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Editor's Introduction

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TRANSFORMATIONS in BRAZILIAN CATHOLICISM

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MARC ROSCOE LOUSTAU

Transformations in Brazilian Catholicism: Editor's Introduction

Marc Roscoe Loustau is Managing Editor of the *Journal of Global Catholicism* and a Catholics & Cultures contributor. As a scholar of religious studies in the context of personal, social, and economic change, his research has focused on Catholicism in Eastern Europe where, after decades of official state atheism, there has been a prominent resurgence of religion in public life. Loustau has taught courses at the College of the Holy Cross on contemporary global Catholicism. He holds a ThD from Harvard Divinity School.

It's my pleasure to introduce the issue of the *Journal of Global Catholicism* titled, "Transformations in Brazilian Catholicism." It is especially gratifying to see this collection published because it emerges from meetings and conversations I had with the lead author and curator, Carlos Steil, in São Paulo in late 2019.

This Special Issue remained on track through the pandemic that disrupted and dislocated research projects, not to mention the global suffering it has caused. The authors were dedicated in writing, translating, and revising their research, coordinating among themselves and with the editorial team under challenging conditions. Dr. Steil, in particular, was instrumental in mobilizing a group of accomplished Brazilian sociologists and anthropologists of religion to submit articles for this issue, scholars who completed their academic training under his tutelage or have collaborated with him in the past. The quality of the assembled articles and the evident creativity they demonstrate in analyzing the changing character of Catholicism in Brazil are a testament to his pedagogical and scholarly skill.

Dr. Steil's coauthored contribution with Rodrigo Toniol, "Strong Church, Weak Catholicism: Transformations in Brazilian Catholicism," stands both as an introduction to this Special Issue and also an effort to answer the impossible: What is the state of the Catholic Church in Brazil? Both Juliano Almeida and Cecilia Mariz, Wania Amélia Belchior Mesquita, and Michelle Piraciaba Araújo explore the "porosity" of Catholicism in Brazil, which Almeida refers to as its openness to the circulation of practices and its habit of encompassing modalities of worship. Catholicism's distinctive practice of organizing mega-events is another parallel among the articles. Mariz, Mesquita, and Araújo focus on a global event, the World Youth Day held in Rio de Janeiro, which José Rogério Lopes and André Luiz da Silva cite as the paradigm of the mega-eventization of faith and a significant influence on the annual festival in Belém (Pará State) called Círio de Nazaré.

My gratitude goes to Mathew Schmalz, the JGC's Founding Editor, and Thomas Landy, Director of the Catholics & Cultures program at the College of the Holy Cross. Special thanks also go to Danielle Kane, Associate Director for Communications, and Pat Hinchliffe, Academic Administrative Assistant at the College's Rev. Michael C. McFarland, S.J. Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture.