



Durham
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Centre for Catholic Studies

Newsletter

Issue 42: Easter Term 2022

Faith and Climate Change

Dr Carmody Grey

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“Delay means death.” That was how the UN Secretary-General summarised the last report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I have worked on nature and environment for some years, but the the last IPCC reports increased my sense of urgency to prioritise this issue in my work, both academic and public.

Soon to be published under the title *Theology, Science and Life* (Bloomsbury), my doctoral research sought to challenge the divide between ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ thinking about science and nature. As the crisis has escalated, I have turned my attention to making the language of ‘value’ work in the ‘fact’-driven discourse of climate politics.

Throughout last year I attended meetings with the world’s faith leaders and leading climate scientists. It culminated in several days at the Vatican with Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Metropolitan Hilarion of Moscow, and others from all major world faiths. We wrote a joint appeal (tinyurl.com/hsappealcop26), which was delivered to COP26.

In the 2021 Hook Lecture in Leeds, I explored the role of values versus facts in responding to climate change (video: tinyurl.com/hooklecture21). I developed these ideas further in a lecture at the Royal Geographical Society, in which I explained how climate change is a ‘wicked problem’: both the problem and the solution are too wrapped up in ‘worldview’ questions to be solved in the terms of ‘science’ alone (full text available at tinyurl.com/rgslecture-grey). I am applying these ideas in advisory work with NGOs, including marine research charity Nekton and citizen science charity Earthwatch.

In my recent work with Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion I have been exploring how values can underpin civil resistance as a response of radical humanity to an inhumane future. My approach is explained in ‘The Ethical Basis of Civil Resistance’ (video: tinyurl.com/ethics-cr) and ‘Where Can We Find The Courage?’ (video: tinyurl.com/xr-courage), where I explore the meaning of ‘activism’. My focus is on ‘humanity’ as the value that must drive action at this time in history.

When *Laudato Si’* was published, parishes, schools, dioceses, and communities of religious started asking for formation around issues of environmental responsibility. I have continued with that work since then, which has included:

- Supporting the Bishops’ Conference with communicating the message of creation care (videos: tinyurl.com/global-healing and tinyurl.com/global-caring)
- Working with Mercy International on environmental responsibility as one of the works of mercy (video: tinyurl.com/mercy-nature)
- Theology of creation, for the Christian conservation charity A Rocha (video: tinyurl.com/arochoa-grey)
- Addressing the Association of Provincial Bursars on relating their financial and monetary responsibilities to the climate crisis
- Supporting Australian Catholic educators in understanding the ecological implications of Christian faith.

My purpose is to accompany and guide Christian communities as they seek to respond to what is, I think, the key ‘sign of our times’: the cry of the earth.

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Learning to be Church Together

Dr Gregory Ryan

Assistant Professor (Research) of Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesiology at the CCS

The roots of Receptive Ecumenism are entwined with the roots of the CCS itself—Paul Murray’s initial project on Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning was the Centre’s ‘first official activity’. That project was launched at a conference in January 2006, and its legacy included not only the series of five further projects in Durham, and more elsewhere, but a major edited volume, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*. Published by OUP in 2008, this swiftly became the indispensable reference for anyone seriously investigating or practising Receptive Ecumenism.

We are pleased to announce that, in June 2022 a long-awaited companion volume will be published: *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning: Walking the Way to a Church Re-Formed*. This includes newly commissioned essays together with revised versions of papers from the Second and Third International Conferences (Ushaw, 2009, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA, 2014).

The long process of turning several box files of conference papers—some no more than notes—on a shelf in Abbey House into the published book was made possible through a generous benefactor donation which funded the part-time post-doctoral post I started in 2018.

The aim of the post-doctoral project was to ensure the long-term viability and dissemination of the CCS Receptive Ecumenism projects, and included other activities: academic essays and conference presentations, public lectures and workshops, and revising the Receptive Ecumenism pages on the CCS website. Two of the more substantial outputs were my monograph, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine in a Learning Church* (Brill, 2020), and a successful one-day international conference held online in June 2021 which resulted in a series of short videos introducing aspects of Receptive Ecumenism, available at tinyurl.com/ccsyoutubechannel.

The undoubted centrepiece of the project, however, is the aforementioned new OUP volume co-edited by myself, Paul Murray, and Paul Lakeland (Fairfield University). Its 38 chapters are arranged in four main sections, covering how Receptive Ecumenism has been understood and applied:

- (a) in different traditions;
- (b) in different geographical and cultural contexts;
- (c) regarding pressing problems for the churches; and
- (d) as a methodology oriented towards particular spiritual and intellectual practices.



RECEPTIVE ECUMENISM AS TRANSFORMATIVE ECCLESIAL LEARNING

Walking the Way to a Church Re-formed

edited by
PAUL D. MURRAY, GREGORY A. RYAN, & PAUL LAKELAND

In addition to work from established dialogues, the volume has been greatly enriched by Pentecostal contributions. Likewise, chapters examine issues around sexuality, race, and interchurch families, as well as such topics as ministry, decision-making, and Mary. Several chapters with a biblical focus provide a very welcome addition to the literature on Receptive Ecumenism, as do the frequent references to synodality and indaba. It has been a rewarding experience for me, not least through approaching such esteemed contributors with suggestions for how their work might be edited for the book!

The international launch for *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning* will be at the Fifth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism, Sigtuna, Sweden, 27-30 June 2022, and we hope also to have a CCS online book launch in the autumn.

Find Out More

For details of *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning*, please see tinyurl.com/reatel

See tinyurl.com/ccsyoutubechannel for:

- A video of the launch event for *Hermeneutics of Doctrine in a Learning Church*
- The 10-minute videos from the 2021 mini-conference

Voices From a Periphery

Dr Pat Jones

Post-Doctoral Research Associate in Catholic Studies here at the CCS

One of the necessary tasks in the field of Catholic social thought involves listening to the voices rarely heard in either ecclesial or theological spaces. A newly published report entitled *Invisible: Prostitution and the Lives of Women* is a significant entry point into a reality which exists around us in our towns and cities, yet which is often hidden from sight. It is based on empirical research commissioned by women@thewell—a charity founded by a Sister of Mercy, Lynda Dearlove—and supported by the CCS through Dr Anna Rowlands, academic adviser for the project. The women who took part were either still caught up in the sex trade, or had exited and bore the scars. Others were professional staff in faith-inspired voluntary organisations working in this field.

The purpose was to explore how the women interpreted their lives and how they understood their own freedom and what had held them captive. In an intentionally feminist approach, I used associative images to open up reflective disclosures and create emotional connections. The report enables the women's voices to be heard describing their experience and reflecting on issues such as safety, the lack of any good choices, and the places they find solidarity. It describes the damage done by prostitution as a tolerated social structure, a tolerance in which we are all implicated. The women's voices are full of anguish, courage, resilience, and moral stature, despite the stigma, self-blame, and compromises with which they live. I found their moral ambition striking; in the words of one young woman still involved:

I guess I'd get people to see that we're not weak, we're not, like, down and out, we can have a lot of strength, and if you give us a bit of a chance to have a voice and to have a bit more choice, we can be there. And that we're not out of society, that we're part of society and we're right next to you.

What emerges is a nuanced and ethically realistic view of how little freedom women actually have when they come from circumstances that create vulnerability and risk in relation to the sex trade. This enables a revised view of what consent means; the vast majority of women involved in prostitution did not enter it with authentic freedom, nor do they truly consent to the sex to which they capitulate. It is not that they lack agency; but the agency they have is taken up with survival. They can do little to alter the social structures that bear down on their lives. The research argues that survival is itself a moral achievement; and that the task of ending the social and structural violence of prostitution is a neglected and valid priority for Catholic social mission.

The research also produced two other texts (soon to be



published) covering the theological and political ground in greater depth:

1. *I Am Real, I Am Here* is a long-form open letter from women@thewell to Catholic bishops. It proposes an interpretation of Catholic social teaching in dialogue with the social reality of prostitution. The text appeals to bishops as teachers to speak with greater courage and specificity about the social and legal changes needed to end this particular form of violence against women.
2. *Prostitution and Catholic Social Teaching: A Briefing for Catholic Parliamentarians* addresses those who work in the political and governmental structures where power to change policy lies. Based on Catholic social teaching and on the experience of women@thewell, it argues for an abolitionist political ethic and appeals to parliamentarians to make a renewed commitment to legislative reform.

Find Out More

For more information, please contact patricia.jones@durham.ac.uk or download the report from tinyurl.com/invisible-plw

The above image is from artist Claudia Clare's 'And the Door Opened' Project, undertaken in partnership with women@thewell.

Events: Easter Term and Summer 2022



Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts III *The Poetics of Liturgy and Place*

An international interdisciplinary conference, 12-14 July 2022 in London

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 Catholic tradition's contribution to 'place-making' through the arts.

Confirmed speakers: Rowan Williams, Timothy Schmalz, Robin Jensen, Romana Huk, Paul Hills, Valentin Gerlier, Hilary Davies

Registration is open until 26 June via tinyurl.com/CLA3conference.

In addition, tickets for the 12 July evening events are available via <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>, including:

- *The Face of Our Faith: A Sculptor's Journey*: a talk by Timothy Schmalz
- Musical performance: Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*

Conference organised in conjunction with the University of Notre Dame in England and in association with The Tablet and Farm Street Church.

Image: Tim Patrick, *The Palace*. Used with permission. timpatrick.co.uk

Ushaw Lecture Series

Wednesday 4 May

Prof. Julia Stapleton (Durham University)
Church, State, and Nation: The Journals of Herbert Hensley Henson, 1900-1939

Wednesday 22 June

Dr Earle Havens (Johns Hopkins University, USA, and RRL Holland Visiting Fellow)
Reading Lord William Howard's Library: Catholic Antiquarianism and Confessional Militancy in Northern England, c. 1583-1630

5.30pm drinks for 6pm lecture at Ushaw, also online

International Scholars of the History of Women Religious Association

Wednesday 11 May

Dr Carmen Mangion (Birkbeck, University of London)
Lay Sisters' Voices: Gender, Social Class, and Religious Identities, 1900-1950
2pm BST, online and in Abbey House

Wednesday 7 June

Dr Sergi Sancho Fibla (UC Louvain, Belgium)
Reassessing Knowledge Transmission Structures of Religious Women in Southern Europe, c. 1300-1500
2pm BST, online

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

Catholic Theology Research Seminar

Thursday 26 May

Dr Victoria Biggs (Durham University)
Disability Theology and the Holocaust: Rethinking Catholic Responses to Genocide in Light of Aktion-T4
Lived Catholicism seminar
5pm in Seminar Room B, Abbey House, Palace Green

Monday 13 June

Dr Gregory Ryan (Durham University)
Rewilding the Church: Perspectives on Pope Francis' Disruptive Synodality
Lived Catholicism seminar
5pm at St Chad's College

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

Early Career Conference in Catholic Theology and Catholic Studies

13 June 2022, in person at St Chad's College, Durham

A chance for postgraduate students and other early career researchers to meet and discuss their work on all aspects of Catholic theology and Catholic studies.

Registration open until 23 May at <https://centreforcatholicstudies.eventbrite.com>.

To receive emails about our events, please register for the CCS mailing list at tinyurl.com/ccsmailinglist