

CATECHIST AND DEACON PROGRAM 2021-2022

BULGARIAN DIOCESE (OCA)
DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH (OCA)

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Why be part of this program?

This program (sequence of courses) can be taken for different reasons, such as to:

1. continue and deepen one's knowledge of the Orthodox faith;
2. have a classroom venue for further dialogue on the faith with others who are equally motivated and read;
3. obtain a catechist certification, in order to teach Sunday school and other Church-related classes;
4. fulfill the educational requirements for ordination to the diaconate. Graduation from this program is not a guarantee of ordination. Ultimately the decision belongs to the diocesan bishop.

This program is already blessed to meet the requirements for purposes 3 and 4 by the OCA Bulgarian Diocese and Diocese of the South. In order to have the program count for these purposes with other dioceses or jurisdictions, please feel free to send this program description and any other program documents to the respective diocesan bishops and/or program coordinators. We are more than happy to communicate with them at their convenience.

If taken for purposes 3 and 4, each course will require a project/paper at the end, which will be graded with pass or fail. If taken for purposes 1 and 2, no papers/projects are required.

This program is not catechetical! It is not meant to prepare someone for reception into the Orthodox Church! Such catechetical classes are offered in the parish, usually by the parish priest.

Prerequisites for diaconal ordination in the OCA:

1. A man at least 35 years of age;
2. Who has been Orthodox in one parish for at least three years (including his wife);
3. Who, if married, has the active support and participation of his wife and family;
4. Who has shown stability in personal and parish life; and,
5. Who has the blessing and encouragement of his parish priest and diocesan bishop.

Furthermore, ordination to the diaconate requires participation in a practicum which teaches the practical aspects of the diaconate. *The practicum is separate from this program of courses (and from any other programs, for that matter) and its cost is not included in the prices below.* The practicum can be taken through the OCA or through different dioceses.

Structure:

Unlike the OCA program, we start with an introduction to our spirituality (asceticism, mysticism, and mystagogy). Also, our program combines Church history and Doctrine into one course. In other words, doctrine is studied historically, so that the teachings of the Church can be grounded in the life of the Church, in the experience of Christ, and not appear abstract or arbitrary. Therefore, our program covers the same content as the OCA program and more and it consists of the following four courses:

1. *Spirituality*
2. *Scripture* (Old and New Testament)=course 1 of OCA
3. *Church History and Doctrine*=courses 2 and 3 of OCA
4. *Liturgy and Church Life*=course 4 of OCA

Duration and structure of courses, schedule, and attendance:

Each course meets online six or seven times (with the exception of "Liturgy and Church Life"), every three weeks, on Saturdays. The entire program lasts one and a half years and offers 84 hours of interactive classes. Each meeting lasts 3

hours and is split into two, with a short break in the middle (5-10 minutes). Each half begins with a lecture on the topic (20-25 minutes), followed by questions and answers, and open discussions. The precise times of the meetings will be determined later on.

The schedule will avoid feasts and major holidays. The schedule of each entire course will be shared with those registered for it at least three weeks before the course begins.

Attendance in our meetings is required and will be taken for those going through the program for purposes 3 and 4. On the occasions on which one cannot attend a meeting, he/she will have to watch the recording of that meeting and write a short report on its content. All meetings will be recorded and the recordings will be shared with everyone registered. Yet, they cannot be shared with others outside the program!

Costs:

For purposes 1 and 2, the whole program costs \$1000 and an individual course is \$300. For purposes 3 and 4, the whole program costs \$1400 and an individual course costs \$400. The payments are non-refundable and are due at the beginning of the program or of that individual course. If one seeks financial assistance, please contact Fr. Silviu (sbunta1@udayton.edu).

To register:

Email Fr. Silviu at sbunta1@udayton.edu by October 1, 2021 to confirm your intent to register AND, once you receive the registration form from him (by email), print and mail the completed form back, with the payment check, by October 15, so that it is received by the first day of class, which will be on October 30. Registrations for individual courses are due three weeks before the first meeting of that course.

Each course will be capped at 35 and they will fill on a first-come basis. Complete payments for the entire program secure a place in each course; enrollment in only one course does not guarantee a place in the other courses.

Please feel free to contact Fr. Silviu at the above email with any general questions (registration, cost, schedule, etc.) or with questions about his classes. For questions pertaining to Fr. Bogdan's classes, please email him at bucur@svots.edu.

Tentative bibliographies

Most readings will be made available for free, in electronic format. Please purchase only the books marked as such!

Spirituality (18 credit hours, taught by Fr. Bogdan)

Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997). Purchase:

https://www.amazon.com/Life-Christ-English-Ancient-Greek/dp/0913836125/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Cabasilas+St+Vladimir%27s&qid=1620773990&s=books&sr=1-2

Other articles and book excerpts will be provided by the instructor in PDF.

Scripture (21 credit hours, taught by Fr. Silviu)

All sources for this course will be shared in pdf. No purchase necessary!

James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (selections)

St. Melito, *On Pascha*

Sts. Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianz, *Philokalia* (selections)

St. Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letter to Marcellinus*

St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs*

Dale Allison, *Studies in Matthew* (selections)

Other articles

Church History and Doctrine (21 credit hours, taught by Fr. Bogdan)

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin, 2015). Purchase:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/318924/the-orthodox-church-by-timothy-ware/>

Vladimir Lossky, *Dogmatic Theology* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2017). Purchase:

<https://svspress.com/dogmatic-theology-creation-gods-image-in-man-the-redeeming-work-of-the-trinity/>

Other articles and book excerpts will be provided by the instructor in PDF.

Liturgy and Church Life* (24 credit hours, taught by Fr. Silviu)

Archbp. Alexander Golitzin, "Liturgy and Mysticism: The Experience of God in Eastern Orthodox Christianity", *Pro Ecclesia* 8.2 (1999) 31-58

Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite. A Short History* (selections)

Met. Kallistos Ware, "The Orthodox services and their cycles"

Met. Job Getcha, *The Typikon Decoded* (selections). Purchase:

<https://www.amazon.com/Typikon-Decoded-Orthodox-Liturgy/dp/0881414123>

Met. Job Getcha, *The Euchologion Unveiled* (selections). Purchase:

<https://svspress.com/the-euchologion-unveiled-an-explanation-of-byzantine-liturgical-practice-ii/>

Elder Aimilianos, *The Church at Prayer* (selections)

John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (selections)

The Rudder (selections)

Ieratikon according to the Simonopetra Tradition (selections)

Diakonikon according to the Simonopetra Tradition (selections)

Other articles

* The liturgy course will consist of eight meetings. A seventh meeting will be dedicated to the canons, particularly those pertaining to the diaconate and parish life.

An eighth meeting will address practical matters, such as, relationship with the bishop, the priest, and the laity; common diaconal functions in a parish; sermon preparation and delivery. Attendance for this last meeting is not required. This practical meeting is NOT a substitute for the practicum required and offered by the different dioceses and which takes place in person. Rather the function is to give you an idea beforehand what a diaconal liturgical ministry is, so that you can prepare yourselves even further before the practicum and also have questions when you participate in the practicum.