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Course: “Earth Crammed With Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday (and University) Life”

Taught in the Ignatian Residential College, Fall, 2004

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Course Description

This course examines the foundations and elements of a Christian spirituality of everyday life, with special attention to university spirituality. Topics include the relationship between human psychological and spiritual development; the foundations and contours of virtue and the Christian moral life; sexuality and dating; the vocation of study; how spirituality operates in the workplace; how to live as a prayerful person in a busy world; how to live a life committed to justice -- in the context of a global, industrialized, technological culture characterized by vast communications networks, war, terrorism and ecological destruction. One unit will examine the particular type of spirituality encouraged by Ignatius of Loyola – “finding God in all things.”

The course will consider the context of the present interest in spirituality and probe its meaning for college-age students. Course will include a) an appreciative but critical historical overview of the Christian spiritual tradition that is overwhelmingly monastic; b) examination of key theological foundations for such a spirituality including the doctrines of creation, incarnation, grace, and Holy Spirit; c) discussion of vocation in terms of concepts such as the priesthood of all the faithful and the relationship of contemplation to action; d) exploration of the practical implications of such a spirituality in daily life.

The course aims to equip students to become conversant in the language, symbols and categories of Christian theological spirituality; to reflect on their own lives in the light of this tradition; to be able to establish critical correlations between the past and the present; to articulate the broad contours of a Christian spirituality on personal and communal levels. Course method includes critical reading of texts; class conversation; personal journal; short writing assignments and oral presentations, lectures, case studies, video presentations, and a practicum on various forms of meditation. **The major project for the course is a class-designed volume on University Spirituality. Through discussion of course material, students will choose topics for a 10-12 chapter volume, decide how to organize this material into sections and chapters. Students will then choose topics and write various chapters in the book. The completed project will be printed and bound by the Fairfield University Printing Office.**

Required Texts

Callahan, William. Noisy Contemplation: Deep Prayer for Busy People. Hyattsville, MD:

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- Quixote Center, 1994, 1982. [Quixote Center, Inc./P.O. Box 5206/Hyattsville, MD 20782.]
- Dreyer, Elizabeth. Earth Crammed With Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life. Paulist Press, 1996.
- Freitas, Donna and Jason King. Save the Date: A Spirituality of Dating, Love, Dinner, and the Divine. New York: Crossroad, 2003. 0-8245-2123-4.
- Gallagher, Michael Paul. New revised edition. Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture. Paulist, 2003.
- Muldoon, Tim. Come to the Banquet: Nourishing Our Spiritual Hunger (Chicago: Sheed & Ward, 2002. 1-58051-119-8.

Course Requirements

1. 20% Several short written assignments; a case study presented on some aspect of university spirituality.
2. 30% Mid-term.
3. 30% Final exam. Topics and the design for a book on “University Spirituality” will be identified by the class and each student will choose one topic of interest to her/him to research and write a 20 page paper.
4. 15% Weekly journal entries that are aimed at engaging in the process of theological reflection. Commitment to the journaling process involves a regular commitment to “sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree.”
5. 5% Attendance at class and full participation every week is expected. Your grade will automatically be affected negatively or positively by this final criterion. More than three absences will also negatively affect final evaluation.

Syllabus

September 9 Introductions.
 Syllabus.
 Pedagogy
 Where do you experience the numinous? Peak experiences?

Journal Reflections

1. What do you want to learn in terms of your own spirituality?
2. What is spirituality? If you were to write a book on university spirituality what are 2-4 major topics you would include?
3. Identify key questions related to lay spirituality.
4. Identify 3-4 major blocks to developing a creative spiritual life.

September 13:

Interviews: Speak with 4-5 students about the spirituality of university life and write up the results in 1-2 pages.

1. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person? Why or why not?
2. Describe the most important specific, concrete elements that you consider part of the spiritual side of your life.
3. Do you have any specific, regular spiritual practices? What is this experience like for you?

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4. What things get in the way of your being the kind of spiritual person you want to be?
5. Are you involved in any kind of justice work in which you are an actor and advocate for the poor, people of color or others who are marginalized in our society?

Journal Reflection:

1. Who am I? What is my nature? What am I meant to do? What am I meant to be? Is the life I am living the life that wants to live in me? Reflect on your childhood to see if there are any clues there about the true identity of self and vocation. You may also want to inquire of parents, grandparents, siblings, friends about things they might have noticed about your early interests and aversions, your gifts and limitations. Take some time to reflect on and analyze the **meaning** of these clues. What do they say to you about who you are? (15)
2. We need to ask not only “Who am I?” but “Whose am I?” (17). Name the many communities of which you are a part. What have you received from these communities that is positive, that is negative? What do you give to these communities in return?
3. What comes to mind when you think of words like “calling” or “vocation”?

September 16 What is Spirituality?

Read: Dreyer, Chapters 1, 2, and 5.

Journal Reflections

1. Devise your own definition/description of spirituality and be able to explain it.
2. Reflect on the intersection of the spirituality and university life? Are there links and if so, what are they? What are blocks to linking the two?
3. In our present society, what are the spiritual demons that block us from channeling our spiritual energies creatively?
4. Name some truths or values that you hold very deeply at the center of your being. What are some of the sources of these values?
5. Think about these values and how they might match up with some of the pressing needs of society as you perceive them.

September 20: Spirituality as Hunger and Desire

Read: Muldoon, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Journal Reflection:

1. When I sit down quietly with myself and think about my life, what are my deepest desires for myself, for my friends and family, for the world? One way to think about this question is to reflect on what you want to have in the palm of your hand at the end of your life?
2. Can you organize these desires into categories of any kind? Are they all aimed at similar goals? Are they all of equal value?
3. Are there things you desire that you would identify as destructive, egotistic, narrow, selfish?
4. The early followers of Jesus and the saints and mystics down through the centuries seem to have had a very deep longing for God, for love, for goodness and justice for everyone. How does your experience of life lead you to be in touch with these desires; what in life prevents you from reflecting on your desires?

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5. Every person lives with fears. What are your primary fears and insecurities? How do they get “played out” in your everyday life? What do you do with them? Is your way of dealing with fear constructive or destructive for those around you? Have you ever tried to befriend your fears? Can they teach you anything about yourself? about your vocation?
6. “Leadership is everyone’s vocation.” What do you think genuine leadership is (in a group, a dorm, a class, a family, a neighborhood, a company, a church) Do you ever experience yourself as a leader? What happens when you think of yourself as being “called” to leadership?

September 23: Theological/Ethical Foundations of Christian Spirituality

Read: Dreyer, Chapters 3, 4.

Journal Reflections

1. How might Jesus’ life function as a model for the Christian life?
2. “Who do you say I am?” Reflect as honestly and truthfully as you can on who Jesus is for you and what effect he has in your life.
3. Identify what you perceive as limitations in your nature.
4. What can one do if one has no feeling or consciousness of her/his deeper self? How do you know? How might one go about developing such awareness?
5. What do you understand by the phrase, “the **theological** and **ethical** foundations for a spirituality? Do you ever think **theologically**? If theology can be described as organized reflection on the human experience of God, do you ever function as a **theologian**?

September 27: Loyola New Orleans video on the tradition and grace.

September 30: Context: Local, National, Global

Read: Gallagher: Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7.

October 4: Context, con’t

Read Gallagher, Chapters 8, 9, 10, 12.

October 7: President van Arx’s Installation: No Class

October 11: Columbus Day Observed: No Class

Write a 2-page paper in which you take one side of a debate about the relationship between organized religion and spirituality. To be handed in October 14.

October 14: Group #1 presentation: “Religion and Pop Culture”

October 18 Prayer

Read Callahan, Chapters 1-7

Journal Reflections

1. Like other aspects of life, the ability to pray and the way in which we pray needs to grow and deepen throughout our lives. Comment briefly on your own "history of prayer." Do you sense that you are growing in your ability to "pray deeply?" Or do you sense that you have been moving away from deep prayer? or that you really never did enter into prayer in any kind of a focused, intentional way? How might you describe some of the changes in your prayer life and comment on why the changes have taken place.

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2. It is a commonplace that Jesus functions as a model for Christians. But is this really the case? Comment on Callahan's Chapter II -- is there anything here that you think young Christian people could genuinely use to engage with Jesus as a model for their own lives? One possible example. In Matthew 4.1-11, Jesus struggles with his own vocation and future ministry. Can this passage be of any help to university students who are seeking their own vocations and calls? Why or why not? Are there any stories about Jesus that you think might be of help to students who do want to develop their prayer lives?
3. "...most of Jesus' praying took place by contemplating the people and events of his life at the time he experienced them." What would such a practice look like and feel like in your own life? Use concrete examples.
4. On page 34, Callahan argues against "Airstream camper" spirituality? What does he mean?
5. Callahan describes prayer as simple, strong and durable, deep and loving, hospitable, socially conscious and integrated. Choose one of these attributes and comment on how it might be lived out in daily life on a university campus.
6. Comment on Callahan's comments on page 52: "Noisy contemplation is prayer for crabgrass Christians."
7. Engage in some of the "Introductory Exercises" on page 55-57. What was your experience like?
8. Social justice is seen by most Christian denominations as a constitutive element of the Christian life. How might university students engage in issues of justice?

October 21: Noisy Contemplation
Read Callahan, Chapters 8-Conclusion

Journal Reflection:

1. Callahan believes that everyone can learn to be an active contemplative by wanting it, by practicing it, by developing habits to support it. Do you think this is true for the "ordinary" Christian? Might it be true for yourself?
2. On page 65, Callahan refers to the important rhythm between quiet time apart and ways to live one's active busy days in a contemplative manner. Comment on how you see this relationship between silent times apart and prayer in the midst of a busy day. Look over the handout of "Theological Reflection." Can some of these directions help one build a habit of daily contemplative prayer?
3. To which object of contemplation do you need to pay special attention at this point in your life? Nature? Culture? people? yourself? God? Society (local and global)?

October 25: Meditation Practicum. We will meet in the Commons in Loyola.
Read Dreyer, Chapters 10 and 11.

Journal Reflection:

1. What is your understanding of morality/ethics?
2. What are its most important elements?
3. How would you define your own "character"?
4. What virtues would you name as qualities/behaviors you possess?
5. Do you know your most prevalent vices?
6. Name several forces that support and that work against self-esteem.
7. How can people at an institution like Fairfield include the poor in their spiritualities?

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8. How does this book address the strong individualism of our culture? Does a more community-oriented approach make sense to you? Do you see problems with it?

October 28: Group Presentation #2: “Spiritual Practices”

Read Muldoon, Chapters 4 and 5.

November 1: Sexuality and Spirituality

Read Dreyer Chapter 8 and Freitas/King, pp. 9-101.

Journal Reflection:

1. What are the key biblical and theological resources in the area of sexuality? How does the Christian tradition support or hinder a healthy sexuality?
2. How might one’s sexuality reveal aspects of God’s existence and presence to the world? Can one’s appreciation of the infinite mysteriousness of another human being lead one into knowing and appreciating the infinite mystery that is God?
3. In your estimation, what are the 2-3 most pressing issues for university students in the area of spirituality and sexuality?

November 4: Sexuality and Spirituality, con’t.

Read Freitas/King, pp. 102-190.

Journal Reflection:

1. What are some of the positive and negative influences of media and popular culture on sexual awareness and practice?
2. Loneliness is a frequently mentioned experience of persons in many stages of life, including young adults. How can one reflect on one’s experience of loneliness spiritually? What are some positive and negative ways that university students might deal with loneliness?
3. Because of the many strains of dualism that still linger in contemporary consciousness, many Christians do not think of sexuality as sacred. Is it possible for us to think of the sexual aspects of our being as truly holy, as a way to participate in God’s life?

November 8: Mid-term examination

November 11: Group Presentation #3: Ethics and University Life: A Case Study

November 15: Spirituality and Work

1. Read Dreyer, Chapters 6 and 7.
2. List 8 major topics you would choose as chapter headings in a book on university spirituality and give a brief explanation of your choices. To be handed in.

Journal Reflection

1. In terms of work, what do you want to be when you grow up? ☺ When you think of the career/vocation you would like to pursue, what do you think you will like most about it? What makes you doubtful or fearful?
2. Many spiritual writers describe the spiritually mature as those who have created some level of integrity in which their true inner thoughts and dispositions are basically reflected in external behaviors. When you think of past/present experience in the work place, to what extent do

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you keep your personal truth hidden or separate from your public attitudes and behaviors? Do you often find yourself thinking or feeling one thing, but exhibiting behavior that suggests something else? When is this good, a necessary evil, or a sign of personal and moral dysfunction? How do you know? To what extent are your “insides” and your “outside” in harmony – with your friends, family, at work?

3. How are you with metaphors? Complete these sentences with a metaphor of your choice. “Life is like a_____.” “My life is like a _____.” “My vocation is like a _____.” What do these metaphors mean? Why did you choose these particular images?
4. As a university student, study is the main work to which you are called during these years (despite protestations to the contrary). Write a two-page description of a spirituality of study to hand in on November 18th. We have learned about many elements of the spiritual life. Which would you include? How and why? How would you apply the concept of spiritual discipline to study? What are the pitfalls, the challenges, the joys, the virtues, the fruits of study?

November 18: Book Design Discussion and Assignment of topics for final paper.

November 22: American Academy of Religion Meeting. **No class.**

November 25: Thanksgiving: No Class.

November 29 Asceticism/Spiritual Disciplines: Related to self; to family and friends,
world, ecosystems

1. Read Dreyer, Chapter 9
2. Write a 2-3 page paper on your understanding of study as a spiritual path. Use all appropriate categories we have studied that might be included in such a spirituality.

December 2: Group Presentation #4: “The Spirituality of Study”

December 6: Wrap-up, assessment.
Read Dreyer, Conclusion

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Supplementary Resources

Spirituality

Aumann, Jordan. Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition. Sheed & Ward, 1985.

Bacik, James J. Spirituality in Transition. Sheed & Ward, 1996.

_____. Spirituality In Action Paulist.

Chittister, Joan D. Wisdom Distilled From the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today. San

Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Ciorra, Anthony J. Everyday Mysticism: Cherishing the Holy. Crossroad.

Cunningham, Larry and Keith Egan. Christian Spirituality: Themes From the Tradition. Paulist, 1996.

Downey, Michael. Understanding Christian Spirituality. Paulist, 1996.

_____. Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality. Orbis, 2000.

Esway, Judy. Real Life, Real Spirituality: For Busy People Who Want to Pray. Twenty-Third

Publications. [Personal account from charismatic conversion to contemplative prayer.

Insights from classical and contemporary authors.]

Everist, Norma Cook and Nelvin Vos. Where in the World Are You?: Connecting Faith and Daily Life. The Alban Institute.

Fenhagen, James. Invitation to Holiness. Morehouse.

Fitzgerald, William John. Stories of Coming Home; Finding Spirituality in Our Messy Lives.

Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1998.

Gaillardetz, Richard. Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community and Liturgy in a Technological Culture. Crossroad, 2000.

Holmes, Urban T. A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction. NY: Seabury, 1980.

Holt, Bradley. Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993.

Kinast, Robert. What Are They Saying About Theological Reflection? Paulist, 2000.

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Nouwen, Henri. Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

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Robinson, David. The Family Cloister: Benedictine Wisdom for the Home. Crossroad, 2000.

Rolheiser, Ronald. Spirituality for A Restless Culture. Mystic: CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1991.

_____. Against an Infinite Horizon: The Finger of God in Our Everyday Lives. Crossroad.

_____. The Holy Longing: The Search for A Christian Spirituality.

Sheldrake, Philip. Befriending Our Desires. Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1994.

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_____. Spirituality & History: Questions of Interpretation and Method. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

Vatican II: "The Church in the Modern World."

Woods, Richard. Christian Spirituality: God's Presence Through the Ages. Chicago: Thomas More, 1987.

Jesuit Spirituality

Barry, William A. Finding God in All Things: A Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1991. 0-87793-460-6.

Sexuality

Chu-Cong, Joseph. The Contemplative Experience: Erotic Love and Spiritual Union. Crossroad.

Ferder, Fran and John Heagle. Your Sexual Self: Pathway to Authentic Intimacy. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1992.

McDonald, Patrick J. and Claudette M. Marital Spirituality: The Search for the Hidden Ground of Love. Paulist Press, 2000.

_____. The Soul of a Marriage.

Rouner, Leroy S. Loneliness. Boston University Studies in Philosophy and Religion, Vol. 19.

Timmerman, Joan. The Mardi-Gras Syndrome

_____. Sexuality and Spiritual Growth. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

Whitehead, Evelyn Eaton and James D. A Sense of Sexuality: Christian Love and Intimacy. New York: Crossroad, 1999.

Prayer/Liturgy/Sacraments

Au, Wilkie. The Enduring Heart: Spirituality for the Long Haul. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2000.

_____. By Way of the Heart. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

_____ with Noreen Cannon. Urgings of the Heart. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Beguerie, Philip and Claude Duchesneau. How to Understand the Sacraments. Crossroad. 1991.

Cooke, Bernard. Sacraments and Sacramentality. Twenty-third Publications, 1991.

Guzie, Tad. The Book of Sacramental Basics. New York: Paulist, 1981.

Hughes, Kathleen and Barbara Quinn. The Peoples Catechism (Section 3: "Celebrating the Faith"). Crossroad, 1995.

Martos, Joseph. Doors to the Sacred. Triumph Books, 1991.

Merrill, Nan C. Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness. New York: Continuum.

Paulsell, Stephanie. Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice. Josey-Bass, 2002.

Saliers, Don E., "For the Sake of the World: Liturgy and Ethics," Worship as Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994): 171-190).

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Work

- Conger, Jay A. and Associates. Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership. Josey-Bass.
- Crabtree, Davida Foy. The Empowering Church: How One Congregation Supports Lay People's Ministries in the World. The Alban Institute.
- Diehl, William E. The Monday Connection: On Being An Authentic Christian in A Weekday World. HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.
- Droel, William. Full-Time Christians: The Real Challenge from Vatican II. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002. 1-58595-177-3.
- Gardella, Peter. Domestic Religion: Work, Food, Sex and Other Commitments. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998. ISBN: 0-8298-1277-6.
- Herman, Stanley M. The Tao at Work: On Leading and Following. Josey-Bass.
- Jacobsen, Steve. Hearts to God. Hands to Work: Connecting Spirituality and Work. The Alban Institute.
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Morality and Justice

- Billy, Dennis J and Donna Lynn Orsuto, eds. Spirituality & Morality: Integrating Prayer & Action. Mahwah, New Jersey, 1996. 0-8091-3611-2.
- Day, Dorothy. All works by and about her.
- Duffey, Michael K. Be Blessed in What You Do: The Unity of Christian Ethics and Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).
- Gula, Richard M., The Good Life: Where Morality and Spirituality Converge (New York: Paulist Press, 1999).
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of A People. Orbis, 1984.
- Harak, E. Simon. Virtuous Passions (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).
- Merton, Thomas. All books by and about him.
- O'Keefe, Mark. Becoming Good, Becoming Holy: On the Relationship of Christian Ethics and Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1995).
- Reiser, William. To Hear God's Word, Listen to the World: The Liberation of Spirituality. Paulist, 1997.
- Spohn, William C. "Spirituality and Ethics: Exploring the Connections," Theological Studies 58 (March 1997): 109-123.

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Waddell, Paul J., "What Do All Those Masses Do For Us? Reflections on the Christian Moral Life and the

Eucharist" Kathleen Hughes and Mark R. Francis, eds., Living No Longer for Ourselves (Collegeville:

The Liturgical Press, 1991): 153-169.

Welch, Sharon D. Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work.

Routledge, 1999.

Human Development/Young Adults

Beaudin, Tom. Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.

Borchard, Therese Johnson. Winging It: Meditations of a Young Adult. Orbis, 2001.

Buier, Rose M. et al. "The Critical Years: Changes in Moral and Ethical Decision-Making of Young

Adults at Three Christian Liberal Arts Colleges. " Journal of Psychology and Christianity

8 (Fall 1989): 69-78.

Carr, Elizabeth E.M. "The Fire Within: Discovering Adult Freedom Before God," The Way Supplement 88

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Carroll, Colleen, ed. The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy

Chicago: Loyola University Press, 2002.

Conn, Jo Ann Wolski. Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development. 2nd ed.

New York: Paulist Press, 1996 [1986].

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 Toolan, David. At Home in the Cosmos.
 Van Ness, Peter H. Spirituality, Diversion, and Decadence: The Contemporary Predicament. SUNY, 1992.
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