

Inaugural De Chastelain Public Lecture

Public Theatre, Trinity College Dublin

Saturday, 13 June 2026

Welcome remarks of Provost Linda Doyle

Taoiseach and Mrs Martin, Prime Minister Carney and Madame Fox Carney, Tánaiste, Ambassador King, Members of the Oireachtas, General and Mrs De Chastelain, Members of the Ireland Canada University Foundation, Chair of the Trinity Board, Mr Paul Farrell, Distinguished guests, Staff, Students, and Friends of Trinity College Dublin,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all this afternoon to the inaugural De Chastelain Public Lecture.

General De Chastelain, I'm delighted you're here and really thrilled that Trinity is hosting the lecture in your name. The patience and persistence you have brought to the peace process in Ireland will not be forgotten and we - all of us - are deeply grateful to you for your service and leadership.

Prime Minister Carney, I am thrilled that you are here with us in Trinity!

It matters to me hugely that the person who made *that* speech in Davos is here in Trinity. You are so much more than that one speech. But that one speech mattered so much. And to put that in context, here and now, next week this hall will be filled with talented and hopeful students graduating from Trinity. I cannot but think that they're heading into a very troubled world.

It is hugely important in that troubled world, they can see people who will stand up and offer a vision and a way forward. You did that in spades in Davos and, more importantly still, your actions follow your words.

In my few words here today, I would like to say to you, drawing on your words from Davos, that I believe that universities have a big role to play in wielding the power of legitimacy, integrity, and rules and working together to help create that "third path with impact" that you spoke about. Here in Trinity, legitimacy and integrity are central to how we both serve and challenge society. Even more so in a world of conflict, climate and biodiversity crisis, and rapidly evolving AI technologies. And we know too that working together is essential in finding the kinds of solutions the world needs.

This is an international and outward-looking university. And I'm happy to say that we welcome over 200 Canadian students here each year. Over the last four years alone, we have collaborated with 125 Canadian institutions: academic, medical, government, and corporate. And, in that time, Trinity researchers have co-authored over 1,300 publications with Canadian researchers, and that collaboration output is growing.

At Davos, you pointed out that the multilateral institutions on which the middle powers have relied - architectures of collective problem solving, as you call them - are under threat. Your examples of the WTO, the UN, and the COP were given. But there is one architecture of a

multilateral collective problem-solving nature that is still intact and of which Ireland is a key member. From my perspective, this is the EU framework program for research. It's much more than a funding mechanism. It's a multicultural, multilingual vehicle for the deep, values-based, international cooperation you are advocating for.

Canada is one of the 22 countries from outside the EU which enjoys associated membership and many more are waiting to join. As Ireland heads into its presidency of the Council of the EU, I say that this is a substantial soft power or, if bolstered further, could even be a superpower of the EU and it's worth fighting for, as is ensuring that Canada has a speedy accession to the next framework program, FP10.

We can, together, up our game and this can be a foundation for real competitiveness.

Competitiveness is one of the key priorities of Ireland's presidency. And universities in Ireland and Canada and across Europe can be places where that competitiveness can be accelerated, underpinned by a value set and an integrity that makes this fight worth it.

And all of this I can say in a different way by borrowing a phrase from Pope Leo: *magnificent humanity*. And while he used this in the context of his encyclical on AI, I think it's a phrase that resounds much more. In Trinity style, and in acknowledgement of this theatre in which our graduation ceremonies take place in Latin, no less, I say:

Universitatem decet pro magnifica humanitate certare

It is fitting and proper for a university to fight for the magnificence of humanity.

And, as we look at the world today, it's right that we all here fight for the magnificence of humanity. And Mark Carney is the kind of leader who gives us hope for that fight.

I could not finish without mentioning Mayo, of course!

Two of my three immediate predecessors as Provost came from Mayo.

Our former chancellor Mary Robinson came from Mayo, from Balina.

And, more precisely still, to mention the most important place in Mayo: among thousands of treasures in our wonderful library is the 9th century Book of Armagh which mentions *Aughagower* as the location where St Patrick himself chose to build a church!

So, Prime Minister Carney, thank you for your leadership and welcome to Trinity College Dublin.

We are so delighted and proud to have you here.