

St Patrick's

Autumn 2023 — No 20

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



Seminary Community September 2023



New SPPU students!
page 5



Dean's update
page 4



World Youth Day
page 3

2023 - A Bumper Harvest!

With great joy and delight, we are very pleased to announce that by the end of September 2023, eight men who had completed initial formation in Maynooth had been ordained to the Priesthood and one man had been ordained as a Deacon.

In chronological order, the following Maynooth alumni received priestly ordination at the hands of the local Bishop:

Rev Michael McCaul on Sunday 29 January, in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry.

Rev Chris Garrett on Sunday 28 May in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Sligo, for the Diocese of Elphin.

Rev Mark Moriarty on Sunday 13 August, in St Mary's Cathedral, Killarney for the Diocese of Kerry.

Rev Mark O'Farrell on Sunday 20 August in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford

for the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

Rev Dawid Aksenczuk on Sunday 27 August, in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast for the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Bishop Kevin Doran travelled to the Diocese of Kumba in Cameroon to ordain **Rev Conrad Forzeh** and **Rev Frankline Nkopi** to the Priesthood on Wednesday 6 September.

Fr Conrad and Fr Frankline spent four years in the Stage of Configuration (Theological Studies) in Maynooth. They will return to Ireland later in the year to take up pastoral appointments in the Diocese of Elphin.

Rev Stephen Ward was ordained to the Priesthood in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry on Sunday 10 September.

Finally, **Anthony Hartnett** was ordained to the Diaconate on Sunday 24 September in Mary Immaculate Parish Church, Stranorlar, Co Donegal for the Diocese of Raphoe.

[Continue on page 2](#)



Fr Chris Garrett with Bishop Doran, Formators, Clergy, Seminarians and Servers following his ordination to the Priesthood in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Sligo on Sunday 28th May 2023

Fr Mark O'Farrell with Bishop Cullinan and his Mother Mary, sister Audrey, brothers Fergal and Brian, and brother-in-law Conor after his ordination in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford on Sunday 20th August 2023.



Fr Conrad Forzeh, Bishop Agapitus Nfon, Bishop Kevin Doran, Fr Frankline Nkopi



Fr Stephen Ward with Bishop McKeown following his ordination to the priesthood



Fr Mark Moriarty, with his parents Brian and Marjie and brother Paul, Sunday 13th August, 2023



Fr Dawid Aksenczuk with his parents Aleksandra and Jaroslaw and Bishop Donal McKeown.

The seminary community shares in the joy of the families, friends and dioceses of our seminary alumni. We pray God's blessing upon these men as they exercise their priestly service with the People of God in the parishes to which they are sent in synodal service of the mission of the Church in Ireland.

The new formation year began with a sense of great energy and hope as St Patrick's National Seminary welcomed 14 new arrivals. 10 of these men are starting in the First Year of the Stage of Discipleship (Philosophical Studies) having completed the Propaedeutic Stage in Spain. 4 are coming into the Stage of Configuration (Theological Studies) from seminaries in other countries (Italy, Nigeria and Slovakia).

This year, the full complement of the seminary community returned on Sunday 10 September. The seminarians in the Stage of Discipleship took part in the Introductory Programme and the seminarians in the Stage of Configuration engaged in a Scripture Workshop on the Gospel of St Matthew, which was facilitated by the Department of Sacred Scripture of St Patrick's Pontifical University.

The entire seminary community took part in a three-day Human Formation workshop, facilitated by Fr Paddy Sweeney (Archdiocese of Dublin) and then a three-day retreat directed by Bishop Brendan Kelly, Emeritus of Galway. These two weeks together enabled the members of a substantially new community to begin to forge the bonds of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral unity which will help all of us to live, work and pray together as intentional disciples of the Lord who bear witness to His presence in our midst on this vibrant, active campus which we share with our colleagues and friends in Maynooth University.

Summer School

Ireland meets Italy and Europe. Two students Ryan Cox and Kieran Graham joined Dr Michael Shortall at a Summer School in Palermo, Sicily. They were joined by 40 international students and lecturers for a full week of inputs, discussion and new friendships. It was called European Humanism in the Making. It is a response to a call by Pope Francis to connect to Europe's tradition of democracy, human rights and religious roots by a network of European Catholic universities. Next year it moves to Lille in France. It is yet another example of the rich experience our students can have at St Patrick's.



Dr Michael Shortall, Ryan Cox and Kieran Graham



Maynooth Union 2023

On Tuesday 13th June 2023, the Jubilarian Classes of 1963 (Diamond), 1973 (Golden) and 1998 (Silver) were joined by alumni of the College celebrating other significant anniversaries of ordination, and by members of the Irish Episcopal Conference and College Staff for Maynooth Union 2023.

On a day of glorious sunshine, the atmosphere was one of thanksgiving for the College and its formative role in the mission of the Church in Ireland and beyond. Following a day of prayer and celebration, including many and various reminiscences, participants left feeling reconnected and uplifted by time spent back in their alma mater.



Golden Jubilarians



Silver Jubilarians



Diamond Jubilarians



New Icons commissioned for the Seminary

The Seminary Council recently commissioned two icons for the Seminary Community. One is in honour of our patron, St Patrick and the other is in honour of St Brigid, Abess and Secondary Patron of Ireland.

The icons have been placed near the entrance to the National Seminary, as reminders to all who look upon them of the powerful witness and mission of these two great saints of Ireland. The icons help the members of the seminary community to be mindful of our motto *Precare et Pascere* - prayerful preparation to go forth as shepherds. We are very grateful to the Redemptoristine Sisters of St Alphonsus Monastery, Drumcondra for accepting the commission to write these beautiful icons for the National Seminary. Críost romhainn, Críost linn.



Maynooth Seminarians at WYD (Lisbon) 1-6 August 2023

World Youth Day 2023



A number of our seminarians, together with lay students of SPPU, joined with their bishops and young people from their dioceses to participate in World Youth Day in Lisbon.

Some 1.5 million young people, including 1,500 from Ireland, encountered a joyful and life-giving experience of Church with Pope Francis, who warmly welcomed the young people, reminding them that God has called them by name precisely because He loves each one of them. "At this World Youth Day," the Pope said, "let us help one another to recognise this fundamental reality: May these days be vibrant echoes of God's call of love." By all accounts, this is precisely what those who shared in this major and very special faith-filled event experienced.



Dr Tobias Winright's keynote on Gun Violence



Tobias Winright, Professor of Moral Theology, delivered an invited keynote address on 29 July about 'A Catholic Perspective on Gun Violence' at a summit 'Addressing Gun Violence and Promoting a Culture of Life' hosted by the Archdiocese of St Louis in St Louis, Missouri (USA).

Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski also spoke and was present during the day-long event, at which over 350 persons - including clergy, women religious, and laypersons - attended.

The issue of gun violence has been addressed by only a handful of moral theologians, and Winright first began writing about this problem 10 years ago, well before one of his daughters experienced an active shooting at her school on 24 October 2022 back in St Louis.

In his presentation, Winright shared about how his daughter texted him and his wife, Elizabeth, as the shooting was occurring. Drawing on Scripture, magisterial teaching, and theologians such as St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, he also provided an ethical framework for a Catholic stance on reducing gun violence. Winright also highlighted how views about guns differ between the Republic of Ireland and the United States. Several local TV, online and print media covered the event and Winright's talk.

Update from the Dean of Theology

The Faculty of Theology is taking seriously the task of engaging with the concept and practice of synodality, since, according to Pope Francis, 'it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.'

Faculty members have been busy locally and internationally giving talks, presenting papers and publishing for both academic and popular audiences. As the first Assembly of the Synod on Synodality takes place in October, one of our own honorary research fellows, Maria Cimperman rcsj, will be attending as an expert theologian. Two of our professors, Declan Marmion and Salvador Ryan have edited a volume *Reforming the Church: Global Perspectives* which one reviewer has called 'a miniature 'synod on synodality''. This academic year we have introduced several postgraduate seminars and reading courses on synodality-related topics. The ongoing challenge is to walk the talk, and we are endeavouring as a faculty to find more synodal ways of working ourselves. Easier said than done!

Maynooth is proud of its connections with the German city of Wurzburg which celebrates its Irish patron saint, St Kilian, with an



annual festival. This summer I had the privilege of delivering the Kiliani Lecture there. My topic was: *Playing with Parables without Pinning Them Down* and I explored possibilities for transformative readings of Scripture. The President, Rev Prof

Michael Mullaney, received a delegation from the diocese of Wurzburg, Germany in July, the diocese having strong links with the parish of St Kilian in Mullagh, County Cavan.

The group were delighted to receive a personal campus tour from Fr Mullaney including the magnificent surroundings of the College Chapel and the visit was rounded off with lunch on campus. We're passionate about theology because we really do believe it can make a positive difference in the world. Theology at SPPU is not an ivory-tower pursuit. Our moral theologians have been addressing thorny issues such as gun violence, war, Irish neutrality, violence against women, the refugee crisis, and homelessness.

Tarsus Scripture School, an initiative that began at the start of Covid and which offers online Scripture programmes for Advent, Lent and Summer, has now found a home in the Centre for Mission and Ministries. TSS held its first blended Summer School in Maynooth this summer with over 70 in attendance and more than 100 following online. This is a wonderful initiative for making biblical scholarship accessible to a wide audience and has people tuning in from as far away as Zambia! The website tarsusscriptureschool.ie has an archive of past programmes freely available.

Our undergraduate intake numbers remain strong thanks to the sterling work of our School Liaison Officer, Ruth Daly and our Marketing strategy, but in common with all higher education institutions in Ireland, retention is proving a challenge.

Dr Jessie Rogers
Dean of Theology





President Rev Prof Michael Mullaney greeting new students



Ruth Daly, Schools Liaison Officer, and Paul Hurley, Director of Marketing, with Student Ambassadors (l-r) Marysia Lenkiewicz, Ruth Kelly and Niall Carey.



Class of 2026 at Orientation day

Encouraging signs in Student Recruitment

This year we have witnessed another increase in applications to our lead undergraduate programme, the Bachelor's in Theology & Arts (BATH). Student first preferences through the Central Applications Office were ahead of last year by 29%, on top of a similar increase on the prior year.

We are currently in the offer season and at the time of print the indications are that the new first year intake will be in the region of 66 new students. Our undergraduate students come from a range of counties across Ireland and

this year they will be joined by some international students also.

This is very encouraging and ensures the university now has established a positive platform for an annual healthy student intake.

The ongoing marketing strategy, and school visit programme is bearing fruit and the President acknowledged the work of our School Liaison Officer, Ruth Daly and Paul Hurley, Director of Marketing & Communications in securing such a positive intake to the programme. One visible output

again this year will be the roll out of the student ambassador programme, managed by Caroline Tennyson.

Postgraduate numbers continue to hold steady. Our Higher Diploma in Theological Studies, and our Chaplaincy and Youth Ministry programmes continue to lead the way in enrolments through the Centre for Mission & Ministries.

Rachel McHugh joins us as Student Recruitment Officer with a brief covering both undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment. Rachel's background is in teaching religious education, running pastoral retreats and as a career guidance counsellor.



A hugely successful Societas Liturgica Congress at Maynooth



The 2023 Congress of Societas Liturgica was held in St Patrick's College, Maynooth from 7 to 10 August last. The theme of the congress was Liturgy and Ecumenism.

The congress was fully subscribed with 230 contributors and guests from around the globe including key contributions from St Patrick's Pontifical University Faculty. Dr Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, Dr Liam Tracey and Prof Seamus O'Connell were instrumental with the local organising

committee and international colleagues in delivering such a strong congress this year at Maynooth.

Societas Liturgica's remit is to encourage research in the field of worship and allied subjects, explore the pastoral implications of such research, facilitate the exchange of the results of this research and other liturgical knowledge, seek to deepen the mutual understanding of the various liturgical traditions and seek ways to make clear the relevance of liturgy in the contemporary world.



Rev Tom Surlis, Rector and Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President pictured with Mr Jim Delaney long-time friend of the College during his visit to the Maynooth campus in August.

Monsignor Brendan P. Devlin (Breandán Ó Doibhlin)



All at St Patrick's College Maynooth were saddened to learn of the death of Monsignor Brendan P. Devlin: Distinguished French and Irish Scholar. The President, Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, and the Rector of the National Seminary, Dr Tomás Surlis, extended condolences on behalf of students and staff to

Msgr Devlin's family, to Bishop Donal McKeown and the priests of the Diocese of Derry, and his circle of devoted and close friends.

Last May, friends from the Irish Department at Maynooth University, Cumann na Sagart, St Patrick's College and members of his family united to celebrate Brendan's contribution to the Irish language. It was a joyful, timely and poignant celebration. Brendan's contribution to the French language was recognised by the French government which awarded him the Légion d'honneur in 2001 for his services to cultural relations between France and Ireland, in particular his work for the restoration of the Irish College in Paris, his development of French studies at Maynooth University, and his work as translator of several of the classics of French literature into Irish.

Monsignor Brendan P. Devlin was born in Rouskey, County Tyrone in 1931. He was educated in St Columb's College, Derry, St Patrick's College, Maynooth and the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. He was ordained priest in 1955.

In 1958, he became Professor of Modern Languages at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, a position he held with distinction until his retirement in 1996. He is known for his work in French and Irish.

Monsignor Devlin was Vice-President of St Patrick's College, Maynooth from 1977 to 1980 and Rector of the Irish College in Paris from 1984 to 2001.

In 2001, he was invested as an Officier of the Légion d'honneur, the highest French award available to a foreign national. On 2nd September 2013, he celebrated the funeral mass of Séamus Heaney, also a past pupil of St Columb's College, Derry.

We give thanks to God for his authentic and faithful priestly witness and his rich scholarly legacy. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Calendar

October 2023

3	Book launch - Sacraments in a Synodal Church - Noel O'Sullivan	
6	Maynooth Presentation Sisters, 200th Anniversary celebration	
10	Opening of the Academic Year Mass	
17	The annual Monsignor J Corish Lecture 2023	

November 2023

10	Prize giving	
11	SPPU Graduation	
12	Mass for Deceased Benefactors of the College	
20	Book Launch - Reforming the Church: Global Perspectives	
24-25	Open Days	

December 2023

7	Annual Lecture in Christian Philosophy	
12-13	Carol service	

Maynooth College welcomes your support.

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



Maynooth College, Co Kildare, W23 TW77, Ireland
+353 (0)1 708 3958 alumni@spcm.ie

[maynoothcollege.ie](https://www.maynoothcollege.ie)

©2023 Maynooth College CHY41, CRA number 20000066



St Patrick's
National Seminary
Maynooth