

St Patrick's College Maynooth

Harvest 2021 Issue no. 12



From l-r, Niamh Palmer, Mark-Paul Behan Clarke, Luka Prancilauskas, Alex Balfe Vicic, Aoife Ryan, Aoife Ward, Shauna Murphy and Colm Mc Goldrick

Ten student ambassadors appointed to fly SPPU flag

St Patrick's Pontifical University has appointed its first ever team of student ambassadors whose role it will be to support student recruitment and retention, and to welcome visitors at prominent events during the year, such as conferences, public lectures and the annual carol services. The ten ambassadors will record personal testimonials for the web and engage with potential and new students, using online chat forums. Some will be active on social media platforms during CAO marketing campaigns,

while others will participate in open days (live and virtual) and attend student recruitment fairs.

At their recent induction session, the ambassadors discussed SPPU's mission and ethos, and gained insights on the programme of studies available, student life, student supports and referrals, social media guidelines, etc.

Most important of all is the fact that the student ambassadors will be sharing their personal experiences with prospective and new students:

"My first year in St Patrick's has been an amazing experience. Meeting new people was great as everyone was so friendly and with the small class sizes, it was really easy to talk to lecturers if you were having any problems or had questions."

Mark-Paul Behan Clarke



An Education to Value



Rev Prof Michael Mullaney marked the start of the 2021/22 academic year with an address in the bi-centenary garden

In person teaching resumes as COVID-19 lockdowns ease

To mark the start of a new academic year, faculty members and staff of St Patrick's Pontifical University and the National Seminary gathered in the bi-centenary garden on 7 September. In his first face to face meeting with this group in more than 18 months, University President, Rev Prof Michael Mullaney paid tribute to the extraordinary way in which colleagues had responded to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

Fr Mullaney described how just days before the first COVID-19 lockdown, the Trustees had endorsed an ambitious new strategy for the

Strategic Plan 2030: A bold and ambitious vision to renew and transform St Patrick's Pontifical University while sustaining its unique heritage for future generations.

College. He confirmed that despite the constraints of working remotely, significant progress had already been made on delivering elements of the **Strategic Plan: A Vision for Renewal & Transformation 2020-2030**.

On the academic side, a review of the University's course offerings was already underway, so as to make them more relevant to the current educational environment. Specifically the course content and

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Dean of Theology, Dr Jessie Rogers, the President & Director of Postgraduate Studies, Dr Michael Shortall



Back to the future for Maurice Garde

A former BATH student who graduated in 1999, has been appointed Academic Registrar at St Patrick's Pontifical University. Maurice Garde (aka Moss) arrived in Maynooth from Tajikistan in August, to take up his new position.

Over the past 20 years, Moss has crossed cultural and geographic boundaries to work in higher education development roles in the UK, the US, Africa and Asia.

His postgraduate studies were undertaken at UCD and Plymouth State University (USA). Moss was also a Peabody Institute Research Fellow in University Administration at Vanderbilt University.

His experience in the Higher Education Sector includes Campus and Institutional Management, Internationalisation, Marketing, UG & PG Recruitment, Alumni Relations, Faculty Management, Admissions and Registry.

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delivery of the BATH will be considered, so that it might respond to those whose faith seeks understanding while also appealing to the skeptic, seeker, stranger.

Fr Mullaney confirmed that there would be a keener focus on the recruitment of greater numbers of high achieving students. He welcomed the recent appointment of a team of student ambassadors, whose role would be to promote the college in an authentic way to new and prospective students, both in person and online. Plans are being formulated which will significantly enhance the available teaching and learning resources, Prof Mullaney confirmed.

Speaking about the recent changes to the Council of Studies, Fr Mullaney said that the pandemic had made it impossible to adequately express gratitude to those whose terms of office had just ended: the outgoing Dean of Theology, Prof Declan Marmion and Prof Seamus O'Connell who was post-graduate director.

In conclusion, Fr Mullaney said the Strategic Plan outlines a bold and ambitious vision which will renew and enhance St Patrick's mission while sustaining its unique heritage for future generations.



Faculty and staff gathered to mark the start of the new academic year

A fertile time for creative theologising

In recent weeks we have welcomed our students back onto campus. One of many advantages of our smaller class sizes is that we were able to resume face-to-face teaching for all cohorts in September.

Over the past 18 months we were all thrown in the deep end with online learning and surprised ourselves with how quickly we learned to swim. We take all of that learning with us into the future, but now it can be an enrichment of, not a replacement for, the embodied experience.

St Patrick's Pontifical University aspires to be an inclusive community of learning, and it has been a challenge to put flesh on that aspiration when so much of what we were doing was through online and remote learning. Some of our returning students will have very little sense of our beautiful campus or of its spaces and rhythms. We have our work cut out for us as we transition back from being a virtual community to a physical one.

A lot of planning is going into maximising both safety and opportunities to connect. There will still be frequent handwashing, physical (not 'social') distancing and mask-wearing. These inconveniences can be a kind of spiritual practice to keep us attentive to others as we focus, not on our own comfort, but on the common good. Times of crisis and rebuilding are fertile soil for creative theologising!

Dr Jessie Rogers
Dean of the Faculty of Theology



Top academics will enrich SPPU

World renowned philosophical thinkers such as Rowan Williams, Eleonore Stump, David Bentley Hart, Patrick Lee, Thomas Joseph White and William Desmond will speak about *The Future of Christian Thinking* at a three-day conference being hosted by the Faculty of Philosophy from 27 - 30 April 2022.

This stellar gathering of thinkers follows hot on the heels of a conference in April 2021 on *The Future of Christian Metaphysics*, which had 150 attendees from Ireland, the UK, Europe and the US.

"Huge interest is building for next year's conference, it's shaping up to be the major philosophical event of 2022," says Dr Gaven Kerr. "The Philosophy Faculty at St Patrick's Pontifical University is proud to host these top academics. They will enrich our campus and our thoughts with their contributions. Indeed, their participation is testimony to the high international esteem in which our faculty is held," he concludes.

To register: maynoothcollege.ie/the-future-of-christian-thinking-international-conference-27th--30th-apr-2022

For more information: youtu.be/uMEQauA4rbE

Prestigious philosophical theology grant awarded

St Patrick's Pontifical University Faculty of Philosophy has been selected to participate in an ambitious international initiative which aims to shape research trends in philosophical theology within the continental tradition in relation to Christian revelation.

The project entitled ***Widening the Horizons in Philosophical Theology*** is funded by a £2m grant from Templeton Religion Trust.

Dr Philip John Paul Gonzales of SPPU's Faculty of Philosophy will join a virtual team of leading and emerging researchers from the UK, Belgium, Germany, USA, Canada, and Australia.

Commenting on the award, Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, said: "This grant

will continue to bring internationally renowned scholars to the corridors of St Patrick's. We are delighted and humbled to have been selected."

Dr Gonzales' two-year project, which launches on 1 October will explore analogical metaphysics in relation to incarnate mimetic desire. "This fits directly within, and supports, the constructive and forward-looking approach of our recent international conference, ***The Future of Christian Metaphysics*** (April, 2021), and our forthcoming conference, ***The Future of Christian Thinking*** (April 2022)," said Dr Gonzales.

For more information on *Widening Horizons: philosophical-theology.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/projects*

A fruitful new year beckons at the National Seminary

On Sunday 5 September, a bright, warm, autumnal day, four men joined the National Seminary community to begin their formation for the priesthood. Together with the Second Years, the new arrivals began a week-long introductory course, designed to help them to settle smoothly into their new surroundings. Their transition is made easier by the fact that all of the incoming seminarians have completed the Propaedeutic Stage of formation in Valladolid or Salamanca in Spain.

The rest of the seminary community returned a week later on Sunday 12 September. There followed a three-day seminar in Human Formation, which was facilitated by Fr Hugh Lagan SMA and then a three-day retreat directed by Sr Marie Fahy ocsa, Abbess of St Mary's Cistercian Abbey in Glencairn. By the end of the first fortnight, all 26 seminarians were well prepared for the start of our new academic year.

Having re-established a stable household, we pray that this coming year will be as fruitful and fulfilling as the last, as we go forward with hope as a community of intentional disciples, keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord and always looking out for one another.

Fr Tomás Surlis,
Rector of the
National Seminary



Incoming First Years together with the Community of Formators (l-r): Fr Michael Shortall; Fr Tomás Surlis; Damien Kirkpatrick (Down & Connor); Will O'Shea (Cloyne); Ciarán Bagchus (Down & Connor); Mark Caffrey (Meath); Fr Chris Hayden; Fr Sean Corkery.



Fr John Gerard Acton blesses his niece Ella and nephew Michael at his Thanksgiving Mass on 2 August



Bishop Brendan Kelly with Fr John Gerard

A season blessed by ordinations

The summer and early autumn saw the joy-filled ordinations of four of our seminarians. John Gerard Acton (Galway) was ordained as a priest on Sunday 1 August in the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St Nicholas, Galway by Bishop Brendan Kelly.

Stephen Wilson (Armagh) was ordained to the diaconate in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on Sunday 16 May by Archbishop Eamon Martin. Antun Pašalić (Killaloe) was ordained deacon on Wednesday 8 September in the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, Ennis by Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe. Ronan Sheehan (Cork & Ross) will be ordained to the diaconate on Saturday 25 September in the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne, Cork by Bishop Fintan Gavin.

The whole seminary community wishes each of the newly ordained, joy and blessings in their priestly and diaconal ministry. We are confident that they will each bring the fruits of the integrated formation journey they have engaged in and uniquely contributed to during the past six or seven years to bear on their service of God and his holy people. *Go dtuga Dia sonas dóibh mar theachtairí Chríost!*



Rev Stephen Wilson and family with Archbishop Eamon Martin in Armagh



Antun Pašalić being ordained by Bishop Fintan Monahan at the Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul, Ennis

Be not afraid of vigorous debate

The *Maynooth Union Day 2021* was by necessity of COVID-19 restrictions an online event. Nevertheless, it was a very positive experience for jubilarians and the wider group of clergy, diocesan and religious, who participated, according to **Fr. Eugene Duffy, President of the Maynooth Union.**



Two keynote addresses were delivered; one by the papal biographer Austen Ivereigh, the second by Gerry O'Hanlon, SJ, a leading Irish theologian. Both speakers suggested that this time of crisis was an opportunity for the Church to renew itself, to reach out to those who are alienated or apathetic regarding their faith. "Each spoke of the need for discernment in facing the difficult issues confronting the Church and for not being afraid of vigorous debate as part of the process. The vision and energy of Pope Francis was their underlying inspiration," concluded Fr Duffy.

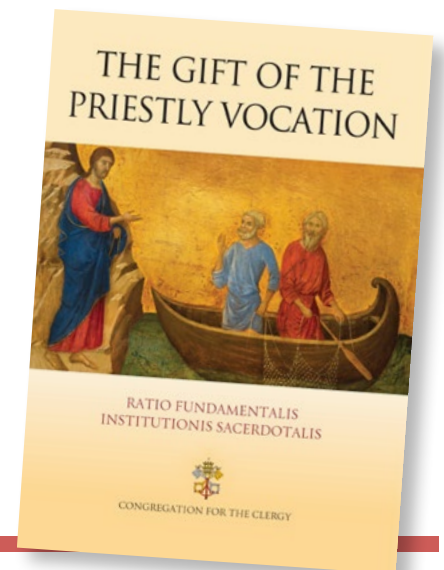
To hear both speakers log on to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCmU8scGXTc>

Solidifying a new framework for priestly formation

A new *Directory for Priestly Formation in Irish Seminaries* has been sent to the Irish Episcopal Conference for consideration before it is forwarded for *recognitio* by the Holy See. This *National Ratio* provides the guidelines and norms which will direct the work of priestly formation in Ireland for some years to come. It is the fruit of collaboration between bishops, seminary formators, priests, religious congregations and orders, experts in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, third-level chaplains, and diocesan pastoral and presbyteral councils from all across Ireland.

Together with the universal *Ratio* (*The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*) published in 2016, this new directory will ensure that the recent significant changes in priestly formation in Ireland become even more firmly rooted. These include: a clear distinction between the four stages of formation: the

Propaedeutic Stage; the Discipleship Stage of Philosophical Studies; the Configuration Stage of Theological Studies and finally, the Vocational Synthesis Stage, which provides for soon to be ordained deacons and priests to be embedded in their home diocese, so they can experience the pastoral realities of their ministry.



Calendar

September 2021

20th **Academic year begins / Lectures commence for all returning students**
1st year students begin 27 September



24th **Lectures begin for HDip in Theological Studies**



November 2021

5th **Annual Prizes and Scholarships Awards Ceremony**



6th **St Patrick's Pontifical University Conferring Ceremony**



December 2021

13th - 15th **Christmas Carol Services**



April 2022

27th - 30th **Faculty of Philosophy hosts International Conference "The Future of Christian Thinking"**

Register at <https://maynoothcollege.ie/the-future-of-christian-thinking-international-conference-27th--30th-apr-2022>



Due to Government & HSE COVID-19 Guidelines, the exact dates of future events may be changed. Please check maynoothcollege.ie for the latest information.

St. Patrick's College welcomes your support. For more information please visit maynoothcollege.ie/giving or call Caroline Tennyson on +353 (0)1 708 3964



Maynooth College Alumni Our Pride, Our Joy

Keep up to date with Maynooth College News & Events:
maynoothcollege.ie/alumni

For more information please contact: alumni@spcm.ie

An Appreciation



In recognition of her very significant role in the development of the College, Barbara Gannon (pictured with her nephew Rob) was awarded an honorary doctorate and a Gold Medal of St Patrick by Cardinal Sean Brady.

Barbra Gannon

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the death of Barbara Gannon in July, a long-time loyal friend and supporter of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Barbara was a warm hearted, intellectually curious woman whose higher purpose in life was always to be of service to others. An active board member of several charitable organisations in NY, she was also - for more than four decades - President of the Irish Educational Development Foundation.

The mission of St Patrick's College is "to explore faith, enrich minds, equip leaders and empower individuals and communities to bring about positive change in a rapidly changing world". In her life and work, Barbara embodied these same aspirations and values, and devoted her considerable energy, insights and no-nonsense approach, to achieving these goals. Her generosity contributed to the education of many seminarians and lay women and men for service in the Church in Ireland and around the world. We are grateful to God for such a wonderful and committed champion. St Patrick's College will recognise and celebrate her friendship and faith at a future date when it is possible to do so.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis

May her faithful soul be at the right hand of God



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