

PhD scholarship to honour the legacy of theologian Professor Anthony J. Kelly

Key points

- ACU is launching a new PhD scholarship to honour Rev Professor Anthony J. Kelly CSsR
- The scholarship is funded in partnership with The Redemptorists (Oceania), a Catholic religious congregation who work in higher education and with marginalised communities
- ACU is ranked first in Australia and top 20 globally in Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies

Australian Catholic University's first philanthropically funded PhD scholarship will honour the legacy of Rev Professor Anthony J. Kelly and help shape the future of theological scholarship in Australia for the next decade.

The scholarship is made possible through a partnership between ACU's Graduate Research School and [The Redemptorists \(Province of Oceania\)](#). The [Anthony J. Kelly CSsR PhD Scholarship](#) honours the enduring contribution of Professor Kelly – theologian, poet, artist, philosopher, and one of Australia's most influential Catholic thinkers.

The scholarship will fund doctoral candidates to undertake a PhD or Doctor of Ministry in systematic theology that is inspired by Professor Kelly's interdisciplinary research, which encompassed art, literature, music and philosophy.

Professor Kelly was a member of the Redemptorist Congregation, and widely respected as a teacher, mentor, and scholar whose work shaped generations of theologians.

As a Professor at ACU, he helped generations of students and scholars encounter theology and touched the lives of many through his ministry and pastoral care.

ACU's National Head of the School of Theology Associate Professor Joel Hodge said Professor Kelly's work was marked by intellectual rigour, spiritual depth and creativity.

"We are grateful to the Redemptorists for their generous support in establishing this new PhD scholarship," Associate Professor Hodge said.

"It is such a privilege and pleasure to carry on Tony Kelly's profound legacy through this scholarship.

"Tony was a special mentor and friend to so many at ACU and beyond, and he left an unparalleled legacy of having supervised the doctorates of generations of Australian theologians. We hope this doctoral scholarship will continue Tony's legacy of nurturing and mentoring emerging theologians and scholars for the benefit of academia, the Church and wider society."

The Redemptorists (Oceania) Provincial Fr John Hodgson CSsR said the scholarship was an investment in the next generation of scholars.

"Fr Tony Kelly was one of Australia's most engaging theological voices - intellectually rigorous, deeply human, poetic and constantly attentive to the wondrous presence of God in our contemporary world," Fr Hodgson said.

"It is a privilege for the Redemptorists to partner with ACU in continuing his legacy through this scholarship, which will support future generations of theological leaders."

MEDIA RELEASE

15 May 2026



ACU Graduate Research School Director Michelle Lopez said the scholarship built on the university's research strength in theology.

“This scholarship will continue to strengthen ACU's reputation as a destination for ambitious and impactful scholarship,” Ms Lopez said.

“It is an exciting opportunity for outstanding students to pursue theological research that is academically excellent and engages with the challenges and opportunities of our time.”

ACU is ranked first in Australia for research quality in the Times Higher Education 2026 World University Rankings. The university also ranked number one in Australia and in the top 20 globally for Theology, Divinity, and Religious Studies in the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject.

Applications for [The Anthony J. Kelly CSsR PhD Scholarship](#) are now open. For more information on scholarships and bursaries, contact the [ACU Advancement Team](#). Learn more about ACU's courses and research in Theology and Philosophy, [here](#).

Media Contact: Louise Crossen, 0477 675 772, louise.crossen@acu.edu.au