S A N T A  C L A R A  U N I V E R S I T Y

PMIN 204       Ecclesiology: The Theology
                of the Church

DRAFT

WINTER 2019    Prof. Frederick J. Parrella
SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the meaning of the group of Jewish followers of Jesus of Nazareth, and proclaimed him the Christ or the Messiah. Saint Paul called these people “church (ekklésia),” those called out to be the new people of God. The part of theology that explores the church is called ecclesiology, the study of the Christian community’s origins in Jewish history and theology; its nature as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the sacrament of the world’s salvation; its history as a community under the Holy Spirit but semper reformanda; and its destiny when the pilgrimage is over and God will be all in all.

Ecclesiology explores the meaning of divine grace in the historical form of a community of disciples, united in faith, and in all that this community does and says. The community’s purpose is to become the living sacrament of the Gospel message and the Paschal mystery to a world of many peoples, cultures, religious commitments, and spiritual sensibilities. Ecclesiology is intimately connected to an understanding of God as Trinity; to the significance of Jesus the Christ as the human face of God and all that God accomplished in Jesus’ death and resurrection; to the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit in Word and sacrament; finally, to the liturgy as a transformative action not only of the church but also of God in and for the world.

REQUIRED READINGS


Massimo Faggioli, “From Status Quo to Insurgency: Conciliar vs. Traditionalist Catholicism.”


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**RECOMMENDED READING**


Vatican documents are available at: [http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm)

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**PAPERS**

**Three (3)** papers, which comprise about 20 typed pages, and **one** oral report of 7 to 10 minutes, are required for the course. The papers must be neatly typed, double-spaced, with sources properly cited. Consult the *Writing Guides* distributed to you for the procedures to follow in writing and printing the paper in this course.

Each paper must have a scholarly foundation, that is, it must be rooted in the text or
texts that serve as sources for your insights as well as serve to substantiate and justify your conclusions. Every time you use another person’s ideas or words, you must carefully cite the text. Each paper is to have one clearly defined thesis that is then developed in a logical and systematic fashion. Papers are written to present a thesis and enlighten the reader about a certain topic; they are not primarily persuasive or rhetorical. Your own experience and insights are often worthwhile and essential to your argument but only when they serve as a lens into the text—in the same manner as the text should serve as a lens into your experience.

I. A brief essay, **five (5) pages minimum**, on Donald Cozzens’s book, *Faith That Dares To Speak* and, Michael McCarthy, “Religious Disillusionment and the Cross: An Augustinian Reflection.” You may also wish to bring in the article by Gwozdz. The essay should discuss the fundamental theological, ecclesiological, and sociological issues raised in the examination of the present situation in the Catholic Church. Be critical, be creative; use insights from your own ministry, if helpful, but be sure to ground your conclusions out of Cozzens’s and McCarthy’s texts. You may also use Parrella’s *The Idea of Church: Historical and Theological Perspectives.*

**Paper due: 4th week.**

II. A critical theological essay, **five (5) pages minimum**, based on the six models of the church of Avery Dulles, which answers this question: *which model or models is the best way to describe the Church today and why?* In your essay, take into account some of the following elements: (1) the problem of situating any model of the Church in the culture of modernity and post-modernity; (2) Dulles’s presentation of the model or models and its/their strengths and weaknesses in the tradition; (3) the relationship of the model(s) you have selected to the other models; (4) the history of the model(s) in Scripture and tradition; (5) the adaptability of your model(s) for ecumenism and ministry in a pluralist world. *Can you suggest another viable model?*

**Paper due: 7th week.**

III. A theological research essay, **eight–ten (8-10) pages** on any topic in ecclesiology you choose. One or more of these required or recommended readings for the course should be the foundation for the paper:

- Parrella, Frederick J. *The Idea of Church: Historical and Theological Perspectives.*
- O’Meara, Thomas F. “Expanding Horizons: A World of Religions and Jesus Christ.” In *Faithful Witness: Foundations of Theology for Today’s Church*, 151-166.
- Other works, depending on your topic and your particular ministry, from the extensive bibliography.

The approach may be historical, biblical, philosophical, theological, or pastoral (these are not mutually exclusive categories). Pick an aspect of ecclesiology, understood in the broadest sense, which interests you, create your thesis on the topic you have chosen, and develop your argument in a clear and coherent manner. Each paper must have: (1) a clearly defined ecclesiology based on a careful analysis of the texts of the course; (2) a cultural or pastoral application developed from the ecclesiology you have presented. You must indicate an in–depth understanding of the required readings you have chosen as well as an appropriate use of the literature available on your topic.

Here are a few “sample” topics:

- The Pope has called a third Council of the Vatican to serve the Church of the third
millennium. You have been invited as a theological expert and consultant from your own tradition/parish/community/ministry, et al. You have been asked to create an agenda for the council. What topics will you propose and why? How will this council differ from Trent and Vatican II?

- What does an “ecclesiology under the cross” mean? How do Dermot Lane’s and Michael McCarthy’s interpretations of the cross help shift the focus of traditional ecclesiology?
- Has Karl Rahner’s idea of a “world church” taken root in basically a Western European Church? How would you create a more global and diverse ecclesiology today? Richard Gaillardetz book on the recommended reading list will be very helpful here.
- How do you understand the reforms of Vatican II placed beside the restorationist papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XV? Will John XXIII or Sixtus V influence the church more in the 21st century?
- Et al.!

Please be prepared to discuss your topic in class during the tenth week of the course.

Paper due: 11th week

Oral Report

In the 8th and 9th weeks of the term, students are to present a report in class (7–10 minutes) on one of the chapters of From Trent to Vatican II. What does the chapter tell us? What is the relevance of the research for the church of today? Select a chapter that reflects your theological and/or pastoral interests.

Schedule

This schedule serves as a general guideline to your reading. The course will not follow this to the letter.

Week 1: Introduction: the question of church; Gwodz chapter
A vs. B consciousness

Week 2: Parrella, Idea of Church, chapters 1, 2, 3
Cozzens, Faith That Dares To Speak
McCarthy, “Religious Disillusionment and the Cross…”

Week 3: Dulles, chapters 1, 13, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Lane, “The Cross as the Revelation of God.”

Week 4: Dulles, chapters 1, 13, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 12. Chapters 7-11 are optional.
Parrella, Idea of Church, chapters 3, 4.
First paper due

Week 5: Tillich, “Symbols of Faith.”
Parrella, chapters 5–8.

Week 6: Parrella, chapters 5–8.

Week 7: From Trent to Vatican II.
Second paper due

Week 8: From Trent to Vatican II: oral reports
Week 9: From Trent to Vatican II: oral reports
Week 10: Last class: oral reports on papers
Week 11: Final paper due

Consultation
My office is in Kenna Hall, Suite 300, Room H. If you wish to speak to me, please make an appointment for a mutually convenient time. Usually the best times are immediately before and after class, although I am also on campus on other days for an undergraduate class. You are welcome to telephone me at home with a question or problem or email me at any time. If you need assistance in developing a paper topic or would like some content and form editing of your papers, please make an appointment to see me or send me the paper as an attachment in Word.

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“When I shall be dead, tell the kingdom of the earth that I have loved it much more than I have ever dared to say.”