

## Context

The University of San Diego, along with other Catholic institutions, now ranks among the top one hundred colleges and universities in the United States. While none would deny the importance of this achievement, many are concerned about what appears to be a diminishing sense of Catholic identity at colleges and universities which self-define as Catholic. Here at USD, we are responding to this concern in new and creative way through the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture which was inaugurated on July 1, 2008 and is the fruit of the vision of President Mary Lyons.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Center is fourfold:

- Develop thought-provoking programs that will engage the University and local community in critical dialogue with the Catholic intellectual tradition
- Promote Catholic Social Teaching and its integration into the academic life of the University community
- Provide conferences, liturgical and cultural events, and exhibits that showcase the Catholic Church's rich heritage and its contributions to the arts, letters, and sciences and to all which ennoble humans to pursue what is right and just
- Support faculty with educational opportunities and financial means to engage the Catholic intellectual tradition and to develop quality courses that expose students to this tradition

The primary focus of the work of the Center is with **faculty**. They have the most contact with the students and are, therefore, the primary vehicle for disseminating and transmitting the Catholic intellectual tradition and for cultivating the Catholic ethos here at the University.

Faculty understand that they have a responsibility *vis à vis* the mission of this University to share responsibility for advancing its Catholic identity. However, many faculty, premier scholars in their respective academic fields, have had neither the time nor the opportunity to probe the Catholic intellectual tradition and develop strategies for integrating this rich tradition into their own curriculum.

## Programs

### Faculty:

-New Faculty Orientation Catholic Identity Seminars: New faculty across the University came together four times for seminars devoted to examining Catholic identity, introducing Catholic Social Teaching, and to understanding the mission of the University and discovering ways to promote that mission.

-Faculty Travel Immersion Seminar: An initiative unique among Catholic colleges and universities, this seminar provided an opportunity for a small group of faculty from across the disciplines to travel together, accompanied by a Roman Catholic expert in the selected subject, to form a small community

of scholars focused on a specific area of Catholic teaching. The inaugural seminar was held in Rome in January 2009 and focused on Catholic Health Care and Health Care Ethics

### **Public**

*-Lessons and Carols: A Festival of Word and Song to Prepare for Christmas:* Celebrated at Founders Chapel on campus and televised on Cox Channel 4 San Diego, this traditional Advent service combines readings from the Old and New Testaments, Christmas carols, and hymns to herald the coming of the Christ.

*-Post-Seminar Public Forum:* Faculty who participated in the Faculty Travel Immersion Seminar presented papers generated by their seminar experience.

*-Speakers:* Lectures held for the public in the inaugural year included :

“The Second Vatican Council and the Idea of a Catholic University”: Mary Doak, Ph.D., of USD’s Theology and Religious Studies faculty, who addressed the idea of the Catholic University in light of the Second Vatican Council.

“God and the Mystery of the Universe: What Science Can Teach us About God”: Guy J. Consolmagno, S.J., Ph.D., an astrophysicist turned Jesuit brother who works at the observatory at Castel Gandolfo and speaks internationally on the compatibility of science and belief in God.

### **Supporting the CCTC**

The Center for Catholic Thought and Culture is off to a modest but productive beginning which will continue to grow as financial support increases.

With greater funding, the CCTC would:

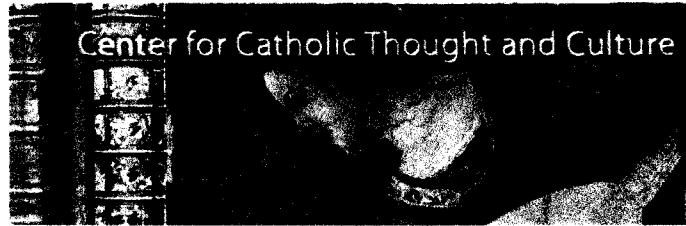
- Hire a full-time director, dedicated to advancing the objectives of CCTC, as well as a full time staff assistant.
- Sponsor a Visiting Fellows Program that would bring both senior and junior scholars to the University to pursue research in their academic disciplines informed by the Catholic intellectual tradition and lead CCTC sponsored seminars and colloquia for faculty.
- Provide mini-grants to faculty who wish to develop courses that incorporate Catholic teaching, including Catholic Social Teaching.
- Present a distinguished speakers series to bring to campus Catholic scholars able to address contemporary social issues from a Catholic perspective for the benefit of the campus community as well as the public

- Bring cultural programs to the University which showcase the Church's contribution to the art and music.
- Invite all new faculty to Rome at the end of their first year of teaching for a concentrated one week course on the Catholic Church. In addition to probing the Church's origins, history and theological development, faculty would have the opportunity to visit museums and important historical sites that testify to the Church's contribution to the development of the arts and humanities.
- Sponsor an annual lecture on science and religion
- Conduct faculty seminars on issues such as Catholic Education, the Church and Environmental Issues.

For the present, the CCTC needs on-going funding to continue initiatives already begun:

- The New Faculty Catholic Identity Seminars (approximately \$5,000 annually)
- The faculty travel immersion seminars (Approximately \$50,000 annually)
- Sponsoring at least two distinguished speakers (approximately \$15,000 annually)
- The Christmas Program of Lessons and Carols (approximately \$20,000 annually)

**For more information, please contact the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture at: 619-260-7936, or [cctc@san Diego.edu](mailto:cctc@san Diego.edu).**



[CCTC » Home](#)

## Welcome to the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture

Though the Center is in its nascent stage, its agenda is ambitious:

- To develop thought-provoking programs that will engage the University and local community in critical dialogue with the Catholic intellectual tradition
- To promote Catholic Social Teaching and its integration into the academic life of the University community
- To provide conferences, liturgical and cultural events and exhibits that showcase the Catholic Church's rich heritage and its contributions to the arts, letters and sciences and to all which ennoble humans to pursue what is right and just
- To provide faculty with opportunities and financial support to develop quality courses that expose students to the Catholic intellectual tradition

From its inception, the Church has been a community of faith and service. Historically, Catholicism has also always been a community of inquiry, learning and reasoned discourse. Though the focus of CCTC's programs and cultural events is Catholic, people of all faith traditions and people of none, are most welcome to attend CCTC sponsored events and benefit from the exchange of ideas.

Please take a moment to visit our Web site. Though our beginnings are modest, it is our hope that in a short time CCTC will develop into a vital Center for Catholic Thought and Culture for the University and local community.

Maria Pascuzzi, S.T.L., S.T.D., Director  
Center for Catholic Thought and Culture

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University of San Diego, 5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA 92110 (619) 260-4600

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## Center for Catholic Thought and Culture

[CCTC](#) » [About CCTC](#)

### **About the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture**

Since its inception, the Church has advanced a dialogue between its own faith claims and the intellectual and philosophical traditions of every age in its pursuit of truth about nature, God and what it means to be truly human. The dialogue, which continued and developed in the patristic and monastic periods, was formalized in the university, an institution born from the heart of the Church, which is to say, from the hearts and minds of believers who sought to bring human knowledge and academic rigor to bear on their faith and their faith to bear on human knowledge and culture. This faith-informed inquiry, together with its fruits in the liturgical, intellectual and social life of the Church, constitutes the Roman Catholic tradition, a multifaceted and historically-developing complex of ideas, practices and cultural forms. Today, no less than in the past, Catholic universities have a vital role to play in engaging and questioning this tradition in light of contemporary human concerns and with the same academic rigor and freedom that have characterized and ensured the tradition's intellectual vigor and depth.

The Center for Catholic Thought and Culture was inaugurated in July 2008 to enable and foster this engagement. Through the development of various programs and events, the Center will provide the University and the local community with opportunities to consider and find enrichment in the intellectual, social, cultural and spiritual traditions of the Catholic Church in which the University of San Diego's identity is rooted. These traditions are founded on a faith which proclaims the goodness of God, the ground of all that exists; that looks to Jesus as the model of what it means to be authentically human; and that relies on God's Spirit to enlighten minds and ennoble hearts to pursue whatever is good, just and ordered to the well-being of all creation.

The Center encourages and welcomes the participation of all members of the University community. Your dedication to academic excellence and relentless inquiry, regardless of academic discipline or religious tradition, is not only valued but is essential to the purpose and character of a Catholic university. For more information about the Center, its programs and how you can participate, please contact the current director, Maria Pascuzzi, S.T.L., S.T.D., at [cctc@sandiego.edu](mailto:cctc@sandiego.edu) or call 619-260-7936.

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