



## **CENTRE FOR MARIAN STUDIES**

**Registered Charity 1183579**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

The Centre for Marian Studies (the CMS), established in 1995, provides educational courses, promotes research and maintains a library, on subjects relating to the theology and wider cult of the Virgin Mary. It has no religious affiliation and is open to members of any religious tradition or none. Members of the CMS are dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration to support and advance Marian scholarship.

The CMS was originally registered with a Trust Deed in 1997 as The Marian Study Centre (Registered Charity 1066253). In 2019 the decision was taken to register the charity as a [Charitable Incorporated Organisation, whose only voting members are its charity trustees](#). Our registration was confirmed on 24th May 2019. This annual report covers the period from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025, as the latter is our accounting end of year date.

### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The CMS aims to advance the education of the public in all matters related to the Virgin Mary, including any theology, devotion, and other social and cultural activities pertaining to her, in particular for the provision of a library, a picture collection, and other material resources, the undertaking of academic research and the dissemination of the useful results to the public and the provision of educational courses and lectures.

In April 2021 the CMS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with St Mary's University in Twickenham to develop mutual agreements for cooperation based on our respective academic and educational needs. St Mary's University is currently the official home of the CMS, and the CMS library collection has been established in the crypt of the church on the university campus. The collection enhances the theological resources held at the university and is available to researchers in Marian Studies.

The trustees have cross-referenced these objectives and activities with the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The CMS website, which is maintained on a voluntary basis by a member of the CMS Management Committee, provides information on Marian news and events: [www.marianstudies.ac.uk](http://www.marianstudies.ac.uk).

The trustees and members of the Management Committee of the CMS are actively engaged in Marian Studies and examples of their publications are listed on the charity's website: <https://www.marianstudies.ac.uk/publications>

In order to promote research, we have also now developed a scheme that allows people to apply to become Fellows, Members and Associates of the CMS. The full details are posted online on our website: <https://www.marianstudies.ac.uk/membership>

## **ONLINE EVENTS**

We have continued to offer free online events in order to give as many people as possible the opportunity to attend. It is pleasing to note that we have welcomed guest speakers and audience members from a range of different countries, and this international dimension has enhanced our discussions.

### **3rd February 2025**

#### **Candlemas Lecture (via Zoom)**

Thanks to the generosity of one of the CMS trustees, we have reinstated our annual Candlemas lecture, with the event now being held in honour of the late Dr Cathy Oakes, who was an art historian and one of the founding members of our charity. Cathy was an expert in medieval Marian iconography and her untimely death in 2019 was a great loss to the CMS on both a personal and academic level.

The fourth lecture (via Zoom) in this new series took place on 3rd February 2025. The invited speaker was the Reverend Dr Ayla Lepine, who is the Associate Rector at St James's Piccadilly in London and an art historian and theologian. Her lecture explored two works of art: *The Annunciation (A Study)* by Julia Margaret Cameron, who reimagined and reconfigured paintings by Renaissance artists including Perugino and Lippi; and a groundbreaking silkscreen print, *The Juiciest Tomato of All*, by the American nun Sister Corita Kent. By considering these two artworks by women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a pair, our guest speaker demonstrated how new ways of encountering Mary in art history, theology, and prayer emerge with unexpected resonance for the twenty-first century.

#### **Online seminar series**

We organised a second series of free online seminars, giving Marian researchers the opportunity to present their work in a supportive atmosphere. It proved to be an occasion for postgraduates to discuss one of their thesis questions, and for established Marian scholars to put forward a new area of investigation. The seminars took place on Wednesday afternoons at 3pm (in the UK) via Zoom and were chaired by Professor Sarah Jane Boss.

The topics for 2024-25 were:

23 October 2024: 'The Marian Signature of Singapore Catholicism' – Dr Michel Chambon (Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, coordinating the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics)

13<sup>th</sup> November 2024: 'Theological and Philosophical Perspectives from Joseph Ratzinger and Peter Kreeft on Mary, the Mother of God: Providing the Grammar of Person in Humanity' – Dr Mary Frances McKenna (Fellow of the Centre for Marian Studies)

15<sup>th</sup> January 2025: 'Russia and Peace: the Apparitions of Fatima as Prophecy' – Dr Chris Maunder (Foundation Fellow of the Centre for Marian Studies)

26<sup>th</sup> February 2025: 'The Passion of Jesus (and Mary) according to Maria of Agreda and Anne Catherine Emmerich' – Fr. Edward Looney (Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Shawano, WI, USA; former President and currently Secretary of the Mariological Society of America)

26<sup>th</sup> March 2025: 'The Annunciation in Theology and Art: shedding new light on an old doctrine' – Professor Tina Beattie (Emerita Professor of Catholic Studies, the University of Roehampton)

9<sup>th</sup> April 2025: 'Mary's kenosis of faith' – Fr Jim Doyle (*Aumônier* of the Irish Chaplaincy, Paris, France)

14<sup>th</sup> May 2025: 'Aubrey de Vere's ecological Mary' – Professor Emma Mason (Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick)

11<sup>th</sup> June 2025: 'Our Lady of the Watersmeet: Marian shrines on the tidal rivers of southern Wales and Gloucestershire' – Professor Sarah Jane Boss (Foundation Fellow of the Centre for Marian Studies)

As the seminars were very successful, we are going to run a third series in 2025-26.

## ONLINE JOURNAL

In 2021 the CMS relaunched *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* as a peer reviewed, online and open access journal. We have joined the mEDRA scheme to register the journal content for the Digital Object Identifier System.

During the period covered by this report, the CMS published two issues of the journal.

**Issue 4.2 (November 2024)** was a second special issue of *Maria* that focused on Mary in Asia, drawing on papers that were given at 'More Universal than Catholicism?', our online conference which took place in 2023 and was co-organised with the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics (ISAC) in Singapore. The topics covered gender, devotion, and place at the Peñafrancia Festival in the Bicol region of the Philippines; the pilgrimage to *Arrokiya Matha*, Mother of Health, at the Shrine Basilica of Vailankanni; and an illuminating investigation into 'Mary and the Origin of the Self', a new Chinese religious movement.

**Issue 5.1 (May 2025)** offered a range of Marian perspectives: an article on the *Treatise on the Love of God* by St. Francis de Sales; a clarification of Mary's role in faith and theology in the responses of Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI to Vatican II; personal reflections on the Marian writings of St. John Paul II and Yves Congar; and philosophical and theological approaches to the 'woman clothed with the sun' in Revelation 12.

Both issues also contained book reviews of important Marian publications.

The journal contributes to our commitment to publish innovative Marian research in the fields of theology, philosophy, literature, history, visual culture, music, sociology, anthropology and psychology. We warmly welcome original contributions on Marian topics in the form of refereed articles, discussion pieces, translations and book reviews.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### Centre for Marian Studies: Accounts 2024-25

Year End: 31 August 2025

<b>Balance at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024</b>	<b>3561.31</b>	
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Outgoings</b>
Candlemas lecture honorarium		100.00
Fellowship fees (8 fellows)	404.46	
Membership fees (13 members)	308.50	
Website		154.56
Website: domain		73.20
MEDRA journal DOIs		191.14
Donations via Crowdfunder	135.00	
Crowdfunder fees		5.40
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>847.96</b>	<b>524.30</b>
Net income	323.66	
<b>Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025</b>	<b>3884.97</b>	
(Ringfenced for Candlemas lectures 100.00, gives disposable funds of:	3784.97	

The accounts for 2024-25 are not complicated and our internal review process is sufficient.

Our income this year was £847.96. We received £712.96, made up of fees from Fellows and Members, and online donations via our Crowdfunder Page of £135.00.

Our outgoings were £524.30, which included the honorarium of £100 to our speaker for the 2025 Candlemas lecture. We made our annual payment to mEDRA for the DOIs for our online journal (£191.14 in 2025); and we paid £227.76 for the maintenance of the WIX website and the renewal of our domain name. There was also a Crowdfunder fee of £5.40.

At present, the funds are unrestricted, i.e. not earmarked for specific purposes. The funds held by the CMS are also too small for the holding of reserves.

We have concluded that the CMS has the funds and resources for it to be an ongoing concern for 2025-26. If fundraising is successful in the future, it will be necessary to undergo external financial monitoring.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The CMS is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and has used the Charity Commission's template for its governing document.

All trustees must be aged over 16 years and at least one of the trustees of the Centre for Marian Studies must be 18 years of age or over. The maximum number of charity trustees is twelve and the minimum number is three. If the number falls below the minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees or appoint a new charity trustee. The quorum for a trustees' meeting is two. Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the Centre for Marian Studies.

### **Management of the charity**

The Centre for Marian Studies is currently run by six trustees and four members of the Management Committee, all of whom contribute to the aims of the charity on a voluntary basis.

#### **Trustees**

Sr Dr Cathy Jones (co-editor of our journal)

Dr Melanie Landman

Professor Andrew Louth

Dr Catherine O'Brien (Chair of Trustees)  
Mr Mike Russell  
Reverend Canon Dr Paul Williams

**Members of the Management Committee**

Professor Sarah Jane Boss (Secretary, librarian and co-editor of our journal)  
Dr Chris Maunder (Treasurer)  
Mrs Natalie Maunder (Website coordinator)  
Professor Jacob Phillips (Conference organiser)

The full committee meets twice a year, usually in September and March.

**Reference and administrative details**

The Centre for Marian Studies

Registered Charity 1183579

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