

Radical Discipleship and Catholic Community

Syllabus



What does Catholic social teaching look like embodied in our daily lives? This course, lead by Colin Miller (Ph.D., Duke, and Director of the Center for Catholic Social Thought) seeks to answer that question by offer a compelling vision of a Church deeply engaged with the reality of Jesus Christ by being deeply engaged with the liturgy, each other, our communities, and especially the poor. This course is for Catholics who sense they are being called beyond our culture of individualism and isolation into thicker bonds of communion with Christ's Church, a deeper familiarity with its social tradition, and a more radical engagement in the works of mercy.

Topics include: seeing Christ in the poor; the Church as local community; personalism; incarnational ministry; social service as liturgical worship; being with the poor, the oppressed, and the sick; a Catholic approach to our culture; voluntary poverty; a Christian approach to money; caring for creation; a Christian view of history; the lives of the saints; and a host of related topics. We'll ground all this in vignettes culled from the lives of the saints, and offer practical suggestions for how to live it out in your local scene. We will also try to foster a sense of belonging within the group, so that we become a bit of a community ourselves as we go along.

The focus of the class is on *discipleship* of the members of the group – becoming a better wholistic follower of Jesus Christ. And it's on *radical* discipleship, which means discipleship that “goes to the root” (that's what *radical* means) and makes a difference for every part of our lives. Such formation takes time. Like a soldier has to go through extensive training and be remade himself before he can go into battle, so the class seeks to form the group into a sort of Gospel “Special Forces”, capable of being leaders in this area in the Church in the future. So the course is not an abstract survey of the

“principles” of Catholic social teaching, nor is it a historical overview of the “social encyclicals”. Rather, it is a comprehensive presentation of the Church’s relevance to our society, our neighborhoods, and each of our lives.

The format includes reading, lecture, and group discussion. Each week there will be two short readings to prepare (all readings will be provided), and class time will be spent in explaining and group discussion of these readings. The class will meet for 90 minutes each week for 10 weeks at the Church of the Assumption in downtown St. Paul. The course is free of charge and open to all and all reading material will be provided.

There are two options for class times each week, and each will cover the same material:

Mondays, 10:15-11:45am, March 18-May 27

Thursdays, 5:30-7pm, March 21-May 30 (no class on Holy Thursday)

Interested parties should register at catholicsocialthought.org, or contact Colin Miller at cmiller@assumptionsp.org with questions.

Order of Topics

Week 1

- Being With
- Salvation and Good Samaritans

Week 2

- Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker
- You Did It To Me

Week 3

- The Gospel as Social Fabric (CD)
- Fragmented, Anxious and Lonely (CD)

Week 4

- Celebration (CD)
- The Little Way

Week 5

- What is a Human Being?
- Negative and Positive Human Freedom

Week 6

- Money in the New Testament
- The Magnificat: Mary and History

Week 7

- Cult, Culture and Cultivation (CD)
- A Philosophy of Labor (CD)

Week 8

- The Catholic Church and Politics (Part 1)
- The Catholic Church and Politics (Part 2)

Week 9

- Compartmentalization
- What is Religion

Week 10

- Foretaste of the Kingdom
- Concluding Discussion