



St. Patrick's College Maynooth

An Education to Value

Harvest
2019
Issue no. 4



BA Theology Class of 2019 - Making new friends during Orientation Week

Optimism as Strong Seminary Intake Marks 225th Anniversary

Celebrations to mark the 225th anniversary St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (SPCM) have been boosted by a rise student numbers. Over 50 seminarians will attend the Pontifical University this year, 33 of whom will be resident in the National Seminary.

Twenty-nine post-graduates will join the college's largest ever postgraduate community, along with 46 new first year lay-students, who have just begun their BA Theology studies.

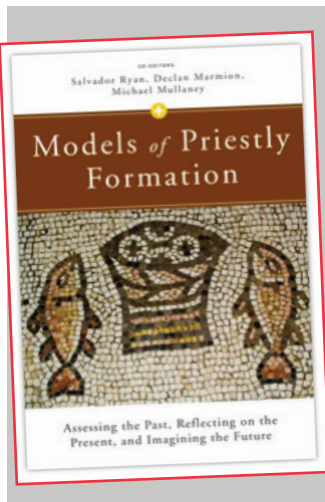
"The increasingly international makeup of the staff and students reflects the global reputation that the National Seminary and the Pontifical University at Maynooth are garnering for themselves," says SPCM President Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney.

The College, which first opened its doors as an educational institution in 1795, will host a Community Open Day on 3 October. This event to which all are welcome, marks the start of a rich and varied programme of lectures, concerts, workshops, tours and exhibitions over the coming nine months.

Recalling the words of Pope Saint John Paul II when he visited Maynooth in 1979: 'St Patrick's College is a place of rich achievement, which promises a future just as great', Fr. Mullaney continues "As well as recalling the legacy and heritage of the College, the 225th anniversary events will demonstrate the optimism and commitment we have, to playing a central role in preparing the next generation of Christian leaders, both nationally and internationally."



Dr Philip Gonzales (left) from the US and Dr Gaven Kerr have joined the Faculty of Philosophy while Dr Aoife McGrath has taken up a new role, as Director of Pastoral Studies.



Forming priests for the future

"An astute and critical assessment of the present state of affairs in relation to priestly formation" is how renowned American author Donald Cozzens, has described a new book; "Models of Priestly Formation" edited by three SPCM academics; Declan Marmion, Michael Mullaney and Salvador Ryan.

Published by Liturgical Press, one of America's largest religious publishers, this collection of thoughtful essays by world leading experts, provides a practical and prudent blueprint for seminary formation in the years ahead.

To order a copy of the book, visit:

<https://litpress.org/Products/6412/Models-of-Priestly-Formation>

INVITATION Maynooth Celebrates 225

Experience the people, place and purpose of St Patrick's College.

Join guided campus tours, exhibitions, guest speakers and enjoy an exclusive concert by the Maynooth College Chapel Choir, followed by a buffet supper in Pugin Hall.

**ALL WELCOME – RSVP
SPECIALEVENTS@SPCM.IE**

Seminary invigorated by shared hopes

On 1 September I began my second year as Rector of the National Seminary by welcoming 13 new seminarians. This represents a 50% increase on the number of resident seminarians compared to last year.

This fact alone is a cause for giving thanks to God and to the bishops and religious superiors who are demonstrating their confidence in St Patrick's College, as a place where the pursuit of excellence in priestly formation is the hallmark of who and what we are.

There is an international flavour to Maynooth, as our non-national seminarians hail from Cameroon, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Croatia and the Czech Republic. This diversity of background, experience and ecclesial tradition will serve to enrich the experience of formation for Irish seminarians, whose outlook on and understanding of the Church will be broadened and deepened.

Of course this international dimension is not new for Maynooth. For well over twenty years, seminarians

from Europe, Africa and the United States have come to St Patrick's College for all or part of their initial formation.

Here they have found a fraternal community dedicated to an integrated programme which enables the process of learning to be a disciple.

As we enter this season of harvest, we look forward to all that a new formation

year will bring for our seminarians, formators, supporters, trustees and friends.

Truly we are alive in hope, enriched by faith and strengthened in love by the presence in our midst of the One who has gathered us in his name, to be formed as a community of missionary disciples.

**Fr. Tomás Surlis –
Rector of the National Seminary**



National Seminary Rector Fr. Tomás Surlis welcomes 13 new seminarians

Maynooth's pivotal role in conversion of Saint John Henry Newman

The canonization in Rome on 13 October of Cardinal John Henry Newman, holds a particular resonance for St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. Newman was a notable Anglican, who converted to Catholicism. Assisting him in his intellectual journey of conversion was one of Maynooth's celebrated historians who later became President of the College, Dr Charles Russell.

Best known in Ireland as the founder of University College Dublin, in 1854 Newman was appointed rector of the newly established Catholic University of Ireland. Newman was responsible for establishing UCD's Literary and Historical Society, which has been a fertile proving ground for aspiring leaders of Irish society.

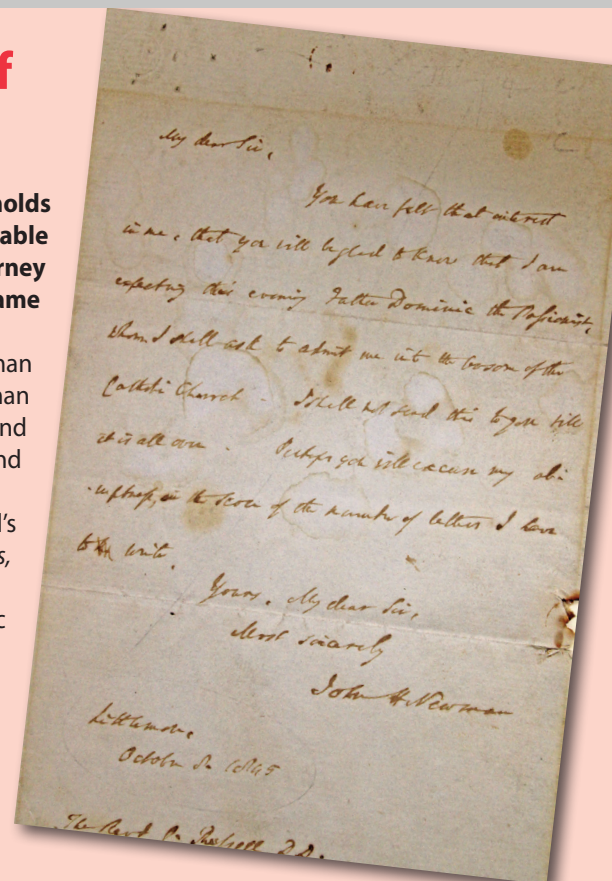
Newman often attributed his conversion to Russell's intimacy and influence, writing of him, "He had, perhaps, more to do with my conversion than anyone else."

On the day he sought admission into the Catholic Church in October 1845, Newman wrote to Fr. Russell to tell him of his decision to convert.



Left: Cardinal Newman will be canonized on 13 October

John Henry Newman's 'conversion' letter is on display in the Russell Library.



Fundamentalism is the enemy of Theology

September marks the start of the new college year. Returning students stride confidently through the gates knowing what is ahead of them, while for newcomers everything is just that: new and sometimes overwhelming.

Thankfully, the Theology Faculty of the Pontifical University is small. We get to know our students personally and arrange small-size induction sessions that help all new students settle into college life and its challenges.

But why study theology? Many of our students hope to be teachers and have chosen religion as one of their subjects. Others want to pursue development or social work in Ireland or overseas. We also have specific programmes for those who wish to be chaplains in schools, hospitals and prisons.

Any career will benefit from the ability to weigh and discern important issues – from a compassionate and just attitude towards other people, who theology teaches have an innate dignity, to the acknowledgement of mystery from which springs new ideas.

We cater too for mature students who have long wanted to pursue the bigger questions in life: What happens when we die? How can God allow suffering? Can you be a rationalist and a believer? Does Christianity have something to say to our current crises: global inequality, climate change, migration and dare I say it - Brexit?

In St. Patrick's College, students critically engage with the Christian tradition – not to restore the past but to enrich the present. The enemy of

theology is fundamentalism – which suppresses questions yet claims to have all the answers.

Theology helps a person to live with the big questions, to grapple with them, in an ongoing quest for insight and wisdom. It reminds us of all we do not know and makes space for genuine enquiry into who we are and why we are here.

Wishing all new and returning students an engaging and fruitful academic year ahead!



Rev. Professor Declan Marmion – Dean of the Faculty of Theology

Europe's core values: democracy, dignity, freedom and equality

Students and lecturers from across Europe and the Lebanon met in the medieval Italian town of Gubbio this summer to learn, discuss and question the ideas and experiences that give shape to the continent of Europe.

The event is part of a project called 'European Humanism in the Making', organised by the European Federation of Catholic Universities (EFCU), of which Maynooth College is a very active member.

When Pope Francis received the European Union's highest award – the Charlemagne Prize – in 2016, he called on Europe to revitalise its core values of dignity, freedom, equality and democracy, among others.

"Europe will be able to confront the problems associated with immigration only if it is capable of clearly asserting its own cultural identity," Pope Francis said.

Each day of the EFCU conference was dedicated to a different theme: history, culture, science, politics and citizenship. SPCM Registrar, Dr Michael Shortall, who represented Maynooth at the conference, led the group which examined European Social Humanism and Catholic Social Teaching.



"The curiosity, dedication, and hospitality of the students embodied much of what is best about Europe," said Fr. Shortall (above right)



Church and State relationship explored at Maynooth Union

A retired Secretary General to the Government, who was ordained a permanent deacon in 2016, the Rev Dermot McCarthy (on right of photo) and Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ spoke at the Maynooth Union's annual gathering in June. Their address, which explored the dialogue and relationship between Church and State in a changing environment, had been published in the September/October edition of *The Furrow*.

Proclaiming the Gospel in a changing world

Recently I had the privilege of addressing 200 delegates at the National Convention of St Joseph's Young Priests Society. I spoke about Pope Francis' 2013 document *The Joy of the Gospel* – in which Francis shared his vision for the proclamation of the gospel in today's changing world.

For me, *The Joy of the Gospel* text is like an early spring wind full of pollen, carrying the promise of new life for the future of the Church.

Rev. Professor Michael Mullaney – President, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth

As a document, it palpitates with energy. It is dynamic – not doctrinal, challenging all of us to think of being 'Church' in a new way.

Our Church was born, not in a synagogue or a rabbinical school, but on the streets of Galilee during our Lord's three years of free and happy wandering, on roads and paths, between houses, fields and lake.

Christianity was born on the road; and roads are open to everyone. We are journeying together on that road with believer and non-believer alike. We are not on a special segregated street, but humbly walk with everyone else asking the same questions, facing the same struggles.

Pope Francis calls for a Church that is not self-referential, that goes out of itself. He is asking us to rediscover the roots of where the Church started out.

This will mean a realignment of all our religious institutions; parishes, seminaries, universities, hospitals, schools, which were established and flourished in a different time.

A Chinese philosopher once said: new beginnings are often disguised as painful endings.

If we are to take seriously the calling to proclaim the gospel, we have to discern what we have to offer as Christians and as a Church.



US fundraiser appointed

A new page is turning in the College's relationship with our American friends and benefactors. After twenty-five years Dr Tom Ledwith will retire as the College's Director of Development and Fundraising in the United States and be succeeded by Mr Jim O'Connor.

Dr Ledwith's quarter century of sterling service to the College will be honoured at a special event in New York during October, which will be featured in the Advent edition of this newsletter.

Mr. O'Connor has more than 29 years of senior level experience working within the Financial Technology sector, including nine years devoted to fundraising. He was Campaign Director for CCS Fundraising, a strategic fundraising firm that partners with nonprofits for transformational change. He was also served as a Major Gifts Officer with the American Ireland Funds Philadelphia chapter.

A graduate of St. John's University, Jim O'Connor lives in Attleboro, MA with his wife Mary and son Jack. He holds leadership positions within his parish, the Diocese of Fall River and Attleboro Deanery.

Jim has been getting to know some of the College's generous American benefactors since March. Attendees at forthcoming fundraising events will soon meet him in person.



Jim O'Connor has been appointed as SPCM's US Director of Development and Fundraising

Calendar of Events

October

3rd

Maynooth Celebrates 225 - Community Open Day
- All welcome. RSVP: specialevents@spcm.ie

16th

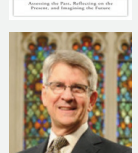
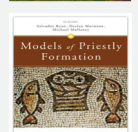
Feasts and Seasons II - Liturgical Music workshop.
Registration via Eventbrite.ie

22nd

Book launch: "Models of Priestly Formation, Assessing the Past, Reflecting on the Present, and Imagining the Future" eds. Salvador Ryan, Declan Marmion and Michael Mullaney

22nd

Leading theologian, Professor Bradford Hinze of Fordham University, New York, will deliver the annual **Devlin Lecture; "Can We Find Our Way Together? The Challenge of Synodality in a Wounded and Wounding Church"**



November

9th

Pontifical University Graduation Ceremony
- By invitation only

29th & 30th

Undergraduate Open Days - All prospective students welcome



December

12th

Maynooth College Plainchant Performance
- All welcome

15th

Maynooth Brass and Reed Band Christmas Concert - Tickets available via Eventbrite.ie

16th-18th

Christmas Carol Services - By invitation only



St. Patrick's College welcomes your support.

For more information:

<http://maynoothcollege.ie/giving>

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