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The Marianists' History of the Evolution of UD's Center for Christian Renewal, the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives and Contribution to the Mission of the Catholic Church (1972-2023)

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The Marianist's History of the Evolution of UD's Center for Christian Renewal, the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives and Contribution to the Mission of the Catholic Church (1972-2023)



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Celebrating 50 Years of Collaboration & Networking with the Catholic Church

Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS, D.Min.

Preface

In 1972, the Marianists established the **Marianist Institute for Christian Renewal**, later called **the Center for Christian Renewal (CCR)**, under the auspices of the University of Dayton. The goal of the Center was to be a bridge between the University and the Catholic Church in dialogue and pastoral service. During the next fifty years to the present, the centers and institutes established under the initial CCR connected the University with the Catholic Church in the spirit and charism of the Marianist tradition. The areas of connection include support for social justice issues in Africa and West Dayton; Catholic elementary and secondary education; and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of the Church, by offering catechetical conferences, workshops, seminars and developing technology to lead to adult faith formation across the global Catholic Church.

The goal of the CCR and subsequent groups was to combine various elements related to the significant contribution of the Marianist Community and individuals associated with the evolution of the Community's ministry within the Catholic Church. This great work continues in institutes, centers and UD departments. This document, will ultimately show how the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, continues the vision and mission of the Center for Christian Renewal today (2023).

(44.) "New times call for new methods," Blessed Father Chaminade often repeated. Blessed Father Chaminade's pragmatic and visionary approach allows for reading the "signs of the times" and responding with attention to history and tradition, while considering innovative and practical solutions for current and future contexts. The Marianist university balances acceptance and adaptation with a faithful commitment to shaping a hopeful future. This commitment involves ongoing discernment, guided by the Marianist educational philosophy and Christian wisdom, and with careful attention to the many influences on students' education including technology, globalization, and financial cost. Fulfilling the Marianist university mission in changing times involves openness, prayerful reflection, and strategic planning. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Universities")

Marianist Institute for Christian Renewal (1971-1974)

The Marianist initiative called **The Marianist Institute for Christian Renewal (MICR)** was established in 1971 with Brother Frank Damm, SM, as director. In early 1972, Damm received a letter from University President Rev. Raymond Roesch, SM, regarding the plans for the institute:

In setting up the Institute, we were particularly interested in assisting the University faculty to fulfill its role as a Catholic University. I do hope that everything you do is directed toward improving the University's ability to carry out its specific mission of presenting the Christian viewpoint in all disciplines...We hope that the impact of the work of the Institute would be directly upon our academic offerings particularly in those areas, which can be influenced by the Catholic philosophy of life. I do hope that this goal is not lost.¹

From the outset, MICR was a product of the Second Vatican Council's prophetic vision for the Church in a new era within the global Catholic Church. As a Catholic educational institution, the University of Dayton considered itself committed to active partnership with other organizations and communities within the Church. This post-

¹ Rev. Raymond A. Roesch, S. M., letter to Bro. Frank Damm, SM, (10 February 1972), 1.

Vatican II ethos enabled the University of Dayton to establish MICR as a way to foster ministries as an "active, critical, and healing presence of the Catholic tradition" within the context of a Church in a changing, modern world.² The great benefit of this structure was its ability to dialog with other communities, providing an opportunity to listen, serve, reflect, and learn in order to offer the fruits of new knowledge to the Church for her use.³

MICR first focused on awarding grants for educational development, faculty incentives, and public service or interests, as specifically related to the Catholic Marianist mission of the University and community. The projects under Bro. Damm's tenure included: (1) ecumenical seminars and workshops on Jewish-Catholic relations in Dayton; (2) a visiting speakers seminar each semester in which a nationally-known scholar would lecture on social issues in the wider society; (3) the establishment of innovative remedial programs for struggling university students; (4) research on educational development regarding new teaching methods in the classroom; and (5) funds for field experiences in an effort to introduce university students to new hands-on research.

² Fitz, the Center Strategy, 1.

³ During this period, the question as to what the relationship between the Catholic Church and Catholic higher education should look like was a significant point of discussion. The University of Dayton, recognizing the new impetus set forth at Vatican II, embraced the chance to "open the windows and let in the fresh air," in the famous words of Pope John XXIII, and engage the local community on new knowledge the Church could benefit from.

Center for Christian Renewal (1974-1994)

In 1974, MICR changed its name to the **Center for Christian Renewal (CCR)** and Brother Raymond L. Fitz, SM, PhD was named director. He served in this position until 1979.



Bro. Raymond L. Fitz, SM, PhD

In addition to the name change, two offices were established to serve under the umbrella of the CCR: **Office for Strategies for Responsible Development (SRD)** and **Office for Moral and Religious Education (MORES)**. Bro. Fitz perceived the two new offices as animators of service and dialogue for the University, the Catholic Church, and the wider community. Regarding service, Brother Fitz thought that the best way to implement a plan demanded cultivating and training "a community of professional persons who are at once skilled and competent in intellectual disciplines" and, most

importantly, who "live with a deep faith in Jesus Christ."⁴ Accordingly, the University of Dayton and its surrounding community would "become an important resource within the Church."⁵ Many of the services directed by Brother Fitz ranged from "training workshops to extensive projects of evaluation and research."⁶ The aim of these workshops, projects, and research endeavors was to produce scholarly literature and enhance the pastoral ministries of local parishes. As director of the CCR, Brother Fitz continually emphasized that the Center would provide a "channel through which the University community [could] be of service to the Church."⁷

Dialogue was a crucial component of the CCR's goal of engaging the wider culture from the Catholic tradition. Here, the objective of CCR was to raise and bring forth contemporary questions facing the Catholic Church in order to foster reflection and action within the Church community. Fitz stressed dialogue as an essential and integral process by which the University community could use new "resources for the exploration of contemporary issues."⁸ He emphasized the overall benefit that dialogue would have on society as well. The insights embedded within the Catholic tradition offered a "critical vision to contemporary persons" while at the same time being a voice that offered compassion to a world full of injustice.⁹

⁴ Fitz, 1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Office for Strategies for Responsible Development (1974–2001)

The central task of the **Office for Strategies for Responsible Development (SRD)**, established in 1974, was to "further distributive justice in the world by means of education and research activities."¹⁰ SRD conducted educational programs to further support the responsible use of resources in a world marked by unjust distribution of foods and resources.¹¹ In particular, the educational programs attempted to help persons better use the resources committed to furthering global awareness of interdependence in the world. Because of the complexity of this problem, the educational programs touched various audiences, including members of religious orders, university and secondary students, and adults.

¹⁰ Fitz, "Offices of the Center," 4.

¹¹ Ibid.



First photo: Bro. Phil Aaron, SM, Marianne Gorczyca, who was in charge of City Links (annual neighborhood conference), and Joanne Troha who later became Director of SRD. **Second photo:** Bro. Ed Zamerowski, SM, Dean Lovelace, and Joanne Troha discussing Dayton Inner City Project. Dean Lovelace was a neighborhood activist who was hired about 1982 to introduce SRD to Dayton neighborhoods. He later became a city councilman and started the Civic Scholars program at the Fitz Center.

Under its first director, Bro. Donald Geiger, SM, SRD mainly worked through Church-related groups in education projects aimed at making excellent resources designed to foster consciousness raising, institutional change, and change of lifestyle accessible to everyone.



Bro. Donald Geiger, SM, PhD at Bergamo – Mt. St. John

For example, SRD's first event, *A Workshop on World Hunger*, took place in 1974 at Bergamo, the Marianist retreat and conference center located at Mt. St. John, in Dayton, Ohio. The event hosted educators and students who were briefed on the "causes [and] consequences and potential solutions to this situation of injustice."¹² Another awareness event, *For Justice Sake*, offered classes that introduced material and information regarding injustice, impoverishment, and education, to enable educators to better teach their students on such matters.¹³

SRD's research programs used technical analysis, participative planning, and decision-making to help groups in developing countries achieve self-sufficiency, especially in the areas of agriculture and nutrition. *Project Tapis Vert* began in Niger in 1975 through collaborative efforts with international aid agencies and the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Niger had suffered a devastating drought in its savannah region in 1973.

¹² Fitz, Evaluation Report, VII, 1.

¹³ Ibid.



The aid agencies managed negotiations with the government of Niger while SRD analyzed the situation and organized strategic "ways to deal with the problems of land degradation and overuse."¹⁴ In particular, SRD staff participated in careful study and research to present "solutions which would not cause destructive side-effects in the long-term."¹⁵ The skills needed by SRD to conduct this careful research included "system analysis, ecology, plant biology, and analysis of social institutions."¹⁶ By 1976, SRD proposed to test various possible means of reversing land degradation: terracing; alternate energy sources to reduce dependence on firewood; planting trees, shrubs and grasses; and development of alternative water resources.¹⁷ By 1977, *Project Tapis Vert* was underway and began full-time work in Niger. As Brother Geiger looked back on the project, he recalled its three phases: (1) an in-depth analysis of "geology, climate, soils and vegetation, of the Chikal region" in Niger (1976-77); (2) applied research and

¹⁴ Fitz, Evaluation Report, VII, 3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

demonstration (1978-1982); and (3) extension of efforts to 14 other villages in the area (1983-1986).¹⁸

Brother Geiger stepped down as SRD director in 1982-83 but continued his research with *Project Tapis Vert* as a faculty member. The new director was Brother Phil Aaron, SM, who switched SRD's focus to social justice within the local Dayton community.



Bro. Phillip Aaron, SM. PhD

The first project under Brother Aaron was the *Ministry to Urban and Rural Poor*, aimed at addressing the need to create an awareness of the concerns of the urban and rural poor through education, service, and responsible social change.¹⁹ The project focused on tutoring programs for farmworker children staffed by UD students; events and activities at the Tipp City Migrant Center (a multi-purpose building used to serve the needs of migrant workers); maintaining the SRD Justice Education Library, where selected materials provided the promotion of justice education; and volunteer service

¹⁸ Donald Geiger, *Ten Years Later: A Report on Project Tapis Vert*, (1986), 4.

¹⁹ *Strategies for Responsible Development*, Project Plan FY84, (3 March, 1983), 1.

opportunities for UD students and members of the community.²⁰ Brother Aaron also redirected the focus of the SRD newsletter, *R&D for Justice Sake*, to better serve the UD campus, Marianists, and the wider community.²¹

Three years into his position as director of the SRD, Brother Aaron managed a project titled *Neighborhood Development*. The central task of this project was to "enable the University to serve the [Dayton] community by providing neighborhood groups with access to university resources."²² Key to the success of this project was the inclusion of both faculty and students as participants in the support of neighborhood organizations and leaders.²³ As a result of Bro. Aaron's vision of developing neighborhoods in the Dayton community, SRD established organizations such as Grow With Your Neighbors and Neighbor to Neighbor, Inc. These organizations grew to help generate new grant funding for SRD and involve University faculty and students in volunteer work and research studies.²⁴ In addition to establishing neighborhood organizations, SRD collaborated with Dayton organizations that were directly working in the field of neighborhood development, such as the Dayton Community Reinvestment Committee, and the Greater Dayton Christian Council.

Bro. Aaron continued this emphasis on neighborhood development until 1993 when he assumed a new position with Campus Ministry. Joanne Troha, the new SRD

²⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

²² Phil Aaron, Summary of Project Plans: Neighborhood Development, (1 April, 1985), 1.

²³ Ibid., 2.

²⁴ Ibid., 1.

director, continued this focus, emphasizing fostering learning through service, and creating partnerships for change toward social justice.²⁵

In her first year, SRD began to "produce a catalogue of service options involving the neighborhoods and organizations" they served.²⁶ Opportunities ranged from "tutoring to helping elderly Dayton residents, work on neighborhood surveys, to housing rehabilitation."²⁷ The catalog was available to student service clubs, faculty in Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, and the Campus Ministry staff.²⁸ Sociology classes took bus tours into Dayton neighborhoods and worked on projects providing services to the neighborhoods. Additionally, University students assisted SRD in "identifying, planning, and implementing community service projects"²⁹ within the focus of the Catholic Marianist charism. SRD projects were eventually incorporated into the Fitz Center in 2001.



Early Fitz Center Team 2001 headed up by Richard Ferguson, top center

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 3

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Office for Moral and Religious Education (1974-1990)

The **Office for Moral and Religious Education (MORES)** was established in 1974 to strengthen and develop a new model of cooperation between the University of Dayton and the religious and faith formation of the Dayton community. Its particular focus was on the Catholic community of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, although with **Fr. John Kelly, SM**, it sponsored the ecumenical group "Religion and Life". The group offered a variety of programs and conferences regarding inter-religious dialogue. MORES and the University of Dayton became an active partner in catechetical and adult faith formation of the local Catholic Church. It achieved these objectives by cooperating with various ecumenical regional community agencies in the "joint planning and sponsorship of continuing education programs in the related areas of value, moral, and religious education."³⁰

Religious education, according to MORES, should always be oriented toward assisting people in the process of "identifying the religious dimension of their concrete quest for meaning."³¹ Therefore, MORES sought to move moral and religious education beyond the structured environment of formal coursework and promote a process of lifelong learning. Given the lifelong characteristic of religious and moral education, MORES required a variety of approaches to learning, all geared toward the discovery of the presence of God in human experience.³²

³⁰ Bro. Raymond Fitz, Draft of Evaluation of the Office for Moral and Religious Education (31 January, 1979), V 1.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

The first director of MORES, **Rev. Michael Donnellan, SM**, served for one year (1974-75). He designed a number of lecture series in parishes and was available for parish consulting.³³ Fr. Donnellan also initiated a dialogue with the Archdiocesan Religious Education Office which led to the first Religious Education Institute held at the University of Dayton.³⁴

Marianist **Br. Bruno Manno, PhD** followed Donnellan as director from 1976-1978. During these two years, Bro. Manno helped manage eleven major programs associated with MORES: workshops; seminars and courses addressing such issues as separated and divorced Catholics; contribution of the Black experience to worship; contemporary moral issues; aging; the Appalachian experience; family life; spirituality; and feminism.³⁵ The participation of MORES and its staff in designing and implementing these programs increased the cooperation between the University of Dayton and the local community on religious education issues. Indeed, "establishing a meaningful and influential relationship with the religious community [was] the task of the MORES office under the leadership of Bro. Bruno Manno."³⁶

Dr. Mary Jules Durkin, sister of the well-known Sociologist Fr. Andrew Greeley, served as the MORES interim director from 1978-1979 and organized two programs during her term. The first was a colloquium in Spring 1979 during which national

³³ Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, 1984-1985 Handbook: General Overview of MORES, (May, 1980), 2.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 6.

³⁶ Ibid., 6.

theologians and sociologists presented new research and publications.³⁷ The Human Intimacy Colloquium explored "the meaning and importance of intimacy in our society."³⁸ The scholars who participated focused their research efforts on marital intimacy "flowing from the Catholic Christian Tradition."³⁹ The success of the colloquium led to the publication of the contributors' papers. The second program was "The David Tracy Lecture," an effort to increase the "awareness of the University community...in the area of the nature of MORES."⁴⁰

In January 1979, **Sister Angela Ann Zukowski**, a Mission Helper of the Sacred Heart, began working part-time for MORES as she transitioned from her role within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Prior to taking on full-time responsibilities, Sr. Zukowski had been a summer lecturer on campus teaching courses related to catechist formation, which allowed her to become acquainted with MORES and its programs.



Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, MA

³⁷ Ibid., 7.

³⁸ Ibid., 7.

³⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 10.

In her four years as MORES director, Sr. Zukowski broadened its mission by reframing the Office's title, "The Office for Moral and Religious Education," with the subtitle "Center for Creative Ministry." The original title was thought to be too limited in regard to its services and the University's evolving understanding of MORES' future role and projects. New times called for new methods and approaches, a sentiment steeped in the Catholic and Marianist spirit of Father Chaminade. At the time, MORES was coordinating outreach services and programs that were in sync with the emerging specific needs of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati; for example, catechetical conferences, workshops, and seminars related to emerging new ministerial needs and concerns. Using her connections from serving seven years in the Archdiocese as Religious Education Consultant for Catholic Schools and Parishes for the Dayton and Northern Regions, Sr. Zukowski reoriented its mission to be a center for creative ministry in the Church and Dayton community, as well as maintaining the ongoing educational services.⁴¹ A number of major national Catholic speakers were invited on campus which attracted many people from the surrounding parishes and communities. This was a major contribution to the Department of Religious Studies outreach, as well.

Through careful study of the period's trends, Sr. Zukowski initiated two new services, each funded with a \$5,000 grant from the Marianist Foundation.⁴² The first service, with the support of two Marianist sisters, was a revitalization of outreach to the

⁴¹ MORES News Notes, (1981), 1.

⁴² Ibid.

Hispanic community, particularly with immigrant workers in the northern part of the Archdiocese. **Sister Mary Louise Foley, FMI, and Sister Estella Ibarra, FMI** implemented outreach services through a "one-on-one ministry in hospitals, homes, and regular Hispanic gatherings."⁴³



Sr. Mary Louise Foley, FMI



Sister Estella Ibarra, FMI with Hispanic Youth

The second service was the **Ministry for Disabled Persons**, which focused on supporting families and promoting inclusion in Catholic schools. Coordinated by **Marilyn Bishop**, this program consisted of workshops, classes on the University of Dayton campus, and lectures and discussions fostering dialog concerning disability and theology.

The MORES team introduced a new UD student program called the **Student Association for Religious Education (SARE)**. SARE was designed to provide

⁴³ Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, Memo to Religious Studies Faculty, (21 September, 1981), 4.

opportunities for UD students to serve in parish religious education programs as catechists, classroom aides, and youth ministers.⁴⁴

In 1983, Sr. Zukowski transitioned from her position as director of MORES to a new director's position of the **Center for Religious Telecommunications (CRT)**, leaving the directorship of MORES to be filled by **Rita Velasquez Bowen**. In her first year at the helm, Bowen maintained and managed two MORES operations that were beginning to develop in size and importance: The Ministry with Handicapped People and the Continuing Adult Religious Education (CARE). Bowen implemented research and effective methodologies for religious education, gave presentations to high school and adult audiences in area parishes, and developed lay leadership training sessions.⁴⁵

A decision was made to close MORES on June 30, 1990⁴⁶ and redistribute its limited budget to other CCR initiatives. The reasoning for this decision was attributed to the rise of other agencies and independent contractors that also provided services in adult religious education and lay leadership development.⁴⁷ The "void" left by the absence of MORES within the local community was felt and heard by many, as can be seen in a letter written to Brother George Deinlein, SM, the then-director of the CCR:

MORES was always a mainstay for those of us in Church professions, especially those of us who are lay professionals...I realize that this decision is long made, and that the changes are all in place. I am not writing to turn back the past few months. I am writing because I want you to know that there is a void now, and

⁴⁴ Rita V. Bowen, MORES: Unit Review, (Fall, 1987), 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶ Rita V. Bowen, Letter to Friends and Colleagues, (17 April, 1990), 1. Bowen continued working for the University, teaching in both the Departments of Religious Studies and School of Education's Teacher Education Program, all while working toward her Doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of Dayton.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

*that whatever really set these wheels in motion was oblivious to the needs of the community around it...We can, and need to, work together for mutual benefit. Right now, an important channel for such cooperation has been lost.*⁴⁸

While a certain tone of disappointment and bitterness can be surmised from this letter, the emphasis that should be noted is the great benefit that MORES contributed both on campus and within the Dayton Catholic community. Much of the work that was initiated with MORES continued in centers emerging within CCR, including both the Center for Religious Telecommunications and the Ministry with Handicapped People (later renamed "The Center for Persons with Disabilities"), programs initiated by Sr. Zukowski and Marilyn Bishop, respectively.

Office of Educational Services (1976–1996)

The **Office of Educational Services** (OES) under CCR was established in 1976 to "provide assistance to schools and school districts"⁴⁹ to equip school personnel to reach policy commitments founded on "adequate knowledge and fundamental value commitments."⁵⁰ The term adequate knowledge includes "financial studies, needs assessments, attitude surveys, enrollment projections, and other information which would be necessary for making intelligent decisions regarding specific policies."⁵¹ The fundamental value commitments meant that the OES considered it a chief task to

⁴⁸ Mary Wlodarski, Letter to Bro. George Deinlein, SM, (8 May, 1990), 2, (underline in original).

⁴⁹ Bro. Raymond Fitz, "Offices of the Center," (14 April, 1978), 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

"emphasize the questions inherent in policy decision making."⁵² In addition, because the OES was dedicated to the objectives inherent in Catholic schools, its purposes included and emphasized services to Catholic elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges. Lastly, since the OES was committed to the concept that there is worth in bringing educators and others together to consider "fundamental value commitments" as they relate to education policy, the central purpose of OES included the support of "research, conferences, workshops, and courses."⁵³

Dr. John Geiger served as the first director. Under Geiger's guidance, the OES conducted many projects, including workshops, lectures, research, and working with local schools – Catholic and public – in the Dayton area regarding social justice issues. One example was a study completed in February 1979 titled, **The Black Community, Dioceses and Diocesan School Systems**. This study was prepared for the National Office for Black Catholics (NOBC) in Washington DC⁵⁴ to provide information and research about the involvement of the African-American community in dioceses and diocesan school systems. Projects and research-based studies such as these highlighted the crucial questions and issues that the OES ultimately took up in order to be a force for good. In 1981, Dr. Geiger stepped down as Director of OES and was replaced by **Dr. Joseph Rogus**.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Bro. Raymond Fitz, Center for Christian Renewal Evaluation Report, (31 January, 1979), VI, 1.

⁵⁴ The Office of Educational Services, "The Black Community, Dioceses and Diocesan School Systems," (February 1979).

In his first year, Rogus continued the services and projects that the OES was already working on, including workshops for local school superintendents, analyses of local levy outcomes in school districts, the development of external funding, and continued field research.⁵⁵ Under Rogus' leadership, the OES nurtured a close relationship with the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). OES received invitations to participate in NCEA research, serving on NCEA boards and being a keynote presenter at workshops and conferences across the country. OES was recognized as a national leader in Catholic education⁵⁶ due in large part to the significant number of consultative contracts in both Catholic and public schools and the quality of professional expertise OES offered. Funding for OES came from the UD School of Education, research projects, consultations, and a Marianist grant. In 1996, OES transitioned into the **Center for Catholic Education (CCE)**.

Center for Catholic Education (1996 -)

The **Center for Catholic Education (CCE)** grew out of a simple, but important question: What more can the University of Dayton and other Catholic universities do to help Catholic elementary and secondary schools? The CCE worked to address this question since its inception in 1996. The idea for the Center for Catholic Education originated when **Dr. Theodore Wallace**, then-president of Chaminade Julianne (CJ), a local Catholic high school, and Mr. Clay Mathile, a local business leader, began

⁵⁵ Joseph Rogus, Interim Activities Report, (January, 1982), 1-6.

⁵⁶ Center for Christian Renewal Board Meeting, (15 April, 1980), 2.

exploring opportunities to improve the business and financial aspects of the high school's operation. After these efforts brought about great improvements in the CJ community, Wallace and Mathile sought to share their new-found wisdom with other Catholic schools through a practical cooperative effort. Soon, the idea for a Center for Catholic Education was proposed to Bro. Raymond Fitz, SM, president of the University of Dayton. The idea caught on quickly due to the support of many friends in the University of Dayton and the wider Catholic community. The Center for Catholic Education was funded through a generous, three-year, \$1.2 million anonymous donation.

The first task of the CCE was to establish a collective identity from which a mission might emerge. The Center established a team of consultants consisting of leading names in Catholic education, including Sr. Mary Peter Traviss, OP, Director of the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership at the University of San Francisco and Sr. Claire Fitzgerald, SSND, Director of the Catholic Leadership Program at Boston College. Also among the team were Sr. Kathryn Ann Connelly, SC, Superintendent of Schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and Fr. James Heft, SM, Chancellor of the University of Dayton. The expertise of these individuals and many others was invaluable in helping the Center establish an identity and find its niche. Setting the course for any entity in the sometimes-treacherous landscape of higher education is indeed a daunting task, but with creativity, passion, and Christian charity, the CCE was

able to establish itself as an advocate for and advisor to Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

The initial thought regarding the purpose of the CCE was that it would operate mainly within an academic realm, through strategic planning services and data collection and distribution. To build scholarly activity, Dr. Thomas Hunt joined the CCE staff in 1996 and Fr. Ronald Nuzzi in 1997. Dr. Hunt was a writer and researcher for the CCE, authoring and editing dozens of articles and 27 books. Widely known as an energetic teacher and passionate advocate for Catholic education, Dr. Hunt increased the prestige of the CCE and contributed greatly to his field. He remained a beloved member of the CCE staff until he passed away on April 17, 2014.

Fr. Ronald Nuzzi, who completed his PhD at the University of Dayton, worked in close conjunction with Dr. Hunt on several projects during his time at UD and after he left for Saint Louis University and finally the University of Notre Dame, where he currently acts as an executive director for the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program. Notably, the two were co-editors of the *Journal of Catholic Education* (originally *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*), a journal founded in 1996 through collaboration between the University of Dayton and a number of other Catholic universities. In addition to his writing, during his time at UD Nuzzi also traveled widely, establishing himself as a sought-after leader of professional development workshops for Catholic school teachers.

While research and publications continued to be an important aspect of the CCE's work, less emphasis was placed on working with schools on strategic planning, and in 1998 the CCE shifted its focus more toward helping local schools with curriculum development and other similar needs. Around the same time, an endeavor that would become a major service of the Center began to take root. While on a trip to the Chicago area, Dr. Wallace and Bro. Ed Brink, SM, a colleague of Wallace's from his days at CJ, visited the University of Notre Dame to meet with the leaders of the ACE program. This program places new graduates in under-resourced Catholic elementary and high schools around the country. The new teachers live in the community and teach at the schools where they have been assigned. In exchange, they receive a modest stipend and free tuition necessary to complete a master's degree. The Center for Catholic Education, recognizing the potential of this exciting new idea, decided to pursue its own program modeled after ACE. It was called the **Lalanne Program**, named after Rev. Jean-Baptiste Lalanne, who worked with Blessed William Joseph Chaminade to develop the Marianist educational philosophy.

Bro. Edward Brink was selected as the first Director of the **Lalanne Program**. In 1999, the first cohort of Lalanne teachers was assigned to schools in the Dayton area. Since then, the program has flourished, expanding into cities across the Midwest. ACE, Lalanne, and similar programs in existence at Catholic colleges and universities across the United States are delivering hundreds of young, energetic teachers to Catholic

schools each year, giving them the positive experience and education they need to stay in Catholic schools throughout their careers.

In 1999, **Sister Angela Lydon, SBS, PhD**, was named CCE director. She brought a strong outward focus to the Center and a desire to assist schools across the country with curriculum and professional development. An important initiative that started during her time as director was the **Passing on the Tradition** series. With the Ohio Department of Education's new Praxis teacher preparation program, the CCE wanted to integrate a Catholic aspect to teacher preparation, so that graduates would be prepared both intellectually and spiritually for their task. The Passing on the Tradition series was a workshop and eventually a multimedia kit that incorporated spirituality into training for teachers becoming Praxis mentors. The first pilot program in 2000 was an immediate success.

In 2002, the CCE began another program that would eventually become one of its pillars. Closely following the model established by the Seton Resource Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, the **Urban Childhood Development Resource Center (UCDRC)** was created to address nonacademic barriers to learning that are common in urban areas. Some of the services offered by the UCDRC include violence prevention programs, family resources, health screening, and counseling. As of 2014, UCDRC worked with five local Catholic schools in the City of Dayton. Funded primarily by grants and private donations, UCDRC provides vital services through on-site

counselors without putting financial strain on the schools. The impact has been substantial.

In 2005, **Bro. Edward Brink**, the Director of the Lalanne Program, was selected as the next CCE Director. His promotion came with a unique challenge; he retained his position with Lalanne while taking on this new role. With extensive coordination and teamwork, the staff of the CCE was able to maintain its high level of effectiveness.

The **Saint Remy Initiative**, a collaboration between the CCE and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, was piloted in 2006 and fully implemented in 2007. Conducted under the leadership of **Dr. Toni Moore**, this initiative focused on the professional development of Catholic school teachers from a spiritual perspective. In the program, educators spend three years delving into three dimensions of Catholic school leadership: spiritual, educational, and organizational. Participating schools send principals as well as teacher-leaders to participate in retreats, development days, and school-wide projects focused on the particular theme for the year. The Saint Remy Initiative carries out an important function for Catholic schools. Whereas the religious sisters and brothers who once mostly staffed Catholic schools were typically given considerable spiritual formation during their instruction and discernment as religious, the faithful lay people who now follow their legacy seldom start out with the same level of spiritual formation. The Saint Remy Initiative helps to address this potential issue by nurturing Catholic educators to be the strong, faith-filled leaders inspiring student to respond to the call to discipleship.

In July 2007, **Susan Ferguson, MS**, took up her post as CCE director. In addition to ensuring the sustainability of programs like UCDRC and Lalanne through fundraising and grant writing efforts, Susan and the staff of the CCE worked to fortify Catholic school teachers by providing meaningful professional development opportunities. For the better part of the past decade, the Center has hosted professional development days and more recently, a yearly summit that attracts participants from all over the country, both in person and virtually. Two other professional development components of the CCE's body of work include 1) the **Excellence Initiative**, designed to help schools perform well according to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati curriculum standards, and 2) the **Literacy Initiative**, led by Dr. Jackie Arnold and Dr. Mary-Kate Sableski, which informs Catholic school teachers about new and creative ways to improve literacy. In the Summer of 2014, the Center for Catholic Education and the University of Dayton hosted the National Catholic Education Association's conference on **STREAM Initiatives** (Science Technology Religion Engineering Art and Math). The initiatives demonstrate the commitment of the Center for Catholic Education to the professional development of teachers, both local and nationwide.

While professional development has become a major component of the Center's work, Lalanne and UCDRC remain the two principal initiatives. Lalanne recently celebrated its fifteenth year with a reunion and a survey to see how graduates continue to engage in their local communities and churches following program completion. Staying true to its foundational objectives, Lalanne gives new educators a spiritual,

educational, and communal formation that helps ensure a successful and fulfilling career, and provides under-resourced Catholic schools with enthusiastic, capable teachers. Similarly, UCDRC has grown into a transformational program for the schools it serves. During the 2013-2014 school year alone, UCDRC served approximately 1,750 students. Counselors working for UCDRC give students at participating schools both clinical and non-clinical help, work with families and school staff, and provide extensive education and formation for students so that they can make healthy lifestyle choices. Lalanne and UCDRC exemplify what the CCE is all about: assisting Catholic schools with their particular needs.

In the past twenty years (2000- present), CCE under Bro. Edward Brink, SM, and Susan Ferguson, collaborated with the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives and Department of Religious Studies in coordinating the **Forum for Young Catechetical Leaders**. This two-year program for University of Dayton students prepares them to teach religious education and faith formation in Catholic schools and parishes. Initially, 35-50 UD students registered for the course which was held all day on Saturdays during each semester. In later years the Forum adapted a new program model. Students alternated spending two semesters in a day-long Saturday class four times per semester, in addition to two Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) e-courses and two semesters in Forum Praxis in parishes and a VLCFF e-course to fulfill their requirements toward Catechist Certification. Coordinators of the Forum Program - Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS, D. Min, Dr. Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey from the Institute

for Pastoral Initiatives, and Susan Ferguson (CCE) - worked closely with mentors in the parishes.

Looking to the future, the CCE hopes to continue and improve its various positive endeavors and address the ever-present challenge of securing reliable funding sources. In addition, the Center is considering ways to boost its scholarship. This comes from a general desire to increase its academic work, which was compounded by the loss of Dr. Thomas Hunt. Another interesting future possibility is one that has been considered in the past: The Center is investigating ways to start working with strategic planning for Catholic schools and school systems. By looking to its past, the CCE is rediscovering ways to build its future.



2020 Staff of the Center for Catholic Education

L-R front row: Susan Ferguson, Executive Director; Jacinta Mergler, Lalanne Program; L- R back row: Barbara Miller, Administrative Assistant; Peggy Brun, Lalanne Program and Rhonda Mercks, Director of the ECHO Program

Center for Ministry With People With Disabilities (1984-1997)

Emerging out of MORES was the Center for Ministry With People With Disabilities. Marilyn Bishop began the ministry with people with disabilities at the invitation of Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS. Bishop joined the MORES staff in 1980 working ten hours a week studying the religious needs of disabled people. The one-year study consisted of many interviews with the target population and their family members in the Dayton, Ohio area. First among needs of people who were physically or mentally disabled was the desire to participate in the life of a parish or faith community. One exception to this was the expressed desire by deaf people to have a Catholic Mass interpreted since there had been no opportunity for communal worship in the Dayton area for 25 years.

Following the study, Bishop began to organize groups to respond to the expressed needs, supported by Margaret Shufflebarger, administrative assistant. Bishop also organized **Faith in Action**, a monthly group who met for support and for organized activities to create opportunities for parish participation by overcoming the physical and attitudinal barriers toward disabled people that existed in parishes.



Under the leadership of Lynn Berlon, three local chapters of **Faith and Light**, a national organization, were organized to provide spiritual inspiration for those with mental retardation and interpersonal support for their parents. Approximately 80-100 people benefited over the span of 16 years.

Deaf Catholics were invited by Queen of Apostles Community to Sunday Mass with a paid interpreter. This opportunity is ongoing at this most welcoming parish that always offered facilities and resources as well as an accepting attitude.

In 1983, with the success in the local area, the Center began a national presence utilizing the expertise of its staff to publicize models of ministry by producing print and video resources plus hosting national conferences. Marilyn Bishop joined the staff for the **National Conference of Christian Churches Committee on Disabilities**. She was editor of the **Journal of the National Apostolate on Mental Retardation** and led in promoting disability ministry education in seminaries that resulted in a symposium of national speakers and a subsequent book on the theology of disability.

Bishop's affiliation with Canadian leaders Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint brought awareness that the inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of education was imperative. This led to hiring Pat Carter, an expert in religious education who, along with Bishop, formed the **Network for Inclusive Catholic Education (NICE)**, which promoted the inclusion of disabled children in Catholic schools and religious education programs. This challenged institutions that lacked faculty familiar with teaching modalities to accommodate various learning styles for

children with disabilities. Carter provided personal consultation to schools and religious education programs throughout the United States to assist those educators willing to learn new ways to welcome all children into their classrooms. A major grant from the Kennedy Foundation provided time for the staff to write and publish four companion booklets on inclusive religious education.

Sensitivity to the preferential emphasis on “people” rather than “disability” motivated the decision to change the name of this program to **Center for Ministry with People with Disabilities**. During this time, the staff expanded to six, two of whom were disabled, one with spina bifida and the other with blindness.

Members of the Society of Mary who played important roles in the success of this ministry include Fr. Eugene Contadino, Fr. Matthew Kohmescher, Bro. David Betz, Bro. Ross Maguire, Fr. James Heft, Bro. Bernard Ploeger, and Bro. George Deinlein among others.

Funding for the staff and programs was initially provided by the Society of Mary with an annual grant of \$60,000. That amount was matched and exceeded by grants from the Knights of Columbus and from the sale of the videos and books that the staff produced in addition to income from annual inclusion conferences. By the time the Center was absorbed into the **Institute for Pastoral Initiatives (IPI)** in 1997, the disability ministry had adapted to emerging new pastoral contexts.

After the Center was absorbed into the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, the ministry continued with **Pat Carter** as Project Coordinator, assisted by Margaret

Shufflebarger. During the following five years, NICE continued at Bergamo Renewal Center at that time a decision was made NICE in collaboration with dioceses around the country in order to maximize the potential outreach and impact. Eventually, the grant for this initiative ran out and it was determined that the regions could continue NICE without IPI's support.

Network of Inclusive Catholic Educators (1996-2005)

As the Ministry with Handicapped People (1982-1995) merged into IPI, various pastoral activities associated with disability ministries continued and a new ministry, **Network of Inclusive Catholic Educators (NICE)**, was established in 1996 and continued until 2005. The objectives of the network were (1) to offer professional development and leadership for Catholic school teachers; (2) offer an annual ICE (Inclusive Catholic Education) conference addressing current issues and concerns for and with persons with disabilities; (3) produce educational materials (print, video, and e-courses) to support ministry with persons with disabilities, and (4) offer courses, workshops and seminars on the local and national levels.

While the staff and some elements of the Network changed over the years, the initiative of an online Certificate Program for Persons with Special Needs, and the publication of the Special Needs Catechetical Series continues to the present.

Publication of special needs catechetical books continued to be part of NICE ministry. The idea to design online courses for the formation of catechists in the field of special needs emerged in early 2000. The staff worked closely with the National

Association for Persons with Disabilities to design online courses to replace the former NICE conference. After Pat Carter retired, Margaret Shufflebarger was the primary support for this ministry.

Beginning in in 2018, **Dr. Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey** assumed responsibility for overseeing the IPI's Special Needs initiatives. A grant from the Sisters of Charity enabled IPI/VLCFF to design a two-level Certificate Program for Special Needs Faith Formation. With the support of Mary O'Meara, the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, and other national leaders in the field, Dr. Mensah-Aggrey coordinated the design and implementation of the Certificate Program.

As of this writing, IPI's primary special needs focus is on the distribution of select catechetical publications, the online certificate program, and conversations with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Pro-Life Office regarding the possibility of offering workshops within the Dayton region.

Evolution of Centers Into the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives

Center for Religious Telecommunications (1983-1996)

The Center for Religious Telecommunications (CRT) was established in 1983 under the direction of **Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS**. While indirectly connected with the Office for Moral and Religious Education (MORES), the primary focus of CRT was to explore new methodologies and praxis for applying emerging new communication technologies for education, catechesis, and lay leadership formation within the Catholic Church.

The CRT offices were initially located on the first floor of Alumni Hall. The staff included two Marianists, **Bro. Bernard Stratman, SM** and **Bro. Elmer Lang, SM**, a full-time administrative assistant, and Sr. Zukowski.

CRT set its course in several directions: offering instruction in the use of new educational technologies for pastoral communication through symposia, workshops, and seminars; creating a national network of Catholic communicators; and collaborating with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Catholic Telecommunications Network of America (CTNA).

Establishing UD as a center for pastoral communications innovation and forming Catholic communicators created momentum for CRT's future. If the Church was to effectively reach people in this age of telecommunications, Sr. Zukowski argued, then it must go beyond the spoken and written word and "utilize the dominant medium of our time—television."⁵⁷

Engaging in applied pastoral research, the CRT team prepared a series of symposiums to explore how emerging new technologies were being applied within the Catholic academic community, specifically departments of religious studies/theology, and dioceses across the United States.

Bro. Elmer Lang, SM coordinated the organization of the first two symposiums - **Religious Communications and the Media** - followed by publication of the symposium papers (1984-5). Twelve representatives - provosts, deans, and religious

⁵⁷ Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, *Center for Religious Telecommunications: Lectures and Workshops*, 1984.

studies/theology chairpersons - from eight Catholic colleges/universities participated in the symposiums. A common theme running through the symposiums reflected the reluctance of various entities of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, particularly departments of religious studies/theology, to consider exploring whether to implement distance learning or new educational technologies in the classroom.

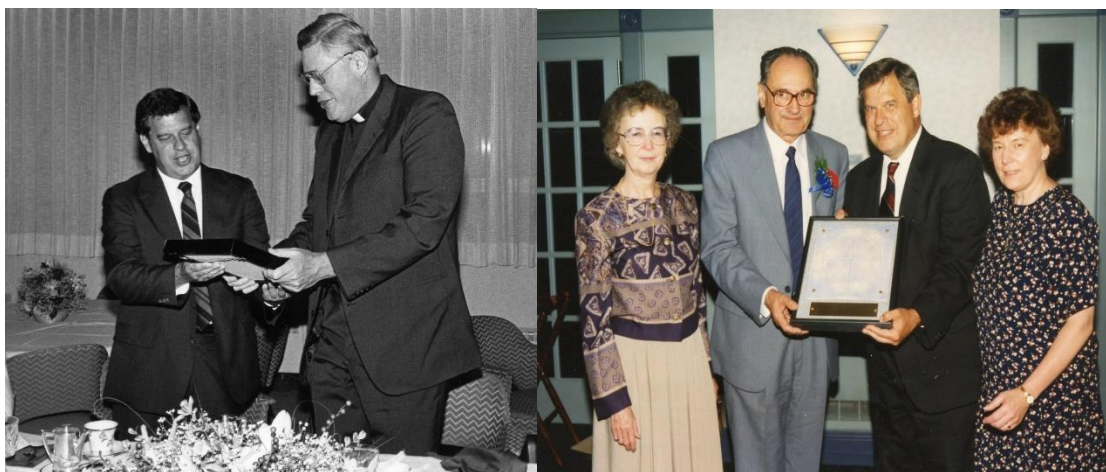
In September 1983, CRT sponsored a symposium funded by the Quatman Foundation (\$8,000) to bring together some of the leading religious communicators in the United States. This symposium received both local and national attention. Bishops Pierre Dumaine and Thomas Kelly and Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk endorsed and participated in the symposium.

In January 1984, two national surveys were developed for Catholic colleges and universities and diocesan and religious communicators in the United States. CRT received an overwhelming response in survey returns. The project enabled the Center to enhance its national recognition and initiate new pastoral communication initiatives.

In 1985, the **Daniel J. Kane Religious Communications Award** was initiated. The award, jointly sponsored by the UD President's Office and CRT, annually recognized a person who had made a lifelong contribution in advancing communications in the Catholic Church. The award is named for Mr. Daniel Kane, retired Director of Communications for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Mr. Kane held prestigious positions within the world of Catholic communications and is widely recognized for his practical wisdom, excellence in composition, and global networking

abilities. Over the years, national and international Catholic communication leaders were recognized – Rev. Bud Kaiser, Paulist priest and Hollywood film producer; Sr. Irene Fugazy, SC, Executive Director of ITV (Instructional TV) of the Archdiocese of New York; Marjorie Week, member of the Pontifical Office for Social Communications, Vatican; Martin Doblmeier, president and producer of Journey Films; Sean-Patrick Lovett, Director of the English Division of Vatican Radio; Sr. Rose Pacatte and Sr. Elizabeth Thoman, both international media literacy experts; Bishop Anthony G. Bosco, chair of the USCCB Communications Committee and bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg, PA; and Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The award continued until 2010.





Past Daniel J. Kane Award recipients: L-R: Sr. Elizabeth Thoman, IHM; Sean-Patrick Lovette, Martin Doblmeier, Marjorie Week, Fr. Bud Kaiser, and Fr. Pierre Babin, OMI.

In 1987 the Center for Religious Telecommunications changed its name to the **Center for Religious Communications (CRC)** to reflect a clearer understanding of the breadth and depth of the Center's emerging communication and ministry initiatives and programs. Also in 1987, three dioceses and sixteen parishes were selected to participate in a CRC research project to assist small town and rural parishes finding alternative means for using existing telecommunication resources and technology for parish adult faith formation. On February 3, 1987, the dioceses of Raleigh, North Carolina and Owensboro, Kentucky; and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, participated in audio teleconferences sharing their thoughts/insights for advancing the use of new media in pastoral ministries. Bishop Anthony Bosco, Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh, chair of the USCCB Communications Committee, and Bishop Joseph Gossman of the Diocese of Raleigh participated in the series of audio teleconferences. As a result of these contacts, Sr. Zukowski was asked to become a member of the USCCB's Communication Committee.

Other initiatives during the mid- to late 1980s included the **Catholic Communications Research Symposium** (July 1984) co-sponsored with Marquette University; **Conference on Theology and Communications** (September 1984); **Future of Family Development and the Electronic Age Symposium** (March 1985); **Conference on Arts and Communication** (Summer 1986); video production of a program on Mariology (Spring 1984), video production of a series on Ministry With Handicapped Persons (Part One, Spring 1984); a summer program on religious telecommunication co-sponsored with United Theological Seminary (1986-87); and several major workshops on the use of telecommunications for women's religious communities at the request of the USCCB Bishops' Communications Committee (1986-88).

Based on the results of the symposia and related applied pastoral research, the CRC collaborated with Catholic diocesan communications and Catholic school personnel within the United States to develop a strategy for CRC/UD to become a center for forming new pastoral educators/leaders who would apply emerging technologies within the Church's ministries (1988). Five major initiatives developed to reach this goal.

The **first major initiative** was undertaken in the early 1980s when the Center for Religious Telecommunications and the United States Catholic Bishops Conference (USCCB) collaborated to develop the **Catholic Telecommunications Network of America (CTNA)**. Sr. Zukowski served on one of the planning committees tasked with producing pastoral programs for CTNA. With the support of Bro. Bernard Ploeger, SM,

PhD, Senior Vice President for Administration (UD) and Bro. Raymond Fitz, SM, PhD, UD President, CRT installed a portable 3-meter satellite downlink on campus (C Lot). The operational site for receiving the signal/programs from the satellite dish was Alumni Hall Room 102. UD's undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Communication managed the satellite downlink operations under the guidance of the CRT team. The 3-meter portable satellite dish was eventually replaced with a 5-meter permanent satellite dish in C Lot and major conduits were laid out into the CRT's satellite head-end office in Alumni Hall.



L-R: Daniel Kane, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Director of Communications; Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH; Rev. Ted Kosse, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Director of Radio and Television at the installation of the 5-meter satellite dish in Lot C.



Sr. Zukowski in Satellite Dish Receiving Room in Alumni Hall

CRT/UD began collaborating with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to physically distribute CTNA recorded programs (VHS) to local cable stations within the Archdiocese.

CRC also applied for pastoral research grants from Catholic foundations to design innovative ways for the Archdiocese and parishes to use CTNA programs for ongoing adult faith formation (1987-1991).

CRC's creative CTNA approach/application caught the attention of the CTNA Executive Board and CRC received an invitation to contribute to CTNA national Catholic programming by producing and hosting video teleconferences originating from the USCCB's communications offices in Washington, DC. These teleconferences were frequently co-sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association (Washington, DC) and continued through the early 1990s.



*Sr. Zukowski and Dr. Regina Haney (NCEA) as co-hosts for a video-conference
with the Diocese of Toledo's Catholic Schools Office Staff*

In the late 1980s, the University of Dayton installed a **Pictoretel System** (six ISDN lines) in Alumni Hall (CRC) to link the three Marianist universities. Bro. Ploeger's vision was to build on CRC's CTNA experience and distance learning innovation with the new Pictoretel system. The goal was to offer religious studies graduate courses, inter-Marianist university e-courses, virtual conferences, and virtual academic administrative gatherings. CRC maintained the Pictoretel system over a number of years. Chaminade University's MA in Theology and the University of Dayton's MA in Religious Studies benefitted from this initiative for several years.



The Picturitel System operated off of 6 ISDN lines located in Alumni Hall 101.

The **second major initiative** was the summer **Pastoral Communications and Ministry Institute** (1983-2002). The goal of the Institute was to establish a national Catholic Communications Formation Center to train pastoral ministers, future Catholic diocesan/parish communicators, and Catholic educators responsible for integrating new communications technology in ministry formation. The annual June summer program (1983-2002) began as a one-week program evolving into a two-week extensive program offering a Certificate in Pastoral Communications and Ministry. Initially, CEUs (continuing education units) were offered for completing the program. Growing requests for graduate credit led the Department of Religious Studies to offer the graduate credit via the College of Arts & Sciences.

Each year, 120 to 165 participants from the United States and international locations received a Certificate in Pastoral Communications and Ministry from UD.

Catholic communicators from the United States, Canada, and France served as presenters, mentors and guides. At the time, this was the only pastoral communications program offered in the US. Many of the participants became diocesan directors of communications, directors of communications for their religious communities, national leaders in the areas of media literacy/education, Catholic communication consultants, and innovative Catholic teachers/administrators that made major contributions to the field and became catalysts for adoption of innovation educational communications.

The summer Pastoral Communications and Ministry Institute continued through 2002. A victim of its own success, a growing number of participants registered for graduate credit versus CEUs, so most of the income went to the University for graduate credit rather than to CRC to run the program. As a result, CRC could no longer maintain the program with only CEU income. This was unfortunate, as it was the only Catholic Communications Formation Program in the United States at a Catholic university. Nothing similar has emerged since that time.

The **third strategic initiative** in the mid-1980s focused on the rising interest in **media education/literacy** within Catholic schools. **Sr. Frances Trumpets, SC**, joined the CRC staff after Bro. Elmer Lang retired. Her focus was on media education/literacy outreach to Catholic schools and parishes, including the study, design, and offer of related workshops on the local, national, and international levels. Close collaboration with the Media Literacy Center directed by **Sr. Elizabeth Thoman** – Los Angeles, CA

enabled the team to publish articles in national media literacy journals and produce a CRC Media Education Quarterly newsletter.



*Sister Frances Trampiets, SC and Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS
discuss the upcoming publication on media literacy.*

In 1986, CRC designed a booklet entitled, “Family Channels for Growth,” as part of a pilot project by the USCCB Department of Communication to encourage discussion about what people watch on television. Approximately 2,500 families associated with Catholic Family Life groups evaluated the booklets and integrated them into their family programs.

In early 2000, the first **Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation** (VLCFF) e-course on media literacy was offered, which led to additional online media courses in the following years. Close collaboration with the Pauline Media Centre (Daughters of St. Paul) via **Sr. Rose Pacatte, FSP, D.Min.**, led to additional online media literacy VLCFF e-courses over the years. Another collaborator was the **Digital Disciple Network** established by **Sr. Caroline Cerveney, TOSF, D.Min.** Together, additional media VLCFF e-courses were designed to introduce Catholic educators and parish ministers to digital social media for use in faith formation. The CRC collaborated with

the Digital Disciple Network to co-sponsor workshops across the US for CRC/UD CEUs. This collaboration continued until Sr. Cervený's death in 2021.⁵⁸

The **fourth strategic initiative** involved a strong collaborative partnership with the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Beginning in 1988, a series of workshops and conferences were held each summer on the University of Dayton campus. CRC also produced live video teleconferences on Catholic education via the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America (Washington, DC) in collaboration with the NCEA for Catholic educators across the country.

This collaboration led to the establishment of a pioneering initiative, the **New Frontiers for Catholic Schools** conference (NFCS) (1988–1994). The goal was to introduce and assist Catholic educators in designing a technology plan for their schools. This idea was a radically new adventure, since most Catholic schools had not moved away from traditional media tools. What Catholic education required was a new way of thinking about curriculum and methodology design in a rapidly evolving new media culture. The Ohio Catholic Conference Department of Catholic Schools invited CRC to meet regularly with the Ohio Catholic superintendents to design a Telecommunications Strategic Plan for the State of Ohio.

The New Frontiers for Catholic Schools Conference was funded by several Catholic publishing houses and other grants. The NFCS invited twelve Catholic schools to apply for the conference. Each school's team included three key teachers and

⁵⁸ As a service to the Dayton community, Sr. Fran Trumpets served as a media education consultant for WPTD's state teacher training program on media literacy until her retirement from UD in 2010.

administrators to ensure that a team would be able to support the implementation of ideas introduced during the conference. Over 84 Catholic schools and over 400 Catholic educators participated in the program, becoming leaders in educational technology planning. Most participating schools were eventually recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools.

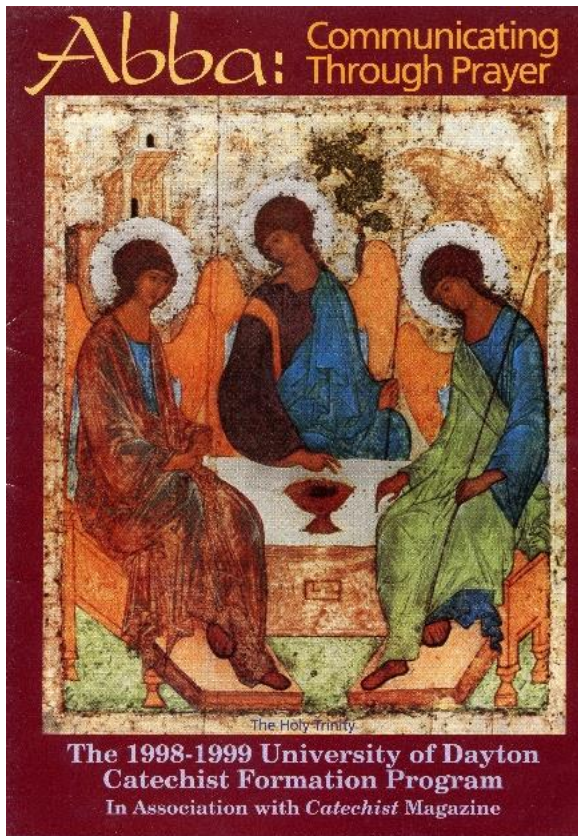
The success of the **New Frontiers for Catholic Schools** spurred Mr. Peter Li, of Peter Li, Inc. to support CRC's **fifth strategic initiative**, the creation of the **Catholic Schools of Tomorrow Award (CSTA) for Innovation in Education and Technology** (1993-2019). Twelve Catholic schools from across the United States were selected from 125-145 entries. The entries were judged in four categories: curriculum, community engagement, technology, and Catholic mission and identity.


During the annual National Catholic Education Association's Convention, the twelve winning schools were recognized at a formal gala dinner and awarded prizes (gifts) from a variety of publishers and educational suppliers. CRC (later known as the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives-IPI) continued to lead the review and selection committees for the award. Ultimately, thousands of teachers and students were impacted by the CSTA and most of these schools not only became National Blue Ribbon Schools, but reported that the award enabled them to apply for and acquire large grants to fund further educational improvement and development within their schools.

In 1994, the **sixth strategic initiative**, the **New Frontiers for Religious Education Conference**, was organized to address the question of how faith formation (religious

education) in parishes could be enhanced by the growing availability of educational technology. The New Frontiers for Religious Education Conference followed the same format as the New Frontiers for Catholic Schools: twelve parishes with teams of three to four persons per parish applied. The conference was held at the University of Dayton and co-sponsored by Peter Li, Inc., the National Catholic Education Association, and CRC. This program continued until 2000. Eventually, many of the dioceses associated with this program became the first diocesan partners for the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF).

Carl Fischer, editor of **The Catechist** magazine published by Peter Li, Inc., invited CRC to consider editing a catechetical series in the Catechist magazine each year. Thus, the **seventh strategic initiative**, The **University of Dayton's Catechist Formation Series** began in 1994. Each year, a particular catechetical theme was identified and eight articles by outstanding catechists, theologians, and biblical scholars were commissioned. Many of these authors were faculty members of the University of Dayton Department of Religious Studies. The series included both discussion questions and catechetical activities for catechists to use in their classroom. Continuing education units through the CRC and graduate credit through the Department of Religious Studies were available for those who completed the series. The series was discontinued in 2014 following the purchase of Peter Li, Inc. by Twenty-Third Publications, and later Bayard Press.





The University of Dayton
CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM
 In Association with *Catechist Magazine*
The Course for 1995-96:
Our Catholic Heritage

A new and convenient way to receive a graduate credit or a continuing education unit in your own parish on your own schedule.

Now, through *Catechist* magazine and The University of Dayton, you can earn a graduate credit or a continuing education unit as you...increase your knowledge...enrich your faith...and discover new ways to enliven your classes.

- Each year *Catechist* magazine prints the course content for the Catechist Formation Program in its pages. This year's course—entitled "Our Catholic Heritage"—will appear in seven sessions in the seven issues of *Catechist* during the 1995-96 school year. This material will be written by scholars in the field with the religion teacher and volunteer catechist in mind.
- Catechists and religion teachers who want to participate must form a group of three or more people in their own or a neighboring school or parish. (Small parishes and schools may wish to join together to form a discussion group.)
- Each group should appoint a leader. This may be a master catechist, principal, DRE or CRE, or anyone else who feels comfortable leading the discussion. The leader will receive a comprehensive guide that will enable him or her to facilitate the group learning process.
- This course will provide models showing how to implement knowledge gained with different grade levels of students.
- The groups will meet with their leader seven times for at least one and a half hours each session to discuss the course content that appears in *Catechist*. There is no need to attend The University of Dayton. You can meet in your own school or parish with your own colleagues at a time most convenient for you. It will be necessary, however, for each participant to have a personal copy of *Catechist* magazine.
- Each participant's work (including a short, very practical paper based on the participant's classroom experiences) will receive a personal evaluation, and each successful participant will receive a continuing education unit from The University of Dayton.
- The cost of this program is reasonable—just \$35 per participant for a continuing education unit or \$65 per participant for a graduate credit.

In the early 1990s, CRC sponsored a conference for Catholic Higher Education titled **Going the Distance: Distance Learning in Catholic Higher Education – Theology and Religious Studies** at Bergamo Renewal Center, and CRC published the conference papers. Catholic colleges and universities from around the country that had or were thinking about integrating distance learning into their theology/religious studies programs were invited. The search resulted in little interest from theology/religious studies departments and/or faculty, but more interest from provosts, vice-presidents and deans.

Representatives from fifteen colleges or universities engaged in an animated dialogue. Dr. David Coleman represented Chaminade University and two UDIT colleagues were present, along with Dr. Tom Skill. It became obvious that while other entities (departments) within their universities were beginning the high-tech distance-learning journey, departments of theology and religious studies had little to no interest, nor was the UD Department of Religious Studies interested in entering the dialogue.

Trends in Technology Columns and NCEA Publications

Based upon the conferences and workshops they sponsored, CRC was invited to contribute a quarterly column for National Catholic Educational Association's *Momentum* magazine. The series titled "**Trends in Technology**" was authored by Sr. Zukowski from 1989 to 2009. Other collaborative publications were co-authored with NCEA's team associated with *Momentum* over the years until the NCEA shifted direction around 2009.

CREC-AVEX (Lyon, France), The Pontifical Council for Social Communications (Vatican), International Consultations, and the Caribbean Initiative (1988-2002)

From 1988 to 2002, the CRC/IPI collaborated with CREC-AVEX (International Institute for Research and Training in Social and Religious Communications) in Lyon, France. The CREC-AVEX year-long program, under the direction of **Rev. Pierre Babin, OMI**, brought together women and men from around the world to learn basic skills in media literacy and communication based on a theory called 'the Symbolic Way'. Hundreds of these participants became bishops, diocesan and religious community

leaders, Catholic communication audio-visual producers, directors and founders of pastoral communication schools, particularly in Asia and Africa. The collaborative agreement provided that Sr. Zukowski would teach one week in Lyon and Fr. Babin would teach one week in CRC's/UD summer program. Over the years, Fr. Babin and Sr. Zukowski collaborated on several publications and gave workshops in various Asian countries related to CREC AVEX.



Sr. Zukowski and Fr. Babin

During the early years, CRC offered a variety of different pastoral communications workshops and retreats around the world. A partial list includes: Retreats International (University of Notre Dame); Mount St. Mary of the West Seminary (Cincinnati); University of Louvain (Belgium); Episcopal Conferences of Italy, Eastern Africa, Holy Spirit Seminary (Hong Kong); Bangkok Pastoral Center for FABS BISCOP (Thailand); FABS-BISCOP - Bali (Indonesia); and the Center for the Study of Communication and Culture (St. Louis University).

Sr. Zukowski held several national and international leadership positions within the Catholic Church beginning in the late 1980s. As the World President for Catholic Radio and Television (known as UNDA World, 1984-2001), she was a member of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications. During her tenure on the Council, a document titled *Aetatis Novae* offered leaven for accelerating the potential direction of CRC.



Sr. Zukowski played a key role in the composition of the document, which focused on creating an “integrated pastoral communications plan” for each episcopal conference and diocese around the world.⁵⁹ Because of her role, Sr. Zukowski became a consultant to various international episcopal conferences and dioceses, speaking on an integrated pastoral communications plan. This enabled CRC to expand its outreach on the international level and advance its programming and networking opportunities.

⁵⁹ *Aetatis Novae*, found at https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021992_aetatis_en.html, Appendix.

In 1993, Archbishop Anthony Pantin, Archbishop of Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies, invited Sr. Zukowski to Trinidad to assist with the design of an Archdiocesan Pastoral Communications Plan. One result of the consultation was the creation of the **Caribbean School for Catholic Communications - CSCC** (1994–present 2023 +) in collaboration with CRC (IPI). The goal of the CSCC was to prepare women and men to learn about the meaning of and the role Catholic communications could play in the Church’s mission. The CSCC is held every August at Emmaus Retreat House in Arima, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies and is administered by the Living Water Community (Port of Spain) and co-directed by Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon and Sr. Zukowski. Presenters initially came from Latin America and the United States. Many of the hundreds of program graduates are now also presenters and assist with program coordination. Currently, attendees come from various Caribbean islands and the program is closely associated with SIGNIS Caribbean (Association of Catholic Communicators).



L-R: Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS; Rhonda Maingot, Director and Co-Founder of the Living Water Community (Port of Spain); and Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon, Archbishop of Port of Spain. The three coordinate the Caribbean School for Catholic Communications.



CSCC 2018 participants from around the Caribbean

In 2015, Sr. Zukowski assisted Bishop Charles Jason Gordon, then Bishop of Bridgetown, Barbados, and Chair of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) Communication Committee to compose a Pastoral Letter on Communications. The final draft was on the agenda of the AEC bishops at their May 2017 meeting in St. Lucia.

The Pastoral Letter on Communications: *New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu* was accepted for implementation in August 2017. The VLCFF converted the Pastoral Letter into a VLCFF e-seminar supported and promoted by the AEC. To date, over 200 Catholics within the Caribbean area have registered for the seminar. Currently, two other AEC Pastoral Letters are in design phase as e-seminars.

In 2015, the dioceses of St. Vincent/Grenadines, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies voted to integrate the VLCFF into their Permanent Deacon Formation Program and the effort is continuing (2022).



Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies, formation program for Permanent Deacons includes VLCFF courses. Men gather in 2013 for an orientation for their first VLCFF course.

Institute for Pastoral Initiatives History (1997- Present)

In 1994, the various centers associated with theology, education, and ministry at the University of Dayton were combined into an entity known as **ITEM – The Institute for Theology, Education and Ministry**, which existed under the name for not quite one year. During that time, directors of the centers within ITEM defined a direction that

met the specific mission and desired objectives of the Marianist mission and vision for networking with the Catholic Church on both the national and international levels, to bridge the University with the Catholic Church in a comprehensive and collaborative way. In 1995, ITEM was renamed the **Institute for Pastoral Initiatives (IPI)**.

The purpose of IPI was to ensure a collaborative ministry, strong stewardship of resources, and envision new pastoral initiatives for the Catholic Church by consistently reading the signs of the times. If new pastoral initiatives or services emerged within the University or a specific initiative of the Institute shifted, it seemed reasonable that the new initiative should blend into IPI. The title was key to raising the consciousness of University of Dayton administrators, faculty, and staff to the University's contributing role within the Catholic Church. In 1996, Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, D.Min, was appointed as the first director of the Institute.

The primary focus of IPI reflected conversations with the Marianists and University administrators to explore new ways to address critical issues and concerns facing the Church in education, catechesis (adult faith formation) and lay ecclesial pastoral leadership as rooted in the "Characteristics of Marianist Education."

The Institute attempted to mobilize the resources of the University of Dayton to establish partnerships with the Catholic Church. The mission was to implement innovative pastoral initiatives designed to meet the needs of the Church and articulate faith within the context of contemporary culture. To fulfill this mission, the IPI developed five goals:

- **Education and Formation:** Through seminars, workshops, conferences and summer programs, the IPI will offer quality programs. It will use state-of-the-art communication practices to effectively communicate learning opportunities.
- **Applied Pastoral Research:** Working in close collaboration with University faculty to define the issues and concerns of the Church, IPI will engage in pastoral research to define new methodologies and approaches to ministry and education. The focus of the research will be leadership formation of women and men in ministry and education.
- **Consulting:** The Institute will bring the expertise of its team, University faculty, and national strategic partners to address the critical pastoral ministry and communication issues related to the new evangelization, catechesis, and communication needs of the Church.
- **Networking:** The IPI team will engage in conversation with Church leaders and ministers on the local, national, and international levels to address the needs of the Church.
- **Publication and Multimedia Production:** The Institute will create opportunities to distribute the results of programs/projects and research to the global faith community for reflection and implementation within their particular cultural context.

1996 ACTA Research Grant (1996-2020)

The IPI received an Adult Catechetical Teaching Aids (ACTA) Foundation research grant to identify alternative approaches for using media and distance learning methodologies in Church ministry and religious and Catholic education across the United States. The pastoral research initiative was supported by the University's Department of Communication represented by **Dr. Samuel Wallace**. The major findings of the national survey of more than 2,000 Catholic school principals, directors of religious education, diocesan communication offices, etc. was published in the Summer 1997 issue of "The Living Light," a quarterly journal published by the USCCB's Department of Education. The data supported the direction and focus of IPI.

Research, Design and Implementation of the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (1996-2000)

In 1996, a University of Dayton grant enabled IPI to explore how online (Internet) adult faith formation could support the catechetical mission of the Catholic Church. A year-long research project sought the most cost effective and easily accessible methodologies to realize online faith formation goals. A computer science graduate student worked one summer to lay out the basic online structure.

In 1997-98, members of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Religious Education staff worked with the Institute to design an eight-week e-course called *An Introduction to Scripture*. In 1998, while the Internet was radically new, IPI piloted the first e-course with ten adult e-students. A second e-course entitled *Basic Catholic Beliefs* followed.

These e-courses were free, since IPI continued to be in a pioneering and pilot phase of development.

In 1999, six dioceses (Wheeling-Charleston, WV; Cleveland, OH; Columbus, OH; Covington, KY; Louisville, KY; and Indianapolis, IN) were invited to a meeting held on the UD campus to explore piloting the two e-courses in their dioceses. They eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity. Only one section of each e-course was available, with 12-15 e-adult learners. While it was a challenge for the participants on many levels, namely, technology and new methodology, the e-courses were the beginning of one of the first online adult faith formation programs in the country.

In 2000, the seven dioceses (including the Archdiocese of Cincinnati) met at UD for a one-day conference to discuss the following items: (1) Should IPI continue down the path of adult faith online learning; (2) did these dioceses see the potential of the e-courses (amidst the perceived challenges) for their diocese; and (3) could the dioceses initially support the initiative? Since all dioceses answered yes to these three questions, the title of the initiative became the **Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation**, and the cost of a diocesan partnership would be \$3,000 regardless of the size of the diocese, and additional partnership benefits were clarified. To encourage marketing the e-courses in each diocese, it was decided that the partner dioceses would receive a \$5.00 rebate for each person who registered for a course. (Note: IPI had no marketing budget. This approach seemed reasonable at the beginning but changed in later years as the VLCFF expanded and the rebate was discontinued.)

VLCFF Convocations (2000-2012)

For twelve years, an annual in-person VLCFF convocation occurred on the UD campus to bring together representatives from all the VLCFF partner dioceses. The two-day event enabled the VLCFF team to both share new developments (courses), offer in-service marketing assistance, and integrate and explain the value of online learning in their dioceses. Topics for new e-courses also emerged from these conversations. The VLCFF e-courses were primarily designed to meet the specific needs and interests of the diocesan partners or emerging trends within the Catholic Church.

In time, the on-site VLCFF Convocation became virtual. While a VLCFF Convocation has not been held in recent years due to the COVID pandemic, Zoom conference calls with VLCFF partners and facilitators have filled the temporary gap. The IPI 2025 Strategic Plan states that the virtual Zoom convocations will continue.

VLCFF e-courses last for five weeks and e-seminars for three weeks. Adult e-learners receive a certificate for each e-course completed: 2.5 CEUs for a 5-week e-course and 1.5 CEUs for a 3-week e-seminar.⁶⁰

Emergence of VLCFF Certificate Programs

Initially, VLCFF offered certificates for individual e-courses. Since only dioceses could award a Certification for Ministry, and certificate requirements varied from

⁶⁰ The CEUs are based upon the International Continuing Education Unit Structure. 2.5 = 25 hours of study and 1.5 = 15 hours of study.

diocese to diocese, VLCFF diocesan partners recommended that the VLCFF simply offer complementary e-courses to support the diocesan catechist formation programs.

By 2008, diocesan attitudes shifted and the partners began requesting that IPI/VLCFF offer a full Certificate in Catechesis (6-8 e-courses), since dioceses were experiencing a decline in staff qualified to offer courses toward certification.

A national team of catechetical leaders (primarily VLCFF diocesan partners) began to outline, design, and develop the Catechist e-course series. They met for several days on UD's campus. By the end of the year, the first full online VLCFF Certificate Program had been developed.

While it has been refreshed, revised, and updated several times over the years, the Catechist Certificate Program continues to be the most popular of the VLCFF Programs.

VLCFF and North American Center for Marianist Studies (NACMS)

In 2008, a dialogue with NACMS led to offering e-courses to support Marianist community formation. A Certificate in Marianist Studies program took shape under the leadership of Patty Gerhard and Carol Ramey from NACMS: six e-courses offered and facilitated by the NACMS team. In 2017, a change in NACMS direction ended this collaborative initiative, although the e-courses continue to be available in Spanish for Marianists in Latin America. Hispanic lay Marianists facilitate these e-courses. Registrations continue to expand.

(47.) Marianist education benefits local communities through adapting to distinctive local culture and complementing this adaptation with global awareness. Marianist educators encourage connections, both real and virtual, to

other cultures, with emphasis on those within the Marianist international educational network. Academically, Marianist universities offer integrated curricula to shape students' understanding of interconnectedness of human knowledge as a foundation for effective action in an increasingly interdependent world. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Universities")

Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia and Arabic E-Courses

In 2007, a visit by **Catherine Miles Flynn**, Executive Director of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia's (AVOSA) Faith Formation Program, initiated a partnership with the VLCFF in English. Existing VLCFF English courses soon were culturally adjusted for AVOSA participants designed specifically for AVOSA, along with new e-seminars, such as the Pastoral Letters of Bishop Paul Hinder of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia.

In 2017, the design of e-courses in Arabic began under the leadership of **Bishop Joseph Naffah** of Lebanon, and was coordinated by the AVOSA Team in Abu Dhabi. As of 2022, nine Arabic courses are available with six Arabic facilitators from the AVOSA Region. Currently, over 200 Arabic students are enrolled in Arabic e-courses with the VLCFF. With the upcoming unification of AVOSA and AVONA (Apostolic Vicariate of Southern/Northern Arabia), it is anticipated that the number of students will continue to grow in English and Arabic. IPI staff hold regular Zoom conference calls and have visited Southern Arabia and offered workshops in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, and other locations.

IPI/VLCFF Hispanic Initiatives (2007–present)

In 2007, diocesan Hispanic coordinators requested that VLCFF e-courses be offered in Spanish. Since offering courses in Spanish required additional personnel, IPI

applied to 15 Catholic foundations before receiving funding to assist in developing the Hispanic VLCFF Program.

After a slow start, the Spanish program expanded under the leadership of **Liliana Montoya, M.Div.**, who was hired in 2015. She created a solid network of Hispanic catechetical and youth leaders across the United States, Mexico, and Latin America and eventually in Southern Arabia (AVOSA), Australia, and Canada.

Liliana Montoya oversees the design and development of the Spanish VLCFF curriculum, expanding e- courses in different training areas and developing new certificates. At this time (2023), there are 57 e-courses and four certificates, serving more than 3,000 Hispanic students with 35 Spanish language facilitators.

The program's positive impact has attracted partners from around the world to train Hispanic permanent deacons in the United States, Chile, Venezuela, Honduras, Columbia, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

In 2022, IPI welcomed the Catholic Extension Society as the newest VLCFF partner. Two new models for collaboration have been created with Catholic Extension. One involves Spanish-speaking religious sisters that will receive basic online faith formation for their transition to begin their Masters degree studies at St. Mary's University in Missouri. They are receiving partial credit for VLCFF courses. The second model is a Hispanic leadership program for women from different locations in the United States who are associated with social work in their parishes.

Two Hispanic initiatives developed are the **Forum for Young Catholic Hispanic Leaders** from throughout the region and a summer program for forming Hispanic Catechists associated with Immaculate Conception Parish (Dayton, Ohio).

The **Forum for Young Catholic Hispanic Leaders** began in 2015 to bring together young people from parishes within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Weekend opportunities focus on faith formation, community, and leadership development. This has been coordinated by Liliana Montoya, MA. The Hispanic VLCFF is included as a blended learning experience. Full day and/or overnight retreats are offered twice a year at one of the retreat houses within the Archdiocese. Over 100 Hispanic youth have enjoyed these opportunities.



Liliana Montoya, Program Coordinator, and President Dr. Eric Spina during the October 2019 Hispanic Catholic Youth Retreat at Curran Place

The Forum met two to three times a year in a retreat setting on the UD campus. Participation grew from 25 to 125 in early 2020 prior to the COVID pandemic. During COVID, the Forum was adapted to a virtual format, thus expanding the experience to young Hispanics in several dioceses. In conversation with Fr. Satish Joseph, the

Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Dayton Region of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, we hope to return to an in-person Forum held at one or more of the local parishes in 2023.

In the Summer of 2022, a pilot Hispanic Catechist Formation Program was introduced for the Dayton Region at Immaculate Conception Parish. Over 50 adult catechists participated. Plans are being formulated to continue support for these catechists during the year, and to explore additional programs.

The Hispanic program has grown that it now has added a full-time administrative assistant, **Cristina Ryan**, and two Hispanic UD students to support the Hispanic initiatives.

IPI Staff Positions



Institute for Pastoral Initiatives Team (2020)

*L-R front row: Pilar (Janet) Hernandez, Jeaninne Chaffin, Dr. Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey,
Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, Angela Hall, Liliana Montoya
L-R back row: Margaret McCrate, John LeComte, Richard Drabik,*

**VLCCFF Coordinator of English Curriculum
Development - Dr. Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey**



In coordination with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the position of VLCCFF Coordinator of Curriculum Development (English) was created in 2012 and continues to the present. **Dr. Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey** has filled the position since 2012. She oversees the VLCCFF English Curriculum Committee and coordinates all 165 VLCCFF English courses. Working closely with VLCCFF course designers, she provides support through the e-course design process, reviews theological content, and refreshes e-course content along the way. She assists VLCCFF facilitators with theological questions related to e-learners' comments or questions.

Mensah-Aggrey serves on several national Catholic organizational committees, e.g., the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM) and the USCCB Office of Certification subcommittee supporting ministry formation, certification, and ecclesial service. On two occasions, she represented the Institute at international catechetical conferences held in the Vatican. She also visited the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern

Arabia and select dioceses in Africa, e.g. Ghana, Malawi, and, participated in an international Catholic Communications Conference in Cape Town, South Africa to promote the VLCFF.

Coordinator of Hispanic Initiatives - Liliana Montoya, M.Div.



Liliana Montoya coordinates and oversees the development of both the VLCFF Hispanic Initiative and the Forum for Young Hispanic Catholic Youth Leadership Formation Program. (See more information above).

Assistant Director for the VLCFF - Richard Drabik, MA



Richard Drabik has been a member of the IPI team for over 20 years, from 2000 to the present. He began his ministry as a theology graduate student, an IT technician, and a webinar team member. Upon completing his degree, Drabik was hired in a permanent position, where he oversees organizing and planning the posting of e-courses, identifying and positioning facilitators (instructors), and works closely with both facilitators and partners to advance VLCFF in dioceses around the world.

He frequently participates in VLCFF diocesan partners' conferences representing IPI/VLCFF by both offering workshops and networking for marketing the VLCFF. He serves on IPI's Core Committee.

IPI Director – Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, D.Min.



Sr. Zukowski oversees the general administration of the Institute, networks within the University, and strives to find funds to support the various initiatives of the Institute via writing proposals, crowdfunding, etc. She is a tenured full professor in the Department of Religious Studies. She explores international networking for IPI. She participates in various projects of the team members, as needed. She holds a tenured professor position in the Department of Religious Studies.

IT Projects Manager for IPI/VLCFF – Robert Stewart



Mr. Stewart has been a member of IPI team for ten years, from 2012 to the present. He manages and ensures the smooth operation of the IPI/VLCFF IT system and assists e-students facing technical issues. He supports the technical side of the VLCFF administration, keeping it fresh and updated. He works with Arabic course designers posting the Arabic e-courses online. He oversees the UD work study and graduate students who support IPI/VLCFF with social media and related posting issues. He serves on IPI's Core Committee.

John LeComte - Video Production

John LeComte managed social media advancement and video production at VLCFF from 2018 until his retirement in 2022. He has agreed to continue to work part-time in this position until the video production position currently advertised (2023) is filled. He may be retained for social media projects into the future.

Miles Hall – Video Production and Digital Media

The VLCFF social media sites maintained include the Espanol Facebook site, English Facebook site, a LinkedIn business site, an Instagram account and Twitter. Use of these social media sites has resulted in a growth in subscribers and responses.

Miles Hall - Video Producer and Digital Media Specialist - Hired Marc, 2023.



Miles has assumed John LeComte's IPI Video Producer Position.

Administrator Assistants Team



Jeaninne Chaffins assists with general administration and support for the Director and IPI/VLCFF Team Members.



Angela Hall is the Finance Operations Manager working closely with Monti Meyer, Dean's Office, and the IPI Director for overseeing all financial matters related to IPI/VLCFF.



Margaret McCrate assists the VLCFF Assistant Director for supporting VLCFF students, facilitators and the VLCFF Certificate Program.



Cristina Ryan assists in supporting the various projects/programs related to IPI's Hispanic Ministries.

Evelyn Mojica is IPI/VLCFF's new (March 2023).

Evelyn joins as an Administrative Assistant where she assists to keep the gears turning for IPI and the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), our Catholic online learning platform.

Additional IPI/VLCFF Support Personnel

Chaminade knew that transforming the social order required the action not just of individuals, but of many people working together with a common mission. For Chaminade, communities of faith were the natural embodiment of a vibrant Christianity. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Education" #12, Page 11)

Each year both undergraduate work study students and graduate student assistants support IPI's work. Numbers vary depending on the availability of students during the year. In 2014, IPI lost our graduate assistant due to financial issues in the College of Arts and Sciences. IPI and the Department of Religious Studies are exploring the possibility of commissioning graduate students in summers to assist with research for updating and designing VLCFF courses.

Throughout the year, many people are commissioned to support various dimensions of the ministry:

- Course facilitators: 105+ (English, Spanish and Arabic)
- Course designers: Number varies during each year as need arises (English, Spanish and Arabic)
- Course updates: almost all 135 English e-courses are to be refreshed/updated by December 2025, a task that will involve many professionals from across the country.
- Social media support

VLCFF Partnership Support

IPI/VLCFF could not function without the vast external support for the program. To ensure that VLCFF meets the specific needs of diocesan partners, ongoing Zoom conference calls are held during the year. Some of these calls focus on a single diocese. At other times, calls include a number of dioceses from within a region or geographic territory, such as Canada, Australia, or the Caribbean. Response to these calls is coordinated by Richard Drabik and includes all members of the VLCFF team.

The conference calls allow the team to identify a variety of VLCFF models (currently 20+) that could integrate the VLCFF program into diocesan planning initiatives. This continual communication is a source for marketing, and an opportunity to identify new e-courses and e-seminars and conduct quality control.

Since its inception, over 78,000 Catholic adults have registered for VLCFF courses and 10,000 e-courses have been offered (2000-2022). Now serving more than 88 dioceses around the world, including Australia, Africa, Southern Arabia, Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, VLCFF set a new enrollment record in 2022,

serving more than 6,500 students per year. During the past two decades, at least one person from 77 countries has completed a VLCFF course.

VLCFF's 20th Anniversary

The Virtual Community for Faith Formation Program celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020. The VLCFF provides online e-courses in three languages for Catholic school teachers, catechists, permanent deacon candidates, and adults interested in Catholic faith formation.

“The VLCFF has created a new paradigm for online learning within and for the Catholic Church,” said Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon, Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies.

Other IPI Programs Sponsored Over the Years

The first major US response to the Vatican report, **Ethics in Advertising** (1997), brought together Catholic scholars and advertising and media professionals in a symposium to reform advertising practices that foster materialism. IPI coordinated the symposium, which was co-sponsored by UNDA-USA, the Catholic Press Association, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and St. Anthony Messenger Press. Panelists represented both secular and Catholic publishing companies. Dr. Terrence Tilley, then chairperson of the UD Department of Religious Studies, played a key role. The results of the symposium were published in various international Catholic journals.

Physical Locations of IPI

IPI was initially located on the first floor of Alumni Hall from 1996-2012, moved to the second floor from 2012 to 2015, followed by a year and a half in a temporary location in the former Music-Theatre Building while Curran Place Room 1200 was being remodeled for IPI's permanent occupancy in 2018. The new Curran Place location offered additional space for a full media classroom and a video production center. It also offers maximum visibility for creating a pastoral presence on the Curran campus.

While being removed from the center of the campus sometimes creates complications for travel between campus locations, there are advantages, such as ease of parking, accessibility for guests, and availability of conference rooms. In early conversations regarding the transfer to Curran Place, Dr. Paul Benson, Provost, indicated that IPI's presence may support and strengthen the Catholic Marianist identity, as well as, spiritual and evangelizing opportunities at Curran Place, as well as become a central location for offering pastoral programs, conferences and services.

The IPI team organized Advent and Lenten Prayer Services for Curran Place staff and administrators. IPI contributed quality religious art to stimulate the religious imagination by arranging an annual exhibit of the UD Marian Library crèches from November through January. The religious art in and around IPI's office continues to attract the attention of Curran Place visitors, who frequently stop by with comments and queries. Eventually, IPI was one of the catalysts, team members, for redesigning

the Curran Place Lobby with the Marian Statue that originally was located on Mt. St. John's Marianist Chapel.

Dr. Paul Benson recommended that IPI explore a collaboration with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Dayton called UDOLLI and the Center for Leadership at Curran Place since both have related common goals. Ongoing conversations continue. IPI team members participate in both Center's programs for personal professional development and exploring how future partnerships may emerge.

Collaborative Projects With Catholic Organizations

A pilot project with the **Institute for School and Parish Development (ISPD)** directed by Frank Donaldson, President, began in 2017. ISPD is located in New Orleans, LA and offers both online and on-site learning for Catholic school administrators and boards of education members. IPI collaborates with the online segment of ISPD's program. ISPD's e-courses are maintained and offered by ISPD staff, and IPI handles the registration, financial administration, and offers CEUs. This project brings in additional funds for IPI.

From 2012 through 2020, IPI collaborated with Sr. Caroline Cervený, SSJ (St. Petersburg, FL) by offering CEUs for her annual **Digital Discipleship Boot Camp** Training Program. This blended learning experience teaches Catholic school teachers and catechists how to use and apply digital media resources within their ministry and learning environments. Several hundred people have received their Digital

Discipleship certificates. While IPI accrues no financial benefit from this collaboration, it is an excellent means to market IPI/VLCFF services. Sr. Caroline is also a VLCFF facilitator teaching online courses related to media formation.

In 2016, a grant enabled IPI to offer in-service workshops to introduce **Christian Meditation in Catholic Schools**. Workshops flourished in the Dayton and Columbus regions.



Precious Blood and Incarnation elementary school teachers and administrators, two of many Catholic schools introduced to Christian Meditation.

Attendance at National and International Conferences

The IPI team members have given many workshops, presentations, and seminars at national and international conferences over the years. Team members have traveled to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Thailand, Hong Kong, India, and the Caribbean to promote the VLCFF. IPI team members have also served on a number of national and international boards and committees over the years.

Moving Into the Future: IPI's 2025 Strategic Plan

In 2021, IPI commissioned Mr. David Ramey to assist efforts of the IPI team to design IPI's 2025 Strategic Plan. Mr. Ramey met several times with the team and in August 2022 Phase I of IPI's 2025 Strategic Plan was published. The final document was distributed to UD's leadership for review and future conversations with the IPI team.

The UD Department of Religious Studies (2022) under leadership of the Chair, **Dr. Jana Bennett**, appointed a Religious Studies ad hoc advisory committee to explore ongoing relationship and partnership of IPI with the department. **Drs. William Johnston, Cecilia Moore, and Timothy Gabrielli** serve on the committee.

The **Phase I (2025)** and **Phase II (2023)** documents of the Strategic Plan, along with this narrative history of the CCR (Center for Christian Renewal) and Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, offers a perspective for envisioning the future of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives within the University.

Phase III (2023) is a detailed review of the standard job descriptions for each IPI Position. This will be followed by an update of the standard job description as developed by the current team members.

Phase IV (2024) will focus on updated implementation of the 2025 goals and a review of the position of IPI's director (2025).

Phase V (2025) a complete review of IPI's 2025 Strategic Plan Implementation, the job description of the director, etc.

(24.) Among the values informing our educational excellence are inclusivity, equity, community, collaboration, solidarity with the suffering and poor, and a spirit of service. Through reflection, discussion and application, these values form the context of education of the whole person. This environment nurtures networks of relationships characterized by attention to the needs of others and service to meet those needs both in and outside the university. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Universities")

Institute for Pastoral Initiatives

Current Vision and Mission (2022-2025)

Vision

Global partners with the Catholic Church in educating and forming disciples through dialogue, service, and faith formation.

Mission

Catholic in tradition and global in mission, the UD Institute for Pastoral Initiatives nurtures a living Catholic faith, rooted in our Catholic Marianist Charism and Vision, through innovative programs and initiatives of faith and leadership formation grounded in applied pastoral research.

(36.) The Marianist educational tradition has long been characterized by shared responsibility for decision-making at all appropriate levels. Effective collaboration requires good communication, clear lines of authority, just policies, and respect for the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, the Marianist University cooperates with other educational works, diocesan structures, ecumenical and interfaith initiatives, national and international organizations, and the civic communities in which the university lives. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Universities")

Core Beliefs

Marianist Education Tradition

Through our Baptism we are called to authentic discipleship by nurturing a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ, practiced within a community of faith, and by witnessing to our shared faith among all those we are called to serve. Our Marianist spirituality calls us to be truly present with a loving and respective presence to all those

we serve. Our initiatives offer excellent means of passing on a distinctive vision for living the Christian life in contemporary times.

The **five characteristics of the Marianist Educational Tradition** are the grounding principles that guide our discernment of the signs of the times and approaches for serving the People of God today:

- Educate for formation in faith.
- Provide an integral, quality education.
- Educate in family spirit.
- Educate for service, justice, peace, and integrity of creation and
- Educate for adaptation and change.

Permanent Mission

In concert with the Church's call toward the New Evangelization in a rapidly changing world, we strive to prophetically face the evolving challenges for proclaiming the Good News. Being on permanent mission calls us to embrace authentic listening and dialogue as a means for reading the signs of the times and discerning the direction and path of our unfolding mission into the future.

Collaboration/Partnership

Collaboration and partnership offer opportunities to identify, realize, and unite all the gifts of ministry blossoming within the Christian community. Through collaboration we are aware that individuals and programs do not exist in isolation. Through our collaborative approach to ministry, we strive to mobilize the rich and diverse resources of our strategic partners for offering the highest quality of lifelong

pastoral educational service. Collaboration and partnership are a bridge and bond for national and international sensibility, faith formation, and orchestrated advocacy to address emerging pastoral needs and issues. Listening to and dialoguing with our partners enables us to be informed, formed, and transformed for creating opportunities to support the evolving pastoral educational needs of the People of God.

Communication

Communication is the heart of the Church. Identifying alternative methodologies for enhancing the communications ministry of the Church is essential to our work. The digital milieu continues to expand exponentially. It is paving the way for information, forming and transforming both the global faith and secular communities. We are called to be attuned to this evolution and discern the most effective means for utilizing the digital milieu for our apostolic missionary activities. Communications throughout our ministry, within and among those we work and serve, can support a greater presence of the Church in the Modern World. In this way, we address the evangelization and mission orientated call of the Church today.

Adaptability

Adaptability opens the door for new creative strategies to address faith and leadership ministry formation needs of the Church. Cultural shifts within and outside the Church invite and challenge us to read the signs of the times. Through research, critical reflection and discernment we determine the most effective and creative methods to address the diversity of issues faced daily. Each cultural context requires that we are sensitive to specific characteristics of language, psychology, methodology,

spirituality, and expressions of faith. Respect for differences, while discovering common ground, and remaining focused on our mission and vision enables us to contribute to a new way of being Church in contemporary times.

Five-Year Strategic Goals

(33.) The culture of acceptance that Marianists call family spirit focuses on the quality of relationships among the members in the community. It is essential that all members embrace the diversity of cultures that surrounds them by communicating with respect and treating one another as equals. Over the long term, these habits acknowledge the value of inclusivity and the dignity of every member cultivating the ground in which genuine relationships can take root and flourish. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Universities")

The following strategic goals for the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives constitute the "one-page" strategic plan for growth over the next three years. Each goal is supported by a set of strategies, and action plan which follows.

Strategic Goal A: Educate the global Catholic Church by bringing faith to people and people to faith.

Strategic Goal B: Provide a platform of ministry formation which enables dioceses, religious institutes and parishes to form parishioners and members, as disciples for the future of the Catholic Church.

Strategic Goal C: Be a bridge for UD to the universal Church, networking Catholic Marianist services and resources to the needs of the church in changing times.

Strategic Goal D: Expand awareness of IPI's capacity for comprehensive approaches to learning that allow to effectively respond to emerging issues.

Strategic Goal E: Build our endowment and pool of major donors to assure IPI's future.

Strategic Goal F: Develop our staff professionally with the technology, skills and cultural awareness to lead a global institute.

For a full detailed report of IPI's 2025 Strategic Plan Phase I, Phase II and Phase III with specific action items contact azukowski1@udayton.edu.

Conclusion

We express our deep gratitude to the individuals who have contributed and reviewed this document. We especially thank Dr. Mary J. Brown and Niki Johnson for their time and dedication with editing. A number of Marianist brothers have shared their memories of the development of CCR and the evolution of the Centers/Institutes, as related to our Catholic Marianist charism and identity. Retired UD administrators and faculty who were members of CCR's Advisory Board highlighted initiatives and people they remember who journeyed with CCR over the years.

This is a living document. As individuals reflect on the historical narrative, remember people, dates, and initiatives to be added, or, clarified, we welcome each one.

Historical documents and references for this narrative can be located at the University of Dayton Archives and Special Collections; Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski's Personal Archives to be placed at the Catholic University of America's Archives; and more recent information is available within the e-folders of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives.

We express our deepest appreciation to the Marianist Community/Foundation for their support. We particularly acknowledge the vision and support of Bro. Raymond Fitz, SM, Bro. Stanley Matthews, SM, Fr. Matthew Kohmescher, SM, Fr. Bertrand Buby, Bro. Bernard Ploeger, SM, Fr. James Heft, Dr. Paul Benson (Provost), Dr. Eric Spina (UD President 2023) Fr. James Fitz, SM, and the Marianist Provincials who inspired, challenged, and encouraged us to think outside the box that new times call for

new methods/approaches for serving the People of God. During the current administration, we wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Danielle Poe, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Jana Bennett, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies for exploring the future position and role of IPI within the University and Department.

A world of hopes and shattered dreams strongly pulls us to this costly venture of living out the promise of the characteristics of Marianist education. It is a venture that may require more than we may think we can or perhaps want to give. But we have a tradition of giving more. In 1839, Chaminade wrote that "we too have been called, as we believe, by Mary herself, to assist her with all our might in the struggle...of our times." We – in the tradition of Marianist education – are called by Mary to fill these times with the Good News of Jesus Christ. (From "Characteristics of Marianist Education" #80, Page 34)

February 2023
Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, D.Min.

SHORT RESUME – Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHH, D.Min. IPI Director

Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHH, D. Min is the *Director of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives (1978- present)* and **Professor** in the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Dayton (a Catholic / Marianist University). She established and is the Director of the *Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation - VLCFF* (1995 – present) with 6,500+ e-learners in 80+ USA Diocese and 24 countries (English, Spanish, Arabic). The VLCFF is a key component of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, an essential element of the University of Dayton's Catholic Distance Learning Initiative. She is a Marianist Educational Associate (MEA) and has been teaching at the University of Dayton for 45+ years.

She coordinates The University of Dayton's **FORUM for Young Catechetical Leaders** (a two-year program preparing UD students to teach religious education and faith formation in Catholic Schools and parishes); she taught for 17+ years in the Honors Program **Chaminade Scholars Vocation & Arts Honor's Course** inclusive of guiding UD students on a discernment pilgrimage to Italy each year for depth vocational discernment, spiritual enrichment and dialogue with Church leaders associated with various Vatican Commissions.

Other academic courses are **Religion & Film** (*Undergraduate*), **Organization & Management in Church Administration, Theology and Ministry, and Leadership in Ministry and Methods in Adult Faith Formation** (*Graduate Level*). She has been a faculty member for a number of years as an instructor with the School of Education's Online Graduate Program in **Catholic Educational Leadership**, she worked closely with the Center for Catholic Education, and works closely with UD's **Life Long Learning Center (OSCHER)**.

She is a member of the **Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart** (Towson, MD). She celebrated her 50th Jubilee September 8, 2014. She has served on her Community's Leadership Service Board (2000-2008). Currently she serves as the MSHH Archivist (2016- present)

She had served as visiting professor at Crec Avex (Lyon, France) for 12 years (1989 – 2002). She is Co-Director of the **Caribbean School for Catholic Communications – (CSCC)** (*Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad / Tobago, West Indies*) along with Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon - Archbishop of Port-of Spain (1994 to present). She assisted as an International Consultant for implementing an **“Integrated Pastoral Communications Plan”** for the Antilles Episcopal Conference (Caribbean Bishops

(2016- 2020) based upon the AEC's new Pastoral Letter on Communications: New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu (August 6, 2017).

She served as the UNDA USA President (*UNDA = National Catholic Association for Radio & Television*) (1987-1993), UNDA North American President (1990-1994) and the UNDA World President from 1994-2001. (*UNDA – is now known as SIGNIS the official Catholic Communications Association recognized by the Vatican with international headquarters in Brussels, Belgium*).

She was a member of the Pontifical Council of Social Communications (1989-2001) Vatican City.

She served as Co-Chairperson for the UNDA/OCIC Planning Committee for their joint World Congresses held in Prague, Czech Republic (1994), Montreal, Canada (1998) and Rome, Italy (2001). She was a member of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (Vatican 1994 - 2001.) She serves as an international consultant for the *Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communications* (Bangkok, Thailand).

Zukowski serves on the Board of Governors of **CREDI** (*Catholic Religious Education Development Initiative*) – Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad, and West Indies. She had been associated with the Center for Catholic Education (University of Dayton) assisting in supporting the *Catholic Schools Summit*. She had been the Chairperson for the *Catholic Schools of Tomorrow Award: Innovation with Technology in Education* sponsored by Bayard Publishers (formally Peter Li, Inc.). Twelve Catholic schools are annually awarded the honor at a special Gala during the NCEA National Convention.

She received the **1993 Lackner Award** given by the University of Dayton for witnessing to Catholic Identity and Marianist Values. In 1997, she was recognized as one of the influential *Catholic Educators in the 20th century* (during NCEA Convention) for influencing new initiatives in teaching and learning through new media. In the same year, Zukowski received the **President's Medallion for Lifetime Achievement in Communications** awarded in 1997 by *the National Catholic Association of Communicators*. In **2001**, she received the National Conference for Catechetical Leaders (NCCL) *Technology Award* for her contribution toward the advancement technology and catechesis.

In 2001 she received the **Pro Ecclesia ET Pontifice** Medal from Pope Saint John Paul II in Rome during the UNDA (SIGNIS) World Congress. In **2004**, she received the **Distinguished Communicators Award from the Salesian Guild (Cincinnati, Ohio)** for her life time contribution to Catholic Communications, particularly within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio. In 2005, she received *the Honorary Prize of Julian*

Kulenty presented during the National Catholic Film Association Conference held in Warsaw, Poland. In 2009 she received the **NCEA National Catholic Schools Board Award** for her contribution for working with Catholic School Boards in the USA. During the 2010 NCEA Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota she received the **Emmaus Award** from the **NPCD Association** for her international and national work with Catholic education, faith formation and innovative online learning. On May 9, 2012, the NCCL (National Conference of Catechetical Leaders) presented Zukowski with their highest honor of the **NCCL Life Time Achievement Award** for excellence in adult faith formation via distance learning. November 9, 2012, she received the **National Catholic Lay Leadership Award** in Philadelphia. In October 2016 she received the **Marshall McLuhan Media and Light Award** from St. Paul's University (Manitoba, Canada) during the International Communications Conference held at the University of Toronto, Canada. She is recognized among the **Talbot's School of Theology's top 20th Century Religious Educators**. In 2019, she received the **Monika Hellwig Award** from the ACCU (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities). In 2023, Zukowski was recognized of the 2023 UD Women of the Year.

Zukowski has been involved with distance education/learning for over 50+ years. She began with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Cable TV initiative in 1971 and continued to advance into radio (on WVUD – then UD's national recognized radio station on campus), satellite communication, multimedia, computer technologies and now the Internet and digital technologies. The beginning of the **Catholic Telecommunications of America – CTNA (1983 – 1989)**, she was invited to produce and co-host a variety of video conferences in collaboration with **USCCB and the NCEA (National Catholic Education Association)** on Catholic Education, Communication and Catechesis, as well as, co-anchoring several USCCB annual fall meetings via CTNA- (early 1980's).

A major focus of her current professional life and ministry is the **Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)** online courses in English, Spanish and Arabic. The VLCFF is working closely with the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern/Northern Arabia and Lebanon for online Catholic Courses.

Her most recent co-edited book (2007) is *Communication **Socialis: The Challenge of Theology and Ministry in the Church*** published by Kassel University (Germany). Other publications include: *Medias, chance pour l' evangeile* co-authored with Pierre Babin, OMI, published in Paris (2000) and published in English by Loyola Press under the title *The Gospel and The Internet* (2002).

Her book *Voices of Courage: An International Profile of Women in Catholic Communications* (2001) has been translated into Slovakian, Portuguese and Spanish (2003). This was a major initiative to support and acknowledge Catholic women in communication leadership positions around the world.

She had written a regular column called “**Trends in Technology**” for **MOMENTUM Journal** (NCEA Publication) for over 20 years. She is the former Executive Editor of the **UD Catechist Formation Series** in the **CATECHIST** magazine which ran for twenty years (1994-2014). She continues to contribute articles to a variety of international Catholic Journals.

She serves as an international consultant on the application of new digital media resources for catechesis, ministry and Church leadership. She offers workshops, seminars and lectures around the world. Her workshops range from designing new digital methodologies for learning, the relationship of the digital milieu and faith formation, transformational Church leadership, nurturing dialogue skills and spiritual formation in a digital era. In September 2012 she addressed the Asian Bishops in Communications and Seminary Rectors in Bangkok, Thailand. In January (2013) she addressed the Clergy Symposium and a Catechetical Conference in Dubai (Southern Arabia), May 2017 offered a full day workshop to the Antilles Episcopal Conference (Caribbean Bishops) during their annual meeting in St. Lucia and in October 2018 addressed various Church leadership groups in Aruba. Zukowski gave one of the two Keynote Addresses at the **National Catholic Educational Associations Convention** in Houston, Texas (April 2013). She has presented many workshops on “**Social Media and Ministry for Clergy Formation Days**”. In October 2020, she gave zoom workshops for the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada’s Conference, and, in April 2021, a keynote for a Zoom Conference sponsored by the Catholic University of St. Tomas, Manila, Philippines. Recently, she is an Academic Advisor for the Asian Research Center (Thailand – 2022).

In the past several years she has been deeply involved with the rapid expansion of **Christian Meditation with Children** within Catholic Schools. Based upon her international research, she is now **implementing Christian Meditation with Children** in consultation with the movement in Canada within the Mid-West (USA) to support quality Catholic Education and Catechesis. She is linking this movement into her vision of Catholic culture and identity in Catholic Schools. In fall 2017 NCEA MOMENTUM Journal featured her article on Christian Meditation. As a consultant to the Antilles Episcopal Conference - AEC (Caribbean Bishops) for Pastoral Communications, she has co-authored with Most Reverend Bishop Charles Jason Gordon, the new AEC’s **Pastoral Letter on Communications: New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu** (August 6, 2017). Currently, she is working with the seventeen AEC dioceses for the implementation of the vision of the Pastoral Letter through e-seminars, workshops and regular video consultations.

Furthermore, Zukowski’s research is in designing prototypes for interactive e- learning for Catholic education, adult faith, lay ecclesial leadership and catechist formation

through the **Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation** in various cultural contexts. As an international speaker and consultant, she seeks ways for addressing the impact of the digital milieu particularly for faith formation and evangelization. Her ongoing research fostering the insights of Fr. Pierre Babin, OMI (*with whom she was associated for twelve years in Lyon, France and influenced by Marshall McLuhan*) contributes for re-imagining his methodology called the Symbolic **Way** in the light of the digital culture for the 21st century. Currently she is researching and writing the history of her Religious Community- the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart”.

Within the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives she invites UD students to participate in the outreach of the Institute by working within the Institute. International UD students are highly encouraged to apply during the year. During the summer Graduate Students are offered an opportunity to engage in support research for the various Institute’s projects.

Sr. Zukowski is identified as one of the outstanding Religious Educators of the 20th Century on Talbot’s School of Theology Religious Education Webiste.

http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/catholic/angela_zukowski/