

BOSTON COLLEGE  
THEO 5426.01

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY  
FALL 2017 AY2018

## AFRICAN FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF THE CHURCH

Time: Thursday 2:00-4:25 p.m.

Place: McGuinn Hall 526

Instructor: Margaret A. Schatkin

Office: Stokes North 437 Phone: 617-552-4604

Hours: TBA

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### **Course Description**

Introduction to the African Fathers and Mothers of the Church, from the post-Apostolic period through the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), and to Saint Bakhita of the Sudan and Sister Thea Bowman. The lives, writings, and teachings of the African Church Fathers and Mothers will be studied in the context of their times, through lectures, readings, films, and discussion.

### **Statement on Disability Services**

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, [dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu), at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Disability Services Office (617) 552-3470, [disabsrv@bc.edu](mailto:disabsrv@bc.edu), regarding all other types of

disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

### **Purpose**

1. To introduce students to the disciplines of Patrology and Matrology.
2. To study the lives and writings of the African Church Fathers and Mothers within their historical context.
3. To show the great contribution of Africa to the life and doctrine of the church, in light of the pre-existing culture.

### **Formal Learning Goals**

This course supports the following learning goals of the Theology Department, inasmuch as:

1. The fathers and mothers who birthed the ancient church give you something close to the “essence of Christianity.” As Yves Congar has written: “The benefit that the theologian can derive from them far surpasses anything he can get from any other text of argument: from them one gains an education in the *sensus catholicus*, much as one learns his native language from intimacy with the greatest writers of its history.”
2. The early church provides a historical paradigm of inculturation and interreligious dialogue.
3. The African Fathers are cited as authorities in the *Roman Catholic Catechism*.

## Textbooks

All textbooks are on reserve in O'Neill Library. All (except Lugira article) are available in B.C. Bookstore.

1. *The Peoples' Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2008.
2. Jurgens, William A., ed. and trans. *The Faith of the Early Fathers*. Volume 1. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1970.
3. Ellingsen, Mark. *African Christian Mothers and Fathers: why they matter for the church today*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books 2015.
4. Lugira, Aloysius Muzzanganda. "The African Identity." In: *Am-African Journal of Research and Education* 1.1 (Spring 1981): 7-30. [scanned copy provided]
5. Ramsey, Boniface. *Beginning to Read the Fathers*. New York: Paulist Press 1985. Revised edition, 2012
6. Smith, Charlene and John Feister. *Thea's Song*. Orbis Books, 2009.
7. Swan, Laura. *The Forgotten Desert Mothers*. New York: Paulist Press 2001.
8. Zanini, Roberto Italo. *Bakhita: from slave to saint*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2013.

## Requirements

1. Regular class attendance and participation.
2. As assigned, brief analysis papers on readings, delivered orally. Note that *all students* are expected to do *all the readings*, whether or not they are reporting or not.

3. Midterm.
4. Final examination held at the officially scheduled time as published by the Registrar of Boston College.

### **Computation of Grade**

1. Attendance, participation, papers
2. Midterm
3. Final examination

### **Academic Integrity**

The importance of academic integrity reflects the value and fair use of each individual's thinking and writing. A reference to the university's academic integrity policy can be found at this link:

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html>.

### **Schedule**

#### August

31Th      Thursday      Meeting 1: Welcome  
(Margaret at Conference)

Guest lecturer: Dr. Judith M. Gentle, eminent scholar and internationally recognized theologian, will speak on Matrology and the Desert Mothers of the Church

#### **Reading**

Ellingsen, Chap. 2: "Mothers of the Desert," pp. 20-29

September

9/7 Th Meeting 2

**Topic:** Fathers and Mothers of the Church

Introduction and definition of terms.

Definition of the title, "Father/Mother of the Church."

Patrology and Matrology; Patristics, Matristics, Ancient Christian Literature. The Various Time Periods. The original texts of the Fathers and Mothers.

**Readings**

Jurgens, "Foreword," Vol. 1, pp. ix-xii

Ramsey, Chap. 1: "Beginning to Read the Fathers," pp. 1-18

Swan, "Introduction," pp. 1-4

Swan, "Glossary of selected terms," pp. 193-200

Swan, "Timeline of the forgotten desert mothers," p. 170

Suggested

Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, Illinois:

InterVarsity Press, 1998), Chap. 3: "Who are the Fathers," pp. 43-55, 203-205.

September

9/14 Th Meeting 3

**Topic:** *Praeparatio Evangelica*: The Preparation of the Ancient World for the Gospel. The Non-Christian World of the Fathers and Mothers: Historical Survey of the Roman Empire. The Last Pharaoh of Egypt: Cleopatra (51-30 B.C.).

**Readings**

Ellingsen, "Introduction: Ancient African Christianity and why it matters," pp. xxiii-xxxv  
 Ramsey, Chap. 11: "The Christian in the World," pp. 210-228

Swan, Chap. 1: "The World of the Desert Mothers," pp. 5-19

Suggested

Pollard, Justin and Howard Reid. *The Rise and Fall of Alexandria* (New York: Penguin 2006), Chap. 11: "The Last Pharaoh," pp. 156-74.

**Film**

Cleopatra

9/21 Th Meeting 4

**Topic:** Introduction to Apostolic Fathers. *Didache* or *Teaching of the XII Apostles*. Charismatic clergy: apostles, prophets, and teachers. Ancient Coptic (Egyptian) version of the *Didache*. Clement the Alexandrian

September9/21 cont. **Readings**

Ellingsen "Introduction," pp. xxxii-xxxiii

Jurgens, pp. 1-6

Ramsey, Chap. 6, "Church and Ministry," pp. 99-113

Ellingsen, Chap. 3: "Clement of Alexandria," pp. 30-47

Ramsey, Chap. 10, "Poverty and Wealth," pp. 194-209.

**Oral reports**

*Didache*, by section nos. from Jurgens, pp. 1-6

1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

6-10 \_\_\_\_\_

## 9/28 Th Meeting 5

**Topic:** Institutional church and Papacy.

Pope St. Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 70).

Three African Popes: Victor I (ca. 186-201),

Miltiades (311-314), and Gelasius (492-496).

Cyprian of Carthage

**Readings**

Jurgens, "St. Clement of Rome," pp. 6-13

Ramsey, Chap. 6, "Church and Ministry," pp. 113-128.

September

9/28cont. Ellingsen, "Cyprian, bishop of Carthage," Chap. 7,  
pp. 82-94.

**Oral reports**

Clement of Rome, by section nos. from Jurgens,  
pp. 6-13

10a-18 \_\_\_\_\_

19-26 \_\_\_\_\_

26a-29 \_\_\_\_\_

October

10/05Th Meeting 6

**Topic:** Christianity in Africa in the Apostolic and  
Patristic age: Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, North  
Africa

Lecture by Professor Aloysius Lugira,  
internationally known scholar, teacher, and  
writer of Christianity in Africa

**Readings**

Lugira, "The African Identity."

[copy provided]

Ellingsen, "Using early African theology today,"  
pp. 198-203.

Ellingsen, Chaps. 6, pp. 78-81: "Commodianus."



October

- 10/05cont. "The Bible as a Text of Cultures," in *The Peoples' Bible*, pp. 13-22.  
 "The Bible as a Text in Cultures: An Introduction," in *The Peoples' Bible*, pp. 23-30.  
 "Jesus and Cultures," in *The Peoples' Bible*, pp. 65-76.

10/12Th Meeting 7

**Topic:** Origen of Alexandria and his Legacy

Guest Lecturer: Fr. Robert J. Daly, S.J.,  
 internationally recognized world expert on Origen

**Readings**

Ellingsen, Chap. 5, "Origen," pp. 63-77

Jurgens, "Origen," pp. 189-215

**Oral reports/Readings**

Origen, *On Fundamental Doctrines*, Jurgens, pp.

190-200, *by section numbers*

443-450 \_\_\_\_\_

451-455 \_\_\_\_\_

456-461 \_\_\_\_\_

462-466 \_\_\_\_\_

467-70 \_\_\_\_\_

October

10/19Th Meeting 8

**Topic:** Cyril of Alexandria and the birth of Christology and Mariology in Egypt

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Judith Marie Gentle, internationally acclaimed Mariologist, author, and lecturer

**Readings**

Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter 2 to Nestorius*, in Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, pp. 236-240 [copy provided]

Ellingsen, Chap. 12, "Cyril of Alexandria," pp. 180-190.

Swan, "Mary and Euphemia, Two holy sisters called daughters of the gazelle," pp. 91-93.

10/26Th Meeting 9

**Topic:** Sr. Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A

Guest lecture by: Dr. Ines M. Maturana Sentoya, Director, Bowman AHANA & Intercultural Center, Boston College

**Film**

*Sister Theo: Her Own Story*

November

11/02Th Meeting 10

**Topic:** Tertullian of Carthage (160-250), ancient North Africa: founder of western Christianity

**Readings**

Ellingsen, Chap. 4: "Tertullian," pp. 48-62

Jurgens, "Tertullian," pp. 111-61

**Oral Reports**

From Tertullian, in Jurgens, pp. 112-18, cited by section nos.:

*Apology* 274-276\_\_\_\_\_

*Apology* 276a-277\_\_\_\_\_

*Apology* 278-280\_\_\_\_\_

*Apology* 281a-281b\_\_\_\_\_

*Apology* 282-285\_\_\_\_\_

**Film**

*Carthage: A Journey Back in Time*

11/09 Th Meeting 11

**Topic:**

The Scillitan Martyrs

The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas

**Readings**

The Scillitan Martyrs (Xerox copy)

November

11/09 cont.

**Readings cont.**

*The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*, translated by R.E. Wallis (ANF 3:697-706) [copy provided]

**Oral Reports**

**From the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas:**

Preface, p. 699 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 1, pp. 699-700 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 2, pp. 700-702 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 3, p. 702 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 4, pp. 702-03 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 5, pp. 703-704 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 6, pp. 704-706 \_\_\_\_\_

**Film**

*Passion of Saint Perpetua: Martyr of the Faith*

11/16 Th Meeting 12

**Topic:** Athanasius of Alexandria, Anthony, and the monks of Coptic Egypt.

**Readings**

Ellingsen, Chap. 1: "Anthony and Other Desert Fathers," pp. 1-19.

Ellingsen, Chap 15: "Athanasius," pp 130-141.

Jurgens, "St. Athanasius," pp. 320-346.

Swan, Chap. 2: "Desert Spirituality," pp. 20-31.

November

11/16 cont.

**Readings Cont.**

Swan, Chap. 3: "The Sayings of the Desert Mothers," pp. 32-70.

**Oral Reports**

Athanasius, *Ad Afros epistola synodica: To the bishops of Africa; letter of ninety bishops of Egypt and Libya.*" [From NPNF 4:488-494; copy provided].

*By section numbers:*

1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

7-9 \_\_\_\_\_

10-11 \_\_\_\_\_

11/23Th Thanksgiving Holiday

11/30Th Meeting 13

**Topic:** St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430): genius of Africa and teacher of the world. Death and Resurrection

**Readings**

Ramsey, Chap. 12: "Death and Resurrection," pp. 229-246.

Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1969): Chap. 1, "Africa," pp. 19-27 [scan]

November cont.

11/30 cont.

**Readings cont.**

Chap. 35, "The End of Roman Africa," pp. 419-426  
[scan]

On the ethnicity of Augustine:

Serge Lancel, "Entre africanité et romanité: le chemin d'Augustin vers l'universel," in *Augustinus Afer: Saint Augustin: africanité et universalité. Actes du colloque international Alger-Annaba, 1-7 avril 2001 (Fribourg Suisse 2003)*, pp. 53-59.

**Film**

*St. Augustine*, a documentary by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR

**Oral Reports**

From Ramsey, Chap. 12:

"Paganism," pp. 229-32 \_\_\_\_\_

"Resurrection," pp. 232-37 \_\_\_\_\_

"Apokatastasis," pp. 237-41 \_\_\_\_\_

"Millenarianism," pp. 241-46 \_\_\_\_\_

December

12/7Th Meeting 14

**Topic:** St. Josephine Bakhita of the Sudan: a natural knowledge of God

December

12/7 cont.

**Readings**Tertullian, *The Soul's Testimony* (ANF 3: 175-180)

[copy provided]

Zanini, *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint***Film***Bakhita: from Slave to Saint*. RAI Radio-televisione italiana.**Oral Reports**

From Tertullian:

Chap. 1, pp. 175-176 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 2, p. 176 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 3, pp. 176-77 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 4, pp. 177-178 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 5, pp. 178-79 \_\_\_\_\_

Chap. 6, p. 179 \_\_\_\_\_

12/ Final exam at the officially scheduled time TBA