

# St Patrick's

Spring 2024 — No 22

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



## Brigid 1500 — Celebrating her light, life and legacy



Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President of St Patrick's College, meeting his Holiness Pope Francis as part of the European Federation of Catholic Universities in Rome in January.

**F**ebruary commenced with a new public holiday in Ireland in honour of St Brigid. The Brigid1500 festival organised by Kildare County Council included a number of events commemorating the extraordinary life of this Irish saint and the 1500 years since her death. Among the events in the greater Kildare area was a grand fiery processional evening with the theme of the Flame of St Brigid held on the grounds of St Patrick's College on 2 February.

Earlier in the week, the Relic of St Brigid returned to her hometown of Kildare in Ireland after 1,000 years.

A special church service to mark the historic occasion took place in Kildare town.

Brigid, a renowned peacemaker, was buried beside the main altar at a monastic church in Kildare, with her grave becoming a shrine for visiting pilgrims. Around 300 years later, when the Vikings were raiding Ireland, her remains were moved to Downpatrick Cathedral in present-day Northern Ireland for safekeeping. There they were buried in an unmarked grave alongside St Patrick and St Columba, until now being returned to her native town.





Eddie and Áine Dowling receiving a gift of appreciation from Rev Prof Michael Mullaney and Rev Dr Tomás Surlis.



Greg & Leslie Fiori with Rev Prof Michael Mullaney.



Longtime friends and supporters Mr Bill Murphy and Ms Una Murphy.



Mary Egan & Manesha Lakhiani.



Maureen Brown & Janet Marzouca with Rev Dr Tomás Surlis, Rector.



John and Joan Mullen with Archbishop Farrell.

# Making New Friends in the U.S.

**T**he President and Rector were accompanied by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell to Florida for an event hosted by Mr Eddie Dowling, board member of the Irish Educational Development Fund, on 22 February last.

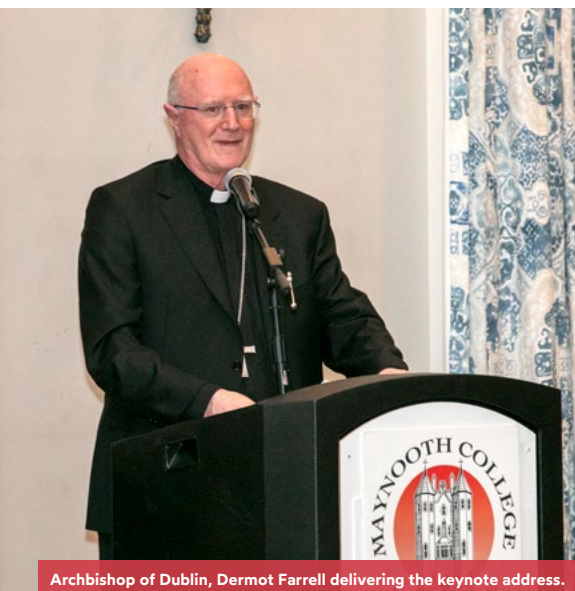
The event, held in Jupiter, was an opportunity for the President and Rector to share details of our ambitious development plan, Beyond2030, which includes potential for a new seminary and an academic learning hub and the launch of the Centre for Mission and Ministries. President of St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Rev Prof Michael Mullaney commented that Beyond2030 is a bold, brave and ambitious plan that is necessary to enable delivery of the college's mission into the future.

Beyond2030 will allow St Patrick's to continue to play a critical role into the future, with so many people searching for hope, spirituality and wisdom, belonging, meaning and faith.

The Rector of St Patrick's National Seminary, Rev Dr Tomás Surlis, added that a new seminary would allow St Patrick's to have a new contract between clergy and laity, while providing seminarians with optimal facilities to prepare them for a fruitful and life-giving ministry as they move out into the communities they serve.

Guest of honour and keynote speaker, Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin acknowledged the long standing support of our American friends and outlined the dynamics involved in administration of the modern church in an increasingly secular world.

We are very grateful to Eddie and Áine Dowling for their work in organising this event and their enthusiasm in gathering support and introducing new friends to St Patrick's College in this part of the U.S.



Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell delivering the keynote address.



A view of the assembled audience listening to Rev Prof Michael Mullaney opening the evening.



# From the desk of the Dean

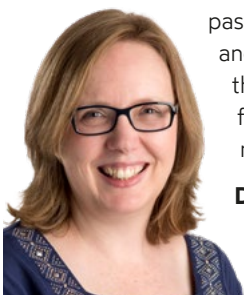
**T**he Theology we engage in at SPPU is not an esoteric, ivory-tower pursuit. How we approach questions about God, the meaning of life and the moral fabric of our shared reality has real-world implications. Referencing the many conflicts in the world, Pope Francis recently warned that we are 'on the brink of the abyss'. In a world gone crazy, Christians can too easily get sucked into divisive rhetoric or retreat into a sentimental holy huddle that ignores the 'weightier matters of .. justice and mercy and faith' (Matthew 23:23). I am really proud of the work being done by our moral theologians to address issues such as gun violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, and war. Theology has a word of hope to speak in the midst of this darkness, because God is always at work in the world, calling us toward life and wholeness. 'Where the danger is, also grows the saving power' (Friedrich Hölderlin).

The synodal processes in the Church are providing opportunities to contribute to conversations on the role of the Church in today's world and how to navigate the path of remaining faithful to the tradition while being open to God's surprising newness. One of the strengths of the faculty is our diversity of views, fertile ground to grow the unity-in-diversity that only the Holy Spirit can produce.

There is something wonderfully creative in the juggling act of pursuing academic scholarship, engaging in the public sphere, learning with young people, and contributing to the life of the Church. It keeps us on our toes, keeps us rigorous, and keeps us real.

This year SPPU was able to increase the number of students accepted on the Healthcare Chaplaincy programme with new placement sites in the Bon Secours Health System hospitals in Cork, Galway and Tralee. The students are benefitting hugely from the experience of pastoral care ministry in the Bon Secours hospitals. Students value both the opportunities they are receiving to learn the skills of pastoral care in the hospitals and the high level of support they receive during their formation for chaplaincy ministry.

**Dr Jessie Rogers**  
Dean of Theology



Pictured at the launch were Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President of St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth with Mr Bill Maher, Group Chief Executive Officer, Bon Secours Health System and Dr Jessie Rogers, SPPU Centre for Mission & Ministries.



Pontifical University

## Launch of Catholic Healthcare Ethics in the 21st Century

**S**t Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth, in partnership with Bon Secours Health System (BSHS), in January launched a new Ethics module for those in Allied Healthcare, professional and administration roles, and people working in Pastoral Care or Chaplaincy.

The first module in this level 9 suite of programmes is Catholic Healthcare Ethics in the 21st Century. This for-credit module can be taken as a standalone short course or combined with further modules and a research project to attain a Postgraduate Diploma. Students will be able to select modules in Ethics, Pastoral Care and Values-Based Leadership.

Each module, delivered through the SPPU online learning platform and by industry-leading professionals, offers the freedom to engage at a time that suits the learner.

The development of these online programmes demonstrates SPPU's commitment to delivering the highest levels of teaching and learning in order to promote intellectual, human and professional development. The programmes for Bon Secours Health System will be offered through the University's Centre for Mission and Ministries.



**Pictured left to right:** Angela Harding, Group Head of Marketing BSHS, Dr Michael Shortall, Dean of Postgraduate Studies SPPU, Eileen O'Connell, Centre for Mission & Ministries, SPPU, Alan Burke, Head of Mission, BSHS, Dr Jessie Rogers Dean of Theology, SPPU, Tobias Winright, Professor of Moral Theology, SPPU, Andrew McCarthy, Chief Sponsorship & Mission Officer, BSHS, Paul Hurley, Director of Marketing, Communications & Development, SPPU.



Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor with the Rector Rev Dr Tomás Surlis.

## Visit of Apostolic Nuncio

**O**n Tuesday 9th January, the Seminary Community was delighted to welcome the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, together with Monsignor Julien Kaboré, on an informal visit.

During his visit, the representative of the Holy Father in Ireland met with the President, Rector and members of the Formation Team. He also met with the resident seminarians, answered their questions and shared insights about his life and ministry, and about the mandate he exercises on behalf of the Pope

for the Church in Ireland. Archbishop Montemayor and Monsignor Kaboré joined the community for Evening Prayer and the Rosary, followed by supper in Pugin Hall. Before he departed the College, the Rector presented him with a bronze replica of a 1730 Penal Cross which is housed in the Russell Library.



## Maynooth Seminarians visit Leinster House

The seminarians of St Patrick's National Seminary, accompanied by the Rector Rev Dr Tomás Surlis and members of the Community of Formators, paid a visit to Leinster House, the home of the Irish parliament on St Brigid's Day.

During their visit, the seminarians took part in a seminar organised by Senator Rónán Mullen, entitled 'Faith and Politics – Promoting Spiritual Values in a Secular World'.

The Seminar was chaired by Senator Mullen and the Maynooth group was addressed by journalist and Irish Catholic columnist Mary Kenny on the theme, 'A balanced view of the history of Catholic Ireland'. Former Irish Ambassador and Director of the DCU Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations, Dr Philip McDonagh, spoke on the subject, 'Faith, Poetry and Politics' and Leinster House Chief Operations Officer, Michael Errity, addressed the group on the 'Houses of the Oireachtas Service'.

The seminarians and staff had a separate meeting with the Ceannt Comhairle at the opening of the seminar and, were hosted to dinner, following a tour of the Houses of the Oireachtas.



## Evening Prayer for Christian Unity

St Patrick's National Seminary was delighted to host members of the community of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute on Thursday 8th February for Evening Prayer of St Brigid for Christian Unity.

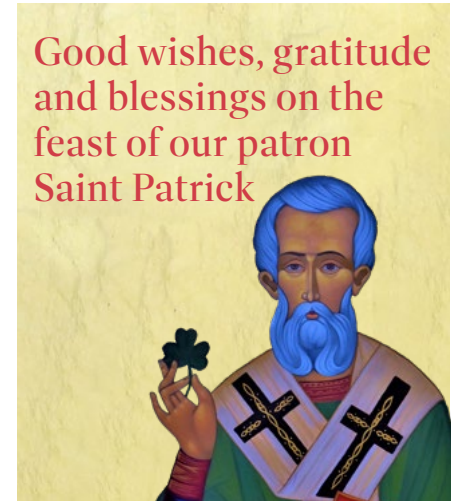
The homily was delivered by The Revd Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of the CITI and he was joined for the occasion by The Revd Dr Mathew McCauley, Deacon at St Matthew's Church, Dublin and Associate Professor at Trinity College, together with five seminarians from Braemor Park. The theme for our prayer together was 'Planted in love and built on love' which is taken from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians and which emphasises what unites all Christians as members of the Body of Christ. May the faith of St Brigid, which rooted and grounded her in love, enable us to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ as we continue on the journey to unity in the fullness of God (cf. Eph 3: 18-19).





# Learning Leadership in a Synodal Church

Bishop Brendan Leahy visited the Seminary on Wednesday 17th January to share his experience of attending the Synod on Synodality in Rome last October. During his presentation, Bishop Leahy spoke about the report from the First Session of the Synod, which will continue in Rome next year. We were particularly struck by the methodology of Conversations in the Spirit which guided the delegates who had gathered with Pope Francis in the St Paul VI Hall in the Vatican.



Pictured with Bishop Connell and with Bishop Paul Dempsey of Achonry Diocese are (l-r) Israel Osikang (Ogoja/Achonry); Will O'Shea (Cloyne); Ciarán Carragher (Armagh); Mark Caffrey (Meath); Patrick Oshie (Ogoja/Achonry) and Damien Kirkpatrick (Down and Connor).

# Ministries & Ordinations

The Seminary Community was delighted to welcome Bishop Paul Connell of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise back to preside at the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for six of our seminarians during Mass on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 8th December 2023. During his homily, Bishop Connell reminded the Candidates that "Like Mary, God has called each of us and yet has not provided us with an outline of our lives, an outline of what will happen to us. We do not know as we go through life what faces us, what manner of life we will have, what joys or sorrows, what crosses and pain may come our way. We cannot predict our tomorrow. We have to make a leap of faith and trust in God, just as Mary did."

We offer our congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Rev Anthony Kerr (Meath) who was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Tom Deenihan in St Mary's Church, Drogheda on Sunday 21st January and to Rev Seán Murphy (Kerry) who was ordained

Deacon by Bishop Ray Browne in St James' Church, Glenbeigh on Sunday 28th January.

The Seminary Community celebrated the conferral of the ministries of Lector and Acolyte during the month of February. Bishop Éamonn Walsh conferred the ministry of Lector on Tiernan Burke (Cloyne) during the Second Semester Retreat on Sunday 4th February and Bishop Michael Router conferred the ministry of Acolyte on Anthony Moffett (Dromore) and Stephen Sherry (Clogher) on Thursday 15th February. We offer prayerful best wishes to our new Lector and Acolytes as they continue on the journey of preparation for Priesthood.



Rev Seán Murphy with Bishop Ray Browne.



Daniel J. O'Connell (President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America) presents the Order's annual donation to Rev Dr Tomás Surlis (Seminary Rector).

# Visit by the President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America

On Sunday 11th February, the Seminary Community was joined by Mr Daniel J O'Connell (President of the AOH in America) for Mass in St Mary's Oratory, followed by brunch in Pugin Hall. The President of the AOH was accompanied by Mr Sean Pender, Vice-President and Mr Ray Lynch, Secretary. We thank the AOH for their ongoing support and generous donation towards the work of priestly formation at the National Seminary.



# John Bruton

## An Appreciation

The President and Rector wish to offer their sympathies to Finola and the extended Bruton family on the death of their beloved John. John was a former Irish Government Minister, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and EU Ambassador to the U.S. in a long and distinguished career. He was also a major contributor to the Northern Ireland peace process in the lead up to the Good Friday Agreement.

Throughout his career, John was committed above all to the idea of a democratic Ireland and a democratic Europe. A man of strong faith, he was an active member in his local Dunboyne parish in Co Meath. As referenced by Fr Bruce Bradley SJ in his homily at the State Funeral for John: 'The truth is that he was an instinctive, reflective Catholic. He was rooted in his faith.' John and his wife Finola have been great friends and supporters of St Patrick's College and as recently as 2022, John was the keynote speaker at our summit.

He will be remembered warmly in St Patrick's College.

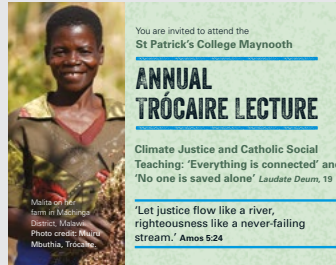
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.  
May he rest in peace.

# Annual Trócaire Lecture

The annual Trócaire Lecture, this year was titled:

**Climate Justice and Catholic Social Teaching: 'Everything is connected' and 'No one is saved alone'**

Laudate Deum, 19



The 2024 Lecture was delivered by Rev Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator SJ, former president of the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar and current Dean of the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, California.

# Carol Service

The annual Carol service took place over two nights in December which for many is the official start of their Christmas season. The college chapel was packed to the rafters on both evenings. The College Chapel Choir & the Maynooth Choral Society directed by Dr John O'Keeffe; the Schola Gregoriana, led by Dr Darina McCarthy; and Maynooth University Chamber Choir, under the direction of Dr Michael Dawson provided those assembled with an evening of spiritual, contemplative and uplifting music.

Each year we see huge demand for tickets that we simply could not satisfy. This is very encouraging to all concerned with the event and is a sign that the Maynooth Carol service is a firm fixture in the Christmas calendar in Ireland as a must attend event.

Among those in attendance this year were An Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland), Mr Leo Varadkar and former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

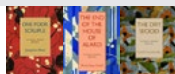


Pictured at the Carol Service were Prof Eeva Leinonen, President of Maynooth University, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, and Rev Prof Michael Mullaney, President of St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

# Calendar

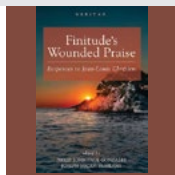
## March 2024

21 Promoting Catholic Women Writers series launch



## April 2024

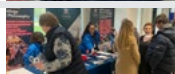
24 Book launch - Finitude's Wounded Praise, co-edited by Philip John Paul Gonzales and Joseph Micah McMeans, launched by Simon Oliver



25 Invited Speakers Seminar: Lecture by Simon Oliver, University of Durham



27 Undergraduate Open Day



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