

**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)
Rev. Louis J. Luzbetak, SVD, Award for Exemplary Church Research**

Description

Fr. Louis J. Luzbetak, SVD, is the researcher most responsible for CARA's early success. He served as executive director for nearly ten years and developed many of the research projects that shaped CARA's reputation for excellence in Church research. His background as a cultural anthropologist and missiologist made him an ideal leader for an interdisciplinary research institution dedicated to providing Church decision-makers the information they need to advance evangelization in a wide diversity of cultural and socio-demographic settings. Fr. Luzbetak devoted his considerable energies and talents to conducting exemplary Church research and to fostering and promoting such research. He initiated CARA's standard of producing outstanding Church research that responds to the needs of Church decision-makers. His books on Church and culture, as well as a wide variety of CARA studies associated with him, remain classic works in the field.

The award plaque incorporates CARA's colors of green and gold. Green represents the traditional color of Church decision-makers and is often used to represent the ministry of bishop. Gold represents CARA's commitment to quality. The plaque also includes the CARA seal – Christ's cross surrounded by circles representing the pastoral action of the Church in the universal apostolate. Both CARA's colors and seal were created during the early years of Fr. Luzbetak's ministry as Executive Director. CARA's work was inspired by the documents of the Second Vatican Council, particularly *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. This document and others directly refer to the role of the Church researcher who adapts the methods of the social sciences for pastoral service, a role given life by the extraordinary commitment and talents of researchers such as Fr. Luzbetak.

Potential Candidates

The Luzbetak Award is for Church research professionals. That is, it is for those who have distinguished themselves in the conduct of Church research. Researchers are those who have conducted important Catholic research and spent a significant portion of their work on Church or religious topics. Many, like Fr. Luzbetak, will be distinguished in the field of culture or in some way sensitive to the importance of culture in understanding Church phenomena. Some may have training or experience in less academic areas but have nonetheless distinguished themselves as researchers.

Examples of potential candidates for this recognition include those who serve as college or university faculty in departments of sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, or other fields, whether at Catholic or non-Catholic institutions. While the focus will be on those who have contributed to social science-related research, it will not be limited to those who have conducted research in areas that exactly overlap with CARA's mission and specialties. Instead, the focus will be on those who have in some way conducted exemplary research and

interpretation that serves as a model to CARA researchers at some level or is particularly instructive in a certain field of research.

Other examples include diocesan or congregational researchers who serve the specific research needs of a particular diocese, whether as interpreters of research findings, original researchers for local projects, or leaders of local data gathering and reporting efforts; researchers employed by the Church in other contexts, whether local, national, or organization-specific, including the research required for advancing the mission of religious communities; independent scholars, consultants, authors, or other professional researchers whose work has made important contributions to the field of Church research as well as those employed by a center, firm, or other organization and who have made important contributions to the field of Church research.