

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Students



ICF 106 – The Church

The Church is the place of encounter between God and His people on earth. This course will provide a brief overview of the origins of the Church; Her identity as One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic; and what it means to be "the Body of Christ" on earth.

Texts: Introduction to Catholicism for Adults, Rev. James Socias (ICA)

Supplemental Reading/Additional Resources:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>

The Bible: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, [*Lumen Gentium*](#) (LG)

Week 1: Holy Spirit, The Paraclete

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA Chapter 7

Work of the Holy Spirit translated as counselor, teacher, advocate, intercessor, helper or comforter.

Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Holy Spirit to the Apostles at the Last Supper. During the post-Resurrection appearances in the Upper Room he imparts the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and gave them authority to forgive sins. At His Ascension, He promises to send His Apostles another Paraclete. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Descent of the Holy Spirit

- Pentecost – The beginning of the Church’s public ministry in the world.

The Holy Spirit in the Creed

- *Lord, giver of life, proceeds from Father and the Son, glorified, spoken through the prophets*

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

- Gives life to the Church.

The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church

- Sanctification
- The Theological Virtues
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- The Charismatic Gifts

Week 2: The Holy Catholic Church

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA Chapter 8

What is the Church?

- *Ekklesia* – “the people called together” or “called out”
- All believers wherever they may be found the local faith community, and the liturgical assembly

The Faith of the Church and Work of the Blessed Trinity

- Articles of faith
- Work of the Blessed Trinity
- Planned by the Father
- Founded by Christ
- Revealed by the Holy Spirit
- Will be perfected in Heaven.

The Fathers of the Church

Authority in the Church - Mother and Teacher

- What is the nature of leadership in the Church?
- Why does the Church have a hierarchy?
- What does the hierarchy of the Church do?

The Church Hierarchy

- The structure of authority and governance in the Church
- The Church Hierarchy is not to be thought of as dominance or control or being higher than lay persons but rather servant leadership

The Magisterium

- Bishops of the Catholic Church in communion with and under the Pope as the visible head of the Church on earth
- Successors to the Apostles
- Receive their authority from Christ.

The Papacy

- Infallibility
- Election of the Pope

Bishops – Shepherds of the local Church

- Successors of the Apostles
- Preside over a particular church

The Priesthood /Diaconate

- Diocesan priest
- Religious priest
- Deacon – Transitional/Permanent

Week 3: Church as Mystery

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA Chapter 8

Sacred Scripture and Tradition use various images to describe the mystery of the Church.

- The Church is both visible (human) and invisible (divine)
- Names and Images of the Church: Church as Sacrament, Mystical Body of Christ, Bride of Christ, Family of God, People of God, Our Mother, Priests, Prophets and Kings, Kingdom of God, Pilgrim, Sheepfold or Flock, Branches of the Vine, Temple or Building

The Four Marks or Attributes of the Church

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic

Week 4: Christ's Faithful

– The Role of the Laity, Consecrated Life, Blessed Virgin Mary

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA pp 276, 278-279, Chapter 5

Lay Faithful

- Priest
- Prophet
- King

Consecrated Life

The Pilgrim Church and its Union with the Church in Heaven

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God