

For Immediate Release: May 6, 2022

ONLINE LAUNCH OF THE O'DRISCOLL FORUM

ONLINE EVENT MAY 31ST TO LAUNCH O'DRISCOLL FORUM

PLAN TO TUNE IN AT 4PM PACIFIC, 5PM MOUNTAIN, 7PM EASTERN TIME

WATCH AT VST.EDU/ODRISCOLLFORUM

VANCOUVER, BC. May 6, 2022. The **Vancouver School of Theology** is delighted to confirm that an international campaign to permanently endow a major new initiative in theological education has been gathering momentum behind the scenes, and is about to go public. The O'Driscoll Forum is billed as "A Celebration of Preaching, Teaching and the Liturgical Arts." Beginning next year, the multi-day program will be an annual highlight of the summer curriculum at Vancouver School of Theology. The Forum is named in honour of Herbert and Paula O'Driscoll.

"Herb" O'Driscoll is a former parish priest and cathedral dean, internationally renowned conference and pilgrimage leader, hymnodist and storyteller, and author of over fifty books, who continues to write and speak prolifically and eloquently at age 93. Perhaps above all, he is a great preacher and teacher of preaching, who has spent a lifetime showing how the stories and traditions of our faith speak eloquently to contemporary concerns, and mentoring others to do the same.

"There's never been a more important moment than right now to form and nurture the gifts of a new generation to articulate Christian faith, not only in the life of the church but beyond it in society," says Herb. "Paula and I can't think of a project we'd rather have our names associated with, and we are immensely grateful to everyone who is contributing to make it possible."

At the heart of each summer's O'Driscoll Forum will be visits by globally distinguished teachers and practitioners of preaching, teaching and the liturgical arts. They will be invited to give public lectures, and to spend a few days on the VST campus sharing their experience with a group of aspiring young practitioners of these skills, in a collegial "master class" format, much like the one Herb pioneered and practiced over many years at the College of Preachers in Washington, DC. Many Forum offerings will also be available online.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, President of Vancouver School of Theology, says: "I'm thrilled that the O'Driscoll Forum will become a centrepiece of the VST Summer School. Herb was one of the first two recipients of honorary degrees from our school, and has been an inspiration and role model for many of us. We are honoured to be able to celebrate and continue his legacy in this way."

A group of friends, colleagues and admirers of Herb and Paula have come together to raise funds for the O'Driscoll Forum. To date, they have collected over two hundred thousand dollars: about two-thirds of the minimum amount required to underwrite the program in perpetuity. Now, they are reaching out to the many others who have been touched by Herb and Paula over the years, and who would wish to add their support to assist in making the Forum a reality.

A live, public, online launch event will be broadcast at 7:00pm Eastern Daylight Time on Tuesday, May 31st, 4pm Pacific and 5pm Mountain Time. Herb will speak and read from his recent book of memoirs. There will be greetings and tributes from distinguished past and present colleagues, and reminiscences from folk who have gone on pilgrimage with Herb and Paula, or crossed paths with them in other ways. Richard Topping will speak about plans for the O'Driscoll Forum. The program will also be recorded and available for later viewing.

For more details about the Forum, to make a tax-deductible donation, and to watch the launch event live on May 31st (or recorded thereafter), please visit: <https://vst.edu/odriscollforum/>

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About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. Among theological schools, VST is viewed as a change agent and an innovator for the church. As an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia, VST is now ranked in the top 50 schools globally and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. In 2020 VST was identified by In Trust Magazine as instituting bold transformative change for the renewal of theological education. Most recently, VST was the recipient of a prestigious Pathways for Tomorrow grant from the Lilly Endowment to help redefine theological field education. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and in North America by ATS (Association of Theological Schools).

The Vancouver School of Theology welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions and Indigenous communities, while celebrating its core relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments. The Vancouver School of Theology celebrates its 50th Anniversary (2021) as a leader in theological education.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that the land on which they are located is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) People.

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