

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Instructors



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

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**

Five truths about the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity are professed in the Nicene Creed. *Lord, giver of life, proceeds from Father and the Son, glorified, spoken through the prophets*

- **The Mission of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit from the beginning plays an essential role in the plan of salvation. He gives life to the Church.

See CCC 686, 737

- **Symbols of the Holy Spirit:** *Water, Anointing, Fire, Cloud and Light, A hand, A dove*

- **The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church**

- **Sanctification** – The Holy Spirit elevates our prayers, sacrifices, gifts and good actions making them holy and pleasing to the Father especially with the Eucharist at Mass.
- **The Theological Virtues** – Through grace, virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit we are capable of acting in a way that brings us closer to perfection. The Theological virtues of *Faith, Hope and Love* are habits that abide in the soul.

- **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural habits that are infused into the soul. Lived in their fullness by Christ, they complete and perfect the theological virtues.

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord

- **The Fruits of the Holy Spirit:**

The natural effects of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are called the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The supernatural acts flow out of acting in accordance with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The 7 gifts are: *Love, Joy, Peace, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control*. The Tradition of the Church also lists *Modesty, Chastity, Goodness*.

- **The Charismatic Gifts**

Charisms of the Holy Spirit with the Church since Apostolic times: *Healing, prophecy, interpretation of prophecies and speaking in tongues, teaching and leadership*

Week 2: The Holy Catholic Church

ICA chapter 8

The Holy Catholic Church

What do we mean by Church? What is the Church? Translation of the Greek *ekklesia* – as “the people called together” or “called out”. As Catholics we use the word “Church” to describe all believers wherever they may be found the local faith community, and the liturgical assembly (CCC 752).

The Faith of the Church and Work of the Blessed Trinity

There are articles of faith that identify us as members of the Church.

The Church is the Work of the Blessed Trinity planned by the Father and founded by Christ. The Church is revealed by the Holy Spirit and will be perfected in Heaven.

The Fathers of the Church

The Fathers of the Church have exceptional doctrinal authority living from the first through the eighth centuries A.D.

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 Pope and bishops, with the help of priests and deacons, exercise a servant leadership. Christ gave the Church a hierarchical authority to teach, rule and sanctify all her members. Christ established the Church in appointing the Apostles to lead His Church, with St. Peter as the “rock” upon which the Church would be built. Christ also sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Church and preserve her from moral and doctrinal error.

The Church Hierarchy

The structure of authority and governance in the Church is called hierarchy, meaning *sacred order*. In the Church, those in authority – the Pope and those bishops, priests, and deacons in communion with him serve the members by teaching and sanctifying them. This hierarchy was developed while the Twelve Apostles were still alive. Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, they passed down their authority and their traditions, so that the Church would continue on the course Christ had set for it.

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

The Magisterium is comprised of bishops of the Catholic Church in communion with and under the Pope as the visible head of the Church on earth. As successors to the Apostles, they are entrusted with and guided by the teaching authority of Christ Himself.

Apostolic Succession refers to the Pope and every bishop having direct lineage to the Apostles themselves who receive their authority from Christ.

The Papacy

Who is the Pope? What is Infallibility? The Pope is the apostolic successor to St. Peter and he shares Peter's authority to rule the Church. His authority over the Church is full, supreme and universal. He possesses the gift of infallibility; he teaches "free from error" in matters of faith and morals. Christ instituted the Church as a collegial body with the Pope at her head. *See CCC 880-881, Dei Filius 4:1-9*

Election of the Pope

Bishops – *Shepherds of the local Church*

Bishops are successors of the Apostles who exercise the fullness of the priesthood of Christ. Generally bishops reside over a particular church; a specific diocese.

The Priesthood /Diaconate

What is a priest's principal task? What is the task of a Deacon?

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

Week 3: Church as Mystery

ICA Chapter 8 - pp 270 – 293

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

ICA Chapter 8 – pp 278-279 Lumen Gentium 30-38 43-47, 48-51, 52-69

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