

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students in the Faculty of Theology:

I am writing to update you on how both USMC and TST are responding to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. You have been receiving emails from USMC about the decisions and temporary changes to university policy. I wanted to use this communication to bring all the details together in terms of how they affect our work in the Faculty.

Course Instruction. As you know, all face-to-face instruction has been suspended for the Winter semester. Moreover, TST does not expect or require students to return to campus for anything related to the Winter semester. Instructors will be contacting their students in their respective courses to indicate how instruction will be completed for the next three weeks. Most instructors have elected to do synchronous on-line teaching with the Zoom application. If this is the case, instructors will be contacting students by email with the details of how to connect to the Zoom session. Please note that students can call into a Zoom session if they do not have an internet connection. **If any student has difficulties with gaining access to online instruction, please let your instructor and myself know.**

Other Program Requirements. General oral examinations (SEM, comprehensives) will be delayed, but final oral defenses will proceed. Please contact the Graduate Centre at TST if you have any concerns or questions. For those completing their field placement, Dr Fortin will have already contacted you to request frequent updates about the status of the site at which you have been placed. Please keep in regular communication with Dr Fortin.

Staff Support. Diana, Emil and Anthony are planning to telecommute. We are setting up the infrastructural support over the next two days. Emil will have ROSI access starting today, but Anthony will not have his ROSI telecommuting access set up until Wednesday. All three staff will have access to student files. All members of staff will take phone calls on their USMC phone numbers. Students can still contact the staff and if a face to face meeting is needed, either Emil or Anthony can arrange to be on campus.

I will be working at home, and I will be available by phone or email if you have any concerns. Darren will continue his work as Director of Advanced Degree Programs and will be available by phone and email.

Library Services. You will have all been notified that Kelly Library will be closed from 8pm, 16 March 2020 until 3 April 2020. Please check daily the webpage for regular updates on which services will still be available during the closure: <https://stmikes.utoronto.ca/library/online-learning-support/>. Those who have personal items in their library carrel are advised to take them away before closing. If that proves impossible, contact Kelly.library@utoronto.ca to request access after 16 March. Kelly Library will contact you when someone is available to grant access.

Also, the Kelly Library, on request, will provide a PDF of book chapters and journal articles from the Kelly Library for St. Mike's Faculty of Theology students. For more information or to make a

request, please contact: kelly.infoexpress@utoronto.ca. And, Noel McFerran, Theology Librarian, noel.mcferran@utoronto.ca, is available for online research consultations. He can advise about accessing electronic resources, and recommend print resources which can be requested through kelly.infoexpress@utoronto.ca.

Public Events. All public events sponsored by the Faculty have been canceled. This includes the weekly Wednesday Liturgy (for the remainder of the semester), the Keenan Lecture, the pro-seminar for March, and the Commissioning Mass. We will try to re-schedule the Commissioning Mass when the University returns to its normal schedule.

Committee meetings. The 18 March Faculty Council has been canceled, as has the USMC Senate. Other committees will meet as needed by Zoom session.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Dr James R. Ginther, PhD
Professor & Dean,
Faculty of Theology,
and Sisters of St Joseph of Toronto Chair in Theology