

ACADEMY OF GLOBAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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1. The Global Church Leadership Professorship: a think tank for the Catholic Church

The newly created Global Church Leadership junior professorship at the LMU within the Faculty of Catholic Theology is to be classified within the general field of practical theology, but with an impact on the entire Faculty and beyond. It is to be anchored in Canon Law, with a concrete outlook from Pastoral Theology and other related theological and social and cultural science disciplines. By means of this interdisciplinary approach, it will join two sides:

- the sense for the given *structure and identity* of the Catholic Church and its range of possible innovations (Canon Law, Ecclesiology)
- with a precise description of the *challenges* in a rapidly changing world and Church (Pastoral Theology, Social Sciences).

The long-term vision is to create a think tank for the Catholic Church on a global level to meet the challenges of the 21st century. With its specific profile, it will be surprisingly unique in the world. It has a markedly different profile from well-established Institutes in the German speaking world as well as in the larger world, whether they be rooted in a more traditional Missiology approach (with some new topics like Dialogue and Theology of Religions) or designed to convey skills borrowed from social or administrative sciences (leadership competence programs etc.).

2. The Academy: an efficacious instrument for global-openness and cooperation with the fostering of an international research network

The Global Church Leadership chair is envisaged basically as a research unit on questions relevant to ecclesiastical leadership, strategy, administration, management, and other specific issues important in the life of the universal Church, the particular Churches, groupings of particular Churches and religious orders. The main concern will be on the diocesan and the bishops' conferences levels. Also included, however, are questions of diocesan substructures such as parishes, health care and educational units, and charitable organizations, as well as, of course, religious orders and the Roman curia. To be able to share and transmit the fruits of its research, there is envisaged *inter alia* a yearly Academy. In this way, the think tank can realize the Humboldtian ideal of the unity of research and teaching in the university.

This yearly *Academy of Global Church Leadership* will be offered as an intensive seminar (3-5 days) on a particular topic of relevance, starting with "Church Financing" in May 2024.

At the yearly *Academy of Global Church Leadership* will be presented well researched papers by experts. Each session of the Academy will deal with only one theme. The chosen theme will be studied from various perspectives in an interdisciplinary way. The presentations will be enriched with open panels. Each yearly Academy will have a cultural aspect, planned according to the possibilities at hand, and with regards to its relevance to the theme chosen.

Also, and of great importance, is the fact that the yearly Academy will have a universal vocation as it will interest itself to all particular Churches in their various situations. Such a broad and inclusive approach will render it more attractive and more efficient in its proposals. Such an approach will establish and comfort it as a 'practical' research unit at the service of science and of the Church. In this way, in view of fostering research, the Global Church Leadership will work towards the establishment of a research network between the LMU and universities/researchers across the world. The aim is to establish connections on all continents with a special attention to the Global South. The idea behind this strategy (without any pretense) is to have

- more competent *people* in leadership positions (bishops, heads of office in the diocesan curia, seminary rectors, parish priests, lay leaders, religious superiors etc.)
- as well as adequate *structures*, institutions, and reformed canonical and extracanonical regulations.

Further, the yearly Academy will bring together professors, researchers, administrators of the Church at different levels, students and interested persons of various horizons and cultural backgrounds. In effect, will be invited for presentations and lectures at the yearly academy not only professors, researchers and Church administrators of the LMU or of other German institutions, but also professors, researchers and Church administrators from all over the world. Participation too is not opened only to persons residents in Germany, rather it is opened to all interested persons from the whole world. In fact, the Academy has a universal vocation.

As a research unit, the Global Church Leadership aims at creating and animating a group of researchers from all over the world, for an efficient and deep analysis of the various challenges of the Church in questions related to leadership and proper ecclesiastical administration. Networking is thus fundamental. The yearly Academy, hence, portrays itself as the means for the concrete realization of this project.

What is more is that the analysis of the proposed theme for the yearly Academy will be done in a cross-disciplinary way. In effect, different related fields of knowledge will be brought into play in the study of the selected theme. Such a program will be developed in collaboration with theological and extra-theological disciplines, with a privileged connection with Canon Law, Pastoral Theology, Liturgy, Education, Fundamental Theology, and Christian Social Ethics. All this, notwithstanding 'secular' disciplines and fields of specializations that may be of interest in the analysis of the chosen theme. This will have the merit of ensuring a thorough

analysis of each particular situation with final proposals more likely to be efficient in comparison to a 'narrow'-minded analysis.

In addition, the global-openness of the Academy will enhance cooperation with other institutions and participate obviously to a widening of horizons and perspectives. Being unique in its genre, the Academy promoted by the Global Church Leadership will offer much in its proper domain and in the domain of cooperation with institutions, theorists and practitioners all over the world.

3. Local-based research approach: attentive to the specific challenges

The yearly *Academy of Global Church Leadership* will focus on the realities and challenges of particular Churches, of groupings of particular Churches, and of the universal Church as such. With the aim of eliciting contextualized proposals for each particular situation, the research called for will be local-based. It is driven by the conviction that good leadership has to be strong in principles but also attentive to changing realities and new challenges. In this way, empirical research and social science approaches will be indispensable. The acquaintance of researchers with the realities studied, by way of belonging or of any other affiliation to the context studied will be greatly valued, without ruling out worthwhile intellectual projects or articles that are not directly social-sciences based. The research shall be facts-based and process-oriented in order to avoid 'futile' fundamental discussions and left-right-polarizations. This is important to be able to study and analyze concrete situations in a factual manner. Only then can efficient proposals be made.

The research will, in this light, aim at offering efficacious instruments in the handling of the various challenges that the Church in different contexts do face. The worldwide sex abuse scandal, the enormous challenges of secularization, religious pluralism, lay and women's empowerment, the growing global middle class with its values centered on self-fulfillment and autonomy-oriented consumerism, polarization and the weakening of the center, evangelization, etc. make the quest for a rational, fact-based orientation for Church leadership evident. Such a problem-based approach could also help to overcome polarizations, oversimplifications, and the inflation of words and programs without evident results.