

## PA903 DE Pastoral Theology

Developed by Rev. Paul CB Schenck, EdD

### Syllabus

#### 1. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:** PA903 DE Pastoral Theology

Pastoral theology examines the relationship between the doctrine of the Church and its practice, especially in the context of the local Church and parish. The course looks at pastoral theology and praxis as it developed from Vatican II, with a special focus on the role of pastoral ministers in pastoral care. The documents of Vatican II, Papal Encyclicals, and contemporary writings form the foundation of the course. The main texts will be *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, with supplementary material drawn from *A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care* by Regis A Duffy, OFM, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishing) and *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* by Richard Gula, S.S., (New York: Paulist Press). Attention will be given to the pastoral thought of Pope Francis.

#### 2. **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- The course participant demonstrates a basic understanding of Pastoral theology as a concept, and its various facets.
- Shows an understanding of Christ's role as the Great Shepherd, and comprehends the spiritual image and meaning of shepherd and flock.
- Understands the various roles and relationships involved in pastoral theology, as well as understands the unique role of the bishops in pastoral care.
- Demonstrates a clear knowledge of the theological criteria for and the various modalities and methodologies of, pastoral care.
- Demonstrates an ability of the deacon to constructively contribute to the pastoral care of the flock in obedience to his bishop, in assistance to the priest/pastor, and in collaboration with the lay faithful.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the ethical responsibilities involved in pastoral care.
- Understands the spirituality of pastoral ministry and in pastoral care.

#### 3. **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Week 1 – Module I. Introduction.

Module One surveys the historical context of pastoral care, with an emphasis on the pastoral documents of Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. A survey of the pastoral material in those documents will be made. and *Ad Pascendum*: The Apostolic Letter Containing Norms for the Order of the Diaconate (Pope Paul VI).

Readings: Course lecture & media.  
*Lumen Gentium* Chapter II.

*Gaudium et Spes*, Introduction (nos. 4-10).

*Ad Pascendum* through “RESTORING THE DIACONATE”.

Post: Summarize, in 200-300 words, the main ideas in the three readings.

## Week 2 – Module II. Pastoral theology in the light of Vatican II.

Module Two examines the developmental progress of pastoral theology from, and following, Vatican II. A brief survey of modalities of pastoral care and various authors and theorists will be made.

Readings: course lecture & media.

*A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*. Introduction (p.9), Chapter 1 (p. 12), Chapter 2 (p. 26).

Post: Summarize in 200-300 words the recent history/developments in Catholic pastoral theology. Reply to two of your fellow participants' posts.

## Week 3 – Module III. The Good Shepherd.

Module Three places Christ as the ultimate and chief Shepherd. A survey of the biblical material touching on the image and actions of the shepherd and his flock will be made, together with the conveyance of the role of shepherd to the disciples and subsequently to the bishops and priests. The words and actions of Christ as the true Shepherd will be reflected upon.

Readings: Course lecture & media.

Is. 40:11; Ez. 34:23, 37:24; Micah 5:4; I Pet. 5:4; John 10:11.

Post: Choose from the passages above two scriptures, one from the OT, one from the NT, and reflect (in 150-300 words) on how they foretell and fulfill, the role of Christ as the shepherd of the sheep. Reply to two of your fellow participants' posts.

Journal: In what way(s) have I experienced Christ as my shepherd?

## Week 4 – Module IV. And he gave pastors.

Module Four will examine the role of bishops as the chief pastors in the local churches. Readings and reflections will be taken from *Christus Dominus, Pastores Dabo Vobis*, and Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*. The emphasis will be on the relative roles and responsibilities of the three degrees of Holy Orders; bishops, priests, and deacons, in pastoral ministry.

Readings: Course lecture & media.

*Christus Dominus*, Chapter II, Part I (Diocesan Bishops) & Part III, C. (The diocesan Clergy).

*Pastores Dabo Vobis* Intro - No. 7, Nos. 12-15.

*Evangelii Gaudium*, Chapter 1.

Post: In 200-300 words, respond to the prompt, “What are some aspects of the relationship of the clergy to the bishop in the diocese?”

Journal: In what pastoral situation(s) have I served the priest or bishop?

Week 5 – Module V. The Deacon as pastoral minister.

Module Five will examine the role of the Deacon in the context of pastoral care. Readings will be taken from *Ad Pascendum, Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*, and the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* in the United States.

Reading: Course lecture with media.

The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. Chapter One: Doctrinal Understanding of the Diaconate.

Post: Summarize in 200-300 words, ways in which the deacon serves in pastoral ministry.

Journal: In what ways do I now participate in pastoral ministry?

Essay due. Approximately 500 words on the development of pastoral theology since Vatican II.

Week 6 – Module VI. Pastoral theology as praxis.

Module Six will examine pastoral theology in context as it is expressed in the local church, the parish, and the community. The theological criteria for pastoral care will be reviewed, and the outlines of pastoral planning will be introduced.

Reading: Course lecture with media.

*A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*. Chapter 4 (p. 56)

Post: In 200-300 words, respond to the prompt, “How is theology expressed in praxis?” Respond to two of your fellow course participants’ posts.

Week 7 – Module VII. The focus of pastoral ministry.

Module Seven will examine the person as the focus of pastoral ministry. A definition of the person, the centrality, and significance of the person will be reflected upon. Readings will be taken from *Evangelii Gaudium*, and *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*.

Reading: Course lecture & media.

*Evangelii Gaudium* Nos. 24-39, 99-107.

*Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Chapter 4. (p. 65)

Post: In 200-300 words, answer the prompt: “How does Pope Francis envision parish ministry, according to him what must the focus be?” And, “What is the nature of the relationship between pastoral minister and people?”

Journal: In what ways have I contributed, or not, to pastoral conversion?

Week 8 – Module VIII. The human person in context.

Module Eight will look at pastoral praxis in the context of their circumstances and conditions. Readings will be taken from various papal writings, pastoral letters, and from *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* by Gula, S.S.

Reading: Course lecture & media.

*A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*, Chapter 3 (p. 41)  
*Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Chapter 5. (p. 91)  
*Evangelii Gaudium* Nos. 186-216 (Chapter Four, II).

Journal: In what ways do I serve the poor and vulnerable in my pastoral ministry?

Week 9 – Module IX. Methodologies of pastoral praxis.

Module Nine will examine various schools of pastoral practice. Readings and reflections will be taken from *A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care* by Regis A Duffy, OFM.

Readings: Course lecture & media.

*A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*, Chapter 5 (p. 73)  
*Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Chapter 1 (Theological Foundations)

Post: In 200-300 words, summarize some of the theological issues in pastoral ministry.

Week 10 – Module X. The spirit of pastoral practice.

Module X will examine the spirit of pastoral practice. Readings and reflections will be taken from *A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care* by Regis A Duffy, OFM.

Readings: Course lecture & media.

*A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*, Chapter 6 (p. 85)

Post: In 200-300 words, summarize the motivations and spiritual qualities of pastoral care. Respond to two of your fellow course participants' posts.

Journal: In what ways do I see myself contributing to the future of pastoral care in my parish (or another setting)?

Essay due: Approximately 500 words on Pope Francis' vision of pastoral care.

Week 11 – Module XI. The character and spirituality of the pastoral minister.

Module XI will consider the character and spirituality in pastoral care and ministry. Special focus will be made on the role of the character and holiness of the pastoral minister. Readings and reflections will be taken from *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* by Gula, S.S. and *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Reading: Course lecture & media.

*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, No. 24.

*Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Chapter 2 (p. 31)

*Evangelii Gaudium*, Nos. 259-283 (p. 169)

Week 12 – Module XII. Final review. Final exam (2 Essays, 250 words each).

Module XII will be a brief review of the material presented in the course.

#### 4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Two Essays are required. The first essay of approximately 500 words is due in week 5. The paper must be in Turabian (or Chicago) style, with a bibliography of at least 3 sources (not including the Bible). The essay topic is the development of pastoral theology in the Church since Vatican II. The second essay is due in week 10. The topic is Pope Francis' vision of parish pastoral ministry.

Discussion Posts: Discussion posts consist of 200-300 word (unless otherwise stated) responses to the prompts or topics. Ordinarily the one posting replies to two others.

Journal entries: Are personal reflections on the topics.

Final Exam (2 Essays): The final exam will consist of two essays on topics selected from a list of 10 from the field of pastoral theology.

Required Reading and Resources: Are contained in each module.

Suggested Readings and Resources:

Francis, and James P. Campbell. *Embracing the way of Jesus: reflections from Pope Francis on living our faith*. Chicago: Loyola Press, a Jesuit Ministry, 2017.

Francis. *In Him alone is our hope: spiritual exercises given to his brother bishops in the manner of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. New York: Magnificat, 2013.

Girzone, Joseph F. *Joshua and the Shepherd*. Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Girzone, Joseph F. *The Shepherd*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1990.

Huebsch, Bill. *Dreams and visions: pastoral planning for lifelong faith formation: the definitive guide*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007.

**5. EVALUATION:** Posts will be evaluated on the bases of a precise, concise statement in response to the prompt which demonstrates an understanding of the topic, an engagement with the material (lectures, readings, resources), and an ability to apply that material in a practical way. Essays will be evaluated as to content (including word count), style, and references. Failure to conform to the proper style (Chicago or Turabian) or word count will result in automatic loss of points (-1 pt. for every major style or grammatical error, and -1 pt for every 10 words under/over the word count after 450 and 550 words, and -5 pts for missing references in the bibliography).

**6. POLICIES:** See the Institute website or manual.

**7. YOUR DEVELOPER/FACILITATOR:**

Father Paul Chaim Benedicta Schenck is a priest in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg (central Pennsylvania). Father Schenck is a former Anglican priest who was admitted to Catholic priesthood through the Pastoral Provision begun by Pope St. John Paul II. He has served as a youth minister, pastor, rector, upper school headmaster, college and seminary professor, public interest legal advocate and diocesan official. He is currently Director of Formation for the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of

Harrisburg and resident priest in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish in Mechanicsburg, PA. Raised Jewish, Fr. Schenck attended Hebrew school as a youth, the Institute of Jewish Studies in the State University of New York, and Baltimore Hebrew University. In Christian formation, he graduated the Elim Bible Institute, Luther Rice University, The Institute for the Psychological Sciences (now Divine Mercy University), Holy Apostles College and Seminary, the Graduate Theological Foundation, and is currently completing his doctoral dissertation in educational leadership for St. Thomas University. He holds degrees in biblical studies, religious studies, theology, bioethics, psychology and applied pastoral practice.