

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

Instructor: Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P.

Office Hours (DSPT 116 East): Tue–Fri. 11:00–12:00 but **only** if you have made an appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

History of the Church from the Apostolic Period until the end of the Middle Ages, focusing, in particular, on its transformation from a small Jewish sect into the international Church of the middle ages. Some attention will be paid to the development of doctrine, but more emphasis will be placed on piety and worship, dissent, missions, mysticism, ecclesiastical organization, and Church relations to secular government. The course will use a lecture / class discussion format.

The **goal** of this course will be that the students acquire a foundational knowledge of the history of Christianity in the ancient and medieval periods, so that they can critically evaluate modern Christian belief and practice in the light of their deep origins.

The **outcomes** will be that the students become proficient in interpreting and discussing sources for those periods orally (demonstrated by participation in class discussions), and that they be able to analyze and interpret them in writing (proved by written examinations and short papers).

Required Reading (Prices on Amazon.com)

The Bible.

Apostolic Fathers, *Early Christian Writings* [ECW], Staniforth, tr. (London: Penguin, 1987); ISBN 978-0140444759 (\$10.08).

St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions*, F. Sheed, tr., 2d ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007); ISBN 978-0872208162 (\$8.95).

Christianity and Paganism, 350-750: The Conversion of Western Europe, J. N. Hilgarth ed. (Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn., 1986); ISBN 978-0812212136 (\$22.50).

The Little Flowers of St. Francis, R. Brown, ed. (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960); ISBN 978-0385075442 (\$8.76).

Catherine of Genoa, *Purgation and Purgatory, The Spiritual Dialogue*, Serge Hughes tr. (N.Y.: Paulist, 1979); ISBN 978-0809122073 (\$13.57).

Optional Book: *Documents of the Christian Church*. Henry Bettenson, ed., 3. ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) ISBN 978-0192880710 (\$18.59). For those interested in theology.

Other Requirements of Course:

1. A Test on the Ancient Section of course (30% of grade).
2. A Test on the Medieval Section of Class (30% of grade)
2. Two careful essays as described below (40% of grade: each one worth 20%).
4. *Active* participation in discussions (has effect on grade).

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I: SYLLABUS

WEEK ONE: THE ANCIENT RELIGIOUS WORLD

Read: "Non-Christians on Christianity" (reader) and
1 Corinthians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon in NT
Optional: Bettenson, pp. 1-4

Sep. 3—**Lecture: Mediterranean Religious Culture**

Sep. 6—**Lecture: Forming Christian Identity: Pagans**

WEEK TWO: SUB-APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY

Have Read:
Hegesippus and Papias (Reader); 1 Clement, Ignatius (except Romans),
and Letter of Polycarp in ECW
Optional: Bettenson, pp. 66-67, 74-77.

Sept. 10—**Discussion: Christianity at A.D. 100**

Sept. 13—**Lecture: Forming Christian Identity: Heretics**

WEEK THREE: DOCETISM AND GNOSTICISM

Have Read: Gnostic and Montanist Texts in Reader
Optional: Bettenson, pp. 67-74.

Sept. 17—**Discussion: The Gnostic Alternative**

Sept. 20—**Lecture: The Clash of Christians and Romans**

WEEK FOUR: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Have Read: "Romans," "Martyrdom of Polycarp," in ECW
Passion of Perpetua and other Martyr Acta (packet).
Optional: Bettenson, pp. 12-15.

Sept. 24—**Discussion: The Cult of the Martyrs**

Sept. 27—**Lecture: Christianity and Culture**

WEEK FIVE: THE IMPERIAL CHURCH

Read: Hilgarth, pp. 11-64.
Have read: Constantine, Oration to the Saints (packet)

Oct. 1—**Discussion: Constantine's Oration**

Oct. 4—**Lecture: Augustine's World**

WEEK SIX: AUGUSTINE

Have Read: Augustine's *Confessions*

Oct. 8—**Lecture: The Conversion of the Barbarians**

Oct. 11—**Discussion: *Confessions***

WEEK SEVEN: AFTER EMPIRE

Read: Hilgarth, pp. 65–116.

Optional: Hilgarth, pp. 117–77.

Oct. 15—**TEST ON ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY**

Oct. 18: No class. Instructor away at a Conference.

READING WEEK (Oct. 21–26): No class

WEEK EIGHT: “MEDIEVAL” CHRISTIANITY

Have Read: Investiture Documents (packet)

Oct. 29 —**Lecture: Carolingian Christianity**

Nov. 1 —**Lecture: Peace, Crusade, and Investiture** (REFLECTION PAPER ONE DUE)

WEEK NINE: THE NEW PIETY

Read: *Little Flowers*, part 1–2 (parts 3 & 4 optional)

Optional: Hilgarth, pp. 178–204; Bettenson, pp. 97–101.

Nov. 5 —**Discussion: Medieval Church and State**

Nov. 8 —**Lecture: Piety and Sacramentalism**

WEEK TEN: FRANCISCANISM

Francis Testament (packet)

Optional: Bettenson, pp. 116–32.

Nov. 12 —**Lecture: St. Francis and the New Piety**

Nov. 16 —**Discussion: Little Flowers**

WEEK ELEVEN: HERESY

Read: Cathar Documents (packet)

Optional: Bettenson, pp. 132–35

Nov. 19 —**Lecture: Medieval Dissent**

Nov. 21–24: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

WEEK TWELVE: SCHOLASTICISM TO SCHISM

Optional: Bettenson, pp. 135–51

Nov. 26 —**Discussion: Catharism**

Nov. 29 —**Lecture: Scholastic Culture**

WEEK THIRTEEN: THE MYSTICAL ALTERNATIVE

Have Read: Catherine of Genoa

Optional: B. Groeschel, "Introduction," *ibid.*, pp. 1–43

Optional: Bettenson, pp. 166–82.

Dec. 3 — **Lecture: Late Medieval Crises** (REFLECTION PAPER II DUE)

Dec. 6 — **Discussion: *Purgation and Purgatory***

EXAM WEEK:

Dec. 10 — **Lecture: *Onto the Reformation?***

Dec. 13 — **Second test**, on Medieval Christianity

Purposes, Outcomes, and Grading Rubrics for the Course

Course Goals

This introductory level survey course seeks to impart to students:

1. A sufficient understanding of the institutional, intellectual, and cultural history of the Church from the post-Biblical period to the end of the Middle Ages sufficient to allow them **intellectual integration** of deeper studies on these thinkers or those influenced by them.
2. A sense of the ever provisional nature of all historical studies, which should encourage the students to model the **academic humility** and openness to contrasting opinions and methods that inform historical debate.
3. By reading difficult and alien writers on their own and achieving the mastery necessary to perform well on the course exams, the students should begin to develop the **self-direction** necessary for their future historical study.
4. Since the essay questions for the exams will be distributed before the exam and the students encouraged to work together preparing their answers, the course will foster a climate of **collaboration** and common ownership proper to research work and teaching.
5. By encountering a thought world that is profoundly different from our own modern one, students will acquire new perspectives that will allow them to **prophetically challenge** the commonplaces and prejudices of modern culture.

Course Outcomes

1. A **broad knowledge** of the history of the ancient and medieval Church as a whole, including non-normative Christianity (“heresies”) in both periods.
2. Beyond the broad outlines, ability to produce more **focused and critical written reflections** of a collection of ancient Christian texts (martyr acta or the writing of Ignatius of Antioch) and one of medieval Christian texts (the Little Flowers of St. Francis).
3. The **ability to communicate** the fruits of their study, especially in class discussions..
4. The ability to bring sound historical conclusions to bear on **contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues**, especially during discussions.
5. An understanding of the historical relations between the Church and **non-Christian religions**, in particular ancient paganism and medieval Islam.

Grading Rubrics

“A” signifies a comprehensive and accurate general understanding of the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and a sure and solid control of the ideas of all authors studied.

“A-“ signifies a generally solid familiarity with the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and the ability to sketch out the basic ideas of the major authors and most minor authors studied.

“B+” signified a basic familiarity with the general development of ancient and medieval Christianity, but somewhat sketchy recall of the ideas of individual authors, including the major ones.

This is only marginally satisfactory in master's level work, even in an introductory class.

“B” signifies even less secure understanding of development and serious lacunae for even major authors. As such, although passing, this is probably not sufficient quality for master's credit.

Below a “B” means that, for all intents and purposes, the performance is so poor that it could not be used to fulfil requirements in a master's program.

NOTE: If you need special arrangements to meet the course requirements for reasons of some documented disability, please see the instructor after the first meeting of the seminar.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I: PAPER TOPICS AND WRITING

There are two short reflection papers required in this course, both to be about 7 to 10 pages maximum. The focus on two phenomena that help form how Christians thought about themselves: Church Leadership and Martyrdom in ancient Christianity and the “New Piety” identified with the Franciscans in the High Middle Ages.

TOPIC FOR PAPER ONE

Chose one of the two following options.

A. Using the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch as your source, propose and defend a thesis concerning Ignatius’s understanding of the nature of the Christian community, his “ecclesiology.” (Do not write a paper contrasting his views with those of the “New Testament”—it did not exist in the form we know it until after A.D. 150.)

B. Using the “Passion of Perpetua,” the “Martyrdom of Polycarp,” the “Letter of Ignatius to the Romans,” and other martyr texts in the reader if you wish, propose and defend a thesis concerning the way second-century Christians understood martyrdom and how it related to the life of the community. (You should not write a paper that focuses on the personalities of the writers).

TOPIC FOR PAPER TWO

Identify and discuss some aspect of medieval Christian piety as expressed by the authors of the *Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*. Pick a theme to develop it using this document as your source. A sampling of themes is given on the reading guide for the *Little Flowers*. You need not restrict yourself to those themes, but you must have a specific theme. (A book report on the *Little Flowers* is not an acceptable paper; nor is a biography of St. Francis—remember that the stories in the *Little Flowers* are often of dubious historical value.)

SOURCES AND METHOD

These papers are an exercise in analyzing historical texts. DO NOT go to the library to look up what “the experts” think. I want to see YOU grapple with these texts. Historians do not have much more than you have. Follow these steps:

1) Finish reading the source readings before they are discussed in class. As you are reading them, watch for attitudes, ideas, theological issues, or topics that are both important to the author of the work and of interest to you.

2) Next, reread the source materials, taking WRITTEN notes (I suggest copying out relevant passages verbatim) on parts of the work that relate to the theme or thesis you are working on.

3) Reread your notes. Ask yourself, what questions do I need to answer as I develop the

theme/thesis of my paper? Four to five questions are usually right for a 7 to 10 page paper. These will become the Roman Numeral Divisions of your outline.

4) Draw up an outline for the paper and organize your written notes so that they are in the order of the outline. Your outline will probably be about 1 1/2 type written single-spaced pages and will have as its lowest level divisions the topic sentences of the paragraphs of the paper.

5) Write a draft of the paper. This is done by expanding the outline and putting in footnote references to the sources that you have collected in your notes. Reread the, adjust transitions, correct grammar and spelling, remove typos. Prepare the final copy and submit it on time.

SUGGESTIONS (WARNINGS?)

CHOOSE A TOPIC/THESIS THAT IS RELATED TO YOUR SOURCES! Some issues (“Papal Authority and the Bible,” “Women’s Role in Medieval Marriage,” etc.) may be of great interest but might be impossible to write using the sources available to you.

DO NOT WASTE PRECIOUS PAGES on a biographies of Ignatius, Perpetua, Polycarp, or Francis of Assisi. Avoid like sin generalized (stereotyped?) characterizations of ancient and medieval Christianity. The paper’s introduction should state your thesis; the paper should demonstrate and elaborate on it; the conclusion should tell the reader why your insights are important for an understanding these long-dead Christian folk. I cannot see how this kind of project can be accomplished in less than seven pages.

BUT I WILL NOT ACCEPT A PAPER OVER TEN PAGES.

If you have some doubt about your desired topic, see me during office hours.

Discussion 1:
CHRISTIANITY AT A.D. 100

Read in preparation: Barnabas, Clement, First Six Letters of Ignatius (not Romans); and in Bible 1 Corinthians.

What errors about Christ are attacked by Ignatius?

Is Christ divine (cf. Eph., Smyrn.)?

Does Christ have a real body and did he really suffer on the cross (cf. Trall.)?

How does Ignatius relate the eucharist and Christ's suffering (cf. Smyrn. 7)?

What is the status of Jewish practices in Ignatius' Church

(cf. Magnesians, Philadelphians)?

If you know Paul's letters, contrast his treatment of Judaism with that of Ignatius.

What is Ignatius view of Church organization?

What role does Eucharist play in life of Church?

How does Ignatius treat bishops?

What is the role of the bishop and other officials?

What is role of the "clergy" (literally "presbytery"--literally elders, but from which we get the word "priest")?

What is the role of deacons?

How does Ignatius relate these two groups to the people and to the bishop?

How does Ignatius relate the bishop to God (cf. Magnesians)

How is the bishop related to the Eucharist (cf. Smyrn.)

What is the bishops teaching role (cf. Ephesians)?

What does Ignatius say on marriage and chastity (cf. to Polycarp)?

How does Ignatius' Church compare to that of the *Clement* and the Pastorals?

In Ignatius' letters how do individual Churches relate to one another?

Can you identify what books of the New Testament Ignatius seems familiar with?

Discussion 2:
THE GNOSTIC ALTERNATIVE (II. CENT.)

Read: Gnostic Texts in this packet

Gnosticism was not a single coherent theology or religious organization, although all “Gnostic” texts show certain similarities. This weeks readings include “Thunder-Perfect Mind,” perhaps the most famous of all Gnostic texts. It is so unusual in form and content that some have wondered if it is “Christian” at all. The other three examples are all “Valentinian” Gnostic in origin: that is to say they mimic older “Orthodox” stories and genres of writing and come from the largest Gnostic group (or at least the one that produced the most extant writing). As you read these texts, try to answer the following general questions:

1. How do these texts approach “God” and ultimate realities. How is the God of these texts different from the God of the orthodox Christianity?
2. What is the status of creation and matter in these texts? How is this different from the views of the Catholic or Great Church?
3. What does salvation mean for these authors? What is the role of “Christ”? How does this differ from the Christ of the Catholic Gospels?
4. Can you make any guesses about how Gnostic Christian communities were organized and lead? Is it different from the Church of Ignatius and the martyrs?
5. Bauer has suggested that there were more Gnostics in the 100s and 200s than Catholic Great Church Christians (the famous “Bauer Thesis”). What would people have found appealing in this movement?
6. Even if Bauer is wrong, there were still lots of Gnostics around in the second and third century. By 300 there were none. Before that date Catholic Christians were a persecuted minority, so repression by them cannot explain the disappearance. As far as we can tell the Gnostic movement just “died.” What aspects of this popular movement can you detect that explain its rapid decline and disappearance?

Discussion 3:
The Cult of the Martyrs

Read all texts but focus on the following:

Guide Questions on Martyrdom of Polycarp.

What is the charge against Polycarp?

What is his defense?

How does he define his beliefs?

Some see eucharistic references in cc. 14-15; what do you think?

What is the attitude of his followers toward Polycarp's dead body? What is the authorities attitude about his body?

Guide Questions on Ignatius to the Romans?

How does Ignatius conceive of his death?

How does he relate his death to Christ's and to the Eucharist?

Do you think he has a death wish?

If you were a pagan, what would you think of this letter?

Guide Questions to Passion of Perpetua

Why is Perpetua arrested?

What is her father's role in this story?

What is the attitude of the authorities toward her?

Her visions:

Describe the first vision and what message Perpetua sees in it. (p. 218-19)

Describe her second vision (p. 220). What is the status of her brother? What does she do for him? What is its effect?

Describe the third vision (p. 221-22). Why would it assure her of "victory"?

What is Saturus vision? How does it relate the martyrs to Church authorities?

How do the martyrs approach their death?

Why is it called a "second baptism"?

According to this text why should Christians venerate the martyrs?

Discussion 4:
Constantine's "Oratio to the Saints"

As you read this document, think of it as a opportunity to get an idea of how the first Christian emperor understood (or failed to understand) his new faith and its relationship to paganism. Especially important is how he relates Christianity to the Greek and Roman cultural and religious heritage. Here is a breakdown of the structure of the oration, with things to consider in each part.

1. The Failure of Paganism

- Why are idolatry and polytheism wrong? How does he prove this?
- How does he view the physical universe? What does it tell us about God?
- How does he evaluate Greek Philosophy?
- What is the status of reason?
- Does Paganism (still the great majority of the empire) have a future?
 - Why or why not?

2. The Truth of Christianity

- What did God accomplish in Christ?
- How does he reply to Pagan objections?
- How does he think of Adam and Eve, the Fall, and sin?
- How does Christianity change the world? Is he optimistic or pessimistic?

3. Constantine's Proofs of Christianity

- What events of Old Testament history does he draw on to prove Christianity.
- What testimonies from paganism does he use? How convincing are they?
- Which seems more important, the pagan witness or the biblical?
 - What texts does he present?
 - What are their origins?
 - Which seem most important to him?
- Does his exposition suggest any reflection on events from his conversion to 235?

4. Constantine's conception of his role

- Throughout the oration Constantine presents himself as a servant of Christ
- How does he reflect on his rise to emperorship?
- How did he merit this rule?
- What is the nature of his rule?
- How does he relate to God?

Finally, consider that most of the bishops at Antioch had suffered through the last persecution. Try to place yourself in their place. How would you react to this new convert and his explication of your faith?

Discussion 4:
Augustine's Confessions

Guide questions on Confessions, book II

Why does Augustine spend so much time on the "Pears Incident"?
 Why did he commit this sin?
 Why did he love the act of sinning itself?
 Can the "Pear Incident" be related to the problem of sexual sin?
According to Augustine, what hope is there for a sinner?

Confessions, *III, esp. c. vi-x.*

Why did Augustine join the Manicheans?
 What did the Manicheans teach? How did they attempt to disprove Catholicism?
 Thinking of Augustine the Man, what would have drawn him to this group and its view of the world?
Taken as a whole, how did Manicheism solve Augustine's dilemmas about sin and evil?
 Why do you think he became dissatisfied?
 Why did his Manichean Faith come into crisis at the beginning of book IV?

FROM WHERE IS AUGUSTINE COMING?

What was the problem with the Manicheans? (*Confessions*, V, iii-x)
Describe Augustine's relationship with his mother. (cf. that with his father)
In book V, chapter x, Augustine encounters the Skeptics:
 What has drawn Augustine to it?
 What problems about God, Evil and Christ is Augustine struggling with?
In book VI, Augustine meets Ambrose:
 What is drawing him to Christianity now or holding him back?
In book VII, chapters vii-xvii:
 What does Augustine learn while reading the "books of the Platonists"?
Why was it good to read the Platonists before reading the Bible?

WHERE IS AUGUSTINE GOING? (book VIII)

Why did Victorinus refuse to become a Christian?
What impact does the Life of St. Antony (chapter vi) have on Augustine? Why?
 What is holding Augustine back from Christianity now?
 Does a human being have two natures?
Describe Augustine's state of mind before and after the incident in the garden (chapter xii).

Discussion 5:
THE INVESTITURE CONFLICT

1. What are Simony and “Lay Investiture”?
How are they related to the Carolingian Church-State System?
Summarize the positions of Peter Damian and Humbert on Reform.
2. What was Gregory VII’s program?
What is his view of the make-up of the Church?
How does his condemnation of lay investiture fit into this program?
3. How did the Gregorian Crisis develop?
Outline the development of the crisis chronologically.
What is Gregory’s complaint against Henry?
What is Henry’s charge against Gregory?
How do Gregory and Henry justify their depositions?

The Royal and Papal Positions

1. What is Gregory’s Position on Church and State?
What are the nature and sources of ecclesiastical authority?
What is the origin of temporal authority?
What is the proper relation of Church and State?
2. What is the Royalist Position?
What are the origins of royal and church authority?
Who should rule the Church? Why?
Why is the King “God through Grace”?
3. Be ready to contrast the Gregorian and Royal Positions, on Sources of authority, relative power, “division” or “union” of Church and State.

Attempts at Compromise

1. How does Manegold modify the Gregorian Position?
What does he concede to the Royalist Position?
What does he mean by the separation of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction?
Would the York Anonymous or Gregory reject this compromise? Why?
2. How does *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda* modify the Royalist Position, or does it?
What does he concede to the Gregorian Position on the power of the Pope?
How does he understand the separation of temporal and spiritual authority?
Would the York Anonymous or Gregory reject this compromise? Why?

Discussion 6:
ST. FRANCIS AND FRANCISCANISM

Readings: The Testament (in reader) and the *Fioretti*

On the Testament:

1. How does Francis see his role in the foundation of his order?
2. What is Francis attitude toward the Church hierarchy? Toward the sacraments, in particular, the Eucharist?
3. How much of the Testament is related to poverty? Does this seem to be the major thrust of Francis' words?
4. What is Francis attitude toward obedience? What does he think of heresy?
5. What do you make of Francis' forbidding interpretation of the Rule?

On the Little Flowers (Fioretti)

Choose from the Little Flowers and be ready to describe one story for each of the following themes (a total of 9 different stories!). Each story should throw light on the Franciscan attitude toward that topic. (Remember, this material dates from 70 years after Francis death, so be ready to relate each event to Francis' own writings.)

The Love of God
True Spiritual Happiness
Obedience
Prayer and contemplation
Poverty, Riches and Money
Francis and nature
Francis attitude toward Christ and Christ's Death
Miracles
The Order of Friars Minor itself

Discussion 7:
CATHARISM: “THE GOOD CHRISTIANS”

Read This week’s readings include two pieces of Cathar Scripture and the only extant Cathar rituals.

Guide Questions for the “Vision of Isaiah” (two versions!)

Who is Isaiah, the “author” of this text? (See the Book of Isaiah in Bible.)

What are the parts of the universe that he sees?

Describe the heavens and their inhabitants.

What is found in the highest heaven?

After reading the Cathar of 1321's version

How is this text different from the first “Vision of Isaiah”?

What is the conception of earthly and physical realities in these texts?

Guide Questions for the “Secret Supper”

Who is John, the narrator of this text? (See Gospel of John, chapters 13-17.)

What does Christ teach him? About the origin of the World? About Christ’s own mission?

About Angels and Demons?

What does he say about the origins of human beings?

How can humans find salvation?

Generally on the Cathar Scriptures

How does their version of Christ’s life compare to the medieval Catholic one?

How does their version of Christ’s mission of salvation compare?

How do they understand the role of the devil and material things?

Why might some medieval people find this theology more satisfying than medieval Catholic theology?

Guide Questions for the Cathar Rituals (read the introduction too)

What are the basic ceremonies of the Cathars? (know: the Giving of Lord’s Prayer, the Consolamentum, the Service, the Melioramentum)

How are they conducted? What do they mean?

How do they reflect the theology of our earlier texts?

What would have made them attractive to medieval people?

What is the role of repeated phrases and words? Of preaching?

What is the role of Cathar “clergy” (Perfects, elders, priors) in Cathar worship?

How does it differ from the role of medieval Catholic clergy?

What acts of worship do Cathar “clergy” lead/perform?

Why might some medieval people find this worship more satisfying than the medieval Catholic Eucharist (the Mass)?

Discussion 8:
CATHERINE OF GENOA

Read: Catherine of Genoa, *Spiritual Dialogue and Purgation*

Part I (pp. 91-114) correlates with Catherine's early life (1447-1475): her period of spiritual isolation, her "conversion" in 1474, her penances and extraordinary fasts.

Part II (pp. 115-133) correlates with her maturity (1476-1510), her mystical experience, service to the sick, directress of the Pammatone Hospital (1490), her final illness, and her dismissal, on Jan. 10, 1510, of her spiritual director.

Part III (pp. 133-150), her final illness (from Jan. to Sept. 15, 1510).

Questions for Part I

- Why is there a struggle between [Catherine's] Body and Soul?
- What are Body and Soul's needs? Why are they easy or hard to meet?
- How does Self-Love help Soul and Body solve their problem?
- What is the result of Self-Love's solution for Soul?
- How does God come to Soul's rescue?
- How does Catherine experience God after her "Conversion" (p. 110)?
- What role has Penance (denying the bodily desires) now?
- How has Soul's attitude toward the Body and Self-Love changed?

Questions for Part II

- Now that Catherine's Soul is in God's presence what happens?
- What is Soul's attitude toward God? Toward herself?
- How do Soul's visions of God help resolve her crisis?
- What is the affect of God's presence on Soul? Where is God found?
- How does it change the relationship with Body? With penance?
- What affect does the experience of God have on Human Frailty?
- What is the affect of "Naked Love of God" on Catherine?
- Why is service not opposed to Mystical Union? Can Union exist without it?
- What is Spirit's response to the hesitations of Human Frailty?
- What is Catherine's "last temptation"? Do you think she overcame it?

Questions for Part III (Most of this part is by "Catherine-observers," not Catherine.)

- How do the observers' theology, ideas, and interests differ from Catherine's?
- What do Catherine's words in part 3 tell us about her views of suffering and death?
- How do Catherine's words in this section relate to the rest of the dialogue?