



## Santa Clara Jesuit School of Theology

### **Citation: The Reverend Antonio Spadaro, S.J.**

Born Antonino Spadaro in Messina, Sicily, Antonio Spadaro of the Society of Jesus does not carry the string of honorific prefixes and suffixes often associated with prominent ecclesiastical officials at the Vatican. Instead, his life exemplifies a remarkable blend of deep scholarship, mastery of cultural hermeneutics, poetic eloquence, and diplomatic acumen.

A master communicator, Reverend Spadaro joined the Society of Jesus in 1988 and studied at the University of Messina and the Pontifical Gregorian University, eventually earning the degree Doctorate in Sacred Theology. For twelve years, he served as the Editor-in-Chief of the influential Jesuit biweekly review, *La Civiltà Cattolica*—one of the oldest continuously published Catholic journals since its foundation in 1850. During his tenure, he transformed the journal into an international scholarly publication available in nine languages.

A prolific author, insightful commentator, and highly sought-after public speaker, Reverend Spadaro has written extensively on issues at the intersection of the Catholic Church, theology, communication, technology, culture, and politics. His exploration of theology, technology, and spirituality includes iconic works such as *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet*, which discusses Christianity in the digital age; *Friending God: Social Media, Spirituality and Community*, on how social media shapes spiritual life.

Reverend Spadaro is an internationally recognized figure whose collaboration with Pope Francis has helped publicize, strengthen, and defend the pope's agenda of ecclesial reform and socio-economic and political transformation. Often in the crosshairs of criticism from opponents of the late pontiff, he has remained steadfast in his support for the emergence of a culturally and technologically fluent global Roman Catholic Church.

Reverend Spadaro conducted the first interview with Pope Francis in August 2013, during which Francis famously declared: "I am a sinner." He conducted multiple interviews with Pope Francis, selections of which were published in *Open to God: Open to the World*. His body of work on Pope Francis includes three volumes compiling all of Francis's speeches and texts, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, his homilies from the chapel of Santa Marta, and books featuring his reflections on children and the elderly. The latter even inspired a Netflix series.

As a trusted adviser, collaborator, and confidante of Pope Francis, Reverend Spadaro accompanied the pope on more than forty-five apostolic journeys across the world. From this privileged vantage point, he co-published *Sii Tenero, Sii Coraggioso: Conversazioni con i Gesuiti del Mondo*, with Francis. In 2023 and 2024, Reverend Spadaro joined more than 350

delegates as a voting member of the Synod on Synodality. He was later appointed as one of eight members of the Vatican's Study Group dedicated to "The Mission [of the Church] in the Digital Environment."

Reverend Spadaro has maintained a longstanding collaboration with Santa Clara University on issues of communication and emerging technology. He now serves as an Undersecretary for the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, a member of the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and Letters of the Virtuosi al Pantheon.

For his significant contributions to culturally contextualized theology, his extraordinary service to the global Church, and his unwavering promotion of Pope Francis's prophetic vision, the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University is honored to confer the degree of **Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa**, on **The Reverend Father Antonio Spadaro, S.J.**