

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Instructors



ICF 101—Christian Anthropology

This course will address the fundamental existential questions (Who is God? Who am I and why am I here? Does God want a relationship with me?), within the structure of an authentic Christian anthropology. The course will examine who God is as a Trinity (communion of persons), who seeks to share Himself with His creation. The Biblical accounts of the creation of the world, the human person (the crown of creation), and the circumstances surrounding the fall into sin will situate the human person within God's plan of salvation. A brief survey of Salvation History will be traced to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer who saves humanity, teaches the person the meaning of his humanity and his life, and is the answer to the questions with which the class began.

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/>

Week 1: The Mystery of God and the Human Person

ICA Chapters 2 and 3; pp. 105-116; 574-588

What is *Christian anthropology*?

Christian Anthropology is the study of humanity (anthropos) within a Christological context, that is, with Christ at the center. By His Incarnation, Jesus Christ *teaches the human person who he/she is*.

Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* 1: *THE REDEEMER OF MAN, Jesus Christ, is the centre of the universe and of human history*.

Gaudium et spes 22: *The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. **Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.** It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.*

Jesus Christ reveals to us who we are by becoming one of us. By His Incarnation, Christ shows us the essential goodness of the human person, and the path we are to follow to become fully human. Christ reveals who God is, who we are, and who we are made to become.

Who is God?

- Trinity – one in substance, three Persons (unity in difference), each equally possesses fullness of divinity and are inseparable in action, each is distinct in relation to the other.
- Communion of persons
- God is relation
- God has revealed Himself to us as Trinity (John 15: 10-11; Matthew 28:19; John 14: 16-17; John 15:26; CCC #234)

God is the Creator

(Genesis 1 and 2)

- God creates *freely and gratuitously*.
- All being is *contingent* – radical dependence on God.
- All being is *gift*.
- Seven day structure of creation - God's order (creation *ex nihilo*, chaos to order)
- God declares all creation to be *good*.

The Human Person is the crown of creation

- The human person is the crown of God's creation, and recipients of His greatest gift:
- Man created *imago Dei* – image and likeness of God; *capax Dei* – with a capacity for God
- Self-knowledge, self-possession, self-mastery
- The human person is created for love, communion, as male and female with differences that are complementary
- The human person is the only being created for his own sake (Personalistic norm: the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use, and as such the means to an end. Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*).

Man created as a unity of body and soul

Body – matter

Soul – created for eternal union with God; powers of the soul: intellect and will

Image and likeness of God:

- Dominion over the earth (stewardship; share in God's kingship over the earth)
- Sharers in God's power of creation (be fruitful and multiply, Gn. 1:28)
- Freedom (CCC 1731; 1743-1748)
- Conscience (CCC 1778)

Week 2: Sin, The Fall, and God's Plan for Healing

ICA pp. 116-122

What is Sin and how does it enter the world?

(Genesis 3)

Sin – temptation of the serpent (CCC 404, 1850)

Human person mistrusts God and the Gift

Original sin is not a personal fault but a deprivation of holiness and justice (CCC 405-406)

Consequences of sin (CCC 402-406)

- Subject to ignorance
- Suffering
- Dominion of death
- Concupiscence – the inclination toward sin. 1 John 2: 16-17 describes the three-fold concupiscence:

“For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world. Yet the world and its enticement are passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever.”

Sensual lust: an inordinate desire for physical gratification

Lust of the eyes: greed or covetousness

Pride of life – arrogance or ostentation in lifestyle that reflects a willful independence from God and others

Appetite – a tendency or inclination. Our appetites are not simply bad – but they must be informed by *virtue*. Two types of appetites: irascible and concupiscible. (CCC 37)

Mortal Sin (CCC 1855)

Venial Sin (CCC 1863)

Grace (God's free self-offering) is necessary to overcome sin and the tendency toward sin

Shame becomes a boundary experience: fear of the other and protection of self

But shame is a true Christian virtue, and even human ... the ability to be ashamed: I do not know if there is a similar saying in Italian, but in our country to those who are never ashamed are called "sin vergüenza": this means 'the unashamed ', because they are people who do not have the ability to be ashamed and to be ashamed is a virtue of the humble, of the man and the woman who are humble." Pope Francis, Homily 4/29/13

<http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/04/29/pope: shame is a true christian virtue/en1-687330>

Where does sin leave us?

God's healing and restoration begin immediately after sin, but it cannot be done by Man on his own. God Himself must repair the relationships that were damaged (God-Man, Person-Person) and restore order to the chaos sin has created.

Protoevangelium (first gospel) Genesis 3:15

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel."

- God fashions clothes for the man and woman (their attempts to cover themselves were inadequate)
- God prevents them from taking fruit from the Tree of Life in their disordered state
- God promises salvation over time
- God begins making a series of Covenants with His people in order to restore the relationship that was lost in the Fall
 - Adam
 - Noah
 - Abraham
 - David

Week 3: The Household of God

ICA pp. 122-142; 143-147

God enters into a series of **covenants** with man in preparation for the fulfillment of His promised salvation in Jesus Christ. A covenant is not a pact built upon reciprocity, but a free gift, a creative act of God's love for us.

God initiates the covenant as an offering of Himself, and man is free to accept or reject God's friendship.

- Original covenant with Adam is broken by original sin
- Covenant with Noah brings about a new creation
- Covenant with Abraham draws humanity together (Gn. 15)
The Father of new life for God's plan of salvation (Gn. 12)
Foreshadowing of God's sacrifice of Christ (Gn. 22)
- David receives the promise that the Savior will come from his line (2 Sam 7)

In the covenants God works in and through the personal weakness and sinfulness of the ones who represent His people. He works through sin and human frailty, and His actions and encounters with man are *transformative*.

God brings order to His creation from the chaos caused by sin.

Oikonomia (economia) – God's Household

We are God's family and He cares for us (His household) through a kind of "divine pedagogy":

- Creating "boundaries" to restore order - Commands and precepts designed to help us flourish and become free (10 Commandments, Ex. 20)
- Teaching
- Disciplining
- Healing

Everything God does – teaching, disciplining, giving us *boundaries* – is oriented toward the good of the person and our happiness; an expression of His love for us; to teach us the right use of our freedom; and to forge an intimate friendship with Him.

Before striking the final covenant with us, God sends **prophets** to foretell the coming of Salvation, to teach the people God's ways, and train them in what is good and true. A prophet is a **truth teller**, and challenges the lifestyle and attitudes of the people.

The prophet:

- Is called out of his comfort zone
- Called to personal conversion
- Tells the truth
- Calls others to conversion
- Must have humility
- Faith and radical dependence on God
- Often endures persecution and suffering

The last of the Prophets is John, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He is the Forerunner of Jesus Christ – the *Friend of the Bridegroom*

The need for a savior:

- Restore image and likeness
- Reveals the Father's love
- Grace to overcome sin
- Definitive defeat of death (*He has destroyed death by undergoing death. He has despoiled hell by descending into hell. He vexed it even as it tasted of His flesh. Paschal Homily, St. John Chrysostom*)
- *The Way* of pilgrimage back to the Father (cf. Jn 14:6)

Week 4: The Incarnation of Christ and the Mission of the Human

Person

ICA pp. 147-156; 173-175; 186-208; 856-865

The Word became flesh for us (CCC 457-460):

- To save us by reconciling us with God
- That thus we might know God's love
- To be our model of holiness
- To make us partakers in the divine nature

Protoevangelium – Gn. 3:15 – is fulfilled in the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38)

- Mary's "yes" to God's gift of Himself recuperates Eve's mistrust and her disobedient act
- Mary becomes the New Eve, and Jesus becomes the New Adam
- Mary is the first and model disciple who teaches us how to respond in trust:
- Contrast Zechariah's response to the angel with Mary's upon each one hearing that God will do something miraculous and seemingly impossible. (Lk 1: 5-25)

Jesus is true God and true man, having a human nature and a divine nature.

God became man, not losing His divinity, or becoming corrupted by humanity

Jesus willingly takes flesh from Mary, the Creator entering into a deep and personal relationship with His creation

Jesus' Method of Encounter with the Human Person

Relationship –

- Jesus encounters the person in fullness – body and spirit – and will touch him/her without *fear* (*Today's Gospel brings us another step forward. Jesus allows a woman who was a sinner to approach him during a meal in the house of a Pharisee, scandalizing those present. Not only does he let the woman approach but he even forgives her sins, saying: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Lk 7:47). Jesus is the incarnation of the Living God, the one who brings life amid deeds of death, sin, selfishness and self-absorption. Jesus accepts, loves, uplifts, encourages, forgives, restores the ability to walk, gives back life. Throughout the Gospels we see how Jesus by his words and actions brings the transforming life of God. This was the experience of the woman who anointed the feet of the Lord with ointment: she felt understood, loved, and she responded by a gesture of love: she let herself be touched by God's mercy, she obtained forgiveness and she started*

a new life. Homily of Pope Francis for *Evangelium vitae* Day, 16 June, 2013, #2

Text from page <http://en.radiovaticana.va/articolo.asp?c=702006> of the Vatican Radio website)

- Meets us where we are (Woman at the Well)
- Encounters us in our Freedom (Rich Young Man)
- Offers us a New Way (Three Wise Men, Zaccheus, men healed of demons)
- Jesus *knows* the human person, and never sees him/her as a means to an end, but as an end in him/herself (Personalistic Norm)

Teaching –

- Parables
- Precepts (Beatitudes, Love Command)
- Truth, freedom, goodness (Jn 14:6, 8:32; Mk 10:18; Mt 19:16-17)

Healing –

- Physical healing (Lazarus, blind men, lepers)
- Emotional healing (Martha and Mary)
- Spiritual healing (Mary Magdalen)

Jesus encounters the human person his/her freedom, offers an opportunity for transformation; no one remains the same

Three Kings – go back by another way

Woman at the well – leaves her water jar

Rich young man – goes away sad

Jesus' life culminates in the **Paschal Mystery** – His suffering, death and resurrection. *Paschal* refers to the Passover, and it signifies that that Christ is *our* Passover.

- In the first Passover, God sent the Angel of Death to pass through the streets and kill the first-born in the household. The Israelites were instructed to sacrifice a lamb and eat its flesh, and to mark the lintels of the entrance to the house with its blood.

- Jesus Christ is the new and definitive Passover. He is the Lamb whose flesh is offered in sacrifice and consumed by us, and we are marked with His blood, which washes us clean and saves us
- Jesus willingly submits Himself to suffering and death. He takes on all of our sin and by His complete self-emptying and self-sacrifice, He transforms all of creation.

From the Cross the Church is born in the blood and water that pour from His side.

"Water and blood symbolized Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. From these two Sacraments the Church is born: from Baptism, the Cleansing Water that gives Rebirth and Renewal from the Holy Spirit, and from the Holy Eucharist. Since the Symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist flowed from His Side, it was from His Side that Christ fashioned the Church, as He had fashioned Eve from the side of Adam".

Saint John Chrysostom

The mission of the human person

The human person is made for love and for eternal union with God in heaven

Jesus Christ teaches us our mission as persons by His life and example, and through His self-sacrificing love (Jn. 15: 12-13; CCC 1878-1879)

Our mission is to be Christian *witnesses (martyrs)*; to follow Jesus in being:

- Relational (encountering other persons in charity and love)
- Teaching (being witnesses to truth in how we live, helping people in their needs)
- Healing (being a spiritual mother/father, providing physical help - works of mercy- and spiritual comfort -prayer, witness, acts of charity and kindness)
- Praying (participating in the life of the Church, offering honor and gratitude to God for His gifts, and calling upon His help for ourselves and others)

He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven. CCC 1709

...Christ offers himself as the path of my life. Sequela of Christ does not mean: imitating the man Jesus. This type of attempt would necessarily fail—it would be an anachronism. The Sequela of Christ has a much higher goal: to be assimilated into Christ, that is to attain union with God. Such a word might sound strange to the ears of modern man. But, in truth, we all thirst for the infinite: for an infinite freedom, for happiness without limits.

... Man is not satisfied with solutions beneath the level of divinization. But all the roads offered by the "serpent" (Genesis 3:5), that is to say, by mundane knowledge, fail. The only path is communion with Christ, achieved in sacramental life. The Sequela of Christ is not a question of morality, but a "mysteric" theme—an ensemble of divine action and our response. Thus, in the theme on the sequela we find the presence of the other center of Christology, which I wished to mention: the Paschal Mystery—the cross and the Resurrection. In the reconstruction of the "historical Jesus," usually the theme of the cross is without meaning. In a bourgeois interpretation it becomes an incident per se evitable, without theological value; in a revolutionary interpretation it becomes the heroic death of a rebel.

The truth is quite different. The cross belongs to the divine mystery—it is the expression of his love to the end (John 13:1). The Sequela of Christ is participation in the cross, uniting oneself to his love, to the transformation of our life, which becomes the birth of the new man, created according to God (see Ephesians 4:24). Whoever omits the cross, omits the essence of Christianity (see 1 Corinthians 2:2).

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers
Jubilee of Catechists, 12 December 2000