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U.S. News and World Report's overall rankings for colleges and universities named Georgetown University 20th in its national university category. (CNS/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters)



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Editor's Note: Welcome to NCR's college round-up, where every Friday we bring you the latest news in Catholic college and university life. Do you have news you would like to share? Email Maria Benevento at mbenevento@ncronline.org.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — [Donnelly College](#), a small Catholic school in Kansas City, Kansas, founded by the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica, announced in a Sept. 13 press release that it was recognized as the most ethnically diverse college in the Midwest by U.S. News and World Report. The ethnic diversity index measures the chance that two randomly chosen students will belong to different races or ethnic groups.



Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kansas, was founded by the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica (NCR/Toni-Ann Ortiz)

Donnelly's diversity reflects the college's commitment to providing affordable education to students who might not otherwise have access and its status as the region's only federally-designated Minority-Serving Institution and Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Last year, 84 percent of the students at Donnelly were people of color, representing 33 countries; 92 percent of the students in the graduating class of 2017 are people of color, and 79 percent of the 2017 class is made up of students who are the first in their families to pursue post-secondary education (first-generation college students).

Donnelly College is not included in U.S. News and World Report's national or regional overall higher education rankings because it does not use ACT or SAT scores for admission, but the school has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for its affordability.

For more about Donnelly College's work with those on the margins, see [this article](#) by NCR's Tom Roberts.

VILLANOVA, Penn. — Villanova University's new \$3.7 million pedestrian bridge, meant to help students safely cross the busy highway, now spans Lancaster Avenue, Main Line Suburban Life [reported](#) Sept. 13. Construction on the bridge will continue until spring 2018.

Plans to incorporate four 4-foot, 7 inch crosses into the plan for the bridge had been met by [controversy](#), according to The Inquirer, with some locals objecting to what they considered an "ostentatious" display of religious symbolism on a bridge that would stretch across a public road and be partially funded by the state.

The objections were overruled because the crosses will be on university property.

"On every building on campus, there's a cross," said the Rev. Peter Donohue, university president. "It's just part of who we are. We are a faith-based institution."

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. — La Salle University [announced](#) on its website Sept. 13 that author Kate Hennessy, Dorothy Day's granddaughter, will speak on campus Sept. 20 as part of the university's Lectures on Religion and Culture Series.

Hennessy recently released a biography, *Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty: An Intimate Portrait of My Grandmother* (see NCR's [review](#)), which tells the story of the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement who is also now a candidate for sainthood.

Jack Downey, La Salle professor of religion and theology, said that Hennessy, whose book was received with critical acclaim, "will present us a precious and rare glimpse into the private life" of Dorothy Day, who, although "we are used to thinking of saints as ancient, remote and superhuman ... presents us with a remarkably accessible contemporary model of holiness."

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — St. Mary's University, a Marianist university in San Antonio, Texas, [announced](#) on its website Sept. 12 that singer-songwriter Kevin Heider will perform on campus Sept. 20 as part of the Catholic Intellectual Traditional Lecture Series.

Heider has a degree in Catholic Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville, which he said has had an impact on his life and work. He has released five albums and has traveled the world performing, producing and recording.

UNITED STATES — Several Catholic schools scored well on this year's U.S. News and World Report overall rankings for colleges and universities.

In the National University category, both the University of Notre Dame and Georgetown University made the top 20, ranked 18th and 20th, respectively.

Catholic schools were especially strong in the regional university category.

In the north, Dominican Friar-run Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, was ranked in first place, while Jesuit schools Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut, and Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, Maryland, were ranked second and tied for fourth, respectively.

In the Midwest, Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, received a first place ranking for the 15th year in a row, while another Jesuit school, Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, was ranked in fifth place.

In the West, three Jesuit universities, Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, were ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively.

Several Catholic colleges and universities were also in the top five of their regions' "Best Value" rankings, including Xavier University of Louisiana, St. Bonaventure University, Dominican University, and St. Mary's University of San Antonio.

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