

*Serving the
UCLA
community*

CATHOLIC BRUIN

August 2015

Volume 12, Issue 1

From our Director

"Dear Fr. Peter: There are pivotal moments in life and the people who are with you or who come into your life at those moments are so very important. You and your staff are such people. It is a blessing to have you in our son's and daughter's lives at UCLA. Thank you for showing us what a faith-filled life for others can be!"

In her stellar reflections at Baccalaureate Mass this June, graduating senior Megan Beck challenged nearly 40 of our 2015 UCLA graduates not only to keep growing in insight, but also to take Christ's generous love into every aspect of their lives. Reprising St. Francis' dictum, "Preach the Gospel at all times—when necessary, use words," she urged her fellow grads not to rest on their laurels, but instead to put their faith into action in the world fearlessly, since the Lord will be with them always. It was a powerful, vibrant message for all of us assembled to hear. Equally powerful and touching was the witness of each graduate reminding us always to be grateful, as they recalled who and what they were thankful for in their lives—and why. Virtually all spoke of how the UCC had been a place of welcome, warmth, and constancy, a place where they were able to grow in their faith and in their sense of community with so many fellow believers. As I said last year, I'm brash enough to believe that, with the Holy Spirit's gracious help, we do this ministry well! Let me share now a bit of what's been happening recently.

Fall wrapped up with great Advent celebrations of the Immaculate Conception and *La Virgen de Guadalupe*. There were discussion evenings with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (on "service")—An Bui, Leiza Castillo, and Megan herself will serve with the JVC next year!—and with Bishop Edward Clark (his ever-popular "Q & A"), a St. Valentine's blood drive, lively nights of poetry/spoken word and of painting, a talent-laden Coffeehouse evening, and a week-long "Busy Bruins" retreat. In March, UCLA Visiting Professor of Public Policy (& former Presidential candidate) Michael Dukakis shared with Catholic faculty and staff his thoughts on "Health Care: the Moral Imperative" from his own Greek Orthodox perspective, while English professor Joseph Nagy spoke in May to this group on "Teaching Students About Myth." Fr. John Cusick, founding director of young adult ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago preached here in May, and explained Sunday liturgy with "A Walk Through the Mass Together."



The UCC Community gathers for our annual "Mass on the Grass" on the UCLA campus.

Thursday dinners, prepared by teams of 3-4 students, draw 30-45 weekly. Bible study/faith-sharing discussions (e.g., on suffering, vocation, Christian art) remain popular, as do evenings of adoration, Taizé prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, or Stations of the Cross during Lent, plus St. Vincent de Paul's regular servings of meals to the homeless on Skid Row downtown or reading to underserved kids. 40-50 students had a faith-filled time at our "Friendship with Jesus" Spring Retreat April 10-12. We hosted a "Catholic Olympics" to bring together "friendly competitors" from other nearby universities on April 25. UCC teams again joined UCLA's annual *Dance Marathon* to help fund pediatric AIDS research or *Relay for Life* to fight cancer. A 6th annual UCC Prom, *Masquerade*, took place in May. Six young adults were welcomed into the Church at Easter Vigil—to cap a vibrant Holy Week, and seventeen were confirmed by Bishop Clark on Mother's Day. Alleluia!!!

I'm ever conscious of the increasing financial needs of the UCC. Besides our normal bills, we will repay (for another year) L.A.'s Department of Water and Power an annual back assessment of more than \$2,000, stemming from four years of incorrectly-rated bills! Moreover, while our archdiocese is remarkable for the level of funding (all staff salaries and benefits!) it has provided us to date, there are no guarantees that such generosity will be endless. So even as we continue to apply for grants to fund a much-needed development director, your help is critical!

Many thanks for keeping our campus ministry present and influential at life's pivotal moments for so many Catholic students here at UCLA! Without your prayers and your financial assistance, few of the events and activities mentioned in this issue would have been possible. In fact, you may wish to take advantage of our credit card donation plan through ParishPay. Just go to www.uccla.org and click on "Support the UCC." And if you have not made us one of your investments, please consider adding us to your charities. Your gift to the UCC will reap invaluable rewards as we strive to form and empower

our students to be future church and civic leaders.

May our Gracious God continue to bless you always!

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- Fr. Peter Abdella, CSP



PARTING THOUGHTS

Quotes from our 2015 Graduates



I will always keep the UCC in my heart, as it is truly a unique place which offered me the support I needed throughout school.

—Valeria Koenigsberg, M.A. Italian Studies

My favorite memory of the UCC is my first Sunday where I felt incredibly welcomed into a new community, with a Mass dedicated to others like me.

—Jonathan Solichin, B.A. Design and Media Art

I'm thankful to the UCC for being a source of guidance and stability throughout my four years here at UCLA. From every Blessing of the Brains to Holy Week to Mass on the Grass, every memory will be cherished. I will miss the familiar charms of the UCC and will be sure to visit every chance I get.

—Kristine Sitson, B.S. Psychobiology

At the UCC, I loved growing in my faith at Bible Study and at Mass and having fellowship with other students.

—Dwight Asuncion, M.B.A. / M.P.H.

I loved being able to attend Mass every week with friends from various other campus involvements who share my faith.

—Kristi Denny, B.A. English

I treasure every memory that I have made at the UCC, and I would like to thank my Student Leadership Team, friends, and the staff for providing me with a home that I will surely return to.

—Andrea Chau, B.S. Physiological Science

I am thankful for the support of the discernment group, Bible studies, the amazing choir, tasty food, great priests, the Student Leadership team, and a space to connect with the Lord. The UCC has provided me with an opportunity to meet so many beautiful people that have helped me on my faith journey.

—Daniel Ojeda, B.A. Psychology

Attention Alumni!

The UCC wants to stay connected with its dear alumni. That's where you come in. We would like to keep you updated on the plans that we have for our ministry, as well as any special events or fundraisers. We want to hear your news, too! We intend to reach out to as many of you as we can. We deeply appreciate your love and care for this Center, and together, old and new members, we will make the University Catholic Center a great place for all future Catholic Bruins!

**Please update us on your email or physical address!
Keep in touch with us by:**

- **EMAIL:**
staff@uccla.org
- **INTERNET:**
www.uccla.org
- **PHONE:**
310.208.5015
- **IN PERSON/BY SNAIL MAIL:**
633 Gayley Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Congratulations, Graduates! We will miss you!

UCC Alumni News

Julia Morton (M.L.I.S. '11) and Hector Torres were married on April 11

Marie Ramirez (B.A. '10) and Antonio Pedrozo were married on May 23

Gabriela Tunzi (B.A. '09) and Martin Behn were married on May 30

Lena Grace, daughter of **Dave (Ph.D. '12)** and **Val (Cullen) Shepard (Ph.D. '10)**, was baptized on July 11

Joaquin Galarza (B.S. '11) and **Megan Claire (B.A. '11)** were married on July 18

Kassandra Reyes (B.A. '10) & **Gabriel Mantaring (B.S. '07)** will be married on October 3

Nick Ross (B.S. '12) and **Melodie Ampuero (B.A. '12)** are engaged

Christine Daniels (B.A. '12) graduated from Loyola Marymount University's Law School

Megan Claire (B.A. '11), **Alyssa Ferraro (B.A. '13)**, and **Alexandra Rudolf-Dib (B.A. '13)** graduated from the PLACE teaching program at Loyola Marymount University

An Bui (B.A. '15), **Leiza Castillo (B.A. '15)**, and **Megan Beck (B.A. '15)** will spend the year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps

Congratulations to all!

SERVICE IN LOVE

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul at UCLA

Here at UCLA, it is important for students not only to embody academic strength but also active participation in the community. On top of that, Christ calls all of us to serve not only out of obligation but mostly out of love of our neighbor. But how can we make this more than words? The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) strives to be a witness of Christ's teachings all over the world through many resources, especially those directed to the poor. Our group at the UCC is one of the student-run conferences of the Society.

As busy students studying disciplines ranging from neuroscience to anthropology, being a part of SVdP has not only given us the opportunity to serve Christ in the poor but also to be able to grow in the spirit of God. One of the acts of charity we



Members of SVdP on Skid Row handing out food and water.

focus on is feeding the poor. However, we don't just satisfy their physical hunger, we also make it our mission to build community with them. The people at Skid Row are people first, and Christ has opened his heart to everyone no matter where they're from or who they are. There is no stronger bond made than with eye contact and a good chat, acknowledging each other in the light of Christ.

As a young group, we also acknowledge the needs of children. SVdP runs the Circle V Ranch camp, a summer camp for under-served youth. We help set up the camp for the annual summer sessions. One of our members also took up the opportunity to be one of the camp counselors. We also outreach through other programs, such as Reading to

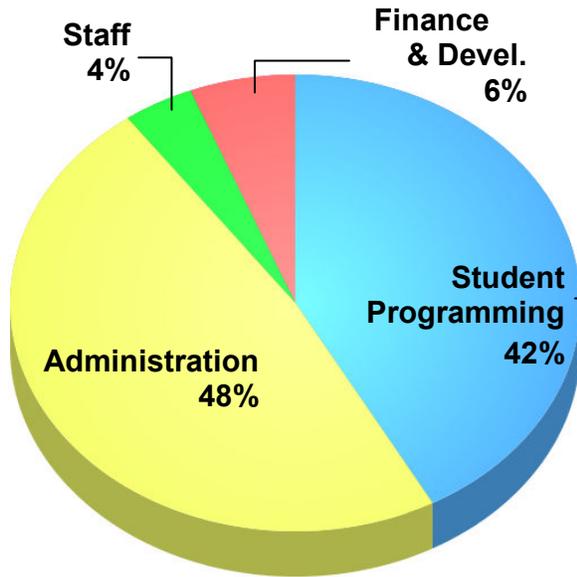
Kids, an organization that provides a once-a-month Saturday reading group, and SVdP's Christmas toy drive. To work with and for these kids, we learn again how to be child-like and see the kingdom of God.

As we have seen, there are many niches in the community that need assistance. Our immediate community, consisting of our peers, is also one of the groups we reach out to. As a faith community, we also strengthen one another with Christ's love. We welcome one another during our weekly meetings but also continue to look for new service opportunities that members are passionate about. For example, we've recently began a food service for the homeless in Westwood. In order to build God's kingdom on earth, we shall work, pray, and serve with our lives. As the SVdP founder Frederic Ozanam said, "Yours must be a work of love."

—Diane Villaroman, 4th year, Neuroscience

UCC STATISTICS

Who Makes Up the UCC & Where Our Money Goes



Total Expenses—\$115,439.72*

*Staff salaries are provided by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and are not included here.

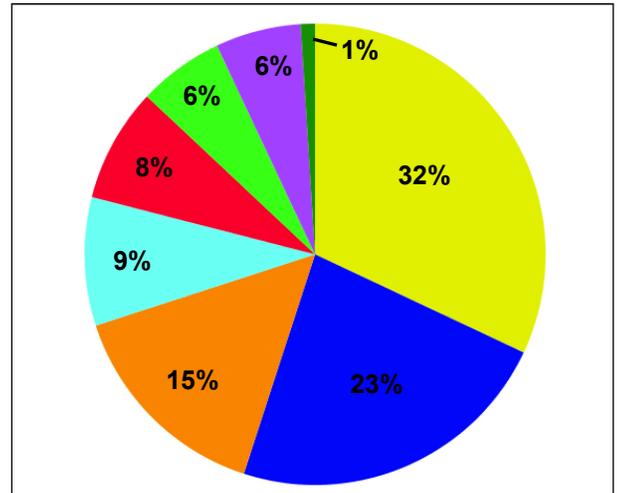
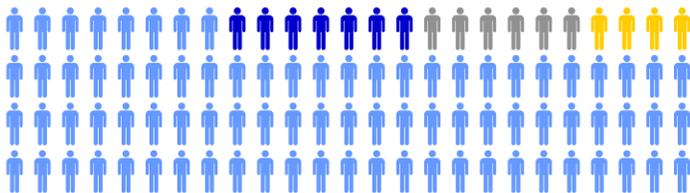
Registration Stats: 641 Registered

83% Undergraduates

7% Grad Students

6% Faculty & Alumni

4% Resident Community Members



Student Programming accounts for

\$48,111.75

- Student Retreats **\$15,376.44**
- Education & Faith Devel. **\$10,798.17**
(incl. ESTEEM, LA Religious Ed Congress, University Catholic Conference of CA, and Speaker Series)
- Liturgy **\$7,194.80**
(including Music Ministry)
- Student Leadership Team **\$4,546.36**
- Community Life **\$3,608.49**
- Social Justice **\$2,983.65**
- Outreach **\$2,962.50**
- Sacramental Preparation **\$641.34**



Our ministry to UCLA students depends upon students' donations, and more importantly, the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends of the UCC. With your pledge, the academic year 2015-2016 will bring even more formation, fellowship, and social justice activities to the Center. Prayerfully consider joining us as we empower the Catholic leaders of tomorrow. We need your support!

Please use the enclosed envelope, or use ParishPay, which you can find by clicking "Support" on the top menu bar of our website, www.uccla.org.

SEEKING GOD'S WILL

UCC Discernment Group

The 2014-2015 school year was a particularly important year for me. I had been discerning a religious vocation for a number of years, but I had been mostly discerning alone. I kept many desires, prayers, and experiences deep within my heart because I found no one to share them with. My first two years of college were similar to high school in this respect: no one really understood why anyone would be drawn to a simple life of chastity, poverty, and obedience. This dissonance was especially strong at UCLA, where the student population is motivated to be the best and be on top. I was once one among them, but the calling grew stronger and louder. This year was important because I made the decision to accept in my heart and mind this interior calling. I reached out to vocation directors and spiritual guides in order to cultivate and foster the potential beginnings of a religious vocation. God outdid me and also provided me brothers for the journey.

The Discernment group at the UCC appears to have developed a reputation as an esteemed and selective group. No one really seems to know who is in it, what is discussed, or when we meet—all for pretty good reasons! Some men, like myself, wanted to keep this discernment process a secret. The content shared was often deeply personal and not warranted for the general public. The next meeting time was determined at the end of every group. The initial discernment period is a particularly sensitive time that needs proper spiritual care. When the need was recognized, Fr. Paul invited a number of men in the community with a shared drawing toward religious life to simply meet each other and share. When finally given this platform, many of us realized: (1) there are actually several of us, (2) we are not alone on this journey, and (3) this type of space is necessary for our growth. What started as a one-time meet-and-greet evolved into a weekly support group. What started with a formalized agenda and structured introductions turned into a space for self-reflection and fellowship.

As we grew toward God during the year, it became natural that we grew closer together. The dynamics of the group were subtly changing as men left and joined throughout the year, but the Spirit of Unity allowed for smooth transitions. We were all at different stages of discernment, but the Spirit of Wisdom illumined our hearts to share useful insights with each other. Though we were diverse individuals with different stories and different callings to serve the Church, the Spirit of Discernment brought us together to become brothers. These men became some of my closest and dearest friends. As I continue with my discernment outside UCLA, I know I have a few phone numbers I can call and opinions I can seek. Praise be to God always.

—Joby Joseph, Class of 2015, Psychology and Study of Religion



A view of the UCC Chapel.

THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

UCC Christmas Concert

On December 6th, a seemingly ordinary Saturday night, the UCLA University Catholic Center (UCC) Music Ministry, conducted by Richard Medrano, filled the UCC chapel with blessed noise. Singing a Christmas Cantata named “The Wonder of Christmas” and a few contemporary Christmas tunes, the Music Ministry certainly ushered the Christmas spirit into the chapel.

The UCC Music Ministry – consisting of a choir and numerous instrumentalists – which usually provides liturgical music for the UCC, began with a string of lighthearted, fun, and engaging Christmas staples such as “All I Want for Christmas,” “Baby it’s Cold Outside,” and lastly, “12 Days of Christmas.” In each of these songs, the choir, in multiple groups, gave the audience a teaser of their clear vocal prowess. In “12 Days of Christmas,” a string of vocalists extended into the audience to coax them into participating in the concert, with each row of the audience singing of each day what “true love gave to us” for Christmas.

Delightfully participating in “12 Days of Christmas” left the audience invested and focused on the concert, which transitioned to the ensemble’s performance of the harmonies located within the cantata, beginning with a rousing overture and hymn “Let Us Adore Him.” The song declared prominently that “Christmas time is here!” followed by multiple verses inspired by the biblical prophecy of Christ in Isaiah 9:6. This biblically prophetic quality of “Let Us Adore Him” lent the concert an ecstatic quality in which the audience could watch the Christmas prophecy unfold in song.

(continued on page 7)

Student Leadership Team (SLT)

- UCC Activities Fair
- Welcome Night
- First Student Dinner (85 people)
- Mass on the Grass & BBQ
- Finals Study Nights each quarter
- SLT Info Sessions and Turnover
- Western-themed Community Appreciation Banquet

Social Justice

- Dance Marathon
- Relay for Life / Luminaria Sales
- Museum of Tolerance Trip
- One Life LA walk
- SVdP Weekly Skid Row Service
- SVdP Christmas Toy Drive
- SVdP Reading to Kids
- SVdP Midterm Care Packs
- Catholic Relief Services “Operation Rice Bowl”
- Jesuit Volunteer Corps infosession
- Visit to Homegirl Café

Outreach

- UCC Website
- UCC on Bruinwalk
- UCC T-Shirts
- St. Valentine’s Blood Drive
- Ecumenical Ash Wed. Service on campus (w/ Liturgy)
- Catholic Olympics with Catholic student groups from other universities
- USAC Funding requests and grants
- Explanatory Mass (with Fr. John Cusick)

Liturgy

- Eucharistic Adoration (with Education & Faith Devel.)
- Bread Baking for Sunday Mass
- Liturgical Minister Training
- Ash Wednesday Masses in Kerckhoff & Ackerman
- Holy Day Masses (incl. *La Virgen de Guadalupe*)
- Holy Week / Triduum services
- Advent & Lenten Planning/Bookmarks
- Advent and Lenten Reconciliation Services
- Multicultural Mass on Pentecost
- Baccalaureate Mass
- Prayers of the Faithful Writing
- Chapel Decoration
- Chris Walker speaks on Liturgical Ministry
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Paschal Candle Preparation

Music Ministry

- Music Ministry Coffeehouse
- Christmas Concert
 - Cantor/Psalmist Training
 - Choir Beach Day
 - End-of-the-Year Choir Dinner

Education and Faith Development

- RCIA (6 people received or completed Sacraments)
- Confirmation with Bishop Clark (17 people Confirmed)
- Bible Beach Day
- Weekly Bible Studies
- Catholicism WOW discussions
- *Kyrie Eleison* Praise & Worship group
- ESTEEM (Development of Future Church Leaders)
- Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ, speaks:
 - “A Conversation on Genuine Loving”

Community Life

- Weekly Student Dinners
- UCC Prom: “Masquerade”
- Weekly “Cornerstone” LGBT Meetings
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- Visit to LA’s Cathedral
- Art Night
- Poetry Night
- Faculty/Staff gatherings/socials

Retreats

- Freshman/Transfer Student Retreat:
- Fall Weekend Retreat:
 - “Love in Translation: Stories of Faith”
- Spring Weekend Retreat: “Friendship with Jesus”
- “Busy Bruin” Retreat
- Evening Retreat for Graduating Seniors

Other

- UCC at LA Religious Education Congress
- UCC at University Catholic Conference of California
- Talk by Dr. Richard Gaillardetz:
 - “Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism”
- Q&A Evening with Bishop Clark



A BIG Thank You to our 2014-2015 Student Leadership Team!

(back row) Gabriel Relich, Taylor Freitas
 (2nd row) Lisandra Uribe, Maria Pedraza
 (front row) Allison Grenda, Megan Beck, Jennifer Truong, Leiza Castillo, Chelsy Sanchez

(continued from page 5)

This was followed by “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” an energetic African “Sing Noel,” and “We Three Kings,” that was almost effortlessly belted out by the ensemble while rousing the spirits of the audience in preparation for an exultant Carol Medley. The Carol Medley – an amalgamation of “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” “The First Noel,” “Silent Night! Holy Night!,” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” – began with a jubilant declaration of Christ’s birth, bringing the prophecy that started in “Let Us Adore Him” full circle.



Music Director Rich Medrano leads the choir at their Christmas Concert

The concert then proceeded to a reflective and poignant note, continuing from the mood set by “Silent Night! Holy Night!” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” to the ensemble’s wistful performance of the Celtic-inspired “Wexford Carol.” The concert’s last song ended with a vibrant performance of “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” which closed on a high crescendo declaring “Christ, the Lord,” leaving the entire chapel in ineffable wonder for the majestic image of the Christchild.

–Jonathan Lee, 4th year, English

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

University Catholic Conference of California 2015

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1)

This was the theme for the University Catholic Conference of California (UCCC) of 2015. More than 150 university students from throughout California gathered at UC San Diego for a weekend to get away from the stresses and pressures of university life, to re-connect with Christ and the faith, and to connect with each other. At the conference, we listened to notable Catholic speakers such as Paul J. Kim, Jaime Thietten, and Pasquale Talarico, all of whom are well-known Catholic praise and worship leaders and singers. Through workshops, we learned more about our faith and deepened our Catholic spirituality so we might be better equipped to live out our faith in our everyday lives. During the day, in between speakers and workshops, there were activities and small groups for us so we might connect with our fellow Catholics. We celebrated Holy Mass every day so that we might allow the Eucharist to transform us from within. At night, we retired to the chapel for an evening of praise and worship, reconciliation, and adoration to implore our Lord God for his guidance and strength as we come to terms with our role in the great plan He has for us all.

The structure of the UCCC was quite basic, but what made it really special – more than the amazing keynote speakers, more than the workshops – was the opportunity granted to all of us at the conference to connect with each other. During this weekend, we met student leaders from other college campuses who dealt with the same stresses and the same struggles as student leaders at UCLA. We met students who understood the hardships of being a Catholic in a public, secular university. We met other campus ministers who could help guide and support us. Through it all, we met people who understood, who empathized, and who cheered each other on as Catholics in a society that doesn’t often have the greatest opinion of us.



At the end of the conference, the students and speakers gather for a picture.

And this great message—the message of intense support and love we can find not only in Christ Jesus himself, but also in the saints and martyrs in heaven, as well as in every person God has placed into our lives—was explored and understood throughout the entire weekend. We saw it in the Eucharist during Adoration and Mass, as we remembered the great sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. We saw it in the inspiring stories of our keynote speakers who helped to rekindle the fire in our souls, the fire of the Holy Spirit that moves us to action. And most of all, we saw it in each other, our earthly cloud of witnesses, cheering us on to keep pushing and moving forward. Full of life, love, and passion, together we run with endurance the race that is set before us.

–Chelsy Sanchez, 3rd year, Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology



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**MEET THE 2015-2016
 STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM!**



ANNE MARIE ALWAN
2nd year, Undeclared

ARIANA BUSSIO
3rd year, English, Theatre & Education minor



ANDREA CERVANTES
3rd year, Psychobiology

EUGENE DEL VALLE
PhD Student, Structural Engineering



JOSEPH FROMM
4th year, Bioengineering

JONATHAN LEE
4th year, English, Film & TV minor



VANESSA LOPEZ
3rd year, Physiological Science



CARINA MARSELLA
2nd year, Undeclared

KEVIN MILLER
4th year, Psychology



HANNAH NAVA-HOLSTEIN
2nd year, Psychology, Education Studies minor

THANG TRAN
3rd year, Biology, Asian American Studies minor



LISANDRA URIBE
4th year, Psychobiology, Religious Studies minor

MATTHEW ZAHN
2nd year, Biology

