



12TH ANNUAL AUSCP ASSEMBLY TO FOCUS ON THEME, UNITY THROUGH SYNODALITY

May 1, 2023 • For immediate release

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will welcome the 2023 Assembly of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests to San Diego, on the theme, Unity through Synodality. The 2023 Assembly will be held June 12-15 at the University of San Diego, a private Catholic university. McElroy will welcome participants Monday afternoon, June 12, and then travel to the USCCB Spring Assembly.

ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW

The 2023 Assembly will begin with a one-day retreat on Monday, June 12, led by Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, a former president of LCWR and currently the founder and President of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue. The retreat is titled, “Responding from a Contemplative Heart: Living Synodality in a Polarized World.” Sister Nancy will also facilitate contemplative preparation and response to the keynotes.

Cardinal McElroy will welcome Assembly attendees during opening ceremonies on Monday at 4 p.m. No stranger to the AUSCP, then-Bishop McElroy was a keynoter in Albuquerque five years ago.

Dr. Massimo Faggioli, a 2016 keynoter in Chicago, will speak Monday evening, June 12, on *The “Synodal Process” in the USA and in the Global Church: A Geography of Hope*. Faggioli plans to “address the similarities and differences between the USA and other synodal processes in the global Church”

UPDATE *We regret to announce that Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle has just been appointed by Pope Francis as his Special Envoy to the National Eucharistic Congress of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from June 4-11, and will be unable to keep his commitment to the AUSCP. We learned of the papal appointment on May 4. We are searching for a replacement keynoter with international knowledge of the synodal process in the global Church. Cardinal Tagle had been scheduled to give a keynote address on Tuesday morning, June 13, and to preside at the Assembly Mass on Wednesday afternoon, June 14.*

Dr. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, Professor of Theological Studies, Loyola Marymount University, will speak Wednesday morning, June 14, on the question: “How do we accompany Latinas/Latinos by facing *la realidad* of contemporary struggles with them?”

Speakers’ biographies are provided, following this release.

BUSINESS, BANQUET AND AWARDS

Business meetings are on the schedule Tuesday and Wednesday.

Elections will be held for four positions on the AUSCP Leadership Team.

Presentations on the activity of AUSCP Working Groups will be given.

Among items of business will be a statement from the AUSCP Mutual Support Work Group, which was developed “concerning the support of our brothers in ministry.” Members who gather at the Assembly will be asked to support the statement, entitled, Being Gay, Ordained, Faithful to the Church and Appreciated by the Church: Are all these possible in today’s Church? If approved, the statement will be distributed to the members of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and released to the media.

Pope St. John XXIII Awards, to be presented at the Wednesday banquet, will go to the AUSCP Founding Fathers as award recipients and Fr. Emmet Farrell, Director of the Creation Care Ministry for the Diocese of San Diego; and to Ellie Hidalgo and Casey Stanton, Co-Directors of Discerning Deacons. The Mission of Discerning Deacons is “to engage Catholics in the active discernment of our Church about women and the diaconate.”

Colloquia – break-out sessions on particular topics are planned for Thursday morning. *Brief descriptions of planned sessions follow this release.*

OPTIONAL EVENTS

A tour of San Diego, led by a local a resident is planned for Tuesday afternoon, for pre-registered and pre-paid participants. Another Tuesday option will be the viewing of a documentary from *America*, Sebastian Gomes will introduce the film, “People of God: How Catholic Parish Life is Changing in the United States.”

Following the Assembly on Thursday afternoon, participants who are pre-registered and pre-paid plan to visit two Immigration Centers, including *Scalabrini Casa de Migrantes* in Tijuana. Participants must have a current passport.

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For more information

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Media coverage is invited

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2023 COLLOQUIA SESSIONS

Assembly participants will be able to select one or two of the Thursday morning colloquia, planned as of this writing.

Voice of the Faithful will offer “Kaleidoscope or Humpty Dumpty?” – discussing whether the polarized post-COVID Church in the United States is headed to “a richer mosaic of vibrant colors and shapes, or to a cracked shell of former glory?”

The AUSCP Mutual Support Work Group will offer two sessions: “What am I supposed to say?” if a priest friend tells you an allegation has been made against him; and “How can we better support priests,” regarding issues of ministry and morale.

New Ways Ministry will offer a discussion of “Where do we go from here?” in a parish or community following numerous gestures of Pope Francis toward LGBTQ people and their families.

Discerning Deacons plans two conversations, one on the “Continental Phase of the Synod,” and the other on “Preparing pastors and parishes to celebrate Phoebe Day.”

Sessions available include one on intercultural living and another on serving in a bi-lingual parish. Also, Father John Dear will lead a discussion on “Preaching the Nonviolence of Jesus.” The AUSCP retreat leader and contemplative guide, Sister Nancy Sylvester, will offer a practical discussion on “Listening and Speaking from a Contemplative Heart.”

BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, Professor of Theological Studies, Loyola Marymount University, will speak on the question: “How do we accompany Latinas/Latinos by facing *la realidad* of contemporary struggles with them?” She will invite attendees “into a process of discerning how to best accompany and bring to the center communities that are divers, complex and seeking a faith to call home.”

As a budding scholar González-Andrieu was named one of the most promising theologians of the next generation by *America* magazine. She is described as one of the leading scholars of theological aesthetics, which she proposes as “a way to bring communities together, respect and celebrate otherness, and lift the theological insights of those who know and express themselves from the peripheries in ways beyond the textual.”

According to the Hispanic Theological Institute, Dr. Gonzalez-Andrieu received a PhD from the Graduate Theological Union specializing jointly in Art & Religion and Systematic Theology to develop the field of Theological Aesthetics. Recognized as a leading scholar in her field, she is the author of “Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty,” and co-edited “Teaching Global Theologies: Power and Praxis.” An activist and public intellectual, Dr. Gonzalez-Andrieu is a contributor to *America: The Jesuit Review* and is on the board of the Ignatian Solidarity Network. She is on the faculty of Loyola Marymount University where in addition to teaching Theology she works on issues of immigration, educational and worker justice and Latino Theology and Ministry initiatives.

Sister Nancy Sylvester is founder and director of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue. She served in leadership of her own religious community, the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan, as well as in the presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Prior to that she was National Coordinator of Network, the

national Catholic social justice lobby. ICCD is beginning its third decade with new resources and programs.

A listing of her blog posts can be found at the website of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue. Her reflections first appeared in *Global Sisters Report* under the heading, *Contemplate this*. The *Global Sisters Report* is an online community of the National Catholic Reporter.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy was born in San Francisco, where he was educated in Catholic schools and the archdiocesan high school seminary. He then earned an American History degree from Harvard College, and a master's in American History at Stanford before re-entering the seminary in 1976. He was ordained a priest in 1980.

In 1982 he was appointed secretary to San Francisco Archbishop John Quinn, who asked him to further his graduate studies in the field of Catholic Social Teaching. McElroy obtained a licentiate in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, a doctorate in moral theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and a doctorate in political science from Stanford.

Bishop McElroy was appointed auxiliary bishop of San Francisco by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of San Diego in 2015, and to the College of Cardinals on May 29, 2022.

McElroy is the author two books, *The Search for an American Public Theology*, and *Morality and American Foreign Policy*. He has also written a series of articles in *America* magazine touching upon key elements of Catholic social teaching.

UPDATE *Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle* will not participate this year, because of a schedule conflict resulting from a papal appointment as Personal Envoy of Pope Francis at a Eucharistic Congress Special Envoy to the National Eucharistic Congress of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from June 4-11.

Tagle is known affectionately as “Chito,” according to the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame, in an announcement that Tagle was to receive the 2015-16 Ford Family Notre Dame Award for Human Development and Solidarity. The announcement praised Tagle, then Archbishop of Manila as “a consistent advocate for the poor and vulnerable throughout his influential career in the Catholic Church,” and “both unpretentious and dynamic, whether commuting by bicycle or inspiring massive crowds with his exhortations.”

In the Philippines, Tagle served as parish pastor and seminary rector. In 1991, he earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Catholic University of America, writing his dissertation on the development of episcopal collegiality during Vatican II.

He was named Bishop of Imus, the Philippines, in 2001; archbishop of Manila in 2011, Cardinal in 2012.

Tagle serves as the President of the Catholic Biblical Federation, Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, and as a member of various departments and dicasteries in the Roman Curia.

Dr. Massimo Faggioli is full professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, Philadelphia. His books and articles have been published in more than ten languages. He is columnist for the magazines *Commonweal* and *La Croix International*. Faggioli gave a keynote address to the AUSCP Assembly, 2016, in Chicago, on the topic, “Pope Francis and the Unfolding of Vatican II in Today’s Church.”

His most recent publications include the books: *A Council for the Global Church. Receiving Vatican II in History* (Fortress, 2015); *The Rising Laity. Ecclesial Movements since Vatican II* (Paulist, 2016); *Catholicism and Citizenship: Political Cultures of the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (Liturgical, 2017); *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis. Moving Toward Global Catholicity* (Orbis, 2020); *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States* (Bayard, 2021). He has co-edited with Catherine Clifford *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II* (Oxford UP, 2022), and is under contract with Oxford University Press for the book *God's Bureaucrats. A History of the Roman Curia*.

The title of his 2023 presentation is *The "Synodal Process" in the USA and in the Global Church: A Geography of Hope*. He says, "The talk will address the similarities and differences between the USA and other synodal processes in the global Catholic Church (Australia, Germany, Ireland, etc.) and will analyze what has been specific of the US synodal process and what it says about the present and future of the Catholic Church in the USA."