European Federation of Catholic Universities
Fédération des Universités Catholiques Européennes
Federación de Universidades Católicas de Europa

FUCE

In Brief | En Bref
En Resumen

Issue No.3 – **Winter 2021**

Vaccines provide hope for a fresh beginning.

OUR POST-PANDEMIC WORLD CAN DELIVER A BETTER FUTURE

The arrival of new vaccines is the first light on the horizon of hope and could augur a fresh beginning for our post-pandemic world. While the lingering cloud of COVID-19 still casts it dark shadows into every aspect of life – economy, healthcare, personal freedoms, religious worship – all of us involved in education have witnessed first-hand how every aspect of university life has been deeply impacted, indeed transformed, in just a few short few months.

Students, staff and administrators find themselves suddenly in a foreign country. The transition to almost completely remote, online and digital delivery has revolutionised teaching, learning and assessment, as well as the actual 'experience' of going to university. Even when life returns to normality, when teaching and learning are rebalanced into a new 'blended' model, there will be no going back to the way things were pre-COVID-19.

This pandemic has been an existential crisis for all of humanity. As Pope Francis wrote in his Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* and further developed in his recent book: *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, a crisis is a time of sifting, when assumptions are shaken-up and lifestyles and priorities are challenged.

Those of us responsible for the governance of universities, especially Catholic ones, are certainly not immune from this existential shake-up or sifting.

Continues on page 2

Existential questions

As university leaders, we must reflect on the most fundamental existential question - why are we here? This question embraces issues of identity, purpose, mission & values as well as the positive role that Catholic universities can play in reshaping our post-pandemic world.

In recent decades, government policy has prioritised funding for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and private funding has been tied to universities' contribution to the national economic balance sheet. The identities and purposes of many universities have shifted to serve research agenda and labour force needs for industry and economies that are sometimes ethically and environmentally problematic.

Pope Francis' reflections in response to the pandemic pose stark questions and send warning signals for the future of humanity and the environment. Just as the Titantic ignored information from passing ships that it was sailing into an ice field, there is a danger that existential myopia will allow us only to see and hear what we want to see or hear.

The virus of indifference

COVID-19 has certainly unmasked another pandemic - the virus of indifference - or worse, our continued collusion with current economic and environmental policies and practices that are leading us to a calamitous end.

We need to design better ways of living together on our shared planet in a post-pandemic world. Of the three great aims of the French Revolution - liberty, equality and fraternity – the Western world has been obsessed with the first two, while ignoring or downgrading the third.

For Pope Francis the warning signals are clear. Francis believes that through the fallacy of making individualism the organizing principle of our society, it has led to the breakdown of fraternity, solidarity and dialogue, which gives a license to the powerful to exploit and manipulate the poor. This has also contributed to the rise of populism and nationalism in many countries today.

What are the new principles that will guide us to a better future? We need a movement of people who truly understand that we need each other – who accept that no one is saved alone; who have a sense of their responsibility to others and to climate change, migration, poverty and hunger.

Fraternity and solidarity

Having a proper sense of the worth of every person and a recognition of his or her dignity, will provide us with an adequate basic principle of social life.

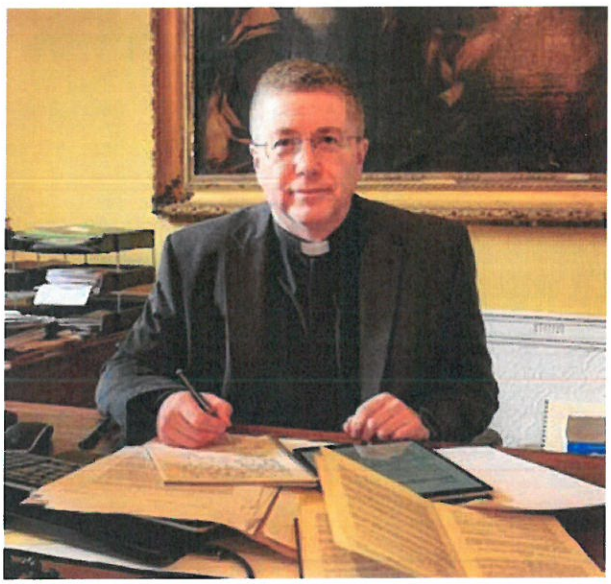
> ***"Unless this basic principle is upheld there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity."***
>
> (*Fratelli Tutti* 107).

During successive pandemic lockdowns, we got a glimpse of that fraternity and the possibility that the world can be organised differently, to reflect that truth. Pope Francis' pandemic reflections challenge Catholic universities to recover their balance as contributors to the common/public good, and to eschew being captured to the market and corporate mindset.

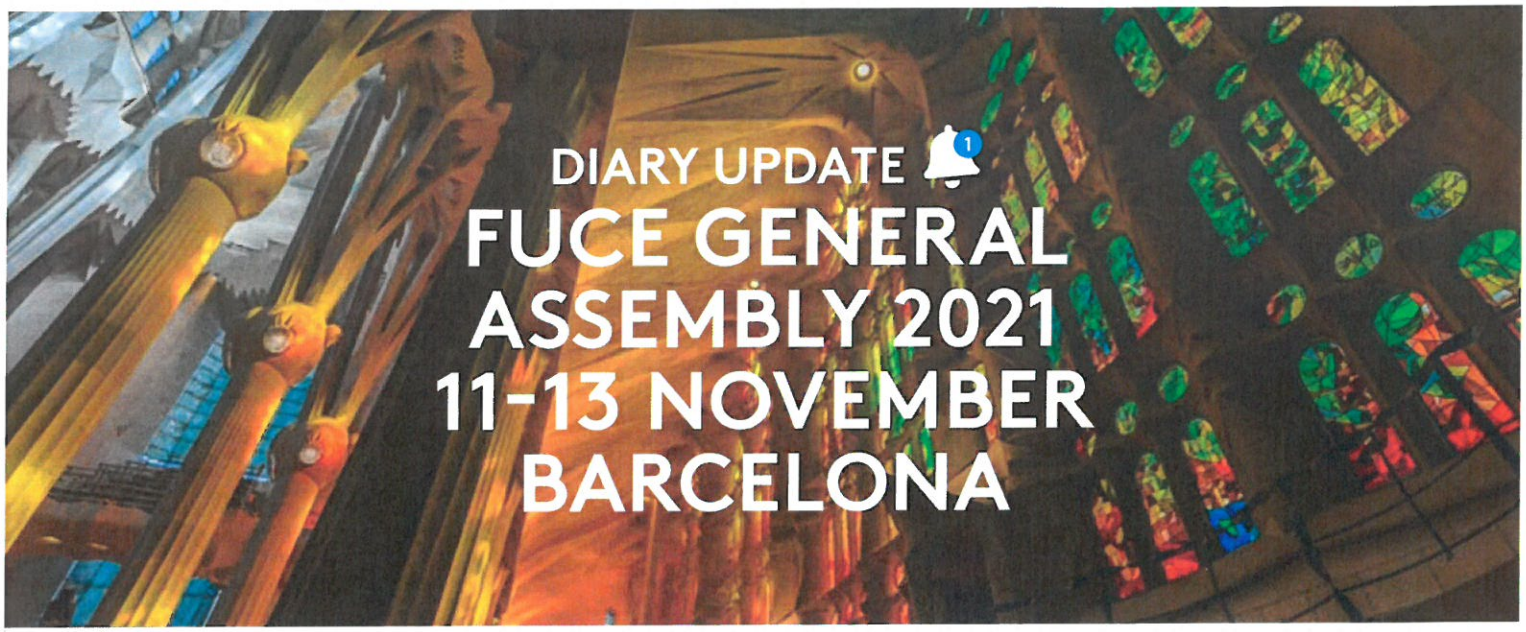
In other words, we must recouple ethics with the economy and the environment. The future relevance of Catholic universities will be measured by their contribution to the debate and dialogue about how "we can design an economy that can offer every person access to a dignified existence while protecting and regenerating the natural world" (*Let us Dream*). This mission will include saving our students from normalising indifference and arresting the "hyper-inflation of the individual."

A new frontier beckons

With a post-pandemic world now glimmering on the horizon, can we find the strength and courage to build a new sense of our shared humanity, a real solidarity, a global fraternity? The scientific and medical world created new vaccines for our common health virus: COVID-19. As Catholic educators, we need to discover quickly the 'vaccine' to fight our deeper existential challenge. And the "we" is very clear - fraternity should be our new frontier!



Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney
President FUCE



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POLAND

An international scientific conference entitled **Leadership Education for Social Transformation Supporting Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in European Societies**, is being jointly organised by the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow and the SCRIBANI European Jesuit Network, at the University of Antwerp.

The conference which will be held on 21-22 April 2021 aims to exchange views and experiences on leadership and its relationship with the social transformation of vulnerable and marginalised people and groups in European society.

The speakers will represent academe and public administration, as well as practitioners from many countries including USA, UK, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and Poland. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will be held online through the www.whova.com platform. Registration will commence in February 2021.

LES UNIVERSITÉS LIBANAISES TRAVERSENT, AVEC ESPOIR, « LES RAVINS DE LA MORT »

Quoi que l'on écrive sur ce que 2020 a apporté aux Libanais, ce sera d'une manière ou d'une autre « un journal de l'effondrement » pour reprendre le titre du roman de Charif Majdalani[1]. Et pourtant cette année avait déjà, bien avant l'explosion du port de Beyrouth, gagné le qualificatif de funeste.

Mais un malheur n'arrive jamais seul, et le 4 août 2020, le Liban avait rendez-vous avec l'un des événements les plus tristes et les plus révoltants de son histoire moderne. Attentat, accident ou négligence criminelle ? Nul ne le sait à l'heure actuelle, et peut-être ne le saurons-nous jamais, mais ce qui est sûr, c'est que les images accablantes qui ont fait le tour du monde ne représentent que le sommet de l'iceberg. L'essentiel du drame échappe aux caméras et persistera bien au-delà de l'intérêt médiatique pour l'évènement.

Il est vrai que le pays avait déjà commencé sa descente aux enfers en 2019, mais l'explosion de Beyrouth l'y a résolument propulsé. En quelques secondes, elle a fait 171 morts parmi lesquels des jeunes, des pompiers, des peintres, des musiciens, des artistes, des architectes de renommée internationale, mais également plus de 6,000 blessés et plus de 300,000 sans-abris. Cette tragédie a plongé le peuple tout entier dans le désespoir, le faisant douter pour la première fois de sa capacité à se relever. Sa résilience, pourtant légendaire, semble être épuisée. « Ni phénix ni Sisyphe ne seront appelés à la rescousse. Les bras tombent, on ne sait plus où trouver les ressources psychologiques et matérielles pour rebâtir », écrit Jabbour Douaihy[2] auquel l'Université Antonine s'apprêtait à rendre hommage en 2020, en sa qualité de « romancier de la libanité ». Ironie du calendrier, cette année était censée marquer le premier centenaire du Grand Liban. Mais au lieu de souffler, dans la joie, les bougies de la naissance de leur pays, c'est sur les cendres et les débris de leurs maisons et de leurs rêves que les Libanais ont eu à souffler.

Au lendemain du désastre, les onze universités privées les plus prestigieuses du pays, pourtant

1 Majdalani, C. (2020). Journal d'un effondrement, Actes Sud/L'Orient des livres, 2020.

2 Douaihy, J. (2020). « Une ville peut-elle mourir ? », L'Orient Littéraire, https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1234611/une-ville-peut-elle-mourir-.html

fragilisées par la crise économique et la pandémie, se sont engagées, par la voix de leurs recteurs et présidents, à fournir tous les efforts nécessaires « pour reconstruire la capitale et panser les blessures de ses habitants », « à ne jamais abandonner Beyrouth et le Liban et à ne pas décevoir notre société en ces temps sombres et tout au long des prochaines années qui pourraient être difficiles »[3].

Des plans d'urgence ont été mis en place. Il fallait être sur tous les fronts à la fois. Et malgré des ressources fort limitées, nous avons fait de notre mieux pour soutenir la santé mentale des étudiants, des enseignants et des employés, assurer les soins médicaux aux blessés, venir en aide aux sans-abris, faire les réparations nécessaires dans les campus endommagés par l'explosion et préparer, en même temps, la rentrée universitaire.

Une rentrée tout sauf ordinaire. Outre les conséquences que la pandémie a entraînées, comme le passage à l'enseignement à distance et au télétravail, il a fallu faire face aux répercussions de l'effondrement économique sans précédent : une inflation de 120 %, une dépréciation de la monnaie nationale de l'ordre de 80 % et un effondrement des réserves de la Banque centrale avec, à l'horizon, la levée des subventions sur les importations des produits de base.

> ***Dans ces conditions comment survivre ? Nous qui n'avons pas le droit de baisser les bras, ni de « fermer boutique » car c'est en missionnaires que nous travaillons, comment pouvons-nous continuer à assurer nos services de base ?***

En plus du lourd déficit dû à l'incapacité de bon nombre de nos étudiants à payer leurs droits de scolarité – pourtant encore libellés en livres libanaises au taux de change officiel, soit 1500 LL le dollar, alors que la livre libanaise s'échange à des taux souvent supérieurs à 8500 LL –, nous subissons de la part des banques un contrôle des capitaux qui nous impose des restrictions très rigoureuses sur l'emploi et le transfert des fonds. Coincés de toutes parts, nous sommes désormais dans l'incapacité de transférer à l'étranger les paiements nécessaires pour le renouvellement de nos abonnements aux différents systèmes informatiques et aux bases de données scientifiques.

Le secteur universitaire ploie sous le poids de la crise. Les budgets alloués à la recherche et au développement ont été drastiquement réduits. Les demandes d'aide financière introduites par les étudiants sont montées en flèche. Pour autant, la révision à la hausse des droits de scolarité est inévitable. Elle nous permettra de réajuster les salaires de nos enseignants et employés dans l'espoir de ralentir l'exode de notre capital humain, mais elle va également causer, malgré tous les efforts que nous déploierons pour l'éviter, d'importants décrochages. Seule une petite minorité de la jeunesse libanaise aura désormais l'opportunité de poursuivre ses études dans une université privée.

Nous ne sommes cependant pas seuls. Beaucoup d'amis du Liban, dont notamment l'AUF et le ministère français de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation (MESRI), se sont mobilisés pour nous aider, et nous les en remercions. Des campus connectés ont été mis en place et des cellules d'appui ont été créées pour soutenir l'enseignement à distance et assurer la formation des enseignants.

Mais ce sont surtout des bourses d'études à l'étranger que nos amis proposent à nos étudiants, et ceci n'est pas une solution. Que du contraire ! Le départ des jeunes tue dans l'œuf toute possibilité de redressement.

Nous avons besoin de notre jeunesse qualifiée pour pouvoir nous relever un jour. Ce sont eux, les jeunes universitaires, qui furent les premiers à réagir après l'explosion, à constituer des chaînes de solidarité, à organiser le soutien aux petites entreprises, à nettoyer les quartiers sinistrés de la capitale et à assurer l'aide aux sans-abris. C'est en eux que nous plaçons le peu d'espoir qu'il nous reste pour réformer nos institutions et construire un État de droit à la place du « monstre ingouvernable »[4] actuel.

Leur exode massif se fait déjà sentir. Dans chaque famille libanaise, il y a au moins un jeune qui a quitté le pays en 2020 ou qui s'apprête à le faire. S'ils partent, nous sommes condamnés, mais s'ils restent, c'est eux qui le sont. Aidez-nous à leur donner espoir ici, au Liban, c'est la seule manière de nous sauver tous ensemble.

P. Michel Jalakh, Recteur de l'Université Antonine

3 « Unissons-nous pour panser les blessures et revendiquer la justice », Lettre du Rassemblement des présidents des 11 universités, 2020 : https://ua.edu.lb/french/actualites-et-evenements/actualites/unissons-nous-pour-panser-les-blessures-et-revendiquer-la-justice

4 Voir « Liban : l'État, monstre ingouvernable ». Éditorial du Monde, 2020, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2020/11/30/liban-l-etat-monstre-ingouvernable_6061646_3232.html

Mehr News Agency / CC BY 4.0

LEBANESE UNIVERSITIES CROSS THE "RAVINE OF DEATH" IN HOPE

When the history is written about what 2020 brought to the Lebanese community, it will somehow be a "Diary of a Collapse," quoting the title of Charif Majdalani's[1] novel published earlier this year. Long before the explosion at Beirut port, 2020 had been already marked out as disastrous year. However, misfortune never comes alone.

On August 4, Lebanon faced one of the saddest and most revolting events of its modern history, leaving us wondering if the explosion was an attack, an accident, or a massive act of criminal negligence. Still, no one knows the answer, and perhaps we might never find one. What is certain, though, is that the devastating images that travelled all around the world only represent the tip of the iceberg. The real tragedy escapes the cameras and persists far beyond the media interest in such a calamitous event.

Undoubtedly, the country had started falling towards hell in 2019, but the explosion at Beirut port firmly propelled it there. In just a few short seconds, 171 people were killed, including young people, firefighters, painters, musicians, artists and internationally renowned architects. More than 6,000 were injured and a further 300,000+ were made homeless. This tragedy has plunged the entire population into despair, doubting for the first time their capacity to survive. The legendary resilience of the Lebanese people seems to be exhausted. "Neither Phoenix nor Sisyphus will be called to the rescue. Arms are falling, we no longer know where to find the psychological and material resources to build again," expressed the novelist of Libanity, Jabbour Douaihy[2], to whom Antonine University was preparing to pay tribute in 2020. Ironically, this year

1 Majdalani, C. (2020). Journal d'un effondrement, Actes Sud/L'Orient des livres, 2020.

2 Douaihy, J. (2020). « Une ville peut-elle mourir ? », L'Orient Littéraire, https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1234611/une-ville-peut-elle-mourir-.html

was supposed to mark the first centenary of Greater Lebanon. However, rather than joyfully blowing out the birth candles of their country, the Lebanese people had to blow out the ashes and debris of their homes and dreams.

In the aftermath of the disaster, the eleven most prestigious private universities in the country – although weakened by the economic crisis and the pandemic – were committed through their rectors and presidents, to provide all necessary efforts to "rebuild the Capital and heal the pain of its citizens," while looking forward to "never abandon Beirut and Lebanon, and not to disappoint our society during these dark times and throughout the next few years which will eventually be difficult."[3]

Emergency plans were established and we had to fight simultaneously on all levels. Despite the limited available resources, we did our best to support the mental health of our students, faculty, and staff, provide medical care to the injured, help the homeless, make the necessary repairs to the campuses damaged by the explosion, and prepare for the beginning of the new academic year.

A new academic year that is anything but ordinary. In addition to the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic, such as the switch to e-learning and teleworking, there were also the repercussions of the unprecedented economic collapse: an inflation rate of 120%, a depreciation of the national currency of around 80%, and the collapse of the Central Bank's reserves, along with the forthcoming removal of import subsidies on primary products.

> ***How can we survive under these conditions? We missionaries, who have no right to give up, nor "put a lid on our boutiques," are still looking for a way through which we can continue to afford our basic needs.***

In addition to the deficit resulting from the incapacity of many of our students to pay their tuition fees – that is still designated in Lebanese pounds and following the official exchange rate of 1,500 LBP per one US dollar while the market rate exceeds at most of the times 8,500 LBP per one US dollar, we are facing as well a capital control that imposes very firm restrictions on the use and transfer of funds. Therefore, we are now unable to transfer abroad payments that are due to renew our subscriptions to different computer systems and scientific databases.

This crisis is weighing down on the university sector. The budgets allocated to research and development have been drastically reduced, and the students' requests for financial aid have skyrocketed, keeping us compelled to increase the tuition fees. This increase will allow us to adjust the salaries of our academic and administrative staff with the hope of slowing the brain drain of our human capital. But despite all the efforts that we are deploying, we still face a significant dropout rate, as only a minority of Lebanese youth will now have the resources to pursue their studies in a private university.

One thing we are sure about is that we are not alone. Lebanon has many loyal friends such as the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) who have never missed a chance to help us, and for which we are thankful. Connected campuses were established, and support units were formed to assure smooth remote learning process and to provide assistance to our academic staff.

Mostly, our friends are offering our students scholarships to study abroad. But unfortunately, this is not a solution. On the contrary, the departure of our young people kills all the possibilities for a future recovery.

We need our qualified young people to stay if we are to have the chance to rise again one day. It is all about them – the young university students – who were the first to respond after the explosion, set up the chains of solidarity, provide support for small businesses, clean up the devastated areas of the capital, and help the homeless. In them, we place our remaining hopes to reform our institutions and to build a state grounded on the rule of law to replace the current "ungovernable monster."[4]

The mass displacement is already being felt. In every Lebanese family, there is at least one young person who has left the country in 2020 or is planning for it in 2021. If they leave, we are sentenced, but if they stay, they are. Help us to give them hope, here in Lebanon, for it is the only way that will save us all.

Fr. Michel Jalakh, Rector of the Antonine University

3 « Let Us Stand Together to Heal the Wounds and Demand Justice », a joint statement from 11 university presidents, 2020 : https://ua.edu.lb/Library/Assets/Gallery/Documents/News/let-us-stand-together-to-heal-the-wounds-and-demand-justice.pdf

4 See « Liban : l'État, monstre ingouvernable ». Éditorial du Monde, 2020, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2020/11/30/liban-l-etat-monstre-ingouvernable_6061646_3232.html

LA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA SAN ANTONIO DE MURCIA APLICA PARA UNIRSE A LA FUCE

Ubicada en Murcia (España), la UCAM Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia es una universidad privada sin ánimo de lucro fundada en 1996 con una clara misión: proporcionar a los estudiantes los conocimientos y habilidades para servir a la sociedad y participar en la misión evangélica de la Iglesia Católica en las áreas de educación y cultura.

La UCAM se caracteriza por ofrecer a los estudiantes una educación integral y personalizada de calidad basada en la combinación de un profundo conocimiento teórico y práctico, además de una educación basada en valores arraigados en los principios del humanismo cristiano. Este modelo ha sido reconocido por la ANECA (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, miembro de la ENQA) –que evaluó positivamente todos los programas oficiales de la UCAM–, así como por evaluaciones internacionales como THE European Teaching Ranking, THE World University Ranking, QS o U-Multirank.

La promoción y el fomento de las actividades de investigación es una de las misiones de la Universidad, lo que facilita y hace accesible a nuestros investigadores la participación

en numerosos proyectos de investigación internacionales (como H2020, Marie Curie, Life o Erasmus+) y permite la transferencia de conocimientos y tecnología a las empresas y a la sociedad. Además, realiza importantes esfuerzos para aumentar la empleabilidad de los recién licenciados. En la actualidad, el porcentaje de estudiantes que encuentran un trabajo después de graduarse se sitúa en el 86% del total.

La UCAM cuenta con más de 450 socios estratégicos internacionales de renombre, entre los que se encuentran varias universidades importantes como la UC Berkeley, Stanford, NTU, NUS o la Università degli Studi di Bologna. Con estos socios, la UCAM ha establecido programas de intercambio de estudiantes, personal y profesores, titulaciones conjuntas, investigación u otro tipo de colaboraciones académicas.

El deporte es parte del ADN de la UCAM. Entre los 21 equipos federados patrocinados y gestionados por la UCAM se encuentra el UCAM Murcia CB, equipo profesional de baloncesto que compite en la Liga Endesa ACB. La institución fue aclamada como ganadora de los Campeonatos de España Universitarios durante seis años consecutivos y entre los mejores atletas de la UCAM se encuentran 24 medallas en los Juegos Olímpicos de Río 2016.

Con cerca de 20 000 estudiantes procedentes de 90 países, la UCAM es un polo de atracción para los estudiantes que buscan programas en diferentes campos que van desde los deportes a los estudios de negocios y jurídicos, desde la medicina y los servicios sanitarios a la ingeniería, la educación o la

D. José Luis Mendoza Pérez
President, UCAM

MURCIA'S SAN ANTONIO CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY APPLIES FOR FUCE MEMBERSHIP

Established in Murcia (Spain), UCAM Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia is a private not-for-profit university founded in 1996 with a clear mission: to provide students with the knowledge and skills to serve society and to participate in the Evangelical mission of the Catholic Church in the areas of education and culture.

UCAM is characterized by offering students an integral and personalised quality education based on the combination of in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge, in addition to a values-based education rooted in the principles of Christian humanism. This model has been recognized by the ANECA (National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation, a member of ENQA) - which positively evaluated all UCAM official programs - as well as by international evaluations like THE European Teaching Ranking, The World University Ranking, QS or U-Multirank.

The promotion and fostering of research activities is one of the University's missions, making it easy and accessible for our researchers to participate in numerous international research projects

(like H2020, Marie Curie, Life or Erasmus+) and transferring knowledge and technology to businesses and society. Furthermore, it puts significant efforts into increasing the employability of recent graduates. Currently, the percentage of students finding a job after graduation lies at 86% in total.

UCAM has more than 450 renowned international strategic partners, among which are several leading universities such as UC Berkeley, Stanford, NTU, NUS, or Università degli Studi di Bologna. With these partners, UCAM has established students, staff and professors exchange programs, joint degrees, research, or other kinds of academic collaborations.

Sport is part of UCAM's DNA. The 21 federated teams sponsored and managed by UCAM include UCAM Murcia CB, a professional basketball team competing in the ACB Liga Endesa. The Institution was hailed as the winner of Spain's University Championships for six consecutive years and UCAM's best athletes include 24 medalists at the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016.

With about 20,000 students from 90 countries, UCAM is attractive for students looking for programmes in different fields ranging from Sports to Business and Legal Studies, from Medicine and Health care to Engineering, Education or Communication.

D. José Luis Mendoza Pérez
President, UCAM

ABAT OLIBA UNIVERSITY TIENE PRISAS UNIRSE A LA FUCE

Abat Oliba University en Barcelona ha aplicado para unirse a la FUCE. Como una de las tres universidades privadas con initiativa social, junto con San Pablo University en Madrid y Cardenal Herrera en Valencia, Abat Oliba University pertenece al grupo de educacion CEU.

Reconocida oficialmente como universidad privada en 2003, la Universitat Abat Oliba CEU tiene más de cuarenta años de experiencia como institución de educación superior, fuertemente comprometida con el pensamiento católico, la docencia y la investigación.

Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga
Rector, Abat Oliba CEU

Actualmente tiene tres Facultades: Derecho y Empresa; Comunicación, Educación y Humanidades; y Psicología, con 24 programas de grado - 7 de los cuales son bilingüe, 13 programas de máster, 8 programas de prosgrado y una Escuela Internacional de Doctorado que ofrece 4 programas de doctorado (Humanidades para el Mundo Contemporáneo, Derecho y Economía, Comunicación Social y Medicina Traslacional).

La Universitat Abat Oliba CEU, comprometida con la excelencia en la docencia y la investigación, destaca por la elevada tasa de satisfacción de su alumnado y de empleabilidad de sus egresados, según constatan diversos estudios de entidades independientes.

Declaraciones del Rector Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga:

"Nos incorporamos a la FUCE con la aspiración de ser un miembro activo, un buen aliado para el desarrollo de proyectos académicos, culturales y científicos, fundados en una visión compartida del mundo y de la persona, según el humanismo cristiano".

ABAT OLIBA UNIVERSITY LOOKS FORWARD TO MANY BENEFITS FROM JOINING FUCE

Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona has applied to join FUCE. As one of three privately run and social initiative universities along with San Pablo University in Madrid and Cardenal Herrera in Valencia, Abat Oliba belongs to the CEU educational group.

Officially recognised as a private university in 2003, Abat Oliba CEU University has more than forty years of experience as a higher education institution, strongly committed to Catholic thought, education and research.

Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga
Rector, Abat Oliba CEU

It currently has three faculties: Law & Business, Communication, Education, Humanities & Psychology, with 24 graduate programs, seven of which are bilingual; 13 masters programmes, eight postgraduate programmes and an International School offering four doctoral programs; Humanities for the Contemporary World, Law & Economics, Social Communications and Translational Medicine.

Abat Oliba CEU University is devoted to excellence in teaching and research, and stands out because of the high satisfaction and employability rates of its students, as certified by several surveys carried out by independent bodies.

Abat Oliba CEU Rector Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga says:

"If accepted as new members of FUCE, we will become a good ally for the development of academic, cultural and scientific projects, founded in a shared understanding of the world and of the person, in accordance with Christian humanism."

CHRISTIANS AND THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC A TIME TO SERVE?

Rev. Dr. Yuriy Shchurko, Dean of Philosophy and Theology at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv reflects on three inter-connected questions: What does COVID-19 have to say to humanity? What does the Bible say about all of this? What do we have to do with all of this?

What does the COVID-19 Coronavirus have to say to humanity?

One year ago, no one would have thought that Christian theologians, apologists, and philosophers would pay so much attention to what seems at first glance to be a solely medical issue – the epidemic of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. However, the extent of the problem is very significant. Its impact on the whole world is so unprecedented that many people are trying to reflect on and deal with this issue, which clearly shows that all humanity is more closely united than we realized or imagined before this happened. Oxford mathematician and Christian apologist John C. Lennox writes:

> ***"Never before have we experienced the lockdown of cities and even countries, the closing of borders, the banning of travel, the shutting of all but essential services, the banning of large sports gatherings, and the silent towns and cities that shout of fear and self-isolation....***

One major effect is the universal feeling of increased vulnerability. Many of us had got used to a fairly stable world, where life was reasonably predictable. Now that all appears to be crumbling away: the things we have always counted on have gone and we are exposed as never before to forces way outside our control. People fear for their health, both physical and psychological; for their families and friends, particularly the elderly and infirm; for their social networks, their food supply, their jobs and economic security, and a host of other things."[1]

Old, primitive fears have awakened with a new force and are dressed in old, forgotten clothes. It appears that many of those fears have very ancient roots. In his recent book written to present a Christian view on the problem of COVID-19, perhaps the most renowned biblical scholar of our times, N. T. Wright, says:

"In most of the ancient world, and many parts of the modern world too, major disasters (earthquakes, volcanoes, fires, plagues) are regularly associated with angry gods. Something bad has happened? Must be because 'someone' has it in for you. In the old pagan world of Greece and Rome, the assumption was that you hadn't offered the right sacrifices; or you hadn't said the right prayers; or you did something so truly dreadful that even the old amoral gods on Mount Olympus felt it was time to crack down on you. The high-minded philosophers

didn't think much of that. They came up with three alternatives. First, the Stoics. Everything is programmed to turn out the way it does. You can't change it; just learn to fit in. Alternatively, the Epicureans. Everything is random. You can't do anything about it. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Then the Platonists. The present life is just a shadow of reality. Bad things happen here but we are destined for a different world.

We have our modern equivalents. Some just want to tough it out. If the bullet's got your name on it, so be it. Most of the modern West is implicitly Epicurean. Stuff happens, but we want to scramble for comfort, so settle down, self-isolate, plenty of Netflix. This too will pass. Some – including some Christians – opt for Plato. Death isn't the worst that can happen. We're heading somewhere else anyway. All right, let's be sensible, but please don't shut down the churches. Or the golf clubs."[2]

In addition to these pessimistic conclusions and considerations, Wright observes "there are specifically (would-be) 'Christian' conspiracy theories. Some people think they know exactly what's gone wrong and what God is trying to say through it all. Some are saying, eagerly, that this is the sign of the End."[3] And even if these theories may seem too pretentious, unfortunately there still exist theories more frivolous, but at the same time no less dangerous, which are unfortunately widespread in many Christian circles. He underlines: "For other Christians, this is simply a way of saying: This is a moment of opportunity! Now that everybody is thinking about death rather than wondering which cupcake to buy, perhaps there will be a massive turning to God. Perhaps we can use this moment to tell our friends about Jesus and how he can take them to heaven. Perhaps this time they'll listen. Others quote the Old Testament prophets to produce a version of the ancient pagan theories. When bad things happen, it must be God that's done it (because he's responsible for everything), so that must mean that he is angry with us for some reason."[4]

All that is mentioned above clearly points out that, as humans, we are more united than we usually think. Having made many achievements in recent years, we still feel vulnerable when facing challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. We still hold old fears in our collective memories, especially when this memory is not illuminated by the truth and power of the Good News.

1 J. Lennox. ***Where is God in a Coronavirus World?*** The Good Book Company 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 22–33
2 T. Wright. ***God and the Pandemic***. SPCK 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 90–102
3 ***Ibid*** – Kindle Locations 131–133
4 ***Ibid*** – Kindle Locations 137–141
5 Э. Ценгер (Ред). *Введение в Ветхий Завет*. (пер. с нем.) Москва, ББИ 2008, С. 431–433

What does the Bible say about all of this?

In fact, only a few events in the Old Testament make it clear that some tragedies are the result of sin - mostly the fall of our ancestors, Adam and Eve (Gen. 3), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19), and the Babylonian captivity, which, according to the prophets, was a consequence of the sinful life of Israel and its attempt to imitate, as we say today, the "culture of death" of neighboring nations. Many other events - such as the famine in the time of the patriarchs, which forced Jacob's family to go to Egypt, when Joseph, who at that time was the second person in the country after Pharaoh, prompted prudent action to save lives in the future - are not considered as punishment for someone's sin. When the famine came to Egypt, Joseph did not tell Pharaoh that this famine was a punishment for sin because they were Gentiles and led immoral lives. No. He said that specific measures should be taken that would allow everyone to survive in the future. Even in the texts of the book of Exodus, when it comes to Israel's deliverance from Egypt (the most important event of the Old Testament) and, accordingly, in the Passover Law, it is not said that Israel was in Egypt because of the Jews' sins.

The perfect picture of the world presented in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament was that the Jews believed that there was a primordial order of things in the world - הְקָדְצ (tzedakah). The art of living is to recognize this all-encompassing order throughout life and bind it together by creating righteousness. Axiom: righteousness produces מוֹלָש (shalom: happiness, salvation, freedom, ease, peace). Peace is not the absence of war but a concept with a positive meaning. Wisdom theology's starting point is a conviction gained from experience: from right action, good happens (to society and oneself) - from an evil act, there is harm (to society and oneself). Wisdom is choosing what leads to life.[5]

However, even among Israel's sages, we hear voices saying that the world's perfect picture after the Fall

has its nuances. In the book of Job, we see that a righteous person can endure. Koheleth polemically points out that the declarative connection between action and result often contradicts experience (Eccles. 7:15; 8:12-14). Of the book of Psalms, three sections (i.e., Psalms 42 to 106), which are the central part of the Psalms, talk of the anxiety, embarrassment, sadness, disappointment, suffering, and despair that a righteous person experiences in this world.[6]

The question is: What does God do with all this? How does God want to solve the problem of sin and human suffering? God chooses Abraham and gives him great promises concerning the new future of all humankind (Gen. 12: 1-3). Therefore, the main task of the descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel, is to solve the problem of sin, to become the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Matt. 5: 13-14). However, instead of becoming a solution to sin, Israel became part of that problem. That is why the prophets begin to say that God personally will come into history in the future and solve this problem. In the prophet Isaiah, we read of a mysterious Servant of the Lord who "was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises, we are healed." (Isa. 53:5 NRS) Similarly, the prophet Daniel says that, after all the peoples' attempts to establish justice on earth, which ended with one totalitarian empire replacing another, the mysterious Son of Man will finally come, and He will establish a kingdom on earth that will have no end.

These hopes for the Servant of the Lord from the book of Isaiah and the Son of Man from the book of Daniel are embodied in God becoming the man Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus Himself says: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly," (John 10:10 NRS) This life comes into our world, wounded by sin, through His mighty deeds, brotherly attitude, compassion, solidarity, and lifegiving teaching. "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mk. 10:45 NRS) The whole of Jesus's life becomes the best and ultimate sign of the whole of humanity. People of His generation looked for a sign that God indeed acts in Jesus. But He answered them: "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12:39-40 NRS) In His Passion, He entered our pain and suffering and healed them by His suffering and death. On the third day, He solemnly rose from death so that we might live by a new life which death cannot destroy.

This new life appeared in the new relationship of Jesus's disciples, their inspiring service and sacrificial life for others' sake, which provoked a positive chain reaction of imitation by many other people that represented different races, cultures, and social statuses. In the Book of Acts, we read: "At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:27-30 NRS)

> ***When bad things happened to people, early Christians did not ask: "Why did it happen?" or "When will it come to an end?" Instead, "They ask three simple questions: Who is going to be at particular risk when this happens? What can we do to help? And who shall we send?"***[7]

We know that, after the Fall, bad things always take place in our lives. "At the same time, however, 'creation was subjected [by God] to ineffectiveness, not through its own fault, but because of him who subjected it.' (Rom. 8:20) In the original Greek, the word for 'ineffectiveness' (mataiotēs) carries the meaning that something is all 'in vain': that is, it has not achieved the goal for which it was

6 For more details see B. C. Davis, ***Psalms***, In G. M. Burge, A. E. Hill (Eds.), ***The Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary***, Baker Books 2012, Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 13502–13582

7 T. Wright. ***God and the Pandemic***. SPCK 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 476

designed."[8] This is why "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:22-23 NRS) What St. Paul is trying to say is that people in the world suffer, and we can understand them since, even having been sealed by the Holy Spirit, we still suffer as well. But we are living by hope, since we are convinced that God is in charge of the world, He is faithful and responsible for His creation, and in some mysterious way takes part in the pain of the world: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." (Rom. 8:26 NRS)

Scripture supports neither pessimistic ideas nor conspiracy theories. God does not want to threaten or frighten humanity to make us better. He enters our life in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, lives a life like us, and receives death so that we could live an eternal life. Jesus Himself showed us what it means to be human and expects us to behave humanly towards others.

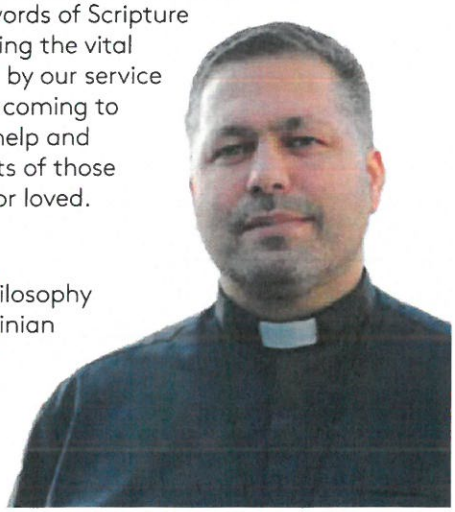
What do we have to do with all of this?

How should Christians respond to the pandemic? We already said that, when facing this pandemic, the right questions will be: "What can we do?", "Who is at most risk?" and "Whom do we have to send?" There can also be other important questions: "Who is God for me when I suffer or go through bad times?" or "Who am I when I am facing difficulties?" Every crisis can be an opportunity or occasion for failure or ruin. We must choose. N. T. Wright says: "In the first few centuries of our era when serious sickness would strike a town or city, the well-to-do would run for the hills (part of the problem was often low-lying, fetid air in a town). The Christians would stay and nurse people. Sometimes they caught the disease and died. People were astonished. What was that about? Oh, they replied, we are followers of this man Jesus. He put his life on the line to save us. So that's what we do as well. Nobody had ever thought of doing that kind of thing before. No wonder the Gospel spread. Even when the Romans were doing their best to stamp it out."[9]

John Lennox says that, for the question "How should Christians respond to the pandemic? There are several different levels on which to answer this question."[10] He lists four suggestions. First, on the practical level, we would be wise to take heed of the best medical advice of the day. Second, Lennox thinks that we also should not begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Using some thoughts from C. S. Lewis on how Christians should respond to the existence of atomic weapons, he applies his reflections to our situation and reminds us that the end of our earthly life will be death:"When it comes, let it find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs [viruses]. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that), but they need not dominate our minds." Third, Lennox reminds us that, as Christians, we are called to love. He lists many examples from the last 2,000 years when Christians have done many good things to many people - especially non-Christians in times of plagues and pandemics, which often saved more than half the population of certain areas or cities. Fourth and finally, Lennox exhorts Christians to remember eternity. He says that "the early Christians, living as they did in a dangerous world where all kinds of threats surrounded them and where life expectancy was relatively short, were given strength to live as sacrificially as they did, contributing so much to the wellbeing of others, by the fact that they had a real and living hope that went beyond the grave."[11]

N. T. Wright says that "the Church's mission began (according to John 20) with three things which have become very familiar to us in recent days. It began with tears; with locked doors, and with doubt."[12] Thus, our mission today is to proclaim the Good News, not only with the words of Scripture but, above all, by confirming the vital importance of the Gospel by our service of wiping these tears and coming to closed doors to offer our help and kindly dispelling the doubts of those who do not feel valuable or loved.

Rev. Dr. Yuriy Shchurko,
Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv



8 J. Lennox. ***Where is God in a Coronavirus World?*** The Good Book Company 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 365-376.
9 T. Wright. ***God and the Pandemic***. SPCK 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 108–113
10 J. Lennox. ***Where is God in a Coronavirus World?*** The Good Book Company 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 397
11 ***Ibid*** - Kindle Locations 397–476
12 T. Wright. ***God and the Pandemic***. SPCK 2020. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 831–832

RELAUNCH OF 'EUROPEAN HUMANISM IN THE MAKING' SUMMER SCHOOL

The '**European Humanism in the Making**' summer school is back on the rails. FUCE's Board of Directors has given the green light for the 2021 edition to go ahead from 5 - 9 July 2021. The availability of the course coordinators has been confirmed and LUMSA university in Gubbio has kindly agreed to play host again.

The participants who were selected for last year's cancelled session, were the first people to be reinvited – and happily almost all of the 2020 candidates reconfirmed their participation with the support of their sending universities. These participants will be doubly motivated to reap benefits from this unique encounter, more relevant than ever following the health crisis and the halting of student mobility.

In several motivational letters, the students said they expected the summer school to offer them a chance to learn about the European social and political construction and management of cultural diversity in comparison with their own country - Lebanon; about the role of religion in secular society, a new experience for societies like Ukraine and Georgia; and about diverging humanist traditions in the European Union and what they may mean for new members and younger democracies, such as Croatia.

The students that will come to Gubbio this summer are strongly attracted by the challenge of an intercultural exchange, which is also reflected in many of their profiles and academic trajectories. They are eager to investigate issues of identity and raise questions about the role of ethics and morals in society, and in particular what Catholic Social Teaching has to offer.

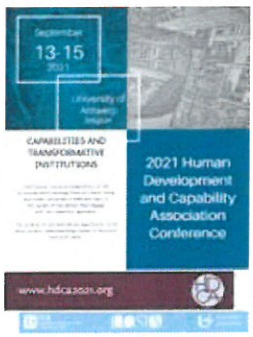
The team of lecturers leading the summer school look forward to engaging the students in dialogue and supporting them in voicing their concerns and hopes for the future of Europe. As during the inaugural summer school, a public forum will be offered when some attendees will address a broader audience in a public session 'My Europe', coordinated by Peter Hanenberg, Professor of Literature and Culture from the Catholic University of Lisbon.

His colleague - José Miguel Sardica - Professor of Political History, will give also an opening lecture at the community hall on the topic: 'Waning Europeaness - From the Totalitarian Shadows of the Past to the Illiberal Threats of the Present'. With this public lecture, the organisers of the **European Humanism in the Making** summer school wish to return the hospitality they enjoy from the community of Gubbio.

NEWS IN BRIEF

HUNGARY

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest



The Department of Armenian Studies at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University (PPCU) offers an English language History MA degree with a specialisation in Armenian Studies. This one of its kind programme in Hungary provides the opportunity for students and scholars to explore the unique Christian heritage of Armenian culture across multiple civilizational and geographic contexts. The faculty, trained in leading European and American universities and supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, promises an exciting educational experience for the years to come. For more information, visit: **https://btk.ppke.hu/en/academics/institutes-and-departments/institute-of-history/department-of-armenian-studies**

Les 26, 27 Octobre 2020 a eu lieu l'événement de clôture du projet européen Erasmus + partenariat stratégique intitulé Lire et écrire des textes littéraires à l'époque des humanités numériques/Reading and Writing literary texts in the Age of Digital Humanities. Pendant les trois ans du déroulement du projet, les chercheurs de 13 universités européennes cherchaient à savoir quelles nouvelles méthodes innovatrices peuvent être appliquées pour populariser la lecture si indispensable à l'enrichissement des expériences de vie. A l'événement de clôture du projet, des professionnels et des chercheurs ont partagé leurs réflexions sur les livres, les lecteurs et la lecture à l'époque du numérique: **https://richreading.ppke.hu/index.html**

NEW EARTHQUAKES ROCK CROATIA OVER CHRISTMAS

Following the devasting earthquakes which hit the Croatian capital in March 2020, two strong quakes hit the Petrinja and Sisak areas of the country on 28/29 December. Measuring 5.5 and 6.2 on the Richter scale, the quakes left six people dead, destroyed many towns and villages making many people homeless. Sisak's cathedral, several churches and many cultural heritage sites were similarly devastated.

Thankfully the buildings of the Catholic University of Croatia, under reconstruction since March, were not substantially damaged by these recent quakes. Unfortunately the homes and properties of many of the university's staff and students have been directly impacted by these latest earthquakes.

To follow CUC's recovery efforts or to offer support and solidarity, log on to www.unicath.hr or follow them on Facebook or Instagram.

NEWS IN BRIEF

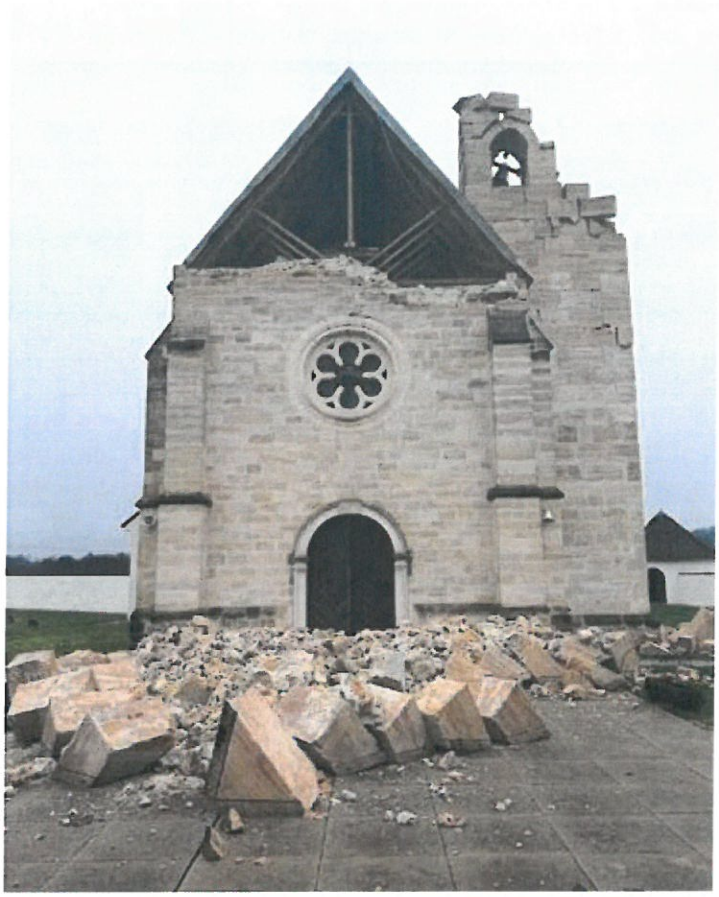
BELGIUM

Call for papers HDCA 2021 Conference: 'Capabilities and Transformative Institutions'

How can we organize for tomorrow's world? Covid-19 has taught us that we are not ready. We have re-discovered our common vulnerability – not only to a virus, but also to policy mismatch, institutional hiccups and authoritarian backlash. Divided we stood, unable to act in concert, lacking real opportunities for deliberation. How can we improve the structures of living together and face the challenges ahead to build a more just and sustainable world?

A Human Development and Capabilities Association Conference will be held in Antwerp, Belgium, from 13 - 15 September 2021 – involving the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), the Faculties of Business and Economics, Social Sciences, and Law of the University of Antwerp and the University Centre Saint Ignatius Antwerp (UCSIA).

More information is available on the conference **webpage**. Questions can be addressed to the conference organizers at: **hdca2021@uantwerpen.be**



NEWS IN BRIEF

SLOVAKIA

Celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the **Catholic Unviersity in Ružomberok** have been deferred due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Since 2000, the CU has conferred more than 33,000 graduates in full-time and part-time bachelor, master and doctoral studies. The CU has four faculties (Arts & Letters, Education, Health and Theology) with more than 90 accredited study programmes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPAIN

Expanded Reason Congress 2021 Transhumanism: ¿Homo Sapiens or Cyborg?

The Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Madrid has issued a call for papers for the 4th Edition of the Expanded Reason Congress, to be held on 17-18 June 2021.

Professors and researchers interested in tackling transhumanism, in any of its forms or related issues, from an expanded reason perspective are invited to submit. Authors may ascribe their papers to the following areas of knowledge:

- Experimental Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Engineering
- Education
- Justice and Law
- Economy and Business
- Political Sciences
- Communication Sciences
- Philosophy
- Theology

The congress will be held in hybrid format – both online and on-site with limited capacity. We hope to engage in a transdisciplinary dialogue that helps to approach transhumanism in all its complexity, connecting it with anthropology, epistemology, ethics and the question of meaning.

For more information you can go to: **www.expandedreasonawards.org** or contact us at: **expandedreason@ufv.es**

FUCE GRANTS ENRICH STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Nastya Kovalenko is a 4th-year Ethics-Politics-Economics student at the Ukrainian Catholic University

On a sunny summers day, after a long selection process, weeks of waiting and uncertainty about the pandemic situation in both Ukraine and Belgium, I received my version of a letter from Hogwarts – confirmation from FUCE that I had been chosen to be an exchange student in Europe. I was invited to study philosophy at KU Leuven, a renowned Catholic university with one of the best philosophy programmes in the world.

Despite the pandemic, KU Leuven did an excellent job of trying to keep their students on campus as long as possible. I'm especially thankful that I had a chance to take classes in person for the first couple of months. We've since had to switch online, and being an exchange student under these circumstances isn't easy. So although there's no partying, carousing on the street, shopping, or encountering the whole of Belgian culture, these past three months in Belgium have flown by incredibly fast.

I still remark at the unique feeling of waking up every day and looking forward to seeing what new experiences are waiting for me. I'm so happy and grateful for the chance to have come here in person - to feel the joy from taking classes, gaining knowledge and meeting new people - many of whom, by the way, are already looking forward to visiting Ukraine and my home university, the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), as soon as borders reopen and unrestricted travel resumes.

Walking around the historic streets of Leuven captivates me. The architecture and aesthetic make it seem as though a Harry Potter movie or an Anderson fairy tale has come to life. It's hard to imagine a better place to have spent the Christmas holidays.

I can't put into words how thankful I am to UCU and FUCE for giving me this fantastic opportunity. This semester has so far been a life-changing one, and I'm looking forward to seeing what else lies ahead during the remaining few months here.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ITALY

The Conference of Rectors of Pontifical Roman Universities and Institutions (CRUIPRO) has launched an exciting initiative to facilitate student mobility between its 22 member institutions.

Under the new arrangement, every semester, ordinary students in the Baccalaureate, Licentiate or Doctorate cycle will be able to attend a course in one of the signatory institutions free of charge, up to a maximum of 6 credits, subject to authorisation from their home institution and acceptance by the host institution.

Starting from the second semester of the current academic year 2020/2021, the objective of the agreement is to encourage mobility within the Roman ecclesiastical university system without incurring additional costs for students.

Je m'appelle Joseph Chlela et suis un étudiant libanais en mobilité d'études en France. Après une 2ème année de gestion à l'université Sainte Famille-Batroun située au Nord de Beyrouth, j 'ai eu l'opportunité de réaliser grâce à la FUCE le 1er semestre de ma 3èmeannée à l'Université Catholique de Lille de septembre à décembre 2020, ce grâce à l'obtention d'une bourse d'études de la fédération sans laquelle cette expérience n'aurait pu être envisagée.

J'ai ainsi eu la chance de vivre un très beau semestre au sein de l'une des meilleures universités françaises, malgré les difficultés auxquelles j'ai dû faire face durant ces quelques mois en raison de l'épidémie de COVID-19. En effet, mes sorties ont été très limitées et ma vie sociale a été particulièrement impactée mais, au final tout s'est bien passé.

J'ai pu durant cette période acquérir de nouvelles compétences, en bénéficiant d'un niveau d'étude de qualité. Et je tiens tout particulièrement à exprimer ma gratitude àl'équipe de l'université Catholique de Lille, sa Faculté de Gestion comme son Bureau des Relations Internationales. Tous m'ont accueilli, aidé et ont facilité mon adaptation à la vie française. J'espère désormais pouvoir revenir dans de meilleures conditions et tiens une nouvelle fois à dire toute ma reconnaissance à la FUCE qui a rendu possible cette belle aventure.

J'encourage tout étudiant qui a l'ambition de poursuivre ses études en France à ne pas hésiter à tenter l'aventure ! Au-delà de son enrichissement du point de vue éducatif, cette mobilité m'a apporté un réel un développement personnel : savoir devenir autonome, s'investir, progressivement devenir un adulte responsable dans une société en profonde mutation. Merci la FUCE !

Tracy El-Kefraoui is a Lebanese-Canadian translation student at the Faculty of Translation and Languages at Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (USJ), Lebanon. She will graduate at the end of June 2021.

"It has always been a dream of mine to be a mobility student for one semester before finishing my bachelor's degree. FUCE made this possible, because if it were not for the scholarship they kindly granted me, this exchange program would have always remained a dream for me due to the economic crisis occurring in my country.

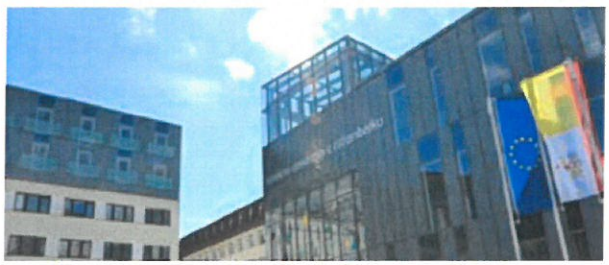
I have always lived in a multilingual country where the standard is the mastery of three languages. However I took it upon myself to learn a fourth language - Spanish. With more than half a billion speakers, Spanish is one of the primary languages of the world. By learning an additional language, I have the chance to become a better and more competent translator. For me, that's the primary benefit of spending a semester at the Comillas Pontifical University in Spain.

Moreover, I am particularly interested in stepping out of my comfort zone by interacting with a completely different culture, one that has been evolving since the dawn of time. I find Spain a remarkably unique and beautiful country, with historical moments having occurred in almost every street. Attending this esteemed institution has provided me with different perspectives, pertaining to both translation and humanities as a whole. I'm confident that FUCE's mobility programme will not only help me become a better translator, but also a better citizen."

NEWS IN BRIEF

SLOVAKIA

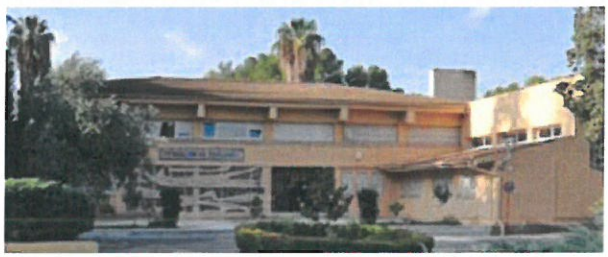
The Catholic University in Ružomberok (CU) has received the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Social Work with Children and Youth.



The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree Programme is a prestigious integrated international study initiative, which aims to enhance quality in higher education through scholarships and academic co-operation between the EU and the rest of the world.

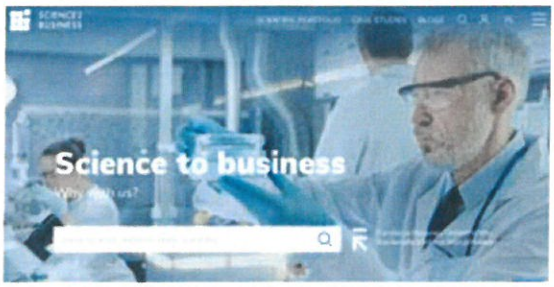
CU is a part of a consortium of four universities: Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius, Lithuania; Riga Stradins University, Latvia and Lisbon University Institute, Portugal, that will deliver the programme. Students will study the joint master's through English and receive diplomas from all four universities when they successfully complete the course. http://www.ku.sk/en/

SPAIN



Since 1 September 2020, the **Faculty of Theology of Granada** has been integrated into **Loyola University**. The activities of the Faculty at Granada are now fully incorporated, which enhances the breadth of Loyola's academic offering to include new degrees in Theology and Religious Sciences as well as all other fields of theological knowledge. https://www.uloyola.es

POLAND



Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw has launched a Polish and English language platform, presenting over 200 profiles of academic researchers who offer opportunities for research activities and international cooperation. Research areas range from theological, philosophical and humanistic subjects to the sciences, including environmental engineering, digital technologies and medicine. With an easy-to-use intuitive interface, the Science2Business platform allows companies to quickly find research topics in which the University has expertise and knowledge. https://science2business.edu.pl/en

GERMANY

Better access to medications in Ghana, locally produced hygiene products from Rwanda and better sales channels for small farmers in the region, as well as an online education platform for young people in South Africa are just some of the innovative ideas from African social entrepreneurs that are being analysed and assessed by School of Management students at the **Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt**. The collaboration is part action learning program funded by the **Bayer Foundation** and is an integral part of the "Entrepreneurship and Innovation" specialisation in the MBA programme. KU is committed to research and teaching with an international and interdisciplinary perspective. Indeed, sustainability and sustainable development are goals of all of KU's academic and transfer activities, a fact that has been recognised by UNESCO. https://www.ku.de/en/

KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT