

St Patrick's College Maynooth

Advent 2020 Issue no. 9



Michael Dawson conducting the Maynooth University Chamber Choir for RTE's Christmas Eve Carols concert in the College Chapel. (Full story inside)

Coronavirus offers a 'Kairos Opportunity' for SPCM's future

While COVID-19 sucked the life out of the St. Patrick's campus, cloisters, chapels and lecture halls since March, 2020 could never be regarded as a 'lost' year in the life of SPCM. So says College President Rev Professor Michael Mullaney.

"When future generations review this period of our history, they will regard 2020 as a kairos moment - a pivotal time - when a number of critical developments converged to allow the College to turn the first pages of an exciting new chapter for its future," says Fr Michael.

The annals will record three key developments for this global coronavirus pandemic year. The first is the sweeping and speedy transformation from in-person learning

in lecture halls and seminar rooms, to **online teaching, learning and assessment.**

Secondly, during the early months of lockdown a revision of the College's statutes was commenced. This work is now at an advanced stage. When agreed, the revised statutes will formalise distinct governance and administration arrangements for the National Seminary and the Pontifical University.

Finally, just before the pandemic took hold in March, the Trustees of St. Patrick's College endorsed a bold and ambitious strategic plan, **A Vision for Renewal and Transformation 2020-2030.**

According to Fr Mullaney this **Vision for Renewal and Transformation** identifies secure and sustainable resources to support the joint missions of the

College - priestly formation and theological education - into the future. It ensures that St. Patrick's College and the Pontifical University will remain as a valuable resource to the Irish and global Church for generations to come.

"Despite the many difficulties SPCM experienced because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has been a year during which the College plotted an exciting route for the coming decade. With humility but also with some confidence, we stand before our future."

Fr Michael Mullaney, President



Virtual Graduation 2020

The 2020 graduation ceremony, held in an eerily empty Gunn Chapel on 14 November was a nonetheless impressive and inspirational event. Archbishop Eamon Martin, Chancellor SPCM joined virtually from Armagh, while Rev Professors Michael Mullaney, Declan Marmion, Tom Casey and Rev Dr Michael Shortall officiated.



Rachel O'Callaghan Covid was not going to stop me from dressing up and celebrating even if there's nowhere to go! It has been an amazing three years with some of the most amazing people and there's nothing I would change but there will be lots that I will miss!
#spcmgrad #graduation2020 #🎓 #missingmaynooth #allgownedupandnowheretogo #makingmemories



Aideen Ní Lochlainn #Bachelor in Theology and Arts Graduation 🎓 #SPCMGrad #ProudDad @stpatrickscollegemaynooth



Yvonne Joye Awaiting online receipt of my Diploma in Spirituality (Applied Youth Ministry). #smallcovidconquests #puttingtogooduse #gettinggenerationcovidtalking through '#covidcrap' & #lockdownlosses #spcmgrad



Maria O'Keeffe #Higher Diploma in Pastoral Theology (Healthcare Chaplaincy) #spcmgrad 🎓🎓🎓



Aimee Muldowney #Bachelor in Theology and Arts Graduation 🎓🎓 @ashleymas98 #spcmgrad #sisters



Ashley Maslin #Bachelor in Theology and Arts Graduation 2020 🎓🎓 #spcmgrad #graduation2020 @aimeem98 ❤️❤️ We did it 🙌 Three years



Liam McCormack #Bachelor of Theology and Arts Happy Graduation baby! I'm so proud of us! 🎓💕 #spcmgrad @KateHeffernan



Ben King #Valladolid #Dromore #SPCMgrad 🎓 My family and I attended the virtual graduation ceremony in different time zones as I am currently undertaking the first stage of priestly formation in Valladolid, Spain. My worldview has been opened up after studying theology at St. Patrick's. I look at the world more deeply in terms of our social connectedness and how society can respond to the challenges we face today in reaction to the gospel message, especially speaking as a 2020 graduate during a world pandemic.



Thieventhran Sebastiyam Pillai #Bachelor in Theology #SPCMgrad 🎓



Chloe McSweeney #Bachelor in Theology and Arts ALL THE HASSLE FOR THE TASSEL 🎓🎓 #spcmgrad



Jaime Rosique #Bachelor of Sacred Theology #spcmgrad Celebratory meal at the community...prawn cocktail!!!

To watch the event go to www.maynoothcollege.ie/graduation-2020



Special Prizewinners 2020

The Archbishop McNamara Memorial Prize
 – Higher Diploma in Pastoral Theology
Maria O’Keeffe

The BA in Divinity – First Year Prize
Anthony Hartnett

The BA in Divinity – Second Year Prize
Ronan Sheehan

The BA in Divinity – Third Year Prize
Giacomo Gelardi

The BA in Theology & Arts – First Year Prize
Colm Mc Goldrick

The BA in Theology & Arts – Second Year Prize
Christina Mc Cambridge

The BA in Theology & Arts – Second Year Prize
Maire Ni Churraoin

The BA in Theology & Arts – Third Year Prize
Grace Brennan

The Cunningham Prize in Canon Law – Second Divinity
Antun Pašalić

The Daughters of Charity prize – Diploma in Philosophy & Arts
John Leonard

The Dominican Sisters Award for Religious Education – Certificate
Niamh Shaw

The Dominican Sisters Award for Religious Education
 – Post Graduate Certificate
Aine Bolger

The Ferns Furlong Prize in Theology – BA in Theology
Tatjana Sator

The Fitzpatrick Prize in Canon Law – Third Divinity
Jamie Rosique Mardones

The Higher Diploma in Theological Studies Prize
Patricia Lyne

The Huxley Biblical Greek Prize
Neal Smith

The Huzley Patristics Prize
Neal Smith

The Kenney Prize in Ecclesiastical History
Antun Pašalić

The Marsh Prize
 (Third Year B.A.Th Systematic Theology)
Grace Brennan

Emma Mhic Mhathuna Award
Gavin Byrne



The National Seminary Formation Team (left to right): Dr John O’Keeffe (Director of Sacred Music); Fr Michael Collins (Director of Formation); Fr Tomás Surlis (Rector); Sr Noreen Shankey ssl (Vocational Growth Counsellor); Fr Sean Farrell cm (Spiritual Director); Fr Michael Shortall (Co-ordinator of Intellectual Formation).

Bearing witness to a world in need

When the seminary went into “online mode” in mid-March, few would have predicted that we would be experiencing intense restrictions so close to Christmas.

I am particularly proud of our seminarians for the manner in which they have responded to the challenges and opportunities that the Coronavirus pandemic has created. Their careful attention to public health guidelines means that we have spent the first semester of the new academic year masked and two metres apart; with our hands coated in hand-sanitiser, in the oratories and in the lecture halls.

We’ve organised ourselves into “Household Groups” – sitting apart at designated tables and in separate common rooms. Everyone keeps to the left on corridors and stairwells. We do all that we can to look out for one another and we pray every day for all those who have been even more directly affected by COVID-19, in parishes, families, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and third-level institutions, businesses and enterprises throughout the island of Ireland.

We have continued to mark the 225th anniversary of the foundation of St Patrick’s College as a locus for priestly formation and theological and philosophical education. Admittedly most events have been slimmed down and planned exhibitions and conferences have either been deferred or delivered online.

The seminary community continues to bear witness, not only to the proud traditions we have inherited, but also to our hope for a bright future which is enlivened by our faith in *Emmanuel*, God-with-us. It is He who inspires all of us together as the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, to learn in this place how to reach out as *Theachtairí Chríost* to a world in need.

Fr Tomás Surlis
Rector of the National Seminary



Hot off the press

Síolta 2020, the annual journal of St. Patrick’s College has just been published. Written by seminarians, faculty members, lay students and alumni, it’s brimful of interesting features and personal perspectives on a year in the life of the National Seminary.

Available for purchase @ €4.99 – please contact sean.murphy.2019@spcmail.ie to order your copy.

On-campus teaching to be restored in spring semester

The recently announced once-off COVID-19 payment of €250 for third-level students is a welcome acknowledgement by Government of the significant upheaval students have endured throughout 2020. Unfortunately this is likely to continue until vaccines become widely available in 2021. Thankfully, most students, and indeed lecturers, have fully engaged with the various forms of online learning now in place – via Zoom, Panopto and Teams.

True, remote learning is not quite the same as face to face interaction in college.

Nevertheless, the campus is open – including the library and other essential services. As soon as public health measures allow, we fully intend to return to normal on-campus teaching, since most of our class numbers are less than 50. Meanwhile, I encourage all students to reap some of the advantages of online learning: flexibility, improved digital communication skills, access to online resources via the MU library, and finally, the importance of self-motivation and responsibility.

Rev Professor Declan Marmion
Dean of the Faculty of Theology

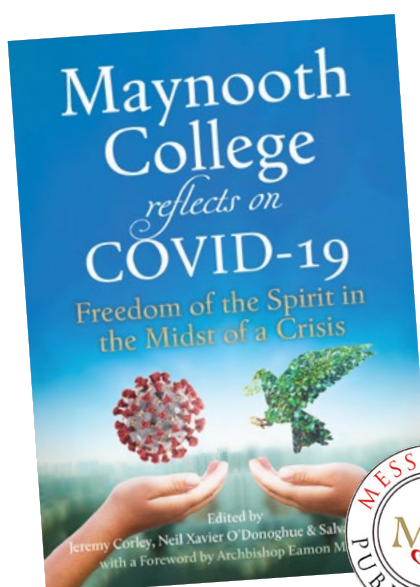
Prepare to be challenged, surprised, maybe even crucified...

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought great disruption in all areas of life, the Church included. It has thrown us into a trackless wilderness and accelerated changes that were already underway. However this enforced pause may also contain seeds of blessing. Jesus, on the cusp of his public ministry, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (Luke 4). There Jesus struggled his way into a clearer sense of his calling. He clarified what he was saying 'no' to and articulated his 'yes' to God's mission and God's method. Perhaps this is our time to rediscover how to cooperate effectively with God's work in the world.

In one temptation, the devil promised Jesus all the glory and authority of the kingdoms of the world for the price of bowing down to him. We don't believe that Jesus could be enticed by satanism; nor are we. But the temptation to build the Kingdom of God, using the same methods by which the kingdoms of the world are established, is real. This is the way of 'power over': peace imposed with violence; leveraging wealth and influence; demonising the other. Jesus says a definitive 'no' to that addictive and destructive route. Instead He chooses God's way, the way of the cross.

If we also recognise and reject the temptation, the possibility emerges to find God's very different, countercultural way. What will that look like for us? Jesus tells the first disciples, 'Come and see!' (John 1:39). That is why it matters so much that we actually get to know Jesus in the Gospels and become his followers. Be prepared to be challenged, surprised, maybe even crucified. Jesus is a different kind of king. God calls us to be a different kind of people.

Dr Jessie Rogers Lecturer in Sacred Scripture,
Faculty of Theology



Where is God in this pandemic?

While there has been endless media coverage of the medical and economic implications of the Coronavirus pandemic, religious issues have seldom been to the fore. Where is God in this pandemic? Can we draw meaning out of the present suffering? What can church communities do to prosper in times of restriction? Finally, what will be the lasting effects on church life? Theologians and philosophers from St Patrick's College will offer their thought-provoking perspectives on these and other issues in a book to be published in spring 2021 by Messenger Press.

Meanwhile a day-long "virtual conference" on COVID-19 will be held on Thursday 21 January 2021 (11am - 5pm). All welcome. For registration details please email specialevents@spcm.ie



Behind the scenes of RTÉ's Christmas Eve carols concert from Maynooth

St. Patrick's Seminary Choir, Schola Gregoriana and the University Chamber Choir, will be centre-stage on RTÉ TV this Christmas Eve presenting a very special concert of carols from Maynooth. The programme, called '**Christmas at Home**', was conceived and recorded in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. Hosted by **Mary Kennedy**, the performance will have an added significance for those who may not be able to attend church liturgies this festive season.



Calendar

December 2020

16th **Christmas Carols** livestream from the College chapel www.maynoothcollege.ie



January 2021

21st **A Virtual Conference on COVID-19**
All welcome. For registration details please email specialevents@spcm.ie



March 2021

9th **Annual Trócaire Lecture "Cry of the Poor, Cry of the Earth"** Keynote speaker **Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle**



9th **Postgraduate Open Evening**



April 2021

24th **Spring Open Day**



May 2021

30th **Diaconate Sunday**



June 2021

15th **Maynooth Union**



Due to Government and HSE Guidelines relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exact dates of future events may be changed. Please visit maynoothcollege.ie for the latest updates.

St. Patrick's College welcomes your support.

For more information: maynoothcollege.ie/giving

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News in Brief

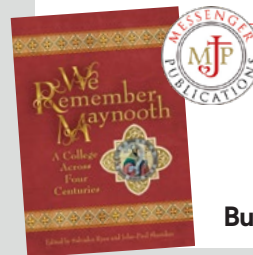


Global diaspora gather for virtual book launch

On 17 November more than 160 people of the global Maynooth family and diaspora attended the virtual book launch of **"We Remember Maynooth - A College Across Four Centuries,"** edited by Salvador Ryan and John-Paul Sheridan.

Speaking at the Zoom launch, Chris Morash, Seamus Heaney Professor of Irish Writing at TCD - congratulated those who contributed to the book's 100 chapters. Theologians, scientists, physicists, classicists, musicians, poets, athletes, librarians, monarchs & students had joined to produce a book that was "not just a repository of memories, but also a volume which provoked memories."

Professor Morash who taught at SPCM for 23 years, said that Maynooth has always been a place where there has been space for more than one voice. "More than any other university on this island, the necessity for dialogue among different ways of seeing the world, has been written into the history and architectural fabric of the University," he said.



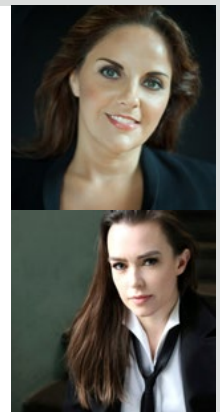
Orders placed before **31 December 2020** will save **€5**, using the code **MAYNOOTH225**

Buy now from messenger.ie

Maynooth College's Christmas Carols



This year's Christmas Carols services have been reimagined. Instead of filling the wonderful Gunn Chapel three nights in a row, internationally renowned performers **Céline Byrne** (Soprano) and the Maynooth Campus Associate Artist **Sharon Carty** (Mezzo Soprano), will perform in a livestream concert on Wednesday 16 December, beginning at 7.30pm. Please see www.maynoothcollege.ie for concert login details.



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