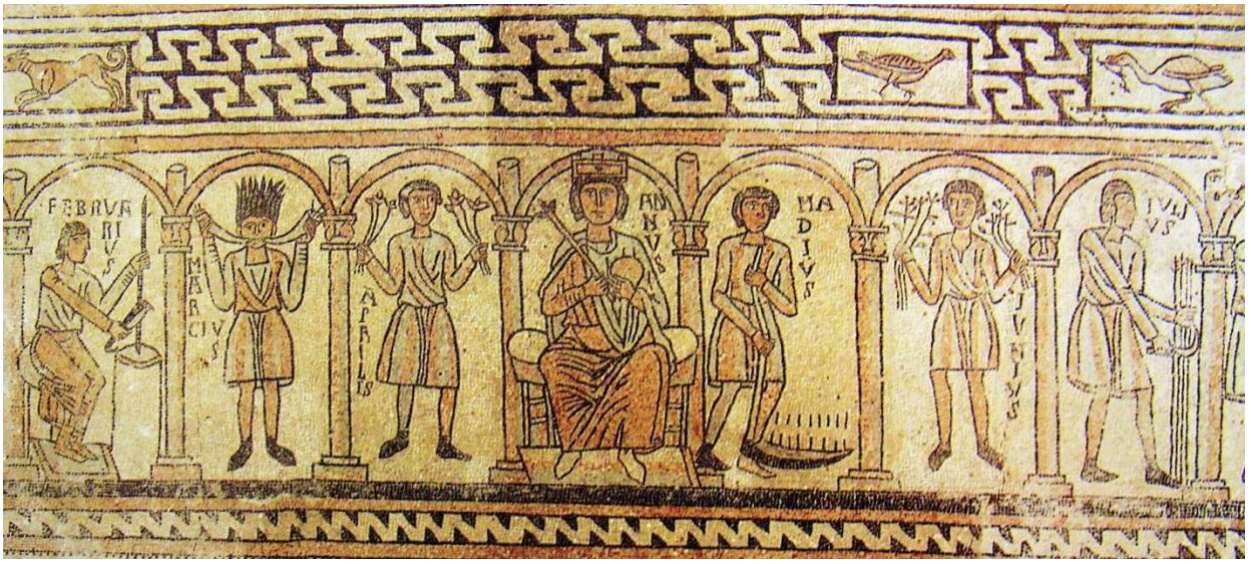
DICASTERO PER L'EVANGELIZZAZIONE
SEZIONE PER LE QUESTIONI FONDAMENTALI
DELL'EVANGELIZZAZIONE NEL MONDO

Press release

The Church of the Sheaves: An International Gathering in Rome

on Mission as an Exchange of Gifts

From October 22 to 24, 2026, representatives of local churches, scholars, and pastoral workers will discuss reciprocity, synodality, and new missionary perspectives.



From October 22 to 24, 2026, Rome will host the international conference *The Church of the Sheaves :* A Church for All: Synodal in Method, Missionary in Spirit, Credible in Love. The gathering will bring together church leaders, scholars, pastoral workers, and regional working groups involved in a process that focuses on mission as an exchange of gifts among local Churches. The proceedings will take place at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, with moments of celebration and fellowship in the Vatican and throughout Rome.

Sponsored by the Dicastery for Evangelization in collaboration with the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University and the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, as well as ecclesial institutions and missionary partners across five continents, the initiative aims to contribute to the formation of pastoral leaders through a renewed approach to mission, grounded in interculturality, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.

The image of Sheaves, inspired by Psalm 126, evokes the fruits of mission that every community is called to share. The project seeks to move beyond a one-way view of missionary relationships, in which some Churches are considered merely donors and others merely recipients: every local Church has gifts to offer and gifts to receive, for the benefit of the entire ecclesial community.

Presentations and Moderation of the Session

The opening session (Thursday, October 22, 10:00–11:30, "Saint John Paul II" Auditorium at the Pontifical Urbaniana University) will feature a welcome address by Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelization in the Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches, and remarks by Vincenzo Buonomo, papal delegate serving as rector of the Pontifical Urbaniana University.

The initiative will be presented by Fr. Stan Chu Ilo, co-director of the project and research professor at the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University in Chicago, whose area of specialization is global Christianity, African studies, and intercultural dialogue, together with Fr. Jaeho Chung, co-director of the project and professor in the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, whose teaching focuses on missionary spirituality, interreligious dialogue, and theological currents in the Asian context.

The symposium will consist of sessions dedicated to the continents

A Global Formation Program

Among the initiative's main tools is the globally accessible online course *Gift Exchange: The Church of the Sheaves*, divided into fourteen modules and designed for bishops, priests, consecrated persons, catechists, lay pastoral workers, and faith educators. The program will integrate theological reflection, interdisciplinary studies, pastoral experiences, and testimonies from all five continents. It will also include five continent-specific documentaries, five volumes on pastoral theology, regional meetings, and a podcast. The project's timeline extends through Pentecost 2028.

The work will be enriched by consultations with dioceses and religious congregations on specific themes: hospitality and a sense of belonging in communities, collaboration among Churches, forms of exclusion, intercultural formation, and new missionary contexts. The goal is to gather pastoral experiences and practices that help Christian communities recognize differences not as an obstacle, but as a resource for communion and mission.

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Journalists and media operators, wishing to attend the sessions on 22 and 23 October, must apply, no less than 24 hours before the event, through the Holy See Press Office online Accreditation System available at: press.vatican.va/accreditamenti