

PRESS RELEASE

THE CHURCH UP CLOSE:

Covering Catholicism in the Age of Francis

(September 5-11, 2016)

SEMINAR IN ROME FOR JOURNALISTS COVERING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Organized by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

ROME, MAY 9, 2016 - In September 2016, the School of Church Communications at Rome's Pontifical University of the Holy Cross offers the fifth edition of its week-long seminar designed to equip journalists with the tools to enhance their coverage of today's Roman Catholic Church. The seminar, entitled "The Church Up Close: Covering Catholicism in the Age of Francis," will take place in Rome from **September 5 to September 11, 2016**.

Conducted in English, the seminar is open to all working journalists, but the number of participants is limited.

Previous seminars have seen the participation of reporters from media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *El País*, the *BBC* and *Le Monde*, to name a few.

Among this year's guest speakers are George Cardinal Pell, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy; Peter Cardinal Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; Arch. Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States Vatican Secretariat of State; Msgr. Khaled Akaseh, Head Officer for Islam at the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue; Rev. Geno Sylva, from the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization; Fr. Sebastian Vazhakala, General Superior and co-founder of the Contemplative Missionaries of the Charity (Sta. Teresa of Calcutta); Prof. Maria Luisa Di Pietro, Member of the National Bioethics Committee (Italy), and Greg Burke, Vice-Director Press Office of the Holy See.

The Church Up Close provides an insight into the nature of the Catholic Church and the inner workings of the Vatican. Conference sessions and interactive workshops address topics from the financial life of the Holy See, the future of the marriage, the reform of the curia, Christians and the Arab world, the Magisterium of Pope Francis, new challenges in bioethics, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, and the state of the Church in Latin America.

According to the president of the organizing committee, Rev. Prof. John Wauck, "*The Church Up Close* seminar was inspired by a series of classes that our school was already offering throughout the year for Rome-based 'vaticanisti'. *The Church Up Close* is a condensed, intensified and amplified version of the class that has been tailored for journalists from around the globe."

In addition to conference sessions, this week-long seminar features on-site visits and personal meetings with curial officials and veteran Vatican correspondents. The goal is to provide both a basic understanding of the Vatican and an in-depth analysis of specific hot-button issues regarding the Church today. Journalists seeking to meet the demand with quality information are given the opportunity with *The Church Up Close*.

Fr. Wauck observes, “Covering an institution as old and as large as the Catholic Church has always been a huge challenge, and in today’s shrinking world, it’s becoming ever more necessary to tell even local stories about the Church from a global perspective. The seminar should help reporters do that. What’s more, Rome is an ideal setting for reflecting on religion and the media with journalists from around the world.”

The seminar has been made possible by a grant from the U.S.-based Our Sunday Visitor Institute, and to the collaboration of the Iscom (www.iscom.org) and the AIGAV (International Association of Journalists accredited to the Vatican).

The full program and detailed information about “The Church Up Close” seminar is available on its website (<http://www.church-communication.net/>). **Applications must be submitted online.**

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