

Report on RVP Activities **January-December 2025**

Annual Seminar

August 19-September 20: Rethinking the Human Condition in the Age of the Anthropocene
(CUA McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values, Washington DC)

International Conferences

- June 2-3: Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: Transmission of Ideas in Europe**
(in collaboration with Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria)
- June 6-7: "Ius Gentium" (Rights of Nations): Heritage and Challenges in the Time of Interacting Cultures**
(in collaboration with the Faculty of International and Political Studies and the Institute of Intercultural Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland)
- June 10-11: The Meaning of Peace and Reconciliation in Conflict Times**
(in collaboration with the Department of Theology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland)
- July 2-3: Central Asia in the Context of Global Communication: Values Transcending Borders**
(in collaboration with the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan)
- July 6-7: Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia and Beyond: Philosophy of Diplomacy**
(in collaboration with the Ala-Too International University and Universities of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
- November 3-4: Adaptive Faith: Technology and Religious Change in the Digital Age**
(in collaboration with the Center for Inter-Religious Studies, Al-Mahdi Institute, Birmingham, UK)
- December 3: Hermeneutics of Change and Philosophy as a Place for Dialogue**
(RVP Consultation)
- December 4-6: The Art of Thinking and Contemplation: Socrates, Buddha, and Christ: Guardini's Gegensatz and Metánoia**
(in collaboration with Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome and Pontifical Athenaeum Sant' Anselmo, Rome, Italy; Pontifical Teutonic Institute Santa Maria dell' Anima, Katholische, Akademie, Guardini Stiftung, Berlin, Germany)

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR (2025)

Washington, DC

August 19-September 20, 2025: **“Rethinking the Human Condition in the Age of the Anthropocene.”** The 2025 seminar explored the profound implications of the Anthropocene—a term that denotes the current geological age viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant force in shaping the structural and the systematic in biological and geological spheres. The seminar drew upon, in an interdisciplinary manner, a diverse array of philosophical, ecological, socio-political, and culture-religious insights, engaging with key thinkers whose works critically examine what it means to be human in an era of deep and irreversible transformations that calls for a profound rethinking of the human existential condition.

Among the key themes, the seminar looked into the relationship between the human being and the world of nature and the concomitant boundaries and focused upon how humanity and nature, particularly in light of contemporary ecological crises, relate and influence one another. The seminar studied foundational contributions of authors from different philosophical traditions to look into the traditional view on existence itself and reexamine the values and frameworks that capture modern consciousness and govern modern societies. While highlighting how societal changes and transformation impact our understanding of selfhood and human nature in general, the seminar encouraged participants to reflect on the crucial importance of moral responsibility and, in particular, in a world marked by a process of ecological degradation, of our possible debt toward future generations. Philosophically, it means to move beyond dualism such as nature versus culture to foster a holistic understanding of our role in the age of the Anthropocene with insights from science, ethics, art, and indigenous knowledge systems.

One of the key approaches to the understanding of the human condition in the age of the Anthropocene, inasmuch as the need for rethinking agency, responsibility, and relationality, as well as



for reimagining the human condition, and for reshaping human aspirations and inspirations in the modern world. Ultimately, it is necessary to consider and debate frameworks identified as relevant for hermeneutical grappling of some crucial environmental and anthropological challenges of the contemporary world. During the five weeks the seminar participants worked intensively to study relevant materials and were challenged to reconsider their understanding of humanity, ethics, and existence in a rapidly changing world. By integrating diverse philosophical perspectives with contemporary ecological and socio-political concerns, the seminar fostered a rich and well-grounded dialogue about the future both as individuals and communities.

The 2025 seminar was held online with participants coming from various countries across the world. **João J. Vila-Chã** (Gregorian University, Italy) continued severing as the moderator of the seminar. Other participants included **Martha Beck** (Lyon College, Arizona, US), **Mberikwazvo Ian Chitambo** (St. Joseph's Theological Institute, South Africa), **Kim Bernard G. Fajardo** (Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippines), **Chrysoula Gitsoulis** (City University of New York, US), **L. Udaya Kumar** (Achary Nagarjuna University, India), **Sofia Simitzi** (Greece), **Abdul Wahab Suri** (University of Karachi, Pakistan), **N. Ravi Vincent** (Andhra University, India), **Yuliia Vintoniv** (Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine), **Zhao Xin** (Wuhan University, China). A few from the Washington DC area also attended the seminar sessions: **Asna Husin** (Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Indonesia), **Mark Michalski** and **Adriene Black** (Catholic University of America, USA).

The seminar was divided in two parts. During the first five weeks, seminar participants focused on the relevant reading materials. In the second part of the seminar, beginning in October 2025, participants present their draft papers and provide critiques and comments on the presentations. On the third Saturday of each month, participants meet to discuss and critique one another's draft in preparation for publication. The draft paper presentation ends in March 2026. As usual, on September 6, 2025, there was a memorial celebration at the Oblates (OMI) to commemorate George F. McLean (1929.6.29-2016.9.6).



João J. Vila-Chã



Martha Beck



Mberikwazvo I. Chitambo



Kim Bernard G. Fajardo



Chrysoula Gitsoulis



L. Udaya Kumar



Sofia Simitzi



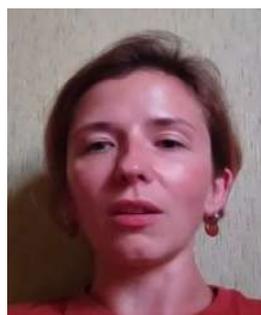
Sonali Singh



Abdul Wahab Suri



N. Ravi Vincent

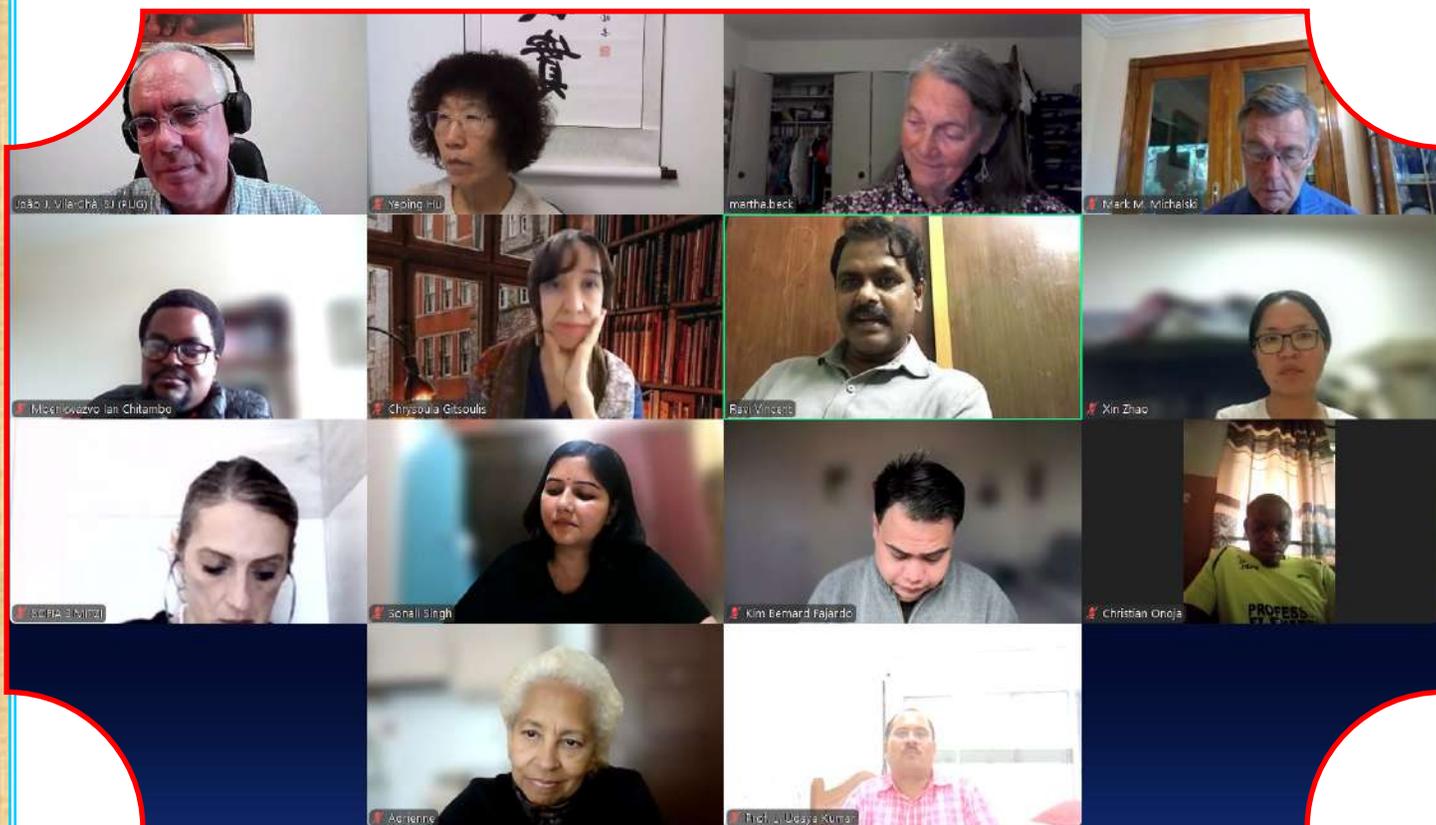


Yuliia Vintoniv



Zhao Xin

During the first five week, each participant was asked to present a brief summary and reflection on the assigned reading. The seminar began with *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI* by Yuval Noah Harari, presented by **Onoja, Fajardo, and Simitzi**. This was followed by Patrick Manning's *A History of Humanity: The Evolution of the Human System*, presented by

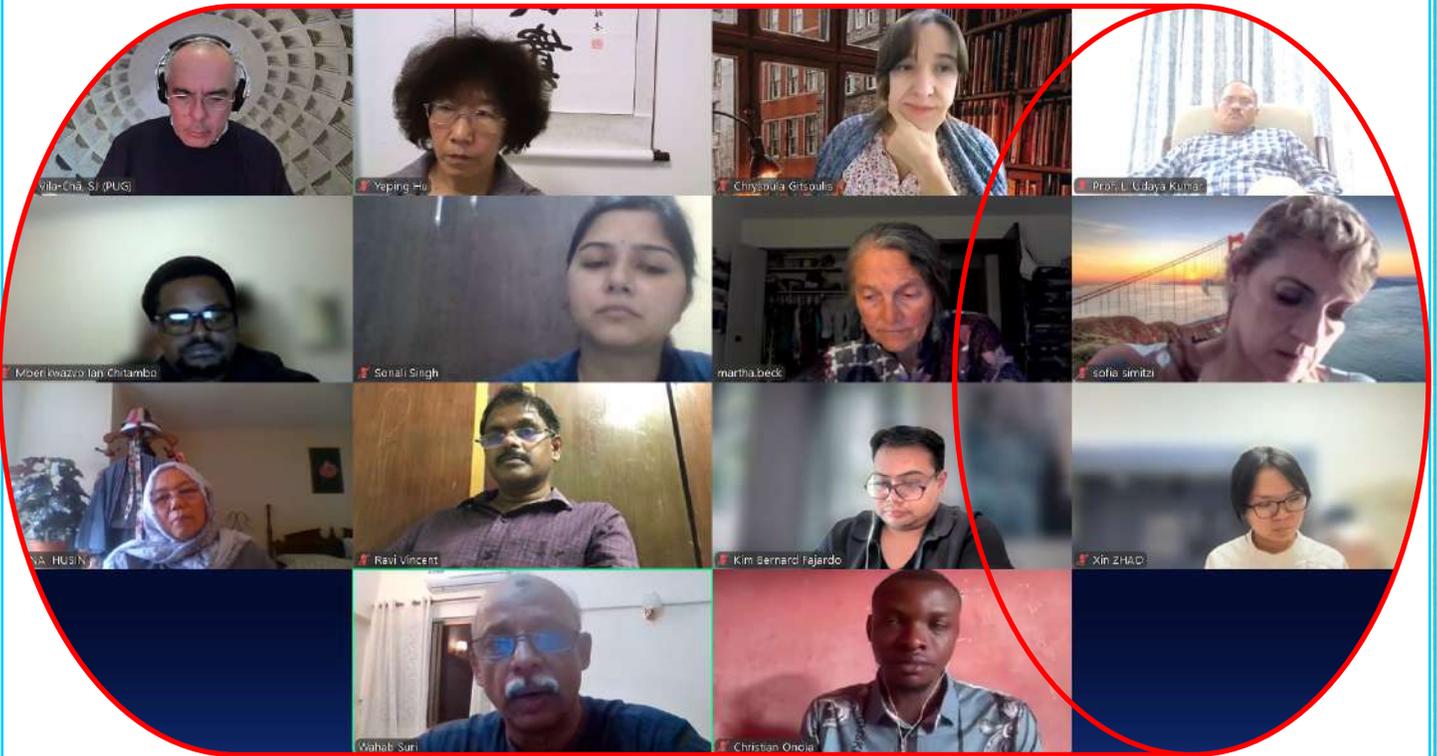


Suri, Chitambo, and Kumar; Albert Borgmann's *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*, presented by **Beck, Singh, and Kadyrov**; Robert Pogue Harrison's *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*, presented by **Zhao, Vincent, and Khan**.

Reading by Bruno Latour, *An Anthropologist Visits the Laboratory*, "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene," "The Impact of Science Studies on Political Philosophy," and "Anthropology at the Time of the Anthropocene: A Personal View of What Is To Be Studied," were presented respectively by **Gitsoulis, Vintoniv, Simitzi, and Fajardo**. V.I. Vernadski's *The Biosphere* was presented by

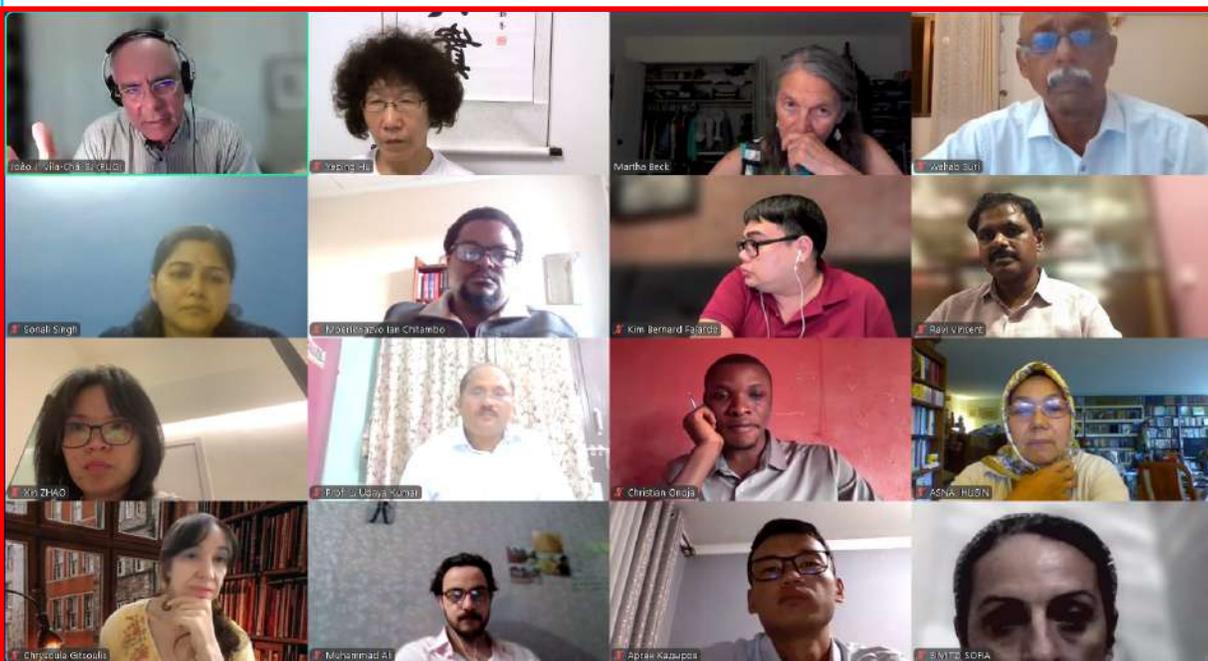


Chitambo and **Gitsoulis**, followed by James Lovelock's *The Age of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth*, presented by **Beck**. Additional readings included James Miller's *China's Green Religion: Daoism and the Quest for a Sustainable Future*, presented by **Zhao** and **Kadyrov**; Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle. The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination*, presented by **Vincent** and **Kumar**;



Francis Fukuyama's *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, presented by **Suri**, **Singh**, and **Kadyrov**; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, presented by all the seminar participants.

Texts also included William Bogard's "Deleuze and Machines: A Politics of Technology," presented by **Kumar**, and Verena Andermatta Conley's "Of Rhizomes, Smooth Space, War Machines and New Media," presented by **Fajardo**. Giorgio Agamben's *Stasis: Civil War as a Political Paradigm* was presented by **Simitzi**; *State of Exception* by **Singh**; and *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* by **Chitambo** and **Zhao**. Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" was presented by **Onoja**. The reading period concluded with Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of the*



Modern Identity, and Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment, presented by **Vintoniv**.

Draft paper critique began in October 2025 and will end in April 2026

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (2025)

Sofia, Bulgaria

June 2-3, 2025: **“Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: Transmission of Ideas in Europe.”** This international conference was initiated by **Bogdana Todorova**, Professor of Islamic Studies and Vice Director of Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria. **Todorova** has previously participated in several RVP regional conferences, including those held in Romania and Kyrgyzstan, and also took part in the 2024 RVP annual seminar.



Bogdana Todorova

According to the conference’s thematic description, Europe has been shaped by diverse religious and cultural traditions, such as the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as various indigenous and philosophical traditions. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue has played an essential role in the transmission of ideas in Europe through interaction and exchange. These activities have not only enriched Europe’s cultural landscape but have also fostered mutual understanding among diverse religious and nonreligious communities. Various institutions (academic, religious, social, and political.) have contributed significantly to facilitating such dialogue, enabling ideas and experiences to cross geographic, cultural, and religious boundaries.

In both antiquity and modern times, interreligious and intercultural dialogue has had a profound impact on Europe’s intellectual development. Scholars from different religious and cultural backgrounds collaborated in translating and interpreting classical works of philosophy, science, and medicine from Arabic and Greek into Latin. These multicultural exchange introduced new scientific and philosophical ideas to Europe, and stimulated advancements in fields such as astronomy, mathematics, and medicine laying the foundation for Europe’s intellectual awakening.

The conference explored questions concerning how philosophical ideas transcend cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries, and how they are shaped, and in turn shape, the local contexts they encounter. As an interdisciplinary event, the conference sought to examine the mechanisms through which philosophical concepts, schools of thought, and intellectual traditions migrate, evolve, and influence societies. From this perspective, the conference aimed to map out both the well-established paths of coexistence and cultural exchange in Europe and the new paths that remain to be explored, as well as the new bridges that need to be built. This focus is especially signifi-



cant in light of major challenges facing contemporary Europe, including migration, social integration, intercultural tensions, political tensions.

Contemporary Europe requires new ideas and insights to understand the rapidly changing landscape – socio-political, technological, ecological, cultural, religious, etc. By fostering open dialogue, communication, and collaboration, Europe can continue to benefit from its rich diversity. Interreligious and intercultural dialogues can strengthen the social fabric and cohesion and contribute to the development of a more inclusive society.



The conference focused in particular on the following issues: dialogue among monotheistic religions in the transmission of philosophical ideas in Europe and beyond; the role of monotheistic religions in the translation and dissemination of philosophical texts; religious mysticism and Sufism in Europe; the role of Muslim thinkers in the development of Islamic philosophy; the adaptation and transformation of ideas across different cultures and religions; the impact of media and technology on the dissemination of philosophical ideas and education; and the way in which religious communities collaborate in addressing ecological crises.

The conference was held at the 'Acad. Ivan Geshov' Hall in the Central Building of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on the first day, and at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology on the second day. Opening remarks were delivered by **Todorova**, Bishop **Petko Valov**, and **Hu Yeping**.



The first session, moderated by **Todorova**, included presentation by **William Barbieri** “Moral Universalism and Intercultural Dialogue”; **Plamen Makariev** (Sofia University) “Religiously Motivated Messages to Society: The ‘Common Language Challenge’”; **Emanuel Sălăgean** (University of Bucharest, Romania) “Common Ideas, Diverse Cultures: The Legacy of Cusanus in McLean’s Global Vision”; and **Andrew Blasco** (Institute of Population and Human Sciences, Bulgaria/Sweden) “Constructivism in the Service of Subjugation.” **Makariev** has worked closely with the RVP in the past: he participated in the RVP annual seminars in 2000 and 2014, organized an RVP conference in Sofia in 1998, and published several edited book in the RVP publication series.

The second session moderated by **Mihaela Pop**, featured **João J. Vila-Chã** “Modeling Knowledge And Its Transmission: The Case of the Platonic Academy of Florence during the Renaissance”; **Iva Manova** (Institute of Philosophy and sociology) “Pyotr Mikhailovich Bitsilli as Transmitter of Ideas: His Émigré Fate and His Concept of Cultural Renaissance”; and **Bianka Boteva-Richter** (University of Vienna, Austria)



“Migration and Fragmented Existence: A European Japanese Elaboration of Human Existence as Being In-between.”

Barbieri moderated the third session, **Todorova** presented her paper “The Transmission of Islamic Philosophy and Knowledge to Europe,” followed by an online presentation by **Nazeem Goolam** (South Africa) “The Transmission of Knowledge from the Islamic World to Europe.” The fourth session, moderated by **Vila-Chã**, included an online presentation by **Bharati Puri** (IIT Delhi, India) “Thich Nhat Hanh: Seeing the World in a Piece of Carrot”; **Ludmil Petrov** (Institute of Philosophy and sociology) “Religious Being of the Human”; and **Mihaela Pop** (University of Bucharest, Romania) “Some Artistic Intercultural Contributions of Romanian Jews at the Beginning of the 20th Century.” The fifth session, moderated by **Manova**, featured **Evelina Hein** (Sofia University) “Introduction of Confucian Ideas into Bulgaria from the Early XXth Century to the Early XXIst Century (via Germany)”; **Hristina Ambareva** (Institute of Philosophy and sociology) “Cultural Shifts in



Privacy from Greek Agora to Dragonfly Eyes”; and **Vessela Misheva** (Uppsala University, Sweden) “Fostering Mutual Understanding: Self-Alienation as a Social Virtue.”

After the conference, the local organizing team guided participants on a tour of Sofia and attended a concert held in a Church, followed by an excursion to the Rila Monastery, located in the Rila Mountains along the Rila River, about 70 miles from Sofia.

Krakow, Poland

July 6-7, 2025: **"Ius Gentium (Rights of Nations): Heritage and Challenges in the Time of Interacting Cultures."** The conference was planned and organized by **Leszek Korporowicz**, Professor at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and Jagiellonian University in Krakow, and **Sylwia Jaskula**, Professor at Jagiellonian University. Both scholars were dedicated to research on intercultural dialogue and communication and had previously participated in the RVP pre-World Congress of Philosophy conference held in Rome on July 29-31, 2024.

The conference description offered an in-depth elaboration of its central theme. Contrary to the expectations of many 20th-century theorists, the modern world has not become standardized. Instead, the increasing mobility of individuals, groups, cultural content, information, and technology has generated greater cultural, customary, religious, and ethnic diversity in nearly every part of the



Leszek Korporowicz



Sylwia Jaskula



Jarosław Górniak



Piotr Bajor



Franciszek Czech



William Barbieri

world. This growing diversity has resulted in more frequent, direct, and complex interactions between individuals, communities, organizations, religious groups, and states. As a result, a range of questions emerges concerning the values that govern these multifaceted interactions. While some of these exchanges lead to peaceful cooperation, trade, and shared experiences, others give rise to tensions and, at times, open conflict. Thus, the contemporary world faces the crucial challenge of establishing norms — both formal and informal— that shape not only legal frameworks and relation



ships but also the intentions and capacities required for meaningful engagement among diverse peoples, cultures, religion, and civilizations.

Many countries and traditions possess rich cultural heritages that offer long-standing solutions and practices developed over centuries. Ethical and religious systems likewise provide inspiration for contemporary efforts to build bridges of understanding and to articulate values that transcend differences in traditions, lifestyles, and spiritualities across the globe. Within the European tradition



shaped by Christian theological and social thought, the concept of the "rights of nations" (*ius gentium*) offers a path toward fostering social order, respect for the dignity of distinct communities, and creative forms of development. Although these values have gained renewed urgency in recent decades, they have been the subject of study and debate since antiquity and acquired a systematic, though later somewhat forgotten, form in the late Middle Ages.

These values are exemplified in the principles of intercultural and international relations associated with the Jagiellonian ideas, which originated in the Kingdom of Poland and later in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the early 15th century. These ideas pioneered the concept of "rights of nations," particularly within the intellectual circle of the Krakow Academy. They were developed by Pawel Wlodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri, 1370-1436), a leading figure of the Krakow school of international law. A prominent Polish scholar and rector of the Academy, Wlodkowic was a key participant in the Polish king's delegation to the Council of Constance (1414-1418). His groundbreaking work continues to resonate today in the tradition of John Paul II's homeland.

Rooted in Christian values that emphasize respect for the dignity of individuals and their communities, these ideas historically served as an axiological principle guiding relationships across diverse contexts and cultural epochs. They suggest the enduring relevance of values that transcend



temporary and instrumental concerns and enable the construction of lasting bridges of understanding. The aim of this conference was to showcase initiatives that exemplify such bridges—an arsenal of inspiration grounded in genuine communication. This approach moves beyond one-way influence, transmission, or manipulation and instead embraces dialogical communication.

Wlodkowic's conception of international and intercultural relations highlights interaction based on reciprocity, exchange, and interdependence, while acknowledging the subjectivity, intentionality, and agency of all participants. This form of communication seeks values that are universal, and even transcendent, yet deeply rooted in lived experience.



The conference presentations invited participants to expand the platform for presenting concrete examples, projects, and reflections that illustrate the pillars of intercultural bridges. These examples are intended to inspire culture-forming activities and encourage similar initiatives that respect the principles of the "rights of nations" in various parts of the world, within different social systems, and in the context of new technological and media realities. One of the conference's key objectives was to promote action that resists the civilizational and political cynicism often driven by technocratic or power-centric values. By exploring the axiological meaning of this concept and its implications for "rights," the conference sought to demonstrate the creative potential inherent in both the intellectual and practical dimensions of the issue. The concept of the "rights of nations," particularly as articulated by Wlodkowic, emerged from European and Christian cultural contexts. His theory introduced categories that laid the foundations for social personalism, extending its application beyond individuals to human communities. A particularly significant notion is that of national dignity, which remains highly relevant today, especially in transnational organizations and multicultural societies. Accordingly, the conference emphasized the need to reflect on cultural and ethnic interpretations of Wlodkowic's ideas, encouraging participants to explore both the universal significance and their contextual specificity. A further critique question drawn from Wlodkowic's thought remains pressing in contemporary global interactions: What are the limits of the rights of nations and cultural rights, particularly in preventing the excessive ambitions of certain groups within multicultural environments? This inquiry invites deeper reflection on the balance between national identity and global coexistence.

The conference was organized into three main thematic blocks. Block I, focusing on the contemporary cultural interaction, addressing issues such as the global expansion of intercultural encounters; the consequences of cultural diversification; domination and cultural marginalization as ex-

pressions of power relations; cultural subjectivity in a media-driven world; core values of national communities amid political divisions; and intercultural dialogue among nations and ethnic groups in an interactive global environment.

Block II devoted to the historical and theoretical foundations of the rights of nations, examined the Krakow School of International Law; social personalism within Krakow humanism; the rights of nations as human and cultural rights; cultural anthropological perspectives; Christian origins and the tensions between particular and universal models of human rights; intercultural rights in contemporary contexts; cultural subjectivity; and the limits of autonomy, agency, and sovereignty.

Block III explored the rights of nations in modern cultural and social contexts, including the right to patriotism in a pluralistic world, the communication of heritage in intercultural education, cultural rights within multinational corporations, the role of cultural and political elites, and the axiological foundations of ethnic policies in multicultural states.

The conference was held at the Faculty of International and Political Studies and the Institute of Intercultural Studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Opening remarks were delivered by **Jarosław Górniak** (Vice-Rector of the University), **Piotr Bajor** (Dean of the Faculty of International and Political Studies), **Franciszek Czech** (Director of the Institute of Intercultural Studies), **William Barbieri** on behalf of RVP, and **Korporowicz**, which provided thematic introductions.

Session I, "The Horizon of Values," moderated by **Czech**, featured presentations by **João J. Vila-Chã** "The Law of Nations and the Idea of Europe: Vatel and Rougemont on the Challenges of Peace"; **Michał Gierycz** (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw) "Reinterpretation of the Concept of the Law of Nations in the Thought of John Paul II"; and **Korporowicz** "Rights of Nations as a Springhead of the International and Intercultural Rights."

Session II, "Ethical Considerations of Rights of Nations," moderated by **Andrzej Wadas** (Jagiellonian University), included **Piotr Mazurkiewicz** (Cardinal Wyszyński University) "'Savage Nations' and 'Civilized Nations': From Włodkowic to John Paul II" and **Bogdan Szlachta** (Jagiellonian University) "Prawa narodów a koncepcja etyki uniwersalnej (The Rights of Nations and the Concept of Universal Ethics)."

Session III, "Socio-Political Challenges Moderator," moderated by **Natalia Ożegalska-Łukasik** (Jagiellonian University), was presented by **Volodymyr Yevtuch** (Former Ukraine Diplomat) "Ethno-cultural Space of Ukraine: Structure, Actors, Interactions, Rights"; **Janusz Węgrzecki** (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University) "Political Prudence in Action. Paweł Włodkowic Defending the Rights of Nations (*ius gentium*) in the Dispute between The Teutonic Brethren and the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania"; and **Przemysław Załuska** (Ignatianum University) "The Rights of Nations in the Age of Globalization: A Christian Solidarism Perspective."



Session IV, "Democracy and Justice," moderated by **Ela Wiącek** (Jagiellonian University), included presentations by **Barbieri** "The Rights of Nations and the Problem of Constitutive Justice" and **Marta Turkot-Piesik** (Warsaw School of Economics) "The Idea of National Sovereignty and the Project of Global Democracy."

Session V, "The Living Heritage," conducted in Polish and moderated by **Jaskuła** with speakers



Wanda Bajor (Catholic University of Lublin) "Humanistyczne inspiracje polskiej średniowiecznej szkoły prawa narodów (ius gentium) (Humanistic Inspirations of the Polish Medieval School of the Rights of Nations (ius gentium)"; **Marek Rembierz** (University of Silesia) "Prawa narodów i relacje międzykulturowe w kontekście zagrożeń i czasów wojny - perspektywy idei jagiellońskich (The Rights of Nations and Intercultural Relations in the Context of Threats and Wartime – Perspectives of Jagiellonian Ideas); and **Anna Walulik** (Jagiellonian University) "Ewangeliczne treści w myśli Pawła Włodkowica.(Evangelical Content in the Thought of Paweł Włodkowic)."

Session VI, "Asian Traditions," moderated by **Adam Żaliński** (Jagiellonian University), included **Andrzej Wadas** (Ignatianum University) "The Samil Movement of 1919 and the Righteous Nation: Voicing Five Millennia of Korean Civilization"; **Wojciech Gołubiewski** (Thomas Aquinas Center, Taipei) "Reading Mozi with Aquinas on Just War"; and **Hu Yeping** "Personal Responsibility from a Chinese Perspective."

The concluding session featured remarks by **Bajor**, **Korporowicz**, and **Hu Yeping**. After the conference participants exchanged ideas and suggestions for future cooperation.



Poznan, Poland

July 10-11, 2025: "The Meaning of Peace and Reconciliation in Conflict Times." The conference was organized by **Dawid Stelmach**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Theology at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) in Poznan. **Stelmach** previously participated in the RVP online conference "Healing a Wounded Society: Challenges, Reconciliation, and Hope in Rwanda," held on



Leszek Korporowicz

April 14-15, 2023.

The conference description stated that in times of conflict, peace and reconciliation become both urgent and elusive, shaping individuals, communities, and nations in their efforts to return to stability and normality. Peace transcends the mere absence of violence; it is a holistic condition in which harmony, security, and mutual respect are upheld by all parties. Achieving peace in conflictual times is often complex, requiring more than a ceasefire or temporary truce; it demands deep-seated changes in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships among those in conflict. Reconciliation, essential and fundamental to lasting peace, is the process by which adversaries confront past grievances and injuries in order to move forward in mutual acceptance and coexistence. Together, peace and reconciliation provide a framework for healing and rebuilding communities marked by division, distrust, and trauma. Peace in its fullest sense implies freedom from fear and the presence of justice, equality, and opportunity for all individuals within a community and all members of society. True peace cannot be sustained without addressing the underlying causes of conflict, including social injustice, economic disparity, and political oppression. This is where reconciliation becomes crucial. Reconciliation is more than a symbolic gesture; it is a transformative process that includes acknowledgment of wrongdoings, accountability, forgiveness, and sometimes reparation. The path to reconciliation requires building trust, creating shared stories, and fostering empathy.

In conflict settings, peace and reconciliation are essential for healing fractured societies and building inclusive and resilient communities in which all members feel respected, valued, and safe. Peace without reconciliation risks being superficial, potentially reigniting conflict when grievances remain unaddressed. Conversely, reconciliation without peace may falter if hostilities is ongoing.



The synergy between the two enables peoples, communities, and societies to imagine a future beyond confrontation and violence, grounded in mutual understanding and respect. Thus, peace and reconciliation are both the means and the destination that encourage people to transform confrontation and conflict into opportunities for unity, development, and prosperity.

In this light, the conference focused on the following issues: Is it possible to promote peace and reconciliation in conflictual times? What do peace and reconciliation mean in different cultures and civilizations? Can religious institutions help prevent conflicts and wars? What roles do traditional religions play in building peace and achieving reconciliation? Is coexistence possible in complex political situations? What does a just peace mean in Central and Eastern Europe? How do traumas affect peace and reconciliation? What new socio-political and economic policies are needed for political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe?

The first day of the conference was held at Ostrow Tumski (Cathedral Island), and the second



day took place in Lubranski's Aula at the University. During the opening session, **Stelmach** and **William Barbieri** gave remarks respectively. The keynote speech session was moderated by **Stelmach** and featured presentation by **Stanisław Gądecki** (Archbishop of Poznań) "Peace in Man, Society and the World," and **Przemysław Hauser-Schöneich** (H.E. Ambassador in Antigua and Barbuda) "International Mediation in the Service of Peace." Session I, moderated by **Barbieri**, included talks by **João Vila-Chã** "Sovereignty and the Idea of Europa: The Notion of Difficult-Peace among Peoples and Nations"; **Jerzy Rząsowski** (AMU) "Military Chaplains in the Service of Peace: Reflections of a Christian Pastor"; and **Hu Yeping** "Peace and Harmony as the Ultimate Goal of Justice." Session II, moderated by **Vila-Chã**, featured **Barbieri** "Reconciliation: Political, Theological, Ecological"; **Przemysław Zgorecki** (AMU) "The Meaning of Peace and Reconciliation in the Context of Christian Philosophy"; and **Stelmach** "Reconciliation in the Rwandan and Polish Context." Session III was dedicated to a students panel, "Vision of Peace, Experience of Conflict: The Perspective of the Young Generation." It was moderated **Cezary Kościelniak** (AMU), with opening remarks by



Jacek Zjawin (AMU), followed by presentations of students from Azerbaijan, China, Poland, and Turkey.

After the conference, participants visited the city center and the art gallery featuring Polish paintings.

Almaty, Kazakhstan

July 2-3, 2025: "Central Asia in the Context of Global Communication: Values Transcending Borders." This conference was initiated by **Aidar Moldashovich Amrebaev**, Senior Researcher and Director of the Center for Political Studies at the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies (IPPSR) in Almaty, Kazakhstan. **Amrebaev** previously participated in the RVP pre-World Congress of Philosophy conference held in Rome on July 29-31, 2024 and presented a paper on the formation of Kazakh identity. The event was coordinated by **Nurken Aitymbetov** and **Damira Alikyzy Sihimbayeva**, both young researchers at IPPSR, who carefully attended to the details of the conference's preparation.

As the conference description explains, Central Asia is a region with a rich history and diverse



Aidar Moldashovich Amrebaev, Rustem Kazakhbaevich Kadyrzhanov, Aigul Kakimbekovna Sadvokassova, Gulnash Askhat, Damira Alikyzy Sihimbayeva

cultural traditions. It plays an important role as a bridge in global communication between East and West. As the heart of the Silk Road in the past, the region was a significant space for the exchange of ideas, values, and goods. In today's globalized world, Central Asia continues to play a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural dialogue. With its unique blend of Turkic, Persian, and Russian traditions, the region has become a hub for intercultural communication and understanding. Its traditional values of hospitality, respect for elders, and communal lifestyle inspire collective efforts toward peaceful coexistence.

Traditional values of Central Asia not only belong to the region itself but also transcend borders through shared human experiences worldwide. By participation in global communication, Central Asia can be an important contributor to mutual respect and cooperation among peoples, cultures, and civilizations on a global scale. These values resonate with many other traditions because they address universal aspirations and common concerns. The region's strategic location and cultural



richness are the potentials for collaboration across cultural and geographical or geopolitical boundaries. In an interconnected world, the rich traditions of Central Asia offer valuable insights and for fostering dialogue, understanding, and communication across cultures and civilizations. By sharing its values and experiences that transcend borders, the region can strengthen its global presence and contribute to collective efforts to build a world rooted in shared human values.



The conference was held at Ablai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages in Almaty. The opening session featured remarks by **Aigul Kakimbekovna Sadvokassova**, Professor of Sociology and General Director of the IPPSR under the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan; **Gulnash Askhat**, Director of the Department of International Relations at the Ablai Khan Kazakh University; and **Hu Yeping**. The session was moderated by **Rustem K. Kadyrzhanov**, Senior Researcher as IPPSR.

The first session, moderated by **Askhat**, included the following presentations **Kadyrzhanov** "Values of Mass Consciousness in Kazakhstan: Opportunities for National Consolidation and Threats to State Sovereignty"; **Amrebaev** "Value Crisis and the Turn to the Discourse of Justice in the Kazakh Intellectual Tradition"; and **João J. Vila-Chã** "The Law of Nations and the Cosmopolitan Model: Emer de Vattel, Immanuel Kant, and the Challenges of Peace."



Session II was moderated by **Amrebaev** with speakers from several alongside scholars from Kazakhstan. Some presented online: **Pan Chang Wei** (China University of Petroleum, China) “Dong Zhongshu’s Philosophy of the Unity of Heaven and Man”; **N. Mammadov** (National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan) “Challenges of Adapting Education in Azerbaijan to International Standards in the Era of Globalization”; and **Halik Yabalak** (Van University, Turkey) “Folklore in the Context of Contemporary Mass Consciousness.” The remaining speakers presented



their research findings in person: **Aidos Saryin** (Parliament (Majils) of Kazakhstan) “Power and Society: A Way to Common Values”; **Aitymbet Lyazzat** (Ablai Khan Kazakh University) “Socio-Cultural Codes and Economic Development: Comparative Analysis of Kazakhstan and Russia”; **Aliya Kazhimuratovna Abisheva** (Al-Farabi Kazakh National University) “Transformation of Kazakhstani Values: Traditionalism vs. Globalism”; and **Damira Alikyzy Sihimbayeva** and **Asyltai Tasbolat** (IPPSR) “From Securitization to Legitimization: “Traditional Islam” as State Religious Policy in Kazakhstan.”

Several other scholars from IPPR had prepared presentations but were unable to share their research due to time constraints. Prior to and after the conference, the local organizing team arranged visits to the Ablai Khan University Museum, the Medeu High Mountain, and the city center. These

visits were followed by a tradition dinner hosted by **Sihimbayeva** and a home visit to the **Amrebaev** to experience Kazakh hospitality.



Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

July 6-7, 2025: “Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia and Beyond: Philosophy of Diplomacy.”

This conference was planned and organized by **Cholpon E. Alieva**, Professor at the Ala-Too International University (ATIU) and Universities of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. **Alieva** has organized similar conferences in Bishkek in previous years, including “Features of “Democratization in Central Asia” (2022) and “Re-Learning to Be Human for Global Times: Islamic Traditions and



Cholpon Alieva

Developments in Central Asia” (2017). She also participated in the RVP annual seminars in 2012 (Building Community in a Mobile/Global Age) and 2021 (Nations, States and the Transformation of Boundaries). The 2025 conference was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and took place at the Ala-Too International University.

According to the conference description, in today’s globalized world the expansion of multicultural spaces and the growing interdependence of civilizations and peoples have made intercultural dialogue both crucial and inevitable in all aspects of socio-political and cultural life. Increasing global awareness of a shared human destiny highlights the need for new forms of philosophical diplomacy as a significant means of preventing and resolving intercultural and intercivilizational conflicts. Dialogue as a way of understanding has deep roots in diverse cultural traditions. In the Middle East and Asia, dialogical practices can be traced to the Sumerian debates, the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, the *Mahabharata*, and the teachings of Buddha and Confucius. In the Western tradition, dialogue took shape through the dialectical methods of Socrates and Plato in ancient Greece. More recently, Western philosophical diplomacy has been influenced by thinkers such as Martin Buber, Paul Ricoeur, and Emmanuel Levinas, who explored the origins and nature of dialogue, its relation to thought, language, and culture, and its potential to transcend material boundaries and overcome dualistic divides such as “subject-object” and “I-thou.”

In Central Asia, dialogue as a unique form of connection between human beings and nature emerged from the region’s ancient nomadic culture and epic traditions like *Kozhozhash*, *Er-Toshtuk*, and *Manas*. This dialogical worldview was also reflected in the diplomatic exchanges of the Saks (7th century BCE–4th century CE), ancestors of today’s Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, with Persian rulers and Alexander the Great. Over centuries, Central Asia’s geographical, historical, and cultural position enabled it to function as a major crossroad for East-West intercultural dialogue. Since the emergence of the Great Silk Road in the 2nd century BCE, the region has developed a syncretic culture and philosophy in which religions and cultural traditions, such as Zoroastrianism,



Tengrism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Christianity, coexisted. During the Middle Ages, Sufism and the cosmopolitan view of Muslim thinkers including Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Al-Khwarizmi, Zhusup Balasaguni, Ahmed Yassawi, Omar Khayyam, and Ulugbek flourished.

The Silk Road, stretching from Xi'an in China to Rome in Italy, played a pivotal role in international relations and diplomacy. Marco Polo documented his experiences along this route in *The Book*



of the Diversity of the World (13th-14th centuries), underscoring its importance as a channel for cultural exchange, diplomatic engagement, and international cooperation. Rulers across Eurasia utilized the Silk Road for these purposes. This long and rich history of intercultural dialogue continues to inform the multi-vector diplomacy of contemporary Central Asian states and has contributed to the region's successful practices of peaceful border resolution. Despite its significance, Central Asia's experience in fostering intercultural dialogue and "Silk Road" diplomacy has received limited scientific attention and warrants deeper academic exploration.

The conference brought scholars from Central Asian countries as well as from other regions of the world to exchange ideas on the theoretical and practical dimensions of intercultural dialogue as a foundation for a philosophy of diplomacy in Central Asia and beyond. Its distinctive feature was the focus on intercultural and interdisciplinary research, as well as the philosophical integration of social and humanitarian values with scientific knowledge in education, particularly in relation to



intercultural dialogue and the intellectual heritage of Central Asia. Discussion focused on the nature and ontology of dialogue, dialogic consciousness and thinking, intercultural dialogue in Central Asia, philosophy of diplomacy and education, natural scientific aspects of dialogic communication, the historical and cultural meanings of concepts such as "Central Asia" and "philosophical diplomacy." Specific themes included the history and philosophy of intercultural dialogue and diplomacy, the role of the Great Silk Road, Central Asia as a cultural and geographical crossroads, philosophical frameworks for intercultural dialogue, national traditions of dialogue in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and philosophy of diplomacy as an emerging field in 21st century philosophy.



The conference opened with "Historical Memory of the City," a guided visit to the Monument of Joomart Bokonbaev on Erkindik Boulevard and Ala Archa Natural Park. This was followed by the presentations by **Takenova Zhyldyz Tunguchbaevna** (Head of the Faculty of Pedagogy at ATIU) and **Niannian Nian** (PhD student, the Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabev).

The official opening session was held on July 6 and moderated by **Alieva**. Welcoming remarks were delivered by **Esenalieva Nazira Soltonbekovna**, Rector of ATIU; **Kaldybaev Salidin Kadyrkulovich**, Vice-Rector for Scientific Work; **Umarov Rustam Usmanalievich**, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs; and **Ishemkulov Tilektesh Ishemkulovich**, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Kazakhstan and Professor of the Faculty of Journalism and Information Technology at Bishkek Humanitarian University.



The opening session was followed by a plenary session, also moderated by **Alieva**, featured presentations by **João J. Vila-Chã** "Conflict, War, and the Role of Diplomacy: The Idea of Europe as Paradigm for the Conquest of Peace"; **Pulat Shozimov Davronovich** (the Aga Khan Humanities Project,



University of Central Asia, Tajikistan) "Tajikistan Philosophy of Diplomacy as a Methodological Basis for a Constructive Dialogue of Values, Interests, and Institutions: The Central Asian Context"; **Pramod Kumar** (Sharda University, India) "Philosophy of Education in Central Asia: Historical Context and Evaluation"; **Telebaev Gaziz Turysbekovich** (the Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi, Kazakhstan) "Culture of Peace in Turkic Philosophy"; and **Taranov Igor Nikolaevich** (the Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic) "An Intercultural Investigation into Core Values in Modern Agriculture."

Session I, moderated by **Shozimov**, included the following speakers: **Almasbekov Esen Marato-**



vich (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic) “History of Kyrgyz Diplomacy”; **Bekboev Askarbek Abdykadyrovich** and **Karabukaev Kadyrkulu Sharsheevich** (the Institute of Philosophy of National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic) “Intercultural Communication as a Catalyst for the Development of Human Thinking”; **Abdybekova Nurmira Abdybekovna** (the Kyrgyz State Academy of Physical Culture and Sport named after B. Turusbekov) “Developing Students’ Communicative Competence on the Materials of Kyrgyz National Games”; **Eshenkulova Kishimjan Zalimtoroeva** (Istanbul University, Turkey and the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University,



Kyrgyzstan) “The Concept of the ‘Virtuous City’ in al-Farabi’s Philosophy as a Model of Intercultural Diplomacy”; **Ibraev Kubanych Sharshekeevich** (the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Kyrgyz State Technical University named after I. Razzakov) “Traditional Values in the Projection of Kyrgyz Philosophy”; **Abdrasulov Savetbek Misirkulovich** (the Kyrgyz National University named after Zhusup Balasagyn) “The Origins of the Dialogical Mentality of Kyrgyz,” **Jonathan Burckel** (the University of Strasbourg, France) “Teacher at the United World International School: Local Stories, Global Lessons: Implementing Storytelling in Kyrgyzstan Inspired by Scandinavian and French Approaches”; and **Zhakisheva Saltanat Urmatbekovna** (ATIU) “Definition of the Image of an Ideal Interlocutor in Communicative Behavior.”

Session II, moderated by **Taranov Igor Nikolaevich**, included **Kadyrov Argen Ishenbekovich** (the International University of Kyrgyzstan) “Kant, Biocentrism, and Kyrgyz Morality: Toward a Dialogue of Ecological Worldviews”; **Karybekova Aizhan Dzhumabekovna** (the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Kyrgyz Republic and ATIU) “Kyrgyz Ethnopedagogy as a Resource for the Modernization of Classical Pedagogy”; **Askerova Zhainagul** (ATIU) “Intercultural Intercultural Communication and International Education: Pedagogical Strategies.”



On online session moderated by **Alieva** brought together scholars from the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) to share their philosophical insights and experience on issues related to intercultural dialogue and communication, including **Wilhelm Danca** (the University of Bucharest, Romania), **Wolfgang Kaltenbacher** (the University of Naples "L'Orientale," Italy), **Anke Graness** (the University of Hildesheim, Germany), **Robin Wang** (Loyola Marymount University,



United States), and **Gail M. Presbery** (the University of Detroit Mercy, United States). In response, **Shozimov** and **Taranov** reflected on "Intercultural Dialogue and Intercultural Research in Central Asia," followed by a presentation by **Elnura Usupova** (ATIU) "AI in Multilingual Classrooms: Opportunities and Ethical Challenges in Fostering Intercultural Understanding."



Birmingham, United Kingdom

November 3-4, 2025: “**Adaptive Faith: Technology and Religious Change in the Digital Age.**” The CUA McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values co-organized this conference with the Center for Inter-Religious Studies at Al-Mahdi Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom. The event was supported by the Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religions at the Keough School of Global Affairs, the University



of Notre Dame and the Al Tajir Trust.

Intensive preparation for the conference began in November 2024. From the

Al-Mahdi Institute, **Muhammed Reza Tajri** (Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies and Lead of Comparative Religion) and **Arman Syed** (Research Assistant, the Centre for Inter-Religious Studies) played key roles in organizing the event. RVP representatives **William Barbieri**, **Hu Yeping**, and **João J. Vila-Chã** joined the planning process. This conference marked the first collaborative effort between the Al-Mahdi Institute, the RVP, and the McLean Center.

According to the brief conference description, the gathering intended to focus on the interplay between technological evolution and religion, which has shaped spiritual practices, theological discourses, and religious identities throughout history. The postmodern, and increasingly metamodern, eras have required societies to navigate the complexities of rapid digital transformation, including developments in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and unprecedented technological growth. As a result, religious traditions face new challenges of reformulation, epistemic transformations, and opportunities for redefinition. The conference situated itself within ongoing debates on modernity, technocriticism and the hermeneutics of religious change. It aimed at understanding the inter-



section between technology, secular modernity, and religious tradition, as well as the dynamic re-configurations of religious life in our contemporary world.

The conference convened a diverse group of scholars from various religious backgrounds. Presentations addressed historical trajectories of technological change in religious contexts and examined theological debates promoted by digital media, AI, biotechnology, robotics, military tech-



nology, and transhumanism.

Welcome Remarks were given by **Reza Tajri** and **Barbieri**, who also introduced the conference thematic focus. Panel I, chaired by **Wahid Amin**, included presentations by **Rahul Kumar Maurya** (Banaras Hindu University, India) "Ethics, Human Nature and AI's Challenge," and **Sayed Mohammad Fatemi** (Al-Mahdi Institute) "Safeguarding Human Agency in the Age of the Cyber-Leviathan: An Islamic Perspective." Panel II, chaired by **Zoheir Esmail**, featured **Arvind-Pal S. Mandair** (University of Michigan, United States) "Engaging Technology from Nondiverse and Local Perspectives"; **João J. Vila-Chã** "Technology and the Crisis of Modernity: Romano Guardini, Faith and the Transformations of Power"; and **Zairu Nisha** (Ramanujan College, University of Delhi, India) "Digital Spiritualism: A New Meaning to Religious Secularism in India."

Panel III, chaired by **Fatemi**, included **Michal Valčo** (Comenius University, Bratislava) "Techno-Gnosticism for the Digital Age: AI, Transhumanism, and the Flight from Embodiment"; **Hadil Lababidi** (University of Zurich, Switzerland) "Chances and Limitations of Using Digital Twins in Healthcare: An Islamic View"; and **Ugochukwu Stophynus Anyanwu** (Pontificia Gregoriana Univer



sity, Italy) “Re-making the Human Being according to the Transhumanist’s Image and Likeness: An Assault on Religious Belief?” Panel IV, chaired by **Munzela Raza**, featured **Babak Rahimi** (University of California, United States) “On the Technicity of Muharram Devotional Performances”; **Jonathan Karr** and **Louisa Conwill** (University of Notre Dame, United States) “Equivocation and Erosion: How LLMs Undermine Catholic Religious Discourse”; and **Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor** (Coventry University, United Kingdom) “Between the ‘Digital’ and the ‘Analogue’: Intergenerational Transformations within Diverse Muslim Communities.”



Panel V, chaired by **Barbieri**, included **Esther D. Reed** (University of Exeter, United Kingdom) “On Accountability for the Taking of Human Life: Toward an Interfaith (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) Ethic of Weapons Control,” and **Mahan Mirza** (The Ansari Institute, University of Notre Dame, United States) “Techno Apocalypse in Islam: Between Utopia and Dystopia.” Panel VI, chaired by **Syed Arman Kazmi**, consisted of **Heidi A Campbell** (Texas A&M University, United States) “Understanding the Digital Othering and Religious Bias Communicated in Popular Internet Memes and Implications for Religious Communities,” and **Shonda Nicole Gladden** (Indiana University, United States) “Blue Notes and Black Codes: Womanism, Digital Faith, and the Algorithmic Future.” In the concluding session, **Reza Tajri** and **Barbieri** offered closing remarks. During the conference, participants also visited the Institute and its Library as well as the city center.



Rome, Italy

December 3, 2025: "**Hermeneutics of Change and Philosophy as a Place for Dialogue.**" As part of its ongoing tradition, the RVP occasionally convenes consultations by inviting scholars with distinctively expertise in their research fields, followed by a business meeting with some RVP board members. **William Barbieri** moderated the session, outlining the purpose of the gathering and in-



William Barbieri



Craig Calhoun



Catherine Cornille



Paolo Costa



Tomas Halik



Hans Joas



Peter Jonkers



Mohsen Kadivar



Gail Presbey



William Sweet



João J. Vila-Chã



Xiang Shuchen

roducing each participants. The consultation addressed a range of issues understood as shared global concerns, as well as possible research themes and the upcoming World Congress of Philosophy to be held in Tokyo, Japan, in August 2028 under the theme "Philosophy: A Place for Open Dialogue." The consultation was held online.

Before the thematic discussion, **João J. Vila-Chã** shared information about the RVP annual seminars, including their themes, structures, participants, and ongoing processes. **Hu Yeping** provided an overview of RVP activities in 2025, plans for 2026, and developments in the publication series. Additional participants included **Craig Calhoun** (Professor of Sociology, Arizona State University), **Catherine Cornille** (Professor of Theology, Boston College), **Paolo Costa** (Professor of Philosophy, the Center for Religious Studies of the Fondazione Bruno Kessler), **Tomas Halik** (Professor of Sociology, Charles University), **Hans Joas** (Professor of Sociology of Religion, Humboldt University of Berlin), **Peter Jonkers** (Professor of Philosophy, Tilburg University), **Mohsen Kadivar** (Professor of Islamic Studies, Duke University), **Gail Presbey** (Professor of Philosophy, University of Detroit Mercy), **William Sweet** (Professor of Philosophy, St. Francis Xavier University), and **Xiang Shuchen** (Professor of Philosophy, Xidian University). The following summarizes the thematic discussion as presented by the participants.

Joas presented key themes from his book project on moral universalism, which aims to offer a global history of moral universalism and to show that it is not grounded exclusively in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Enlightenment thought has many historical roots, including roots in Chinese,

India, and Buddhist traditions. The project seeks to trace development from the Axial Age to the late 20th century, emphasizing the interplay between the history of moral universalism and the history of empires and imperialism. For this reason, the book is titled *Political Universalism*.

From this historiographical perspective, Joas identified several possible topics that emerge organically for reflection on the present and near future. He noted that there is a tendency in the West to frame contemporary global tensions primarily as a conflict between democracy and autocracy, a characterization he views with skepticism. Instead, the book examines the future of model universalism in relation to the dynamics of inter-imperial conflict in our time, particularly tensions between the United States and China. While the roles of other global actors, the EU, Russia, India, etc. are also significant in this tension. For scholars today, this presents a relatively pessimistic situation.

With regard to the future of moral universalism, Joas thinks that one possible reason for cautious optimism is the potentially constructive role of the Catholic Church under the Popes Francis and Leo, as well as the broader role of world religions that represent diverse forms of moral universalism. The important is cooperation between the Catholic Church and other globally oriented Christian organizations and non-Christian bodies that incorporate and incarnate other religious forms of moral universalism. Religious cooperation, not in the sense of religious dialogue, is important today, particularly, cooperation aimed at peacebuilding in an era of a new inter-imperial conflict. The Catholic Church in the past made contributed to the development of an ethics of peace, especially in response to the specific dangers of nuclear warfare. For several decades after the Cold War, it seems that nuclear warfare, seen more dangerous in the past, is less urgent; however, now, due to the new inter-imperial tensions, coupled with many technological innovations, it is a time to address these dangers in new ways that are really able to speak directly to the present situation. How an inter-religious understanding of moral universalism might relate to the heated debates on church reform, especially in the context of global Christianity. This would be a topic for Catholics, but in the spirit of a renewed understanding of Catholicism, in the age of globalization of Christianity where Christianity and Catholicism seem not really to die out but weakening, for instance in Europe, while at the same time growing stronger in other parts of the world. What does this shift imply for the future of the Church and religion more broadly?



Halik emphasized the need to deepen the idea of synodality as a reform of Christianity, not only for the Catholic Church, but also for Christianity as a whole and potentially for other religious traditions. Synodality should move beyond a theoretical concept and become a lived practice grounded in listening, accompaniment, dialogue, and mutual respect. In this context, Halik warned of the growing danger of populism, which poses a serious threat to democracy. Due to the increase of populism in the Czech Republic, after the recent election the political situation has become dangerous. It is a great surprise for many people. Following the crisis or perceived collapse of the project of globalization, there are new resurgence of nationalism, populism, religious fundamentalism, political extremism. Against this backdrop, the central question is how to develop a moral climate that is able to overcome these challenges in this divided world and to support a just society and the renewal of democracy. Halik suggested that Pope Francis's metaphor of the Church as a "field hospital" offers an important framework. Such field hospitals require solid institutional foundations, which are capable of providing practical assistance as ministries, spiritual diagnosis, the reading of the sign of the times, and developing a system of moral and psychological immunity against the infection of populism and all ideologies.

Regarding postwar recovery, such as recent conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, Halik stressed reconciliation rather than shouting. This is a long-term task for generations to come. The process of reconciliation after dictatorship is important. While political actors and diplomats may be satisfied once battles, shouting, hostilities cease, nevertheless there are still scars of the past, deep wounds and unresolved traumas. In this context, religion can play a role in healing historical wounds through processes of reconciliation and forgiveness. Although the process of globalization has made the world interconnected through technology and information, significant gaps remain in politics, culture, religion. To address this imbalance, the theological concept of *perihoresis*, a form of unity that preserves differences, should be developed as a model for the general process of globalization and for further communication between cultures and religions. More than dialogue alone, *perihoresis* could inspire a new international political culture rooted in relational coexistence.

For Halik, Pope Francis's *Fatelli Tutti*, which calls for a renewed political culture grounded in solidarity, synodality, and universality. Synodality should be understood not only with Catholicism but also in Protestantism and other Christian traditions toward the possibility of an ecumenical synod in order to develop a culture of sharing. These ideas are about heart, reflecting in many traditions of the world. This is a task. This can be interpreted in a broader way in terms of ecumenical connection



A new synod should be the ecumenical synod of theologians among Christians, not only Catholics but also Protestants who had synods at the very beginning of the Reformation. A new synod should be the common shared practice rather than a confessional one, offering a new conceptual framework for globalization. Reconnection should be taken place in a deep level. For the challenge of institutional forms, conservatives and progressives have different opinions how to keep them. But the deeper challenge is to rediscover the depth of religion, culture, and spirituality, which calls for a new spirituality of common purpose or shared pathways.



Calhoun identified several interconnected themes shaping global challenges. First, the concept of artificiality encompasses both technological developments and social and cultural technologies including law, governance, and constitution-making. It is anchored by the commonalities and differences among operations as artificial persons, the world of AI and robotics, and gene editing. It is the ways in which we have not only an issue about technology, but an issue about interfering with changing and remaking nature, and an issue of making new kinds of realities in society. We need to have deeper understanding of AI. But an approach to person and transcendence in which the current discourse about AI is one of the challenges. Borrowing Herbert Simon's idea on sciences of the artificial, it is necessary to look at artificiality by questioning the sufficiency of existing science and theology and philosophy, particularly a natural reality that does not incorporate elements of artificiality. Current debates on AI challenges traditional notions of personhood and transcendence.

Second, geopolitics is examined from several dimensions. The first concerns the fate of moral universalism in the context of inter-imperial wars. Put differently, with or without wars, the world is undergoing a reorganization, in part, an imperial remaking of the modern world system. Geopolitics is a label for it, which should call to our attention. The point is the challenges to cosmopolitanism and arrangements of cooperation, that is, the existing structures of remaking the place of the West. The West has loomed large in philosophical reflections and geopolitical thought, but the place of the West in the world is being remade by contemporary geopolitics in a variety of ways. For the issues of war, both its recurrence, including the return of war to the European continent, and its transformation, as part of the technological issues, are that war no longer means what it once did. If we simply say that we are having war again and imagine it like the past, we miss several points, including the risks of annihilation and extinction, and the changing role of human agency in wars, where not just drones, but all kinds of geopolitical systems and satellite systems, etc., are at work, and artificial intelligence, which may bypass human beings in decisions about the use of weapons.

A third theme is the resurgence of ethno-national claims on religion and civilization. Various versions of ethno-nationalism, including the European right, are appearing around the world. This resurgence makes claims on religion in the constitution of peoplehood and on civilization, and approaches these often through a new kind of rhetoric of decline that echoes back to early 20th century narratives. For instance, recent accounts of American peoplehood, Eurasianism in parts of the former Soviet Union (especially Russia and its relationship to orthodoxy), and similar movements elsewhere. These positions draw from diverse religious backgrounds—Anglicanism, American Protestantism, or non-religious origins—but often involve conversion to a newly growing and changing orthodoxy, which is not necessarily Greek or Russian or any of the particular national traditions, but is significantly orthodox for orthodoxy and for a version of national conservatism. The ethno-national projects are deeply connected to mythology and to the ethnicization of religion, as seen specifically in Catholicism, but also in many different religions, such as ethnicization of Hinduism in India. The issue of synodality is a closely related to the structures for fraternal collaboration and dialogue in discerning common paths, and how such structures are transformed under resurgent nationalism. It has implications for ecumenism and reconciliation. It is a significant theme.



Because the relationship among theology, philosophy, and social theory is becoming newly rich and interesting, some of the demarcations that have set philosophy apart in some countries and in some traditions are changing. At the same time, some of the older institutional connections are shifting. But more generally, there is a lot of work in the New Orthodoxy in various traditions on theology, philosophy, and social theory. People say things like, America is an idea, or America was created out of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and a specific history, but America isn't an idea, it is a people with a specific calling in history and with specific characteristics. It then has criteria for inclusion and exclusion of who counts as the real people. There is a variety of ethno-national claims about the people and the real people, such as European responses to immigration and integration; the assertions of national peoplehood of the Germans or the Hungarians, or whatever nationality often draw religion into a role in the constituting of peoplehood. Religion often plays a prominent role in this new nationalism, subordinated to a national political project that treats religion as the historical ground of common peoplehood. This is certainly not the only way to think about religion, but it produces a variety of re-engagements or conversions that have agendas, that are worth thinking through. In that sense, the same for civilization. Scholars have often distinguished nations and nation-states from civilizations and think more broadly of civilizations, now a

Converted effort to ethnicize civilizations themselves. In many contexts in Europe, people treat Western cosmopolitan thought as somehow ethnic in its character. Westerners can do this, and immigrants from certain other traditions cannot carry out the mission of enlightened thought. This produces a claim on the civilization of the West, namely, the possible suicide of the West may be going on now, or at least its severe decline according to some thinkers, and attempts to redefine how the West might remake itself. Such kind of ethnicization of this civilizational concept of the West shifts how it has been thought about and how it has related to both religion and nationality.

Xiang stated that geopolitics is arguably the most pressing issue of our time, particularly when viewed through the lens of the responsible use of power. Samantha Power's *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide* raises the question of the responsibility to protect, which remains a real issue. From intercultural and interreligious perspectives, moral universalism is clearly at stake. Can we arrive at a common consensus that all actors have moral responsibility to something beyond their immediate interests? For instance, Chinese foreign policy is largely non-interventionist and often criticized for not intervening. This position has its reason, which is pragmatic and also has moral justifications. The complexity lies in determining when is it moral or not moral to intervene. It is an ethical issue. In relation to this is the idea of responsible use of power, which can be viewed from the domestic angle, particularly through the lens of wealth inequality. In the United Kingdom and the United States, wealth inequality has reached alarming levels, for example, the homeless issue. Similar in China, where increasing economic illiberalization has led to the entrenchment of social classes. Elite groups consolidate access to resources, especially education, just like the nepotistic perpetuating their own class interests. Wealth inequality is thus a global problem and should be addressed from intercultural perspective.

Another concern is gender. In China today, gender tensions are intensifying, similarly in many parts of the world and closely linked to decline of fertility rates. This is also a global problem. Across East Asia, many problems are related to women's social and economic status, reflecting the transition from agricultural to industrial and post-industrial societies. Notably, some Chinese intellectuals and philosophers try to use Confucianism to argue that women should return to domestic role and stay at home. This conservative pushback is neither sustainable nor grounded in contemporary socio-economical realities. While some people argue that gendered divisions of labor had functioned well because of previous economic situation of agricultural societies, those conditions no longer exist; hence it is necessary to rethink of gender roles.



This challenge is not unique to China; similar debates occur in other cultures as well, for instance, Muslim societies, India, etc. People need traditions and culturally grounded approaches to address gender issues. It is not sustainable and often ineffective to import external models, each culture must find ways of dealing with the issue within its own framework. In China, one response is to provide economic support for families, though this is only one among many possibilities.

Kadivar stressed the urgent need for cross-cultural and transcultural scholarly cooperation in the field of values and philosophy. The first priority is the institutionalization of justice as a supreme value. How can justice be institutionalized in the contemporary world? Whether under democratic or authoritarian systems, justice should become a foundational international principle. The primary effort must focus on articulating and implementing this philosophical concept through ethical, legal, political, and even metaphysical inquiry. In this sense, justice is the mother of all other high values. The second priority is revitalizing the international human rights framework. After World War II, the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and related institutions emerged as central mechanisms for articulating and upholding universal values. Today, however, these values are too often instrumentalized by global and regional powers. We are witnessing systematic violation of these values not only by authoritarian regimes but also by governments that claim democratic legitimacy. Global and regional powers routinely evade or undermine their human rights obligations. Given that the United Nations and its associated instruments are lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, the question remains: what can we do to defend human rights and to prevent violations committed by powerful states?

The third priority is the protection of civilians as the most basic human value. First and foremost, we are human beings before anything else. The most egregious valuations of human values involve the killing of innocent civilians, especially children, woman, and elderly, through genocide, mass murder, and ethnic cleansing, which are often justified under the pretexts of counterterrorism or defending the homeland. Even when institutions like the International Criminal Court in the Hague issue convictions, their deterrent effect appears minimal. In recent years, reports of such atrocities have become tragically routine, even in the aftermath of declared ceasefires.



This reality poses a profound moral challenge: what meaningful actions can be taken to safeguard basic human values as people are human beings with humanhood. It is deeply troubling and painful to our conscience when we can do so little to help restore the minimum standard of humanhood. Disturbingly, many of these crimes are committed in the name of Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This places a particular responsibility on these religious traditions along with others, to actively prevent violence in the name of religion. Political leaders often justify what they have done, for instance, President, Vice President, Prime Minister of some countries are just doing things like this. This must be categorically rejected. The task of philosophy, theology, and metaphysics is confront such justification with their texts. Scripture does not authorize violation of human dignity, nor does it justify divine genocide. Philosophers and theologians must explicitly forbid such interpretations and reaffirm the sanctify of human life.



Costa raised the issue of demographic catastrophe by quoting David Runciman's "Are We Doomed?" in *London Review of Books*. Yet the real catastrophe is not extinction, but biological exhaustion of the human species. Therefore, the deeper concern is a shift in our attitude toward the future. A cross-cultural perspective on the emergence of demographic winter would be especially illuminating. So far, the issue has largely been discussed in biological terms, even this winter appears to be approaching at remarkable speed. What is at stake is our understanding of what is happening to humanity. Closely connected to this is the ongoing crisis of civility, clearly for several years now in the attitude of people toward the role of civility in the crisis of democracy. The economic crisis and the rise of populism both point to the breakdown of civility. This raises question about peoplehood: how people relate to citizenship, community membership, and democratic responsibility. At its core, the issue seems to involve a reaction against a certain understanding of civility, often perceived as elitist, which helps explain the difficulty of understanding why it happened. From a Western perspective, civility has followed a recognizable trajectory since the rise of the polite society in the 18th century. This is only one historical path, and alternative cultural perspectives are essential for understanding the present moment. This is deeply tied to the democratic mindset and to how seriously people take political life. There has been a tendency to depoliticization of civility, weakening its role in democratic outcome. This stands in contract to the original republican conception of civility.

Jonkers discussed the 2028 World Congress of Philosophy, which will be held in Tokyo, Japan,

August 2028. The general theme will be “Philosophy: A Place for Open Dialogue,” with a set of sub-themes, such as trust and hope in times of crisis, science and democracy, academic freedom, language, translation, and ineffability. The main theme articulates five interconnected dimensions: (1) philosophy, philosophizing, philosophical canon, education, methods of philosophy; (2) place, life, beauty and sublime nature of sustainability and responsiveness; (3) openness, inclusion and exclusion, listening to various voices; (4) dialogue, peace and conflict, respect and disregard, silence and silencing; (5) world, universality and cultural particularities.

Sweet addressed three components that traditionally the RVP has operated. The first concerns the relationship with the World Congress of Philosophy. The relationship creates an opportunity for synergy between the World Congress and the preparations of the RVP’s pre-WCP conference. The second component is grassroots engagement, which is reflected in workshops, conferences, and seminars whose themes are largely determined from the ground up. Local scholars identify the issues they wish to discuss and seek feedback on matters of direct concern to them. The third component is the overarching theme that is broad and not threatening enough to accommodate diverse perspectives. Together, these three components can help bring synergy in terms of contents, shared concerns, and generic themes.

The issue of the person is important in light of current debates on artificial personality and artificial persons. Civility, once again, is about relationship among persons. Synodality can be seen as a methodological framework for persons interacting with one another in a genuine and authentic way. A generic concept could be metaphysical, understood in the sense of political, social, economic, religious. The concept of the human person and the transcendent brings into play the whole idea about artificial intelligence, which has not been thought out deeply, although there is a certain level of discussion. Most people do not quite understand what that even means. In this sense, AI falls into the category of the person. Themes such as metaphysics and technology, or idea of the person in metaphysics, are broad enough to serve as unifying concepts. At the same time, it remains crucial to see what emerges from the grassroots. It is necessary trying to think of ways of unpacking these general themes in concrete situations. Some ideas are fascinating, but how to play out these ideas on the ground. Pope Leo has drawn attention to ethical questions about AI. People know of AI, but they don't understand what it actually entails. This brings back to questions: what do we mean by a

person, or what an intelligence is. Some people who work in AI have said for years that is the wrong metaphor. Themes of humanity of person, of conviviality, of cooperation, etc. are pressing issues that are both philosophical and practical and can help our engagement with technologies.



Cornille argued that dialogue itself is the more generic term for synodality. It involves people listening to one another, seeking some form of mutual understanding, and then moving beyond the particularity of each participant in the dialogue. There is a long history of dialogue that can be informed by synodality and vice versa. In the contemporary world of interreligious dialogue, one concern is the relationship between religious nationalisms and its impact on interreligious dialogue and intercultural understanding in general. The realities of religious politics and nationalism have impeded the progress of dialogue over the past 20 years or so. For this reason, nationalisms and its influence on dialogue as well as synodality is the topic that merits some attention. Religious cosmopolitanism can be understood as a form of universalism. Cosmopolitan discourse has been present for some time, but what is its current status and viability within religion and philosophy?

Another concern is the tension between freedom and belonging. Belonging—to a culture, a nation, or a religion—has been a crucial topic, especially in religious contexts, as many people disaffiliate from religious traditions in pursuit of agency and authenticity. A renewed understanding of belonging need not preclude freedom. Although these may appear primarily as religious rather than strictly philosophical questions, they intersect in meaningful ways, which is precisely what makes them interesting and compelling for discussion. People today often hold more expansive understandings of reality, and they respond to the threats posed by universalism and cosmopolitanism.

Presbey thought that the most pressing issue facing the world is peace. It is important, necessary, and increasingly under threat in the context of nuclear weapons. We cannot presume that this danger has receded. The threat is existential: if such weapons were ever deployed, the consequences could be catastrophic, potentially the end of the world. At the same time, the imperial wars perpetrated even by democracies, which themselves are vulnerable to misinformation and manipulation of public opinion. The rise of ethno-nationalism, with manipulated people, is exacerbating many of the world's problems. In contrast to these forces, what is needed is trans-border solidarity, especially in relation to the environment as environmental crises are crucial and ongoing concerns. Addressing these requires international solidarity and cooperation across borders, which seems to be undermined by factionalism and misinformation. The task, therefore, is not only to refocus on environmental crises but to ask what kind of international human community must be strengthened in order to protect it, and to safeguard the future of humanity, particularly those who are most marginalized. The marginalized demands special attention, especially migrants. Many are fleeing conflict, environmental catastrophe, or economic devastation, yet their human rights become precarious. The international human rights agreements affirm the right to asylum and refugee status.

How do we understand the process through which people are marginalized, and how do we undo their marginalization through a robust human rights? Economic inequality plays a significant role in migrants and other marginalized groups. These issues require support systems that reduce economic disparity and ensure a basic human minimum that meets people's needs. Instead, what we often witness is an unchecked accumulation of wealth without concern for the growing inequality and violation of human dignity.



Rome, Italy

December 4-6, 2025: **"The Art of Thinking and Contemplation: Socrates, Buddha, and Christ: Guardini's *Gegensatz* and *Metánoia*."** In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Romano Guardini's *Der Gegensatz*, this conference was held in collaboration with the Pontifical Gregorian University (PUG), the Faculty of Philosophy of the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo (Sant'Anselmo), the Pontifical Teutonic Institute Santa Maria dell'Anima, the Katholische Akademie, the Guardini Stiftung, and the CUA McLean Center for Study of Culture and Values. Under the auspice of the PUG Rome Catholic Studies Program, the conference was planned, coordinated, and organized by **Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten**, Extraordinary Professor in the PUG Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage of the Church.

The conference aimed to address the contemporary crisis of thinking and to explore the relevance of "thinking in contrapositions" (*Denken in Gegensätzen*) from theological, spiritual, interreligious, and philosophical perspectives. According to Guardini, the theoretical and hermeneutic foundation of epistemology rests on contrapositions (*Gegensätze*), which dynamically constitute a tension within a relational space. In contemplative knowledge (*Anschauung*)—a form of knowing that transcends discursive thinking—these contrapositions remain neither mixed nor separated, yet form a unit in tension. Reflecting on the great figures of thought (*Denkergestalten*), Guardini describes the exercise of thinking as an ascesis of thinking (*Askese des Denkens*). Within his philosophy of the living-concrete, he understands *metánoia* as a change of sense (*Um-Sinnung*). In distinct yet related ways, Socrates, Buddha, and Christ each represent such a transformation in life and thinking. The conference concluded with a day of "Applied Thinking," during which participating students shared ideas and experiences related to various ways of "thinking in contrapositions" in the context of their own scientific research.

At the opening session, **Aaron Pidel** (PUG Catholic Studies) offered welcome remarks, followed by **William Barbieri's** introduction to the conference theme and **Schlobitten's** to the meaning and organization of the meeting. The first day, held at PUG, featured a keynote address by **Heinz Sproll** (Professor of Church History, University of Augsburg, Germany) on Augustine and memory.



William Barbieri, Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten, Aaron Pidel



Session I, "Metánoia in Socrates," was moderated by **Andrea de Santis** (Professor of Philosophy, Sant'Anselmo), with presentations by **Holger Zaborowski** (Professor of Philosophy, Erfurt University, Germany) "Repentance and Self-Acceptance: Guardini, Socrates and the Desire for God"; **Alessandro Stavru** (Professor of Philosophy, University of Verona, Italy) "Il morso della vipera: confutazione, turbamento e trasformazione negli interlocutori di Socrate"; and **Andrea Di Maio** (Professor of Philosophy, PUG) "Socrate e/o Gesù: una sorta di opposizione polare?" Session II, "Metánoia in Buddha," was moderated by **Robert Fusco** (Professor of Literature, Salesian Pontifical University, Italy), with presentations by **Paolo Trianni** (Professor of Theology, PUG) "Il Buddha: la sapienza del vuoto"; **Judith Suchaneck** (Forum Asia Pacific, University of Salzburg, Austria) "The Silent Revolution of Knowledge: Why We Need to Expand Our Methods of Experiencing the World"; and **Hu Yeping** "Non-Self as Compassionate in Buddhism." This was followed by a session on



"Contemporary Approached I" with contributions by **Robert Flanagan** (Professor of Religion, Virginia Theological Seminary, United States) "Beholding the Tension between Being and Becoming" and **Schlobitten** "Epoché and Silence: The Wounds of the Mind."

The second day was held at Sant'Anselmo. **Andrea de Santis**, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, welcomed participants and introduced the keynote speaker, **Paul Metzloff** (German Bishops' Conference), who spoke on Guardini's philosophical and theological thought. Session III, "Metánoia in Christ," moderated by **Zaborowski**, included presentations by **Isabella Bruckner** (Professor of Christian Thought and Spiritual Practice, Sant'Anselmo) "*Vivere le contrapposizioni. Un tentativo sulle beatitudini*"; **Andrea Grillo** (Professor of Sacramental Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Sant'-



Anselmo) “La conversione a Cristo come Gegensatz. Lo sfondo teologico di una filosofia del concreto vivente”; and **Andreas Scheib** (Professor of Philosophy, Salzburg University, Austria) “Intuition as Subjective Cognition: Cognition as Subjective Intuition.” Session IV, “Contemporary Approach II,” was moderated by **Bruckner** with presentations by **Roberto Fusco** “*Socrate e il santo: esercizio del pensiero, tensione ascetica e metánoia dall’antichità alla prima agiografia greca*”; **Massimiliano Zupi** (Professor of Philosophy, Sant’Anselmo) “Il Der Gegensatz di Romano Guardini: una logica per pensare l’essere come metaxý e come generazione”; and **João Vila-Chã** “Through Thought to Thinking: Contemporary Voices.” Session V, “Contemporary Approaches III,” moderated by **Vila-Chã**, included **René Micallef** (Professor of Moral Theology, PUG) “The Thinking in the Bible” and **Barbieri** “To See Anew: Training One’s Vision with Guardini.”



The third day took place at Santa Maria dell’Anima and was moderated by **Schlobitten**. Three students from the PUG Rome Catholic Studies Program and two young researchers from Germany offered their reflections on how forms of thinking had shaped their worldviews and personal lives. **Larissa Gerg** (Consultant, Katholische Akademie in Berlin, Germany) provided information about research interests of German young scholars in Guardini. **Matthias Theodor Vogt** (Professor of Culture, Faculty of Social Sciences, PUG) presented a proposal of propaedeutic program to introduce Roman cultures to potential students new to Rome. **Zipporah Maureen Chepkemoi Kiprono** (Professor of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, PUG) spoke on her research interest, while **Josmy Jose** (Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium, Italy) introduced their educational program. **Gabriel von Wendt** (Professor of Philosophy, Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Italy) provided an insightful overview of the presentations and discussions.



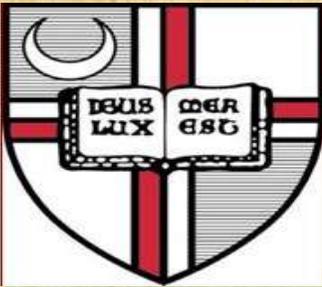
Participants included students and young researches from PUG Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage, the Rome Catholic Studies Program, the Guardini Stiftung Berlin, and Sant'Anselmo: Jaya di Domenico, Katie Thompson, Elena Sidoni, Ruta Giniunaite, Caterina Tessacini, Annmarie Dinan



Hansen, Audra Ball Rose, Luis Beimfohr, Kolbe Joseph Bergeron, Arthur Gruffydd Vickery, Vincenzo Sborchia, Enrico Uberti, Simon Müller, Julie Adamik, Helena Zell, Kali Pietre Llamado, Gloria M. Sosa, Sergio Ribalda Vicente, Cecilia Cofrancesco, Haroon Malik, Nikita Semenikhin, Francois Vaccaro, Claudia Roselli, Anna Deane, Benjamin Lochie, Kate Ruane. **Luis Beimfohr**, assisted with translation of all the presentations and technical coordination throughout the conference.

During the conference, **Schlobitten** hosted the participants for an informal dinner at her lovely home, providing more opportunities for further dialogue and collegial exchange. **Scheib** (Salzburg University) offered the possibility of publishing selected papers in an academic journal. Overall, the atmosphere of conference was marked by openness, intellectual generosity, and active engagement. Participants shared their research findings with enthusiasm and contributed meaningfully to discussion.





McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values
The Catholic University of America

2025 Spring Lecture Series

January 23: The Contest and Control of Jerusalem's Holy Sites

March 20: Community, Solidarity, and Religious Freedom

April 7: The Virtue of Solidarity

April 8: Sheets of Scattered Sand: Cantonese Protestants and the Secular Dream of the Pacific Rim

April 28: Passing Down Religious Identity: Faith Community Experiences

The CUA McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values

Caldwell Hall 425, 620 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington DC, 20064

Phone: (202)319-6089; Email: cua-rvp@cua.edu; Website: <https://mcs cv.catholic.edu>

Webinar (Jan. 23, 2025, 12.00-13.30 EST)

The Contest and Control of JERUSALEM'S HOLY SITES

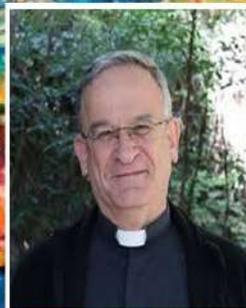
A Historical Guide to
Legality, Status, and Ownership

Zoom Link: <https://cua.zoom.us/j/89333266788?pwd=4l75vqsuV3TwGsXjFKG01rOba7ycQ8.1> (Passcode: 063333)

Respondents



Moussa Abou Ramadan
(University of Strasbourg)



David M. Neuhaus SJ
(Pontifical Biblical Institute)



Dan Arbell
(American University)



Marshall J. Breger
(Author)



William A. Barbieri
(Moderator)

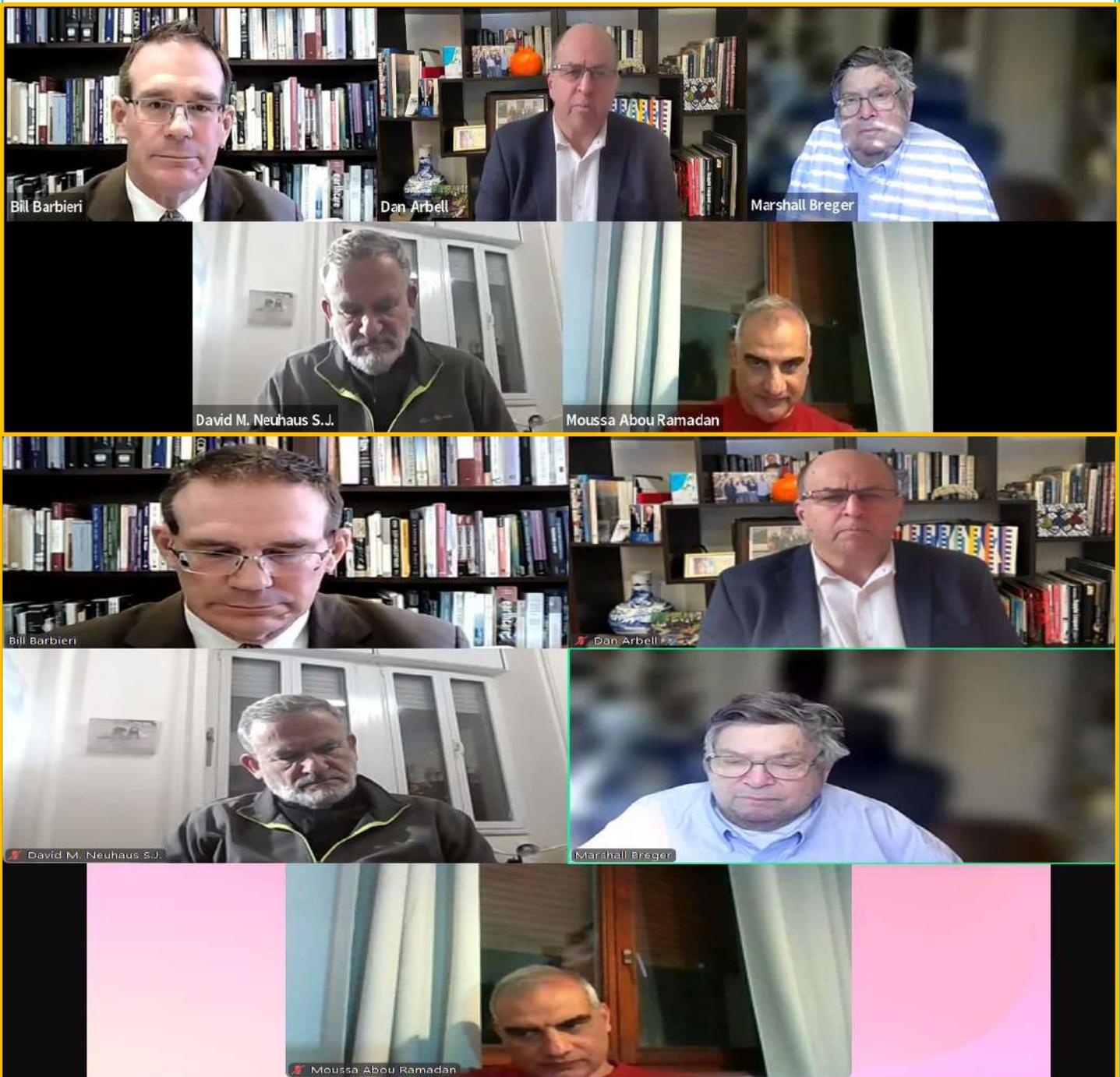


McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values
Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies School of Theology and Religious Studies

Washington, DC

January 23, 2025: **"The Contest and Control of Jerusalem's Holy Sites: A Historical Guide to Legality, Status, and Ownership."** This online event was organized by CUA McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values as part of its Spring lecture series, initiated by **William A. Barbieri**, Director of the McLean Center. The event featured a book presentation: *The Contest and Control of Jerusalem's Holy Sites: A Historical Guide to Legality, Status, and Ownership*, authored by **Marshall J. Brege** (1946-2025), CUA Professor of Law, and **Leonard M. Hammer**, Edwin and Alma Lakin Chair on the Holocaust, Human Rights, and Comparative Genocide at the University of Arizona.

During the event, **Brege** presented the main argument and findings of the book. Respondents included **Moussa Abou Ramadan**, Professor of Muslim Law and Islamology at the University of Strasbourg, France; **David Mark Neuhaus**, SJ, Superior at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem; and **Dan Arbell**, Scholar-in-Residence at the Center for Israeli Studies at American University, Washington, DC. The discussion was moderated by **Barbieri**.

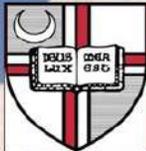


Community, Solidarity, and Religious Freedom



Stephen F. Schneck
Chair of United States Commission on
International Religious Freedom

March 20, 2025, 2.15pm-3.30pm
(Caldwell Hall 107)

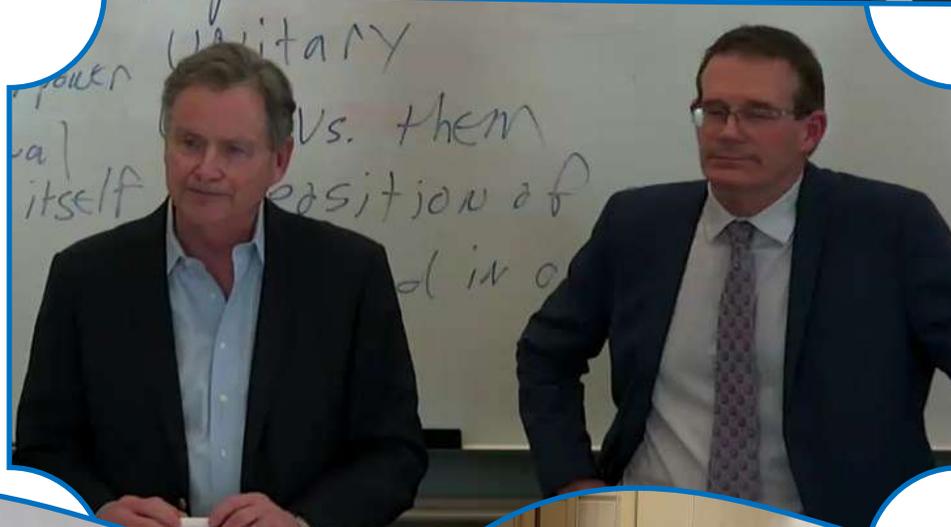


McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values
The Catholic University of America

IPR Institute for Policy Research
IN SERVICE TO CHURCH, NATION & WORLD
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC

March 20, 2025: "**Community, Solidary, and Religious Freedom.**" This in-person event was organized by the McLean Center as part of its Spring Lecture Series. The lecture was delivered by **Stephen F. Schneck**, former Professor of political philosophy in the CUA Department of Politics and former Director of CUA Institute of Policy Research and Catholic Studies. **Schneck** currently serves as Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. He took part in several international conferences organized by RVP in the past.



McLean Center 2025 Spring Lecture Series

The Virtue of Solidarity

A Webinar with



Andrea Sangiovanni
(King's College London)



Meghan Clark
(St. John's University)



Avery Kolers
(University of Louisville)



Sally Scholz
(Villanova University)



William Barbieri
(Moderator, Catholic University of America)

Monday, April 7, 2025, 1:00p.m.-2:30 p.m. EST

Zoom link: <https://cua.zoom.us/j/89240871769>



McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values
The Catholic University of America

IPR Institute for Policy Research
IN SERVICE TO CHURCH, NATION & WORLD
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC

April 7, 2025: "**The Virtue of Solidarity.**" This online webinar was organized by the McLean Center as part of the Spring Lecture Series. The event brought together scholars who have each published major works on the concept of solidarity. During the webinar, each speaker presented their research findings on solidarity from distinct philosophical and theological perspectives, followed by lively discussion after each presentation. The session was moderated by **Barbieri**.

The speakers included **Andrea Sangiovanni**, Professor of Philosophy at King's College London, author of *Solidarity: Nature, Grounds, and Value* (2024); **Meghan Clark**, Professor of Moral Theology at St. John's University, New York, author of *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: the Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (2014); **Avery Kolers**, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville, author of *Moral Theory of Solidarity* (2016); and **Sally Scholz**, Professor of Philosophy at Villanova University, of *Political Solidarity* (2008).



Sheets of Scattered Sand

**Cantonese Protestants and
the Secular Dream of the Pacific Rim**



Dr. Justin KH Tse
Religion and Culture
College of Integrative Studies
Singapore Management University

**April 8, 2025, 2.15pm-3.30pm
(Caldwell Hall 107)**



McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values

The Catholic University of America



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
School of Theology and Religious Studies

620 MICHIGAN AVENUE, N.E. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20064

Washington, DC

April 7, 2025: **"Sheets of Scattered Sand: Cantonese Protestants and the Secular Dream of the Pacific Rim."** Justin KH Tse, Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture at Singapore Management University's College of Integrative Studies, delivered a lecture on his newly published book. Drawing on both scholarly research and personal experience, Tse reflected on the religious lives of Cantonese speaker Christian communities across the Pacific Rim, particularly in San Francisco, Vancouver, and Hong Kong.





THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
 School of Theology and Religious Studies
 620 MICHIGAN AVENUE, N.E. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20064



McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values
 The Catholic University of America



Passing Down Religious Identity: Faith Community Experiences

Monday, April 28, 2025

Steven Happel Room, 100 Caldwell Hall

12:00 - 12:15 pm

Welcome Remarks

William Barbieri, PhD (Director, CUA McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values)

Susan Timoney, PhD (Associate Dean, CUA School of Theology and Religious Studies)

12:15 - 1:30 pm

Lunch (Steven Happel Room, 100 Caldwell Hall) with Keynote Speech

Merylann "Mimi" J. Schuttloffel, PhD (CUA Department of Education, Professor Emerita and Brother Patrick Ellis and Chair, and Senior Fellow at the Center for Faith, Identity, and Globalization)

1.30 - 3.00 pm

Practitioners Panel

Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky (Director, Intergroup Relations, JCRC of Greater Washington)

Susan Timoney, PhD (CUA, School of Theology and Religious Studies)

Ayse Selma Bahceci (CORE Educational Services, Home School Coordinator)

Moderator: Ibrahim Anli, Executive Director, Rumi Forum

3.00 - 3.30 pm

Coffee Break

3.30 - 5.00 pm

Scholars Panel

Benji Davis, PhD (Department of Religious Studies, George Mason University)

Fevzi Sarac, PhD (Department of Political Science, Louisiana State University)

Jem Sullivan, PhD (CUA School of Theology and Religious Studies)

Moderator: William Barbieri, PhD (CUA School of Theology and Religious Studies)

5.00 - 5.10 pm

Concluding Remarks

Ibrahim Anli (Executive Director, Rumi Forum)

5.30 - 7.00 pm

Dinner (Pryzbyla Center, Great Room C) With Appreciation Remarks

Mehmet Saracoglu, PhD (Director at the Center for Faith, Identity and Globalization)

Washington, DC

April 28, 2025: "Passing Down Religious Identity: Faith Community Experiences." This in-person event was co-organized by the McLean Center and the Rumi Forum (Washington, DC). The program was planned by **Ibrahim Anli**, Executive Director of the Rumi Forum, and **William A. Barbieri**. It was sponsored by the Center for Faith, Identity and Globalization and the Wise Institute, and the event was held at CUA.



The event opened with welcome remarks by **Barbieri** and **Susan Timoney**, Associate Dean of CUA School of Theology and Religious Studies. The keynote address was delivered by **Merylann**

"Mimi" J. Schuttloffel, Professor Emerita of CUA Department of Education. The program featured two panels. The Practitioners Panel, moderated by **Anli**, included **Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky** (Director, Intergroup Relations, JCRC of Greater Washington), **Timoney**, and **Ayse Selma Bahceci** (CORE Educational Services). The Scholars Panel, moderated by **Barbieri**, included **Benji Davis** (Department of Religious Studies, George Mason University),



Fevzi Sarac (Department of Political Science, Louisiana State University), and **Jem Sullivan** (CUA



School of Theology and Religious Studies). **Anli** offered concluding remarks, followed by words of appreciation from **Mehmet Saracoglu**, Director at the Center for Faith, Identity and Globalization, at the closing dinner.