



8 August 2022

A very warm welcome to all new and returning Advanced Degree students! You are receiving this welcome letter because you are in one of the following programs: PhD, DMin, ThM, or MA. And, you are receiving this letter from me in my capacity as Director of Academic/Graduate Programs.

There two major changes occurring this academic year. First, as you may know, the University of St Michael's College has created a federated relationship with Regis College, which is now known as Regis-St Michael's (RSM). This new federation came into being on 1 July 2022, with Dr. Jaroslav (Jerry) Skira as the new Dean. It is going to take at least a year to implement this new partnership, which will have some impact on our AD programs. For this year, the AD programs will be run separately at USMC and Regis but there will be plenty of opportunities for collaborative events as we move towards greater integration. We are excited about the potential opportunities that RSM will present to all of us.

Second, it is everyone's expectation that classes and Faculty events will return to pre-pandemic conditions, but we will follow the policies and practices set by the University of Toronto as well as provincial and municipal public health policy. Please check your email on a regular basis as we may receive updates on campus practice in late August or early September.

Here are a few important things to know:

**Day of Welcome:** Our Day of Welcome will be on 7 September starting at 4.15 PM. This will be an RSM event as we will gather together with faculty, students, and staff from both Regis and St Mikes. The gathering for AD students (PhD, DMin, ThM, MA) will begin at 5:30 PM at Regis College Room CR B. This important gathering gives us a chance to meet one another, new and returning students, faculty (including the new Dean!), librarians and staff. We will meet together for a Liturgy of the Word followed by a light meal at Fr Madden Hall at St Mikes. Look for more information on the website.

**GCTS Orientation:** All AD students must attend the GCTS Orientation, which will take place on Friday, 9 September from 8.45am to 12 noon. This orientation will take place virtually and the Zoom link will be sent to you closer to the day.

**Advising:** If you have not yet heard from your advisor, please do contact her/him in the next few weeks to review your course selections for the upcoming year or the next phase of your program. You should meet at least twice a year with your advisor, if not your whole committee. Feel free to

initiate that meeting. If you are a MA or ThM student, I will serve as your advisor until one is identified for you.

**Language exams** are scheduled for Tuesday, 6 September. Again, due to the evolving nature of Covid19 protocols, please check the TST website for updates. More information is available at <https://www.tst.edu/academic/language-exams-courses>.

**Applying for SSHRC & OGS scholarships:** A program expectation is that all students, as qualified, will apply for government scholarships. Canadian citizens and anyone with landed immigrant status are eligible for SSHRC funding (more information here: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/fellowships/doctoral-doctorat-eng.aspx>). All students, regardless of citizenship, may apply for OGS scholarships. (See info here: <https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/PRDR019245.html>). Applying for these scholarships is worth the effort, not only because of the monetary incentive, but because the application process helps you to refine your research project. *A great number of St Mike's students were awarded OGS scholarships in recent years. In addition, at least two St Mike's PhD student have received a SSHRC scholarship, including the prestigious Armand Bombardier award.* Keep an eye out for grant writing workshops, they are very helpful.

**Advanced Degree Seminar:** This seminar is a forum for all graduate students in RSM to present their work to one another and receive feedback from peers and faculty alike. Doctoral students in particular will be invited to present at least once during their program, potentially at the point of a landmark in your studies, e.g. presenting your thesis proposal, or a paper that has been accepted for a conference. Such an academic community is a valuable part of graduate study. Seminars will be held on Wednesdays after the common prayer. Unless others indicated, seminars will be held in person. Please reserve the following dates for the AD seminar: **21 September, 5 November, 30 November, 11 January 2023, 15 February, 29 March, and 19 April.**

Here are some important contacts to keep in mind:

- **Kelly Library Theological Librarian:** Noel McFerran ([noel.mcferran@utoronto.ca](mailto:noel.mcferran@utoronto.ca))
- **Writing support:** <https://library.stmikes.utoronto.ca/research/>. Select the "Writing Help Consultations" drop-down, and there you can book an individual appointment.
- **St Mike's Health and Wellness Counsellor:** Nicole Leblanc ([Nicolem.leblanc@utoronto.ca](mailto:Nicolem.leblanc@utoronto.ca))
- **Pastoral care and spiritual support:** Fr. Morgan Rice, CSB ([morgan.rice@utoronto.ca](mailto:morgan.rice@utoronto.ca) or 416-926-7121); and Sr. Anne Anderson, CSJ: ([anne.anderson@utoronto.ca](mailto:anne.anderson@utoronto.ca)).
- **Contacting the Director of Academic Programs:** This year I am using the Booking Tool on the Microsoft Office suite. To make an appointment to see me, using your utoronto email address, click on the following URL:

[https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/DirectorofAcademicProgramsFacultyofTheology\\_@utoronto.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/DirectorofAcademicProgramsFacultyofTheology_@utoronto.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/)

This tool is connected to my university calendar and when you suggest a time, it will tell you whether I am available. Please enter a suggested time. I will respond by either confirming that time or I will suggest an alternative. I am happy to meet with you in person or by Zoom.

Please contact me with any questions you might have about these points or others related to your study. I wish you well in the remaining weeks of summer and look forward to seeing you on the Day of Welcome.

Best wishes for a safe start to the school year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James R. Ginther', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James R. Ginther, PhD  
Professor of Medieval Theology &  
Director of Academic Programs.