

# St Patrick's

Spring 2022 — No 14

The newsletter of St Patrick's Pontifical University & St Patrick's National Seminary



St Patrick as painted by Nathaniel Westlake, and later gilded by Robert Mannix, on the ceiling of the body of the Chapel. Behind a detail of the vast heavenly procession.



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**St Patrick's Day greetings and blessings to all our newsletter readers around the world.**

**We thank all of you for your support and encouragement.**

## Summit marks first step on listening and learning journey

**T**he Church in Ireland has embarked on a synodal pathway of listening and learning from many different voices to discern the signs of the times and map a way forward. Likewise, St Patrick's College will embark on a similar pathway of learning and listening to many voices from the fields of pastoral ministry, education, business, politics, law as well as our alumni at a Maynooth 'summit' to be held at the College on 23 April (Easter Week).

The implementation of the College's strategic plan A Vision for Renewal and Transformation 2020-30 will form the context of the summit. The College is revising and expanding its academic programmes to reach a broader cohort of students and with the development of the new Centre for Mission and Ministries we are working with partners to deliver new qualifications in counselling, youth ministry, and health care chaplaincy in response to pastoral needs. At a strategic level, the College is engaging with stakeholders about how its spatial resources will futureproof the College's mission of formation and education.

The purpose of the summit is to enlist a broad base of advocates in Ireland for our strategic plan and to resource its implementation. The multifaceted nature of the strategic plan and the recently revised governance structures, designed to enable the College to deliver its mission, will require more lay involvement with

the comprehensive skillset and experience in order for the College to continue to make a spiritual, educational and pastoral impact. The day will include a number of presentations from key speakers, including former Taoiseach, John Bruton, with ample opportunities for participants to share their ideas.

The summit will be an exchange of ideas and draw on the many gifts, charisms, experience, expertise, skills, and competencies of the participants to help discern how St Patrick's College can move forward with the Church and society, both nationally and internationally.

To learn how to participate in the Summit contact Caroline Tennyson at [caroline.tennyson@spcm.ie](mailto:caroline.tennyson@spcm.ie)



# Returning to a semblance of normal campus life

**F**ollowing a long period of online studies and remote learning, students of St Patrick's Pontifical University finally got a chance to return to Loftus Halls in September 2021. It was certainly not 'business as usual' as some public-health restrictions were still in place when the new academic year got under way in September 2021.

Masks, online exams and social distancing we still in place for much of the semester. However, it was wonderful to see students wander the corridors and cloisters again. Initiatives such as orientations, re-orientations and social activities were to the fore along with outdoor seating areas to fit in with the 'new normal.' Pop up vaccination tents were in place along with complimentary masks and sanitisers.

The extent to which we are now able to teach in person and return to some semblance of normal campus life is precisely because of our adherence to public health guidelines along with other safety measures.

As we came together for the second semester, with a further relaxing of restrictions, the SPPU management team continued to meet regularly and adjust its guidance based on information regarding the COVID-19 situation on a regular basis.

What we as a community at SPPU have learned is that the pandemic has amplified how important social interactions can be for mental health. A discussion before or after class, a lecture question that identifies a common interest, can underpin social networks for students who might be from another city, county or another country. With life becoming increasingly fast-paced, and increasingly digital, SPPU may offer one of the last opportunities for young adults to meet face-to-face on a daily basis. The need for on-campus education has never been greater whilst utilising the tools and skills gathered during our online learning experience.

## New programmes

SPPU didn't sit back during the pandemic. As we adapted to a new learning environment, programme development grew at an exponential rate. This included launching a new undergraduate degree in Counselling which commences in September 2022. We also have a Professional Diploma in Youth Ministry and Spirituality also commencing in September. With the advent of online learning and micro-credentials our new partnership with Aspal (aspal.ie) has never been more important in reaching out to communities and parishes both in Ireland and abroad. There are a number of new partnerships and programmes in development and SPPU looks forward to continuing to grow its academic programme offerings and student numbers in the coming years.

**Moss Garde**





Seminary Community at the grave of Frank Duff 27 January 2022.

# Entering a new semester with a spring in our steps!

**W**ith the arrival of the second semester in the current formation year has come a welcome relaxation of some of the Covid-19 restrictions with which we have been living since March 2020. It is good to see more people around – both in St Patrick’s College and in Maynooth University. This brings a renewed sense of energy and hope to the seminary community which has been quietly but purposefully in situ since September 2020.

We prepared for the new semester with a three-day Human Formation Workshop delivered by Paul Ruff, Assistant Director of Human Formation and Director of Counselling Services, The Seminaries of St Paul, Minnesota. This was followed by a visit to Glasnevin Cemetery, where we were given an entertaining and informative tour and brought to see the

burial places of such notable figures in Irish history as Daniel O’Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Collins, Countess Markiewicz, Éamon de Valera, Fr Frank Browne SJ and Frank Duff (founder of the Legion of Mary). On the weekend before the start of the new semester, we were honoured to have Bishop Larry Duffy of Clogher with us to direct the New Year Retreat.



Bishop McGuckian blesses the newly installed statue.

## New statue of St Joseph

**On Wednesday 8th December 2021, Bishop Alan McGuckian blessed the new statue of St Joseph which was commissioned to mark the Year of St Joseph, and which was sculpted by Tadhg Ó’Dushláine from a single piece of bog oak.**

It depicts St Joseph bearing aloft the child Jesus and carrying the tools of his trade as a carpenter – a gentle, courageous, wise, and caring father, who looked after Jesus and Mary and who is a model of faith-filled discipleship for all who aspire to the ministerial priesthood.



Most Rev Larry Duffy, Bishop of Clogher, pictured with seminarian Stephen Sherry (Clogher)

## Ministries 2021-22

**It was a real joy for the community to be able to celebrate the admission to candidacy and institution as Lector and Acolyte of a number of seminarians this year, following last year’s moratorium due to Covid-19 restrictions.** Our sincere thanks to Bishops Alan McGuckian SJ and Larry Duffy, and to Archbishop Francis Duffy for their presence with us for these key moments in the formation journey of our seminarians.






Archbishop Francis Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam, pictured with seminarians who were instituted as Acolytes: l-r Sean Murphy (Kerry), Timothy Collins (Limerick) and Mark Quinn (Tuam).

# Calendar


March 2022

8	Virtual Postgraduate Open evening 3-7pm	
8	Annual Trócaire Lecture <i>How women of faith are responding to the ecological crisis</i> Register at <a href="https://bit.ly/trocaire-lecture-2022">bit.ly/trocaire-lecture-2022</a>	

## April 2022

23	Maynooth Learning & Listening Summit	
27-30	Faculty of Philosophy hosts International Conference on <i>The Future of Christian Thinking</i> . Register at <a href="https://bit.ly/TFOCT-22">bit.ly/TFOCT-22</a>	
30	SPPU Undergraduate & Postgraduate Open Day	

## May 2022

10	Irish Theological Quarterly annual lecture	
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## June 2022

14 - 15	Maynooth Union Annual Gathering	
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**Maynooth College welcomes your support.**

For more information please visit [maynoothcollege.ie/giving](https://maynoothcollege.ie/giving) or call Caroline Tennyson on +353 (0)1 708 3964

# Shining a light on the latest Christian thinking research

From 27 – 30 April, academics from all over the world will come to St Patrick's Pontifical University Maynooth to discuss *The Future of Christian Thinking*. The theme for the conference reflects widespread international interest on Christian thought.

Indeed, in the last few decades, philosophical concern with Christian thought has dominated many of the publications and much of the research in philosophy. Questions of the existence and nature of God, His relation to creation, His salvific will, the problem of suffering, heaven and hell and so on have appeared in the recent philosophical literature.

The issue of Christian thinking touches every aspect of our modern society. There is no part of human life that is not in some way brought into focus by reflection on the mysteries of the Christian faith. Not only that, but philosophical thought has also continually found the truths professed by Christianity to contain within themselves a philosophical dimension worthy of pursuit. It is indeed the case, that there is a mutual interchange between the water of philosophy and the wine of theology.

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Among others, speakers include Rowan Williams, David Bentley Hart, Cyril O'Regan, Eleonore Stump, as well as members of our own distinguished Faculty of Philosophy. Anyone who is interested in Christian thought and the philosophical dimension thereof will gain something positive through attending this conference. The Faculty of Philosophy is proud to present this conference and to welcome you to St Patrick's Pontifical University Maynooth.

**Dr Gaven Kerr**



# Renowned international speaker to deliver ITQ guest lecture



We are delighted to welcome Dr Celia Deane-Drummond, Director of the Laudato Si Research Institute and Senior Research Fellow in

theology at Campion Hall, University of Oxford to deliver the 2022 Irish Theological Quarterly (ITQ) annual lecture on the Theological Foundations of Pope Francis's Integral Ecology.

Dr Deane-Drummond is widely recognised internationally as a public speaker and has published hundreds of articles in academic and other journals.

She is also honorary visiting Professor in Theology and Science at the University of Durham, UK. Her work at the interface of theology, ethics and the biological and human sciences stems from her prior academic experience in plant physiology as well as theology. She was chair of the European Forum for the Study of Religion and Environment from 2011-2018.

Her research interests focus on the interface between theology and science and recent publications include *The Evolution of Wisdom Volume I: Theological Ethics Through a Multispecies Lens* (2019) and *Shadow Sophia: The Evolution of Wisdom Volume II* (2021).

The lecture will be delivered online on 10 May 2022 at 6pm, is free, and open to all. However, prior registration via Eventbrite will be required. For information about how to register please email Caroline Tennyson at [caroline.tennyson@spcm.ie](mailto:caroline.tennyson@spcm.ie).



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