

**Loyola Institute Newsletter**

**Winter 21/22**

## Women and Theological Formation

'Theological education key to women's empowerment in the Church'. Thus the Pan-African Women's Ecumenical Empowerment Network (PAWEEN) noted at a meeting in Norway (2016). In his New Year's sermon last year (2020) Pope Francis declared that women "should be fully included in decision-making processes" in the Church. The two go hand in hand. If people want to be involved in decision-making they must be informed and educated, speaking the same 'language' as those in positions of authority. Otherwise, we have is a mere pretence of involvement, without any real authority. Theological education of women is key for the future flourishing of the Church, not only for women in the Church. Many studies show that investing in girls' education transforms communities, countries, the entire world. Investing in theological education will transform the Church.

We are delighted to offer two scholarships, specifically for women. Thanks to the generous support of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles African women can apply for the Sisters Angèle-Marie Littlejohn and Bibiane Leclercq Scholarship, and due to the generous support of the Sisters of St John of God Irish women can apply for the Bridget Clancy Scholarship. These are two excellent opportunities for women to travel further along the path of theological education, and truly to make a difference.

There is a second aspect, just as important, when it comes to theology and women: the study of women theologians. We have many in our tradition, but they are often overlooked. This week students on our MPhil in Christian Theology studied the Trinitarian theology of Catherine Mowry LaCugna (1952 – 1997). There are many other women to study: Egeria's record of her pilgrimage to the Holy Land impacted the development of Easter Week ceremonies globally, the works of the Doctor of



Catherine Mowry LaCugna (1952 –1997)  
was a feminist Catholic theologian and author of *God For Us*.  
LaCugna's passion was to make the doctrine of the  
Trinity relevant to the everyday life of Christians.

the Church Abbess Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179), the preaching women of the radical Beguine movement ... Leaving the last word to another Doctor of the Church, Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), Teresa suggests that if "one or two ... fearlessly do what is best" things will begin to change. Now is the time for women to seriously commit to theological education.

Dr Fáinche Ryan

**We will be hosting an online event for women interested in studying theology on Feb 1st. Details to be finalised - watch our website, or sign up to our newsletter for more information.**

**For details of the Sisters Angèle-Marie Littlejohn and Bibiane Leclercq Scholarship and the Bridget Clancy Scholarship and a series of other scholarships please check out our website [www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute](http://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute)**

## COP26: a Brief Word of Encouragement



Mark Carney, the former head of the bank of England, shares an interesting anecdote in his book *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*. He tells of a meeting with Pope Francis in 2014, in which the Pope talked of the difference between wine and grappa. Wine 'is many things and enlivens the senses'; grappa, on the other hand, is distilled alcohol which has only one purpose, as a *digestivo*. Francis compares grappa to the marketplace, which distils and reduces humanity to one of its aspects- the economic. The challenge is to turn grappa back into wine, to recover the rich diversity of humanity from a reduced and blinkered version of itself.

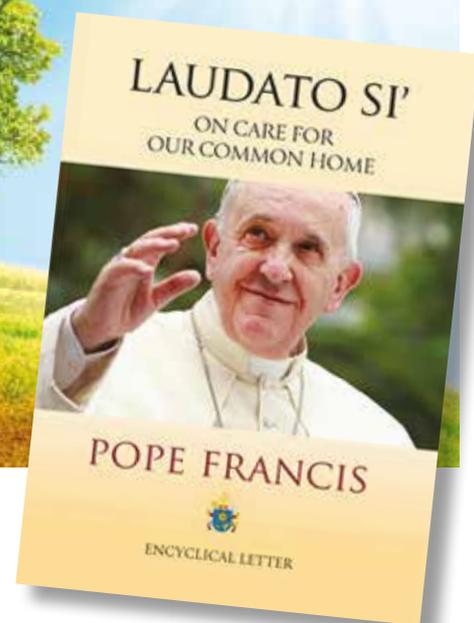
As we look to take even some limited hope from the COP26 gathering in Glasgow-



assessed by some as a very limited achievement at best, and by others as an utter failure and betrayal- we are left to ask, with Francis and Mark Carney: how do we widen the view, how do we reverse this obsessive reduction of human beings to their purely economic or technological significance? Surely theology has a role in helping us to achieve this task?

For five hundred years, the nation-state has been considered the best way for societies to flourish. This is why 'nationalism' is still a tantalising option for so many people. And yet, we now see the incapacity of nations to co-operate effectively in the face of common threats, such as COVID and the climate crisis. Nation-states, on their own, seem to be incapable of turning grappa into wine.

This why what happens 'outside the blue zone' is so important. The blue zone is the formal discussion hall, where the politicians made grand but hollow speeches. Outside this zone, there is a rediscovery of civil society: all manner of protest groups, looking to 're-wild' societies from below; indigenous peoples; the endangered populations of the global South; the angry disenfranchised youth, speaking through the likes of Greta Thunberg.



How is this 'theological'? A starting-point is the triad of documents from Pope Francis: the encyclical *Laudato Sí*, the synodal letter *Querido Amazonia* (as well as the Amazon synod process in general); and the more recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (on fraternity and 'social friendship' in a post-COVID world). It is striking how many of the alleged deficiencies of the COP26 process are touched upon in these documents, and it is interesting to re-read them in the light of this event.

Through these writings, Francis has committed the Church to a process of 'synodality', that is, a 'walking together' in discernment, which is to be genuinely respectful and inclusive of all voices. It is a hugely adventurous undertaking- a turning of grappa into wine, as we rediscover the full humanity of the Church. In the wake of COP26, perhaps the question is being posed to us: can the Church show the nations how it should be done?

**Michael Kirwan SJ**

## Congratulations and News



**Congratulations to Dr Alexander O'Hara** who has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship at Harvard University for 2021-'22. He left the Loyola Institute for Harvard in October. While a Research Fellow at the Loyola Institute in the project on theology and the early Irish church Alex made significant contribution to the module entitled Christianity of the Celtic World. He also co-ordinated a very successful webinar series to celebrate the 15th centenary of the birth of St Columbanus, a series which attracted a high number of international attendees. In addition, during his time with us, Alex continued his work toward a publication on cultural perceptions of Ireland and the Irish. He is co-authoring this work with an American colleague. They aim to submit the manuscript to Princeton University in September 2022. We wish Alex all the best in his ongoing research work in this fascinating area of study.



### **Dr Jake Erickson awarded Research Fellowship**

Loyola Institute's Dr Jacob Erickson has been named a Fellow in the Pantheism and Religious Life project, a research collaboration between Kings College London and Johns Hopkins University. Sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation, the project awards ten non-residential fellowships to support new, original research exploring pantheism (where God is in "all" and all is "in" God) and issues of contemporary religious life. In conversation with current climate ethics, queer ecology, theories of ecological embodiment and constructive theology. Erickson's project asks how one might construct a "wild pantheism" where Divinity is unruly in and as the body of the earth itself. Such a project asks how that unruly Divine might lure forth new perspectives on Climate justice and action.



### **Congratulations to Dr. Kate Oxsen for being awarded a PhD for her research on - Royal Women in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament**

Kate talks about her PhD

Building on my previous interest in the representation of gender in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT), this project is focused on the depiction of the three most prominent royal women in the HB/OT: Bathsheba, Jezebel (with Athaliah), and Esther. These characters have received varying degrees of scholarly attention in their own right. However, a dearth of extended depictions of royal women elsewhere in the HB/OT suggests the merits of a reading strategy which explores the relationship between the narrative accounts of these three women.

Kate Oxsen was Supervised by Prof. David Shepherd



**Congratulations to Loyola Institute staff member Dr David Shepherd** who, at the invitation of the new Provost, Dr Linda Doyle, has taken on the role of Senior Lecturer this autumn. This is a great distinction and we are delighted for David, although we will miss him.



### **New Visiting Scholar**

In late November we welcome Ryszard Bobrowicz, from the Centre of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Lund in Sweden. Ryszard's specialism is religious diversity and its implications

for contemporary European states and societies. The new multi-faith reality of Europe can be a cause of disagreement and conflict, but also of constructive transformation. He is a member of a research project on religious literacy, in which the Loyola Institute is working with Dutch (Theological University of Apeldoorn) and Swedish colleagues (University of Lund). Ryszard will be here for a week on the Erasmus+ mobility programme; he will give lectures on the Christian Theology module, 'Readings in Classical Theological Texts', and will present at the research seminar.

# Postgraduate Christian Theology Scholarships Awarded for 2021/22

## The Blessed Dominic Barberi Studentship



**Max Feenan**

Thanks to Passionist Provinces  
of Britain and Ireland  
St Joseph's Province  
and St Patrick's Province

## Sean O'Riordan Scholarships

**Richard Ferro  
and  
David Rose**

Thanks to  
Congregation of the  
Most Holy Redeemer

## Spiritual Mission Scholarship



**Evelyn Ross**

Thanks to Congregation  
of the Holy Spirit

## Religious Education Teachers Scholarship



**Kate Clancy**

Thanks to  
the Loyola Trust

## Loyola Trust Scholarship



**Stephen  
McCroghan**

Thanks to  
the Loyola Trust

## Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Theology



**Antony  
Mathias OCD**

Thanks to  
the Loyola Trust

For details of Christian Theology scholarships available for academic year 22/23  
please see [www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute](http://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute)

## Save the Date

### A Festival of Theology: 19th - 21st May, 2022

Teaching and research in the theology of the Catholic tradition is the academic mission of the Loyola Institute in Trinity College Dublin. It celebrates the tenth year of this academic mission in 2022. What better way to celebrate than the hosting of 'a festival of theology', taking as its theme 'theology in the University, the challenges, the relevance, the difficulties'? What is a university for? What role can theology play in its life? What is the relevance of this enterprise for theology, for the university, for society, for church? What about the critical role of academic freedom? How does the academic study of theology differ from the various other academic approaches to the study of religion? An international body of academics will examine these questions over three days, 19th -21st May, 2022.

Keep an eye on our website for more details.



## Columcille in Context

Theologians and Historians in Conversation  
to Commemorate the 15th Centenary  
of the Birth of Saint Columba of Iona (521/ 2021)

2021 marks 1,500 years since the birth of Saint Columba/ Columcille of Iona (521-597), one of the co-patron saints of Ireland. Born in Co. Donegal, Columba left Ireland in 563 to establish a monastery on the island of Iona in the Scottish Hebrides which became one of the most famous monasteries in Ireland and Britain.

To commemorate the 15th centenary Loyola Institute research fellow Dr Alexander O'Hara organised a series of evening online lectures.

The lectures, listed here, can all be accessed on the [Loyola Institute's YouTube Channel](#):

Colomb cille caindlech: The Interaction of History and Memory in Creating the Festival of Columba - *Professor Thomas O'Loughlin, Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology, University of Nottingham*

St Columba and the Fathers - *Meredith Cutrer, DPhil Candidate, Oxford University*

'Soiscela mor Coluim cille', The Great Gospel of Colmcille - *Dr Cornelius Casey & Dr Fáinche Ryan*

Peregrinatio in the Careers of Columcille and his Monastic Family - *Jonathan Wooding Honorary Professor, Medieval and Early Modern Centre, University of Sydney*

St Columba and the Existential Categories of Displacement and Identity - *Dr Billy Swan*

Freeman out with the tribes: Exiles for Christ from Saints Patrick to Kilian - *Dr Alexander O'Hara, Loyola Institute Research Fellow.*

The final lecture in the series will be on 15th December 2021 and will be delivered by J. Michel Reaux Colvin, Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures Department, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. His lecture is entitled "Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, v.15-17 and *Adamnán's De locis sanctis*: Reception, Social Networks, Sacral Geography, and Cultural Brokerage in the Early-Medieval Insular Periphery"

For details on how to register check out our website.

After 15th December it will be up on our [YouTube channel](#) for viewing.

## Faith Seeking Understanding – Update

It is really unfortunate that during the Michaelmas term the Loyola Institute has been unable to resume its activities, such as lectures, seminars, conferences, social events- other than the formal teaching programmes. Like everyone else, we are hoping that the New Year will bring better fortune, but Covid precautions have the final say in this.

We are hoping to run the Faith Seeking Understanding programme once again. As with last year, this will be three evenings of presentations on topics of Christian theology. The provisional dates are Wednesdays 2nd, 9th and 16th February, from 5.00 to 7.30. It is possible that the last of these might be held in person. There are other public lectures and events which we are looking to put on during the Spring, but details will have to wait until we have a clearer picture of what is possible. Please keep an eye on the Loyola website, or sign up to our mailing list.

# Loyola at Summer Conferences



Fáinche Ryan and Michael Kirwan with the President of the ESCT, Prof. Margit Eckholt, of the University of Osnabrück.

The Loyola Institute was represented at two conferences in Germany last summer. This year's conference of the European Society for Catholic Theology (ESCT) took place in Osnabrück, on the theme of 'Creation-Transformation-Theology'.

Fáinche Ryan and Michael Kirwan are both involved with ESCT, as representatives of Irish and British Catholic theologians respectively.

Fáinche and Michael then moved to Münster, for the meeting of the European

Academy of Religion (EuARE). The Loyola Institute presented a panel entitled 'Theologies of Disaster and Hope', with papers from Michael Kirwan, Con Casey, and Juan Diego Galaz SJ (a PhD law student at Trinity). Fáinche also presented a paper entitled 'Prudentia, Parrhesia and Decision-making' in a panel on universal authority and primacy.

Both conferences were hybrid events- a mix of in-person and virtual talks- because of COVID restrictions. This was less satisfactory than a proper live conference; nevertheless, it was moving to gather at these two locations for their historical significance, as the venues where the Peace of Westphalia was hammered out by Catholic and Protestant princes in 1648.

**The Loyola Institute**  
*School of Religion*  
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

## PhD Scholarship in Theology and the Early Irish Church

The Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin is pleased to announce a doctoral scholarship in theology and the early Irish Church.

The successful applicant will have a strong research background and demonstrated track record of excellence in theology and/or medieval history. If the student is lacking expertise in either of these areas they will be asked to complete appropriate modules from the MPhil in Christian Theology, or from the MPhil in Medieval Studies.

The scholarship will cover academic fees and offer a stipend of €13,000 per annum for four years.

Closing date for applications:  
Friday December 31st 2021.

For more details of this scholarship and other post-graduate scholarships in Christian theology see [www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute](http://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute)

The Loyola Institute is grateful for the generous support of the Loyola Trust (Augustinians, Carmelites (O.Carm.), Columbans, Jesuits, Loreto Sisters, Marists, Oblates, Society of African Missions).



## The Loyola Institute

*School of Religion*

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

*is dedicated to education and research in theology in the Catholic Christian tradition and offers degrees at postgraduate level, both taught and by research.*

*Scholarships available.*

**Further information: [www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute](http://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute)**

**Email: [Loyola@tcd.ie](mailto:Loyola@tcd.ie)**

**Phone +353 (0) 1 8964790**



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