

The Clare and Hawley Chair in the History of Catholicism

The CCS is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr James Kelly as the inaugural holder of the Clare and Hawley Chair in the History of Catholicism.

The new chair is the first in the UK to be dedicated specifically to Catholic history and has been made possible through generous benefaction by the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre and the Brentwood Ursulines, for which we are extremely grateful.

The new chair is named after Mother Mary Clare, foundress of the Ursuline Convent at Brentwood, and Susan Hawley, foundress of the English Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre.

James has been working with the CCS since September 2012 and is the author of *English Convents in Catholic Europe, c. 1600–1800*, joint general editor of the five-volume series *The Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism* and has recently published *The Catholic Reformation: A Very Short Introduction*.



James said, "I am particularly thankful to the support of the Brentwood Ursulines and the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre for making this position possible. Their foresight will ensure that the CCS and the University's department of Theology and Religion will continue as a centre of research excellence into the history of Catholicism into the future."

James will take up his post on 1 November 2025.

Installation of Anna Rowlands as the first female Catholic Canon of Durham Cathedral

On Sunday 5 October, Professor Anna Rowlands was installed as the first female Catholic Ecumenical Canon at a service in Durham Cathedral.

The invitation from Bishop Sarah of Jarrow, acting as Bishop of Durham, came in recognition of all Anna has given to the life of the Catholic Church, and to the wider life of God's church in this region, and beyond as the St Hilda Professor in Catholic Social Thought and Practice within Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion. Particular mention was made of the contribution she has made through her work in Catholic Social Thought and Practice.

Anna says, 'it is a huge honour and a real pleasure to become a part of the college of canons at Durham Cathedral. As a regular attendee of Evensong and in appreciation of the ecumenical friendships I have enjoyed with many connected to the cathedral and diocese it is a particular joy to deepen my bonds with the Cathedral and its community. Pope Francis and now Pope Leo have insisted that our own synodal renewal in the Catholic tradition must be ecumenical - no synodality without ecumenism - and so I hope that, in a small and personal way, I can be a point of connection that gives expression to this hope and desire for deeper relationship between our Catholic and Anglican traditions.'

Welcome to our new FCJ research associate



The CCS is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Alexandra Verini as the FCJ Postdoctoral Research Associate in the History of Catholicism. This post is funded by a donation from the Faithful Companions of Jesus and will investigate the history of the FCJs in the UK from 1830 to the present day. Alexandra completed her PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles, where her research focused on utopian thought in medieval and early modern English women's convent writings. This research laid the foundation for her monograph, *English Women's Spiritual Utopias, 1400–1700*. She has recently served as Associate Professor at Ashoka University (Delhi, India), where her research has explored comparative mysticism and nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century women religious and colonialism, specifically at the Loreto Institute.

Alexandra said: "I am thrilled to be joining the Centre for Catholic Studies as FCJ Postdoctoral Research Associate in the History of Catholicism. This exciting project has the potential to open new perspectives on the study of women religious in the UK and on histories of social activism and gender. It will be a great honour to work under the direction of Professor James Kelly in learning more about the history of the Faithful Companions of Jesus and sharing findings with audiences in and outside of academia."

Upcoming conference on Lived Catholicism

On 2-3 December, the CCS, in partnership with the Nanovic Institute of Notre Dame, will be hosting the third global Lived Catholicism conference, entitled The Church's Ordinary Way: synodality, possibilities and tensions.

The first two Lived Catholicism conferences opened up some of the pressing questions for the Catholic Church today: how to manage the tension between innovation and tradition; how to take seriously prophetic and paradoxical voices from the edges of our community; and how to make visible the complexities of power and powerlessness at all levels. Many of these questions are now being raised by the synod process.

We will have plenary papers from the Jesuit Kenyan theologian, Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, the American sociologist of religion Tricia Bruce, the Filipina Catholic theologian Estela Padilla. Anna Rowlands will also facilitate a conversation with bishops from different parts of the world exploring the experience and challenge of synodal leadership. Based on the earlier conferences, we anticipate a rich range of papers from a variety of contexts and academic disciplines, including sociology, theology, anthropology, and history.



Plenary speakers at the conference include Tricia Bruce, Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, and Estela Padilla.

One reason for hosting the conference is that use of the lens of "lived Catholicism" can help deepen reflection on the gifts and challenges of the synodal process. But there is a second reason. We are keen to support the development of "Lived Catholicism" itself, an emergent field of study which offers the opportunity to explore the rich and sometimes subversive nature of Catholicism as lived across many different contexts. Dr Avril Baigent, who is leading in organising the conference, first coined the term "lived Catholicism" in her Durham doctoral work, and our sense that something important is captured by this phrase has been affirmed by the energy around our two previous conferences and the associated special edition of a journal (*Ecclesial Practices Special Issue: Lived Catholicism. Vol. 9.1*). We'd love to be able, with Avril's leadership, to continue to support the development of this fascinating field.

This third online Lived Catholicism conference is made possible by the support of a Durham-Notre Dame seedcorn grant, led by Clemens Sedmak of ND and Karen Kilby from the CCS. We've been able to prepare the way for this coming conference with a smaller, in person colloquium in April, focused on the different lived experiences of synodality in Eastern and Western Europe. This brought together empirical research from Germany, Poland and Slovakia, scholars from Hungary, Austria, the UK and the US, and a keynote speaker from Prague, the philosopher/theologian/sociologist Fr Tomáš Halík.

CCS welcomes declaration of Saint John Henry Newman as a "doctor of the church" amid NINS collaboration

This summer brought the announcement that Saint John Henry Newman is to be declared a "doctor of the Church". This is exciting news: he is the first figure from England since Bede to be recognised in this way, and will take his place in the memory of the church alongside figures like Augustine, Aquinas, Catherine of Sienna and Teresa of Avila.

This has come at a particularly significant time for us in the Centre for Catholic Studies, because of a newly developing transatlantic collaboration with NINS, the National Institute for Newman Studies, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We are delighted that Newman's intellectual contribution to Catholic tradition is being so definitively recognised, and also very pleased about our own growing collaboration with NINS. Indeed we'd like to congratulate NINS on the substantial role they played in supporting the Bishops of England and Wales in petitioning for Newman's cause to be declared a doctor of the Church.

Newman had already, for many years, woven his way in and out of the life of the CCS. A number of CCS staff have a long-standing fascination with his thought, drawing on it in our research, teaching and outreach. We have also since our beginnings worked in various ways in partnership with

the Newman Association, who have welcomed many of us to speak in the Newman circles across the country and partnered with us in developing the 'Newman Association Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Ecumenical Theology' in 2013-14, in offering scholarships, and in running Study Days and Early Career Conferences.

All this made us enthusiastic about the possibilities of collaborating with National Institute for Newman Studies in the US. NINS host Newman archives, an impressive worldwide network of Newman scholars, and the Newman Studies Journal, among other things. We are delighted now to have up and running the National Institute for Newman Studies Doctoral Fellowship, which supports two research students, currently Nathan Smith and Lawrence Gregory, to pursue their doctorates in Durham while also gaining experience being involved within NINS. The early fruits of this partnership went on display at the NINS Fall Symposium in October 2025, entitled "New paths and dwelling places": The Next Generation of Newman Scholarship, where Nathan and Lawrence presented papers, and Durham colleagues Paul Murray and Mike Snape responded. We hope that this very promising collaboration will grow and deepen in the coming years.

Pop-up exhibition at PGL showcases key pieces from the Little Company of Mary archives

by **Dr Eilish Gregory**

In June 2025, I was delighted to have the opportunity to launch Palace Green Library's first pop-up exhibition in Special Collections.

The pop-up exhibitions are designed to showcase the diverse archival collections held in Special Collections, and to encourage members of the public and students to visit Palace Green Library.

My pop-up exhibition focused on the Little Company of Mary (LCM) Archives, which had recently moved from their motherhouse in London to Palace Green Library in October 2024. The pop-up exhibition centred on six different themes drawn from the LCM's archives which form part of my forthcoming monograph on the LCM.

This included a fundraising poster for their hospital in Dollis Hill, London, a telegram announcing the appointment of a new Mother Superior for the LCM's



L-r: Sr Monica Whelan, Dr Eilish Gregory, Sr Patricia Mary Bell, Sr Ellen Maseve

mission in Argentina, floor plans of their hospitals in Chicago and Fiesole, Italy which the sisters designed themselves, a newspaper article publicising the opening of their new hospital in Wagga Wagga, Australia, and their makeshift chapel in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

It was a pleasure to have the LCM's Congregational Leadership – Sisters Patricia Mary Bell, Ellen Maseve, Esther Shin and Monica Whelan – at the launch and to be part of a special backstage tour of the archives with them.

New volume on Receptive Ecumenism launched at Stockholm Ecumenical Week

In June 2023 the CCS held a successful symposium on Synodality and Receptive Ecumenism, Learning on the Way, which brought together 130 delegates from seven Christian traditions, including Sr Nathalie Becquart XMCJ, and for which we have continued to receive very positive feedback from participants – as well as asking 'what next'?

Building on the symposium conversations, Paul Murray and Greg Ryan, now joined by John Stayne, have begun a follow-on project making a synthesis of the data, with both issues arising and some possibilities for receptive learnings across traditions. Two sets of constructive essays by Catholic theologians and theologians from each of the other participant traditions have been commissioned, and synodal-style seminar discussions of drafts of these essays took place during a 36-hour face-to-face event in Durham in June 2025.

The initial output from this phase will be a volume on Receptive Ecumenism in a Synodal Church, bringing together insights from 2023 and 2025 as an example of the local church sharing an ecumenical and synodal gift which might be received more widely. The team are hoping that following publication of the proposed project volume there will be a significant ecumenical synodal event in Rome in 2027 to celebrate and disseminate the work.



In addition to the synergy with synodality, another area which has been fruitfully explored in recent years is the creative reception of Receptive Ecumenism in Scandinavia, resulting in the Fifth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism being held in Sigtuna, Sweden in 2022. A volume arising from this conference, edited by Greg Ryan together with colleagues from Sweden, and including essays by several CCS members and friends, was launched at Stockholm Ecumenical Week this August.

Nausikaa Haupt, Olle Kristenson, Michael Nausner, and Gregory A. Ryan, *Spirit Flowing Like Water: New Conversations on Receptive Ecumenism*, Church of Sweden Research Series no. 24 (Wipf & Stock, 2025). Available to buy from Amazon and wipfandstock.com/9798385228119/spirit-flowing-like-water/

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Events: Michaelmas Term 2025

Catholic Theology Research Seminars*

Thur 9 Oct 4pm BST (GMT+1)	Sara Parvis (University of Edinburgh) <i>Women and the Reception of Nicaea</i>	Sem Rm B and Online
Thur 6 Nov 4pm BST (GMT+1)	Michael Hahn (Sarum College) <i>Language of the Abyss in the Mystical Theology of Bonaventure</i>	Sem Rm B and Online
Thur 4 Dec 4pm GMT	Simon Hewitt (University of Leeds) <i>The Paradox of Ineffability</i>	Sem Rm B and Online

Conferences

Tue 2 - Wed 3 Dec 9.30am GMT	Lived Catholicism Third Online Conference <i>The Church's ordinary way - Synodality: possibilities and tensions</i>	Online
Tue 14 - Thur 16 Apr 9.30am BST (GMT+1)	Third International Franciscan Conference <i>Life and Love Transfigured: Exploring New Horizons in the Franciscan Tradition</i>	Durham
Mon 29 Jun - Wed 1 Jul 9.30am BST (GMT+1)	EMBIC V <i>The fifth Early Modern British and Irish Catholicism conference, jointly organized by Durham University and the University of Notre Dame.</i>	University of Notre Dame (USA) in England, London

Holy Name / St Cuthbert's Lecture

Thu 30 Oct, 7pm GMT
St Cuthbert's, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HL

Tue 4 Nov, 7pm GMT
Holy Name, 7 N Jesmond Ave, Jesmond, Newcastle, NE2 3JX

Prof. Karen Kilby

Tradition vs. Change? The Creed of Nicaea and the Development of Doctrine

Bishop Dunn Memorial Lecture

22 Jun 2025
7pm BST (GMT+1)

Canon Dr Paula Gooder, Canon Chancellor for St Paul's Cathedral
Title TBC

Venue TBC

ISHWRA seminars will be confirmed shortly.

* Registration for CTRS Seminars, Book Launches, and ISHWRA seminars opens three weeks in advance at

<https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>

To receive details of our events and other news to your inbox, please register for the CCS mailing list at

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-email-list>

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Any questions? Please contact Theresa Phillips, the CCS Manager: theresa.phillips@durham.ac.uk.

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