

A detail from the Sistine Chapel ceiling, showing the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. Mary is depicted in a dark, patterned robe with a red and gold sash. She holds the Christ Child, who is also in a dark robe. Below them is a scroll with Greek text. The background shows a landscape with a rainbow and a city. The entire scene is set within a semi-circular architectural frame.

Creation, Christology, and Human Flourishing

Rome Seminar Series
23–26 September 2022



ACU

INSTITUTE FOR
RELIGION &
CRITICAL INQUIRY

Creation, Christology, and Human Flourishing

ACU IRCI Rome Seminar Series

23 – 26 September 2022

Australian Catholic University Rome Campus

Via Largo Giovanni Berchet, 4 00152 Rome

Convenors: Lewis Ayres, Michael Champion,
and Matthew Crawford

Director's Welcome

On behalf of my colleagues in the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry I welcome you to the "new" ACU Rome Campus on Largo Berchet. While the campus still sits above Rome on the Gianicolo and has wonderful vistas of the city from its rooftop terraces, it is in the leafy and tranquil neighbourhood of Monteverde, some distance (but not too far!) from the tourists of Trastevere, and alive with local life, including the buzz of cafes and many fine restaurants, historical sites such as Villa Pamphili and its lakes and woodlands.

After the covid-enforced exile from the city, we are excited again to host a series of conferences that provide an opportunity for the Institute to bring together leading scholars to explore key issues in their fields of study. The respective seminars are a practical expression of our ongoing global collaboration in religion and theology, philosophy, biblical and early Christian studies, and, for the first time, medieval and early modern history.

Since the seminars were inaugurated in 2015 as invitation-only events they have been focussed on the participants themselves and their intellectual engagement around key questions and innovative topics. This year we are turning outwards. We are hosting a series of public lectures, aimed to showcase our three core research programs and to signal our commitment and aspiration to engage with the universities and academies that animate Rome with intellectual vitality.

I take this opportunity to thank fellows of the Institute for the work they have undertaken to bring together wonderful programs for their respective seminars. My thanks also go to our former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at ACU, Professor Wayne McKenna, and now his interim successor, Professor James McLaren, for ongoing support and sponsorship of the IRCI Rome Seminars.

I trust that your participation will provide the opportunity to establish new connections and to enrich existing ones. I am sure there will be lively and engaging discussions and deliberations as you explore issues which not only create new knowledge but also have the potential to benefit belief, civil society, and our fragile world.

Professor Peter Howard
Director, IRCI

Flourishing in Early Christianity

Achieving individual, social, and environmental flourishing is the global grand challenge of our age. There is an urgent need to interrogate how various aspects of human experience, in interaction with wider systems and ecologies, contribute to or hinder well-being. The Biblical and Early Christianity Program at ACU has established the Flourishing in Early Christianity project to address concerns like these by elucidating the complex and often contested views of flourishing in ancient Christianity. It offers new interpretations by engaging with research on flourishing from other fields, including psychology, philosophy, health humanities, and the social sciences, while also seeking to inform scholarship in these disciplines by providing a robust set of historical case studies.

The project has three strands: (1) Health: Being and Feeling Well; (2) Cultivating the Good Life: Reason and Creativity; (3) Flourishing Communities: Communal Ecologies and Places. These strands collectively aim to encompass the central human capabilities required for well-being across various domains of human experience. Early Christian sources from the earliest Christian communities to Byzantium will be studied to explore diverse visions of flourishing at the individual, communal, and ecological scales.

This seminar is the first of a series of capstone seminars titled 'Creation, Christology, and Transformation'. These seminars aim to draw out inter-relations between the strands and press the questions of the novelty and distinctiveness of early Christian accounts of flourishing as well as the adequacy of modern theories of well-being.

We welcome you to ACU's Rome Campus and look forward to our discussions.

Schedule

Thursday 22nd of September

A public lecture followed by a reception will be held in association with the conference. Conference participants are welcome to attend.

7:00pm–9:00pm Public Lecture: The Essential Legacy of Post-Chalcedonian Christology:
A Hymn to the Emperor Justinian
Lewis Ayres (Durham/ACU)

Friday 23rd of September

5:30pm–6:00pm Welcome and Introduction to the Project
Michael Champion (ACU)

6:00pm–7:00pm Welcome Reception

7:00pm–9:00pm Dinner Off-site

Saturday 24th of September

8:30am–9:00am Coffee

9:00am–10:00am Reason Persuading Necessity: Gregory of Nyssa's *De Imagine* as a
Reworking of Plato's *Timaeus*
John Behr (Aberdeen). Respondent: Matthew Crawford (ACU)

10:10am–11:10am Gnostic views on Creation and Christology
Chiara Tommasi (Pisa). Respondent: Stephen Carlson (ACU)

11:10am–11:30am Morning Tea

11:30am–12:30pm Divine Envy in Creation and Incarnation according to Julian and Cyril
Matthew Crawford (ACU). Respondent: Brendan Case (Harvard)

12:30pm–2:00pm Lunch

2:00pm–3:00pm The Model for a Blessed Human Life: Christ's Human Nature in the
Discourse of the Fourth Century
Volker Drecoll (Tübingen). Respondent: Lewis Ayres (Durham/ACU)

3:10pm–4:10pm Jesus, Strauss and the Breadth of Human Flourishing
Ben Edsall (ACU). Respondent: Jennifer Strawbridge (Oxford)

4:10pm–4:30pm Afternoon Tea

4:30pm–5:30pm Paul’s Eschatology, Human Flourishing, and Everyday Millenarianism
Simon Gathercole (Cambridge). Respondent: Kylie Crabbe (ACU)

7:00pm–9:00pm Dinner on Campus

Sunday 25th of September

10:30am–11:30am Creation, Salvation, and Flourishing in some New Testament
Christological Thought
Teresa Morgan (Yale). Respondent: Michael Champion (ACU)

11:40am–12:40pm Figures of Flourishing in Liturgical Texts and Spaces
Sarah Gador-Whyte (ACU). Respondent: Medi Volpe
(Durham/Cambridge)

12:45pm–2:00pm Lunch

2:30pm–5:00pm Group Excursion

Free Evening

Monday 26th of September

10:00am–11:00am Of Birds and Breastfeeding: Augustine, Kenosis, and Feminist Concerns
about Human Flourishing
Han-luen Kantzer Komline (Western Seminary). Respondent: Medi
Volpe (Durham/Cambridge)

11:10pm–12:10pm Friendship with God as Deification in John the Theologian and
Maximus Confessor
Brendan Case (Harvard). Respondent: Jonathan Zecher (ACU)

12:15pm–1:45pm Lunch

1:50pm–2:50pm Who is the Devil? Cappadocian Accounts on How ‘the Evil One’
Prevents Human Flourishing
Gabrielle Thomas (Emory). Respondent: John Behr (Aberdeen)

3:00pm–4:00pm Grief and Fear on the Biblical Stage: Christ’s Tears and Christian
Emotions in Early Exegesis
Jonathan Zecher (ACU). Respondent: Volker Drecoll (Tübingen)

6:30pm–7:30pm Farewell Reception

7:30pm–9:30pm Dinner Off-site

ACU Rome Seminars, Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry

- 2022 Religious Mobilities: Europe and the Medieval and Early Modern Worlds
- 2022 Theologies of Catholicity
- 2022 Redeeming Autonomy III
- 2019 Jewish Traditions and the Social Imagination of Early Christians
- 2019 Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Early Christianity III
- 2019 Redeeming Autonomy II
- 2019 Atheism, Religion, and Experience
- 2019 Religion and Democracy: Global Issues in Ethics III
- 2018 Counter Narratives: Telling the Christian Story Differently
- 2018 Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Early Christianity II
- 2018 Redeeming Autonomy: Agency, Vulnerability, and Relationality
- 2018 Varieties of Atheism
- 2018 Moral Disagreement: Global Issues in Ethics II
- 2017 Texts, Traditions, and Early Christian Identities I
- 2017 Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Early Christianity I
- 2017 Negative Political Theology
- 2017 The Enigma of Suffering
- 2017 Companions of Guilt Arguments in Metaethics
- 2017 Cosmopolitanism and National Identity: Global Issues in Ethics I
- 2016 The Rise of the Christian Intellectual in the Second Century
- 2016 Atheism and Christianity: Moving Past Polemic
- 2016 Conceiving Change in the Church
- 2015 *Laudato Si'*: The Greening of the Church?

ACU Biblical and Early Christian Studies, Rome Seminar Publications

Lewis Ayres, Michael Champion, Matthew Crawford, eds. *The Intellectual World of Late-Antique Christianity: Reshaping Classical Traditions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023 forthcoming.

John M. G. Barclay, Kylie Crabbe, eds. *The Reception of Jewish Tradition in the Social Imagination of the Early Christians*. London: Bloomsbury, 2021.

Francis Watson, Sarah Parkhouse, eds. *Telling the Christian Story Differently. Counter-Narratives from Nag Hammadi and Beyond*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

Lewis Ayres, H. Clifton Ward, eds. *The Rise of the Early Christian Intellectual*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

Notes

Notes

Notes

Participants

LEWIS AYRES, Durham/ACU

JOHN BEHR, Aberdeen

STEPHEN CARLSON, ACU

BRENDAN CASE, Harvard

MICHAEL CHAMPION, ACU

KYLIE CRABBE, ACU

MATTHEW CRAWFORD, ACU

VOLKER DRECOLL, Tübingen

BEN EDSALL, ACU

SARAH GADOR-WHYTE, ACU

SIMON GATHERCOLE, Cambridge

HAN-IUEN KANTZER KOMLINE, Western Seminary

TERESA MORGAN, Yale

JENNIFER STRAWBRIDGE, Oxford

GABRIELLE THOMAS, Emory

CHIARA TOMMASI, Pisa

MEDI VOLPE, Durham/Cambridge

JONATHAN ZECHER, ACU

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Cover art:

Mosaic of Theophany in Hosios David, Thessaloniki, Greece.



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