



Durham
University

Centre for Catholic Studies

Newsletter

Issue 40: Michaelmas Term 2021

Dear Readers,

As we begin a new academic year, we are pleased to share with you the latest news from the Centre for Catholic Studies. We have news of two new projects beginning (p.1-2) and one major project reaching completion (p.3). In addition, we look forward to the second online Lived Catholicism conference and a variety of other events, details of which are shown on the back page. We start with some development news.

CCS Donors Inducted into the Chancellor's Circle

Durham University's Chancellor's Circle is a community of the University's most senior benefactors. In 2021, the following were welcomed into the Circle in recognition of their significant gifts to the CCS:

- Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre
- OFM (Capuchin) GB Charitable Trust
- University of Notre Dame
- Individual donors

Sr Moira O'Sullivan CRSS is pictured here at the 2021 Chancellor's Circle Members' Dinner, receiving the certificate of induction on behalf of the Sepulchrians.



These benefactors join the many other CCS donors who are having a transformative impact on the CCS and who are recognised as such through their membership of the Chancellor's Circle. We thank them and our wider community of partners for their generosity.

The CCS Welcomes the Catherine de Francheville Fellow

The CCS is delighted to welcome Dr Sarah Barthélemy to the CCS staff team as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the History of Catholicism.



As of September 2021, Sarah holds the Catherine de Francheville Fellowship and is researching the history of the Congregation of La Retraite and its role within the history of women's spirituality in France from the middle of the 17th century to c.1820. The CCS is very grateful to the Congregation of La Retraite for funding this three-year full-time post.

Sarah completed her PhD on the Faithful Companions of Jesus through a joint programme between Université de Louvain and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

Upon her appointment, Sarah said, "As I am convinced of the importance of religious women in early modern history, I am delighted to be working in such a pluralist environment with CCS members and partners. I am also very excited to collaborate with them to better understand the models of apostolic life for women and the growth of female spirituality."

centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk
Catholic Theology in the Public Academy

✉ ccs.admin@durham.ac.uk
☎ +44 (0) 191 334 1656

🐦 @CCSDham
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Franciscan Theology News: Congratulations to Billy Crozier

We are thrilled to report that Dr William (Billy) Crozier, who recently completed his PhD with the CCS, has started a three-year Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship here at the CCS.

The Science of the Saints: St Bonaventure's *Quaestiones De Colore*

The project will lead to the production of an edition, translation, and commentary of the *Quaestiones de Colore*. These are found in a little Assisi manuscript which is believed to be a notebook belonging to St Bonaventure from his time as a student in Paris c.1250 and which is written in his own hand.

The scholarly consensus maintains that Bonaventure, unlike Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, produced no truly scientific or philosophical works, but instead confined his attention to 'purely' theological writings. The *Quaestiones de Colore* are the only example of a piece of 'scientific' work attributable to St Bonaventure and, thus, are highly important. If their authenticity is accepted, they would offer the basis for a fundamental shift in how we view Bonaventure's place within the theological-philosophical milieu of the 13th century. They would also speak greatly to the vexed question of his attitude towards the relationship between faith and reason, and the place of philosophy in Christian wisdom—a subject upon which some of the greatest Bonaventurian scholars of the last century (e.g., Étienne Gilson and Joseph Ratzinger) spilled much ink.

The project will also show how Bonaventure, as well as several other of the early Franciscans—Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, Alexander of Hales, Richard Rufus of Cornwall, etc.—all made important contributions, equal to those made by the Dominicans, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas, to the scientific theories of light, colour, matter, vision, and motion.

The animating spirit of the project is not that of the history of science. Rather, its *modus operandi* is decidedly theological: to show how the 'scientific' contributions of the early Franciscans can be understood within the framework of Franciscan creation theology and its underlying assumptions about faith and reason, the Franciscan love of nature, and Bonaventure's personal belief that 'Each creature proclaims the wisdom of the Creator'.

On the start of Billy's fellowship, CCS Dean-Director Paul Murray said, "This project will strengthen the CCS's developing programme in Franciscan Studies and offer the opportunity for Durham to be at the heart of the editing and dissemination of a previously unknown work attributable to St Bonaventure. We're delighted that Billy's expertise has been recognised by this prestigious fellowship scheme and will enjoy working with him for another three years."

Billy's Journey

A native of County Durham, Billy completed his BA in Theology at Durham University in 2009, following this with an MA under the care of the CCS. In 2015 he commenced part-time doctoral study at the CCS, exploring the theology of St Bonaventure, specifically his doctrine of Christ's human knowledge and how it relates to his broader interpretation of the relation between faith and reason.



Since 2019 Billy has led undergraduate modules on St Thomas Aquinas, St Bonaventure, and Medieval Theology and Spirituality, and, in May 2021, he led an advanced course on St Bonaventure's thinking on love and knowledge as part of the CCS's Franciscan Studies Summer School. He was awarded his PhD in June 2021.

Billy was supported in his studies by Catherine McAuley and St Jude scholarships, without which, he says, his postgraduate study simply would not have been possible. Billy's journey speaks to the power of scholarship donations, both for their life-changing effects on individuals, and their long-term legacy of forming the next generation of scholars and teachers.



Project Report:

La Retraite Fellowship in Theology and Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition

Dr Elizabeth Powell

As Elizabeth's project reaches completion, she here reflects on her time in the post



Lateral rays refracted through prisms of stained glass cast across the stone walls of the Cathedral. A city of trees advancing from the River Wear, curving like a protective arm around cobbled streets and university buildings. These were my first impressions of Durham when I was interviewed for the La Retraite Fellowship in Theology and Spirituality in the autumn of 2018. These monuments of wood and stone seem to re-proportion us and to root the comings and goings of academic life in the enduring and tangible. Conversations while ambling among trees, craning necks to glimpse the leafy boughs, and bowing heads together beneath the Cathedral's arches have shaped my three years at the Centre for Catholic Studies as much as the books and lectures it has generously fostered.

My research began with the thesis that the rehabilitation of our physical dwelling and spiritual indwelling, as these are inseparably bound, resides in our tutelage in the art of loving attention. Moving from a full-time teaching post into this full-time research position allowed the tentacles of my inquiry to stretch and wander, leading me to books like *The Tree of Meaning* by Robert Bringham, *Becoming Animal* by David Abram, and the Magic and Ecology podcasts at CRASSH of Cambridge University. Alongside these ventures with contemporary philosophers of place and other eco-writers, I sidled the 14th century anchorite, Julian of Norwich and her *Revelations of Divine Love*. Through meditative slow-reading of each chapter as though 'a small thing like a hazelnut' that contained 'all that is', Julian inducted me further into the art



Photo by Olly Pearson

of attention as a kind of seeing 'guided by love' or 'affectionate affirmation', in the words of Josef Pieper, that is necessary for the true appearing of things.

As these pockets of new growth established themselves along the borders of my research interests, the hard ploughing work of editing my PhD dissertation for publication took place in the full light of sun. The metamorphosis from 'dissertation' to 'book' felt as improbable as caterpillar to butterfly, yet final proofs arrived the following spring with the new name, *David Jones and the Craft of Theology: Becoming Beauty* (Bloomsbury, 2020). The book launched as part of CCS's online series just as the country submerged into the global pandemic and 'lockdown' spread like a weed in our domestic vocabularies. The radical reforming of our daily lives engendered a 'tritych' of meditative

essays on the Holy Mysteries written in response to the current pandemic, eventually finding a home and wider readership in the pages of **Commonweal** magazine. They have also sown the seeds of my new book, tentatively titled, *Place, Liturgy and Kinship: The Ecotheological Vision of David Jones*.

As we enter this new autumn, I am delighted for a reason to return to the trees and Cathedral of Durham as the organiser of CCS's third Catholicism, Literature and the Arts conference for the summer of 2022. There is a humility, realism, and steady kindness characterising the life of learning and prayer at the CCS and it is perhaps in part thanks to these native and ancient companions of wood and stone that such virtues endure and flourish here (along with the hoped-for return of a good many bowls of pasta and carafes of wine at La Spaghetтата!).

Michaelmas Term 2021 Events

Catholic Theology Research Seminar

Tuesday 5 October

Prof. Karen Kilby (Durham University)

Thinking Again About Sin and Suffering

Annual Teilhard Seminar, supported by the British

Teilhard Network

5pm in Pemberton Lecture Room PG20, Palace Green, Durham

Thursday 4 November

Dr Andrew Prevot (Boston College)

Training the Soul: A Black Theological Journey Through

'The Spiritual Exercise'

5pm GMT, online

Thursday 25 November

Revd Dr David Goodill OP (Blackfriars, Oxford)

Nature as Guide, Wittgenstein, and the Renewal of Moral Theology

5pm in Pemberton Lecture Room PG20, Palace Green, Durham

Centre for Catholic Studies Book Launch Series

Tuesday 30 November (6.30pm GMT)

An online celebration of the publication of:

A Brief Systematic Theology of the Symbol—a book

by **Dr Joshua Mobley** based on the doctoral work he

completed at the CCS. Josh will be joined by Hans

Boersma, Karen Kilby, and Simon Oliver to discuss the

work. All welcome!

Registration

To register for an event, please visit

<https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>

(Registration for seminars, lectures, and book launches opens three weeks before each event.)

Ushaw Lecture Series

Tuesday 12 October

Dr Katie Bugyis (University of Notre Dame)

Ministers of the Eucharist: Nuns in England During the Central Middle Ages

6pm BST (UK time), online

Wednesday 8 December

Christmas Lecture

Prof. Giles Gasper (Durham University)

Medieval Christmas: Customs and Consumption

6pm at Ushaw, preceded by 5.30pm drinks

Second Online Lived Catholicism Conference

Paradox and Prophecy:

Why the Study of Lived Catholicism Matters

15-16 November 2021



Lived Catholicism is the study of Catholicism as lived across time and space. This conference will ask: what are the paradoxes of Lived Catholicism and how can it be authentically prophetic?

Details at <http://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>.

This conference is organised in conjunction with Duquesne University and in association with *The Tablet*.



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