

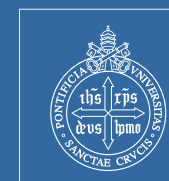
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Conferences: Conference sessions deal with issues of culture and religion (inter-religious dialogue, marriage laws, science and faith, bioethics), the Church and the media (public opinion, Vatican coverage, transparency) and the nature and structure of the Holy See (its organization, and role in international politics).

Encounters: Personal encounters create a unique opportunity for journalists to experience the Church up close. Participants

have the chance to meet with key curial officials and leaders from pontifical councils and congregations to expert analysts loaded with a wealth of experience in Church communication and Vatican journalism.

On-site Visits: This crash course on the Church in Rome will include visits to St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, the Historic Center of Rome, as well as visits to the Vatican Observatory, and the Barracks of the Pontifical Swiss Guard.



Pontificia
Università
della
SANTA
CROCE

School of Church Communications



ISCOM – Promozione della
Comunicazione Istituzionale

THE CHURCH UP CLOSE 10TH ENGLISH EDITION

Covering Catholicism in the Age of Leo XIV

SEPTEMBER 7-12, 2026



WHEN

From Monday, September 7
to Saturday, September 12, 2026

WHERE

The Pontifical University
of the Holy Cross
Piazza di Sant'Apollinare, 49
00186 Rome, Italy
www.unisantacroce.it

FEES & SCHOLARSHIPS

The seminar fees are € 880 (travel and lodging not included).
A list of nearby hotels may be provided to each seminar participant upon registration. Interested participants have the opportunity to apply for a scholarship.

WHO

The Church Up Close is organized by the School of Church Communications of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and the Association ISCOM (www.iscom.info).

The seminar is sponsored by Our Sunday Visitor and counts on the collaboration of the IARJ (International Association of Religion Journalists), the AIGAV (the independent association of journalists accredited by the Holy See), and the academic journal *Church, Communication and Culture*.

WEBSITE

www.church-communication.net
(Program will be regularly
updated in the website)



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Tel: +39 06681641 - Email: churchupclose@pusc.it
Website:
<https://www.church-communication.net/english-seminar-2026>
X: @ChurchUpClose

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Collaborators



WHAT

Religion news occupies an increasingly important place in today's journalism, and many media professionals are seeking keys to unlock a complex institution that sparks enormous public interest: the Catholic Church.

Building on its successful monthly seminars for Rome-based Vatican correspondents, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome once again offers **The Church Up Close**, a one-week seminar in English for journalists who cover the Vatican from afar.

Combining conferences, workshops, personal encounters, and on-site visits, the seminar is designed to give journalists an array of tools to enhance the quality of their coverage of today's Roman Catholic Church. Here is what participants receive:

- A basic sense of the lay of the land at the Vatican;
- A serious, in-depth analysis of specific hot-button issues;
- A taste of the rich complex history and culture that lies behind contemporary Church affairs;
- A personal introduction to some of the key players in Rome;

- A chance to reflect, in an ideal setting, with journalists from around the world, on the fascinating relationships between religion and the media.

FOR WHOM

Designed with journalists in mind, the program is also an ideal orientation for new staff at an Embassy to the Holy See. Members of the diplomatic corps are most welcome.

Previous seminars were attended by journalists from media outlets such as, among others, *The New York Times*, *Fox News*, *NBC*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Religion Unplugged*, and *USA Today* (USA), *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Financial Times* and *BBC* (UK), *The Record* (Australia), *The Southern Cross* (South Africa), *CBC* and *The National Post* (Canada), *El Universal* (Venezuela), *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Switzerland), *O Clarim* (Macau), *The Mainichi Shimbun* (Japan), *Agencia EFE* (Spain) and *Radio Renascença* (Portugal), *Družina* (Slovenia).



THE CHURCH UP CLOSE

10TH ENGLISH EDITION

SEPTEMBER 7 - 12, 2026 - PROGRAM



MONDAY 7TH

- 9.00 - 9.45 REGISTRATION & WELCOME COFFEE*
- 9.45 - 10.15 **Introduction to the Program: Getting to Know the Church Up Close***
Rev. Prof. John Wauck
Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
- 10.15 - 11.45 **Nature and Mission: What Is the Catholic Church?***
Rev. Prof. Paul O’Callaghan
Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
- 12.00 - 13.30 **Getting to Know Pope Leo through the Order of Saint Augustine***
P. Kolawole Chabi, OSA
- 13.30 - 14.30 **WELCOME LUNCH - BUFFET***
Greetings from the Rector
- 14.30 - 17.00 **GUIDED TOUR: St. Peter’s Basilica**
Rev. Prof. John Wauck
Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

TUESDAY 8TH

- 9.00 - 10.30 **ROUNDTABLE: Doing Diplomacy in the Holy See***
The Honorable Mr. Keith Pitt
AUS Ambassador to the Holy See
Cav. Mark Vlastic
International Lawyer and Former White House Official
- 10.30 - 11.00 COFFEE BREAK*
- 11.00 - 12.30 **Demographics of the Catholic Church***
Jesús Colina
Journalist and Author
- 13.00 - 15.00 **WORK LUNCH: The Church in Latin America**
GUEST SPEAKER:
Prof. Rodrigo Guerra
Secretary of the Commission for Latin America
- 15.30 - 17.00 **ENCOUNTER AT THE DICASTERY FOR COMMUNICATION**
- 17.00 - 19.30 **GUIDED TOUR: Historic Center of Rome**
Mr. John & Mrs. Ashley Noronha
Professors, Art & Architecture Guides

WEDNESDAY 9TH

- 8.00 - 11.00 **POPE’S AUDIENCE**
- 11.30 - 13.00 **Christians in the Middle East***
Marta Petrosillo
Aid to the Church in Need International
- 13.15 - 15.15 **WORK LUNCH: Vatican Communications**
GUEST SPEAKER:
Mr. Alessandro Gisotti
Dicastery for Communication
- 15.30 - 17.00 **Finance and Economy of the Vatican***
Dr. Benjamín Estévez de Cominges
Secretary General of the Secretariat for the Economy
- 17.15 - 18.45 **The Church in Asia***
Fr. Robert McCulloch, SSC
Missionary Society of St. Columban

THURSDAY 10TH

- 9.00 - 10.30 **The Diplomatic Corps of the Holy See: How is a Nunzio Made?***
Mgr. Mihăiță Blaj
Under-secretary of the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State
- 10.30 - 11.00 COFFEE BREAK*
- 11.00 - 12.30 **The Roman Curia: Organization, Reform and Challenges***
Rev. Prof. Fernando Puig
Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
- 13.15 - 15.30 **WORK LUNCH: Dos and Don’ts in Covering the Vatican**
GUEST SPEAKERS:
Gretchen Crowe
Editor-in-Chief, OSV News
Courtney Mares
Vatican Editor, OSV News
- 15.30 - 17.00 **Human Trafficking and Migrants***
Dr. Monica Attias
Coordinator of the Sant’Egidio Anti-trafficking Network
- 17.15 - 18.45 **Vatican Museum: An Introduction***
Dr. Elizabeth Lev
Art Historian, Author & Tour Guide

FRIDAY 11TH

- 9.00 - 10.30 **ROUNDTABLE: Social Doctrine of the Church on Poverty***
Encyclical Dilexi Te
Prof. María Dolores Sánchez Galera
Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development
AI and labor implications
Matthew Sanders
CEO of Longbeard & Founder of Builders AI Forum (BAIF)
- 10.30 - 11.00 COFFEE BREAK*

- 11.00 - 12.30 **Journalism, Trust and Clerical Abuse in the Church***
Paulina Guzik
International Editor, OSV News, author of *Truth Heals*
- 12.30 - 15.30 FREE TIME
- 15.30 - 17.00 **The Church in Africa***
Arch. Fortunatus Nwachukwu
Secretary
Dicastery for Evangelization
(Section of First Evangelization and New Particular Churches)
- 17.30 - 20.00 **GUIDED TOUR: Vatican Museums**
Dr. Elizabeth Lev
Art Historian, Author & Tour Guide

SATURDAY 12TH

- 9.00 - 10.00 BUS TRIP TO CASTEL GANDOLFO
- 10.30 - 12.00 **ENCOUNTER AT THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY COMMUNITY: The Catholic Church and Scientific Culture**
Rev. Fr. Richard D’Souza, SJ
Astronomer and Superior of the Jesuit Community
- 12.15 - 13.45 **GUIDED TOUR: Borgo Laudato Si**
- 14.00 - 15.30 **FAREWELL LUNCH IN BORGO LAUDATO SI GARDENS**
- 17.00 - 18.00 BUS TRIP BACK TO ROME
- END OF SEMINAR**

NB. Activities marked with asterisk (*) are held at the premises of the University.

