This course is intended to serve as a resource for catechists and religious educators, but also would serve well for anyone desiring a synthetic overview of Christian doctrine with an emphasis on explaining it to others. The course covers the material presented in the first two pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, namely, Creed and Sacraments. Readings will come mainly from the CCC, with some short readings in primary sources illustrative of the theology that forms its background. These short readings may also be useful as resources in a catechetical setting.

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Required Texts: Catechism of the Catholic Church; C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce; JPII On the Most Holy Rosary; John Kosmas Skinas, Pictures of God: A Child’s Guide to Understanding Icons. These will be supplied free of charge to all students in the class. All brief readings will also be supplied in class.

Schedule of Readings

Monday, June 18

First Hour: Seeking a “Renewed Pedagogy of the Basics” through an “Apologetics of Love”

- CCC #1-25 (on the purpose of the Catechism); 170 (on doctrines)
- St. Augustine, Sermon 212 “On the Handing Over of the Creed”
- Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium sections 35-36
- Charles Wesley, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Recommended: CCC #185-97 (on the creed)

Also Recommended:

- For further reference on the history of apologetics: Avery Dulles, A History of Apologetics (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005); note especially pp. 336-38 for an approach something like the approach of this course.
- The best introduction to the history and theory of catechesis is Gerald F. Baumbach, The
Second Hour  Natural Knowledge of God

CCC## 26-49
Plato, Symposium 210a-212a (Ascent to Contemplation of Beauty Itself)

Tuesday, June 19

First Hour  Natural Knowledge of God in Contemporary Debate
Stephen Hawking, The Grand Design, pp.5, 28-34
Plato, Phaedo 96a to the end (the death of Socrates)
“Physicist George Ellis Knocks Physicists for Knocking Philosophy, Falsification, Free Will,” interview by John Horgan in Scientific American, Jan. 21, 2016 (posted on the journal’s blog).

Resources for further reference:
Stephen M. Barr, Modern Physics and Ancient Faith (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003; this is a classic statement of the compatibility and synergies between faith and science.
Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., the Magis Center website: www.magisreasonfaith.org/encyclopedia.html (contains specifically catechetical and age appropriate educational resources)

Second Hour Revelation
CCC## 50-73.
Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae. Q.1.1, on sacra doctrina

Wednesday, June 20

First Hour  Revelation cont’d: Scripture and Tradition
CCC## 74-141
1 Cor. 15.1-7
Louis Bouyer, The Word, Church and Sacraments, pp. 60-63

Second Hour  Faith
CCC## 142-70, 185
Paul Glynn, Reflections on Modern Miracles (Ignatius Press, 1999), pp. 97-123
Mother Teresa, Selected Letters from Come Be My Light, ed. by Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C. (NY: Doubleday, 2007), on darkness.
Recommended: J. Ratzinger, IC, pp. 39-81
Thursday, June 21
First Hour  God
  
  CCC ## 198-231
  Exodus 3.1-22; 33.1-34.8
  Augustine, Confessions 1.1-5
  Recommended: Ratzinger, IC, pp. 103-61, an extended exegesis of Ex. 3.1-22 on the name of God, with reflections on natural and revealed theology along the way.

Second Hour  The Trinity
  
  CCC ## 232-267
  Mark 14.32-42; Genesis 18.1-15
  Chiara Lubich, Essential Writings (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2007), pp. 204-05
  Rublev’s Icon of the Trinity (copies handed out in class)
  Recommended, Ratzinger, IC, pp. 162-90

Friday, June 22
First Hour  Creation
  
  CCC ## 268-301, 355-84 (skim ##325-54)
  St. Francis, “Canticle of Brother Sun”; also, “The Earlier Rule” (“Regula non bullata”), Prologue, plus chapters 7-9, 15-16
  Thomas of Celano, First Life of St. Francis, Book 1.57-62, 80-82, 94-96

Second Hour  The Problem of Evil
  
  CCC ##302-24
  John F. Haught, God and the New Atheism (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2008), chapter 8, pp. 92-107
  Recommended: Ratzinger, IC pp. 149-50, on the power of God; p. 160, on the risk of evil.

Monday June 25
First and Second Hours: The Fall; Original Sin
  
  CCC ## 385-421
  Two Ancient Texts on the Fall: Irenaeus, Against all Heresies
  3.20.1-2; 3.23.5; 4.14.2; 4.37.1, 6; 4.38.1, 3
  Augustine City of God 14.10, 12-15
  Recommended: for those interested in a theologically and philosophically sophisticated review of the paleoanthropological literature on where human beings first appeared (multiple points of origin or one?) see Brendan Purcell, From Big Bang to Big Mystery, pp. 189-206.
Tuesday, June 26
First Hour  Incarnation

*CCC ## 422-486 & 1159-61 (on images)*

Origen, *On First Principles* 2.6.1-2

Second Hour  Christ’s Whole Life is Mystery

*CCC ## 512-98*

John Paul II: *On the Most Holy Rosary* sections 1, 20, 24, 33, 43


Origen, *Against Celsus* ("Contra Celsum"), Prologue (Henry Chadwick translation; Cambridge University Press, 1953.)

Recommended: Ratzinger, *IC*, pp. 193-270, offers a full exposition of the issues involved in separating the “historical Jesus” from the “Christ of faith,” and thus on preserving the unique category of “mystery” to explain Christ’s life. The “Excursus” on “Christian Structures” is especially relevant to a course on the “basics,” complete with thoughts on surmounting Lessing’s “ugly ditch” between contingent historical truth and necessary intellectual truth (analogous to the separation of the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith”).

Wednesday, June 27
First Hour  Death of the Lord and Atonement

*CCC ##599-623*

John Paul II, Speech from April 13, 1986, On the Occasion of the Historic Visit to the Synagogue of Rome

Augustine, *The Trinity* 13.4.13-18

Second Hour  The Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord

*CCC ## 638-682*


Icon of the Women with Spices (to be handed out in class)

Chora Icon of the Anastasis;


Charles Wesley, “Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise” (hymn)

Thursday, June 28 (Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles)
First Hour  Resurrection of the Body, Judgment, Life Everlasting

*CCC ##976-1075 (NB: this is out of sequence from the last CCC reading)*;

C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (the whole text, but if you have time for only a little: pp. 9-11, 104-22)

Second Hour  The Holy Spirit

*CCC ## 687, 733-36* (skim the rest of the article on the Holy Spirit, ## 683-747)

Augustine, *On the Trinity* 15.27, 31


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**Friday, June 29 (First Martyrs of the Church of Rome)**

**First Hour  The Mystery of the Church I**

*CCC ## 748-810*

Jn 19.31-37

Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* 1, 91-96, 110-12.

**Second Hour  The Mystery of the Church II: The Four Marks of the Church**

*CCC ## 811-70*

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**Monday, July 2**

**First Hour:  Marks of the Church, continued**


**Second Hour  Mary, Mother of God**

*CCC ## 487-511; 963-975; re-read ## 466; 721-26.*

Jn. 2.1-11; 19.25-37

The Icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, and Ekdokimov, *Art of the Icon*, pp. 259-67

Chiara Lubich, *Essential Writings* p. 42, citing Pius XII

Benedict XVI, brief extract from a 2005 homily on the Assumption


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**Tuesday, July 3**

**First Hour  The Communion of Saints**

*CCC ## 946-62*
Second Hour  Liturgy and Sacraments in General  
*CCC ## 1076-1209*  
Louis Bouyer, *The Word, Church and Sacraments* pp. 75-77

**Wednesday, July 4**

First Hour  Baptism and Confirmation  
*CCC ## 1210-1284 and CCC ## 1285-1321*  

Second Hour  Eucharist, the Sacrament of Love  
*CCC ## 1322-1419*  
Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, sections 1-16;  
Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth* vol. 2, pp. 229-40, “Jesus’s Death as Reconciliation (Atonement) and Salvation”  

**Thursday, July 5**

First Hour  Sacraments of Healing: Penance; Anointing  
*CCC ## 1420-1532* (cf. ##2559, 63, 72-73, 81, 83, on prayer and conversion)

Second Hour  The Sacraments at the Service of Communion, Holy Orders  
*CCC ## 1533-1600*  

Also, since the catechist has the obligation of explaining properly the Church’s position on all issues, including those that are both unpopular and controversial. On the reservation of the ordained priesthood to men, here is a brief text: Sara Butler, “Embodied Ecclesiology: Church Teaching on the Priesthood,” in Erika Bachiochi, *Women, Sex, and the Church* (Boston: Pauline Media, 2010), pp. 143-159. Her longer work is best resource for understanding the Church’s position: Sara Butler, MSBT, *The Catholic Priesthood and Women* (Chicago: Hildebrand Books, 2007). See especially Chapter 3, “Three Objections to the Church’s Teaching,” and Chapter 6, “More Objections to the Church’s Teaching.”

**Friday, July 6**

First Hour  Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Matrimony  
(also including a brief treatment of consecrated virginity)  
*CCC ## 1601-1666 and re-read ##369-73: the theology of marriage recapitulates the whole of salvation history.*


No Second Hour (Class will end one hour early).

**Course Requirements**

1. Preparation of Assigned Readings and Attendance at all Classes
2. *Brief Written Assignments*, due most class days (80%); see explanation below
3. Final Exam (20%). **Open-book take-home**, due 5:00 pm on Fri., July 6.
4. Class Participation will be used to adjust grades upward where applicable.

**“Brief Written Assignment” Explanation**

The *CCC* is punctuated at certain places by sections called “In Brief.” These sections are summary sections, attempting to encapsulate the doctrine in a brief way, perhaps suitable even for memorization. The written assignments in this class take their cue from these sections. For any given segment of text we study from the *CCC*, the assignment is to write your own “In Brief” summary. When I say “any given segment,” I am thinking of the segments assigned for any given hour of the class in the list of readings above. Sometimes, for a very long assigned segment, a part of the assigned text is acceptable.

Your “In Brief” summary should:

1. Provide “access” to the essential doctrine. The idea is to communicate the essentials of the doctrine you are summarizing, in a way that does not “water down,” but grants access, to the teaching. (see *CCC* #22)
2. Aim your In Brief at a particular audience which you will specify each time, for example: *RCIA class at a suburban parish; business associates; college students sitting around talking about faith matters; Confirmation class in a predominantly Hispanic parish; eleventh graders in a rich suburban high school who could care less about religion; suburban parish women’s or men’s bible reading group for*
young adults; etc. (see CCC #24). NOTE: audiences NOT ALLOWED: any audience in age or ability below high school students. The primary emphasis in this class is on learning and understanding the doctrine of the Church and the first requirement of the “In Brief” is that it demonstrates a clear and precise understanding of the doctrine. It is difficult to determine how precise an understanding of the doctrine one has if it is simplified to an elementary level.

The best “In Brief’s” will

(1) **Key** the exposition of doctrine to the relevant sections of the CCC as you go along. This can be done in parentheses in your text.

(2) **Preserve** the language of the CCC where the language carries precision of expression that cannot be altered without erasing the precision. For example the word “person” in the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be replaced by “part” or “aspect.” To do so would be to change the doctrine itself. The point is to help the reader understand what “person” means in the context of Trinitarian teaching, not to replace the word.

(3) **Use** the language of the CCC in a way that preserves its precision but engenders understanding. For example, suppose you chose a Q and A format for an “In Brief” on the topic of Faith. It might look like this:

Q. What is faith?
A. “Faith is the “adequate response” to revelation (CCC #142).

Q. What makes it “adequate”?
A. It is “adequate” because it is more than simply believing that what is revealed is true. It means believing it is true and accepting it as God’s invitation to be received as friends into His own company (CCC #142).

Q. How is this done?
A. By entrusting oneself to God wholly, in a way that would not be appropriate for any human being (CCC #150).

Q. What does this mean?
A. It means that, following the example of Abraham (CCC #146), and, even more, of the Blessed Virgin Mary (CCC ## 148-49), one “submits one’s intellect and will to God” (CCC #143), freely assenting to the whole truth that God has revealed, and embracing the trusting “obedience” to which faith invites us.

Perhaps you could then have a brief summary paragraph.

(4) In some way, connect the doctrine to the experience of the person or group you have chosen to address:

a. In this case, perhaps the idea of “trust” provides opportunity for an analogy which both has points of comparison (for example, we submit ourselves to or follow someone we “believe in”)

b. As well as points of contrast (we never believe in any human being as fully as we “believe in” God, which is why we can say that faith is “certain” (CCC #157) while still remaining “faith.”

c. The Scriptural examples of Abraham and Mary can be used to connect to our own experience, but from a Scriptural perspective. Use Scripture as encouraged by the CCC to fill out a catechesis that is full of image,
person, story that connects to our experience without being reduced to our experience.

(5) Learn the doctrine yourself by attempting to communicate it to someone else.

(6) “In Brief” means BRIEF. What is/are the one, two or three most important points? The ones that are essential, and that should be memorized, if anything were going to be memorized? And then what are subsidiary points that aid in understanding? What would you say in a brief conversation with someone who wanted to know what you believed about X, Y or Z? Then, if you had more time, what else would you add?

(7) A note on the use of analogies: analogies are great! But they all fall short: make sure you show where they fall short as well as where they are apt: then both aspects of the analogy will be useful!

Whether or not you receive the full 80% of credit for this course requirement depends in part on how many of these assignments you turn in, and in part on their quality. In terms of quantity:

10 assignments turned in = A for this course requirement (see below, however)*
9 = A- (see below, however)*
8 = B+
7 = B
6 = C
fewer than 6 = F

In terms of quality: The assignments will be graded √, √+, √-. For the first three assignments graded √+, and then for the next two, you get credit for one additional assignment (meaning that for the first 3 √+’s, you have to complete only 9 total for an “A,” and for the next two, only 8 total for an “A.” An assignment graded √- does not count towards the total; but if revised and turned in can be counted if the revision is graded higher. Only two such revisions will be accepted.

Please note that part of “quality” is professionalism. Your in-briefs should be professional quality, meaning that the presentation should not be marred by ANY mistakes in grammar, syntax, punctuation or spelling. YOU are the only “auto-correct” you should rely upon. You should take the same care with these assignments as though you were turning them in to a publisher for consideration for publication. This means that all book titles should be italicized or underlined (such as Catechism of the Catholic Church, or any abbreviations (Catechism, CCC, etc.). This means not using “it’s” in place of “its.” It means making sure that all pronouns have antecedents, and that includes pronouns in quoted texts.

No “A-” grade will be assigned unless at least one of the assignments turned in is graded √+, and no “A” grade unless at least two of the assignments are graded check plus. If 10 assignments are turned in, but fewer than 2 √+ have been assigned, the grade will be A-. If 9 assignments are turned in and no check plus is assigned, the grade will be B+.

Assignments will be returned to students the next day, with suggestions for improvement.
Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required. Unexcused absences will lower the grade by one half-grade assigned for the number of assignments turned in (10 = A-; 9 = B+; etc.). These cannot be made up by accumulated check plusses.