

**Jennifer Cunningham**  
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When I embarked on my BATH degree as a mature student, spending an Erasmus year abroad was not in the equation. I just thought “that’s not for me.” How wrong was I?! When the opportunity to study theology at the Katholieke Universiteit of Leuven, Belgium, presented itself, I almost dismissed it. However, fortunately, I decided to give it some serious consideration, and with the help and encouragement of St Patrick’s College I went on my merry way to Leuven, where I spent an amazing and wonderful year.

I was instantly made to feel “at home” with a warm welcome from my host university. KU Leuven provided all the necessary assistance to facilitate my settling in, and to help me choose my subjects. Erasmus students, as part of the International Programme, which is taught through English, can choose from a wide variety of subjects. Studying, and becoming friends with young people from various countries, the camaraderie, and social gatherings, together with learning to understand how the Christian faith is lived within the diverse cultures, was for me, a profound experience. The exams were oral, and I found the professors to be interesting, focused, funny and approachable.

The many organised trips throughout the year to various parts of Belgium, Holland, Germany, and France offered a marvellous taste of European culture: visiting places such as Amsterdam, Paris, Cologne, First World War cemeteries, and museums, to name but a few. I also had the amazing experience of travelling to Greece with the Faculty, on a Scripture study trip. The focus of the study was St Paul, so we visited archaeological sites and museums, as well as sampling the beautiful Greek cuisine, and enjoying the exciting night life as guests of the students of the University of Aristotle, Thessaloniki.

Having the support of my home university, St Pat’s, enabled me to embrace the combined academic, travel, social and personal experience of the Erasmus Programme, which, in turn, brought me on a remarkable and powerful journey of learning, self-development, and personal growth.

My year in KU Leuven as an Erasmus student was awesome: and to think I nearly didn’t consider it!