

Simone Weil Lecture to explore empathy and human connection

Leading philosopher Professor Dermot Moran will deliver the 2024 Simone Weil Lecture in Human Value, examining the issue of empathy and interpersonal relations through the lens of two extraordinary female philosophers.

The annual public lecture is presented by ACU's School of Philosophy and is named in honour of Simone Weil, the French philosopher and political activist whose work focused on social justice.

Professor Moran will use the philosophical insights of Simone Weil and Edith Stein to illuminate the concept of empathy, not just as a feeling, but as a complex, philosophical concept essential for understanding and engaging with others.

"It is an honour to be asked to deliver the 2024 Simone Weil Lecture," Professor Moran said.

"I'm using the opportunity to explore some pivotal philosophical concepts through the lens of two notable female philosophers, Simone Weil and Edith Stein.

"Both Weil and Stein defied societal norms and pursued intellectual and social activism with unparalleled vigour.

"Born into privileged backgrounds, they shattered barriers to education and both underwent profound spiritual journeys and dedicated their lives to understanding and alleviating human suffering. Their legacies continue to inspire generations."

Professor Moran is a renowned philosopher and public intellectual who is the inaugural holder of the Joseph Chair in Catholic Philosophy at Boston College. He was previously Professor of Philosophy at University College Dublin. He has been a Visiting Professor at Yale University, Northwestern University, Rice University, and Connecticut College.

He is a Past President of the International Federation of Philosophical Studies/Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie (FISP) and an elected member of the Institut International de Philosophie (IIP) and the Royal Irish Academy.

Professor Moran said the annual lecture series was an important way to elevate public discourse.

"Exploring these philosophical concepts provides a deeper understanding of individual and collective human experience and enhances our approaches to contemporary social challenges."

Acting Executive Dean Theology and Philosophy Professor Richard Colledge said the Simone Weil lecture series provided a philosophical framework for contemporary moral, social and political debates.

"The lectures are inspired by the Christian intellectual and activist Simone Weil's ethical vision that is rooted in radical attentive compassion and obligation to others," he said.

Professor Colledge said the study of philosophy was an integral part of ACU's mission as a Catholic university.

"The discipline of philosophy allows students to inquire into the larger questions that often go unexamined, and assumptions that often go unchallenged," Professor Colledge said.

"In nurturing a spirit of intellectual inquiry, it allows us to address fundamental human questions, drawing on wisdom both ancient and modern, including our Catholic intellectual tradition."

The Simone Weil Lecture series was launched in 2000 by then ACU Professor of Philosophy Raymond Gaita.

For more information, visit [Simone Weil Lecture | ACU](#)

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