

# Programme



## 17th Annual International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (IRTP) Conference

24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, June. Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia, Spain



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY



Càtedra de  
Gastronomia,  
Cultura i Turisme  
Calonge i Sant Antoni

# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (IRTP) Conference

## University of Girona - Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia, Spain

### Overall Programme

Wed 24th	14.00-15.00	<b>Registration</b> <b>Sala Venerable</b>	14.00-15.00	<b>Meet the Publishers:</b> Chat with Kevin, Razaq & Carlos about publishing in books / journal. <b>Sala Venerable</b>
	15.00-16.00	<b>Opening of Conference / Welcome Session - Sala Venerable</b> Welcoming from Abbot Manel Gasch I Hurios on behalf of the Montserrat Benedictine Community, Dolors Vidal from University of Girona, Kevin Griffin and Razaq Raj from the Institute for Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage and Silvia Aulet from the UNESCO Chair of Cultural Policies and Cooperation, UdG.		
	16.00-16.15	<b>Launch of IRTP (Institute for Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage)</b> Kevin Griffin, Razaq Raj		
	16.15-17.00	<b>Keynote Speaker 1:</b> Religious Tourism Promoting a Culture of Peace, Interfaith Dialogue, and Human Fraternity. <b>Nour Farra Haddad ~ Sala Venerable ~ Chaired by Razaq Raj</b>		
	17.00-18.00	<b>Round Table Discussion: Daniel Olsen, Stephen Haller, Tadeja Jere Jakulin, Tamara Rátz ~ Sala Venerable</b> ~"Should the future of pilgrimage be driven by technological innovation, sustainability imperatives, or the preservation of spiritual authenticity?" ~ <b>Chaired by Kevin Griffin</b>		
	18.00- 18.30	<b>Catalan Music Showcase</b>		
	20.00-22.00	Dinner (paid by delegates) **		
Thurs 25th	9.00-9.30	<b>Registration, arrival Sala Venerable</b>		
	9.30-11.00	<b>Session A:</b> Technology <b>Chair:</b> Dino Bozonelos <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session B:</b> A.I. <b>Chair:</b> Daniel Olsen <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	11.00-11.30	Coffee Break		
	11.30-13.00	<b>Session C:</b> Sustainability <b>Chair:</b> Darius Liutikas <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session D:</b> Experience <b>Chair:</b> Polyxeni Moira <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	13.00-14.15	Lunch (Buffet dels Apòstols)		
	14.15-15.15	<b>Keynote Speaker 2:</b> An Approach to Sacred Spaces from the Perspective of the Connection Between Nature and Health. <b>Silvia Gili and Ricard Fernandez ~ Sala Venerable ~ Chaired by Silvia Aulet</b>		
	15.15-16.00	<b>Session E:</b> New Pilgrimage <b>Chair:</b> Ruth Dowson <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session F:</b> Peace and the Future <b>Chair:</b> Razaq Raj <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	16.00-18.00	Museum guided tour		
	19.30	Video mapping at the Basilica		
	20.00	Dinner (paid by delegates) **		
Friday 26th	9.30-11.00	<b>Session G:</b> Understanding the Pilgrim <b>Chair:</b> Tadeja Jere Jakulin <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session H:</b> Governance <b>Chair:</b> Shin Yasuda <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	11.00-11.30	Coffee Break		
	11.30-12.30	<b>Keynote Speaker 3:</b> ~ From Interpretation to Experience: Narrative as A Space of Encounter with the Sacred in Religious Tourism. <b>Tomasz Duda ~ Sala Venerable ~ Chaired by Carlos Fernandes</b>		
	12.30-14.00	<b>Session I:</b> Pilgrimage and Development <b>Chair:</b> Tamara Rátz <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session J:</b> Theory and Philosophy <b>Chair:</b> Stephen F Haller <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	14.00-15.30	Lunch (Buffet dels Apòstols)		
	15.30-17.00	<b>Session K:</b> Protecting the Sacred <b>Chair:</b> MD Javed Kawsar <b>Sala Venerable</b>	<b>Session L:</b> Motivation <b>Chair:</b> Dane Munro <b>Abat Muntades</b>	
	17.00-18.30	<b>Closing ceremony - Presentation IRTP conference 2027</b> Razaq Raj, Kevin Griffin, Carlos Fernandes, Silvia Aulet and Darius Liutikas		
	20.00 -23.00	<b>Gala Dinner</b> ~ including <b>Institute for Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (IRTP) Annual Awards &amp; Conference Best Paper Awards</b>		
Sat 27th	9:30-13.00	<b>Fieldtrip: Visit to Santa Cecília de Montserrat and Degotalls Trail</b>		
	13.00-14.30	<b>Networking lunch</b>		

\*\* For dinner there are two options available: Abat Oliba Buffet or Abat Cisneros Hotel Buffet. Please make sure to carry your credential to get a 10% discount. Please contact the staff for more information about location and prices.

\*\* Timetable for everyday Praying Lauds (7:30) & Vespers (18:45). Free entry at the Santa Maria de Montserrat Basilica.

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**University of Girona - Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia, Spain**

**25 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session A: Technology**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**When the Oracle is an Algorithm: The Future of the Sacred Experience**

Po Man Tse

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

**Instagrammable Sacredness: The commodification and visual consumption of Mosque Tourism**

Kristel Kessler

MCBS (Modern College of Business and Science), Oman

**Reconstructing Sacredness in the Digital Age: Mobile Digital Sacred Spaces and Transformative Experiences in Heritage**

Dong Wang, Silvia Aulet

University of Girona, Spain

**25 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session B: AI**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**The Implementation of Digital Tools in the Interpretation of Heritage from a Cultural and Pastoral Perspective**

Silvia Aulet, Anna Vilanova-Prat  
University of Girona, Spain, Catedral de Barcelona, Spain

**AI Generated Narratives in Religious Tourism Marketing: Opportunities and Ethical Risks**

Md Javed Kawsar, Rashed Khan  
University of Salford, United Kingdom

**AI-Enabled Religious Pilgrimage: A Human Centred Sacred Framework for Authenticity and Responsible Transformation**

Parichay Parivesh, Razaq Raj  
Katharos Techie, India, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

**25 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session C: Sustainability**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**Authenticity, Multifunctionality, and Sustainability in Religious Tourism: The Case of the Strahov Monastery in Prague**

Dimitrios Mylonopoulos, Polyxeni Moira  
University of West Attica, Greece

**Integrating Sustainability into Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage**

Kevin Griffin, Razaq Raj  
Technological University Dublin, Ireland, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

**Green Spiritual Tourism and Sacred Landscape Experience on Mount Emei, China**

Feiran Yang, Katia Hueso Kotekaas  
Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

**Analysing Tourism Impacts in the Azores: Inducing a Sustainable Tourism Model for a Spiritual Destination**

Cláudia Faias, Cláudia Seabra  
University of Coimbra, Portugal

**25 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session D: Experience**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**Pilgrimage Routes as Spaces of Interaction: Shared Experiences of Blind and Sighted Participants**

Jolanta Kručkauskaitė  
Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

**The Phygital Pilgrim: Navigating Hybrid Sacred Experiences at The World Youth Day Jubilee 25 in Rome**

Justyna Liro, Elżbieta Bilka-Wodecka  
Jagiellonian University, Poland

**"No Straight Journeys": Tracing the "Twisted Rope" of Japan in Will Ferguson's Hitching Rides with Buddha**

Dorothy Lane  
Luther College, Canada

**From "non-places" to meaningful places: Lourdes and Camino Lituano Case**

Marius Minkevičius  
Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

**25 June**  
**15.30-16.30**

**Session E: New Pilgrimage**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**Relics on the Move: Decentring Pilgrimage and the Mobility of Holy Objects in Diaspora Communities**

Dino Bozonelos, Daniel Vecchio  
California State University, United States

**Religious Tourism as Neoliberal Piety: Islamic Spirituality and Sufism in Egyptian Islamic Tour Operators**

Shin Yasuda  
Takasaki City University of Economics, Japan

**Pop as Sacred Space: Rosalía's Lux and the Reconfiguration of Contemporary Spiritual Tourism**

Dolors Vidal Casellas, Adriana Figueroa Cortez  
University of Girona, Spain

**25 June**  
**15.30-16.30**

**Session F: Peace and the Future**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**Walk of Mutual Repair: Pilgrimage in the Context of Peirce's Triadic Philosophy**

Tadeja Jere Jakulin, Dane Munro  
University of Primorska, Slovenia, University of Malta, Malta

**Sacred Spaces and Mountain Communities: Regenerative Strategies in a Tourism Context**

Carlos Fernandes, Isilda Leitão  
Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo, Portugal, University Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

**Religious Heritage at the Crossroads: Planning the 38 Saint Stephen Memorial Year in Székesfehérvár, Hungary**

Tamara Rátz  
Kodolányi János University, Hungary

**26 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session G: Understanding the Pilgrim**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage in a Global Future World**

Darius Liutikas  
Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Lithuania

**Pilgrimage as Biographical Resource: A Process-Based Typology of Camino de Santiago Pilgrims**

Andreas Braun  
BSP Business & Law School Berlin, Germany

**Does a More Physically Demanding Pilgrimage Bring More Spirituality and Closeness to Faith**

Jaffer Idris, Jabar Yaqub  
Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

**Polish Pilgrimages in the Holy Year (Jubilee 25): Structure, Scales and Directions**

Elżbieta Bilska-Wodecka  
Jagiellonian University, Poland

**26 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session H: Governance**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**The Communicative Dimension of the Religious Event in the Event Management of Contemporary Culture**

Leticia Arráez  
Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Italy

**Governance at Religious/Cultural Tourism Destination Sites**

Dino Bozonelos  
California State University, United Stated

**Between Paths and Beliefs: Religious Tourism as a tool for cultural understanding and social transformation**

María Angélica Alvarez Orozco, Silvia Aulet  
University of Girona, Spain

**26 June**  
**12.30-14.00**

**Session I: Pilgrimage and Development**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**Ancient Pilgrimage Routes as Tools for Durable Territorial Development: Case study of Camino de Santiago**

Maria Laura Gasparini  
University of Bologna, Italy

**Unlocking the Potential of Pilgrimage tourism for Post War Tourism Recovery: Evidence from Tigray, Ethiopia**

Asefash Dejine Ayallew, Silvia Aulet  
University of Girona, Spain

**The Apparitions of Notre Dame Du Lac (Our Lady of The Lake) In Togo: Or the Roman Church's Strategy in Africa**

Pierre Fournié, Henri Dou  
Gustave Eiffel University, France, Académie de l'Intelligence Economique, France

**26 June**  
**12.30-14.00**

**Session J: Theory and Philosophy**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**Reorienting the Pilgrim-Tourist Dichotomy**

Daniel Olsen

Brigham Young University, United States

**Whose Sacredness? A Systematized Review of Theoretical Grounding and Social Representation in Tourism Studies**

Ana Maria Candell Saldarreaga, Silvia Aulet

University of Girona, Spain

**The Autopoiesis of Pilgrimage Tourism: How Cruise Passengers Self-Organise Transformational Meaning in Mass Tourism**

Taja Macek

University of Primorska, Slovenia

**26 June**  
**15.30-17.00**

**Session K: Protecting the Sacred**  
**Location: Sala Venerable**

**Negotiating the Sacred: Religious Sensitivities within Contemporary Tourism Practices**

Polyxeni Moira  
University of West Attica, Greece

**(Over) Tourism and Tolkien's Doors of Durin: Challenges and Opportunities for St Edward's Local Parish Church**

Ruth Dowson, Karen Wellman  
Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

**From Sacred Landscape to Pilgrimage Environment: The Case of Monte San Giorgio and Mendrisio**

Lorenzo Cantoni, Adelaide Gavazzi  
Università della Svizzera Italiana, Switzerland

**UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Inscription: End of the Road or a New Beginning?**

Michał Duda, Bogdan Włodarczyk, Marzena Makowska-Iskierka  
University of Lodz, Poland

**26 June**  
**15.30-17.00**

**Session L: Motivation**  
**Location: Abat Muntades**

**Religious Tourism in Islam: Between Spiritual Purpose and Sincere Intention**

Tariq Elhadary, Razaq Raj

Istanbul Nisantasi University, Turkey, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

**More Than Faith: Self-Fulfilment as a Key Driver of Memorable Religious Tourism**

Pamela Sau-Ying HO, Deborah Po-man TSE

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

**Drawing, Religious Experience and the Pilgrim's Mind**

Stephen F Haller

Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

**Reframing Sacred Journeys: Gen Z's Motivations to Visit Sacred Sites After the Pandemic**

Cláudia Faias, Carla Silva

University of Coimbra, Portugal, Polytechnic University of Viseu, Portugal



# Montserrat,

*beyond the monastery*

*Art, Nature & Spirituality*

**June, 27th**

9.30

**Meeting at the Bus stop, Montserrat Abbey**

10.00 – 12:00

**Guided visit to Santa Cecília de Montserrat Monastery**

[Santa Cecília de Montserrat](#) stands as a witness to the origins of Montserratian monasticism, having been the first monastery built on the mountain in the 10th century in a truly iconic location. From here you have a wonderful panoramic view of the most spectacular spires of the massif. The Romanesque church, restored in the 20th century by Puig i Cadafalch and, again, in the 21st century, preserves the sobriety characteristic of Catalan medieval architecture. It currently houses the *Sean Scully Art Space*, an artistic intervention that establishes a suggestive dialogue between contemporary art, light and spirituality. The visit allows you to discover the historical and cultural wealth of Montserrat in an environment of great scenic beauty, where heritage, nature and inner experience are combined in a unique way.

12.00 – 13.00

**Walking talk through El Camí dels Degotalls**

El Camí dels Degotalls is an easy walk that combines nature and the relationship between Montserrat and the many sanctuaries scattered throughout the Catalan geography. The route is decorated with majolica tiles of various Marian devotions and monuments to artists, in memory of distinguished figures from Catalonia, showing in this route the link between the sanctuaries (and Montserrat as a paradigm) and the sense of belonging. *It is a route of about 2km* with a slight gradient that runs along the foot of vertiginous walls and in its southernmost part small springs of water flow that give it its name. Legend has it that this most extreme point was the resting place of some French bishops who, fleeing the Revolution, had taken refuge in the monastery of Montserrat. While spotting some of the peaks of the Pyrenees on clear days, they sighed to return to their home, on the other side of the mountain range.

**Note: Please wear comfortable shoes**

13.00 – 14.30

**Networking lunch**