

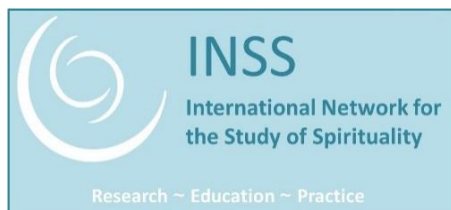
Seventh International Conference of the  
International Network for the Study of Spirituality

# **Spirituality, Critical Reflection and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World**

incorporating a celebration of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*

South East Technological University  
Waterford, Ireland  
16-18 May 2023

**WELCOME**



## The International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

is registered in England and Wales as a Company Limited by Guarantee (No: 7549446)  
and  
is registered in England and Wales as a Charity (No: 1166990)



**The INSS is a unique international network for people interested in bringing the study of spirituality to life through research, scholarship, education and practice.**

---

The International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) aims to facilitate the critical exploration of spirituality within the theory and practice of a wide range of academic and applied disciplines. It seeks to offer a space, both physical and conceptual, where multi-disciplinary research and conversations in the field of spirituality studies may be drawn together to contribute both to a better understanding of spirituality in professional and everyday practices, and to the development of new theoretical frameworks.

**Our mission is to contribute to research in, and the development of, a field of enquiry that makes a difference, both now and in the future.**

The International Network for the Study of Spirituality is a member of the UK Register of Charities where the strategic objectives of INSS are formally recorded in the following terms:

"For the benefit of the public throughout the United Kingdom and internationally, to facilitate increasing awareness, understanding, respect for and support of, people's spirituality, both in professional contexts and the wider community, by promoting:

- the critical study of all aspects of spirituality;
- education and dissemination regarding these matters;
- the development of inclusive and respectful policies and professional practices."

**Join INSS at <https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/>**

## INSS Executive Committee

<https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/INSS-Executive-Committee>



- Dr Joan Walton, Chair
- Ms Julie Billingham, Strategy Advisor on Operations and Technology
- Dr Cheryl Hunt, Founding and outgoing Editor in Chief, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*
- Mr Armando Lüscher, Digital Infrastructure Manager
- Dr Sophie McKenzie, Social Media Coordinator
- Mrs Helen McSherry, Treasurer
- Prof. Wilfred McSherry, Co-Editor in Chief, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*
- Dr Michael O'Sullivan, 2023 Conference Chair, Links Coordinator
- Prof. Melanie Rogers, Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIG Co-ordinator
- Prof. Linda Ross, Co-Editor in Chief, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*
- Dr David Rousseau, outgoing Chair, Company Secretary
- Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr, Book Reviews Editor, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*



## Collaborative partners with INSS for this conference

### Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)



<https://spiritualityinstitute.ie>

### SETU Spirituality in Society and the Professions Research Group (SpirSoP)



[https://www.wit.ie/research/centres\\_and\\_groups/wit\\_research\\_groups/humanities-research-groups/spirsop/](https://www.wit.ie/research/centres_and_groups/wit_research_groups/humanities-research-groups/spirsop/)

### South East Technological University, Ireland



*The conference is kindly supported by the SETU Research Connexions fund*



**INSS gratefully acknowledges the financial and organisational support of its collaborative partners, without which this conference could not have taken place.**

*A complimentary copy of the Tenth Anniversary issue of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality has been kindly supplied for each delegate by the publisher, Routledge, Taylor and Francis.*

## Table of Contents

### Page

2	The International Network for the Study of Spirituality
3	INSS Executive Committee
4	Collaborative partners for this conference
6	Welcome from Joan Walton, Chair of INSS
7	Welcome from Michael O’Sullivan, Conference Chair
8	<b>Conference programme</b>
10	Conference information
	<b>Public and Keynote presentations – Abstracts</b>
12	Dr Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK
13	Prof. Jonathan M. Wooding, University of Sydney, Australia
13	Prof. John Swinton, University of Aberdeen, UK
14	Dr Niamh Brennan, Independent Scholar and Author, Ireland
15	Dr Michael O’Sullivan, South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland
	<b>Parallel sessions programme</b>
16	Session 1 - Tuesday 14.30-16.15
18	Poster viewing - Tuesday 16.15-16.45
19	Session 2 - Tuesday 16.45-17.55
20	Session 3 - Wednesday 10.30-12.15
22	Session 4 - Wednesday 14.15-15.30
24	Session 5 - Wednesday 15.40-16.45
25	Session 6 - Thursday 10.10-11.55
26	Session 7 - Thursday 13.10-14.20
29	<b>Parallel session presentations – Abstracts</b> <i>(in alphabetical order of [first] presenter’s surname)</i>
75	Find out more about the <i>Journal for the Study of Spirituality</i>
75	Find out more about INSS Activities
76	An invitation to become more involved in INSS



## Welcome from Dr Joan Walton, Chair of INSS



It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) to our Seventh International Conference: *Spirituality, Critical Reflection and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World*. It has become something of a cliché to say that we live in an uncertain world, but it also reflects the reality of our experience. Covid-19 exacerbated this, causing disruption in the personal and professional lives of many, including an increase in physical and mental health problems. It is to consider this that we are here, exploring in depth the relationship between spirituality, and the uncertainties that beset us in the material world, with specific reference to what this means for professional practice.

It is particularly wonderful that we are able, once again, to have a real meeting, given that – due to the pandemic – the previous conference in 2021 had to be held online. Successful as that was, we did hope that the next conference would not need to be – and here we are. It is notable that we have presentations from scholars coming from 27 different countries, which I think demonstrates the enthusiasm for a live in-person event. We hope that you will find the conference an exciting and inspiring three days, which will give you the opportunity to engage in conversations with others having similar scholarly interests.

This is my first time being present at this conference as Chair of the Executive Committee. I would like to thank all members of the committee for the work they do throughout the year to enable INSS to thrive. There is excellent teamwork, and it is a privilege to work with so many dedicated people.

I especially want to thank Michael O’Sullivan for the work he has undertaken to enable this conference to take place. He has put tremendous time and effort into its organisation, making sure that no aspect of the planning is omitted. As a consequence, we have more presenters and participants attending this conference than at any previous INSS (formerly BASS) event.

I also want to thank Cheryl Hunt, whose recently published book *Critical Reflection, Spirituality and Professional Practice* influenced the title of this conference, which she will draw on in her presentation as a Keynote speaker. Being a founding Director of INSS, and founding Chief Editor of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, it is clear that we might not be meeting here at this event if it were not for her vision and drive over the years.

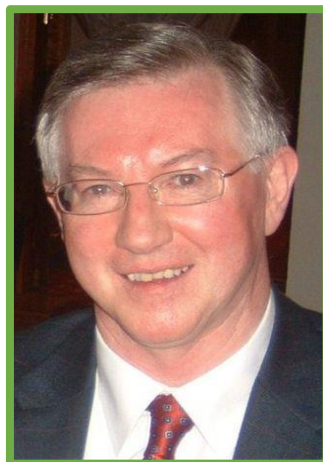
Finally, I want to convey a special thank you to David Rousseau, who is stepping down as Chair of the INSS Executive Committee. David has worked immensely hard in this role for several years, and we are very grateful for his substantial contribution to the successful development of INSS during that time. Fortunately, he will remain on the Committee as Company Secretary, so INSS will still benefit from his skills and experience.

It only remains for me now to wish you an enjoyable and enriching time, conversing with others who have a shared interest in studying and researching the significance of Spirituality, Critical Reflection and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World.

*Joan*



## Welcome from Dr Michael O'Sullivan, Conference Chair



A warm welcome to all of you to Waterford and to Ireland. This year, for the first time, the biennial conference of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality is taking place outside the UK and we are delighted to hold it at South East Technological University (SETU), Waterford Campus and to have it opened by our President, Prof. Veronica Campbell. The South East Technological University came into being on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. It is the only university in Ireland with MA and PhD studies in applied spirituality. The graduates have gone on to publish their work, present at conferences, and take up leadership roles in various countries and professions. SETU is also the only university in Ireland with a Research Group in spirituality studies. The Group is called Spirituality in Society and the Professions (SpirSoP [www.wit.ie/spirsop](http://www.wit.ie/spirsop)) and was inspired by my colleague, Dr Bernadette Flanagan, who along with one of our graduates and Honorary Research Associate, Prof. Kerri Clough, is co-editing the *Routledge International Handbook of Research Methods in Spirituality and Contemplative Studies (Spring 2024)*. The book promises to be a ground-breaking publication on the subject. All these developments have benefited greatly from the wonderful vision and support of our SETU colleagues: Dr Suzanne Denieffe, Head of School of Humanities, Dr Susan Flynn, Head of Dept. of Arts, Dr Geraldine Canny, Head of Research, and Prof. Mark White, as well as other SETU academic colleagues we have worked with over the past eight years since spirituality studies became part of the university: Prof. Michael Howlett, Dr Richard Hayes, Dr Michael Bergin, Dr Seamus Dillon, Dr Patrick Lynch, Dr Paul O'Leary, and Dr Don O'Neill.

The INSS conference is the third International spirituality studies conference to take place in what is now SETU. The previous ones were on 'Pilgrimage and the Evolution of Spiritual Tourism' (in 2018) and 'Spirituality in Society and the Professions' (in 2019 in partnership with the European Spirituality in Economics and Society Institute). Like the two previous conferences, this one, too, is supported by the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE – [www.spiritualityinstitute.ie](http://www.spiritualityinstitute.ie)) based in Dublin. All the trustees of SpIRE, and the members of the Advisory Committee, are participating at this conference and are among those wearing yellow lanyards.

The INSS Executive Committee is delighted with the range of abstracts that we have received, and also that we have such a strong international participation with delegates coming from 27 countries.

We hope you will take the opportunity to network and find partners for future research and publication projects. We hope, too, that you may have time to experience the attractions of Waterford which is Ireland's oldest city and which is located in a region called "Ireland's Ancient East".

**Céad míle fáilte to you all**, which is a traditional Irish language greeting meaning, **a hundred thousand welcomes**. I wish you a stimulating and uplifting experience, and look forward to meeting you all.

*Michael*



Seventh International Conference of the  
International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

***Spirituality, Critical Reflection, and Professional Practice  
in an Uncertain World***

**PROGRAMME**

**Tuesday 16 May 2023**

- From 12 noon      *Registration and Refreshments – SETU Viking Restaurant*
- 13.00-13.20      **Welcome** by Prof. Veronica Campbell, President of SETU, and introductory comments by Dr Michael O’Sullivan, Conference Chair – **Main Auditorium**
- 13.20-14.20      **Keynote 1: Dr Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK.**  
***‘Doing’ Reflective Practice and Understanding Spirituality as a Way of Being: Implications for Professional and Transformative Practice.***  
– **Main Auditorium**  
*Chair: Dr Joan Walton, INSS*
- 14.30-16.15      Parallel Sessions (1) – **Tourism and Leisure Building (T & L)**
- 16.15-16.45      *Refreshments and poster viewing – T & L / Open area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*
- 16.45-17.55      Parallel Sessions (2) – **T & L Building**
- 18.15-19.15      *Buffet Meal – SETU Viking Restaurant*
- 19.30-20.30      **Public Lecture: Professor Jonathan Wooding, University of Sydney, Australia.**  
***Seeking God at the World’s Edge: The Contemporary Appeal of ‘Celtic’ Spirituality.*** – **Main Auditorium**  
*Chair: Dr Seamus Dillon, SETU*  
*(Coach after lecture to Tower Hotel for those staying there)*

**Wednesday 17 May 2023**

- 08.30-08.45      *‘Spirit Moment’ (optional) Dr Phil Brennan – Main Auditorium*
- 09.00-10.00      **Keynote 2: Prof. John Swinton, University of Aberdeen, UK.**  
***Thickening Spirituality: Finding Depth within the Spirituality and Health Conversation.*** – **Main Auditorium**  
*Chair: Prof. Wilf McSherry, INSS*
- 10.00-10.20      *Refreshments – Main Atrium*
- 10.30-12.15      Parallel Sessions (3) – **T & L Building**



12.15-13.15	<b>Keynote 3: Dr Niamh Brennan, Independent Scholar &amp; Author, Ireland.</b> <b><i>Narrative and the Task of Spirituality. An Investigation of 'The Universe Story' and its Urgent Implications for Understanding and Practising Spirituality.</i></b> – <b>Main Auditorium</b> <i>Chair: Prof. Melanie Rogers, INSS</i>
13.15-14.15	<i>Lunch – SETU Viking Restaurant</i>
14.15-15.30	Parallel Sessions (4) – <b>T &amp; L Building</b>
15.30-15.40	<i>Break</i>
15.40-16.45	Parallel Sessions (5) – <b>T &amp; L Building</b>
15.45-16.40	<i>Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS) Editorial Board meeting (closed session) – T &amp; L Building, Room 235</i>
15.45-16.40	<i>Spirituality Scholars' Network (SSN) meeting – T &amp; L Building, Room 238</i>
16.45-17.30	<b>Drinks Reception, short talk and news about JSS, hosted by the Journal for the Study of Spirituality.</b> <u>All conference delegates welcome.</u> – <b>T &amp; L / Open area at end of 1<sup>st</sup> floor</b>
17.30	<i>Coach to Tower Hotel for those staying there</i>
19.30	<i>Conference Dinner (optional) in Tower Hotel</i>

## Thursday 18 May 2023

08.30-08.45	<i>'Spirit Moment' (optional) Dr Phil Brennan – Main Auditorium</i>
09.00-10.00	<b>Keynote 4: Dr Michael O'Sullivan, South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland</b> <b><i>Authentic Subjectivity and Spirituality in the University.</i></b> – <b>Main Auditorium</b> <i>Chair: Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr, INSS</i>
10.10-11.55	Parallel Sessions (6) – <b>T &amp; L Building</b>
12.00-13.00	<i>Lunch – SETU Viking Restaurant</i>
13.10-14.20	Parallel Sessions (7) – <b>T &amp; L Building</b>
14.30-15.15	Closing Plenary – <b>Main Auditorium</b>
15.30	<i>Depart (Coach to Tower Hotel for those staying there)</i>



## Conference Information

### General Guidelines

- The Evening Lecture on 16 May by Prof. Jonathan Wooding will refer to the story of St Brendan, the Navigator, whose feast-day coincides with the opening day of the INSS 2023 conference. See: <https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/St-Brendan>
- **W1 bus** goes to the campus every 30 mins from the clock tower very close to The Granville and Dooleys hotels and **W2 bus** returns there.
- Consider downloading the **Rapid Cabs app** to your phone and setting up an account.
- There will be a few tables at the conference where flyers about events will be left, including discount order forms for Dr Cheryl Hunt's book which led to the conference title.

### Guidelines for Presenters and Parallel Session Chairs

#### *Before the Conference*

If you are intending to use PowerPoint it is **essential to have sent a pdf copy of your presentation** directly to Dr Paul Clogher ([Paul.Clogher@setu.ie](mailto:Paul.Clogher@setu.ie)) **by the beginning of May** and marked as 'Conference Presentation' in the subject field.

#### *Length of each presentation*

**Parallel session presentations** (30 mins: **20 mins talk** + 10 mins Q&A)

**Dialogue Pairs** (30 mins except for one of 60 mins, as indicated)

**Symposia** (90 mins)

**Workshops** (60 mins)

➤ ***These times will be strictly adhered to, so please time your presentation in advance!***

#### *General 'Etiquette'*

- Papers to be presented in the parallel sessions have been grouped as far as possible in terms of theme. In a few cases, especially where participants have asked to give their presentation in a specific slot, the coherence may not be quite so strong – but we are certain that useful connections will arise in discussion!
- As a courtesy, we ask that the presenters in each group attend the other presentations in that group and that the Chair is present for the full session.
- **We also strongly encourage all participants to remain in the same room for the group of presentations.** We recognise that some movement may be necessary to accommodate specific interests – but please note that the maximum 30 minutes for each presentation *and discussion* will be strictly adhered to so it would be greatly appreciated if anyone wishing to attend another presentation in a different room could do so as quickly and unobtrusively as possible. Thank you 😊

## On the day

- *Those wearing yellow lanyards will be able to assist you with inquiries.*
- *The rooms to which each group of presenters has been allocated are shown in this booklet (pp.16-28).* Check which room you are in and please go to that room **at least 5 minutes before the start of the session**. This will allow time for checking that everything is in order
- The Session Chair will briefly introduce each presenter (name and institutional affiliation) and invite the first presenter to begin.
- The Session Chair will tell presenters when they have 5 minutes left and 1 minute left. Presenters will then be asked to stop.
- Presenters will have 10 minutes to take questions from participants before their 'slot' finishes.
- The Session Chair may wish to make a note of common or contrasting ideas between papers and help to draw these out in facilitating discussion.

## Sharing your experience

Contact Dr Sophie MacKenzie about participating in our INSS and JSS

Social Media activities: [smackenzie@aecc.ac.uk](mailto:smackenzie@aecc.ac.uk)



@INSSpirituality

😊 Enjoy the conference everyone 😊



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay



## Public and Keynote Presentations

### ABSTRACTS



#### ***‘Doing’ Reflective Practice and Understanding Spirituality as a Way of Being: Implications for Professional and Transformative Practice.***

**Dr Cheryl Hunt**

University of Exeter, UK.

(Chair: Dr Joan Walton, INSS Chair)

**ABSTRACT:** Reflective practice has been described as a means of ‘having 20 years’ experience rather than one year’s experience twenty times over’ and is often understood as a means of exploring the ‘What?’, ‘How?’ and (less often) ‘Why?’ questions that drive professional practices. ‘Doing’ reflective practice in this way can undoubtedly provide insights and new perspectives with which to develop and enhance professional practice – but it can also be seen simply as a ‘chore’, another requirement of an institutional audit culture and/or of the assessment of professional education and training. In this lecture I will illustrate from personal experience how including the ‘Who?’ question – ‘Who is the self that practices?’ -in one’s reflective practices can change the nature of the inquiry.

I will also address the question of what makes reflection ‘critical’. This is generally regarded as reflection resulting in action in order to effect change in personal, social and/or political circumstances, particularly in relation to social justice. Drawing on the work of Parker Palmer on what constitutes ‘vocation’ and John Heron on different forms of knowledge, I will suggest that to ask ‘Who am I?’ can shed light on the relationship between spirituality and the material world of everyday practice, including what it means to be a professional. It is a light which can help us not only to see better how our own innate sense of ‘beingness’ and ongoing experiences and ideas feed directly into our roles as professionals, but to consider the transformative potential of those roles.

**Cheryl Hunt** is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Exeter UK where she was formerly the Director of Professional Doctorates in the Graduate School of Education. She has designed, directed and facilitated numerous academic and professional programmes involving reflective practices. A Director and Trustee of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality since its inception, she is also the Founding and outgoing Editor-in-Chief of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality; and the author of *Critical Reflection, Spirituality and Professional Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021).



## ***Seeking God at the World's Edge: The Contemporary Appeal of 'Celtic' Spirituality.***

**Prof. Jonathan Wooding**

University of Sydney, Australia.

(Chair: Dr Seamus Dillon, SETU, Dept Head)

**ABSTRACT:** Over the last half-century, but especially since the 1980s, people have turned to the early churches of the Celtic-speaking nations as a source of inspiration for spirituality. For some

this has been an historical search for alternative models of 'church' to those of the present day. Others are inspired by the monastic culture of the Celtic churches, which exhibits on the one hand an appealingly ascetic spirituality, and on the other a richness of artistic as well as literary expression.

This lecture will explore themes in 'Celtic Christianity', particularly with reference to the story of St Brendan, whose feast-day coincides with this opening day of the INSS 2023 conference. This is a tale that has had an enduring appeal for its narrative of monks who seek God in the ocean. Thomas Merton saw in it a 'a symbolic tract on the monastic life', but lay readers also find in it a reflection on earthly existence and life in community. It has inspired many modern writers on spirituality, for example Cynthia Bourgeault and Ray Simpson, as well as novelists who have mediated religious narratives for a wider reading public, such as C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Frederick Beuchner.

*Jonathan Wooding is an Australian-born church historian. He was director of the programmes in Celtic Christianity at the University of Wales Lampeter/Trinity Saint David from 1998-2013. He held the Sir Warwick Fairfax Chair of Celtic Studies at the University of Sydney from 2013-21. He has written or edited sixteen books and has written over 60 articles or chapters in books concerning topics in church history, monasticism, and the cult of saints in the Celtic world—including several studies of the cult of St Brendan.*



## ***Thickening Spirituality: Finding Depth within the Spirituality and Health Conversation.***

**Prof. John Swinton**

University of Aberdeen, UK.

(Chair: Prof. Wilf McSherry, INSS, JSS Co-Editor in Chief)

**ABSTRACT:** Within the conversations around spirituality and healthcare there are many different ways in which spirituality is conceptualised and understood. The way we conceptualise

spirituality determines what we think we should do with it. Concepts matter. Concepts such as meaning, purpose, dignity, hope, relationality, and transcendence are often used to describe the essence of what spirituality 'is'. These are important. There is, however, a tendency to develop 'thin' descriptions of the various aspects of spirituality – with the accompanying danger that thin practices will emerge from such descriptions. This lecture will explore what a 'thick' description of spirituality might look like – and what kinds of understandings and practices might emerge from such a description.





**John Swinton** is Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care and Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. In 2004, he founded the University of Aberdeen's Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability. He has published widely within the area of mental health, dementia, disability theology, spirituality and healthcare, qualitative research, and pastoral care.



## ***Narrative and the Task of Spirituality. An Investigation of 'The Universe Story' and its Urgent Implications for Understanding and Practising Spirituality.***

**Dr Niamh Brennan**

Independent Scholar and Author, Ireland.

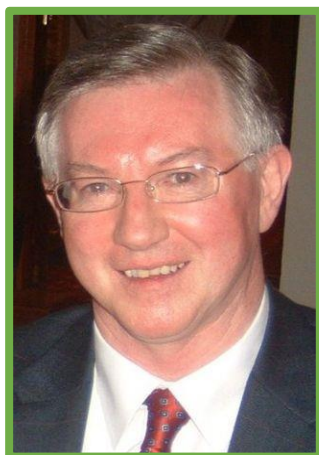
(Chair: Prof. Melanie Rogers, INSS, SSN/SIGs Co-ordinator)

**ABSTRACT:** Thomas Berry has written that 'it is all a question of story'. We are in trouble, he laments, because we do not have 'a good story'. The old story of 'how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective' and so, he argues, we need a new story that will provide the context 'in which life [can] function in a meaningful manner.' French hermeneut, Paul Ricoeur, makes the claim that 'life can be understood only through the stories that we tell about it, then an examined life, in the sense of the word as we have borrowed it from Socrates, is a life recounted'. This is achieved by the unity provided by narrative and the way in which it can hold together seemingly dichotomous events and concepts. Both thinkers' commitment to narrative is striking, although from different approaches. Ricoeur analysed the function and purpose of narrative while Berry accepted the power of narrative unquestioningly and used it to propose a new human understanding within an evolving cosmos. The first articulation of this 'New Story' in its stand-alone version was developed by Berry and mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme, in *The Universe Story* in 1992. It recounts the scientific development of the universe in a narrative, mythical style. If, as Eaton argues, the cultural narrative of the West was one of 'disenchantment', Berry and Swimme's 'Universe Story' is a counter narrative which integrates the natural world with a spiritual vision and offers a revitalised cultural narrative within a cosmological framework.

This lecture will examine the role that narrative plays in the development of subjectivity, with a specific focus on the critical and challenging implications of the Universe Story for our spirituality, and in particular, its manifestation in our educational, religious and economic institutions.

**Niamh Brennan** is a writer and lecturer in the area of cosmology, ecology and spirituality. She is author of *The Human in the Universe* (Wyndham Hall Press 2014) and co-author with Greg Morter of *The Universe Story in Science and Myth* (Green Spirit 2016). She has contributed to several journals including *Religions*; *Worldviews: Global Religions, Ecology and Culture*; *Spirituality*; and *The Furrow*.





## ***Authentic Subjectivity and Spirituality in the University.***

**Dr Michael O'Sullivan**

South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland.

(Chair: Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr, INSS, JSS Book Reviews)

**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this lecture is to show the value of authentic subjectivity as a methodology for living and studying spirituality critically, empathetically, and transformatively. It will do so in the context of focussing on spirituality in the university, where people are educated to be scholars, researchers, and professionals.

The study of spirituality in university settings faces a number of challenges. It must have a distinctive identity. It must have a field of study that corresponds to it and a distinctive way of studying the field. A third challenge is how to preserve its integrity by not denying its self-implicating character while at the same time exercising critical thinking. This issue highlights a fourth challenge, namely how to reconcile subjectivity and objectivity. Fifthly, in today's world spirituality in the university also needs to be studied in a way that can include everyone, while at the same time providing for the differences that exist between, for example, people who live by a religious spirituality, and those who are spiritual but not religious. As well as catering for the different spirituality life-views, the inclusive character of spirituality as a university discipline must also cater for the rapidly growing phenomenon of 'spirituality and' which is the most striking development in the discipline in recent years. 'Spirituality and' refers to the huge growth in interest in spirituality among the professions.

I will address these issues of identity, integrity, objectivity, and inclusivity for spirituality as a university discipline by means of what I call the methodology of authentic subjectivity. Doing research, teaching, writing, leadership, and administration, etc. in the university according to this methodology is a contemplative and rigorous spiritual practice and allows both the field of spirituality studies to be set by the unlimited scope of the transforming spirit of authenticity and the resources it draws on to do such studies to be open-ended.

**Michael O'Sullivan** is Co-Founder and Director of the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) in Dublin, Ireland ([www.spiritualityinstitute.ie](http://www.spiritualityinstitute.ie)) and a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State, South Africa. He is a Director and Trustee of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality and member of the Editorial Boards of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality and Spiritus. He is Emeritus Senior Lecturer at South East Technological University, Ireland, and a founding member of the university's research group on Spirituality in Society and the Professions (SpirSoP). He was formerly Founding Programme Leader of the university's MA in Applied Spirituality.



## Parallel Sessions

(Total 82 + 2 Posters)

**Tuesday 16 May**

**Session 1 – 14.30-16.15** (16 presentations – 1 symposium + 5 panels of 3 x 30 mins each)

<b>Pilgrimage</b>
<b>Room TL 245 Chair: Dr Noelia Molina</b>
<p><b>Symposium</b></p> <p><b>From Local Sites to Global Encounters: Aspects of Pilgrimage Practice with reference to Recovery from Uncertainty</b></p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Bernadette <b>Flanagan</b>  <a href="mailto:Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie">Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie</a>            South East Technological University, Ireland and SpIRE</p> <p>Dr Jaeyeon <b>Choe</b>  <a href="mailto:jayeon.choe@gmail.com">jayeon.choe@gmail.com</a>            Glasgow Caledonian University            School of Hospitality and Tourism, Hue University, Vietnam</p> <p>Iain <b>Tweeddale</b>  <a href="mailto:tweeddale.iain@gmail.com">tweeddale.iain@gmail.com</a>            Journeying Pilgrimage Company</p>

Art and Literature		
Room TL 249 Chair: Prof. Michael Howlett		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>'In danger': tragedy and hope in Pasolini's cinematic spirituality</b></p> <p>Dr Paul <b>Clogher</b> <a href="mailto:Paul.Clogher@setu.ie">Paul.Clogher@setu.ie</a> Theology &amp; Religious Studies, South East Technological University, Ireland</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Across border learning: Extending relational practices through the creation of collaborative communal poetry</b></p> <p>Caroline <b>Coyle</b> <a href="mailto:ccoyle@ait.ie">ccoyle@ait.ie</a> Lecturer, Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, Ireland</p> <p><i>Additional author unable to co-present:</i></p> <p>Shemine <b>Gulamhusein</b> <a href="mailto:shemineg@uvic.ca">shemineg@uvic.ca</a> University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The 'Journey's Hero': Learning from Dante in times of crisis and transformation</b></p> <p>Lee Andrew <b>Newitt</b> <a href="mailto:Lee.newitt@bucks.ac.uk">Lee.newitt@bucks.ac.uk</a> Buckinghamshire New University, UK</p>

Health Care		
Room TL 250 Chair: Prof. Linda Ross		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Responding to the spiritual needs of clients who have left a religious community</b></p> <p>Dr Maria Björkmark  <a href="mailto:maria.bjorkmark@abo.fi">maria.bjorkmark@abo.fi</a>  Åbo Akademi University,  Department of Caring Science,  Vasa, Finland</p>	<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>A semiotic approach to the ethics of care and its spirituality: A study case of nursing</b></p> <p>Mary Beth Bowen  <a href="mailto:Mbowen@ost.edu">Mbowen@ost.edu</a>  PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, USA</p> <p>Dr Paniel Osberto Reyes Cardenas  <a href="mailto:panielosberto.reyes@upaep.mx">panielosberto.reyes@upaep.mx</a>  UPAEP (People's University of Puebla State, Puebla, Mexico)  Visiting Professor at Oblate School of Theology</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Identifying and operationalizing spiritual strengths: Familiarizing healthcare professionals with a complementary family of spiritual assessment options</b></p> <p>Dr David Hodge  <a href="mailto:DavidHodge@asu.edu">DavidHodge@asu.edu</a>  Arizona State University, USA</p>

Mental Health/Counselling		
Room TL 225 Chair: Dr Noel Keating		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Mental Health Service Users Perceptions of Spirituality – a Mixed Methods Study</b></p> <p>Prof. Melanie Rogers  <a href="mailto:m.rogers@hud.ac.uk">m.rogers@hud.ac.uk</a>  School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, UK</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Finding HOPE in existential crisis – the role of spirituality in suicide aftercare and prevention</b></p> <p>Dr Simon Jones  <a href="mailto:Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au">Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au</a>  La Trobe University, Albury Wodonga Health, Australia</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Perceptions in an uncertain world: Findings from a continuous cross-sectional study on hopes, ideals and fears during the COVID-19 pandemic</b></p> <p>Univ.-Prof. Dr med. Arndt Büssing  <a href="mailto:Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de">Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de</a>  Professorship Quality of Life, Spirituality and Coping University Witten/Herdecke, Germany</p>



<b>Higher Education</b>		
<b>Room TL 251 Chair: Dr Ruth Harris</b>		
<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Intentionality and Healing- Applying SOPHIE as a Reflexive Practice in Higher Education</b></p> <p>Dr Gulnar <b>Ali</b> <a href="mailto:g.ali@uel.ac.uk">g.ali@uel.ac.uk</a> Dept. of Psychosocial Studies, School of Education and Communities University of East London, UK</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Creative connecting: a case study exploring a person- centred approach to providing spiritual care in a higher education setting</b></p> <p>Lisa <b>Anthony</b> <a href="mailto:Lisa.ilira@icloud.com">Lisa.ilira@icloud.com</a> Counsellor. Supervisor and Spiritual Companion in private practice</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Reclaiming the “humanity” of higher education through spiritual resourcing</b></p> <p>Dr J. Cody <b>Nielsen</b> <a href="mailto:j.cody.nielsen@convergencesstrategies.org">j.cody.nielsen@convergencesstrategies.org</a> Dickinson College (USA) and Convergence Strategies Inc.</p>

<b>Spiritual Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Room TL 252 Chair: Dr Don O’Neill</b>		
<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Between suicide and (online) adoration in the pandemic: A philosophical analysis concerning Being and Presence</b></p> <p>Dr Peter <b>Kevern</b> <a href="mailto:p.kevern@staffs.ac.uk">p.kevern@staffs.ac.uk</a> Staffordshire University, UK</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Growing through grief: widowhood as a catalyst for spiritual development</b></p> <p>Margery <b>Buckingham</b> <a href="mailto:morganbuckingham@msn.com">morganbuckingham@msn.com</a> SETU MA graduate in Applied Spirituality, Ireland</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>The health and wellbeing benefits of spirituality</b></p> <p>Dr William <b>Bloom</b> <a href="mailto:william@spiritualcompanion.org">william@spiritualcompanion.org</a> Spiritual Companions Trust, UK</p>

**Poster viewing session - 16.15-16.45** (2 Posters - Viewing with authors, *and refreshments*)

<b>Posters can also be viewed throughout the conference</b>	
<b>Open area, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor</b>	
<p><b><u>Poster</u></b></p> <p><b>Nursing students’ perception about spirituality in end-of-life care: The body mapping technique as an expressive way</b></p> <p>Prof. M<sup>a</sup> Dolores <b>Fernández-Pascual</b> <a href="mailto:mariadolores.fernandez@ua.es">mariadolores.fernandez@ua.es</a> Department of Health Psychology. University of Alicante, Spain</p>	<p><b><u>Poster</u></b></p> <p><b>Use of a First-Person Spirituality Methodology in Pilgrimage</b></p> <p>Liz <b>Murray</b> <a href="mailto:liz.murray@postgrad.wit.ie">liz.murray@postgrad.wit.ie</a> PhD studies, SETU and SpIRE, Ireland</p>

**Session 2 - 16.45-17.55** (11 presentations – 1 workshop + 5 panels of 2 x 30 mins each)

<b>Eco-spirituality</b>
<b>Room TL 245 Chair: Dr Niamh Brennan</b>
<b>Workshop</b> <b>Nature is nurture: Eco-spirituality in times of eco-grief</b> Dr Megan E Delaney <a href="mailto:mdelaney@monmouth.edu">mdelaney@monmouth.edu</a> Assoc. Prof., Monmouth University, USA

<b>Teaching</b>
<b>Room TL 249 Chair: Dr Padraic Hurley</b>
<div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>Spiritual direction as a resource for teacher formation, wellbeing and resilience</b>  Dr Bernadette Miles  <a href="mailto:Bernadette.miles@kardia.com.au">Bernadette.miles@kardia.com.au</a>  Kardia Formation P/L; Stirling Theological College  - University of Divinity Melbourne Australia </div> <div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>Spiritually aware practice (SAP) in education: teaching that sparks the spirit</b>  Janet Monahan  <a href="mailto:j.monahan@herts.ac.uk">j.monahan@herts.ac.uk</a>  EdD studies and Senior Lecturer,  University of Hertfordshire, UK </div>

<b>Abuse</b>
<b>Room TL 250 Chair: Dr Elizabeth McCrory</b>
<div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>Spiritual Abuse in Christian spiritual accompaniment. Co-constructing meaning through narratives of the self by survivors</b>  Jesmond Apap  <a href="mailto:jesmond.apap.98@um.edu.mt">jesmond.apap.98@um.edu.mt</a>  PhD studies, University of Malta and SpIRE, Ireland </div> <div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>Made in God's image: The child sexual abuse survivor's embodied journey from deicide to resurrection</b>  Dr Sumer Bingham Musick  <a href="mailto:SumerBingham@upike.edu">SumerBingham@upike.edu</a>  University of Pikeville  Dr Robert Musick  <a href="mailto:RobertMusick@upike.edu">RobertMusick@upike.edu</a>  Chaplain/Instructor of Religious Studies, University of Pikeville, USA </div>

<b>Health Care</b>
<b>Room TL 225 Chair: Mr Philip Cremin</b>
<div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>Certain experiences in an uncertain world: Transpersonal experiences in epilepsy and meaning for those who have them</b>  Dr Louise N. Spiers  <a href="mailto:Louise.spiers@northampton.ac.uk">Louise.spiers@northampton.ac.uk</a>  University of Northampton, UK </div> <div> <b>Oral</b>  <b>A critical reflection on researching spiritual practices in the treatment of eating disorders</b>  Tara Travers  <a href="mailto:tara.travers@postgrad.wit.ie">tara.travers@postgrad.wit.ie</a>  PhD studies, South East Technological University and SpIRE, Ireland </div>



<b>Health Care</b>	
<b>Room TL 251 Chair: Ms Liz Murray (SpirSoP PhD Cand.)</b>	
<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Reflections prompted by a Qualitative Evidence Synthesis of Women's Experiences of Spirituality in Childbirth</b></p> <p>Dr Vivienne <b>Brady</b>  <a href="mailto:bradyvi@tcd.ie">bradyvi@tcd.ie</a>  School of Nursing &amp; Midwifery, Trinity College  Dublin, Ireland</p> <p>(Dr Noelia <b>Molina</b>  <a href="mailto:Noelia.Molina@setu.ie">Noelia.Molina@setu.ie</a>  South East Technological University and SpIRE,  Ireland)</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Lilias Trotter and Simone Weil: A duet of spiritual midwives for times of uncertainty</b></p> <p>Elizabeth <b>Millar</b>  <a href="mailto:elizabethmillar330@gmail.com">elizabethmillar330@gmail.com</a>  PhD studies, McMaster Divinity College, Canada</p>

<b>Mental Health</b>	
<b>Room TL 252 Chair: Ms Lesley O'Connor</b>	
<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Spirituality/religiosity and mental wellbeing among Israelis during the period of COVID-19</b></p> <p>Dr Ephraim <b>Shapiro</b>  <a href="mailto:eas97@columbia.edu">eas97@columbia.edu</a>  Ariel University, Israel</p>	<p><b><u>Oral</u></b></p> <p><b>Did I look at the blackness or did I look at the stars? Stories of spirituality, mental health and recovery: Meaning, connection and growth</b></p> <p>Katja <b>Milner</b>  <a href="mailto:katja.milner@nottingham.ac.uk">katja.milner@nottingham.ac.uk</a>  PhD studies, University of Nottingham UK  ESRC, Institute of Mental Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Health Sciences</p>

## Wednesday 17 May

**Session 3 - 10.30-12.15** (16 presentations – 1 Symposium + 5 panels of 3 x 30 mins each)

<b>Towards a homo-ecologicus system of human governance</b>
<b>Room TL 245 Chair: Dr Paul Clogher</b>
<p><b><u>Symposium</u></b></p> <p><b>The Law as a governing tool in shifting the narrative from homo-economicus to homo-ecologicus</b></p> <p>Prof. Séverine <b>Saintier</b>  <a href="mailto:saintiers@cardiff.ac.uk">saintiers@cardiff.ac.uk</a>  School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University, UK</p> <p>Alexandra <b>Pimor</b>  <a href="mailto:apimor@earthlaw.org">apimor@earthlaw.org</a>  Earth Law Centre</p> <p>Anthony <b>Zelle</b>  <a href="mailto:tzelle@earthlaw.org">tzelle@earthlaw.org</a>  Earth Law Center, USA</p>



Reframing Spirituality		
Room TL 249 Chair: Dr Bernadette Flanagan		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spirituality, complexity and public policy in an uncertain world</b></p> <p>Prof. Naresh Singh <a href="mailto:naresh@jgu.edu.in">naresh@jgu.edu.in</a> Professor &amp; Vice Dean, Jindal School of Government &amp; Public Policy. Director, Centre for Complexity Economics, Applied Spirituality and Public Policy. O.P Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana. India.</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Consciousness and spirituality: Are they two aspects of the same reality?</b></p> <p>Dr Joan Walton <a href="mailto:j.walton@yorks.ac.uk">j.walton@yorks.ac.uk</a> School of Education, Language &amp; Psychology, York St John University, York, UK.</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Vocational Pauses, Pivots, and Impediments: Exploring Spirituality under Covid</b></p> <p>Prof. Claire E. Wolfeich <a href="mailto:cwolftei@bu.edu">cwolftei@bu.edu</a> Boston University School of Theology, USA</p>

Higher Education		
Room TL 250 Chair: Prof. David Perrin		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Lecturer perspectives on opportunities for transformative learning for students of social sciences undertaking undergraduate research</b></p> <p>Dr Ruth Harris <a href="mailto:Ruth.Harris@tudublin.ie">Ruth.Harris@tudublin.ie</a> TU Dublin (School of Social Sciences, Law and Education)</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Education through Life Orientation: A spiritual Process of Awareness and (re)Positioning</b></p> <p>Dr Edwin van der Zande <a href="mailto:edwin.vanderzande@ru.nl">edwin.vanderzande@ru.nl</a> Titus Brandsma Institute (Nijmegen)</p>	<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>Belonging and spirituality – the missing link in a holistic educational experience</b></p> <p>Sandra Nolan, PhD Cand. <a href="mailto:20101812@mail.wit.ie">20101812@mail.wit.ie</a> South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland</p> <p>Dr Susan Flynn, supervisor, <a href="mailto:Susan.Flynn@wit.ie">Susan.Flynn@wit.ie</a> Head of Dept of Arts, SETU Waterford, Ireland</p>

Mysticism		
Room TL 225 Chair: Dr Éibhlís NicUaithuas		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World in Mystical Judaism</b></p> <p>Roz Brown <a href="mailto:rosslyn.brown@nottingham.ac.uk">rosslyn.brown@nottingham.ac.uk</a> Doctoral Researcher, University of Nottingham and Midlands4Cities, UK</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Occupying Your Heart with Love and Peace: A Study of Benny Tai's Understanding of Civil Disobedience and His Spirituality from the Perspective of Mysticism</b></p> <p>Hau Chi Chau <a href="mailto:csuchauhauchi@gmail.com">csuchauhauchi@gmail.com</a> PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>"Mixed Life" Mysticism for the present age: Resources from 14th century mystics</b></p> <p>Rev. Kevin Goodrich, OPA <a href="mailto:kgoodrich@dbq.edu">kgoodrich@dbq.edu</a> University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Anglican Order of Preachers (Dominicans)</p>



Health Care		
Room TL 251 Chair: Ms Diane Jackson (SpirSoP PhD Cand.)		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Implementation of the Spiritual Needs Screener in Palliative Care Counseling</b></p> <p>Univ. Prof. Dr med. Arndt Büssing  <a href="mailto:Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de">Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de</a>  Professorship Quality of Life, Spirituality and Coping  University Witten/Herdecke, Germany</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Moral distress and spiritual uncertainty among rural caregivers providing palliative and end of life care during pandemic</b></p> <p>Dr Nasreen Lalani  <a href="mailto:lananin@purdue.edu">lananin@purdue.edu</a>  Purdue University, IN, West Lafayette, USA</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Clinical simulation: The acquisition of spiritual care skills in 1<sup>st</sup> year nursing students</b></p> <p>Laura Martínez Rodríguez  <a href="mailto:laura.martinezr@ub.edu">laura.martinezr@ub.edu</a>  PhD studies, University of Barcelona, Spain</p>

Spiritual Practices		
Room TL 252 Chair: Dr Elizabeth McCrory		
<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>Critically reflecting on the language of the soul in narrative therapy and spiritual direction</b></p> <p>Dr Laura Béres  <a href="mailto:lberes2@uwo.ca">lberes2@uwo.ca</a>  Assoc. Professor &amp; Graduate Program Coordinator, School of Social Work, King's University College at Western University, Canada</p> <p>Dr David Crawley  <a href="mailto:dcrawley@laidlaw.ac.nz">dcrawley@laidlaw.ac.nz</a>  Laidlaw College, Auckland, New Zealand</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Stitching: Spiritual or not?</b></p> <p>Prof. Beth R. Crisp  <a href="mailto:beth.crisp@deakin.edu.au">beth.crisp@deakin.edu.au</a>  Deakin University, Australia</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The potential of religiously-unaffiliated spiritual practices for overcoming crisis situations. A qualitative exploration in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies</b></p> <p>Julia Dencker  <a href="mailto:juliadencker@outlook.de">juliadencker@outlook.de</a>  Junior Peace and Conflict Studies scientist at Otto-von-Guericke-University of Magdeburg, Germany</p>

**Session 4 - 14.15-15.30** (10 presentations – 1 Workshop + 1 dialogue pair 60 mins + 4 panels of 2 x 30 mins each)

Spirituality Frameworks for Professional Practice	
Room TL 245 Chair: Asst. Prof. Jacqueline Whelan	
<p><u>Workshop</u></p> <p><b>Including spirituality and religion in professional practice: Reflecting critically on your framework</b></p> <p>Dr Fiona Gardner  <a href="mailto:f.gardner@latrobe.edu.au">f.gardner@latrobe.edu.au</a>  La Trobe University, Australia</p>	

Spiritual Care Practice	
Room TL 249 Chair: Dr Sophie MacKenzie	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dialogue (60 mins)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spiritual care practices in the 21st century in care settings</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Claire Borrione  <a href="mailto:clairehibon1@gmail.com">clairehibon1@gmail.com</a>  Nurse, MSc in Palliative Medicine  Maison médicale Jeanne Garnier, France</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nicolas Pujol  <a href="mailto:pujolnicolas@ymail.com">pujolnicolas@ymail.com</a>  Psychologist, PhD Religious studies,  Maison médicale Jeanne Garnier, Paris, France</p>	
Social Work	
Room TL 250 Chair: Mr Philip Cremin	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oral</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spirituality and social work in uncertain times</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Claudia Psaila  <a href="mailto:claudia.psaila@um.edu.mt">claudia.psaila@um.edu.mt</a>  University of Malta</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oral</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spirituality and social work, state of art</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Enric Benavent-Vallès  <a href="mailto:ebenavent@peretarres.url.edu">ebenavent@peretarres.url.edu</a>  Pere Tarrés Faculty of Social Education and Social Work, Ramon Llull University, Spain</p>
Health Care	
Room TL 225 Chair: Prof. Linda Ross	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oral</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spirituality and nursing: Connecting the holy and human spirit in our work and world</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mary Beth Bowen  <a href="mailto:Mbowen@ost.edu">Mbowen@ost.edu</a>  PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, USA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dialogue</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Embedding compassion and spirituality into clinical education: A new approach</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Elisabeth Gulliksen  <a href="mailto:e.gulliksen@hud.ac.uk">e.gulliksen@hud.ac.uk</a>  School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, UK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prof. Melanie Rogers  <a href="mailto:m.rogers@hud.ac.uk">m.rogers@hud.ac.uk</a>  Professor of Advanced Practice and Spirituality, University of Huddersfield, UK</p>
Mental Health	
Room TL 251 Chair: Dr Padraic Hurley	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oral</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transformation in the Victorian mental health sector from a critical/integrative reflection, spirituality and lived experience perspective</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hannah Friebe-Gabbert  <a href="mailto:hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com">hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com</a>  Mental Health Consultant, Spiritual Care Studies &amp; Practitioner, Sydney School of Divinity and Monash Health, Australia</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oral</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The interface of spirituality and mental health care – a dialogue with epistemic justice</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Patricia Carlisle  <a href="mailto:p.carlisle@qub.ac.uk">p.carlisle@qub.ac.uk</a>  Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland</p>



Health Care	
Room TL 252 Chair: Prof. Wilf McSherry	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Reservoir or Canal: Spiritual refreshment for Aged Care Chaplains</b></p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Robyn <b>Wrigley-Carr</b>  <a href="mailto:rwrigley-carr@divinity.edu.au">rwrigley-carr@divinity.edu.au</a>  Associate Professor in Spiritual Care  University of Divinity, Australia</p>	<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>Personal spiritual care for professional spiritual caregivers: A dialogue about healing and wellbeing as a helping professional</b></p> <p>Rev. Kristen <b>Hydinger</b>, MDiv, MA  <a href="mailto:kredford@bu.edu">kredford@bu.edu</a>  Research Fellow, Boston University</p> <p>Rev. Dr Holly <b>Benzenhafer</b>  <a href="mailto:hollybenzen@gmail.com">hollybenzen@gmail.com</a>  Canyon Ranch Lenox  Spiritual Wellness Provider</p>

**Session 5 - 15.40-16.45** (5 presentations - Workshop + 2 panels of 2 x 30 mins each)

**JSS Editorial Board and SSN meet at this time also**

Supervision as Spiritual Practice
Room TL 245 Chair: Prof. Claire Wolfeich
<p><u>Workshop</u></p> <p><b>Spiritually-informed supervision: A practice to address the uncertainties of personal and professional development</b></p> <p>Dr Douglas S. <b>Hardy</b>  <a href="mailto:doug.hardy@nts.edu">doug.hardy@nts.edu</a>  Nazarene Theological Seminary, USA</p>

Mysticism	
Room TL 249 Chair: Dr Noelia Molina	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>A time of great confusion. What can we learn from Titus Brandsma (1881-1942)?</b></p> <p>Dr Anne-Marie <b>Bos</b> <a href="mailto:a.bos@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl">a.bos@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl</a> Titus Brandsma Instituut, Netherlands</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Tears of fire: Itinerary of soul suffering in uncertain times</b></p> <p>Dr Beverly <b>Lanzetta</b> <a href="mailto:blanzetta@icloud.com">blanzetta@icloud.com</a> Independent Scholar, USA</p>

Mental Health	
Room TL 250 Chair: Rev. Jesmond Apap	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>A systematised review of the Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR) Population and Public Health Outcomes</b></p> <p>Nicole <b>Holt</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:Nicole.holt@canterbury.ac.uk">Nicole.holt@canterbury.ac.uk</a></p> <p>Canterbury Christ Church University, UK</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spirituality and Diversity Discussions: A reflective practice training initiative for mental health sector workers</b></p> <p>Jennifer R <b>Greenham</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au">mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au</a></p> <p>Spiritual Health Association, Australia</p>

## Thursday 18 May

Session 6 - 10.10-11.55 (15 presentations – 5 panels of 3 x 30 mins each)

Existential Explorations		
Room TL 249 Chair: Dr Joan Walton		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Un-certainty as an overcoming of spiritual materialization</b></p> <p>Dr Erik Kuravsky  <a href="mailto:erikkuravsky@gmail.com">erikkuravsky@gmail.com</a>  Faculty of Catholic Theology,  University of Erfurt, Germany</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spirituality and adolescent uncertainty: 2 Be Loved (Am I Ready)</b></p> <p>Prof. Mary T. Kantor  <a href="mailto:kantorm@merrimack.edu">kantorm@merrimack.edu</a>  Merrimack College, Graduate Programs in Spirituality &amp; Spiritual Direction, North Andover, MA, &amp; Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, USA</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Everybody Hurts: Reimagining Humanity in the Face of Suffering and Compassion</b></p> <p>Sabine Wolsink  <a href="mailto:sabine.joanne.wolsink@univie.ac.at">sabine.joanne.wolsink@univie.ac.at</a>  PhD studies, University of Vienna, Austria</p>

Teaching		
Room TL 250 Chair: Dr Noel Keating		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spiritual, Religious, Secular?: The Different Meanings of Mindfulness in an Uncertain World and its Implications for the Irish Catholic Primary School Classroom</b></p> <p>Dr Tom Carroll  <a href="mailto:tom.carroll@mic.ul.ie">tom.carroll@mic.ul.ie</a>  Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Beyond wellbeing: exploring the relationships between psychological wellbeing, religiosity and religious coping amongst adolescents in post-primary schools in Ireland</b></p> <p>Dr Lydia Mannion  <a href="mailto:lydia.mannion@mic.ul.ie">lydia.mannion@mic.ul.ie</a>  Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spirituality in the English Language Classroom: Exploring Teacher Trainees' Views on Spirituality within the Context of Their Teaching Profession and Teaching Practice</b></p> <p>Dr Maria Hrickova  <a href="mailto:mhrickova@ukf.sk">mhrickova@ukf.sk</a>  Department of English and American Studies, Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia</p>

Social Justice		
Room TL 225 Chair: Dr Paul Clogher		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The transformative power of evangelical poverty: Developing a Franciscan spirituality of antiracism</b></p> <p>Prof Daniel P. Horan, OFM  <a href="mailto:dhoran@saintmarys.edu">dhoran@saintmarys.edu</a>  Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, USA</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Indigenous Spirituality in view of Missionary Activity in Nigerian Christianity (1880 - 1950)</b></p> <p>Onyewuchi Obirieze  <a href="mailto:afrogeografa@gmail.com">afrogeografa@gmail.com</a>  South East Technological University MA graduate in Applied Spirituality</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Effectuated Spirituality for Social Good.</b></p> <p>Ayodele Olusayo Osunmakinde  <a href="mailto:akindele.osunmakinde@gmail.com">akindele.osunmakinde@gmail.com</a>  School of Management, Marketing &amp; Leadership, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK.</p>



Health Care		
Room TL 251 Chair: Ms Geraldine Purcell		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The psychospiritual experiences of ethnically diverse healthcare staff during the COVID-19 pandemic</b></p> <p>Rev. Dr Guy Harrison  <a href="mailto:guy.harrison@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk">guy.harrison@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk</a>  <u>hs.uk</u>  Oxford Centre for Spirituality and Wellbeing (OxCSWell),  Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, UK</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spiritual Inscape- Staying real or losing faith? Teaching and Learning of Spirituality and Spiritual Care Perspectives arising from COVID – 19 Pandemic</b></p> <p>Asst. Prof. Jacqueline Whelan  <a href="mailto:whelanj1@tcd.ie">whelanj1@tcd.ie</a>  Faculty of Health Sciences,  School of Nursing &amp; Midwifery,  Trinity College Dublin</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Spiritual and emotional wellbeing and resilience of Advanced Clinical Practitioners during the Covid-19 pandemic</b></p> <p>Prof. Melanie Rogers  <a href="mailto:m.rogers@hud.ac.uk">m.rogers@hud.ac.uk</a>  School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, UK</p>

Contemplative Engagement		
Room TL 252 Chair: Dr Ruth Harris		
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Leading in a VUCA world: The spirituality of Thomas Merton (1915-1968) and its relevance for contemplative leadership</b></p> <p>Dr Elmor van Staden  <a href="mailto:vanstadenelmor@gmail.com">vanstadenelmor@gmail.com</a>  SPIRASA, IT Manager at Hitachi Vantara</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Contemplative engagement at the Center for Action and Contemplation's Living School: An assessment of strengths and challenges</b></p> <p>Michael Ceragioli  <a href="mailto:mceragioli@ost.edu">mceragioli@ost.edu</a>  PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Contemplative practices: an anchor in uncertain times'</b></p> <p>Diane Jackson  <a href="mailto:diane.jackson@postgrad.wit.ie">diane.jackson@postgrad.wit.ie</a>  PhD studies, South East Technological University, Waterford and SpIRE, Dublin, Ireland</p>

**Session 7 - 13.10-14.20** (9 presentations - Workshop + 4 panels of 2 x 30 mins each)

Pilgrimage
Room TL 245 Chair: Dr Anne Kennelly
<p><u>Workshop</u></p> <p><b>From Croagh Patrick to the Camino de Santiago and beyond: The role of transformative pilgrimage learning, spirituality, and critical reflection in dealing with love, death, and legacy</b></p> <p>Prof. Elizabeth J. Tisdell  <a href="mailto:ejt11@psu.edu">ejt11@psu.edu</a>  Penn State University—Harrisburg, USA</p>



Health Care	
Room TL 249 Chair: Mr Flor O'Mahony	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>A Critical and Timely Reflection on the role and function of the Healthcare Chaplain in an uncertain world</b></p> <p>Dr Margaret Naughton  <a href="mailto:naughtonmargaret@yahoo.com">naughtonmargaret@yahoo.com</a>            Healthcare Chaplain and Chaplaincy Educator            University Hospital Kerry, Ireland</p>	<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>Spirituality &amp; Practice in Healthcare Chaplaincy: A Dialogue of Listening &amp; Accompaniment in End of Life Care</b></p> <p>Rev. Dr Christine O'Dowd-Smyth  <a href="mailto:odowdsmythchristine@gmail.com">odowdsmythchristine@gmail.com</a>            Church of Ireland Healthcare Chaplain,            University Hospital Waterford, Ireland</p> <p>Rev. Dr Daniel Nuzum  <a href="mailto:daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie">daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie</a>            Healthcare Chaplain, Cork University Hospital,            Ireland</p>

Spiritual Counselling	
Room TL 250 Chair: Dr Susan Flynn	
<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>How spirituality plays a key part in bringing the whole person into the room in professional practices from an interpersonal and a systemic perspective</b></p> <p>Thomas McCormack  <a href="mailto:thomas@tmclifecoach.com">thomas@tmclifecoach.com</a>            MA in Applied Spirituality graduate, South East Technological University</p> <p>Sile Walsh  <a href="mailto:info@silewalsh.com">info@silewalsh.com</a>            ELIS Advantage Ltd, Ireland</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The poor in spirit and a problem saturated storyline: Narrative therapy in dialogue with the Sermon on the Mount</b></p> <p>Karen J Nivala  <a href="mailto:knivala@bst.qld.edu.au">knivala@bst.qld.edu.au</a>            PhD Studies, Brisbane School of Theology under the Australian College of Theology, Australia</p>

Spiritual Practices	
Room TL 225 Chair: Ms Tara Travers (SpirSoP PhD Cand.)	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>Psychological upheaval, extraordinary phenomena, and the practice of spiritual direction as a resource for uncertain times: A postmodern, decolonizing, disability-studies perspective</b></p> <p>Dr Shannon McAlister  <a href="mailto:smcalister@fordham.edu">smcalister@fordham.edu</a>            Fordham University, USA</p>	<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>"Vivre l'inespéré". Narratives and Atmospheres of Uncertainty in the Community of Taizé</b></p> <p>Dr Katharina Opalka  <a href="mailto:katharina.opalka@uni-bonn.de">katharina.opalka@uni-bonn.de</a>            Faculty of Protestant Theology, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany</p>



Integrative Spirituality	
Room TL 251 Chair: Prof. Michael Howlett	
<p><u>Oral</u></p> <p><b>The significance of 'interior development' for effective 'exterior' climate action</b></p> <p>Dr Pádraic Mark Hurley  <a href="mailto:Padraic.Hurley@setu.ie">Padraic.Hurley@setu.ie</a>          South East Technological University, Ireland, and SpIRE</p>	<p><u>Dialogue</u></p> <p><b>The inception and journey to date of the Spirituality Lab: An Australian translational research initiative</b></p> <p>Jennifer R Greenham  <a href="mailto:mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au">mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au</a>          Spiritual Health Association, Australia</p> <p>Dr Simon A Jones  <a href="mailto:Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au">Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au</a>          La Trobe University, Albury Wodonga Health, Australia</p> <p>Hannah Friebe-Gabbert  <a href="mailto:hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com">hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com</a>          Sydney School of Divinity and Monash Health, Australia</p>



## Parallel Session Presentations

### ABSTRACTS

*(in alphabetical order of presenters' surnames)*

#### Oral:

#### **Intentionality and Healing- Applying SOPHIE as a Reflexive Practice in Higher Education.**

Dr Gulnar Ali

[g.ali@uel.ac.uk](mailto:g.ali@uel.ac.uk)

Dept. of Psychosocial Studies, School of Education and Communities

University of East London (UEL), UK

Prevalence of psychological trauma, moral injury, and stress-related disorders among university students are higher than ever, due to Covid-19 pandemic. Not acknowledging and neglecting spiritual distress, psychological trauma and recovery could result in dysfunctional coping, role-confusion, compassion-fatigue, substance use, and other harmful health seeking behaviours among students in higher education. Integrating spirituality and existential care competencies into higher education could foster meaning making and self-efficacy among students. However, a need for developing a shared understanding through more explicit representation of spirituality and existential care in psycho-social education, research and practice ethos; has been voiced over last three decades. To construct spirituality in health education; a reflective framework, **SOPHIE (Self-exploration through Ontological, Phenomenological, and Humanistic, Ideological, and Existential expressions)** was developed by the researcher in 2017. SOPHIE, has been applied as a practice methodology during several teaching and mentoring sessions, during and post COVID-pandemic 2020-2022. Reflexive activities such as: art as an agency, poetry writing and practicing gratitude and mindfulness, were used to explore person's spiritual and existential care needs. Participants were facilitated to explore moral values, existential quest and meaning making process to address their trauma and self-care needs. SOPHIE, as practice methodology; recognised the power of authenticity, self-awareness, intentionality, creativity and empowerment, as core domains of spiritual care. Acknowledging the scope of spirituality and existential care, in higher education and professional practices, is highly recommended.

#### Oral:

#### **Spiritual Abuse in Christian spiritual accompaniment. Co-constructing meaning through narratives of the self by survivors.**

Jesmond Apap

[jesmond.apap.98@um.edu.mt](mailto:jesmond.apap.98@um.edu.mt)

PhD studies, University of Malta, and SpIRE, Ireland

My PhD research project aims to explore the lived experience of people who have been personally exposed to the phenomenon of spiritual abuse (SA) within the context of spiritual accompaniment in Christian faith-based communities in Malta and the UK. SA is being defined as coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context, with potential devastating effects on the victim's conceptualisation of the self and one's identity, and spiritual life development. The practice of one-to-one spiritual accompaniment as a context of encounter is the context of interest for this research project. Using a qualitative research approach, I am interested in exploring narratives of how victims and survivors in two socio-cultural contexts [Malta and the UK] would have made sense and constructed meaning of their experience of SA through an interview, and how such narratives could inform best practice in the counselling profession to address the needs of victims and survivors of SA.



**Oral:**

**Creative connecting: A case study exploring a person-centred approach to providing spiritual care in a higher education setting.**

Lisa Anthony

[Lisa.ilira@icloud.com](mailto:Lisa.ilira@icloud.com)

Counsellor Supervisor and Spiritual Companion in private practice

This presentation of a single case study examines a 6-month piece of work with an international student in a UK university setting. The presenter has been a qualified and practising person-centred Counsellor for nearly 30 years, deeply rooted in and committed to the person-centred approach developed and described by Carl Rogers (1951) as well as training in person-centred expressive arts (Natalie Rogers, 1993) and subsequent training with the Spiritual Companions Trust as a spiritual companion.

The case study examines the presenters' transition from therapist to spiritual care co-ordinator in a setting where face to face spiritual care was being re-established following the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is done through reflection on my work with a final year undergraduate student, accessing Pastoral and Spiritual Support within the university for the first time in the final year of her degree.

The student was struggling with academic expectations, personal wishes, uncertainty about her future and an emerging sense of seeking meaningful connection and spiritual practice.

In the shared uncertainty between presenter and student emerged a creative, reflexive and responsive approach to our time together and the case study seeks to set this exploration and learning into a theoretical framework, drawing on both therapeutic and spiritual approaches.

Within the university the majority of students, when asked, identify as 'spiritual not religious'. The person-centred approach, with its focus on self-actualisation, personal growth and social justice offers a lens through which we can begin to explore new approaches to spiritual and pastoral care.

**Oral:**

**Spirituality and social work, state of art.**

Dr Enric Benavent-Vallès

[ebenavent@peretarres.url.edu](mailto:ebenavent@peretarres.url.edu)

Pere Tarrés Faculty of Social Education and Social Work, Ramon Llull University, Spain

There is an interest in spirituality that has never been seen before and that coincides with the lack of interest in religious participation in some parts of the world. The word spirituality is very polysemic and its definition can be focused from very different approaches. Spirituality can be understood as an experience of connection with the universe or with nature, one can also understand spirituality as transcendence, as the relationship that is established with the mystery, with God, with the totally other, spirituality also refers to the link with oneself, with one's identity, with one's roots, and, from a psychological level we relate spirituality with the search for meaning, with the vital purpose, this approach is very close to understanding spirituality as a mechanism of transformation.

The link between spirituality and social work has been relevant in research, in this area of knowledge, for a couple of decades. There is a great disparity of approaches to this relationship both on the part of professionals, who do not always consider that attending to the spiritual dimension of the person is part of their role, and on the part of clients who manage their spirituality in very different ways. In this paper we analyse how the term "spirituality" is used in social work research. We focus on the scientific production of the last 10 years from different cultural contexts: USA, Canada, Latin America, Australia, and Europe.

**Dialogue:****Critically reflecting on the language of the soul in narrative therapy and spiritual direction.**

Dr Laura **Béres**

[lberes2@uwo.ca](mailto:lberes2@uwo.ca)

Associate Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator

School of Social Work

King's University College at Western University, Canada

Dr David **Crawley**, Laidlaw College, Auckland, New Zealand

[dcrawley@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:dcrawley@laidlaw.ac.nz)

The five theoretical lenses that make up the critical reflection on practice model as described by Béres and Fook (2020) are: reflective practice; reflexivity; post-structural thinking and postmodern narrative practice; critical perspectives; and spirituality. The reflective practice lens asks practitioners to consider what theories have been informing their practice and whether there have been any times when those theories have not fully explained the dynamics of a situation or provided direction for intervening in that particular practice experience. We will discuss our experiences of using narrative therapy practices, which we have found to be honouring and empowering of people's hopes and preferences in life. At the same time, when people have raised issues pertaining to their spirituality and their souls, we realized that there was no way to conceptualize the soul within the social constructionist understanding of identity, which is a foundational element of narrative therapy. This led the primary presenter to a theoretical exploration of the language of the soul, drawing upon the work of Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This theoretical exploration was further enriched as she and the second presenter, drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's work, began to dialogue about the place of the soul in narrative therapy and spiritual direction. We will talk about how our experience of critically reflecting on our practice led to theory development which provides further support to working with people during times of uncertainty, by creating space for talk about spirituality and/or the soul. Practice examples of working with people in times of uncertainty will be shared.

**Oral:****Made in God's image: The child sexual abuse survivor's embodied journey from deicide to resurrection.**

Dr Sumer **Bingham Musick**

[SumerBingham@upike.edu](mailto:SumerBingham@upike.edu)

University of Pikeville, USA

Dr Robert **Musick**

[RobertMusick@upike.edu](mailto:RobertMusick@upike.edu)

Chaplain/Instructor of Religious Studies, University of Pikeville, USA

Childhood sexual abuse is a trauma so severe that it has been likened to an ongoing and inescapable death. In the midst of the pandemic instances of domestic violence and child abuse have continued to rise, inflicting spiritual wounds upon the dignity and worth of the human person. These spiritual wounds harm the core of one's identity and teach one that they are not a person before God. As uncertainty saturates one's identity with feelings of shame, fear, and anxiety it is ever more important to discover stability in the truth of God's love.

What does it mean to be made in God's image? How can one discover this truth? And what are the implications for survivors of childhood trauma and those who journey with them?

Utilizing analogical methods, the embodied wounds of the survivors' experience offers insight into these questions. In short, it is argued that this form of abuse results in a deicide or death of how one knows God. While the violation of the body results in profound spiritual harm, it is also, paradoxically, the mechanism through which one encounters resurrection.

Using a hermeneutic of rape, the passion narratives can operate as a model for understanding and healing from experiences of child sexual abuse. The sexually abused Jesus, stripped and publicly humiliated, also encounters a loss of safety and innocence along his journey. After his bodily death, he descends into hell



and enters a space of liminality. From this chasm, characterized by feelings of abandonment and mystery, Jesus emerges into new life. Resurrected with wounds his body anchors the Christian community to a new way of being in an uncertain world.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Responding to the spiritual needs of clients who have left a religious community.**

Dr Maria Björkmark

[maria.bjorkmark@abo.fi](mailto:maria.bjorkmark@abo.fi)

Åbo Akademi University, Department of Caring Science, Vasa, Finland

*Additional author:*

Linda Nyholm, PhD, Associate Professor,

Åbo Akademi University, Vasa, Finland

Religious disaffiliation and moving away from organized religion are growing trends in society today. For some, leaving a religious community may lead to profound changes in life, including changes in identity, worldview and social relationships. These changes may even lead to mental health problems and the need for support from health care. However, studies show that individuals who have left a religious community experience a lack of support and understanding from care professionals. The aim of this study was to gain understanding of how to respond to the spiritual needs of clients who have disaffiliated, from the perspective of care professionals.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine participants from two health organizations in Western Finland. The participants were care professionals, nurses and psychologists, working within psychiatric care, both in in-patient and out-patient services. The data material was analyzed through a qualitative content analysis.

The results of the study imply that care professionals today are still cautious to discuss spiritual and religious matters with their clients. Responding to the spiritual needs of a client after religious disaffiliation requires both knowledge and courage of the care professional. Clients in this life situation need a care professional who dares discuss spiritual questions, also the ones that are painful. Having the courage to talk about religious and spiritual issues as a care professional is important, not only when caring for clients who have disaffiliated, but when caring for all clients.

The results of the study show that both general knowledge about spirituality and religiosity, as well as more specific knowledge about religious disaffiliation are needed within health care. Care and support for clients who are suffering due to life changes after religious disaffiliation can be developed by training and education of care professionals, and by raising awareness of religious disaffiliation, also on a societal level.

#### **Dialogue:**

#### **Spiritual care practices in the 21st century in care settings.**

Claire Borrione

[clairehibon1@gmail.com](mailto:clairehibon1@gmail.com)

Nurse, MSc in Palliative Medicine

Maison médicale Jeanne Garnier, France

Nicolas Pujol

[pujolnicolas@ymail.com](mailto:pujolnicolas@ymail.com)

Psychologist, PhD Religious Studies,

Maison médicale Jeanne Garnier, Paris, France

For twenty years, a growing interest for the spiritual question in healthcare is manifested by an increasing number of publications with the keyword 'spirituality', new spiritual care workers, assessing tools for spiritual distress or spaces for spiritual healing. It reflects a significant transformation that seems to concern the whole society: a transition from religion to spirituality. How to explain this dynamic, and what does it say about the transformations in the world of care and our societies? Moreover, the health crisis worsened the suffering of



the caregivers that was already been amplified by the *managerial turn*. The appearance of these new, non-religious spiritual practices seems to have a connection with this suffering at work. This study aims to better understanding of the rise and diversity of spiritual practices in the healthcare world.

Basing on the grounded theory, we conducted a qualitative international French-speaking study. The research team included a nurse, a religion sociologist, a theologian and a psychologist. Ninety interviews were conducted within nine practices (Three practices per country).

Three categories emerged from this analysis: subjectivation, medicalization and psychologization. From them, a typology was built to illustrate the nine practices studied. The interest for the spiritual question in healthcare appeared inseparable from the *managerial turn* of healthcare facilities and the introduction of the *New Public Management*. The reference to neoliberalism makes it possible to articulate on the one hand, the transformations of the religious field, such as the rise of the culture of authenticity (Taylor) and individualization of beliefs; and on the other hand, the growing interest for spirituality in healthcare.

This study revealed the link between the interest for spiritual question in the world of care and the introduction of neoliberal organization of work. Two other categories allowed us to explore the sustainability of these practices: dynamics of theorization and integration into strong collectives turned out to be powerful elements in their perpetuation.

#### Oral:

#### **A time of great confusion. What can we learn from Titus Brandsma (1881-1942)?**

Dr Anne-Marie **Bos**

[a.bos@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl](mailto:a.bos@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl)

Titus Brandsma Instituut, Netherlands

Often the uncertainties of present times have been compared to the troubled times of the nineteen-thirties, addressing economic depression and the blossoming of the most contradictory ideologies. In the Netherlands, one of the distinctive voices of that time was Titus Brandsma (1881-1942), a Carmelite priest and professor of philosophy and mysticism at the Catholic University in Nijmegen. In 1932, as rector magnificus of this university, he analysed the true crisis of his time not as an economic or social crisis but as a spiritual crisis. He saw 'great confusion in the realm of thought' and 'the most awful chasm in the thoughts concerning God'. Therefore Brandsma advocated a change of world view which is deeply spiritual. He presented a renewed concept of the divine which involves the connection of all people and every person to the whole of creation. With this concept he tried to contribute fundamentally to restoring the 'broken social order', and drawing people out of their isolation. In this presentation text fragments from the writings of Titus Brandsma in the nineteen-thirties will be read. Central themes in these writings are human dependency and Christian love. What can we learn from the analysis of Titus Brandsma and how can his reaction to these 'dark times' help us in our search for our own answers in these uncertain times.

#### Dialogue:

#### **A semiotic approach to the ethics of care and its spirituality: A study case of nursing.**

Mary Beth **Bowen**

[mbowen@ost.edu](mailto:mbowen@ost.edu)

PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, USA

Dr Paniel Osberto Reyes **Cardenas**

[panielosberto.reyes@upaep.mx](mailto:panielosberto.reyes@upaep.mx)

UPAEP (People's University of Puebla State, Puebla, Mexico)

Visiting professor at Oblate School of Theology

The study of Christian Spirituality has allowed new and exciting possibilities for widening the scope of understanding the manyfold of human transcendent experience; it is our belief that the study of spirituality, through the use of semiotic (the rigorous science of interpretation), allows us to discover significant spiritual realities. As opposed to a dyadic relationship (which is normally the one offered by the hermeneutical



tradition) semiotics, cultivated by the American Pragmatist tradition, expands the possibilities of spirituality through triadic potentiality. In this presentation, we introduce the general approach of theological semiotics through the lens of the pragmatist tradition, as offered by American Pragmatist Jane Addams. Addams developed a triadic account of care in her work *Ethics of Care*. Mary Elizabeth O'Brien's theory, *A sacred covenant model of caring for nursing practice*, provides a theoretical framework to evaluate the concept of presence understood within nursing theory with specific considerations of the theological triadic relationship of the eucharist, the presence of God, and the Christian faithful's presence to one another as a praxis rich field for embodied care. Finally, we submit a theological semiotic analysis of presence to expand upon O'Brien's conceptualization of presence spiritually while addressing the potential synergy of applied ethics. Our analysis considers the case study of the spirituality of presence as a spiritual triadic relationship between the carer, the cared, and the Divine manifested as presence in such encounters. Our audience benefits from considering new backgrounds of interpretation, such as semiotics, and hence will appreciate their promising value as a methodological approach for expanding the notion of embodied care within the discipline of academic spirituality.

#### Oral:

#### **Spirituality and nursing: Connecting the holy and human spirit in our work and world.**

Mary Beth **Bowen**

[Mbowen@ost.edu](mailto:Mbowen@ost.edu)

PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, USA

The study of Christian Spirituality has allowed new and exciting possibilities for widening the scope of understanding the manyfold of human transcendent experience, and it is my belief that the study of spirituality expands how professional nurses can engage in the work of their profession in a complementary and enriching manner to their faith lives. In this case, I look to a very crucial source of deep spirituality – the spirituality of presence in nursing. This study provides a theological hermeneutic of the concept of nursing presence, demonstrating that the expansion of Catholic theology within contemporary nursing theory deepens the spiritual wellspring of the Catholic Christian nurse and the wisdom of nursing spirituality in general. To support our claim, I bear in mind Mary Elizabeth O'Brien's *Sacred Covenant Model of Caring for Nursing Practice* and the theological triadic relationship of the eucharist, the presence of God, and the Christian faithful's presence to one another to limit the scope of my research. I also explore through a review of the nursing literature the concept of presence in the nursing spirituality scholarship, including a brief synopsis of nursing spirituality, holistic nursing, and presence. Consequently, I present a summary of O'Brien's model, which provides a theoretical framework to evaluate the concept of presence understood within nursing theory and praxis. Finally, I submit a spiritual analysis of presence to expand upon O'Brien's conceptualization of presence spiritually and theologically, bridging personal faith with nursing spirituality opening space for the sacred relational dimensions of the nurse, the patient, and the Divine.

#### Oral:

#### **Reflections prompted by a Qualitative Evidence Synthesis of Women's Experiences of Spirituality in Childbirth.**

Dr Vivienne **Brady**

[bradyvi@tcd.ie](mailto:bradyvi@tcd.ie)

School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, Ireland

*Additional authors:*

Dr Noelia **Molina**

[Noelia.Molina@setu.ie](mailto:Noelia.Molina@setu.ie)

SETU (South East Technological University), Waterford, Ireland, and SpIRE, Ireland

Jessica Eustace-**Cook**

[Dublineustacj@tcd.ie](mailto:Dublineustacj@tcd.ie)

BA, MA, MLIS, MAJo ALAI, The Library of Trinity College, Ireland

We conducted a Qualitative Evidence Synthesis (QES) to explore the concept of spirituality for women in labour and childbirth using the JBI methodology for qualitative evidence synthesis. Two reviewers independently screened over 4500 records for inclusion in the QES using agreed eligibility criteria and were blinded to each other's decisions. Conflicts were resolved by reviewers examining the full text of the article and if disagreement remained, a third reviewer was consulted, and actions and decisions recorded. We met at regular intervals to explore conflicts and recognised that, as we reviewed and discussed the material, we each brought reflections of our professional, personal and clinical experiences of motherhood and spirituality.

Our professional lives incorporate education, women's health, maternity care and psychotherapy. We each have personal experience of childbirth. The aim of this presentation is to share the insights emerging from our discussions and reflections during the process of reviewing and analysing the records and emerging themes in the literature. Salient themes included: cultural sensibility in spiritual practices at birth, rituals, transpersonal and transcendental experiences at birth, and existential issues. We will discuss how we problematised emerging insights and how this prompted further inquiry into our professional practice, values and spiritual transformative growth.

By engaging in this research process, we gained awareness and an ability to revise the external and the internal 'meaning structures' of our clinical, academic and personal practices. We illustrate how this process of introspection and inquiry, ultimately enabled the authors to develop skills to critically reflect on how to understand spiritual experiences in labour and birth.

Conclusion: this process offered a more concrete understanding of spirituality, the meaning of spirituality in childbirth for us, personally and professionally, individually and collectively and helped us to anchor our intentions for further research inquiry into spirituality and birth in an uncertain world.

#### Oral:

##### ***Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World in Mystical Judaism.***

Roz Brown

[rosslyn.brown@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:rosslyn.brown@nottingham.ac.uk)

Doctoral Researcher, University of Nottingham and Midlands4Cities, UK

Kabbalah is a mystical strain of Judaism which has its origins in twelfth-century Spain. Its worldview holds that Creation is not currently as God envisioned it to be, and it therefore falls to humans to rectify it. This belief is known as *tikkun olam*—the repair of the world.

This presentation will thus examine some of the tenets of *tikkun olam* as valuable means of transforming our evidently "broken" planet. Focus will be given to *tikkun ha-atzmi/nefesh* (the repair of the self/soul), the significance of small-scale acts, the role of *kavvanah* (intention), as well as the place of creativity and artistry in this mission. Ultimately, the presentation will argue that the Kabbalistic concept of *tikkun olam* is one of particular relevance to the uncertain times in which we live in. Its messianic nature offers one both hope and comfort, as well as alleviating feelings of powerlessness; on a practical level, it encourages collective action, reflective practice, and taking responsibility for the way in which we move through the world.

#### Oral:

##### **Growing through grief: Widowhood as a catalyst for spiritual development.**

Margery Buckingham

[morganbuckingham@msn.com](mailto:morganbuckingham@msn.com)

MA graduate in Applied Spirituality, SETU, Ireland

This study has aimed to answer the question, "Under what circumstances is widowhood a catalyst for spiritual development?" Through review of existing literature and in-person interviews, the following conclusion has been reached: Spiritual growth occurs during widowhood when the widow is part of a supportive social network, when she has had some spiritual involvement before her partner's death and when she is able to refocus the energy previously centered on her marriage into spiritual activities, goals, and practices.



Spiritual Authenticity formed the framework of this research. By examining both my own spiritual authenticity and that of my interview subjects, through the lenses of experience, understanding, judgment and decision making, we reach the point that allows the emergence of beauty, truth, intelligibility, meaning, goodness, and love. Heuristic Inquiry, the research method used here, begins with a question of personal challenge for the researcher. This method allows one to include stories from others through which the researcher is able to discern similarities and differences, draw conclusions, test theories, and suggest further investigation.

Those interviewed were five American women between the ages of 60 and 80 who were widowed at least two years before the interviews and had not remarried. They were recruited using convenience sampling among peers of the researcher. In addition to identifying a possible explanation for spiritual development catalysed by widowhood, the study also proposes a new graphic representation of grief recovery that is more complex and more accurate than the usual models. Recommendations proposed for organizations dealing with the psycho/spiritual needs of widows include offering grief support groups and advice on helping the bereaved through the process of grief recovery. Areas identified for future research include revival of the Order of Widows, more research on widowers and combining research on widowhood with the study of spirituality in mature women.

#### Oral:

#### **Implementation of the Spiritual Needs Screener in Palliative Care Counseling.**

Univ.-Prof. Dr med. Arndt **Büssing**

[Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de](mailto:Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de)

Professorship Quality of Life, Spirituality and Coping

University Witten/Herdecke, Germany

#### *Additional authors:*

Karin **Scheer**, University Clinic Essen, Hospice work and Palliative Medicine consultation, Clinic for Internal Medicine, Essen, Germany

Mitra **Tewes**, University Clinic Essen, Palliative Medicine, Clinic for Internal Medicine, West German Tumor Center, Essen, Germany

Anja **Dickmann**, Essen-Mitte Clinics, Evangelische Huysens-Stiftung/Knappschaft, Palliative Medicine, Essen, Germany

Wolfgang **Niesert**, Essen-Mitte Clinics, Evangelische Huysens-Stiftung/Knappschaft, Palliative Medicine, Essen, Germany

Jens **Büntzel**, Palliative Care Unit, Südharz Clinic Nordhausen, Nordhausen, Germany

Jochen **Rentschler**, Department Hematology and Intensive Oncology, Palliative Medicine, Ortnova Clinic, Offenburg, Germany

In order to apply spiritual care competently and reliably, patients' spiritual needs have to be documented in order to respond to them as a multi-professional team. As it is often argued that there is not enough time for further documentation, the 10 item Spiritual Needs Screener (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86$ ) was developed on the basis of the internationally established *Spiritual Needs Questionnaire* (SpNQ). The instrument was tested in four palliative care centers in Germany enrolling 134 patients (62% women, mean age  $71 \pm 12$  years).

The Screener scores were significantly higher in the Southern center compared to the West and East centers ( $\eta^2=0.15$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ). The differences refer mainly to Religious and Inner Peace needs rather than Existential needs. Women had higher needs than men ( $\eta^2=0.36$ ;  $p<0.029$ ). Moderate to strong needs for psychological support were stated by 41%, and pastoral care support by 27%. First reactions were talks with medical doctors (94%), palliative care nurses (89%), psychologists (89%), while chaplains were consulted in 41%. In 39% psychotherapeutic support was initiated, in 48% psychological and pastoral care support, and in 13% none of them.

Many patients appreciated that they were asked about their spiritual needs. However, some nurses had reservations about working with the screener, while other professions (i.e., pastoral care, psychology) appreciated it. In many cases there were clear misjudgments in relation to the needs expressed. The team often stated that there was no need for psychological or pastoral support, although strong needs were expressed by the patients.

The Screener this may sensitize for an important topic which is often a matter of chance whether it is addressed or not. It facilitates easier documentation and thus reactions by the care team.

#### Oral:

#### **Perceptions in an uncertain world: Findings from a continuous cross-sectional study on hopes, ideals and fears during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Univ.-Prof. Dr med. Arndt Büssing

[Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de](mailto:Arndt.Buessing@uni-wh.de)

Professorship Quality of Life, Spirituality and Coping

University Witten/Herdecke, Germany

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, most people became aware that mankind is dependent on one another. Therefore, the course of their hope that global mankind will pay more attention to each other (Hope), the ideal of working to ensure that the world becomes fairer in the future (Fairer), the perception that our society is falling apart (SFA), and general fear for the future (FfF) during the pandemic should be addressed.

Data of 5,144 participants were analyzed who consecutively participated in a cross-sectional survey between 6/2020 and 5/2022. Data were assigned to characteristic phases of the pandemic (i.e., after 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown, waves 3 and 5).

Participants' Hope was declining from 55% after the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown to 20% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave and 19% in the 5<sup>th</sup> wave. Fairer was declining from 64% to 37% and 41%. SFA was increasing from 60% to 89% and 94%, while FfF was increasing from 29% to 61% and 64%. Hope and Fairer were best and moderately related to Awe/Gratitude (GrAw-7), and less to psychological wellbeing (WHO-5), corona related Burden (5NRS) or Reflection of life (PCQ). In contrast, SFA and FfF were moderately to strongly related to Burden and low wellbeing, and marginally negatively to Awe/Gratitude. Health Care Professionals had marginally lower Fears and more Hope than other professions ( $\eta^2 < 0.003$ ).

Thus, during the pandemic peoples' hopes and ideals were declining with the increase of burden, fears and worries, and declining psychological wellbeing. They noticed that the society is falling apart more and more and that particular interests increasingly played a role instead of prosocial community interests. While faith in God and praying were declining, pausing in wondering awe as a perceptive aspect of spirituality was positively related to their hopes and ideals - and could thus be fostered as a resource.

#### Oral:

#### **The interface of spirituality and mental health care – a dialogue with epistemic justice.**

Dr Patricia Carlisle

[p.carlisle@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.carlisle@qub.ac.uk)

Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland

In their exploration of ways of knowing, epistemology, and ethics Miranda Fricker (2007) proposed the idea of epistemic injustice, when a person, in their capacity as a knower is wronged. Fricker examines the ways in which epistemic practices are "played out by subjects that are socially situated" (2007, p.viii) and the associated questions of identity and power.

Central to the re-emergence of spirituality in contemporary mental health care is meaning making and the personal, and shared values to which they are attached (Barker and Buchanan-Barker, 2008). This approach is a divergence from solely medically based understandings of mental distress, towards an exploration of how the individual makes sense of their world and their experience of mental distress. In the light of global uncertainty and change spirituality may be important aspects of an individual's sense of



understanding within their experience of mental distress, but these may be overlooked within mental health care.

Epistemic justice offers a lens through which to explore the interface of spirituality and mental health services. Although patient centred approaches have made progress in recognising patients' voices in mental health services they continue to experience various forms of epistemic injustice (Drozdowicz, 2021). Despite growing recognition of spirituality in the lives of some individuals and communities there remains an ambivalence to engage with the subject with mental health services. Epistemic injustice is common for mental health service users as they are denied the means to voice their experiences and engage in dialogue that might increase their understanding of their experiences (Crichton *et al*, 2017; Johnstone, 2021). In this presentation the author explores the interface of service user, mental health services and the acknowledgements of spirituality within the mental health narrative, through the lens of epistemic justice.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Spiritual, Religious, Secular?: The Different Meanings of Mindfulness in an Uncertain World and its Implications for the Irish Catholic Primary School Classroom.**

Dr Tom Carroll

[tom.carroll@mic.ul.ie](mailto:tom.carroll@mic.ul.ie)

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Mindfulness has exploded in popularity in recent decades across several sectors of society, including healthcare, education and commerce. The popularity of the practice is supported by a growing body of research indicating benefits including improved physical and mental wellbeing. However, several commentators have argued that multiple meanings that can be attributed to mindfulness given its often open and somewhat opaque definitions, ranging from a placeholder for Buddhist teaching to a universal human capacity. In response, this paper is divided into two parts. First, mindfulness is proposed as being operative in the West via three distinctive strands: the secular psychological model, the privatised commodified model and the post-secular spirituality model. Second, against the backdrop of the many challenges and uncertainties of our world, it is argued that some mindfulness practices offer profound resources for spirituality, wellbeing and contemplative education in the Catholic primary school classroom.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Contemplative engagement at the Center for Action and Contemplation's Living School: An assessment of strengths and challenges.**

Michael Ceragioli

[mceragioli@ost.edu](mailto:mceragioli@ost.edu)

PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, USA

This presentation offers a critical assessment of a popular and dynamic program of spiritual-contemplative instruction for professionals and socially engaged individuals of various backgrounds and occupations. The CAC's Living School has sought to meet the needs of those confronting the radical upheaval and complexity of the modern world, creating space for a discourse that addresses head-on our shifting landscape, while teaching methods with deep roots in Christian traditions of spirituality. In this regard, the school offers something of a case study (difficulties included) of the dissemination and integration of contemplative wisdom in our vexed moment.

The model of contemplative engagement and instruction delivered by Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) – an organization initiated for the healing, sustaining, and empowering of social activists – has long served as an influential and sought-after resource for those invested in the work of social change. As a graduate of the CAC's Living School, I will assess how the contemplative resources shared as part of the school's curriculum impact professionals (including social activists, mental health workers, and public officials). What resources, practices, and methodologies bear fruit in the lives of these professionals? What practical challenges from the field either affirm or call for the development of the CAC's approach? *How does growing consciousness regarding the marginalization of various groups in the United States and beyond both*



*facilitate and challenge this model of contemplative instruction?* Many participants have charged the Living School with perpetuating harmful exclusionary discourses; as the Living School enters a process of redeveloping its curriculum, what lessons might we gain surrounding the formal teaching of methods of contemplation to a pluralistic audience? Through interviews with Living School students and critical assessment of the Living School program, I aim to present a picture of the transformation achieved through this particular model of spiritual engagement, as well as its limitations.

#### Oral:

#### **Occupying Your Heart with Love and Peace: A Study of Benny Tai's Understanding of Civil Disobedience and His Spirituality from the Perspective of Mysticism.**

Hau Chi Chau

[csuchauhauchi@gmail.com](mailto:csuchauhauchi@gmail.com)

PhD studies, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, USA

In this presentation, I contend that civil disobedience is mystical as it sparks the experiences of wholeness with the self and oneness with God; these two mystical experiences bring hope to the oppressed during uncertain times. To support my contention, I will bring in Benny Tai's central idea, "occupying one's heart with love and peace," in his understanding of civil disobedience and his spirituality and highlight the key component of personal transformation and nonviolent resistance.

Benny Tai, born in 1964, is a Hong Kong legal scholar, democracy activist, and Christian. I choose Benny Tai as my dialogue partner not only because he was the leader of the Occupy Central Movement, not only because of his years of experience in the democratic movement, but more importantly because his thought on the development of a democratic society in Hong Kong is rooted in his Christian faith. To him, civil disobedience is not a pragmatic method for pursuing democracy but an embodiment of his faith in the time of upheaval. Benny Tai demonstrates how Christian spirituality can be integrated with his profession creatively during uncertain times in Hong Kong. My task here is to examine his understanding of civil disobedience and his spirituality from the perspective of mysticism.

I will first introduce Tai's concepts of justice and love, which are grounded on his theory, the "Four Levels of Development of the Rule of Law." Second, I will indicate the personal transformation component in Tai's understanding of civil disobedience and argue that personal transformation eventually brings about the experience of wholeness. Third, I will examine Tai's insistence on nonviolent resistance and argue how being one with God allow us to step out of ourselves to love the enemies. To conclude, I will present how civil disobedience generates hope through the mystical experiences of wholeness with the self and oneness with God.

#### Oral:

#### **'In danger': Tragedy and hope in Pasolini's cinematic spirituality.**

Dr Paul Clogher

[Paul.Clogher@setu.ie](mailto:Paul.Clogher@setu.ie)

Theology & Religious Studies, South East Technological University, Ireland

In a final interview with Furio Colombo, the Italian poet and film artist, Pier Paolo Pasolini lamented what he described as the tragedy of human life: 'What is the tragedy? It's that there are no longer any human beings; there are only some strange machines that bump up against each other.' 'We're all in danger,' he concludes. Pasolini's cinematic 'canon' offers a response to this pessimism. A self-declared agnostic, Christian spirituality exerts a seminal influence over his film style and theory. This paper considers three landmarks in Pasolini's cinema as transformative visions of hope in dangerous times and, further, offers a hermeneutical reflection on his cinema as calling to mind of the sacred which invites viewers into an unfolding and reciprocal exchange of meaning. *La Ricotta* (1963) reflects comedically upon the death of God, and thus meaning, at the hands of rampant greed and casual indifference via the story of a destitute actor. *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (1964) re-reads the Gospel of Matthew through an analogous filmic style that in Pasolini's words 're-consecrates' Jesus and reactivates his story in the context of mid-twentieth century Italian social life. *Teorema* (1968), finally,





explores the transformative impact of a mysterious, almost divine, visitor on the lives of an upper-class Italian family and the challenges this raises for human meaning in a techno-capitalist world. In each film, Pasolini offers a form of filmic *anamnesis*, where the sacred is called to mind and hope collides with tragedy. Taking Pasolini's film style and theory as its cue, this paper explores these redemptive, though ambiguous, visions of reality and, further, the possibilities of cinema as a spiritual and reflective medium that traces images of hope in dangerous times.

#### Oral:

##### **Stitching: Spiritual or not?**

Prof. Beth R. Crisp

[beth.crisp@deakin.edu.au](mailto:beth.crisp@deakin.edu.au)

Deakin University, Australia

Lockdowns associated with COVID-19 saw a resurgence of interest in stitching at a time when the ability to engage in religious or spiritual practices outside the home became limited. Stitching refers to a range of textile crafts which involve use of needles, such as sewing, knitting, crochet, tapestry, embroidery or quilting to create clothing, homewares or other objects. Mostly undertaken by women, there has long been stitchers for whom this activity is inherently a spiritual activity. The rhythmic pattern of the work is said to enable mindful practice or a space to meditate on other concerns or contemplation on religious or spiritual texts, and the connections enabled through stitching may be significant. Stitching has long been a way in which women could mould their identities while helping one another or make charitable donations. At the same time as strengthening connections with others, stitching can aid processes of mourning and remembering. However, there are many women for whom stitching is the antithesis of spiritual. There is a considerable difference between people who choose to stitch than those for whom stitching is a task or chore they are required to undertake. As a form of employment, stitching has become associated with exploitative practices, including poor pay and poor working conditions. In contrast to those who stitch by choice and can exercise agency over what and when they create, those who stitch for a living are subject to timelines and restrictions on what they create, and hence are less likely to experience stitching as a spiritual activity. This paper contributes to the spirituality literature by demonstrating why a generalised delineation of actions per se, as spiritual or not, is problematic.

#### Workshop:

##### **Nature is nurture: Eco-spirituality in times of eco-grief.**

Dr Megan E Delaney

[mdelaney@monmouth.edu](mailto:mdelaney@monmouth.edu)

Associate Prof, Monmouth University, USA

Consciously or unconsciously, many of us worry about the health and sustainability of the planet and all of her inhabitants. Climate change may illicit feelings of anger, frustration, hopelessness and despair; paralleling the symptoms of grief (Doherty & Clayton, 2011). A term used to describe this is "ecological grief" (or eco-grief). Eco-grief refers to the sense of loss or anticipated loss of ecosystems, species and the stress due to climate change (Conn, 1995). Solastalgia is another term used to describe the sense of loss one feels watching environmental destruction in their front yards; feeling homesick while at home (Albrecht, 2007). Ecospirituality is a combination of ecology and spirituality, offering the instinctive and ethereal awareness that humans are interwoven with all aspects of the planet. Ecospirituality can help awaken or reawaken a deeper connection to the natural world and help us incorporate all aspects of reciprocity in our lives (Author, 2020).

This presentation combines research and practical application and will engage the audience in ways to think deeper about their spiritual connection to the natural world. As a teacher and ecotherapist, the presenter will discuss the ways they help their students and clients conceptualize ecogrief and solastalgia, deepen spiritual awareness incorporating the natural world and develop a practice of reciprocity. Ultimately, the objectives are to instill a deeper sense of self in relation to the planet, expand feelings of hope and build practices that incorporate self-care and care for others. The goal for this presentation is to help participants either begin or further expand their spiritual practice incorporating tenets of ecospirituality.

**Oral:**

**The potential of religiously-unaffiliated spiritual practices for overcoming crisis situations. A qualitative exploration in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies.**

Julia Dencker

[juliadencker@outlook.de](mailto:juliadencker@outlook.de)

Junior Peace and Conflict Studies scientist at Otto-von-Guericke-University of Magdeburg, Germany

How does spirituality emerge in a society where culture is absent? During the GDR's 40-year existence, the regime immensely suppressed individual faith, the expression of religion, and religious institutions – mainly Protestant and Catholic churches. After German reunification, only 25 percent of former GDR citizens belonged to one of the two denominations, and the numbers continue to decline. Over the past 30 years, East Germans, like many other societies in and around Europe, have been uniformly hit by various crises and uncertainties. It has been widely researched and proven that religious faith, prayer, parish membership and religious counselling can help people overcome crises and emerge stronger. But how does the successor generation of GDR citizens, who grew up without religious faith and without a supportive socio-political organizational structure, deal with personal and societal crises? In the East German society systems of help are generally absent and psychotherapy is still often viewed critically. This study, based on narrative interviews explores the potential of non-religious spiritual practices for overcoming individual crises among young East German women. And, in the broadest sense, provides an answer to what added value individual spiritual responsibilities and practices hold for international peace studies. If the results allow, it can be concluded that spiritual practices have a high value for dealing with life crises. For professional practice, this means that spirituality must be a significant part of the training of young professionals of all kinds. Be it social workers, therapists, medical professionals, mentors, coaches or the like. The business sector is already leading the way, with spiritual leadership already on the agenda in many global companies. The goal must now be to also pay close attention to and deal with the spirituality of the individual to strengthen human capacity to create a peaceful and prosperous future life.

**Oral:**

**Transformation in the Victorian mental health sector from a critical/integrative reflection, spirituality and lived experience perspective.**

Hannah Friebe

[hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com](mailto:hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com)

Sydney College of Divinity and Monash University, Australia

Between 2019-2021, the state Government in Victoria, Australia undertook a Royal Commission into their Mental Health System. The system was described as 'broken' and in dire need of reform (Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, 2021). Following the Royal Commission there were 65 recommendations which heralded the way for a robust reform agenda. Since then, a division within the Victorian public health system has been commissioned with the task of 'transformation', with the voices of people with lived experience being a pivotal component to this transformation. Some health care services have adapted to this transformation better than others – with others experiencing challenges due to a greater power imbalance, a lack of understanding around authentic transformation and the need to embrace radical cultural change.

This presentation will examine the concept of change within the Victorian Health System. In particular, how to support transformation from a critical/integrative reflection, spirituality and lived experience/consumer perspective lens. The presenter will offer a lived experience workforce Consumer Consultant perspective, working across multiple organisations at these reforms. Such a stance offers a critical and nuanced perspective towards mental health, including the author's own commitment to personal spiritual practices and action-reflection ways of working/research, enhanced through postgraduate training in Spiritual/Pastoral Care and specialist Clinical Pastoral Education training.



**Poster:**

**Nursing students' perception about spirituality in end-of-life care: The body mapping technique as an expression way.**

Prof. M<sup>a</sup> Dolores **Fernández-Pascual**

[mariadolores.fernandez@ua.es](mailto:mariadolores.fernandez@ua.es)

Department of Health Psychology. University of Alicante. Spain

*Additional authors:*

Laura Martínez **Rodríguez**

[laura.martinezr@ub.edu](mailto:laura.martinezr@ub.edu)

PhD studies, University of Barcelona. Spain

Abilio **Reig-Ferrer**

[areig@ua.es](mailto:areig@ua.es)

University of Alicante. Spain

Laura Riquelme **Ros**

[laurariquelmeros@hotmail.es](mailto:laurariquelmeros@hotmail.es)

University of Alicante. Spain

Eva Barallat **Gimeno**- Universitat de Lleida

Clara Iago **Porregón**- Universitat de Lleida

**Objective:** To explore the perceptions and discourses of nursing students providing end-of-life spiritual nursing care.

**Method:** Exploratory qualitative study. Analysis of illustrations and stories made by 40 students constructed through the body mapping technique.

**Results:** Preliminary findings identify a number of categories which emerged from the content analysis. Mainly perceptions of the spiritual dimension and the meaning of the integration of spirituality in the care in end-of-life patients.

**Conclusions:** Students identify the omission of teaching on spiritual care in their nursing curriculum. However, they recognise that this is an important concept which needs to be integrated into care because of its place within the ontology of nursing profession.

**Symposium:**

**From Local Sites to Global Encounters: Aspects of Pilgrimage Practice with reference to Recovery from Uncertainty.**

Assoc. Prof. Bernadette **Flanagan**

[Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie](mailto:Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie)

South East Technological University, and SplRE, Ireland

Dr Jaeyeon **Choe**

[jayeon.choe@gmail.com](mailto:jayeon.choe@gmail.com)

Glasgow Caledonian University

School of Hospitality and Tourism, Hue University, Vietnam

Iain **Tweedale**

[tweedale.iain@gmail.com](mailto:tweedale.iain@gmail.com)

Journeying Pilgrimage Company

In October 2020 the journalist Mosha Gilad, writing in the Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, noted that, 'For the first time in 1,600 years, no pilgrims in the Holy Land ... the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem lies empty, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands desolate'. This stark description paints the scene during the pandemic at some of the most famous Christian pilgrimage sites in the world. It was a scene which was repeated globally.

But as the outward expression of pilgrimage was eclipsed, new stars began to emerge in the pilgrimage skyline. This symposium will explore three pilgrimage trends which have emerged after the uncertainties for global travel which the pandemic generated.

Firstly, we will examine whether the dreams inspired by popular Hollywood movies and literary bestsellers like *Eat Pray Love* (2006) and by tourism imaginaries of settings which aid recovery from the pressures of uncertainty, such as tranquil Southeast Asia monasteries are equally good for traveller and local communities.

Secondly, we will explore a new South East Ireland – South West Wales pilgrimage, as it currently evolves through a partnership between [The British Pilgrimage Trust](#), [Pilgrim Paths of Ireland](#), [Journeying](#) and [Guided Pilgrimage](#) so as to develop the ancient connection between St Davids, Pembrokeshire and Ferns in County Wexford. The pilgrim route is being promoted by the Ancient Connections project and employs two pilgrimage officers.

Thirdly, we will look at the return to local pilgrimage which the uncertainties of global travel triggered. In particular the rising attraction of holy wells in Ireland will be explored. The pandemic was a health emergency and so links between personal healing, local geography and holy wells will be explored through the lens of “therapeutic landscape”.

### **Workshop:**

**Including spirituality and religion in professional practice: Reflecting critically on your framework.**

Dr Fiona **Gardner**

[f.gardner@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:f.gardner@latrobe.edu.au)

La Trobe University, Australia

We all have, consciously and/or unconsciously, a framework that underpins our professional practice. This is usually a combination of theoretical ideas, values and beliefs that have often evolved from practice into a form of individual practice wisdom. My own recent experience of writing for social workers about embedding spirituality and religion in practice encouraged me to critically reflect on my practice with social workers and spiritual carers, who might, for example, be called pastoral care workers, chaplains or faith and wellbeing workers. This enabled me to articulate more clearly “where I am coming from” in my professional practice, particularly in relation to my spiritual beliefs.

In this workshop, I will briefly present my framework which consists of what I have identified as key themes from spirituality and religion (such as meaning and transformation), from theoretical ideas (such as Critical Theory, First Nations Relational Worldviews and Environmental Social Work) and from qualities and capacities for practice (such as deep listening and humility) underpinned by critically reflective processes. I will then ask workshop participants for initial reactions: what one aspect of my framework might particularly appeal to them or, if nothing appeals, what overall reaction might they name.

Next, I will ask participants to critically reflect on their own framework for including spirituality and religion in professional practice. Participants will be invited to visually represent what their framework might look like: to either draw or write what emerges as they reflect critically on what has influenced their own practice. Participants will then share these in pairs and encourage each other to draw out more of what their professional ‘practice wisdom’ might be.

We will finish with sharing of perspectives asking: what has emerged for you during this process? What are the implications for practice?

### **Oral:**

**“Mixed Life” Mysticism for the present age: Resources from 14th century mystics.**

Rev. Kevin **Goodrich** O.P.A

[kgoodrich@dbq.edu](mailto:kgoodrich@dbq.edu)

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Anglican Order of Preachers (Dominicans)

A spirituality of the “mixed life” as understood by fourteenth century English mystics offers a bridge for critical reflection, delivered orally as a paper presentation, on contemporary spiritual life and practice in our own



uncertain world. The 14<sup>th</sup> century English mystical tradition witnessed a broadening of participation in the contemplative life, including the lifestyle of the anchorite Julian of Norwich, while offering space for those outside formal religious vows such as Margery Kempe, a merchant and mother. The Augustinian canon Walter Hilton's widely circulated work, *The Mixed Life*, helped define this new understanding.

Our world is all the more uncertain, though for different reasons. Yet a re-contextualized conception of the "mixed life" may offer an approach to being in the world that facilitates human and transcendental connections across social and spatial difference. A "mixed life" approach presents an opportunity for spiritual centeredness among individuals and institutions experiencing the destabilized world of our world historical moment.

2023 is the 650th anniversary of the showings of Julian of Norwich. Julian has been a source of inspiration for many during the pandemic and other tumult of the past triennial, with compelling parallels between her times and our own. Though enclosed physically in an anchorhold, she and others made the practice of a spiritual anchorhold accessible to many. She lived in an enclosure, with a window into the church that allowed profound spiritual participation in the holy mysteries even as she had a window to the world which allowed no less profound spiritual counsel for everyday people. This non-dualist, integrated, practical spirituality might well be re-envisioned for our time. There is great spiritual power in reloading Julian's windows for spiritual paths seeking a not dissimilar "mixed life" today.

### **Dialogue:**

#### **The inception and journey to date of the Spirituality Lab: An Australian translational research initiative.**

Jennifer R. Greenham

[mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au](mailto:mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au)

Spiritual Health Association, Australia

Dr Simon A. Jones

[Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Simon.Jones@latrobe.edu.au)

La Trobe University, Albury Wodonga Health, Australia

Hannah Friebe-Gabbert

[hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com](mailto:hannahgabriellefriebe@gmail.com)

Sydney School of Divinity and Monash Health, Australia

What was patently certain in this uncertain world, was the mental health system in Victoria, Australia was broken beyond repair well before the pandemic came along to exert additional pressure on its fragile eco system. From a world leading suite of services 20 years ago, systems fell into chronic disrepair in the intervening years owing to a lack of will to adequately invest in the health and wellbeing of Victorians. Mercifully the mood has shifted, and awareness of the critical role mental health plays in general health and wellbeing has succeeded in elevating its public profile. It is the intention of the Spirituality Lab collective to make explicit the connection between spirituality and mental health and embed the spiritual domain into a new model of mental healthcare through a suite of translational research initiatives.

In early 2022 the Spirituality Lab team came together and developed a working brief of core objectives and identified opportunities that have the potential for leverage across many diverse fronts, including direct care in primary health, growing the evidence base through action research, development of training initiatives and broader research and academic opportunities. In keeping with what the word 'lab' conjures up, the Spirituality Lab is exactly that, a space for experimentation, the testing of hypotheses and action research.

The core team of researchers, mental health and spiritual care practitioners and lived experience consultants operate from a co-design methodology, employing an action-reflection-action, opportunity and strength-based model of enquiry. The lab to date has succeeded developing partnerships, harnessing interest, and commitment of a broad range of leading health services, clinicians, and academics from around Australia and beyond.

This dialogue presentation seeks to share with delegates what has thus far transpired, funding submissions made and more broadly the learnings of such a dynamic initiative in the translational research space.

**Oral:****Spirituality and Diversity Discussions: A reflective practice training initiative for mental health sector workers.**

Jennifer R Greenham

[mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au](mailto:mentalhealth@spiritualhealth.org.au)

Spiritual Health Association, Australia

Spiritual Health Association with their valued partner, Victorian Transcultural Mental Health both based in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and funded through the Victorian Department of Health have collaborated since 2017 to present a suite of learning opportunities to mental health workers. The objective is to explore spirituality and diversity and how workers might engage with people for spiritual care and spiritual health outcomes in a variety of service settings.

The collaboration draws upon diverse skill sets in the facilitation team including psychiatrists, mental health spiritual care practitioners and education and learning consultants to support 90-minute themed small group reflective practice conversation. Into its fourth year the project continues to engage a vast range of clinical, community and lived experience mental health workforce personnel. Participating professionals are supported to nominate and explore the challenges they experience when addressing the spiritual dimension of human expression and need, in what has traditionally been a predominant clinical paradigm and somewhat hostile environment.

The presentation will review the evolution of this training model, share learnings and evaluation data gathered over four years facilitating *Spirituality and Diversity Discussions*. It will also highlight what spiritual care best practice training research suggests in terms of conceptual, experiential learning and future practice implications.

Resoundingly, the data highlights the need for the biopsychosocial-spiritual model of care to be embedded into services ensuring all have capacity to navigate what may seem complex, but as spirituality and diversity is explored, a simplicity is revealed that supports all to understand its natural place in whole person care. In fact, spirituality and the spiritual lens offers a dimension and depth of connection that sustains and enriches us all in our professional and personal lives.

**Oral:****Across border learning: Extending relational practices through the creation of collaborative communal poetry.**

Caroline Coyle

[ccoyle@ait.ie](mailto:ccoyle@ait.ie)

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, Ireland

*Additional author unable to present:*

Shemine Gulamhusein

[shemineg@uvic.ca](mailto:shemineg@uvic.ca)

University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Over the past decade, MacEwan University's (Edmonton, Canada) Department of Child and Youth Care (an allied field to social care) has been travelling to the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, on a study tour starting at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), Department of Social Care. International collaborations have yielded student exchanges, international practicum opportunities, and students crossing borders for graduate studies. During the 2019 visit, one particular experience stood out. This presentation draws on the teachings of a TUS instructor, who embeds cultural and spiritual practices in her classroom. Together, the presenters understand spirituality as the connection to self, other, and other than human (Sheridan, 2008). This instructor shared that the centrality of relationality (a spiritual connection) in the social care context provides a potential 'conduit safe space of trust' for transformational learning, healing and/or change. Via a discussion on how *relational practices* must extend beyond the practitioner-client relationship and into practitioner-practitioner, educator-educator, and educator-student relationship, we





speak to how a collective poetry experience brought together students and educators from two different contexts (connection to self and other). By doing so, we hope to shed light on poetic inquiry as a methodology in social care, and how teaching spaces can act as sites of scaffolding spiritual approaches to practice. The presentation highlights the power and practical use of creative and spiritual artistic collaborations as a way for children, youth, and families to make sense of their experiences and offers them a voice within systemically marginalizing contexts.

**Pivoting during covid.** While students at MacEwan have not been able to travel, the two presenters/instructors continued to engage in innovative across-borders collaborative practices.

The presentation focuses on three objectives:

- (1) defining and articulating how spiritual practices can be embedded in social care practices;
- (2) recognising the power of cross-border learnings and how innovative social care practices can yield *relational practices* beyond practitioner-client connections;
- (3) an engaged practice experience with communal collective poetry that offers a unique way of creating one voice amongst many; and
- (4) an opportunity to unpack teaching methods to enhance the scaffolding of practice contexts.

Findings from reflections have also evidenced how relational (spiritual) practices were extended through collaborative creative mediums as a result of 'Across Border Learning'.

### Dialogue:

#### **Embedding compassion and spirituality into clinical education: A new approach.**

Dr Elisabeth **Gulliksen**

[e.gulliksen@hud.ac.uk](mailto:e.gulliksen@hud.ac.uk)

Senior Lecturer, School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, UK

#### *Additional Authors:*

(Co-presenter) Prof. Melanie **Rogers**, Professor of Advanced Practice and Spirituality, University of Huddersfield, UK

Prof. John **Wattis** – University of Huddersfield, UK

Ashely **Scott** – University of Huddersfield, UK

The benefits of spiritually sensitive and compassionate health care are well documented and recognised by bodies that set professional standards. The EPICC Spiritual Care Education Standard describes the spiritual care competencies expected in undergraduate nursing and midwifery students. However, the best methods to develop such competencies are still being explored.

A conversation about the barriers to teaching spirituality in health professional education (a lack of teaching time, de-prioritisation within the curriculum and teaching lacking clinical relevance) developed the concept of 'spotlight' teachings. Spotlights are a couple of minutes spent considering spirituality, routinely built into every taught session. The spotlight content is based on the clinical subject taught during the class and fully integrates spiritual care competencies into existing curricula.

A mixed method, feasibility project was undertaken in an academic setting for student Advanced Clinical Practitioners, who received spotlights in their taught sessions over an academic year. An anonymous online survey, containing validated scales, was completed by a single cohort, pre and post intervention to identify changes in student's knowledge, skills and perceptions.

Full analysis of the results is ongoing, but intermediate findings demonstrate the feasibility of this approach. Indeed, the project has been extremely well received by students and educators alike, resulting in some unexpected successes. Since spotlights were introduced there has been a noticeable increase in awareness of spirituality in the students and they are now (completely independently) including 'spotlights' in their own presentations. These achievements hint at the value of this method, it's future possibilities and pave the way for future research.



**Workshop:**

**Spiritually-informed supervision: A practice to address the uncertainties of personal and professional development.**

Dr Douglas S. Hardy

[doug.hardy@nts.edu](mailto:doug.hardy@nts.edu)

Nazarene Theological Seminary, USA

Practitioners in many different professions encounter uncertainty on a regular basis. There may be uncertainty about one's adequacy to meet a specific task or challenge, about the current condition or future of one's institutional or programmatic home, and, increasingly, about how uncertainties in the larger cultural, economic, and political arenas of the world might impact one's personal and professional well-being. Supervision in the professions purportedly provides a relational space where these kinds of uncertainties might be addressed in ways that support and help practitioners; however, the supervisory process can and often does serve performative and evaluative agendas that leave the one supervised feeling more uncertain and more stressed. What might the lens of spirituality help us to see about these shortcomings in supervisory process? In this workshop participants will be (1) introduced to a spiritually-informed understanding of supervision that emerges out of the context of spiritual direction practice, (2) helped to identify areas of uncertainty in their professional practice that could benefit from a spiritually-informed approach to supervision, (3) provided with a brief experiential exposure to spiritually-informed supervision, and (4) encouraged to adapt it to their own practice context, for example in counseling, social work, pastoral work, or management. The desired outcome is that all will leave better equipped to engage supervision as an intentional spiritual practice, whether as the one being supervised or the one supervising.

**Oral:**

**Lecturer perspectives on opportunities for transformative learning for students of social sciences undertaking undergraduate research.**

Dr Ruth Harris

[Ruth.Harris@tudublin.ie](mailto:Ruth.Harris@tudublin.ie)

TU Dublin (School of Social Sciences, Law and Education), Ireland

This paper seeks to identify how undergraduate students of Social Sciences may experience transformative learning over the course of their studies, culminating in an individual undergraduate research project. While the context is secular, parallels are drawn between personal transformation and spiritual growth. Transformative learning is conceptualised as 'transformation of meaning perspectives' to make them 'more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, reflective' (Mezirow, 2000). The values of transformative learning such as 'empathic solidarity arising from critical reflection, leading to reflective action and a commitment to participatory democracy' (ibid) are mirrored in the values of community development in aspiring to achieve social justice through the principles of participation, empowerment, and collective decision-making and reflect the spiritual values of contemplation and action. Links are made to concepts of learner-centred education based on metaphors such as 'participation' and 'becoming' (Hager & Haliday, 2007); pedagogies of depth (Hart 2007); the development of human consciousness (Kegan 1982, Wilber 1998); critical reflection (Hunt 2021); authentic subjectivity and social transformation (O'Sullivan 2016); and mysticism and social transformation (Ruffing 2001).

In this study, interviews were carried out with eight lecturers on a community studies degree programme to establish how a dimension of transformative learning could be traced through modules, work placements, and during final year research projects. Enablers and inhibitors were identified. Key findings included the importance of the development of empathy through reflective practice and through engagement with key literature which gave students the tools for critical reflection on inequalities and their own disadvantage or privilege. Changes in the values and attitudes of students and their desire to bring about change in society as a result of these new insights suggest a prophetic praxis. However, the experience of transformative learning varied greatly across the student cohort and inhibitors included obstacles to personal



development, superficial levels of engagement with course content, stress around academic performance, and missed opportunities for class participation and lecturer feedback.

**Oral:**

**The psychospiritual experiences of ethnically diverse healthcare staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Rev. Dr Guy Harrison

[guy.harrison@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:guy.harrison@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Oxford Centre for Spirituality and Wellbeing (OxCSWell), Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, UK

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant concerns for the wellbeing of NHS staff [1-3]. For the most part staff are resilient professionals, trained and experienced in dealing with illness, disability and death [4]. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an exponential impact on staff mental health with reports indicating elevated rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout and suicidality [5-6].

In the UK, ethnically diverse NHS staff have experienced these pandemic-related pressures even more than their white ethnic colleagues with higher levels of mortality [7] and concerns about unequal access to PPE [8]. Many ethnically diverse staff reported re-traumatisation through recalling past experiences of racism [9]. This highlights the need to better understand the experiences of ethnically diverse staff during the pandemic so that appropriate interventions that support their specific needs can be developed.

One mechanism that may guard against the experiences listed above is the provision of 'psychospiritual support.' This can be defined as "psychologically-informed support which responds to people's need to find meaning, purpose, relationship and hope, and may include transcendent understandings of the Divine or of ultimate meaning." [10] There is evidence that psychospiritual interventions improve patient-practitioner relationships and reduce stress in healthcare staff [11]. However, although psychosocial support interventions are commonly identified and implemented to support staff with their health and wellbeing needs [1,12], the provision of *psychospiritual* support is less evident in NHS settings.

This paper aims to report on a study of the role of spirituality in the lives and work of ethnically diverse healthcare staff within ten NHS Trusts in five cities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in turn to inform the development of psychospiritual support interventions for staff.

**Oral:**

**Identifying and operationalizing spiritual strengths: Familiarizing healthcare professionals with a complementary family of spiritual assessment options.**

Dr David Hodge

[DavidHodge@asu.edu](mailto:DavidHodge@asu.edu)

Arizona State University, USA

Spirituality is a critical source of strength for many people. Furthermore, people often turn to spirituality to cope with uncertainties of various types. Yet, despite the importance of spirituality in dealing with challenges, healthcare professionals frequently fail to address spirituality in clinical settings. To assist clients cope with, or ameliorate, the problems they face, it is necessary to identify and operationalize clients' spiritual assets. To accomplish this goal, a spiritual assessment should be administered to clients, typically using a two-step process in which a brief assessment is administered to all clients followed, if clinically warranted, by a more in-depth comprehensive assessment. The data obtained during the assessment lays the foundation for subsequent clinical decisions. There is, however, no one-size-fits-all approach to conducting a spiritual assessment. Both healthcare professionals and clients have a variety of interests in any given clinical setting. For example, the nature of the presenting problem, the amount of time available for the assessment, the client's personality characteristics, communication style and cultural background, and other factors can vary from case to case. After reviewing the rationales for conducting spiritual assessments in healthcare settings, this presentation presents some specific approaches or models for conducting spiritual assessments. After presenting a model for conducting a brief assessment, a family of five complementary comprehensive spiritual assessment methods are presented. More specifically, one verbal model is discussed—spiritual histories—along with four diagrammatic approaches: spiritual lifemaps, spiritual genograms, spiritual eco-maps and

spiritual ecograms. A brief overview of each approach is provided along with an analysis of its strengths and limitations regarding its use in various settings. The aim is to familiarize attendees with a repertoire of conceptually distinct spiritual assessment tools so that the most appropriate assessment approach in a given client/practitioner setting can be selected.

#### Oral:

#### **A systematised review of the Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR) Population and Public Health Outcomes.**

Dr Nicole Holt

[Nicole.holt@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:Nicole.holt@canterbury.ac.uk)

Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

The number of people who identify as 'Spiritual But Not Religious' (SBNR) is growing, but the field of Public Health has largely ignored this increase. Research suggests there has been a rise in people who identify as SBNR as a response to current societal culture. This increase is important because people's personal beliefs are key to their health behaviours. Spirituality can be understood as an aspect of people's health and wellbeing which organizes the values, the relationships, meaning, and purpose of their lives.

**Aim:** To explore whether there is an association between adults who identify as SBNR and Public Health outcomes.

**Methods:** A systematised literature review over the last 10 years including literature from all around the world.

**Results/Discussion:** The reviewed research suggests findings about the SBNR population and health were relatively mixed. Being SBNR can be damaging to individuals' health due to associated spiritual struggles and stigma. However, holding a spiritual belief can be useful for those with addiction issues. There was also research to suggest that for some people who identified as SBNR found online social support groups were reported to be beneficial for their health as they could share their experiences with others. **Conclusion:** These findings highlight the struggles some people who identify as SBNR can face and demonstrate how it can negatively affect their mental health.

**Future research:** Further exploration of SBNR individuals' experiences within Public health practice is required. This research should focus on the UK context, which may differ to that in other countries due to differences in the religious and cultural landscape.

#### Oral:

#### **The transformative power of evangelical poverty: Developing a Franciscan spirituality of antiracism.**

Prof. Daniel P. Horan, OFM

[dhoran@saintmarys.edu](mailto:dhoran@saintmarys.edu)

Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, USA

Alongside the recent twin worldwide catastrophes of global climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, a third rising crisis has surfaced in the form of persistent systemic racism and increasing xenophobia. While certainly not a new phenomenon, geopolitical dynamics rightly described as 'uncertain times' have shifted in such a way as to contribute to a renewed sense of divisiveness, increased discrimination, and the amplification of systemic and institutional racism in places as wide-ranging as the United States and Canada to the United Kingdom and France to South Africa and beyond. Pope Francis has described this context in his recent encyclical letter *Fratelli tutti*, writing "a readiness to discard others finds expression in vicious attitudes that we thought long past, such as racism, which retreats underground only to keep reemerging. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think" (20).

In addition to a political, cultural, and social concern, racism is also a spiritual concern and, therefore, a subject that requires a renewed sense of spirituality and spiritual practices. The American Catholic ethicist Bryan Massingale has described this dimension of racism as a 'soul sickness.' This paper argues that the medieval Franciscan spiritual tradition offers distinctive resources for a transformative antiracist spirituality. This paper focuses on the central Franciscan understanding and practice of evangelical poverty and its primary



conceptual and embodied intention to dismantle unjust social and ecclesial power structures. Drawing on key texts in the *regula* of Francis and Clare of Assisi, alongside other early Franciscan sources, this paper shows how their unique vision of voluntary *minoritas*, penance, and kenotic Christocentrism provides resources for a contemporary antiracist spiritual framework, especially for those who unwittingly benefit from systems of racial injustice and white supremacy.

#### Oral:

#### **Spirituality in the English Language Classroom: Exploring Teacher Trainees' Views on Spirituality within the Context of Their Teaching Profession and Teaching Practice**

Dr Maria Hrickova

[mhrickova@ukf.sk](mailto:mhrickova@ukf.sk)

Department of English and American Studies, Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia

*Additional author:*

Monika Strbova, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia

Spirituality, defined as 'beliefs and practices that are grounded in conviction that there is a transcendent (nonphysical) dimension of life' (Peterson – Seligman, 2004), belongs to the most intimate, private, and therefore sensitive, topics to talk openly about. Yet, as our spirituality determines core existential concerns and the meaning we ascribe to life, its importance for teachers and teacher trainees, either as private practice or as a theme discussed in classroom, should not be undervalued. In the world of uncertainty and constant disruption which we experience now, spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, or mindfulness, may be of great benefit to educators in helping them to self-reflect and foster their resilience so that they may better function as effective practitioners. This paper attempts to explore whether and how spirituality and spiritual practice matter to teacher trainees enrolled in the English teacher training study programme at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, within the context of their study and professional life. Students (N= 122) were first investigated through the questionnaire. On the basis of the results of the first phase, 10 students were selected to take part in the semi-structured in-depth interviews which were analysed through content analysis. The goal of the present paper is to illustrate students' reflections on spirituality as a potential anchor and supportive factor which may help them to cope with distress and embrace hope and positivity both in their training and career. By uncovering and analysing students' thinking on spirituality and inquiring about their needs to incorporate spirituality as a topic to their teacher training, the paper suggests possible ways of how to integrate it successfully into the curriculum. Imaginative literature, and primarily poetry in English, was suggested as a vehicle through which the topic of spirituality may be introduced in ELT classroom, both during students' training and later, in their professional practice.

#### Oral:

#### **The significance of 'interior development' for effective 'exterior' climate action.**

Dr Pádraic Mark Hurley

[Padraic.Hurley@setu.ie](mailto:Padraic.Hurley@setu.ie)

South East Technological University and SpIRE, Ireland

We live in an era of acute existential crises and concern. There is a growing recognition among many experienced climate action practitioners that the 'climate crises' is not just an 'it'. It critically involves also a 'we' and an 'I', and a consequential recognition of the significance of 'interior development' if we are to *become more real* and effective in our change and developmental practice.

In May 2019, the Irish Dáil declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. The latest Climate Action Plan 2021 commits significant leadership and implementation of the actions to the 'public service' and in particular Local Government with the Local Authority Climate Action Charter set to play a pivotal role. In 2021 as part of the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) many expressed the need "to enhance the capacity of local authorities and the community sector, in order to meet our ambitions". How could we most strategically enhance this 'capacity'? And does 'spirituality' have a role to play?

This paper will inquire into the hierarchical 'grade system' in the Public Service (and more specifically Local Authorities) and will note from a 'developmental perspective' that the grade system in many ways may presently act as a structural impediment for optimum capacity building, potentially functioning as an inhibitor, somewhat ironically towards a more authentic 'service' orientation, with roles defining selfhood rather than the creative capacity of self-defining roles. The paper will thus explore the critical distinction between *domineering hierarchies* (problematic) and *growth hierarchies* (healthy) and inquire into alternative emerging models of *holarchical* organisation as strategic capacity generators.

It will draw on empirical developmental studies of managers and supervisors, putatively indicative of respective *capacities to hold and create developmental space*, highlighting 'post-rational' and 'spiritual clarity' capacities. This framing lends itself to granular developmental training and awareness of attendant 'causal' impacts on adaptive capacity and leadership, with causal denoting an *integration* of contemplative state awareness/cultivation and 'postconventional' developmental maturity.

And it will inquire as to whether the present grade structure acts as an impediment to healthy 'individuation', understood at core as a psycho-spiritual maturing. Spirituality is partially understood in this context as a quality or strength to regain and remain whole, an integrative capacity, in the face of being structurally 'parted', 'graded', 'degraded', 'fragmented' and explored as a potential key to unlocking capacity for a more 'personal'-public, service orientation, as distinct from a rigid standardization, which can perpetuate mediocrity and a citizen perceptual experience of disservice and dissatisfaction not functionally fit for present and/or future purpose, as partially evidenced by recent research.

#### Oral:

#### **Personal spiritual care for professional spiritual caregivers: A dialogue about healing and wellbeing as a helping professional.**

Rev. Kristen **Hydinger**, MDiv, MA

[kredford@bu.edu](mailto:kredford@bu.edu)

Research Fellow, Boston University, USA

Rev. Dr Holly **Benzenhafer**

[hollybenzen@gmail.com](mailto:hollybenzen@gmail.com)

Spiritual Wellness Provider, Canyon Ranch Lenox, USA

During the height of the COVID pandemic in 2020, demand for counseling and spiritual care rose at a staggering rate. Spiritual care providers (including clergy and chaplains) were already at heightened risk of burnout before COVID's outbreak. Additionally, attrition across these groups rose and continues to increase through 2022. Providers who remain in these professional fields must balance their own lived experiences of collective and individual traumas with an increased professional demand to care for others also grappling with new and unprecedented life events and transitions. It is no surprise that existential crises, spiritual languishing, and fractured resilience emerge among caregivers. Spiritual care providers are key players in constructing a culture beyond COVID that is humane, healing towards well-being, just, and resilient. In order to offer spiritual care in a sustainable and even flourishing manner, however, they must have space to nurture and nourish their own bodies, minds, hearts, and spirits. How can spiritual caregivers find space to care for their spiritual well-being in general *and* when life's uncertainties are societally and globally destabilizing? Additionally, how can spirituality not simply ease the symptoms of life's stressors but help professional spiritual care providers heal and eventually thrive?

This session will offer resources and insights for professional spiritual caregivers at an individual, relational, and organizational level aimed at preventing burnout while promoting healing and eventual flourishing. Utilizing current, ongoing quantitative and qualitative research, we will present preliminary findings about burnout prevention and flourishing promotion among a sample of professional spiritual care providers in the United States. We will then offer practical suggestions and an introduction to embodied spiritual practices geared toward this specific professional population as a means of engendering sustained healing, discernment, and a return to holistic resilience that may lead to spiritual thriving.



## Oral

### Contemplative practices: An anchor in uncertain times.

Diane Jackson

[diane.jackson@postgrad.wit.ie](mailto:diane.jackson@postgrad.wit.ie)

PhD studies, South East Technological University, Waterford and SpIRE, Dublin, Ireland

Practitioners attest that contemplative spiritual practices such as *lectio divina* (sacred reading), contemplative prayer, and spiritual accompaniment have a grounding effect on those who consistently practice them. During the inevitable periods of uncertainty and turmoil in life, they provide the practitioner with a centred stability that positively affects not only them, but those with whom they interact in their personal and work lives. However, not all Christians have knowledge of, or, ready access to these contemplative practices.

Since the Age of Reformations, Protestant faith traditions have for the most part disregarded these contemplative aspects of spiritual practice, as they responded to the Reformers cry of *sola scriptura*. But my research shows that in the last century there is strong evidence of a 'turn' to the contemplative in Protestantism. This presentation will give a brief overview of this turn in the USA, UK and Ireland and identify the perceived 'lack' in some expressions of Protestantism that has resulted in the contemporary thirst for ancient practices of contemplative Christianity.

## Oral

### Finding HOPE in existential crisis – the role of spirituality in suicide aftercare and prevention.

Dr Simon Jones

[SimonA.Jones@awh.org.au](mailto:SimonA.Jones@awh.org.au)

Albury Wodonga Health/ La Trobe University, Australia

"Mental illness is an existential crisis, a crisis in meaning, and if you can find some way to strengthen the meaning of your life then you're able to get through." Spirituality provides hope, meaning and purpose in psychological and existential crisis and is a protective factor in maintaining positive mental health – even through the uncertainty of our times. Supporting personal spirituality in suicide aftercare and prevention restores meaning following loss, loneliness and nadir - the lowest point in life. Furthermore, crisis and nadir may represent a turning point and opportunity in someone's mental health and recovery leading to a spiritual emergence out of crisis.

This paper will present our experience of supporting spirituality in the Hospital Outreach Post-suicidal Engagement (HOPE) program based at Albury Wodonga Health regional Australian hospital. The HOPE program supports people who have attempted suicide or with suicidal thoughts with intent and plan for three months. HOPE provides integrated and multidisciplinary clinical, psychosocial and lived experience support based on the personal needs and goals of clients. This presentation will illustrate how spirituality is included in suicide risk assessment; a biopsychosocial-spiritual model of care; supporting cultural/ spiritual strengths; personal medicine coaching and spirituality integrated therapeutic treatment.

This paper will also draw on findings from recent PhD research with people living with mental illness which found that irrespective of participants religious or spiritual type or their beliefs and practices, spirituality is universally used by participants to find meaning and purpose, to make sense of their experience of their mental illness, provide stability, a reason to live, and hope.

The 2021 Royal Commission, and subsequent reform and transformation in the Victorian mental health and wellbeing system provides an extraordinary opportunity of critical reflection and recentering of spirituality in person-centred, holistic and recovery-oriented practice in suicide aftercare and mental health care.



**Oral:****Spirituality and adolescent uncertainty: 2 Be Loved (Am I Ready).**

Prof. Mary T. Kantor

[kantorm@merrimack.edu](mailto:kantorm@merrimack.edu)

Merrimack College, Graduate programs in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction, North Andover, MA and Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. USA

In her song “2 Be Loved (Am I Ready)” Lizzo, American rapper and chart topper amongst high school students, captures a glimpse into what can be a tumultuous time of identity formation and of seeking belonging in the adolescent years:

Girl, I'm 'bout to have a panic attack  
I did the work, it didn't work,  
That truth, it hurts...  
What's happenin' to me? Oh, oh, oh  
Am I ready? (Girl, there ain't a doubt)  
Am I ready? (What you talkin' 'bout?)  
Am I ready? (You gon' figure it out)  
To be loved, to be loved (to be loved)  
How am I supposed to love somebody else?  
When I don't like myself, like, ooh...

While the field of adolescent development provides frameworks for these biological, cognitive, and psychosocial transitions of adolescence, a growing body of research across the social sciences, psychology, and medicine includes spirituality in this development, as well as upholds spirituality's contributions to adolescent well-being and resilience, at a time when too many young people are saying “I'm 'bout to have a panic attack.”<sup>1</sup> The Search Institute's Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence explores the intersections and opportunities for integration between youth development and spiritual development. They argue that coming to terms with questions of meaning, purpose, and identity, and developing one's deepest, fundamental commitments are critical issues in adolescent development and are also at their core, spiritual development issues. This presentation, drawing on the Search Institute's research, is also informed by my ongoing theological research, consultations, and chaplaincy experience in a secular international residential high school. From collaborative critical reflection with school psychological counselors, I offer contributions to professional practices across academic communities' chaplaincies, campus ministry, counseling and wellness centers, as well as with campus adults charged with nurturing the minds, bodies, and spirits of adolescents.

**Oral:****Between suicide and (online) adoration in the pandemic: A philosophical analysis concerning Being and Presence.**

Dr Peter Kevern

[p.kevern@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:p.kevern@staffs.ac.uk)

Staffordshire University

Reflecting on the threat of nuclear annihilation, Teilhard de Chardin spoke of a day when “humanity will realize that biologically it is faced with a choice between suicide and adoration.” Faced with what appeared to be a similarly profound threat in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a flourishing of online forms of adoration that deserve attention for what they can tell us of the human dimensions of spirituality in its response to isolation and anxiety.





This presentation explores the phenomenology of adoration by reference to a particular Catholic Christian expression that emerged during the global lockdown, of online Eucharistic Adoration. I will establish that the practice is incomprehensible in terms of the traditional understanding of the presence of a divine Being, and that in order to take it seriously we must reconceive our notions of spiritual Presence. Drawing on the work of two post-Heideggerian philosophers, Marion and Nancy, I will argue that, understood as a devotion to 'Presence without Being', the phenomenon gives us some valuable insights into the structure of human spirituality as a response to existential threats.

The practical significance of this work is in directing attention at adoration, rather than supplication, as the fundamental feature of human spirituality at times of anxiety. It indicates that people offering spiritual support to those suffering deep anxiety should not so much seek to supply comforting ideas but to encourage individuals to self-transcendence.

#### Oral:

##### **Un-certainty as an overcoming of spiritual materialization.**

Dr Erik Kuravsky

[erikkuravsky@gmail.com](mailto:erikkuravsky@gmail.com)

Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Erfurt, Germany

Gurdjieff and Nietzsche said that the worse the situation is, the better are the chances for personal transformation. This attitude is easily understandable on a psychological level: the inner conflict and the felt need to be "awake and sober" are the basic conditions for any real spiritual work. In this sense, the more uncertain the times, the more one is drawn to reflect and contemplate on one's own situation. In my essay, I address a deeper, ontological importance of uncertainty as the genuine structure of spirituality as such. I present Heidegger's analysis of the traditional identification of certainty with truth, resulting from a representational interpretation of human experience and of Being. I relate the pre-Socratic understanding of *physis* as a self-concealing emergence of beings with the Buddhist and the Christian mysticism which sees the nothingness as the ontological ground of all. Bringing together Heidegger and mysticism, I show that the everyday mode of a psychological dependence on certainty is nothing but an expression of existential anxiety in face of the essential un-certainty of the very ontological emergence of the world (i.e., of the nothingness). The modern trends of psychologizing spiritual practices (e.g., mindfulness meditation) are then shown to be a materialization/reification of the uncertain into certain and thus a falsification of the spiritual in terms of the (psychologically) material. Finally, I discuss the co-belongingness of the need to embrace the uncertainty of our modern situation and the need to let go, or to be released from the "certainty-promises" of (pseudo)spirituality. I argue an overcoming of spiritual materialism to be the leap that fulfills both these needs, thus allowing us to first have a chance of experiencing Being in its enigmatic, abyssal creativity.

#### Oral:

##### **Moral distress and spiritual uncertainty among rural caregivers providing palliative and end of life care during pandemic.**

Dr Nasreen Lalani

[lalanin@purdue.edu](mailto:lalanin@purdue.edu)

Purdue University, IN, West Lafayette, USA

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought multiple uncertainties and distress to both to families and caregivers providing palliative and end of life care in the home, hospice or community settings. Particularly, in rural communities, caregivers experienced increased anxiety, burden, compassion fatigue and inequities due to lack of access and unequal distribution of healthcare resources. Both rural patients and caregivers were found to be at risk for burnout, trauma and poor wellbeing. Using a community based participatory approach, we explored caregivers (both formal and unpaid) experiences caring for their older adults with serious chronic illnesses. The study was done in partnership with Federally qualified rural health clinics, Purdue Extension Teams and Indiana Rural Health Association. Using purposive sample, we conducted informal caregivers, healthcare providers and community stakeholder qualitative interviews (N=30). All the interviews were done

online using Teams and Zoom. Findings were analyzed using thematic analysis approach. Our findings showed that both caregivers and healthcare providers suffered psychological, emotional and moral distress due to several pandemic restrictions. As a result of restricted visitation, isolation policies and lack of communication, caregivers felt increased anxiety, experienced complex grieving and feelings of helplessness. Caregivers struggled overcoming their own fears, making connections and offering spiritual care to their dying patients in the hospital settings. During pandemic, absence of end-of-life rituals among families experiencing death of their loved ones caused feelings of ambiguous loss, uncertainty, spiritual and existential distress, delayed grieving and other bereavement issues. Some caregivers preferred virtual modes of communication whereas others felt discomfort due to lack of training and connectivity issues. Providers felt not comfortable assessing emotional and spiritual concerns using technology. Our study recommends developing supportive interventions and wellness programs to address grieving, moral injury and emotional distress among caregivers. Training and digital care competencies are recommended for staff providing palliative and end of life care in community practice settings. Future studies are needed to examine the development and provision of supportive care interventions in both physical and digital spaces of the healthcare system.

#### Oral:

#### **Tears of fire: Itinerary of soul suffering in uncertain times.**

Dr Beverly Lanzetta

[blanzetta@icloud.com](mailto:blanzetta@icloud.com)

Independent Scholar, USA

The testimony of numerous Christian mystics situates the seat of suffering in the soul that—being more sensitive than the body—suffers more intently than earthly suffering. The soul that has become one with God's will feels both the heartbreak of God and the anguish of humankind. Such a soul, in an outpouring of contrition and loving desire, feels infinite compassion for suffering and longs to unite what is divided.

This paper studies the itinerary of soul suffering in St. Catherine of Siena, its relevance to contemporary spirituality and the healing professions, and the stages of the soul's movement from selfish, imperfect tears to the sweet tears of fire, where the soul is clothed in charity and weeps when God is offended, and her neighbors hurt.

The fourteenth century in which Catherine lived is not unlike our own. It was a period damaged by the ravages of the Black Plague, and significant social, political and religious unrest. Sharing in every injustice—including "spiritual cruelty," "bodily cruelty," and other sins inflicted on her neighbors—Catherine recognizes the intimate bond between divine and human suffering and how "on every level of society," her neighbors are the medium through which she can serve God.

In *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*, she lists six types of weeping, and a methodology of soul development. Catherine notes that tears are vessels of genuine devotion that proceed from the heart, serve as prayers of intercession, and are necessary for moving from one spiritual stage to the next. The itinerary of soul suffering gives birth to the perfection of love: suffering expands the soul; suffering borne of desire and contrition of heart heals and atones for sins; and suffering leads to the person's growth in virtue, opening the heart to merciful solidarity with the crisis of humanity.



**Oral:**

**Beyond wellbeing: exploring the relationships between psychological wellbeing, religiosity and religious coping amongst adolescents in post-primary schools in Ireland.**

Dr Lydia Mannion

[lydia.mannion@mic.ul.ie](mailto:lydia.mannion@mic.ul.ie)

Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

*Additional Authors:*

Dr Maurice **Harmon**, Department of Learning, Society and Religious Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Dr Trevor **O'Brien**, Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Recent years have witnessed an increase in the discourse surrounding mental health and wellbeing worldwide (Chandra & Chand, 2018), while mental health-related issues amongst adolescents have risen steadily in prevalence (OECD, 2021). International research purports the potential of spirituality from both a religious and non-religious perspective to influence student wellbeing, either positively or negatively (Wong, Rew & Slaikeu, 2006); however, the relationship between these areas amongst students attending post-primary schools in Ireland has not previously been investigated. The current study aims to address this gap in the literature, by empirically exploring the relationships between psychological wellbeing (PWB), religiosity and religious coping amongst students at Senior Cycle level in post-primary schools across Ireland. This research employed a cross-sectional design and a mixed-methods approach to data collection. Convenience sampling was used to recruit a sample of post-primary school students (N=110) of varying and no religious backgrounds, aged between 15 and 19 years, for the quantitative aspect of the study. Participants completed online questionnaires measuring their PWB, religiosity and religious coping. Additionally, some participants (N=7) completed online, semi-structured interviews on their perceptions regarding the relationship between mental wellbeing and religion. Correlation, comparative and regression analyses were used to analyse the quantitative data, while reflexive thematic analysis from the critical realist perspective was employed to analyse the qualitative data. The results revealed a complex relationship between PWB and religion. Religiosity was not significantly correlated with PWB; however, religious beliefs were a predictor of enhanced PWB amongst some participants. Notably, the use of positive religious coping methods were associated with a range of benefits for students' PWB. Conversely, greater adoption of negative religious coping mechanisms were linked to lower levels of overall PWB. The discussion outlines a number of implications for policy, practice and future research, including whether the term 'religiosity' is an accepted term of spirituality amongst adolescents in Irish contemporary society, based on the results of this study.

Drawing on the work of White and Epston alongside various Sermon scholars, this paper will explore the spirituality of the Sermon in dialogue with the philosophy and concepts of narrative therapy. The framing of the Sermon in terms of character, themes, rhetoric and context will be placed alongside a discussion of problem, power and the 'intentional state understandings' of narrative therapy's reauthoring concepts; the realm of intentions, purposes, value, beliefs, hopes and dreams, principles of living and commitments. This dialogue offers insights into the nature of spirituality offered in the Sermon for the ones who are poor in spirit: an alternative story where they are declared as blessed.

**Oral:****Clinical simulation: The acquisition of spiritual care skills in 1<sup>st</sup> year nursing students.**

Laura Martínez **Rodríguez**

[lauramartinezr@ub.edu](mailto:lauramartinezr@ub.edu)

University of Salamanca, Spain

*Additional Authors:*

María Dolores **Fernández Pascual** - Universidad de Alicante

Abilio Reig **Ferrer** - Universidad de Alicante

Laura Riquelme **Ros** - Universidad de Alicante

Cristina García **León** – Universidad de Lleida

Jordina **Domenech** – Universidad de Lleida

**Objective:** To evaluate clinical simulation as a method teaching and learning of spiritual care skills in nursing.

**Method:** This mixed methods study comprising of a qualitative exploratory study and a quantitative questionnaire was carried out following teaching of simulated scenarios. Spiritual suffering and spiritual needs scenarios were developed and implemented with two groups of students in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of nursing training (n = 45). Qualitative data was collected via students written reflection (simulation debriefing), carried out individually, following an established guideline for reflection. Quantitative data were collected using the Spanish version of Spirituality and Spiritual Care Rating Scale pre and post simulation activity.

**Results.** The students' perspectives on their learning and acquisition of Spiritual competencies through simulation was positive (high / very high scores in the different dimensions measured in the survey). The most valued content was "nursing care and nursing soft skills "

**Discussion.** The competences explored in this work can be broadened and agreed upon in order to articulate a syllabus for clinical simulation as a model for working spiritual dimension in nursing care.

**Conclusion.** The opinions of the students reinforce the use of simulation for the learning of spiritual care.

**Oral:****Psychological upheaval, extraordinary phenomena, and the practice of spiritual direction as a resource for uncertain times: A postmodern, decolonizing, disability-studies perspective.**

Dr Shannon **McAlister**

[smcalister@fordham.edu](mailto:smcalister@fordham.edu)

Fordham University, USA

The World Health Organization has recently challenged the psychiatric, drug-based paradigm for dealing with psychological upheavals, including phenomena sometimes described as psychoses or symptoms of schizophrenia. I will argue that the recommendations of the WHO parallel somewhat the contemporary practice of spiritual direction as a nonjudgmental listening environment where people's accounts of their inner experiences are welcomed with respect--and that trained spiritual directors can serve as a support and a resource for those experiencing psychological upheaval and/or extraordinary phenomena (without usurping the roles of trained mental-health professionals).

The wisdom of indigenous cultures and of the Christian mystical tradition can also offer resources for appreciating extraordinary phenomena and navigating psychological upheavals that have been treated as merely pathological within a materialist, colonial, European-Enlightenment framework. An appreciation of these indigenous and mystical resources also responds to calls from within Disabilities Studies to value neurodiversity, and to be cautious about a medical model that pathologizes human differences. From a postmodern, decolonizing, disability-studies perspective, there is no justification for favoring a materialist philosophy characteristic of the European Enlightenment over indigenous and mystical beliefs in the world of spirit and spirit-communication.

The figure of the 'shaman' studied by scholars of religion cross-culturally, corresponds with the figure of the 'prophet' within the Judeo-Christian tradition--and with some forms of mysticism within Christianity. Indeed, when approached via reader-response criticism through a multi-cultural, decolonizing, postmodern,



disability lens, the synoptic gospels and the Gospel of John present Jesus as exemplifying shamanic practices and mystical experiences. We can glean resources for navigating psychological upheaval and extraordinary phenomena by examining indigenous shamanic practices; writings from within Christian mysticism on the discernment of spirits and on the evaluation of corporeal, imaginative, and intellectual visions and locutions; and a re-reading of the life of Jesus from a multi-cultural, decolonizing, postmodern, disability lens.

### Dialogue:

**How spirituality plays a key part in bringing the whole person into the room in professional practices from an interpersonal and a systemic perspective.**

Thomas McCormack

[thomas@tmclifecoach.com](mailto:thomas@tmclifecoach.com)

South East Technological University MA graduate in Applied Spirituality, Ireland

Síle Walsh

[info@silewalsh.com](mailto:info@silewalsh.com)

ELIS Advantage Ltd, Ireland

The last number of years have taught us how uncertainty brings us back to the question of “Who am I? Who are we?”

In this dialogue, individual and systemic lenses will be applied to look at how we as practitioners consciously integrate the whole self and then with others, and what this means for the people we support in our professional practices.

In an effort to expand these conversations we will utilise Internal Family Systems, Integral Theory (Ken Wilber, 1949), individualism and collectivism, 7-eye model of supervision (Hawkins and Shohet, 1985), an anti-oppressive lens, psychology of inclusion and our personal experiences of working with others to explore the following questions...

- What is important to be aware of for us to support ourselves and others, in relating to self and others holistically?
- How do we notice when we are rejecting a part of ourselves, or a part of others?
- What does this look like through an individual and systemic lens?
- How can the individual lens and the systemic lens influence one another for the holistic development of the person?

These questions, the implications of integration, rejection, othering/splitting will be discussed leveraging spirituality, psychology and inclusion to form an honest and thorough perspective on the journey through integration towards individuation, wholeness and collective connections.

A part of this dialogue will engage in experiential examples of how we can unconsciously split in ourselves, and in our professional capacities when working with others. This will move into how othering shows up in the systems inherent in spirituality and its implicit and explicit impact on groups of people, down to the individual. This dialogue will point to what can often go missing as we journey the questions of “Who am I? Who are we?” The speakers in this dialogue share varied experiences of spirituality and its role in professional practices.

### Dialogue:

**Spiritual direction as a resource for teacher formation, wellbeing and resilience.**

Dr Bernadette Miles

[Bernadette.miles@kardia.com.au](mailto:Bernadette.miles@kardia.com.au)

Kardia Formation P/L; Stirling Theological College - University of Divinity Melbourne, Australia

Teacher education courses focus largely on curriculum content and pedagogical knowledge and skills. The greatest resource in the cultivation of wellbeing and enhanced learning outcomes for students, the teacher's self, is given minimal attention. Yet, we teach who we are, for better or worse. The complexity of the work of teachers continues to grow. Teachers carry high expectations from their school leaders, parents, students, the

wider community, and themselves. They carry heavy, demanding workloads. In such a climate it is easy to see how, without a robust sense of vocation and the nurturing of this, teachers suffer from high stress, become disillusioned and disconnected from their vocation. Current research shows these factors contribute to high attrition rates, particularly of early career teachers.

Spiritual direction is a practice that enables a person to be connected to their authentic self which can, in turn, foster and strengthen a sense of purpose and vocation. Our personal history and spirituality are a deep well of accumulated values and experiences from which we can draw wisdom and strength. We also accumulate experiences and disordered tendencies<sup>2</sup> that distort decision making and limit personal freedom. In exploring our spiritual identity through spiritual direction, we explore our sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, our purpose and meaning in life. Spiritual direction provides a place for critical reflection and to become conscious of what limits and what enables a person's freedom to make life-giving choices.

The research, conducted in Australia in 2022, sought to examine how critical reflection through spiritual direction could support teachers in developing resilience, teacher formation and wellbeing, particularly in these uncertain times. An empirical study was conducted over 8 months with 38 teachers who were offered 8 sessions of spiritual direction. All participants completed a survey and 10 participants attended individual interviews prior to commencing spiritual direction and on completion of the eight sessions. Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative. This paper presents a summary of the results of the research.

#### Oral:

##### **Lilias Trotter and Simone Weil: A duet of spiritual midwives for times of uncertainty**

Elizabeth Millar

[elizabethmillar330@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethmillar330@gmail.com)

PhD studies, McMaster Divinity College, Canada

Pregnancy involves waiting and can often be a time of uncertainty and anxiety. Just as midwives assist and patiently wait with the pregnant mother while anticipating and preparing for the birth of a baby, Margaret Guenther views spiritual directors as spiritual midwives. Spiritual directors help us navigate uncertain times and attend to the anticipated and realized new life within us and around us. The metaphor of midwifery is helpful as we get to know women from church history who can play the role of spiritual midwives and companion us as we wait and prepare for the birth of new life. Writing from my social location as a woman, a mother of five who has experienced the care of midwives, and as a practical theologian, I will advocate for midwifery as an image that captures the power of spiritual companionship and practical guidance. Then using psychologist James Birren's Guided Autobiography method of approaching life stories, I will examine the themes, such as branching points, career, health, and spiritual values, that emerge from the autobiographical writings of Lilias Trotter and Simone Weil. Finally, I will explore how this female duet from Christian history can act as spiritual midwives as they gently guide us towards a patient and purposeful sort of waiting, while directing our attention to Divine Love and Life and demonstrating a practical and delightful orientation to the world around us. Trotter and Weil are two women of faith who can comfortingly companion and practically assist as we journey through uncertain and anxious times and wait for the birth of new life.

#### Oral:

##### **Did I look at the blackness or did I look at the stars? Stories of spirituality, mental health and recovery: Meaning, connection and growth.**

Katja Milner

[katja.milner@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:katja.milner@nottingham.ac.uk)

PhD studies, University of Nottingham, ESRC, Institute of Mental Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Health Sciences, UK

A recovery approach to mental health care seeks to better understand lived experiences and their potential applications to clinical practice. A summary of findings will be presented outlining a narrative study conducted





as part of a PhD and building upon findings from the first qualitative systematic review study. Thirty participants were interviewed and asked to share their stories of spirituality, mental health and recovery. A narrative thematic analysis was conducted exploring superordinate themes of: 'Meaning making', 'Psychospiritual development' and 'Spiritual connection'.

Participant stories contained wisdom, challenge, beauty and a striking willingness and ability to articulate a dimension of life that can sometimes be considered taboo, nebulous or too overly subjective to have value. A salient finding not adequately addressed within empirical research was the articulation of meaning making for some participants as an internalised form of spiritual guidance. Another key finding highlighted by a number of participants was the importance of authenticity within the context of their psychospiritual growth. An emergent integrative factor relating to all superordinate themes was the concept of spiritual functionality. This highlighted how spirituality often operated within participant experiences to be supportive of their mental health and recovery, although at times could be challenging or damaging to mental health. Spiritual functionality could therefore be a useful concept within mental health and clinical contexts to support understanding of sometimes highly subjective and nuanced spiritual and mental health experiences.

Further details of the thematic frameworks derived from the narrative analysis have the potential to contribute towards spirituality and mental health clinical teaching and training, psychotherapy and general mental health and wellbeing interventions. They have the potential to reduce stigma in the context of spirituality and mental health, and improve understanding of these important and often functional experiences within people's lives.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Spiritually aware practice (SAP) in education: Teaching that sparks the spirit.**

Janet Monahan

[j.monahan@herts.ac.uk](mailto:j.monahan@herts.ac.uk)

University of Hertfordshire, UK

In England and Wales teachers are required by law to promote children's spiritual development as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) agenda: what is the nature of this professional practice in education?

A diverse sample of ten primary school teachers were interviewed and data analysed into qualitative themes. Some findings confirmed the researcher's expectations such as curriculum choices which favoured nature, story, and global themes; child-centred teaching styles and teachers using their own knowledge and understanding of spirituality.

More surprising findings included:

- in many lessons, curriculum or subject was incidental or even irrelevant: SAP emerged as a teaching style or pedagogy, not a curriculum factor.
- How much teachers needed to draw on their own educational values in the absence of other guidance.
- All ten participants, including those in faith schools, were universalist in their professional practice; all SAP was respectful to the spirituality of the child as expressed by the child.
- Five teachers used the term 'spark'. *"You look for the spark in them."* *"It's that spark - you see it in their faces."* *"I aim to spark them."*

The law requires teachers to promote children's spiritual development, but governments decline to say what that means, although Ofsted inspects SMSC at every school inspection. This situation creates an empty space to which some teachers respond creatively. In an educational culture consumed by curriculum content and test scores, how best can the spiritual development of children be respected and supported?

The significance of the project is in illustrating the nature of current teaching designed to promote spiritual development. This fills a knowledge gap in spirituality research and provokes questions on the value of this practice to child, school and society.



**Poster:****Use of a First-Person Spirituality Methodology in Pilgrimage.**

Liz Murray

[liz.murray@postgrad.wit.ie](mailto:liz.murray@postgrad.wit.ie)

PhD studies, SETU, Waterford Campus and SpIRE, Ireland

Heuristic Inquiry is a first-person methodology, in which the researcher does not bracket their own experience, becoming transformed over the course of their research. Critical Reflection as described by Gibbs and Schon also attends to practitioner transformation. Brookfield describes critical reflection as “quite simply the sustained and intentional process of identifying and checking the accuracy of our teaching assumptions” (Brookfield 2017, 3). My PhD research topic of pilgrimage has much academic literature on the subject. As a student of Applied Spirituality, I needed to position myself in relationship to unfamiliar disciplines. I decided that the methodology chosen to address the research question (heuristic inquiry), could possibly be used as literature search strategy. By committing to the framework of heuristic inquiry, I engaged with the processes of intuition, indwelling, focusing and an internal frame of reference. The heuristic phases included engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. (Moustakas 1990), (Sultan 2018). The creative synthesis would be the narrative text to be discussed with my supervisors, which was then expanded and consolidated. The heuristic process was employed throughout each iteration of the literature review chapter. The initial search focused on the six books of the Routledge Series of Studies in Pilgrimage, Religious Travel and Tourism edited by John Eade and Ian Reader. On completion of the phases of Moustakas, a disciplinary spread of Anthropology, Sociology, Theology and History emerged. Emergent also were the methodologies commonly favoured by each discipline. Explication of the missing authors/themes, led to the corpus of Irish pilgrimage literature. As a Spirituality scholar I need to bring my own voice to the table, whilst not diluting or preferencing a specific discipline. The heuristic approach was well suited to this task, by providing a framework for my literature search strategy.

**Oral:****The ‘Journey’s Hero’: Learning from Dante in times of crisis and transformation.**

Lee Andrew Newitt

[Lee.newitt@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:Lee.newitt@bucks.ac.uk)

Buckinghamshire New University, UK

This presentation will focus on the spiritual journey of personal development in times of crisis and breakdown. A new interpretation of Campbell’s Hero’s Journey will be shared drawing out the psychospiritual qualities being transformed at each stage. As such the presentation provides a new model or tool to help a person make sense of personal spiritual development at times of crisis and breakdown.

‘The Journey’s Hero’ presentation offers a background analysis to the chapter of the same name, published in ‘Positive Psychology Across the Life Span: An Existential Perspective’. In this paper, the author will present an analysis of Dante’s Divine Comedy, exploring how a person’s psychology might change throughout the process of psychospiritual transformation. The premise for this investigation was a simple one. If Joseph Campbell’s seminal work on the ‘Hero’s Journey’ (HJ) highlights the ‘stages of psychospiritual transformation’ then will an analysis of an autobiographical example of HJ reveal the psychological changes occurring at each stage? Dante’s classic work, the ‘Divine Comedy’(DC) was chosen, as it is commonly recognised as being autobiographical in nature and a symbolic representation of psychospiritual transformation that anecdotally aligns with the HJ. Firstly, the structure of the DC and the HJ were compared for alignment then, after confirmation, a thematic analysis of the verses in each book, was undertaken, to extract main themes for each stage of the journey. This analysis was cross referenced for continuity and alignment with other analyses; DC analysis by Baxter, Luke, Schaub and Vernon; HJ analysis by Le Grice; and Transpersonal Development by Fowler, Vaughan and Wilber. The findings are correlated and presented in the ‘Breaking Out, Breaking Through, Breaking In’ Model of Psychospiritual Transformation.

In conclusion, there is reason to be optimistic that the proposed model; adds to the current conceptualisation of psychospiritual transformation; brings the language into alignment with language of



today; and may be more accessible to a wider audience. In all cases, it may provide another useful tool to help make sense of our personal spiritual development in these times of crisis and upheaval.

**Oral:**

**Reclaiming the ‘humanity’ of higher education through spiritual resourcing.**

Dr J. Cody Nielsen

[j.cody.nielsen@convergencestrategies.org](mailto:j.cody.nielsen@convergencestrategies.org)

Dickinson College (USA) and Convergence Strategies Inc.

The higher education academy has become a model of business practice which seeks to remove the human elements which brought the academy into existence. In a modern world where commerce of educational degrees is the access point to personal financial wealth, higher education has acquiesced to a role of treating students as little more than clientele. This has resulted in diminished morale within the academic workforce, student satisfaction to be continuously on the decline, and a sense that higher education is perhaps no longer about a larger question of identity formation and is instead a “stamp” on which to accredit a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) or business. Applying the approaches unique to spiritualities and religious practices across the world, a reclaiming of the humanities is possible, inviting students to be a precious commodity of a collective learning experience in which our principles are grounded on humanness, peace, and practices which proclaim equity and justice. This paper seeks to incorporate spirituality as a key “lens” through which for us to reframe our institutional structures and reclaim a public trust of the academy as laboratory from which our entire global society comes.

**Oral:**

**The poor in spirit and a problem saturated storyline: Narrative therapy in dialogue with the Sermon on the Mount.**

Karen J. Nivala

[knivala@bst.qld.edu.au](mailto:knivala@bst.qld.edu.au)

PhD Studies, Brisbane School of Theology under the Australian College of Theology, Australia

In an uncertain world, there is a sense of relatability to the phrase, ‘the poor in spirit.’ Thus, begins the most famous of the teachings of Jesus in the book of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount. In a very different context, the founder of narrative therapy, Michael White, wrote of a different ‘poor in spirit:’ “When people consult therapists, they tell stories...” “themes often reflect loss, failure, incompetence, hopelessness, or futility.”

Despite Narrative Therapy’s oft-perceived rejection of the Christian metanarrative, a growing number of counsellors holding a Christian faith embrace the approach, finding resonance with their spirituality, the challenges to power and the storied nature of their faith. Both narrative therapists and several strands of biblical scholarship posit that story is lived in and out of and is transformative. This confluence of ideas raises questions about how the spirituality espoused in the Sermon could sit alongside this post-structural therapeutic approach.

**Dialogue:**

**Belonging and spirituality – the missing link in a holistic educational experience.**

Sandra Nolan

[20101812@mail.wit.ie](mailto:20101812@mail.wit.ie)

PhD studies, SETU Waterford, Ireland

Dr Susan Flynn, supervisor,

[Susan.Flynn@wit.ie](mailto:Susan.Flynn@wit.ie)

Head of Dept of Arts, SETU Waterford, Ireland

This presentation is based on findings from a larger study examining experiences of education inclusion for migrant and minority ethnic students at SETU Carlow, highlighting a need for a holistic approach to education provision. Findings indicated strongly that migrant and minority ethnic students feel isolated and excluded because of a lack of belonging. Belonging, like spirituality, is a subjective experience, yet it centres on the idea of simultaneously being accepted and of being part of something bigger than oneself. Circumventing these issues point to an opportunity for spirituality to become a greater part of the student experience.

This study was informed by scholarship around the spiritual dimension of education. hooks creates space for a holistic view of both the student and lecturer, maintaining the importance of emotions and a need for “conscious teaching - teach with love” (2003, p.133). Freire discussed how emancipatory education necessitates awareness of the self to deconstruct the dominator-dominated relationship of traditional education structures (1970). From an Irish perspective, the idea of “non-recognition” as outlined by Baker, Lynch et al, considers how a holistic framework is necessary to create inclusion and equality in education (2004).

Inspired by Freire’s (1970) “problem-posing” model of education, fundamentally based on inclusion, dialogue – written and verbal – was how raw data for this research was collected. There was a biphasic approach to data collection, including an online survey questionnaire (n=74) and focus group (n=5). This study was informed by a constructivist paradigm and employed a crystallisation technique for analysis whereby both sets of data, along with current literature, were interpreted and contextualised so that each partial account complemented the others.

To create optimal opportunities and contexts for student engagement and success at third level HEIs must look to what is missing from the student experience. In that regard, the results of this study point to spirituality

#### Oral:

#### **Indigenous Spirituality in view of Missionary Activity in Nigerian Christianity (1880 -1950).**

Onyewuchi Obirize

[afrogeografa@gmail.com](mailto:afrogeografa@gmail.com)

MA graduate in Applied Spirituality, South East Technological University, Ireland

The aim of the research is to broaden the understanding of the indigenous spiritual experience in Nigeria in light of missionary activities in Nigeria during the first half of the twentieth century. This understanding is pursued through a research question in particular to identify some features of the indigenous spiritual experience in Nigeria in light of missionary activities in Nigeria during the first half of the twentieth century. A review of the spiritual frameworks underpinning the research identifies critical interiority/authentic subjectivity as the key methodological principle.

The research uses Form-descriptive methodology to study the lived experiences of four missionaries through their biographies in their historical context including social, political, cultural and economic events. Three levels of form-descriptive phenomenology including form profile, external horizon and inner horizon were applied to the texts towards extracting findings.

Since most Nigerian Christians are indigenous peoples previously nourished exclusively by indigenous spirituality, the important findings include that both indigenous spirituality practitioners and Christians shared belief in a holistic interconnected world permeated by spirits in every aspect. Both groups also participated in common practices like multi-level consultations for community well-being of which some Christians avoided engaging spirits & profound/profane solutions through the mediation of indigenous priests/doctors. Another finding is an integrated approach to illness management where patients sought comprehensive treatment from indigenous priests/doctors involving summoning supernatural forces as complementary. Both groups also continued the annual celebration of the earth as the sacred conduit of life particularly as the harbinger of abundant crop harvests. Lastly there is successful inculturation of indigenous spirituality aspects into Christianity.

Considering the historical context, the growth of Christianity and apparent decline of indigenous spirituality respectively since 19<sup>th</sup> century are both complex and contested. Nevertheless, evidence show that



certain indigenous spirituality ceremonies & rituals have declined or ceased compared to Christianity increasing vitality.

#### **Dialogue:**

#### **Spirituality & Practice in Healthcare Chaplaincy: A Dialogue of Listening & Accompaniment in End of Life Care.**

Rev. Dr Christine O'Dowd-Smyth

[odowd Smyth christine@gmail.com](mailto:odowd Smyth christine@gmail.com)

Church of Ireland Healthcare Chaplain, University Hospital Waterford, Ireland

Rev. Dr Daniel Nuzum

[daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie](mailto:daniel.nuzum@ucc.ie)

Healthcare Chaplain, Cork University Hospital, Ireland

This Dialogue proposes a topic in dialogue between two healthcare chaplains working in two acute hospitals and specialising in end of life spiritual care. Daniel Nuzum of Cork University Hospital and Christine O'Dowd-Smyth of University Hospital Waterford will discuss how a breadth of Spirituality informs practice in accompanying patients and their families "to the gate" in patient centred end of life care. Using the methodology of authentic subjectivity; the enabling complementary methodology of grief theory, and as praxis the scaffolding of deep listening and Ignatian spiritual direction, the accompaniment of those approaching end of life and their loved ones; the recognised spiritual challenges of navigating approaches to end of life care, life limiting illness and terminal diagnosis; the recognition of the role of the practitioner and the spiritual 'liminal space between' will be examined and discussed and subsequently laid open for audience engagement, participatory reflection and discussion as this sensitive and important area of spiritual practice and care is presented and experienced.

#### **Oral:**

#### **"Vivre l'Inespéré". Narratives and Atmospheres of Uncertainty in the Community of Taizé**

Dr Katharina Opalka

[katharina.opalka@uni-bonn.de](mailto:katharina.opalka@uni-bonn.de)

Faculty of Protestant Theology, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany

The presentation will explore how spiritual practices can enable coping with uncertainty by opening up spaces of ambiguous narratives and ambivalent experiences in atmospheres that can serve as "training spaces". For this purpose, the ecumenical monastic Community of Taizé (Burgundy, France) is understood as an example of lived Christian spirituality that allows the young people, who come to visit a space to participate in both a style of prayer and a way of communal life that places the provisional (and therefore, uncertainty) at the core. Since the writings of its founder, Brother Roger (1915-2005), Taizé has employed narratives of uncertainty for spiritual communal life such as: *vivre l'inespéré* (transl. as "a life we never dared hope for"), *dynamique du provisoire* (the dynamics of the provisional) or *pèlerinage de confiance* (pilgrimage of trust). The paper will explore from a hermeneutical perspective how these narratives reframe biblical (or traditional) imaginary to maintain ambiguity in a way that allows for expressions of ambivalent experiences between hope and struggling with destructivity.

In addition, to understand Taizé, the communal practices of prayer that mediate these narratives have to come into focus. By expanding the methodology, the paper will show how current research on atmospheres can be included in the study of spiritual practices: atmospheres themselves carry an element of uncertainty, insofar they are synthetic, emergent, vague and fluid. Therefore, studying atmospheres requires developing methods to study uncertainty (such as collective ethnographic approaches in becoming aware of and describing atmospheres).

In conclusion, the paper will discuss how the spiritual practices in Taizé can serve as an example for studying narratives and atmospheres that (may) help to face uncertainty in an approach that focuses on open-endedness and the provisional.

**Oral:****Effectuated Spirituality for Social Good.**Ayodele Olusayo **Osunmakinde**[akindele.osunmakinde@gmail.com](mailto:akindele.osunmakinde@gmail.com)

School of Management, Marketing and Leadership, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

This paper develops an understanding of the relationship between spiritual capital and social entrepreneurship. Doing so advances the cognitive-based view of spirituality as a capital form drawn in the praxis of social entrepreneurship. In the last two decades, research on faith, spirituality and religion at work has developed as a distinct research area (Benefiel, 2007; Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Brügger, 2021; Brügger & Huppenbauer, 2019; Delbecq, 2009; Fotaki, Altman, & Koning, 2020; Gundolf & Filser, 2013; Houghton, Neck, & Krishnakumar, 2016; Lips-Wiersma, Lund Dean, & Fornaciari, 2009; Long & Driscoll, 2015; Miller & Ewest, 2013; Neal, 2013; Oswick, 2009; Tackney, Chappell, & Sato, 2017; Tracey, Phillips, & Lounsbury, 2014). For this paper, *social enterprise* is defined as a framework or a model that facilitates the utilisation of entrepreneurial pathways and tools in tackling social problems to generate a social impact that delivers on the public good. In comparison, spiritual capital is an intangible asset that enhances the capacity of an individual to generate latent and cognitive values of immense significance. Accordingly, this paper unveils spirituality as a precipitating and facilitating cognitive infrastructure and resource is mobilised as a capital form with implications for research and practice.

**Oral:****Spirituality and social work in uncertain times.**Dr Claudia **Psaila**[claudia.psaila@um.edu.mt](mailto:claudia.psaila@um.edu.mt)

University of Malta

Spirituality is an important dimension of human experience (Payne, 2014). However, research shows that social workers are not trained to value the importance of spirituality and the implications of it in the lives of clients (Gilligan & Furness, 2002). In this presentation, we discuss findings of a study that explored social workers' perspectives on spirituality in social work practice in a changing Maltese context. It is within this transformational context that social workers practice. Furthermore, the study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. One could surmise that responses may have been influenced by this uncertain time.

A mixed methods sequential design (Cresswell, 2009; Manjengwa, 2020) was used with the quantitative data collection preceding qualitative data gathering. A quantitative survey captured a wide understanding of social worker's perceptions that was then deepened through interviews. Eight-four social workers (13.5% of total population) answered the online questionnaire, while ten social workers shared their experience in semi-structured interviews.

The presentation focuses on themes that emerged from the interviews. The participants defined spirituality as a way of living while religion was more about structure. However, they saw spirituality and religion (S/R) as intertwined. They claimed that S/R are essential to social work practice. More specifically, the social workers focused on the client-social worker relationship, and how integrating S/R into practice increases trust and strengthens the relationship. The participants highlighted the importance of following the client's lead in integrating S/R into practice and discussed this in relation to the helping process. Some participants considered spirituality to be more beneficial to the client's wellbeing than religion. Moreover, they explained how including S/R contributes positively to the process. They also spoke about the challenges they face with integrating S/R into practice. Additionally, the social workers believe that there exists a need for training in this area.



**Oral:****Spiritual and emotional wellbeing and resilience of Advanced Clinical Practitioners during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

Prof. Melanie **Rogers**

[m.rogers@hud.ac.uk](mailto:m.rogers@hud.ac.uk)

University of Huddersfield (School of Human & Health Sciences), UK

*Additional Authors:*

(Co-presenter) Dr Lihua **Wu**, Kingston University, UK

Prof. Vanessa **Taylor**, University of Huddersfield, UK

Angela **Windle**, University of Huddersfield, UK

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a huge toll on healthcare practitioners, interventions to support practitioners are urgently needed. This longitudinal study examined the spiritual and emotional wellbeing and resilience of Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Advanced Clinical Practitioner provide holistic care for patients in all settings, they are educated to an advanced level of practice clinically and academically.

In the early stages of the pandemic 785 ACPs responded to participate in a mixed methods study comprising of three validated surveys (The Facit 12 for Spiritual Wellbeing, the Warwick Edinburgh for Emotional Wellbeing and the Connor- Davison (CD-RISC) for resilience. Qualitative open-ended responses were also collected to review individuals' experiences of working as an ACP during Covid-19. The same study was replicated 18 months into the pandemic with 371 responses. Standard statistical analysis was applied to the quantitative data with thematic analysis for the qualitative data.

Findings from both phases of the study identified worryingly low levels of spiritual wellbeing and resilience. Interestingly respondents who identified spirituality in terms of meaning had higher levels of wellbeing and resilience than those who related spirituality to their faith. Respondents who reported higher levels of (spiritual) meaning reported statistically significant greater emotional wellbeing ( $\beta = .66$ ,  $B = .88$ , 95% CI [.74, 1.02],  $p < .001$ ). The only significant predictor of resilience was spirituality ( $F(11,222) = 14.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ) which accounted for 38% of the variance in resilience (adjusted  $r^2 = .38$ ).

Qualitative findings identified intra pandemic spiritual wellbeing and resilience facilitators and detractors

This presentation will explore this study's key findings, related to spirituality and resilience. It will also offer discussion around Resilience Based Clinical supervision to enhance ACPs spiritual wellbeing and resilience which has been offered to a 14 ACPs following the study.

**Oral:****Mental Health Service Users Perceptions of Spirituality – a Mixed Methods Study.**

Prof. Melanie **Rogers**

[m.rogers@hud.ac.uk](mailto:m.rogers@hud.ac.uk)

University of Huddersfield (School of Human & Health Sciences), UK

*Additional Authors:*

Prof. John **Wattis**, University of Huddersfield, UK

Prof. Stephen **Curran** University of Huddersfield, UK

Dr John **Stephenson**, University of Huddersfield, UK

Phil **Walters**, Southwest Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust, UK

Wajid **Khan**, Southwest Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust, UK

This study of people who had used mental health services was conducted in two phases. The first used published scales to measure attitudes towards spirituality in everyday life and in their experiences of mental health services (spirituality in practice). There were 170 respondents. Participants also answered questions about whether they viewed spirituality as distinct from religion and the usefulness of the concept of *spiritually competent practice* (SCP). In the second phase, six participants were interviewed in detail about the concepts



of SCP and *availability and vulnerability* (A&V). Quantitative data was examined statistically and qualitative data thematically.

The quantitative results showed that respondents who viewed spirituality as distinct from religion were likely to place a higher value on spirituality in everyday life. Those who had experienced the integration of spirituality within services they had received placed a higher value on the place of spirituality in practice.

Qualitative themes formed around respondents' perceptions of spirituality and their own journey in mental healthcare and how far healthcare practitioners integrated spirituality into holistic care. They were given brief descriptions of SCP and A&V and their views on the usefulness of these concepts were generally positive.

This presentation will explore key findings including: the relationship between the quantitative measures, the distinction between religion and spirituality and how far spirituality had been integrated in services, in the light of the importance of spiritual care as a part of person-centred, holistic practice.

### **Symposium:**

#### **The Law as a governing tool in shifting the narrative from homo-economicus to homo-ecologicus.**

Dr Saintier **S  verine**

[saintiers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:saintiers@cardiff.ac.uk)

School of Law & Politics, Cardiff University, UK

Alexandra **Pimor**

[apimor@earthlaw.org](mailto:apimor@earthlaw.org)

Earth Law Centre

Anthony **Zelle**

[tzelle@earthlaw.org](mailto:tzelle@earthlaw.org)

Earth Law Center, USA

The symposium will hold a space for critical reflection on the ethical, consciousness and spiritual implications of legal practice, development, mechanisms and innovations in this period of ecological polycrises and political uncertainties.

Nature, understood both as biotic communities of interacting and co-dependent entities, and as a-biotic environmental landscapes and resources, is increasingly being afforded legal rights. From this Euro-centric perspective, Nature is separate from humanity. The rights of Nature are recognised for their intrinsic ecological value, as well as for Nature's role on the (emotional, physical, therapeutic, psychological and spiritual) health and well-being of those affected by its degradation or eradication.

In spite of this broadened recognition of the value of Nature, western human communities remain predominantly guided by an entrenched economic worldview. Values, systems, and ensuing choices are based on an economic spirituality and thus geared towards individual efficiency and profit as homo economicus. Environmental law and related tools still fail to address the root causes of the global crisis (Boyd), which stem primarily from human activity. Overpopulation, overconsumption, deforestation, pollution, intensive farming and agriculture are behavioural illustrations of the systemic, insensitive, extractive, wasteful and destructive spirituality enabled by legal systems that are underpinned by the belief that humanity rules the natural world (Capra & Mattei).

A fundamental shift towards a homo-ecologicus approach and ecological balance is needed and requires our global society to adopt an emergent system of governance being dreamt up within a new spirituality and collective consciousness. The root cause for ecological balance will be the radical transformation in humanity's collective consciousness towards a society based a more inclusive, socially and ecological spirituality, that itself demands an ethical and radical institutional shift (Heldeweg & Saintier). Although Spirituality and collective consciousness are crucial elements of this radical transformation, their part into the discussion is not yet put to the fore.

This symposium aims to remedy this gap and discuss ways in which human legal constructs, systems and mechanisms can incorporate Spirituality and collective consciousness as framework elements in our



discussion on eco-governance development to promoting a new narrative for a homo-ecologicus system of human governance.

#### Oral:

#### **Spirituality/religiosity and mental well-being among Israelis during the period of COVID-19.**

Dr Ephraim Shapiro

[eas97@columbia.edu](mailto:eas97@columbia.edu)

Ariel University, Israel

**Background:** The period of COVID-19 has had a large impact not only on physical health but mental health. The stresses and uncertainties of affect the period has had an effect on it in complex and not fully understood ways, including those connected with spirituality/religiosity There may be opportunities to improve well-being among the spiritually/religiously involved, yet the topic has been understudied.

#### **Research Questions:**

- 1) How has COVID-19 affected several aspects of mental health among spiritual/religious Jewish and Muslim Israelis
- 2) Do results vary by spiritual/ religious beliefs?
- 3) What are the implications of these findings toward improving the mind-body connection and well-being among Israelis?

**Methodology:** Surveys were administered to a random sample of over 1000 Israeli Jews and Muslims in fall/winter 2020/21. Respondents were asked about mental health status, stressors, stigma types, mental health-related knowledge and attitudes, information sources and demographics. Spirituality/religiosity was measured by five questions about different aspects of spiritual beliefs and religious identity and including those related to prayer, higher powers and coping during a crisis. Descriptive and multivariate analyses were performed. Key informant interviews with religious/community/healthcare leaders were performed afterwards.

**Findings:** Spirituality/religiosity was often associated with greater mental health but also with some barriers to improved mental well-being such as stigmas. Variations were found by specific types of spiritual/religious and demographic subgroups. Parallels between Jews and Muslims were found but also important differences. Avenues for increased education about mental health through spiritual/religious mechanisms were identified through the analyses and interviews.

**Conclusions:** Spiritual/religious contextual factors of Israelis can potentially impact their mental health since COVID-19 in complex ways such as greater reflection and ability to cope. However, efforts are needed to better use spiritual/religious resources to help improve well-being, both mental and physical, and should be tailored to different spiritual/religious communities.

#### Oral:

#### **Spirituality, complexity and public policy in an uncertain world.**

Prof. Naresh Singh

[naresh@jgu.edu.in](mailto:naresh@jgu.edu.in)

Professor and Vice Dean, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy. Director, Centre for Complexity Economics, Applied Spirituality and Public Policy. O.P Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana. India.

This presentation will first survey the mystical and spiritual core of some of the world's major religions: Christianity, Islam (Sufism), Hinduism ( Advaita Vedanta), Buddhism and Daoism. It will show that beyond dogma and doctrine the spiritual core in all these traditions point to a remarkably similar conception of our spiritual nature. Many of the contemplative pathways to understanding our own true lead firstly to what we are not. Finally, we come to an understanding which is normally difficult to explain in words as this understanding is beyond mind and thought. This is referred to as emptiness, pure consciousness, pure awareness etc. The presentation will then ask the question whether this understanding can play a role in the way we organize our societies, govern ourselves and make public policy especially in the era of the Anthropocene and in a world of increasing uncertainty. It will be argued that the uncertainty unleashed on the

world by the Covid 19 pandemic was just one example of a classic complex adaptive system which now characterizes the social ecological systems in which we live. It will show that the failure to understand our true spiritual nature is the root cause of the challenges we now face in the Anthropocene. It will further show that we must use complex adaptive systems principles for public policy making in the face of the increasing complexity and uncertainty and move beyond the linear deterministic approaches of the Newtonian world. We will come the conclusion that we are not as much in control as we would like to believe, and as amply demonstrated by the pandemic.

#### Oral:

**Certain experiences in an uncertain world: Transpersonal experiences in epilepsy and meaning for those who have them.**

Dr Louise N. Spiers

[Louise.spiers@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:Louise.spiers@northampton.ac.uk)

University of Northampton, UK

*Additional authors:*

Chris A. Roe, University of Northampton, UK

Melinda Spencer, University of Northampton, UK

Since the Babylonians, a connection has been established between individuals with epilepsy and spirituality. In Western medical contexts, individuals with epilepsy reporting mystical or spiritual experiences are understood through case studies. Such experiences are diagnosed as problematic seizure-related activity or psychosis, to be controlled through medication. This study sought to explore the lived experience of individuals with epilepsy who also had spiritual experiences. The aim was to provide a richer understanding of the phenomenology from a non-medical perspective, using the lens of experience to enable critical evaluation of the current biomedical understanding. The study was focused on the meaning of the experiences for participants, considering well-being and de-stigmatisation. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed and 8 UK individuals, aged 21-45 were recruited. Data was gathered using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The participants describe certainty about experiences connected directly to their epilepsy that others question, including access to a non-shared reality, precognition, psychic events, near death (NDE) and out of body experiences (OBE), synesthesia, past lives and psychic abilities. Findings of the study include the difficulty of explaining their certainty to other people, resulting in dismissal. Participants understood their experiences to have a profound meaning and to be the catalyst for an introspective process of transformation; a spiritual journey, the value and status of which is at variance with understandings within the neuropsychiatric literature. Participants found that it was important to use their insights in service of a wider community. The research suggests that, in fact, not all experiences in individuals with epilepsy are undesirable symptoms of the condition, and that some are, in fact, genuine spiritual experiences that have a positive effect on well-being. Future research includes exploring the nature of such spiritual experiences and their extent in wider populations of individuals with epilepsy.

#### Workshop:

**From Croagh Patrick to the Camino de Santiago and beyond: The role of transformative pilgrimage learning, spirituality, and critical reflection in dealing with love, death, and legacy.**

Prof. Elizabeth J. Tisdell

[ejt11@psu.edu](mailto:ejt11@psu.edu)

Penn State University—Harrisburg, USA

This workshop will present the notion of Transformative Pilgrimage Learning (TPL). TPL is connected to Mezirow's (2000) notion of transformative learning (TL) and Morinis and Cousineau's considerations of spiritual pilgrimage. Mezirow's TL is grounded in an experience of disorienting dilemma, the role of critical reflection in bringing to light one's assumptions, to facilitate a transformed perspective that results in TL. Since



Mezirow never discussed the role of spirituality in (TL), Tisdell (2020) and colleagues (Tisdell & Swartz, 2022), blend TL with the spiritual pilgrimage (Cousineau, 1998; Morinis, 1992) to discuss TPL.

With this as background, this workshop will explore how spiritual pilgrimage, such as the Irish Croagh Patrick pilgrimage, or the Camino de Santiago across Spain, has the potential to facilitate **living life as pilgrimage**, if one continues to engage in a spiritual practice, and in critical reflection post pilgrimage. Such a life-approach can be helpful in dealing with the blessings and difficulties at the heart of life's Big Questions – namely, love, death, and legacy, which has become even more complex during COVID 19 and beyond in this uncertain world.

The facilitator/presenter will put participants in four smaller discussion groups based on:

- 1) Those who have done pilgrimage
- 2) Those that have engaged in meaningful death experiences
- 3) Those who draw on spirituality that make meaning of love experiences
- 4) Those who focus on spirituality and critical reflection in forging their legacy

The final portion of the workshop will bring together these smaller groups, and engage in a discussion of the specifics of HOW TPL, with its attention to spirituality and critical reflection can help in the dealing with love, death, and legacy in living life as pilgrimage in an uncertain world.

### **Oral:**

#### **A critical reflection on researching spiritual practices in the treatment of eating disorders.**

Tara Travers

[tara.travers@postgrad.wit.ie](mailto:tara.travers@postgrad.wit.ie)

PhD studies, South East Technological University, and SpIRE, Ireland

Eating disorders are serious disorders with the highest mortality and morbidity rate of all mental health conditions. The aim of this study is to explore the contributions made by spiritual teachers/practices to the journey of recovery from eating disorders for women in Ireland aged between 35 and 65. The methodology for this study is phenomenological, employing Professor Finn Thorbjørn Hansen's 'wonder lab' approach which is uniquely suitable to investigating sensitive, subtle subjects such as eating disorders. For women with eating disorders, the world is always an uncertain place. In particularly uncertain times such as these; the pandemic, climate crisis and war provide a unique breeding ground of isolation, anxiety and disconnection which contribute to the proliferation of eating disorders. Connection with the self, others, nature, and the divine may be augmented by spiritual practice.

Given the challenging nature of eating disorder treatment, an expanded range of services and treatment options is needed. International research findings suggest that spiritual approaches to treating clients are as effective, and sometimes more effective, than secular ones. The role of spiritual practices (such as spiritual accompaniment, pilgrimage, yoga, mindfulness, twelve step programmes) as a pathway to recovery could provide a space for deep reflection and connection both for people with eating disorders and the researchers who engage with them. Critical reflection and researcher reflexivity offer insights on spiritual practice as an effective and relevant pathway for eating disorder recovery. Critical reflection around the emergent spirituality research is suggestive of a new way; not just of seeing eating disorders as a mental disorder but of seeing the individual in treatment as a unique spiritual entity capable of connection, healing and transcendence.

### **Oral**

#### **Leading in a VUCA world: The spirituality of Thomas Merton (1915-1968) and its relevance for contemplative leadership.**

Dr Elmor van Staden

[vanstadenelmor@gmail.com](mailto:vanstadenelmor@gmail.com)

SPIRASA, IT Manager at Hitachi Vantara

We live in a world that is constantly changing, a world that seems to be getting more unstable each day. Modern society, indeed, appears to be more complex than ever. Such a tumultuous environment places

tremendous challenges on corporate and societal leaders, who are expected to anticipate events or predict how they will unfold. It is no wonder that governments and organisations have been seeking the 'holy grail' of intuitive discernment for years, although often for selfish reasons. Unfortunately, history has shown that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution when it comes to providing vision and leadership in a *VUCA* (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world.

What are leaders to do, and who can they turn to for guidance? The contemplative spirituality of *Thomas Merton* (1915-1968), mystic and 20th-century monk who lived and wrote from within the cloister walls of Gethsemani (Kentucky, USA), may offer welcome guidance to leaders, especially as it pertains to *contemplative leadership*. Merton knew that the world's problems (he wrote during the Second World War, a time when the world was also in complete turmoil) cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that existed when the problems were created, but that a completely new level of 'thinking' and 'being' is required. For Merton, a non-dual/contemplative world view is the key to the solution.

Contemplative leadership, a leadership that draws on a contemplative world view, holds that a leader's success and wisdom stem, not from personal knowledge, experience, or skills, but from a deep understanding of her/his 'self' and being one with the Divine (the only reality that exists). Cultivation of such an approach to leadership demands periods of solitude and silence, a regular contemplative practice, spiritual accompaniment, and being part of a supportive community.

This paper not only highlights the importance of Merton's spirituality for a clearer understanding of the leader's 'self', but also uncovers its relevance for contemplative leadership. Such an approach to leadership is particularly well suited to an ever-changing, uncertain, and unpredictable world.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Consciousness and spirituality: Are they two aspects of the same reality?**

Dr Joan Walton

[j.walton@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:j.walton@yorks.ac.uk)

School of Education, Language & Psychology, York St John University, York, UK.

De Quincey says that consciousness is "our deepest mystery and our most intimate reality" (2002:64). None of what we experience as human beings happens outside of consciousness; and yet we know little about its nature or origins. The dominant assumption is that the brain creates consciousness, and that when the brain dies, consciousness disappears. However, neuroscience has failed to identify how the brain produces qualitative experiences such as colours and tastes; or indeed our most profound spiritual experiences. There is a realisation that the nature of consciousness may have been misunderstood, and that in fact it might exist as a fundamental property of reality. These possibilities are explored through ideas such as panpsychism, cosmopsychism (Goff 2018) and analytic idealism (Kastrup 2019).

At the same time, theologians are wrestling with the challenge of understanding the nature of a God who exists separate from the world, holding omnipotent power, yet allowing great suffering to continue. Pantheists address this problem by identifying God with the universe, whilst panentheists do so by holding that the universe is within God (Bruntrup et al 2020).

In this presentation, I explore the potential relationship between new understandings of consciousness and of spirituality. I will argue for the possibility that consciousness is the primary 'stuff' of the universe, which is infinite and eternal, with intrinsic core qualities of Love and Creativity. Within such a worldview, the natural world in all its forms, and all aspects of human experience including our spiritual experiences, are expressions of this ultimate source. My aim is to present a case in support of the hypothesis that the universe is essentially pure consciousness which can also be perceived as divine in nature.



**Oral:****Spiritual Inscape- Staying real or losing faith? Teaching and Learning of Spirituality and Spiritual Care Perspectives arising from COVID – 19 Pandemic.**

Asst. Prof. Jacqueline Whelan

[whelanj1@tcd.ie](mailto:whelanj1@tcd.ie)

Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Background** The spiritual inscape of persons within the context of healthcare and the COVID pandemic has challenged healthcare professionals. Persons receiving healthcare have a right to spiritual care and wish to have spiritual and/or religious needs met. The process of embedding spirituality, spiritual care and understanding a person's spiritual care needs is an integral aspect of holistic person-centred to identifying spiritual issues and concerns. However, specific spiritual needs and struggles were unmet creating dark phases in people's lives. The teaching and learning of spirituality, spiritual care demands effective modes of preparation to develop nurses' capacity to understand patients' and realities and experiences to enable relevant actions that fit with patients' frames of reference.

**Aim and objectives** Explore contemporary perspectives to teaching and learning of spirituality. Provide an understanding of core nursing and patient issues related to the pandemic and specific curricula content relating to spiritual care needs and competent spiritual care provision in healthcare practice.

**Theoretical perspective/methodology** An integrative literature review was undertaken aligned to the theory of heutagogy as a holistic position to advance contemporary issues and humanistic approaches to teaching and learning of spirituality. Multiple perspectives of students, nurses, and patients and families' perspectives were explored to advance contemporary understandings of the topic in the context of the recent pandemic.

**Conclusions and implications** Healthcare is mandated to develop contemporary teaching approaches required to fit societal needs, the reality of practice and patient experiences. There is a need to advance humanistic evidence-based approaches to guide the future development of educators, practitioners, and students alike. Future-proofed Gold Standard relating to Enhancing Nurses' and Midwives' Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovative Education and Compassionate Care (EPICC) is consistent and advocated with the best available evidence to meet persons' spiritual needs.

**Oral:****Vocational Pauses, Pivots, and Impediments: Exploring Spirituality under Covid.**

Prof. Claire E. Wolfteich

[cwolftei@bu.edu](mailto:cwolftei@bu.edu)

Boston University School of Theology, USA

The Covid pandemic brought uncertainty into every realm—and while implications for health, politics, and work have been central in the news, these impacts also affect the realm of spirituality. This paper looks specifically at how the unpredictable evolution of the pandemic impacted spirituality in work and vocation, as seen through several kinds of sources. First, the paper incorporates recent studies of work and professional practice in news sources, noting themes such as burnout, labor conditions for “essential workers”, and the “great resignation.” Second, the paper draws upon selected scholarship in vocational psychology. Third, the paper introduces qualitative data from several U.S. New England congregations that have participated in a five-year grant project entitled Creative Callings; the author directs this project, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment. This paper particularly focuses on themes of vocational *pauses*, *pivots*, and *impediments* under the uncertain conditions of the pandemic. In so doing, I will make a case for the interdisciplinary study of lived experience as a key method in spirituality studies, to be brought into critical reflection and dialogue with classic texts and traditions. I illustrate this method by bringing my sources into practical theological conversation with significant texts and traditions related to spirituality, vocation, and discernment. The paper thus proposes a complex, contextual reframing of spirituality, vocation, discernment, and professional practice.



**Oral:****Everybody Hurts: Reimagining Humanity in the Face of Suffering and Compassion.**Sabine **Wolsink**

PhD studies, University Assistant, Institute for Systematic Theology and Religious Studies of the Protestant Theological Faculty and the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion, University of Vienna, Austria

[sabine.joanne.wolsink@univie.ac.at](mailto:sabine.joanne.wolsink@univie.ac.at)

Uncertain times ask for a renewed view on what it means to be human and to be part of humanity. This paper will address these questions from the perspective of suffering and compassion. Suffering is an inherent part of the human condition. Being confronted with pain and suffering, human beings tend to ask the 'why' question: why does this happen (to me)? We, however, do not suffer alone. Being able to give meaning to pain, we have to find expressions. We need others to imagine and share these expressions with. Compassion, understood as identifying with and sharing in the suffering of others, is, however, not always an unproblematic practice. Whether it is wholeheartedly embraced or firmly rejected, it easily lacks to do justice to suffering. Critical reflection regarding compassion and suffering is thus needed to avoid too simple answers on the 'why' question. In professional practices, a middle way can be created that acknowledges the suffering of others without losing sight of how life could be meaningful.

In the paper, these concerns will be addressed by discussing the work of the Dutch intellectual Allard Pierson (1831-1896) in the context of his contemporary Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Pierson resigned as a minister from the church before he became a professor of aesthetics and art history and developed a philosophy of life in which suffering plays an important role. Both Pierson and Nietzsche focused on the meaning suffering could have for humanity and underlined the role of imagination in this process. From this historical perspective, the paper will shed a light on contemporary thinking on compassion, for example in theology of compassion and religious humanism, and its implications for professional practices. By doing so, it aims at reimagining humanity in the face of suffering and compassion in order to contribute to human flourishing.

**Oral:****Reservoir or Canal: Spiritual refreshment for Aged Care Chaplains.**Assoc. Prof. Robyn **Wrigley-Carr**

[rwrigley-carr@divinity.edu.au](mailto:rwrigley-carr@divinity.edu.au)

Associate Professor in Spiritual Care, University of Divinity, Australia.

In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote that if we're wise, we'll live more like a reservoir than a canal. Reservoirs are massive dams that retain water when filled, then discharge the overflow without massive loss to themselves. By contrast, canals are narrow waterways with little reserve, pouring out what they receive before being filled, hence vulnerable to becoming depleted. This water analogy has resonance for Chaplains who need rest and spiritual refreshment to be able to provide spiritual care to people with dementia from a place of abundance.

COVID-19 has had a considerable impact on Aged Care Chaplains. Coping with pandemic protocols, offering reassurance to residents and families, plus leading additional funerals, have taken a toll. This paper explores provision of spiritual refreshment for Chaplains through a pilot study. In September 2022, I led a weekend spiritual retreat for five Aged Care Chaplains at a cottage at Jamberoo Benedictine Abbey (N.S.W, Australia). Prior to the retreat, each Chaplain was interviewed, so the retreat could be tailored to their needs. The Aged Care provider where the Chaplains work describes itself as 'strongly and intrinsically Christian', so this retreat operated within the Christian tradition.

The theological undergirdings for the retreat came from Evelyn Underhill's writings about retreat leading. Firstly, silence - to attend to what we usually miss and gain peace and rest. Secondly, immersion in creation - refreshment through engaging our senses in earth's beauty. Thirdly, prayerful contemplation of Christ (the 'Living Water') through prayer. The five retreatants were provided with reflection questions, Scripture quotes and prayers for solo contemplative walks by the Abbey stream. Group spiritual practices



included Ignatian meditation, *lectio divina*, singing, corporate prayer, discussion, and Benedictine worship. Written evaluations indicate the retreat was life-giving and spiritually refreshing. Times in silence were seen as helpful for cultivating a contemplative presence when journeying with people with dementia.

#### **Oral:**

#### **Education through Life Orientation: A spiritual Process of Awareness and (re)Positioning.**

Dr Edwin van der Zande

[edwin.vanderzande@ru.nl](mailto:edwin.vanderzande@ru.nl)

Titus Brandsma Institute, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Students write their life orientation as part of an educational programme in philosophy, world religions, and spirituality at a non-confessional University of Applied Sciences. During six months, students from various disciplines, including educational studies, social work, journalism, and business management, attend philosophy, worldviews, and spirituality classes and practice different forms of dialogue. Also, they become acquainted with various forms of spirituality to discover which training or exercise is helpful for their spiritual process.

At the beginning of this programme, they start answering facilitating questions and exploring their meaning-giving answers regarding their life orientation and professional and societal views. After four weeks, they spend a few days in a monastery. Subsequently, they add new insights to their original articulations, which shows development in expressing their opinion on the human being, the world, the meta-empirical, and the good life. In the end, they reiterate his process.

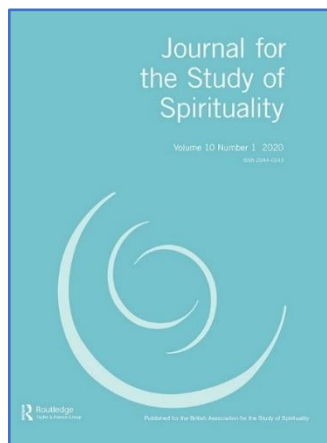
In this practical-theological research on the development of personal life orientation, we developed this narrative approach to help students articulate and reflect critically on their views and values. The *Dialogical Self Theory* (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) states that a thorough overview of your life orientation and other perspectives serves flexibility and adaptiveness in an uncertain world. Our research indicates how education through life orientation could improve the preparation of students for their jobs by revealing the relationship between personal values and professional behaviour in a demanding society.

**Brochure design:**

Cheryl Hunt and Michael O'Sullivan

March 2023

## Did You Know?



### ***The Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)***

is co-owned by INSS. It is a peer-reviewed, international and inter-disciplinary journal, published in association with Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Members of INSS receive print copies of the two issues each year, as well as online access to the whole archive (2011 to date).

To support this INSS conference the publishers have kindly provided a complimentary copy of the Tenth Anniversary issue of *JSS* for every delegate.

In addition, a number of selected articles will be freely available on the journal's webpages until August 2023:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/yjss20/current>



### **The Spirituality Scholars' Network (SSN)**

is an INSS initiative which aims to support doctoral students, early career researchers and scholars in sharing their interests, experiences and projects in the field of spirituality studies.

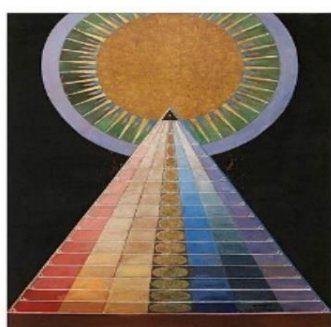
We hold regular symposia where scholars of spirituality are encouraged to share their work in a supportive and encouraging environment. We also host occasional lunchtime webinars, 'The Conversational', to stimulate discussion.

Abstracts of doctoral theses are invited for display on the INSS networking pages.



## **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**

INSS currently hosts three SIGs:



Spirituality and the Arts



Spirituality and Consciousness Studies



Spirituality, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Find out more at:

<https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/Special-Interest-Groups-SIGs>





We hope you have enjoyed the conference.  
The next conference will be held in 2025.

Our mission is to contribute to research in,  
and the development of,  
a field of enquiry that makes a difference  
both now and in the future.

If you are not already a member  
you are warmly invited to join INSS NOW:

<https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/join-inss-application-form>

**Membership of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality includes:**

- Print copies of two issues of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)* each year.
  - Online access to the full *JSS* archive (2011 to date).
- Access to an area of the INSS website for 'Members' Only' containing links to Special Interest Groups and other information.
  - Discounted registration for INSS Conferences and other events.

