

St Patrick's

Winter 2022 — No 17

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



We congratulate all who graduated, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level and wish them well on their future paths, wherever it may take them.



Graduations 2022
page 1-2



Awards Night 2022
page 3



Head of Vatican Observatory
page 4

Creating a vision for the next chapter in the life of the Church

"Our Synodal journey is taking place at a significant turning point in the history of the Church here. In 2029 we will mark the bicentenary of Catholic Emancipation and, as it approaches, there is a sense that we are in some ways drawing to a close a significant chapter in the life of the Church here, while at the same time seeking a new vision of living faith for the future."

"The Synodal reflections so far have merely skimmed the surface. It is clear that we need to go much deeper in our listening, reflection and dialogue, and much wider in our conversations. And that is where the graduates of St Patrick's Pontifical University come in!"

The words of Archbishop Eamon Martin, who addressed the graduate class of 2022 in theology and philosophy in his role as Chancellor of St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth.

Archbishop Martin further commented that he believed that many people are finding the current

Synodal process in the Church to be stimulating and refreshing, and are welcoming the opportunity to engage in prayerful discernment and discussion. Although at the same time recognising that not all feel that way. Some Catholics are confused by the Synodal process; they find such openness a potential threat to the stability and certainty of Church teaching. It is therefore very important that we work hard together to preserve the unity and communion of the Church at this time.

[continues on page 2](#)



"The National Synthesis reveals significant challenges for the handing on of the faith in Ireland. There are clear calls for greater transparency and participation in decision making and for more accountability within our parish and diocesan church structures. There is a longing to connect with the energy and gifts of our young people and a call to discover fresh models of responsibility and leadership in the Church which will facilitate the role of women, as well as men, and help reach out to those who in recent decades have left the Church, or who feel excluded, forgotten or ignored.

The Synodal process can help in developing such a vision and manifesto for the future which is both ancient and new, and which can bring afresh to our troubled world and its many lonely and wounded people, the joyful message that 'Christ is alive', 'Christ is our hope!'

Graduates are well equipped to become active in the next important phases of Ireland's Synodal pathway. Ten years from now the Patrician year 2032 will mark 16 centuries of Christianity in Ireland. We need your help in creating a vision for the next chapter in the life of the Church in Ireland. We must be more confident and prophetic in the dialogue between faith and culture in Ireland."

Archbishop Martin invited all present and in particular Graduates to become actively involved in ongoing Synodal conversations and encouraged the Pontifical University to bring its resources and talents to the task of ensuring that the Church of the future in Ireland is a Church which serves; a Church which is less about maintenance and monuments and more about mission and evangelisation.





Awards Night

It's always a very special event in the university calendar, the evening before Graduation when students across all years are rewarded for the special effort they've put in to their studies. This year's Student Awards and Scholarship evening took place on Friday 11th November on campus and was attended by students, staff and families.

St Patrick's Pontifical University Alumna, Kate Higgins Jackson delivered the keynote address at this year's Student Awards and Special Prizes evening. Kate graduated with a BATH and Master's Degree in Moral Theology at SPPU before moving into the area of international humanitarian aid. She has spent the last six years managing programmes in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Somalia, and at the Syrian border in Lebanon with Concern Worldwide. During a captivating delivery, Kate shared with the audience her love of what she does and how it is often the smallest of differences in people's lives in such regions that have the biggest impact and gives her the motivation to keep going back and doing what she does.



Kate Higgins Jackson with Rev Dr Michael Shortall, Dean of Postgraduate Studies.





Jim and Jackie Delaney



The President with Mr Lawrence G McMichael & Ms Patricia D Wellenbach



Richard & Diane Welsh

Revitalising fundraising efforts in the US

Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President, and Director of Marketing Paul Hurley recently visited New York and Philadelphia to meet with friends and supporters as part of the Irish Education and Development Foundation events in New York and Philadelphia. This was the first opportunity Fr Mullaney had in recent years to update supporters of St Patrick's College, on recent developments, on the long term strategy and immediate plans for the Pontifical University and Seminary.

The US events were an opportunity to reconnect with old friends and indeed make new ones. A case statement was presented for the immediate funding priorities of the college which was received positively.

The things they ask the Pope's Astronomer

Dr Guy Consolmagno, Director of the Vatican Observatory gave a fascinating talk on campus on 7th of November 2022. This talk is part of the *Science for Seminaries* project, and invited to Maynooth by Dr Andrew Meszaros, Lecturer in Systematic Theology. As part of a humorous and engaging talk Dr Consolmagno discussed, among other things the strong connection that exists between faith and science despite the common perception that they are diametrically opposed.



Christmas & the Irish

Following the successful conclusion of the trilogy *Birth and the Irish, Marriage and the Irish, and Death and the Irish* (published by Wordwell Press from 2016-21), Prof Salvador Ryan, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, is now working on a fourth volume, titled *Christmas and the Irish*. This will gather together contributions from historians, theologians, folklorists, literature scholars, musicologists, librarians, journalists, educationalists, and many others, to explore how Irish people have experienced and celebrated Christmas at home and abroad over more than a millennium of history.

The book will be published in late 2023 by Wordwell Press.



All Saints & All Souls Retreat

4-6 November 2022

The Seminary Community had the pleasure of welcoming back Sr Marie Fahy oco, Abbess of St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn to direct the seminary retreat at the beginning of November.

Sr Marie reflected with us on our personal dreams and the dreams of Jesus. She wished to look at the importance of dreams in finding a way forward, as a way of getting out of a crisis, "because in giving time to our dreams" as St Joseph did, "we are really listening to our deepest desires and listening to the Holy Spirit" who helps us to interpret our deepest desires in the light of God's truth and of God's desires for us. Sr Marie's words, together with her gentle, insightful and encouraging presence, gave encouragement and hope to our seminarians and to the wider formative community.



Equipping Christian Leaders in an Age of Science (ECLAS)

Divine Action & the Sacraments

During his meeting with the Irish Bishops on 26th August 2018, Pope Francis said: "the transmission of the faith in its integrity and beauty represents a significant challenge in the context of Ireland's rapidly evolving society."

The Pope went on to say that "genuine religious formation calls for faithful and joyful teachers who are able to shape not only minds but also hearts in the love of Christ and in the practice of prayer." People of faith are increasingly called to bring "the wisdom and values of their faith to their engagement in the various sectors of the country's social, cultural and political life." St Patrick's Pontifical University and St Patrick's National Seminary have this year embarked on a *Science for Seminaries* Project entitled "Divine Action and the Sacraments".

The ECLAS website sets the scene for this initiative: "In the twenty-first century, science is always part of the vernacular. From banner issues – such as evolution, neuroscience, and reproductive technologies –to daily



questions about medicine and public policy, ministers need a grounding in science to preach persuasively, pastor responsively, and spread the Gospel. ECLAS is currently working with 12 theological colleges." The initiative involves three lectures on science-engaged theology in the core curriculum.

Featuring prominent theologians and scientists, the module will introduce seminarians to key themes at the intersection of natural science, philosophy, and theology with a focus on the relationship between divine action and the sacramental means of grace. The lectures will build toward an international workshop, public lecture, and a study day. The *Science for Seminaries* project team is being led by Dr Andrew Meszaros, working in collaboration with the Seminary Council.

An Advent People

In some ways, Advent is the liturgical season that most closely resonates with where we are at the moment in our journey together as Church. We are the Community of Jesus' Disciples. We are a people that waits in hope for the fulfilment of God's promise which continues to emerge in this world.

With Jesus, we wait in the wilderness of the current geopolitical and social uncertainties and with him we learn how to place our trust in the promise of the Father, a promise made known to us through the Word made Flesh, "the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature." It is he who "sustains the universe by his powerful command" and it is he who will lead us out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land, where we will know freedom, where we will know peace, where we will know deep and lasting happiness.

In the meantime, we watch and wait. We watch and wait in anticipation. We watch and wait in hope. It is this faith-filled hope which enlivens the mission and witness of the National Seminary and which inspires us each day to set out anew on the pilgrim path of faithful love of God and neighbour.

“ the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature.”

Each day, we watch and pray, with and for our fellow journeymen and women and we ask Emmanuel, the Promised One, to fill the hearts and homes of all who read these words with light and love this Christmas and throughout the year to come.



Fr Mullaney's re-election as President of FUCE

Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President of St Patrick's College, has been re-elected President of the European Federation of Catholic Universities (FUCE) at the recent general assembly in Tirana. Originally appointed to the role in 2019, Prof Mullaney leads the 59 member strong federation of catholic universities across Europe and Lebanon at a time when members are encountering the direct challenge faced by war in Ukraine and societal upheaval.

FUCE was created in 1991 for the purpose of fostering cooperation between its members through: mutual information between member universities; exchange and cooperation in the fields of teaching, research and culture; reflecting on the meaning, orientation and action of Catholic universities in the European and international context of education.

Calendar

December 2022

13 Live stream of the Christmas Carol Service, check sppu.ie for updates



March 2023

7 Postgraduate Open Evening



7 Trocaire Lecture



26 Choral Concert



April 2023

28-29 Analogy, Desire, and Imitation an international Philosophy workshop



Maynooth College welcomes your support.

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



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Dean of Philosophy Notes

Since its restoration in 2019, the Faculty of Philosophy at St Patrick's Pontifical University has gone from strength to strength. Student enrolment is good, particularly at postgraduate level. We continue to attract students of high calibre both from Ireland and abroad. While we are keen to consolidate our position as a centre of excellence in teaching and research within the Christian tradition, we are also embarking on a number of new initiatives. Above all, we are seeking to broaden the access and the reach of our programmes.

We have launched an attractive MPhil programme (with various options for combining taught and research elements) which affords graduate students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of philosophy through specialised study, personal work, and research. We will be working hard to promote our MPhil among final-year philosophy students at universities in Ireland and abroad. We have also begun promoting our undergraduate philosophy programmes in schools: the very positive response from students and teachers has been most encouraging. Our BPhil degree will be listed at the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the UK. It is our aim to evaluate the BPhil for eventual inclusion in the Central Schools Admissions system in Ireland (CAO).

Another new initiative is the Faculty of Philosophy Seminar Series which will take place three times each semester and will involve academics from Ireland and abroad. The series will align itself closely with the strategic goals of the University to enrich our identity, to enhance the experience of our existing students, to build and foster relationships with partners locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally, and to increase student recruitment. The seminar series aims to continue to put the Faculty of Philosophy at SPPU 'on the map'. Finally, and again, with an eye to broadening access and reach, we are exploring the possibility of devising short courses in philosophy which can be delivered online or in a blended way.



Rev Dr Simon Nolan, O.Carm
Dean of Philosophy



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