



Level 7 Catechism: Theology: Section 1

Course Description & Syllabus (2021-2022)

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Course Description:

In this course, we will study basic teachings of Orthodox Christianity, and will look in depth at not just what we believe, but even more importantly, how we as faithful Christians respond when asked about what we believe. We call this concept “apologetics” and it has been a part of the Church from literally day one.

We will keep this concept in mind, as we carefully read and consider deeply the truths of our Orthodox Faith. In using the wise counsel of a modern day Elder, (soon to be canonized saint!) Cleopa of Romania, we will share ways how we can explain our Orthodox Faith to those we come in contact with in a way that is effective and respectful, with the salvation of the person we are speaking to as the utmost consideration.

Course Texts:

We will be using the famous Great Elder Cleopa of Romania’s books: The Truth of our Faith (Vol. 1 &2) as the basic texts. Both are published by Uncut Mountain Press.

Assignments:

There will be weekly readings assigned, as well as monthly one-page reflection papers due at the end of each month. Students are expected to be on time for class (camera on!) and prepared for in-class discussions and small groups. There will be a final term paper assigned in the Spring.

Tentative Calendar:

A more detailed calendar will be given at orientation to list reading assignments and that week’s topic. We are flexible and will adapt as the conversation takes us.

Topics:

Among other things, here are some of the topics we will cover: Apologetics, The Church, Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition, Veneration of the Saints, Angels, and the Mother of God, Holy Icons and Relics, Fasting, The Divine Liturgy, and the Mysteries of the Church.

A Consideration:

In addition to teaching at St. Raphael School, I am also a full time Orthodox priest with a pretty active parish. If an emergency comes up, a funeral, or if there is a need to cancel a class, it will be communicated with an in-class assignment. I do not expect this to happen, but just be aware of that possibility. The hazards of having a priest as a teacher... 😊

Grading:

Grades will be given for the assignments given (monthly reflection papers), for Classroom participation (from the assigned readings given that week), and for a final term paper in the Spring. All reflection papers and the term paper **MUST** be typed and submitted through the Schoology site. Coming to class prepared and having read the assignment is a must. Nobody wants to just hear me yammer on for an hour and half every week... 😊 And besides, I want to hear what you think, and how you understand these important topics.

The Virtual Classroom:

We will use the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom. Students will receive a link (via email) that will enable them to join the virtual classroom. Specific information regarding the technology used (including required technology) can be found by visiting the “Technology in the Classroom” section of the Student Parent Handbook.

About the Instructor:

I was born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware. I am a 2002 graduate from the University of Delaware, where I received a B.S. in Family & Community Services (basically a social work degree.) I then received my MDiv from St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in May of 2005. In June of 2005 I was assigned to Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission in Mechanicsburg, PA, where I currently serve as pastor. I have taught liturgics and homiletics at St. Tikhon’s Seminary, and given several retreats and talks over the years, one of my favorites being the keynote speaker at the Antiochian Village College Retreat where I talked about, you guessed it... Apologetics! I am married to my lovely wife, Anastasia, and have four children: Nicholas (15), Kyra (14), Elijah (10), and Joachim (4). I am excited for this class and look forward to the continued opportunity and responsibility of teaching and sharing the faith for St. Raphael School!