

Chancellor, University staff, guests, and fellow graduates,

My name is Elizabeth Culhane; I am graduating with a Graduate Diploma in Divinity, with a focus on theological languages.

The Graduate Diploma has supported my larger journey into academia. It has provided an opportunity to immerse myself in the languages of German and Latin. This focus has accelerated my language capabilities and supported my original research. It has opened up texts from different contexts and my understanding of these.

In particular, the language focus has directly enhanced my concurrent PhD work. My thesis proposes a fresh model for bringing together two, seemingly opposing conceptions of time and reality from theological metaphysics and continental philosophy. While my primary texts are available in English translation, they were originally written in the German language and examine Latin terminology and concepts. There has been huge value in engaging more closely with highly technical concepts in their original language.

The Graduate Diploma has not simply helped me develop useful capabilities for interpreting texts. It has been significant in two other important ways. These relate to vocation and community.

#### **Vocation and community**

The Graduate Diploma brought me into a diverse community of learning. This community supported my growth in capabilities – it is always easier to develop language skills in a community. It also provided an opportunity to see successfully modelled the unity in diversity possible among staff and students from many theological traditions, life stages, and vocations.

This diversity was significant for me personally. It opened my eyes to the possibility of a home for me in theological academic spaces, in which I have, at times, felt like an outsider. This sense was confirmed by personal support from both staff and students, who glimpsed a vocation I could not always see and encouraged me to continue.

The Graduate Diploma thus opened my eyes to new understandings of texts, community, and vocation. Thank you to the staff and community of the University of Divinity who have made this possible. Congratulations, my fellow graduates.

Thank you.

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**Elizabeth Clare Culhane, Graduate Diploma in Divinity**

