SYNERGY TORONTO 2026

CONFERENCE

Program & General Information

Registration - 2nd Floor Courtyard	
Monday, Nov. 2	3:00pm - 7:00pm
Tuesday, Nov. 3	7:00am - 7:00pm
Wednesday, Nov. 4	7:00am - 7:00pm
Thursday, Nov. 5	7:00am - 9:00am

November 3 – 5, 2026

Chelsea Hotel
33 Gerrard St W
Toronto, ON

Venue Map

Churchill Ballroom
Plenary Sessions
Closing Mass

Courtyard
Meet Our Sponsors
Registration/Information

Exhibitor Hall
Meet Our Agencies

Mountbatten Salon
Dining Area
Poster Presentations (Day 2)

Mountbatten Lane
Breakfast & Lunch Buffet

Windsor Room
Meditation/Quiet Room
(Day 1 &2)

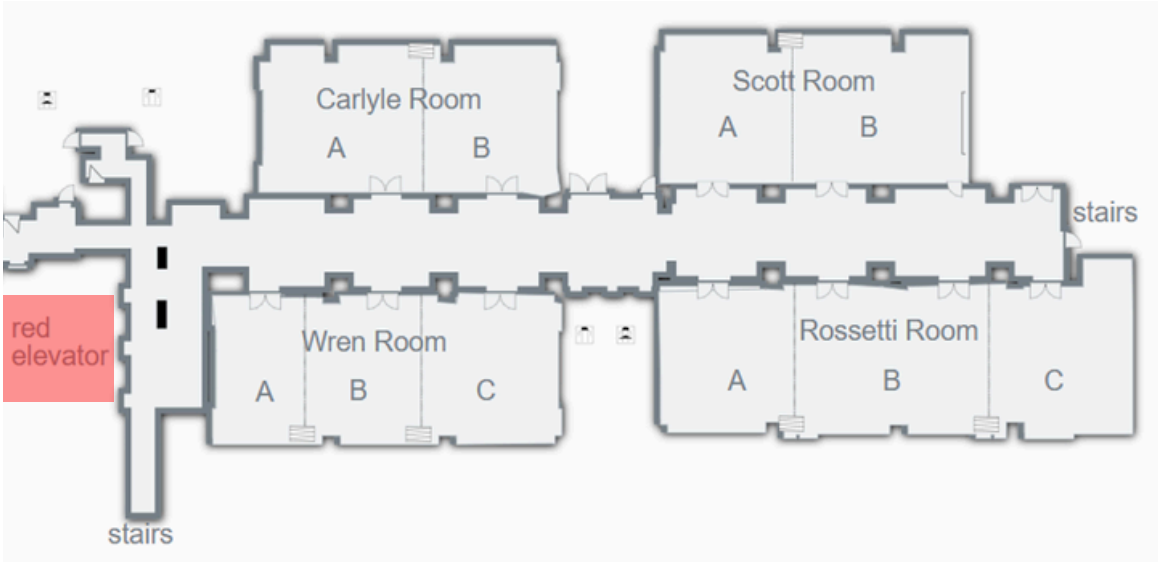
2nd Floor



3rd Floor

Carlyle Room
Rosetti Room
Scott Room
Wren Room

Concurrent Sessions
World Café



Conference Essentials

General Info:

- Breakfast - Buffet-style - Served every morning between 7:30am -9:00am
- Lunch - Day 1 &2 - Buffet-style - Served at 12:00pm
  - Day 3 - Boxed Lunch - Served at 12:30pm
- All meals will be served from Mountbatten Lane, adjacent to our designated dining area in the Mountbatten Salon.
- Coffee & Snacks will be served on the 3rd Floor on Days 1 & 2, and in Mountbatten Lane on Day 3.

Accessibility Directions:

Getting to the 2nd Floor:

The central staircase leads directly to the conference area.
You can take the Blue, Green, or Red elevators to reach the second floor.
The Red elevators reach a Level 2 Split-Floor, there is a 5-step staircase to reach the main conference area.
If you take the Blue or Green elevators, you will reach this area directly.

Getting to the 3rd Floor:

The central staircase leads directly to the 3rd floor conference rooms.
If you require step-free access to Carlyle, Rossetti, Scott, or Wren on the 3rd floor, please use the Red elevators. From the main courtyard, please take the Blue or Green elevators down to the main floor, then switch to the Red elevators.

WiFi & Password

- Wi-Fi network: Chelsea Meeting | Password: Chelsea7979

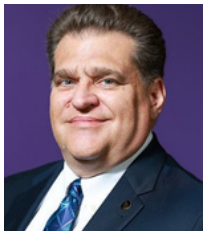
Listening and Sharing Together

In the spirit of synodality and collaboration, we will be using the **Slido** app during select sessions, including the World Café, to gather ideas, reflections, and feedback. Look for the QR codes provided throughout the conference and participate using your mobile device.

Day 1 Morning

Morning Plenary Session 9:00am - 10:45am Churchill Ballroom

Living the Tradition: Catholic Social Teaching in Our Time



Keynote Panel Discussion
Moderator: Stephen Hurley
Panelists: Dr. Brian Corbin, Ed.D., Dr. Moira McQueen, Ph.D. & Sr. Mary Rowell, C.S.J.

Description: This opening plenary explores the richness and relevance of Catholic Social Teaching through three complementary perspectives: its historical foundations, its ethical vision and its practical application in contemporary life and ministry. Together, our presenters will examine not only what Catholic Social Teaching teaches, but also how it challenges us to live, lead and serve in ways that promote human dignity, solidarity and the common good.

Participants will be invited to deepen their understanding of this living tradition, engage critically with the realities of our time and consider how faith can inspire meaningful action in our organizations, communities and society. In doing so, the session will lay the foundation for the conference's broader exploration of how faith-inspired leadership and collaboration can respond to the complex social challenges of our time.

Break 10:45am - 11:00am 3rd Floor Main Corridor

Morning Concurrent Sessions 11:00am -12:00pm 3rd Floor

Featured Sessions: 60mins

1. Human Dignity at the Centre: Catholic Ethical Decision-Making in light of Catholic Social Teaching. – **Facilitated by Dr. Moira McQueen, Ph.D.**
2. The Ministry of Personal and Global Healing: Fostering Personal and Organizational Change – **Facilitated by Sr. Donna Markham, O.P.**
3. The Ongoing Evolution of Catholic Social Tradition – **Facilitated by Sr. Mary Rowell, C.S.J.**
4. Reconciliation in Today's Changing Times – **Facilitated by Hon. Graydon Nicholas**

Paper Presentations: 25mins - Offered at 11:00am & 11:35am

1. The Angel Foundation – Bridges of Hope, Community and Service - **John Wujek**
2. Beyond Shelter: Addressing the Housing Crisis through "Progress in Place" and Research-Driven Innovation – **Angie Peters**
3. Bonds of Solidarity: How Subsidiarity helps Canadians care for refugees - **Renze Nauta**
4. Movement Toward Change: A Collaboration Between Healthcare Professionals and Deaf Services Canada – **MacKenzie; Rose Etheridge; Mihret Tekle**
5. Reconciliation as a Spiritual Gift and Social Task: Lessons for Catholic Social Teaching in Practice – **Fr. Gordon Rixon, S.J.**

Lunch 12:00 - 1:00pm Mountbatten Salon

Day 1 Afternoon

Afternoon Plenary Session

1:00-2:45pm Churchill Ballroom

Catholic Leadership Panel






Keynote Panel Discussion
Moderator: Dr. Agnes Thomas Ph.D.
Panelists: Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine, Sr. Donna Markham O.P., Hon. Graydon Nicholas, & Shirlee Sharkey

Description: This plenary session will explore leadership in Catholic education, health care, and community services, drawing on the wisdom and experience of distinguished leaders who have dedicated their lives to serving others.

Break

2:45 - 3:00pm 3rd Floor Main Corridor

Afternoon Concurrent Sessions

3:00 -4:30pm 3rd Floor

Panel Discussion: 90mins

1. No One Beyond Care: Redemption, Healing, and Men Who Have Used Violence – **Shereen McFarlane; Oluwapelumi Adegbenjo; Suchira Banerjee; Mandira Aich**

Conversation Circles: 90mins

1. Building Mission-Centred Cultures Across Catholic Health, Education, and Social Services – **Jane Kenny; David Long; Sr. Sonal Castelino, C.S.J.; Vanessa Nicholas-Schmidt**
2. Catholic Social Teaching in Practice Through the Arts – **Audrey Ferrer and Dolores Kwapien**
3. Room at the Table: An Interactive Opportunity to Experience L'Arche Daybreak Community – **Trish Glennon; Liska Stefko; Clara Fraschetti**
4. St. Gabriel Passionist Garden Ministry: Working to Foster, Develop and Preserve the Beauty and Vitality of the Unique Garden Spaces at St. Gabriel's Parish –**Marlene Bourdon-King**

Evening Mass & Tour of St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica

Attend the evening Liturgy at the beautiful St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, located at 65 Bond St., a 10-minute walk from the Chelsea. His Excellency, Bishop Robert Kasun, will be celebrating Mass. Participants will have the opportunity to tour the Cathedral following Mass.

Mass: 5:30pm / Tour: 6:15pm

*Please inquire at the main registration desk with questions or for more details.

Day 2 Morning

Morning Plenary Session 9:00am - 10:45am Churchill Ballroom

Connecting Indigenous Wisdom to Catholic Social Teaching





Facilitators: Edwina (Eddie) MacDonald - Michipicoten First Nations
Dr. Rosella Kinoshameg - Odawa/Ojibway Elder

Description: This session will include scripture, storytelling, Indigenous wisdom and Traditional teachings to explore the Seven Sacred Teachings (Respect, Humility, Compassion / Bravery, Honesty, Truth, Wisdom and Unconditional Love) and Circle Teachings, and to look into their relationship to Catholic Social Teaching (CST). These will greatly help to inspire personal reflection through the Circle and move forward in taking action, even in small ways.

Break 10:45am - 11:00am 3rd Floor Main Corridor

Morning Concurrent Sessions 11:00am -12:00pm 3rd Floor

Featured Sessions: 60mins

1. Catholic Social Teaching and the Moral Imagination – **Facilitated by Dr. Brian Corbin, Ed.D.**
2. Human Dignity at the Centre: Catholic Ethical Decision-Making in light of Catholic Social Teaching. – **Facilitated by Dr. Moira McQueen, Ph.D.**
3. The Ongoing Evolution of Catholic Social Tradition – **Facilitated by Sr. Mary Rowell, C.S.J.**

Paper Presentations: 25mins - Offered at 11:00am & 11:35am

1. Building Social Bridges: Co-Creating Intergenerational Communities of Belonging – **Gladys Hrabi; Katarina Lee-Ameduri**
2. The Choice to Change Project: An Innovative, Trauma-Informed Stepped Care Model for Men's Healing, Accountability, and Survivorship - **Mandira Aich; Covy Blanco**
3. Recovering the Authentically Human in a Digitally Mediated Age: A Case Study in Catholic Higher Education – **Dr. Patrick Craine, Ph.D.**
4. Society of Saint Vincent de Paul: Practical Solutions to Canada's Housing Crisis – **Louise Coutu**
5. The Working Centre Grassroots Model for Living Catholic Social Teachings – **Joe and Stephanie Mancini**

Lunch 12:00 - 1:00pm Mountbatten Salon

Poster Presentations - Meet Our Presenters

1. New Beginnings – **Arcangelo Limanni**
2. Beyond the Food Bank: Reimagining Food Security, Dignity, and Hope – **Crystal Rees & Pam Inshan**
3. Palliative Care Coaching – **Ronald Annushton**

Day 2 Afternoon

Afternoon Plenary Session

1:00-2:45pm Churchill Ballroom

Synodality in Action







Keynote Panel Discussion
Moderator: Angela Townend MSW, RSW
Panelists: Sr. Gill Goulding, C.J. & Linda Staudt

Description: This panel explores the connection between the Church's call to walk together and the growing need for Catholic organizations to collaborate more intentionally in service of the common good. Rooted in the principles of listening, discernment, trust, and shared responsibility, this plenary session will examine how working together across ministries can strengthen relationships, break down silos, and create new opportunities to advance our shared mission and better serve our communities.

Break

2:45 - 3:00pm 3rd Floor Main Corridor

Afternoon Concurrent Session

3:00 -4:30pm 2nd & 3rd Floor

World Café - Collaborating and Building the Future Together

All conference participants are invited to join this interactive conversation following the plenary session on Synodality in Action. Using a World Café format, participants will engage in a series of small-group discussions designed to surface ideas, share experiences, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Together, we will discern priorities, identify possibilities for action, and consider how we can collectively build a more hopeful and vibrant future.

The World Café also offers a unique opportunity to connect with fellow participants from across ministries, sectors, and communities. Through conversation and attentive listening, participants will gain insights from those serving in a variety of contexts, including individuals and organizations working alongside people on the margins. These exchanges foster fellowship, strengthen relationships, and create new possibilities for learning and collaboration.

Every voice is welcome, and every perspective has something valuable to contribute.

Day 3 Morning

Morning Concurrent Sessions

8:30 -9:30am 3rd Floor

Featured Sessions: 60mins

1. Catholic Social Teaching and the Moral Imagination - **Facilitated by Dr. Brian Corbin, Ed.D.**
2. Continuing the Journey of Walking Forward Together: Learnings from Indigenous and Non-indigenous Relations and Bridge-Building **- Adam and Julia Kozak**
3. Youth Panel Discussion - **Moderated by Sr. Evanne Hunter, IBVM**

Paper Presentations: 25mins - Offered at 8:30am & 9:05am

1. A Caring Community Working Together to Increase Affordable Housing – **Luigi Ferrara**
2. Prevention to Intervention: Addressing Youth Homelessness and Sex Trafficking at Covenant House Toronto – **Rachel George**
3. The Heart of Christian Mission: The Heart of Jesus Christ – **Cheryl Ann Smith**
4. (Re)Purpose and Collaboration: The Felician Sisters' Model for Housing Solutions – **Brian Harris; Sr.Jeremy Midura, CSSF**
5. St. Philip Neri's Table: A Client-Choice Parish Food Pantry Advancing Food Security through Catholic Social Teaching – **Yesmil Pena**
6. The Stage as Sanctuary: Participatory Drama, Family, and Belonging in the Rise Up Kids Model **- Sijesh Augustine**

Break

9:30 - 10:00am Mountbatten Lane

Closing Mass

10:00 - 11:00am Churchill Ballroom



Rooted in Faith, United in Mission

His Eminence, Frank Cardinal Leo, Archbishop of Toronto, will celebrate Mass as conference participants gather in prayer and thanksgiving, reflecting on the insights, relationships, and shared commitment to serving the common good fostered throughout the conference.

Break

11:00 - 11:15am Mountbatten Lane

Day 3 Afternoon

Closing Plenary

11:15am-12:30pm Churchill Ballroom



L'Arche Toronto Sol Express

The Sol Express creative and performing arts program is a dynamic space for adults with developmental disabilities to explore, develop, and share their gifts and stories through creative expression

Call to Action

The end of the conference is only the beginning. In this closing plenary, we will celebrate the ideas, relationships, and momentum generated over three days of discussion and learning. The plenary will feature an inspiring theatrical reflection by **L'arche Toronto Sol Expres**s, inviting participants to consider how the conference's spirit of transformation and collaboration can shape their work and inspire meaningful action. Participants will also be invited to help shape the next phase of this work by identifying priorities for ongoing collaboration and collective action. Together, we will reaffirm our commitment to driving meaningful change and lay the foundation for a future gathering to continue the conversation.

Lunch & Learn Workshops

12:45 -2:30pm 3rd Floor

1. Character-Based Leadership: A Framework to Think About Organizational Culture and Wellbeing - Kathleen Redmond

Organizational effectiveness rests on two things: the culture people work in — both stated and whispered — and the character of the people, especially leaders. The session anchors this in the research that states that every organization has two structures: the formal chart and the everyday relationships within it.

2. Disability and Accessibility in the Workplace- Dr. Chavon Niles, Ph.D.

This interactive session will offer an embedded learning experience focused on access, equity and ableism. Through guided activities and practical scenarios, participants will consider whose bodies, minds and ways of participating are anticipated in everyday planning—and who may be unintentionally excluded. Rather than treating accessibility as an afterthought or checklist, the session will connect accessibility to human dignity and full participation, supporting participants to identify practical ways of embedding it into their programs, services, communication and organizational practices.

3. Faith, Stewardship & Firewalls: Safeguarding the Mission in the Age of AI - John Del Grande

Cyber threats are evolving, AI is reshaping the workplace, and the choices we make matter. This practical session explores cybersecurity and responsible AI through the lens of stewardship, trust, and mission, helping us embrace new technology while protecting our people, information, and the communities we serve.

4. Government Relations and Advocacy - Benjamin Lamb

Ben Lamb will provide a landscape update about Canada's political environment and advise on best practices for Catholic advocacy opportunities.

5. Palliative Care Best Practices and Lessons Learned on Collaboration and Shared Approaches to Health Care Delivery in the Margins - Fr. Dr. Matthew M. Durham, D. Min.

Explore lessons from Journey Home Hospice on collaborative approaches to palliative care for people experiencing vulnerability, strengthening partnerships to ensure compassionate, dignified care for all.

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR CONFERENCE PLANNING PARTNERS

Archdiocese of Toronto

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