

Stanton Center for Ministry Formation
2023-24 Spiritual Theology I
“Life in Christ: Ascetical Theology and Spiritual Practices”
Syllabus

An introduction to the basic elements of Christian spirituality and a study of Christian disciplines that move the student further into the transformed and lived life of Christ. This class will emphasize the use of Christian Scripture and Christian experience in light of Biblical revelation and Christian tradition with Anglican and Benedictine spirituality as the foundation.

This course will answer the following questions:

- What happened to me at my Baptism? Where do I go from there?
- What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?
- What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?
- What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?
- What spiritual practices are suited to my journey with Christ?
- How do I share my experience with others?

Facilitators: Bishop Michael Smith and Patricia Mackey Stone

Requirements:

1. Regular attendance in-person or via Zoom and participation in class discussions.
2. Bring Bible and appropriate text to class.
3. The construction and development of a Rule of Life. Due January.
4. Two reflection papers of between 2 and 3 pages on the assigned readings to demonstrate what interests you and speaks to your own life with God. Due December and April.
5. Journal reflections of 200-300 words monthly consisting of life lessons that can be shared in class. Due monthly.
6. A spiritual autobiography will be the final product for the class. Due last class.

Texts Required:

NRSV Study Bible or translation of your choice.

Chittister OSB, Joan. *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century*. Crossroad, Second Edition, 2010. **OR** Sutera OSB, Judith. *St. Benedict’s Rule: An Inclusive Translation and Daily Commentary*. Liturgical Press, 2021

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1989. (Please get study guide edition)

Gatta, Julia. *Life in Christ: Practicing Christian Spirituality*. New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2018.

Pennington, Basil. *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*. New York: Crossroad, 1998 OR Enzo Bianchi.

Pennington, Keating, Clarke. *Finding Grace at the Center: The Beginning of Centering Prayer, 3rd Ed.* Woodstock VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2016.

Williams, Rowan. *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B Erdman's Publishing Company, 2016.

Underhill, Evelyn. *Abba*. New York: Moorhouse Publishing, 1981

Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. New Kensington, PA.: Whitaker House, 1982.

Sessions

1. August – Overview of the class:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?

- Anglican/Benedictine Spirituality

Stanton Center Eucharist

2. : September

What happened to me at my Baptism? Where do I go from there?

- Gatta, Introduction and Chapter 1: "Reliving Christ's Death and Resurrection"
- Gatta, "Rule of Life," pp. 179-184.
- Foster, Chapter 1, pp. 1-17

Spiritual Practice: "*Rule of Life*." (Pat Stone)

3. October

What are the marks of a life lived "in Christ"?

What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- Pennington, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*.
- Gatta, Chapter 4: "Prayer in Solitude," pp 159-166
- Foster Chapter 5, pp. 78-96

Spiritual Practice: "*Lectio Divina*" (Michael Smith)

4. November:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?

What are the marks of a life lived "in Christ"?

What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- Gatta, Chapter 4: "Prayer in Solitude" pp.128-139 and pp.148-151 and 154-159

- Foster, Chapter 2 and 3 and 7, pp 19-58, pp.120-136
- Pennington, et al, Finding Grace at the Center
- Stone, Pat: “Quiet Prayer” (handout)

Spiritual Practice: “*Contemplative Prayer*” (Pat Stone)

5. December:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?

What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?

What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- Williams, Being Disciples, Essentials of the Christian Life.
- Foster, Chapter 6, pp. 99-119
- Sharing Rule of Life

Spiritual Practice: Community Gathering and *Group Lectio*: (Michael Smith and Pat Stone)

6. January:

What spiritual practices are suited to my journey with Christ?

How do I share my experience with others?

- Gatta, Chapter 4: pp. 151-153
- Foster, Chapter 10, pp. 179-196
- Examen app

Spiritual Practice: “*Prayer of Examen*” (Marcia Hotchkiss)

7. February:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?

What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?

What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- The Book of Common Prayer (please bring it to class)
- Gatta, Chapter 3: “Sanctifying Time through the Liturgical Round” (40 pages)
- Foster, Chapter 11, pp.197-217

Spiritual Practice: *The Use of the Book of Common Prayer, Church Calendar*: (Michael Smith)

8. March:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?

What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?

What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- Gatta, Chapter 4: “Prayer in Solitude” pp. 139-147, pp. 167-178
- Foster. Refresh Chapters 2 and 3
- Underhill, Abba.
- Pat Stone: “Handout-The Lord’s Prayer”

Spiritual Practice: *The Lord’s Prayer and other approaches* (Pat Stone)

9. April:

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?
 What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?
 What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?

- Gatta, Chapter 2, pp 37-86
- Foster, Chapter 8, pp. 137-156
- Brother Lawrence, “The Practice of the Presence of God”

Spiritual Practice: *The Practice of the Presence*, (Drew Crowson)

10. May: What happened to me at my Baptism? Where do I go from there?

What are the expectations in scripture for a transformed life?
 What are the marks of a life lived “in Christ”?
 What are the spiritual practices used in Christian tradition?
 What spiritual practices are suited to my journey with Christ?
 How do I share my experience with others?

- Gatta, Spiritual Direction, pp 184-192
- Foster, Chapter 12, pp. 218-236

Spiritual Practice: *Spiritual Direction*, (Michael Smith and Pat Stone)

Schedule: Monthly beginning in August 2023 through May 2024
 Dallas Class begins at 12:30 p.m. | Greenwich Class begins at 1:30 p.m.

Session One: Devotion, Sharing of Reflections on Text
 Session Two: Review of Readings, Teaching
 15 Minute Break
 Session Three: Spiritual Practice: Teaching and Practice
 (Schedule for every class unless changed for Diocesan Calendars)

Class Dates: August 19, 2023; September 30, 2023; October 21, 2023; November 18, 2023;
 December 16, 2023; January 20, 2024; February 17, 2024; March 16, 2024; April 20, 2024;
 May 18, 2024