



'ONE HEALTH'

NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN KU LEUVEN AND UC LOUVAIN

With the concept of 'integral ecology,' Pope Francis in his Encyclical *Laudato Si'* recognises the interconnectedness of all creation, that is, of environmental, social, and human health. The awareness that everything is connected fosters the concomitant holistic moral responsibility that cannot treat human, animal and environment health separately. The protection of the environment and human life cannot ignore or be dealt with in isolation from animal welfare, but rather where each is part of a larger whole.

The COVID-19 pandemic starkly demonstrated how habitat destruction and wildlife exploitation disrupted ecosystems and human-animal interactions contributed to the virus 'spillover', leading to a global health crisis. Studies show that 60% of emerging infectious diseases originate from animals (e.g. COVID-19, Ebola).

For this reason, an ethic of stewardship rooted in the care of and love for creation, supports the proposal that humanity has a divinely inspired responsibility to protect all living beings. Furthermore, climate change exacerbates disease transmission, underscoring that climate action is also essential for human health security.

'One Health,' therefore, is an integrated, unifying approach that emphasises collaboration across multiple disciplines: medicine, veterinary science, environmental science, and public health, to address complex health challenges that arise at the intersection of these domains.

The 'One Health' approach is particularly important for tackling issues like zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, food safety and security and environmental degradation. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach," advocating for comprehensive solutions that address health, economy, and nature together. Such interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to improved health outcomes and preventing future global health threats.

The 'One Health' approach challenges anthropocentric worldviews that prioritise human needs over nature and promotes an eco-centric perspective, which values all forms of life and their contribution to the ecosystem.

Pope Francis critiques a "misguided anthropocentrism that places human desires and greed above the needs of the planet." One Health similarly promotes an eco-centric perspective which values all life forms and recognises their role in maintaining planetary health. Scientific research highlights the importance of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem stability and resilience, helping prevent the spread of diseases by maintaining balanced ecological systems.

Scientifically, the 'One Health' approach provides a framework for addressing root causes of pandemics and promoting sustainable health strategies and equitable access to health care and

sustainable food systems, sustainable lifestyles, fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, and policies that prioritise the common good. By integrating key themes of *Laudato Si'*, ethics and science, the 'One Health' approach offers a comprehensive pathway toward a healthier, more just, and sustainable world.

The FUCE Board is delighted that our hosts of the next General Assembly at KU Leuven and UC Louvain on 4-6 June will bring together a number of experts in this interdisciplinary field to present research and explore various scientific and ethical questions of the 'One Health' approach. There will also be panel discussion and engagement with this theme between the presenters and participants, as well as the opportunity for networking, and deepening and forging new relationships between Catholic Universities around Europe and Lebanon.

The General Assembly also provides an opportunity to express our solidarity with the Catholic universities of Lebanon, Ukraine, and Georgia each of whose countries have been going through enormous challenges and suffering in recent years. We hope and pray that this year a just peace can be found in these countries and the Catholic universities there will flourish once again. In addition, members of FUCE Board will update participants on progress of the proposal to fund shared research topics between member universities of the Federation.

The next General Assembly is also significant because it will elect a new President and members of the Board. Candidates who are interested in becoming the next President and members of the Board are invited to present their candidatures one month before the election on 6 June to Franck Violet. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in Belgium in June and thank you for the enormous support and kindness so many of you have shown me over the last six years.

Rev Prof Michael Mullaney
President of FUCE



SAVE THE DATE



FUCE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEUVEN & LOUVAIN 4-6 JUNE 2025

KU Leuven and UCLouvain, Belgium



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NEWS IN BRIEF



FRANCE

REMÉMORER DES MOMENTS IMPORTANTES DE L'HISTOIRE DE L'ICP

En 2025, l'Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) créé en 1875 par Mgr Maurice d'Hulst, sous l'autorité de l'Archevêque de Paris, fêtera son cent-

cinquantenaire. Dès l'origine, sont fondées une Faculté de Droit, une Faculté des Lettres et une Faculté des Sciences. En 1878, est fondée l'École de Théologie qui deviendra Faculté en 1889.

L'année 2025 sera l'occasion de se remémorer des moments importants de l'histoire de l'ICP, des 14 recteurs qui ont dirigé l'institution depuis sa création et des figures marquantes, telles qu'Edouard Branly ou Jacques Maritain.

150ans.icp.fr/le-site-dedie-aux-150-ans



GEORGIA

SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARIES

The year 2025 is an important one for the Christian world. It marks the 1700th anniversary of the world's first Ecumenical Council, the Council of Nicaea in 325, as well as the Holy Jubilee year 2025 with the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." In Georgia, the 300th anniversary of the death of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, the Georgian diplomat, writer, and Catholic monk, whose name graces the university, is also commemorated. The date will be honoured at the 8th Annual International Symposium on "Catholic Heritage in Georgia" which will take place in June.

As a Catholic institution, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is celebrating these significant anniversaries with a variety of other events. A year-long programme dedicated to the Holy Jubilee includes various scientific and cultural events, such as conferences, discussions, seminars, poetry evenings, and pilgrimages. Additionally, an international conference on the Council of Nicaea is scheduled for the autumn of 2025.



SUMMER SCHOOL 2025

**BUILDING COMMON HUMANITY
AND GROUNDED CITIZENSHIPS**

The sixth FUCE summer school to be held at the Université Catholique de Lille from June 30th until July 4th, 2025, will address the topic of 'European Humanism in the Making'. The aim is to build common humanity and grounded citizenship in the face of growing populism.

Member universities are invited to nominate two or three students (2nd or 3rd year bachelors) to attend. The closing date for nominations is February 16th. The number of places is limited to 30 and the final selection will be made by the course coordination team.

To date, 115 students from about 30 member universities have participated in this international exchange, reflecting with their peers from Lebanon, the EU and wider Europe, on the cultural, religious and philosophical foundations of the European project as a basis to rethink its future.

The specific topic for this summer school, to be addressed in the opening public lecture and during the five sessions, relates to the need to rethink humanism in the light of rising populism and how it affects European society.

The rise of populist movements is reshaping the political landscape and the public realm. It is affecting all dimensions of society including education and culture. Populism attempts to transform constitutional democracy from its stable post-World War II form into a new, significantly mutated model of representative democracy.

Populist movements do not entirely reject the logic of representation but rather disfigure it by discrediting the role of cultural and political mediations, by undermining the checks on the

power of majorities, and by reviling views and groups that do not fit into their understanding of who 'the people' are and what they want.

The summer school will investigate the problems populism engenders; how it reconceptualises the notions of the people and the public realm and how it transforms the model of liberal democracy - from parliamentary to audience democracy, from deliberation to identity politics, from civil conversation to collective identification and homogeneous belonging.

It will look into the pitfalls this engenders; stigmatisation of elites and minorities, loss of pluralism, danger of authoritarian solutions through processes of digitalisation which create closed epistemologies instead of opening up the debate, refuting expert knowledge leading to fictitious interpretations which are open to manipulation, appropriating ideologies and value reference systems taken out of context, and unmediated direct political legitimation.

The way forward will be sought through respect for pluralism, embodiment of common humanity and grounded citizenship.

For more information, see

univ-catholille.fr/en/our-international-policy/international-projects/fuce-summer-school

NEWS IN BRIEF



ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE D'UNIVERSEH À L'UNAMUR

Du 18 au 20 novembre, l'Université de Namur a eu l'honneur d'accueillir des scientifiques, des académiques, des étudiants et des membres du personnel universitaire de toute l'Europe pour le « General meeting » de l'alliance UNIVERSEH (European Space University for Earth and Humanity). Cet événement a été marqué par des échanges fructueux, des ateliers enrichissants et des présentations inspirantes.

« L'UNamur a rejoint relativement récemment l'Alliance. Organiser et accueillir l'assemblée générale était une façon de montrer et démontrer notre investissement dans ce projet. C'était aussi l'occasion de faire connaître Namur et son écosystème », souligne Annick Castiaux, rectrice de l'UNamur.

L'objectif principal de l'assemblée générale est de réunir l'ensemble des partenaires et des personnes impliquées dans la réalisation du projet afin d'échanger sur les avancées et les difficultés du projet mais également de constituer des équipes solides et solidaires et d'encourager l'esprit d'équipe.

En savoir plus: universeh.eu

POLAND

ERASMUS+ PROJECTS AT UPJPII



The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow (UPJPII) is actively involved in two

prestigious international projects under the Erasmus+ programme. The first, AISS (Artificial Intelligence for Studies and Support in Higher Education), focuses on developing innovative solutions for higher education based on artificial intelligence. The project, with partners from Spain, Germany and Lithuania, aims to develop a

compendium of educational scenarios, training and technological tools to support the use of AI in teaching.

The second project, INEDU (Artificial Intelligence-Based Inclusive Higher Education), focuses on inclusivity in higher education. It aims to make higher education more accessible to people with disabilities through the use of AI technologies. Coordinated by UPJPII, the project brings together partners from Poland, Spain, Germany and Lithuania.

The projects reflect the university's commitment to promoting modern and sustainable solutions in higher education.

STRONGER TOGETHER

EN CAS DE DOMMAGE, QUI SOUFFRE?



Le Réseau Européen des Instituts de la Famille (REDIF) est un Groupe Sectoriel

de la Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques (FIUC). Il a été créé en 1995 à Lyon, à l'initiative des instituts de Lyon, Salamanque, Milan, Louvain-la-Neuve et Madrid. Au terme de leur troisième rencontre, qui s'est tenue à Salamanque en 1997, les membres du réseau ont adopté une charte définissant l'esprit du groupe et les objectifs l'animant.

Le REDIF a pour objet d'étude et d'enseignement la famille et les thèmes qui lui sont connexes tels que l'éducation, la bioéthique, la sexualité, etc., et en propose une approche scientifique pluridisciplinaire, rigoureuse et critique. Le REDIF a aussi le souci de conjuguer approche scientifique et pratique, et souhaite apporter aux différents acteurs professionnels et du domaine associatif, dans leurs champs respectifs, ainsi qu'aux politiques et aux religieux, les éléments nécessaires pour la compréhension et l'évaluation des situations engageant les familles.



Anna Vilaregut, IP du Grup de Recerca de Parella i Família (à droite), avec le nouveau Comité Exécutif du REDIF (gauche-droite) Secrétaire générale : Marina Rougeon, Trésorière : Ana Berástegui Pedro-Viejo, Présidente : Costanza Marzotto and Vice-président : Carles Perez Testor

Le réseau est composé actuellement de l'Institut Société et Famille de l'UCLy en France, du Centro di Ateneo Studi e Ricerche sulla Famiglia de l'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore de Milan en Italie, et, en Espagne, de l'Instituto Superior de Ciencias de la Familia de l'Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, de l'Instituto Universitario de la Familia de l'Universidad Pontificia Comillas, du Grup de Recerca de Parella i Família de l'Universitat Ramon Llull et du Deusto Family Psych de l'Universidad de Deusto.

Parmi ses objectifs, le REDIF œuvre à promouvoir des travaux scientifiques sur la famille notamment en organisant des séminaires et colloques annuels. Celui de 2024 s'est tenu les 26 et 27 septembre derniers à la Faculté de Psychologie, de sciences de l'éducation et de sport de Blanquerna - Université Ramon Llull à Barcelone, sur le thème « Évènements vitaux et famille ». En 2025, le colloque annuel du REDIF sera accueilli par l'Université de Deusto, et aura lieu les 26 et 27 juin à Bilbao en Espagne, avec pour thème : « En cas de dommage, qui souffre ? ». Ce sera également l'occasion de célébrer les 30 ans du réseau.

Marina Rougeon

SAVE THE DATE



REDIF CONFERENCE 2025

IN CASE OF DAMAGE, WHO SUFFERS?

26-27 June 2025 – University of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain

MEMBER PROFILE

CU: UNIVERSITY IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

In 2025, the Catholic University in Ružomberok (also known as CU) will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its foundation. During that time, the university has developed from a regional to an internationally recognised institution.





CU is now a member of the Partnership of Catholic Universities, the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the Federation of European Universities, the Baltic university programme, Magna Charta Universitatum and many more.

Ružomberok has a long and rich history of education, and this was among the reasons for the establishment of the university in 2000. The objective was to establish an institution that would shape young intelligence and guide it on the path to knowledge, science and common values.

Today, the university consists of four faculties: Faculty of Arts and Letters, Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Health and Faculty of Theology, where bachelor's, master's and doctoral (PhD and PhDr) degrees can be obtained.

The university's graduates enjoy a high degree of employability. The results of the current Verification of Excellence in Research survey carried out by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic demonstrated that they had achieved national, international and world levels in many fields of study.

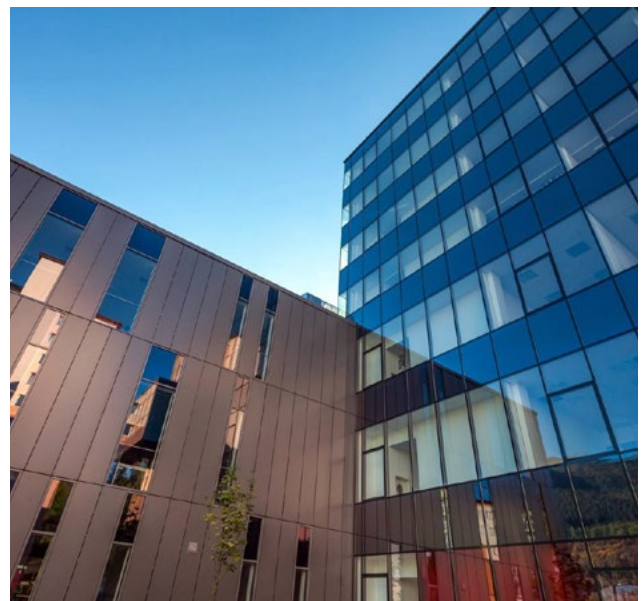
According to the survey, students of the CU are the second most satisfied in Slovakia. That is due mainly to the good balance between the demands of their studies and the time available to devote themselves to meeting them. The university is located in the heart of nature in one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Slovak Republic with important mountain destinations and UNESCO sites located within 30 minutes by car.



Opening the university to the global environment through the development of the competences of members of the academic community in the context of their self-development, improving the conditions for accepting foreign students and colleagues and creating a background for joint scientific, research and artistic cooperation in the international community are seen as the main pillars of the university's internationalisation strategy.

International cooperation is an important part of the educational and training life of members of the CU academic community. For this reason, an internationalisation audit took place at the CU in 2024, and in 2025 the university is moving into the implementation phase of its internationalisation action plan.

The university's graduates enjoy a high degree of employability, achieving success at national, international and world levels in many fields of study.



NEWS IN BRIEF



SPAIN

SOCIETY OF JESUS OPENS CAMPUS IN MADRID

The Society of Jesus has opened the Arrupe Campus in Madrid. The campus represents a further step in the collaboration between the Universidad Pontificia Comillas and the University of Deusto.

The Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Arturo Sosa, SJ, visited the building, together with the rectors of both universities, along with members of their teams and the Board of Directors of Advantere.

The Arrupe Campus, which is named after Pedro Arrupe, Father General of the Jesuits between 1965 and 1983, is now fully operational. It houses Comillas ONEXED, the new postgraduate and lifelong learning schools of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, the new headquarters of Deusto Business School, and the Advantere School of Management, founded by Deusto and Comillas, which are strategic academic partners along with Georgetown University.

SPAIN

NEW PRESIDENT FOR RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES

Lluís Recoder i Miralles has succeeded Antoni Millet Abbad as the president of the Ramon Llull University (URL) Foundation Board of Trustees, the university's governing body in all non-academic areas.

A lawyer with extensive experience both in the public and private sectors, Lluís Recoder i Miralles

has been a member of the Congress of Deputies (1986-1999) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Western European Union (1993-1999), and of the Parliament of Catalonia (1999-2007 and 2010-2013). He is a partner of Ineo Corporate and had previously been partner at KPMG.

Since 2022, he has the president of Sant Cugat-Rubí Red Cross, of the Advisory Board of the ECOEMBES Strategic Plan and of Fundació Ajuda i Esperança. He is also a co-founder of Banc d'Aliments de Catalunya and a member of the Climate Project and the Cercle d'Economia.

POLAND

IGNATIANUM UNIVERSITY JOINS NEREUS



Ignatianum University in Krakow has become an associated member of the prestigious NEREUS (Network of European Regions Using Space Technologies) network. NEREUS brings together regions utilising space technologies to improve citizens' quality of life, support the economy, and achieve sustainable development goals. The university has also signed a cooperation agreement with the Małopolska Voivodeship, a full NEREUS member.

The network promotes the use of space data in various fields, including public health, agriculture, digitalisation, and natural resource management, contributing to social, economic, and environmental development.

Membership opens new opportunities for Ignatianum University in knowledge exchange, international cooperation, and regional space technology development. It also allows active participation in political dialogue and collaboration with European institutions such as the European Parliament, European Commission, and European Space Agency.

NEW FACES

In this edition we introduce two recently appointed FUCE member university rectors.



Antonio Allende SJ **Comillas Pontifical University**

After receiving confirmation from the Dicastery for Culture and Education, the Grand Chancellor of Comillas, Reverend Father Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, has appointed Father Antonio Allende Felgueroso as the new rector of Comillas Pontifical University.

Antonio Allende Felgueroso obtained his Doctorate in English Philology at the University of Salamanca and his Degree in Theology at JSTB Berkeley (California). His teaching experience has been at the University of San Francisco (USA) and at the Faculty of Theology of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas. He has extensive experience in the governance and management of various apostolic works of the Society of Jesus. From 2015 to the present, he has been the Delegate for Education of the Spanish Province.



Dr Joan Torra **Ateneo Universitario Sant Pacià**

Dr Joan Torra has been appointed rector of the Sant Pacià University Athenaeum in Barcelona. Born in Manresa, Catalonia, in 1954, Dr Torra has been a priest of the diocese of Vic, of which he has been episcopal vicar, since 1982.

A graduate in Theology and Patristic Sciences at the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum of the Pontifical Lateran University of Rome (1990), he has been a professor at the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia since 1996, specialising in lecturing on topics concerning patrology. Dr Torra was also a professor at the Higher Institute of Religious Sciences of Vic, where he was director from 2004 to 2008.

NEWS IN BRIEF



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PEACE, JUSTICE & INCLUSION

Inspired by Mostar's iconic Old Bridge—a symbol of resilience and coexistence—the EUPeace alliance was launched in 2023. By promoting collaboration, innovation, and societal engagement, EUPeace aims to become a driving force for positive change in Europe and beyond.

The alliance unites nine European universities with the aim of promoting peace, justice, and inclusion. These values, central to the European ideal, must be continuously cultivated, and EUPeace embraces this challenge through transformative education and teaching and learning practices, interdisciplinary research, and local community engagement, equipping future citizens with the skills, knowledge and experience to uphold them.

EUPeace alliance member Comillas Pontifical University hosted its first major event in Madrid in 2024. Among other activities, Comillas leads societal impact initiatives through the alliance's LivingLab – a collaborative space bridging academia and society where universities, civil society, public, and private sectors co-create solutions to societal challenges.

CROATIA

NEW LIBRARY & FACULTIES AT CUC

The Catholic University of Croatia (CUC) recently inaugurated a new library and expanded its academic offerings by establishing a Faculty of Law and a Faculty of Engineering. Both faculties will launch in the 2025/2026, offering five-year degree programmes for 40 students annually.

During 2024, CUC hosted the conference “Whose Story Gets Told: AI and Collective Memory” on November 19–20 as part of the “How LLMs

Modulate Collective Memory and Its Ethical Implications” project which was led by Jasna Čurković Nimac in collaboration with IBM's Ethics Technology Lab, University of Notre Dame, USA.

On November 29, the university concluded a research project on digital healthcare ethics with a conference on “Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare – Challenges and Potentials” led by Ante Čartolovni.

On December 13, the €1.63 million AntibacHip project was presented, focusing on antibacterial materials for hip endoprotheses. Led by Tamara Holjevac Grgurić, the project underscores CUC's dedication to innovation and interdisciplinary research.

FRANCE

NEW UCU CENTRE OPENED

The new Mykola Haievoi Centre for Modern History at Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) has been officially opened. The centre was jointly founded by Ukrainian Catholic University and Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and will research the history of Ukraine and Europe in the 20th century.

The centre is named in honour of a young historian and graduate of the UCU Humanities Faculty, a doctoral candidate who perished in the Kursk area on 27 August 2024. He was 28 years old.

The centre's director, Prof Yaroslav Hrytsak emphasised the importance of projects like the Mykola Haievoi Center for Modern History: “Individual and collective trauma, the challenges of just peace and security, war and ecological damage, transitional justice, the renewal of cultural heritage, management of migration and the coordination of humanitarian aid – through joint research projects like this, Ukrainian scholars can become aware that they have access to unique data and that their being in Ukraine can give them a competitive advantage in conducting research.”

ucu.edu.ua/en/news/mynule-dopomagaye-rozumity-sogodennya-v-uku-vidkryly-tsentri-suchasnoyi-istoriyi-im-mykoly-gayevogo

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NEWS IN BRIEF



BELGIUM

POPE FRANCIS IN LEUVEN

In 2025, KU Leuven will celebrate its 600th anniversary, marking six centuries since its foundation by a papal bull. As part of the commemorations, Pope Francis visited the university on 27 September 2024.

“The university works on building an open dialogue based on mutual understanding, including between different religions. This way, we try to promote harmony and peace, inspired by Christian values and ideals.”

– Rector Luc Sels

During the visit, Rector Luc Sels highlighted KU Leuven’s commitment to fostering open dialogue rooted in mutual understanding. He also addressed themes such as academic freedom, global crises and challenges, refugee vulnerability and the role of the church and the university in advancing solidarity.

Pope Francis emphasised the importance of holistic education in preparing students to navigate contemporary challenges. He praised the university’s dedication to nurturing culture, ideas and truth in service of humanity, at the same time cautioning against reducing life to the measurable or settling for superficial thinking.

“Expanding boundaries and becoming an open space for humanity and for society is the great mission of a university.”

– Pope Francis



WEAVING TOGETHER THE THREAD OF HISTORY

In 2025, the Université Catholique de Lille celebrates 150 years of history, an important milestone in its commitment to higher education, research and society. Since 1875, the institution has been committed to educating responsible and enlightened citizens, combining strong local roots and valuable international links. The University has grown steadily and has now 40,000 students.

This anniversary offers a great opportunity to revisit the university’s heritage and to highlight the way in which each member of its network, including FUCE, has contributed to weaving the thread of this shared history.

Although distance may limit direct participation in the festivities, details of the year’s agenda are available at www.univ-catholille.fr where visitors can also find stories and initiatives that bear witness to the university’s rich history and can discover its plans for the future.

NEWS IN BRIEF



ITALY

POPE FRANCIS VISIT TO PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY

On Tuesday, 5 November 2024, the Holy Father Francis visited the Pontifical Gregorian University to meet with his community on the occasion of the Dies Academicus. According to Fr Arturo Sosa SJ, the visit confirmed the mission of the Pontifical Gregorian University following the incorporation of the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute.

In his wide-ranging address, Pope Francis said that the academic space must be transformed into a 'house of the heart'. He continued:

"The care of relationships needs the heart that dialogues. The heart unites the fragments and with the hearts of others a bridge is built where we can meet. The heart is necessary for the university, which is a place of research for a culture of encounter and not of discarding. It is a place of dialogue between the past and the present, between tradition and life, between history and stories."

At the conclusion of the Dies Academicus, Pope Francis participated in the awarding of prizes to students in recognition of their academic merits.



TEOLOGÍA E INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL

Durante los días 11 y 12 de marzo, la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Deusto celebrará sus tradicionales Jornadas de Teología, cuyo título de este año es: "Teología e Inteligencia Artificial". Las actividades se articularán en torno a seminarios especializados, destinados a quienes tienen una formación teológica, desarrollan su profesión o colaboran en ámbitos eclesiales y sociales, y mesas redondas, abiertas al público en general.

Estos encuentros anuales se han consolidado como un foro de referencia que reúne a teólogos, antropólogos, sociólogos, filósofos, intelectuales y otros expertos interesados en debatir sobre los grandes desafíos de nuestra sociedad y el papel que la Teología puede desempeñar en la construcción de respuestas. La edición de este año sitúa la Inteligencia Artificial como eje central de la reflexión.

¿Cómo puede la Teología dialogar con la IA para ofrecer nuevas perspectivas sobre la dignidad humana, la ética y la trascendencia en un mundo cada vez más digitalizado?



NEWS IN BRIEF



SPAIN

RAMON LLULL HOSTS APOROPHOBIA CONFERENCE

Ramon Llull University (URL) hosted the second International Conference on Apophobia in October 2024. Apophobia is defined as rejection, aversion, fear and scorn towards poor or disadvantaged people, which harshens the effects of poverty.

The conference was led by IQS-URL in collaboration with Pere Tarrés Foundation-URL, Càritas, Fundació Assís, Arrels Fundació, Cristianisme i Justícia, Borja Institute of Bioethics-URL, Vidal i Barraquer Foundation-URL, Esade-URL, ESDI-URL, Blanquerna Observatory-URL and La Salle-URL, with support from "La Caixa" Foundation.

In the words of URL rector Josep A. Rom, "it's an example of the organisation of activities with a strong social impact through the collaboration of different institutions in the same project. In this congress, our academic activity and our compromise with social transformation become one".

During the conference, members from academia and professionals from different fields offered multidisciplinary perspectives, experiences and possible solutions to apophobia. Professor Aaron Reeves's (London School of Economics and Oxford University) presentation "Common People: how elites and the working class navigate the symbolic market for being ordinary" addressed the influence of self-perception by elites on social and economic policy, especially towards marginalised populations.



FRANCE

UCLY VALUES REFLECTED IN 2024 STUDENT LIFE PLAN

UCLy believes that a high-quality student life is essential to achieve academic success and to prepare for professional and civic life. The 2024 UCLy student life plan aligns with the institution's strategy and its charter, reflecting its values.

The action plan is structured around six strategic axes including more than thirty main initiatives:

- Caring for Students: Promoting student well-being, physical and mental health;
- Energising Campus Life: Making campuses lively, attractive, and inspiring with nurturing spiritual life, culture and sports;
- Preparing Students for their Future Professional and Personal Lives;
- Involving Students in Governance: Encouraging active participation in institutional decision-making;
- Supporting, Welcoming, and Including all Students;
- Fostering Ecological Transition with sustainable initiatives.

The student life plan is the result of collective efforts by students, and members of the institution. The ambition is to foster trust, openness, inspiration, and creativity while providing tailored support based on individual needs.

NEWS IN BRIEF



LEBANON

USF EQUIPS FACULTY WITH AI SKILLS

As part of its commitment to continuous professional development, the Holy Family University (USF) in Lebanon, in collaboration with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), has launched a training programme for its faculty members to master the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching.

This initiative aims to modernise teaching practices by integrating appropriate AI tools to optimise the teaching and learning process and evaluation methods. Through this training, faculty members will gain essential skills to leverage innovative technologies, personalise learning experiences, and enhance student monitoring.

By embracing this approach, USF, in partnership with AUF, has reaffirmed its pioneering role in the use of new educational technologies. This initiative not only addresses the evolving needs of the academic sector but also elevates the quality of education provided to students. It reflects the university's visionary outlook and its commitment to preparing younger generations for the challenges of the 21st century.



SPAIN

UCV AIDS FLOOD-STRICKEN VALENCIA

In response to the tragic events following the floods in Valencia, the Catholic University of Valencia (UCV) has launched a variety of solidarity initiatives. From the outset, it mobilised volunteer groups to assist in the removal of mud and debris, as well as to provide essential aid and supplies to the most affected communities.

Additionally, the UCV established a special unit offering free psychological support and initiated a volunteer programme in collaboration with Valencia City Council to assist the elderly, alongside a special spiritual accompaniment plan.

Furthermore, the UCV Legal Clinic has created a free virtual assistant to support the application process for aid, while the UCV Clinics have offered their facilities to dentists unable to reopen their own facilities.

The UCV has also announced an extraordinary scholarship programme to provide additional financial assistance to students, ensuring that those affected can continue their studies without the current situation hindering their academic progress.

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FUCE

Université Catholique de Lyon
Service des Relations Internationales
10 Place des Archives
F-69002 LYON
contact@fuce.eu

www.fuce.eu