

## St Patrick's College Maynooth

Harvest 2020 Issue no. 8



## Alumni reflect on St. Patrick's contribution to their careers

hether it's reporting about a gangland drugs feud in Drogheda, negotiating deals for UEFA in Switzerland or working as a hospital chaplain on the COVID frontline in Cork, SPCM alumni readily admit that their education at St. Patrick's College, was the foundation upon which their diverse careers were built.

RTE's North East Regional Correspondent, Sinéad Hussey, who regularly appears on the main TV news bulletins of the national broadcaster, completed a Higher Diploma in Christian Communications in 2003. The course gave me a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging and it gave me direction.

For Sinéad, that HDip was key to landing her role with RTE.

The course "gave me a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging and it gave me direction", says Sinéad. In a world of 'fake news and noise" it's a reporter's job to gather the facts and to tell the real story. "The HDip course I did in Maynooth helps me to do that" she says. Continued on page 2





Remembering John Hume's Maynooth years

"Look at the real heroes who come to light in these [pandemic] days: they are not the famous, rich and successful people; rather, they are those who give themselves in order to serve other people."

## Pope Francis,

Palm Sunday Homily, 2020

## SPCM Alumni are 'real heroes'

his special edition of our newsletter acknowledges the powerful impact graduates of St. Patrick's College make both locally and globally. Many of our alumni devote their lives to serving God and others, in parishes, schools, prisons and hospitals, while others pursue careers in academia, broadcasting, journalism, politics, NGOs and sports management.

SPCM's abiding commitment to deliver an education to value does more than just enable our graduates to find a career that they love, it also gives them a life that they love too.

There is no greater love, the Gospel challenges us, than to give our lives in the service of others.

In this Harvest newsletter, we salute our alumni and proudly share their stories with you.

**Rev. Professor Michael Mullaney** President SPCM



## Alumni reflections Continued from page 1



"The education I got in Maynooth, formed me as a confident and respectful person," says **Liam McGroarty, Business Development Manager for UEFA**, who graduated in 2000.

"Studying a Masters in Theology gave me the skills to critique matters fairly and properly," Now based in Switzerland, Liam's responsibilities include organising events and stakeholder management, sponsorship activation, customer relationship management and the management of regulatory processes.

"In my job, I work with people from different faiths and none," explains Liam. "Once you come at issues from a moral and fair-minded perspective, your counterparts will recognise and appreciate that."



Julianna Crowley, Healthcare Chaplain, based in Cork University Hospital. Her job is to provide pastoral care to patients and their families at what can be the most difficult and challenging moments of their lives.

"My time in SPCM provided me with life skills and an ability to respond appropriately...and to persevere in times of difficulty" During the COVID-19 pandemic, this care has become even more critical for patients, as they don't have the comfort of having family members by their bedside.

"My time in SPCM provided me with life skills and an ability to respond appropriately to quandaries, to reflect through the widest possible perspectives, to respond carefully to patients and not to react too quickly, and also to persevere in times of difficulty," explains Julianna.

## Jane Mellett graduated with a Masters in New Testament Scripture in 2003.

Jane works for the development agency, Trócaire, on their 'Living Laudato Si' project. Her role encourages faith communities all over Ireland to get involved in the climate change movement.

SPCM's intimate campus and small class sizes meant there was a special sense of community that led to Jane developing lifelong friendships. "The lecturers were always approachable and such experts in their field, so the interactions with them were always great" says Jane. "Just after secondary school was a time when we were all exploring issues around spirituality. St. Patrick's was a special space to share and have those conversations", she says.



## Patrick Boland was conferred with a HDip in Theological Studies in 2015. Nowadays he works as an executive coach and a leadership consultant.

As a psychotherapist, writer and content creator on spirituality matters. Patrick fully acknowledges that undertaking a Higher Diploma in Theological Studies was hugely beneficial to his professional development and multi-hyphenate career.



Patrick's fondest recollections of St. Patrick's are of his fellow students. "I remember great characters in the classroom and their interactions with the lecturers. I loved the in-depth teaching of scriptural theology and I particularly remember great lectures on church history and world religions. Getting a sense of the historical context of faith communities and contemporary social and cultural anthropology was fascinating," says Patrick.





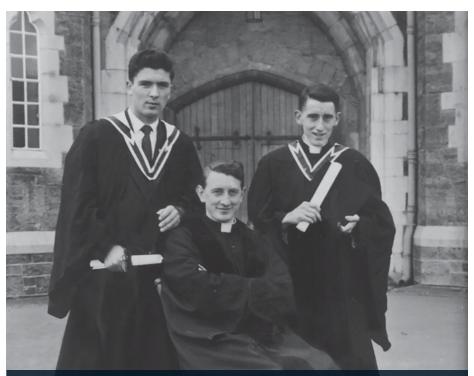
## 2020 Conferrings will be virtual

A highlight of the academic year, the Pontifical University's annual conferring ceremony, has been forced to move online as a result of COVID-19. Under normal circumstances, students and their families gather in the Gunn Chapel to participate in one of the most spectacular and joyful conferring ceremonies to take place in Ireland each year.

"Unfortunately the class of 2020's graduation experience will be very different due to the Coronavirus pandemic," says Rev. Dr Michael Shortall, Registrar of St. Patrick's College. The College had been planning a face to face ceremony, in compliance with public health guidelines. However the recent shift to Level 3 restrictions for the whole country means this is no longer feasible. "We are still discussing how we can make this year's virtual conferring ceremony as special as possible, and will be in direct contact with graduates in the coming weeks," Fr Shortall concluded.



## Remembering John Hume - Activist, visionary politician & peacemaker



John's Hume's life journey was shaped by his early experiences at Maynooth. This photograph was taken on graduation day 1958, when he received his MA. Also pictured are (seated) Msgr. Brendan Devlin, Professor Emeritus of French and former Vice-President of the College, and (right) the late Fr. Ciarán Devlin, Diocese of Derry (Brendan's brother).

he death on 3 August of the Nobel Peace Laureate and architect of the Good Friday Agreement, John Hume, prompted an outpouring of tributes from friends, colleagues and admirers – local, national and international.

Mr. Hume was justly praised for being a loving father and family man, a devoted citizen of his beloved Derry, a mould-breaking campaigner for social justice and political reform, an activist and visionary, who ultimately became a politician and statesman of worldwide stature.

However in all of the commentary surrounding his passing, little attention was given to the fact that John Hume was an Alumus of SPCM. He studied for four years from 1954 -1958 at the National Seminary in Maynooth, as a clerical student for the diocese of Derry.

John Hume noted that Maynooth gave him a capacity for logical thought and for persistence, what he himself described as 'stickability'.

Monsignor Brendan Devlin, Emeritus Professor of Modern Languages at St Patrick's College – himself a priest of the Derry diocese – firmly believes that John's Hume's life journey was shaped by his early experiences at Maynooth.

In an appreciation written after his death, Msgr. Devlin suggests that the inner force which powered John Hume's many qualities and achievements was forged during his formative years at the National Seminary. "The seven years required for priestly formation were above all an obstacle race which it took determination to negotiate successfully; and the sustaining principle was not pious waffle but hard-headed thoughtfulness," says Msgr. Devlin.

At his requiem mass, the celebrant described how Mr. Hume regularly sought spiritual refreshment by making quiet visits to his neighbourhood church, the cathedral in Derry.

John Hume, thinker, visionary, politician and peacemaker, was until his dying day very much a 'Maynooth man' concluded Msgr. Devlin.

## Haec olim meminisse iuvabit

It will be pleasing one day to remember this



'Towards the year 2000: Public Policy in Ireland': one-day Conference presented by past students prominent in political and public life, 15th June 1995.
Front row (L-R): Eamon Ryan, ambassador to Portugal; Mary Hanafin, Fianna Fáil Executive; Joe Costelloe, TD; John Hume, MP, MEP; Patrick Hillery, former President; John Wilson, former Tanaiste; Senator Michael O'Kennedy. Back row (L-R): John Gallagher, deputy general secretary, Democratic Left; Dominic McNamara; Liam Ryan; John Brown, TD; Patricia O'Connor; Farrell Corcoran; Noel Dempsey, TD; Theresa Ridge, Dublin County Council; Matthew O'Donnell; Maurice O'Connell, Governor, Central Bank; R. V. Comerford.



## **Carrying Maynooth to** the ends of the earth

first entered Maynooth in 1992 with the intention of training for the priesthood. Twenty-eight years later I'm still here; but not as a priest. Yet I don't regret a single day.

Maynooth University gave me my first real love of the Irish language; it opened up for me the wonder of working in the Gaeltacht; it taught me how to be a historian; and how to conduct myself in the world of academia.

The seminary and SPCM complemented this by inculcating in me a great love of sacred music; Gregorian Chant; polyphony. And it gave me lifelong friendships.

## Maynooth has nurtured me physically, emotionally, spiritually, psychologically.

Numerous books have been written about Maynooth College over the decades, but this one is very different. Rather than telling a straightforward history of the College, this is a treasure chest of reminiscences of former students and staff. You'll meet many familiar faces; see many recognisable sights; relive many memories, both familiar and forgotten.

"We Remember Maynooth" introduces a cast of characters who have given their lives to teaching, research and scholarship. People who have played significant roles in the religious, cultural and political history of Ireland, and especially in the history of the Irish diaspora -among whom so many of its alumni spent the rest of their lives.

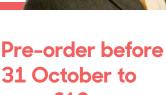
It's always been said that the Maynooth College campus is difficult to leave. Indeed, many people never do; or, if they do, they carry 'Maynooth' with them, even to the furthest ends of the earth.

## Dr Salvador Ryan

Professor of Ecclesiastical History

## 31 October to save **€10**.

Buy now from messenger.ie



Orders placed between 1 November - 31 December will save €5, using the code MAYNOOTH225



## Monsignor Michael Olden Scholarship

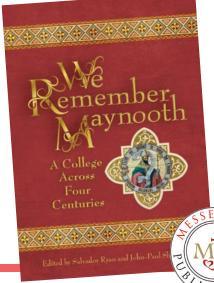
A special scholarship has been initiated in honour of Monsignor Michael G. Olden in recognition of the immense contribution he has made to St Patrick's College.

Msgr. Olden, who is celebrating his Diamond Jubilee this year, devoted 20 years of his priesthood in the service of the College in a variety of roles. Beginning in 1966, he served variously as Dean of the College, as Professor of Ecclesiastical History and finally as College and University President from 1977-85.

The distinction of hosting Pope John Paul II on his visit to the College in 1979 fell to Msgr. Olden, during which the foundation of the John Paul II Library was laid.

Msgr. Olden was also responsible for initiating fundraising activities in the United States, developing a network of loyal friends and donors whose generosity ultimately led to the College Chapel being magnificently restored, the Pugin buildings reroofed and refurbished, along with many other capital projects that might otherwise have been impossible.

The scholarship, valued at €1,000 will be awarded annually to a postgraduate student, lay or cleric. The first bursary has already been awarded to a lay doctoral student completing a PhD in ecclesiastical history, coincidentally Msgr. Olden's own academic specialty.



## Giving a voice to Maynooth's class photos

"An ambitious venture, worthy of our epoch-changing times," is how Prof. Thomas O'Connor, Director of the Arts & **Humanities Institute at Maynooth** University, describes the Clericus Project, which was unveiled in June.

The project involved the digitisation of 124 student class portraits (class pieces), dating from the second half of the nineteenth century up to 2018. Visitors to SPCM will know the classpieces, which have hung mutely in SPCM's cloisters for decades.

"By simply visiting the website and entering a name, visitors now enjoy access to 20,000 individual records, snapshots, literally, of Maynooth's 225-year old mission,"

The aim of Clericus was to develop an interactive online environment to capture St. Patrick's 124 ordination classpieces and to make them permanently available to the public.

With the launch of www.clericus.ie access is now available at the click of a mouse, to nearly 10,000 individual photographic records, as well as to the biographical records of Maynooth's pre-photographic generations.

"The Clericus archive provides an eloquent testimony of the lives and work of the Irish clergy at home and overseas, and will help to tell their stories," concludes Prof. O'Connor.







(Cloyne); Matthew Newell (Clogher)

## Looking back, looking within and looking forward - hopefully

n 13 September, the eve of the feast of the Triumph of the Cross, I was delighted to welcome new seminarians as well as the second year group for the Introductory Programme 2020. The remainder of the seminary community followed a week later for a Formation Workshop and opening retreat, kindly directed by the Bishop of Meath.

Since returning to St. Patrick's College, our focus as a community has been on re-establishing the bonds of fraternity and on establishing a stable household. We have also reflected together on living with the reality of COVID-19.

The workshop and retreat days enabled all our seminarians to look back, to look within but also to look forward on what has already turned out to be an extraordinary year. Social distancing, the wearing of masks, hygiene protocols and blended online and face to face teaching and learning, have become an integral part of who and how we are.

While the oratories and the dining hall look different, as do all the lecture theatres - one thing remains constant and this is where we find our hope and strength. At the heart of the many challenges and opportunities which the 'unwelcome Coronavirus guest' has brought to our lives, there is the still, small voice of our God, reassuring us of His presence and encouraging us to look out for and to look after one another.

As a seminary community, we have pledged to sacrifice some comforts and embrace some restrictions so that all of us can live together in a way that is healthy, peaceful and full of

faith so that, in the words of Julian of Norwich, 'all will be well and all manner of things will be well."

For now, we give thanks that we are back and we hope that we can remain, as we ask God to protect our people and our world.

## Fr Tomás Surlis

Rector of the National Seminary

## SPCM community salutes newly ordained priests

t is always a source of joy for the seminary community when one of our number, who has completed his initial formation, is ordained to the priesthood. This year, we celebrate the ordination of two men: Thomas Small (Kilmore) and Shane Costello (Tuam). The day of ordination is a time to give thanks for all that God has done in the life of the one being ordained and to pray for the new priest's openness to being formed after the heart of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Their journey does not end on the day of ordination - rather, it continues in a new way, amongst brother priests in their diocese and with the people whom the newly ordained is called to serve in the parish to which he is sent.

We wish Fr Tom and Fr Shane every blessing in their first parish appointments and we thank them sincerely for the contribution they have made to the life of the seminary during their years with us here in Maynooth.

## Ad multos annos

Fr Tomás - Rector



## **Ordination of** Fr Tom Small

Fr Tom Small was ordained to the priesthood on 27 September by Bishop Martin Hayes (right) in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Belturbet, Co. Cavan. Bishop



I was ordained to the priesthood in Knock Basilica by Archbishop Michael Neary on 23 August in what was a truly joy filled celebration. Afterwards I got the news that I would be beginning my priestly ministry in Westport, Co. Mayo.

During my final year in Seminary I had been a Deacon in Westport, so seeing so many friendly and familiar faces made settling in here much easier than expected. The warm and genuine welcome I've received from priests and parishioners alike, demonstrates the tremendous goodwill there is amongst the faith community for me as a newly ordained priest.

In my early weeks, I've celebrated Mass and the sacraments, including a First Holy Communion Wass which was particularly special. I'm really looking forward to playing my part in building up God's Kingdom in this picturesque part of Ireland. Fr. Shane Costello CC



## Embracing the challenges presented by COVID-19

t has been heartening to see students gradually returning to the campus over the last few weeks – the first time since March due to COVID-19. The pandemic has led to dramatic shifts in universities globally – with most moving to an online and blended learning model. St. Patrick's College is no different as we try to adapt to the challenges of keeping each other safe and not congregating in large numbers.

However the smaller class sizes we have in St. Patrick's, means we hope to be able to conduct most of our programmes on site with as much face to face teaching as possible.

Nonetheless as students and staff move into this virtual

Moving to online classes can be disorienting, so, if you are struggling, do not hesitate to get in touch with your lecturer or with the student mentor. They want to help you succeed in your studies.

learning environment, there are the twin dangers of isolation and loss of motivation. While students already lead busy digital social lives, our challenge now as educators is to develop a similar level of online engagement with their academic work.

Most of the online communications platforms we are using – Panopto, Moodle, Zoom and Microsoft
Teams – have forums for peer to peer interaction and discussion.
Because we believe that learning also occurs through dialogue between students and staff alike, our preference is for a 'hybrid' or blended approach that incorporates face to face contact in the classroom with online teaching and learning.

For students, the challenge is to stay positive and motivated in these tough times. One way is to develop a good daily academic routine. Decide on concrete study tasks with a specific timeframe (e.g. reading a specific chapter or article, writing an outline for an essay).

Remember too that mind and matter are linked. Take some physical exercise each day – ideally outdoors.
Looking after your body will also improve your mental well-being. Try to eat healthily and maintain a regular sleep schedule.
Finally, stay socially connected – with friends and family.

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Check the Moodle pages of your modules regularly; follow up on your reading and plan your assignments. Contact your peers via discussion and other forums – they are facing the same challenges as you.

The words that keep recurring in this new world we find ourselves in, are 'resilience' and 'flexibility'. COVID-19 is a constantly moving target, so

students and staff will need to adapt to any new restrictions at short notice. We are all in this together and we will get through it - so let's embrace the challenge!

**Rev. Professor Declan Marmion**Dean of the Faculty of Theology

# Sage advice for First Year Students Plan ahead, manage your time and get involved

y first year studying for the BATh at St. Patrick's College was a truly rewarding and thoroughly enjoyable experience. I'm really looking forward to second year – despite the obvious difficulties ahead.

That's not to say that there weren't challenges along the way; submission deadlines for essays and assignments and the end of semester exams - to name but a few. What I found helpful was planning ahead and also managing my time was key.

Here at SPCM you'll experience a flexible and supportive learning environment, a thriving, vibrant and dynamic institution that will seek to work with you, enabling you to achieve your goals.

A major benefit of the Pontifical University is that we're a small academic community which makes it easier to access the various supports available to students.

Studying theology offers a refreshing alternative to the hustle and bustle of university life. You'll be exploring some of the biggest questions of human existence. What is God like? How do we approach the scriptures? How do we respond to the various crises facing the world today? Each student approaches theology differently. Everybody will have their own unique perspective and will have to wrestle with their own questions and doubts.

Eventually when COVID-19 restrictions are eased there'll be plenty of opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities on campus. They range from the sporting and social to the religious and cultural. There's definitely something for everyone, so be sure to get involved, you won't regret it.





Proudly displaying the All Ireland Pollinator Award are Ciaran Kelly and Patrick Brereton.

## Busy bees on St. Patrick's award winning Green Flag campus

The campus of St. Patrick's College & Maynooth University was recently declared the overall winner of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan project. The award was in recognition of both the pollinator friendly planting and excellent gardening and grounds maintenance that's undertaken on the campus. The judges also had particular praise for the promotion and educational initiatives undertaken by the College and MU in relation to the Campus Pollinator Plan, through its websites and social media channels.

The Campus also received a prestigious Green Flag. Such flags are presented to sites that are managed in an environmentally sustainable way. Other judging criteria include horticultural standards, cleanliness and community involvement.

The Green Flag scheme which operates to an international benchmark standard, encourages the provision of good quality public parks and green spaces. Public town parks, country parks, gardens, cemeteries, nature parks, and green spaces from across Ireland and fourteen other countries participated in the awards scheme.



Seaman (Grounds Supervisor)

## Fall appeal in lieu of annual US fundraisers

he cancellation of SPCM's national events in New York and Philadelphia, due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has led to a reappraisal of SPCM's fundraising efforts for 2020–2021. The COVID-19 crisis has adversely affected St. Patrick's finances – with every income stream having been impacted. In addition the installation of new technologies to facilitate a blended learning approach has required new investment.

As in the past, the on-going support of SPCM's US friends is vital to the College. In lieu of the annual fundraising dinners, the College has launched an appeal to its longstanding and generous US benefactors. Those who attended past events and are in a position to contribute, may take comfort from knowing that any gift they make will have an even greater impact than usual, as there are no dinner or hotel expenses involved this year.

The College is very mindful to the challenges that benefactors and their families are themselves facing during this pandemic. Expressing his solidarity with any friends experiencing difficulties, College President Fr. Michael Mullaney said;

"For anyone who is unable to donate currently, please know that what we value most, is your on-going friendship and prayers."

Meanwhile Jim O'Connor, SPCM's Executive Director in the US continues his outreach to approximately 150 new contacts throughout the US, in business, academia and the arts, prominent within the Irish-American community.

## In Memoriam

This summer saw the passing of three great and generous US supporters of St. Patrick's College: Mr Frank Castagna, Mr Richard Chapdelaine and Dr Daniel Mulvihill.

On behalf of the whole SPCM community, we extend our deepest sympathies and express our eternal gratitude to their families and friends.

They will be remembered during our annual Mass for deceased benefactors on 8 November.

**Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dílse**May their faithful souls be at the right hand of God

## **News in Brief**

## All Bach for Culture Night



The fifteenth annual edition of Culture Night took place across the island of Ireland on 18 September with a programme of over 900 offline and online artistic events being presented.

At St. Patrick's College, Dr. John O'Keeffe (Organ) and Sharon Carty (Mezzo) presented an all-Bach programme of sacred classics to an audience of 50 people in the magnificent 450 seat Gunn Chapel.

## Calendar

## November 2020

13th Prizes and Scholarships Awards Ceremony



27th & 28th

**Undergraduate Open Days** for prospective students

## December 2020

16th Christmas Carol Service with soloist Celine Byrne

## March 2021

9th **Postgraduate Open Evening** 

## April/May 2021

28th Apr - 1st May

**Future of Christian Thinking** International Conference

## May 2021

30th Diaconate Sunday

## June 2021

15th Maynooth Union

Due to Government and HSE Guidelines relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exact dates of future events may be changed. Please visit maynoothcollege.ie for the latest updates.

**Enchanting students** and audiences alike

> The internationally renowned mezzo soprano Sharon Carty, has been appointed as a Maynooth Campus Associate Artist.

This new role, which will involve both performing

and teaching, is supported by St. Patrick's College in conjunction with Maynooth University, Music Generation Kildare and Kildare County Council.

Professor Antonio Cascelli, Head of the MU's Music Department is excited: 'With her incredible talent and international experience, Sharon will have the opportunity to share her expertise with students in Maynooth and will enchant audiences with her singing,' he said.



## Thinking deeply about COVID-19

In a series of features published over the summer months, staff from the faculties of Theology and Philosophy at the Pontifical University have been sharing their reflections on the impacts of the Coronavirus from social, human, philosophical and theological perspectives. The articles were circulated to every diocese in Ireland for sharing with their faith communities. These thought provoking reflections allowed Faculty Members to share their considered views on many of the challenges people are facing during the ongoing pandemic.

The articles continue to be available on the College's website:

https://maynoothcollege.ie/newsevents/2020/faculty-members-of-stpatricks-college-reflecting-on-the-impactsof-covid-19-from-its-social-humanphilosophical-and-theological-perspectives





## St. Patrick's College welcomes your support.

For more information: maynoothcollege.ie/giving Caroline Tennyson

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