

## ANIMA EDUCATION

### An Introduction to Theology

#### Rationale:

*“As a body, we hope to go to heaven, which means spending eternity with the Blessed Trinity, and we expect the experience to be wholly blissfully; but in the prospect of spending one hour [learning about] the Blessed Trinity here below, there is no anticipation of bliss.”*

- F.J. Sheed *Theology for Beginners* (1957)

In treating the study of theology as an ‘optional extra’, or for the academics only, Catholics are missing out on some of the best and most profound elements of the Catholic Faith. If knowledge and love are proportionate – that you can love most what you know best – then a greater knowledge of God could lead to a greater love. In offering this *Introduction to Catholic Theology* we hope to re-ignite an interest, and even love, in the mysteries of the Catholic faith.

#### Aim:

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.” (Luke 10.27)*

*“What is unknown cannot be loved”*  
St Thomas Aquinas, *‘De Trinitate’* 10.1:2

In this course, we will look at not only ‘what’ Catholics believe, but how it is that they got there. How did Catholics get from hints at the plurality of God in the Scriptures to the doctrine of the Trinity? How did the early Church first work out the knotty question of who Jesus Christ was? What about the idea of Seven Sacraments? Of purgatory? Or the Virgin Birth? And of countless other questions.

To answer this, we need to look at the study of theology. From the Greek *theo-logos*, meaning ‘Words about God’ or the ‘study of God’, theology is our human attempt to articulate the Divine.

By taking the Nicene Creed as our framework, we will look at the role of theology in Catholic history and see how human beings – both inspired and not so inspired – have tried to articulate infinite realities into finite language.

#### Learning Objectives:

This course will assist students to gain

1. A familiarity with the definition and role of theology
2. An understanding of how Catholic theology has been done throughout the centuries, and how this has changed.
3. An appreciation of the connection between Catholic theology and Scripture.

4. A familiarity with the development of the key concepts of the Catholic faith, including the Trinity, the Divine Natures of Christ, Mary as *theotokos*, the role of the Holy Spirit, the Church and Sacraments.
5. An appreciation for the process of the development of doctrine, including heresies, theological controversies, and ecumenical councils
6. An awareness of some key figures in Church theology, including Tertullian, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Henry Newman and Hans urs von Balthasar.
7. An awareness of the limits to theology

## **Unit Overview:**

### **Week 1: Introduction**

- What is Theology?
- Is it logical to talk about God?
- Limits to theology?
- The role of the theologian?
- What is belief? And is it rational?
- The God of philosophy vs the God of faith

### **Week 2: ‘I Believe in God the Father’**

- Who is God the Father?
- What does ‘creation’ really mean?
- The Trinity and the ‘Essence’ of God
- A land before time – infinity vs eternity
- How do we know this? *Tertullian* and his word ‘Trinity’

### **Week 3: ‘I Believe in God the Son’**

- “Who do you say I am?” Working out the nature of Jesus Christ
- Early Christological heresies
  - o Arianism
  - o Nestorianism
  - o Monophysitism
- The Council of Nicea-Constantinople
- Can God have a mother? Early debates on the role of Mary
- The Council of Ephesus and the term *theotokos*

### **Week 4: ‘I Believe in God the Holy Spirit’**

- Who is the Holy Spirit and how can He be known?
- What does it mean to say that the Bible is ‘inspired’?
- The great grace debate
- What is the Church?
- Ecclesiology (ie theology of the church)

### **Week 5: Theology Continued and Continuing**

- The 7 Sacraments?
- The changing role of the theologian
- The politics of theology
  - o Newman and the ‘Development of Doctrine’
  - o Von Balthasar and the ‘theology on one’s knees’

- Is the Age of Revelation over?
- What is the role of theology now?
- QnA

### **Duration:**

Five 120 minute sessions over five weeks. For those doing the course for professional development with MACS, each session attended will be individually accredited.

### **Student Participation:**

The unit will be offered on zoom with an option for face-to-face participation. Each session runs for 2 hours, and consists of a 50 minute lecture, followed by a 20 minute tutorial and closing with a summary. There will be a short break in-between hours. The formal session ends with a concluding plenary, after which the presenter and tutor will remain available for QnAs for at least 30 minutes. Recommended reading will be assigned for preparation for the next session. The 50-minute lecture will be recorded each week and made available to students for the week.

### **Reading List:**

Recommended Texts:

- F.J. Sheed. *Theology for Beginners*. Sheed & Ward (1957).

\*students will be sent a weekly reading list closer to the start of the course.

Additional Helpful Texts:

- Aidan Nichols. *The Shape of Catholic Theology*. Liturgical Press (1991).
- Bishop Robert Barron. *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith* (2014).
- C.S Lewis. *Mere Christianity*. Harper Collins (1952).
- Joseph Ratzinger. *Introduction to Christianity* (1968).
- F.C. Bauerschmidt & J. Buckley. *Catholic Theology: An Introduction* (2017).
- F.J. Sheed. *Theology and Sanity*. Sheed & Ward (1962).

### **Presenter:**

Natasha Petrakos has a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family. She teaches philosophy, theology, and ethics at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, and is a casual academic at Australian Catholic University. A former journalist, Natasha is the music director for the Parish of St John Henry Newman in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. She is thrilled to be working alongside David Schütz and Anna Krohn to resurrect Anima Education since 2021.

### Formal Qualifications:

- Master of Arts in Theological Studies (John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family)

- Bachelor of Liberal Arts (Campion College)
- Associate in Music Australia (AMEB)

**Tutor:**

David Schütz has completed a Master of Theology degree at Catholic Theological College and is a casual academic at Australian Catholic University. He has an Arts degree in history and classics from Adelaide University. He was an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church before entering the Catholic Church in 2001. From 2002 to 2020 he was Executive Officer for the Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Archdiocese. From 2004 to 2007 he was an Adult Education Officer for Catholic Adult Education Melbourne. He originally founded Anima Education with Anna Krohn in 2007, and is honoured and privileged to be continuing to teach at Anima since 2021 with Natasha Marsh.

Formal qualifications:

- Master of Theology (Catholic Theological College, University of Divinity)
- Bachelor of Theology (Luther Seminary, North Adelaide),
- Graduate Diploma in Ministry (Luther Seminary, North Adelaide),
- Bachelor of Arts (University of Adelaide),
- Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Management (University of South Australia)
- Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (Australian Catholic University)