



Spirituality Institute  
for Research & Education

**Trustee Report 2024**

For the year ended 31st December 2024



**Charitable Object:** The promotion of spirituality by providing education, research and community service for the public benefit

**Address:** SpIRE, Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin D06 W9Y7

## **Trustee Report and Financial Statements**

**Including**

***Table of Activities related to SpIRE purposes***

**For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**



# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

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## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Trustees	Sr. Anne Marie Dixon Dr. Bernadette Flanagan Dr Ruth Harris Ms Andrea Hayes Dr. Michael O'Sullivan
Chairperson	Dr Bernadette Flanagan
Director and Treasurer	Dr Michael O'Sullivan
Secretary	Sr Anne-Marie Dixon
Charity Number (CHY)	22374
Charity Regulatory Authority Number (CRN)	20204471
Principal Address	SpIRE, Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin D06 W9Y7, Ireland
Telephone	087.4140694 (+ 353 87 4140694)
Website	<a href="http://www.spiritualityinstitute.ie">www.spiritualityinstitute.ie</a>
Accountants	Crowleys DFK Unlimited Company Chartered Accountants 16-17 College Green, Dublin D02 VO78 +353 1 679 0800   <a href="http://www.crowleysdfk.ie">w: www.crowleysdfk.ie</a>
Bankers	AIB, Ranelagh, 40/42 Ranelagh, Dublin 6, D06 VY5869/71 BIC: AIBKIE2D National sort code: 93-10-39 Account Type (SpIRE) (bank spelt it as SPIRE) IBAN: IE20AIBK93103926652017
Solicitor	Cormac Ó Ceallaigh & Co 388 North Circular Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7

**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
for the year ended 31 December 2024



## Chairperson's Foreword 2024

Dr Bernadette Flanagan, PBVM  
Chairperson Board of Trustees

We are filled with gratitude for another year of engagement with a multitude of individuals and groups who seek to bring the insights and practices of spiritual traditions into a great variety of daily life settings. In the past year, we were honoured to have an MA student who brought the legacy of a Cistercian women's monastery in 13th-century Germany (Helfta) to life for women today. Helfta was distinguished by the mutual support in the community for each other's spiritual unfolding. This unfolding was explored through writing and a writing mentor was invited to support the community, in the person of Mechtilde of Magdeburg, a blind Beguine to whom the community gave refuge. Long before psychoneuroimmunology revealed the link between expressive writing, the functioning of the immune system and the relief of soul distress the community at Helfta had learned the power of writing. It is the hope of the graduate to establish a new form of Scriptorium to explore Scriptio Divina.

SpIRE has been inspired in the past year by the recognition of the contribution of spiritual practices to sustainability. In this context an application was made to receive an SETU President's PhD scholarship to explore the effectiveness of contemplative practices in supporting climate activists in their work. This application was successful and a PhD scholar has been recruited to work with climate activist in Ireland.

Through collaborating with SpirSoP [www.wit.ie/spirsop](http://www.wit.ie/spirsop), an accredited Research Centre for the study of spirituality at South East Technological University (SETU), it has been possible for SpIRE to apply to a diversity of research funds which are available. In particular, collaboration is being developed with the other universities of the European University of which SETU is a member (<https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/>) so as to explore the distinct practice of pilgrimage by Sea and its contribution to sustainable pilgrimage travel. This initiative is of particular interest to the Waterford campus of SETU because James Rice, Mayor of Waterford, was a notable sea pilgrim who undertook multiple journeys to Santiago de Compostela during the late 1400s. He is buried in Christchurch Cathedral (Waterford), and his tomb features a Camino shell, indicating his connection to the Camino pilgrimage.

Good governance continues to be a priority. Ongoing Trustee education has received particular attention in the past year. SpIRE is enormously grateful to the Irish Province of the Society of Jesus who provide a beautiful home for SpIRE activities in Milltown Park. The very generous sponsorship of the Presentation Sisters (North East Province), the Order of Discalced Carmelites, the All Hallows Trust, the Holy Child Sisters and the Jesuits (Irish Province) have provided the financial support to enable SpIRE to grow, to sponsor students in need, and to support innovative research.

I express my gratitude to Kathleen Lyng CHF, to Margie Kennedy, Ann McGrath and to Lisa Power for their practical support of SpIRE's Vision and Mission through Library, Secretarial, accounts and hospitality volunteer services, respectively. I am very appreciative of the commitment of the Advisory Committee who support SpIRE's vision and mission in public events, publications and conferences. Ad multos annos!

**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
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## Director's Foreword 2024

Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ  
Trustee / Director and Treasurer of SpIRE

During 2023-2024 MA and PhD studies in applied spirituality provided by the South East Technological University (SETU) continued to be delivered in Dublin where they are hosted and supported by SpIRE. SpIRE was delighted to have played a major role in bringing these studies to the new university and provides a first-class specialist library in the discipline, in Dublin. Members of SpIRE also continued to lead or participate in the Spirituality in Society and Professions (SpirSoP) Research Group of SETU, which is the first group of its kind in an Irish university.

Another ground-breaking output in 2024 under the leadership of SpIRE was *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Spirituality and Contemplative Methods*. The book was co-edited by the Chair of SpIRE and Professor Kerri Clough, a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality, who had been appointed by SETU as an Honorary Research Fellow. The book included chapters from SpIRE associates, including Dr Noelia Molina, Programme Leader of the MA in Applied Spirituality.

At the end of October 14 students graduated with an SETU MA, and one with a Postgrad Dip, in Applied Spirituality. One member of the class switched to PhD studies in spirituality during the year, and another deferred completing the MA dissertation requirement. Feedback from the MA graduates is further evidence of the impact of SpIRE in developing and disseminating the value of spirituality study, research, and practice for lived experience and the professions. See <https://spiritualityinstitute.ie/ma-applied-spirituality/> and the 'Esteem for Work of SpIRE' page in this report (pp. 28-29).

SpIRE's website, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Soundcloud pages, and Mailchimp communications are key sources of dissemination about SpIRE's activities. See <https://spiritualityinstitute.ie> and the tabs and icons on the site.

The election of the Director as the President of the global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS) in San Antonio, USA was a powerful acknowledgement of SpIRE's standing in the field as is his continuing role as a member of the Executive Committee and the Links Coordinator of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) (<https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/>). Some of the work of the Board of Directors of INSS during 2024 involved planning and organising the 8<sup>th</sup> biennial conference of INSS which will take place in the University of Northampton, England from June 17-19, 2025. The title of the conference is 'Spirituality, Consciousness, Technology, and Wellbeing: Implications for Research, Education, and Practice'. Both the Chair and Director of SpIRE serve on the editorial board of the INSS journal, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*. In November 2024 the Director delivered his SSCS Presidential Address in San Diego. Behind much of SpIRE's visible work are its generous sponsors to whom we are very grateful. We honour all those who contributed so enthusiastically in different ways to the life and development of SpIRE during the past year, and we look forward to another great year in 2025-2026. Míle buíochas to all!

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2024

### INTRODUCTION

The Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) was established in 2015 to serve the spiritual seeking of people locally and globally. It emphasises the value of exploring the themes, trends and countours of seeking meaning and value through advancing spirituality studies in a university context. It supports exploration of the interface between spirituality and the professions, as well as bringing spiritual resources to bear on a range of life settings and concerns. These settings include work, family, relationships, life-transitions, and concerns regarding human, societal, and planetary wellbeing. In order to serve the contemporary global spiritual awakening, SpIRE aims to develop contemplative and critically informed spirituality guides, reflective and ethical practitioners, spirituality theoreticians, and skilled researchers. It gives effect to its aims through education, research, conferences, training, consultancy, publishing, leadership and networking.

### OBJECTIVES AND MISSION OF THE CHARITY

The Charities Act 2009 lists as 'charitable purpose' four objectives, which SpIRE seeks to enact in a distinctive way.

- **The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship**  
SpIRE provides bursaries to students in need.
- **The advancement of education**  
SpIRE hosts and delivers an MA in Applied Spirituality, serves PhD students in spirituality, runs a specialist library, organises international conferences regarding spirituality studies, and exercises leadership on various international educational boards in the field of spirituality studies.
- **The advancement of religion**  
SpIRE provides public lectures on Spirituality & the Professions and spiritual guidance.
- **Any other activity that is of benefit to the community**  
SpIRE supports publication of research findings in the field of spirituality studies and provides a consultancy service.

**Mission:**

*The promotion of spirituality by providing education, research and community service for the public benefit at Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin D06 W9Y7, Ireland.*

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

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At the Jesuit Provincialate building in Milltown Park, Milltown Road, SpIRE curates a world-leading, specialist spirituality studies Library. Rooms are rented in the building for the delivery of an MA programme in Applied Spirituality, occasional public lectures, and to support PhD students.

### DELIVERY OF MA in APPLIED SPIRITUALITY

The MA in Applied Spirituality, gained accreditation in 2016 from what was then the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) making it the first time in Ireland for an Institute of Technology to accredit a postgraduate programme in Spirituality Studies. The first version of the programme ran at Milltown Institute, Dublin from 2001 (NCEA, HETAC, NUI). In those years it was a 2-year programme. The first year ran as a HDip year and was mandatory for progression to the MA. In 2010 the programme was rewritten as a one-year programme in order to become a DCU award at All Hallows College (DCU). SpIRE hosts and supports the programme, particularly through scholarships provided by benefactors of SpIRE, through the provision of a coffee and snacks service on class days when students are in attendance and through the services of a volunteer Library Coordinator. The MA is also served by a very experienced and distinguished team of lecturers and research supervisors, recruited by SETU.

Through student feedback and the processes of quality review the programme is constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs of spiritual seekers. As the MA group all have distinct professional experience, the dissertation now has become longer so as allow contemplative engagement with unique professional questions in areas such as education, coaching, spiritual care, therapy, medicine, eco-services, tourism, etc.

The next photo shows the 2024-2025 class with the programme leadership team: Noelia (Programme Leader), Michael (Programme Director/Leader from 2005-2021), and Bernadette (founding Programme Director in 2001), and Kathleen, the Library Resource Coordinator. Class participants came from Pakistan, Malta, UK, and Ireland, and included a returned missionary from Congo.



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**ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING / RESEARCH / PUBLICATIONS**

**Initiatives taken by members of the MA team & SpIRE to advance research, engagement, dissemination and publications in the field of the academic study of applied spirituality during 2024 included:**

Dr Catherine Cronin, an Independent Scholar, delivered an innovative learning workshop re Sustainable Development and Inner Development practices with the MA students in November. Students designed a range of Pecha Kucha presentations with themes including creativity, change, hope, freedom, connection, impact, relationships, and action — all arising from a focus on the SDGs and IDGs (Inner Development Goals <https://lnkd.in/eR47HuAq>). The workshop was supported by N-TUTORR, a national project across the Technological Higher Education sector which aims to transform the student experience.

The 3 PhD candidates (recruited 2021), whose studies in the field of applied spirituality studies are hosted and supported by SpIRE, made good progress in their work during the year. A fourth scholarship PhD student started in February 2024 after completing the Cert in Applied Spirituality Studies. Her PhD will be a study of the contribution of inner development goals to advancing the UN's sustainability development goals.

*The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Spirituality and Contemplative Studies* was published in September 2024. This ground-breaking work was edited by the Chair of SpIRE and Professor Kerri Clough, a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality and an Honorary

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

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Research Fellow of SETU. The complex commissioning and editorial process was funded by SpIRE.



SpIRE continued its collaboration with and leadership in developing a fully accredited Research Group for the study of Spirituality in Society and the Professions (SpirSoP) at South East Technological University (SETU). In February South East Technological University (SETU), in collaboration with the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education ([SpIRE](#)), convened a pioneering roundtable discussion **on the benefits of spiritual practices in the recovery from eating disorders** on February 26, 2024. PhD Candidate Tara Travers has been interviewing women age 30 – 70 from across Ireland to gather testimonies regarding spiritual practices which were critical in their journey to regulate disordered eating.

The event was opened by **Mary Butler, TD, then Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People**. The event brought together spirituality researchers, prominent experts in the field of eating disorders, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders within the field of eating disorder recovery to deliberate on the critical role that spiritual practices can play in the recovery process. PhD candidate Tara Travers, a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality, outlined her research findings to date, particularly the significance of spiritual accompaniment in eating disorder recovery.

Andrea Hayes, an experienced Irish broadcaster, author, a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality at SETU, and a trustee of SpIRE, acted as host for the day. Professor Deborah Lycett, a leading global expert in the field of spirituality and eating disorder recovery, delivered the keynote address, presenting her research findings on the subject.

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024



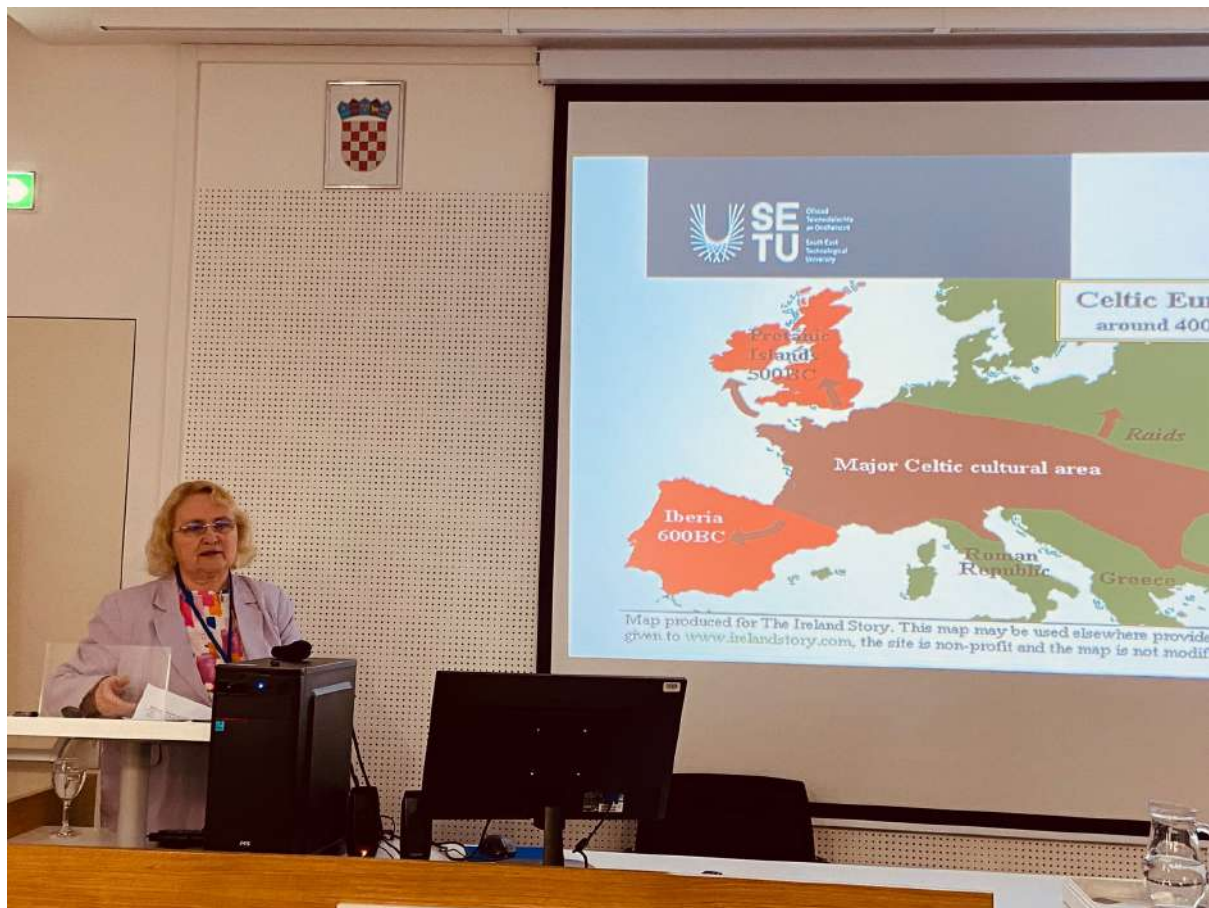
L-R (back): Dr Elizabeth McCrory, Dr Noel Keating, Dr Noelia Molina, Diane Jackson (PhD Cand), Dr Padraic Hurley, Dr Paul Clogher;

L-R (front): Dr Michael O'Sullivan, Tara Travers (PhD Cand), Minister Mary Butler, Dr Bernadette Flanagan.

In May Dr Bernadette Flanagan and Dr Noelia Molina, of SpirSoP and SpIRE, attended the **Sacred Sea conference** in Zadar, Croatia. They travelled to the University of Zadar thanks to the [EU-CONEXUS Mobility Fund](#) at SETU. The conference, entitled "Religious Practices in a Maritime Context", looked at establishing a maritime pilgrimage network between SETU, and the universities in Zadar in Croatia, Valencia in Spain and La Rochelle in France. The conference focused on both past and present religious practices within a maritime context in order to discuss, combine and compare different approaches, problems and perspectives towards the study of the connection between saints and the sea. Dr Flanagan and Dr Molina enjoyed the opportunity to network with their colleagues across the other EU Conexus universities and share ideas about making maritime pilgrimage research a reality. The photo below shows Dr Flanagan, Chair of SpIRE and Co-Chair of SpirSoP, presenting at the conference.



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The next step in this collaboration will involve a small team of staff from Zadar, SETU and Valencia making an application for a Seed grant to explore the Impact of religious and spiritual practices on urban coastal environments (IRUCE)

In June SpirSoP and SpIRE welcomed a **Fulbright senior specialist scholar** from San Antonio, Texas. Prof. Markey met PhD researchers, supervisors, and MA in Applied Spirituality staff to discuss US pragmatic philosophy (Pierce, Dewey, James) as a research paradigm and its implications for spirituality research.

He also read a selection of dissertations from the MA in Applied Spirituality to identify how that philosophy might strengthen the conceptual frameworks of this research. Particular attention was paid to how pragmatism has the potential to closely engage with and give expression to new aspects of spiritual practice in professional and social settings and so provide hard evidence for macro-level discourses.

Commenting on his visit, Prof Markey said, "SpIRE and SETU are doing remarkable work in Applied Spirituality in Ireland – innovative, creative, and welcoming to so many different professions and perspectives".



## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

The photo below shows Prof. Markey with the participants who also discussed the possibility for future collaboration of doctoral clusters in spirituality studies in Malta, the Netherlands, and the USA, as well as the role of international spirituality conferences at SETU in strengthening its leadership position in the emerging academic discipline of spirituality studies.



### Inner Development Goals <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>

Thanks to SpirSoP, SETU leads the way in focussing attention on the importance of inner dispositions for sustainable development. The SpirSoP/SpIRE participants (see photo) also explored inner development goals as a case study of pragmatism. In 2023 the intergovernmental panel on climate change concluded that agreed targets for change have not been met. They observed that education and information alone are not producing the required changes. Transformation in humanity's inner appreciation of the climate crisis would be required to truly comprehend the magnitude of the crisis.

A group of 23 practices, many drawn from spiritual wisdom traditions, have been developed so that the climate crisis may also be approached from the inside out. Meanwhile, the UN has adopted the pragmatic response of inner development goals.

## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

In September SpirSoP organised a highly successful event on the topic of Inner Development Goals with Professor Christine Wamsler and Dr Fredrick Lindencrona. Prof. Wamsler, Lund University, has established a contemplative sustainable futures programme that creates space and opportunities for knowledge development on the role of inner dimensions and transformation for sustainability. Dr Lindencrona is Head of Research Co-Creation at IDG Foundation, Sweden. Other speakers were Dr Padraig Hurley, who lectures in the MA in Applied Spirituality and is Co-Chair of SpirSoP, and Sue Saunders, who is engaged in PhD studies on this topic with SETU and SpIRE.

### INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS (IDGB) HUB - VIRTUAL LAUNCH

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 1.05 - 1.55pm



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**

**WHAT INNER SHIFTS**  
OR HUMAN GROWTH NEEDS TO HAPPEN IN ORDER  
FOR US TO REACH THE SDG's COLLECTIVELY?



**INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
Transformational Skills for Sustainable Development



Scan QRCode to Register  
OR  
E-Mail: [Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie](mailto:Bernadette.Flanagan@setu.ie)



**Prof Christine Wamsler**  
Sustainability Science  
Lund University  
  
Founder:  
Contemplative  
Sustainable Futures  
Program



**Dr Fredrik Lindencrona**  
Head of Research  
Co-Creation  
@ IDG Foundation,  
Sweden



**Dr Pádraic Hurley**  
Lectures in  
Contemplative  
Psychology / Wellbeing  
(SETU)  
  
Co-Chair SpirSoP  
Research Group



**Sue Saunders**  
SETU PhD Scholar  
"An Investigation of the Role of  
Inner Development Goals (IDGs)  
and Practices in the advance of  
Sustainable Development  
Goals (SDGs) with Irish climate  
change activists"

**CONNECTING  
FOR IMPACT**

South East Technological University  
Strategic Plan 2023-2028

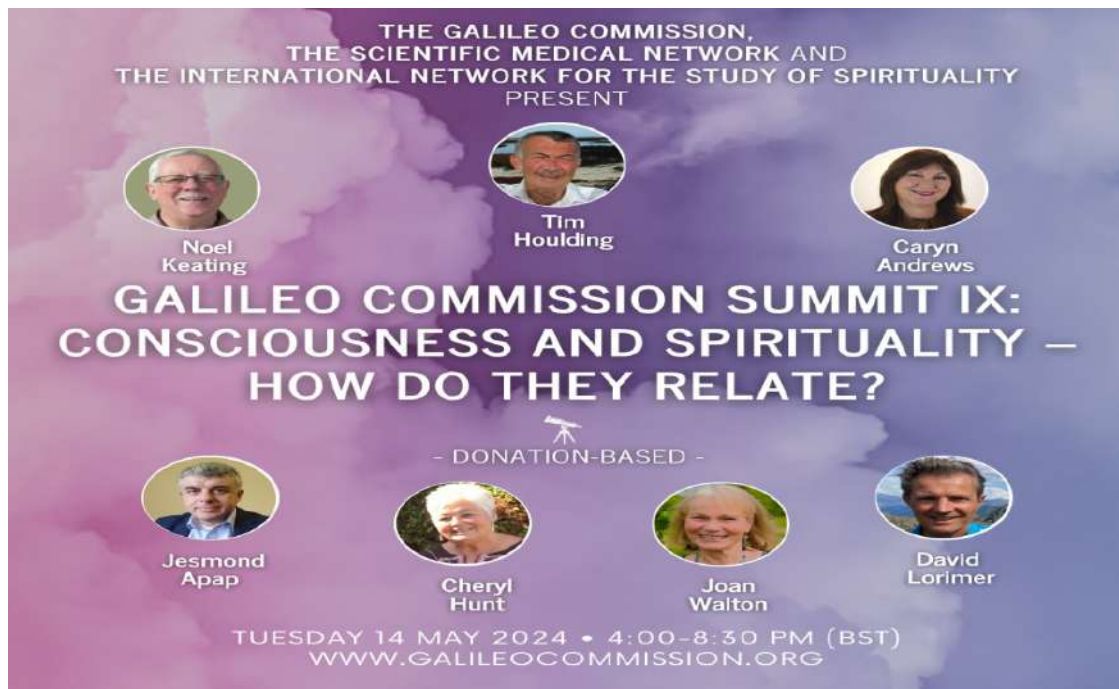
[setu.ie](http://setu.ie)



## INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COLLABORATIONS

**SpIRE and The Galileo Commission are linked organisations.** Dr Noel Keating, a member of the SpIRE Advisory Board, presented at the online Summit on 'Consciousness and Spirituality - How do they Relate,' in May 2024.

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**Professor André Brouillette**, Boston College, USA was a Jesuit visitor to SpIRE in June. A pilgrimage scholar, he came at the invitation of SpIRE to do research on pilgrimage in the Irish context and to deliver a lecture on 'Pilgrimage by Land or Sea: Portal to Spiritual Awakening and Eco Awareness'. The other keynote presenter on the topic was Dónal Ó Céilleachair, award winning filmmaker of *The Camino Voyage by Sea*. The event was chaired by Pat Coyle, Director of Communications for the Irish Jesuits. **The SpIRE lecture was held in collaboration with Camino Ireland.**





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L-R: Liz Murray, who is doing PhD studies on pilgrimage with SETU and SpIRE, Turlough O'Donnell, Chair of Camino Society Ireland, Michael, Bernadette, Dónal, Pat, and André.

***(Re)Emerging Scholars & Practitioners Nurturing Scholars & Practitioners Series***

In October, in an online event, the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS) welcomed guest speaker Dr. Bernadette Flanagan, Spirituality Research Lead South East Technological University, Chair of SpIRE, and a past president of SSCS, to address them on the topic 'How does your scholarship and study of spirituality frame, stretch and deepen your spiritual practice from head to heart?'

The Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS)  
**(Re)Emerging Scholars & Practitioners**  
***Nurturing Scholars & Practitioners Series***

How does your scholarship and study of spirituality frame,  
stretch and deepen your spiritual practice from head to heart?



**Guest Speaker**  
**Dr. Bernadette Flanagan, Spirituality Research Lead**  
**South East Technological University, IRELAND**

Bernadette Flanagan is an practitioner and researcher in applied spirituality studies. She has consulted to a wide range of organisations in Ireland and overseas on dimensions of spiritual education, spiritual care and spiritual practice in such fields as healthcare, education, relational wellbeing, aging, addiction and leadership. Bernadette has supervised numerous research project in spirituality studies and regularly examines doctoral spirituality projects outside Ireland. Her Routledge Handbook publications on the subjects of Spirituality in the Professions (52 domains) and Contemplative Approaches to Spirituality Studies are at the frontiers of developments in spirituality studies.

JOIN US FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2024, 4:30 -5:45 PM EST ON ZOOM.

Friday, October 4, 2024,  
4:30-5:45 pm EST  
via Zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88660580634>



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***The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Spirituality and Contemplative Studies***, co-edited by the Director and Professor Kerri Clough, was published in September 2024. It provides the first authoritative overview of methodology in this growing field. Against the background of the pandemic and other global challenges, spirituality is expanding as an agreed term with which to discuss the efforts people make to be fully present to deeper, invisible dimensions of their personal identity and external reality, but until now there have been few resources exploring the different methodological approaches researchers take.

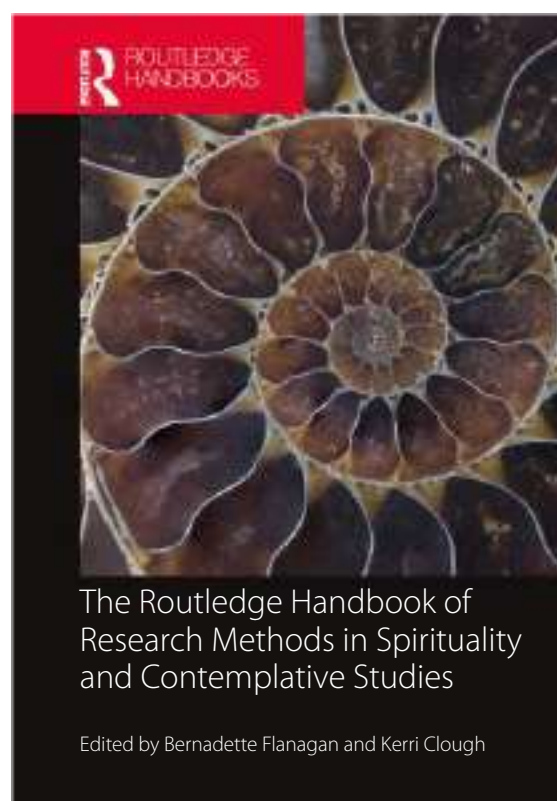
This book explores the primary methodologies emerging: First Person, Second Person, and Third Person, and provides a systematisation of spirituality research in applied contexts for the first time. It comprises 33 chapters by a team of international contributors.

"The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Spirituality and Contemplative Studies not only awakens our imagination to moments of wonder within the spiritual depths of the material world. It also offers multiple ways of researching spirituality."

- Robert D. Romanyshyn, Author of *The Wounded Researcher* (Routledge, 2020).

"This Handbook contributes chapters by a diverse group of experts on how contemplative research can meaningfully shape education, healthcare, leadership, philosophy, and our future on Earth. As research on the human mind and experience progresses, contemplative methods will be imperative, and this Handbook will remain a source to reference."

- Michael R. Sheehy, Executive Editor of the *Journal of Contemplative Studies*



## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Chair and Director of SpIRE were interviewed by Prof John Markey, OP at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. Prof Markey is the convenor of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Spirituality degree at Oblate. He leads a richly ecumenical dialogue and innovative scholarship. The programme is unique in its focus on the long, deep, and rich history of the Judeo-Christian traditions in prayer, mysticism, and spiritual guidance.

In the interview Michael and Bernadette told the story of what brought them to the field of spirituality studies in higher education settings. The interview is on YouTube at the following link and is about 26 minutes long: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lijnl7erbo&t=132s>

Other interviewees in the series include **Philip Sheldrake** who has been Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Spirituality at Oblate School; **Sandra Schneiders**, Professor Emerita of New Testament Studies and Christian Spirituality at Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley; Professor **Bernard McGinn** who is widely regarded as the preeminent scholar of mysticism in the Western Christian tradition and **Wendy Wright** Professor Emerita of Christian Spirituality at Creighton University, and Affiliate Faculty at the Oblate School of Theology's Institute for the Study of Contemporary Spirituality.

<https://www.youtube.com/@OblateSchoolofTheology/videos>



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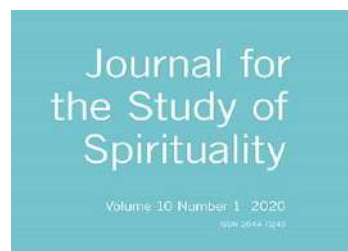
## INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE STUDY OF SPIRITUALITY (INSS)

[www.spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org](http://www.spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org)



The Director of SpIRE is also a member of the Executive Committee of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) and the Links Coordinator of INSS with other organisations engaged in spirituality studies around the world.

The photo below shows the Editorial Board of the INSS *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* (JSS), which includes the Director and Chair of SpIRE.



### Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS)

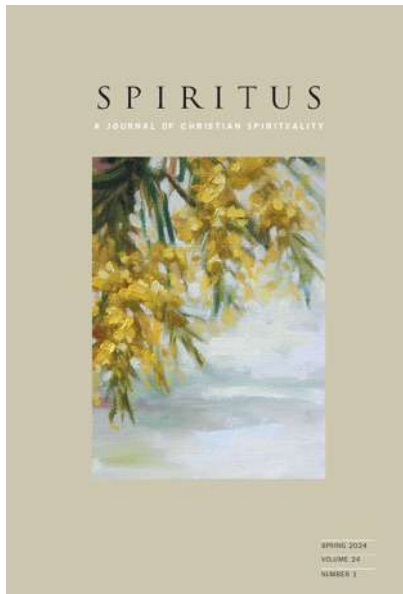
The global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS) exists to promote research and dialogue within the community of persons interested in the field of spirituality. The SSCS is ecumenical and interdisciplinary, encouraging the application of diverse critical approaches to the study of spirituality. The membership of the SSCS is drawn from universities, seminaries, and higher education colleges in various countries, especially the United States. The Chair of SpIRE was the first ever Irish president of SSCS. She and the Director previously served on the Society's Governing Board. In November 2023, in San Antonio, the Director, having been Vice-President and President-Elect for the previous year, became the first Jesuit, first Irish male, and third European to be elected as President by his peers in the more than thirty years of the Society's history (See <https://spiritualityinstitute.ie/new-leader-of-christian-spirituality/>). He had also previously served on the Steering Committee of the Christian Spirituality Study Group of the American Academy of Religion, the Promotions Committee of the Society, the International Relations Committee of the Society, of which he is a founder, and he continues to serve on the Editorial Board of the Society's journal, *Spiritus*, a world leading academic journal for the study of Christian spirituality. He delivered his presidential address in San Diego on 23 November 2024. The photo below shows him with four Jesuit colleagues who were present at his address:



L-R: Dr Chris Staab (Jesuit School of Theology, University of Santa Clara), Dr Andre Brouillette (Boston College), Michael (Spirituality Institute for Research and Education and South East Technological University, Ireland), Dr Peter Nguyen (College of the Holy Cross, Massachusetts), and Dr Frank McAloon (Fordham University, NY).



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The Director of SpIRE is a member of the Editorial Board of *Spiritus*, the SSCS journal. The journal is published bi-annually, and it is the leading international journal of its kind.



**The Spirituality Association of South Africa (SPIRASA)**, a venture of the Centre for Spirituality Studies, promotes the academic study and practice of spirituality.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/spirasa.org>

During 2024 the Director continued as a Research Fellow of the University of the Free State of South Africa where SPIRASA is based.

**The Center for Contemplative Leadership - Princeton Theological Seminary, USA**

Prof Bo Karen Lee, founding director



The Center for Contemplative Leadership (CCL) in the US believes in the robust integration of deep spiritual roots with the wider work of liberative justice in the world. SpIRE has sponsored and promoted a few of CCL's activities and members of SpIRE have participated in them.

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In July, the Chair, and Director, of SpIRE were invited to attend the world premier film on **Roshi Robert Kennedy, SJ**, at the Galway Arts Festival. Irish-American Jesuit priest Robert Kennedy is a Zen Buddhist Master and travelled from New York for the film. The film, entitled *Are We One*, traces the sharing of Zen meditation as part of Robert Kennedy's life's work, and that of his successors and student. It is a contemporary exploration of interfaith dialogue and co-operation based on the common ground of human experience. Fr Kennedy took part in a Q&A session after the film. SpIRE is acknowledged in the film credits. In the photo Fr Kennedy is flanked by the Chair, and Director, respectively, of SpIRE.



DIRECTOR: DÓNAL Ó CÉILLEACHAIR  
72 mins, Ireland, 2024, Digital

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**SPIRITUALITY SCHOLARS VISIT SpIRE**

Dr Claudia Psaila, University of Malta, one of the two new External Examiners for the MA in Applied Spirituality, visited in February.



L-R: Dr Noelia Molina, Dr Claudia Psaila, and Dr Michael O'Sullivan

- Professor Brenda Murphy, Research Lead in the SETU School of Humanities, and Professor John Markey, OP, Director of PhD Studies, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, visited SpIRE on 13 June 2024. See next photo. L-R: Michael (Director), Bernadette (Chair), Brenda, and John.

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Dr André Brouillette, SJ, Boston College (centre), visited in June. Seen here with Bernadette and Michael



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Dr Jayeon Choe, Glasgow Caledonian University, also visited SpIRE during the year. Like the Chair of SpIRE she is engaged in developing pilgrimage and spiritual tourism as a research subject in the field of spirituality studies.



L-R: Bernadette (Chair), Dr Choe, and Michael (Director). Dr Choe is holding *Pilgrimage Beyond The Officially Sacred: Understanding The Geographies of Religion and Spirituality in Sacred Travel*. Edited by Michael A. Di Giovine and Jaeyeon Choe. (2021).

Two graduates of the MA in Applied Spirituality visited SpIRE before heading to their new missionary assignments. In the photo they are holding copies of their MA dissertations for deposit in the SpIRE Library. Susanna's dissertation is entitled, *The Spirituality of Migrants* and Rita's is entitled, *Exploring Contemplative Dialogue between Theravada Buddhism and Catholicism in Myanmar*.

Susanna, SSC from Korea is now working in Myanmar and Rita, RNDM from Myanmar is now working in the Philippines.

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024



## WEBSITE



The SpIRE website (<https://spiritualityinstitute.ie>), of which the Director is the administrator, gives helpful information about some of SpIRE's activity and resources and is a key resource for disseminating SpIRE's influence in the national and international field of spirituality studies and practice. The resources include a YouTube channel, videos, podcasts, Facebook, twitter, and LinkedIn icons, as well as the online catalogue of its specialist library.

## DEVELOPMENT OF SpIRE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

During 2024 the SpIRE Library, which was created in 2019, continued to update its holdings. The Chair, Bernadette, and the Library Coordinator, Kathleen Lyng, continued their work of

## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

designing a cataloguing system for the growing collection. The direct weblink to the online catalogue is <https://spirelibrary.spiritualityinstitute.ie/>

SpIRE's specialist library service is managed by a volunteer graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality programme, Sr Kathleen Lyng. Kathleen is a Holy Faith sister and former Principal of St Brigid's primary school, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.



The Library collection is the premier collection in Europe of over 9,000 books and associated journals for the study of contemporary and applied spiritualities. This collection has been carefully built over the past 30 years, primarily through the substantial initial book donation of the Irish Jesuits, and a subsequent significant contribution by the Irish Vincentians after the closure of All Hallows College. Today a modest per capita from South East Technological University for registered students of the MA in Applied Spirituality and the exceptionally generous annual donation of the Presentation Sisters, North East Province enable the stocks to grow in line with the ever-new research specialisations in spirituality which are developing: e.g., trauma-informed spirituality, spiritual needs of neurodiverse persons, and kindness as a spiritual practice in leadership. Fr Tom Layden, SJ chairs the library board: <https://spiritualityinstitute.ie/spire-library/>

The Library Project Coordinator provides MA and PhD students and designated library users with an introduction, orientation, and support at the following times:



# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

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### OPENING HOURS

**WEEK ONE of MA (Sept):** 8.30-8.55am; 10.50-11.05am; 1.00 – 1.55pm; 15.50-16.05

Library Assistance during the other weeks when MA modules are offered:

- **Wed:** 10-11am; 11.30-12.30; 2 – 4pm
- **Thurs & Fri:** 8.30-8.55am; 10.50-11.05am; 1.00-2.10pm; 4.05-4.15; 5.00-5.30pm; and 5.30-6.00 on Friday
- **Sat:** 8.30-8.55am; 10.50-11.05am; 1.00-2.10pm; 4.05-4.15pm

Library Assistance in Weeks when MA modules are not offered:

- **Tues, Wed, Thurs:** 10-11am; 11.30-13.00; 2.00-4.00pm

### VOLUNTEERING AT SpIRE

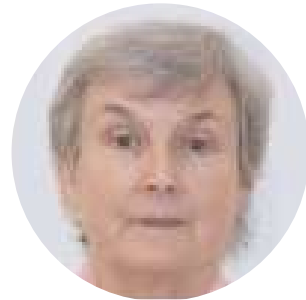
Margie Kennedy and Lisa Power are graduates of the MA in Applied Spirituality. Margie is the volunteer Secretary to the Board of Trustees and Lisa is the volunteer Hospitality Coordinator.



Margie



Lisa



Kathleen

### FINANCIAL REVIEW

#### INCOME - WHERE WE GET OUR INCOME

Income received in 2024 was €90,000 and all of it was in the form of donations. SpIRE is very grateful for the great generosity of the Presentation Sisters North East Ireland, the Irish Jesuits, the Discalced Carmelite Anglo-Irish Province, the Society of the Holy Child of Jesus, the Dominican Sisters, and the All Hallows Trust.

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

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SpIRE acknowledge the very generous donation by the Presentation Sisters North-East Ireland in 2024 which supports the unique specialist SpIRE library and other projects. The Chair of SpIRE is a Presentation sister.



SpIRE acknowledges the financial and non-financial support of the Irish Jesuit Province. SpIRE's activities, including its unique library, are based at the Jesuit Centre, Milltown Park, Dublin. The Director of SpIRE is a Jesuit priest.

### EXPENDITURE - HOW WE SPEND OUR INCOME

**Expenditure in 2024 totalled €69,257 of which:**

Library expenses (books and journals) were €21,018  
Library equipment costs were €7,407  
Sponsorship for MA (and PhD) students was €15,542  
Routledge International Book Project was €5,250  
Catering costs for MA programme were €2,985

### STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES of SpIRE

1. Preserve and develop a specialist library collection for spirituality studies at Milltown Park.
2. Communicate effectively by implementing an effective use of social media platforms, a website, and an online newsletter;
3. Ensure planning, monitoring, and evaluation by having systems in place to strengthen programme, fiscal, and operations management;
4. Mobilize the funds in support of these strategic priorities through collaboration with benefactors and receipt of entrance fees for SpIRE events.

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**ESTEEM for the Work of SpIRE**

**Testimonials from graduates about their experience of the 2023-24  
MA in Applied Spirituality**

- *The **MA programme** is informational as well as transformational. The holistic approach means that academic learning is accompanied by personal integration and application. This all takes place in an atmosphere that is warm and encouraging where each person is supported in exploring their own path.*
- *The **MA in Applied Spirituality** was a soulful, introspective, liminal and magnificent year-long experience, which I am still processing, knowing it has transformed me, and my life. I deeply appreciated the safe, encouraging and validating space, generously provided by the leadership team and my fellow students. I was mesmerized by the captivating dissemination of mystical and grounded content, the depth of my inner journey, and the unique opportunity to explore awareness of my True Self and the golden thread of my path – all while being gently challenged to maintain a meaningful academic rigor. I am deeply grateful to Noelia, Bernadette and Michael.*
- *The **MA course** has genuinely transformed my connection to God and all that is sacred in life. It illuminated the nature of my own Spirit and allowed me to see the parts - that were originally rejected - as sacred also. The course is rich in wisdom, teachings, and structured in a way that truly takes your soul on journey into the wonderment of yourself. The lecturers are a fantastic team who are passionate and supportive. You will not regret this decision; it's powerful and brings out what is best in all of us.*
- *The **MA in Applied Spirituality Programme**, expanded my vision beyond all my expectations, challenging me to become more consciously aware by looking at my own life and the world through a broader and deeper spiritual lens. It was a journey of deeper awakening, discovering in the process that human pain, suffering and sometimes even the most traumatic experiences were, in fact, sacred and graced moments. It was a time of meeting and embracing the most tender and compassionate God. My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to the Course leaders and lecturers for the quality of their academic programme which both challenged and inspired me to integrate and deepen my spiritual life and experiences. It was a truly transformative journey and an invaluable year.*



## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

- *This **MA Programme** has helped me to deepen a life lived with loving kindness for myself and for all beings. The academic course work was nourishing, informative, stimulating, sometimes challenging, and always restorative. The accompanying experiential spiritual practices on the MA Programme, helped me to strengthen my capacity to move towards a deeper contemplative life. I am grateful to all for this precious time to look inwards and listen deeply and move towards a shared horizon of beauty, intelligibility, truth, goodness and love.*

### Testimonial of a current PhD student, who is also a graduate of the MA programme

- As an Irish Research Council awardee, PhD student researching pilgrimage in the southeast of Ireland, I've found in SpIRE a rare and supportive academic home. In 2024, I had the chance to learn from Fulbright scholar Prof. John Markey, spend time in conversation with André Brouillette, and join an event with the Camino Society of Ireland — all hosted by SpIRE. These world-class experiences, along with access to a specialised spirituality library with extensive pilgrimage studies resources, have deeply enriched my research and shaped my confidence as a scholar.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE of SpIRE

SpIRE is a Trust. The Trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet at required times to review developments and make decisions. The Trustees are:

**Bernadette Flanagan**   **Michael O'Sullivan**   **Anne Marie Dixon**



**Ruth Harris**



**Andrea Hayes**



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**Dr Bernadette Flanagan, PBVM**

Bernadette Flanagan, Co-Founder and Chair of SpIRE, completed her PhD in Humanities (Spirituality) at the Milltown Institute, Dublin. Since that time she has become an Associate Professor in Spirituality and led the development of MA and professional doctoral studies in spirituality in Ireland. She has consulted to a wide range of organisations in Ireland and overseas on dimensions of spiritual education, spiritual care and spiritual practice in such fields as healthcare, education, relational wellbeing, aging, addiction and leadership. She leads the Spirituality Research Unit of South East Technological University (SETU).

Having served on the Governing Board of the prestigious global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality and the Nominations Committee of the Society she was elected the first Irish President of that Society in November 2017. She is also a member of the advisory board of *The Way* journal.

Email: [bflanagan@spiritualityinstitute.ie](mailto:bflanagan@spiritualityinstitute.ie)

Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Bernadette-Flanagan/e/B00H2VGQ7Q>

PURE: <https://research.setu.ie/en/persons/bernadette-flanagan>

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1688-6569>

**Rev Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ**

Michael O'Sullivan is the Co-Founder and Director of the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education in Ireland (SpIRE) and of the Spiritual Capital Ireland Centre which SpIRE superseded. He is a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State, South Africa, President of the global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS), and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) as well as its Links Coordinator with organisations engaged in spirituality studies across the world. He is a member of the Editorial Board of both *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* and *Spiritus*, two of the leading international journals for the study of spirituality.

He has degrees in Social Science and Philosophy, and four degrees in theology up to PhD level, as well as training and experience in spiritual accompaniment, counselling, and community development. He is Emeritus Senior Lecturer at South East Technological University (SETU) and was the Programme Director/Leader of the MA in Applied Spirituality in three different higher education institutions over a period of 16 years. He was also during some of those years Programme Director of the Higher Diploma in Applied Spirituality at Milltown Institute (NUI) and Head of Theological Studies and of the Depts of Systematic Theology and Moral Theology at All Hallows College (DCU).

Having worked originally as a specialist in liberation theology and feminist theology, he has dedicated himself since the early years of this millennium to the development of spirituality as an applied academic discipline. He has served as a member of the Governing Board, the Promotions Committee, founding member of the International Relations Committee, and Vice-President and then President of the global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS). He has also served on the Steering Committee of the Christian

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Spirituality Study Group of the American Academy of Religion and on the Leadership Board of the Centre for the Academic Study of Christian Spirituality at the University of Zurich.

Professor Arthur Holder's citation (below) is one of many that shows his standing in this field of applied academic study and practice:

*Dr. Michael O'Sullivan, SJ has established himself as a leading figure in the academic field of Christian Spirituality. Through his teaching, writing, public speaking, and administrative service he has inspired colleagues and students not only in Ireland but throughout the world. Tireless in his efforts to build networks of collaboration among people of different nationalities, denominations, and scholarly disciplines.*

(Professor Arthur Holder, at the time Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and John Dillenberger Professor of Christian Spirituality, Graduate Theological Union Berkeley, CA; and past President of the international Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality and former Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Christian Spirituality Study Group of the American Academy of Religion).

**E-mail:** [spiremos@gmail.com](mailto:spiremos@gmail.com)

**Linkedin:** <http://www.linkedin.com/in/michaelfosullivan1>

**PURE:** <https://research.setu.ie/en/persons/michael-osullivan>

**ORCID:** [orcid.org/0000-0003-0215-9536](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0215-9536)

**YouTube:** 'A Jesuit with the People' (2018); 'Authentic Interiority and the Study of Spirituality' (2018); 'Spiritual Capital' (2014)

**Sr Anne Marie Dixon, OSU**

Anne-Marie Dixon has a background in theology, sociology, education, counselling, and spiritual guidance. Having taught in the Voluntary and Community Sectors at Second Level she went on to become a Lecturer in the Pastoral Department and Department of Spirituality, Milltown Institute (National University of Ireland), and a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Spirituality, All Hallows College (Dublin City University). At All Hallows College she was a member of the MA in Applied Spirituality Board, delivered MA modules on spiritual autobiography, awareness and attentiveness skills, and integration process, and supervised MA dissertations. She continues in some of these roles for the South East Technological University in Applied Spirituality that SpIRE hosts and supports in Dublin. She is an accredited psychotherapist (MIAHIP, MIACP, Reg. ICP) working in private practice. She is also an accredited cross professional supervisor, an MIACP accredited supervisor, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Supervisors Association of Ireland (SAI). She was a member until 2020 of the Board of Directors of the All Ireland Spiritual Guidance Association (AISGA). An Ursuline Sister, Anne Marie is a member of the Congregation's Leadership team,

**Email:** [dixonannemarieosu@gmail.com](mailto:dixonannemarieosu@gmail.com)

**Dr Ruth Harris**

Ruth Harris studied languages and literature at UCC and at the University of Lille (France) and has a PhD in Psycholinguistics from the School of Education in TCD. She completed the MA in



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Applied Spirituality at the Milltown Institute in 2007 undertaking a research project on the topic of bereavement following suicide which was later published as a chapter in *Spiritual Capital* (O'Sullivan & Flanagan, 2012). She delivered a number of guest lectures and workshops at the Milltown Institute in subsequent years.

Ruth is a senior lecturer at TU Dublin in the School of Humanities and specialises in the areas of Applied Linguistics, Intercultural Communication, Diversity and Equality, and Research Methods. Her research interests include Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, Migrant Integration, Transformative Learning and Contemplative Pedagogies. She has been involved in special interest groups on assessment in third level education, including most recently in Authentic Assessment, and acted as external examiner on the MA in Applied Spirituality from 2017 to 2020.

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

**Andrea Hayes**

Andrea Hayes is an *Irish Times* and *Sunday Times* best-selling author. She is also a well-known Irish presenter whose TV and radio work include *Fota into the Wild*, *Dog Tales*, *Coming Home for Christmas*, *Animal A&E* and *Sunshine Meets*. Andrea holds an MA in Applied Spirituality, is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Bethany grief facilitator, Spiritual Director and is currently on the teaching team for Anamcharadas (<https://anamcharadastraining.com/>)

**Email:** [andreaHayesroro@yahoo.ie](mailto:andreaHayesroro@yahoo.ie)

**The operational aspects of delivering the Strategic Plan are supported by a voluntary Advisory Committee. The members of the Advisory Committee are:**



**Prof Michael Howlett**

Michael Howlett has a doctorate in Theology, and a PhD in English. He is Professor Emeritus and retired Head of Department of Applied Arts at South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland, where he also lectured in Theology and Religious Studies, and offered the Interdisciplinary Seminars. His research interests lie in the interacting relationships between literature, society, spirituality and religion, and he has published in Irish and European theological journals. As well as serving on the SpIRE Advisory Group he is a member of the Social Justice Ireland board and its Academic Advisory committee. Michael's interest in spirituality developed when he was working with youth services and parish renewal more

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than thirty years ago. Following this experience, he began a study of Patrick Kavanagh for his theology doctorate in which he focused on the Human Being in Kavanagh's poetry. This work led him to appreciate the fundamental spiritual dimension of human beings, a conviction which was further strengthened in a doctoral study of James Joyce's writings. For Michael, spirituality is a core value and starting point and lies at the heart of religion and of pastoral and social renewal.



**Dr Noelia Molina**

Noelia Molina is a psychotherapist, lecturer and researcher. Her primary background was in Biomedical Sciences and Molecular Pathology. She worked for 17 years as a Medical Scientist (accredited by The Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine in Dublin) in various laboratory disciplines in Dublin. Having worked in private practice as an accredited psychotherapist (NAPCP) for 13 years, she has specialised in maternal mental health and had run therapeutic maternal groups.

She has been engaged in spirituality studies for more than a decade now. Having studied for an Adult Diploma and a Higher Diploma in Spirituality at the Milltown Institute, she went on to complete a PhD in Spirituality at All Hallows College, Dublin City University, where she investigated the transition to motherhood as spiritual process. Her book based on her dissertation has been published by Routledge. At All Hallows College (Dublin City University) she delivered MA modules in Contemplative Psychology and Spiritual Autobiography. In August 2021 she became Programme Leader of the MA in Applied Spirituality which is accredited by the South East Technological University (SETU) and hosted and supported by the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) in Dublin. She teaches Spiritual Autobiography, Awareness and Attentiveness skills, Spiritual Accompaniment Literature, and supervises, also, MA / PhD dissertations. She has wide experience giving workshops in spirituality and researching spiritual and religious issues in Ireland.

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**Dr Noel Keating**

Noel was awarded a doctorate for his research into the child's experience of meditation and his paper "Children's Spirituality and the Practice of Meditation in Irish Primary Schools" was published in the *International Journal for Children's Spirituality* in December 2016. His book *Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents* was published by VERITAS in December 2017. He progressed to the PhD after successfully completing the taught Masters in Applied Christian Spirituality at All Hallows College, Dublin City University, with a research interest in meditation with children, particularly how children experience its spiritual fruits.

Noel is voluntary National Coordinator for Christian Meditation in Ireland and he coordinates their *Meditation with Children Project*, involving 35,000 children who meditate as a whole-school practice in over 150 primary schools across Ireland. He offers in-service, free of charge, to school staffs who are interested in introducing meditation to children. Noel also works with teachers at second-level and lecturers at third-level who are interested in introducing teenagers and young adults to the practice of meditation.

He spent 40 years in the education sector in Ireland as a second-level teacher and principal and as Education Officer with the Presentation Sisters in Ireland. He is author of *Mission Integrity: Having Faith in Our Schools*, which explores how trustees and schools may reflect together on the challenge of remaining faithful to their vision and mission. His most recent book is *Meditation with Children – A Resource for Teachers and Parents*. Noel and Alana Levandoski in Canada have created a CD of music, song, and reflections inspired by the book.



**Dr Bernadette Masterson**

Bernadette Masterson obtained her PhD in Medical Humanities from All Hallows College, Dublin City University in 2016. Her chosen topic, spiritual awakening in chronic illness, has been close to her heart for many years and her research, utilising a psycho-spiritual approach, uniquely highlights ways in which chronic illness may foster opportunities for ongoing awakening to deeper levels of consciousness. Her dissertation has been published as a book



## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2024

by Peter Lang Press. She supervises research dissertations in the MA in Applied Spirituality. She is also a trained spiritual director.

Bernadette completed a four-year training in psychosynthesis, leading to an MA from London's Institute of Psychosynthesis/University of Middlesex in 2001. Psychosynthesis is a transpersonal psychology founded by Italian psychoanalyst Roberto Assagioli, a contemporary of Freud and Jung. Its framework holds that humans are essentially spiritual beings having a human experience, and contain within them a drive to become whole. Every personal challenge presents an opportunity for psychological and spiritual growth.

Bernadette's first degree was a BA in Irish and English, followed by a Higher Diploma in Education, at University College, Galway, in 1981. She worked in London for many years in broadcast journalism. She produced reports from the Middle East on human rights issues, such as the refugee crisis in Jordan (interviewed King Hussein) following the Gulf War in 1991, sanctions in Iraq, and territorial disputes in Yemen. Her reports were screened by international broadcasters including the BBC, Channel 4 and RTE. She was co-founder/director of an independent TV production company for nearly 10 years, managing 15 employees including film crews and broadcast facilities in central London.



**Dr Elizabeth McCrory**

Elizabeth McCrory received her BA, MA and PhD from University College Dublin and MBA from Warwick University, UK. She developed an interest in spirituality through her work both in the public health services and private business sector and has studied spirituality for 10 years. She runs workshops and seminars on a variety of topics including: Meditation, Spiritual Autobiography, Parenting, Spirituality and long-term illness, Death and Dying, and Women in transition.

She completed her training as a Clinical Psychologist and worked in the General Medical Services in Ireland before moving to the UK where she undertook an MBA and worked as Human Resources Director for Coopers & Lybrand. She then returned to Ireland and worked as Human Resource Director at Coopers & Lybrand, PA Consulting and KPMG.

She is an experienced clinical psychologist and psychotherapist with a special interest in Chronic Pain. Her clinical practice covers a diverse range of issues including adolescent issues, emotional problems, health challenges, relationship issues and life crises. She combines psychotherapy with contemplative practices; the focus is on helping clients to archive wholeness through connecting with their deepest True Self.

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## TRUSTEES' REPORT

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Elizabeth's corporate work focuses on developing potential through transformational growth promoting Executive & Leadership Development, Team Development, Employee Engagement and Coaching.



**Dr Anne Kennelly**

Anne Kennelly has a background in education, arts administration and is a psychodynamically trained art therapist. Having qualified as a Primary school teacher, she went on to work in arts administration in Siamsa Tíre (The National Folk Theatre of Ireland). While there, she developed a community arts education project entitled, "Hidden Voices from the Dark" which focused on illuminating the voices of people with sight loss in the community.

Following studies for an MA in Education, she then taught on a number of adult education programmes with Kerry ETB, contributing appreciably to the organisation's work in inclusive education and adult literacy. Combining her experience in adult education with her community arts work, she completed an Education Doctorate at NUIM in 2013 with a thesis entitled, "An áit in a bhfuil t'anam is ann a thógas do chosa tú (Your feet will always take you to the place of your soul): A study of transformation through indigenous ways of knowing in a County Kerry community". This study highlighted how learning through the lens of imagination as opposed to a more technical and rational one only, allows for experiences of soul which, in turn, facilitates an experience of learning as living; thus challenging modernist approaches to education.

In 2007, she qualified as an art therapist, in Vancouver Art Therapy Institute. She is a professional member of IACAT and delivers experiential workshops in art therapy to students of mental health nursing at the MTU, Tralee. From 2016 to 2018, she taught the Education module on the MA in Education and Wellbeing of the Older Person at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. She is also a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality and became a member of the SpIRE Advisory Committee in 2021.

### STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

**Trustees are responsible collectively for:**

- Defining the mission statement, ethos and constitution of the organisation
- Developing a high ethical standard within the organisation and ensuring that everyone involved always acts with integrity

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- Encouraging a culture of openness, responsiveness and accountability
- Developing a strategic plan
- Safeguarding the organisation's assets
- Monitoring the efficient use of resources
- Financial planning, including liaising with fund providers and identifying new sources of funding
- Encouraging the best possible service provision in line with the constitution of the organisation
- Ensuring compliance and keeping up-to-date with changes
- Setting the risk capacity for the organisation
- Communicating with stakeholders and the public – and being open and accountable
- Clearly defining the role of board members – including distinguishing between the role and responsibilities of the Director and the role of the Chairperson
- Ensuring that key positions such as chairperson, vice-chairperson and treasurer are always filled
- Adequately planning for succession and ensuring handovers take place
- Consulting with specialists, as appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and assessing SpIRE's performance, and utilising the results to instigate positive change and innovation
- Developing a strategic plan for SpIRE, as well as monitoring and evaluating this plan annually with the Director. The performance of SpIRE will also be assessed and monitored against the strategic plan and KPI's
- Managing operations effectively and efficiently, while also ensuring compliance with legislation and corporate governance requirements so that sustainability is not jeopardized.
- Ensuring that entries on the CRA's Register of Charities is up to date and that the Annual Report / Accounts is submitted in a timely manner
- Adopting the Governance Code for Community and Voluntary Organisations
- Ensuring that all board members are fully aware of the responsibilities associated with their role and receive adequate training opportunities

## ORGANISATIONAL CHART



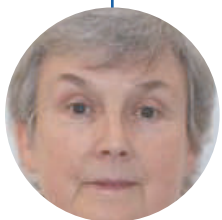
TRUSTEES



VOLUNTEERS



DIRECTOR



LIBRARY  
COORDINATOR



HOSPITALITY  
COORDINATOR



SECRETARY TO  
BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES



ACTIVITIES  
ADVISORY  
TEAM



PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT









**SpIRE, Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin, D06 W9Y7, Ireland**  
**email: [spiremos@gmail.com](mailto:spiremos@gmail.com)**