

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

 **LOURDES**
24/26 JANUARY, 2024



PRE-PROGRAM

stopped on November 21, 2023 and updated regularly on www.medias-catholiques.fr

Times of upheaval

WHAT DO artificial intelligence (AI) and the synod on synodality have in common? At first glance, not much. But, for our Catholic media, the approach desired by Pope Francis and the upheaval of AI are both shaking up our habits and our practices, and re-examining our reason for being, both as “media” and in as “Catholics”.

These two challenges also question our ways of doing things and our positions in a world that seems ever more

changing, when it is not always more slippery. Added to these challenges is also the return of violence in Europe with the war in Ukraine, which reminds us that our mission to inform is not always without risk and can make us priority targets.

As Catholic media, how can we adapt to this times of upheaval?

Xavier Le Normand,
program coordinator.

TUESDAY JANUARY 23, 2024

08:30 pm — Hotel Saint-Sauveur

Friendly welcome dinner for those already present

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 24, 2024

From 10:30 am to 12:00 pm — Hotel Panorama

Reception of participants, registration, distribution of badges and files

From 2:30 pm and until the end of the Congress, the reception desk will be set up in the entrance hall of the CEF hemicycle.

From 12:30 pm to 02:15 pm — Hotel Panorama (restaurant on the 1st floor)

Friendly seated lunch

For those concerned, FMC Board of Directors and lunch in the lounges of the Panorama hotel (first floor).

From 03:00 pm to 04:00 pm — Basilica of the Rosary (lower basilica, at esplanade level)

Opening Mass of the Congress

Feast of Saint Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists.

From 04:30 pm to 05:15 pm — Hemicycle of the Conference of Bishops of France

OPENING OF THE CONGRESS

Presentation of the theme by Xavier Le Normand, program coordinator.

Plenary 1. Media facing oppression

Conference-debate / Hemicycle / Wednesday January 24 / 05:15 pm - 06:30 pm

The return of war to Europe – with Russia's invasion of Ukraine since February 2022 – has brutally reminded our media of our duty to inform, including on the worst realities by confronting them.

This mission, which is also our reason for being, can directly expose the lives of journalists on the ground and make our media targets, directly or in a more sneaky way.

But how to fulfill this duty? How can we continue to go into the field, keep an editorial team alive and promote this content to readers, when so many forces are put in the way?

Speakers:

Paterno R. Esmaguél II

Paterno R. Esmaguél II is a journalist and leads religion coverage for *Rappler*, an internationally renowned media outlet based in Manila, Philippines.

Paterno was one of *Rappler's* first reporters in 2012 and served as its news editor from 2020 to 2023. A media professional for sixteen years, Paterno is also a professor of journalism at *University of Santo Tomas*, a pontifical university run by the Dominicans and one of the oldest Catholic universities in Asia.

He holds two master's degrees – MA in Journalism from the *Ateneo de Manila University*, Philippines, and MSC in Asian Studies (Religions in Plural Societies) from the *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, *Nanyang Technological University*, Singapore.

A representative of the *Kyiv Independent* editorial staff

The *Kyiv Independent* is an English-language Ukrainian media outlet.

Based in Kiev, it was founded at the end of 2021 by members of the former *Kyiv Post* team, notably thanks to an emergency grant from the *European Foundation for Democracy* and the use of crowdfunding.

Just weeks after its launch, it found itself on the front lines covering Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

From 06:30 pm to 08:00 pm

Free time

From 08:00 pm — Hotel Panorama (restaurant on the 1st floor)

Standing buffet dinner

THURSDAY JANUARY 25

From 08:00 am to 09:00 am — Basilica of the Rosary

Mass

Plenary 2. Will AI replace us all?

Conference-debate / Hemicycle / Thursday January 25 / 09:15 am - 10:45 am

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing many sectors, including journalism. Algorithms are already capable of producing articles, translating languages, conducting surveys and even creating works of fiction. This rapid development raises crucial questions about the future role of journalists in the creation and dissemination of information. Faced with this progress, some experts are wondering about the future of journalists. Will AI replace them?

Best proof of this question: *this text was entirely generated by AI!*

Speakers to be specified.

From 10:45 am to 11:15 am — Hemicycle hall
Coffee break and time for informal discussions. Press table available free of charge.

Thematic workshops

Thursday January 25 / Hemicycle and other room indicated on site / 11:15 am - 12:15 pm

One hour of workshop, in small groups, to discuss between participants and with guests on the following themes (of your choice)

1. How can the media be actors of synodality?

Catholic media have a privileged link with an entire population of believers: their readers. While Pope Francis calls the entire Church for a “synodal conversion”, should our media also embark on this path? In what terms, for what purposes and how can they respond to this call from Pope Francis?

Speakers :

Walter Chikwendu Ihejirika

Walter Chikwendu Ihejirika is a Catholic priest from the Diocese of Ahiara, Nigeria. He completed his university studies at the *Pontifical Gregorian University* and the *Salesian University* of Rome.

He is currently a Professor of Development Communication and Media Studies and also Dean, *Faculty of Communication and Media Studies*, University of Port Harcourt.

He is president of *Signis Africa*.

Alessandro Gisotti

Alessandro Gisotti, born in Rome in 1974, is a professional journalist. Since July 2019, he has been vice editorial director of the *Dicastery for Communication* of the Holy See, after having been interim director of the Press Office of the Holy See. From 2000 to 2016 he worked at *Vatican Radio*, where he was vice-editor-in-chief. From 2017 to the end of 2018, he coordinated *Vatican News* social media.

He taught journalism at the *Jesuit Istituto Massimo* in Rome and *Theories and Techniques of Journalism* at the *Pontificia Università Lateranense*. Among his publications, we find *The Decalogue of the Good Communicator according to Pope Francis*, published by Elledici with a preface by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle.

In 2022, he interviewed Pope Francis for the Holy See's daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

2. Does ChatGPT have its place in our editorial offices?

Being able to generate articles in a few clicks and illustrations just as easily, could artificial intelligence replace our editorial staff? Some media also rely heavily on this instant generation. But without going to this distortion of journalism, generative artificial intelligence can provide many services.

Are these legitimate or is it a betrayal of our profession and our readers?

Speakers being confirmed.

From 12:30 pm to 02:00 pm — Hotel Panorama (restaurant on the 1st floor)

Friendly seated lunch

Plenary 3. Expectations and visions of the Synod throughout the world

Conference-debate / Hemicycle / Thursday January 25 / 02:15 pm - 03:30 pm

In his message for World Communications Day 2023, Pope Francis recognized that “the ecclesial community is not exempt” from the “polarizations and contrapositions” which mark the current period in history.

Exacerbated by social networks, internal divisions in the Catholic Church sometimes seem to be getting worse every day, becoming more and more violent. Among the objects of this polarization, the synod on synodality desired by Pope Francis, considered by some to be a source of confusion and therefore divisions. By shedding light on these divisions, can the synod help heal them?

Speakers :

Jean-Paul Sagadou

An Assumptionist religious of Burkinabè origin, Jean-Paul Sagadou has a degree in theology from the *Catholic Institute of Paris*. He has been working for several years to break down the physical, cultural and religious barriers that stand between young Africans by organizing *African Integration Trips (V.I.A)*. He is currently editor-in-chief of *Prions en Église Afrique*, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. For many years, he has published columns in Burkinabè magazines but also in *La Croix Africa* where you can read a few articles by him on the concept of ubuntu and synodality.

Joachim Heinz

At 49, Joachim Heinz is a journalist, editor since 2007 at the Catholic press agency KNA (Katholische Nachrichten Agentur) in Bonn, Germany.

He specializes in the fields of history, theology and subjects relating to the Third World.

Inès San Martín

Graduated with a master's degree in communications from the *Austral University of Buenos Aires*, Inés San Martín (born in Rosario, Santa Fe, 1986) is an Argentine journalist, former co-editor and manager of the newspaper *Crux* in Rome between 2014 and 2022. Since September 2022, she is vice president of marketing and communications for the American branch of the *Pontifical Mission Societies (OPM)*. She has lectured on Pope Francis, the Vatican, and Church communications in the United States, Chile, Mexico, Italy, and Ireland. [By videoconference].

From 03:30 pm to 04:00 pm — Hemicycle hall

Welcome drink offered by the Lourdes Tourist Office

Tasting of natural fruit juices and artisan pastries from local producers.

Thematic workshops

January 25 / Hemicycle and other room indicated on site / 04:00 pm - 05:00 pm

One hour of workshop, in small groups, to discuss between participants and with guests on the following themes (of your choice)

3. Should our media be at the service of the unity of the Church?

Catholic media play an important role in the life of the Church. But as the divisions between Catholics spread and become visible, what position should we adopt? Is it the role of Catholic media to give visibility to these divisions or, conversely, should we adopt a more cautious approach so as not to reinforce them? By reporting them, do our media not in fact run the risk of becoming stakeholders in these divisions?

Speaker :

Antonio Olivé

Antonio Olivé has been a journalist and CEO of *Rome Reports TV* since 2015. In this capacity, he has produced six documentaries for commercial and Catholic television on the Pope and the Vatican.

Previously, he worked as deputy editor of the Spanish national newspaper *Qué!* (Vocento group). He was a Washington correspondent for the 2012 US presidential elections and was a contributing editor for the Spanish newspaper *ABC*. *Rome Reports* currently has over 800,000 *YouTube* subscribers.

4. How can we use AI in our businesses?

Artificial intelligence does not only concern journalists and illustrators. Coders, legal managers, recruitment managers... All our professions can benefit in one way or another from the support of artificial intelligence in some of our tasks. So how can we take advantage of this seemingly unlimited resource?

Speakers being confirmed.

Great witness

Conference / Hemicyle / Thursday January 25 / 05:15 pm - 06:00 pm

The Congress welcomes its great witness.



Presentation of the Father Jacques Hamel Prize 2024

Hemicyle / Thursday January 25 / 06:00 pm - 06:30 pm

Among the candidate producers of an original creation whatever its form, published during the year 2023, the jury selected and rewards journalistic work which highlights initiatives in favor of peace and interreligious dialogue. Created in 2017 by the Federation, this Prize is awarded for the seventh time in memory of the priest murdered on July 26, 2016 in his church in Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray.

From 06:30 pm to 08:00 pm
Free time

From 08:00 pm — Hôtel Panorama (restaurant on the 1st floor)
Standing buffet dinner

hosted by **Dominique Bouchait**, master cheesemaker, *Meilleur Ouvrier de France*

FRIDAY JANUARY 26

From 08:00 am to 09:00 am — Basilica of the Rosary
Mass

Thematic workshops

Friday January 26 / Hemicyle and other room indicated on site / 9:15 am - 10 am

In a workshop, in small groups, to discuss between participants and with guests on the following themes (of your choice)

5. AI cathos: the example of CatéGPT

Generations of images, contracts, job offers, articles... but also catechetical responses! Based on ChatGPT, CatéGPT seeks to recreate Catholic teaching in a fun way, trying to be as faithful as possible to the texts of the Catholic Church while giving this tool the appearance of a discussion.

Speaker:

Nicolas Torcheboeuf

An engineer in Switzerland, Nicolas Torcheboeuf is interested in new technologies and particularly in what concerns artificial intelligence. With his brother, he notes a great ignorance of the fundamental texts of the Church among the young people of their generation, even among practicing Catholics. The technologies around ChatGPT quickly appeared as a fantastic opportunity to rediscover all these texts: Holy Scripture, catechism, Encyclicals, etc. in a simplified way, in order to answer all the questions that we may ask ourselves today.

6. What rules for the use of AI?

Faced with the rise of artificial intelligence, it is becoming increasingly difficult to know whether information is genuine and processed by a human, or whether it was generated by an AI.

Faced with uncertainties and the risks of spreading false information, charters and commitments are being put in place, in order to certify media as producers of true information.

Speakers being confirmed.

From 10:00 am to 10:45 am — Hemicycle Hall

Tasting of regional products

with the friendly participation of cheese producers (cow, goat and sheep), local cured meats, artisanal preserves, Jurançon winemakers, etc. Possibility of purchase.

Plenary 4. The synod can he repair the divisions of the Church?

Conference-debate / Hemicycle / Wednesday January 26 / 10:45 am - 11:45 am

Launched by Pope Francis in 2021, the synod on synodality began with a major consultation across the world, culminating in national syntheses and then work on a continental scale. If certain subjects appeared to be universal concerns, these summaries also highlighted that both the vision of the synod itself and the expectations regarding it could vary greatly from one country to another, when they do not oppose each other.

Hopes raised in some countries are as many fears in others. These divergences can be explained by historical reasons, practices and different theological views. The whole challenge of the second Roman assembly, then of the magisterial document which will eventually follow, will be to succeed in getting these voices to agree.

Speakers :

Mike Lewis

Mike Lewis is a Catholic writer, editor and podcaster from the United States. He is the co-founder and editor-in-chief of the website *Where Peter Is* (wherepeteris.com), which publishes articles and commentary on the Catholic Church.

He has written extensively on the traditionalist and ideological opposition to Pope Francis that is pervasive in the American Church and elsewhere. Previously, Mike worked in the communications department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and for the *Catholic Climate Covenant*. He is married with four children and lives near Washington, DC.

Marie-Lucile Kubacki

Head of the religion section at the weekly *La Vie*, Vaticanist, correspondent in Rome, Marie-Lucile Kubacki has covered religious news since 2011.

In 2017, she co-wrote the book: *Why Religious? This life is worth it*, with Sister Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops. She is the author of numerous articles, analyzes and reports in the Vatican, in France and in several countries around the world.

Sister Christine Danel

Sister Christine Danel, trained as a doctor, is a nun of the Xavière congregation. She has notably worked for over fifteen years at a research center for HIV/AIDS in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2017, she was elected as the superior of her congregation for a six-year term.

Sister Christine Danel was appointed as an expert by Pope Francis at the synodal assembly held in Rome last October.

[By videoconference].

From 11:45 am to 12:00 pm — Hemicycle of the Conference of Bishops of France

CONCLUSION OF THE CONGRESS

From 12:30 pm to 02:00 pm — Hotel Panorama (restaurant on the 1st floor)

Friendly seated lunch

For people leaving before lunch, possibility of a take-away packed lunch (to be reserved when registering).

From 03:00 pm to 03:45 pm — At the Sanctuaries Reception and Information Center

Screening of the film on the message of Saint Bernadette (to be confirmed)

>>> As every year, the Federation provides you with free shuttles on arrival and departure, connecting the Saint-Joseph gate of the sanctuaries (50 m from the hotels) to train stations and airports. VTC, minibus or touring coaches will be identifiable by their "Congress St. Francis de Sales" sign. The schedules will be communicated to you by email before the Congress and on site at the reception stand. For your trip, we invite you to consult snCF-connect.com, volotea.com, ryanair.com, and other reservation sites. **Recommended times from Paris:** by train, departure Wednesday at 06:39 am (arrival at 11:22 am), return Friday at 12:57 pm (arrival Paris 05:49 pm) by direct TGV *Inoui*; by direct plane *Volotea*, departure Orly Wednesday 08:45 (arrival at 10:10), return Friday departure 18:40 (arrival Orly at 20:05). **Recommended times from Rome:** direct *Ryanair/Air Malta* flight, departure Wednesday at 02:25 pm (arrival at 04:25 pm), return Saturday at 08:50 am (arrival Rome 10:40 am); no direct return flight on Friday, compulsory transit from Toulouse via Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid or other major European destinations.