

PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM

DO966 DE Seminar on Eschatology

Instructor:
Deacon Bill Ditewig, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar examines the fascinating theological study known as eschatology, with its concerns related to the “last things” (*eschata*) of death, judgment, heaven and hell. The seminar will have two major components. First, we will consider the actual content of a Catholic eschatology, since our traditional understanding of eschatology differs greatly from some other faith communities – and from Hollywood depictions of “the end of the world”! Many Catholics, however, do not hear much about our own Tradition on the subject, and one Catholic theologian has written that eschatology “is the missing link in much contemporary theology” (Dermot Lane). This leads to our second consideration: how a Catholic eschatology is integrated into a systematic, pastoral theology for ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To see eschatology in relationship to other theological disciplines.
2. To study fundamental elements of eschatology within the Catholic tradition.
3. To examine the nature and interpretation of apocalyptic literature; esp., the Book of Revelation.
4. To discuss and consider the impact of this study on pastoral ministry, especially the ministry of the deacon.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Tentative):

WEEK 1 (9 – 15 September):	Introduction: Rausch, Intro and Chapter 1 (ZOOM)
WEEK 2 (16 – 22 September):	Online Forum
WEEK 3 (23 – 29 September):	Rausch, Chapter 2 (ZOOM)
WEEK 4 (30 September – 6 October):	Online Forum
WEEK 5 (7 – 13 October):	Rausch, Chapter 3 (ZOOM)
WEEK 6 (14 – 20 October):	Online Forum
WEEK 7 (21 – 27 October):	Rausch, Chapter 4 (ZOOM)
WEEK 8 (28 October – 3 November):	Online Forum
WEEK 9 (4 – 10 November):	Rausch, Chapter 5 (ZOOM)
WEEK 10 (11 – 17 November):	Online Forum
WEEK 11 (18 – 24 November):	Rausch, Chapter 6 (ZOOM)
THANKSGIVING WEEK – OFF	
WEEK 12 (2 – 8 December):	Rausch, Chapter 7 (Online Forum)

COURSE ELEMENTS:

ZOOM and ONLINE FORUM Since this course is in a seminar format, we will have more frequent discussions via ZOOM. As can be seen in the tentative schedule above, we will have six 90-minute ZOOM conferences, starting with WEEK ONE and then every other week: Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11). Notice not only the FREQUENCY of these conferences, but also their length of 90 MINUTES. The alternating weeks will be online, using our course management software. I will post discussions topic(s) for Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

Our ZOOM Conferences will be on **MONDAY EVENINGS AT 7 PM EASTERN TIME.**

It is expected that all students will be present for every ZOOM Conference as well as every online forum.

GRADING

Since this is a seminar, grades will be determined by the student's preparation for, and participation in, the discussions both in our conferences and the online forum. There are no exams or final papers/projects.

REQUIRED TEXT:

- Thomas P. Rausch, SJ. *Eschatology, Liturgy, and Christology: Toward Recovering an Eschatological Imagination*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.

Father Rausch's text is available in electronic as well as print formats; either is fine.

While I am not including them as "required" texts, I am presuming that you already have a copy of the documents of the Second Vatican Council as well as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, all of which will be useful. Of course, all of these texts are available free online.

In addition to Father Rausch's text, I will upload additional materials to the Learning Management System, including handouts and occasional PowerPoint presentations.