

THE COMMON ROOM

A SEMI-OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER
FROM THE CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Autumn 2024, No.2



UNIVERSITY
OF DIVINITY

Friday 24th May, 2024

For every thing there is a season...

Welcome to this second edition of our Student Representative Council (SRC) newsletter for this academic year at Catholic Theological College (CTC). Through this form of communication, we hope to highlight and celebrate aspects of our shared life at CTC.

Thank you to all those students who submitted entries for our SRC newsletter title competition. Our SRC has reviewed these and voted, and we are pleased to announce the reigning title: 'The Common Room'. Congratulations to our SRC Vice President, Gerry Vytilingam, for suggesting this. You have a CTC Keep Cup coming your way, which will help you through these remaining weeks of assessments with the necessary caffeinated needs.

Much has happened since our first edition, as you will see throughout this edition of the newsletter. Thank you to all those who have contributed reflections and photos. Congratulations to all those who have represented our College in the sporting field these last few months. As Venerable Catherine McAuley, the foundress of my religious congregation (the Sisters of Mercy), wrote in one of her letters: *"this is [our] life; joys and sorrows mingled, one succeeding the other."* One minute we can be jumping with joy and celebrating, and the next minute succumbing to sorrow and commiserating.

May we continue to hold Dr Christopher Morris' family, friends and all members of our CTC community in our prayers and support one another during this time of loss and grief. Chris taught me in Year 7 and I knew him as "Mr Morris". I was deeply shocked and saddened by his sudden death, and have really struggled to make sense of it. Special thanks to Gerry for sharing a personal reflection on Chris in this edition.

All CTC students and staff are invited to our end of semester Pizza Party, which will be held in our CTC Student Common Room from 1.00pm this Tuesday, 28 May. Free pizza, drinks and nibbles will be provided. Colloquially, students have named this a "procrastination pizza party", which is perhaps a better title for our event in future advertising. We look forward to seeing you and catching up before we bunker down for our final essays and exams for this semester.

On Thursday 6th June we have our CTC Annual Mass and Dinner being held from 5.00pm at Corpus Christi College in Carlton. This will be an opportunity for our community to gather for prayer, thanksgiving and celebration of the achievements from the previous academic year. This is a paid ticketed event and space is limited, so please book your place, if you have not already done so, via this link: trybooking.com/CQKKL.

Sadly, at the end of this semester, we will farewell two of our much loved SRC members: Br Dominic Snell OP (Dominican) and Mr Dawn Saji (Corpus Christi College). We remain grateful for their valued contributions to our SRC, especially in their respective roles as Secretary (2023-24) and Academic Board Representative (2024). Their "cool, calm and collected presence" here at CTC will be missed. We wish Br Dom and Dawn well in their future endeavours and travels. May God be with them on their journeys.

We wish our students, staff and friends of the College all the best for the remainder of this semester and the coming mid-year break. Go gently and stay safe, especially in the cold, wet weather that we know all too well here in Melbourne. We look forward to seeing you all again, and welcoming new students on campus or on Zoom, for Semester 2 from Monday, 29 July.

Every blessing,

Sr Emma Llewellyn RSM
President of the CTC SRC

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, study and pray—the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and their elders past and present.

Vale, Dr Christopher Morris



It's been a difficult time for the students and staff of CTC. In recent weeks, those on campus know the sombre feeling of walking the hallways. Staff and students alike have been lost for words at times. It is challenging to know what to say or do, or how to move forward. As in Ecclesiastes 3:1, we are reminded "for everything there is a season". The news of Dr Christopher Morris' death has brought a confronting season of death, weeping and mourning for our college.

Chris was a beloved staff member of the CTC Community. I had Chris as my lecturer in Christian Spirituality A and B during 2023. When I signed up to the subject, I didn't have high expectations. I thought that Christian Spirituality was a wishy-washy discipline. I was skeptical for what was on offer. But from the very first few weeks, Chris knocked my pre-conceptions out of the water. In the weeks that followed, he opened up my mind to the deep monasticism of the desert fathers, the enormous creativity of Hildegard de Bingen and the radicalness of Simone Weil. Christian Spirituality became my favourite subjects last year. They were the subjects that engaged my soul the most. I often found my weekly readings infiltrating my thoughts whilst working, in prayer or in conversations with friends.

My favourite memories of Chris were our asynchronous Thursday night Zoom check-ins. They happened once every few weeks, with students from across these lands of Australia, ranging from as north as Brisbane (Meanjin) to where I was in Swan Hill (Wemba-Wemba Country) and Melbourne (Naarm). Together, we shared with Chris our reflections on the wisdom holders from our tradition, including the likes of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and St John of the Cross. I've gained new spiritual insights and rich friendships with online students because of Chris. Zoom was no barrier for his ability to deeply listen and to teach effectively. In a digital era, I know students who had Chris for Christian meditation cherished his ability to lead others in spiritual dialogue and enter into contemplation.

His demeanour in person was kind, generous and compassionate. He also had a fabulous forest green sweater that he wore around campus often. If I saw a flash of green in the hallway, I knew Chris was around. He always took the time to say hello and check in. He was generous with his time for his students, and was always willing to have a conversation.

Chris and I bumped into each other briefly this past March, on a random Tuesday before non-teaching weeks. I don't tend to come onto campus on Tuesdays, so it was providential that we crossed paths. I said hello, and thanked him for his assistance in my recent application to an internship in Rome that I was accepted to. He was humble in accepting the thanks. I ended the conversation by saying that I'd bring him back a souvenir as a gesture of gratitude for his help, and that I'd tell him about the experience when I return. That was the last time I saw Chris. It makes me feel quite emotional knowing that I can't repay him for all that he has done; not just for his support with the internship, but for the way he has championed me in my academic life and endeavours beyond the College. He has shaped, and continues to shape the lives of students and staff at CTC.

I remember Chris once said something in class along the lines of, that "we stand on the shoulders of spiritual giants". In his own way, Chris was a spiritual giant himself. He had a great gift of listening. The kind of listening that gently guided you, drawing you to sit in the space of silence, and breathe through the heaviness of the world and see the light of God. He was the type of personality who rarely seemed frazzled. He was calm, collected and intentional with what he said. The shock of his death has been heart-breaking, and the grief that follows is something we are all trying to come to terms with.

It feels like a paradox to be in this time of grief, despite the last few weeks being the liturgical season of Easter. Perhaps, this juxtaposition is a reminder that our lives hold both the crucified Christ and the resurrected Christ in tandem. Like a lava lamp, we hold various colours within us. Sometimes it all seems to be muddled into a monolithic blur if we don't allow the light to be turned on and shine through. The power of light allows us to appreciate and separate the colours to see the facets for what they truly are. Similar is the power of God, through time.

Christians are not inoculated from experiencing mental illness. In Australia, of the 3,000 lives lost to suicide each year, 75% are men. The weight of this statistic is heavy. The "elephant in the room" needs to be addressed, and it starts with genuinely asking how your own mental health is. It's also about opening up, and providing support to those who around you like, your family and your friends in need. I encourage everyone— whether you are a lay person, seminarian, priest or religious to start the conversation in your own circles. Professional support is also available with CatholicCare Victoria free of charge. Please contact Rev. Dr. Kevin Lenehan or Dr Maureen Saclot if you need access to these services.

The recent feast of Pentecost reminds us of the power of the Holy Spirit who meets us in the upper room— whether we are in a posture of confusion, fear, crying or wrapping ourselves in a foetal position with not many answers. I pray that the presence of the Holy Spirit and the peace it brings as comforter holds us as students, staff, friends and family of Chris, as we lament.

*Eternal rest grant unto the soul of Christopher Morris, O Lord.
Let perpetual light shine upon him, and may he rest in peace.
Amen.*

Miss Gerry Vytilingam
Vice President of the CTC SRC

Yarra Theological College Volleyball Tournament 2024



On Friday April 5th, students and friends of CTC journeyed to the St Paschal Estate, Box Hill for the 2024 Yarra Theological Union (YTU) Volleyball Tournament.

We had two teams representing CTC, and a wonderful cheer squad of students, family, and friends. Congratulations to CTC Team 1 (led by Team Captain, Ray El Fakhry) who placed third. The evening was concluded with a BBQ and festivities, hosted at the Divine Word Missionaries' formation house.

Special thanks to the YTU Student Representative Council for hosting. We had a fantastic day! We felt warmly welcomed by your hospitality, and look forward to working together in the future.

Miss Gerry Vytlingam
Vice President of the CTC SRC



The Brotherhood Cup 2024



The 2024 Brotherhood Cup was held on Saturday 11th May, at Salesian College Chadstone, bringing an end to the undefeated championship of YTU. We offer our congratulations to the new champions, the Dominicans, who were a newly formed team, making a debut in this tournament. A total of five teams participated and after a tiring day of a round robin schedule, with almost three hours of gametime per team, the rankings are as follows:

1. Dominicans
2. YTU
3. CYFC (Catholic Youth FC)
4. MGL/Capuchins
5. Corpus Christi College

Congratulations to Br Benjamin Kombo OMI who was awarded Most Valuable Player on the day! The tournament was a very big success which highlights the great fraternity of young Catholics in Melbourne, whether they be from religious, diocesan, youth group or college communities.

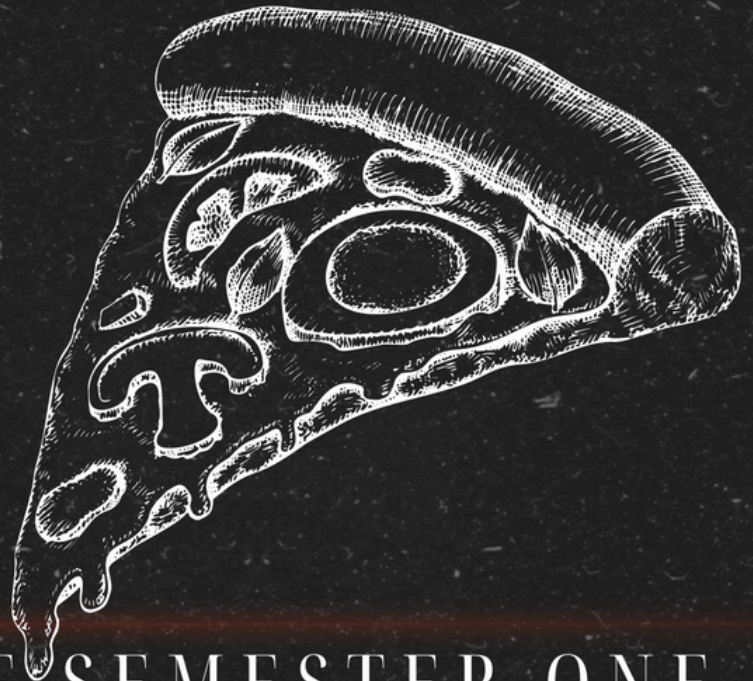
The day ended with delicious BBQ with salads and an awards ceremony which congratulated the amazing talent. A big thank you to the main organisers from each team who took initiative in running the event.

Mr Dawn Saji CCC
Academic Board Representative of the CTC SRC





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THE CTC SRC INVITES YOU TO:

THE END ● OF SEMESTER ONE



FREE PIZZA PARTY



ALL WELCOME



TUESDAY 28TH MAY 2024



1:00PM



CTC STUDENT COMMON ROOM

Engaging Your Faith:

“Incarnating Transcendence in Our Secular Age”

A review by Ms Bei-En Zou

Last Wednesday, armed with a mug of tea and wearing my Ugg boots, I settled at my laptop to Zoom into an ‘Engaging Your Faith’ session. The topic was ‘Incarnating Transcendence in Our Secular Age’. Dr Paul Sharkey gave an incisive presentation on the question posed by philosopher Charles Taylor in his book, *A Secular Age* (2007): “why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?”

Paul explained that we live in an entirely different world to people living 500 years ago. For medieval people, God was experienced as tangible and present, not only through private religious experience, but in the everyday lives of people. God was at the centre of how people imagined and experienced the world and themselves. Medievalists lived in an enchanted world haunted by spirits, filled with saints and surrounded by holy places. The sacred was close; all reality filled with the divine. But for us in this 21st century, we don’t live in that kind of transcendent world. We live in a disenchanted world. We no longer worry about demons; we don’t expect to meet God anywhere. We explain the world via atoms, and solve problems by technology. We live in an immanent world, a world seemingly closed off from transcendence. Our world is material and secular. Paul helped us to see that neither worlds were better or worse than the other: we reflected on the benefits of living in a world with penicillin, for example. The challenge lies in recognising that:

- 1) We cannot go back to an enchanted world
- 2) There are still chinks in our world where the light of enchantment may pass through. Indeed, our transcendent God has already entangled himself with our material world, in the body and blood of his Son.

Charles Taylor’s book on the subject of transcendence in immanence is over 800 pages long, and assumes a fair degree of philosophical background. I admired Paul’s deft summary of key material; his careful definition of complex terminology, his clear accessible language and his thoughtful and engaging manner. The slides were also colourful and some even had animation! Particularly excellent was Paul’s ability to make a dense academic text relevant. Paul guided us in reflecting on the topic for each of our contexts: in Melbourne, in 2024, in our places of work, study and play. As one participant summarised: this presentation has helped make sense of my (secular) world of school, and has given me energy and inspiration to engage with it again. I thoroughly recommend Paul’s session, and all other sessions by our CTC staff in the ‘Engaging Our Faith Series’. Don’t miss out!

Ms Bei-En Zou
Treasurer of the CTC SRC

Rev. Prof. Austin Cooper OMI AM Symposium

On Friday 10th May a number of staff, students and friends of CTC gathered in the Knox Room for the symposium in honour of Rev. Prof. Austin Cooper OMI AM. Fr Austin was a valued staff member of our CTC community who passed away on Sunday 2 July 2023.

Thanks to the blessing of technology, many were also able to attend this symposium via Zoom. It was an inspiring day, featuring a range of speakers who shared varied accounts of their personal and professional connections with Fr Austin.

We remain grateful for his witness and ministry over many years, especially in his roles as founding Master of CTC, historian, formator and ecumenical friend, as well as his numerous contributions to Christian scholarship, formation and spirituality. Thank you to Rev. Dr. Max Vodola and all who assisted with the organisation of this fantastic event.

Sr Emma Llewellyn RSM
President of the CTC SRC



Join the CTC Outreach Team



The Missionaries of Charity are looking for volunteers (students and staff) to assist in their soup kitchen for men in Fitzroy on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays. If you can spare an hour or two in the mornings to prepare the food or in the evenings (4:00 PM–6:00 PM) to serve the food, please email src@ctc.edu.au or chat to Gerry to join our outreach team.

STUDENTS IN THE WILD



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THE WILD



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STUDENTS IN THE WILD

Notices for Students

Survey for Online Students

The SRC want your feedback on how we can better support our students, specifically those who study online. If you study online (full time or part time), please follow this link or scan the QR code and complete the survey, so we can create events that will benefit our community of online students!

Link: <https://shorturl.at/ghji9>



News and Events Board in the Student Common Room

A kind reminder to students of the 'News and Events Board' available in the Student Common Room. The left hand side of the board is for any students to post events that you think our CTC community would benefit from. The right side of the board (where the blue ribbon divides) is strictly for SRC notices, from the SRC. **Please ensure the posters/flyers advertised build community, support our students and encourage fellowship.** The SRC have discretion to remove any posters promoting expired events and irrelevant/unsuitable notices.

Contributions to the next edition of 'The Common Room'

If you would like to contribute to future editions then please chat to a member of the SRC in the Student Common Room or send us an email: src@ctc.edu.au

A meme to LOL





Very Rev. Dr Kevin Lenehan
Master of CTC

Invites

CTC Students

to attend the

Annual Mass & Dinner

on Thursday 6 June 2024

5.00 pm Mass

Corpus Christi Chapel, 180 Drummond Street, Carlton

followed by

Pre-Dinner Drinks, Dinner and Presentations

Cluny Dining Room, Corpus Christi College

Cost: \$60 per person

RSVP essential by 30 May 2024 via TryBooking – trybooking.com/CQKKL

Seats are limited.

Enquiries: vi.panganiban@ctc.edu.au