

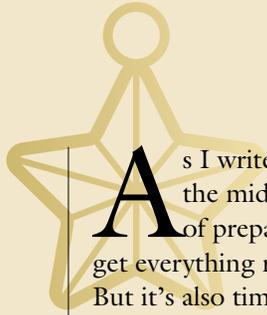


UNIVERSITY
CATHOLIC



CHRISTMAS 2022

Proposing Jesus Christ and Forming His Disciples



As I write to you, we are in the midst of Advent, a time of preparation. It is time to get everything ready for Christmas. But it's also time to recall all the Lord has done for us and through us during this year.

During this time of preparation, we prepare our houses for Christmas. Many times, we must rearrange the furniture, or even take some pieces of furniture out of the living room to make space for our special Christmas decorations. And if you are like me, wanting a Christmas tree for every room—please don't judge me—there is even more work to do. But of course, this is not the only preparation we need. Most importantly, we must prepare our hearts.

Through prayer and different novenas and devotions, going to confession, we can provide a nice and warm place for Jesus to be born in our hearts. How awesome! We are indeed preparing our hearts to welcome the Christ Child.

Advent and Christmas are also times of gratitude, recalling all our blessings. Even during trials and difficulties, we are called to acknowledge His presence in our lives. As a ministry, University Catholic is grateful. With the expansions to the different campuses throughout the diocese, we see God's blessings as we bring the Good News to more and more

PREPARING FOR CHRIST

A message from our Director

college students.

Expanding also has its challenges. Faced with declining donations, we are even more grateful for the love and support of each partner in mission, each monthly donor, each person who believes in our mission to Propose Jesus Christ and Form His Disciples. We could not do it without their love and support. Now I ask once again for your help. Please, if you have not yet made your contribution to University Catholic this year, please do it. If you have already contributed and can donate some more, I encourage you to do so. With the support of each one we are able to help so many college students, now throughout the entire Diocese, to experience God's love and to grow their faith—not abandon it—while in college.

Please know of my gratitude and daily prayer for you, your families, and intentions. As we prepare our house and hearts for the Christ Child this Christmas, let's be grateful for God Himself, Who for love of us made Himself small and accessible.

Merry Christmas.

Fr Gervan Menezes
Diocesan Director of Campus
Ministries.



A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

FRASSATI HOUSE NASHVILLE



most popular rooms of Frassati House is the kitchen, which was renovated in 2020.

Built in 1894, the Kuhn family watched the Cathedral be constructed in their backyard. They bequeathed the house to the Diocese of Nashville, and in 2006 Bishop Choby made it available to Fr. John Sims Baker, UCat's founding chaplain.

Named after Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, patron of college students



Frassati House has been a home away from home for Catholic college students in Nashville since UCat's inception in 2006.

The Victorian home, located behind the Cathedral and on the edge of Vanderbilt's campus, offers students warm, inviting spaces for events, chapel visits and hanging out. On any given afternoon, the house is buzzing with activity as students drop by to study or visit with one another between classes and before daily Mass. Morning prayer fills the chapel each weekday, and students pray before the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day and night every Thursday.

Like most homes, one of the

and young adults, Frassati House has borne much fruit for UCat's ministry. "Having a place to gather is crucial in building community," says Fr. Rhodes Bolster, UCat Nashville Chaplain. "Frassati House is a blessing that we do not take for granted."

AQUINAS HOUSE COOKEVILLE



St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church's office in Cookeville has been renamed Aquinas House and doubles as UCat-TNTech's campus ministry and a place for college students at Tennessee Tech to call home.

After three years in Nashville as UCat Chaplain, Fr. Gervan knows first-hand the importance of having a welcoming space for campus ministry. "The Lord provided. When I saw our offices in Cookeville and the excess space, it was a perfect fit," he said.

NEWMAN HOUSE CLARKSVILLE



UCat at Austin Peay State University calls the Newman House home and enjoy this charming house that's equipped with a kitchen, comfy couches, study rooms and games.

"Newman House provides students a place to gather, to study or simply hang out in the presence of God. I come here almost every day in between classes to study or relax, which is especially helpful because I live off campus," says Alina Miller, a junior at APSU studying nursing. "It is a very resourceful space for those of us in college."

SAINT MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE MURFREESBORO

Catholic Students at Middle Tennessee State University have a new place to call home, the St.



Martin de Porres House, located about a mile from campus next to St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church. Sunday suppers, Bible studies and

faith formation are held here and students have access to drop by to study or just hang out. Because of its proximity to St.

Rose of Lima Parish, the students named the center St. Martin de Porres House to reflect the real-life proximity of these two saints, says Nathan Williams, Director of Campus Ministry for UCat-MTSU.

After many years at our former Catholic Student Center, St. Martin de Porres House offers more interior and exterior space for UCat activities, a more hospitable kitchen for meals, and greater integration with St. Rose parish, the only Catholic church in Murfreesboro, Nathan said.



OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR

A testimony by a University Catholic student

Prior to the moment I began to live my life solely for Our Lord and for Our Lady, I was living in utter despair. Deeply deceived by the culture of death that pervades each corner of modern life, I was slowly leading myself down the wide path—the path to Hell. Having been fed the lies of the relative happiness and truth, I so naively thought that the purpose and destiny of my life was up to me to find joy and peace. I must continue to follow what I believed to be right. Unbeknownst to me (and to too many young souls I am afraid), what I “believed to be right” was meticulously influenced by the prince of this world and his kingdom of darkness.

I was raised a cradle Catholic, but the extent to which I thought of God began and ended on Sundays, when I was forced to go to Mass. My catechesis was negligible and my love for God nonexistent. I even began falling into the lie of scientism—that all that can be known about the world is at the hands of scientific study.

Progressing throughout my adolescence and childhood, I began

to form “my own” view on the world and its realities i.e., began to reject the true reality of our universe, Jesus Christ. What I thought was informed self-introspection and a progressing perspective on the world was, in truth, the decaying of the garden of my soul. The prince of darkness, knowing that I was open to anything but God, began implanting in me lies that led to my eventual despair.

After high school and an illustrious athletic career, I entered college with the same mindset of pursuing what was “good” (i.e., pleasurable) and “right” (i.e., advantageous for me), just as I had done throughout my childhood. Now, being in an environment without the same parental and familial constraints, I was ready to experience all the world had to offer me. Oh, how misguided and lost I truly was!

Allured by the new worldly “goods” that college now offered me, I plunged myself into the world, living solely for it. I was completely shackled by the chains of passion, and yet, the evil one deceived me into thinking I had found true

Although the workings of the Most Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary in my life far surpass my own understanding, it is with great joy that I have been tasked with sharing their workings. May the fruit of their greatness pour forth from this testimony, despite my incapability in articulating it, and may Our Lord open my mind and heart, so that these words should proclaim His praise.

Oh, how transformed is my life after cooperating with the grace God has been trying to give me. How free it is to accept the gift of life I have been given, knowing from Whom it has come. How liberating and invigorating it is to live in the light and truth of Jesus Christ.



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freedom. Still with the same yearning for true joy and peace, I continued to search through these vicious avenues the enemy had presented me, and the internal darkness of my soul only continued to grow stronger.

For over a year or so, I lived completely and utterly in a fog of confusion, isolation, loneliness, and shame. I did not know what to do—or to Whom to turn.

It was then that the personhood of Jesus Christ became inescapable to me. After watching and listening to different personal testimonies online, the reality of Jesus Christ penetrated my lifeless and spiritually dead soul. I knew that not only Our Lord was real, but that He was the answer to every question that every heart could muster up.

The desires and intentions of my heart changed drastically toward

finding out more about Him, how to know Him, and how to love Him. God, of course the author of these desires and intentions, began working in my miserable soul a path to new life—a new life in Christ Jesus—but still, my soul was too miserable and too attached to sin.

Even after having learned of Our Lord's power and truth, I, sheepishly and miserably, turned back to my old life. I knew that if I were to fully embrace Our Lord that everything about me would change as well, and I was still too weak, too attached to the world and its empty consolations and pleasures.

Our enemy, knowing I was now aware of the Savior and Redeemer of the world and terror of demons, began working even more diligently on my destruction. The next few months that I endured were the most

torturous and painful in my entire life, having tasted the sweetness of the water of Jesus Christ, but rejecting it still for the world.

It was after a moment of complete helplessness that I had driven myself into, that I finally accepted my identity as a beloved child of the one, true and everlasting God. After this moment, I became newly created. Everything about my personality, my desires, my aspirations, and my ambitions dramatically transformed.

Now, I am a joyful and loving servant of Jesus Christ and Mary Most Holy, to Whom I owe my life and everything good in it and am persevering on the good race of the spiritual life.

May the Lord Jesus Christ be forever praised and may His Most Glorious Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, be forever blessed.

