

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program – Diocese of Las Vegas Reading and Writing Assignments – Fall 2009

All readings should be done *before* coming to each month's session, if possible. Reading selections are taken from our textbooks, online sources, or other books available for purchase through the Office of Faith Formation. For updates and direct links to online readings, see <http://www.catholic-resources.org/LasVegas/LEMP.html>.

Monthly written reflections should be done *as soon as possible* after each session (so it's still fresh in your mind), and *emailed both* to Fr. Felix Just, S.J. (fjust2000@yahoo.com) *and* to Dr. Marc Gonzalez (dr.gonzalez@dioceseoflasvegas.org). Please write *two or three* good paragraphs in response to *each* question listed below, for a total of one full *single-spaced* page. All papers should be typed and include a *brief heading* (name, date, and topic). Please send your paper as a *file attachment*, rather than in the text of your email.

Primary Bibliography: Books to be used throughout this two-year program:

- *Catholic Study Bible* (or another "study edition" of the full Bible).
- *Documents of the Second Vatican Council*. 1962-1965. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd edition, 2003. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/cccl/>

Sept. 19-20, 2009 – Biblical Studies 2 (with Fr. Felix Just, S.J.)

Learning Objectives:

- To be able to identify the literary forms, dominant themes, and core theologies of each section of the Bible.
- To know how the relationship between the Old and New Testaments can be understood, in several different ways.
- To become more familiar with how the Scriptures are used in the Eucharistic Liturgies of the Catholic Church.

Reading Assignments:

- Margaret Nutting Ralph. *Scripture: Nourished by the Word*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002. – finish chapters 4-6.
- *Lectionary for Mass: Introduction* (1981) – Chapter IV ("The General Arrangement of Readings for Mass") and Chapter V ("Description of the Order of Readings"); paragraphs 58-110. – available online at <http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/DocumentContents/Index/2/SubIndex/11/DocumentIndex/126>

Written Reflections:

- 1) What is the Catholic understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments? Develop and illustrate your answer with some specific examples.
- 2) What do you see as the most important differences in how the four Gospels portray the life and teachings of Jesus?
- 3) Which book of the Bible do you find most inspirational? Why? And which book is most disturbing for you? Why?

Oct. 17-18, 2009 – Catholic Social Teaching (with Edward E. Dolejsi, Calif. Cath. Conf.)

Learning Objectives:

- To know the main principles of Catholic Social Teaching, as developed in Papal Encyclicals since 1891, in other Vatican documents, and in several important documents of the American Bishops since the 1970's.
- To be able to explain the biblical foundations and contemporary applications of Catholic Social Teaching.

Reading Assignments:

- *Catechism* – Part Three, Section One, Chapter Two: "The Human Community" (par. 1877-1948) and Part Three, Section Two, Chapter Two, Article 7: "The Seventh Commandment" (par. 2401-2463).
- Encyclical of Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est / God Is Love*. (64 pp.) – from www.vatican.va or [USCCB Publications](http://www.USCCB.org)
- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. Washington: USCCB Publications, 2007. – available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org
- Edward P. DeBerri, et al, eds. *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*. 4th ed. *Orbis*, 2003. (224 pp. \$20.00)

Written Reflections:

- 1) Which main principles of Catholic Social Teaching do you most directly and most easily put into practice? How?
- 2) Which principles of Catholic Social Teaching are most difficult or challenging for you personally? Why?
- 3) What might be some effective ways for your parish to help the "average parishioner" (not just the "social activists" or isolated groups) to better integrate the principles of Catholic Social Teachings into his or her faith life?

Nov. 7-8, 2009 – Christian Morality (with Jennifer Shaw, Ph.D. cand.)

Learning Objectives:

- To be able to explain such basic concepts as “ethics, morals, conscience, sin, forgiveness, etc.”
- To become familiar with the main “sources” of Christian morality: scripture, tradition, science, and experience.
- To reflect on the relationship between Christian faith and moral practice, both in the private and public realms.

Reading Assignments:

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd edition, 2003. – Part Three, Section One, Chapter One: “The Dignity of the Human Person” (par. 1691-1876) and Chapter Three: God’s Salvation: Law and Grace” (par. 1949-2051).
- Documents of Vatican II: *Dignitatis Humanae* (“Declaration on Religious Freedom”; 1965).
- Russel B. Connors, Jr. *Christian Morality: In the Breath of God*. Catholic Basics series. Loyola Press, 2002.

Written Reflections:

- 1) What is the Catholic understanding of the role of the individual conscience in moral decision making?
- 2) What is the most important moral issue that affects you personally, and how can the Church’s teachings help you?
- 3) In what ways is the Bible helpful for teaching Christian morality to others? How might using the Bible be difficult?

Dec. 4-6, 2009 – Weekend Silent Retreat (led by a team from Loyola Institute for Spirituality)

Retreat Objectives:

- To grow ever deeper in your life of prayer and closer in your relationship with God, especially with Jesus Christ.
- To develop more comfort in drawing upon a wide range of resources and traditions in Christian prayer.
- To learn the principles of the “discernment of spirits” as a practical way of finding God’s desires for your life.

Reading Assignments:

- A short book on prayer – TBD

Written Reflections:

- No paper for this month, but take some time after the retreat to reflect upon your own experience of this retreat, esp. your encounter with God in personal and community prayer.