Who Cares? Society, Religions, and the Concern for the Other

2nd Religion and Society Conference

Faculty of Theology, University of Malta

Plenary Conference Programme

Thursday, 28 May 2026

08:00–08:45 Welcome Coffee & Registration
08:45–09:00 Opening Speeches –Convenor Prof. John Berry; Rector Elect Prof. Frank Bezzina
09:00–09:30 Keynote: Wasim Salman – *Care as Being-With Others: Reflections for Religion and Society*

Session 1 Foundations of Care: Philosophy, Theology, and Crisis

09:30 Rastislav Nemec – *The Philosophical Aspects of Permanent Crisis as an Opportunity for Human Mutuality*
09:45 John Berry – *Care Beyond Proximity: Becoming Responsible for the Other*
10:00 Ondřej Kolář – *God Who Cares: Divine Providence and Human Responsibility*
10:15 Pavle Mijovic – *The Reimagination of Care in the Contemporary World: From Philosophical Reflection to Ethical Action*

10:30–10:45 Discussion
10:45–11:15 Coffee Break

Session 2 Scripture, Tradition, and Narrative Ethics of Care

11:15 Jozef Jančovič – *From Conquest to Compassion: The Care of Captives and Moral Responsibility in the Warfare Narrative of 2 Chronicles 28:8–15*
11:30 Joseph Ellul – *Religious Leadership: Service and Solidarity*
11:45 Hector Scerri – *Jean Valjean's Iconic TLC: Some Socio-Theological Footnotes to Victor Hugo's* Les Misérables
12:00 Edward Wright – *From a Pedagogy of Empathy to Action: Cultivating Community, Social Justice, and Civic Responsibility in Catholic Religious Education*
12:15 Dorianne Buttigieg – *Anamnesis & Care: Temporal Dimensions of Authentic Christian Worship*

12:45–13:00 Discussion
13:00–14:15 Lunch Break

Session 3 Care, Hospitality, and Lived Religious Practice

14:15 Mario Tomljanović – *Caring at the Margins: Faith, Vulnerability, and Human Dignity*
14:30 Gabriele-Ausra Vasiliauskaite – *Who Cares? Clinical Pastoral Practice and Gospel Proclamation in the Context of the War in Europe*
14:45 Claire Wolfteich – *Learning Sabbath: Sustaining Religious Leaders in Public Vocations of Care and Justice*
15:00 Jimmy Bonnici & Patricia Bonello – *We Care: The Role of Priests in Maltese Society Today*

15:15–15:30 Discussion
15:30–15:00 Coffee Break

Session 4 Gender, Family, Sexuality, and Moral Imagination

16:00 Kornélia Kolářová Takácsová – *Caring Women in the Middle Ages: An Excursion into Female Spirituality in Medieval Central European Society in the 13th Century*

16:15 Jean Claude Attard – *The Perennial Other: Women & the Catholic Moral Imagination in Maltese Society*

16:30 Birutė Obelenienė – *Contradictions between Understanding Sexuality in Catholic Education and Comprehensive Sexuality Education*

16:45 Isabelle Zammit & Laura K Taylor – *Understanding Care across Different Religious Groups in Early Childhood*

17:00 Fateme Najjarzadehgan – *Qur'ānic Ethics of Care Toward Women: Marriage, Divorce, and the Moral Grammar of Protection*

17:15-17:45 Discussion & Closing of Day 1

18:00-19:00 Free Time on Sliema Front (Gzira side)

19:00-21:30 Conference Dinner

Friday, 29 May 2026

Session 5 Care, Art, Media, and Technological Imagination

08:30 Maciej Wróbel – *Listening Beyond Sound: Spirituality, Empathy, & Well-Being in Adults with Cochlear Implants*

08:45 Glen Attard – *Training the Gaze: Spirituality, Cinema, and the Moral Imagination of Care*

09:00 Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten – *Does Art Care About Us?*

09:15 Piotr Roszak – *Can AI Care? Cognitive Safety and the Limits of Technological Compassion*

09:45–10:00 Discussion

10:00–10:15 Coffee Break

Session 6 Violence, Trauma, and Religious Responses

10:15 Aini Linjakumpu – *From Harm to Care: Transformative Responses to Spiritual Violence in Religious Communities*

10:30 Danica Igrutinovic – *My Brother's (Jail) Keeper: Justice, Order, and Community in Orthodox Public Discourse*

10:45 Nadiia Volik – *Churches as Agents of Care in Ukraine's War Context: Humanitarian Responses Since 2022*

11:00 Hendrik Weingärtner – *Repair as Care for Our Common Home? Interreligious Explorations*

11:30–11:45 Discussion

11:45–12:00 Coffee Break

Session 7 Migration, Displacement, and Humanitarian Care

12:00 Elena Serina – *'For a New and Better World': Catholic Humanitarians, Refugee Care, and Global Social Justice After World War II*

12:15 Halyna Teslyuk – *'You Were Strangers': Old Testament Texts of Care Read through the Lives of Displaced Ukrainian Women and Children*

12:30 Mateja Pevec Rozman – *We Have Never Been Independent: Dependence, Virtue, and Moral Responsibility Toward the Other*

12:45 Przemysław Kantyka – *Anthropological Choice as a Determinant in the Approach to Man, Society and Nature*

13:00–13:15 Discussion

13:15–14:30 Lunch Break

Session 8 War, Law, and the Ethical Limits of Care

14:30 Tadej Strehovec – *Autonomous Lethal Decision-Making in the Gaza Conflict*

14:45 Andrii Paliukh – *Legal Frameworks of Humanitarian Care in Ukraine: The Role of National and International Law*

15:00 Ikenna Paschal Okpaleke – *Beyond Othering: Reframing Religious Difference for Peacebuilding*

15:15 Therese Comodini Cachia – *Duty of Care and Environmental Stewardship: A Comparative Analysis of the ECHR and* Laudato Si'

15:30 Zuzana Svobodová – *Care of the Soul is Care of the Community*

15:30–15:45 Discussion

15:45–16:00 Coffee Break

Session 9 Christian Ethics, Social Theory, and Local Care Practices

16:00 Piotr Kopiec & Sławomir Pawłowski – *Rediscovering Christian Determinants of the Social Problem Theory and the Theory of Welfare State*

16:15 Marta Scialdone – *Beyond the Self. The Other and the Bahá'í Perspective: Sustainable Values to Shape Subjectivities Across Borders*

16:30 Vilma Šliužaitė – *From Caring Relations to Universal Responsibility: A Christocentric Perspective on Care Ethics*

16:45 Jude Thaddaeus Buyondo – *Intergenerational Human Flourishing: The Chinese Rites Controversy and Contemporary Epigenetic–Psychotherapeutic Insights*

16:45–17:00 Discussion & Closing