

Loyola Institute Newsletter

Spring / Summer 23

Titus Brandsma: “Ethical Resistance in Turbulent Times”

On 15 February the Loyola Institute, along with the Irish province of the Carmelites, hosted a lecture and drinks reception on ‘Titus Brandsma: Ethical Resistance in Turbulent Times’. St Titus, a Dutch Carmelite priest, was noted for his resistance to the Nazis, for which he was arrested and transported to Dachau concentration camp, where he died in 1942. He was canonised in 2022. Fr. Fernando Millán Romeral O. Carm (an expert on Brandsma, based in Madrid), delivered the lecture, drawing attention to different aspects of the saint’s life: as an academic administrator, helping to found a university; as a commentator on Carmelite mysticism, as a journalist; as someone with passionate interest in drawing people together. His own physical frailty contrasted with the steadfast courage which he showed in the face of evil. Fr Millán’s lecture drew an audience of about 150 people to the Trinity venue, including many from the Carmelite family in celebration of their most recent saint.



Dr. Fernando Millán Romeral, O.Carm

Watch this and other lectures on the Loyola Institute YouTube Channel and will also be published in Doctrine and Life during the summer.



Fr. Michael Troy, O.Carm. (Provincial of Irish Province of Carmelites),
Dr Fernando Millán Romeral, O.Carm.
and Dr Fáinche Ryan Loyola Institute, TCD



Alexander Cupples (PhD student), Kevin Heffron,
Madi Kiema CSsR, Emmett O’Regan (PhD student).

Research Into Early Irish Christianity



Alexander Cupples at Narrow Water Castle, Co. Down.

In 1950, Robert Schuman, one of the founders of the European Union, described the Irishman, St Columbanus, a 'patron saint of all those who seek to build a united Europe'. More recently, Pope Benedict XVI called Columbanus a 'European saint', claiming that his writings contain the earliest written mention 'of all Europe', whose last foundation rivalled St Benedict's Monte Cassino.

Growing up a Presbyterian amongst the despair and fear of the Troubles near the border in rural Co. Down, beside a ruined eighth-century church containing an enigmatic saint, I have concluded that the early Irish church and its theology is of immense relevance to today. Not only is it relevant to the theological and ecclesiastical issues of

today's church within a secularised culture, but also as an essential resource to aid reconciliation and ecumenicism, amidst the backdrop of Brexit and a beckoning Irish border poll e.g. this church predated the Reformation, professed loyalty to Rome whilst claiming autonomy in some aspects, and can be justly credited with a lot of the education and Christianisation of western Europe, resulting in the island being considered by many as an island of 'saints'.

I have the huge privilege of undertaking a Ph.D. within a great, supportive, open-minded, highly-qualified, diverse department, supervised by the highly respected theologian Dr Fáinche Ryan, and generously funded with philanthropic funding. This project attempts to reconstruct aspects of the ecclesiology within early Irish Christianity, in east Co. Down, using a multi-disciplinary approach of archaeology, history and theology, with my academic background in archaeology and history. I will be focusing on the writings associated with Bangor abbey, the main training centre of Columbanus, arguably the most significant church in Ireland at one point, responsible for the earliest surviving Irish hymnal and potentially the earliest western Eucharistic Latin hymn of western Europe. More specifically, I intend to determine the nature of the laity-clergy interactions within the Eucharist and their veneration of saints in order to gauge the extent of the relevance of the early Irish church to today's issues.

Alexander Cupples

PhD student, Loyola Institute

Loyola Institute - Contributing to European Theology

The European Society for Catholic Theology promotes the academic discipline of Catholic theology. The Society offers itself as a service both to the Church and to society across Europe, engaging with the many questions which challenge Christian faith, and those challenging contemporary European culture. At the recent Curatorium meeting in Veszprém, Hungary (February 2023) the Loyola Institute was well represented by Dr Michael Kirwan, currently President of the British section, and Dr Fáinche Ryan, President of the Irish section. The next International Congress (30/8 – 2/10, 2023) will be hosted by Pécs (Hungary), with the interesting theme of EUROPE: Spiritual Resources for the Future. <https://pphf.hu/esct2023/>



What Our Students Say



David Rose

I was worried about taking on the level of study and research involved in the MPhil while working full-time. However, the part-time programme is spread over two years and with evening classes, it is manageable. Once I began the classes, the quality and depth of the teaching and interaction among my classmates really stoked my passion for theology. The programme provided me with the language and concepts to ask the big questions about life, faith and meaning. My work involves policy development and interaction with Church leaders; the MPhil equips me with a deeper appreciation and understanding of Church and the need for reform and renewal, that is being promoted by Pope Francis. I would say to people considering the study of theology, take the plunge, you won't be disappointed with the Loyola Institute!

David Rose

MPhil student 21- 23



Chloe Lubinski

I came into the faith in my twenties and spent my years of early formation experientially learning about spiritual direction and living out my faith in community. As my passion for living out my faith became stronger, the importance of deepening my intellectual and contextual understanding became clearer as well. I knew what it was like to experience and be changed by the love of God – but how could I better understand the Trinity, or more articulately talk about God's intergenerational economy of redemption? What about the many prominent theologians that have formed and reformed the experience of faith in our time, in our place? The postgraduate degree in Christian Theology has been a profound expansion for my faith as well as my understanding of the faith – infusing my own practical living with an essential historical contextual breadth and intellectual theological rigor.

Chloe Lubinski

MPhil Student 22/23

Loyola Institute Open Evening April 17th



Loyola Institute students enjoying a walk in Trinity College. Left to right; Evelyn Ross, Clement Narcher, Kate Clancy and David Rose.

Loyola Institute Open Evening 17th April

There will be an Open Evening for those interested in postgraduate study with the Loyola Institute, on Monday 17th April, from 6.30 – 8pm.

The evening will include a 'sample' lecture, and an opportunity to meet the teaching staff; this will be followed by a reception. The event will be held in the ISE/Loyola Building, Trinity College Dublin.

About MPhil in Christian Theology

The Masters in Christian Theology gives students a rigorous knowledge of core themes and issues in historical and contemporary Christian theological scholarship. They engage with the main figures and debates of the tradition, and reflect upon their continued relevance to contemporary discussion. A high point of their study is the written dissertation, which enables students to engage in the advanced study of their chosen topic

of interest. The research proficiency which the student acquires can make the MPhil an ideal stepping-stone to more advanced theological study.

The MPhil programme requires the completion of six modules and a dissertation within one year (full-time), or two years (part-time). For those unable to take on this commitment because of time or other constraints, there are also two alternatives, Diploma and Certificate. See our website for more details.

Screening of the Letter in TCD



The TCD premiere of the film *The Letter- a Message for our Earth*, took place in January, with an attendance of around eighty people. This event was co-hosted by the School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies and the Loyola Institute, with Dr. Jake Erikson and

Dr. Cathriona Russell as the main organisers. The film, an initiative that emerged from Pope Francis's letter *Laudato Si'; On Care for Our Common Home*, has attracted a lot of attention; its Irish premiere was hosted by President Michael Higgins in December. Five leaders, different voices from Amazonia, India, Senegal, and the USA, receive a letter from Pope Francis, inviting them together to meet in Rome. Made by award-winning director Nicholas Brown, this is a very well-made, and very moving piece of cinema. The website of the film: <https://www.theletterfilm.org/> gives details of the conversations around *The Letter*, and how these conversations can be continued.

Our Lenten Series 'Authentic, Effective Reform in the Church: Reading Yves Congar Today'

The call for reform strikes terror in the hearts of many. Yet reform is precisely what is being called for in the current synodal process; change, adaptation, growth, a pruning to allow the Holy Spirit to be heard, in our times, and in our various cultures. The People of God are constantly tasked with listening afresh to the Holy Spirit. The French Dominican Yves Congar's (1904-1905) *True and False Reform* (first published 1950; revised edition 1968) is an excellent teacher in this journey of continual renewal. Rooted in 2,000 years of Christian theology, Congar has learnt to distinguish between Tradition and traditions (practices added on, but not essential), between what he terms 'true' and 'false' reform. Congar sees the Church through a theological lens. Change is called for to better reflect God to the world, a world which is God's good creation. Congar forefronts the vitality and innovations of the world, and only secondarily the problems, the negative

developments that the world may present. In 1968 France he noted that the challenges to the church had become more radical, touching the very roots of the church and its faith. People 'are intellectually and culturally torn out of a Catholic framework, perhaps even out of a religious framework, and thrown into a world which, by its vitality



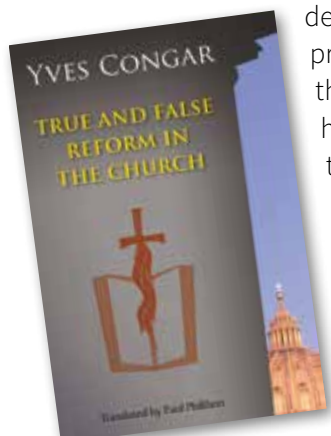
Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ, Director of the Religious Life Institute at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology in Cambridge, Dr Michael Kirwan SJ, Director of the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin and Dr Fainche Ryan, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at the Loyola Institute.

Photo thanks to The Tablet/Sarah Mac Donald.

and its innovations, imposes its problems upon us' (pp. 3,4). This is Ireland today. In seeking to contribute to the synodal process, to educate people so we might contribute to synodal and ecclesial reform, the Loyola Institute proposed a rereading of Congar's ever relevant work. In Lent 2023 Dr Cornelius Casey, Dr Fainche Ryan and Dr Gemma Simmonds presented Congar's thought, demonstrating the relevance of his theology to the synodal process

Dr Fainche Ryan

These lectures are available to watch on the Loyola Institute YouTube channel - youtube.com/@loyolainstituteTCD - and will also be published in *Doctrine and Life* during the summer.



The Synodal Process

Creating Space for New Ideas to Grow

If a picture is worth a thousand words then the image of an all-male top table at the continental assembly of the global synodal process in Prague, spoke volumes.

On Monday, 6th February, two hundred in-person delegates from 45 different countries gathered in the Czech capital to finalise the contribution of the Catholic Church in Europe to the Synodal Process. A further 390 delegates attended remotely. I was one of ten on-line delegates invited to join the Irish Church delegation.

Within seconds of turning on my laptop I was stunned by the sight of a line of men sitting at the top table, dressed in clerical attire. All were bishops or cardinals and in their opening speeches, they urged delegates to “really listen” to each other. Unfortunately, the optics of an all-male,

clerical lineup telling anyone to “really listen”, when at the same time they were dominating the top table, displayed a shocking indifference to the issue of women’s inclusion in the Church that had featured so prominently in the consultation phase of the Synodal Process.

Pictures from the main body of the hall also showed a preponderance of male clerics and a striking absence of women and young people. My heart sank. It continued to sink when differences between the Eastern and Western churches on the issues of equality for women and LGBT+ people became obvious.

Occasionally, my heart soared. High points included the spiritual introduction delivered by Mgr Tomáš Halik, the Czech theologian and the presentation from the Irish delegation which faithfully reflected the voices of those who took part in the synodal listening sessions in Ireland.

Overall, despite the negative moments, internal tensions and patriarchal blindness, the Prague Assembly gives me hope. By bringing people together, the Synodal Process is changing relationships and the culture of the Church. It is creating a space for new ideas and relationships to grow.

I expect the Synodal Process will experience further turbulence and tensions when it moves to the next stage and holds two Synods in Rome in October this year and next.

Ursula Halligan

PhD student in Christian theology at the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin



Ursula Halligan with fellow Loyola Institute students Nemo Castelli SJ and Sarah Clarke at the recent lecture on Titus Brandsma

‘A Servant Church on the Synodal Way’ 14th-15th April 2023



This public Symposium will gather reflections upon the theme of women and ministerial service in the Roman Catholic Church, in the light of the synodal process. It will provide an update on the current discussion regarding women deacons, and its relevance to the needs of a changing Church in Ireland and in Europe.

Confirmed speakers: Pr. Margit Eckholt; Pr. Judith Gruber; Julieann Moran; ; Dr Gerry O’Hanlon SJ; Dr Bernard Pottier SJ; Pr. Jessie Rogers; Dr Phyllis Zagano.

The Symposium will take place on the campus of Trinity College. The programme will run from 5.30 to 8.00 pm on Friday 14th, and from 10.00 to 3.30 pm on Saturday 15th. Admission is free, but you must register in advance. Registration [here](#).

St. Phoebe (1st century) was a deaconess of the Church at Cencreae,

Theology: “Live and Dangerous”

The Loyola Institute does theology at the intersection ‘where church, academy, and society meet’.

Theology’s engagement with the third of these, the wider society, is one of its most exciting but difficult tasks. ‘Political theology’- theology with a dangerous edge- tries to make sense of this task.

To cite several recent examples. In autumn 2022, Michael Kirwan contributed one of the articles to the Jesuit periodical *Studies*, which reflected upon the role of the Church in this country, in the light of one hundred years of Irish statehood, and fifty years since the 1972 constitutional amendment on the place of the Church. The situation and the culture have changed enormously, as is well-known. It is common now to describe Ireland as a ‘secular’ or at least ‘secularising’ society, and recent books speak of the ‘fall’ or ‘disappearance’ of Christianity. In fact, as the article attempts to show, the situation is more complex than this- and, for Christians, more hopeful.

One theologian who helps us to see this is William T. Cavanaugh, from dePaul University, Chicago. In December 2022, Pr. Cavanaugh gave a lecture at the Newman Church, and a seminar at the Loyola Institute, on “The Myth of Religious Violence and the Enchantment of the Secular”. He argued that we need to think differently about the usual ‘story’ of secularism’s triumph over religious faith. This version of history is in fact highly questionable, not least because it is based on a skewed reading of the historical facts. But it is readily used by people who are seeking to diminish or marginalise religious faith, and we need to be ready to question it.

Professor Siobhán Garrigan warns us of another

danger. In November 2022, she gave a keynote address at the winter colloquium of Edinburgh University’s Centre for Theology and Public Issues, entitled “Capitalist Christianity and the Paradox of Women’s Power”. She and the panellists reflected upon the ways religion and politics are intertwined in the current ‘culture wars’, which appear to have become global. How can we avoid being drawn into a politics of intolerance, distortion, and untruth? A range of theological voices, as well as an awareness of the potency of Christian rituals, will help us. Christianity has rich resources for resistance and refusal, so as not to be manipulated by cynical politicians.

In February 2023, Dr Michael Kirwan and Dr Fáinche Ryan attended a meeting of European Catholic theologians in central Europe. The conference was interesting and productive, but never far away was the influence of a government seeking to co-opt the church, by means of national populist sentiment, and a militant championing of the family, in the name of what has been called “illiberal democracy”.

As these different examples show, if theology is to be truly ‘words about God’, and not words about some particular human project, it must have a clear sense of its purpose and tasks. Pr. Cavanaugh and Pr. Garrigan each show the importance of taking seriously this



Dr Michel Kirwan, Director of the Loyola Institute
with Certificate student Thabi Madide



Prof. William T. Cavanaugh (right) on an earlier visit to Loyola Institute to speak at our 2016 conference on “The Role of Church in a Pluralist Society: Good Riddance or Good Influence?”

Photographed with Dr Cornelius Casey, Prof. Patrick Prendergast and Professor Hans Joas.

Theology: “Live and Dangerous”

public face of theology, above all in helping us to overcome distortions and manipulations in political debate. These discussions are not easy, because they often touch upon important and sensitive issues. And yet, when the Church expresses its solidarity with the homeless, or with migrants and asylum seekers- most of us can see there are links to be made. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Sí* and *Fratelli Tutti*, has taken a lead, in calling for a new way of doing politics, one which emphatically brings our faith and social awareness together.

We are not always comfortable with this. There is a view that politics and religion should be kept rigorously apart, and Christians should stand apart,

concerned only with ‘higher’, spiritual matters. But this would be a betrayal of the gospel message, as the political theologian Charles Davis asserted:

Nothing could be more absurdly untrue to Christian history than the contention that the Christian religion as embodied institutionally in the Church is apolitical or above politics ... The Christian religion has always been thoroughly political, with social and political action the major vehicle of the distinctively Christian religious experience. Briefly, Christians find God in their neighbour rather than in their consciousness or in the cosmos.

Dr Michael Kirwan SJ

Director, the Loyola Institute



Prof. Siobhán Garrigan, keynote speaker on the theme, “The Globalization of the Culture Wars? Religion, Gender, and Politics in the Public Square”



The panellists at the winter colloquium of Edinburgh University’s Centre for Theology and Public Issues, were (as pictured, left to right) Ulrich Schmiedel, Shadaab Rahemtulla, Ulrika Auga, Alysa Ghose and Rachel Muers.

Museum Visit



The Book of Kells Module led by Prof. Fáinche Ryan included special visits to the Royal Irish Academy and The National Museum of Ireland. In the RIA they looked

at the Cathach of St. Columba, known as the Cathach, a late 6th century Insular psalter. It is the oldest surviving manuscript in Ireland, and the second oldest Latin psalter in the world.

Analogy, Desire And Imitation International Workshop



Dr Michael Kirwan will be among the contributors to an international workshop on “Analogy, Desire, and Imitation” hosted by St. Patrick’s Pontifical University.

The workshop runs from 9:00am on Friday 28th April till 5:00pm on Saturday 29th, in Renehan Hall, St Patrick’s Pontifical University, Maynooth

See Eventbrite for booking details or contact wideninghorizonsproject@spcm.ie



Dr Fainche Ryan met Pope Francis while attending The XI International Thomistic Congress, organised by the Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas (PAST) and hosted by the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome (September 2022)

Scholarships for MPhil in Christian Theology



We have a range of scholarships available to study at the Loyola Institute. See more here.

The Loyola Institute is grateful for the generous support of the Loyola Trust (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.

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