



# Orthodox education for faith and life

SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS ORTHODOX INSTITUTE

Newsletter October 2021

## Developments in 2021

For almost two years we have suffered the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and state lockdowns. It is easy to be tempted to despondency and to give way to anxiety about the personal and societal outcomes, immediate and long-term, of this trying experience. For Christians, it is of particular concern that restrictions have been placed on gathering for worship. Many have felt the lack of corporate fellowship and, especially, the difficulties faced in having access to the Eucharist and the other Holy Mysteries that are vital to nourishing our communion with God. How thankful we are that many Orthodox clergy have found ways and worked hard to support the faithful through these ordeals. Most importantly, we must uphold each other in prayer, knowing that, wherever we are, our prayer is joined with the prayer of the Church which is surrounded by a Heavenly cloud of witnesses (Heb 12:1). Yes, there is 'social distancing,' but we have the assurance that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39).

**New Premises:** The pandemic notwithstanding, this has been an important year in the development of SCMOI. At the end of February we moved into our new premises in Dandenong, Victoria (rented from Ruscare Limited). Now we have offices, a library and teaching room. This is a tremendous step forward in positioning the Institute for future growth and service to the Orthodox Church in Australasia. **His Grace Bishop George** blessed the premises on Sunday 28 February.

**Library:** In March, **Ms Melanie Hechenberger**, BAHons, MA, MInfoM, was appointed Librarian. Her priority is the cataloguing of the current collection of about 7000 titles in English, Russian, and other languages. We extend our congratulations to Mel and her husband John who were recently blessed with the birth of a son, Alfred. Our aim is to develop the library as a support hub, supplementing our access to Adelaide Theological Library (ACD), that will provide Orthodox materials for our current student body, and grow to become a major

research facility for current and future students, scholars, and the wider Orthodox community.



*Librarian Mel Hechenberger with two of the Varangian Orthodox Christian Youth Union volunteers who unpacked the library stock*

**Impact of State Lockdowns:** In some respects, the impact of the Covid lockdowns has been minimal, given that SCMOI delivers all courses online. Still, the lockdowns have meant, for the second year running, cancelling the annual Residential School – a blow to our academic program and the corporate life of the Institute community. It also meant cancelling the scheduled Commencement Ceremony. If it pleases God, we look forward to a Residential School in July 2022, incorporating many of the quality items we had hoped to present this year. They include a couple of public lectures that will be advertised in due course.

**Student Enrolments:** Since commencing teaching in Semester 2, 2018, student numbers have steadily grown. Currently there are 17 Undergraduate, and four Postgraduate students, and one DMin candidate. Of these 20 were enrolled for ACD units this Semester. There are three full-time students and five in the 'Clergy Track'. Students come from five Orthodox jurisdictions. While SCMOI trains serving and prospective clergy, most students are laity studying part-time for personal growth and to better equip themselves for service to Christ and His Church.

**Appointments:** Late 2020, **Rev. Dr Andrei Psarev** kindly accepted an invitation to join the Distinguished Visiting Faculty. He is Professor of Canon Law and Russian Church History, and Director of Undergraduate Studies



at Holy Trinity Seminary, Jordanville, N.Y. Deacon Andrei has just completed delivering a module on the History of ROCOR. We are indebted to him for this valuable contribution to the Church History program.

Semester 2 saw us welcome the **Rt Rev. Lawrence Cross, OAM** as a Visiting Lecturer. Fr Lawrence is a well-known and highly regarded patristics scholar and theologian, who taught for many years at Australian Catholic University. Students have greatly appreciated his three-part lecture series on Soteriology.

Welcome also to **Mrs Anastasiya Metlenko** who joined SCMOI in April as our Administration Assistant.

**New Courses:** Earlier this year, SCMOI introduced the **Certificate of Ministry Studies**, requiring the completion of four units of the BMin program. This is a useful option for students who wish to cover some basic areas of theological study without committing to the eight-unit DipMin or twenty-four-unit BMin. The award can be completed in one year of part-time study.

SCMOI also offers an Undergraduate four-unit **Certificate in Christian Leadership**. **Fr Erich Fein**, Lecturer in Christian Leadership, has developed innovative units in this field that integrate contemporary leadership theory with patristic perspectives. This certificate provides a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills within an Orthodox framework.

Arrangements are being finalised to enable SCMOI to offer postgraduate students the **Master of Theological Studies** (coursework and thesis) and **Master of Theology** (research thesis) degrees, commencing in 2022. Both degrees offer a pathway to research doctorates (PhD/ThD). Places are subject to supervisory capacity. Intending candidates should contact the Institute Director in the first instance ([frpeter@scmoi.edu.au](mailto:frpeter@scmoi.edu.au)).

*Archpriest Peter A.L. Hill  
Institute Director*

## Belated Congratulations

It was our intention to celebrate, at the scheduled Commencement in July, the achievement of **Steven Threadgill** in becoming our first ACD Diploma of Ministry graduate. Unfortunately, Covid prevented that happening, so here we offer our hearty congratulations to Steven who completed the award in 2020. An accomplished student, he departs with our prayers for God's rich blessing on his future endeavours.

## Digital Editor

In 2019, **Fr Andrew Smith** kindly stepped-in to manage the Institute webpages and Facebook account. Recently, he found it necessary to relinquish these tasks. We sincerely thank Fr Andrew for his skill and commitment, which has significantly enhanced the public profile of SCMOI.

## Homiletics Unit 2022

Preaching is central to the Church's witness and vital for equipping the faithful. "Preach the word!" declares Saint Paul, "Be ready in season and out of season" (2 Tim 4:2). The unit **MINS2533 Homiletics** will be offered in Semester 1, 2022. This unit examines Orthodox preaching from New Testament times to the present day, outlining principles for effective preaching and providing practical advice. As a special offer, **Orthodox clergy** who wish to *audit* (i.e., no academic credit) this unit may do so at the discounted fee of \$250 (normal audit fee is \$350). To register your interest, please email us at [info@scmoi.edu.au](mailto:info@scmoi.edu.au)



SCMOI is the theological and higher education institute of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Tertiary award courses are delivered by arrangement with the Adelaide College of Divinity and the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology.

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