

Reverend Professor Francis J. Moloney SDB AM FAHA, RIP

Catholic Theological College mourns the passing of Rev Professor Frank Moloney SDB, who died in Melbourne on Saturday 8 November 2025 after a period of illness.



Francis Moloney was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1940, took his first vows as a Salesian of Don Bosco in 1961, and was ordained priest in 1970. He studied at Melbourne University, the Salesian Pontifical University (Licence in Sacred Theology), the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Licence in Sacred Scripture), and at the University of Oxford (D. Phil.). His dissertation, *The Johannine Son of Man*, was published in 1976, beginning a lifelong scholarly interest in the Fourth Gospel.

From 1976 to 1994 Fr Frank served on the faculty of Catholic Theological College as a member of the Biblical Studies Department where he taught the New Testament and in particular the Gospel of John. During that time, he was one of the founding editors of the Australian theological journal *Pacifica* and an associate editor of *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. He was a Visiting Professor to the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. In 1984 Pope John Paul II appointed him to the International Theological Commission of the Holy See, on which he served for eighteen years. In 1992 he was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the first theologian to be so honoured. In 1994 he was made a member of the Order of Australia for services to Australian religion and culture.

In 1994 he was appointed the Foundation Professor of Theology at Australian Catholic University, where he made a significant contribution to the developing faculty. In 1999 he was appointed the Professor of New Testament at the Catholic University of America, and in 2001 he was elected President of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, the first non-United States citizen to hold this position. In 2002 he was appointed to the endowed Katherine Drexel Chair of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America.

Back in Australia, Fr Frank served as Provincial Superior of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Australia and the Pacific from 2006-2011, taking on some teaching and research at Catholic Theological College. He was elected a Fellow of the College in 2009 and resumed full-time teaching and research at Catholic Theological College and Australian Catholic University in 2012.

He has been awarded honorary doctorates from St Mary Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD (STD) and Australian Catholic University (D. Univ.). He was an emeritus professor at the Catholic University of America and Australian Catholic University. Until

recently, he has served as Rector of Salesian College “Rupertswood,” Sunbury, Victoria. Fr Frank leaves a publication record of over fifty academic books and scores of scholarly articles. His pastorally-oriented publications on scripture and theology are widely used in Catholic parishes and schools.

The citation for his appointment as CTC Senior Fellow states that Fr Frank was “an accomplished teacher and communicator who has the ability to inspire his students with a burning desire to know the Word of God as he guides them in their study of the biblical texts and their literary, historical and theological character. His speech is direct; his thought is profound, and his willingness to share his insights with others evident. All this is bound together with good humour and a ready willingness to engage with the experience and understanding of his audience.”

CTC Master, Fr Kevin Lenehan, has paid tribute to Professor Moloney for his contribution to theological education in Melbourne and internationally over the last half century. “Fr Frank Moloney was a priest and scholar, deeply imbued with the Salesian spirit, for whom theological education was about the growth of the whole person, intellect, body and spirit, on the way to the fulness of life offered by the Gospel. May he rest in peace, and may the Moloney family and the Salesian congregation be comforted in their loss.”