

**St. Mary's University College
Faculty of Education
Graduate Diploma of Religious Education Program**

**THEO 503
Understanding the Sacraments
Fall 2011**

Instructor: Elisabeth MacDonald, B.Ed., M.A., M.R.E.

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Term Dates:

September 19 – December 9, 2011

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Historical development and current understandings of sacramental rites, the role of the sacraments in Christian life and as community celebrations, and the role of the school in the teaching of sacraments

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

- demonstrate an understanding of concepts underlying the Catholic sacramental vision: sacramental awareness, grace, symbols, signs, rituals, and prayer
- describe biblical, historical and theological developments of the sacraments
- describe current understandings of the sacraments and the rituals and symbols used in the sacraments
- show understanding of the role of sacraments in Christian life and as community celebrations
- consider the role of the school and the parish in teaching the sacraments
- explore a current issue or concern regarding one or more sacraments in the Catholic Church today
- reflect on one's own journey in understanding of sacraments

COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY:

This is an online course using the St. Mary's University College Moodle platform. Access to Moodle courses can be found at <http://moodle.stmu.ab.ca/>

The first session is a face-to-face meet & greet introduction to the course. For participants in the Medicine Hat region, this first session will occur on Monday, September 19th, 2011 as part of the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education's Faith Day. Please contact the instructor for more details.

For participants in the Calgary region, the first session will occur on Monday, September 19th, 2011, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Bishop Grandin High School (111 Haddon Road SW).

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

1. Hahn, Scott. *Swear to God – The Promise and Power of the Sacraments*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.
2. Mick, Lawrence E. *Understanding the Sacraments Today (Rev. Ed.)*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006.
3. Bible Texts: New Revised Standard Version or The Catholic Study Bible are probably the better versions for study and reference. Other sources are the New American Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible.
4. Catechism of the Catholic Church (Second Edition) – several online versions are available and are free to access. You may want your own hard copy but the online is fine for this course. There is a good searchable version from Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church at <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccs.htm> . The Vatican site also a copy: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
5. Additional online readings as posted by the instructor.

LEARNING TASKS OVERVIEW:

There are 4 major components of learning in this course:

- a) Weekly readings from texts and online postings by the instructor with one-page assignments posted approximately every two weeks (20% - see **Bi-Weekly Assignment Rubric**)
- b) Online discussion based on responses to instructor and student postings. Each week you will be asked to participate in the online discussions. The discussions are critical in an online course because they are the place where you interact with other students and the instructor around specific questions and issues raised in our reading and course assignments and particularly about links that you see between our readings and your own teaching context. (40% - see **Weekly Online Discussion Rubric**)
- c) Essay: 5 – 6 pages in length (20% of final mark)
The focus will be on a current topic, issue or concern related to one or more sacraments. Students can choose their own topic to explore and should reference at least three sources (including course resources) in discussion of their position. Excellent essays will demonstrate critical thinking with appropriate sources referenced. (See **Essay Rubric**)
- d) Final reflection paper: 5 - 6 pages in length (20% of final mark)
This is a personal reflection of significant learnings in this course. It is not simply a summary of content but a critical reflection in terms of one's own understandings vis-à-vis the course readings, assignments and shared discussion. It should include elements of the Shared Christian Praxis approach. It is highly recommended that students keep a journal throughout this course to draw upon for this final paper. (See **Reflection Paper Rubric**)

All assignments should be typed (12 point), double-spaced, and no more than 6 pages (approximately 1500 words). Either an MLA or APA style is acceptable.

Weekly Topics, *Readings and Due Dates:

(*additional online readings will be posted by instructor)

TOPIC	TEXTUAL READINGS	CCC #s READINGS	Online Discussion Opening Date	Online Discussion Closing Date	Written Assignment Posting Date	Written Assignment Due Date
Introduction & Sacramentality	Hahn Ch. 1 & 2	1127, 1145-1149, 1210	Sept. 19	Sept. 26	Sept. 19	Oct. 3
Biblical Roots	Hahn Ch. 3 – 10	1150-1152	Sept. 26	Oct. 3		
Baptism	Mick Ch. 1	1213-1284	Oct. 3	Oct. 10	Oct. 3	Oct. 17
Confirmation	Mick Ch. 2	1285-1321	Oct. 10	Oct. 17		
Eucharist & the new Roman Missal (2 wks)	Mick Ch. 3 Hahn Ch. 11 & 14	1322-1419	Oct. 17	Oct. 31	Oct. 17	Oct. 31
Marriage	Mick Ch. 6 Hahn Ch. 12	1601-1666	Oct. 31	Nov. 7	Oct. 31	Nov. 14
Holy Orders	Mick Ch. 7	1128, 1533-1600	Nov. 7	Nov. 14		
Essay work			No postings Nov. 14 th as Essays are due on Nov. 21 st			
Peer Responses	Peer Essays		Nov. 21	Dec. 9	Essays to be posted by Nov. 22	
Reconciliation	Mick Ch. 4	1422-1498	Nov. 21	Nov. 28	Nov. 21	Dec. 5
Anointing of the Sick	Mick Ch. 5	1499-1532	Nov. 28	Dec. 5		
Final Reflection Paper			Open forum Dec. 5 – 9 Re: course learnings/feedback		None posted – final paper due	Dec. 9

Bi-Weekly Assignment Rubric (20% of final mark)

Meets the standard of excellence 4	Clearly meets the acceptable standard 3	Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard 2	Clearly below acceptable standard 1
<p>Displays an excellent understanding of the course materials and the underlying concepts.</p> <p>Uses course materials to support important points. Clear evidence of critical thinking (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). Writing quality is excellent.</p>	<p>Displays understanding of the course materials and the underlying concepts.</p> <p>Some use of the course materials to support points. Some evidence of critical thinking.</p> <p>Writing quality is very good.</p>	<p>Displays some understanding of the course materials but is missing key concepts.</p> <p>Some use of course materials but missing critical links to support points. Some evidence of critical thinking but lacking important details.</p> <p>Writing quality is adequate with some errors.</p>	<p>Displays little or no understanding of the course materials and the underlying concepts.</p> <p>Use of course materials is incoherent or entirely missing.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of critical thinking.</p> <p>Writing quality is poor.</p>

Weekly Online Discussion Rubric (40% of final mark)

Meets the standard of excellence 4	Clearly meets the acceptable standard 3	Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard 2
<p>Student responds to the posted discussion with thoughtful ideas, clearly communicating his or her ideas and opinions and poses additional questions that deepen the discussion. Includes examples and real life applications. Interacts at least three times with others (in addition to their own posting).</p>	<p>Student responds to the posted discussion in a way that indicates some thought or original ideas and opinions. Includes examples and real life applications. Interacts at least twice with others (in addition to their own posting).</p>	<p>Displays little understanding of the course materials and the underlying concept being discussed. Use of course materials and other information to support points is incoherent or missing entirely. Little or no response to other student postings.</p>

Essay Rubric (20% of Final Mark)

	4	3	2	1	Value
Purpose	The writer's central purpose or argument is readily apparent to the reader. It is consistently clear throughout the paper	The writing has a clear purpose or argument, but may sometimes digress from it.	The central purpose or argument is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose or argument is generally unclear.	/4
Content	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.	Information provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Information supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.	/8
Organization & Style	The writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout. The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The writing is generally engaging. It is focused and keeps the reader's attention. The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other.	Though the paper has some interesting parts, the reader finds it difficult to maintain interest. In general, the writing is arranged logically, although not consistently.	The writing has little personality. It is not logically organized and ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning.	/4
Language Conventions	The essay is efficiently written in clear and concise language. The writing is free or almost free of errors. Appropriate references are used and cited in acceptable format.	Sentences are well-phrased and there is some variety in length and structure. The flow from sentence to sentence is generally smooth. There are occasional errors. Reference citations have some minor errors.	Some sentences are awkwardly constructed so that the reader is occasionally distracted. The writing has many errors. Frequent errors in citation format.	The essay is not efficiently written, nor does it utilize clear, concise language. Spelling is often incorrect; sentence, paragraph, and essay structure are often incorrect; grammatical rules not often followed. Poor use of references; citations have many errors.	/4

Reflection Paper Rubric (20% of Final Mark)

Using the "Praxis" Approach in Your Reflection Paper:

- a) The "Praxis" approach begins with our own understanding of something before we engage in further learning. Where were you in your own understanding of a particular sacrament or the sacraments in general at the beginning of this course?
- b) Think about how you came to this understanding – the how, why, who, when kinds of questions you ask yourself. We've all been influenced by persons and events in our lives and considering that influence is important in reflecting on our current position and understandings.
- c) The course materials, the discussions and other explorations you may have done have all impacted your learning in some way. What was important to you? What were the significant "ah-ha" moments? What were some of the things that made you think differently or perhaps deeper? What confirmed for you what you already believed or held to be true? What surprised you? Speak to the specific examples of what you learned in this course. (This is where keeping a journal through the course can be helpful.)
- d) Then think about what difference this new learning will make for you. It's the 'so what – now what?' part of the "Praxis" approach. Has it changed your thinking on anything? Has it inspired you towards changes in your decisions and actions? Will it make any difference to your teaching? Will it make any difference in your faith life? How else will it impact you?

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1
Critical Thinking X 2	A superior paper that shows insight and critical thought. All components of the praxis components are clearly evident and well thought out.	Clear evidence of critical thinking (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). Personal reflection is clearly evident.	Some elements of critical thinking evident. Some evidence of personal reflection.	Little or no evidence of critical thinking. No evidence of personal reflection.
Content X 2	Synthesis of ideas/concepts is clear and effective with support and examples from course material (incl. readings & discussions).	Very good use of course material (incl. readings & discussions) in supporting ideas.	Some synthesis of ideas/concepts. Reference to course material evident.	Details are missing. Essential course content information is inappropriate or lacking.
Clarity & Conventions	Exceptional control of ideas and expressions.	Very good control of ideas and expressions. Only minor errors in format or conventions.	Adequate control of ideas and expressions. Errors are sometimes intrusive and may affect clarity of communication.	Communication is not clear. Control of ideas and expressions is not evident. Multiple format errors.

Evaluation:

5 written bi-weekly assignments	20%
Online discussions based on weekly postings (10 weeks @ 4%/week)	40%
Essay (5 – 6 page paper)	20%
Reflection Paper (5 – 6 page paper)	20%

Grade Determination

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Percentage	97+	93-96	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	60-66	<60
Grade Point	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.0	0

Suggested Additional Resources:

Bausch, William J. *A New Look at the Sacraments*. New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publ., 2006.

"Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy", Vatican Council II. 04 Dec. 1963. Available online:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

General Directory for Catechesis. Available online:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17_041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

Klein, Peter. *The Catholic Source Book (Third Edition)*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Co., 2000.

Knox, Ian. *Theology for Teachers (Third Edition)*. Ottawa: Novalis, 1999.

Martos, Joseph. *Sacraments – Celebrations of God's Life*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publ., 2003.

Martos, Joseph. *The Sacraments – An Interdisciplinary and Interactive Study*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009.

O'Malley, William J. *The Sacraments – Rites of Conversion*. Allen, TX: Tabor Publ., 1995.

Osborne, Kenan B. *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist*. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

Rolheiser, Ronald. *Our One Great Act of Fidelity – Waiting for Christ in the Eucharist*. New York: Doubleday, 2011.

Stoutzenberger, Joseph. *Celebrating Sacraments*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1993.

St. Mary's University College Library Services:

http://library.stmu.ab.ca/services/serv_students.htm