



Loyola Institute Newsletter

Spring 2018



Loyola at Mountain to Sea: Dlr Book Festival

Professor Siobhán Garrigan joined a panel at the renowned Dún Laoghaire book festival for a discussion on the meaning of home. Siobhán was joined by Syrian writer Marwa Al Sabouni, writer Darran Anderson and economist Dan O'Brien.

MPhil in Christian Theology What our students say:

Edith O'Nuallain

Like anyone starting out on something new, I began my studies with both excitement and trepidation. After all, it had been more than 30 years since I had last studied in Trinity College, Dublin. Reading theology alone, it soon became evident that I could only go so far with a self-directed approach to study. I felt the need to engage with others, both lecturers who could guide my studies, and students, who like me, were seeking something more.

The MPhil in Christian Theology turned out to be everything I was looking for. As someone very much living in the world I wished to be inspired by theological writings which would not only broaden my Christian outlook, but equally challenge me to engage with cultural issues.

The MPhil is a journey into and through a theological landscape which continues to re-shape and re-form my concept and understanding of Christianity. Furthermore, it is deeply relevant to our times.

The MPhil's emphasis on cultural, social and political concerns in



Edith O'Nuallain, Eoin Walshe and their classmate Leslie Flores discussing the Book of Kells.

conversation with contemporary Christianity, delivered through seminar style teaching was never anything but challenging, always seeming to demand that I go further, dig deeper, think harder. I wouldn't have it any other way!

Please turn over



The MPhil class and staff on a field trip to Glendalough.

I have found the MPhil in Christian Theology at Loyola Institute both intellectually stimulating and spiritually enriching.

Prior to commencing the course I had hoped to further pursue my professional and personal interest in theology. But what came as a surprise, was the practical benefits to my teaching of religious education at second level. One of my school's root beliefs is 'We are all teachers, we are all learners, always'. The MPhil has allowed me to live this belief out authentically for the good of both my students and myself.

Studying a brand new Christian Theology course at the home of the Book of Kells provides a compelling context for study. From delving into Scripture and reading the great theologians/philosophers to exploring Glendalough and debating the modern challenges at the intersection of theology, church and society, the MPhil offers an excellent range of modules. The diversity of students and expertise of staff have also been contributory factors in the course's success.

Based on my experience, I highly recommend the MPhil in Christian Theology at Loyola Institute.

The MPhil in Christian Theology can be studied full or part time and lectures are in the evenings. Scholarships are available. The closing date for application for the MPhil commencing September 2018 is July 31st. For more details see www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute

Where is God in Prison?

Loyola Ph.D. Research on Prison Chaplaincy.



Meins Coetsier (with Guitar) in the Prison at JVA Fulda
(Photo Winfried Möller)

Meins G.S. Coetsier is a PhD student at the Loyola Institute and prison chaplain in two German prisons. His research focuses on a theology of prison ministry and considers the violence of the human condition, and the subsequent experiences of alienation, forsakenness and imprisonment. In the Bible, we find the structures and foundations for this disorder, which in turn, is the theme of his research: forsakenness and imprisonment. Coetsier reflects on prison experiences, and its articulation in symbols of alienation and estrangement in the scriptures. Drawing on the writings of Karl Rahner, he sheds light on the experience



Meins Coetsier with a Prisoner
(Photo Winfried Möller)

of incarceration and on the question of pastoral ministry on the margins. He concentrates on two Christian ordained ministers: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Alfred Delp. Their courageous testimonies of faith, of what it means to be living out of Christian hope, while being imprisoned and eventually executed, is arresting. Coetsier sheds light on the questions of meaning and hope in captivity. With Viktor Frankl, he shows us that everything can be taken from people in their imprisonment but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way before God.

Recognition of research on 'Truth Telling'



Dr Fainche Ryan (standing on left) photographed with Professor Patrick Prendergast, Provost of Trinity College Dublin and other researchers featured in the Provost's Annual Review.

Trinity College Dublin has recognised the contribution of the Loyola Institute and the importance of Theological studies by including the research of Dr Fainche Ryan, Director of the Loyola Institute in the prestigious Provost's Annual Review.

This annual review highlights the work of 12 researchers working within the University, inviting them to write a short paper on the importance of their work. This year the research of Dr Fainche Ryan is featured under a contribution entitled "*The Importance of Truth Telling for the Health of Society*" you can read it on line at <https://t.co/tAWOv6OV3I>.



Brexit and Europe, a political and spiritual challenge

Sébastien Maillard, Director of the Jacques Delors Institute, Paris spoke to a full house at a Loyola Institute lecture held in Trinity's Long Room Hub on 28th March.

In a broad ranging and stimulating talk Maillard suggested "As guidelines to all those acting for Europe, at whatever level or position, we could explore the four principles put forward by Pope Francis to foster peace. They were not meant for Europe but I found that they apply perfectly well. They are not particularly religious principles: they affirm that 'unity prevails over conflict', 'time is greater than space', 'the whole is greater than the part' and 'realities are superior to ideas'."

Sébastien Maillard's full paper will be published in the summer issue of *Studies*, the Irish Jesuit quarterly review.



Sébastien Maillard, Director of the Jacques Delors Institute with Dr Fainche Ryan and Noelle O'Connell, Executive Director of the European Movement Ireland who chaired the session.

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INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY JOURNAL

Loyola Institute Upcoming events

Sat 9th June, *Amoris laetitia* – A seminar

10.30 am – 1.00 pm

Loyola Institute, ISE/Loyola Building

Trinity College Dublin

Free/ All Welcome

Watch out for:

Loyola Evening Lecture series 2018/2019

To be announced shortly.

International conference on the theme of
Media, Society and Religion
to be held in 2019.
Details to be announced soon.

“Stand Upright and Raise your Head!” Doing Theology in Troubled Times



Michael Kirwan S.J, a visiting member of the Loyola Institute staff, spoke on this theme at one of our regular free evening lectures. Here he is chatting with Loyola Ph.D. student Oana Marian after the lecture.

The ‘secularist’ word-view, which has dominated western thought and culture for decades, is imploding. Twenty years ago a group of British theologians, under the banner of “Radical Orthodoxy”, declared secularism a dead-end, reduced to promoting a materialism which is ‘soulless, aggressive, nonchalant and nihilistic.’ In 2018, these words ring even more true. We struggle with ‘post-truth’ and with ‘fake news’, with a retreat from thought and reasoned argument in public life. And, strikingly, we use religious language to describe our ‘apocalyptic’ situation. It is not true that we have moved away from religious ways of thinking and feeling, as the secularist tries to claim.

There are false ‘religions’ on offer- either the self-massaging narcissism of late-capitalist ‘spirituality’, or the herd-like transcendence of fascistic nationalism. Perhaps it is time to hear, once again, the voice of Christian religious wisdom. Theology offers a way beyond total self-absorption on the one hand, and tribal group-hate on the other. Christian wisdom requires us to ‘stand upright and raise our heads’, to find a way to flourish in troubled times without being overwhelmed by fear, insecurity and resentment.

Michael Kirwan SJ

New Trinity Fellow Loyola Institute

Congratulations to our Loyola Colleague Dr David Shepherd who has been elected a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin. David is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.



Capabilities Approach to Human Development

This year my research took me to Oxford to present ‘Capabilities and Contemporary Moral Theology: Likely Bedfellows or Inevitable Foes?’ The complexities and frustrations of human development are painfully evident in contemporary society: Persistent inequality, deprivation, and absolute exclusion in the midst of unprecedented opportunity, technological improvement, and wealth, guarantees that human development cannot be characterised as automatic progress for all.

Describing basic justice in this context is notoriously complex, if not inescapably elusive. Irrespective of this inherent complexity, the capabilities approach to human development and Catholic social teaching, share an interest in questions of social justice. By examining the core concepts and central debates around human development in these discourses, my research focuses on the shape of an intersection between capabilities and theological ethics, and ultimately recommends the inclusion of the capabilities framework in theological discourse on human development. I think that the capabilities discourse helpfully identifies the integral components of the true human moral narrative, that is, the reality of people’s lives, which is so neatly captured in the capabilities question: what am I able to do and to be in life? Essentially, in my research I am hoping to point towards the value of an expanded dialogue within the field.

**Dr Katie Dunne Assistant Professor in Theology
in the Catholic Tradition, Loyola Institute**



Changes Afoot

The Loyola Institute is delighted with the first year of the MPhil programme, and we are currently busy dealing with applicants for September 2018 entry. This year we have even more scholarships available. Our PhD students are also doing well. The postgraduate research seminar had a good first year. We look forward to developing it further in the years to come.

At undergraduate level there are new developments. From September 2019 the combined School (Loyola Institute, Department of Religions and Theology, Irish School of Ecumenics) will offer a new degree. This degree will be called a BA in Religion. There will be the possibility of an exit route in Theology, or one in Religion and Theology. The Loyola staff will continue to teach at undergraduate level.

Dr Fáinche Ryan, Director of the Loyola Institute

Loyola – Creating a space for reasoned academic debate

“Congratulations on yesterday’s impressive event. Having a forum to clarify what the arguments are is no small service. The better arguments do not always win the debate in the public forum because of other intruding agendas. Who, other than Loyola, could stage such a gathering?”

This was the assessment of a participant at the day-long seminar, ‘Living Humanly: Perspectives from Law, Morality and Science’ which took place on April 13th. The Loyola Institute hosted the seminar in the context of the discussion around the 8th amendment. The aim was to provide a forum for reasoned academic debate on issues of law, morality and science as they pertain to living humanly.

The Speakers were: Prof. Lisa Sowle-Cahill, Boston College (Perspectives from theology), Prof. Neville Cox, Trinity College Dublin (Perspectives from law), Prof. Joan Lalor, Trinity College Dublin (Perspectives of a clinician), Prof. Paula Murphy, Trinity College Dublin (Perspectives from developmental embryology), Dr Patrick Riordan SJ, Campion Hall, Oxford (Perspectives from philosophy). The forum was Chaired by Prof. Shane Allwright, Fellow Emerita, Public Health and Primary Care, Trinity College Dublin.

It was a privilege to hear the (quite stellar) contributions from these perspectives, different one from another, and yet all impressively relevant. Not a day for advocacy, rather the aim of the seminar was to enable the audience to garner information from a wide spectrum of approaches. The event had been fully booked and participants left with lots of food for thought.



Dr Patrick Riordan SJ and seminar chair Prof. Shane Allwright,



Prof. Lisa Sowle-Cahill, Prof. Joan Lalor, Dr Fainche Ryan and Prof. Paula Murphy



Prof. Neville Cox addressing the seminar on legal perspectives.



Loyola Institute student Patricia Dunphy and Prof. Joan Lalor chatting during a coffee break.



Among those attending the seminar were Dr Amanda Dillon, and Juan Diego, SJ.

One of our first graduates Eóghan Stanley on his work with Corrymeela



“Corrymeela begins when you leave” is the phrase you tell the groups you work with after a weekend of exploring the power of human encounter. I heard that phrase as a participant on the “Conversations that Matter” programme which

brought young adults together from across this fractured island. Little did I know that three years later my Corrymeela experience would begin when I left Trinity. After a wonderfully challenging four years studying Catholic Theology with the Loyola Institute I needed time to reflect and discern the direction I want to take my degree. I also wanted to be able to utilise the skills I had developed during my studies. I took the plunge and got accepted

for a one year volunteering role at Corrymeela. Since September the value for human encounter in transforming division has become a reality. Bridging gaps for sectarian divides has been the initial need for this peace centre. But Corrymeela extends its arms to so much more, refugees, LGBTQ and bereaved families are all welcomed to engage. Corrymeela predicates itself on the transformative power of the Gospel, and this is implemented through our everyday “mundane” encounters and duties. I’ve experienced this most while working for the community, from cleaning dishes to salting ice pathways at 7am. From random dialogues on pacifism to random laughter with soldiers. Corrymeela begins when you leave, it gives you the perfectly imperfect lens to see the possibility for hope in every human encounter.

Laudato Si’

On Care for our Common Home



Laudato si’ is the second encyclical of Pope Francis, published in June 2015. The encyclical has the subtitle “On Care for our Common Home”. In it, the Pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action”.

The environment is a particular area of interest for Loyola Institute Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics, Jacob J. Erickson. Jake has been active in sharing his expertise. In November he participated in an event on *Laudato si’* with eco-theologian Fr. Sean McDonagh SSC, Rev. Fletcher Harper of Greenfaith, Lorna Gold of Trocraire and James Buchanan of Operation Noah.

In February he led a workshop hosted by the Loyola Institute for Religious Education teachers and entitled “*Laudato si’*: Pope Francis and his Love Letter for the Earth.”



The Loyola Institute

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

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

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