

BASICS OF ORTHODOXY SYLLABUS 2011-2012
ST. MAXIMUS, DENTON, TEXAS

Meeting Wednesdays, 8:00 p.m. following Vespers at 7:00 p.m.
Format: Prayer; Questions on Assigned Reading (5-15 minutes), Talk (60 minutes)

September 28: Introductory Session 1: The Church [Read Part 1 of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, p.. 11-42.]

October 5: Introductory Session 2: The Church and Jesus Christ [Read Part 1 of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, p.. 43-72.]

October 12: Introductory Session 3: The Church and the Canon Holy Scripture [Read Part 1 of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, p.. 73-101.]

October 19: Introductory Session 4: The Church and Holy Scripture (Use & Inspiration)[Read Part 1 of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, p.. 102-144.]

October 26: Introductory Session 5: The Church and Holy Tradition [Read Part 1 of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, p.. 145-194.]

November 2: Fr. Justin at All-American Council, no class. Read!

November 9: Introductory Session 6: The Church and the Ecumenical Councils [Read Part II of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 195-238.]

November 16: Introductory Session 7: The Church and Salvation [Read Part II of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 239-273; St. Cyril "Protocatechesis"]

November 23: Introductory Session 8: The Church and Her (Rational) Worship [Read Part II of Timothy Ware *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 274--328.] [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Prologue, pp. 7-10]

November 30: Session 1, Faith & Life: The Connection between What We Believe and How We Live [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 1 "God as Mystery," pp. 11-25; St. Cyril Catechetical Lecture 4]

December 7 Session 2, God's Plan for Man: In the Image and Likeness of God. The Goal: Theosis [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 2 "God as Trinity", pp. 27-41]

December 14 Session 3, God's Plan for Man: Life According to the Commandments of Christ. The Path to the Goal. [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 3 "God as Creator", pp. 43-66]

December 21 Session 4, Christ's First Command: Repent! [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 4 "God as Man", pp. 67-87; St. Cyril Catechetical Lectures 1, 2]

December 28: Nativity Break

- January 4: Session 5, Cultivating the Christian Life: Prayer, Fasting Almsgiving [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 5 "God as Spirit," pp. 89-104]
- January 11: Session 6, Prayer: Private and Corporate [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Chapter 6 "God as Prayer," pp. 105-132]
- January 18: Session 7, Prayer: Why We Need a Rule of Prayer and How to Develop One [Read Timothy Ware, *Orthodox Way*, Epilogue "God as Eternity, pp. 133-138]
- January 25: Session 8, Prayer: Mechanics 1 Levels of Prayer, Mechanics [Read St. Theophan *Path of Prayer*]
- February 1: Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (The Vigil is class tonight.)
- February 8: Session 9, Prayer: Mechanics 2 [Read St. Theophan handout, *Develop Personal Rule of Prayer*]
- February 15: Session 10, When You Fast [Read Bp. Kallistos Ware "The True Nature of Fasting", "Historical Development of the Great Fast", and "The Rules of Fasting" pp. 13-37 in *The Lenten Triodion*]
- February 22: Session 11, When You Give Alms [Read Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, pp. 11-30]
- February 29: Clean Week, Canon of St. Andrew: Attend as many of the four sessions of Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew as you can. Attend a Presanctified Liturgy. [Read Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, pp. 62-85]
- March 7: Session 12, A Christian & His Money: A Look at Tithing [Read Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, pp. 31-44]
- March 14: Session 13, Nicene Creed 1 Introduction [Read Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, pp. 45-61]
- March 21: Session 14, Nicene Creed 2 Article 1 "I Believe" [Read Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, pp. 87-105; St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 5 on Faith]
- March 28: Session 15, Nicene Creed 3 Article 1 "In One God" [Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 6]
- April 4: Session 16, Nicene Creed 4 Article 1 "The Father" [Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 7]
- April 11: (Holy Week): The Services of Holy Week and Pascha Attend as many services as you can (pick one evening Sun-Wed; then Thurs evening, Friday Vespers (afternoon) Matins (Friday evening), Paschal Vigil (starting Sat evening at 11:30)
- April 18: (Bright Week): Session 17 Nicene Creed 5 Article 1 "Almighty": Almighty God & the Problem of Evil [Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 8]

- April 25: Session 18: Creed 6 Article 1 “Maker of Heaven and Earth” [Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 9]
- May 2, 9 Fr. Justin gone [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 1-11]
- May 16: Session 19 Creed 7 Article 2 “And in One Lord Jesus Christ” The Divinity of Christ [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 12-21; St. Cyril Catechetical Lectures 10, 11]
- May 23: Session 20 Creed 8 Article 3 “Who for us men and for our salvation become man and was incarnate....” The Humanity of Christ [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 22-27; St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 12]
- May 30: Session 21 Creed 9 Article 4 “And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried.” The Suffering and Death of Christ [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 27-40; St. Cyril Catechetical Lecture 13]
- June 6: Session 22 Creed 10 Article 5 “And on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures.” The Resurrection of Christ [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 41-49; St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 14]
- June 13: Session 23 Creed 11 Article 6 “And ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God.” The Ascension of Christ and the Exaltation of Human Nature [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 50-62]
- June 20: Session 24 Creed 12 Article 8 “And in the Holy Spirit...” [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 63-82; St. Cyril, Catechetical Lectures 16, 17]
- June 27: Session 25 Creed 13 Article 9 “In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” [Read *The Doctrine of Christ*, Archbishop Dmitri, pp. 83-129; St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 18, paragraphs 22-25]
- July 4: No Class
- July 11: Session 26 Creed 14 Article 10 “I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins.” Baptism and the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)[Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 3 “On Baptism”]
- July 18: Session 27 Creed 15 Articles 7, 11, 12 The Coming Again in Glory, Resurrection of the Dead, Life of the Age to Come; Eschatology [Read St. Cyril, Catechetical Lecture 15]
- July 25: Session 28 The Theotokos and the Saints
- August 1: Session 29 Divine Liturgy 1 Introduction [Read “The All-Night Vigil Commentary” on stmaximus.org]

August 8: Session 30 Divine Liturgy 2 “Blessed is the Kingdom” The Kingdom of God
[Read Brianchaninov, *Prayer of Jesus*, pp. 17-35]

August 15: Session 31 Divine Liturgy 3 The Great Litany Part 1 [Read
Brianchaninov, *Prayer of Jesus*, pp. 36-49]

August 22, 29, Sept 5: Fr. Justin gone [Read Brianchaninov, *Prayer of Jesus*, pp. 50-111]

September 12: Session 32 Divine Liturgy 4 The Great Litany Part 2 [Read, Vlachos,
A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain, pp. 17-41]

September 19: Session 33 Divine Liturgy 5 The Antiphons & Little Litanies [Read,
Vlachos, *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 42-60]

September 26: Session 34 Divine Liturgy 6 The Scripture Readings [Read, Vlachos, *A
Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 60-88]

October 3: Session 35 Divine Liturgy 7 Litanies after the Gospel [Read, Vlachos, *A
Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 88-103]

October 10: Session 36 Divine Liturgy 8 The Great Entrance [Read, Vlachos, *A Night
in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 103-111]

October 17: Session 37 Divine Liturgy 9 The Anaphora of St. Basil [Read, Vlachos, *A
Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 111-138]

October 24: Session 38 Divine Liturgy 10 The Anaphora of St. John {Read St. Cyril,
Catechetical Lecture 23; Read, Vlachos, *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*,
pp. 139-151]

October 31: Session 39 Divine Liturgy 11 The Lord’s Prayer 1 [Read St. Nikolai
Velimirovich, *The Lord’s Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 15-16; Read, Vlachos, *A
Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 152-165]

November 7 Session 40 Divine Liturgy 12 The Lord’s Prayer 2 [Read St. Nikolai
Velimirovich, *The Lord’s Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 17-20; Read, Vlachos, *A
Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*, pp. 165-185]

November 14 Session 41 Divine Liturgy 13 The Lord’s Prayer 3 [Read St. Nikolai
Velimirovich, *The Lord’s Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 21-24]

November 21 Session 42 Divine Liturgy 14 The Lord’s Prayer 4 Daily Bread [Read
St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *The Lord’s Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 25-26]

November 28 Session 43 Divine Liturgy 15 Lord’s Prayer 5 Forgive Us Our Debts
[Read St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *The Lord’s Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 27-28]

December 5 Session 44 Divine Liturgy 16 Lord's Prayer 6 Lead Us Not into Temptation [Read St. Nicholai Velimirovich, *The Lord's Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*, pp. 29-39]

December 12 Session 45 Divine Liturgy 17 The End of the Divine Liturgy

December 19 Session 46 Marriage & Monasticism as Theatres of Salvation

For Those Preparing for Holy Illumination (*Scheduled separately during Great Lent for those to be received at Pascha, and at other times as Needed*)

Session 1: The Renunciations and Confession of Faith

Session 2: Confession and How to Prepare for It

Session 3: The Baptismal Service

Session 4: Holy Communion and How to Prepare for It

Reading List

*Brianchaninov, Bp. Ignatius. *On the Prayer of Jesus*. St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1995.

Cleopa, Elder of Romania. *The Truth of Our Faith*. Uncut Mountain Press, volume 1 2002, Volume 2 *On the Christian Mysteries* 2006.

Colliander, Tito. *Way of the Ascetics*. SVS Press 1960.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures*. In volume 7 of the second series of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers. Eerdmans. A partial version is available from SVS Press. Lectures given to catechumens of 4th century Jerusalem going over the Creed with many references to the Old Testament to show that these things must be so. Available online at <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>

Lossky, Vladimir. *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*. SVS Press. 2001.

Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow. *Catechism of the Orthodox Church*. St. Tikhon's Seminary Press. 1997. Questions and answers with Biblical references, 1839. Good reference.

*Schmemmann, Fr. Alexander. *Great Lent*. SVS Press. 1969.

Sophrony, Archimandrite. *St. Silouan the Athonite*. SVS Press. 1999. A simple but profound saint we should know who reposed in 1938.

Romanides, Fr. John. *Patristic Theology*. Uncut Mountain Press. 2008.

Romanides, Fr. John. *The Ancestral Sin*. Zephyr Publishing. 2002.

*(Royster), Archbishop Dmitri. *The Doctrine of Christ: A Layman's Handbook*. Diocesan Publications, 1984.

Theophan the Recluse. *The Spiritual Life and How To Be Attuned To It*. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood. 1995.

*Theophan the Recluse. *The Path of Prayer*. Praxis Institute Press. 1992. Text online at <http://www.stjohnaz.org/stjohnaz/index.cfm/resources/instructions-for-spiritual-life/st-theophan-the-recluse-on-prayer/>. Recordings also online.

*Velimirovic, Nicholai of Zicha. *The Lord's Prayer: A Devout Interpretation*. St. Paisius Monastery. 2001.

*Vlachos, Hierotheos. *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*. Birth of the Theotokos Monastery. Second Edition, 1996.

Vlachos, Hierotheos. *Introduction to Orthodox Spirituality*. All of this writer's books are worth reading.

*Ware, Timothy. Penguin Books. 1993 second edition. (*First edition of 1963, 64 is to be preferred, but is hard to get*). Basic History of the Church and modern situation.

*Ware, Timothy. *The Orthodox Way*. SVS Press. 1995 revised edition. A classic description of Orthodox Spirituality and the spirit of the Church.

Zander, Valentine. *St. Seraphim of Sarov*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (SVS). 1975. An introduction to a universally loved saint whom all should know.

*There are assigned to be read in conjunction with the class. The others are highly recommended for outside reading.

Two General Reference Books:

Slobodsky, Archpriest Seraphim. *The Law of God*. St. Job of Pochaev Printshop, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1996. Good overview of everything.

These Truths We Hold. St. Tikhon's Seminary Press. South Canaan, PA. 1986. Good overview of everything.

General Information About the Class and the Catechumenate

1. Class will begin as close to 8:00 as we can manage and will end at approximately 9:15. Please bring a Bible, note paper, and a three-ring binder to hold your syllabus and handouts.

2. The class is open to all wanting to know about the Orthodox Church, Her Faith, and Her practices. Orthodox and non-Orthodox, the serious seeker and casual inquirer are equally welcome. The class is directed, however, towards those who are wanting to know more about the Orthodox Church with a view to possibly being joined to Her (Inquirers) and those who have formally declared their intent to be united to the Church and are preparing themselves for Holy Baptism and/or Chrismation (Catechumens). Anyone who disrupts this process through disrespect, lack of seriousness, or persistent argumentativeness may be asked to leave the class. Inquirers and Catechumens are expected to have and ask questions. Don't be bashful!

3. The first eight weeks of the class, the Introductory Sessions, are designed to give everyone and overall view of the Church, Her Faith, and Her Worship. The sessions of the Catechesis Proper go deeper to enable an inquirer either to embrace or reject the Church with adequate knowledge to make that decision. There are four sessions for

those marking final preparations for Holy Illumination (Baptism) Only those being received at that time may attend.

4. Reading or practical assignments may be given from week to week. They will not be heavy or excessive. Handouts to read will be available, as will a list of recommended (but not required) books. As each person is different, it is not possible to require the same books for all. If you have questions about what you could or should be reading outside of class, please consult the priest. Not every book available is useful or appropriate to each person. Several books are assigned to be read in conjunction with the class lectures.

5. Those who are serious about possibly becoming Orthodox are expected to attend all the classes. If you simply cannot, please contact the priest beforehand. Inconsistent attendance will slow your progress. You need this material, and it is difficult for the priest to help you 'make up' missed material. Please make every effort to attend.

6. Catechumens are expected to attend the divine services regularly. Your faithful attendance at class and services are one indication to the priest of your overall seriousness.

7. Inquirers and Catechumens may attend the full Divine Liturgy on Sundays. If they desire to follow the early practice of leaving the Liturgy at the dismissal of the catechumens, they are asked to remain at church and use the time to advance their catechesis through reading, prayer, or *quiet* conversation with another person about the Faith. Under no circumstances should catechumens and inquirers be talking casually, loudly, or getting an early start of coffee hour. If it is too distracting to go out of the service, better to stay in it.

8. A person is an inquirer until he indicates to the priest that he desires to become an Orthodox Christian and the priest determines that he is ready to take that step.

9. An inquirer is officially made a catechumen by public prayer in the church. To be made a catechumen indicates a commitment to the Orthodox Church and implies a break with any previous associations, especially in regard to Sunday worship, Communion, and other Sacraments.

10. A person's catechumenate may be brief, or long, depending on how long it takes for one to become ready to embrace the Church and Her way of life with faith and without hesitation. You may consult with your priest about the timing of your Baptism/ Chrismation, but please do not pressure him. God will make it clear when the time is right. The basic rule of thumb is a year of consistent study, prayer, and attendance from the time you first began to investigate the Church seriously. This can vary considerably depending upon circumstances.

11. Catechumens are expected to lead orderly lives according to Christian norms and to be in regular attendance at services. It is always appropriate for them to let the priest know ahead of time if they must miss a service or class. If they have particular problems, struggles, or besetting sins, they should set up meetings with the priest to discuss them so that they may obtain help specific to their needs.

12. Your thoughts on this class, the syllabus, and topics are welcome. Please give the priest your thoughts and requests so that this class may continue to be improved.