



Durham  
University

Centre for Catholic Studies

# Newsletter

Issue 41: Epiphany Term 2022

## The CCS in Service of the Synodal Movement

Anybody following developments in the Catholic Church cannot have failed to notice a new word entering the ecclesial vocabulary: *Synodality*—literally *walking together*. But unlike some other church buzzwords, the theological development of this concept is taking place alongside an invitation for wide participation—the 2021-23 synodal process: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, which Rome correspondent for *The Tablet* (and current CCS doctoral student) Christopher Lamb describes as ‘the most ambitious Catholic renewal project for 60 years...a listening exercise that aims to give every member of the 1.3 billion Church a stake in its future’.

The historical, theological, cultural, and experiential aspects of synodality and the synodal process are clearly of great interest to the CCS, and we are already exploring some of the implications. For example:

- In the field of **Lived Catholicism**, a synodality stream at the 2021 online conference resulted in lively discussions.
- Several synodal assemblies and commentators have recognised clergy sexual abuse as a key dysfunction triggering the church’s synodal turn. Our **Boundary Breaking** project brings important new data and constructive insights into this field.
- The potential for ecumenical learning about synodality, especially in respect of the full involvement of lay women and men, was formally recognised in the 2017 ARCIC agreed statement *Walking Together on the Way* using the approach of **Receptive Ecumenism** developed at the CCS. Not only is there potential to learn from other traditions, East and West, but the experience of listening and learning in local churches, and of creating sites of hospitality for dialogue has applicability to questions of synodal processes and style. A new volume, *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning* (June 2022, OUP) includes numerous references to synodality in ecumenical perspective.
- We are researching sites of potential **Transformative Renewal in the Church** in England and Wales, including the ‘Root and Branch’ movement and its ‘Inclusive Synod’ held in Bristol last year.
- Pope Francis’s synodal approach, and some of the topics which are arising in synodal assemblies worldwide, align closely with our ongoing programme of research and publications, **Catholicism Transfigured**.



- Numerous aspects of our programme in **Catholic Social Thought and Practice** are connected with the practice of synodality, not least as conceived by Pope Francis.
- Supported by the CCS and *The Tablet*, Christopher Lamb is producing a podcast on synodality entitled **The Church’s Radical Reform**. The first two episodes are available at <https://tinyurl.com/ccssoundcloud>.

Synodality is being addressed in some of our **Catholic Theology Research Seminars**, and CCS members have been invited to give talks on the topic for churches and associations, as well as working with diocesan synodal processes and subsequent pastoral plans, including formation programmes for lay and ordained ministry.

A small focus group is meeting this term to consider how we coordinate and present activities pertaining to synodality from various workstreams, and plan specific events/activities for future—especially for the next few years alongside and in the wake of the Synod on Synodality as the Catholic Church discerns and practices ‘what the Lord expects from the Church of the third millennium’ (Pope Francis).

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# Paradox and Prophecy: Why the Study of Lived Catholicism Matters

“Lived Catholicism” is an emerging term being used to describe the variety of ways in which Catholicism is lived around the world and through history, building on the work of scholars across the disciplines and developed by Avril Baigent in her doctoral work at the Centre for Catholic Studies. It has a ground-up focus, seeking to engage with the many ways in which ordinary people craft, improvise, negotiate and subvert their Catholicity.

Here, Avril reflects on the second Lived Catholicism conference, which took place online in November 2021, organised by the CCS in partnership with the Department of Catholic Studies, Duquesne University, and in association with *The Tablet*.

The conference brought together scholars from around the world. Our plenary speakers demonstrated the breadth of interest in the topic. Historian and theologian Massimo Faggioli spoke of paradox both as central to the Church’s way of being, implicit within the notion of the universal Church; and as a key analytical tool, distinct from messiness, highlighting fault lines in thinking and practice. The paradoxical grounded the prophetic.

Sociologist Michele Dillon’s starting point was that all Catholicism is lived. Foregrounding the paradoxical uncovers accommodations between the institution and ordinary Catholics. For example, American Catholics do not see themselves as independent of the Church: they are the Church. It is a pragmatic position which means they do not feel they have to leave if they disagree with the institution. Under this pragmatism, religious and secular identities intersect rather than oppose.

Theologian Clare Watkins explored a key question for scholars in this field:



how does the authority of lived religion relate to the authority of normative religion? Unpacking key texts from the Second Vatican Council, she located paradox at the heart of Catholicism, with the lived, the strange, and the conflicted as loci of our relationship with God.

Finally, anthropologist Valentina Napolitano opened up Catholicism as a contested domain. In conversation with Anna Rowlands, she highlighted notions of power and control. She also spoke of the paradox of studying lived Catholicism while herself living it.

There were riches elsewhere in the conference too. Short paper streams covered topics as diverse as the abuse crisis, the role of women and gender, education and healthcare, cultural engagements, and paradox and belonging. Damien Costello highlighted the work of a nineteenth century Native American theologian, Black Elk, whose work resonates today with *Laudato Si'*. Anna Niedzwiedz unpacked the complex relationship between money and religious practice among Catholics in Ghana. Our Pop-up Podium slot continued to shed light on the sheer diversity of Catholicism.

Finally, there was the opportunity to reflect on the paradoxes and prophetic moments in studying Catholicism. Led by Robert Orsi, the session covered the realities of the field, from access to archives and fieldwork subjects (who are the gatekeepers?) to treading the fine line between challenging the institution and remaining within it.

The closing plenary session reflected the joy of the conference: scholars from across the disciplines, gathered around a common concern to study Catholicism, and enriched by the many stories, methods, and epistemological challenges shared.

I am grateful to the conference team: Marcus Pound, Pat Jones, Gaël Pardoën, Tom Duggan, Martin Campbell, Theresa Phillips, and Jane Lidstone; and to Paul Murray for all his support over the year.

Nine of the sessions are available as videos via [livedcatholicism.org/lived-catholicism-2021](https://livedcatholicism.org/lived-catholicism-2021)

A collection of papers from the first Lived Catholicism Conference will be available this year as a special edition of the journal *Ecclesial Practices*.

## News from the History of Catholicism Research Programme Area

In the past year, the History of Catholicism research strand has welcomed two new members. Dr Sarah Barthélemy joined as the Catherine de Francheville Fellow to investigate the role of the Congregation of La Retraite in the development of female spirituality from c.1650–1820, while earlier in the year Dr Liam Temple started as the Capuchin Fellow, investigating the relationship between the Capuchins and Britain. Underlining the CCS' continuing strength in this area, particularly in the history of women religious, a new three-year post will soon be advertised for a fellow to study the early international foundations of a particular congregation c.1880–1940.

Partly due to this strength, the CCS is home to the newly-launched international research network, ISHWRA (International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association). The network's specific focus is to promote and facilitate enquiry into the history of Catholic female religious through a global perspective. It will host a monthly research seminar and a biennial workshop on a specific theme, with all seminars hosted virtually to allow for global participation. The seminar series will allow for the tracking of major international research themes, including the relationship between female religious and education, faith and spirituality, gender, politics, race, and social care. The network's launch workshop was hosted virtually by the CCS and examined the experience of women religious during the French Revolution, with a collection of essays on the topic already planned. ISHWRA's convening committee includes the CCS's Cormac Begadon and Sarah Barthélemy, and James Kelly is on its Advisory Committee. The seminar schedule for the Epiphany term is shown to the right.

On the publication side, James Kelly's *English Convents in Catholic Europe, c.1600–1800* has been shortlisted for the 2021 Ecclesiastical History Society Book Prize. In addition, *British and Irish Religious Orders in Europe, 1560-1800: Conventuals, Mendicants and Monastics in Motion*, edited by Cormac Begadon and James Kelly, has just been published. It has its roots in the third biennial Early Modern British and Irish Catholicism conference and the AHRC-funded Monks in Motion project. The book is the first in a new series, 'Catholicisms, c.1450–c.1800', published by Durham University IMEMS Press, a new imprint of Boydell & Brewer. The CCS's James Kelly is one of the series editors, along with two colleagues from the University of Notre Dame. The interdisciplinary series focuses on Catholicism as it grew to become a global movement. It is not limited to one particular country or geographical area, but includes work on any location where there was activity relating to Catholicism, from its old heartlands in Europe to 'new' grounds of activity in both north and south America, Asia, and Africa.



Image from the collection of the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre. Reproduced by permission of Durham University Library & Collections.

## International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association

### Seminar Schedule for Epiphany Term 2022

Wednesday 12 January  
**Dr Sarah Barthélemy** (Durham University)  
**Women and the Jesuit Norms in Europe: From the *Matres Societatis Iesu* to the *Jésuitesses*, 17th–19th centuries**  
Online event: 2pm–3pm GMT

Tuesday 8 February  
**Dr Anca Sincan** (Gheorghe Sincai Institute, Romanian Academy)  
**An Army of Nuns: The network of Greek Catholic women who built the underground Church in 1950s Romania**  
Online event: 2pm–3pm GMT

Wednesday 9 March  
**Dr Tonya Moutray** (Russell Sage College, USA)  
**Navigating Religious Difference: Catholic nuns in England 1794–1829**  
Hybrid event: 2pm–3pm GMT online and in Abbey House

Wednesday 6 April  
**Dr Michel Chambon** (National University of Singapore)  
**The Ministry of Chinese Catholic Nuns, Past and Present**  
Online event: 2pm–3pm BST

Registration opens 3 weeks before each seminar at <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>

## Epiphany Term 2022 Events

### Catholic Theology Research Seminar

Thursday 13 January  
**Dr John O'Brien** (Durham University)  
**'Normative' and 'Dissident' Ecclesial Narratives in Dialogue.** A Lived Catholicism seminar.  
5.30pm—for Durham University members only

Thursday 10 February  
**Dr Gabrielle Thomas** (Emory University)  
**Rethinking Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Theology**  
5pm GMT, online (open to all; registration opens on 20 January at <http://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>)

Thursday 17 March  
**Prof. Claudia Hopkins** (Durham University)  
**The Politics of Pilgrimage in Mid-nineteenth Century Spanish Art**  
5pm in Seminar Room B, Abbey House, Palace Green  
Registration opens on 3 March

### Romero Lecture

24 March 2022  
**Public lecture: Edgardo Colón-Emeric** (Duke Divinity School) on the relevance of Romero for the times we are in. Details TBC. Registration opens on 3 March at <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>

### International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association

Please see the previous page.

### Ushaw Lecture Series

Wednesday 23 February  
**Dr Tonya Moutray** (Russell Sage College, USA, and Durham Residential Research Library Visiting Fellow)  
**'Fugitive Virgins': Refugee Women Religious in British Culture, 1792–1815**  
5.30pm drinks for 6pm lecture, at Ushaw

Tuesday 8 March  
**Archbishop John Wilson** (Archdiocese of Southwark)  
**Is the Gospel Really Good News? Catholic Evangelisation and Catechesis in the 21st Century**  
Bishop Dunn Memorial Lecture 2021-22  
5.30pm drinks for 6pm lecture, at Ushaw

Registration opens 3 weeks before each lecture at <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>.

### Centre for Catholic Studies Book Launch Series

Tuesday 25 January  
**Anna Rowlands: Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times**  
5.30pm GMT, online

Wednesday 2 February  
**Joshua Mobley: A Brief Systematic Theology of the Symbol**  
6pm GMT, online

Registration opens 3 weeks before each launch event at <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>

## Conferences in 2022

### Early Career Conference in Catholic Theology and Catholic Studies

13 June 2022 in person in Durham

The CFP for this year's conference will be circulated shortly.

### Third Biennial Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts Conference

12-14 July 2022, to be held in person in London, hosted by our partners at the University of Notre Dame London Global Gateway.

The theme of 'The Poetics of Liturgy and Place' will be engaged by speakers, artists, and poets, and by musical performance, inviting reflection on the dynamic relationship of place, liturgy, and the arts.



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### Keep up-to-date

To receive details of our events, please register for the CCS mailing list at [tinyurl.com/ccsmailinglist](https://tinyurl.com/ccsmailinglist)