

SANTA CROCE

PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY OF THE HOLY CROSS FOUNDATION



RELIGION, THE FOUNDATION OF CULTURE

Prof. Marta Brancatisano (*Santa Croce*), Bishop Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot (Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), and Honorable Khalid Chaouki (President of the Great Mosque of Rome) participating in the course “The Great Religious Traditions.”



Bishop Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, formerly a missionary in Egypt and Sudan, is Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Rector of the Pontifical Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.

In an increasingly secular world, many people question whether religious ideas should influence various aspects of our life. They often lack a basic knowledge of the religious ideals of major religious traditions, or how they impact cultural norms and practices, from social structures to government laws and geopolitics. Yet greater knowledge should lead to a better understanding between people and countries comprised of different faith groups. This goal of information and understanding was the general purpose of a recent 9-week course hosted at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

“The Great Religious Traditions” course, with weekly sessions held from January to March, was designed to present accurate and unprejudiced knowledge. Every Tuesday for 2 ½ hours, experts in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism taught the basics of their religious traditions. The course was directed by Professor Marta Brancatisano (*Santa Croce*), and Manuel Sanchez, president of the ISCOM Association, who co-sponsored the course in collaboration with the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

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The goal was not interreligious dialogue, but an objective presentation of different traditions and their conception of the image of God, the image of man and woman and their relationship, and the relationship between faith, politics, and ecology. Speaking at the initiation of the course, the Honorable Khalid Chaouki, President of the Great Mosque of Rome explained: “The meaning of dialogue in this course is not the presentation of a dialogue among religions, that discussion belongs to the competent bodies, but that of treating the human spheres that are intertwined with religion: the sense of God, woman, politics.”

Thus, the expert speakers were given the task of providing basic information about their religious traditions. Theological understanding can illuminate the foundations of different cultures, their influencing social formations, legal structures, as well as political and economic life.

As the Catholic historian Christopher Dawson maintained in his influential book *Religion and Culture* (1948), every culture has its roots

in religious sensitivities and reality. Therefore, providing information about the structures of the great religious traditions can be of service for persons working in the public, social, or economic arenas of a country.

Courses like this at *Santa Croce* are attended by professionals working in the area of a particular specialization. “The Great Religious Traditions” was geared toward diplomats, journalists, and leaders of religious

organizations. Part of the purpose and value of the course was to gather and present objective research in service to the universal Church. However, insights gained from the course reach students indirectly in classes taught by our professors who participated.

The following *Santa Croce* professors made presentations during the session on Christian religious tradition: Fr. Carlo Pioppi (Professor of Modern and Contemporary History), Fr. Giulio Maspero (Professor of Dogmatic Theology), and Marta Brancatisano (Professor of Church Communications).

Santa Croce includes scientific research as part of its mission as a Pontifical University. The word “science” can be misleading if we only think of physical sciences with test tubes and chemicals. However, conferences, programs, and institutes based in the humanities are a regular part of the scientific academic work at *Santa Croce*. In future newsletters, we plan to include more articles on research and teaching programs aimed at serving the universal Church. 🙏

SPEAKERS



Prof. Marta Brancatisano, co-director of the course “The Great Religious Traditions”, teaches “Man and Woman: Anthropology of the Relationship” at the School of Church Communications.



Fr. Giulio Maspero, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at *Santa Croce*, has recently published scholarship on Gregory Of Nyssa and Trinitarian Theology.

SESSION TOPICS

More than a dozen experts on major religious traditions participated during the 9-week course on the following topics:

- **Why is it important to know religious traditions?**
- **The pillars of Islam: sacred texts, religious groups, political Islam**
- **Judaism: cycle of the year and cycle of life. Origins, general principles**
- **Christianity: history, rituals, subdivisions**
- **Hinduism and Buddhism: origins and development, foundations, currents**
- **The notion of God in different religious cultures**
- **Woman and man in Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism**
- **Faith and politics: the declension of the relationship in religions**
- **Ecology and globalization: the approach of each religion of heart and mind**



Noemi Di Segni, President of the Union of Italian-Jewish Communities, is an executive member of the World Jewish Council, which represents Jewish communities in 100 countries on six continents.



Khalid Chaouki, President of the Great Mosque of Rome, told participants, “For us Muslims, the most important challenge today is the prevention of radicalization, especially among young people.”



Swamini Hamsananda, Vice President of the Italian Hindu Union.



Katsutoshi Mizumo, Head of the Rissho Kosei Kai Center, a Buddhist organization founded in Japan.

TEACHING AND LEARNING TO LOVE

Human Affection and Christian Chastity

It is very important for future priests in the Church to learn how to love in a mature way, and to teach others how to love. A prelude for this is to live the virtue of chastity, a “sign of the transparency of relationships and the gift of self”, as the recent Ratio on priestly formation says (n. 21).

Therefore, a Study Week was organized by the Center for Priestly Formation (CPF) for seminary formators of candidates for the priesthood in various countries. Talks originated in Italian with simultaneous translation into English and Spanish. Overall themes for the program were: The Christian Virtue of Chastity: Theological and Moral Issues; Learning to Love; The Psychological Perspective; Teaching to Love: Developing a True Christian Paternity.



Every year, formators from seminaries around the world travel to *Santa Croce* Center for Priestly Formation to study with other instructors.

In addition to six contributors from other universities, the following *Santa Croce* professors made presentations: Fr. Julio Dieguez, Fr. Paul O’Callaghan (Director of the CPF), Fr. Ralf van Bühren, and Fr. Wencislao Vial. After the morning presentations, everyone participates in the afternoon workshops, focusing on practical problems in daily life. 🙏

ROME CONFERENCE ON FORGIVENESS



Msgr. Mariano Fazio, Vicar General of Opus Dei and Vice Chancellor of the University of the Holy Cross gave a talk on “Pope Francis and St. Josemaría Escrivá on Charity and Forgiveness.”

Resentment can last for days or even years. Forgiveness, as a response to a grave injustice, can heal deep divisions and tense relations in the family, in one’s own community or among nations. These were among the ideas discussed at the first “Rome Conference on Forgiveness” held at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Participants at the conference came from different countries to discuss forgiveness, especially how to help children to forgive. Also discussed was how forgiveness is viewed in Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and how to implement forgiveness education programs to promote peace in the context of political conflicts.

The conference moderator was Fr. Robert Gahl, Vice-Director of the MCE Research Center. Among the speakers, Robert Enright, pioneer of the social and scientific study on forgiveness (University of Wisconsin-Madison); Annette Shannon, lecturer in Belfast, Northern Ireland; Barbara Marchica, of the pastoral Council of Milan; Omer Ahmed Kerim Berzinji, ambassador of Iraq to the Holy See; Peta Pellach, of the Elijah Interfaith Institute of Jerusalem; Gammenos Mastrojenni, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Paola Binetti, Italian parliamentarian; and Alison Sutherland, director of the Rotarian Action Group for Peace in Great Britain. 🇬🇧

RELIGION AND CUSTOMS

“Religion and Customs – European Religion and its Cultural Tradition” was the theme of a meeting held at the University in January, in which a delegation of Chinese scholars belonging to various institutions, universities and research groups took part. To welcome them were *Santa Croce’s* Rector, Fr. Luis Navarro, and Bishop Juan Ingacio Arrieta, the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Canon Law.

The meeting was preceded by a photographic presentation by Vittoria Tam, on the “History of Salvation” and its influence on the Christian art. Also participating was the Secretary for the Pontifical Council for Culture, Bishop Paul Tighe, and the Secretary of the Secretariat for Communication, Monsignor Lucio Ruiz.

The delegation was led by Prof. Zhuo Xiping, the Director of the Institute of World Religions, who in his

greetings pointed out the importance of the Catholic Church in the development of European culture. Other members of the delegation included Prof. Wang Yaun, the president of the Chinese Academy of Science and

Technology for Development, and Prof. Liu Ruiqui, the president of Culture & Brand Research Group. The meeting was promoted by Alessandro Dri, lawyer and professor of commercial law in China. 🇨🇳



Meeting to facilitate cultural and artistic exchanges with China.

RETREAT TO ADVANCE

Fr. John Burns has become well-known for giving spiritual retreats and talks. He frequently directs retreats in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee where he has served as an associate pastor and pastor since his ordination



St. Mary's Parish
in Memominee Falls, Wisconsin

in 2010. Among the list of Catholic groups who call upon Fr. John to give retreats and conference talks include Franciscan University, Theology on Tap, and the young adult renewal ministries of ARISE and Cor Jesu. He is a regular guest on Relevant Radio's program The Inner Life and works extensively with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity for whom he has given conferences, retreats and spiritual direction in Romania, Armenia, Italy, England, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.

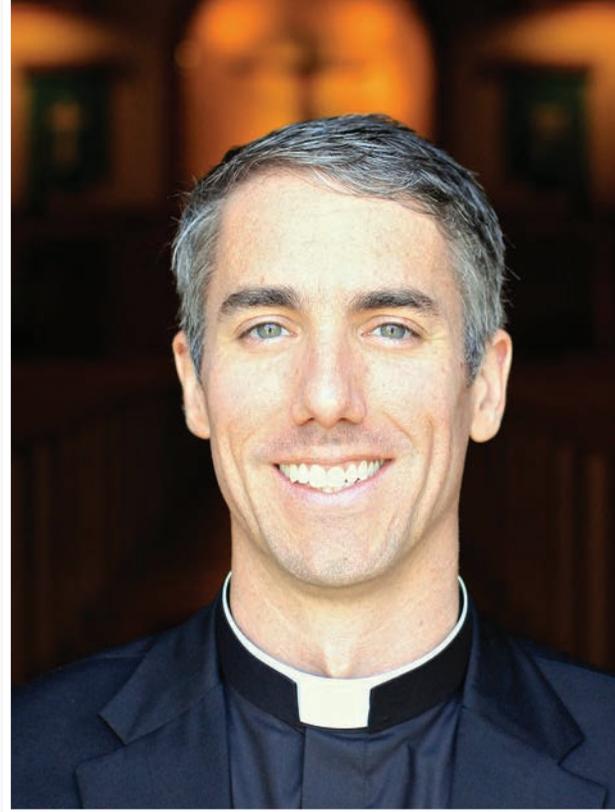
Appropriately enough, Fr. John began his discernment to become a priest at a retreat he attended a year after graduating from Notre Dame University in Indiana. In his words,

when he was 24 "I finally gave God permission to speak. I went on a good retreat and formally asked the questions about discernment about priesthood – it was crystal clear it was time to actively discern the priesthood."

His bishop initially sent him to study theology at the Gregorian University in Rome and then asked him to study Moral Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. In recalling his time of study and discernment at *Santa Croce* he says, "*the spirit of prayer pervades everything there, making visits to the Blessed Sacrament before and after class...also the accessibility of the professors and their interest in the students and their ability to connect everything we were studying academically to pastoral work, the life of the Church, and our own pursuit of holiness...*"

What he learned from his professors about connecting Church teachings to pastoral work and the pursuit of holiness has carried over into his work as a priest. At St. Mary's Parish in Memominee Falls, Wisconsin, his most recent assignment, he gave a series of seven talks called "Catholicism 101: Exploring the Basics of Being a Catholic". You can listen to these talks and other sermons by Fr. John on the parish website: www.stmaryparish.net.

In addition to his busy speak-



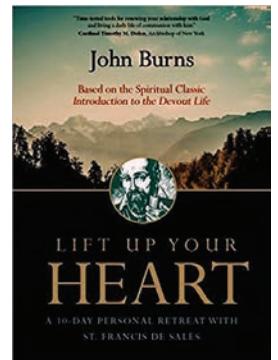
Fr. John Burns

ing schedule, he published a book last year with Ave Maria Press – *Lift Up Your Heart: A 10-Day Personal Retreat with St. Francis de Sales*.

Fr. John took this saint's Introduction to the Devout Life, a spiritual classic on holiness and loving God, and created ten meditations for the modern reader.

After this whirlwind of activity, Fr. John is now on a sort of retreat from pastoral work. He recently returned to *Santa Croce* to study for a doctorate in Sacred Theology. Once again he will be enveloped in a community where he says "The whole of my study was a guide to my ability to be a priest who is able to communicate the moral teachings of the Church."

We are please to introduce our readers to another *Santa Croce* alumnus who is serving Catholics in America and beyond. May God bless Fr. John's doctoral studies at *Santa Croce* as he briefly retreats from pastoral work in order to advance his pastoral ministry. ☪



"the spirit of prayer pervades everything there, making visits to the Blessed Sacrament before and after class... also the accessibility of the professors and their interest in the students and their ability to connect everything we were studying academically to pastoral work, the life of the Church, and our own pursuit of holiness..."

— Fr. John Burns

A HELPER OF THE FATHERLESS

Seminarian Chris de Souza worked hard to graduate from *Santa Croce's* theology program in 2017, had a few weeks to enjoy time with his parents and relatives in Perth, Australia, and then entered into a whole new world: an orphanage in Bangalore, India.

It's a far cry from his six years of corporate law, two of them in Sydney, Australia, managing corporate accounts by day and serving as a humanitarian lawyer by night. Being a lawyer was intense, he loved helping people - but he was not truly happy and considered a future in the priesthood.

"It wasn't enough for me, said Br. Chris. "I was already discerning when I arrived in Sydney those last two years. I received formation with Opus Dei and built a relationship with a priest for spiritual direction. He guided me through discernment, and then I joined the Somascans. After my novitiate in northern Italy, I

was encouraged to attend *Santa Croce* in Rome."

The Somaskan Fathers and Brothers live together in communities, pursuing holiness by prayer and ministry to the poor, living in humility and kindness, loving poverty and work. They often perform ministries such as the care of orphans, the disadvantaged and the poor.

"To me, the best thing about studying at *Santa Croce* is the healthy environment," says Br. Chris, "the study and prayer life. My professor-advisor was great. I could talk with him; we would pray alongside each other in the chapel, we sang together

in the choir. That demonstrates that *Santa Croce* professors are not out of reach, and their involvement helped me to grow as a student."

Br. Chris is currently spending his pastoral year serving in a Somaskan orphanage. The idea is to get missionary experience and make the final discernment before taking solemn vows as a priest. He's playing sports with orphaned boys, cleaning night and day with bucket and mop, and yet... there's still another side to his ministry.

Once a lawyer, always a lawyer, but this time he has a new focus: "Since leaving Australia, I have made myself available, and began an apostolate of accompaniment." Some of his friends went into politics or are in senior positions with Christian lobby associations and political advisory groups. "We remain in close contact regarding changes in policy and legislation: religious freedom, marriage redefinitions, euthanasia, freedom of expression, and aggressive gender ideology programs in primary schools."

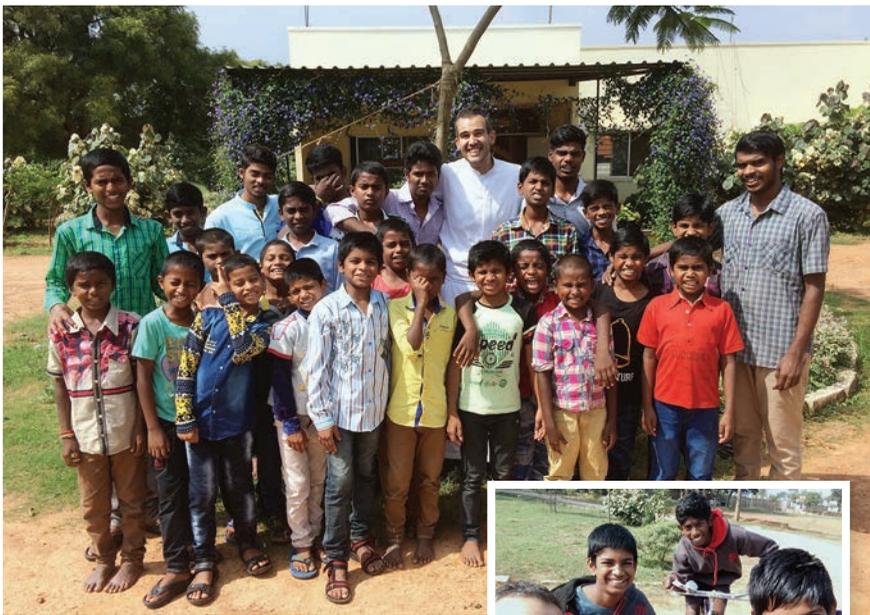
Br. Chris deepened his faith through studying theology at *Santa Croce*. But beyond that, he deepened his faith by being a part of the vital Christian community there. Whether as a lawyer or a priest, there is no doubt that Br. Chris will continue to "see the trouble of the afflicted" and imitate God by being a "helper of the fatherless." 🙏

But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;

you consider their grief and take it in hand.

The victims commit themselves to you;

you are the helper of the fatherless. — Psalm 10:14



Br. Chris with orphans at the Somaskan Father's Suryodaya Boys Home, Bangalore, India





Professors prepare to join the Inaugural Mass procession for the 2017-18 Academic Year

CREATING A LEGACY TO HELP OTHERS

You can create a legacy today that will help others grow in the Church. The beauty of this is that it costs you nothing today, but it will help *Santa Croce* in the future. The amount of your estate doesn't matter, but what does matter is that each of us has a plan, not leaving our legacy to chance. After remembering our family and loved ones, we should remember our favorite charities. If *Santa Croce's* work is important to your beliefs and values, please consider remembering us in your final plans.

Our mission at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Foundation is to raise awareness and support in the United States for the academic and financial needs of *Santa Croce*. We work with our benefactors to meet present needs and develop future resources to make sponsorships available for seminarians and priests for the Church.

You may help in this important mission by remembering the Foundation in your final plans.

With just a few words, you can help build the future of the Church! A few words in your will by naming the

Foundation as a beneficiary allows you to support what you believe in—well beyond the years God will give you in this lifetime. Your bequest helps secure training for future leaders to serve the Church throughout the world.

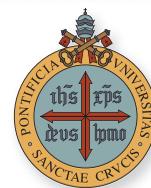
Your bequest gift offers assurance for the continuing excellence of *Santa Croce*. While providing for the disposition of some of your assets, it is also an expression of your love and commitment to those people and groups that you most cherish.

Benefits of a bequest:

- Allows you to make a gift that cost nothing today.
- Creates a legacy to help support what you believe in.
- When established as a percentage, a bequest intention allows for change in the value of your assets.
- Most of all, your gift provides for the future of *Santa Croce* and the leadership of the Church.

REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION – CREATING A LEGACY TO HELP OTHERS

- Please send me your brochure to consider bequest options *A Brief Overview of Charitable Planning*
- Please have a Charitable Gift Counselor give me a call to discuss planning options
- Please enroll me in the Santa Croce Legacy Society, as I have already remembered the Foundation in my:
 - Will Trust Retirement account Life insurance Other _____



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FROM ALL THE WORLD TO ALL THE WORLD

Our students are tremendously grateful for the unique opportunity they have to study at *Santa Croce*. They study with world-renowned thinkers, and they meet friends from every continent – all within an easy stroll of the Vatican, the Pantheon, and the countless other treasures of the Eternal City, and more importantly, all done for the glory of God and the good of His holy Church.



“*Santa Croce* gave me a warm welcome to the world of Communications, in the realm of skills and from the Catholic perspective. The faculty is professional, student-friendly, encourages personal contact with the professors. I am so proud to be a part of an incredible university. In going home to India, I don’t have expectations - but whatever is needed, I’ll work for that.”

Fr. Sanesh George
Church Communications
Kerala, India.



“I came to Rome with the goal of learning how to evangelize and spread the values of the Church in a professional and effective manner. *Santa Croce* offers students exposure to the world of social communications that prepares us with the skills to implement what we have learned in our diocese.”

Fr. Didier Mokuba Ngankoy
Diocese of Inongo, Congo



“My bishop asked if I would like to study in Rome and which subject area I preferred. I asked what was most needed in our diocese and he replied, “Canon Law.” So I said, “Then I like Canon Law!” *Santa Croce’s* program was the best for what I needed. It is also great to live in a college residence with priests from all over the world.”

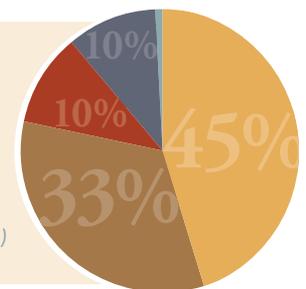
Fr. Albert Fortuny Llaveria
Third-year licentiate
Tarragona, Spain

SANTA CROCE’S 1,600 STUDENTS
HAIL FROM 75 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES!

On behalf of all our students, **THANK YOU!**
Your help makes a world of difference!

STUDENTS BY LOCATION:

- Europe
- Americas
- Africa
- Asia
- Oceania (less than 1%)



The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Foundation

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