

Dr. Darleen Pryds  
Spring, 2010  
Saturdays 9:40 a.m-12:30 p.m. FST Classroom  
Franciscan School of Theology  
Available by appointment  
tel. 510-848-5232 ext. 21  
email: [dpryds@fst.edu](mailto:dpryds@fst.edu)  
<http://courseweb.fst.edu/Pryds>

### **HSSP 2460 Lay Spiritual Practices**

This class will explore through experience and study a broad range of spiritual activities used by lay Christians and will look at the historical origins and early developments of them. Pilgrimage, prayer, contemplation, storytelling, fasting, feasting, sexuality and celibacy, festivals and processions are among the practices we will explore together. The historical and cultural background of these practices brings out new aspects of even the most common of these practices. For example, the act of reading psalms and prayers will be discussed in its medieval mode as a form of body prayer. Through discussion of some primary texts and a range of secondary texts, participants will explore ways to adopt and adapt spiritual practices for the 21st century. *This class presumes that all participants are willing to experience each of the prayer forms respectfully.*

#### **Student Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. investigate independently the historical development of Christian spiritual practices for both scholarly and pastoral needs by means of a basic understanding of research tools.
2. discuss the origins of Christian spiritual practices within their historical context
3. have experienced a wide range of Christian spiritual prayer in class
4. think creatively about pastoral applications of spiritual practices within a multicultural and multi-generational range of pastoral settings

#### **Course Procedure:**

This course will be conducted by way of historical lectures given by the professor; class discussion of readings; experiences of each spiritual practice covered in the syllabus; and discussion of these experiences. Some readings and discussions will take place on-line through Moodle.

To enroll in the Moodle portion of the class, the enrollment key is: Prayer

#### **Expectations:**

While this class explores the historical background to spiritual practices, it also introduces participants to a range of devotional practices in the Christian tradition that must be experienced in order to be appreciated and fully understood. It is presumed that all participants will be open to experiencing all forms of prayer and devotional practices that are part of the in-class experiences. No one will be asked to pray in a way that offends them. Any student who rejects a

form of prayer proposed in class will be asked to discuss their objects privately with the professor.

### **Final Research/Pastoral Project:**

There are far more devotional practices and forms of prayer than we have time to experience and discuss during the course of this semester together. For that reason, each participant will be asked to prepare a written project (15 pages) that the student will also present orally to the whole class (20 minutes) in a clear, well-organized presentation.

The project should explore or develop in greater depth a spiritual practice of special interest. This project should be historical in its method of analysis; but, if you are in a pastoral degree program, the project may be a creative exploration of a spiritual practice or a preparation of a pastoral program related to a spiritual practice. **All projects must be approved by the instructor.** The purpose of this assignment is to give each participant the opportunity to explore in depth a particular practice in depth.

**Reflection Papers:** Students are requested to write two short (3 pages) reflections papers on their experiences praying with a devotional practice that is new to them. A separate informational sheet is provided that explains the expectations of this assignment.

### **Evaluation Procedure:**

Evaluation of each student's work will be based on individual written project (20%), thoughtful and respectful participation in class discussions (15%), oral presentation of final project (15%), two reflection papers on two different prayer experiences (20%), peer evaluation and feedback (10%); participation in at least two Optional Experiential Components noted on the syllabus. The participation in an Optional Experiential Component includes the actual participation in the event or in the creative process and a brief report to the class on your experience (20%).

The evaluation standard for each student depends on his/her degree program. Students in research oriented degree programs (Ph.D., M.A. ) will be evaluated on ability and performance of critical analysis and logical presentation of arguments. Students in professional/pastoral degree programs will be expected to actively look for pastoral applications of material and make these applications in relevant, effective ways.

All students are expected to participate in the full range of spiritual practices, but this participation does not lend itself to evaluation *per se*.

### **Important Dates:**

March 6: Reflection Paper #1 due in class

April 10: Reflection Paper #2 due in class

May 8: All written research projects due in class

### **Required Reading:**

Thompson, Marjorie, Soul Feast. An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life  
Rule of Saint Benedict

Readings TBA to be posted on Moodle

**Recommended Reading:**

Jane Redmont, *When in Doubt, Sing. Prayer in Daily Life*

**Schedule of Classes****Feb. 6:**

- **Lecture: Introduction to Lay Spirituality and the Origins of Christian Monasticism**  
 Why should monastic spirituality be a model for the lay spiritual life?  
 Benedictine Monasticism meets U.S. pop spirituality: Thomas Merton (d.1968), Kathleen Norris (currently writing), and Joan Chittister (currently writing)  
 How to read a book or article (<http://courseweb.fst.edu/pryds/Study/notes.pdf>)
- **Required Reading:** Thompson, Ch. 1, 3, 9
- **Optional Experiential Component:** Write Your Own Personal Rule of Life: Consider its structure and purpose; also consider the presentation of this Rule if physical presentation matters to you. How do you intend to use this Rule? If desired, we may as a class create a ritual to help each individual consecrate and bless you upon your presentation of the Rule.
- **Film Clip:** Into Great Silence (2007); The Trouble with Angels (1966); The Nun's Story (1959).

**Feb. 13: Monasticism as a Lay Spiritual Practice/ Lay Adaptations on Monasticism**

- **Lecture:** 12-14<sup>th</sup> century models of lay religious life: 1.) Beguines—the vocation to be a single working, prayerful woman; 2.) Third Orders—associating with religious orders is enough for me; and 3.) Humiliati—families and neighborhoods as “domestic monasteries”
- **Discussion:** Relevance of Monasticism as a Model for Lay Spirituality Today; Rule of Life for Lay People
- **Optional Experiential Component:** On your own attend a worship service at Incarnation Monastery at 1369 LeRoy in Berkeley (preferably a Sunday mass when a larger lay community is present). Address and other contact information at <http://www.contemplation.com/Hermitage/Incarnation.html>
- Read *The Rule of St. Benedict* [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/gregory/life\\_rule.iv.i.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/gregory/life_rule.iv.i.html)  
 To focus your reading, as you read the Rule of St. Benedict, notice the structure of the Rule, itself, as a text. What kinds of prayers are delineated; how is daily life structures for the monks; what are the seasonal changes the monks experience; how do the monks interact with the outside world? Take clear notes indicating chapters and sections that are of particular interest/relevance for class discussion.

**Feb 20: Saints and Holy People**

- **Lecture:** Hagiography as Story Telling; Canonization and What Makes it “Official”; Iconography and How Saints are depicted.
- **Optional Experiential Component:** Each student is to tell a story about a holy person (i.e. the label “holy person” is defined and determined by you). Be prepared to tell this story to the class. This will required rehearsal on your part, as well as careful preparation.

- Reading on Moodle
- Film Clip: *Brother Sun, Sister Moon; Francesco*.

### **Feb. 27: Lay Preaching**

- Lecture: Historical Models of Rose of Viterbo; Angela of Foligno; Dorothy Day
- Film Clip: *Entertaining Angels*
- Optional Experiential Component: Attend liturgical lay preaching. (I will be preaching at Newman Hall/Holy Spirit Parish in Berkeley on Sunday Feb. 28 at 5:00 p.m. and at 10:00 p.m.)
- Reading on Moodle

### **Mar. 6: Reading as Prayer: Lectio Divina, Lectoring, Spiritual Reading**

- Discussion: Reading as Prayer; Books of Hours and the Laity's use of books for prayer. History of *Lectio divina* as a prayer form.
- Required Reading: Thompson, ch. 2.
- Optional Experiential Component: Create your own Prayer Book; consider the structure, format, texts, images; does texture of paper or binding affect the experience of praying with your book? If your prayerbook is electronic, consider the inclusion of music, video, and interactive journaling.

### **Due Today hard copy in class: Reflection paper #1**

### **Mar. 13: Praying with Beads: Rosary, Jesus Prayer.**

#### **Introduction to Mary**

- Lecture: Mantra prayers and Marian Devotion
- Reading on Moodle
- Optional Experiential Component: Create your own prayer beads. Consider the meaning of number, shape, texture, and color of the beads/medals/cord.
- In-Class Experiential Component: The Rosary

### **Mar. 20: Marian Devotion: What does Mary Mean?**

- Lecture: Marian Devotion, the Rosary, and Political Agendas: Anti-Communism, Pro-Life Movement, Feminism.
- Film Clip: Fulton Sheen.
- In Class Experiential Component: Stations of the Cross

### **No Class Meeting Sat. March 27: Reading Week**

- On-Line Class via Moodle:  
Examination of Conscience and Confession/ Spiritual Companionship
- Required Reading: Thompson: ch. 6, 7

### **No Class Meeting Sat. April 3: Holy Saturday**

- On-Line mini-lecture on Pilgrimage posted on Moodle [Please read in order to prepare for the class Pilgrimage on April 10]

**Apr. 10: Class Pilgrimage**

**Destination TBA (options include: Grace Cathedral, S.F. Labyrinth; Crosses in Lafayette; other)**

**Due Today hard copy in class: Reflection Paper #2**

**Apr. 17: Shrines: Household Shrines, Roadside Shrines**

- **Lecture:** Consecrating Mundane Space
- **Reading on Moodle**
- **Experiential Component:** Create a Shrine. Consider its purpose, location, structure; what images will be included. How will you use it in prayer/reflection?

**Apr. 24: The Life Cycle as Spiritual Practice; Story Telling as Spiritual Practice**

- **Lecture:** Birth, Initiation Rites (Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage), Death and Dying
- **Experiential Component:** Student is to tell an illustrative story about an initiation experience which could include death and dying.
- **Required Reading:** Thompson, Chapter 4, 8; on-line reading on dying and death.

**May 1: Contemplative Prayer/Hermits and the Anchorite Tradition**

- **Lecture:** Silence and Solitude in Christian Prayer
- **Reading on Moodle**
- **Film Clip:** *Into Great Silence*

**May 8: Student Presentations**

**Due Today hard copy in class: Final Project**

**May 15: Student Presentations Class will meet until noon, location TBA.**