

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Fall 2018

ST 3035 In Search of the Church: Building Ecclesiology

3.0 units (5 ECTS) – Thursdays: 9:40-12:30: DSPT Classroom 1

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Course Description

Beginning with Scriptural passages that highlight the Church of the Origins, we examine the rising of the Christian community and the progressive self-awareness of the community as it organized to respond to the call of the Gospel and the needs of the times.

We then continue by surveying the “quest for ecclesiology” in the movement from the Reformation and the Council of Trent to the 20th century, Vatican II and the global Church at the start of the Third Millennium.

In the final portion of the course we highlight tasks confronting the Church in the contemporary world: Church as mystery; prophetic and pilgrim People sent to announce and celebrate salvation; community of disciples that witnesses and serves.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you will have gained an overview of what is called ecclesiology or the theology of Church (by all accounts one of the newer branches of theology). In addition to having an insight into how Christians of various traditions identify Church, you will have worked with some of the social and theological notions that build paradigms for Church today.

You will have learned the principles of ecclesiology, and honed skills in bibliographical research and analysis of popular and scholarly church texts through participation in class/group discussions, by two scholarly book reviews and by sharing your insights through group-work and class presentations.

Tools for assessment

In addition to attendance and class participation, your learning in this course will be assessed on the basis of participation in group discussions, one class presentation and two book reviews.

Group and class discussions will be based on reading assignments.

The written assignments will be done in stages. You will begin by preparing an annotated bibliography of ten (10) works published Catholic pastors or theologians who have written on Church. Choose theologians or pastors from the 20th and 21st centuries. Based on the bibliography that you have produced, study the work of one theologian/pastor as the basis of a short research paper (10 pages) on that pastor/theologian's teaching on the Church. You will offer a summary of your research in a presentation to the class (style and method to be discussed). You will be able to use process and product to fulfill the *Research Paper Review* (RPR) required for all M.A. Theology students at DSPT.

Scheduling

During the first class meeting, we will firm up the instruction calendar and due dates for assignments. A commitment for the Salesians necessitates my absence several times before Reading Week. The lecture schedule and reading deadlines will need to be adjusted by common agreement with students. The course schedule will be finalized during the first week of class.

Format: Survey course built on lecture and group discussion of assigned readings.
Evaluation: Class participation; bibliographic research; 2 book reviews; group work and class presentation [3.0 units].

Texts

Instructor's notes: Boenzi, Joseph. *In search of the Church: building ecclesiology*. Notes for the private use of the students of ST3035; *pro manuscriptu*. Berkeley: Institute of Salesian Studies, 2018 [\$32.00]

Dulles, Avery. *Models of the Church*. 2d expanded ed. Garden City: Doubleday-Image Books, 2002. [ISBN: 0385133685; \$12.00]

Francis, Pope. *The Name of God is Mercy*. A conversation with Andrea Torielli; translated by Oonagh Stransky. New York: Random House, 2016 [ISBN: 978-0399588631; \$13.66]

Recommended reading (optional texts)

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second edition revised in accordance with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II; contains glossary and analytical index. New York: Random House, 2003. [ISBN: 978-0385508193; \$10.12]

Allen, John L., Jr. *The Future Church: How Ten Trends Are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church*. Reprint ed. New York: Image Books, 2012. [ISBN: 978-0385520393; \$11.08]

Francis, Pope. *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium*, apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 2013. [ISBN: 978-1601374585; \$12.52].

Gaillardetz, Richard R. *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism*. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2015 [ISBN: 978-0814683095; \$19.95].

McBrien, Richard P. *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism*. New York: HarperOne, 2008. [ISBN: 978-0061245213; \$19.77]

Course Themes

Church: “What’s in a name?”

We begin with an overview of Ecclesiology, as a discipline and a passion. The first step is to survey the language of ecclesiology – the terminology – beginning with the expression “church”, first as it is found in the Hebrew Scriptures (three levels of meaning used among the community of Israel) and in the New Testament (Assembly of God or Church of Christ?). A number of passages are presented for reflection and discussion.

Church: traces and images

From terminology, we pass to imagery. How is the Church depicted in the New Testament? What are the traits of the early Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles? The disciples of Jesus gather, *convoked by the Spirit*, and their growing community is seen as both faith-filled and faithful. Is this an historical reporting, or an ideal towards which the community was called to strive?

From the accounts in Acts of the Apostles, the course moves to examine the Church as described by Paul: his description of actual communities (Corinth) and his theological presentation of the Church’s vocation (community of called and gifted, Body of Christ, Bride of Christ...) Other scriptural “images” to designate the early Church (such as People of God) are then examined.

Jesus Christ: Origin of the Church

St Paul identifies the Church with Jesus Christ. If we are to build on this relationship, we need to examine the Paschal events of Christ’s own passion, death and resurrection, and the events of the sending of the Holy Spirit for a Pentecost in the formation of the Church.

As the Early Church moved through the events of the Resurrection and the Pentecost to a new understanding of Jesus’ entire life and mission, Christians began to reflect on the entire journey of Israel as the People that God freed from slavery, set apart from the nations, instructed by the prophets. They saw the coming of Jesus in terms of the fulfillment of the divine promise to Israel, but also as a means of bringing all people to life and salvation... and in this sense, they concluded that Jesus came essentially to found the Church.

Incarnation, Passion and Passover, Sending the Spirit, sharing Eucharist: all are founding moments and founding elements that continually build and rebuild the Church.

But if the Church is divine, it is also build on a human rock and constructed with living stones. We look at the calling of the disciples and of the Twelve, both a preparation and a founding element as Jesus gathers a community to serve the Reign of God.

Holy Spirit Present in the Church

All of Salvation History revolves around a Promise, and as the Gospel stories develop, we become more and more aware of a new Promise – that Jesus will send the Holy Spirit. In this unit we will examine how the Early Church understood concepts such as the *gifts of the Spirit* and the reality of the Spirit's *abiding presence*. We will examine John's Gospel differs from the teachings of St Paul on these themes.

Development of Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is a relatively new discipline within systematic theology. Until the 20th Century few Christians thought it necessary to attempt a definition of Church. Even during periods of schism and religious wars, disputing sides all agreed that Church was a *given*. However, different ways of imaging Church led to different understanding, and different theologies.

In this unit we take time to examine the images, concepts, reflections of Church in the teachings of the «Fathers» of the Eastern, African and Western Churches in post-apostolic times (Patristic Era). A second era to study is that of the Middle Ages, where in Europe we see the westernization of Christianity, systematic ordering of theology through the Scholastic movement, and the move toward papal primacy. This leads us into the Modern Era, with Renaissance and Reformation: John Calvin's *Institutes* and his concept of *spiritual church*; the Council of Trent and its stress on *institution* and *the real*. In the centuries that follow, there are alternate waves where Christians perceive themselves as “people of the Book” or as “devout and graced pilgrims.”

The Church as Mystery

Throughout the first millennium, the Church was considered one of the *mysteries* linked intimately to Christ and his mission. During the modern era, scholars and leaders were more concerned with science and system. Rather than attempt a definition, we will look at descriptions of Church that respect the mysterious and mystic elements of the Church's *nature*.

In this unit we will have the opportunity to survey briefly the teachings of Thomas Aquinas on the Church and those of some of his contemporaries. We then move to the proposed schema of the First ecumenical council of the Vatican (Vatican I: 1869-70), the *magisterium* of Pius XII (1939-58) on Church and Christians, the constitutions and decrees of Vatican II (1962-65) on the nature of the Church and the Church in the contemporary world, and ends with reflections made through the post-conciliar period on grace and mystery as the object of faith.

Marks of Church: Unity

The Church journeys through history and, at the same time, transcends time and culture: this, as we have seen, is an aspect that makes Church a *mystery*. This Church that is *mystery* is the unique Church that, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, we profess to be *one, holy, catholic* and *apostolic*. In this and the following three units, we look at these four attributes or *marks* of the Church.

To begin, we reflect on the Church as One. What are the foundations of this belief? What are the implications? When we speak of *oneness* as *unity*, is that the same as *communion*?

It is here that we look at the issues of particular churches and church universal; of spiritual gifts (plurality of charisms), of separation between ecclesial communities, communion among believers and communities, building on the scriptural call to *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism* [Eph 4:5].

Marks of Church: Holiness

Holiness is the second mark of the Church. In this unit we begin with the Scriptures and survey Jesus' quest for holiness. It was this that gave him *authority* as a teacher (and as Messiah).

Moving from Scripture, we will look at the insights of the faithful over the centuries, as well as the *magisterium* of the Church, particularly of Vatican II, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Marks of Church: Catholicity

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers an authoritative explanation of the term *catholicity* that opens us to discuss this mark of the Church from various perspectives. To say *catholic* is to affirm that the Church's mission is universal just as it is evangelical. Salvation is a universal message and a universal invitation. From the beginning of the Church, we read in *Acts of the Apostles*, the life of the community of Christ's disciples made sense only when they reached out to others. The *primitive* Christian community shows us the "beginnings" of the universal mission of the Church – an affirmation of the universal mission of Christ (*et pro vobis et pro multis!*).

People of God is a vocational concept – a people called to move toward God while inviting others to "taste and see the Goodness of the Lord!" Catholicity, therefore, does not present the pilgrim with an easy road.

Delving into this topic, we look at the experience of Saint Augustine and his teaching on the Universality of the Church. We look at the testimony of martyrs, and how this influences the work of evangelization. We also ask some hard questions, like:

- Who belongs to the Catholic Church? (*Catechism* 836-838)
- What is the actual relationship between the Church and Non-Christians? (*Catechism* 839-845)

- How central is *mission* to being Church? (*Catechism* 849-856)

Marks of Church: Apostolicity

The Church cannot be universal unless it is also missionary. The fourth mark of the Church is that it is *apostolic*. But how do we understand apostolic? This mark has something of a horizontal dimension and something of a vertical dimension, for the Church, to be faithful, must be rooted in Christ through the apostles. At the same time, it must go out to the whole world and announce the Good News, not of its own accord, but as a community *sent* by Christ, *the apostle of the Father*.

In this unit we look at the New Testament through the early community's *kerygma* – Church is sent to proclaim Jesus. The apostles are presented to us (*Acts, Pauline letters*) as receiving a mission directly from Jesus. From Scriptural descriptions to the assertions of the Fathers (Patristic era), we see the Church presented as a people on a mission – a universal mission. These concepts (and images) found new resonance during the 20th Century as theologians stressed *apostolate*. Their reflections lead up to Vatican II: the Church in all her members is “sent out” into the whole world

Models of Church: Institutional Paradigm

Building on imagery used by Avery Dulles, in his landmark study *Models of the Church*, we look at the models and mental constructs that have served in discussions of the Church over the ages. Dulles presents us with five models, to which he adds a sixth. The first model or paradigm is the *Church as Institution*. This model looks at Church as a juridical society, with the division and distinction of powers. Christ's three-fold mission of teaching, sanctifying and guiding is institutionalized in a hierarchical conception of authority.

- How does the Institutional model conceive of the unity of the Church?
- Has the longing for unity that moved many people away from this model?

Models of Church: Communion Paradigm

During World War II, Pope Pius XII proposed a model of Church as Communion when he spoke about the *Mystical Body of Christ*. This image, strong in the letters of St Paul, seemed apropos during a period of universal suffering of a world at war. Pius' approach brought about more than a consolation: it signaled a shift in theology. Insights from the “human sciences” (as Roman documents are inclined to call psychology, sociology and related sciences) allowed the Church to be seen as an ongoing incarnation. Christian worship soldered the relationship between the believer and God, but, in the corporate image of *mystical body*, also brought the individual into communion and fellowship with fellow believers and (why not?) non-believers.

Models that follow the Communion paradigm look at notions of *primary groups, secondary groups*, and their impact of wider society. Membership in Christ (stressing the corporate but not the institutional) also implies a call to holiness: a universal call to holiness.

Vatican II built its ecclesiology on this model, articulated by Pius XII in the 1940s but developed over the two decades between his encyclical and the convocation of the ecumenical council. Perhaps it was this paradigm-shift that made Vatican II possible in the first place.

- How does this perspective shape the Church's self-understanding?
- Who benefits in the Church after such a paradigm shift?

Models of Church: Sacrament

Beginning with the notion of *sacramentality* rather than of specific sacraments, Vatican II described the *general sacramentality* of the Church. Such an approach opens a discussion on the nature of *sacramentality* itself. For those who hold a sacramental model of Church as most characteristic, Christ is presented as the *primordial* or *basic sacrament*. The Church, reflecting Christ, is seen as an *effective community of salvation*.

To speak of Church as Sacrament is to open a highly metaphorical discourse while striving to be most concrete. Liturgy and worship are important features of such an understanding of Church, but typically sacramental ecclesiology opens the discussion of the mission of the Church to work for the transformation of Society into a more just and humane reality while presenting Christ as Savior of humankind.

Models of Church: Herald

The “Herald Model” of Church places the primary emphasis on the “word” with little or no emphasis on the “sacramental” aspects of the Church. The singular mission of the Church is seen to be *proclamation (kerygma)*: to proclaim what has been heard and what is believed. This model is endorsed in the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* (Vatican II 1965).

In this model of Church, it is constantly affirmed that the Word of God is more than just a set of ideas or ideals, information or doctrine. It is the self-revelation of God. The Word of God, in this context, is understood as inviting each human person to a deeper relationship with God.

Models of Church: Servant

The Servant Model allows us to take a different look at Church altogether. The emphasis is not on the Church as the subject, but on the Other: on God and neighbor.

As always, the image of Church derives from Christology – and in this case, it is Christ as God's Servant.

Models of the Church: Community of Disciples

This is essentially a new model of Church. In responding to the teachings of John Paul II on Church, Avery Dulles rethinks the models that he had presented earlier. Gathered by the Spirit around the Risen Lord, the Church lives to announce Christ's gift of salvation

(*kerygma*) as prompted by the Spirit (who empowers us to believe). In this paradigm, believers gather around Christ – but it is the Risen Christ whom they put at the center!

Church under the eschatological lens

As we approached the third Christian millennium, Catholics prepared with a three-year *triduum* of prayer, repentance, reconciliation. Christ at the center, the *same yesterday, today and forever!* – presented himself anew to the world during the *Great Jubilee*. The year 2000, the last of the old millennium, was celebrated as a year of grace.

Many non-Christians, and not a few bible-based ecclesial communities, looked at the years approaching the 21st Century as the *End Times*. Y2K, emergency kits, duct tape, the rapture... themes such as these made gathering in Times Square on 31 December 1999 an ominous event.

Millennialism has not been a strong feature of Catholicism since the time of St Augustine. This does not take away the fact that the Church looks forward to the *End Times*, the *Parousia*. To proclaim the Gospel has always meant prompting consideration of the origin and the end of humanity. We take a quick look at eschatological themes as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, reflecting on the *kingdom* of God, and such New Testament images of Christ as Shepherd, King, Judge. We will also look at the theme of *worship* and *liturgy*, as expressed in the documents of Vatican II.

Third Christian Millennium

The New Evangelization: At the end of the *Great Jubilee 2000*, the Church moved outward through the Holy Door of God's House, and right into the midst of the world in new times. The Church heard Jesus call us to *put out into deep waters* and to launch the Christian message anew. Reflecting again on the Gospels and in this fiftieth year since the conclusion of Vatican, we will take time to delve into the question of the New Evangelization, with special attention to the appeals of Pope Francis during the Year of Mercy.