

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Students



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

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA Chapters 2 and 3; pp. 105-116; 574-588

The God who is love is a communion of persons. God is perfect love and self-gift within Himself, and this love manifests itself in the purely gratuitous act of creating. God is Creator, and His act of creating is pure gift. God creates the human person male and female – equal in dignity, made for communion, and finding unity in their sexual difference. God loves all of His creation, but only man and woman are *like God*. It is to them that God bestows the gift of freedom, and to whom He gives dominion over all of creation.

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.

Who is God?

- **Trinity**
- **Communion of persons**
- **Relation**

God is the Creator

- God creates *freely and gratuitously*
- Radical dependence on God
- All being is *gift*
- Seven day structure of creation
- All creation is *good*

The Human Person is the crown of creation

- Self-knowledge, self-possession, self-mastery
- The human person is created for love, communion, as male and female with differences that are complementary
- Unity of body and soul
- Body – matter
- Soul – created for eternal union with God; powers of the soul: intellect and will
- 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

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA pp. 116-122

God creates man and woman ultimately for an eternal union of love with Him. But the man and woman – thanks in part to the deception of the serpent (the devil) – refuse God's gift, believing the lie of the serpent which says that God withholds what is good from them. In this refusal, their eyes are opened, and they see the folly of their choice. God does not abandon the man and the woman, however. Nor does He abandon us. Instead, He promises a Savior, and immediately begins the process of preparation and healing.

What is Sin and how does it enter the world?

Human person mistrusts God and the Gift

Original sin is not a personal fault but a deprivation of holiness and justice

Consequences of sin

- Subject to ignorance
- Suffering
- Dominion of death
- Concupiscence
 - Mortal Sin (CCC 1855)
 - Venial Sin (CCC 1863)

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.

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

Week 3: The Household of God

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA pp. 122-142; 143-147

God begins that process of healing us even in the Garden, before Adam and Eve are expelled. He clothes them Himself and He promises salvation. From then on, salvation history is God teaching us what it means to be His children. He gives us laws and precepts, not to suppress our freedom or to punish us, but to teach us, protect us and save 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
- David receives the promise that the Savior will come from his line

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

Oikonomia (economia) – God's Household:

- Restore order
- Commands and precepts
- Teaching
- Disciplining
- Healing

Prophets foretell the coming of Salvation, teach the people God's ways, and train them in what is good and true.

The need for a savior:

- Restore image and likeness
- Reveal the Father's love
- Definitive defeat of death
- Grace
- Pilgrimage back to the Father

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

Person

Weekly Reading Before Class: ICA pp. 147-156; 173-175; 186-208; 856-865

Jesus Christ teaches us what it means to be a human person, and by His life, death and resurrection it is possible for us *to become like Him*, and one day be united with the Father in heaven. Living the Christian life is demanding, because love is demanding. Through His Church, God gives us what we need to meet the demands of love: the Sacraments, which give us the grace to live a virtuous life in close relationship with God; the communion of the faithful, on earth and in heaven; and the gift of prayer, which draws us more closely into relationship with God, and allows us to do the work of manifesting His love to the world.

- 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

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 Encounters the Human Person

- Relationship
- Teaching
- Healing

Jesus' life culminates in the **Paschal Mystery** – His suffering, death and resurrection.

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