

# Latin American Religious Leaders Webinar to Discuss COVID-19 and Society Inequalities Exposed by the Virus

*The G20 Interfaith Forum, the world's leading organization focused on the intersection of faith and policy, discusses Latin America during COVID-19.*

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*Thiago Alves Pinto*

G20 Interfaith Forum gathers leaders to discuss Latin American social issues and how to address them from a religious perspective.

The G20 Interfaith Forum, the world's leading organization focused on the intersection of faith and policy, is hosting a webinar to discuss the difficulties exposed in Latin America during COVID-19. The virtual meeting will take place on

June 24, 2021 from 11:30-3:30 MDT, focusing on how Latin American religious voices engage with the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. Register for the free webinar at [https://bruneluniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_T6X02xsdTX2Q49qsDC\\_6aA](https://bruneluniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_T6X02xsdTX2Q49qsDC_6aA).

This webinar is the culmination of a series of events that explored ways faith-based stakeholders responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis—through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Speakers will explore the complex connections between sustainable development; religious cultural heritage; the pandemic and religion; digital literacy and the role of religious communities; and more.

Speakers and presenters include:

- Peter Petkoff (Brunel University London)
- Ana María Celis Brunet, Professor (Chile)
- Evaldo X. Gomes, Professor (Brazil)
- Cruz Ebensperger O., Hon. Senator (Tarapacá, Chile)
- Marcelo Bartolini, Director Art. 18 (México)
- Adelita Ravanales, Excm. Supreme Court (Chile)

- Juan Navarro Floria, Professor (Argentina)
- Claudio Epelman, Religions for Peace (Argentina)
- Thiago Alves Pinto, Professor (U.K.)
- Damaris Moura Kuo, Hon. State Congresswoman (Brazil)
- Rodrigo Vitorino Alves, Professor (Brazil)
- Guilherme de Carvalho, Theologian (Brazil)

“Religion has always played a vital role in providing relief to the poor in Latin America,” Pinto said. “Religious organizations often fill the (large) gap left by States in addressing social issues. Nevertheless, most of the work done by these organizations is ad hoc, often managing pressing social needs. Religious organizations have the power, however, to do much more. They can mobilize people to work towards long term goals, such as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.”

"In 2020, and in the face of the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, the G20 Interfaith Forum focused particularly on the way in which this pandemic and the measures taken by States to combat it, affected the fundamental right to religious freedom," added Floria. "A year later, we propose to review the evolution of these issues in Latin America, considering that far from having concluded, the pandemic has spread and deepened in the region; and at the same time there are new challenges linked to vaccination."

"This meeting is an opportunity to exchange perspectives from various fields around a selection of current and emerging issues such as religious cultural heritage and its protection, reflections after a year of COVID-19, and another style of pandemic," Brunet said.

The gathering continues a series of meetings that will produce policy recommendations for the global G20 Interfaith Forum to be held in Bologna Italy, September 13 to 15. These meetings brought together Latin American religious leaders, government officials, academic experts and business leaders who have been charged by G20 Interfaith Forum organizers with developing policy recommendations that will be submitted in September to world leaders at this year's G20 Summit.

## About the G20 Process

The Group of Twenty, or G20, is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, bringing together the leaders of Earth's most prosperous economies. Collectively, G20 members represent around 80 percent of the world's economic output, two-thirds of the global population and three-quarters of international trade. Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues as well as broader humanitarian issues targeted by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

## About the G20 Interfaith Forum

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives to help shape the overall G20 agenda. It draws on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. Through its extensive network of networks, it helps prioritize key global policy goals and point toward practical means of implementation at every level of society.

For more information, please visit [www.g20interfaith.org](http://www.g20interfaith.org).

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