Tentative Syllabus

Spirituality Class, Winter Spring 2012

Deanery Higher Education & Diaconal Vocation Program

This class can be taken for personal enrichment, diaconal vocations exam prep and/or catechist certificate. The latter come at the end of every curricular cycle of courses.

Warnings:

1) not all texts, especially in the first session will be entirely ‘orthodox’. This is for the sake of a historical sense of dialogue/controversy on the spiritual life.

2) Unless otherwise indicated, you may skim the reading for what interests you more. The readings will be large.

CWS=Classics of Western Spirituality from Paulist press.

Readings are to be done for and discussed at the class that they are listed under.

The Chicago Deanery group will cover this as individual class sessions. The Detroit Deanery class will read independently, meeting for discussion both w/ and w/o instructor.

Session 1  February 25/2012 10-2pm @ St. Makarios Mission/ University of Chicago. Intro: ‘What is Spirituality/spiritual life?’; Biblical foundations; early Christian texts. The reading for this session will be available through web or attached files emailed out.

Articles by Fr. Alexander Golitzin, Fr. Bogdan Bucur, Dr. Dragos Giulea.

Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice pdf to be sent out

Philo

Odes of Solomon, text Odes of Solomon 4, 10, 19, 20, 36, 38 http://users.misericordia.edu/davies/thomas/odes.htm

Gospel of Thomas http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gthlamb.html


Ascension of Isaiah http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ascension.html


Session 2  Tentative date/time March 11, 2-5pm; place TBA. Origen, Anthony, Evagrius, Gregory of Nyssa, Cassian http://www.ccel.org/ccel/origen/prayer.html

Philocalia of Origen by St. Basil, Gregory the Theologian and Gregory of Nyssa—will send out selections ( from book 1 and 15)

http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen-john10.html )--skim or skip

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/origen_philocalia_02_text.htm

St. Anthony’s Life, by Athanasius http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.html or CWS Athanasius

St. Anthony’s Letters, translated by S. Rubenson—file will be emailed

John Cassian: each pick a different vice (books 5-12) and study to report back

http://www.osb.org/lectio/cassian/inst/index.html

Evagrius, on Tempting Thoughts

Pdf to be sent out, from Casiday book.

Evagrius, Life of Moses (CWS), and selections from Commentary on Song of Songs (files to be sent)

Other St. Gregory Nyssa texts: http://www.sage.edu/faculty/salomd/nyssa/index.html

Session 3  Macarian Homilies: 1, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 32, 33, 39, 40, 43, 47-50. Isaiah of Sketis (2, 5, 14, 16, 19, 21, 28) , Liber Graduum (Memra 12, 18, 24, 27); Diadochus of Photike, Philokalia vol.1 251-296 (I will try to scan and send as much as possible). Please Read Evagrius on Tempting Thoughts if didn’t yet:

http://www.ldysinger.com/Evagrius/00a_start.htm; Letters of St. Anthony.

Session 5  John Climacus ch16-30, Andrew of Crete, John Damascene (from on Divine Images, and canons of Pascha and Transfiguration.
Aside from Climacus all handout or email

Session 6  Symeon the New Theologian, Isaac of Nineveh, Gregory Palamas
SVS popular patristics for symeon, Gregory excerpts from Philocalia or Triads

Session 7&8  Summary; Review of themes (see old—incomplete—syllabus below); discussion of modern “resourcements”/“revivals” and issues. How to adapt primarily monastic ideals to non-monastic life. Spirituality in Church community and marriage. Read Earthen Vessels by Fr. Gabriel Bunge.

Questions outside of direct reading:
  1)  What is the “image of God”?
  2)  What is the human composed of; what are our constituent elements?
  3)  what is the general biblical and Orthodox understanding of human perfection and fall?
  2)  What biblical elements go into that?
  3)  What tensions are there in Tradition concerning human perfection and fall?
  4)  How do we describe our place in XC?
  5)  What is the role of our will and striving in relationship to God’s grace?
  6)  What are central images for human spiritual striving?
  7)  what is the connection between liturgy and the inner life? What are the biblical images for this?

Will send out files from Bishop-Elect, Fr. Alexander Golitzin; Fr. Bogdan Bucur; Dr. Dragos Giulea; Fr. Gabriel Bunge. Feel free to find and read from these authors, in particular, independently, as well as from modern “elders”.

Read chapter on Origen in Fr. John Behr’s Way to Nicaea.

Questions:
  1)  What appears to be key in the theology of the Old Testament?
  2)  How does that key play a role in the theology of the New Testament?
  3)  How does that key to reading the Old Testament (and New) provide us with a model for spiritual life?
  4)  How does Origen inter-relate scriptural reading and spiritual striving?

Odes of Solomon 4, 10, 19, 20, 36, 38

  1)  what would seem to be the meanings of these images in the Odes?

Origen Philocalia (collection by St. Basil and the two St. Gregories) chapter 1&15

  1)  why three senses to Scripture?
  2)  What conundrum do those who interpret Scripture too literally end up in?
  3)  What do all accept should receive a mystical (allegorical) interpretation?
  4)  How do ‘scandals’ in the Scripture function?
Excerpt from Irenaeus Adv. Heres. 4:38

1) What is the purpose of the human according to St. Irenaeus?

St. Ephrem Hymns on Virginity and Symbols of the Lord 4-11

1) Explain how Ephrem uses symbol; here the symbol of oil?
2) What effect does the transformation of our perception have on prayer?

St. Athanasius, Life of Anthony

1) describe with precision what drives Anthony to the desert.
2) What role does sexual renunciation and temptation play?
3) How is the state of transfigured life described in the story?
4) How does Anthony’s ascetic perfection affect his later ability to interact with society?

The Virtues of St Macarius 1, 13, 34, 41, 44

1) describe the practice of the Jesus prayer as this document claims St. Makarios taught.

St. Macarius Hom. 1, 8, 12, 15

1) What is the author’s picture of divinized humanity?
2) How is the fallen human condition described?

St Gregory Nazianzus Oration 38, 40, 45

1) How does St. Gregory describe the Fall and our redemption?

Evagrius On Prayer; Fr. Gabriel Bunge article

1) describe Evagrius understanding of the image of God; the preconditions for prayer.

St. John Cassian Institutes On the Eight Vices (pick one)

Spirituality Readings GB, 1b

Life of Anthony

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.html

extra info on Odes

http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/odes.html

Macarian Homilies

http://elpenor.org/macarius/homilies.asp
another translation available from Classics of Western Spirituality as *Pseudo-Macarius: the Fifty Spiritual Homilies*

Gregory (Nazianzus) the Theologian

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf207.html

another translation is available from SVS Press, in the Popular Patristics Series #36

Evagrius *on prayer* is available in several editions and in the first volume of the Philocalia.

I will try to scan the interesting pieces of *The Virtues of St. Macarius*, which can be found in SVS press’s PPS, *St. Macarius the Spiritbearer*

St. John Cassian, *Institutes*


http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf211.toc.html

Martyrdom of Perpetua


Orthodox Christian Spirituality Class

Syllabus from previous thematic version of class in 2004or05; some pieces of this will be used for last two sessions

#1 Intro: Spiritual Experience. What is Spirituality? What distinguishes Orthodox Spirituality?

#2 Prayer; Repentance

Reading: selections from St. Macarius, St. Symeon and Evagrius; Canon of St. Andrew.

#3 Human Faculties and Passions; Spiritual Discernment; Spiritual Elders

Reading: St. John Cassian, St. Diadochus (passages from Philokalia, vol.1)

#4 Symbolism: Word and Image

Reading: St. Dionysius: *Divine Names*; Sebastian Brock, *Luminous Eye*

#5 Symbolism of the Spiritual Life as a Whole: Mystical Ascent

Reading: St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* and St. Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*

#6 Symbolism of the Spiritual Life as a Whole: Hierarchy and Ladder

Reading: St. Dionysius, *Celestial* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; begin St. John Climacus, *The Ladder*.

#7 Symbolism of the Spiritual Life as a Whole: Ladder

Reading: the rest of the *The Ladder*.

#7 Spirituality and Us: Finding a Voice for Modern or Non-Monastic Spiritual Life

Reading: individual choice from select biblio. Final essay/report will be a 5-7 paper and/or a short presentation to the class by each student on an Orthodox spiritual writer whose writings speak to her/him in a way that she/he feels is relevant to her/his life as lived in a modern, non-monastic context. OR, one can critique, write about one’s disagreements with or pose hard questions (that one feels should be answered, but are unanswered) of a spiritual writer.

Alexander-Alexandre: www.alexanderpress.com (866) 303 5517

Cistercian Publications: www.spencerabbey.org/cistpub/catalogue/catframes.html (269) 387 8920

Paulist Press: www.paulistpress.com (800) 218 1903

St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press: www.stots.edu/bookstore/serv.htm (888) 454 6678

St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press: 1-800-204-2665

Light and Life: (952) 925 388 www.light-n-life.com

Many more have come in existence in last 8 years

Required Texts


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**Optional Secondary, Supplementary Texts** *(it is recommended to select one for reading and reference throughout semester):*


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**Select Bibliography for final essay/report:**

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, *Courage to Pray.*


*Any others by Met. Anthony.*


Matthew the Poor, *Orthodox Prayer Life*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.


*On Prayer*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.

*Wisdom from Mount Athos*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.

Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.

*The Way of a/the Pilgrim*. many different editions.


**other texts (many more appearing in last 8 years) may be accepted with the instructor’s approval.**