

Second International Franciscan Studies Conference welcomes delegates and keynote speakers to Durham

Between 12 and 14 March 2024, nearly 100 delegates came to the Marriott Hotel in Durham to attend 'The Franciscan Tradition: Retrieval and Innovation' – the second International Franciscan Studies Conference hosted by the Centre for Catholic Studies.

The conference organising committee consisted of CCS members Rik Van Nieuwenhove, James Kelly, Liam Temple, Br Tommy Piolata and Brian Casey with outstanding support from Theresa Phillips and Catherine Tuckwell in the CCS office.

Sponsored by members of the Franciscan family in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and the United States, attendees heard over thirty papers on the historical and theological underpinnings of the Franciscan tradition.

Speakers came from the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Australia and various universities across Europe, showing the abundant interest in the various intellectual and spiritual traditions from the beginnings of the movement until the present.

In addition to the papers, evening prayer and morning Mass at St Cuthbert's Catholic Church, Old Elvet, reflected the prayer and liturgical side of the Franciscan tradition.

The keynote speakers, Sister Mary Beth Ingham, Fr Giuseppe Buffon and Sister Margaret Carney offered a kaleidoscopic journey of the tradition, thought and rules of Franciscans.



The keynotes provided much for people to think about and energised many also. The conference showcased some of the work being done on Franciscanism internationally and the work that the Centre for Catholic Studies is doing to build up a wide ranging programme of research and eventually teaching in Franciscan Studies.



Above: Sr Margaret Carney
Right: Fr Giuseppe Buffon



You can listen to the keynote speeches at:
<https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/catholic-studies/research/franciscan-studies/>

Or, via the CCS's Soundcloud account:
<https://on.soundcloud.com/3bawHf2XppGdMcLD8>

Dr Brian Casey's FMDM project



L-R Jo Halford (Senior Congregational archivist), Sr Teresa Mitchell (Congregational archivist), Dr Brian Casey, Sr Helena McEvilly (CLT) and Sr Jane Bertlesten (Congregational leader).

Between March 2020 and March 2024, I worked as the FMDM Fellow in the History of Catholicism at the Centre for Catholic Studies. I am currently finalizing a monograph examining the history of the female congregation, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, between the 1930s and the millennium. The story of women religious in twentieth century global Catholicism is a relatively unattended one. FMDM has always been a small congregation that have left significant footprints across the world.

These are traced from material gathered from over thirty archives in ten countries as well as an extensive congregational archive in Ladywell convent, the motherhouse of the congregation.

This work allows for big questions of the place of the Catholic Church to be asked, in particular issues around catholicity, concepts of unity and how to maintain these in a globalised religious community.

FMDM Sisters drew inspiration from the Franciscan tradition and their own charism, as they presented themselves as religious products of modernity. The large tent of initiatives, missions and responses of the Congregation show the importance of building and sustaining relationships at a grassroots level, which was manifested through their pioneering institutional work in areas of rich and challenging religious plurality. The Congregation's charism of missionary work and the Divine Motherhood saw them self-consciously present themselves as wholly modern in their apostolates, seeking to 'give birth to Christ'.

It has been an interesting, challenging and intellectually stimulating four years. Being based in the richly interdisciplinary environment of the CCS has helped enormously in exploring and discussing ideas with colleagues from disciplines beyond history. As I continue on my formation as an academic historian, the nuances, conceptual ideas and rigor I learned from former colleagues will stand to me in future research endeavours.

Facing and learning from the abuse crisis

*The Boundary Breaking research report, titled *The Cross of the Moment*, is published on 30th April.*

Sometimes it happens in research that an interviewee says something which opens a door of interpretation or captures an insight that goes to the heart of the problem.

About midway through the Boundary Breaking research, a woman from a parish whose former priest had been imprisoned for a sexual offence said this: 'We're the body of Christ and if one part of that body is injured or is broken, we're all broken a bit and injured a bit.'

This recognition illuminated what became distinctive about the project; it is concerned with how the clerical child abuse crisis has affected the whole body of Christ, the community and the institution, in this local context of England and Wales.

In this research, we listened to survivors of abuse, whose voices are essential and primary, but also to laypeople from directly affected parishes, priests, bishops and religious men and women, as well as safeguarding professionals and other office-holders.

All these voices matter. The result is, we hope, a polyphonic portrait and narrative. It is also ground-breaking. There is a vast literature of writing about the abuse crisis, but very little that is based on empirical listening, and still less that engages across the breadth of the community of faith.

These are narratives of harm and pain but also of soul-searching honesty and grief, and willingness to take responsibility.

The report is also distinctive in another way. It is not about particular cases or about safeguarding policy or practice. Rather, the aim was ultimately theological and constructive. After listening, we drew out aspects of Catholic culture and teaching implicated in how abuse happened and how the institutional response has so often failed.

We then looked for practical paths forward and imagined possibilities for restoring relationships and trust. This was both a disciplined academic task and a matter of discernment.

The report is available to download on the CCS website from the 30th April 2024, in separate chapters or as a complete text. There is also a summary and a brief guide to reading the report.

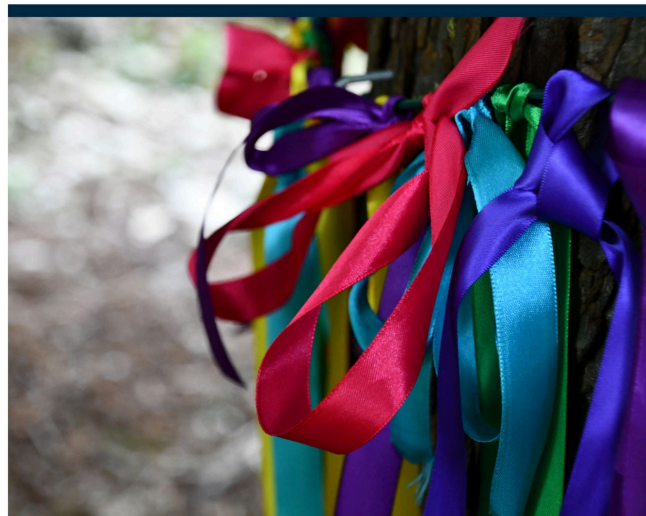
Please visit: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/ccs-boundary-breaking>

If you would like a printed copy, please submit your address to the form at: <https://forms.office.com/e/We7UDSiU00>

Further publications will follow.

The Cross of the Moment

A Report from the Boundary Breaking Project



Pat Jones, Marcus Pound, Catherine Sexton

Some of the heartfelt questions asked by several participants captured this profoundly: What is the Holy Spirit teaching the Church through our experience of this crisis? What do we need to learn? What is our responsibility now?

The report does not provide answers. There are no recommendations. It is rather an examination of collective conscience oriented towards Pope Francis' proposal that what is needed is a process of conversion followed by practical action involving everyone. The text models a process and invites people to consider how they too can listen, reflect, and imagine what could be different.

In particular, the report profiles the courage and insights of survivors and invites us all, as the whole community of faith, to do more to learn from their experience. It draws attention to the relevance of synodal conversations in this area and to the potential that lies in exploring restorative approaches, drawn from ideas of restorative justice.

Those who have been sexually abused experience devastating and lifelong effects. If you have been affected by sexual abuse in a setting related to the Catholic Church or the Church of England and wish to seek help, you can approach these organisations.

- Safe Spaces: <https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/>
- Survivors Voices: <https://survivorsvoices.org>

Each Catholic diocese also has details of its Safeguarding teams and policies and other sources of support on diocesan webpages.

Sculptor Dr Fenwick Lawson honoured with Blue Plaque at Bow Cottage

Internationally renowned sculptor, Fenwick Lawson ARCA, was honoured at the unveiling of the blue plaque, installed by Durham City Parish Council, at his former home and studio at Bow Cottage on Friday 16th February.

The unveiling was attended by many of Fenwick's close family, friends, and former students, including Sir Brendan Foster and Alan Smith OBE DL, both of whom unveiled the plaque together.

The plaque commemorates the historical significance of Bow Cottage and also celebrates it being the Lawson family's residence between 1977 and 2015, and the creation of the iconic *The Journey* sculpture, as well as other esteemed sculptures. It is part of a project by Durham County Council which aims to promote rich, diverse heritage in the City.

Fenwick, aged 91, told the gathered audience: "This sculpture, *The Journey*, is not about me, it's about the work, and the meaning of the work is about the love that fellow man has for fellow man. It's humanity. You can't do that on your own. We all have this interdependence on each other and it's at the bottom of it all."

Sir Brendan Foster added: "Fenwick was a fantastic teacher. He loved the pupils, which was part of why we enjoyed being with him. He is a legend and his legacy in this part of the world will last forever."

After the unveiling, a reception was held in St Chad's College, where the Lawson family held a reception after the unveiling of *The Journey*, for the people who had helped raise the money for its casting.

Alice Brown, the parish and county councillor for Neville's Cross ward and long-time friend of the Lawsons, said: "These blue plaques seek to celebrate a person, event or building of significance in our city, and today is no exception. We've come together today to honour and say thank you to a great man and someone who we're particularly proud to have associated with our city."

Award winning architect, Vincente Stienlet presented Fenwick with a framed photograph of the sculptor and his wife, Joan, in the studio at Bow Cottage in the 1980s, which Stienlet took when he and Fenwick worked together designing churches in the North-East and Yorkshire.

The release of *The Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism* has been celebrated with launches in Rome, London and Dublin.

The work explores the history of Catholicism in the two countries between 1530 and 2021. The two general editors of the project were CCS Sweeting Associate Professor in the History of Catholicism, James Kelly, and John McCafferty, Professor of History at UCD and Honorary Professorial Fellow with the CCS.

In Rome, its publication was celebrated at an event jointly hosted by the British Embassy to the Holy See and the Embassy of Ireland to the Holy See. The event was held at St Isidore's College, and was addressed by the UK ambassador, Chris Trott, and the Irish ambassador, Frances Collins.

Previous to the Rome event, a launch was held at Newman House on St Stephen's Green in Dublin, site of the Catholic University of Ireland founded by John Henry Newman. The event in London was held in partnership with Notre Dame London at Fischer Hall, just off Trafalgar Square.

L-R: Sir Brendan Foster, Dr Fenwick Lawson and Alan Smith OBE DL



Fenwick's daughter, Anna, thanked the guests and the members of the Durham parish and county councils, including Grenville Holland, who proposed the plaque, and parish clerk Adam Shanley, who brought the project to fruition.

She also paid tribute to her mother, saying: "She can't be here, but without her, the majority of this would not have happened. She worked full-time as a teacher to help finance dad's work. She's worked side by side with him on mosaic works. She's fed him, comforted him, and motivated him. She's been his rock."

In May 2008, at the launch conference for the CCS, Anna presented on Fenwick's work under the title, '3D Theology: A Sculptor on His Work', and Fenwick generously gave permission for the CCS to use images of his evocative work on our website.

Speaking of the long relationship between the CCS and Fenwick, CCS Co-Director, Paul Murray, writes: "The scale and style of Fenwick Lawson's distinctive chain-saw sculptures are a key aspect of the Christian imaginary of the North-East of England and leave a lasting impression on all who encounter them on visits to the region. This is, perhaps, most poignantly so of the magnificent Pietà which has found its proper permanent home in the Chapel of the Nine Altars of Durham Cathedral.

"It is fitting that, as displayed on our prayer card, the CCS adopted an image of Fenwick's 'Young Bede' as a key symbol. This very fine piece was commissioned by the Pontifical Bede College, Rome, and was carved by Fenwick from a piece of fallen Chestnut tree which had once grown in the grounds of the Cathedral. In turn, Durham University commissioned a bronze casting, which now stands in the Bill Bryon Library, the University's main library building, amidst the young scholars of today."

L-R: Christ Trott (British ambassador), Dr James Kelly (general editor), Rev Professor Mícheál Mac Craith, OFM (Guardian of St Isidore's), Professor John McCafferty (general editor), Frances Collins (Irish ambassador).



The work, which spans five volumes and includes over 80 contributors, is the first of its kind. It includes contributions from a number of CCS members, including Liam Temple, Capuchin Fellow in the History of Catholicism, acting as co-editor of the second volume, while Alana Harris, an Honorary Fellow of the CCS, edited the final volume. Amongst the contributors are CCS Honorary Fellows Cormac Begadon, Michael Questier and Maurice Whitehead.

Events: Easter Term 2024

Catholic Theology Research Seminars*

Thur 9 May 5pm BST (GMT+1)	Brian Casey (University of Durham) <i>The Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood and the challenges of missionary expansion, 1946-1971</i>	In-person, Sem Rm B, Abbey House and Online
Thur 16 May 5pm BST (GMT+1)	Jaisy Joseph (Assistant Professor of Systematic and Constructive Theology, Department of Theology & Religious Studies, Villanova University) <i>Catholic Approaches to Race and Racism before and after Vatican II</i>	Online
Thur 23 May 5pm BST (GMT+1)	Sarah Barthélemy (University of Durham) <i>Models of religious life in French seventeenth-century missions: laywomen and spiritual direction</i>	In-person, Sem Rm B, Abbey House and Online
Thur 6 Jun 5pm BST (GMT+1)	Oliver Keenan (Director of the Aquinas Institute, University of Oxford) <i>Irony and Uncanny Revelation: The Work of Truth in Theology</i>	In-person, Sem Rm B, Abbey House

International Scholars for the History of Women Religious Association*

Wed 5 June 12pm BST (GMT +1)	Annalaura Turiano (Université Gustave Eiffel, France) <i>Italian missionaries in Egypt and Syria (1890 – 1940): gender, education and the making of an informal empire</i>	Online
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Conferences

15 - 16 Jul 2024	Early Career and Postgraduate Conference The Early Career Conference, hosted by the Centre for Catholic Studies and the Department of Theology and Religion, is a chance for postgraduate students and other early career researchers to meet and to present their research in a collegial environment.	Durham University
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This interdisciplinary conference will focus on:

- Catholic Theology and Catholic Studies (Day One)
- Theology & Religious Studies, the global and the local (Day Two)

For more details and to register, please visit:

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

* 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://tinyurl.com/ccsmailinglist>

Catholic Theology by Distance Learning

Study at your own pace, in any time zone, alongside work, ministry, family or caring commitments.

Enrol for a Postgraduate Certificate, a Postgraduate Diploma, the full MA, or even test the waters cautiously by enrolling on the core module, 'Catholic Theology: A Preliminary Tour', as a stand-alone option.

Watch a video about the course with Karen Kilby and Anna Rowlands talking about the programme's scope, modules and who the programme is intended for at shorturl.at/uHMR9, and find full details of the programme at shorturl.at/jvLW7.

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

centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk - Catholic Theology in the Public Academy

✉ ccs.admin@durham.ac.uk

☎ +44 (0) 191 334 1656

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