



Durham
University

Centre for Catholic Studies

Inspiring the extraordinary

Prospectus 2024-2025



Catholic
Theology
in the
Public
Academy

**CENTRE *f*OR
CATHOLIC
STUDIES**



Introduction

When established in October 2007, the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) was the UK's first permanent centre devoted to pioneering research and teaching in Catholic theology and Catholic studies in the public academy.

Our academic home and administrative base is one of the UK's premier research Department of Theology and Religion (as assessed by the research assessment exercises—2008, 2014 and 2021), with academic staff members from several departments in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

We work in close partnership with the Catholic Church to produce future leaders, foster talent, and foment Catholic scholarship locally and globally.



Message From Our Patron



HE Cardinal Walter Kasper

Former President of the
Dicastery for Promoting
Christian Unity

At the dual launch of the Centre and the Bede Chair of Catholic Theology in 2008, I described the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) as a unique and much-needed space for research and teaching in Catholic theology and Catholic studies in the mainstream of the UK's public academy. So it has proved to be over the past decade.

The CCS has grown to form a vibrant and inclusive community of scholars of Catholicism and committed practitioners of Catholic theology. Housed within Durham University's internationally regarded Department of Theology and Religion, the CCS provides a distinctive forum in which to pursue the difficult questions of our time with both creativity and fidelity and to form outstanding theologians and scholars who will go on to influence both the church and the wider world.

I wholeheartedly commend Durham University, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, and all the religious orders, partner organisations, staff, students, friends and individual donors for your crucial support for the CCS. I pray that through your commitment, generosity, and vision, the potential of the CCS will be fulfilled, giving it the long-term stability it requires in service of Catholic mission in the UK.

With my every blessing,
HE Cardinal Walter Kasper

Message From Our Director



Prof Karen Kilby

Bede Professor of
Catholic Theology
Director of the CCS

On behalf of the staff, students, and many friends and partners who constitute the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS), I welcome you into association with this unique body, a place of proven excellence.

You join us at an exciting point on our journey, with our work currently ranging across six broad areas in varying stages of development:

- Constructive Catholic Theology
- Catholic Social Thought and Practice (CSTP)
- The History of Catholicism
- Franciscan Studies
- Lived Catholicism
- Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts

I hope you enjoy learning more about us, and we very much look forward to working together to achieve together our full potential.



The Department of Theology and Religion is situated on the World Heritage Site of Palace Green, immediately adjacent to Durham Cathedral.

CCS Executive



Prof
Karen Kilby
*CCS Director and
Bede Professor of
Catholic Theology*



Tim Guinan
Senior Development
Manager



Theresa Phillips
CCS Manager



**Catherine
Tuckwell**
CCS Administrator
and Northern Diaconal
Formation Partnership
Administrator

CCS Staff Members



Prof Anna Rowlands
St Hilda Professor of
Catholic Social Thought
and Practice



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D. Murray**
Professor of
Systematic Theology



Dr Marcus Pound
Associate Professor
of Catholic Studies



Dr Gregory Ryan
Assistant Professor and
Academic Co-ordinator
of the Northern
Diaconal Formation
Partnership



**Prof Clare
Watkins**
Professor (Research)
on the Mobilisation
for a Revitalised and
Healthier Church
Project



**Dr Nomi
Pritz-Bennett**
Career Development
Fellow in Catholic
Theology



**Canon Prof
Simon Oliver**
Van Mildert Canon
Professor of Divinity
and Head of the
Department of
Theology and Religion



**Prof Christopher
Insole**
Professor of
Theological Ethics



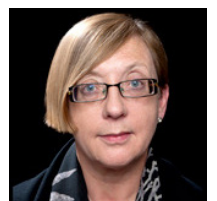
Prof Lewis Ayres
Professor of Historical
and Catholic Theology



Dr Jonathan Bush
University Archivist



Dr Krastu Banev
Associate Professor of
Theology



Dr Mary Brooks
Associate Professor
in the Department
of Archaeology



Dr James Kelly
Sweeting Associate Professor
(Research) in the History
of Catholicism and Director
of the Durham Residential
Research Library



**Dr Sarah
Barthélemy**
Catherine de Francheville
Fellow in the History of
Catholicism



Dr Liam Temple
Capuchin Fellow in the
History of Catholicism



Dr Eilish Gregory
Little Company of Mary
Fellow in the History of
Catholicism



Avril Baigent
Research Assistant on
the Lived Catholicism
and Synodality Project



**Prof Rik Van
Nieuwenhove**
Professor of Medieval
Thought



Dr William Crozier
Leverhulme Early Career
Fellow and Duns Scotus
Chair in Franciscan
Studies



**Prof Mathew
Guest**
Professor in the
Sociology of Religion



**Dr Michael
Gilmore**
Honorary Fellow at St
John's College, former
Academic Registrar at
Durham University



**Prof Gerard
Loughlin**
Professor of
Christian
Theology



Prof Alec Ryrie
Professor of the History
of Christianity



Prof Giles Gasper
Professor of High Medieval
History and Faculty
Deputy Executive Dean
(Research)



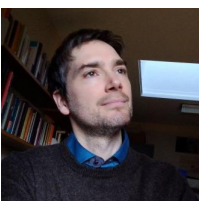
**Prof Stephen
Taylor**
Professor of Early
Modern British History



**Prof Stefano
Cracolici**
Professor of Italian
Art and Literature
in the School of
Modern Languages
and Cultures



**Prof Bennett
Zon**
Professor in the
Department of Music



**Prof Jonathan
Miles-Watson**
Professor of the
Anthropology of
Religion



Prof Peter Ward
Professorial Fellow
in Ecclesiology and
Ethnography



**Prof Michael
Snape**
Michael Ramsey Canon
Professor of Anglican
Studies

Honorary Faculty



Prof Eamon Duffy
(University of Cambridge)
Honorary Professor of the
History of Catholicism



**Prof Myriam
Wijlens**
(University of Erfurt)
Honorary Professor of
Canon Law



**Prof John
McCafferty**
(University College
Dublin) Honorary
Professor of the
History of Catholicism



**Prof Maurice
Whitehead**
(Venerable English
College, Rome)
Honorary Professor
of Catholic History



**Prof John
McGreevy**
(University of Notre
Dame) Honorary
Professor of the
History of Catholicism



**Prof Michael
Questier**
Honorary Professor
of the History of
Catholicism



Dr Alana Harris
(King's College
London) Honorary
Fellow in the Study of
Lived Catholicism



**Rev Prof Stan
Chu Ilo**
(DePaul University,
Chicago) Honorary
Professor



**Rev Dr Hans
Zollner, SJ**
(Pontifical Gregorian
University) Honorary
Professor



Dr Maria Exall
Honorary Fellow
in Catholic Social
Thought and Practice



**Br Dr Brendan
Geary, FMS**
(Provincial of the
Marist Brothers,
West-Central Europe)
Honorary Fellow



**Dr Cormac
Begadon**
Honorary Fellow in the
History of Catholicism



**Dr Catherine
Sexton**
Honorary Fellow



**Sr Dr Barbara
Stafford, RLR**
(La Retraite) Honorary
Fellow



**Dr Owen
Earnshaw**
Honorary Fellow in
the Department of
Philosophy and the
CCS



**Rev Dr John
O'Brien, CSSp**
Associate Professor
(Research) in
Transforming Church



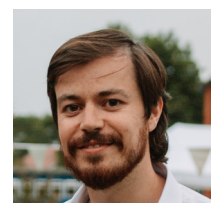
Dr Brian Casey
FMDM Fellow in
the History of
Catholicism



Dr Pat Jones
Post-Doctoral
Research Associate
in Catholic Studies
(Boundary Breaking
Project)



Dr Victoria Biggs
La Retraite Fellow
in Lived Theology,
Trauma, and
Reconciliation



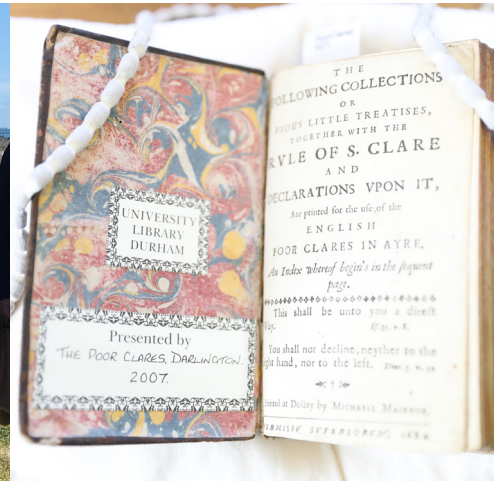
Dr John Stayne
Honorary Fellow in
the Department of
Theology and Religion



The Sisters of La Retraite have a history of over 300 years. They were founded in 17th century Brittany to give retreats to women. The name "La Retraite" signifies the importance to us of the need for every person to stand back from everyday life in order "to seek inner stillness and to listen; to discover the meaning of what one is living; to recognise the forces of life and death in and around oneself; to make choices in freedom" Rule of Life 1:6

We see the CCS as a "sacred space", a place for study and reflection that enables students and members of the wider community to explore, understand, and deepen their faith life and relationship with Christ. For this reason the Sisters of La Retraite are delighted to be partners in this enterprise in Catholic theology.

Sr Dr Barbara Stafford, RLR
Former Area Leader for the Sisters of La Retraite in Ireland/UK



CENTRE *f*OR CATHOLIC STUDIES



Aims of the Centre for Catholic Studies

Catholic Theology in the Public Academy

The Centre for Catholic Studies is a vibrant and inclusive community of practitioners of Catholic theology and researchers into Catholicism which aims:

- to pursue critical and creative studies of Catholic thought, history, culture, and practice in all its breadth and depth;
- to form and nurture scholars and theologians who will contribute to shaping the future drawing from the richness of Catholic tradition and ecumenical learning;
- to engage with and contribute to the transformation of church and society, locally, nationally, and internationally.

We do this by:

- teaching, researching, supervising doctoral students, and engaging in outreach;
- pursuing collaborative research projects within and across a range of disciplines, supported by public research funds and philanthropic bodies;
- developing mutually beneficial partnerships globally with relevant academic, ecclesial, and public bodies.

In all our activity we are committed to holding ourselves accountable to the Department of Theology and Religion, the wider University, and our stakeholders, and continuing to be inspired by the gifts and charisms of the religious congregations who have been so important to our development.



I began a course of postgraduate study in order to develop into an academic theologian, someone for whom the work of Catholic systematic theology is part of a lay vocation. The CCS proved to be an exemplary facilitator of my development in this regard, investing in me a kind of mutual apostolate between the academy and the church, and a generous bursary that gave me as much in confidence and responsibility as it did in material support.

Dr Edward Epsen
*Former PhD student, now
Researcher at the University
of Aberdeen*

Having studied Christianity from an Islamic perspective, I wanted a greater sense of it from a practitioner perspective. At Durham I was marvellously introduced to contemporary Catholicism with an eye on the past. With Dr Pound's help, I achieved my goal and quenched my thirst for continued understanding in the dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

Mohammed Gamal
Former MA Student

Research: Constructive Catholic Theology

Conversations, Culture and Communion: Networking for Church Vitality and Health.

Following on from the Boundary Breaking project's research into clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, a new three-year project was launched in October 2024: "Conversations, Culture and Communion" responds to the issues and needs identified in the Boundary Breaking report, *The Cross of the Moment*. Informed by theology, social sciences, psychology, and - above all - by the wisdom of those with lived experience, the project facilitates conversations, networks, and participative projects with the aim not only of disseminating the learning from *The Cross of the Moment*, but also of supporting mutual learning and projects for ecclesial revitalisation.

More information about the project will feature in the CCS newsletter and on the website as it develops.

Visit <https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-conversations-project> for further details.

You can download *The Cross of the Moment* and its quantitative report *Attitudes of Catholics in England and Wales to Child Sex Abuse in the Catholic Church* at:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-boundary-breaking>



The decision of the CCS to understand theology as a dynamic, ever-changing discipline, which both shapes, and in turn is shaped by, the life of the church, has produced a unique scholarly environment; one in which the pursuit of theological learning, both that of its staff and students, is placed within the broader narrative of the Christian community and its ever changing witness to the Gospel.


Dr Billy Crozier
Former PhD student, now Leverhulme Early Career Fellow and Duns Scotus Chair in Franciscan Studies at the CCS (from January 2025)


Durham University
Centre for Catholic Studies


The Cross of the Moment
A Report from the Boundary Breaking Project



Pat Jones, Marcus Pound, Catherine Sexton


Durham University
Centre for Catholic Studies

Attitudes of Catholics in England and Wales to Child Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church
A Quantitative Report from the Boundary Breaking Project



Marcus Pound and Gregory A. Ryan
April 2024

Bonaventure's *Quaestiones de colore*

In 2021 Dr Billy Crozier commenced a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, editing a previously unknown work by St Bonaventure which is written in his own hand, namely the *Quaestiones de colore*. As this is the sole surviving example of a separate scientific-philosophical work by St Bonaventure, the project will show the importance of the 'scientific' contributions made by the early Franciscans and how they are fundamentally grounded in Franciscan creation theology and the love of nature.

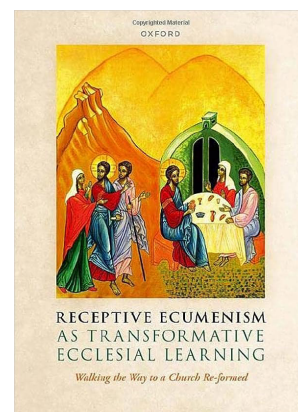
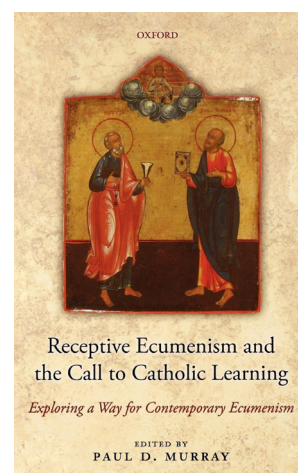
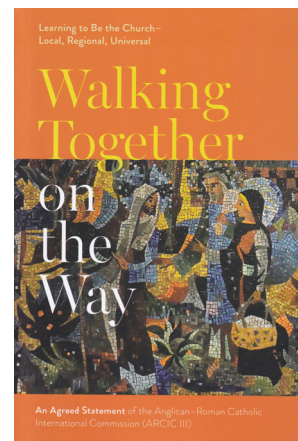
Receptive Ecumenism (RE) Projects

Receptive Ecumenism emerged alongside the Centre for Catholic Studies itself under Prof Paul D. Murray at the start of the 21st century, and continues to be a research field which is being explored and applied in Durham and beyond. The core principle behind Receptive Ecumenism (RE) is that today the primary ecumenical responsibility is not to ask ‘What do the other traditions first need to learn from us?’ but to ask ‘What do we need to learn from them?’ The assumption is that, if we all seriously live this question, then we will move in ways that will deepen both our respective identities and the communion between us.

The first International RE Conference took place at Ushaw College in 2006 under the title, Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning. HE Cardinal Walter Kasper was the guest of honour. The CCS organised a further conference - Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Learning to be Church Together - in 2009. This was concurrent with a multi-year project on Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church which explored the relevance of RE to life on the ground in the local churches of the Northeast of England, testing and extending the thought and practice of RE in practical ways. Subsequent conferences have taken place in America (Receptive Ecumenism in International Perspective: Contextual Ecclesial Learning, Fairfield CT, 2014, co-convened by the CCS), Australia (Leaning into the Spirit: Discernment, Decision-Making and Reception, Canberra 2017), and Sweden (Transforming Ecumenism: Listen to What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches, Sigtuna 2022).

In 2017, the CCS was delighted to partner with the National Board of Catholic Women and the Caulfield Foundation to investigate Ecclesial Learning About Women and the English Churches Through Receptive Ecumenism. Rev Dr Gabrielle Thomas, lead researcher, published her report in 2019. From 2018 to 2022, Dr Gregory A. Ryan consolidated and developed the core literature on RE through a number of book publications, culminating in the major co-edited volume, *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning: Walking the Way to a Church Re-formed* (2022). He is now co-editing a further volume with the Church of Sweden based on the 2022 conference.

RE has been widely recognised as impacting churches the 21st Century. It has explicitly shaped the first ‘Agreed Statement’ emerging from the formal Anglican-Catholic dialogue (ARCIC III) as well as being incorporated into the ecumenical principles of local churches. Current projects include exploration of Synodality and RE (see p11) and Paul Murray’s forthcoming monograph, *Healing the Wounds of the Church*, which gives a unique insight into the stories and theology of Receptive Ecumenism as well as connecting with a larger project of systematic ecclesiology.



‘Learning on the Way’ Symposium

In June 2023, the CCS held a two-day symposium, ‘Learning Together on the Way’, which explored the potential synergy between Synodality and Receptive Ecumenism.

The purpose was to put the CCS’s internationally-regarded work on Receptive Ecumenism in service of the synodal pathway on which the Catholic Church has embarked and to invite assistance with this task from theologians and leaders of six other major Christian traditions with significant historical presence in England and Wales.

As explored in a series of seven pre-circulated tradition-specific briefing papers, the key question throughout was ‘What can the Catholic Church learn from the understanding and experience of these Western Christian traditions as it seeks to become a more synodal church?’

140 participants from across the participant traditions and the English and Welsh Catholic Church shared in the small-group discussion process that lay at the heart of the symposium and contributed to the plenary reflections.

As launch for the proceedings, the 2023 Bishop Dunn Memorial Lecture was presented by Sr Nathalie Becquart XMCJ, Undersecretary of the Office of the Synod of Bishops, in which she explored the essential interrelationship between Ecumenism and Synodality.

Convened and led by Paul Murray and Gregory Ryan, in collaboration with other CCS colleagues, the event was supported by: Porticus International, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW), and the Newman Association. In the light of the synod gatherings in 2023 and 2024, and following a well-received study day given for Churches Together in England and the Society for Ecumenical Studies, this work is now being revisited with a view to additional theological reflection and dissemination as to how Receptive Ecumenism might help churches become more synodal in their ways of living and working.

The briefing papers can be viewed under Project 7 at: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-receptive-ecumenism>



If synodal renewal is indeed for all the churches and if receptive ecumenical engagement and learning is a vital aid in this process, then we need to develop ways in which the practice of this symposium can become routine habit in the life and work of each of our churches. That would be a real lasting legacy for this event; one well worth striving for.

Prof Paul D Murray and
Dr Gregory A Ryan

The Bede Professor of Catholic Theology

Through a creative partnership between the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the Oaklea Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of La Retraite, and a private trust, the Bede Chair is the first endowed Chair of Catholic Theology within a secular UK university and gives some long-term stability to the CCS. The holder of the Bede Chair, Prof Karen Kilby, a leading Catholic theologian of international repute, is also involved in a wide range of outreach activities.

Bede Outreach

The Bede Professor can be invited to speak or to facilitate conversations in a range of contexts in the local diocese and beyond, that can include:

- Speaking in parishes;
- Speaking at clergy ongoing formation days;
- Contributing to the annual Diocesan Festival;
- Staffing training sessions for teachers, school leaders, catechists, and leaders of Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies modules;
- Meeting for informal theological conversation with local groups, as requested.
- Facilitating theological conversations in a range of settings.



A Word from Karen Kilby, the Bede Professor

It is a privilege to hold the Bede Chair in Catholic Theology. The CCS is an extraordinarily dynamic place, and the students are intelligent, committed, and a pleasure to work with.

What I value about the Bede Chair above all is the way it combines such a top flight academic context with a deep and real involvement in the local church. In the past few years I have found myself running a theology book club, travelling to Kenya for CAFOD, speaking to groups of Anglican or Catholic clergy, participating in the leadership of the Hexham and Newcastle Synodal process, speaking in parishes around the Diocese, facilitating a lay listening exercise, and giving theological input on a retreat.

It's all wonderfully varied and enriching, and I have particularly enjoyed getting to know and relate more deeply to the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

The Sisters of Mercy have been involved in Education in the North East of England since 1843. The first school founded in Sunderland was St Bede's, now renamed St Anthony's, a Girls' Catholic Academy of which the Sisters were Trustees, and is now passed to the Diocese and is part of the Bishop Chadwick Academy Trust.

We were excited and enthusiastic when Bishop Kevin Dunn approached us about the Bede Chair, especially as it built on the already strong theology work at Durham University and Ushaw College. It is excellent that this initiative encourages Catholic pupils into Higher Education and builds on the Catholic ethos of our Schools.

We greatly value the outreach of the Chair and the Centre for Catholic Studies more widely into schools, parishes, the Diocese and regional, national and international areas. During a time of great change for Catholic life and mission in these Isles, we are convinced that the Centre for Catholic Studies has a vital role to play for decades, even centuries, to come.

For this reason, we have been delighted to help build the Core Endowment that will make this possible by funding the Directorate and the Core work of the CCS into the future.

The Oaklea Sisters of Mercy





Bishop Kevin Dunn

Bishop Kevin Dunn (RIP), the 12th Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, was a great supporter of the development of Catholic theology and Catholic studies at Durham. He personally backed the campaign to raise the necessary £2 million endowment to establish the Bede Chair of Catholic Theology –the first such in the UK since the Reformation— and had a clear sense of the regional, national, and international significance of this development.



Coming from a continental department of Catholic theology, I soon noticed the advantages of pursuing Catholic studies in Durham: its multi-confessional setting means you will soon feel not simply a spectator but a protagonist of the ecumenical movement. My knowledge of Catholic theology was greatly deepened in a way that would have been just impossible in a mono-chromatic, mono-confessional setting.

Dr Luca Badini Confalonieri

Former PhD student, now Executive Director of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research



St Bede the Venerable, detail from the Harry Clarke window at St Cuthbert's Catholic Church - home to the Durham University Catholic Chaplaincy

Research: Catholic Social Thought and Practice

The CCS has established itself as a leading academic centre for Catholic Social Thought and Practice (CSTP) working in close collaboration with the UK Centre for CSTP, which brings together academics and practitioners, including CAFOD and the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN). Our key areas of activity in CSTP include:

- Local Community Experiences of and Responses to Conflict-Induced Displacement from Syria: Views from Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. This project includes examination of the way that religious identities play a role in local 'host' community responses to refugees, the way that religious values in humanitarian outreach affect provision, and the way that refugees themselves negotiate religious identities whilst on the move (CCS co-recipient of an award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council).
- How the experience of UK Catholic homelessness charities discloses fresh insights into CSTP, and in particular, illuminates practical meanings and dynamics to the concept of the common good (with the Plater Trust and CSAN).
- The relationship between CST and global homelessness response and advocacy, including the role of Catholic actors at local, national and international levels (with Depaul International and the UK Centre for CSTP).
- Faith-based responses to destitution in the UK asylum system (with the Jesuit Refugee Service).
- CST and prostitution - listening to women affected by prostitution. This work is undertaken with the practitioners who support these women, and in dialogue with insights from trauma theory, feminist thought, and a range of theological perspectives, in order to expand Catholic understanding and voice (with women@thewell and the UK Centre for CSTP).



The CCS offers a dynamic community of scholars pushing to address the contemporary relevance of Catholicism in local, national, and global politics.

Anna Blackman
*Former PhD student,
now Lecturer in Catholic
Religious Education at the
University of Glasgow*

What does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself in a complex global society? Consider, for example, unemployment, inequality, welfare, the financial system: all pressing and contentious economic issues; or more subtly, consumer choice and corporate ethics. The Church in the widest sense needs more tools and training to translate its insights into terms that society as a whole can engage with and which stand up to critical scrutiny.

Dr Mark Hayes (RIP)
*Former St Hilda Reader in
CSTP*



The St Hilda Chair in Catholic Social Thought and Practice

At the core of the CCS's work on Catholic Social Thought and Practice (CSTP) is the St Hilda Chair in CSTP, held by Prof Anna Rowlands and founded in partnership with a group of committed benefactors from the UK, Europe, and the US. This enabling group includes major foundations, women's religious congregations, and business executives, who are each passionate about providing world-leading critical academic resource to contribute to the constructive development and imaginative practical application of the CSTP tradition and so aid its wider critical engagement and dissemination amongst both scholars and professionals.

St Hilda Outreach

The St Hilda Chair has a formal commitment to outreach, providing academic support to the wider church and to organisations engaged in putting CST into practice, such as the Jesuit Refugee Service, CSAN, Caritas Europa and the International Catholic Migration Commission. St Hilda outreach includes writing for and appearing in the media, including BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day; public lectures and informal talks; participation in 'expert' panels and seminars; and participation in training workshops. The St Hilda Chair will consider invitations to speak at diocesan, national and international events.



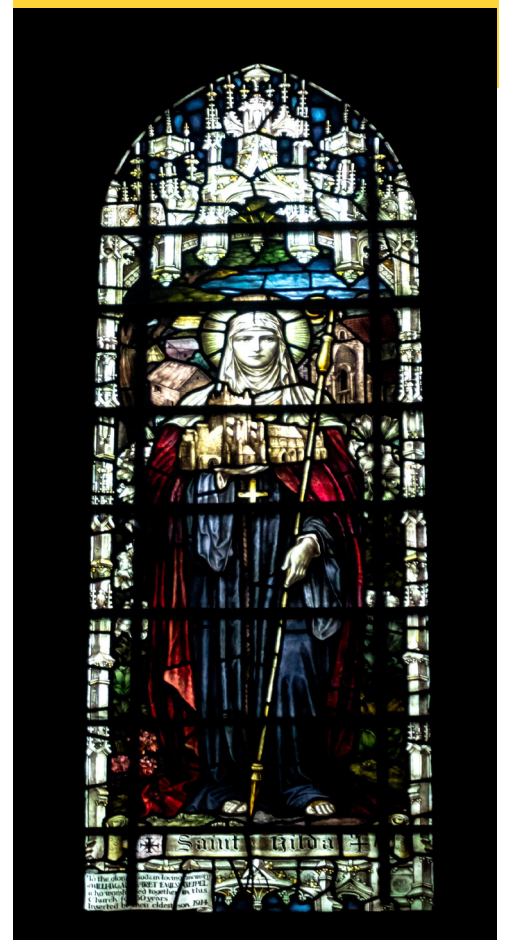
A Word from Anna Rowlands, holder of the St Hilda Chair

I am absolutely delighted to hold this innovative and exciting post. This role requires a dedication to pursuing both cutting-edge research in the Catholic social tradition and a desire to work in partnership with Catholic faith-based organisations that are shaping the next generation of Catholic social practice; a desire to make known the tradition of CSTP as widely as possible at a critical moment for our culture, as well as a commitment to critically examine the development of that same tradition.



The CSTP work at Durham comes at a time of widespread interest in exploring what can be gained from Catholic Social Teaching in response to challenges facing our society. This clearly demonstrates the vital contribution we can make to the flourishing of society in pursuit of the common good.

HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols



St Hilda at St Hilda's Church, Hartlepool. Image by Jonathan Irwin Photography.

Research: History of Catholicism

History of Catholicism

The History of Catholicism is a well-established inter-disciplinary research programme within the CCS. It sees the CCS organise, in partnership with the University of Notre Dame, a highly successful international triennial conference on Early Modern British and Irish Catholicism, with recent feedback describing it as ‘changing the field’. Each conference has resulted in several publications, including the essay collections, *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*; *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580 – 1789*; and *British and Irish Religious Orders in Europe, 1560–1800: Conventuals, Mendicants and Monastics in Motion*, one review describing the latter as setting ‘a new research agenda, which ought to shape the field in the years to come’. The fifth conference is due to take place in 2026.

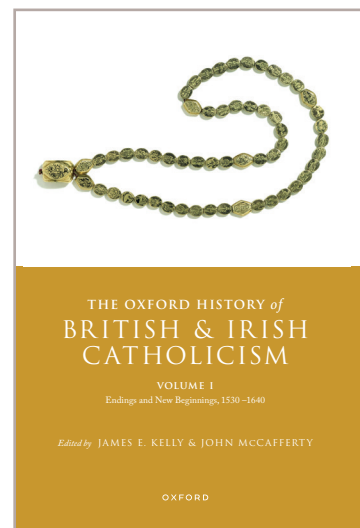
The programme includes workshops in partnership with other institutions as well as the research network, International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association (ISHWRA).

The research cluster also works closely with Catholic archives across the country, working in conjunction with various bodies to promote their use and preservation, including the re-housing of several significant Catholic archive and library collections in Durham.

The programme has been facilitated by partners including St Cuthbert’s Society of Ushaw, the Congregation of Jesus, the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, the Capuchins, the Congregations of La Retraite, the Little Company of Mary, and Sir Christian Sweeting. These partnerships have resulted in a series of fellowships in the History of Catholicism.

Medieval Theology

The CCS membership includes a number of medieval specialists, with research and teaching interests in the areas of early and late medieval theology and scriptural exegesis, particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries and the patristic periods. We work in partnership with the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (IMEMS), one of the most diverse and dynamic centres of medieval and Renaissance studies in the world. The Institute includes 45 scholars across 13 departments and three faculties, as well as a vibrant community of postgraduates.



The Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism

2023 saw the publication of the five volumes of *The Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism*, which is the first time such an overview has been produced. The research cluster has been instrumental in its creation, with CCS team members acting as overall general editor, individual volume editor, and contributors.

In addition, programme members are involved with the new interdisciplinary book series, ‘Catholicisms, c.1450–c.1800’ published by Durham University IMEMS Press, which focuses on Catholicism as it grew to become a global movement.



Research: Lived Catholicism

Lived Catholicism is a notion developed by Avril Baigent in the course of her doctoral research into the lived religion and identity of Catholic teenagers, recognising the importance of improvisation, negotiation, resistance, and subversion in everyday religiosity. It identifies Catholicism as a powerful forming and deforming force. Attention is paid to the ways in which Catholicity is co-created by individuals and communities in their particular time and place.

Through a series of conferences and collaboration, the conceptual work to flesh out Lived Catholicism began in 2020. A new 18-month project in partnership with the University of Notre Dame began in October 2024 looking at Lived Catholicism and Synodality. The project will work to develop the cross-disciplinary nature of the study of Lived Catholicism with a focus on Pope Francis' global experiment, the 'Synod on Synodality'. Both Lived Catholicism as an intellectual framework and Synod as an object of focus share an orientation towards social justice: each seeks to move beyond traditional power structures and attend to the voice and concerns of those who have been marginalised. The project will culminate in an in-person, European-focused colloquium and an online, globally-reaching conference.



Research: Catholicism, Literature and the Arts

What substantive relationships of conceptual and formal influence exist between Catholicism and the arts?

- Is there such a thing as Catholic literature, Catholic music, and Catholic art? If so, in what ways does their catholicity reside in relevant ideas, attitudes, values, and beliefs?
- Are there distinctive styles and traditions of Catholic writing, composition, and painting?
- Are there particular images and themes which Catholic writers, artists, and musicians have explored over the years?
- Are there certain styles of composition, writing, and painting which have come to be associated with the expression of Catholic spirituality?
- And how is Catholicism depicted more broadly in literature and the arts, regardless of the catholicity of their originating creators?

These are some of the challenging questions tackled in the CCS's research programme in Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts, as well as through the following conferences:

- Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts I (July 2017)
- Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts II: Legacies and Revivals (July 2019)
- Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts III: The Poetics of Liturgy and Place (July 2022)



Mater Admirabilis by Pauline Perdrauat, at the Trinità dei Monti, Rome (detail)

Completed Projects

Vitality in Women's Apostolic Religious Life

Funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, this project gave voice to the authentic, lived experience of sisters in search of a sustainable future. We considered the sources and nature of sustainability of the apostolic form of religious life for women in East and Central Africa and we enquired about the hopes for and challenges of religious life for vocation discerners and new entrants to women's religious life in the UK and Ireland. The project reports are available on the CCS website.

Theology and Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition

This fellowship, held by Dr Elizabeth Powell, was funded by the Sisters of La Retraite. Elizabeth developed a project inquiring into the theology and spirituality of forms of vision as loving attention, reading the work of Julian of Norwich in dialogue with the visual culture of her medieval Norwich, as well as with visual artists of the 20th century with whom she shares surprising affinities.

Lived Theology, Trauma, and Reconciliation

In this fellowship, funded by the sisters of La Retraite, Dr Victoria Biggs investigated points of intersection between post-Holocaust and liberation theologies, with a focus on how largely unexplored histories (e.g. the Nazi persecution of the Roma) might inform and enrich contemporary theological responses to genocide and mass violence.

Ecclesial Learning About Women and the English Churches Through Receptive Ecumenism

This research, funded by the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) and the Caulfield Foundation, was conducted by the Rev. Dr Gabrielle Thomas from October 2017 to June 2019. It explored the experiences (both positive and negative) of women within their respective ecclesial traditions/contexts, asking what kinds of gifts women bring to their churches, and testing how Receptive Ecumenism helps women from radically diverse traditions learn and receive gifts from one another.

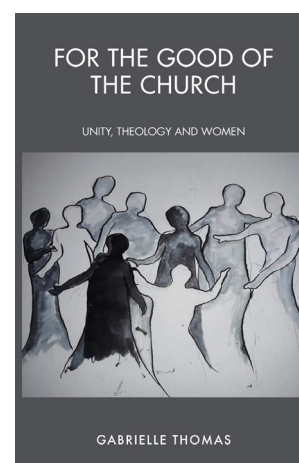
Monks in Motion: A prosopographical study of the English and Welsh Benedictines in exile, 1553-1800

Since 2015, the 'Monks in Motion' project team has been investigating the activities and membership of the English and Welsh Benedictines, 1553-1800, exploring their changing political role in transnational familial and intellectual networks. The project has seen the creation of an open source, searchable electronic database of all English and Welsh Benedictines from the period, including those who were early leavers or did not pass the selection process. It has received national media coverage due to some of its discoveries.



Religious Life Vitality Project: From L to R:

- Prof Paul D. Murray (Durham University)
- Dr Maria Calderon Muñoz (Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, MBIT, Cambridge)
- Ms Yvonne Williams (Durham University)
- Dr Catherine Sexton (MBIT)
- Sr Dr Gemma Simmonds, CJ (Religious Life Institute, MBIT)



Clement Reyner (Image the property of Downside Abbey General Trust)

Boundary Breaking

In Spring 2024, the CCS completed a multi-year project discerning the wider ecclesial-cultural consequences and implications of the sex abuse crisis within the Roman Catholic Church. The primary focus was on analysing the potential complicity of Catholic ecclesial self-understanding and wider Catholic cultural habitus in allowing clerical sexual abuse to be at once endemic, hidden, unthinkable, denied, and mismanaged. A full report, *The Cross of the Moment*, was published in April 2024, with a quantitative report following in October.

You can download both reports at:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-boundary-breaking>

Transformative Renewal in the Church

The Transformative Renewal in the Church project studied three sites in Britain: Lay Ministry in Hallam; The Root and Branch forum; Female pastoral ministry in Angelsea; and 3 sites in Ireland: Diocesan renewal in Kerry; Reception of *Laudato Si'* at parish-level; Dialogue between the Association of Catholic Priests and Irish Bishops, as examples of such renewal. With the research at a close, findings are being written-up.

Models of Theological Practice

Karen Kilby, the Bede Professor of Catholic Theology, together with Prof Clare Carlisle of Kings College, London, explored the practice and experience of writing. The project was funded by the Templeton Religion Trust, as part of the “Widening Horizons in Philosophical Theology” grant. Dr Elizabeth Powell, formerly the La Retraite Fellow in Theology and Spirituality in the CCS, also spent a year with the project.

A series of writing retreats, mostly at Douai Abbey, were at the heart of the project. Theologians and philosophers experimented with incorporating contemplative elements into their writing practice, and reflected together on the nature of the writing task. What do we seek when we write? What makes it so hard? In what sense is writing itself a spiritual practice? Scholars from Kings, Durham, Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, Edinburgh, St Andrews, Aberdeen, Liverpool Hope, and Exeter Universities explored these themes together. The hope of the project is to help theologians better understand themselves as writers, but also to contribute to moving the intellectual life and the contemplative life closer together.

Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood

Between March 2020 and March 2024, Dr Brian Casey worked as the FMDM Fellow, finalising a monograph examining the history of the female congregation, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, between the 1930s and the millennium. Using material gathered from over thirty archives in ten countries, as well as an extensive congregational archive in Ladywell convent, the project asked big questions of the place of the Catholic Church, in particular issues around catholicity, concepts of unity and how to maintain these in a globalised religious community.

Sepulchrines with Enlightenment

Following an initial three year project from 2014-2017, the Sepulchrines generously funded a second fellowship starting in January 2020, in which Dr Cormac Begadon investigated the interaction of the Sepulchrines with Enlightenment thought, c.1750-1820. His research examined the canonesses as Englishwomen at the heart of the European Enlightenment, in the shadow of revolutionary thought and events, illustrating how they functioned as agents of change in the reciprocal transfer of ideas between Europe and England through their work as educators. The project also examined the ways in which the Sepulchrine community was affected and shaped by contemporary religious, philosophical and political movements.

Postgraduate Research, Supervision, and Teaching

Research, both individual and collaborative, is at the heart of the CCS. Our commitment is to nurture a community of scholars from undergraduate through to doctoral research—a flourishing community of Catholic scholarship in the pluralist, public academy in the unique context of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Durham offers an unparalleled environment for postgraduate study of Theology and Religion, having been ranked UK 1st in research quality in the UK research assessment exercises 2008 RAE, 2014 REF, and 7th in the world in the QS World University Subject Rankings (2023). Our staff members provide a wide range of expertise for postgraduate students interested in all areas of Catholic theology and Catholic studies. As well as academic excellence, we also aim to provide students with access to world-class study facilities and to a range of training and professional-development opportunities that are second to none, including teaching and research assistantships.

The Durham Catholic Theology Research Seminar

The Catholic Theology Research Seminar is a forum for scholarly discussion of pertinent issues in the Catholic traditions of theology and church. It ranges across the traditional theological disciplines (scriptural, historical, philosophical, systematic, liturgical, ethical, and practical/pastoral), Catholic social thought and practice; Catholicism, literature and the arts; and Lived Catholicism. Staff and students of the Department of Theology and Religion join with staff and students of other departments, and others with a shared commitment to the critical exploration of Catholic theology and practice.



I was a grateful recipient of CCS bursary, which afforded me both financial support for my degree and the opportunity to participate in the vibrant life of the CCS community of friends, colleagues, students, and staff. It was a gift to belong to such a diverse and hospitable community and to attend an array of academically and spiritually stimulating events.

Dr Kelsie Rodenbiker
*Former PhD student, now
Research Associate in the
School of Critical Studies at
the University of Glasgow*



We have a dedicated set of modules which allow students to take an informal 'pathway' in Catholic studies within our wider MA in Theology and Religion programme.

We also offer doctoral supervision in the following areas:

- Modern Catholic fundamental and dogmatic theology
- Patristic theology
- Medieval theology
- Catholic social thought and practice
- Political theology
- Theology and ethics
- The reception of Vatican II
- Religion and film
- 20th and 21st century Catholic theologians
- The place of Scripture in modern Catholic theology
- Catholicism and gender
- Philosophy and theology
- Theology and spirituality
- The history of Catholicism
- Critical theory and Catholic theology
- Franciscan studies
- Lived Catholicism

Distance Learning in Catholic Theology: MA, PG Diploma, PG Certificate and CPD single module

This exciting new venture led by the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) and the Department of Theology and Religion is designed so that participants can work through the material at their own pace, studying equally well in any time zone and in many different life-situations, alongside work, ministry, family, or caring obligations.

This fully online programme is designed both for those who have studied Theology before and for those who have a background in a variety of other academic backgrounds.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-distance-learning>



Pursuing the MA pathway in Catholic Studies at Durham was a real blessing. It was exciting to be in a place where firstclass theological research is carried on in an environment that's open to and often in partnership with the lives of the local churches. I have a sense of having not just learned some theology, but of having been trained to be a theologian. I also greatly appreciated the accessibility, flexibility, and supportive understanding of the academic staff.

Martin Browne OSB
Glenstal Abbey, Ireland

Student Life: Academic, Pastoral, and Spiritual Support

Academic Support

- A personal tutor for each undergraduate
- A team of at least two supervisors for all research students
- Scholarship and bursary assistance
- Regular devoted research seminars in all the key areas of theology and religious studies
- Regular meetings of the Durham Catholic Theology Research Seminar
- Annual postgraduate and early career conference
- Support with attending key academic conferences
- Research Assistant and Teaching Assistant opportunities
- Participation in collaborative planning for and hosting of academic events



I came to the CCS as a Presbyterian parish minister with a Masters in Practical Theology, exploring how Catholic spirituality might inform and enhance my tradition's practices. I found a perfect environment for my PhD research. Durham's CCS offers unrivalled academic expertise, combining breadth of scholarship with depth of specialist understanding. More than that, the academic staff embody Catholic faith and spirituality as a lived reality beyond the textbook. I have experienced their genuine concern to enable my research to represent faithfully both our church traditions, and to enhance my work as a practitioner. The CCS has a unique atmosphere and I have been immeasurably enriched by studying in this community.

Rev Dr Lynn McClhery
Former PhD student

Pastoral and Spiritual Support

- A designated member of CCS staff with responsibility for student liaison
- A commitment to nurturing a peer community of scholars, as expressed through shared meals and social time around research seminars and events
- Close partnership with Durham University Catholic Chaplaincy
- Clear partnership with dioceses, church bodies, religious orders, and regular opportunities to meet with leaders and formative influences within the life of the contemporary church





The Catholic Chaplaincy to Durham University, based at St Cuthbert's Parish, exists to offer pastoral care for the students and staff of the University—a living Catholic community within Durham's vibrant academic community.

Fr Andrew Downie, Catholic Chaplain, said: "Durham's students and staff strive for academic excellence in their many different areas of study, and the Chaplaincy aims to foster prayerful and rigorous reflection on their faith."

"In the Centre for Catholic Studies, top-quality Catholic theological work is carried out in the public academy. The CCS, through its academic and outreach programmes, enriches the life of the local church and provides students with opportunities to ask the questions that every intelligent Catholic should be asking. The work of the CCS helps to prepare our students to take their place as thinking believers in the heart of the church."



Durham University Catholic Society members with Bishop Cunningham at the CCS 10th anniversary celebrations



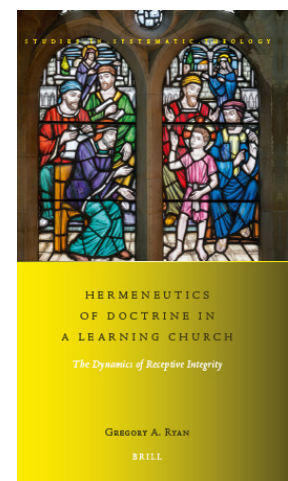
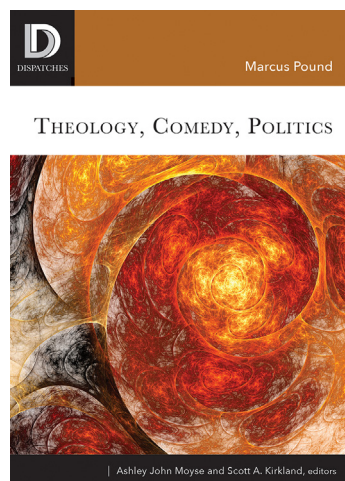
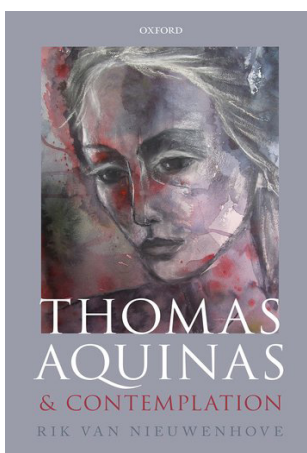
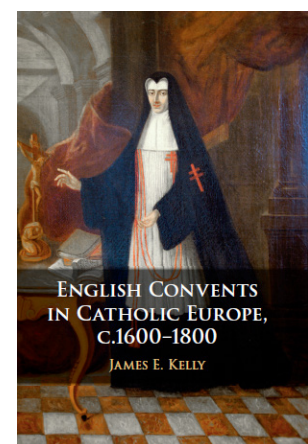
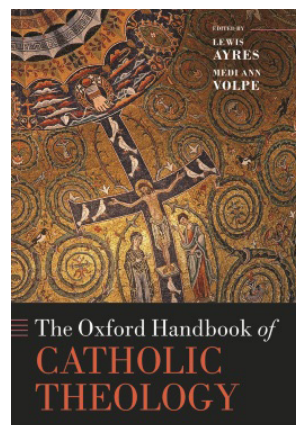
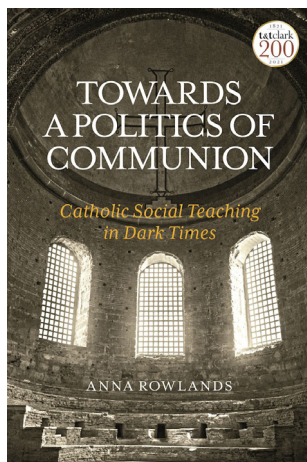
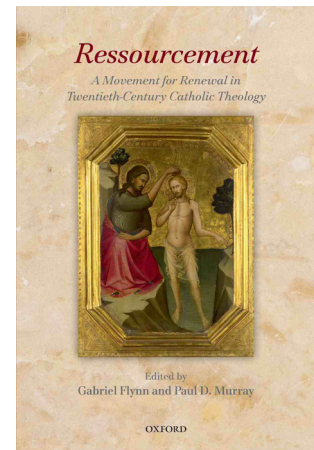
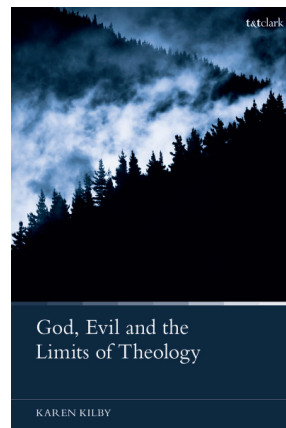
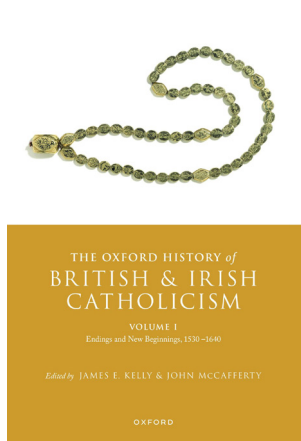
The Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University has 50 academic staff members, over 150 postgraduates, and an annual undergraduate intake of more than 70, which makes it one of the most varied and dynamic departments in Britain.



The academic, social, and spiritual support I received as a student of the CCS was the very best part of my experience at Durham University. There is a commitment to kindness: staff genuinely care about students, about each other, about CCS donors and ecumenical partnerships, and about the wider church and world. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I had to be formed in such a wise and humanising scholarly environment.

Dr Rachel Davies
Former PhD student, now Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Australian Catholic University

Publications by CCS Members





The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle values its continued partnership with the Centre for Catholic Studies based at Durham University. It is a valued resource for the Church in the North East of England and beyond and is a continuation of the rich heritage of Catholic life and mission in our region going back to the time of the Northern Saints: Aidan, Cuthbert, Hilda and Bede.

Please be generous in supporting this important mission so that the CCS will continue to play its part nationally and internationally in providing Catholic scholarship and formation.

May the Lord continue to bless the work of the Centre for Catholic Studies.

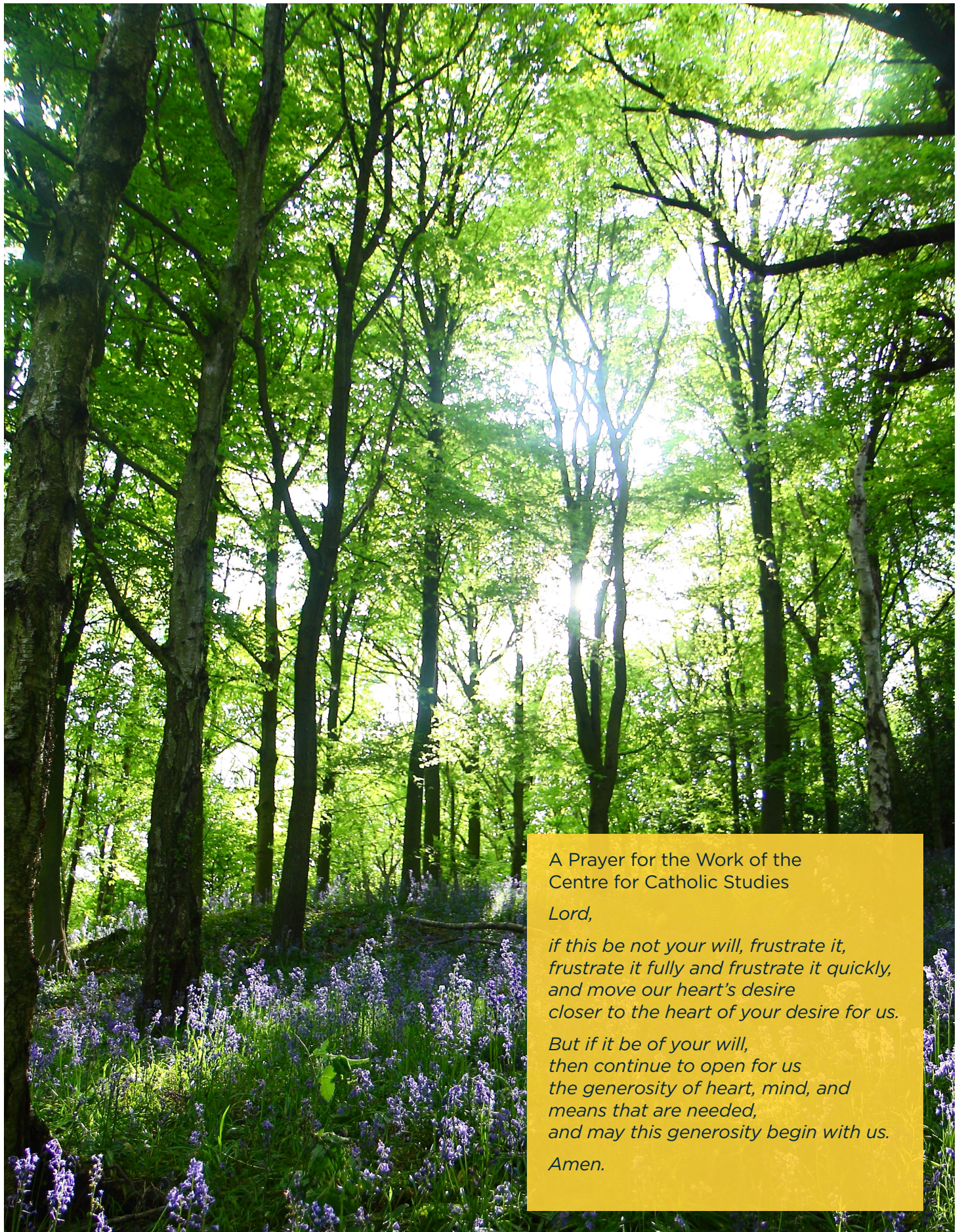
Rt Rev Stephen Wright

15th Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle



Durham University is proud to host our internationally important Centre for Catholic Studies. The work of the Centre is rooted in the long traditions of Christian scholarship and mission in the North East of England, stretching back to the time of St Cuthbert and St Bede, both buried in Durham Cathedral. This scholarship speaks to our regional history, and opens out to a global community with whom we collaborate in a common pursuit of humane knowledge. We are grateful to our supporters, and are continuing to seek further support for the work of the Centre by establishing an endowment for the long-term future and by providing scholarships for the next generation of postgraduate students.

Professor Karen O'Brien
*Vice-Chancellor and Warden
Durham University*



A Prayer for the Work of the
Centre for Catholic Studies

Lord,

*if this be not your will, frustrate it,
frustrate it fully and frustrate it quickly,
and move our heart's desire
closer to the heart of your desire for us.*

*But if it be of your will,
then continue to open for us
the generosity of heart, mind, and
means that are needed,
and may this generosity begin with us.*

Amen.

The Centre for Catholic Studies is pleased to be working in partnership with:

Arts and Humanities Research Council
Brentwood Ursuline Sisters
British Teilhard Network
CAFOD
Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre
Capuchin Franciscans of Great Britain
Capuchin Franciscans of Australia
Capuchin Friars, St Augustine Province, US
Carmelite Nuns
Catholic Historical Society of Ireland
Catholic Theological Association of GB
Community of St Francis
Conference of Religious in England & Wales
Congregation of Jesus
Congregation of La Retraite (Britain & Ireland)
Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace
Conventual Franciscan Federation (US)
Durham University Catholic Chaplaincy
English Benedictine Congregation
Faithful Companions of Jesus
Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood
Franciscan Province of Ireland
The Hartley Trust
Institute of Our Lady of Mercy
Jesuits in Britain
Little Company of Mary
Mater Ecclesiae
National Board of Catholic Women
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National Institute for Newman Studies, Pittsburgh
Northern Diaconal Formation Partnership
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Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus
Sisters of the Religious of Christian Education
Society of the Sacred Heart
The Society of St Francis
The Tablet and The Pastoral Review
Trustees of Ushaw College
University of Notre Dame, Australia
University of Notre Dame, Indiana
& many Generous Individuals of Vision





Durham University

Centre for Catholic Studies

centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk
Catholic Theology in the Public Academy

Centre for Catholic Studies

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To join the CCS mailing list, please visit
<https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-email-list>

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-  Find us on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or Soundcloud

Enquiries About Postgraduate Research Programmes

(MA by Research, MLitt, DThM,
Integrated PhD, and PhD):

theo.pgresearchadmissions@durham.ac.uk
T: +44 (0) 191 334 3929

Enquiries About the MA in Theology and Religion:

durham.ac.uk/study/askus

Enquiries About the Distance Learning MA in Catholic Theology:

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