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Historical and critical criteria of discernment regarding the resilient reuse of decommissioned catholic churches

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FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
BANGKOK THAILAND

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



ICOMOS PRERICO
ICOMOS International Scientific committee on Places of Religion and Ritual

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## Preface

This book of Abstracts is about the 2022 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium (ScSy22). The ScSy22 is recorded another historical event of ICOMOS. This is the first time Scientific Symposium held two tracks both in situ and online presentations. At the beginning to prepare this ScSy22, the situation of the world was not clear whether peoples can travel freely or not. In fact, we were not sure how many ICOMOS members physically participate in this symposium? That's why we decided to combine both in situ and online presentations.

Theme of the 2022 Scientific Symposium is "**Religious Heritage**: Celebrating and conserving places of religious and ritual significance in a global world and in changing climates." Under this theme, we considered 5 sub-themes like as:

1. Significance of Places of Religion and Ritual
2. Influence of Climate Change on the Conservation, Protection and Management of Religious Heritage
3. Changing Use and Perception of Places of Religion and Ritual following the Covid-19 pandemic
4. Practice of Pilgrimage following the Covid-19 pandemic
5. Reuse of Religious Heritage places

Many peoples helped this 2022 Scientific Symposium possible. During the preparation process, Mikel Landa, the president of Advisory Committee, made decisions at important issues. ISCs like ICAHM, ICICH, ICLAFI supported reviewers for the abstracts. Hatthaya Siriphattanakun, a board member of ICOMOS and a member of ICOMOS Thailand, helped the setting of this symposium. Gaia Jungeblodt, director of international secretariat, supported setting the date and other matters from the beginning, and Jessica Khan, Administrative assistant of ICOMOS Secretariat, helped from ICOMOS side such as communicating with EPs and ISCs. Eps did volunteer work for the translation of abstracts in English and French, and Vasu Poshyanandana, Secretary General of PRERICO and a member of ICOMOS Thailand, did a great work in the process of organizing this symposium.

My special thanks to 27 reviewers from ICAHM(3), ICICH(2), ICLAFI(5), PRERICO(14) and ICOMOS Thailand(2) for their valuable evaluation on time. At the last, I would like to appreciate to all members who summitted abstracts and deliver your presentations in situ and online for two days. Without all of you, this 2022 Scientific Symposium was not succeeded.

Thanks.



**Hae-Un Rii**
President, ICOMOS ISC on PRERICO

# ScSy22

**ICOMOS Advisory Committee 2022 Scientific Symposium**
**Religious Heritage: Celebrating and conserving places of religious and ritual significance in a global world and in changing climates**
Fine Art Department, Bangkok, Thailand, 29 and 30 October 2022

In the context of the ICOMOS annual meetings, the ICOMOS Advisory Committee organises its 2022 Scientific Symposium on 29 and 30 October at the Fine Arts Department (Bangkok, Thailand) on the theme "Religious Heritage: Celebrating and conserving places of religious and ritual significance in a global world and in changing climates".

Religious heritage is a living heritage which greatly impacts the way people go about their daily life. The Covid-19 pandemic in particular has brought changes to patterns of worship and the use of religious heritage places, for instance due to limits in attendance numbers at ritual ceremonies, requirements for social distancing, development of on-line worship. Nevertheless, its religious and ritual significance has not diminished for communities.

Climate change and its effects – such as changing temperatures and seasonal climate patterns, floods, droughts, extreme precipitation events, unseasonal rain, snow and wind, melting glaciers – are having an impact on the conservation, protection and management of religious heritage – places of religion and ritual. Existing conservation and management plans, especially long term planning, needs to be revised. The recognition and response to these issues vary widely based on the traditions and customs of religious and/or ethnic groups.

**The 2022 Scientific Symposium attempts to explore these impacts and challenges through the following sub-themes:**

1. **Significance of Places of Religion and Ritual**
   - The significance of places of religion and ritual is recognized in different ways across the world, according to religions, regions and ethnic groups.
   - Case studies or comparative studies on the perception of the significance of places of religion and ritual across religions, regions and ethnic groups are invited.

2. **Influence of Climate Change on the Conservation, Protection and Management of Religious Heritage**
   - How do communities recognize and respond to climate change across different religions and regions in the world.
   - Experiences, examples or case studies on the implementation of protection, conservation and management measures for religious heritage are invited.

3. **Changing Use and Perception of Places of Religion and Ritual following the Covid-19 pandemic**
   - The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has varied across countries, religions and ethnic groups affecting patterns of worship and ritual in different ways.
   - Proposals exploring such trends and their possible future development – will they continue or not after the end of the pandemic – are invited.

4. **Practice of Pilgrimage following the Covid-19 pandemic**
   - How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the practice of pilgrimage and what are the long-term impacts?

5. **Reuse of Religious Heritage places**
   - Case studies on issues related to changes of use and original function of religious heritage places; use by a different religious group; conflict potential and management, are invited.

# Historical and critical criteria of discernment regarding the resilient reuse of decommissioned Catholic Churches.

– Andrea Longhi

**Abstract**

The topic of decommissioning and reuse of redundant, underused or decommissioned Christian Churches involves both the scientific community – scholars of history of arts and cultural heritage – and the ecclesial communities of the secularized Western World, worried about improper use of historic churches.

For the first time ever, Vatican institutions promoted an investigation among episcopal conferences in Europe, Canada, the United States, and Australia, in order to formulate common guidelines concerning reuse of decommissioned churches. The document was voted by delegates in 2018, at the Pontifical Gregorian University. The ecclesial investigation was accompanied by a survey of recent and ongoing academic and institutional research, by the Responsible Risk Resilience Centre of the Politecnico di Torino.

This paper underlines certain aspects of the document published by the Pontifical Council for Culture including, in particular: the relationship between identity and adaptivity of historic buildings; the historical understanding and consciousness of values of religious heritage; the role of historical investigations in defining transformation possibilities of decommissioned churches; the resilience of religious heritage, understood as the balance between reaction and adaptation to traumas and pressures; perspectives in social, cultural, and management sustainability of architectural regeneration activities; the involvement of local communities and new "heritage communities" in heritagization and reuse processes. The document encourages the intersection of professional skills in the context of preservation and community participation, envisaging a planned social use, a unified territorial vision, and an approach following a network of values and shared strategies.

**Keywords**

Decommissioned churches, catholic heritage, history of architecture, values

**Contact**

Andrea Longhi, Associate Professor in History of Architecture at the Politecnico di Torino; member of ICOMOS-PRERICO Italian Committee, and of the scientific committee of the International Congress of Religious Contemporary Architecture (Seville 2013, Puebla-Mexico 2015, Santiago de Chile 2017, Porto 2019). He has been advisor of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Department for Cultural Heritage of the Church, for the investigations and the implementation of the Guidelines for decommissioning and ecclesial reuse of churches (2018).

# Critères historiques et critiques de discernement concernant la réutilisation résiliente des églises catholiques désaffectées

— Andrea Longhi

**Résumé**

Le thème du déclassement et de la réutilisation des églises chrétiennes redondantes, sous-utilisées ou désaffectées implique à la fois la communauté scientifique - les spécialistes de l'histoire des arts et du patrimoine culturel - et les communautés ecclésiales du monde occidental sécularisé, inquiètes d'une utilisation inappropriée des églises historiques.

Pour la première fois, les institutions du Vatican ont promu une enquête parmi les conférences épiscopales d'Europe, du Canada, des États-Unis et d'Australie, afin de formuler des directives communes concernant la réutilisation des églises désaffectées. Le document a été voté par les délégués en 2018, à l'Université pontificale grégorienne. L'enquête ecclésiale a été accompagnée d'une enquête sur les recherches universitaires et institutionnelles récentes et en cours, par le Centre de résilience aux risques responsables du Politecnico di Torino.

Ce document souligne certains aspects du document publié par le Conseil pontifical de la culture, notamment : la relation entre l'identité et l'adaptabilité des bâtiments historiques ; la compréhension historique et la conscience des valeurs du patrimoine religieux ; le rôle des enquêtes historiques dans la définition des possibilités de transformation des églises désaffectées ; la résilience du patrimoine religieux, comprise comme l'équilibre entre la réaction et l'adaptation aux traumatismes et aux pressions ; les perspectives de durabilité sociale, culturelle et de gestion des activités de régénération architecturale ; l'implication des communautés locales et des nouvelles "communautés du patrimoine" dans les processus de patrimonialisation et de réutilisation. Le document encourage l'intersection des compétences professionnelles dans le contexte de la préservation et de la participation communautaire, en envisageant une utilisation sociale planifiée, une vision territoriale unifiée et une approche suivant un réseau de valeurs et de stratégies partagées.

**Mots-clés**

Églises désaffectées, patrimoine catholique, histoire de l'architecture, valeurs

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Andrea Longhi, Professeur associé en histoire de l'architecture au Politecnico di Torino ; membre du comité italien d'ICOMOS-PRERICO, et du comité scientifique du Congrès international d'architecture religieuse contemporaine (Séville 2013, Puebla-Mexico 2015, Santiago du Chili 2017, Porto 2019). Il a été conseiller du Conseil Pontifical pour la Culture, Département pour le Patrimoine Culturel de l'Eglise, pour les investigations et la mise en œuvre des Directives pour le déclassement et la réutilisation ecclésiale des églises (2018).