



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Faculty of Education, Theology, & the Arts



FETTA Newsletter December 2023

It's great to be sending the December issue of the staff and student FETTA Newsletter on the University's patronal feast day, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This is not only celebrated in this little corner of Twickenham – it's a national holiday in twenty-five countries around the world, including places where many of our diverse student body have connections, including Colombia (where the picture above was taken), Andorra, Equatorial Guinea, Italy, Macao, Malta, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Spain, East Timor, and Venezuela.

Below you'll find a range of announcements, and a chance to meet an upcoming star from the BA Acting, Kwabena Mensah, whom you might recognise from a Samsung ad, and who we're all hoping will one day get to play either Martin Luther King or Kid Arachnid's alter-ego, Miles Morales. You can also meet another rising star from the staff of our School of Theology, Susan Longhurst. Susan was a student in my very first lecture at St Mary's nine-years ago, and is now a member of academic staff looking after our micro-campus at the Gillis Centre in Edinburgh – she's a true St Mary's success story.

Please note the publicity about tonight's celebrations, to which all are very welcome, and have a happy Advent filled with FETTA goodness.



Prof Jacob Phillips
Interim Dean of the Faculty of Education, Theology, and the Arts
Professor of Systematic Theology

Faculty announcements

St Mary's is preparing a new Access and Participation Plan (APP) for submission to the Office for Students and is consulting staff and students as part of this process. The APP sets out how St Mary's will improve equality of opportunity. This means that students from all backgrounds should be supported to access university or college, have a good experience, get a good degree and progress onto further study or graduate employment.

To our student colleagues: It is important that we capture the views of as many of you as possible so please complete the survey linked below. There is a chance to win one of two £100 Amazon vouchers. Please can staff also encourage their students to complete this

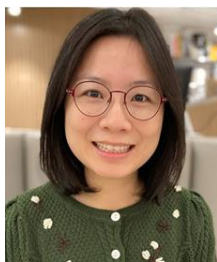
Complete the student survey

To our staff colleagues : This brief staff survey is part of the first stage of this consultation. The survey should take no more than five minutes to complete and your responses will be kept confidential. As a member of St Mary's staff you may have valuable insights and views on the issues or challenges you feel have the potential to negatively affect St Mary's students' ability to be successful in their studies. Some of these issues may be related to personal circumstances (for example, financial pressures) and others to the university experience itself.

Complete the staff survey

For further information please contact:

- Widening Participation Research and Impact Evaluation Officer:
nicola.smith-wilson@stmarys.ac.uk
- Head of Widening Participation: nikki.anghileri@stmarys.ac.uk



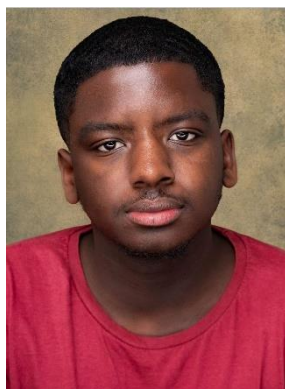
Welcome

FETTA extends a huge welcome to Polly Leung who joined our administrative team this week. Polly will be working alongside our School of Creative and Liberal Arts colleagues and also our colleagues in the School of Education.



Meet a FETTA Student.

**This month we talked to Kwabena Mensah,
who is studying BA Acting**



Tell us a bit about yourself and why you chose to study at St Mary's

I started acting class at aged 13, mainly musical theatre. I went to the Boury Academy, which was great because it is a not-for-profit performing arts school, which believes in increasing diversity within the arts, so it was affordable and it really sparked my passion for acting. I picked St Mary's because I wanted to be part of a university and not a stage school. I love that my friends here do all sorts of other courses, the mix of people is really interesting. I live in halls and I love it here.

I'm just doing my first set of assessments, I was in early today to rehearse with my group before uni starts, and I've really learned a lot in my first semester, mainly about movement. I've an agent and have been to quite a few castings. I'm in an advert for a new Samsung phone, so I have been up in lights in Piccadilly Circus, as well as on TikTok and YouTube.

Who inspires you?

I'd say Idris Elba. He's an actor, producer, director, DJ, rapper, he makes music, he's just amazing and he grew up 10 minutes away from my family home.

Is there a particular staff member you would like to give a shout out too, who particularly inspired or supported you?

Yes two actually, Mark Street and Tom Cox. Always down for a chat and if you're finding class tricky, they really explain their feedback and show you how you could improve your performance.

What is your proudest or most memorable moment at St Mary's

I did Shakespeare's King Henry V monologue in front of the whole class and it went really well, I was really proud.

How do you learn lines?

My technique is to record myself on my phone reading the lines of the other character, leaving gaps for my lines. Then I rehearse and repeat it over and over.

What do you want to do in the future?

Be the best I can be and make it in Hollywood. My dream roles would be Miles Morales, the black spiderman and Martin Luther King. I want to give 100%, win awards, make my family proud.

Tell us about a family Christmas tradition

My Auntie leaves money on the Christmas tree, and the bigger notes are higher up the tree. I'm the tallest of all the cousins, so I let the little ones take the tens off the bottom branches and then swoop in for the fifty on the top. She's a very generous Auntie!



Meet a FETTA Colleague

This month we talked to Susan Longhurst from the School of Theology, Course Lead of MA Applied Catholic Theology



Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do at St Mary's

I lecture broadly on the nature of religion and I am also the course lead of the MA in Applied Catholic Theology which runs in Edinburgh. I have been at St Mary's forever. I started as a student on the Pastoral Ministry Foundation Degree. At that time, I was working as a chaplain. I was really interested in prayer and wanted just to learn about theology generally really. I was interested in how I could apply my studies to my work. I got a distinction and was persuaded by my lecturer to go on to further study. I enrolled on the MA in Pastoral Theology and from that I went on to do my PhD here. During my studies, I continued to work as a chaplain in a nursing home, I was a youth coordinator for Southwark Archdiocese and later I began to do some lecturing at St Mary's. Now I work part time at the University and part time as a business development manager for a charity called Sycamore which offers an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today.

What do you enjoy most about working here?

I love teaching, I really love looking at new religious movements and it's great to see students get really excited by the course content. I also really enjoy being in an academic environment, I've made such lovely connections.

What is the most interesting project you've worked on at SMU?

Establishing the MA Applied Catholic Theology at the Gillis Centre in Edinburgh has been the most rewarding project, but also the most demanding. In Scotland, Scottish students have their postgraduate fees paid for them by the Scottish government, but that was not open to our students as we are an English institution. The archdiocese really encouraged me to challenge the government to reconsider. I had to prove that our programme was unique in Scotland and I was

successful in my negotiation. So as of 2024/25 Scottish students will be able to study the MA and their fees will be covered by the Scottish government and securing this funding is a really important step in opening the course up to a much more diverse group of students. I'm really proud of that.

What's a secret talent no one knows you have?

So, this is a secret talent I'm hoping to have in the next six weeks...speaking Spanish. Basically, my son is getting married and I am to meet his future family in six weeks' time, but at this point we do not speak each other's language, so I have six weeks to learn Spanish. I can do that right?

If you could do another job for a day, what would you do?

I love animals and so would like to be a vet (glad it's just for one day though!)

Tell us about the best or worst Christmas present you ever bought a loved one.

My husband is a great cook and he asked for oven gloves for Christmas last year. I ordered them in a panic and didn't open them before I wrapped them. When he opened them up, they were some heavy duty super long gloves for fire fighters that go right up to your shoulder! I think I have to do better this year.

What's on in FETTA during December and January?



St Mary's University Annual Celebration Patronal Feast Day

The Chaplain invites you to celebrate
the University Patronal Feast Day on

Friday 8th December

Mass in the University Chapel at 5.30pm
followed by drinks and dinner

If you wish to attend drinks and dinner
RSVP with any dietary requirements to
chaplaincy@stmarys.ac.uk

The Patronal Feast Day is one time when we can all share in the vision and mission of the University, giving thanks for what has been achieved over the last year, and encouraging each other in our collaborative efforts on behalf of the University.

Our University motto, 'show yourself to be a mother' can find its expression in our lives here whether, academics, support staff or students. May we wish you a very happy Feast Day.

Chaplaincy

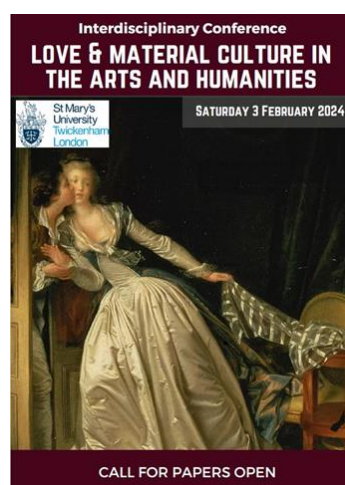
<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/announcements/2023/11/st-marys-patronal-feast-day>

Music and Well-being



Chelsea Persad, will look at how music has, and continues to, assist in creating a safe space for the Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi community in the UK to express themselves and grow. Chelsea will look at the beginnings of British South Asian music such as the Daytime Raves and British Bhangra, as well as the evolution of British South Asian music and musicians.

Please come and join us in the Senior Common Room on Tuesday 12th December 530pm, where there will be wine, crisps & convivial conversation.



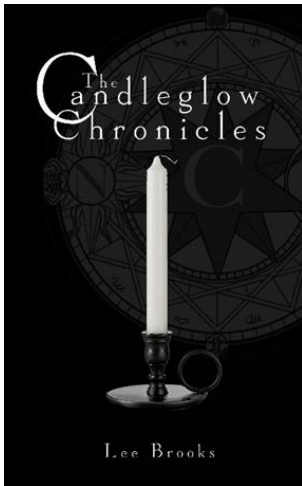
I'm delighted to give you all first-sight of a conference we have upcoming in February 2024 on Love and material culture, offered as one of the events for our Walpole Research Centre for Literature, History and Public Pasts. This will be hosted in the WDR at St Mary's. The keynote speaker, will be Dr Sally Holloway.

Please consider submitting a proposal and/or passing it to relevant friends/colleagues/PhD students!

Very best wishes

Angela Platt (angela.platt@stmarys.ac.uk)

Free Yultide ebook



The magic of Christmas is not just a pleasant side effect of a festive thawing in the human condition, it is the objective of a complex spell that was cast, more than a century and a half ago, by a powerful sorcerer, and which has, since that time, been the most important piece of business on the agenda of an organisation that keeps you safe every day of your life, even though you have never heard of them.

The Candleglow Chronicles is a Yuletide novella in 25 chapters to enjoy alongside the treats that come out of your advent calendar.

If you would like a free copy of the ebook simply email

lee.brooks@stmarys.ac.uk.

Notices from our students this month

Bring your #Simmie friends and get involved in all the fun! The Liberal and Creative Arts department will be hosting a festival in Spring 2024. The events include a Debate Night and several walking tours. The Debate Night will take place on Thursday 2nd May 2024. The department is looking for students who would like to participate.

Two sessions in which students will create content for the walking tour are running on Wednesday 24th Jan and Wednesday 31st Jan from 1 pm in Room E5 (TBC). Content could be photography, a short story, a poem, a film, etc. The best content will win a prize!

To take part in the events above, join the WhatsApp Groups below, we look forward to seeing you!

Content Creation Sessions :

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KZEXliNtdqs12gTFpiSdcR>

Debate Night: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/JThC8BDJSnHCPFeOPpduvn>

BA Acting performance

Level 6 Acting students will be performing The Winter's Tale directed by Ally Cologne in the main Theatre on campus.

Dates are: 13th, 14th & 15th December at 7.30pm.

St Mary's students and staff are very warmly welcome. For a complimentary ticket, please email - tracey.french@stmarys.ac.uk

Our recently published cost-of-living report found that last year, 53% of St Mary's students struggled to afford food and groceries. In response we have launched our "SU pantry", providing food, toiletries and sanitary products to students in need. **The SU pantry** is completely reliant on donations.

We currently need donations of the following items...

- Toiletries (Toilet Roll, Shampoo, Conditioner, Shower Gel etc.)
- Non-Perishable food items (Canned foods, Long-life Milk, Tea/coffee etc.)
- Sanitary Products (individually wrapped and unopened)
- Stationery (Notebooks, etc.)

We have now set up a page through which we can accept monetary donations.

If you would like to donate to the SU Pantry, you can do so

here: <https://checkout.square.site/merchant/P44XM5VRDQB1N/checkout/LTZCR7CBN2UT75ZSGGDMBFFH>