

# THE COMMON ROOM

A SEMI-OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER  
FROM THE CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE  
2024 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Summer 2025, No. 1



UNIVERSITY  
OF DIVINITY

Tuesday 14th January, 2025

## Renewed in Hope: A Year of Jubilee

Welcome to the final edition of our newsletter from your 2024 Student Representative Council (SRC). We are grateful to all who have contributed to our newsletter. We hope that you have appreciated this form of communication, as a way of highlighting and celebrating aspects of our shared life at Catholic Theological College (CTC), and we welcome feedback and suggestions at [src@ctc.edu.au](mailto:src@ctc.edu.au)

Having recently celebrated the arrivals of the Christ-child at Christmas, the 2025 New Year, the Jubilee Year of Hope for the universal Church, and the magi on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, let us take time to reflect on and give thanks for all new arrivals in our lives (whether expected or unexpected). With any arrival, there can be mixed feelings of anticipation, excitement, anxiety and uncertainty. In his Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, Pope Francis invites “an opportunity [for all of us] to be renewed in hope” (n.1). Hope is greatly needed in our world and at this time. The Christian message of hope can be seen as counter-cultural in a society that is permeated by degenerative, damaging and disparaging messages. T.S. Eliot wrote: “we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time”. May we be curious, creative, confident and compassionate creatures, especially as we embark on a new academic year filled with opportunities for renewed hope, spiritual growth, personal development and academic success.

Looking ahead...

- Semester 1 2025 classes will commence in the week beginning Monday, 24th February.
- The CTC Opening Mass and refreshments to mark the new academic year will be held on Friday, 28th February.
- Our SRC Annual General Meeting and the election of our new SRC Executive will take place early in Semester 1. Stay tuned for more information. We encourage all CTC students to consider joining our SRC, whether you are new or returning, studying part-time or full-time, attending classes online or face-to-face. All are welcome! It is a great way to contribute towards the life of our College, as well as get to know students and staff at a deeper level.

As this is our last newsletter, we take this opportunity to thank you for your support of our SRC initiatives and events during the past academic year. On behalf of our current SRC Executive and members, it has been a privilege and pleasure serving our CTC community in this way.

May 2025 be a promising and productive year for all CTC students and staff. For those students who are graduating or taking leave from your studies, we wish you well in their future endeavours. Continue to take time for rest and relaxation during the remaining summer break, amid any personal and professional commitments. We look forward to seeing you again, and welcoming new students to CTC from Monday, 24th February 2025.

Every blessing,

**Sr Emma Llewellyn RSM**

**President of the 2024 CTC SRC**



*Emma Llewellyn RSM is a Sister of Mercy. She has just completed her Master of Education and Theology/Graduate Certificate in Research Methodology, and is President of the CTC SRC. Her academic areas of interest include Religious Education, Church history, missiology and systematic theology. Emma's experiences have been in Catholic secondary school leadership and teaching roles in the areas of mission, liturgy, English and Religious Education. Her hobbies include watching movies, attending live theatre, supporting the Essendon Bombers (AFL) and spending time with her goddaughter.*

*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.*

## Luce memes and hope-filled dreams: what a mascot can teach Catholics about being 'Pilgrims of Hope'



If you've ever wondered if the Catholic Church could cross over with the world of anime, then 'Luce' is your answered prayer. In October 2024, the Vatican announced a mascot for the Year of Jubilee in 2025; an anime character called Luce.

Controversially, Luce's arrival was not welcomed by many Catholic media outlets, who criticised her eccentric blue hair, scallop shell eyes and vibrant green (Merry People brand looking) gumboots. More fundamentalist groups even considered her as "satanic" or "demonic" – a disfigured representation of the saintly art which the Catholic church has produced over its over 2000 years of existence.

There was also a conspiracy theory regarding the similarity of Luce's name to Lucifer. Clearly this correlation was not considered by those who were studying Latin or theology, and who knew that both names originated from the Italian and Latin words for "light".

For a generation of people who are "chronically online", the anime style of Luce was confronting for many Catholics (both young and old). Like Michelangelo and Fra Angelico, Luce was designed by an Italian artist, named Simone Legno. Legno's style is not so typically renaissance, as he is from the tokidoki brand which takes inspiration from Japanese graffiti and street art. He created Luce for The Dicastery of Evangelisation at the Holy See, and the intersection of anime and Catholicism took the internet's "meme" pages by storm.



According to Archbishop Rino Fisichella who is the Vatican's chief organiser for the Jubilee Year, the mascot was an endeavour to engage with "the pop culture so beloved by our young people". From my perspective, it seemed like an endearing gesture. Many a time, we hear the word "recontextualisation" or "cultural context" used to consider to how we can best evangelise youth. Is the context of pop culture always a positive influence for youth? No. But, can some of pop culture's forms be used for good? Yes. Pope Francis has gifted Luce the mascot as a symbol of joy and relatability. A relatability which hopefully speaks to the anticipated 30 million pilgrims who will travel to Rome in the coming year.

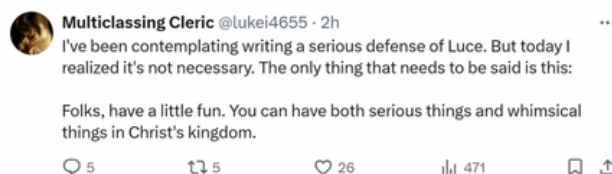
So how is exactly Luce linked to the theme of the Jubilee, "pilgrims of hope"? The aspects of Luce which stand out to me is that Luce is a weathered pilgrim. She is equipped with a yellow rain jacket, demonstrating a willingness to go forth into "all seasons" of life, spiritually and physically. She wears a World Mission Rosary (originally designed by Archbishop Fulton Sheen), a symbol of prayer and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. She has a rod in hand to guide her steps, which might assist when the path is uneasy or unclear. Her dog Santino (a name which translates to "little saint" in Italian) is a joy-filled companion on the journey, perhaps alluding to Pope Francis' priority for Catholics to care for creation. Luce also has friends! They have different skin tones, hair textures and gumboots - a nod to the diversity of the 1.37 billion Catholics worldwide! Accompanying Luce's friends is an angel, and a dove which is a symbol for the Holy Spirit. Luce is supported by many human and spiritual companions, a reminder to Catholics of the importance of community on the pilgrim journey. Each friend of Luce's has a different accessory which can assist themselves, and/or others on their way, be that with a bible, a band aid or a bag. They appear faith-filled and ready to take on the road ahead to Rome, or elsewhere.

As I've delved deeper into academia, I've found it more difficult to define "hope". Theologically, verses from the bible like Isaiah 40:31, "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength", or Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" come to mind. They are great passages which encourage Christian people, as pilgrims on the journey of life. However sociologically, it is difficult to hope that things will change in circumstances of oppression, particularly where war, famine and political turmoil persist.

At times, one might think that hope is a fantasy or dream, only for the privileged. In that sense, should the notion of hope be retired? The words of Chelsea Watego's book, *Another Day in the Colony*, remind me that "It is in the retirement of hope that we are forced to return to, and remember, who we are and where we are from". Even when we attempt to "retire hope", there is something that reorients us to our deepest identity. As Catholics, perhaps this means looking at what sort of person God has made us as, and called us to be. Can we treasure the uniqueness of our weathered selves on the pilgrim journey? Can we appreciate that we have community who can be companions on our journey, when the waters rise and the road becomes unclear? I am not trying to say that it's easy to hope, nor that we shouldn't hope at all. I'd like to consider a less zero to one hundred approach to hope. In some ways, hope for Christians is both the already-and-not-yet of the community of God.

Recently, I've been inspired by Jessica Lockhart's book, *The Woman at the Tomb*, which considers that "perhaps hope is a gift which lives not so much in the having but in the giving". To see hope as not just a noun but a verb puts into perspective the constant, never ending journey of acting in pursuit of Christ, and searching for wholeness. Sometimes hope seems like a distant dream, and sometimes it is a choice for survival everyday. Amidst the tiring nature of living in hope, the joy of having a blue-haired mascot reminds me that a childlike need for God isn't a bad thing.

Despite the Luce memes (as entertaining as they can be), ultimately, I see the benefits of her presence in the Jubilee year. Luce facilitates an ability to draw conversations about what it means to be a pilgrim in the twenty-first century. Pilgrimages are not merely for the pious or elderly, but are for the young, tired and eclectic who are still navigating life. Is the style of Luce different to anything the Vatican has produced in the last 2000 years of the Church's existence? Yes. Nevertheless, her example reminds us that hope is not idealistic, but a movement through the everyday - one step at a time.



**Geraldine (Gerry) Vytilingam is Vice President of the CTC SRC and Editor of The Common Room newsletter. She recently completed her Master of Theological Studies, with a minor thesis on liturgical inculturation in the Missa Terra Spiritus Sancti. Gerry has worked in music ministry, Catholic education and social justice advocacy for over seven years across rural, regional and metropolitan areas. She currently facilitates staff faith formation for Catholic schools. In her spare time, she enjoys perfecting her recipe for cream cheese frosting and making melodies with her guitar.**

## End of Year Mass and Refreshments



**Benjamin Kombo is a Deacon with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He is a Bachelor of Theology student, and a General Member of the CTC SRC. His academic areas of interest include theology of the human person, Christology and synoptics. In his spare time, he enjoys singing, piano, soccer and table tennis.**

When we gather to celebrate the Holy Eucharist as a community of God's people, our Lord Jesus becomes grace, joy and peace for us. The breaking of bread and the pouring of the wine become for us food and drink for eternal life. As a community of Christ's faithful we do not just gather at the breaking of bread as though it was a routine, we are gathered together to sing the Lord's praises, to worship God the Father through Jesus his Son in the Holy Spirit.

On Friday 8th of November, we celebrated the 2024 End of the Year Mass and refreshments. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by the Master of our College, Fr Kevin Lenehan. The First Reading was taken from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians 3:17-4:1. St Paul's writing to the Philippians lays emphasis on the importance of the active awaiting of the Lord who has prepared our homeland in heaven. Paul, further states, "from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ".

In the homily, Fr Andrew Chen OMI, the Rector of the Oblate seminary in Camberwell, spoke of Paul's unconditional love and encouragement for his Christian community that he cherishes and prays for. Fr Andrew's homily touched a key aspect of Luke's Gospel as Christ calls us to be good stewards for the kingdom of God. As Children of God, we have been graciously endowed with talents. But then, we must make these talents yield abundant fruits by our transformative human actions as people of God.

This end year gathering is an amazing way to come together to share our numerous talents and experiences of what was good during the semester and what we can improve in the future as an academic and faith community.

Personally, I enjoyed the liturgical participation of all at this event and also, the good food and drinks. In thanksgiving to God, we as a community at CTC rejoiced at the end of this academic year for the unbounded love of God throughout these semesters. We consider this gracious moment for us all to pray, reflect and share the love of God where Christ is given, received and shared in the Holy Eucharist keeping us all as one family. Unconditionally, Christ gives himself in the body, blood, soul and divinity as a source of spiritual nourishment for his children who are pilgrims of hope in communion. Jesus invites us to come to Him constantly so that in our thirst, he will quench our thirstiness, that in our quest for food, he will fill us with the everlasting bread of life. That is why, in partaking in the body and blood of our Lord, we represent the human and divine promise of Christ in his command to celebrate his life, death and resurrection in perpetual memory of him. In a vertical relationship, we receive Christ the bread come down from heaven. As much as in a horizontal way, Christ invites us to manifest the goodness of his life to one another in humility and service.

A big thank you to all the Staff and students at our dear College for their contribution to the success of the 2024 academic year. May God in his infinite goodness continue to bless us all.



# End of Year Mass and Refreshments



## Memorial Liturgy for Dr Chris Morris

Wednesday 16th October 2024 marked the six-month death anniversary of Dr Chris Morris, Senior Lecturer in Christian Spirituality and Head of the Department of Pastoral and Spiritual Care at CTC.

Students and staff gathered in person and online on Tuesday 15th October to commemorate the life of Chris, through liturgy. Those present were invited to light a candle and share a memory of their friendship with Chris. We were reminded of his humour, kindness and deep listening. Following the liturgy, those on campus were invited to gather for refreshments in the Student Common Room.

It still feels quite surreal that Chris is no longer with us at CTC. We offer our continued prayers for our college community, and for Louise, Evie and Agatha during this time.

Below is the concluding prayer said at the liturgy, which we invite you to pray at home and with your loved ones in memory of Chris.

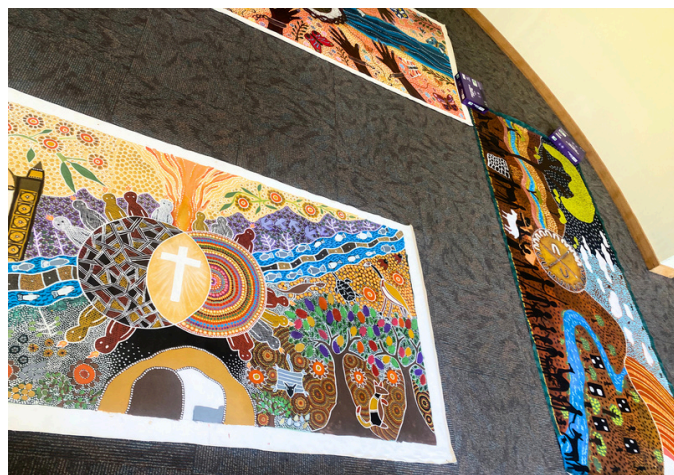


### **A Prayer for the Dead (taken from the Order of Christian Funerals 72)**

Lord our God,  
the death of our brother Chris recalls our human condition  
and the brevity of our lives on earth.  
But for those who believe in your love death is not the end,  
nor does it destroy the bonds that you forge in our lives.  
We share the faith of your Son's disciples  
and the hope of the children of God.  
Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of testing and pain  
as we pray for Chris and for those who love him.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

For professional support, please contact:  
**Beyond Blue:** 1300 22 4636  
**CatholicCare Victoria:** (03) 5337 8999

## Presentation from Nungalinya College



On Tuesday 15th October we were visited by Principal Ben van Gelderen and Rev. James Woods who shared about the work of Nungalinya College which is on the lands of the Larrakia people in Darwin. Every year, Nungalinya College trains over 300 adult Indigenous Christians in literacy, numeracy, theology, ministry, art, family wellbeing and bible translation. The community is comprised of representatives from Anglican, Uniting Church, Catholic, Lutheran and Baptist backgrounds. Ben and Rev. James brought some of the artworks created by their students, displaying them in the Thomas Carr Centre. It was great to hear about the ways Nungalinya supports First Nations Christians in gaining theological education, which equips them with skills to pass on the faith to present and future generations. For more information and to support Nungalinya College, visit [www.nungalinya.edu.au](http://www.nungalinya.edu.au)

## 2024 Knox Lecture

This year, the annual Knox Lecture was presented by Rev Associate Professor Jamie Calder SJ on the topic 'Connecting with Hope, Reconnecting with the Christian Vision of the Person'. Fr Calder is a priest of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and serves in the Directorate of Mission and Identity at Australian Catholic University. He is a practicing psychologist, and is particularly interested at the intersection between theology and psychology. Drawing on the current social, ecological and cultural contexts of the world and the Catholic Church, Fr Calder shared about the Christian vision of hope. At the core of Fr Calder's points was that to reclaim personhood, a theology of relational intimacy must be in effect. In the theological anthropology of vulnerability, a care for the other and the self includes God who becomes neighbour, holding humankind in relationship.





UNIVERSITY  
of DIVINITY

# Study with us in 2025



## Transforming lives through faith and reason

Catholic Theological College (CTC) is a college of the University of Divinity. We are a community of learning and research in philosophy, theology, scripture, church history, spirituality, moral theology and pastoral studies.

Many of our courses and units are available to **study online**.

Our programs are customised to meet your individual needs.

### 2025 fees

- Audit: \$650 per unit
- Single unit: from \$2,109 per unit
- Undergraduate: from \$2,109 per unit
- Postgraduate: from \$3,268 per unit
- Higher Degrees by Research: from \$9,804 per annum

Ask us about payment options, including FEE-HELP.

### Undergraduate courses include:

- Diploma in Theology
- Advanced Diploma in Philosophy
- Bachelor of Ministry
- Bachelor of Theology

### Postgraduate courses include:

- Graduate Certificate in Divinity
- Graduate Diploma in Theology
- Master of Pastoral and Spiritual Care

### Higher Degrees by Research include:

- Master of Philosophy
- Doctor of Philosophy
- Doctor of Professional Practice

To find out more scan the QR code or visit: [ctc.edu.au](http://ctc.edu.au)



For more information:

CTC: +61 3 9412 3309 | [registrar@ctc.edu.au](mailto:registrar@ctc.edu.au) | 278 Victoria Parade East Melbourne | [ctc.edu.au](http://ctc.edu.au)

CRICOS: 01037A



## Spirit Sophia

On reading Elizabeth A. Johnson's extraordinary chapter "Spirit-Sophia" in *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (pp. 131–158), Jessica Parsons felt inspired to arrange some of Johnson's words into a prayer. The particular words and phrases quoted come from pp. 140–145.

Spirit Creatrix,  
 gracious, furious mystery,  
 indwelling, nonviolent  
 power that connects,  
 renews, and blesses.  
 Come, vivify us.  
 Lure us into the depths of love.  
 In the midst of all our agony,  
 teach us the ways  
 of justice and courage.  
 Help us announce  
 and bring into being  
 new events of freedom  
 for those diminished by pain.  
 Come Spirit Creatrix,  
 Vivify us.



*Jessica Parsons is a Bachelor of Theology student. Drawn to theological studies by the desire to deepen her relationship with Christ, she has found them to be as fascinating as they are transformative. Jessica's area of academic interest is the interaction between theology, Christian spirituality and trauma theory, particularly for its pastoral implications. She delights in raising her two feisty, courageous teenage daughters, Elizabeth and Camilla, and watching them grow in wisdom and wholeness.*

## The Winner of our 2024 Obscure Baby Name Competition

In our previous edition of 'The Common Room', the 2024 CTC SRC hosted a competition for the most obscure biblical/religious name for (Interim Library Manager) Annalise Reeves' baby. **Congratulations to Br Samuel Potter MGL for his successful submission of *Zerubbabel*.**

Upon selection of Br Samuel's suggested name, Annalise commented:  
"As much as I would 'love' to call my child Maher-shalal-hash-baz, I think the winner is Zerubbabel submitted by Samuel Potter. I think it rolls off the tongue quite nicely".

Pictured below is Br Samuel with his prize of an assortment of sweet treats.



**Congratulations also to Annalise on the safe arrival of her baby girl in November 2024. The students and Staff of CTC wish you the very best in this new season!**

## Perpetual Vows: Going 'all in'



**Michael Last is a recently ordained Deacon with the Missionaries of God's Love Priests and Brothers. In 2024, he completed his Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Ministry at CTC. He loves bushwalks, brunch, the beach, brown (obviously), and alliteration. In 2025, he will be moving to Sydney to commence his appointment as Deacon.**

It's been a pretty big year for three of us Missionary of God's Love (MGL) Brothers: me, Joseph, and Adrian. We professed our perpetual vows at the end of October and were recently ordained as deacons on the feast of St Andrew, 30th November. Next year we'll be ordained priests. It might be tempting to think of ordination to the priesthood as the climactic moment in our journey of formation, and understandably so. After all, it is the third and final celebration that we have to look forward to. However, for us as religious brothers, it's the profession of vows that is the really big deal.

Professing our Perpetual Vows is kind of equivalent to a wedding day. Just as a bride and bridegroom make vows to one another, we make a solemn, binding commitment of love to our Lord Jesus Christ by professing vows of evangelical poverty, chastity, and obedience. Living these vows is a radical imitation of Jesus and an avenue for being united with him in his poverty, chastity, and obedience. In professing these vows, we lay down our lives to belong to Jesus completely. We dedicate ourselves to the preaching of the Gospel for the salvation of all. So, you could say it's the most important day of our lives.

Although we profess initial vows and have a period of discernment living religious life, making Perpetual Vows is crossing another threshold. It means the discernment period is over and now we're going "all in", no turning back. Scary, but ultimately liberating.

As we were preparing for this special moment, I spent some time reflecting on my life's journey. Looking back, I could see how God was gently drawing me to himself and revealing to me the purpose he had made me for. All I could do was marvel at his goodness and respond in joyful gratitude! I'm so thankful that God led me to find my home within the MGLs. We are still pretty young as far as religious congregations go, but what attracted me to the MGLs was their witness of joy, humility, radical poverty, genuine brotherhood, and their mission to serve and renew the Church in the power of the Spirit. I have experienced belonging to this community as a great gift.

There were times over the past several years of formation where I experienced doubts and challenges. But by the mercy of God, I was able to persevere and hold onto faith. Making it to this point after a long journey was a great celebration of the triumph of God's grace in my life. Being able to profess our vows surrounded by friends and family was a tremendous joy for Adrian, Joseph, and me. Each of us are so grateful for all the love and support that has sustained us in our journey.

In our vows statement, we declared publicly: "I consecrate myself to the wounded heart of Jesus, broken open in love for the world." This is what it means to be a Missionary of God's Love. We draw near to the heart of Jesus in our personal life of prayer, we are given a share in his heart for the world, and we go out to minister with his compassion. Now that we've completed our studies at CTC, we're moving on into full-time mission and we're excited to see how the fire of God's love will continue to burn in each of us, impelling us to share God's love with all whom we meet.

**You can watch the Profession of Perpetual Vows ceremony at [bit.ly/MGLvows](https://bit.ly/MGLvows) and read Michael, Joseph and Adrian's vocation stories here: <http://flr.ms/bvl>**



**Photos are courtesy of the Missionaries of God's Love Brothers and Priests**

# Notices for Students

## Recycling your cans

Sr Stephanie Sullivan MGL (SRC Member) has begun a great initiative in our Common Room of collecting used cans as part of the Container Deposit Scheme. Before you consider throwing your can in the recycling bin, please keep an eye out for the cardboard box- or ask a member of the SRC in the Common Room!

## Contributions to the next edition of 'The Common Room'

If you would like to contribute to keeping up the production of the 'The Common Room' in 2025, please email: [src@ctc.edu.au](mailto:src@ctc.edu.au).

## A note from the Editor

As the 2025 academic year commences, I'd like to thank all students, staff and friends of CTC for their support with 'The Common Room' newsletter during 2024. This newsletter was inspired by Yarra Theological Union's weekly SRC newsletter. Our project began as a small endeavour to keep our CTC community up to date with what is happening on campus, but has developed into a larger and more formalised publication facilitated by many hands, which has reached the wider CTC community. A lot of hard work, effort and co-ordination has occurred behind the scenes to make this newsletter possible, both by our 2024 SRC and guest contributors. Thank you to all those who have been writers throughout 2024/2025! A big thank you to Sr Emma Llewellyn RSM, Dr Catherine Playoust and Ms Vi Panganiban for their assistance in publishing this past year's editions of the newsletter. It's been delightful to hear from our readers on their insights of our articles, reports and photographs. Having completed my Master of Theological Studies, I will be concluding my time on the CTC SRC and stepping back as Editor of 'The Common Room' to commence full time work in 2025. I wish you all a restful remainder of the holiday season, and a rejuvenated academic year.

Kind regards,

**Miss Geraldine (Gerry) Vytilingam**

**Editor of The Common Room Newsletter and Vice President of the 2024 CTC SRC**

## A meme for good measure

