



**ONLINE LEARNING**

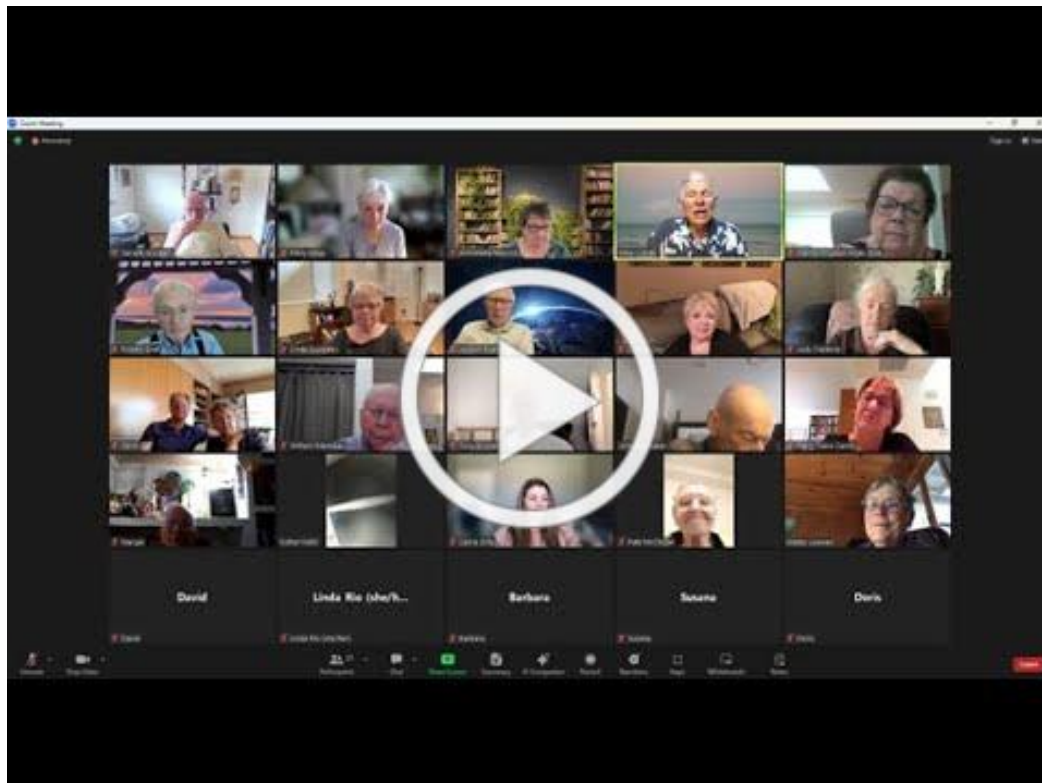
Brings the whole world together!

**GO GLOBAL!**

**GMU**  
GENERAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY  
Blessed by the Sacred Spirit

**APPLY NOW!**

## GMU Celebrates the Life of Jean Conley, M.Th.



View the GMU family's online celebration of the life and legacy of this remarkable woman.

## President Grudzen and Marita Grudzen Meet with Bishop Lagho of Milindi, Kenya



Marita and I had lunch with Bishop Willybard Kitogho Lagho in the Sacramento area. He has worked with GMU over the past decade when he was the Vicar General of the Mombasa Archdiocese in Kenya.

When we first went to Kenya in 2012, he was also the Chairperson of the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics, an interfaith organization representing all religious leaders in the coastal region of Kenya. He asked us to plan and fund a summer week-long interfaith training program for community leaders in the coastal region of Kenya. We were able to raise the funds necessary to train at least 20 community leaders in interfaith skills from 2013 through 2019. During the Coronavirus epidemic we began to develop an interfaith online community meeting monthly and affiliated with Maryknoll in Kenya. This community had both Christian and Muslim members.

GMU also began a graduate studies program in Science and Religion in 2019 in affiliation with the Tangaza University Institute for Interreligious Dialogue and Islamic Studies. This program now has over 50 students enrolled from Kenya, other African countries, India and the US. It is directed by experts in the Science and Religion Dialogue in India, Africa and the US and accredited by the European Council for Higher Education.

Bishop Lagho asked GMU to work with him on economic development and environmental projects in the coastal region of Kenya.

Bishop Lagho is a key interfaith leader not just in the coastal region but throughout the nation of Kenya. He has just been appointed the chairperson of the Kenyan Religious Leaders Conference, based in Nairobi. He is also the only Catholic bishop in Africa with extensive training in the Islamic faith and many years of experience in interfaith dialogue. He recently represented the Catholic faith at a major center for interfaith dialogue in Abu Dhabi, which he shared with us over our luncheon meeting. We will continue to interact with Bishop Lagho in the future over common issues and concerns.

*~Gerald Grudzen, Ph.D.*





## Librarian's Corner



### More Googling tips: phrasing your Google searches for more unbiased results

Recently, a librarian colleague recommended a book called *Verified: how to think straight, get duped less, and make*

*better decisions about what to believe online*, by Mike Caulfield and Sam Wineburg (University of Chicago Press, 2023), a very readable, entertaining and informative book about online search strategies. I highly recommend it. From it, I learned something new about Googling; something I've always suspected but didn't know for sure: how you phrase a question affects the results! Google's algorithms give you the results it "thinks" you want to see. Surprise!

I decided to try it out. Recently a questionable pop-up ad appeared as I was scrolling along online. The ad said something like, "Why do doctors want you to stop eating blueberries?" As a person who eats blueberries on my granola almost daily, this sounded scary. I always thought they were healthy.

I typed a question into Google: "Are blueberries bad for your health?" Google, having decided that I was looking for sites to back up a theory that they're bad, delivered these top results:

- *What happens to your body when you eat blueberries every day: can eating too much of a good thing come with downsides?* (site: EatingWell)
- *How blueberries may potentially be bad for you.* (site: NutriFusion)
- *Side effects of blueberries and what happens if you eat too many.* (site: Livestrong)

- *The hidden risks of eating blueberries: what not to pair for vision loss.* (site: Alinart Health)

I reworded the question. This time I asked, “Are blueberries good for your health?” Now Google intuited that I was looking for evidence in support of eating blueberries and led me to these sources:

- *10 Proven health benefits of blueberries* (site: HealthLine)
- *Health benefits of blueberries* (site: WebMD)
- *Nutritional power of blueberries* (site: Mayo Clinic)
- *Blueberries: nine health benefits to know* (site: VeryWell Health)

Notice that among the sites that recommend eating blueberries are two highly respectable sites, WebMD and the Mayo Clinic. My intuition tells me that the sites I found when I used negative wording seemed a bit sketchy, and potentially unreliable, as did the pop-up ad that started me on this quest. Thus, I will happily continue my morning blueberry ritual.

The takeaway from all this? Word your search queries ambiguously, using neutral language, to retrieve a balanced set of results. Example: “What are the health effects of blueberries?”

I eagerly await your comments, suggestions, and questions.

~Judy Clarence, M.L.I.S., GMU Librarian  
[librarian@globalministriesuniversity.org](mailto:librarian@globalministriesuniversity.org)

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## Dr. Margie Schneider Receives Fr. Edward J. Ciuba Scholarship



GMU congratulates Rev. Margie Schneider on receiving the Fr. Edward J. Ciuba scholarship from Waterspirit, allowing one student to take the online Climate Pastoral Care Course for free.

**Waterspirit** is a non-profit spiritual ecology nonprofit that informs, inspires, and empowers people of all beliefs to deepen their consciousness of the sacredness of water and the interdependence of all Earth's systems.

Check out Dr. Schneider's Creation Spirituality Courses.

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# GMU Podcast



## EDUCATIONAL, INSIGHTFUL, SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The next episode of the GMU "Voices" podcast had to be postponed until September 16. We will let you know when it "drops" on the [GMU YouTube channel](#).

It will trace the history of FCM from its founding in 1973 to the present. Bishop William Manseau, the founding president of FCM, and Tom Cusack, President of FCM today, will provide their insights into the evolution of FCM from its founding era, present status, and future directions. President Grudzen will moderate the discussion and show how GMU emerged out of FCM.

Sign up for notifications.

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## GMU Courses and Programs



## Poetry as Prayer

September 9, 2024

On Zoom

**Presenter: Judy Clarence**  
**Coordinator: Marita Grudzen**

Judy is a published poet and serves as the GMU theological librarian.

Register for the Poetry as Prayer 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.

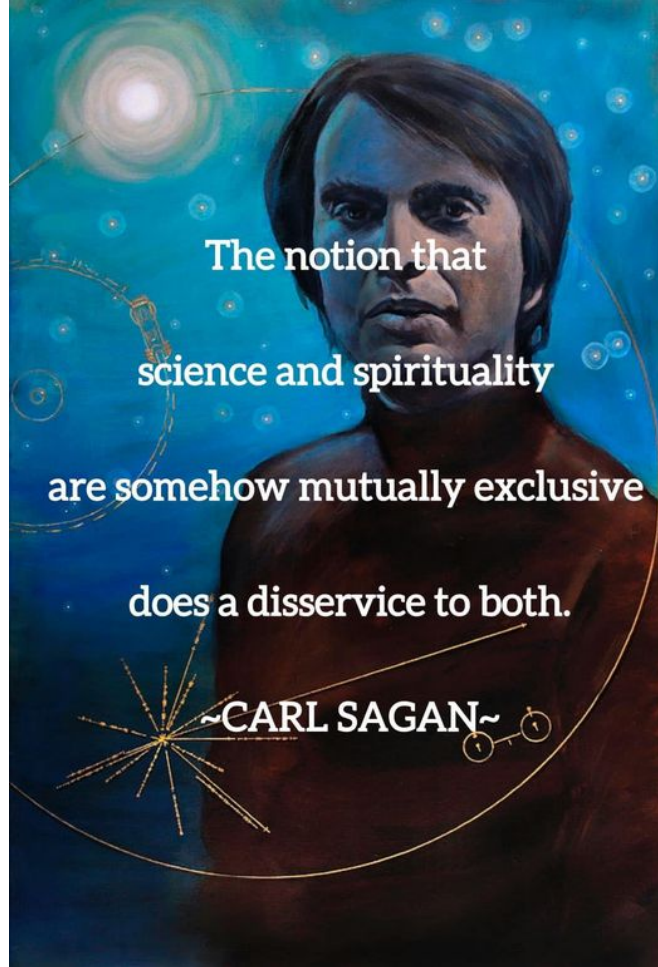
[Click Here to Read about Volunteer Chaplaincy Opportunities.](#)

[Learn More about GMU's Chaplaincy Programs.](#)

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## Religion and Science

GMU partners with the Institute of Science and Religion program in Cochin, India. You can view lectures on their [YouTube channel](#).



## 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.

Download the flyer with all the information.

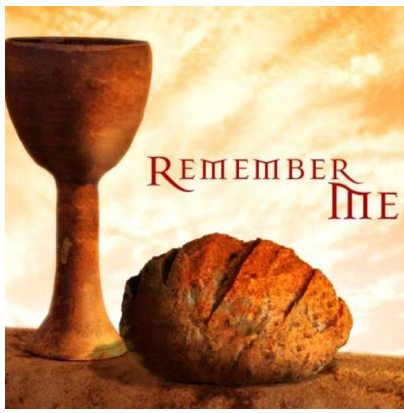
Explore GMU's Religion and Science Program.

Apply here.

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**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

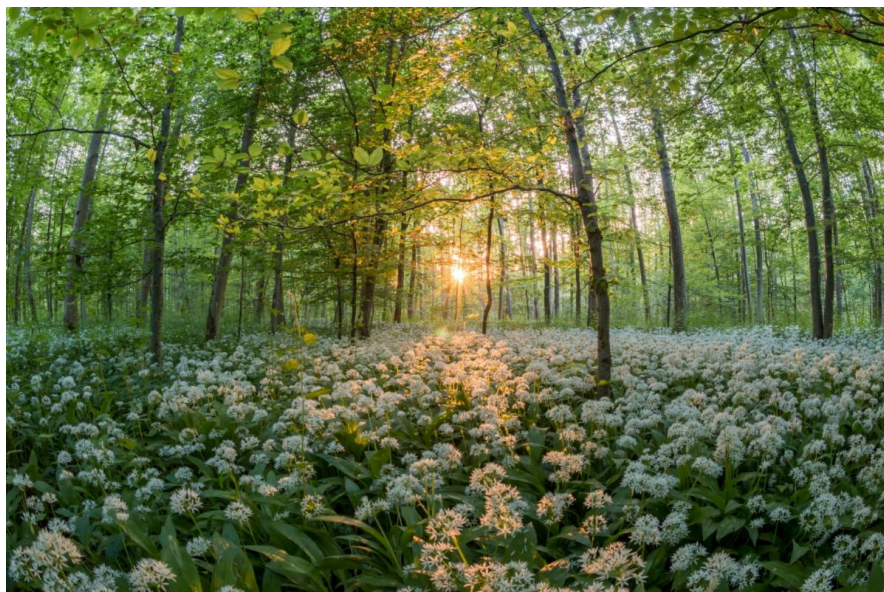
## Tradition

5 sessions \$475 + \$25 App Fee

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

Apply Today.

## GMU Partners





The Center for Celebrant Training Center is thriving, primarily because there has been a significant increase in applications for Funeral Celebrants in the past two years. This growing interest is likely due to the number of people who want to serve bereaved families in a meaningful and personal way. The Center offers that kind of training in your own time schedule and tailored to the kind of services you would like to offer with confidence.

We have even had the honor of funeral directors enrolling in our program or paying for the training of an individual that is conducting services for their funeral home. There has also been a newfound strong interest in training from end-of-life doulas.

It is a privilege to be able to provide a service that is so needed.

*~Michael Conley, D.Min.*

Visit the Center for Celebrant  
Training.



### **PCS 506 - Ancient Christian Texts for Healing**

**The new cohort begins  
Tuesday, September 10, 2024,  
at 7 PM Eastern, meeting every  
other week until November 19,  
2024.** The course is available for  
Live-Online Hybrid Study.

Instructor: Shirley Paulson, PhD, the  
founder and principal producer of  
Early Christian Texts: The Bible and  
Beyond



[Learn More.](#)



## **PCS 720: The Poetics of Stitched Prayers**

**The three-month course begins September 1st**

Instructor: Sybil Reynolds

Women have gathered in circles to stitch and pray for centuries. Join us as we experience the blessing of slow, meditative, hand-stitching. Using simple materials, and needle and thread, you will learn basic stitches for stitching your prayers.

[Learn More.](#)



## **PCS 311: The Women Who Wrote the Bible**

**Nine Wednesdays from September 18th - November 13th, 2024**

**7:30-8:30 PM ET**

Instructor: Lizzie Berne DeGea, chaplain and scholar teaching Bible studies to people around the world. She is the author of *Jesus Found in Translation: The Story Within the Story of the Bible's Earliest Gospel*

[Learn More.](#)

**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.](#)

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





Save the dates: **World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 6 - 8, 2025.** GMU is once again collaborating with **Tangaza University, IRDIS,** and the **Harmony Institute of Kenya** on a third international online conference dedicated to fostering the precepts of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. 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 October 2024** to

- Hub of the Americas: [americas@fratellitutticonference.org](mailto:americas@fratellitutticonference.org)
- Hub of Africa: [africa@fratellitutticonference.org](mailto:africa@fratellitutticonference.org)
- Hub of Europe: [europa@fratellitutticonference.org](mailto:europa@fratellitutticonference.org)

Communication on accepted papers and presentations will be made by **15 November 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 (George Mason University), Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, IRDIS (International Research Dialogue in Science), Harmony Institute (Education Culture Religion Arts)

info@fratellitutticonference.org  
www.fratellitutticonference.org

World Interfaith Harmony Week  
UN Official Observance 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

Visit the Conference Website.

President Grudzen has pledged





GMU's support of the Proposal for Nature and Climate to the [Bezos' Earth Fund](#) as a "Contributing Interfaith Organization."

GMU will partner with Omeriey Foundation as the focal point in Kenya, and participate as the USA mentor for Makerere University Kampala and Nairobi University in the EARTH FUNDS AI for Climate and Environmental Challenges in September 2025

## GMU Scholarships and Donations



Global Cultural Connections at Pacifica Institute has given a \$500 donation for tuition scholarships for students residing in Africa.

Private donations totaling \$1150 were given to GMU's General Fund to cover operating expenses.



GMU operates under the corporate umbrella of the Federation of Community Ministries of California (FCM of CA), originally formed on October 30, 1997, when we gained the status of a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. GMU is registered in Santa Clara County, CA, as a DBA of FCM of CA. The two entities have the same Board of Directors.

**Help "Bring the World Together!"**

[Donate to GMU.](#)





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*Honoring the Sacred in All!*

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