

STMM 561 CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER Fall Quarter 2007

Date: September 15-16, October 13-14, November 10-11

Instructor: Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to **introduce** students to some important themes in contemporary Christian spirituality and to a variety of approaches to prayer. Students will apply these themes to reflect upon and articulate their personal spirituality. They will also be invited to explore the theological and pastoral implications of these different approaches to prayer and spirituality. Keeping a **reflection journal** is strongly recommended for this course as a means of gaining insight and growth into one's spiritual journey. Class sessions will include lecture, prayer experiences, reflective times, music and discussion.

OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with the key elements of contemporary Christian spirituality and how these themes find expression in one's personal spirituality.
2. To experience and become familiar with a variety of prayer forms that will enable one to practice those forms which express one's personal spirituality.
3. To deepen one's process of self-reflection and to be able to articulate one's relationship to the God of one's understanding.
4. To deepen one's appreciation for the sacredness of all life.
5. To reflect on and evaluate the pastoral implications of the different approaches to prayer and spirituality.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bass, Dorothy C. ed. (1997) *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cannato, Judy. (2006) *Radical Amazement*. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books.

Fiand, Barbara. (1999) *Prayer and the Quest for Healing*.
New York, NY: Crossroad.

Palmer, Parker. (1990) *The Active Life*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Rohr, Richard and friends. ed. (2006) *Contemplation in Action*.
New York, NY: Crossroad.

Vennard, Jane E. (2003) *Embracing the World: Praying for Justice and Peace*.
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

A packet of articles to be read for the course will be available the second weekend.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Hart, Thomas. (2004) *What Does it Mean to be a Man?* New York: Paulist.
- Keating, Thomas. (1999) *The Human Condition: Contemplation and Transformation*. New York: Paulist.
- Killen, Patricia O'Connell. (1997) *Finding Our Voices: Women, Wisdom and Faith*. New York: Crossroad.
- Ulanov, Ann and Barry. (1982) *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**FIRST WEEKEND****Saturday Morning:**

- Introduction to Course
- Descriptions/images of spirituality
- Brief historical overview of Christian Spirituality

Saturday Afternoon:

- Key themes of contemporary Christian Spirituality

Sunday Morning:

- Spirituality: The Dance of the Mystic and the Prophet

SECOND WEEKEND**Saturday Morning:**

- Spirituality: The Dance Continues
- Pastoral Implications regarding diverse spiritualities

Saturday Afternoon:

- Divers experience of spirituality: gender, culture, sexual orientation

Sunday Morning:

- Overview of Christian Prayer
- Images of God

THIRD WEEKEND**Saturday Morning:**

- Prayer as Embodiment
- Stages and Approaches to Prayer

Saturday Afternoon:

- Prayer Rituals and Prayer Ways
- Insights about Prayer

Sunday Morning:

Pastoral Implications regarding Prayer
Refocusing on Spirituality and Prayer

Throughout the weekends we will participate in various prayer experiences during class.

PRE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Read *Radical Amazement* and *Contemplation in Action* before the first weekend session. Please read the books with your “head and heart.” Take notes (not to be handed in) and keep track of questions, resistances, “ahas” and concerns that emerge for you.
2. Establish or re-affirm a **15 minute daily prayer practice** at least a month before the course begins.
3. Write a 3-4 page, double spaced **Reflection Paper** that describes your spiritual life including your prayer practices, spiritual disciplines and your relationships to God. Please include questions, struggles or concerns you have regarding your own spiritual journey or in light of your ministry.
Due: September 15, 2007
5. Please fill out the attached questionnaire and return it by e-mail or regular mail to Alexandra (as instructed on the form) by **September 1, 2007**. Your responses will help me to create the course content and processes.
Thank You!

**CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER
STMM 561**

NAME: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Ministry/Work: _____ **E-mail:** _____

1. Name the courses/workshops you have taken in the last three years that focus on spirituality and/or prayer.

2. Name three goals you hope to achieve during this course for yourself.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

3. What fears/concerns do you have about this course?

4. Name **a person** (living or dead) who has had a significant influence on your spiritual life. Describe that influence.

5. What image and/or name of God is most significant to you at this time in your life?

6. What themes/topics/concerns emerge for you regarding spirituality and/or prayer in light of your ministry?

7. What situations/processes/activities help you to learn best?

8. Do you feel called to lead a prayer in class?
(Focus at beginning of class or after the break, or a longer prayer experience.)

What form/type of prayer would you use? (e.g. Taize prayer, centering prayer, psalm reading, movement, guided imagery, a song, a poem, scripture, ritual, etc.) Please describe it.

- 9 Do you feel called to create a sacred space for class that would be a visual reminder of the presence of Mystery and an expression of spirituality?
10. Do you feel called to be part of a panel that explores spirituality in relation to gender (male/female) ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation?
11. Further comments/suggestions/information that would help me to respond to your learning needs....

Due Date: September 1, 2007

Please return Questionnaire to: Alexandra Kovats, csjp, Ph.D.
1104 21st Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

or e-mail to: cosmicdancer@comcast.net

Thank You!