



Dear Friends,

The Council has been watching the development of the COVID-19 pandemic constantly since the May newsletter was sent to members. We have come to the conclusion that the responsible way to proceed, is to plan the Congress in hybrid form. This will allow participants the choice of travelling to the United States and joining the programme on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, or of participating from their homes, via forms of recorded transmission.

In taking this step, we have had to weigh up advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include a mode of participation for those whose health prevents them from travelling, and for those who live in countries whose nationals are forbidden to travel internationally. In addition, the hybrid mode will facilitate engagement from those members in countries where US visas are hard to obtain, and from European University teachers, whose teaching year will not have ended. The disadvantage is the assault on our Society's deeply incarnational way of conducting its life and we do not underestimate this. We enjoy hearing papers together, discussing them over meals, exchanging research news, worshipping together, and renewing friendships during coffee breaks and in free time. It is, of course, our greatest hope that as many people as possible will be able to come to Notre Dame safely.

This decision has a number of implications, which the Council is exploring with the Local Committee. At this stage, the most important information for members is that proceedings will begin on the evening of Monday 19th July 2021 and end at lunch time on Friday 23rd July 2021. Although the Biennial General Meeting in Durham agreed to a Tuesday commencement, the additional 24 hours will allow us to space events so that those joining us online, and in different time zones, are not under enormous pressure. The Local Committee's generous flexibility is a great encouragement to us.

In the May Newsletter, we promised to consult the membership in order to gain their responses to the plans which the Council is putting in place. You will soon be receiving a link to a short survey, and we would be grateful if you would respond as quickly as possible to the questions. Your answers will be crucial in the further work of the Council and the Local Committee. One of the innovations that a hybrid conference brings, is the opportunity for registered participants to send a pre-recorded short paper, if they are not able to attend the Congress in person. Further information on formats will be sent to all those who choose to share their research in this way. You will see a further question in the survey, which invites members who will be participating remotely to host regional discussion groups. It is our hope that we can make the best of our new circumstances by fostering engagement among groups of scholars who live in the same time zone.

To conclude with good news, we are delighted that the following keynote speakers have agreed to address aspects of the theme of 'Liturgy and the Arts':

François Cassingena-Trévedy OSB 'The Art of Liturgy'
(response by Dr Arnaud Montoux)

Professor David Brown (St Andrews) 'The Arts in Liturgy'
(response by Dr Gerald Liu)

Professor Deborah Sokolove (formerly Wesley Seminary & Director of the Henry Luce III Center for Theology and the Arts) 'Liturgy and the Arts'
(response by Dr Marcia McFee)

Dr Mirella Klomp (Protestantse Theologische Universiteit, Amsterdam) 'Liturgy as Public Art'
(response by Dominik Abel, graduate student)

All of our speakers have accepted our invitation in the knowledge that the mode of presentation might be determined by responses to the pandemic and we are enormously grateful for their understanding. Please consider submitting your own paper proposals. In addition, please give some thought to standing for office, or nominating someone else to stand. There will be elections to the following offices:

Council Members at Large (3 vacancies)
Treasurer (to serve with a co-treasurer)
Secretariat (2 vacancies)

Descriptions of the responsibilities attached to Council membership and to Executive positions can be found at this link:

<https://www.societas-liturgica.org/constitution-for-societas-liturgica/>

With all good wishes,

Bridget Nichols, President