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Lilly Fellows Program Grant to Fund Conference Honoring Vatican II, SHU Founding

Published: DECEMBER 15, 2021

CATEGORIES: Speakers & Events

Thinkers, writers and leaders will gather to discuss Catholic higher education

Sacred Heart University has received a Lilly Fellows Program grant to develop and host a three-day, regional conference next October on Vatican II and Catholic Higher Education which will be held on the 60th anniversaries of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) and Sacred Heart University's founding.

Sacred Heart was founded in 1963 in the spirit of Vatican II as the first Catholic institution in the United States led by lay people. Next year's conference dates, Oct. 13-15, acknowledge that connection, as those were the days of Vatican II's first sessions.

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities is also supporting the conference, titled "Vatican II and Catholic Higher Education: Leading Forward." This event headlines several leading keynote speakers including Massimo Faggioli, a professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University, and a prominent historian on the Church as well as a distinguished thinker and writer on Vatican II and Pope Francis. Faggioli's most recent book is *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis: Moving toward Global Catholicity*. Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington University, Washington, D.C. writes and speaks on a wide variety of topics concerning higher education, women and Catholic education, and her articles have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education* and other publications. Grant Kaplan, a professor of theology in the department of theological studies at St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO, works in the areas of fundamental theology and modern theology as well as the Vatican. Susan Bigelow Reynolds, an assistant professor of Catholic studies at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, GA, examines the intersection of ecclesiology and lived Catholicism in contexts of diversity, marginality and suffering.

Michelle Loris, associate dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Catholic studies department chair, is the conference director. She is honored to have such leading speakers. Loris wants the experience to bring people together and enable participants to generate robust and meaningful conversations about the challenges Catholic higher education faces today.

“The conference aims to bring together thinkers, writers, artists, leaders and teachers who can offer deep, creative and interpretive reflection on the impact of the Vatican II and the Catholic intellectual tradition on Catholic higher education,” Loris said. “This group can then examine and imagine how these ideas can lead and move education forward into the 21st century.”

Founded in 1991, the Lilly Fellows Program seeks to strengthen the quality and shape the character of church-related institutions of higher education. Among several initiatives, it maintains a collaborative National Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities that sponsors a variety of activities including grant and fellowship programs designed to explore the Christian character of the academic vocation and to strengthen the religious nature of church-related institutions. Regional Conference Grants fund programs that encourage examination of topics of special significance to faculty, administrators and students at a particular institution or group of institutions, or matters of special intellectual concern to faculty and others in Christian higher education.