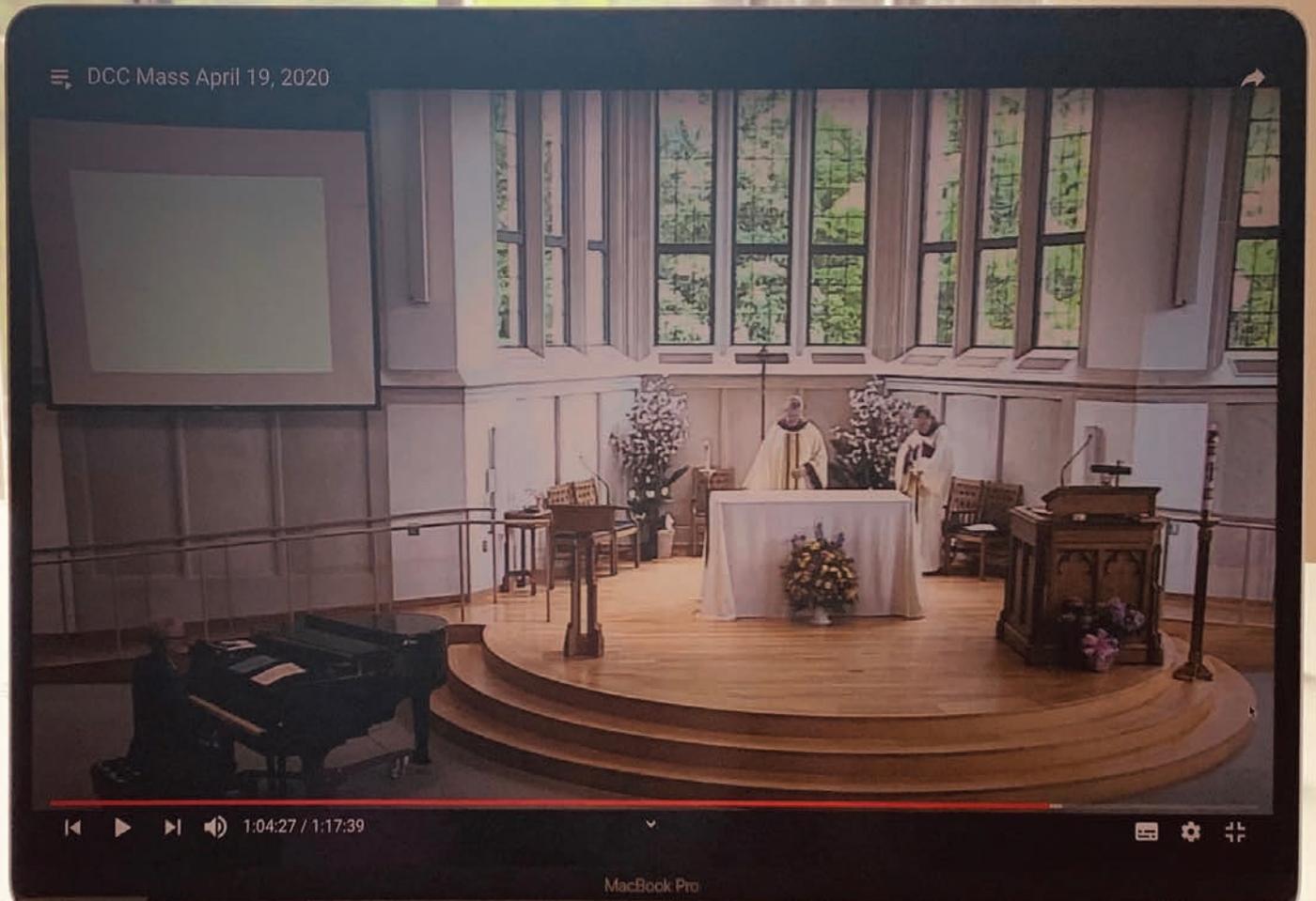


SUMMER 2020

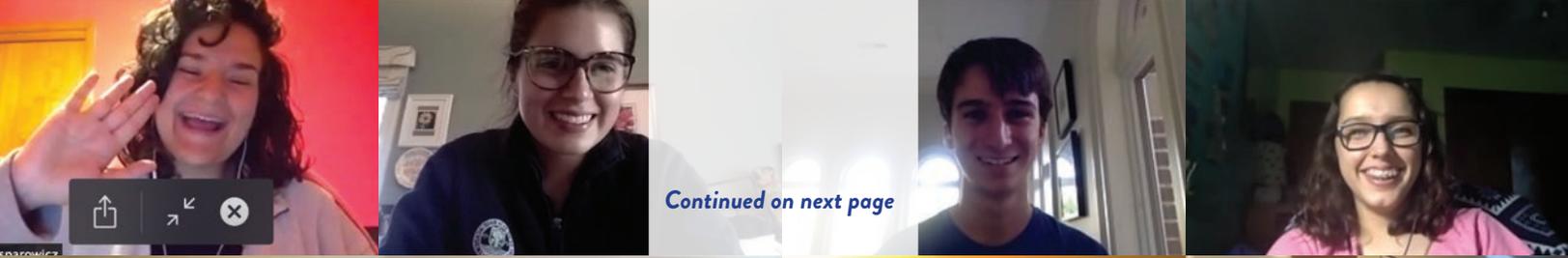
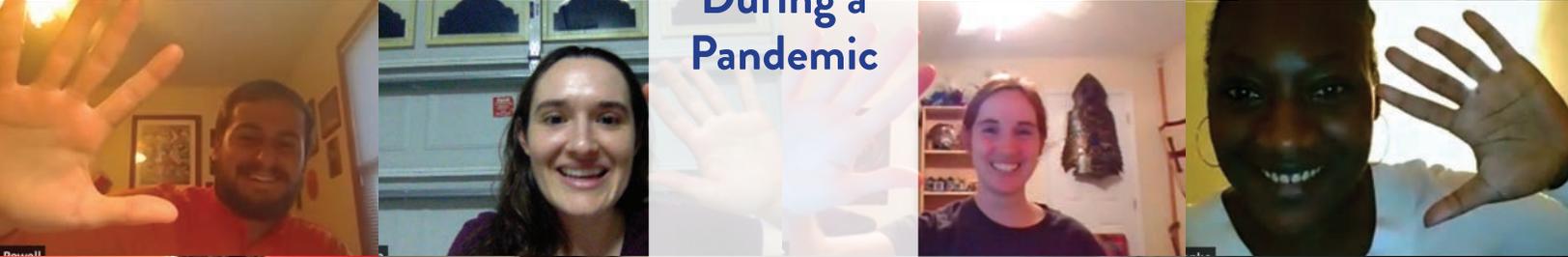
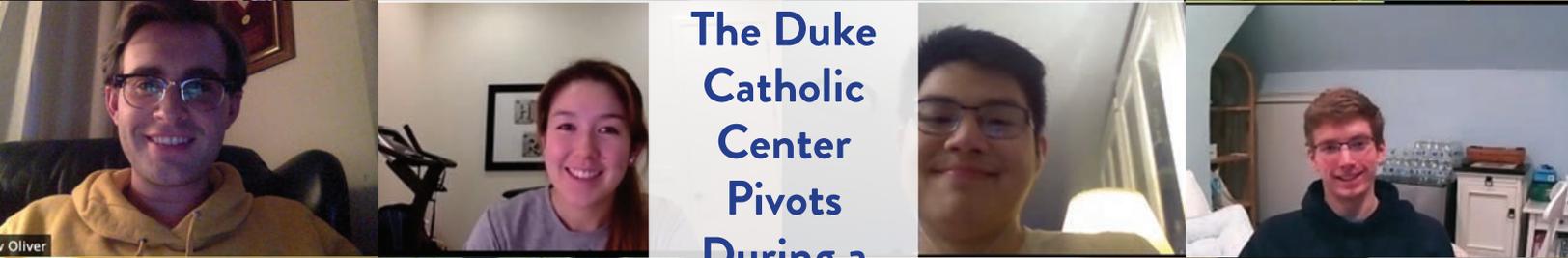
DUKE CATHOLIC

THE DUKE CATHOLIC CENTER NEWSLETTER



MacBook Pro





When the Duke Catholic Center staff gathered on March 11th for an emergency meeting to discuss the closure of Duke's campus and how to pivot the ministry during an unprecedented time, they briefly considered not live streaming Sunday Mass.

"I remember someone saying there were plenty of churches that live stream Sunday Mass and we asked ourselves whether we could really offer something that was unique," recalled Director of Development Michelle Sutton '12. "What we realized is that we could offer something different and perhaps we could do it better. The connection to Duke's

VIRTUAL MASS BEHIND THE SCENES

Right away, viewers that tuned into DCC's virtual Mass knew they were watching something special. While many parishes had the priest do all the readings for Mass, or a single lector in person, the DCC began to ask students to record themselves doing the readings remotely and then the DCC would air live the recordings during the service.

"I think it was a Holy Spirit thing," recalled Director of Music Andrew Witchger P'15. "When I left campus after the meeting, I was thinking that there has to be a way to include students in the virtual content.

My goal became to get as many people involved as possible, no matter where they were."

It was Andrew's idea to begin to include students in virtual Mass. The first Mass featured three different student lectors participating remotely – two from Florida and another from Ohio. Eventually the DCC involved over 25 lectors remotely including several lectors for the Passion readings during Holy Week.

"Online Mass was a lifesaver during the school year. It was great to still feel connected to the DCC and to share with my family, my friends who virtually contributed," said Kyle Campbell '22.

Then Andrew began to think about what was possible to do for the music ministry in the virtual format. His professional background played a key role in helping music ministry students stay involved.

"I spent 10 years working in a studio, mixing music together," said Andrew. "A lot of times we would use music from musicians that were not local. They would send us their tracks or we could record them live remotely. I knew the technology and I thought I could use it to keep the students engaged during this time and working together."

Continued on the next page



DCC Cantor OG '22 seamlessly transitioned from cantoring for Mass in person to leading worship virtually from her home in Arizona.

campus, the connection to our friars, and to the style of music we use to praise our God, is important to our students. We knew we had a much better chance of engaging students with their relationship with Jesus during the quarantine if they could continue to receive faith content from us, just as if they were on campus."

So instead of cancelling Mass, cancelling retreats, and cancelling small groups – the DCC moved all of these, some in less than a week, to a virtual format. The motto the DCC began to adopt in the Spring months became "God is never quarantined!"



Watch Music Director Andrew Witchger coach the DCC choir.

This [fascinating video](#) shows how Andrew would mix and edit tracks from students for various musical Mass parts. Andrew eventually engaged over 28 musicians remotely for Virtual Masses and created musical compilations for all the Mass parts that he dubbed the “COVID tracks”. He also put together engaging rehearsal videos that coached students through recording the music. This [particular video](#) shows Andrew coaching a student singing a Psalm after Easter and how it should be sung reflects the excitement of the Easter season. Students thrived in this environment in unique ways.

“The pandemic allowed students to improvise and try different styles with the music,” said Andrew. “Students are less self-conscious and are willing to take more musical risks when they’re recording themselves privately vs. performing in front of a congregation. Now that we’ve gone back to in-person Masses, I see my musicians have improved because they’ve had this experience.”

The results were outstanding. Duke Students, alumni, parents and friends were able to stay engaged in their faith during the pandemic through DCC’s online services. On average, over 400 users tuned in virtual Mass live and over 1400 would watch the recording of Mass after it aired live. The DCC received positive messages about its virtual services from all over the world.

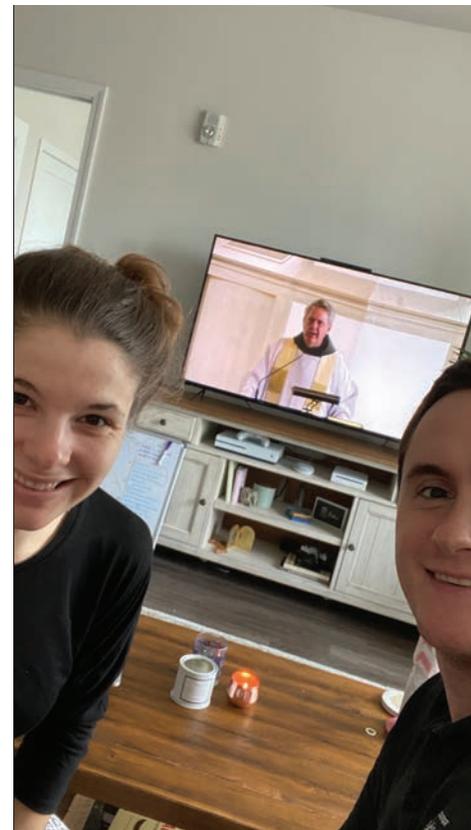
“I would just like to THANK YOU for the live stream Mass,” said Kevin Turkovich P’23. We decided to attend mass together as a family in our living room. It surely was a different setting for all of us, but I truly believe wherever people come together to worship to celebrate our Lord in prayer or Mass, Jesus is present. Having Fr. Mike say the Mass and the students participating remotely was a great idea and brought our global world together as God does everyday.”

PIVOTING OTHER DCC PROGRAMS

Coming off the success of virtual Mass, the DCC turned to its other programming that engages students in their relationship with Jesus to make them virtual as well. Eventually the DCC moved small groups, retreats, Holy Hour and even its event celebrating graduating seniors online.

“I began small group during the pandemic because a friend and I had agreed to start going together for Lent,” said Kyle Campbell ’22. “We started going together and thought it was good for both of us, so we finished out the school year and even attended during summer. I think small group was particularly useful during the pandemic because without Churches open, it provided a stand-in to engage with my faith each week. Also, the intellectual isolation of being sent home was remedied by having an hour to spend talking with others about our faith.”

The DCC will continue to pivot into the uncertainty of the Fall semester! 



Engaged DCC alumni Mary Skapek ’16 and Chris Dieckhaus ’16 watch virtual Mass online during the pandemic.



“If we are intended for great ends, we are called to great hazards.”

- ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

As we are on the cusp of student returning to campus, there seem to be many unknowns to consider. As I speak with various university administrators, the logistics seem rather intimidating and yet the spirit of determination and resolve have captured the moment. That experience, combined with a university that has the best and the brightest engaged in the process, gives me optimism about the academic year upon which we are about to embark. While there are obvious hazards, I believe greater ends await!

This summer has proved rather challenging on a number of levels. Fr. Brad’s death has shaken me and our community. Our faith, however, is the rock foundation upon which our lives and ministry have been built and I am confident that Fr. Brad would want us all to double down on the joy and hope of the resurrection. It is that great end to which he dedicated himself and toward which we move as we continue to celebrate our love of Christ Jesus in the Church. The hazard of loving is worthwhile for the greater end of knowing God’s love made manifest in this life and the next.

The challenges and hazards of preparing for a year of outreach in ministry to students who return to campus as well as those who will remain at home is daunting to be sure. But the greater end of sharing the joy of the Gospel with our students is what impels us. As we consider remaining in the Parking Garage for Mass and modifying a myriad of other ministerial possibilities, I invite you to join me/us in the truth that this time is no greater than some of the other challenges of human history. And through them all, great hazards though they may have been, Jesus is still Lord of the Universe and the love of our lives! I can see that the message of the Good News will be more difficult for some students who may have drifted from Jesus in these days of “stay-at-home”. But God’s glory is never hidden and will continue to be made manifest in us who love as He loves, even amidst the challenges of our times.

Know of my prayers for you and your families as we step out on faith!

Peace,
Fr. Mike

Mystical Body of Christ in Action.



“The most powerful moment was at the very first meeting, someone started with an opening prayer and over 40 students all made the sign of the cross at the same time,” said Ella. “It really hit me then and there that we were participating in the Mystical Body of Christ and the Church.”

After praying together, students broke up into breakout rooms on Zoom to discuss how to maintain their Catholic faith while away from school, friends, and a like-minded community. They shared about different ways to pray and hold each other accountable for growing in their faith even though they could not physically be together.

“For me and so many other Catholic students, this was an eye-opening experience into the vast community at-large that is the Catholic Church,” said Ella.

Ella decided to host two more intercollegiate prayer nights. The subsequent meetings had similar number of participants and allowed new friendships to flourish. Ella met two other college students from Columbia University who were attending similar events hosted by students from Santa Clara University.

As these connections began to deepen, Ella began to organize events for the future with her peers. She is now on an intercollegiate team that is preparing to host other virtual events for Catholic college students all over the United States as the pandemic continues and social distancing requirements remain in effect.

“We’ve started a Facebook group called “Intercollegiate Catholics” that has about 75 college student members from across the country,” said Ella. “Hopefully the Facebook group can be a way for us to maintain the intercollegiate Catholic community that began with these virtual prayer nights.” 

Like many other Duke students, Ella Gunady '22 felt the difficulty of quarantine settle in early. At first, what seemed to be an extended Spring Break, suddenly became an unprecedented semester as Duke Students were told they should not come back to campus. For Ella, who was very engaged in her faith as a Duke Student, this meant she could no longer attend Mass with her friends and her weekly small group. While the DCC began to offer these ministries virtually right away, she realized other college students at other universities might be missing connection through faith. So she gathered virtually with her other Duke Catholic friends and decided to host a prayer night for college students all over the world called “Intercollegiate Night of Prayer.”

Ella reached out to fellow Duke students, Kyla Brezitski '21, Elizabeth Bartusiak '21, Sophia Mascarena '21, Marco Gonzalez '21 and Natalie Kubicki '22. They hatched a plan to meet virtually. They began searching the web for other Catholic campus ministries and made cold calls and emails to several different ministry sites.

“I received a lot of rejections and no answers, which was really discouraging at first, but so worth it at the end. God really does provide,” said Ella.

Between the campus ministries that did respond, this newly formed team had sparked enough interest to hold their first event on April 21st. The first night of prayer was a huge success. Including the 5 Duke students, over 40 participants from over 15 universities gathered on Zoom to pray for 90 minutes. The event greatly impacted all those who attended.



Catherine Preston '01: A Legacy of Christian Service



At the end of June, longtime Duke Catholic Center staffer Catherine Preston announced that she would leave her post as DCC campus minister after 12 years in order to pursue a career in nursing. Catherine ministered and shepherded hundreds of students and alums to Jesus during her many years serving at the Duke Catholic Center. It was rare for her to be absent at any DCC event. She was always present, accompanied by her brother Tom Preston, who's presence at the DCC was honored in the [DCC's 2014 Annual Report](#).

"It is hard to even imagine the DCC without Catherine. Over the last 11 years, I have seen Catherine at every Mass, every Tuesday Night Dinner, and virtually every interaction I've had with the DCC," said Adam Tomasiello '13 and former Duke Admissions Officer. "To me, the qualities that truly define Catherine are her patience, poise, and positivity. Catherine's life is a powerful testament to Christ."

Catherine first encountered the Duke Catholic Center when she was a student at Duke where she pursued a degree in Psychology and was on the varsity swimming team. She quickly became a student faith leader and then when she graduated in 2001, she served as the DCC's first Peer Ministry Coordinator for two years. It was there that she discovered a heart for ministry and enrolled at Franciscan University to obtain a Masters in Theology. She later re-joined the DCC staff in 2008 as Director of Faith Formation, and was most recently promoted to Director of Small Groups as the DCC was rapidly expanding its small group outreach. Her impact during all these roles is hard to describe.

"I was indeed touched by Catherine—by her prayerfulness, her deep, evident love for Jesus, her patience and manifest charity," said Br. Charles Marie, OP '16. "Her witness to the daily perseverance in grace that is part and parcel of the Christian life was a moving example to me--and remains so, as I not infrequently think of and pray for her." Br. Charles graduated in 2016 and joined the Dominican seminary to pursue a vocation to the priesthood.

During her long tenure, Catherine wore so many hats – all of them which led students closer to Christ. She prepared countless students to receive the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, confirmation, and first communion. She organized countless retreats, guiding student leaders and reviewing student retreat talks. She was instrumental in kicking off the DCC's evangelical small group program which has flourished in the last 5 years, even designing a unique retreat program for small group faith leaders that has shepherded an era and spirit of prayer and discipleship amongst Catholic Students. It suffices to say that Catherine's impact ran deep, and many Catholic students and alums are still practicing their faith today because of Catherine's ministry and service.

"Catherine was one of the main reasons I stayed involved in the DCC during my time at Duke," said Kirsten Osbourne '13. She was always available to chat and lend her support whenever I was going through a tough time. Her words of religious wisdom and advice were invaluable, and I owe part of my continued commitment to the Catholic faith to her."

The Duke Community was saddened by her departure, as it is certainly a loss, but is very excited about Catherine's future!

"I know Catherine is proud of the work she's done at the Catholic Center, and she should be," said DCC Director of Development Michelle Sutton '12. "She is a 'helper' and nursing school is a beautiful next step." 



In Loving Memory



FR. BRAD HECKATHORNE, OFM, CONV.

DECEMBER 3, 1950 – JULY 11, 2020

This last month, the Duke Catholic community was devastated in mid-July by the unexpected passing of its DCC Associate Director, Fr. Brad Heckathorne, OFM Conv. His ministry and service left a deep impact on Catholic life at Duke and the other Conventual Franciscan communities in which he served throughout his decades of priestly ministry.

At Duke, he was loved greatly by students, staff, and alumni for his heart for the poor and marginalized, for his willingness to walk alongside students wherever they may be in their spiritual lives, and for his dry, one-of-a-kind humor.

The DCC will publish an in-depth tribute of Fr. Brad in its upcoming Annual Report. If you have any Fr. Brad stories you'd like to share about how he touched your life, please contact Michelle Sutton at michelle.sutton@duke.edu.

FRIAR SIDE CHATS



OUR TOP THREE
FRIAR SIDE CHAT
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR YOUR
DAILY WALK



Looking for a fresh way to connect your faith with everyday life? Well, we might be a little biased, but we're still going to recommend giving the DCC's Friar Side Chats podcast a listen! You can find Friar Side Chats on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, the DCC app, Soundcloud, and more. Plus, here are our top three recommendations to get you started:

#64 | Why Is This So Hard?

When we look at people whose faith we admire, there's often a common thread running through their lives: regular and intentional prayer. So what is it about prayer that makes it so powerful? How can we make it a bigger part of our lives? And importantly: why is it sometimes so hard?

#49 | Back To Basics

In a world where it can be all too easy to step back from our faith when we are so caught up in trying to achieve our dreams, Duke alum Rob Collins shares how getting back to basics has been key for his career and his life.

#3 | Relationships Part 1: Do They Really Get You?

In this time of both too-close quarters and isolation from loved ones, we could all do with some renewal and refreshment. Join us as we take a deeper look at our relationships with family and friends and examine some practical steps to take these relationships to the next level. 



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