

News Release

New Course for Training Clergy Approved by Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland

New Masters Course in Theological Studies integrates academic theory with professional application

Dublin, October 20, 2008 - An inter-institutional agreement between Trinity College Dublin and the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland was signed today. It underpins the introduction of a new Masters degree course in Theology which will revolutionise the training for ordained ministry in the Church of Ireland and will also provide opportunities for those training for work in other churches.

The new course will lead to a Master in Theology (M. Theol.) as opposed to the previous Bachelor in Theology Degree (B. Th.) and will be taught by staff of Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. Participants may choose between a three-year and a six-year part-time option with the latter being delivered in an innovative non-residential, distance learning mode. Both options will have a significant parish internship element.

The new course, which will have a rigorous academic core whilst also broadening the scope and content and assessment to include professional application, will commence in October 2009.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr John Neill said, "what is really exciting about this new course is that it integrates the academic study of Theology with the practical experience of working as a pastor within a parish. We believe this is a critical milestone towards the provision of effective and professional training and formation to enable clergy and laity to be prepared for the mission of the Church in the 21st Century. I would like to pay particular tribute to the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson and the Ministry Formation Team for their work on finalising this agreement and the authorities in Trinity College for their support and co-operation. This agreement builds very positively on our longstanding relationship with the University and positions us effectively in partnership for the future."

The Provost of Trinity College Dublin, Dr John Hegarty said, "Trinity College is delighted about this agreement on the joint delivery of a Masters in Theological Studies. Introducing this new postgraduate programme with its innovative combination of academic and practical elements is an exciting and timely initiative that will develop and strengthen the long-standing, fruitful cooperation between Trinity College Dublin and the Church of Ireland."

Participants in the Masters in Theology will be selected from those taking part in a one year foundation course available in each diocese in the Church of Ireland.

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