

Ministry At The Margins -- RSFT 2577
Spring, 2007
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Course Objective: That each participant in this study would formulate a theory of pastoral ministry appropriate for ministers who serve among any particular community of Christians (chosen by the student), which could be identified by the canons of the study as being at the margins of the Roman Catholic Church.

Course Outline: The participants in this study will reach the objective through lectures, discussions and readings in six modules sequentially:

- A. The Contemporary Church: In an effort to define the Christian communities at the margins the participants will briefly consider the contemporary Roman Catholic Church in the United States. We will attempt to find identities or markers for worshipping communities that might enable us to establish, for the purposes of the study, the mainstream and the margins. (Jan 30-Feb 13)
- B. History of Worship at the Margins: Ministry to worshipping communities at the margins in the America is not new. The manner of evangelizing and sustaining the faith of worshipping communities at the margins over the last two centuries will be considered. The effects of ministerial service on the development of some particular marginalized worshipping communities will be studied. (Feb 16-Mar 6, **No Class Feb 20**)
- C. Theology at the Margins: Worshipping communities at the margins often have members who reflect on the way in which the community understands salvation, church and ethics. The development of theological reflection for a few communities at the margin will be considered. (Mar 9-Mar 23)
- D. Thinking with the Church at the Margins: The study will consider the documents of the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council which guide ministry at the margins. Contemporary Catholic commentators on these documents may also be considered. (Apr 3-Apr 17, **No Class Good Friday**)
- E. The Minister at the Margins: This study will review some contemporary considerations for ministry at the margins with regard to Sunday worship, sacraments, prayer and community organization. Several active ministers will be invited to answer questions generated by our study regarding the practical challenges to ministering at the margins. (Apr 20-May 4)
- F. A Theory of Pastoral Ministry at the Margins: The study will attempt to develop a system which would guide theological reflection, worship, teaching and behavior for those who minister to communities at the margins. (May 8-May 11)

Course Expectations: The participants in the study are expected to join in class discussions, present a class on one of several topics to be handed out and write a 3 to 5 page paper outlining a theory of pastoral ministry at the margins for the practicing minister serving a specific worshipping community of your choosing.