

CENTRE FOR SAFEGUARDING MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Call For Papers

International Conference:

TRUST AND DIALOGUE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: RETHINKING POWER AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

(Offered in French and English)

Submissions by March 30th, 2026

In the wake of recent scandals, the Catholic Church faces a renewed call to become more trustworthy — a call that engages the challenges of cultural transformation and the rising demand for honesty, transparency, and shared responsibility. This journey requires a profound reexamination of how power is understood and exercised within relationships, a task marked by both theological depth and pressing pastoral urgency.

This conference is part of the International Project *Towards a Trustworthy Church* (<https://ustpaul.ca/en/pilot-project-on-restorative-dialogue/>). The main researchers of this project are Dr. Karlijn Demasure (Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada) and Dr. Sheila McMahon (University of San Diego, USA).

This conference invites scholars, theologians, pastoral workers, and practitioners to explore how trust and dialogue can serve as foundations for renewing relationships within the Church — among clergy and laity, men and women, institutions and communities, and between the Church and the wider world.

We welcome contributions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- **Biblical, Theological, and Canonical perspectives** on trust, dialogue, and authority
- **Servant leadership** as a model for those in power
- **Synodality and participation**: new models of governance and shared discernment
- **Pastoral practices** that foster trust and mutual accountability, exploring power in Church dynamics for the sake of safeguarding
- **Restorative dialogues** fostering healing and trust
- **Communication, transparency, and the media** in shaping trust within the Church
- **Interreligious or ecumenical perspectives** on trust and dialogue
- **Sociological and psychological dimensions** of ecclesial relationships and authority
- **Survivor Movements, Bystanders, and Challenging Power Dynamics**

Submission Guidelines

- Proposals can be written in English or in French.
- **Abstracts** of 250–300 words should be submitted by March 30th, 2026.
- Please include a short **biographical note (100 words)** with your submission.
- Notifications of acceptance will be sent by April 15th, 2026.
- Full papers can be in English or French and no more than 20 minutes in presentation length.
- A selection of the best papers will be published.

Conference Details

- **Dates:** 13-16 October 2026
- **Location:** Saint Paul University, Ottawa
- **Languages:** English and French

Keynote speakers present at the conference in person include:

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| • Dr. Jim Keenan SJ | • Dr. Patrick Goujon SJ |
| • Dr. Ivo Aertsen | • Dr. Christine Hinze |
| • Dr. Karlijn Demasure | • Dr. Léocadie Lushombo |
| • Dr. Annemie Dillen | • Dr. Sheila McMahon |

Submissions and inquiries should be sent to:

✉ trustresearch@ustpaul.ca



This conference is in partnership with the
University of San Diego Center for Restorative Justice