

# Annual Report 25

*"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." – **1 Peter 4:10***

# Introduction



VERY REV.  
DAT TRAN, C.S.P.

## Executive Director

Father Dat Tran, a member of the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle (Paulist Fathers), is rector of the Cathedral of Saint Andrew and oversees the mission of the Catholic Information Center.

Dear Friends,

Each year, the Catholic Information Center is blessed by the opportunity to pause, reflect, and give thanks – for God’s faithfulness, for the generosity of our partners, and for the many lives touched through our shared mission.

This annual report is more than a summary of programs or numbers; it is a testament to what becomes possible when faith is lived intentionally, and when people commit themselves to forming disciples for the life of the Church and the good of the world.

This past year has reminded us once again that the Church’s mission of encounter and accompaniment is needed more than ever. Through our Leadership Formation Institute, adult faith formation programs, and events, we continue to offer meaningful opportunities for learning and growth. We also gather people through ecumenical events and community dialogue. In all of this, we seek to accompany people wherever they are on their faith journey, inviting them into deeper relationship with Christ and with one another. Again and again, we have witnessed how authentic community, thoughtful formation, and prayerful discernment awakens hearts to missionary discipleship.

None of this work happens in isolation. It is made possible

because of the commitment of a faithful staff, knowledgeable presenters, dedicated volunteers, parish partners, and diocesan collaborators, and by the generosity of donors who believe in the transformative power of the Gospel. Your partnership allows us to respond to the needs of the Church today – bridging divides, forming leaders, and creating spaces where people can ask meaningful questions, grow in faith, and discover how God is calling them to serve.

As you read this report, I invite you to see not only what has been accomplished, but where the Holy Spirit is leading us next. With gratitude for all that has been, and hope for what lies ahead, we remain committed to inspiring and equipping Catholics to live their faith with confidence, compassion, and joy. Thank you for walking alongside us in this mission.

Please know that you remain in our prayers, and that we are deeply grateful for your partnership and trust.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Very Rev. Dat Tran, C.S.P." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Very Rev. Dat Tran, C.S.P.**  
Executive Director  
Catholic Information Center  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

# About

Rooted in the Paulist charism of evangelization through dialogue and radical hospitality, the Catholic Information Center seeks to form, equip, and accompany adults as missionary disciples. Adult faith formation is essential for building a Church of mature, committed believers who can live their faith with clarity, joy, and courage in today's complex world.

In 2025, we offered a diverse range of programs – series, workshops, and parish-based experiences – designed to deepen understanding, foster spiritual growth, and strengthen discipleship. These initiatives invited participants to explore Scripture, Tradition, and contemporary issues through prayerful reflection and dialogue.

# Staff

At the heart of the Catholic Information Center's mission is a dedicated and faithful staff who bring our vision to life each day. Rooted in prayer, collaboration, and a shared commitment to evangelization through dialogue and hospitality, our team accompanies individuals and communities on their journey of faith. Through their expertise, creativity, and care, the staff of the Catholic Information Center help create spaces where faith flourishes, relationships deepen, and the Church's mission is lived with confidence, compassion, and joy.

## MISSION

The Catholic Information Center in the Diocese of Grand Rapids forms, equips, and sends lay Catholics as missionary disciples – confidently serving their parishes and the wider world with faith, hope, and love.

## VISION

The Catholic Information Center envisions a vibrant, inclusive, and Spirit-filled Catholic community where the merciful face of Christ is visible to all – and where people of every background can joyfully share in the Good News of God's Reign.



**Rev. Mike  
Cruickshank, C.S.P.**  
Associate Director



**Mark Mann**  
Director of Programs  
& Institutes



**Mary Martin**  
LFI Program  
Coordinator



**Kenny Williams-Buck**  
Graphic Design &  
Communications  
Consultant



**Amanda Koch**  
Office Manager



**Claudia Hallberg**  
Administrative Assistant

# Forming Disciples

**Adult Faith Formation** at the Catholic Information Center is more than a collection of individual programs; *it is a movement of lifelong learning, spiritual growth, and accompaniment.* Rooted in the Church's Tradition and responsive to the questions of our time, our formation offerings invite adults to deepen their relationship with Christ while growing in understanding, confidence, and community.

Through signature series such as Faith of the Church, bilingual workshops, and parish-based experiences, participants engage Scripture, theology, and contemporary issues through prayerful reflection and dialogue.

Together, we are cultivating a vibrant community of adults who are committed not only to deepening their own faith, but also to living it generously—sharing their gifts, accompanying others, and contributing to the life and mission of the Church.



## Rooted in the Church's Tradition

*"The Nicene Creed series opened my eyes to the depth of what we profess every Sunday. It's not just words - it's a call to live in relationship with God." — Participant*

**The Faith of the Church** – professing the Nicene Creed.

**Pilgrims of Hope** – A reflection on the Year of Jubilee.

**From Jesus to the Christ** – a historical view of the conflicts and controversies in the early Church.

**Women of the Passion** – the women who accompanied Jesus in his passion and crucifixion.

**Women of the Way** – who tended to and sustained the early Church post-Pentecost.

**A New Shepherd, A Renewed Call** – a reflection on the Augustinian charism and roots in the life of Pope Leo XIV.

**Road to the Well** – Discovering our identity, dignity, and purpose. Theology of the Body. Co-sponsored with HELP Pregnancy Aid.

## A Ministry of Accompaniment

*"I never thought I could make space for a retreat in my life. This experience showed me that God meets us right where we are ...and that has changed everything." — Retreat Participant*

**Setting Our Hearts on Higher Gifts / Poniendo Nuestro Corazón en los Dones Más Elevados** – A Bilingual Lenten Workshop.

**Preparing for Judgment Day** – Made Fun! A Lenten Retreat on reviewing life with gratitude and honesty so that you can relish your face-to-face meeting with the Lord.

**Church Art and Architecture Tour** – explored the relationship between chapels, parishes, and the mother church of the diocese.

**Passing on a Faith that Matters** – explored how parents, grandparents, god parents, aunts and uncles can hand on faith to the next generation of Catholics.

**From Grand Rapids to the Great Wall** – the joys, challenges, and spiritual depth of living the Gospel across cultures. Co-sponsored by the local chapter of Maryknoll Affiliates.

**Busy Person Retreat** – Integrating prayer, reflection, and personalized spiritual direction in daily living, co-sponsored by Dominican Center Marywood.

**Circle of Life** – a panel conversation on end of life planning, co-sponsored by the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan.

**Stations of the Crèche** – inspired by the tradition of the Stations of the Cross, encounter the mystery of Christ's Incarnation.

## Responsive to the Questions of Our Time

*"The session opened my heart to see God's plan for creation in a new way. It's deeply personal and life changing." — Participant*

**Breaking the Toxic Polarization Cycle** – strategies for building bridges with rival groups.

**Eco-Theology and the Holy Spirit** – a new perspective in *Laudato Si*.

**Welcoming the Stranger** – the Church's teaching on immigration.

**Watch Your Language** – translating religious language in non-religious circles.

*Scan the QR code to explore recordings of our 2025 CIC programs.*





## At the Intersection of Faith and Life

- **The Gallagher Talk:** This event honors the life and visionary leadership of **Father Joseph V. Gallagher, CSP**, who served as CIC Director from 1978 to 1982. The theme of our 2025 event was ***The Role of Compassion in a Divided World***, presented by **Gloria Purvis**, a nationally recognized Catholic speaker, author, and public scholar known for her bold and compassionate voice on issues of faith, dignity, and justice. **160 people registered for this year's Gallagher Talk.**



- **Women of Vision Series:** This series of four presentations presented the opportunity to explore the proposals in the final document of the recent **Synod on Synodality**. Monthly, we hosted different presenters to introduce 3-4 women of faith, highlighting the historical context and the gifts that they expressed through their leadership – gifts that are still needed today. Presenters for the Women of Vision Series, included: **Sister Barbara E. Reid, O.P., Ph.D., Bronwen McShea, Ph.D., Shannen Dee Williams, Ph.D., and Patricia Cooney-Hathaway Ph.D.** A **total of 85 people, representing 24 parishes and faith communities participated** in the series, including attendees from Hoboken NJ, Chicago IL, Eden Prairie MN, and Boston MA.



### Wisdom Circles – A Space for Reflection and Growth:

Two weeks after each presentation of the **Women of Vision Series**, participants were invited to gather in Wisdom Circles. These small group sessions designed to deepen the experience of the presentation, offered the space to pray together and explore how the stories of these women illuminate our own God-given gifts today. Facilitators included: **Cami Beecroft-Mann, Barbara Conklin, and Mary Martin.**

- **Evening in December:** Each December, the Catholic Information Center partners with downtown Grand Rapids Christian churches to host Evening in December—an ecumenical gathering of prayer, dialogue, and reflection on Advent themes. This year's theme, ***A Weary World Rejoices***, invited participants to acknowledge the weariness many feel today and rediscover the hope and renewal that Advent offers. The event featured a panel discussion with **Lutheran Bishop Julie Thomas Schneider, Pastor Daryl Kistler of Hope Congregational, and AJ Fossel, Director at Community Food Club.** **82 people registered, representing 14 faith communities.**



# Equipping Leaders



In May, the CIC offered Deep Dive Sessions to provide focused, practical formation for strengthening parish life and supporting sustainable pastoral initiatives. Rooted in prayer, shared wisdom, and better practices, these sessions move from vision to action, equipping participants with better practices and renewed confidence for ministry.

## Jump Starting Small Groups

Small groups foster spiritual growth, faith sharing and community. This four-part series teaches participants how to effectively facilitate a small group, whether for faith formation, retreats or seasonal gatherings.

## Bereavement Care

The Bereavement Care, a four-week training course, equips participants with the knowledge and skills to provide compassionate care, cultivate active listening, and provide spiritual support to those who have experienced loss.

## Understanding & Serving Inactive Catholics

This training series helps to foster understanding and connection with inactive Catholics, with an emphasis on what is practical for different parish situations. through dialogue, invitation, and engagement.

71 volunteers from 32 parishes were equipped for outreach and service to others.

- Basilica of Saint Adalbert, Grand Rapids
- Cathedral of Saint Andrew, Grand Rapids
- Holy Redeemer, Jenison
- Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids
- Holy Trinity, Comstock Park, Comstock Park
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Grand Rapids
- Our Lady of Sorrows, Grand Rapids
- Our Lady of the Lake, Holland
- Saint Francis Xavier and Shrine Our Lady of Guadalupe, Grand Rapids
- SS. Peter & Paul, Ionia
- St. Anthony, Saranac

- St. Anthony of Padua, Grand Rapids
- St. Edward the Confessor, Lake Odessa
- St. Francis de Sales, Norton Shores
- St. John Paul II, Cedar Springs
- St. Joseph, Pewamo
- St. Joseph – St. Vincent, Weare
- St. Jude, Grand Rapids
- St. Mary, Muskegon
- St. Mary, Spring Lake
- St. Mary Magdalen, Kentwood
- St. Patrick, Parnell
- St. Patrick-St Anthony, Grand Haven

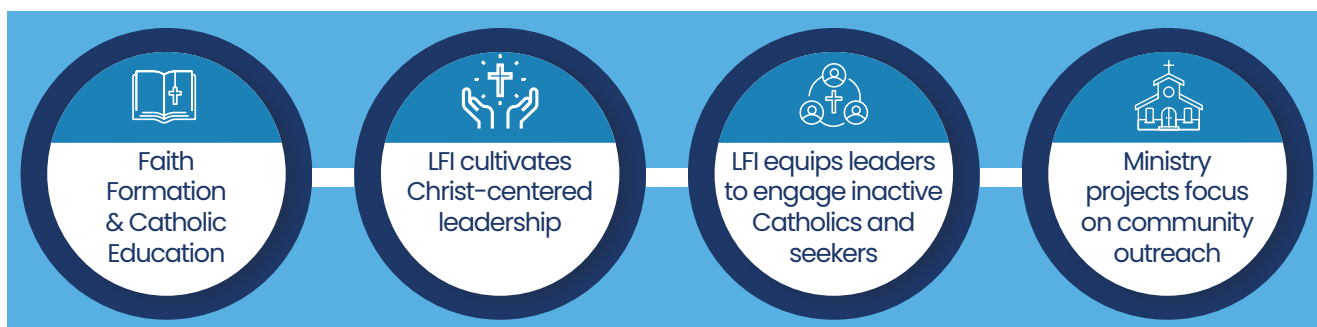
- St. Paul the Apostle, Grand Rapids
- St. Philip Neri-St. Anne, Reed City
- St. Pius X, Grandville
- St. Robert of Newminster, Ada
- St. Sebastian, Byron Center
- Mayflower Congregational, Grand Rapids
- St. Ann, Newark, NJ
- St. Michael, Long Meadow MA
- St. Paul the Apostle, New York, NY

# Sending Missionaries



## Leadership Formation Institute for Missionary Disciples

In 2025, the **Leadership Formation Institute (LFI)** continued to serve as a transformative formation experience for lay leaders, **equipping them with spiritual depth, pastoral vision, and practical skills** to live and lead as missionary disciples within their parishes. Rooted in the Church's call to evangelization and inspired by *Evangelii Gaudium*, **LFI invited participants to view every aspect of parish life through a missionary lens—grounded in prayer, attentive listening, and courageous outreach.**



Three parishes sent teams to participate in LFI, engaging a total of **21 lay leaders** in a 12-week formation process. Participants gathered weekly for two-hour sessions focused on spiritual formation, communal discernment, accompaniment, and intentional project planning. *This shared journey fostered collaboration across parishes while helping participants translate formation into concrete pastoral action.*

The formation process culminated in the launch of four parish-based initiatives, each responding to the unique needs of its local community. The **Seek & Find** event at **St. Jude Parish** (October 11, 2025) invited neighborhood families to experience the parish campus through hospitality, relationship-building, and the creation of prayer centerpieces for use in their homes.

At **St. Mary Magdalen Parish**, participants launched **The Rescue Project** in January 2026, a series of weekly small-group sessions designed to proclaim the Gospel in a compelling way—offering participants a framework for understanding reality and making sense of the world through the lens of faith.

At the **Cathedral of St. Andrew, Made For More** (January 2026) created a welcoming pathway home for those who have drifted away from the Catholic faith, emphasizing listening, community, and small group sharing. Also at the **Cathedral**, the **Lay Ministry Toolkit** has been designed to assist lay ministry teams (e.g. lectors, ushers, choir) as they begin to introduce elements of small group prayer and sharing in a more intentional way.

Together, these initiatives reflect the heart of the Leadership Formation Institute: **forming lay leaders who move from formation to mission, strengthening parish life, and embodying the Church's call to accompany others as missionary disciples in today's world.**

## Instituto de Formación de Liderazgo para el Ministerio Hispano



Equipping and forming Spanish-speaking lay leaders who strengthen parish life and mission.

Hispanic Catholics represent nearly **40% of the U.S. Catholic population**, and in West Michigan, approximately **119,000 residents are Hispanic**, with an estimated **56,000 Catholics**, that is about **20% of the Catholics in the Diocese of Grand Rapids**. This growing community calls for strong, culturally responsive leadership.

The **Leadership Formation Institute for Hispanic Ministry** equips lay Hispanic/Latino Catholics with a solid foundation in Church teaching and practical skills for ministry. Leaders are prepared to serve in ways that reflect the cultural and pastoral realities of our region. The current cohort of 22 lay leaders are midway through the program – studying Scripture, evangelization, prayer, and pastoral planning.



## Impact in 2025

In June, **16 leaders** completed the three-year program of **24 courses**. They are now actively leading initiatives in their parishes:

Cathedral of Saint Andrew	Saint Mary's, Grand Rapids	Holy Name, Wyoming	St. Francis de Sales, Holland
Hosted the first of four women's retreats in September, drawing 110 participants.	Launched a family faith formation program to strengthen prayer and unity at home.	Began small-group Bible studies for families, helping parents share the faith.	Preparing to offer Children's Liturgy of the Word in Spanish, fostering faith in the next generation.

# Missionary Disciples Spotlight

## St. Jude's "Family Seek & Find"

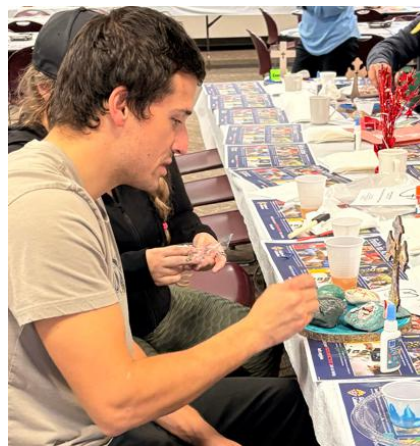
*"This experience showed us that missionary discipleship begins with simple invitations that make people feel they belong." – LFI team member*

As participants in the Leadership Formation Institute (LFI), the parish team from St. Jude stepped forward with a shared longing: to strengthen family connection and renew a sense of welcome within their community. Throughout the summer, the team practiced the habits they learned in LFI – discernment, deep listening, collaborative planning, and trust in the Holy Spirit. Their conversations revealed a persistent reality: many families disengage from parish life after the sacrament of confirmation is received by their children. If St. Jude was to grow, families needed not only programs; they needed to feel they belonged.

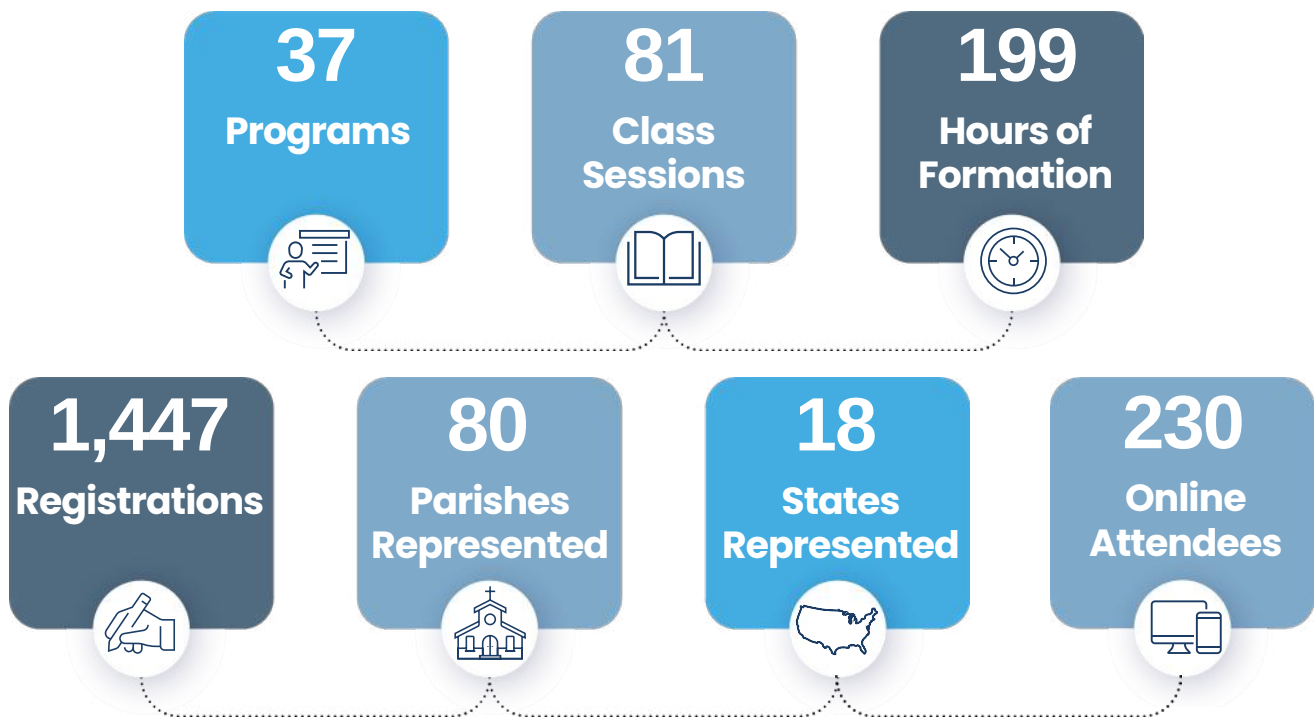
Guided by this insight – and aligned with St. Jude's strategic priorities of growth, welcome, and family support – the team envisioned a simple, joyful encounter that would open the parish to both members and neighbors. Their project, **Seek & Find**, became that invitation. With support from parish leadership and seed funding from the CIC and Knights of Columbus, the team designed a campus wide scavenger hunt and creative activity that made it easy for families to participate without pressure or prior connection. On October 11, more than **150 participants**, about 40 families, joined the event, including many walk ins drawn by street signage. Toddlers, teens, parents, and grandparents engaged together, creating moments of connection, laughter, and shared faith.

After the event, team members noted renewed parish energy, increased confidence in their own leadership, and new ideas emerging for future outreach. This Spring, the team plans to host a community bicycle swap and blessing of the bikes for neighborhood families. What began as a formation project became a lived expression of missionary discipleship—leaders sent forth to ignite belonging and welcome in their community.

**Scan the QR code to the right to watch St. Jude's final project video and see how their Leadership Formation Institute journey came to life through Seek & Find.**



# By the Numbers



## And still counting...

Our newest program in 2025, the **School of the Beatitudes** offers a transformative journey into the heart of Christ's teachings. This monthly series, running from September to May, explores the eight Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew through engaging discussions and hands-on service.

Each session combines insightful presentations with a practical service opportunity at a local non-profit, such as God's Kitchen or the Community Food Bank.

# Operating & Financial Review

**This Operating and Financial Review highlights how the Catholic Information Center stewards its resources responsibly to sustain mission-driven programs, strengthen long-term stability, and support the work of leadership formation and evangelization.**

The Catholic Information Center is committed to the faithful stewardship of its financial and operational resources, ensuring that every gift entrusted to the organization is used with care, transparency, and purpose. Through thoughtful budgeting, strategic planning, and responsible oversight, the CIC aligns its resources with its mission—supporting programs that deepen faith, foster dialogue, and form mature disciples prepared to serve the Church and the wider community.

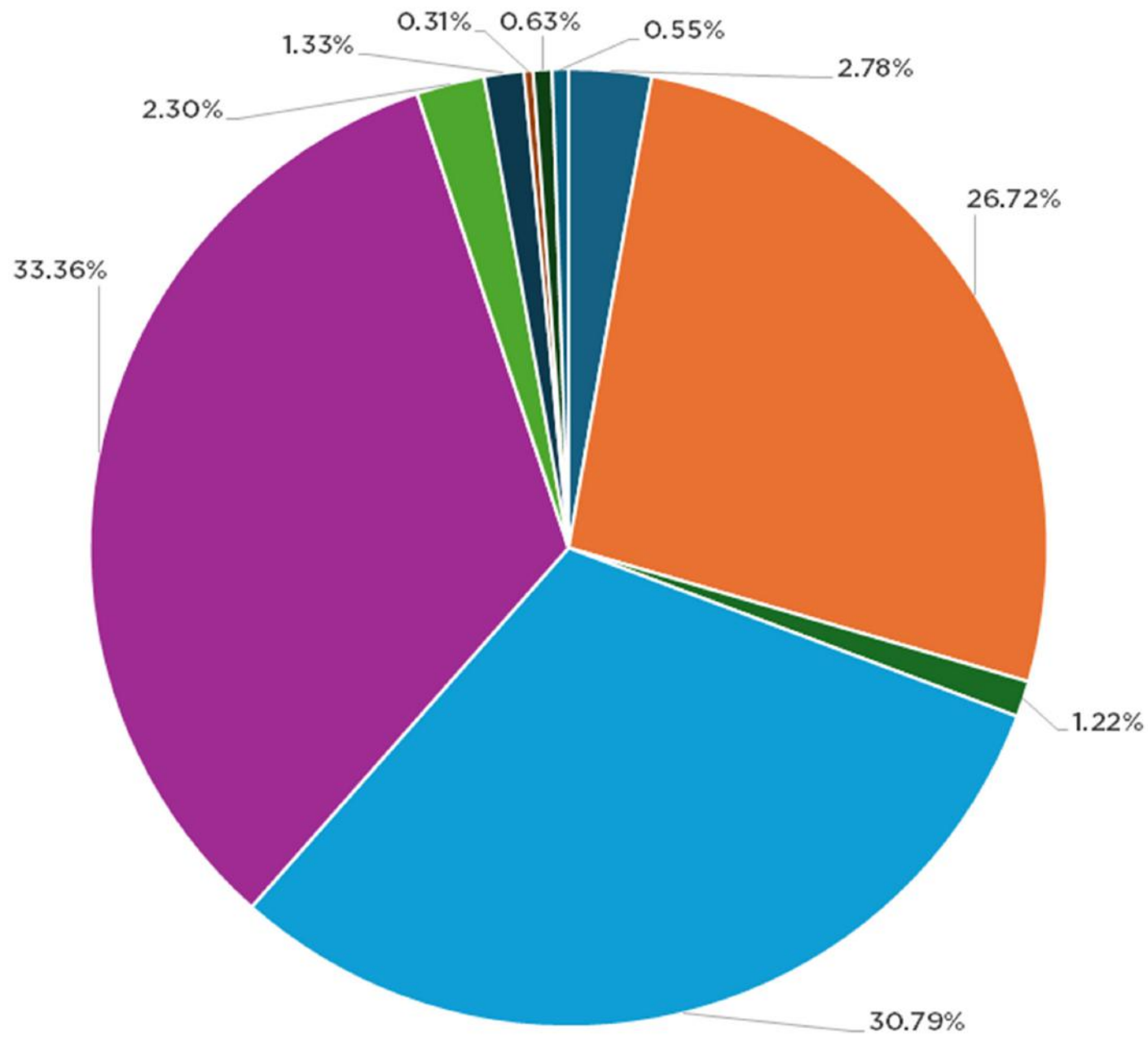
This careful stewardship directly strengthens the CIC's evangelizing mission. By investing in high-quality formation programs, digital outreach, and accessible learning opportunities, the CIC is able to reach individuals at every stage of their faith journey. These investments create spaces where the Gospel is proclaimed through prayer, study, conversation, and hospitality, inviting participants to encounter Christ and to grow in confidence as witnesses to their faith in everyday life.

The CIC's stewardship also plays a vital role in forming leaders for parish life. Resources are intentionally directed toward initiatives that equip lay leaders with spiritual depth, pastoral skills, and a collaborative mindset needed for effective ministry. As a result, participants are sent back to their parishes prepared to lead small groups, accompany others, and develop ministries that respond to local needs—extending the CIC's impact far beyond its walls and into the heart of parish communities, locally and nationally..

**The annual operating buget of the Catholic Information Center is:**

**\$431,944.80**

Expenses Jan-Nov



- |                                   |                                  |                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| ■ Contracted Services             | ■ Leadership Formation Institute | ■ Special Events |
| ■ Programs: Adult Faith Formation | ■ Administrative                 | ■ Rent/Lease     |
| ■ Utilities & Maintenance         | ■ Furniture/Equipment            | ■ Café           |
| ■ Volunteer Appreciation          |                                  |                  |

CATHOLIC INFORMATION CENTER

# Donor Impact



## Donor Generosity Makes Our Mission Possible

The mission of the Catholic Information Center is sustained through the generous support of donors who believe in the importance of adult faith formation and leadership development. This generosity strengthens essential programs such as the Leadership Formation Institute, forming lay leaders to serve their parishes and communities with confidence, pastoral vision, and a missionary spirit. Donor support also advances digital evangelization, enriches adult faith formation offerings, and ensures that CIC's facilities remain a welcoming space for learning, dialogue, and community.

## Forming Leaders. Reaching Hearts. Building the Future.

Through continued generosity, the Catholic Information Center remains responsive to the needs of the Church today while preparing for the future. Support not only sustains current ministries but also contributes to long-term stability through grants, sponsorships, and the development of an endowment—investments that will strengthen CIC's mission for generations to come.

## Grateful for Those Who Make This Work Possible

The Catholic Information Center gratefully recognizes the donors whose faithful support enables this work to continue. Their commitment ensures that CIC remains a trusted resource for formation, evangelization, and leadership in service to the wider Church.

## With Special Thanks to Our 2025 Gallagher Talk Sponsors

*The Catholic Information Center extends our deep gratitude to our **2025 Gallagher Talk sponsors**. Your generosity makes it possible for our community to gather, learn, and be renewed in faith. Thank you for standing with us in this mission and for investing in the spiritual life of our community.*

***Aquinas College, Catholic Charities, Distinctive Catering, Faith Alive Books, Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters, Paulist Mission Advancement Office.***

# Vision & Investment



## LOOKING AHEAD AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

Looking to the future with hope and trust in the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Information Center remains committed to forming and sending lay Catholics as missionary disciples rooted in faith, hope, and love. Your partnership makes this mission possible—responding to today’s spiritual hunger for purpose, community, and healing, and helping build a Church that reflects the merciful face of Christ.

### 1. Invest in Lay Leadership Formation

The Leadership Formation Institute will continue to grow as a collaborative partnership with parish communities, cultivating a network of formed and confident leaders who are rooted in faith, responsive to the needs of their communities, and prepared to strengthen parish life. Support scholarships, new program tracks, and ongoing mentorship that equip lay Catholics to serve with confidence and compassion in their parishes and communities.

### 2. Strengthen Adult Faith Formation

Programming this coming year will feature “Broken Mary” with Kevin Matthews, an on-the-road program “Finding Inner Peace in a Noisy World: The Power of Silence”, our continued exploration of “Women of Vision” and a pilot program, “Open our Hearts: Healing Racism.” Help expand online and onsite courses, launch new thematic series on timely topics, and bring CIC programs directly into parishes across West Michigan.

### 3. Build a Culture of Dialogue and Inclusion

Events like the Gallagher Talk and Evening in December will continue to provide opportunities for inter-cultural and ecumenical dialogue in effort to foster understanding and community. Create spaces where diverse voices are welcomed, relationships are healed, and unity is fostered through culturally responsive programs.

### 4. Advance Our Communication and Outreach

In the coming year, we are planning to create new video content for self-directed online learning as well as continuing to improve the quality of outreach through our e-newsletters, social media, and in the diocesan magazine FAITH Grand Rapids. Help amplify stories of transformation and extend the CIC’s reach through refreshed media, digital platforms, and community engagement.

### 5. Ensure Long Term Sustainability

The Catholic Information Center has benefitted from grants from the Lilly Endowment, Catholic Foundation of West Michigan, the Paulist Mission Advancement Office, as well as continued financial support from the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Grow the impact of this ministry by supporting grants, sponsorships, and the development of an endowment — securing a strong foundation for future generations.



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