

## GOD, CHRIST, & SALVATION IN EARLY CHURCH

STHS 4412  
Spring 2007

Mary Ann Donovan  
Mon-Thurs 11:10-12:30

**Description:** This lecture-discussion course will explore the concepts of God, Christ, and salvation in scripture, ritual, creed, and councils of the patristic period. Designed for advanced M Div and MA or STL students. Meets requirements of a content course for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year JSTB MDiv curriculum.

**Requirements:** attendance, readings, participation in discussion, short weekly papers focusing on an issue or issues in the readings, and personal questions which those readings stimulate, and, finally, two ten page papers. The first ten page paper is due (instead of a short paper) on either February 22 or March 12. The second ten page paper is due (instead of a short paper) on either April 5 or May 10. Alternate: an oral midterm, on April 2 and 5; and a 15 to 20 page paper on material from Part 4 of course due May 17.

**Objectives:** 1) to attain suitable familiarity with the layers of the tradition around the concepts and their interrelationships; 2) to grow in ease in the historical interpretation of primary sources; 3) to attain mastery (appropriate to the student's level of study) of two sections of the material.

**Assessment:** Competence in objectives 1 and 2 will be demonstrated via the short weekly papers and discussions; competence in objective 3 will be demonstrated via two longer papers on two sections of the course.

### Required texts

Gerald O'Collins, SJ. *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*. New York: Paulist, 1999.

Reader. Contains all other readings, primary and secondary.

**N.B. There will be no class Jan. 29, as I will be attending an ATS meeting.**

### Part 1: In Story

February 1 Alternate Stories: Gods of Ancient Mediterranean World. Read for next class: "Mercy, Peace, a Sacrifice of Praise!": The Testimony of the Apologists." In Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, pp.21-49.

February 5 God of the Christian Story: from the God of Israel, through the God of Jesus. Read for next class one Gospel in its entirety.

February 8 Did Jesus think He was God? Jesus's growth in consciousness. Read for next class: Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ."

February 12 "A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16). How did Jesus become the Savior? Read for next class: "Jesus, the World's Redeemer." In Gerald O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, pp.132-169.

## **Part 2: In Ritual**

February 15 Ritual and the God it honors. Read for next class: from Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, pp.116-157; pp.283-303; pp.349-392.

February 19 Presidents' Day

February 22 Celebration as a Christian. Read for next class: "General Introduction." In Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, pp.1-27. Option 1: ten page paper due today or March 12, your choice.

February 26 Becoming a Christian: conversion journey. Read for next class: "Egypt." In Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, pp.173-233.

March 1 Baptismal experience: diverse rituals. For next class, read "The Scriptural Roots." In G. O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, pp.11-82.

## **Part 3: In Creed**

March 5 The New Testament and the Trinity: Jesus, Son of the Father. For next class, read "The Trinity Before Nicaea." In Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, pp .85-113.

March 8 No class: I will be at the Sisters of Charity General Chapter.

March 12 Second century reflections: the salvation Jesus brings. Read for next class: "Christ." In Origen, *De principiis*, c.2. Option 1: ten page paper due today if it was not done for Feb. 22.

March 15 Third century clarifications: One God, and Jesus. Read for next class: #s 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 299. In J. Stevenson, ed. *A New Eusebius*.

March 19 Position of Arius: Jesus, the perfect Son, saves by example. For next class: read Joseph T. Lienhard, "The Arian Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered."

## **Part 4: In Conciliar Teaching**

March 22 **Nicaea** - Is the Son God as the Father is God? Salvation by transformation. For next class: read "From Nicaea I to Constantinople I." In Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, pp 114-126.

**March 26-30: SPRING BREAK**

April 2 Athanasius in Post-Nicene Situation. For next class, read "First Letter to Serapion" by Athanasius.

April 5 Basil and how the Spirit enters prayer. For next class, reading to be distributed.

April 9 Holy Spirit from Athanasius through Cappadocians. For next class, read *Fifth Theological Oration* by Gregory of Nazianzen. Option 2: ten page paper due today or May 10, your choice.

April 12 Is the Holy Spirit God? I **Constantinople**. For next class, read "The Person of the God-Man." In Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (199-600)*, pp. 226-243.

April 16 Presuppositions of Christological doctrine. For next class, read "The Person of the God-Man." In Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, pp. 243-277.

April 19 Problems of exegesis and theologies of the Incarnation. For next class, read *Definition of Chalcedon*.

April 23 **Chalcedon**: Is Jesus equally God and a human being? For next class, read "Chalcedon and the History of Theology," and "Chalcedon - End of Beginning?" in Aloys Grillmeier, SJ, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1, pp. 550 - 557.

April 26 Chalcedon continued. For next class, read "What Does It Mean Today to Believe in Jesus Christ?" In Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 18, pp.143-156.

### **Conclusion**

April 30 No class. There will be no class, as I will be away.

May 3 Belief Today in Jesus Christ. For next class, prepare about three pages on what you think it means today to believe in Jesus Christ.

May 7 Option 2: ten page paper due today if it was not done for April 5.