



## FACULTY NEWSLETTER

December 6, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving weekend and you are rested and ready for the push to finals and the conclusion of the fall 2022 semester!

With that in mind, I want to share some information on what lies ahead at the beginning of the spring semester 2023, as well as reminding all of us on how we will be wrapping up this semester in terms of grading and the Christmas holiday that follows.

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First, a look ahead to January and the **University Research Day Abstract Submissions that will be due January 24, 2023**: University Research Day (URD) at The Catholic University of America is a day when students, faculty, and staff come together to celebrate, share, and learn about the exciting research taking place at Catholic University.

Over the past seven years, URD has showcased the work of hundreds of students, faculty, and staff, including research on the economics of farmers in Ghana, evangelization in the New World, the effect of mindfulness in child development, and the automatic detection of concussions, among many others. For instance, I invite you to [explore last year's award winners and program](#).

URD 2023, which will take place on April 18, 2023, will include opportunities for posters, oral presentations, and interactive research demonstrations (e.g. architectural models, short dramatic performances, etc.).

If you are interested in presenting a paper, poster, or interactive demonstration, please complete the abstract submission form available on the [URD Abstract](#)

[Submissions page](#). Abstracts must be received by January 24, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. to be considered. Submissions received after that date will not be reviewed.

More information is available at <https://research-day.catholic.edu/> and you can reach out to the University Research Day team at [researchday@cua.edu](mailto:researchday@cua.edu).

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A more formal announcement on the Christmas/New Year's break will be issued in the coming days, but before that email goes out, I want to stress that all academic buildings will remain open until the start of the break on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

There is an expectation that the entire University campus will be closed from that time (Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.) until Tuesday, January 3, 2023. This means that all faculty and staff members must anticipate your needs before the University closes on Wednesday, December 21.

Please remember that over the Christmas break heating in buildings and other utilities will be set to minimum levels. In the event of inclement weather, snow removal and salting will be limited.

In years past, my office has granted exceptions for faculty and academic staff members to return to campus to use their offices or other academic facilities. This year, only the following exceptions will be considered:

- Research activities where a delay would have significant financial impact or catastrophically disrupt the research project or protocol.
- The staffing of laboratories with animal experiments where a delay would result in euthanasia or loss of a colony or as needed to support critical research.
- The staffing of laboratories with activities to maintain living tissues, plants, or animals, to prevent a catastrophic loss of data.
- Deadline-driven research activities or activities with short-term deadlines whose pause or deferral would lead to catastrophic delay or loss of research results.

If you believe entry to your building meets the requirements listed above and you need to request an exception, you must submit your request by Monday, December 12 at 12:00 noon [by Google Form](#). The request will be forwarded to Vice Provost David Long ([longdp@cua.edu](mailto:longdp@cua.edu)) for final authorization. The approved list of exceptions will then be submitted to the Department of Public Safety from the Provost's office.

**Due to continued projects taking place in Caldwell Hall and McMahon Hall, those buildings will be closed to all occupants throughout the break.**

Any approved requests for access to academic facilities will only be given for Tuesday, December 27 through Friday, December 30 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. No weekend or extended hour requests will be granted.

Please note that no undergraduate students and graduate students are allowed on campus during the Christmas break except for those who have been approved as essential members of research laboratories.

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These are the important upcoming dates for all of us as we close the fall semester:

Thursday, December 8	Patronal Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Holiday & Reading Day; no classes)
Friday, December 9	Last day for Fall 2022 graduation candidates to submit diploma application in <a href="#">Cardinal Students</a>  Final date to deposit theses and dissertations for January 2023 graduation
Sunday, December 11	Reading Day
Monday, December 12	Last Day of Classes
Tuesday, December 13 through Saturday, December 17	<a href="#">Final examination period</a>
<b>Tuesday, December 20</b>	<b>All final grades due in Cardinal Students by 3:00 p.m.</b>
Saturday, January 7, 2023	Degree conferral for students completing degree requirements in Fall 2022 semester

I again highlight the date and time of **Tuesday, December 20 at 3:00 p.m.** as the deadline for submitting grades in Cardinal Students.

Every member of the faculty was sent the Final Grades Memo from the University Registrar yesterday afternoon (December 5). Please take note of the special grading circumstances listed on the memo.

Every semester I receive reports from the University Registrar on the number of faculty members who have missed the deadline and the number of courses without entered grades. While I am always happy to say that the number of late grades has gone down from semester to semester, I want to reach zero this semester.

***I cannot stress enough that your grades need to be completed and submitted on time.***

Any questions about the Final Grades Memo should be directed to the Office of Enrollment Services at 202-319-5300 or [cua-enrollmentservices@cua.edu](mailto:cua-enrollmentservices@cua.edu).

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Finally, as I have done in my three previous pre-Christmas newsletters, and despite the fact that we are still in the earlier stages of Advent with today's celebration of the Feast of Saint Nicholas, I submit the following Christmas reflection that I hope will bring our celebrations into perspective:

If you were to attend all the Christmas Masses, you would hear a different gospel at each Mass. The gospels begin with Matthew's genealogy of Jesus at the Vigil Mass, continues with a joyful proclamation of the birth of Jesus from Luke's gospel at the Midnight Mass, and then, on Christmas day, the gospel of John reminds us that Christ is God the Son, the Word made flesh.

It may be the case that the hardest gospel to listen to at Christmas is the genealogy of Jesus, but even without the shepherds, angels, magi, or manger, there is still quite a story there.

The genealogy begins, "**Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob,**" and so on, listing forty-one men and five women. Heading the list is Abraham, the first person God spoke to directly since Adam and Eve, who was told to "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." God told Abraham to leave behind his family, all his relatives, all his friends, and Abraham did as God commanded. By listing Abraham at the beginning of the genealogy, the first ancestor we encounter is a very holy, God-centered man.

“Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.”

We stop again with Tamar, the first woman in the genealogy. According to Jewish law, when a husband died, if he had no male children, the brother of the dead husband was to marry the widow and have children, so that the property would be kept in the family and the family name would be carried on. Er, the first son of Judah, had married Tamar. The couple had no children, and Er died. Just as the law required, Onan, the second son of Judah, married Tamar. Again, no children, and Onan dies. By now, Tamar wanted no more of Judah's sons as husbands, and besides, Shelah, the third son, was quite young.

Then, Judah's wife dies. Tamar decides she doesn't want to marry Judah's son Shelah, but Judah himself. According to Jewish law, if a man gets a woman pregnant, he must marry her. Knowing the law, Tamar devises a plot to wed the sheep-baron Judah. During sheep-shearing season, Tamar dresses in a colorful, very attractive robe, and hides her face with a veil. She stands by the road where the men will see her as they go to shear the sheep. Sure enough, Judah notices this attractive woman, and makes his romantic advances. Tamar asks Judah for a kid goat in exchange for her favors; he agrees. To make certain he will actually send her the young goat, Tamar asks Judah for his identity bracelet and his walking stick. Sheep shearing season ends, the months go by and Judah notices Tamar is pregnant. He calls for her death as a common prostitute. Tamar brings out his identity bracelet and walking stick, and says, "Judah, this child is yours." The expectant father compliments Tamar for her cleverness, marries her and soon Tamar gives birth to twin boys, Perez and Zerah.

We have just started reading the genealogy of Jesus, and so far, we have Abraham, a very holy man, as one ancestor, and Judah, a scoundrel who will sleep with a prostitute, as another. It is clear now that Jesus has very human ancestors: the great people we like to call our family, and a few ancestors we would rather not mention.

“Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.”

Rahab, a true heroine. The Israelite army surrounded Jericho, ready to invade the land of Canaan, and the general Joshua sent two spies into Jericho. Dressed as travelers, wearing long, flowing robes, the spies mix with the crowds. Rahab lived close to the outer wall of the city. She was a pagan and a Canaanite, but she wanted to be on the side of the Jewish God, so Rahab takes the Israelite spies into

her house. Then, after dark, she helps the spies slip down over the wall so they can report back to Joshua. Rahab only asks that her family be protected after the Israelites capture the city. After the Israelites capture Jericho, Rahab marries one of the spies, Salmon, and they have a son, Boaz.

**"Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth."**

Ruth, a Moabite foreigner, commits herself to the people and the God of her mother-in-law. "Wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die I will die, and there be buried. May the LORD do thus to me, and more, if even death separates me from you!" In the end, Ruth is rewarded for her loyalty, her generosity, and her willingness to risk everything for the sake of righteousness, and she becomes the symbol of God's salvific embrace for everyone.

**"Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king."**

We come to David, the saintly king and acknowledged sinner. As a youth, David was charming and charismatic, a man who played the lyre and sang. When he became king, David loved God, and knew God guided him and showered him with goodness and compassion. A courageous warrior, a resourceful leader in battle, David conquered Jerusalem. Then, David sinned severely. One day, he went out onto the balcony of his royal palace, and looked across the roofs, where he saw Bathsheba, the wife of his soldier Uriah bathing. Overcome by lust, David commits adultery, and Bathsheba gets pregnant. To cover his sin, David orders her husband Uriah to the most intense fighting in his military campaign, right in the heart of the battle, knowing, hoping, Uriah will be killed. David then married Bathsheba, yet that first child died. Their second son, Solomon, becomes King, and is known throughout history for his wisdom.

**"David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz..."**

As we read on, we have names that are unfamiliar and hard to pronounce. Some we do not know who they are, others we know very little. For instance, there is Ahaz, the eleventh king of Judah. A very superstitious man, Ahaz liked to dabble in pagan cults, making him not very holy and not a very good Jewish leader.

"...Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile."

Jechoniah was the last king before the Babylonians, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, conquered Judah. Jechoniah was only 18 when he became king, and ruled for three months before Nebuchadnezzar's army marched into his capital city and deported the upper class to Babylon, where they lived in exile for the next eighty years. His reign could not be counted as one of the most successful in history.

"After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel the father of Abiud."

Nobody knows who Abiud was. The only place you hear about him is in this genealogy.

"Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor. Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud. Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar became the father of Matthan..."

All we know about Matthan is that he is the great-grandfather of Jesus.

"...Matthan the father of Jacob. Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ. Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian captivity to the Christ, fourteen generations."

That is the genealogy. Knowing about the forty-one men and five women Matthew lists as the ancestors of Jesus reminds us that in his humanity: Jesus was fully and profoundly human. His ancestors included both the holy people of God and the degenerate sinners.

Tracing his lineage back to Abraham reminds us of the favors and protection God promised to Abraham, that God would make Abraham the father of a great nation. Pausing at the mention of David, we remember that Jesus is born into the royal house of David, the King of Israel, a royal house that God promised would endure forever. Most importantly, the genealogy identifies us with Jesus. Among our ancestors, each of us can tell of very devout, holy, faith-filled family members. We also have those skeletons in the family closet, members we would rather not talk about, the scoundrels and rotten shoots on our family tree.

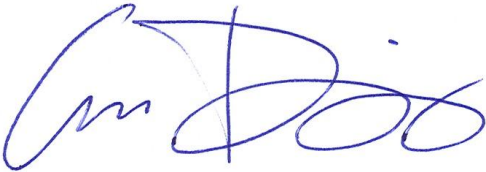
As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we know Jesus is as human as we are. The genealogy tells us Christ, the Son of God, is true God and true Man. From the saints and sinners of history, from the success stories of faith and the miserable failures, from the historical legends to the unknown placeholders, God intervenes in our history. God intervenes by giving us a Savior like us, a Messiah like us, a human like us, to save us from a sinfulness that all of us, whether we be saints, success stories, miserable failures, historical legends or relative unknowns, face in our daily lives.

The Christmas story is more than genealogies or ancestors; it is about the love of God that took human form, the love of God that worked through human history to become a human in history.

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I hope you and your family have a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas, and may we all celebrate a Happy New Year 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Dominguez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aaron Dominguez, Ph.D.

**Office of the Provost**

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