

## Save the Date



### The Lattey Lecture

The Von Hügel Institute is pleased to announce that **Sister Damien Marie Savino** will deliver the biannual **Lattey Lecture**, "Humans as Gardeners: 'Tilling' and 'Keeping' in the Spirit of Integral Ecology", on **Thursday, 30 April 2026 at 5:30 pm** in the Garden Room, St Edmund's College.

In his landmark environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis called for "a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature" (LS 215). What might this new way of thinking – and living – look like, especially in view of the notion of integral ecology that lies at the heart of the encyclical? This lecture dialogues with that question, proposing the image of humans as gardeners and exploring the vocation to "till and keep" that was entrusted to humans in Genesis 2:15. The lecture draws from themes in the speaker's recently published book, "Learning the Language of Creation: Catholic Social Teaching and Integral Ecology". Applying the biblical notions of "tilling and keeping" to contemporary ecological concerns, the lecture reflects on how these complementary approaches can enrich the Catholic understanding and practice of integral ecology and creation care.

Further information on how to register will be shared in due course.

**About Sister Damien Marie Savino:** Sister Damien Marie Savino is a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist who holds a doctorate in Civil/Environmental Engineering and masters' degrees in theology and soil science. Her interdisciplinary research interests include integral ecology and Catholicism, theology and science, technology and faith, ecological restoration, and resilience theory. Currently she serves as the Melchor Visiting Research Professor in the College of Engineering at the University of Notre Dame, with a concurrent appointment in the McGrath Institute for Church Life. Sister Damien Marie is author of the 2025 book, "Learning the Language of Creation: Catholic Social Teaching and Integral Ecology", available from Liturgical Press. She was also an editor and contributor to the 2023 book, "Responding to the Global Pandemic as a Systemic Crisis: The Economy of Francesco as a New Paradigm". She has published and lectured widely, both nationally and internationally, on integral ecology, *Laudato Si'* and creation care, the integration of science and faith, and questions of technology.

## Registrations are open



## 2026 Von Hügel Lecture

**Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**, recipient of the [2024 Templeton Prize](#), will deliver the annual Von Hügel Lecture at St Edmund's College, giving a talk entitled "Bearing Witness: Responsibility, Recognition, and the Quest for Repair".

The Von Hügel Lecture will take place **in person only** at St Edmund's College (Garden Room) on **Tuesday, 12 May 2026 at 5:30 pm**. Given the availability of space, we would like to invite anyone interested in attending to register by 5 May.

All are welcome to attend!

**About Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela:** Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela is the Director of the Centre for the study of the After of Violence and the Reparative Quest, and the South African National Research Chair (SARChI) in Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma at Stellenbosch University. Her work focuses on trauma studies and the psychoanalytic interpretation of remorse and forgiveness. She holds a B-rating from the National Research Foundation and is a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa and an honorary member of the South African Psychoanalytic Association. Her recent honours include The Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award (2021), a Harvard Radcliffe Institute Fellowship (2020-2021), and honorary doctorates from Rhodes University and Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. Since 2017, she has been a Research Associate and Global Scholar at Queen's University, Belfast.

[Register here](#)

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## REDS#4 "Gandhian Values Today: Right versus Might in a Time of Power Politics"

The Von Hügel Institute is pleased to share details of the upcoming fourth session of the Research Engagement Dialogue Series (REDS), featuring **Hon. Dr Ela Gandhi MP**, who will speak on "Gandhian Values Today: Right versus Might in a Time of Power Politics".

The talk will take place on **Tuesday, 17 March 2026, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm CAT (8:00–10:00 am GMT)** in a **hybrid format**. Information about the registration link will be shared in due course.

At the present moment we are confronted head-on with the issue of violence. One approach is to gain or seize power in order to become as powerful as those with power; another is to look at the power of humanity, to build up value systems. What about the superpower of goodness? There is a spiritual power to values that transcends material power. In 1930, Gandhi famously wrote, "I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might". In the fourth REDS session, Ela Gandhi, lifelong peace activist and granddaughter of Kasturba and the Mahatma, explores what Gandhian values can contribute to today's battle to save the soul of humanity.

**About Hon. Dr Ela Gandhi MP:** Ela Gandhi is a qualified social worker, anti-apartheid stalwart and lifelong peace activist, who went on to serve as a Member of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. Ela was previously Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology and continues to serve as Co-Executive President of Religions for Peace, the world's biggest inter-faith body.

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## REDS#5

### "Bearing Witness Across Histories of Violence: Reckoning with the Past and Present"

Our UNESCO Chair, Professor Alain Tschudin, is proud to present the fifth session of the Research Engagement Dialogue Series (REDS), "Bearing Witness Across Histories of Violence: Reckoning with the Past and Present". The event is hosted by the Von Hügel Institute, St Edmund's College, and co-hosted by the Centre for Sustainability Transitions, Stellenbosch University.

The dialogue will take place on **Wednesday, 13 May 2026, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm (GMT)** in the Garden Room, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, and online. A reflective workshop will follow from **2:00 pm to 3:30 pm (in person only)**; attendance at the morning dialogue is required to participate in the workshop.

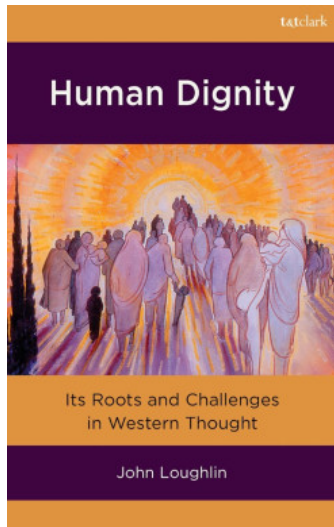
Speakers include **Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**, 2024 Templeton Prize Laureate (Stellenbosch University, South Africa), **Professor Ralf Wüstenburg** (Europa-Universität Flensburg), **Dr Zeina Barakat** (Europa-Universität Flensburg), and **Dr Akuch Anyieth** (Stellenbosch University).

This roundtable traces the emergence of "bearing witness" from its moral and theological roots through its scholarly development in Holocaust testimony and trauma studies, to its role in post-conflict repair. Through reflections on Germany, South Africa, Palestine, Sudan and South Sudan, the speakers will explore how

bearing witness can foster acknowledgement, accountability, and the possibility of solidarity with societies emerging from (and still confronted with) mass violence.

Further information, including registration details, will be shared in due course.

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## "Human Dignity: Its Roots and Challenges in Western Thought": New book by former VHI Director Professor John Loughlin

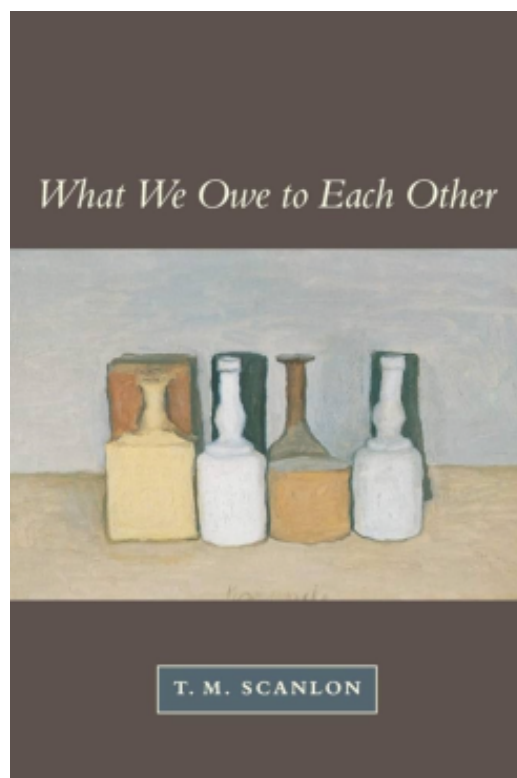
**Professor [John Loughlin](#)**, former Director of the Von Hügel Institute and Emeritus Fellow of St Edmund's College, has a new book forthcoming with Bloomsbury Academic. "Human Dignity: Its Roots and Challenges in Western Thought" is due to be published on **30 April 2026**.

The book offers a wide-ranging and historically grounded examination of the concept of human dignity, tracing its development from biblical and classical sources through patristic, medieval, and modern thought. It explores the role of dignity across theology, philosophy, law, and political theory, and addresses the tensions between religious and secular accounts of the human person in contemporary debates on human rights, freedom, and moral responsibility.

Combining intellectual history with normative analysis, the study reflects core concerns long associated with the work of the Von Hügel Institute: the relationship between faith and reason, the moral foundations of public life, and the contribution of religious thought to contemporary intellectual and social debates.

[Find the book here](#)

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## "What We Owe to Each Other": Reading Group by Dr Flavio Comim

During Lent Term 2026, St Edmund's College Bye-Fellow [Dr Flavio Comim](#) has led an online reading group on **Thomas Scanlon's "What We Owe to Each Other"**.

In an era marked by deep division and injustice, Scanlon argues that the central task of ethics is to establish fair principles for living together – principles that must be justifiable to all those affected by them. At a time when fellow citizens are often treated as “enemies to be defeated,” his work challenges us to move beyond tribal identities and appeals to power, urging instead a serious and impartial consideration of others’ claims and objections.

The VHI reading group has met annually for the past 26 years and looks forward to welcoming new members. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the online format has proven to be both fruitful and accessible, enabling participation from near and far.

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## "How Georges Lemaître's year in Cambridge led to the Big Bang"

One hundred years ago, an unknown Belgian priest arrived at St Edmund's College with an extraordinary idea – that the universe itself had a beginning. An article, published in the [Catholic Herald](#), tells the story of alumnus Georges Lemaître's time in Cambridge and his collaboration with mathematical physicist Sir Arthur Eddington, a partnership that would change our understanding of the cosmos forever.

*When Lemaître arrived, accommodation was found for him at St Edmunds House where records of his time there remain today and are prized by the University. Lemaître sought and found two other Catholics there in order to have daily mass. Dr [Simon Mitton](#), life fellow of St Edmunds College at Cambridge University, committed Catholic, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and a tremendous writer in the history of astronomy has found Lemaître's old chair which now bears his name. It remains in the possession of the Catholic chapel in the college as a memorial to his time there.*

[Read the story](#)

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## Support the VHI

The Von Hügel Institute for Critical Catholic Inquiry of St Edmund's College, Cambridge, celebrates the richness of Catholic thought and culture. Through our programming, research, and engagement in public discourse, we promote mutual enrichment between the best of the secular academy and the Catholic traditions of theology, philosophy, ethics, arts and sciences.

Support the VHI: <https://bit.ly/3D0HdAY>.



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