



Image of the day - Port Ballintrae, County Antrim

Reports

Saint Patrick's College Maynooth selected for prestigious philosophical theology grant

The Faculty of Philosophy at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth has been selected to host one of the twelve grants offered by the project Widening the Horizons in Philosophical Theology, anchored at the University of Saint Andrews, and funded by a £2m grant from Templeton Religion Trust.

This project is an ambitious international initiative spearheaded by Professor Judith Wolfe. It comprises leading and emerging researchers in the fields of philosophy and theology from the UK, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, the USA, Canada, and Australia. The project's impressive aim is to shape and widen the future direction of research trends in philosophical theology within the continental tradition in relation to Christian revelation.

Commenting on the grant award, Reverend Professor Michael Mullaney, President of Saint Patrick's College Maynooth, noted "this grant will continue to bring internationally renowned scholars working at the intersection between philosophy and theology to the corridors of Saint Patrick's College, along with supporting our cutting-edge and future-orientated research in Christian philosophy. We are delighted and humbled to have been selected."

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This is two-year project led by Dr Philip John Paul Gonzales of the Faculty of Philosophy at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth will explore analogical metaphysics in relation to incarnate mimetic desire.

Dr Gonzales commented, "the project which launches on 1 October 2021 fits directly within, and supports, the constructive and forward-looking approach of the Faculty of Philosophy as seen with our recent international conference, The Future of Christian Metaphysics (April, 2021), and our forthcoming conference, The Future of Christian Thinking (April 2022)."

Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth opened its doors as an educational institution in 1795 as the National Seminary, becoming a Pontifical University in 1896. In the intervening two centuries, it has established for itself an impressive reputation for scholarship and learning. The Pontifical University and National Seminary are often referred to as Maynooth College. Today, as a Pontifical University, the College specialises in the study of theology and philosophy at both postgraduate and undergraduate level and related areas, in one of the most beautiful campuses in Ireland, and the support of Ireland's newest university, Maynooth University. Saint Patrick's College attracts students from home and abroad from a wide variety of backgrounds and careers. Students who wish to add the study of Philosophy and/or Theology to their chosen career and gain a deeper insight into their role in shaping a better society and serving the common good. Further information is available on maynoothcollege.ie

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More information regarding Widening Horizons and its projects can be found here:

philosophical-theology.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/projects/

Notes on The Future of Christian Thinking, global conference at Maynooth campus April 2022, maynoothcollege.ie/the-future-of-christian-thinking-international-conference-27th-30th-apr-2022

Ordinations resume in the Church of Ireland



At the ordination of the Rev John Lowden on September 5 are, front row from left: The Ven Barry Forde, Archdeacon of Belfast (Preacher); John Lowden; the Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor and the Rev Canon James Carson, rector of St Michael and St Stephen with St Luke, Belfast. Back row from left: The Rev Canon Kevin Graham, Director of Ordinands; the Rev Canon William Taggart, Registrar; the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor.

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Ordinations in the Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin and St John the Baptist, were conducted by the Rt Revd Ferran Glenfield, the Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, assisted by Dean Arfon Williams. Revd. John Addy, Revd. Adam Norris and Revd. Xanthe Pratt were ordained for local ministry at a service in St John's Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin & St John the Baptist for service in the Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh

The following are admitted to the Order of Deacon

Marion Keating – Meath & Kildare (preparing for OLM ordination)

Pat Ryan – Meath & Kildare (preparing for OLM ordination)

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Revds John Addy, Adam Norris and Xanthe Pratt – Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh (OLM) John and Adam will be serving as local ministers in the Sligo Cathedral Group. Xanthe will serve in Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon.

Revd John Lowden – Connor, for the curacy of St Michael and St Stephen with St Luke, Belfast.

Revd Elaine Pentland – Down & Dromore

Revd Andrew Moore – Down & Dromore

The following are ordained Priests

Revd Anna Williams – Down & Dromore, for the curacy of Seapatrick, Banbridge

Revd Rodney Blair – Down & Dromore, for the curacy of Shankill Parish, Lurgan.

Revd Andy Hay – Down & Dromore, for the curacy of St Finnian's, Cregagh.

Revd Jim Fleming – Down & Dromore (OLM)

Revd Colin Birnie – Down & Dromore (OLM)

OLM - Ordained Local Ministry





New Diocesan Director of Ordinands appointed in Armagh

**The Archbishop of
Armagh, the Most
Revd John
McDowell, has**

**appointed the Revd Ruth Murray, Rector of
Woodschapel, as Diocesan Director of Ordinands
(DDO). Ruth succeeds Canon Bill Adair, who has
stepped down as DDO after almost 10 years acting in
that capacity.**

Making the announcement the Archbishop said: “First, I want to thank Canon Adair for his sterling service as DDO. Anyone who knows Bill will find it easy to believe that he has been a cheerful and shrewd adviser and encourager to many people who have been on a journey of exploration around vocation and ministry. I have reason to be particularly grateful to Bill for his counsel in the circumstances of my limited knowledge of the diocese and the restrictions which applied for so long and prevented me from getting to meet people in person.

“I am delighted that an experienced and dedicated clergy person such as the Revd Ruth Murray has agreed to take on this role, which is so important in the life of the Diocese and of the Church of Ireland. The ordained ministry is far

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from being the ‘sum total’ of the Church, but it is an essential and foundational element of what we are.

Ordained ministry is an enormous privilege and a great responsibility. I trust that, in the changed circumstances of our lives, when we are all re-evaluating what is most important for ourselves and our community, that the call to ordained ministry will find a prominent place. I know that Ruth will bring her own qualities of calm reflection, encouragement and wisdom to fostering this sense of vocation.”

The Revd Ruth Murray commented: “Being entrusted with the role of Diocesan Director of Ordinands is at once humbling and heartening. Thank you to Archbishop John for this new opportunity to serve and I ask for your prayers as I begin to explore my role in our Armagh Fellowship of Vocation. My thoughts turn to words near the beginning of the Jubilate, ‘ ... serve the Lord with gladness and come before his face with songs of joy ...’.

“As I journey with those in the diocese who are exploring their vocation and seeking God’s guidance, I pray that we will be able to share that joy. Whatever we do to serve God, and wherever we serve, may we all be able to do so with gladness.”

Canon Bill Adair said: “I wish to congratulate Revd Ruth Murray on her appointment as DDO for Armagh Diocese, and wish her many happy years in a post which I have thoroughly enjoyed for almost ten years. During this time it has been an honour to serve and to get to know those who have sought to explore their vocation and sense of God’s



call to serve. These are exciting times as ways of ministry are being explored not only along traditional paths but also in the new ways for us as a Diocese, of Ordained Local Ministry.

Canon Bill Adair

“The calibre of all those who have come forward to explore

God’s call for them has been exceptional over the years whether they proceeded to selection or not. With folk such as these being open to God’s call, I feel nothing other than encouraged for the future of the Church of Ireland in our Parishes. God is truly at work among us all. In wishing God’s blessing on Ruth’s ministry as DDO, I wish to thank Archbishop John and his predecessors for putting their trust in me, I know that I have gained much from all those who have explored God’s call over the years. Please do remember Ruth in your prayers.”

Church in Wales votes to bless gay marriages

Gay couples will now be legally allowed to have their marriage blessed in Church, after a historic vote by religious leaders in Wales.

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The Church in Wales voted on Monday to allow Anglican ministers to bless same-sex couples, meaning that the Church of England is now the only Anglican church in Great Britain not to either bless or marry same-sex couples.

While the proposals would not allow gay weddings, the move has been hailed as a “halfway house” for modernists, while conservatives fear that the development is controversial, and could split the Church.

The Church in Wales tweeted: “A Bill to authorise a service for blessing for same-sex partnerships is passed by the Church’s Governing Body today.”

Responding to the vote passing, **Bishop Paul Bayes, the Bishop of Liverpool**, said: “This is a good decision.

“The Church in Wales is following its mission to Wales, just as the Church of England is called to shape its mission for this England.

“Part of a world Communion, and there for the actual people we are sent to serve, in all their rich & God-given diversity.”

‘I yearn for the day when the Church of England [makes] the same step – we need to be a Church for ALL England!’

Jayne Ozanne, a prominent LGBT campaigner and member of General Synod, the Church of England’s legislative body, added: “I’m thrilled to hear of this significant step by the Church in Wales towards a fully inclusive church today.

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“If we want all in our care to flourish and thrive, and for our churches to grow, we must learn to embrace diversity and be known as people who practice what we preach.

“ Love is love, and where this is found between two adults it is something that should be celebrated and blessed. I yearn for the day when the Church of England has the courage to make the same step – we need to be a Church for ALL England!”

The Very Rev Jeffrey John, a Church of England priest who made headlines in 2003 by being the first person to have openly been in a same-sex relationship to have been nominated as a Church of England bishop, also described the vote a “halfway house”.

The Church in Wales’s vote to allow blessings of gay marriages passed by a two thirds majority across all three “orders”, bishops, clergy and laity, of its governing body.

The Bill will only be for a “experimental” five-year term and individual clergy would be able to “opt out” of leading ceremonies. Last year Bishops in the Church of England rejected similar proposals. The Bill was discussed at a meeting of the Church’s governing body.

European Churches urge EU to protect vulnerable in Afghanistan

Conveying solidarity with people in Afghanistan, Rev Christian Krieger, president of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), and Cardinal Jean-Claude

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Hollerich SJ, president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), issued a joint statement on Thursday, 2 September, urging the European decision makers to show humanity and act with determination in addressing the human tragedy currently unfolding in the country.

As EU institutions are holding meetings on Afghanistan this week, European Churches turn to all political leaders, offering reflections and policy recommendations, urging them to prove that "EU values are not an empty rhetoric but are practical guiding principles that lead to actions based on ethical standards, beyond mere political or economic considerations."

In their joint statement, Churches appeal to the international community to protect persons who are targets of oppression and whose lives are at risk, such as women, children, civil society actors, human rights defenders, journalists, artists and members of ethnic and sexual minorities, as well as Christians and other religious communities.

Churches encourage the European Union and its Member States to lead common and coordinated solidarity efforts carried out by the international community to assist Afghans escaping violence and terror.

"We urge the EU to be instrumental in creating humanitarian corridors, resettlement and other secure passages, to bring refugees to safe places outside Afghanistan. We also encourage the EU Member States to give security of

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residence to Afghans already in the EU and stop deportation efforts to Afghanistan" - reads the statement.

"Condemning terrorism in all its forms and expressions", CEC and COMECE also call on the faithful to remember the victims of recent terror attacks and their families in prayers.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Webinars - Responding to Afghanistan

It's clear that in the face of such civic collapse, sin and inhumanity within a complex military and geo-political context, there are no quick, neat or easy answers, Evangelical Alliance writes.

However we believe that the Church globally can and should play a vital role in providing care and welcome for those fleeing, as well as praying for wise political interventions and for our brothers, sisters and others who remain.

We respond firstly and constantly through prayer, recognising who God is, who we are and who the Afghani people are in His eyes. We have written a prayer which can be used in a church, small group or individual setting.

Practically there are a range of ways we can respond immediately. Christian organisations like Tearfund and many others are running crisis appeals right now. There is a

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desperate need for food, shelter, medical care and essentials for those in refugee camps.

Evangelical Alliance has written to political representatives last week to try to better understand how the Northern Ireland Executive is responding and to see where the Church might be able to offer assistance.

Organisations like Welcome Churches and Embrace exist to help churches better support and welcome people from other cultures who arrive here. Already there is a need for food, clothes and suitable accommodation locally.

Evangelical Alliance partnered with EMBRACE a few years ago to produce this free booklet to help churches as they develop their culture of welcome. Our friends at Home for Good are hosting an online information session for anyone interested in caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people this Thursday 9th September alongside the HSCNI foster care service. See links below.

Over the months ahead we hope to be able to signpost to other ways that the local church corporately and individually can respond to this specific instance and the wider challenges and opportunities around racial and cultural integration.

Embrace -

[[] <https://www.embraceni.org/resource-materials/welcome-helping-churches-welcome-people-from-other-countries/?>]

Home for good -

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If you would like to explore the opportunity of fostering unaccompanied asylum seeking children, then this event would be a good place to start - Thursday 9th, online.

[<https://homeforgood.org.uk/events/caring-uasc-sept-21>]

European Heritage Open Days 2021 - Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland

An illustrated talk about the resources of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland will be presented via Zoom on Friday 10 September at 12.00. It will cover the wide range of resources held by the Society for research - printed, manuscript and secondary material.

Zoom Time: Friday 12.00 - 13.00 (UK Time)

Free registration through Eventbrite is essential. Go to the Eventbrite page for this event -

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talk-presbyterian-historical-society-of-ireland-ehod-tickets-156708881483>]

Opinion

N Ireland will be Biden's next foreign policy disaster by Ruth Dudley Edwards

The ignorance and arrogance shown by President Biden in his mishandling of the Afghan withdrawal are evident once again in his approach to Ireland - Ruth Dudley Edwards writes in the Daily Telegraph.

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It is alarming when a lawyer as careful with his language as David Trimble – who put his life, his party and his career on the line to secure the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement – sends an open letter bluntly speaking of the Biden administration’s role “in contributing to the damage being caused to the Agreement through your support for the Northern Ireland Protocol”

Democratic administrations have tended to have a “green” (i.e. Irish nationalist) tinge, but Bill Clinton’s intellect and knowledge tempered his inclinations and Obama had little interest. Biden is different. “Anyone wearing orange is not welcome here,” the then vice-president beamed on St Patrick’s Day 2015 as he welcomed green-tied Taoiseach Enda Kenny to his Washington home. “Only joking,” he added, perhaps seeing that Kenny’s smile seemed strained.

Unfortunately that gaffe was just another indication of Biden’s utterly superficial take on Ireland: green good, orange bad and not a clue about the history and politics of Northern Ireland other than that the Brits had made the Catholic Irish people The Most Oppressed People Ever.

Apart from Sinn Fein, which wants to destroy Northern Ireland, there is dismay at the EU’s spitefully harsh implementation of the protocol. As Trimble puts it, the protocol “has not only subverted the [Agreement’s] main safeguards,” but is “causing civil unrest and political uncertainty” and “damaging the Northern Ireland economy, disrupting supply chains, inflating prices and diverting trade from our main market in Great Britain”.

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Worse still, “by giving the EU powers over the movement of goods into and out of the province,” it “has torpedoed the ‘consent’ principle and risks a return to sectarian strife”.

This is no exaggeration. Demoralised Unionism is in turmoil, feeling betrayed by the Prime Minister and the DUP is crashing in the polls because of its failure to block the protocol, which incites rage. The EU jumped to accept the evidence-free Irish argument that there might be violent consequences if the existing land border with the republic were beefed up. Loyalists learnt a lesson from that: a recent survey of loyalists found that 91.5 per cent fear a return to violence.

The EU – recently supported blindly by Biden – have refused to consider any alternatives to the protocol and accuse the UK of ripping up agreements, yet all that has been requested is that mutually acceptable ways be found to ameliorate the worst aspects of a hasty and destructive deal. Trimble asks that Biden embrace the report from the Centre for Brexit Policy proposing a well-thought-out “Mutual Enforcement” deal that replaces nit-picking regulations with mutual trust between Brussels and London to apply the other’s rules to movement of goods.

What is worrying is that the sentimental Irish lobby is not just Biden. This month Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer will launch a fundraising event in Manhattan organised by the Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation.

Does he not know that McGuinness was a mass murderer who made it clear on his tombstone that at the gates of death he was still an IRA Volunteer?

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Is it any wonder that Unionists have no faith in this new administration?

Courtesy of the Daily Telegraph 07 September 2021

Poem for today

Studying the Language by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

On Sundays I watch the hermits coming out of their holes
Into the light. Their cliff is as full as a hive.
They crowd together on warm shoulders of rock
Where the sun has been shining, their joints crackle.
They begin to talk after a while.
I listen to their accents, they are not all
From this island, not all old,
Not even, I think, all masculine.

They are so wise, they do not pretend to see me.
They drink from their scattered pools of melted snow:
I walk right by them and drink when they have done.
I can see the marks of chains of around their feet.

I call this my work, these decades and stations—
Because, without these, I would be a stranger here

Pointers for prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;

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and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,
make us to love that which thou dost command;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We give You thanks, O Lord, that You have invited Your
people to pray, in the confidence that You will both hear and
answer them according to Your merciful will.

We praise You, O Lord, for the gift of work and for the gifts
and skills which shape our earthly vocations. Teach us to
labour not for earthly reward but for Your glory, knowing that
nothing we do in Your service is ever in vain. Give comfort
and direction to the unemployed and the underemployed,
that they may find work appropriate to their needs and
abilities. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.


We pray especially for those who labour on behalf of Your
kingdom, for our bishops.....,clergy, our pastor(s), and for all
missionaries and church workers. Bless especially those
who serve You on mission fields far from home and those
who bring the light of Your Word to the blind. Lord, in Your
mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our nation and those who labour on our behalf
at every level of government, and for all who serve the
public trust, that they may fulfil their duties
with wisdom, honour, and justice. Lord, in Your mercy, hear
our prayer.

We pray for the men and women of our armed forces,
especially those who labour against the forces of
war,terrorism, and oppression. We ask Your blessing also

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upon those who protect and defend us here. Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.



Loving and gracious God,
we come before You to give thanks
for what You have done for us.
We celebrate Your Name and offer You praise
because of Your Holiness,
yet You are a living God
in whom we trust and believe.

upon those who protect and defend us here. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We are mindful of the many whose lives are filled with pain and suffering, grief and sorrow. As You once showed Your mercy to those who called upon You long ago, so show Your mercy to those who cry to You today. According to Your will, grant them healing and peace, especially _____**those whom we name now in our hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

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Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Speaking to the Soul

For the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem, the Levites throughout the land were asked to come to Jerusalem to assist in the ceremonies. They were to take part in the joyous occasion with their songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps, and lyres.

Nehemiah 12.27 NLT

God's people have always loved celebrating! The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was an incredibly significant moment and we are given a wonderful picture of the people's celebrations. The Levites had the leading responsibility for worship and so they were brought into

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Jerusalem from all over the country for this special moment. There was a wide range of musical instruments from trumpets and harps to lyres and cymbals, and Nehemiah organised the singers into two choirs who walked in different directions around the walls of the city. Nobody was left out. It must have been a great deal of fun.

The whole Bible is punctuated with times of exuberant worship. It is no surprise that when John received his vision of heaven it was in the form of the most amazing wedding banquet.

John records, “I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.” (Revelation 19.1) It is wonderful that we have our own personal experiences of God but we need to be continually aware that we are part of something much, much bigger. As we live for God today we may not see any other Christian but the praise that we offer is part of a great chorus of worship that is arising to God from all over the world. When we break bread and remember Jesus’ death on the Cross, we are united with every single Christian - from those who have recently found salvation, to those who are slipping away from this life.

There are times when, sadly, it is impossible to meet with other Christians because of personal circumstances or illness. However, in such moments we need to remember that great multitude with whom we are completely united through our love for God. In an amazing way we stand today in unity with Nehemiah and the people as they offered their noisy, enthusiastic worship long ago.

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QUESTION

In what ways does God bless you when you worship with other people?

PRAYER

Great God of Wonders, we worship you and thank you for uniting us with all your people in every time and place.
Amen

