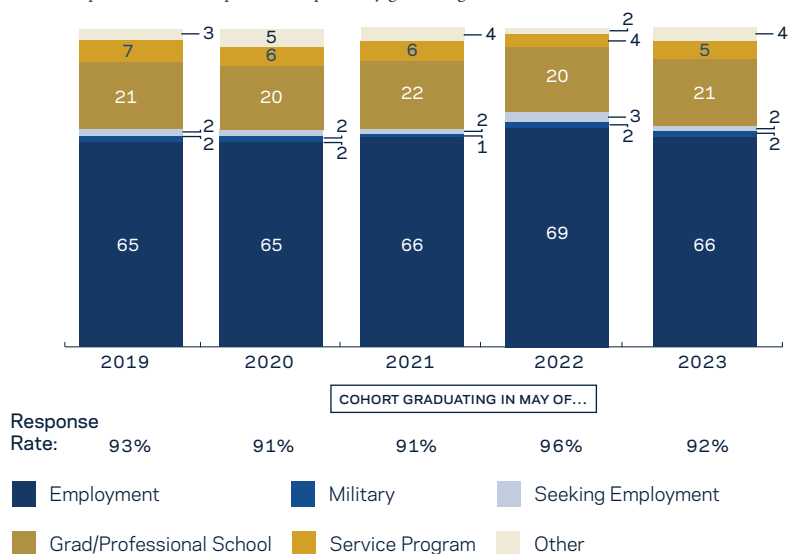


Joseph Kaboski, the David F. and Erin M. Seng Foundation Professor of Economics

In his November farewell letter to conclude his 10-year tenure as CREDO president, Joseph Kaboski, Notre Dame's David F. and Erin M. Seng Foundation Professor of Economics, predicted the future of CREDO will include growth, particularly outside the United States.

POST-BACCALAUREATE PLANS

Percent of post-baccalaureate plans, self-reported by graduating seniors (First Destination Data Collection)



Note: Due to rounding, the sum of sub-elements may not equal 100%.

Religious Liberty Summit 2023

In the summer of 2023, Notre Dame Law School hosted its third annual Religious Liberty Summit for scholars, advocates, and defenders of religious liberty around the world. The summit focused on the theme “Protecting Religious Liberty in a Rapidly Evolving Society,” and included topics such as religious expression and social media, religious liberty in the corporate space, religious responses to the rise of autocracy, and the persecution against religious minorities.

The keynote speakers included Nazila Ghanea, special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Fiona Bruce, the UK prime minister’s special envoy for freedom of religion or belief. More than 60 speakers served on 14 discussion panels.

In previous years the summit has been held at Notre Dame’s Rome Global Gateway.

“In addition to bringing faith leaders and advocates together from around the world, we want to bring them to Notre Dame,” said G. Marcus Cole, the Joseph A. Matson Dean of the Notre Dame Law School and the founder of its Religious Liberty Initiative. “Bringing people to Notre Dame means exposing the world to our global footprint as a university. There is no other university that has a presence all around the world the way the University of Notre Dame does.”

In his remarks, Cole conceded that many victories and successes had occurred since they had last met, but so too remained many pressing and dangerous issues, like the sale of thousands of Yazidi women into sexual slavery, or blasphemy laws in Nigeria that have led to imprisonment and lynchings, or, closer to home, Catholic hospitals that could lose their licenses if they do not consent to abortion services, assisted suicide, or gender reassignments. While fighting these issues, he cautioned, those present would need to clearly articulate for what they are fighting.

He said: “The court of public opinion remains largely unaware of the importance of religious liberty and the role that it plays in our basic freedoms and rights. We cannot rely on the press to

educate the public on religious freedom until and unless we educate the press. They already enter the conversation with misconceptions, precommitments, and their own biases—not because they have ill intention, but because they are human. What we need to do is focus, not on the politics, but on the people.”

Even with the daunting state of things, celebrations were had. As part of the events, Lord David Alton of Liverpool, a member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, was awarded the Notre Dame Prize for Religious Liberty. In his decades-long career, he has fought tirelessly for freedom of religion, whether for the Uyghur cause in China, for Coptic Christians in Egypt, or for individuals persecuted in Russia, North Korea, and beyond. He has long used his voice to draw attention to human rights abuses and to tell the stories of the vulnerable.

Jack Coons, a professor emeritus of law at the University of California, Berkeley, was also awarded the Religious Liberty Scholarship Award for his work on school choice. He recently published a book titled *The Case for Parental Choice: God, Family, and Educational Liberty*.

The impact of the three-day summit continued beyond July. Stephanie Barclay, the director of the Religious Liberty Initiative, said, “This year we are excited to partner with the *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* to publish the remarks of many academics at the summit as part of a special symposium issue. We’re looking forward to increasing the reach of thoughtful contributions that will be made on the issue of freedom of religion or belief.”

Notre Dame’s Religious Liberty Initiative was established in 2020 to provide advocacy, counsel, scholarship, fellowship, and service in defense of freedom of religion or belief. In the Religious Liberty Clinic, students and faculty work on cases for individuals and organizations of many faith traditions. The clinic has filed briefs ranging from preventing the destruction of Indigenous sacred sites, to a defense of Jewish schools barred from receiving state funds for special needs education, to advocating for the rights of those of religious minority groups like Sikhs, Jews, and Muslims while incarcerated.

Master of Divinity Program Creates Culturally Competent Ministers



Lay students and Holy Cross seminarians during their pilgrimage to Rome in the summer of 2023.

Today more than half of US Catholics under age 18 identify as Latino. For those studying ministry, how can they be better trained to accompany those Catholics? Notre Dame's Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program is offering its students language and cultural immersion to help shape their future ministry.

Todd Walatka, an associate teaching professor in theology and director of the M.Div. program, explained: "The future of the Catholic parish in the United States is a multicultural parish where you're going to have Masses in English and Spanish, so our graduates need to be able to enter into that kind of space with the competency to enter into dialogue.

"We are in an increasingly diverse US Church and global Church," he said. "And so to prepare our students to minister in the Church of today, much less the Church of tomorrow, it demands greater intercultural competency."

Thanks to funding from a Lilly Endowment grant, M.Div. students are invited to learn Spanish, participate in summer service on the border, and go on pilgrimages to Spanish-speaking locations, all as part of their training.

"Our program is built about around helping students engage a new cultural context or a new population with a posture of receptivity, a posture of empathy—where you're not coming in as the savior, but you're coming in to be formed and then contribute and to be with the people," Walatka said.

In 2022, as part of the immersion, the group of 23 lay students and Holy Cross seminarians went to Pueblo and Mexico City during fall break, and to Rome during the summer of 2023.

For Julia King '23M.Div., witnessing the piety of Mexico, especially at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, forced her and her classmates to ask questions about their futures in ministry.

"How does this impact my ministerial identity?" King asked. "How does this help me serve those who are the most marginalized and vulnerable? And how has this helped me to be able to reach out to more people or experience a different reality of the Church than my own?"

Those themes once again echoed during her service placement with Catholic Charities in Brownsville, Texas, where she encountered migrants.

"I was able to encounter the deep faith that people have," King said. "They're displaced; they literally showed up without shoelaces. We were able to meet material needs but also provide some sort of spiritual nourishment. Just witnessing the hope that people have that God has a plan for their lives and that's carried them this far—it was transformative, and I don't think my heart will ever be the same after encountering physical people in the midst of their suffering."

Lay graduates from Notre Dame's three-year, in-resident M.Div. program go on to careers in ministry at parishes, universities, high schools, and nonprofits across the country. Thanks to the Lilly grant, many of those graduates will now be equipped to serve in both English- and Spanish-speaking ministries.

Discerning the Future of Synodality



This February the McGrath Institute for Church Life, along with the Committee on Doctrine from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), hosted a symposium at Notre Dame attended by bishops from across the United States. The theme of this year's conference, "The Role of Episcopal Discernment in the Synodal Journey," crystallizes the conference's intention of providing bishops with "time apart, however brief, for [their] own discussions and discernments."

The Synod on Synodality has produced much discussion in the Church and will conclude in the fall of 2024. By co-hosting this conference, the McGrath Institute provides bishops with both time away from their usual duties that can be spent in discernment and discussions about how discernment is an essential part of the role of bishop.

With sessions covering a broad range of topics focused around the episcopacy, from "Catholic Teaching as an Element in Episcopal Discernment" to "The Role of a Synodal Bishop," the conference also provided time for group discussion and common prayer. The themes of the various sessions were informed by topics that have appeared as common themes in various stages of the synodal process.

Sixty-four bishops arrived to campus on Monday, February 26. They began with a reception, introduction, and dinner, followed by a keynote presentation from Cardinal Mario Grech, who serves as the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops. In a public session on Monday night, shortly after the conference began, Cardinal Grech delivered an address on "The Role of a Synodal Bishop" to the bishops, students, faculty, and staff in attendance. Throughout the course of his talk he emphasized the influence the Trinity should have in any process of discernment, claiming that "[a] diocesan bishop's perception of himself must therefore be equally theological, christological, and pneumatological." He went on to say that "the protagonist of the synodal assembly is the Holy Spirit."

Tuesday began with Morning Prayer, part of the Liturgy of the Hours and the common prayer of the Catholic Church, in the St. Thomas More Chapel in Notre Dame's Law School. From there attendees participated in a series of presentations and discussions, concluding with a concelebrated Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Two plenary discussions, one on Tuesday and one on Wednesday, allowed all participating bishops to contribute to the discussion and share their views. The plenary discussion on Wednesday was guided by the American delegates to the synod discussions that took place at the Vatican in the fall of 2023, including the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend's Bishop Kevin Rhoades.

The University's contributions to the synodal process, which began with a broad-ranging survey of the student experience, continued in a more concentrated way with this conference. By bringing together bishops from across the country, the University created the space for conversations that will start on campus and continue long after the synod concludes in Rome.

