

MPhil in Christian Theology – One Student's Experience

Studying an MPhil in the Loyola Institute 2019 – 2020 was one of the best decisions I've made... spending time in beautiful Trinity College, meeting new people and being immersed in theology was an absolute joy! During my year at the Loyola Institute I learned that the study of theology is both necessary and relevant, as knowledge and understanding of God can potentially shape our worldview, our values and our actions. There is no other area of human understanding that is more impactful in shaping and affecting every area of our lives.

One of the most important benefits of studying an MPhil was that it gave me a grounding in systematic theology. I studied Augustine and Aquinas and also a module in Christology, a module that involved a comprehensive engagement with the scriptural and theological issues surrounding Jesus Christ. I particularly enjoyed learning of modern women theologians engaged in systematic theology such as Catherine LaCugna who wrote on the doctrine of the Trinity. For LaCugna, this doctrine is the cornerstone of systematic theology with radical consequences for the Christian life: God's work of salvation enacted through Jesus Christ and the Spirit is no less than a full expression of what God actually is. Even though we humans cannot penetrate the mystery of God, we can be confident that God is not different from the God who acts in the history of salvation (LaCugna 1991, 210-11). Catherine LaCugna was a prophetic theologian ahead of her time. Studying systematic theology has given me an intellectual depth in how I, too, speak of the great mystery of God.

One of the many benefits of studying an MPhil at the Loyola Institute is that I have a reading list for life! Continuing to read key theological texts around the rich modules on offer has allowed me to grow deeper in my understanding of the



Some of our 2019/20 and 20/21 graduates:

Front row L to R:

Dr Michael Kirwan, Deirdre Soffe, Dr Fáinche Ryan,

Emmet O'Regan, Dr Con Casey.

Back row L to R: Ursula Halligan, Marian White and Seamus Crimmins

Christian vision of God. It has enabled unbroken personal learning and growth. The study of theology doesn't end when the final thesis is handed in... in many ways it only begins! Theology is for life. It isn't static, it is persistently growing and evolving, and always needs refining. Since completing my studies I now see my responsibility to help others understand – to bridge the gap, to translate, to break it down. There are many strands to human existence and so much searching for meaning. Theology answers this seeking by providing instruction not only into truths we are called to believe, but gives us insight and direction into how to live our lives.

Helena Connolly

MPhil in Christian Theology – One Student’s Experience



About Helena Connolly

Helena Connolly began working life as a secondary school music teacher and school chaplain in Edinburgh and subsequently spent 10 years working as a parish pastoral worker in Kerry, and later as a diocesan youth director in Clogher. As a musician and singer/songwriter, she has produced two self-penned albums (Future in the Past and The Reason Why) and published a book called ‘Prayerful Ireland’ (Messenger Publications, 2018). She currently works as a Director of Evangelisation with the Irish Redemptorists and is soon to launch a digital evangelisation platform called ‘The Preached Word’.

www.helenaconnolly.com

Invitation



Dr Cornelius Casey, Founding Director
Loyola Institute with Prof Linda Doyle,
President & Provost, Trinity College Dublin

You are all invited to join us at an event to mark the retirement of the Founding Director, Dr Cornelius Casey, and 10 years of the Loyola Institute at Trinity College Dublin.

It will be held at 6pm Thursday 19th May, 2022 in the Synge Theatre, Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin.

Dr Cornelius Casey will deliver a lecture on “Theology in a Conversation about Hope”. The lecture will be followed by a Reception.

This evening is sponsored by the Loyola Institute Trust and will open the International Festival of Theology: Theology and the University hosted by the Loyola Institute 19th-21st May, 2022.

Different Postgraduate Options



Dr Michael Kirwan, Director of Loyola MPhil (on left) in Christian Theology
with students from the 21/22 Class and adjunct professor Dr Neil Morrison (back right)
who delivers the module ‘The First Words: Theology/ies of the Bible’

There are now three programmes in Christian theology which are offered through the Loyola Institute. The MPhil 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, we have two alternatives, Certificate and Diploma. On successful completion of the Certificate, a student may wish to continue onto the Diploma, and from Diploma to MPhil. The modules are the same in all three programmes, and have the same assessment patterns.

Scholarships are available for all options.

Theology and the University

A FESTIVAL OF THEOLOGY

In 2011 an agreement signed by the Board of Trinity College and the Loyola Trust (Augustinians, Carmelites, Columbans, Jesuits, Loreto Sisters, Marists, Oblates, and Society of African Missions) established the Loyola Institute at Trinity College Dublin. The Loyola Institute began its mission of teaching and research in theology in the Catholic tradition with its first intake of students in 2012. To mark this, and to celebrate ten years of teaching and research the Institute is hosting a Festival of Theology in Trinity College Dublin from 19th to 21st May 2022.

A public lecture by the inaugural Director, Prof. Cornelius Casey, entitled 'Theology in a Conversation about Hope' will open the Festival at 6pm on Thursday 19th May.



Prof. Sharon Rider (University of Uppsala)

The Festival will continue over the next two days with speakers focusing on the theme of 'Theology and the University', with a particular focus on the European context. Prof. Sharon Rider (University of Uppsala) will begin the day on Thursday with a consideration of the role of Higher Education as 'a Road to Somewhere'. In the context of arguments which claim that universities have betrayed their founding

mandates, Rider will offer her thoughts on the place and purpose of higher education in the 21st century. Prof. Sergio-Thomas Bonino (University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome) was Secretary General of the International Theological Commission when the document 'The Genetic Code of Catholic Theology: Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria' was issued (2012). His paper will explore the origins and intentions of this document. Bonino will address the important issue of the need to distinguish theology from religious sciences, as well as considering how Catholic theology, as a service rendered to the ecclesial community, can at once be rational and scientific in character.



Prof. Massimo Faggioli (Villanova University)

Prof. Massimo Faggioli (Villanova University) will continue to argue for the presence of theology in the university; interestingly his paper will explore some of the challenges to theology coming not only from the outside but also from the inside of the Catholic Church. Prof. Dirk Ansorge, Prof. Ethna Regan and Prof Michael Kirwan will present papers from a German, Irish and British context, while Prof. Josef Quitterer



Prof. Sergio-Thomas Bonino, (University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome)

(University of Innsbruck) will argue for the important contribution of academic theology to a healthy university and society. Prof. Fáinche Ryan (Trinity College Dublin) will consider the role of theology in a university considered as a 'refuge of truth' where students are enabled 'to stop and to think'. Prof. Lieven Boeve (KU Leuven, Belgium), will enquire in what way the university, and the scientific-reflexive access it offers to the world, offers a locus theologicus: a place from where to speak about God while Prof. Wozniak (Kraków) will bring the conversation on theology at the university into considerations of Trinitarian ontology. The need for theology to reconsider its modus operandi, the new tasks for theology, will be presented to us by Prof. Michael Conway (Maynooth). By the end of our two days we will be much enriched and hopefully convinced by Josef Pieper's argument that 'a university without theology cannot be a university in the full sense'.

For details on how to register for this conference see our website <https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/>

Professor Siobhán Garrigan is named RTÉ's new presenter of *The Leap of Faith*.

Friday night is movie night in my household. Tiredness after the week's work means little else is possible. But around 10PM, with the credits rolling, the kitchen needs to be tidied up and the recycling put out. For years, the soundtrack to this ritual has been *The Leap of Faith* on RTÉ Radio One, a weekly religious affairs programme "for all faiths and none", as its tagline has it.

Never did I think I'd be hearing my own voice presenting it, but somehow the last six weeks have led to that outcome. In early March, I was invited to audition; soon after I was offered the gig and within a week I was sat in a studio full of kit and given guests to interview.

Asked how I feel about it, there is a lot to learn! Not only about the kit, but also, and mostly, about how to interview people well. I need to learn a new rhythm as well: the life cycle of an academic project, whether turning research into publications or leading institutional change, is famously long. Barges, turning, etc. But the lifecycle of the media is short: guests are lined up and briefs need to be digested at what, for an academic, is shockingly short notice. However, there's an energy to it, like with a musical performance, and I'm finding that liveliness stimulating. Michael Comyn, the previous presenter, leaves unfillable boots; but I hope that, in time, I too will help RTÉ's listeners gain insights and

RTÉ RADIO 1



Professor Siobhán Garrigan

knowledge on religious matters that enrich or encourage their own lives, even as they're doing the dishes.

**Professor Siobhán Garrigan,
Loyola Professor of Theology.**

Ukrainian - A View from a Theologian

Within the context of the Christian Theology module, 'Violence and Grace in the Human Narrative', Dr Fáiinche Ryan contacted Prof Dr Roman Zaviyskyy, President, Ukrainian Branch of the European Society for Catholic Theology to address us on Russia's War On Ukraine. This was a closed event. As well as to Loyola students Zoom invites were sent to alumni, to the Peace Studies MPhil group, and to AMRI. More than 80 attended this most interesting lecture. A key contention made by Roman was that Russia should be understood as trying to live as a nation coming to terms with the loss of empire. In this search for a new identity Russian nationalist consciousness has been captured by Putin's propaganda, centring on the need to reconstitute the empire as it was before the fall of the Soviet Union. He instanced startling statistics showing that more than 80% of Russians believe that Russia should invade the Baltic States, and also Poland. This is the context of the current Russian war in Ukraine. Roman made clear that Ukraine is a country with many ethnic groups, including a significant number of Russian speakers who identify themselves as Ukrainian. It was moving to hear someone speak of daily life in a country at war. Although based in Lviv, Roman spoke poignantly of the coffins of soldiers and of his 15 year old son seeking to enrol in the local defence forces. The lecture provoked interesting questions and comments.



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Scholarships for Women in Theology

We are delighted to now have two specific scholarships for women to add to our range of other scholarships.

The Bridget Clancy Scholarship

Thanks to the generous support of the Sisters of St John of God we have a scholarship of €15,000 (this will cover fees and offer a stipend) for an MPhil. in Christian Theology.

Sisters Angèle-Marie Littlejohn and Bibiane Leclercq Scholarship

Thanks to the generous support of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles we have a scholarship specifically for an African woman.

For details of these scholarships and others please see www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/scholarships



Kate Clancy and Evelyn Ross are both current students of the MPhil in Christian Theology. Kate is the 2021/22 recipient of the Loyola Trust Scholarship for Religious Education Teachers.

Dr Jacob Erickson reports on his activities, which include a presentation at a gathering of colleagues in environmental humanities in Bristol. (April 28th-29th). This is the Philosophical Life of Plants project, a research network, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. It is a five-way collaboration between various philosophy and literature departments, the archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew (London), and the Goethe- and Schiller-Archiv in Weimar, Germany. The event will include a roundtable on Environmental Futures. Jake is the co-chair of the Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Unit of the American Academy of Religion. At the last AAR meeting in November 2021, panels were organised on Luther studies, on worship in a digital age (“The Ubiquities of Christ, COVID and Computer: Global Conversations on Digital Worship”) and



more. He also gave a paper to the Religion and Ecology Unit on “Wild Panentheism: The Queer Flesh of Divinity”. Finally, he has contributed to the COVID-19 Blog collection of the Trinity research hub, on What the Pandemic Means. His essay focuses on the politics of emotion as they relate to the pandemic, recovery fatigue, and play. Links to these events and outputs can be found on the Loyola webpage

Loyola Institute Open Evening 25th May



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

The Case for Theology in the University

“Alongside professional training, the university is an institution of inquiry – ‘teaching and research’ – into the critical and constitutive issues of human flourishing, and in all its rich diversity. The case for theology must be that it contributes in a distinctive way to this tradition of inquiry, and that it brings specific and very powerful resources to the engagement.”

Read more of Dr. Cornelius Casey’s article for the latest edition of *Studies* at www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute. This article sets out the thinking behind the Festival of Theology that the Loyola institute will host in May 2022 on “Theology and the University”.



There will be an Open Evening for those interested in postgraduate study with the Loyola Institute, on Wednesday 25th May, from 6.30 onwards. The evening will include a ‘sample’ lecture, and an opportunity to meet the teaching staff; this will be followed by a reception. Please contact us for further details, or see the webpage.

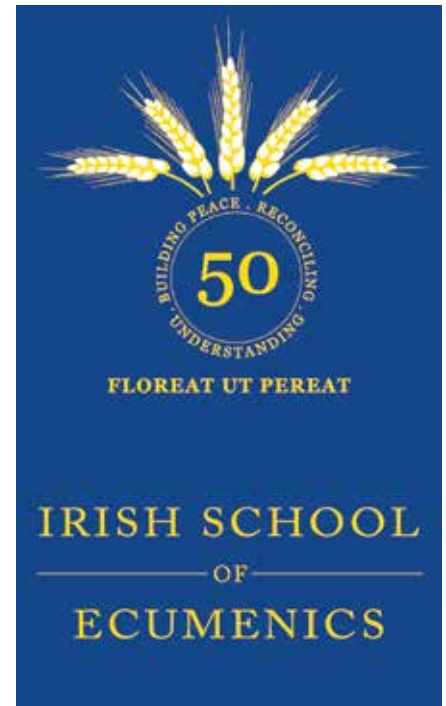
Celebrating 50 Years of The ISE

Fr Tom Layden SJ, Chair of the Loyola Institute Trust and Company Board, reports on a webinar via Zoom, in which he took part on 31st March as part of a series to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Irish School of Ecumenics. Professor Siobhan Garrigan, was also on the panel, which considered 'The Ecumenical Movement and Just Peace on the Island of Ireland: Christianity Discredited or Pilgrim's Progress?'

The question we were discussing- 'Christianity Discredited or Pilgrim's Progress?'- originated in the title of a book written in 1988 by ISE's second Director, Dr Robin Boyd, and it gave us a creative way of looking at the contributions- past, present and future- of those in the ecumenical movement to the work for a

just peace on the island of Ireland.

How would ISE's founder, Dr Michael Hurley SJ, have felt about our interchange of ideas and analysis? He would have welcomed the forthrightness about how Christianity had been discredited by our failures to work together for a just peace over the years. He would, I believe, have agreed that there has indeed been Pilgrim's Progress along the way. But he would have added that there has not been sufficient progress and that we need to be energetically taking new creative initiatives in which the churches cooperate in serving peace and justice in our society. He would be calling us to avoid becoming complacent about what has been achieved or despondent about where there has been failure.



**DECISION-MAKING
IN AN UNCERTAIN TIME**
Should you always obey your conscience?

FRIDAY 10TH JUNE 2022

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Prof Cornelius Casey CSsR, Trinity College Dublin
- Prof Raphael Gallagher CSsR, Alphonsianum, Rome
- Prof Stefania Tutino, University of California (UCLA)
- Prof Desmond Ryan, Trinity College Dublin
- Prof Patrick Hannon, St Patrick's College, Maynooth
- Prof Fáinche Ryan, Trinity College Dublin.

This Conference is sponsored by the Dublin Province of the Redemptorist Congregation.

For further details see the Loyola Institute website
www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/

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

 The Loyola Institute
School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

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

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