



*Lighting*  
*the Way*  
*Forward*

Mission Integration  
Annual Report  
*2023-24*



AMONG THE MANY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR, the brightest was the opportunity to host a national conference, titled *Lighting the Way Forward: The Purpose of Catholic Higher Education in a Changing World.*

More than 250 thought leaders from 40 Catholic colleges and universities across the country gathered on our campus for three days of prayer, reflection, discussion, action planning and networking. Through plenary addresses offered by internationally-known experts as well as a remarkable series of workshops presented by scholars and practitioners, conference participants explored the role Catholic higher education can play in promoting integral human flourishing in our emerging, post-pandemic context.



**A PARTICULARLY INSPIRING ASPECT OF THE CONFERENCE**

was the opening keynote offered by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy. Cardinal McElroy’s talk, “*Laudato Si’: A Pillar for Identity and Mission for the Catholic University Today,*” highlighted the way in which the holistic, interdisciplinary nature of Catholic, liberal arts education — including an enduring concern for ethics and justice complemented by a commitment to education of the heart and spirit — is needed now more than ever. This approach to education is essential to accomplishing USD’s recently refreshed mission of advancing academic excellence to create a more inclusive, sustainable and hopeful world.

**THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR ALSO INCLUDED**

the good fortune of hosting an international conference on the theme of “*Laudato Si’: Protecting Our Common Home, Building Our Common Church.*” Among the attendees were four cardinals, including the pope’s ambassador to the United States, Cardinal Christophe Pierre; six archbishops; and 20 other bishops. They were joined by two dozen Catholic theologians, as well as representatives from leading Catholic environmental advocacy organizations.

**THESE HIGH-PROFILE GATHERINGS**

continued to elevate the reputation of USD as a leader among Catholic colleges and universities. In addition to these special events, the mission integration team continued to develop, enhance and expand programs serving our students, faculty, administrators, staff and alumni.

**ILLUSTRATIVE SNAPSHOTS OF THESE ARE PRESENTED**

in the pages to follow, with special attention dedicated to four particularly notable developments: a dramatic increase in student engagement; a comprehensive approach to faculty, staff and administrator formation; enhanced partnerships with the diocese and local Catholic community; and a vibrant rhythm of liturgies and events, which help bring meaning to the busyness of the academic year while shaping the culture of the university.

**WITHOUT A DOUBT, THIS IS AN EXCITING AND MOMENTOUS TIME**

for the University of San Diego and the *Division of Mission Integration.* Building on the work of updating the university’s mission, vision and value statements, Mission Integration will play a central role in operationalizing and leading the new strategic plan.

**IN THE SUMMER OF 2024,**

the division will include the *Tom and Karen Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness and Social Action,* the *Changemaker Hub* and the work tied to USD’s strategic pathway, known as *Care for Our Common Home.* Incorporating these key units will empower us to expand and deepen our impact in new and exciting ways.

**AS USD CONTINUES CELEBRATING ITS 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY,**

we look forward to a most radiant future.



# Student Engagement



University Ministry saw a **30% increase** in the total number of unique students served in 2023-24, as compared to the previous academic year. This growth was driven both by new offerings, such as the successful Coffee House events and Companion faith sharing groups, as well as by the return to full operation of several programs, which previously had been constrained due to the pandemic.

## COFFEE HOUSE

Specifically designed to appeal to and connect with the current generation of college students — known as Generation Z or the Zoomers — Coffee House brings the best elements of a traditional retreat to campus in a way that fits into the busyness of daily life. Held once each semester, Coffee House is a student-led evening of music, storytelling, coffee and dessert and authentic community. In its second full year, the program is thriving, accomplishing its purpose to introduce new students to the University Ministry community and the various programs UM offers, as well as to encourage them to consider the ways in which their college experience — indeed, their lives — will be enhanced by a commitment to deepening their faith.

## COMPANION GROUPS

The Companion faith sharing groups represent a revised approach to our long-established program of small-group ministry. The key to Companion groups is forming, preparing and supporting student leaders who are equipped and energized about inviting their peers into these groups, which meet weekly.

## RACHEL'S NIGHT SHELTER AND TIJUANA DAY TRIPS

Among the programs returning to pre-pandemic levels of popularity were Rachel's Night Shelter and Tijuana Day Trips. A program of Catholic Charities serving homeless women and children in downtown San Diego, Rachel's Night Shelter allows USD students to prepare and then share a meal with the shelter residents, learning more about each other and themselves, including their call to serve with compassion. Sponsored several times each semester, Tijuana Day Trips provide the opportunity to develop relationships with our neighbors across the border, while learning more about the joys and struggles of their lives.



## 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

- 9 Dinners at Rachel's Night Shelter
- 6 Retreats
- 5 Tijuana Day Trips
- 4 Theology on Tap sessions for graduate students
- 2 Immersions



## Faculty, Staff and Administrator Formation

Over the past few years, the Division of Mission Integration has created formation programs for various constituents. With the addition of a new offering specifically for non-tenure-track faculty, we now have an intentionally crafted offering for all of our campus colleagues.

### FACULTY SEMINAR

The Faculty Seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition invites participating tenured and tenure-track faculty members to deepen their understanding of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT), recognizing it as a resource and reference point for their work. The year-long program also supports faculty members in examining the alignment of the CIT with their teaching, scholarship and service, as well as encourages them to more directly engage with USD's mission, vision and values.

### LEADERS IN MISSION

Analogous to the faculty seminar, *Leaders in Mission* is a cohort-based model shaped to meet the needs and interests of administrators and staff. The program deepens participants' understanding of the traditions that established USD as a Catholic university and assists them in exploring the richness and relevance of USD's mission and vision for a holistic education today.

### FACULTY SEMINAR FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

The Faculty Seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty was launched in 2023-24 to complement these two existing formation programs. Recognizing the hugely important role that non-tenure-track faculty play, we created a program just for them, offered at times that meet their schedules and in ways that support their integration into campus life.

### ADDITIONAL FACULTY LECTURES

In addition to these extended, intensive opportunities, the Francis Center G. Harpst Center for Catholic Thought and Culture (CCTC) hosted two faculty lectures. In the fall, Father Christopher Kellerman, S.J., presented his book, *All Oppression Shall Cease: A History of Slavery, Abolitionism and the Catholic Church*. In the spring, Matthew T. Eggemeir, PhD, offered the Switgall lecture, addressing the topic of "A Catholic Just Peace Approach: Resisting America's Inner and Outer Wars."

### PRAYER BREAKFASTS AND GREATFULNESS GROUP

Finally, the Office for Mission convened two prayer breakfasts, providing spiritual nourishment and the enrichment of community, as well as a *gratefulness group* during the month of November, which encouraged participants to ponder the power of gratitude in their personal and professional lives.

#### 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

85

Attendees of CCTC faculty lectures

27

Participants in the Faculty Seminar programs

14

Participants in the Leaders in Mission program

2

Prayer Breakfasts

1

Gratitude Group

## Partnerships with Local Catholic Community



During our founding 75 years ago, an important dimension of the vision of our founders was that USD would serve the local Catholic community. Mother Rosalie Clifton Hill and Bishop Charles Francis Buddy knew that, in order to be a great university, we first had to be a great local university. Moreover, they believed that for the diocese – and the entire region – to flourish, it would need a Catholic college to prepare the next generation of teachers and leaders. From the beginning, providing access to children from poor Catholic families was part of our mission, with each parish in the diocese contributing financially and otherwise to make the university a reality.

### TORERO PROMISE

While the University of San Diego has a long history of fruitful collaboration with the local Catholic community, those partnerships continue to expand and strengthen. Perhaps most notable in this regard is the *Torero Promise*, a guaranteed admissions program that creates a direct pathway for students in San Diego’s and San Bernardino’s diocesan high schools to attend USD.

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE DIOCESE AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Beyond the *Torero Promise*, we are grateful for the many partnerships flourishing with the diocese and with Catholic schools. We continue to directly support *Nativity Prep Academy*, *Cristo Rey High School* and various other schools, offering meeting spaces as well as special programming both for their graduates who are USD students, as well as for their teachers and staff. More broadly, the Division of Mission Integration’s Center for Christian Spirituality facilitates the process for teachers in the diocese to become certified to teach religion. The hybrid program, titled “*Teaching Religions: Enlivening Faith for Teachers*,” has become a model that other dioceses and universities are striving to emulate.



### 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

**250+**

*Students and their families attended the Catholic Schools night at USD basketball*

**45**

*Teachers participated in the Teaching Religion catechetical certificate program*

**8**

*Cristo Rey students were placed at USD as a part of their work-study program*

**5**

*Nativity Prep Academy alumni graduated from USD in May of 2024*

# Liturgies and Events



A principle strategy for inviting colleagues into an initial encounter with, enhanced appreciation for, or refreshed commitment to the university's mission, vision and values is to provide high-quality, thoughtful Masses, liturgies and other community gatherings throughout the year. In addition to offering a lived experience of our mission, these events communicate important information about who we are and draw attention to the meaning undergirding the flurry of activity that characterizes campus life.

## MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ALL-FAITH SERVICE

For decades, the rhythm of campus life has been shaped by the Mass of the Holy Spirit, a celebration that inaugurates the fall semester and the All-Faith Service, which sets the tone for the spring. In September, Cardinal McElroy served as the presider for the Mass of the Holy Spirit, during which he offered an stirring message on the critical role of Catholic universities in the synodal process to which Pope Francis has called the universal church. This year's All-Faith Service focused on the theme of "Leading with Love," and was one of the most well received in the more than 30-year history of the event.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

These two foundational liturgies are complemented by other special events held throughout the year. Some of the other key liturgies include: the Mass of Welcome for new students and their families; Ash Wednesday; the Farmworkers Mass; the Baccalaureate Mass for graduates and their families; USD's Juneteenth Celebration; the Sept. 11 commemoration and interfaith prayer for peace; the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony; Lessons and Carols; and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration and Mass.

Through these liturgies — as well as through the two Masses held every Sunday night and the 12:15 p.m. Mass offered every day in Founders Chapel — Mission Integration cultivates a vibrant, inclusive Catholic culture, assisting all members of the campus community to in faith, to reflect on what is most important and to feel renewed by the experience of community.



## 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

**2,000+**

Attendees at Mass of Welcome and Baccalaureate Mass

**750+**

Attendees at Mass of the Holy Spirit

**250+**

Attendees at All-Faith Service

**60**

Sunday-night Masses in Founders Chapel

**MISSION INTEGRATION**

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