

Prof. Dr. habil. Myriam Wijlens, STL, PhD, JCD

Biographical Note

Origin/ Citizenship

Losser, The Netherlands, 1962

Current Address

Chair of Canon Law
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University of Erfurt
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Employment

- Ordinary Full Professor of Canon Law at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Erfurt (Germany), since 2005
- Interim Vice-Leader for Research and International Affairs of the University of Erfurt (2008)
- Vice-President for International Affairs of the University of Erfurt, (2008-2011)
- Honorary professor of “Ecumenism and Canon Law” at the University of Durham (England), 2012-2024
- Assistant Professor (“Universitair docent”) of Canon Law, Theological Faculty of Tilburg, The Netherlands (1999-2005)
- Judge and Promotor of Justice, Diocese of Münster, Germany (1991-2005)

Education:

Licentiate in Catholic Theology (S.T.L. - 1986) from the Catholic University of Nijmegen (now Radboud University), The Netherlands

Master & Licentiate in canon law summa cum laude (MA & JCL-1988) from Saint Paul University and the University of Ottawa, Canada

Doctorate in canon law magna cum laude (PhD and JCD 1990) from Saint Paul University and the University of Ottawa, Canada

Habilitation with *venia legendi* for canon law (1997) Westfälische-Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany.

Areas of Expertise and corresponding acknowledgement / contacts:

Ecumenism:

- Delegate on behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity:
 - Faith and Order Commission (2008-2022); as well as Co-Convenor of its Study Group “Moral Discernment in the Churches (=MDC)” (2015-2022)
 - Faith and Order Commission, Vice-Moderator (2023-2030)
 - Consultation between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the Roman Catholic Church on Questions concerning Ecclesiology (2013-2017)
 - On behalf of MDC, Expert to the “Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission – ARCIC III” to its project on Receptive Ecumenism, 2018-onwards

- Honorary professor “Canon Law and Ecumenism”, Durham University, England 2012-2027
- Since 2018 Consultor to the “Catholic- Orthodox Study Group” of the Foundation “Pro Oriente,” Vienna
- 2017 – 2021 Member of the Academic Advisory Board of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute at Jerusalem, Notre Dame University (USA) (Appointed as proposed by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity)
- Member of the Groupe of Farfa Sabina: Roman Catholic and Protestant Theologians on the future of the Petrine Ministry (2005-2011)
- Expert to the Bishops Conference of The Netherlands (1996-2004); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2008) and the Episcopal Conference of Germany (2018) on ecumenical questions
- Since 2007 Member of the Academic Advisory Board of the ecumenical research institute “Johann-Adam Möhler Institut” in Paderborn, Germany
- Since 2007 Member of the Academic Board of the “Cardinal Willebrands Archives”
- Since 2010 Member of the Ecumenical Working Group of Catholic and Protestant Theologians in Germany” (=“Cardinal Jäger- Bishop Stählin Group”; Roman Catholic president: Cardinal Karl Lehmann till 2019, currently Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck)

Ecclesiology:

- Appointed by pope Francis as Consultor to the Synod of Bishops (2021-2026)
- Appointed by pope Francis as expert to the Assemblies of the XVI Ordinary General Synod of 2023 and 2024.
- Appointed by Cardinal Mario Grech as Member of the Steering Group for the Synod of Bishops with the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission” (2021-2028)
- Appointment by Cardinal Mario Grech to the Canon Law Commission for the Synod 2023-2025
- Appointment by Cardinal Mario Grech as Executive Secretary to the SG “The Papal Representatives in a Missionary Synodal Perspective” (2024-2025)
- Co-Moderator of the international research group “Peter and Paul Seminar” which focuses on the reform of ecclesiological institutions from an ecumenical aspect (since 2004)
- Invited expert to the conference “Reform(s) of and in the Church” to assist pope Francis in reforms of the Church, organised by Civiltà Cattolica (2015)
- Invited participant to the XII and XIII Colloquia of Istituto Paolo VI, Centro Internazionale di Studi et Documentazioni, Brescia (Italia)
- Research grant by private foundation (freeing teaching responsibilities for seven years (2020-2027): “*Transparency – Accountability – Responsibility: Reforms of Ecclesial Structures and Practices*” (connecting: synodality- clerical abuse – ecclesiology- canon law)

Sexual Abuse of Minors and Spiritual Abuse

- Member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, Holy See (2018-2022); Moderator of the Working Group: “Safeguarding Guidelines and Norms”
- Expert for a Courtcase in The Netherlands on negligence and accountability of leadership of religious institute concerning physical abuse of pupils (2021)
- Expert for a case at High Court in Ireland at request of State Solicitor on negligence and accountability of leadership of religious institute concerning sexual abuse of minor (2005)
- Delegated investigating judge in approx. 100 penal cases on behalf of several bishops or major superiors, worldwide since 1990- 2025
- Advisor for the Report commissioned by the Australian Conference of Bishops: Implementation Advisory Group and the Governance Review Project Team, *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia. A Report and Recommendations on the Governance and Management of Dioceses and Parishes in the Catholic Church in Australia*. 200 p. (2020) <https://www.catholicreligious.org.au/light-from-the-southern-cross>

Law on Institutes of Consecrated Life

- Member of Canonical Affairs Commission of the Conference of Major Superiors in The Netherlands (since 1992- 2020)
- Canonical Expert for the Union International of Superior Generals (since 2016)
- Consultant to Institutes of Consecrated Life - World Wide (since 1992)
- Co-organisator of leadership trainings of religious institutes and of annual gathering of advisors to religious institutes in the Jesuit run “Kardinal König Haus” Vienna (since 2015)

Visiting professor / lecturer:

- Department of Canon Law University of Münster (1992-2012)
- Pontificio Collegio Beda, Rome (1997-2000)
- University of Freiburg i.Br., Faculty of Catholic Theology (2000)
- The Catholic University of America, School of Canon Law (2001-2003)
- Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law (2005-2008)
- Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (“Angelicum”) Roma (2011)
- St. Cuthbert’s Visiting Research Fellow, Durham University England (2012)
- Honorary Professor Durham University England (2012-2027)

Grants

- 2020-2027 private foundation: Research Project (implies substitute for teaching): *Transparency-Accountability- Responsibility:Reforms of Church Structures and Practices* (approx. € 1,400.000)
- 2013-2025 private foundations for Research projects of Peter and Paul Seminar (ca € 43.000)
- 2012 two month St. Cuthbert Research fellow on Receptive Ecumenism, Durham University UK
- 2 month Research grant IMMO, University of Utrecht The Netherlands
- 1987-1990 Scholarships from Religious Institutes, the Netherlands for 3 years of studies in canon law in Ottawa (US\$ 75.000)
- 1986-1987 Rotary Foundation, Ambassadorial Scholarship for canon law studies in Ottawa, Canada (US\$ 25.000)

Academic Advisory and Consultancy Positions (more relevant ones)

- Since 2021 Member of the Steering group on “Priestly Education and Formation” (German episcopal Conference)
- Since 2020 Directing Co-Publisher of the series “Erfurter Theologische Schriften”
- Since 2020 Directing Co-Publisher of the series “Erfurter Theologische Studien”
- Since 2019 Member of the faculty council, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Erfurt
- Since 2017 Member of the Editorial board of Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, Munich
- Since 2013 Theological advisor to Theologische Quartalschrift Tübingen
- Since 2011-2020 Member of the Directing Board (Präsidium) of the Guardini Foundation, Berlin
- Since 2011-2025 Member of the Academic Senate of the University of Erfurt
- Since 2009 Editorial Consultor, International “Journal for the Study of the Christian Church”
- Since 2009 Member of the Editorial board of “Journal of the European Society for Catholic Theology”
- 1994 – 2008 member of different commissions of the Conference of Bishops in the Netherlands, e.g. Mixed marriage, Ecumenism, Sexual Abuse by Clerics.

Organisator of Conferences cq. Academic Lectures given with International Relevance (sample):

- European Academy for Religion (2021)
- Canon Law Society of America (San Diego 1997, Cincinnati 2004, Kansas City 2008, Buffalo, NY, 2010, St. Louis 2014, Grand Falls MO 2024)
- Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches (Debrecen 2017, Rom 2019, Athen 2024)
- Canadian Canon Law Society (2021)
- Catholic Theological Society of America (San Antonio 2006, Los Angeles 2007)
- Canon Law Society of India (1994 and 1996)

- Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland (Glasgow 1997, Gateshead 2001, Harrogate 2014)
- Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand (Melbourne 2011, Gold Coast 2016)
- Societas Oecumenica, Salisbury 2002, Malta 2022, Warsaw 2024
- University of San Francisco, Paul Watson Lecture 2003
- Centro pro Unione, Rom. Lectures, 2005 and 2021
- Symposium “The Second Vatican Council and the Signs of the Times Today,” Tübingen 2005
- Louvain Encounters in Systematic Theology, 2005 and 2007
- International Symposium on the Parish, University of Limerick, Ireland 2008
- Symposium “Protestant Church Polity in Changing Contexts”, Utrecht (NL), 2011
- Durham University (UK), St. Cuthbert Lecture (2012), The Tablet Lecture (2019), Symposium *Learning on the Way* (2023)
- Conference “The Second Vatican Council 50 Years after its Opening”, Freising, 2012
- University of Fairfield, Fairfield (USA), Receptive Ecumenism III, 2014
- Reform(s) of and in the Church, Civiltà cattolica, Roma 2015
- Reform in the Catholic Church (Evangelische Akademie Tutzing, Germany, 2016)
- Inauguration of Australian Catholic University & The Catholic University of America (Roma, 2016)
- Society for the Law on the Eastern Churches (Debrecen, Hungary 2017, Rom 2019, Athens 2024)
- Vatican, Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, organisor of seminar: *Promoting and Protecting the Dignity of Persons in Allegations of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults: Balancing Confidentiality, Transparency and Accountability* (2019)
- Vatican, Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, organisor of seminar: *Rights of Alleged Victims in Penal Procedures* (2021)
- 2015-2020 Initiator and organisor of annual lecture of the Chair of Canon Law in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Bund Katholischer Unternehmer: *Erfurter Debatten zu Wirtschaft und Glaube*.
- Symposia at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rom *Theology Responding to the Challenge of Synodality* (2023), *Commemorating Vatican II- Lumen gentium* (2024)
- Symposium at the Biblicum Rome, *Exegesis and Hermeneutics: Searching for a Nexus between History, Theology and Cultures* (2023)
- *1700 Years Council of Nicaea: Lectures* at Angelicum (Roma) & Chichester (UK)
- *Lectures on the Synod on Synodality*, e.g. in Brüssel, London, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Bombay, Bangalore, Cairo, Nairobi, Tilburg, Ottawa, Katowicz, Vienna, Rom

Seven Symposia for the Research Group “Peter and Paul Seminar” (Co-Convenor since 2004 and speaker):

- 2004 in cooperation with Georgetown University (Law School), Washington DC, *Collegiality in the Church: Theology and Canon Law*
- 2007 in cooperation with Saint Paul University Ottawa, *The Local Church and its Leadership: Receiving the Vision of Vatican II*, Ottawa
- 2009 in cooperation with the University of Erfurt, *Conversion and Reform in View of the Unity of the Church*
- 2011 and 2012 in cooperation with the Catholic University of Louvain: *Liturgy as Litmustest of Reform*
- 2018 in cooperation with the University of Erfurt: *Diversity and Unity: Rethinking the Teaching Office of the Episcopal Conference in a World Wide Church*, Erfurt
- 2021-2022 in cooperation with the Université de Laval à Québec, “*Accountability –Transparency and the Reform of Ecclesial Structures*”
- 2022-2024 Rome, “*Reframing the Understanding of Participation in Mission and Leadership in a Synodal Church*”
- 2025-2027 Rome, “*Faces Inhabiting Places and Spaces*”

For the above there is an ongoing cooperation with the members of the PPS who belong to the following institutions:

Boston College, The Catholic University of America, Washington DC, Université Laval in Quebec, Saint Paul University Ottawa (Kanada), St. John's College Minnesota, St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, Institut Catholique, Université Fribourg, Catholic University of Leuven, Alphonsianum Roma, Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Centrale Florence, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Caracas (Venezuela), Santa Clara University California, Hekima University Nairobi, National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Wellbeing of the Child: Protection – Promotion- Rights (research project and Stufu). For the project that is conducted in English there is a Cooperation with 35 lecturers. Numerous participated in a 2025 edited book by Myriam Wijlens and Yeshica Umana Calderón. The scholars are from the following Institutions:

FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University, USA | Outreach: European Court of Human Rights | United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) | African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) of the African Union | Children's Legal Centre for Wales, and Observatory on the Human Rights of Children | United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence | Supreme Court of Western Australia - Perth | the UN (New York and Geneva) | Centre for Child Protection (Rome) | Safeguarding Department of the Union International of Women Religious | WCC-UNICEF Partnership | World Council of Churches | Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Vatican | Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, USA | Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland | University of Western Australia | Department of Psychiatry, Sackler School of Medicine, University of Tel Aviv, Israel | University of Guelph, Canada | University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA | Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg | Pontifical Gregorian University, Roma | Catholic University of Croatia | Gustavus Adolphus College, USA | North-West University, South Africa | Ukrainian Catholic University | Loyola University Chicago, USA | Universitätsklinikum Ulm | Universität Ulm | University of London, UK | Universität Lübeck|

Publications:

Around 20 (co-edited) books on hermeneutics of Vatican II related to canon law, ecumenism, sexual abuse, laity, bishops, papacy and diocesan structures, etc. and more than 160 articles in international - peer reviewed - periodicals in English, German, French, Spanish and Dutch. (see attachment)