

GMU mourns the loss of Jean Conley, M.Th.



Dear GMU Family,

Jean Conley passed into Eternal Life after a month of hospice care at her home.

Jean became a key member of the GMU administration shortly after its

founding in 2001. She served as VP for Operations and Development from 2003 until she retired from the GMU administration in 2019. She was also the Founder and Director of the Celebrant Training Program for the past 12 years. The Celebrant Training program continued to be affiliated with GMU after her retirement in 2019.

Jean earned her Master of Theology degree from GMU in 2009 and taught graduate courses on Contemporary Christianity, focusing on recent studies of the historical Jesus.

Jean was a Federation of Christian Ministries member for 35 years and was commissioned to witness marriages through FCM legally. She served on the FCM board and as the FCM Development Director.

I worked closely with Jean for almost 20 years. GMU could not have continued to expand and develop its ministries over the past two decades without the crucial contributions of Jean Conley. We give thanks for her life of service.

GMU will have an online celebration of Jean's life at a later date.

Sincerely,
Gerald Grudzen,
President

In Loving Memory
Jean Conley
August 13, 1940 – June 8, 2024



Jeanette P. Conley, devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, passed away peacefully at her home on June 8, 2024, at the age of 84. Born in Chicago, IL to Harry Leyer and Mary DeMartino. Her family moved to Los Angeles in 1951 where Jean attended Gardena Middle and High School. After graduating in 1959 she worked for the Southern California Gas Company. She married her first husband, Jerome Hebert, in 1961.

Jean manifested leadership and educational service all her life. For 15 years before her children were born, she taught religious education classes, then with her husband she held leadership positions in Worldwide Marriage Encounters, giving weekends and leadership to that organization until Jerry was diagnosed with ALS. Jean cared for him at home until he died in 1979, leaving her with three children, 9, 6 and 5 months old. As a widow, she was asked to give talks on topics of relationship, death and dying to ME groups. She also formed a sharing group of young widows and widowers which met in her home twice a month.

Jean earned a B.A. in Human Behavior and an M.Th. in Contemporary Christianity from GMU. She published six books about her life, values, and creative ideas. She was known for her perceptive questions and creativity.

Through Marriage Encounter leadership she met, fell in love, and married Father Mike Conley in 1986. With him, she took on operations manager and development director of Global Ministries University, an online interfaith theology training school. She devoted every day to this work for 18 years. But she considered her greatest achievement to be the creation and success of a celebrant training program. She was awarded the Anthony Soto Award in 2016 by the Federation of Christian Ministries for her leadership and commitment to education.

At Four Seasons Community in Marietta, CA, Jean and Mike enjoyed Tai Chi and were regulars at bingo on Friday night. Looking back over 80+ years she wrote, "The most profound experience of my life has been the power of love. The meaning of life for me involves living each day – not in memories of the past or waiting for something to happen in the future – but to fully love in the present."

She is survived by her husband, Mike, son Tony Hebert, daughter Carrie Dilla, and grandsons, Krew and Kasen. Interment of her ashes will be at Holy Cross Mortuary, Culver City, CA on Saturday, July 20th at 2 pm. A Celebration of her Life will be held at The Reef in Long Beach on Sunday, July 21st at 2 pm. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to ALS.

Tribute to Jean

Jean's husband, Michael Conley, D.Min., Provost Emeritus of GMU, and Director of the Celebrant Training Program, has written a beautiful and inspiring obituary for Jean. Click on the button below to read about the life of this extraordinary woman who helped shape GMU into an exceptional institution of higher learning.

Mike is planning a celebration of her life to be held at The Reef in Long Beach, California, on Sunday, July 21st, at 2 pm.

[Read Mike's tribute to Jean.](#)

[Read the excerpt from Jean's book about GMU.](#)

Global Peace Award Presented to President Grudzen



President of Global Ministries University, Gerald Grudzen, Th.D., was presented with a “Global Peace Award” by the Buddhist Council of America during its 3rd Global Peace Conference, on June 16, 2024, International Vesak Day. See more videos on the [GMU website](#) or the [GMU YouTube channel](#).

Imam Arif Huskic, Minister of Interfaith Relations, founder and President of the Common Word Alliance Clergy Interfaith Organization, was present at the ceremony. He invited Marita Gurdzen to speak about her environmental ministry at his weekly conference in July.

Marita founded "Stewards of Our Common Home" in the Diocese of San Jose. She also serves as an officer in the GMU corporation



and leads interfaith projects in Kenya with Maryknoll Affiliates and GMU.

Also pictured at the event is a seminary classmate of President Grudzen, Father Paul Chateau, a financial supporter of GMU and Catholic pastor in Detroit.

Librarian's Corner



Helpful and Ethical Uses of AI

I last wrote about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in March of 2023, four or five months after the emergence of ChatGPT (OpenAI). At that time, my focus was on the potentials of misuse, especially in academic settings. I'm still keenly aware of the dangers of using AI for academic research (accusations of plagiarism, absorption of misinformation, risks of simply copying facts

and opinions rather than investigating, contemplating, and learning from the research process), but today I'm going to write a bit about some positive uses of AI when approaching scholarly research projects.

As Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield has written, "AI tech is a new seed planted in the garden of humanity which will grow larger every passing moment, and rather than letting it grow completely unfurled, I would rather us nourish it and help guide its growth with curiosity, love, mindfulness, and compassion."

I've spent the last two days attending a national online conference of Atla, the association for theological librarians. Fully a third of the sessions were focused on, or related to, AI. In several of them, the benefits of AI were described along with the usual cautions and warnings. Here are some of the suggested, helpful uses.

1. **Simple brainstorming of ideas or topics.** Ask ChatGPT to help find focus. *Example:* "I'm a graduate student who needs to write a

paper on Muslim/Christian conflict in Kenya. What are some issues I should consider?"

2. **Listing of keywords or terms for study on a topic.** Example: "Suggest some keywords to use in researching the artist Chagall's relationship to Christianity."

3. **Listing of pros and cons for a topic** Example: "What are the pros and cons of censorship in social media?"

4. **Presenting a point of view on a topic.** Example: "Do most nutritionists recommend that adults drink milk?"

5. **Editing or improving your writing if it's OK with your instructor.** Example: "Did I make any grammatical or spelling errors in this essay?"

6. **Providing a translation.** Example: "Please translate this academic journal article from French into English."

Want to get started? Go to <https://chatgpt.com>. You don't need to sign in. Just scroll down to the little box that says "Message ChatGPT" and start typing your question. Have fun! And please **share with me** your questions, concerns, and observations.

~Judy Clarence, M.L.I.S., GMU Librarian

GMU Launches New Podcast



EDUCATIONAL, INSIGHTFUL, SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

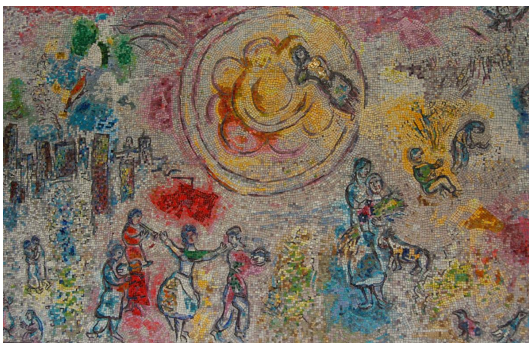
We are excited to announce the release of the first episode of our "Voices" podcast series! This episode features insightful discussions on personal spiritual

growth. Our faculty members share their diverse perspectives and experiences, providing a valuable educational opportunity for listeners. At Global Ministries University, we believe in the power of continuous learning and professional development, and this podcast is just one of the many resources we offer to support your growth. Tune in to expand your spiritual horizons!.

Tune in!

Sign up for notifications.

GMU Courses and Programs



Art and Spirituality

Join us for an engaging "Art and Spirituality" lecture on **July 1 at 7 PM (EDST)** with Michal Lewon, a GMU doctoral candidate, Benedictine Oblate, Zen practitioner, humanist, and chaplain. Michal will provide insight into the intersection of art and

spirituality through the works of Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophy/Waldorf Education) and Marc Chagall found at the Art Institute of Chicago. Texts referenced include *Colour, and Art As Spiritual Activity*, by Rudolf Steiner, and *Chagall*, by Victoria Charles.

The presentation is free, but you must register to receive instructions for joining Zoom.

Register for July 1
presentation.



"Interfaith Spiritual Advocates"

President Grudzen is working with the New York State Office of Faith and Non-Profit Development to pursue funding for GMU's Community Chaplaincy program,

now designated as "Interfaith Spiritual Advocates," for outreach to the immigrant and refugee communities, in the State of New York in collaboration with Mustafa Gokek, President of [Buffalo United for Peace](#). The program is scheduled to be launched in January 2025.

Learn more about GMU's Chaplaincy
Programs.

GMU's First M.Th., Religion and Science, India Graduate

June is graduation month! Enos Kamau has received his M.Th. and is now pursuing a Th.D. in Religion and Science with Global Ministries University. We congratulate Enos on his outstanding achievement and wish him success in his doctoral studies!



CONGRATULATIONS

GMU Graduates!



Theology for the 21st Century



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IRDIS, Tangaza University, Nairobi, Kenya

Course Chair
Prof. Dr. Gerald Grudzen

Course Coordinators
Dr. Augustine Pamplany
Prof. Dr. Job Kozhamthadam
Dr. Reginald Maudlin Nalugala

Contact Us :

+1-866-419-8020

info@globalministriesuniversity.org

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Theology for the 21st Century

A new cohort in the GMU's Religion and Science Program will begin in September 2024. Reduced tuition is offered to North American, European, and Australian applicants. Discover the compatibility of science, spirituality, and faith.

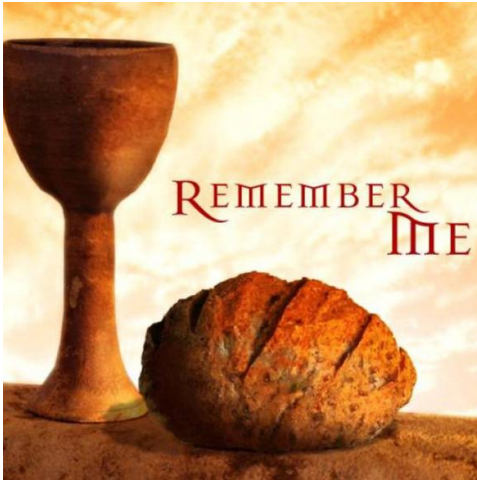
Pope Francis supports the compatibility of religion and science:
Pope Francis: Evolution and Big Bang Theory Are Real

Download the flyer with all the information.

Explore GMU's Religion and Science Program.

Apply here.

Collaboration with People's Catholic Seminary



GMU seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of those who wish to start Intentional Eucharistic Communities. Together with PCS, GMU is now offering:

Creating Inclusive Eucharistic Communities in an Emerging Synodal Church

5 sessions \$475 + 25 App Fee

Women in the Bible and

Christian Tradition

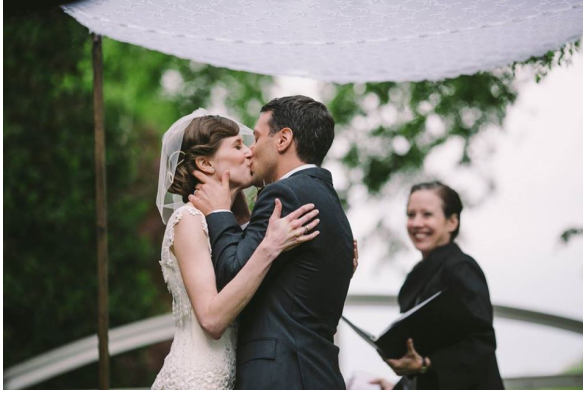
5 sessions \$475 + 25 App Fee

Credit for these courses can be applied towards a GMU graduate degree or certificate.

Apply Today.

GMU Partners





Our Focus

People today are looking for a more personal approach to rites of passage, such as weddings and funerals. Our focus is to provide formal training that shows you how to design and conduct personal, meaningful wedding ceremonies and funeral services.

Visit the Center for Celebrant Training.



Mary Magdalene:
A Leader for the First and Twenty-first Centuries

PCS 310 - Introduction to Mary Magdalene: A Leader for the First and Twenty-First Centuries

May 14, 2024 – July 23, 2024
Zoom meeting every other
week

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Course Instructor: Dr. Shirley
Paulson

Christians have imagined Mary Magdalene as the repentant prostitute for well over a thousand years, but now, after the discovery of the Gospel of Mary and other early Christian writings, we know there is not a shred of truth to that. She was also the one person most closely associated with the resurrection of Jesus. Was she actually one of Jesus's disciples? Or even the first apostle? In our own complex and confusing world of the 21st century, what we learn from Mary can startle us with refreshing spiritual insights. They are profoundly relevant today for men and women who resonate with the teachings and acts of Jesus.

- Who was Mary?
- Why is the Gospel of Mary so valuable?
- How shall we understand Mary's most important teachings?
- What were the controversies, and why do they matter?
- How does Mary relate to the Bible?
- What could Mary's life and teachings mean to us today?

Learn more and
apply.



New PCS Retreat/Independent Course: Celebrating the Sacred Feminine in Your Life with Dr. Bridget Mary Meehan

"Celebrating the Sacred Feminine in Your Life" invites you to explore the beautiful mosaic of names and images that depict God's all-embracing, inclusive love for us. Each section provides imagery of the sacred feminine in Scripture, in Christian mystics, and in contemporary life. Open yourself to your *belovedness* as an image of the Divine Feminine in prayer and action, and explore new paths to spiritual healing, nourishment, and transformation in our world.

Celebrating the Sacred Feminine in Your Life is available as a private retreat, an independent study, or as a course for sharing in a cohort model.

Cohorts meet in a Zoom video conference to share insights on their meditations.

For those taking this course as an independent study or retreat, Bridget Mary will be available upon request to share with you in phone or Zoom conversations.


Enroll
here.

**"Belonging Together:
Migrants, Refugees, Displaced People and
Global Solidarity"**



GMU welcomes a new collaborating partner, **Globethics**, in planning and hosting the free international interfaith online conference in conjunction with **World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 6 - 8, 2025**. Other collaborators are **Tangaza University**, **IRDIS**, and the **Harmony Institute of Kenya**. Titled, "Belonging Together: Migrants, Refugees, Displaced People, and Global Solidarity," the conference will focus on "the inseparability of the human family—people belong together regardless of their origin and residence status. At the same time, the title alludes to the irrevocable responsibility of humankind for mutual care—being human and being in solidarity with others, especially the most vulnerable, belong together."

Read the Globethics Draft of the Concept Paper for the Conference



Third International Conference on Fratelli Tutti

CALL FOR PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

Belonging Together: Migrants, Refugees, Displaced Persons and Global Solidarity

6-8 February 2025 International Interfaith Online Conference during the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

Interested participants are invited to submit papers for short presentations and mini-lectures on topics related to the conference's overarching theme and influencing the fields of the three thematic tracks. Possible topics may include but are not restricted to the following:

Thematic Track 1: Being Human, Being Migrant

- Migrants' identity, resilience and agency
- Negotiating migrant self-understanding, reception and integration in host communities
- Gendered migration experiences and transnational belonging

Thematic Track 2: Living Together in the Age of Migration, Caring for One Another

- Hospitality and practices of inclusive community by and with migrants
- Migration, border politics, citizenship and nation-building, using legal framework in concert with the United Nations Global Compact
- International migration, mobility, families and community engagement

Thematic Track 3: Ethical Principles and Shared Values for Shaping Migrant-Sensitive Societies

- Moral obligations toward refugees and vulnerable migrants
- Protecting migrant women, children and unaccompanied minors, equipping for self-reliant futures
- Interfaith solidarity, human dignity and human rights for peaceful societies

Submission


Abstracts of 300 words are to be submitted until **1 September 2024** to

- Hub of the Americas: americas@fratellitutticonference.org
- Hub of Africa: africa@fratellitutticonference.org
- Hub of Europe: europa@fratellitutticonference.org


Communication on accepted papers and presentations will be made by **15 October 2024**

Presentations during the parallel thematic sessions of this online conference shall not exceed 10 minutes, and each session is designed for a maximum number of three presentations to allow sufficient time for interaction between the attendees.


Organizers




GMU
Globe, Migration University



Forum for Intercultural Dialogue



IRDIS
International Research Dialogue Institute



Harmony Institute
International Center for Dialogue & Understanding

info@fratellitutticonference.org www.fratellitutticonference.org

World Interfaith Harmony Week
UN Official Observance - 1st Week of February

A "Call for Papers" for the February conference has been issued. Interested parties can submit proposals for inclusion in the conference proceedings and publications to the three "hubs" in Africa, the Americas, and Europe.

Download the "Call for Papers" flyer for more information.



The [Alliance for Shared Values](#) has donated \$1,500.00 for "3 full Scholarships for MTh Religion and Science 3rd cohort."

The [Edmund J Nightingale Charitable Fund](#) has donated a \$1000.00 grant "for where it's needed most."

Honoring Fathers Around the Globe



Fathers in Our Lives

Fatherhood does not come with a manual, and reality teaches us that some fathers excel while others fail. We ask for Your blessings for them all and forgiveness where it is needed.

We remember the many sacrifices fathers make for their children and families, and the ways--both big and small--they lift children to achieve dreams thought beyond reach.

So too, we remember all those who have helped fill the void when fathers pass early or are absent; grandfathers and uncles, brothers and cousins, teachers, pastors and coaches and the women of our families.

For those who are fathers, we ask for wisdom and humility in the face of the task of parenting. Give them the strength to do well by their children and by You.

In Your Holy name, O God, we pray. Amen.

~Rev. Chuck Currie

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Donate to GMU.



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