



UNIVERSITY CATHOLIC

Proposing Jesus Christ and Forming His Disciples



WINTER 2023

AWAKENING 34

Prayer. Formation. Communion.

These simple three words are what the semi-annual retreat known as Awakening is all about.

On Friday, February 23, 2024, dozens of college students from all over the Diocese of Nashville arrived at YMCA's Camp Widjiwagan to experience University Catholic's Awakening 34. Over the course of the three-day weekend retreat, students engaged in small-group discussions, service activities, and communal prayer. In addition to

that, students had the opportunity to hear from some inspiring guest speakers including Bishop Spalding, Fr. Joseph Hill S.J., and the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia.

However, the most amazing part about Awakening is that it is completely student-led. This year, João Prado (senior) and Arwen Rolinitis (junior), at Belmont University, served respectively as rector and coordinator of the retreat. Additionally, almost half of the students present at the retreat

either served as small-group leaders or Prayer Site staffers, who engaged in constant intercession for the retreatants all weekend.

Awakening also provides an opportunity for students to interact with people from other campus ministries within the University Catholic community. From Clarksville to Cookeville and Lebanon to Sewanee, students spent



WHERE TRUE FRIENDSHIPS ARE FORMED

AWAKENING

all weekend forming and developing friendships with each other, whether through sports or casual mealtime conversations. By coming together as one family, those from smaller ministries were able to have an experience of the Catholic community like never before.

Awakening 34 was truly a profound experience for all the retreatants and staffers, and each of them can attest to how Jesus Christ personally encountered them during this time. Although it was sad to see such a beautiful weekend come to a close, all of the students are looking forward to Awakening 35. If you are a student who would like to join us for the next retreat, please visit universitycatholic.org/awakening for more information on how to register.

XXXIV



Source & Summit

A message from our Director

As the Church in the United States lives the Eucharistic Revival, we at University Catholic could not choose a better theme to guide our school year: The Source and Summit.

In communion with our bishops, priests and parishes, we are helping our students to live this Eucharistic Revival in a concrete and personal way. At most of our campuses, students have access to Adoration. In some campuses we have adoration daily.

Since its origin, UCat has always tried to bring the students closer to the sacraments. I would even say that is our biggest priority—helping the students to access the sacraments.

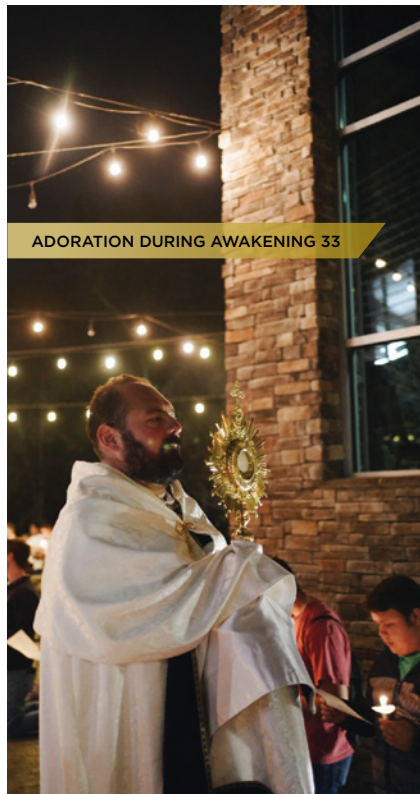
This year we started our activities at all our campuses with Welcome Week activities. We continue to serve the different campuses with Bible studies, small groups, rosaries and other activities. Eucharist Processions have taken place at the secular college campuses at Vanderbilt, Belmont, and Tennessee Tech.

Our Awakening retreats are a blessing for the 240+ college students who take part from all the campuses served by UCat.

I'm happy to tell you that this year we started UCat activities at Cumberland University in Lebanon and a totally new initiative with

UCat at Williamson County, using St Philip Parish in Franklin to serve college students in Williamson County. We are really excited about these additions and can't wait to see where the Holy Spirit will lead us.

The Diocesan Office of Campus Ministry has hired our first Diocesan Coordinator of Campus Ministry, Zack Smith. Zack joined us in October and has been busy visiting the different campuses to get to know the students and how we can



help advance our mission to Propose Jesus Christ and Form His Disciples.

Our efforts never slow down. We started 2024 with the March for Life Pilgrimage, Awakening 34 in February, and more Eucharist processions throughout our 12 campuses. I hope to see you at our Gala on April 13 in Nashville to celebrate all the Lord is doing to and through University Catholic.

The Lord is working in the lives of so many college students, and it is a privilege to witness the work of the Holy Spirit and the transformations taking place.

Thank you for your love, support and belief in our mission. I know this phrase can be a bit cliché, but we cannot do it without you. Please continue to pray for us. Continue to pray for our students, leadership, staff and partners in mission. Know of my daily prayers for you.

As Catholics we believe that the Eucharist brings all of us together, no matter where we are physically. So, see you in the Eucharist.

In Christ,

Fr. Gervan Menezes, M.Div.
Diocesan Director of Campus Ministry



DEACON CRAIG AND WIFE ALYSON

WELCOME DEACON CRAIG!

For the first time ever, UCat Nashville has a deacon serving alongside our chaplain, Deacon Craig Thomas, who was ordained for the Diocese of Nashville in April.

Deacon Craig leads a weekly program, Alpha, which serves as UCat's RCIA program. Over dinner, he covers the basics of Christianity with college students who are hungry for more than what the world offers. He gives reflections during holy hours, spiritual direction, and makes house calls to bless dorm rooms.

Born and raised in Baltimore, he received a degree in engineering from Loyola University in Maryland. After college, he spent four years as a missionary serving in Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan and among the poor in India and the Philippines. He has worked professionally as an engineer for the past 30 years. He and his wife Alyson moved to Nashville in 2013. They have four grown children.

FUN IS AN EFFECTIVE EVANGELIZATION TOOL

At 6'4" Fr. Rhodes Bolster naturally attracts attention. Add his black cassock and signature smile—and at times some juggling—he can draw a crowd. His joy is evident and attractive. He wants to share it with others.

As part of our mission at UCat to Propose Jesus Christ and Form His Disciples, University Catholic strives to provide wholesome alternatives to campus life and to help foster genuine friendships.

“College students need some holy leisure and good fun,” says Fr. Rhodes Bolster, UCat Nashville Chaplain. “It’s amazing to see the hearts that can open through a hike or soccer game.”

“In a day and age when all young people’s actions are evaluated and scrutinized, liked and disliked, students need times and places where they can just be—moments of realization that they are human beings not human doings,” he added. “Good fun helps us enter into the joy of the Lord, who delights in His children no matter what grade they get on their bio-chemistry exam.”

“Through these leisure activities and events like weekly Sunday Suppers, University Catholic invites students to enter deeper into their relationship with the Lord,” he says.



A MAN OF HIDDEN TALENTS



A PERFECT DAY FOR A HIKE

WELCOME WEEK 2023

UCAT MTSU



UCAT TENNESSEE TECH



UCAT AUSTIN PEAY



UCAT AUSTIN PEAY



UCAT NASHVILLE ALLEY PARTY



TUG-O-WAR WITH FR. BOLSTER



SOCCER WITH THE SISTERS



FIELD DAY





HANNAH WITH HER FIANCÉ GEORGE (LEFT) AND FRIEND ADAM

UCAT'S POWERFUL IMPACT ON MY LIFE

by Hannah Shea

I spent my first two years of college in a worship leader training program at Trevecca Nazarene University, where I received an associates degree in Praise and Worship. Two years later, I graduated with my bachelor's in Commercial Music. Having had powerful experiences of the Catholic faith in high school, finding a strong Catholic community was a priority for me during my college search. As I began to look into Trevecca for music, I stumbled upon UCat through a google search. From their website alone, I knew if I decided to move to Nashville, UCat would become my Catholic home—and it became just that.

Being Catholic in a primarily Protestant program, UCat was essential for me maintaining the faith. UCat reminded me daily that I was not alone, allowed me to stay close to the sacraments, and gave me the space to practice music ministry in my own faith tradition.

Not only did UCat bless me as a student, but now working as a Church employee, I can see the formation I received from UCat changing the way I approach ministry every day. Firstly, UCat

taught me what it looked like to live a life rooted in prayer and how to work from a place of overflow. I will never forget serving on the leadership team and being expected to spend an hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament before leading our retreats. Secondly, UCat taught me that a shared mission is essential for a community to thrive. UCat is so successful because every person knows and is on fire to live out the mission—to propose Jesus Christ and to form His disciples. These are just a few of the many blessings I've received from UCat.

I would be mistaken if I forgot to mention that I also met my fiancé through UCat, and we will be getting married this summer! The seeds UCat has planted in my life continue to reap harvest and for that, I'm so grateful. Because of your belief in this mission, the fire just keeps on burning! Thank you so much for your support!

Hannah Shea is a 2023 graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University. She currently works as a youth ministry music director in St. Petersburg, Florida.

FRIENDSHIP AND DATING

An inspiring talk by Fr. Pine

Fr. Gregory Pine, OP, drew a big crowd of students to the Frassati House backyard when he visited in September. Speaking on "Friendship and Dating," he challenged students to desire marriage. "Everyone is made for marriage," he said. "Marriage is an icon for heaven—it's a holy desire."

The well-known author and podcast host currently serves as an adjunct professor of dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies and an Assistant Director of the Thomistic Institute.



FR. GREGORY PINE, OP



A PACKED HOUSE

OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome Zack Smith to our University Catholic Diocesan office team. Born and raised in Cookeville, Tennessee, Zack enjoyed his childhood growing up in a Protestant Christian family, including having two uncles who are Protestant pastors! After abandoning his faith in adolescence and experimenting with a host of spiritualities and religions, Zack discovered the Catholic Church. After two years of RCIA, the Holy Spirit finally led Zack to full communion with the Church on the Feast of St. Augustine, who is his patron saint! During that time, he moved to Kansas City to study music education and music therapy but eventually graduated with a degree in psychology. Although he had planned to continue his psychological studies in graduate school, an unexpected inspiration from the Holy Spirit, followed by a simple prayer, led Zack to abandon all for Jesus Christ: “Whatever you want me to do, however you want me to do it, I am Yours.” After moving to Michigan for a few months, he eventually found his way back to his hometown, where he was providentially offered the position of being the new Diocesan Coordinator of Campus Ministries for University Catholic.

Zack has a huge heart for disciple-making and setting other hearts aflame for Jesus Christ: “I am not concerned about having the best social media presence or the most entertaining events. All I need is a group of men and women who love Our Lord above all things!” Since moving back to Tennessee, Zack has started inviting students into his own spiritual life through what he refers to as the apostolate of friendship. For

some of the college students, this includes waking up before sunrise to pray Matins every morning: “I tell the students all the time that living out holiness isn’t complicated: faith, prayer, and sacrifice. Be friends with people who live that life, and be a friend to those who don’t.” Reflecting on University Catholic’s mission to “propose Jesus Christ and form disciples,” Zack emphasized the need for college students to recognize how they can witness to Christ in their academic studies: “A

modern-day martyr doesn’t look like a person getting thrown to lions; rather, it is the college student sitting in Organic Chemistry who, despite all the stress and difficulties, offers up their suffering with joy and love. When others see that sort of attitude, then you will get their attention.”

Zack is very excited to be the newest part of the University Catholic team, and he asks for your prayers for both him and all the students as he lives out the words of his own prayer: “I am Yours.”





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UCAT *Gala*

APRIL
13
2024
Get Tickets Now!



at THE CATHOLIC PASTORAL CENTER

PLEASE JOIN US!

You are invited to the UCat Gala on Saturday, April 13, at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Nashville. Please join us as we celebrate all that God has done through and for our ministry's work in transforming the lives of college students.

The evening will begin with a reception at 6:30, followed by a seated dinner.

Use the QR code or visit universitycatholic.org/gala to purchase tickets or become a table sponsor. Proceeds support UCat's mission to college students—to Propose Jesus Christ and Form His Disciples.