



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year to All from GMU!



Our Staff wishes the very best of health and happiness to our students, prospects, instructors, and supporters. There

always seems to be a sense of excitement as we begin a New Year. Most individuals are motivated to 'make a fresh start,' that is, make New Year's resolutions that will improve their lives, such as losing those extra pounds, getting a better job, and, yes, earning that degree one has been wanting for so long. Are you ready to reach your academic goals this year?

If you are, GMU is ready for you. As the new year springs forth, we, too, are looking for ways to make the GMU experience as rewarding as possible. We do not want our students to feel as though they are simply a number in the computer, in fact, we pride ourselves in offering personal service and giving them as much flexibility as possible as they work through their programs. They also have the opportunity to modify their Program Schedule and take a leave of absence from their coursework and payments when necessary. This kind of flexibility is not typical for a university but then, GMU is not your typical university. We care about our students and have a stake in their success.

Are you ready to apply and begin the process of earning that degree or certificate? Maybe you are already enrolled... is this the year that you graduate and receive your diploma? No matter where you are in reaching your academic goals, our Staff is here for you.

Accelerated Assistance to Be Provided in the Navigation of Our Online Classroom



Although many students may work through the online classroom without needing help, there are others who are challenged but do not want to look challenged or they do not want to 'bother' the Staff and therefore hesitate to ask for help.

We do not think the learning platform should be a 'stumbling block' in achieving one's academic and ministerial goals. As a consequence, we have decided to increase the level of support available. Beginning this year our students will be able to receive personal step-by-step instructions whenever needed. Dr. Mike Conley, Provost, manages the online classroom and will contact applicants to offer assistance during the admissions process and will also be available to students throughout their program.

Graduation Venue Changed



Due to the fact that we are an online university and have students from all over the world, it has been decided that a physical graduation ceremony is not in the best interest of our graduates. Instead, we are going to conduct the graduation ceremony via a teleconference call.

Those graduates who are able to attend the ceremony are welcome to do so but having a teleconference gathering allows all graduates to participate free of charge and without travelling great distances.

The 2019 graduation ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 6th at 5 p.m. It was determined that in light of the different time zones, 5 p.m. PST. This was the time of day that would accommodate the most graduates. We will continue to mail diplomas following the completion of all requirements but now all graduates will have the opportunity to be recognized for their honorable achievement.

President's Column



As we enter this New Year, 2019, I am reflecting on some events of the past year that were significant for me personally but also for Global Ministries University.

We completed our seventh year of an interfaith mission in Kenya sponsored by Global Ministries University and we also attended the Parliament of World Religions in Toronto where we were able to present a seminar on the Paths to Peace Kenya Interfaith project. Our work in Kenya received recognition by the Education Minister for the coastal region of Kenya, Mr. Hassan Duale, who spoke at our program in Mombasa on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 and endorsed the interfaith education project we began in 2012.

As we go forward into 2019, we are also working closely with the Jesuit University in Nairobi, Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, to gain National recognition for our program. The Director of the Hekima Institute of Peace Studies, Father Elias Opongo, SJ, was a keynote speaker for the 2018 seminar in Mombasa.

The Maryknoll Lay Mission program which sends missionaries throughout the world invited Marita and I to lead an 8-hour seminar on interfaith theology for the new groups of Maryknoll Lay Missioners on the Monday after Thanksgiving at Maryknoll, NY. We also led two interfaith seminars at the Maryknoll location in Los Altos, CA during the month of December. John Raymaker and I are developing a new book as a sequel to *Steps to Vatican III* on the prophetic mission of Christianity in our global age. John will be visiting us in San Jose during the month of February when we plan to work on this book.

We hope to develop the theme of *Building Bridges* rather than walls across the world.

Gerald Grudzen, PhD

Parliament of World Religions Is an Exhilarating and 'Hilarious' Experience

Dr. Grudzen and his wife, Marita Grudzen, attended the Parliament of World Religions in Toronto November 1-7 and presented a workshop on their interfaith education project in Kenya. Following is an article, written by Fr. John P. Martin, MM, who was also in attendance at this gathering, that capsulizes his experience in a very meaningful way. Fr. Martin has worked as a missionary in Bangladesh and Mexico with a specialization in interfaith spirituality.

*"Oh, when the saints go marching in, Oh, when the saints go marching in
Oh Lord I want to be in that number, When the saints go marching in."*



As I drove back to Maryknoll, NY on November 9th, surprisingly the verses of this famous hymn came rushing into my mind and I laughed at the

divine playfulness that brought them to my memory. They so aptly describe what I experienced at the Parliament of World's Religions in Toronto, Canada. I instinctively knew that it was an overwhelming kind of experience, that was exhilarating and spiritually uplifting at the same time. (I checked out the origins of "exhilaration" and by golly, its root means "to gladden", as in "hilarious.") Yes, it is a serious endeavor to bring together 7,500 people from 220 spiritual and religious traditions from dozens of countries. And yet it ended up being hilarious, as in having a grand time mingling with so many sisters and brothers, all of whom share with you a level of universal consciousness, of an elevated spiritual life and of an acute compassion for all of God's creatures, among other things, all rooted in your love for your own tradition. ([Click here to read the entire article.](#))

"And suddenly you know: It's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings."

– Meister Eckhart