



CTC Graduation | 26 May 2023

## IMPORTANT DATES

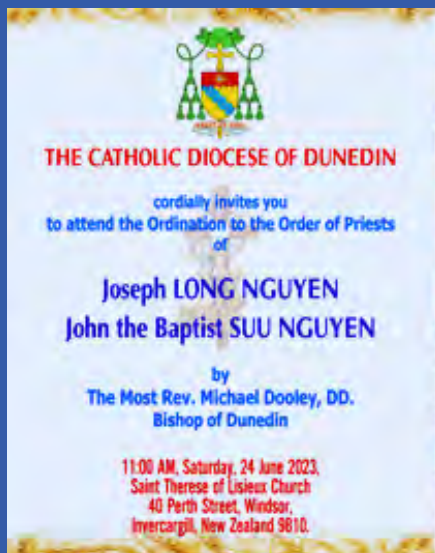
- 07-16 June – Level 7 Study & Exam Week
- 09 June – Faculty Academic Seminar
- 16 June – Level 7 End of Semester 1
- 21 June – Level 7 Examiners' Meeting
- 22 June – Academic Advisory Board Meeting

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand (SCCANZ)

The National Office of Professional Standards (NOPS) has finished the review of this course and we are now accepting enrolments again for July intake.

Go to [www.tekupenga.ac.nz/safeguarding](http://www.tekupenga.ac.nz/safeguarding)  
to enrol



## Message from the Chief Executive

Robert Blucher

***Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōnā te ngahere.***

***Ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōnā te ao.***

The bird that consumes the miro berry owns the forest.

The bird that consumes knowledge owns the world.

It was a pleasure to see our graduating students being presented with their Bachelor Degrees and Graduate Diplomas on 26 May.

Congratulations and all the best for your future plans.

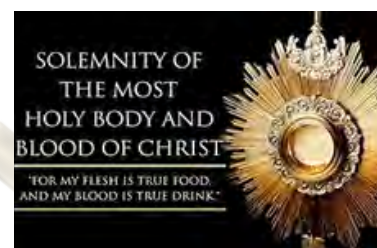
Thank you also to our staff and students for their organisation and support of this wonderful event.

Good luck to all current students for your exams next week!

This week we celebrate The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi).

*Lord Jesus, by giving me bread  
and wine, Your Body and Your  
Blood, You teach me that life is  
either a gift, or it is not life:  
Nourished by You, help me to  
make my life an offering  
pleasing to the Father.*

(Prayer by Father Andrea Vena)



# Theology "opened doors to myself"

## Dr Rohan Curnow's thoughts on living out and studying the faith

By Mark Bond



With eight qualifications to his name, Dr. Rohan Curnow is certainly an accomplished academic, but long before he had all his degrees, he was simply the middle child of eight children, growing up in Canberra, Australia. When he entered university, he had no plans to study theology. "I chose theology almost by accident," he said.

"I started in Architecture [...] and then ended up in a philosophy degree at the [Australian National University]. I was tempted to do Honours in Religious Studies, but there wasn't much supervision, so instead I went to the Australian Catholic University and did an MA in Theological Studies with a lot of applied ethics, thinking I would end up a professional ethicist. A compulsory paper in that programme was theological studies, and once I started reading Karl Rahner and the like, I got addicted." Addicted indeed—after completing his MA, Curnow received a scholarship to study at Regis College, a Jesuit postgraduate theological school in Toronto, Canada, and from 2006 to 2014, he completed four qualifications, including an Advanced Diploma in Lonergan Studies and a Doctorate in Sacred Theology. Reflecting on those years, Curnow shared that there was a vocational aspect to his studies, not least because thoughts of priesthood had snuck in among his academic interests. "I guess I was discerning a vocation along the way," he said, admitting to feeling a "nagging" curiosity about priesthood during his postgrad years. "It probably wasn't until doctoral studies that I realized that the seminary wasn't for me, and marriage was." Happily married since 2016, Curnow said he made "the right decision," although he added that he has great respect for "guys that give [the seminary] a run one way or another."

Although he never got a chance to test out a priestly vocation, Catholic spirituality remains a significant part of his life. He shared that he tends to adopt a "spirit in the world, day-to-day mucking in" approach to spirituality, and this is evident in his ministries and spiritual practices. As is the case with most parents, Curnow has to balance his prayer life with his role as a dad, which means that although he relies on prayer habits such as the Ignatian examen to "take stock and look at where the Spirit is leading me," this prayer often "gets broken up on those days when there's dirty nappies and things." And when he's not at home or the university, he could very well be carrying out his role as chaplain for the Australian Air Force, which he began in 2020.

Curnow is currently Deputy President at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, having previously served as the school's Academic Dean and Academic Registrar.

He says his most rewarding role was being Academic Dean, since it gave him the opportunity to work together with colleagues at CIS to shift the curriculum from the Sydney College of Divinity to Notre Dame Sydney. "We pulled the trigger on the shift to Notre Dame during Sydney's big Covid lockdown," he reflected. "There were teething problems, but the move has opened up a lot of options for seminarians and laypeople in Sydney and New Zealand, and I find that rewarding."

With so much university administration under his belt, he is a stranger neither to academics nor theology, and had much to say about the benefits of theological studies in both individual lives and wider society. In response to the age-old gripe that academia isn't part of the "real world," Curnow took a clear stand. "That kind of claim is obviously reductionist," he said, and in defending theology as a service to the "cultural good," he made recourse to two of his favourite theologians, the Jesuit priests Robert Doran and Bernard Lonergan. "Both talked about vectors by which history is transformed, about the creative spirit within the human being, the intellect reaching out and transform[ing the person], and about a healing factor, which we would call grace. If you follow that vector along, grace changes people, people change culture, culture changes society, and society distributes vital goods. Reducing society just to vital goods is reductionist. People of integrity create genuine cultural meaning, and without true meaningful culture, I think society is missing out, and is flying blind, in a sense."

For people considering study in theology, Curnow had some sound advice. "Francis calls us to mission and to evangelisation, and he wants an educated faith," he stated. "Faith and reason are not opposed; one enriches the other. And because Christ reveals what the human being is, in studying the faith, you get a better understanding of yourself. Wherever you take that, it's worth it. Then there's the opportunity for specialisation—you might train for pastoral work, and serve the social good, or write thousands of words on the Trinity, and serve the cultural good. In any case, there's always an element of changing yourself for the better. That's what I found. It was theology that opened doors to myself."

After such a profound discussion, a lighter question was posed: if all the saints were giving lectures, and you could only attend one, whose would you attend? "Probably Ambrose," he said, after a moment of thought. "He was an incredibly competent theologian, and a fearsome administrator. I'm sure he'd have something to say."

*(Editor's note: We thank Dr Rohan Curnow, CIS Deputy President, for his presence during the 2023 Graduation. On this occasion Mark Bond interviewed Dr Curnow.)*

# Graduation 2023 Highlights

