

# Research Day 2025

Wednesday 4 June



UNIVERSITY  
OF DIVINITY

## Welcome

The University of Divinity's annual Research Day connects our researchers and wider community in person and online. Our research community explores the Divinity disciplines and engages a diversity of academic fields, practices and contemporary issues.

## St Paschal Campus

[90 Albion Road, Box Hill, Victoria, 3128](#)

Entry: please enter via Reception

Drop-off/Pick-up: via the driveway circuit (enter from 90 Albion Road)

Parking: St Paschal's car park (enter from 98 Albion Road) | Overflow parking on Bedford Street

Public Transport: [733 Bus](#) to/from Box Hill train station | [Box Hill](#) and [Laburnum](#) train stations




## Adelaide Hub at UCLT

[312 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Brooklyn Park, South Australia, 5032](#)

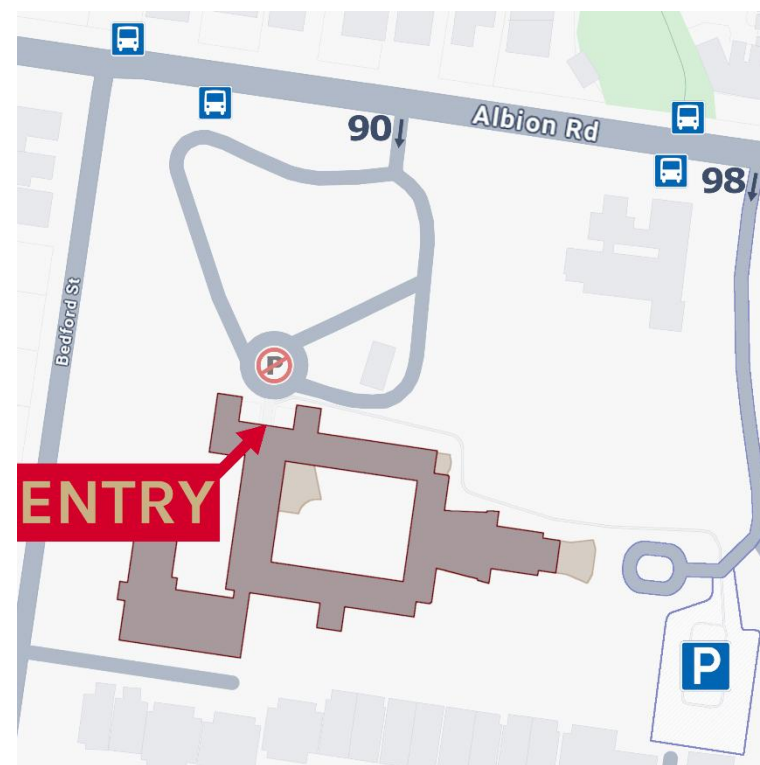
*Details for attending in person will be emailed directly to Adelaide Hub registrants.*

## Online (Zoom)

Click [Join Zoom](#)  to connect to a Stream or the Keynote Presentation. We encourage your participation by keeping your camera on during the presentations you attend.

Event times are listed in AEST (Melbourne/Sydney/Brisbane). Adelaide: -½ hour | Perth: -2 hours.

For support connecting with Zoom, contact (03) 9131 4915 or (03) 9853 3177 on the day.



# Research Day Program



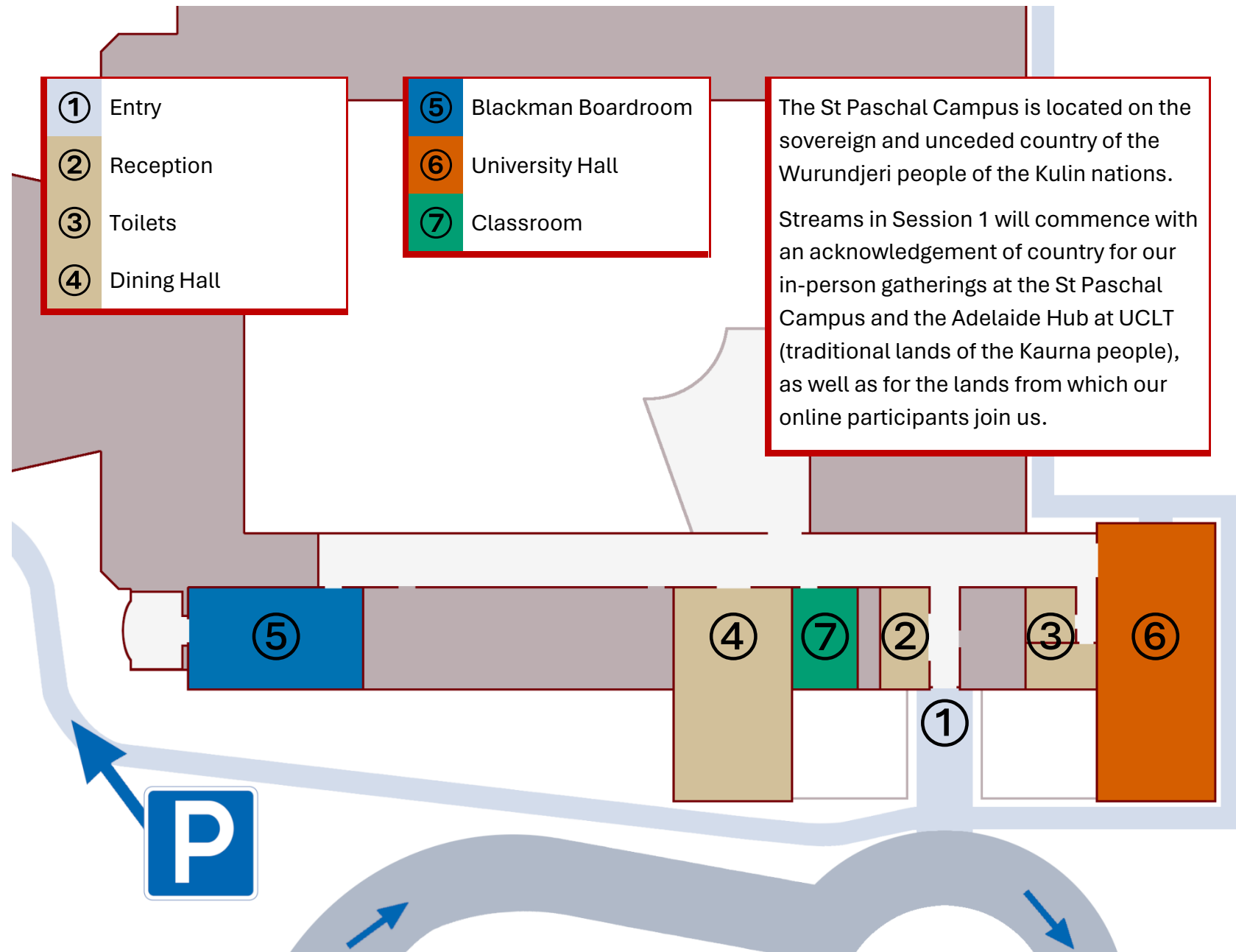
Presentations from the Adelaide Hub and over Zoom will be screened live at their listed Stream venues.

Time (AEST)	Stream 1: Blackman Boardroom   <a href="#">Join Zoom</a> 		Stream 2: University Hall   <a href="#">Join Zoom</a> 		Stream 3: Classroom   <a href="#">Join Zoom</a> 	
8:30am – 9.00am	The St Paschal Campus opens at 8.30am – join us for a tea or coffee in the Dining Hall					
Session 1	New Testament Chair: Lisa Agaiby		Church and Healing Chair: Michael Kelly		Aesthetics I: Church Life and History Chair: Rebekah Pryor	
9:00am – 9:30am	Deborah Storie	St Paschal Campus	Glen O'Brien	St Paschal Campus	Katharine Massam	St Paschal Campus
	On vineyards, their tenants and owners, lands and fruit: An experiment with inculturation hermeneutics (Luke 20:9-1)		Queer holiness and united Methodist schism		“God is not a boy's name”: feminism, resistance, and the art of holy laughter	
9:35am – 10.05am	Paul Creevey	St Paschal Campus	Elizabeth Lee	St Paschal Campus	Pam Zweck	Adelaide Hub
	“They put a sponge full of wine on a branch of hyssop” (John 19:29): A sign of a new Exodus in Jesus’ death		Just hospitality amid the broken body of Christ		Will the Reformation Artist Please Stand?	
10.05am – 10.40am	Dining Hall: Morning Tea					
Session 2	Hebrew Bible Chair: Liz Boase		Missional and Ecumenical Theologies Chair: Katharine Massam		Philosophical Theology Chair: Scott Kirkland	
10:40am – 11:10am	Lachlan Davis	St Paschal Campus	Darrell Jackson	St Paschal Campus	Fergus King	St Paschal Campus
	The Sotah Revisted: Did the ordeal in Numbers 5:11–31 induce miscarriage?		Kinesis, diaspora, and unsettling theology		The Spirit does matter: Farewelling metaphysical dualism in the Gospel of John	
11:15am – 11:45am	Rachelle Gilmour	St Paschal Campus	Sarah Callista	St Paschal Campus	Peter Kline	St Paschal Campus
	Saul’s wives: Royal marriages in the patrimonial politics of Benjamin and Judah		Must I Suffer: Reading Mark 8:31-9:1 with “Aku” (I)		God, or the unconscious: Interiority in Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard	
11:50am – 12:20pm	Zhong Li	Zoom	John Dupuche	St Paschal Campus	Mick Pope	St Paschal Campus
	“You shall not kill” or “You shall not murder”? (Exodus 20:13)		What can Hindu theology say about the Catholic doctrine of Mary’s immaculate conception? Why bother anyway?		Extinction and the God-world relationship	
12:20pm – 1:10pm	Dining Hall: Lunch					
Session 3	The Early Church Chair: Rosemary Dewerse		Contemporary Mission and Meaning Chair: Chris Mutherin		Aesthetics II: The Saints Chair: Megan Cassidy-Welch	
1:10pm – 1:40pm	Rosemary Canavan	Zoom	Philip Hughes	St Paschal Campus	Deidre Sheeran	St Paschal Campus
	Women benefactors in ekklesia and cities in Asia Minor		Meaning in life through religious faith		Tactile encounters with the reliquary of Sainte Foy (c. 900)	
1:45pm – 2:15pm	Timothy Harris	Adelaide Hub	Geralyn McCarthy	St Paschal Campus	Rebekah Pryor	St Paschal Campus
	Reframing <i>From Plight to Solution</i> : The imagery of freedom in Paul and Epictetus		Rediscovering the Charismic Dynamic of the Catholic Church in Australia		Rudderless boats, seafaring saints and other ideas for mobility, solidarity and resistance	
2:20pm – 2:50pm			Ruth Mathieson	St Paschal Campus	Veronica Webb	St Paschal Campus
			What can the Church learn about mission from the Parkrun phenomenon? Using the five marks of mission as a framework		Theological issues in contemporary images of St Veronica: Overcoming the ‘hermeneutics of embarrassment’	
2.50pm – 3.00pm	Gather at University Hall					
Keynote	University Hall   <a href="#">Join Zoom</a> 					
3.00pm – 4.00pm	Meg Warner (Principal, Wollaston Theological College) Reflections upon Revisiting the Source Formerly Known as ‘E’					
4:00pm – 4.10pm	Closing Address: Megan Cassidy-Welch (Dean of Research Strategy)					

# Research Day at the St Paschal Campus



The St Paschal Campus opens at 8.30am – join us for a tea or coffee in the Dining Hall. Session 1 will commence at 9.00am sharp.





## Deborah Storie

St Paschal Campus

On vineyards, their tenants and owners, lands and fruit:

An experiment with inculturation hermeneutics (Luke 20:9-1)

According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus told a parable in the Jerusalem Temple shortly before Passover when his opponents questioned his authority (Luke 20:9-19 and //s Mark 12:1-12; Matthew 21:33-46). Some scholars identify this as the most complex of Jesus' parables. It might also be the simplest. Those against whom Jesus told this parable understood it immediately. In this experiment in intercultural hermeneutics (Ukpong), I attempt to recover the parable's communicative clarity by exploring the historical contexts from which the parable emerged, the narrative and canonical contexts in which we receive it, and the contemporary context in which I read. I pay particular attention to: i) the economic and political realities of early first century Palestine; ii) the economic and material realia portrayed in the parable; and, iii) the public conflict to which Jesus' performance of this parable contributed.

## Paul Creevey

St Paschal Campus

“They put a sponge full of wine on a branch of hyssop” (John 19:29):

A sign of a new exodus in Jesus' death

Recently, Köstenberger (2022) stated that the central redemptive event in Israel's history, the exodus, is significant to the Fourth Evangelist. Whilst most scholars recognise John's distinctive use of the hyssop stick, scholarly reflection on the link between the first exodus and a new exodus that is connected by the death of the first-born son(s) is limited. This paper will proceed in three parts: (i) a brief overview of literature that highlights the significance of the Exodus theme for the Fourth Evangelist; (ii) the importance of John's unique identification of the use of the hyssop stick at Jesus' death; and (iii) the interpretation of this motion as a means for the Fourth Evangelist to capture John's understanding that, in Jesus' death, Christians are beginning a new exodus that leads to the establishment of a new covenant community in perpetuity.



Stream 2: University Hall | [Join Zoom](#) 

Church and Healing | Chair: Michael Kelly

**Glen O'Brien**

St Paschal Campus

## Queer holiness and united Methodist schism

This paper argues that the inability of the United Methodist Church to live together with difference over sexuality represents the failure of twenty-first century Methodists to live out of John Wesley's ideal of a catholic spirit. In elevating views on sexuality to a church-dividing principle, the Gospel as a revelation of God's reconciling work for the world has been displaced from the centre of Methodist discourse, an action that will result in exclusionary harm for LGBTQI+ Methodists. Queer holiness is real and a recognition of this is necessary for the fully affirming Methodism of the future.

**Elizabeth Lee**

St Paschal Campus

## Just hospitality amid the broken body of Christ

In response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Churches now have safeguarding policies, practices and training to reduce the risk of future abuse of children and vulnerable individuals. However, little attention has been given to the needs of congregants and communities harmed by sexual or other traumatising violence. This presentation offers preliminary results gathered through a contemplative, participative theological inquiry. Bringing the expertise of congregants' lived/living experience into conversation with interdisciplinary trauma scholarship and feminist trauma theology, we critically reflected on and reimagined liturgical, pastoral and administrative practices along with their theological underpinnings. Recognising ourselves as the broken body of Christ, we are envisioning how just hospitality may manifest.



## Katharine Massam

St Paschal Campus

### “God is not a boy's name”: feminism, resistance, and the art of holy laughter

In Spring 1990, Graham English's cartoon for *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion* showed a squat female figure in a skirt and tee-shirt smiling broadly. The slogan on her shirt read: “God is not a boy's name”. This paper considers the liberative potential of humour and its connection with grace. It argues that the free-spirited capacity to laugh is linked to divine and human creativity. Establishing a link between humour and human solidarity and then turning to the social danger inherent in the collapse of public language, the paper explores humour as part of the theological foundation for resistance that supports both meaningful discourse and the reversal of worldly assumptions. Humour can represent a choice to hold what J.B. Metz calls the Gospel’s “dangerous memory” of suffering and the call to justice against a wider horizon of hope.

## Pam Zweck

Adelaide Hub

### Will the Reformation Artist Please Stand?

The topic ‘Will the Real Reformation Artist Please Stand?’ provides a vehicle to widen the horizons on Lucas Cranach the Edler and to establish his place as the real Reformation artist. This topic came to mind during my thesis research when I became aware that Lucas Cranach the Elder is barely mentioned, if at all, in many resources regarding fifteenth and sixteenth-century religious art, while in contrast, Albrecht Dürer is often referred to as the Reformation artist. This omission was somewhat rectified during the 2017 anniversary of Luther’s posting of the ninety-five theses to the Castle Church door, when Cranach’s religious images were on display in exhibitions throughout Germany. I will look at these two extraordinary artists with regards to their background, relationship with Luther, knowledge of the new Protestant faith, their painting style, and their other interests other than religious painting. The scholarship so far researched suggests that there are a variety of reasons for Dürer’s claim on the title of Reformation artist, and just as many different interpretations of a number of his religious works that in some cases limit their relationship to the Reformation. Nonetheless, there is no denying Dürer’s important role in the success of the Reformation in Nuremberg and his deep regard for Luther and his writing. I intend to show the reasons why the title of Reformation Artist belongs to Cranach, while not negating Dürer’s achievement as the great magnificent Renaissance artist that he was.



## Lachlan Davis

St Paschal Campus

### The Sotah Revisted: Did the ordeal in Numbers 5:11–31 induce miscarriage?

This paper revisits the controversial biblical ritual in Numbers 5:11–31, which tests a woman accused of adultery. Scholars have long debated whether the ritual was meant to cause a miscarriage if the woman was guilty. I explore this question through ancient medical texts, early Jewish and Christian interpretations, and the Hebrew text itself. Did the ritual assume pregnancy? Was it designed to induce miscarriage? Or was it only about fertility and shame? Drawing on sources like Akkadian healing texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Protoevangelium of James, I argue that, while miscarriage is a possible outcome, the text leaves room for multiple interpretations. The Sotah ritual’s meaning remains complex, reflecting ancient ideas about justice and divine judgment.

## Rachelle Gilmour

St Paschal Campus

### Saul’s wives: Royal marriages in the patrimonial politics of Benjamin and Judah

This paper examines the presence and absence of Saul’s wives in the narrative of 1-2 Samuel. The portrayal of Saul’s wives reflects local distinctives in the dynamics of patrimonial politics underlying Saul’s rise to power in Benjamin, northern memories of Saul’s reign, and Judahite critique and comparison with David.

## Zhong Li

Zoom

### “You shall not kill” or “You shall not murder”? (Exodus 20:13)

This paper aims to analyse and clarify the meaning of the sixth commandment in the Decalogue as presented in the Hebrew Bible. Owing to its simple form, the commandment has been translated in different ways – commonly as “Thou shalt not kill” or “Thou shalt not murder” – despite the significant contextual differences between these terms. This paper will examine the structure of the commandment and its surrounding legal material, particularly in the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant in Exodus. It argues that the more accurate semantic rendering is “you shall not kill,” and that the underlying term refers to unlawful killing, a category that includes unintentional, intentional, and premeditated killing within the legal framework of the Pentateuch.



## Darrell Jackson

St Paschal Campus

### Kinesis, diaspora, and unsettling theology

I will explore the theology of three migrant theologians – constructing their theologies in Australia – with mainland Chinese, Samoan, and Sri Lankan heritages. In this short paper I will highlight a central theme that I believe is common to each of their work – namely, the dynamic interaction that exists between diasporic origin and diasporic residence. I will argue that ‘unsettling theology’ best characterises the relationship of their work to forms and patterns of Christian theology that draw significantly upon ‘western’ or ‘Eurocentric’ traditions. An evaluation of their theologising suggests that the migrant, or diasporic, context carries the generative potential for constructive theological exploration and articulation.

## Sarah Callista

St Paschal Campus

### Must I Suffer: Reading Mark 8:31-9:1 with “Aku” (I)

In a re-reading of Mark 8:31-9:1, this presentation focuses on the contrasting theme of suffering/agony in the present time with the future promise of deliverance. A central question emerging from this theme is how an Indonesian Peranakan woman and ex-colonised subject might read such a passage. The idea of ‘good news’ may not necessarily be viewed in as wholly positive – rather, it may be alarming or even be interpreted as another form of subjugation through passivity. By engaging the text with an Indonesian native text, the juxtaposition may be able to enlighten this reading into a contextual interpretation to give a better understanding of this ‘good news’.

## John Dupuche

St Paschal Campus

### What can Hindu theology say about the Catholic doctrine of Mary’s immaculate conception?

### Why bother anyway?

Origen and Tertullian taught that Mary was sinful, for if Jesus is universal saviour she must be a sinner. However, later theologians, influenced especially by Duns Scotus, started to teach that she was sinless from the start of her existence, a dogma solemnly declared by Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus*. Kashmir Shaivism distinguishes between the various means of attaining union with the Godhead, the highest of which is an immediate illumination, independent of any circumstance, a teaching which, as this presentation will seek to show, can throw light on the dogma of Mary’s immaculate conception. What might be some of the implications of this development? It underlines the freedom of the Holy Spirit in the work of the Church. It shows the power of the feminine in the history of salvation. It is a lesson in humility, showing how Christian theology must learn from other religions.



## Fergus King

St Paschal Campus

### The Spirit does matter: Farewelling metaphysical dualism in the Gospel of John

The idea that there is a strong presence of metaphysical dualism in the formative environments of the Fourth Gospel needs to be set aside. It belongs to none of the major Hellenistic intellectual traditions of the period, nor to Judaism. It is more helpful to understand a metaphysical subordinationism rather than a dualism within its cosmology.

## Peter Kline

St Paschal Campus

### God, or the unconscious: Interiority in Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard

Interiority or inwardness is a decisive theological and philosophical category for both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard. It names the point at which subjectivity, in its inmost ground, is enabled by a radical alterity, namely, God. Self-consciousness is therefore constitutively de-centered, or organised around enabling conditions that impinge upon but are unavailable to consciousness. Interiority for Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard is therefore structurally homologous to the psychoanalytic unconscious, specifically as theorized by Jean Laplanche. This paper will outline this homology and argue that, while Schleiermacher's conception of interiority is formally similar to the psychoanalytic unconscious, Kierkegaard's conception is more materially similar, emphasising as it does the constitutive burden and double-bind of subjectivity.

## Mick Pope

St Paschal Campus

### Extinction and the God-world relationship

Extinction is as much a fact of earth history as evolution, death as much as life. In the present, human beings are driving what has come to be known as a sixth mass extinction. What do we make of this theologically? Rather than take a classic theodicean approach of trying to absolve God of the suffering and loss involved in extinction, or of deferring justice to the eschaton, I want to concentrate on what God is doing in the present. Rather than Holmes Rolston's God watching suffering from a distance, I examine how panentheism emphasises the intimate co-suffering presence of God by comparing and contrasting the work of Sallie McFague, Jay McDaniel and Jürgen Moltmann.



## Rosemary Canavan

St Paschal Campus

### Women benefactors in ekklesia and cities in Asia Minor

Employing SRI (socio-rhetorical interpretation) in conjunction with numismatic evidence, I will engage the social intertexture of women benefactors, especially those engaged in minting coins, to explore the implications of female benefaction in the wider dynamics of the cities in Asia Minor and their relationship to benefaction within and among the Christ believer communities, especially where women offer their houses for the community assembly. In doing this I also engage the social and cultural texture in understanding the relevance of benefactors in the economic life of the cities and ekklesia.

## Timothy Harris

St Paschal Campus

### Reframing *From Plight to Solution*: The imagery of freedom in Paul and Epictetus

Paul and the Stoics of the early imperial period (of whom Epictetus was a highly regarded exemplar) share many commonalities in terminology and rhetorical style. Both address similar experiential and existential concerns and we could readily imagine them in creative public debate. However, the worldview premises of Paul and Epictetus are profoundly different, and this is reflected in how the question of achieving freedom from the constraints and fears of the world as these were experienced at that time. Epictetus continues to be a popular figure in our contemporary world, and his writings continue to sell well in New Age bookshops and are frequently quoted in related fora. This paper compares and contrasts the rhetoric on freedom with a view to highlighting what is distinctive in Paul's writings.



## Philip Hughes

St Paschal Campus

### Meaning in life through religious faith

How do people find meaning in their lives today? The question is particularly pertinent for retirees, when the dominant areas of life such as earning an income and bringing up a family have receded as major sources of meaning. And what part does religion play in the provision of a sense of meaning for retirees in contemporary society? The Communities of Meaning project has conducted 72 interviews with a wide range of retirees, living in different types of contexts and with different backgrounds. We have explored their variety of social connections and their church connections and the sense of meaning that emerges from those connections. This paper will provide an introduction to the results of this study.

## Geralyn McCarthy

St Paschal Campus

### Rediscovering the Charismic Dynamic of the Catholic Church in Australia

This research explores the disconnection between institutional Catholicism and the lived experience of Australian Catholics in an increasingly secular, pluralistic society. Using a mutually critical correlation methodology, it engages sociological, theological, and ecclesiological sources to investigate how the Australian Church might respond to cultural disaffiliation and ecclesial distrust. Central to the project is a recovery of the Church's charismatic (charismic) dimension – rooted in Vatican II's vision of communion and the theology of charisms – as a means of ecclesial renewal. By critically examining contemporary religious identity and practice, alongside tradition, the study argues for a reimagined, dialogical Church: attuned to the Spirit, accountable to its people, and capable of credible witness in this context.

## Ruth Mathieson

St Paschal Campus

### What can the Church learn about mission from the Parkrun phenomenon?

#### Using the five marks of mission as a framework

Considering the Parkrun phenomenon through the lens of the 'five marks of mission' which emerged in the Anglican Communion in recent decades provides an opportunity to explore what the church can learn about mission from Parkrun. Findings from this comparison suggest there is value in a predictable weekly pattern that is replicated around the world, there being a short explanation for what is expected in the local context for newcomers before the event, and with people encouraged to belong by volunteering from their first visit. Like the church, Parkrun considers issues related to participation with diverse people, including those who live with disability, and encourages respect of creation.



## Deidre Sheeran

St Paschal Campus

### Tactile encounters with the reliquary of Sainte Foy (c. 900)

Bernard of Angers, author of books I and II of *The Book of Sainte Foy's Miracles* (1013-20), records pilgrims' encounters with the statue reliquary of Sainte Foy produced for the cult of Sainte Foy in Conques, France. During the late 9th century, the statue reliquary was crafted to represent the saint and hide a relic of her skull within. The statue figure, adorned with jewels and gold leaf, sits upright on a throne, wearing a crown and with arms outstretched towards the pilgrims. Christian belief that the bodily remains of saints were sources of sacred power imbued the reliquary with miraculous healing and protective powers. This paper explores the possible physical and imaginary tactile encounters of early 11th century pilgrims with the statue reliquary of Sainte Foy.

## Rebekah Pryor

St Paschal Campus

### Rudderless boats, seafaring saints and other ideas for mobility, solidarity and resistance

What is it to see an image? And what does the image ask of us? Giotto's 1320s fresco of Mary Magdalene's Voyage to Marseille figures the saint in a rudderless boat – that proto-renaissance motif for providential adventure or certain death. The image persists as an “ethical solicitation,” Judith Butler writes, “one that compels us to negotiate questions of proximity and distance.” Propelled by Butler's provocation and informed by art history, religious writing and feminist theological instincts, this paper examines the contemporary art of collaborators Rebekah Pryor and Melissa O'Rourke, whose current and ongoing project *Rudderless* plays with Giotto's fresco to understand how inherited cultural motifs and patterns of movement persist to shape personal and political realities, including through artmaking and theological reflection.

## Veronica Webb

St Paschal Campus

### Theological issues in contemporary images of St Veronica: Overcoming the 'hermeneutics of embarrassment'

The woman 'Veronica', shown wiping the face of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross, is identified with the woman healed by Jesus of a blood issue when she reached out to touch his clothes (Mk 5:25-34; Matt 9:20-22; Lk 8:43-48). Blood features in these two episodes: in her suffering, the need for her cloth, her desperate desire to touch Jesus, the impulse to wipe clean Jesus' face and, ultimately, as the constituent medium to create the image of his face. Some contemporary Veronica iconography challenges us to consider the blood of Jesus and the blood of Veronica together and thus to confront the traditional 'hermeneutics of embarrassment' in relation to menstrual blood, and to acknowledge what have been the implications for this for women in practice.

# Keynote Presentation



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3.00pm – 4.00pm in University Hall | [Join Zoom](#) 

## Dr Meg Warner

Principal, Wollaston Theological College

### Reflections Upon Revisiting the Source Formerly Known as ‘E’

A theorised ‘Elohists’ or ‘E’ source was one of the four pillars of the Newer Documentary Hypothesis within Pentateuchal scholarship. ‘E’ was posited and promoted as a source that could be classified as pre-Priestly and non-Priestly, even as it was named for its practice of the avoidance of God’s special name, ‘YHWH’ – also adopted by ‘P’. The majority of Hebrew Bible scholars today have abandoned the hypothesis of an ‘E’ source entirely despite a late rally from Documentarians (mostly based in the USA).

This paper reflects upon an exercise in revisiting the Elohist hypothesis for the purpose of resuscitating ‘E’ – but as a post-Priestly, broadly Priestly, redaction. This will explore the implications of any success with such an attempted resuscitation for the enterprise and reputation of the study of the Pentateuch.

*Meg will be introduced by Professor Megan Cassidy-Welch (Dean of Research Strategy), who will also moderate questions after the presentation.*

*Professor Cassidy-Welch will offer a brief closing address to conclude the 2025 Research Day.*

