

An Inspirational
Paradigm:
Creating
Communities of
Encounter for Jesuit
Business Education



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF JESUIT UNIVERSITIES

“Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good.”

– Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 129.

“Business abilities, which are a gift from God, should always be clearly directed to the development of others and to eliminating poverty, especially through the creation of diversified work opportunities.”

– Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* 123.

“The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become.”

– Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education*, 2000.

Introduction

The original Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education was published in 2020, prior to a series of profound global disruptions that have reshaped our social, economic, and educational landscape. Since then, the world has experienced a global pandemic, the escalation of regional and international armed conflicts, and the rapid emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence. These developments have intensified existing inequalities, transformed the nature of work and learning, and raised new ethical, social, and anthropological questions. In light of these changes, the original paradigm requires not a simple revision, but a renewed articulation capable of responding to today's realities with greater depth, urgency, and discernment.

Motivated by a concern over increasing income inequality, the crisis of migration and violence, and the reality of a world of "haves and have-nots", critics have noted that the present economic and financial order increasingly favors those with wealth and power, in *Laudato Si'* what Pope Francis called the Technocratic Paradigm. Those excluded from this economy are swelling the ranks of the poor and marginalized, thus increasing the possibilities for social disruption. A paradigm of inclusion with special concern for sharing the benefits of increasing wealth to improve social conditions for all is proposed as a "counter" to the reigning paradigm of wealth creation which ignores the impact on the environment, the social fabric of a community and the lives of ordinary citizens.

This document proposes an updated Inspirational Paradigm structured around three interconnected elements. **First**, it offers a renewed reading of the current global context and its implications for Jesuit business education. **Second**, it articulates a set of fundamental human "hungers" that Jesuit business education seeks to awaken and cultivate, shaping the inner dispositions from which responsible leadership can emerge. **Third**, it presents the creation of communities of encounter—rooted in dialogue, social friendship, and discernment—as the institutional and cultural response to these hungers and as a path toward the common good. In addition, the document includes an appendix devoted to an Ignatian discernment on Artificial Intelligence (AI), recognizing generative AI as one of the most transformative forces shaping business, education, and society today.



A. The State of Affairs

Business and the market economy are a uniquely transformative force for good. A score of society, academic, and religious leaders have echoed the thoughts of Pope Francis with which we began this document: business is a most powerful way to improve lives; it is a noble vocation. It is essential that business education help students appreciate the good that business does and can do. Jesuit business schools must focus students' attention on both recognizing and working toward business endeavours that foster the common good and promote human dignity. However, as we acknowledged in the first version of this document in 2020, many challenges to the common good and human dignity persist in our world, depriving a large number of people of the benefits of the market economy.

Five years later, these challenges have deepened, and a sense of urgency has grown in depth and strength. We have seen the potential for good and the emerging signs of new challenges from the growth in such areas as AI. While its full impact is still unknown, we realise, that, among other things, it will change the nature of work for many (e.g., students, alumni, faculty and staff). Like other revolutions in technology, efficiency and speed will dominate the development and application of AI, but the lack of ethical guidelines and the potential negative forces of commercialization will advance before guardrails can be agreed upon and established. This cautions us to allow for reflection and analysis of its impact on the lives of ordinary people who might be negatively impacted, including young people (see appendix A).

We know that the gains from technological progress can provide widespread societal improvements, but thus far the benefits of AI are accruing to those at the top of society, leaving the middle class and poor to increasingly worry about their futures. As many have pointed out, the COVID Crisis may not have caused these social and economic disruptions, but that crisis sped up what we now see as inevitable changes in many areas—health care, education, work, etc.—exposing the deficiencies in our social fabric and structure.

In his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis notes that the crisis demonstrates that we do not yet have a way to respond to global problems. All the major issues affecting the human family, and especially our intertwined economies, are global. Pope Francis proposes that our response needs to be an increase in human fraternity and solidarity.

One succinct summary of key forces contributing to our deteriorating social fabric is captured by what Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, calls the

four “P’s.”¹ Taking the “Three P’s” of Moises Naim – Populism, Polarization, and the Post-truth age – Fr. Sosa adds a fourth – Protectionism.² The spread of **Populism** which refers to the increasing reliance on strong leaders who appeal to the fears and prejudices of a nation and utilise anti- democratic tactics to address social problems. What we see in nearly all sectors of our social lives is **Polarization**, a dividing into camps, a diminishment of respect for those who think differently, and an “Us versus Them” mentality that stifles dialogue. This is the world which our students not only observe but is the source of a rise in anxiety and depression prevalent among youth across the globe. The increasing reliance on the manipulation of media, the spreading of half-truths, or outright denial of the truth, characterises political life in this **Post-truth** age. What results is a destruction of trust in institutions which are dedicated to the wellbeing of all, to honesty and integrity. **Protectionism** is the turning away from international cooperation to ensure that a nation’s doors are closed to those not already included and favored.

As has become obvious to many, this is a world of shattered dreams, a world without a plan for inclusion, for addressing such global issues as the climate crisis, the expansion of armed conflict, the increase in refugees fleeing dire circumstances and immigrants seeking a better life, the sin of racism, a world of short- sighted arguments against growing problems. As *Fratelli Tutti* points out, “Often the voices raised in defence of the environment are silenced, using apparently reasonable arguments that are merely a screen for special interests” (no. 12)³. These unaddressed problems, especially the challenge of migration where millions are now without a claim to a home or citizenship, is addressed only piecemeal and as a narrowly local and regional problem. We see politicians stoke fears of “the other” to turn those in need of a decent and safe place to live and care for their families into enemies to be feared and denied access to basic human needs.

What then might be the paths of hope, the way forward in such a world? After a long meditation on the “Parable of the Good Samaritan,” *Fratelli Tutti* proposes that a recognition of our equality and dignity require that we cultivate a virtue of social friendship and create a **culture of encounter** in our families, places of work, communities and nations.⁴ **Social friendship** and a **culture of encounter** are ways to honor and promote the common good which is served when a nation welcomes,

¹ Arturo Sosa, SJ, *The Jesuit University: Witness to Hope, Creative and Dialogical Presence*, Address delivered at the Assembly of the International Association of Jesuit Universities Bogotá, Colombia, June 29 to July 3, 2025.

² Moises Naim, *The Revenge of Power: How Autocrats Are Reinventing Politics for the 21st Century* (St. Martin's Press, 2022).

³ *Fratelli Tutti*, Encyclical of Pope Francis, October 3, 2020.

⁴ The culture of encounter emphasizes moving beyond indifference to truly see, listen, and connect with others, especially the marginalized, by crossing barriers and valuing diverse human experiences, thereby recognizing the human dignity of all.

protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile and vulnerable.⁵ Fraternity and social friendship cannot be demanded; it is the product of the hard work of encounter.

All of our business schools pursue academic excellence, but education that prepares young people for this world must consider how “excellence” is measured—not by school rankings or journal reputations alone, but by what our graduates become and by how the school models and promotes a culture of encounter and social friendship. Rankings and reputational indicators may follow as a consequence of doing these things well, but they are not the ultimate purpose of Jesuit business education. If graduates of a Jesuit business school are to be instruments for the creation of a new social order characterized by a desire to encounter, then skills such as deep listening and an openness to the opinions of others must be modelled both inside and outside the classroom.

Universities and, more specifically, undergraduate and graduate business schools, play a crucial role in addressing these challenges and building opportunities for positive change. Their responsibility is, at a minimum, **threefold**:

1. To **generate new knowledge** that deepens our understanding of the business sector and impacts the way business is conducted through their research, including research that addresses social challenges and economic discrepancies; and
2. To help raise awareness and **provide a framework for reflection** on the role each student plays in being part of the solution, as agents of change, and to support students and faculty as they develop concrete strategies for becoming part of the solution to these challenging issues; and
3. To **build a world where encountering the “other”** is recognized as the best path forward for managing our personal and social challenges.

⁵ Social friendship means moving beyond mere solidarity to active care and shared responsibility, much like the Good Samaritan. It transcends differences and isolation, fostering genuine connection and mutual support, especially for the marginalized.



What then are the implications for creating an environment that prepares students for this world and is truly **encounter-centered** in its pedagogy?

B. Hungers We Hope to Elicit

We seek to awaken in our students a set of deep “hungers” (i.e., deep desires) that ignite purpose, expand imagination, and inspire a hopeful commitment to transforming the world. Jesuit business education does not merely equip students with the hard and soft skills required to succeed in today’s complex economy; it aims to stir in them a profound aspiration to become agents of integral human development, leaders who grow in the fullness of their humanity while contributing to the flourishing of others. These are the hungers we specifically strive to awaken, cultivate, and strengthen:

Learning Environments that Foster Encounter:

Formative experiences prepare students to respond with creativity, discernment, and purpose to the complex ethical, social, organizational, and technological realities of our time. An Ignatian approach to learning emphasizes the context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. Student learning is deepened when they engage not only with real-world challenges through live case studies and digitally enhanced environments, but also through meaningful work with communities and organizations.

Integrated Knowledge:

Considering the overwhelming amounts of information they face, students need a more purposeful formation that integrates their intellectual, affective, intentional, and critical thinking capacities. Ignatian pedagogy aims to help them understand how diverse concepts fit together to reach deeper levels of insight and meaning.

A Moral Compass:

Students today experience the limitations that accompany a moral discourse that focuses almost exclusively on individual rights, while largely ignoring the responsibilities we have to each other. Our students need to acquire an ethical foundation, and methods for moral discernment and the cultivation of moral character.

Community and Belonging:

We want students to value building meaningful communities that have genuine connectedness and model engaged civility, to display a strength of passion and commitment to use their gifts and talents for others, perhaps as entrepreneurs creating opportunity for others; there can be a sense among them that they have found their voice as change agents, and now they long to participate more actively, creating more good in the world.

Global Perspective:

Having seen the limitations and dangers of ethnocentrism and nationalism, our students need to develop skills like deep listening and an open mindset to embrace a more global perspective. Each of us dwells in many communities, from the community of our birth to the community of the human family and have duties to each of these communities.

Emotional Well-Being:

Students experience a world of rapid technological change, loneliness, uncertainty, and constant pressure. They long for learning environments that recognize their vulnerability, create safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces, and promote their emotional well-being. By fostering discernment, inner balance, and resilience, we need to assist our students to develop the interior resources to approach the future with hope, navigate complexity with courage, and cultivate healthy, fulfilling lives and relationships.

Adult Spirituality and Meaningful Impact:

Jesuit education awakens a hunger for an adult spirituality that gives meaning to life and opens a horizon of transcendence. Integrating faith and reason, this spirituality becomes the inner source from which students discern who they are, what ultimately matters, and and for and with whom they are called to live. Through this discernment, spirituality becomes a driver of meaningful impact, guiding students to translate their convictions into responsible action oriented toward the common good. For our students to generate positive and lasting impact, we should strengthen their capacity for deep listening, integrated thinking, collaboration, communication and diplomacy. They should thus be enabled to engage in efforts that advance human dignity and social transformation.

What then must a Jesuit business school become to accompany our community—students, faculty, staff, and alumni—to address the larger challenges of our day?

C. Creating a Community of Encounter in Jesuit Business Schools

These hungers find an inspiring response in Pope Francis' call for the fostering of communities of encounter. Our schools should become places instilled with a culture of shared journeys among and between their stakeholders: students, staff, faculty, alumni, and other business leaders. This encounter begins and is regenerated by each invitation to deep, meaningful community engagement embodying the call to be people for others. A **community of encounter** is a **welcoming, mentoring, and discerning community**. That is, a welcoming community is an inclusive community. A mentoring community provides accompaniment by community members with more experience and applicable knowledge. A discerning community is a community that is moved to constantly review its commitment towards the common good.

The key principles of Jesuit education and Ignatian spirituality are the means through which schools can create, grow, and continually adapt this culture of encounter. The purpose of our community of encounter is to foster students that embody the four Cs of Jesuit education: **competent** in intellectual and technical skills, **conscious** because it has the intrinsic ability to discern the rightness and goodness of their own actions, **compassionate** towards the poor and marginalized, and **committed** to co-creating a more just and sustainable world. These principles form students with a critical perspective on society's needs, challenges and opportunities.

How then are these key components evident in the following?

- **Humanistic Education.** Offering a humanistic education is the responsibility of faculty staff, and administrators. The goal of a humanistic education is the education of the whole person to discern their purpose in life and making a meaningful impact. Beyond achieving technical excellence in business courses, a humanistic curriculum draws upon the insights of Catholic social teaching as its essential source. This curriculum encompasses subjects such as ethics, the responsibility of business to society, humanistic management, governance, and sustainability. This should lead to a deepening of critical thinking, and a better understanding of the social reality in service of the common good and the strengthening of democratic values. This curriculum should help us understand the needs of the poor and the excluded.
- **Interior and Spiritual Formation.** Jesuit education also nurtures the interior and spiritual dimension of the person. Integrating faith and reason, this formation invites students to engage in personal reflection and discernment about what

ultimately matters and how they are called to live and serve. Inspired by the values of Catholic Social Teaching, this spiritual horizon encourages students to ground their personal and professional choices in a deeper sense of meaning, responsibility, and care for human dignity. In this way, the inner life becomes a source of discernment and commitment in the pursuit of justice and the common good.

- **Experiential Learning.** Our classrooms extend beyond the four walls of the physical room through experiential learning approaches that engage students with real-world challenges and structured reflection. One such approach is service learning, which integrates academic content with community-based projects grounded in guided reflection, fostering awareness of societal challenges and a strong commitment to solidarity, justice, and the common good. Another experiential pathway is project-based learning in partnership with organizations, where students work on real problems faced by firms, public institutions, or social organizations to address societal challenges. In this way, students – first – apply disciplinary knowledge to generate evidence-based solutions while developing professional, ethical, and collaborative skills. And second, we ensure that they develop real exposure to societal challenges and become aware of their capacity to improve or solve them.
- **Ignatian Pedagogy.** Ignatian pedagogy is our primary tool for formation, rooted in a dynamic of **context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation**. Experiential learning is complemented with other methodologies such as Socratic and/or Ignatian dialog⁶, that emphasize critical thinking, empathetic listening, collaborative activities, innovative mindset, clear communication, and integrated knowledge.
- **Creating a Learning Environment of Meaningful Encounters.** An environment of open dialogue and meaningful encounters inside and outside of the classroom are essential parts of the student journey. Also, co-curricular activities, including student associations and clubs, contribute to welcoming and integrating new students, as well as the development of leadership skills and the application of learning. Another high-impact practice is faculty-student research programs, especially those designed to promote deeper, clearer understanding for positive social impact.
- **Faculty and Staff Engagement.** Faculty and staff are called to actively embody and sustain the community of encounter by leading through example in their teaching, mentoring, administrative practices, and daily interactions. This includes modelling inclusive and respectful relationships, practicing attentive

⁶ By Ignatian dialog we mean a process which one approaches with an open mind, listening to what others have to say, and assuming they participate with good intentions.

accompaniment of students, fostering collaboration across roles, and engaging in continuous self-reflection on how their professional responsibilities contribute to the common good. Faculty and staff are encouraged to integrate Jesuit values into curricula, pedagogical practices, advising, and support services, ensuring that evaluation, feedback, and decision-making processes are aligned with the formation of competent, conscious, compassionate, and committed graduates.

The community of encounter in Jesuit business schools is called to be one that fosters meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, openness to a diversity of viewpoints, care for one another as fellow learners. *Cura personalis* also drives our engagement process within the business school community and without, especially with the poor and marginalized and recognizing them as brothers and sisters to each of us. Creating a community of encounter also requires fostering a culture of care—one that takes seriously the dignity, vulnerability, and well-being of each person, and that shapes learning environments marked by attention, accompaniment, mutual responsibility, and care for our common home.

As we release this document, Pope Leo XIV has just issued his encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, which focuses on human dignity in the era of AI. It offers an overview of Catholic Social Teaching, a compelling account of the challenges facing humanity, and the moral guidance needed to navigate the opportunities and risks posed by AI. This perspective should enrich the discussion presented in our appendix.

We end our reflections six years after our first Inspirational Paradigm, with the final paragraph from that document. The task facing us **is still as urgent today** as it was then:

A Jesuit education in business is firmly based upon an ethical framework that emphasizes the fundamental questions of the dignity and the potential of the individual, the centrality of the common good, and the importance of social networks that affirm and support human flourishing. Each academic field—marketing, finance, accounting, management, human resources, etc.—acknowledges that the present approach to business education, with its emphasis on the profit motive and neglect of social good, contributes to an unsustainable economy that does not support human flourishing. Each academic field should then offer an alternative vision based on ethical principles and the promotion of virtue. What is best for all and for the planet? It is the responsibility of each faculty member, department, and school to articulate their position vis-a-vis the Ignatian paradigm.

Now is the moment to respond to this critical challenge for business education.

Appendix: A Discernment on AI

Technology has the power to heal, connect, educate and protect our common home; but it can also divide, exclude and generate new forms of injustice. In the abstract, technology in and of itself is not a solution to humanity's problems, just as it is not inherently evil. In practice, however, technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate and use it. Therefore, the primary choice is not between a "yes" or "no" to technology, but rather between constructing Babel or rebuilding Jerusalem.

— Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas 9.

Since the release of the Inspirational Paradigm in 2020, one of the most radically transformative developments in our world has been the rapid rise of AI, particularly Generative AI.

AI offers the possibility of a "digital revolution" akin to the industrial revolution of the 19th century. It will radically impact the nature of work, including in higher education. Beyond the ease of access to information offered by the advent of the internet, AI opens up a new world of opportunities. Generative AI models can summarize vast amounts of information in the span of minutes and lower the barriers of entry to academic knowledge. They can also serve as conversation partners to develop research ideas and offer meaningful feedback throughout the research development process. They ease the learning curve for technical skills such as coding, and they can help develop or rethink pedagogical approaches for any course. AI creates new opportunities for students, faculty, and administrators. Already, we see them grappling with these possibilities. These positive promises are accompanied by risks, especially with the safety of personal data or the temptation to use AI tools as a means to avoid the hard work of developing critical thinking skills.

The advent of AI, with its opportunities and challenges, calls for a systematic reflection about work and education.⁷ Leveraging the tools from Ignatian Spirituality inherent to the Jesuit tradition, we invite all Jesuit business schools to engage in a discernment about how to use AI for teaching and research. This *discernment in common* is a unique opportunity for faculty and staff to come together and discuss the aims and methods of Jesuit business education, with respect to both teaching and research.⁸

All discernments are discernments towards good outcomes: a discernment in common about the use of AI in Jesuit business education ought to start from the perspective that AI can be a force for good for our academic project. However, this discussion cannot ignore the ethical dilemmas already presented by AI. For example, AI increases the risk of creating an irreversible gap between technology haves and have-nots, leading to greater wealth disparities and reducing social mobility. Also, the environmental footprint of AI and its impact on energy and water availability and costs are important concerns. Other ethical issues will likely arise in the course of a discussion rooted in deep reflection from the faculty and staff. Yet the main goal of the discernment is to assess how best to use AI as a force for good to foster the aims and methods of Jesuit business education, such as the ones outlined in our Inspirational Paradigm.

We propose the following questions for Jesuit business schools' communities to consider with respect to AI:

1. How are we using AI in the classroom and in assignments that elicit from students their own assessment of the data and the challenges we face in a particular discipline or course? That is, how is AI assisting with and strengthening the learning process, not replacing it?
2. How are we pointing to uses of AI that may have harmful effects on others, on the environment or on our collective well-being?

⁷ The Catholic Church has taken a keen interest in the impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on society. A discernment process would do well to consider the latest reflections on AI coming from the Vatican, including *Antiqua and Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*, Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, January 28, 2025; *Message of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for the 60th World Day of Social Communications*, January 24, 2026; and *Magnifica Humanitas*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIV, May 25, 2026.

⁸ For some background on the history and principles of discernment in common, see Fr. Arturo Sosa's Letter to the Society of Jesus "On Discernment In Common", September 27, 2017, pages 2-6: https://www.educatemagis.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/2019/08/2017_09_27_letter_p_general_on_discernment_english_-2.pdf

We encourage each Jesuit Business School's leadership to reach out to their school or university Mission Officer to adapt Fr. Sosa's framework for a discussion in the context of discerning the future of Jesuit Business Education.

3. How can AI support students in becoming competent, conscious, compassionate, and committed? What challenges might AI pose to the development of these competencies?
4. How can AI help awaken and nurture the following core aspirations in our students? What challenges might AI present in fostering these aspirations?
 - A Learning Environment that Fosters Encounter
 - An Integrated Knowledge
 - A Moral Compass
 - A Community of Belonging
 - A Global Perspective
 - Emotional Well-Being
 - An Adult Spirituality and Meaningful Impact
5. How can AI contribute to the creation of a Community of Encounter? What challenges, if any, does AI pose to the development of such a community?
6. In the context of humanistic education, how can AI help make education more genuinely humanistic? Conversely, what aspects of students' learning journeys should be strengthened to foster humanistic formation within an increasingly technologically sophisticated environment?

We hope that these questions can bring faculty and staff together for a meaningful process of reflection and discussion towards using new technologies to improve Jesuit business education. We look forward to discussing the process and outcome of this discernment in meetings of the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools (IAJBS) and Colleagues in Jesuit Business Education (CJBE).

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Background

In December 2025 a working group convened by the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU) Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education Taskforce gathered at ESADE in Barcelona to begin work on a second edition of the Inspirational Paradigm (IP). This group included:

*Cristina Gimenez Thomsen – Professor and Director of Identity and Mission, ESADE (Spain)

*Joseph Phillips – Professor and Dean Emeritus, Seattle University (USA)

*Luz Karime Abadia Alvarado – Dean, Javeriana Bogotá University (Colombia)

*Isabelle Chaquiriand – Dean, Uruguay Catholic University (Uruguay)

*Roberto Galang – Dean, Ateneo Manila University (Philippines)

*Michael Garanzini, SJ – President Emeritus, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (USA)

*Patricia Grant – Associate Dean, Georgetown University (USA)

*Javier Marquez Vigil – Dean, Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Spain)

*Nicholas Santos, SJ – Associate Professor, Creighton University (USA)

Quentin Dupont, SJ – Assistant Professor, Georgetown University (USA)

Pilar Castro Gonzalez – Dean, Loyola Andalucía (Spain)

*Denotes IP Taskforce member

After the meeting in December, the working group continued to convene remotely and solicited feedback on the document from across the Jesuit business school network. The document was approved on April 13, 2026 by the full IAJU IP Taskforce and formally released on June 1, 2026. The IP Taskforce membership is as follows:

Cristina Gimenez Thomsen – (co-chair) Professor and Director of Identity and Mission, ESADE (Spain)

Joseph Phillips – (co-chair) Professor and Dean Emeritus, Seattle University (USA)

Luz Karime Abadia Alvarado – Dean, Javeriana Bogotá University (Colombia)

Isabelle Chaquiriand – Dean, Uruguay Catholic University (Uruguay)

Joseph Christie, SJ – Secretary for Higher Education of the Society of Jesus (India)

Roberto Galang – Dean, Ateneo Manila University (Philippines)

Michael Garanzini, SJ – President Emeritus, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (USA)

Patricia Grant – Associate Dean, Georgetown University (USA)

Claudia Ibarra Baidon – Dean, ITESO (Mexico)

James Joseph – VP for Advancement and Innovation and Executive Dean, LeMoyne College (USA)

François Kaboré, SJ -- Rector, Kosyam Jesuit University of Science (Burkina Faso)

Javier Marquez Vigil – Dean, Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Spain)

Nicholas Santos, SJ – Associate Professor, Creighton University (USA)

June 1, 2026