



Welcome to the Faculty of Theology of St Michael's College 2020

It is my honour, on behalf of the Faculty and Staff of the Faculty of Theology, University of St Michael's College, to welcome you warmly to the 2020-2021 academic year. We are delighted to see both new and returning students join us for another year of study. Especially during these trying times, I hope you have had time for rest and relaxation in the summer months and will be ready to embrace the work that begins in September.

In anticipation of the new academic year, faculty members have been researching and writing as well as preparing for their upcoming classes. Staff members have been putting finishing touches on the necessary documents and processes that will assist you in your work as students. We all now look forward to seeing our community expand to include each and every one of you. We want to discover you in our classes, converse with you outside the classroom and pray with you at our liturgies.

The current COVID-19 situation presents significant challenges to our theological enterprise, but it is also an opportunity to respond from the heart of our faith traditions. Since the beginning of the provincial state of emergency in March we have been planning for how to continue the Faculty of Theology's tradition of academic excellence within a welcoming and inclusive community. For the Fall semester all the member colleges of the Toronto School of Theology TST will be delivering most courses remotely, and at the Faculty of Theology in particular will be doing the same for extra-curricular activities such as our common weekly liturgical worship. We look forward to resuming in-person courses and events as soon as possible, but the safety of our students, faculty and staff is a greater priority, so we will reopen in accordance with the directives of the civic health authorities, and will follow their policies of health safety in terms of physical distancing, the use of face mask indoors, etc. But rest assured that we have spent a great deal of time and effort since March focusing on how to continue delivering outstanding classes and support services until we can return to in-person activity.

Returning students already know that USMC is an excellent place to pursue a theology degree and I trust new students will quickly discover that too, despite the current situation. The Faculty of Theology is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of the Metropolitan Andriy Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies as an autonomous academic unit within the Faculty, which expands the learning and research opportunities in the Faculty. Good theologians never practice their craft in isolation and we all have the privilege of the ecumenical context of the *Toronto School of Theology*. I encourage you to take advantage of this larger community as well as the general university community. Last but not least, there is so much to discover and learn in this multi-faith and multicultural city of Toronto.

Registration began through ROSI/ACORN on July 20, 2020 for all courses in 2020-2021. Procedures and details for registration are included in this package.

Our (online) Welcome Day will begin with the Annual General Meeting for the Student Life Committee. Nominations for positions on the Committee have been solicited in advance by e-mail and all students can vote on those nominations by e-mail prior to the AGM. Last year's committee will

present a summary report of events and expenditures at the meeting itself. This is one reason why all students, both returning and new, must be in attendance. The SLC is the committee that enhances our community life. Your involvement—including as a voting member—is crucial to building a strong community of scholarship and prayer in the Faculty.

Again, welcome to the Faculty of Theology!

With kindest regards,

John L. McLaughlin, PhD
Interim Dean, Faculty of Theology