

press  
release

# Charism & Creativity

*Catalogues, management and innovation  
regarding the cultural heritage  
of institutes of consecrated life*

**Rome, Antonianum**  
4 | 5 May 2022

A conference opened by a call for papers to researchers, to communities of consecrated life and their consultants and collaborators, to foundations, associations and entities who manage cultural assets of religious entities.

Deadline for sending proposals:  
**9 April 2021 27 September 2021**



promotors



CONGREGATIO  
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PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

In 2018, on the occasion of the international conference *Doesn't God dwell here anymore?*, Pope Francis wrote in his greeting message: "Ecclesiastical cultural assets are **witnesses to the faith of the community** that has produced them over the centuries, and for this reason they are in their own way instruments of evangelization that accompany the usual tools of proclamation, preaching and catechesis".

Four years on, the present conference is planned as a **joint initiative of the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life**, with the collaboration of the National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage and Religious Buildings - Italian Bishops' Conference, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Church - Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage of the Church - Pontifical Gregorian University, UISG - International Union of Superiors General, USG - Union of Superiors General, SAM - Secretariat for Assistance to Nuns, Department of Architecture - University of Bologna.

The occasion focuses on the need for systematic and scientific **awareness** of the cultural heritage of communities of consecrated life, through the work of cataloguing in order to **recognize** the cultural heritage. This will help both save it from dispersion and theft, and reaffirm its place and importance within the religious communities themselves. In this way, the cultural heritage will become a new instrument for an innovative and attractive pastoral care, thanks to objects that offer narratives and enunciate the identity of the Church and the particular charism of each order and institute.

The cultural goods in the possession of the communities of consecrated life are thus opportunities for a better **anchorage to the territory** and for the initiation or deepening of cooperation with institutions, associations and schools: antidotes to the isolation of the communities themselves.

The conference in Rome will be a catalyst for experiments and experiences already being carried out across the globe, in order to allow them to be exchanged and extended, and for an initial census of best practices.

The conference will be an **international event that will focus on all the segments into which cultural heritage is currently divided**: property and movable goods, artistic and testimonial heritage, archives and libraries, and what is currently defined as "intangible heritage". This conference will also be an opportunity for a critical and comparative reflection within the Church, in order to establish the possibility of a clear dialogue with the institutions and civil institutes dealing with the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in the specific national and international contexts.

## **QUADRUPLE THEMATIC FRAMEWORK BEHIND THE CONFERENCE**

The agenda will focus above all on the state of progress and the methods used to catalogue the cultural heritage of the communities of consecrated life. The multiplicity of charisms that have enriched the Church over time and in different contexts has generated a heritage with such diverse features that a unitary census is not possible. Suffice it to think of the difference between a hermitage and a convent, a monastery and a house of religious sisters.

In this panorama, **cataloguing initiatives often stop within the boundaries of orders and congregations**, sometimes within those of individual provinces, or, for monasteries of contemplative life, traditionally *sui iuris*, within their walls. Even so, cataloging cultural heritage is fundamental as much for awareness of it as for its safeguarding and valorization.

Hence the second topic of this conference: for the Church, **enhancing the value of her cultural heritage means returning it to its proper purpose and to the purpose for which it was created, i.e. ultimately to proclaim the Gospel** and to serve the greater good of humanity. The Church's cultural assets do not aspire to a sterile museumification, but to **vitalize the circuits of life of Christian and civil communities**, becoming a meeting point for many people, for whom they are often elements of affection and reference for identity.

A third theme, made urgent by the ever more frequent cases of disposal of religious houses, is the **identification of experiences, research and projects for the reuse and re-functioning of the real estate of the communities of consecrated life**, with particular attention to cases of transformation into "common goods", social condensers of community development, the result of participatory processes with the stakeholders of the territories.

Traversal to the above-mentioned themes is the fourth one, with which we hope for **general frameworks for understanding and interpreting** the Cultural Heritage of the Communities of Consecrated Life in ecclesial and ecclesiological, juridical, symbolic and semiotic terms: approaches that could inaugurate a new way of understanding the goods and promoting them, at the intersection of charism and creativity.

**The aim of this first study opportunity is to stratify a patrimony of reflections, methods and case studies for a catalogue of replicable models and recommended strategies that can be a guide or a reference for new processes.**

## **THE CONFERENCE IS OPEN TO SPEAKERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, SELECTED BY A CALL FOR PAPERS**

Researchers and members of communities of consecrated life, their advisors and consultants, foundations, associations and institutions that manage cultural heritage of religious bodies are particularly welcome to contribute.

The proceedings of the two study days are intended to be an authoritative and wide-ranging synthesis of what is being done and what is being researched on the knowledge, protection, valorisation and management of the cultural assets of communities of consecrated life on a global scale.

## **CALENDAR AND DEADLINES**

### **7 December 2020**

call launch / Conference announcement

### **~~9 April 2021~~ 27 September 2021**

deadline for sending proposals for intervention

### **~~14 June 2021~~ 29 November 2021**

communication of the results of the abstract review

### **By ~~26 July 2021~~ 7 March 2022**

confirmation of participation by the authors

### **~~30 September – 1 October 2021~~ 4 | 5 May 2022**

Conference in Rome

### **For further information:**

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