

ST 2454 The Community Called Church

T. H. Sanks, sj

Fall, 2005

Goal: To investigate ways of thinking about the church, present, past and future, and to draw out implications for action on the Mission, Membership, and Ministry in the Christian community.

Topics: We will begin our reflections by considering the social and cultural contexts out of which we theologize at present, our thought-forms, and the dialectical relationship between thought (theology) and action (praxis). We will survey the various ways in which the Christian community has understood itself historically, and the polar tensions that have persisted into the present. Of primary concern, will be the purpose or mission of the church and its relationship to the world.

Method: The seminar will require regular reading and participation in discussions. To prepare for the discussions, each student should write a one or two page (typed, double-spaced) report including: 1) points of simple clarification, e.g., technical terms, words in foreign languages, etc.; 2) major issues raised in the reading; and 3) your own questions stimulated by the reading.

Grade: Final grade will be based on both the written work and the quality (not quantity) of the oral participation.

Required Texts:

P. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*

A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*

R. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*

T. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*

M. Hebblethwaite, *Base Communities*

R. Schreier, *The New Catholicity*

T. H. Sanks, *Salt, Leaven, & Light*

Articles collected in Reader

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Assigned Readings

Sept. 8 Introductory Class

Sept. 12 Topic: Social and Cultural Context

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 1; Sanks & Coleman, *Reading the Signs of the Times*, Chs 1 & 2; Rahner, "Toward a Fundamental Interpretation of Vatican II;" Schreier, *The New Catholicity*, Ch. 1.

Sept. 19 Topic: Method in Ecclesiology; Social Construction of the Church

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 2; Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*

Sept. 26 Topic: Various Ways of Understanding Church

Readings: Dulles, *Models of the Church*

Oct. 3 Topic: Church in Early Christianity

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 3; Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*.

Oct. 10 Topic: Development of Papal Power & Conciliarism

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 4; Knowles & Oblensky, "The Popes at Avignon," in *The Middle Ages*, 406-434; Oakley, "Conciliar Theory," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 510-523; O'Malley, "The Millennium and the Papalization of Catholicism," in *America*, 8-16.

Oct. 17 Topic: Reformation & Unity of the Church

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 4; M. Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility," 3 - 111.

Oct. 24 Reading Week

Oct. 31 Topic: 19th Century, the Magisterium, and Papal Infallibility

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 5; "On the Magisterium," *Chicago Studies*, 210-263; Dulles, "Moderate Infallibilism," *A Church to Believe In*, 133-148; "The Infallible Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff," *The Christian Faith*, 232-234.

Nov. 7 Topic: Ecclesiologies of Vatican II

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 6; "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," and "The Church in the Modern World," *Documents of Vatican II*; O'Malley, "Developments, Reforms, and Two Great Reformations;" in *Tradition and Transition*; Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II," in *The Reception of Vatican II*; J. Comblin, "People of God at Vat II."

Nov. 14 Topic: Changing Forms of Ministry

Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 7; O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*;
(recommended: O'Malley, "Priesthood, Ministry and Religious Life," *Theological Studies*, 49, 1988, 233-257)

- Nov. 21 Topic: Liberation Ecclesiology
Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 8; Hebblethwaite, *Base Communities*
- Nov. 28 Topic: Global Church & Inculturation
Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Ch. 9; R. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, Chs. 2-7.
- Dec. 5 Topic: The Church in the U.S. & Ecumenism
Readings: *Salt, Leaven, & Light*, Chs. 10 & 11; J. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, Chs. XI & XIII; T. J. McGreevy, "The Sex Abuse Crisis," and T. J. Reese, "The Impact of the Sexual Abuse Crisis," in *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*.
- Dec. 12 Oral Exam or Final Paper