



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

**Address: c/o Irish Jesuit Provincialate, Milltown Park,  
Milltown Road, Dublin D06 V9K7**

## Trustee Report and Financial Statements

including

Table of activities related to SpIRE purposes

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

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

<b>Trustees</b>	<b>Sr Anne Marie Dixon Dr Bernadette Flanagan Dr Michael O'Sullivan</b>
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Dr Bernadette Flanagan</b>
<b>Director</b>	<b>Dr Michael O'Sullivan</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Sr Anne Marie Dixon</b>
<b>Charity Number (CHY)</b>	<b>22374</b>
<b>Charity Regulatory Authority Number (CRN)</b>	<b>20204471</b>
<b>Principal Address</b>	<b>SpIRE, c/o Irish Jesuit Provincialate, Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin D06 V9K7, Ireland</b>
<b>Telephone</b>	<b>087 4140694</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b><a href="http://www.spiritualityinstitute.ie">www.spiritualityinstitute.ie</a></b>
<b>Accountants</b>	<b>Crowleys DFK Unlimited Company Chartered Accountants 16-17 College Green, Dublin D02 VO78 +353 1 679 0800   w: <a href="http://www.crowleysdfk.ie">www.crowleysdfk.ie</a></b>
<b>Bankers</b>	<b>AIB, Donnybrook, 69/71 Morehampton Rd, Dublin D04 K2W8 BIC: AIBKIE2D National sort code: 93-10-39 IBAN: IE20AIBK93103926652017</b>
<b>Solicitor</b>	<b>Cormac Ó Ceallaigh &amp; Co. 388 North Circular Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7</b>



**Chairperson's Foreword 2020**  
**Dr Bernadette Flanagan, PBVM**  
**Chairperson, Board of Trustees**

There are signs that the global climate may be close to a tipping point for transition to a warmer world. Amid calls for transition to a zero-carbon economy, politicians and much of the public are in denial. However, their preferred technological and market solutions will be insufficient; a transformation is needed in our way of life. The spiritual dimension of the challenge has been neglected. It demands that we question the nature of self, our relationships with each other, the Earth and the beyond, our ways of life, and our sources of meaning. It is against this background that SpIRE continues to grow and develop its outreach to all those concerned about building more authentic organisations, social outreach and professional practice.

The fifth cohort of MA in Applied Spirituality students was admitted in 2020. Activities were, however, restricted by the emergence of the coronavirus. International applicants were unable to obtain a visa to travel and many adaptations had to be made in the rooms at Milltown Park which hosts the programme, in order for the participants to participate safely. Even the annual conferring ceremony was a casualty of the virus.

Major change is taking place at this time in the governance of charities. Good governance involves putting in place systems and processes to ensure that your SpIRE achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way. Having studied the principles of good governance in 2019 and reviewed related actions one principle at a time, the SpIRE trustees have now put in place a comprehensive Handbook of Policies and Procedures in the realm of Codes of Conduct; Trustee Responsibilities & Roles; Volunteer Policy; Financial Controls, Risk Assessment and Communications.

I thank the Irish Province of the Society of Jesus which has made a home for SpIRE, its library and academic activities at its Provincialate in Milltown Park. The generous sponsorship of the Presentation Sisters and the Order of Discalced Carmelites, have provided the financial support which has been a very significant factor in enabling SpIRE to develop and in supporting students with financial needs.

I congratulate all who collaborate with SpIRE in lecturing, research supervision and spiritual accompaniment. I express my gratitude to Kathleen Lyng CHF, and to Margie Kennedy for their practical support of SpIRE's Vision and Mission through Library and Secretarial volunteer services. I am very appreciative of the commitment of the Advisory Committee who support SpIRE's vision and mission in public events, publications and conferences. While COVID has had a big impact on day-to-day activities, it is heartening to know that the underlying spirit and focus of SpIRE remains energetic and clearly focused.

**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
for the year ended 31 December 2020



**Director's Foreword 2020**  
**Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ**  
**Trustee/Director and Treasurer**

2020 was, of course, the first year of COVID-19, which restricted SPIRE's activities. Nevertheless, there were high quality achievements in a number of areas.

16 students graduated with the MA in Applied Spirituality. While the MA is a Waterford Institute of Technology programme, and a WIT award, it is hosted and supported by SpIRE in Dublin, many of whose members are also programme staff, and two of whose members largely wrote the programme for WIT and were very involved in leading it through the approval process. Three of the year's MA graduates already had a PhD, two of these were third level lecturers, and the third was a professor of medicine.

The SpIRE Library was launched on World Book Day on March 5th. The inaugural lecture to launch the library, 'Journeying with Psyche and Soul in Spirituality', was given by Dr Larry Culliford (UK Author, a co-founder of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group, and a former Chair of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland). The Library is a specialist library for applied spirituality studies in Dublin and is also unique in cataloguing its resources in terms of spirituality as a distinctive academic discipline. Dr Culliford's paper was published in the online journal, *Studies in Spirituality*. See <https://www.spirituality-studies.org/dp-volume6-issue1-spring2020/2/>

On the international front, the Chair and Director of SpIRE were interviewed by DMin students in Kansas and by MA students in Sweden during the year. SpIRE was also recognised in the form of my appointment to the editorial board of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, the journal of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) and as the Links Coordinator for INSS with similar organisations around the world. INSS evolved during the year from the British Association for the Study of Spirituality and launched a new website which can be viewed at [spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org](http://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org). I also serve on the Board of Directors of INSS.

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/> and the Esteem for Work of SpIRE page in this report.

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 look forward to another great year in 2021 despite the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.

Míle buíochas to all.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) was established in 2015 to advance the academic study of spirituality in higher education and professions where it can enrich the service of people – health care; social care; leadership; education, etc. The interface between spirituality and such areas is a sign of a new spiritual consciousness across the globe, as well as an indication of the emerging space for engaging spirituality issues in the academy.

There is a recognition that the big issues which face humanity today, such as the ecological crisis need deep and wise responses, in which spirituality has an important part to play. The Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh has said, “real change will only happen when we fall in love with the Earth”. We also know that cultures who believed in the sacredness of mountains and forests as the domain of the spirits were able to live sustainably for thousands of years.

It is significant to note that in Article 12 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples their spiritual rights have achieved recognition through the statement: “Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies”.

The acknowledgement and affirmation of spiritual experiences is also recognised today as an important aspect of spiritual care in nursing home settings. The research of Dr Monika Renz, Head of psycho-oncology at Kantonsspital in St Gallen, has generated awareness that just as exercise and the gym should receive social and cultural support for those at a stage of life when these practices are important, so services that provide deep listening, attentive presence and the acknowledgement of altered awareness of spiritual realities should have their rightful place in settings such as nursing homes.

Even in the business world, the need for “soul” days is seen as a means of countering excessive stress and the pressures of executive management, and spirituality can also make a difference to the values of a company and the way it functions. Religious institutes and clergy members of diverse churches are also aware of the increasing importance of receiving training in an open and sound spirituality. Funeral directors and tour guides are also seeking training in spiritual practice for their different spheres of services.

In this document, the Trustees of SpIRE present their efforts to fulfil their charitable purpose and the Accounts which serve this purpose for the year ending 31st December 2020. These reports are an intrinsic aspect of fulfilling the vision of making the resources of spirituality available for creating a more just, compassionate, kind and sustainable world.

**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
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**OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY**

The Charities Act 2009 lists as 'charitable purpose' the following four objectives:

- **The advancement of education**  
SpIRE hosts and delivers an MA in Applied Spirituality, runs a specialist library, and members serve 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
- **The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship**  
SpIRE provides bursaries to students in need.
- **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 V9K7*



# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2020

## DELIVERY OF MA in APPLIED SPIRITUALITY

The MA in Applied Spirituality, awarded by Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), takes place in Milltown Park, Milltown Road, Dublin D06 V9K7. The programme began with WIT in 2016, making it the first time in Ireland for an Institute of Technology to run and accredit a postgraduate programme in applied spirituality.

The Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) hosts and supports the programme. The Director of SpIRE, Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ, is also the Programme Leader for the MA. He did a great deal of the work to write and lead the programme through its validation and accreditation by WIT. Prof. Bernadette Flanagan, Chair of SpIRE, previously had leadership and design roles in the programme when it ran, firstly at Milltown Institute (NUI), and then at All Hallows College (DCU), before these colleges closed. The programme has the benefit of an internationally leading library in the field of spirituality studies, namely the SpIRE Library, which is supported by the Irish Jesuits. It is also served by a very experienced and distinguished team of lecturers, research supervisors, and spiritual accompaniers.

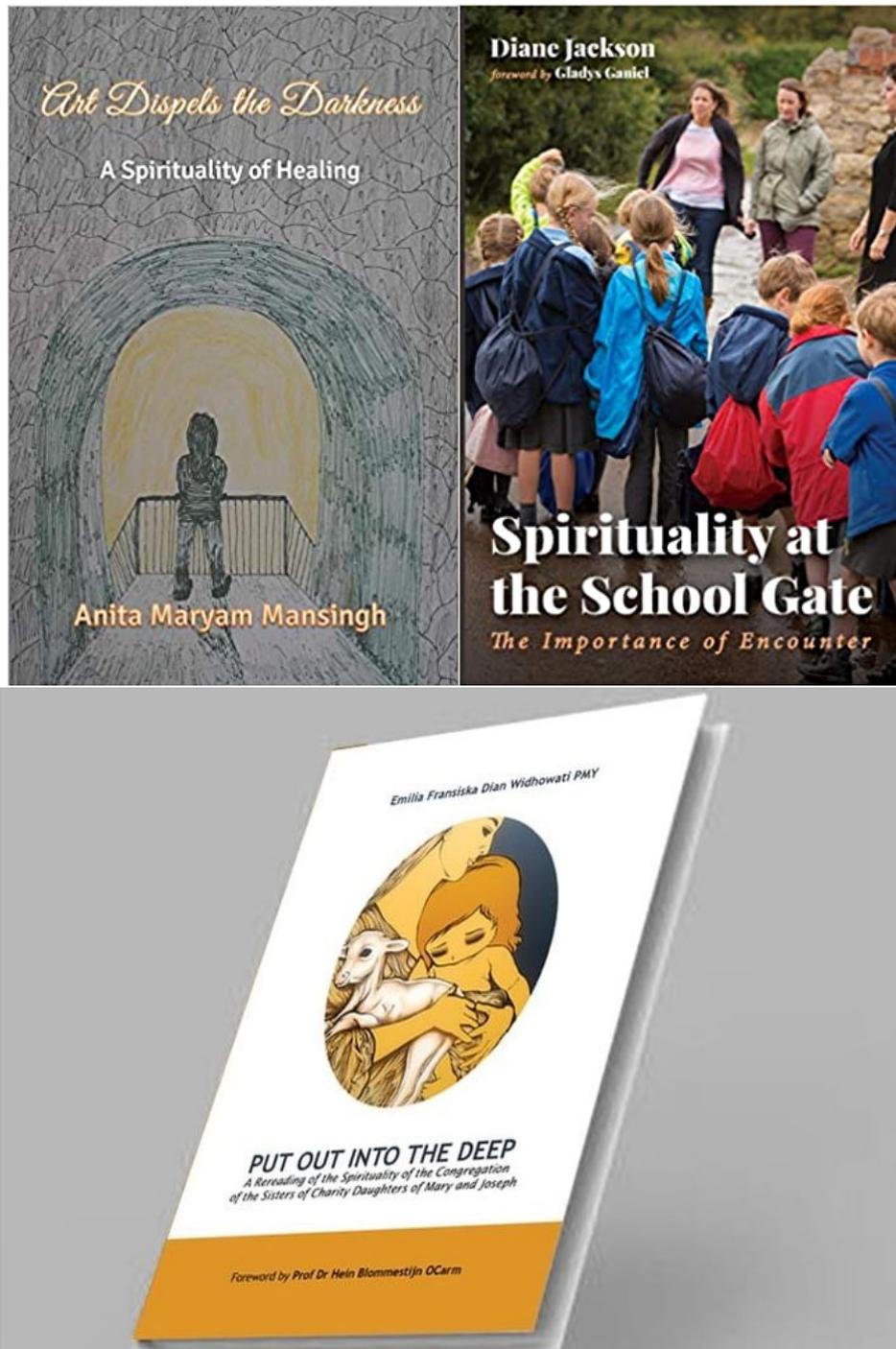
The photo below shows the 2019-20 class with the programme leadership team in the centre at the front (L to R): Bernadette (4), Michael (5), and Noelia (6).



Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
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**ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS**

Among the publications by staff and students of the MA in Applied Spirituality in 2020 were books by Sr Anita from Pakistan, Diane Jackson in Dublin, and Sr Emilia from Indonesia – see book covers below.



**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
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**DEVELOPMENT & LAUNCH OF SpIRE ACADEMIC LIBRARY**

During 2020 the SpIRE Library, which was created in 2019, continued to update its holdings with the purchase of over 500 new books. The work of creating a spirituality cataloguing system for the whole collection also continued. Bernadette Flanagan, and the Library Coordinator, Kathleen Lyng, ably supported for a while by Bernadette's nieces, Ciara, Claire, and Helen McDermott, did the work involved, which is still ongoing. Donations of books were received from Rev Dr Jack Finnegan, SDB, Mr Tom Larkin, Mr Greg Heylin and Ms Pamela May who are all graduates of the MA, Sr Jennifer Perkins, FMA, a former colleague at All Hallows College, and Fr Myles O'Reilly, SJ, who serves as a spiritual accompanier on the MA programme.



# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2020



The official launch of the Library took place on World Book Day on March 5th. The launch lecture, 'Journeying with Psyche and Soul in Spirituality', was given by Dr Larry Culliford (UK Author, a co-founder of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group, and a former Chair of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland). Dr Culliford's paper was published in the online journal, *Studies in Spirituality*. See <https://www.spirituality-studies.org/dp-volume6-issue1-spring2020/2/>

L-R in the photo below: Dr Noel Keating, SpIRE Advisory Committee, Dr Noelia Molina, SpIRE Advisory Committee, Dr Larry Culliford, lecture and launcher, Rev Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ, Director of SpIRE, and Prof Bernadette Flanagan, Chair of SpIRE.

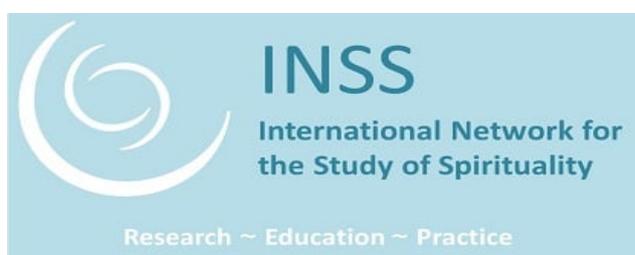


## INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COLLABORATIONS

During 2020 the Director of SpIRE, Rev Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ was appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, the journal of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) which evolved out of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality. He was also appointed Links Coordinator between INSS and other similar organisations around the world that are engaged in spirituality studies. He also serves on the Board of Directors of INSS, the International Relations Committee of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality, the editorial board of the Society's journal, *Spiritus*, the premier academic journal for the study of Christian spirituality, and holds a number of other international appointments. The Chair and Director were interviewed about their work in the field of spirituality studies by DMin students from Kansas City, USA, and MA students from the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Sweden, and the Director was among those interviewed from four continents for the Spirit-Duality event towards the end of the year.

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

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



During the year the Director worked with his colleagues on the Board of Directors to evolve the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS) into the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS). Michael was the first ever Irish person to be elected to what was BASS. INSS launched its website in late 2020. He was also appointed to the editorial board of the INSS journal, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* (JSS).

#### **INSS International Conference on Spirituality in Research, Professional Practice and Education**

The Director worked with the other members of the organising committee of INSS during 2020 to plan for the above online conference of INSS in association with York St John University. The conference will take place online in June 2021. The Chair of SpIRE, Dr Bernadette Flanagan will give one of the four keynote papers, and the Director will also give a paper. The conference will celebrate 10 years of the INSS journal, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*.

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

The 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 Director continued to serve as a founding member on the International Relations Committee in 2020. The Chair of SpIRE is a past-president of the Society and is the first ever Irish president.

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**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 2020 the Director continued as a Research Fellow of the University of the Free State of South Africa where SPIRASA is based. The Chair, and the Director of SpIRE led a Zoom seminar on 'The Irish Spiritual Tradition' with DMin students from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City in June 2020. The director of the programme is Rev Dr Doug Hardy, a colleague of Bernadette and Michael in the international Society for the Study of Spirituality. These students hope to make a trip to Ireland with Doug when COVID restrictions allow so as to visit sites of Celtic spirituality.

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The Director and Chair were also interviewed for a research project, 'Contemplative Practices in Higher Education for Sustainable Development: An Exploration of their Role for Moving Society towards Sustainability' by a team of MA students at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden, Roberta Domingues, Charlotte Freudenberg, Haley Mah and Esther Zimmer. In total, 18 different master programmes from the countries Finland, Germany, Estonia, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Ireland were represented.

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They were also invited participants to a Zoom event about spirituality and ecology, hosted by Kylemore Abbey, in which two of their colleagues in SSCS, Prof Doug Christie (Loyola Marymount University, California), and Prof Matt Ashley (Notre Dame University, Indiana) were keynote speakers.

The photo to the right is of the Director of SpIRE being interviewed for the Spirit-Duality international event in which twenty-four speakers from four continents were invited to take part. The title of Michael's interview was 'A Jesuit's Lived Spirituality'.



<https://spirit-duality.heysummit.com/speakers/michael-osullivan/>

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2020

## VOLUNTEERING at SpIRE



The specialist Library service delivered by SpIRE is managed by a volunteer graduate of the MA programme. Sr Kathleen Lyng is a Holy Faith Sister and former Principal of St. Brigid's primary school, Greystones, Co Wicklow.



SpIRE is distinguished by providing access to the premier library collection in Europe of 6,000 texts 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 funding of the Irish Jesuits; with a contribution by the Irish Vincentians to the collection being made after the MA in Applied Spirituality closed at All Hallows College and a per capita student from Waterford Institute of Technology for registered students of the MA in Applied Spirituality. The Library Project Coordinator provides supports such as:

- Orientation/support at the following times:  
Opening Week of MA in Sept: 8.30am – 4/4.30pm  
Weeks when MA modules offered: Wed 10am – 4pm; Thur/Fri/Sat 8.30am – 4pm  
Weeks when MA modules not offered: Wed 10am – 4pm
- Participating in the ongoing training in library software
- Tagging and displaying newly acquired library stock
- Managing the ordering and binding of journals
- Collaborating with WIT online library services in making recommendations to MA students

Margie Kennedy, a graduate of the MA in Applied Spirituality, is the volunteer Secretary to the Board of Trustees.



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**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

**INCOME - WHERE WE GET OUR INCOME**

Income received in 2020 was €41,972.25, of which €41,700 were donations.

Donations <sup>1</sup>	€41,700.00
Other	€272.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>€41,972.25</b>

**EXPENDITURE - HOW WE SPEND OUR INCOME**

Book purchases and journals for the SpIRE Library	€15,918.52
Ongoing annual library costs outside of book and journal purchases	€14,133.87
MA Student support and programme support	€9,896.41
COVID Emergency costs	€1,588.01
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>€41,536.81</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The balance brought forward from previous years was €95,081.34.

<sup>2</sup> Providing a specialist library for education and research in spirituality is a central aspect of SpIRE's Service. The establishment costs for the library during 2019 and 2020 were cumulatively €49,598.18.

**Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)**  
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**STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES of SpIRE**

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

**SpIRE Activities 2020 – COVID-19<sup>3</sup>**

2020	TOPIC
January	Issue Call for Abstracts for <b>Conference</b> entitled: <i>Irish Pilgrim Paths: Marketing Indigenous Spiritual Tourism</i> . <b>Date:</b> Friday, 20th March 2020 Time: 10:00 - 16:15. Venue: Tourism & Leisure Education Building, Cork Road Campus, Waterford Institute of Technology.
March	Marketing 100 attendance places at <b>Conference</b> entitled: <i>Irish Pilgrim Paths Marketing Indigenous Spiritual Tourism</i> Preparation of Resource Materials for 100 attendees at the <b>Conference</b> Delivering the <b>Conference</b>
April	Evaluation of Feedback from <b>Conference</b> entitled: <i>Irish Pilgrim Paths Marketing Indigenous Spiritual Tourism</i>
May	Contributing to the 7th European Conference on Religion, Spirituality and Health at University of South Denmark, Odense. Contributing to the 6th International Conference of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality, on the theme of Spirituality in Research, Professional Practice & Education, June 1-3, York St-John University (England)
June	Healthcare Conference: Trinity College Dublin & Pre-conference workshop:
September	5 <sup>th</sup> Intake to MA in Applied Spirituality in collaboration with WIT
November	<i>Pilgrimage: Spirituality on the Move</i> Public lecture by Dr Bernadette Flanagan

<sup>3</sup> Due to the COVID-19 virus, it was not possible to run events. Here is the table of what was in mind for 2020

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**ESTEEM for Work of SpIRE**

Some testimonies about the 2019-20 MA in Applied Spirituality (Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) award). The MA is hosted and supported by SpIRE at the Jesuit Centre, Milltown Park, Dublin, Ireland, and members of SpIRE are core staff of the programme.

- “I thank God for leading me onto what has been a truly enriching year with such valuable teaching from all the staff. Very many thanks to each of you for guiding me through this thought-provoking and nourishing year. Every blessing.”
- “The MA program is a rich and meaningful and complex program which led to a thought-provoking and life-enhancing year. Huge thanks and gratitude to everyone on the staff – Michael, Bernadette, Noelia, David, Anne-Marie, Amanda, Brian, Pdraig, and Kathleen. It has been a rich, intense and rewarding year. Much respect and love.”
- “Thanks to everyone who made my MA year so special, I have enjoyed every moment and the year has changed my life forever.”
- “With thanks to Michael and Bernadette for facilitating the MA program; to Kathleen (in the library) for all her assistance; and the faculty team for their generous teachings. A special thanks to Noelia for her heartfelt supervision. Blessings to all.”
- “To Michael, Bernadette, Noelia, Kathleen and all the wonderful lecturers who shared their wisdom this year. I am eternally grateful. Thank you so much for such a wonderful year. My soul feels grounded and my life expanded after it.”
- “Thank you so much for an amazing experience.”
- “Dear Michael, Bernadette, and Noelia (the leadership team), I write in deep gratitude for all your efforts over my MA in Applied Spirituality experience. Each of you, in your unique and lovely ways, have made such important contributions to my time in the programme. You set great examples, been a continued resource and shared so much knowledge and wisdom.”
- “It was a great experience and I feel a better sense of myself and of my purpose in life. I feel stronger and happier in myself.”
- “I have expanded both mind and spirit and know this experience will forever give deeper meaning to my life. I will continue to think of you all in prayer and with great gratitude.”
- “To the Director, Dr Michael O’Sullivan, whose attention to detail made for a smooth running of the programme. His lectures and his embodying of what he taught were a wonderful example of authenticity of life.”

## **DATA PROTECTION at SpIRE**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this statement is to provide a concise policy overview regarding the observance of Data Protection obligations by SpIRE. This includes managing appropriately obligations in dealing with personal data, in order to ensure that SpIRE complies with the requirements of the relevant Irish and EU legislation, namely the Irish Data Protection Act (1988), the Irish Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (May 2018).

### **Rationale**

SpIRE is legally obliged to comply with the Data Protection principles set out in the relevant legislation. This Policy applies to all Personal Data collected, processed and stored by SpIRE in relation to its trustees, staff, volunteers, associates and clients in the course of its activities. All are treated equally under this Policy.

### **Scope of Policies and Procedures**

The policies and procedures which have been developed cover both personal details and sensitive data, held in relation to data subjects, by SpIRE. The policy applies equally to personal data held in manual and automated form.

All Personal Details and Sensitive Personal Data will be treated with equal care by SpIRE. Both categories are equally respected as Personal Data in SpIRE's policies and procedures, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The Handbook of Policies and Procedures provides for the following:

- I. A Subject Access Request procedure
- II. The Data Retention and Destruction Policy
- III. A Data Loss Notification procedure
- IV. A sample Fair Processing Notice (for conferences and public events)
- V. A matrix of data categories, with reference to the appropriate data retention period for each category

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2020

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE of SpIRE: TRUSTEES

SpIRE is a Trust with three Trustees. 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

### **Dr Bernadette Flanagan, PBVM**

Bernadette Flanagan, Chair and co-founder 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.

Side by side with her expanding disciplinary expertise, Bernadette has had a distinguished career as a manager and leader in third and fourth level education in Ireland. She has held such roles as President (Acting), Deputy President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Registrar, Head of Department and Director of Research. In these roles she has developed quality systems, administration systems, strategic plans, implementation plans, teaching & learning strategies and institution-wide research activities. She has had responsibility for line managing staff and negotiating partnerships, as well as validation and accreditation for more than 30 programmes ~ NFQ Levels 6 - 10 ~ with various agencies (NCEA/HETAC, NUI, CCE, MIE, UW, DCU). Her expertise has been called on by a wide diversity of academic bodies in Ireland.

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>

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

# Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### Rev Dr Michael O'Sullivan, SJ

Michael O'Sullivan is the Director of SpIRE, Programme Leader of and lecturer and research supervisor in the MA in Applied Spirituality, and a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State, South Africa. He has degrees in Social Science and Philosophy, and four degrees in theology up to PhD level. He also has training and experience in spiritual accompaniment, counselling, and community development.

He has worked in South and Central America and East Africa. He lived for thirteen years with Fr Peter McVerry and a few other Jesuits among socio-economically disadvantaged people. They lived in a tower block of flats in Ballymun, Dublin before it was demolished. 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 of the global Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS) and of the Steering Committee of the Christian Spirituality Study Group of the American Academy of Religion. He currently serves as a founding member of the International Relations Committee, and the Promotions Committee, of the SSCS, the Leadership Board of the Centre for the Academic Study of Christian Spirituality at the University of Zurich, the Executive Board of Directors of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS), which evolved out of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS), the editorial board of *Spiritus*, the journal of SSCS, and the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, the journal of INSS. He is co-founder of the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education in Ireland (SpIRE) and of the Spiritual Capital Ireland Centre which was superseded by SpIRE. For sixteen years now he has been running the leading international MA in Applied Spirituality. Professor Arthur Holder's citation 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, 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).*

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

## Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) TRUSTEES' REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2020

### **Sr Anne-Marie Dixon, OSU**

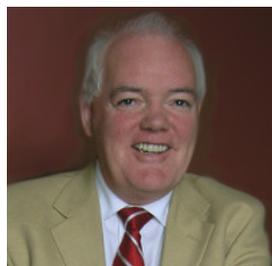
Anne-Marie Dixon has a background in theology, sociology, education, counselling, and spiritual guidance. Having taught in the Voluntary and Community Sectors at Second Level she went on to become a Lecturer in the Pastoral Department and Department of Spirituality, Milltown Institute (National University 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 Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) MA 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 and an MIACP/MIAHIP accredited supervisor. 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.

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**Skype:** [anne-mariedixon](https://www.skype.com/people/anne-mariedixon)

## **VOLUNTARY SpIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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 Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), 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 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.

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**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. Currently, she is a part-time lecturer in the MA in Applied Spirituality which is accredited by Waterford Institute of Technology 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 skills, research modules and also supervises MA dissertations. She has wide experience giving workshops in spirituality and researching spiritual and religious issues in Ireland.



**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.

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Noel is voluntary National Coordinator for Christian Meditation in Ireland and he coordinates their *Meditation with Children Project*, involving 50,000 children who meditate as a whole-school practice in over 250 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 by Peter Lang. 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.

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**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.

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

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

In line with the requirement for Trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the Trustees have looked at the risks that SpIRE currently faces and have reviewed the measures already in place, or, needing to be put in place. To ensure effective risk management the SpIRE Library is fully insured by the Jesuit Provincialate, at Milltown Park, where it is located. The Trustees have identified five key areas where risks may occur:

- Governance and management
- Operational
- Financial
- Reputational
- Laws, regulations, external and environmental

**Governance and management** require that all the Trustees receive appropriate training. By being a member of The Wheel, Ireland's association of community & voluntary organisations, charities & social enterprises the Trustees have access to timely relevant training.

**Operational risks** include those risks inherent in the charity's activities, particularly the delivery of the MA in Applied Spirituality Programme and public talks. The provision of a licence by the Society of Jesus to SpIRE for use of the facilities at Milltown Park means that a stable operational location for SpIRE activities has been secured

**Financial risks** include those which could arise as a result of poor budgetary control, inappropriate spending, poor accounting, non-compliance with laws and regulations and poor risk assessment in the delivery of public events. An agreed annual budget sets the parameter within which spending will occur, and it is regularly reviewed.

**Reputational risks** include possible damage to the charity's ethos and reputation by contributing to unethical research, publishing with vanity publishing houses and failing to observe the standard quality assurance systems of higher education. A commitment to peer feedback and review mitigates this risk.

**Laws, regulations, external and environmental risks** include the consequence of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This is mitigated by ongoing training in Wheel seminars.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role of Trustees collectively involves:

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

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**ORGANISATIONAL CHART**

