

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF COURSES**  
**CATALOGUE OF THE PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY STUDIES**  
**YEAR 1 AND 2**

**1. Introduction to Prayer**

The objective of this course is to introduce members into the practice of both personal, contemplative prayer and community liturgical prayer through a study of their nature, necessity and, in regards to mental prayer, various methods, in particular that of St. Teresa of Avila. The course examines the different types of prayer, the difficulties one meets in the practice of prayer as well as the signs of progress in contemplation. This course is offered immediately upon entrance.

Members practice mental prayer daily, particularly during the community Eucharistic Holy Hour, and as future canons regular, their daily life revolves around the Abbey community's celebration of liturgical prayer. They are personally guided in the practice of prayer by a priest. (2 semester hours)

**2. Lectio Divina – Sacred Scripture**

The objective of this course is to introduce members into the practice of spiritual reading (*lectio divina*). The Sacred Scriptures serve as the basic material for reading and reflection. Selected books of the Old Testament are read one year, and books of the New Testament the other year. Introductions to the books are given, major themes are pointed out, commentaries of the saints are consulted and reflections are shared. (1 semester hour)

**3. Marian Life and Consecration**

The objective of this course is to introduce members into the Marian life and spirituality of a Premonstratensian. The course covers the doctrinal foundations of Marian devotion and consecration and the spiritual patrimony of the Church and our Order on how to live a Marian life effectively. (1 semester hour)

The course is taught upon entrance and prepares each member to make or renew his personal Marian consecration on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>). The primary text used for this course is the classic *True Devotion to Mary* by St. Louis de Montfort. The teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe are also studied.

**4. Catholic Spirituality**

The objective of this course is to give members a firm and comprehensive foundation in the general principles of Catholic spirituality. It covers the following areas: the supernatural organism and the life of grace, the infused virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Christian perfection and the universal call to holiness, sin, temptation, the enemies of the spiritual life, the need for conversion, the spiritual combat, asceticism, purgation and the necessity of the cross, and the positive means toward spiritual growth - prayer, the Sacraments and a life of virtue. (3 semester hours)

## **5. Religious Life – The Evangelical Counsels**

The objective of this course is to introduce and instruct members into Catholic religious life in general and into Premonstratensian canonical life in particular.

The course material includes three major areas of focus:

- A. The Magisterial teaching on religious and consecrated life as presented in a variety of contemporary Church documents.
- B. The teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on religious life as presented in *De Perfectione Vitae Spiritualis* and the *Summa Theologica*.
- C. The evangelical counsels in particular
  - a) Consecrated Celibacy
  - b) Obedience
  - c) Poverty

This course is taught with the view to authentically understanding and faithfully living the evangelical counsels under vow in the context of our Norbertine abbey life. (4 semester hours)

## **6. Saint Augustine - His Life and His Religious Ideal**

The objective of this course is to give members an understanding and love for the person of our holy father Saint Augustine of Hippo, to know his thought, his spirituality and his monastic way of life.

The first part of the course introduces the person and life of St. Augustine with a view to developing a deep and personal devotion to him and to invoking his intercession as our spiritual father.

The second part treats of the spirituality and basic philosophical and theological teachings of St. Augustine. Finally, the third part of the course presents a comprehensive view of St. Augustine's doctrine on religious and monastic life. The *Rule of St. Augustine* is also studied. (1 semester hour)

## **7. History of Apostolic/Canonical Life**

The objective of this course is to give members an understanding of the specific character of the apostolic/canonical life lived by Premonstratensians by examining the history of its development from the Apostles themselves to the time of St. Norbert. A variety of historical texts are used to give members a thorough knowledge of, and appreciation for, the rich history of the *vita apostolica* as the perfection of clerical life and the ideal embraced by our holy fathers Saints Augustine and Norbert. (1 semester hour)

## **8. Life of Saint Norbert**

The objective of this course is to introduce members into the times, person, life and spirituality of Saint Norbert and the Order he founded. The historical context of the spiritual and ecclesial reform movements that gave rise to Premonstratensian life are examined. The life of St. Norbert is studied in a variety of sources including the 12<sup>th</sup> Century accounts of his life - the *Vita A* and *Vita B*.

The course is presented with a view to developing a personal relationship with St. Norbert as the founder and protector of our way of life. He is presented as a model to be imitated and not merely admired as well as a powerful intercessor before God in mediating and strengthening the grace of one's Norbertine vocation. (1 semester hour)

## **9. History of the Premonstratensian Order**

The objective of this course is to offer members a comprehensive survey of the major developments throughout the long and fascinating history of the Norbertine Order. A number of reference texts are used, and the course is offered with additional insights provided by both research and the lived experience of Norbertine life. (1 semester hour)

## **10. The Code of Canon Law for Religious**

The objective of this course is to give members a thorough knowledge of the Church's legislation concerning consecrated life. Members learn how the theology and spirituality of religious life are codified and expressed in juridical terms. They are also introduced to the fundamental concepts which are necessary to understand and live concretely the religious life we bind ourselves to by means of the profession of our vows. (1 semester hour)

## **11. The Constitutions of the Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré**

The objective of this course is to instruct members in regard to the specific identity, spirituality and legislation proper to our Order as animated by our proper charism and authoritatively presented in the *Constitutions* of our Order. The course examines the history and development of the life and charism in the proper law of our Order, our proper charism and spirituality as it is expressed in the present *Constitutions*, and the proper law of the Order expressed in the current juridical norms. (1 semester hour)

The course is taught in light of the canonry "Book of Customs" of St. Michael's Abbey in Orange that further specifies the manner in which the universal legislation of the Order is lived out here in our community.

## **12. Gregorian Chant: Theory and Practice**

The objective of this course is to give members a knowledge and appreciation of our proper Norbertine chant and to practice it so as to participate fully, actively and to the best of one's ability in the community choral Office and Mass.

- A. Theory - This part of the course explores the history, theory and spirituality of chant with a view to instilling in the members an appreciation for the chant and why it has perennial value as liturgical music and is the norm for all other forms of liturgical music. Readings from the early Church Fathers are read.
- B. Practice - Members participate in group and individual singing practices six days a week for approximately thirty minutes and whenever else necessary. (4 semester hours)

## **13. Latin**

The objective of this course is to give members sufficient knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the Latin language so as to comprehend basic liturgical texts. It is taught in such a way as to show the value and beauty of Latin, particularly for liturgical prayer. The course is also meant to lay a foundation for further Latin studies for the purpose of using this knowledge in ecclesiastical studies. Students are also to take care to learn how to speak the language with correct and clear pronunciation. (3 semester hours)

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF COURSES  
CATALOGUE OF THE PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY STUDIES  
YEAR 3**

**1. English Composition**

Designed to provide a “persuasive edge” for academic and most other kinds of writing, this course focuses on the techniques of persuasion as well as on detecting common writing and documentation problems and learning ways to correct them. (4 semester hours)

**2. English Literature**

This is an introduction to some of the great masterpieces of England’s “Age of the Novel.” From pompous clergymen to hungry convicts to “fallen” women, this course introduces a wide array of unforgettable characters struggling with universal emotions such as greed, jealousy, and loneliness. (4 semester hours)

**3. History**

This is a general survey of American history from the era of exploration to the close of the Civil War. The units of study are well balanced between political history and social and economic developments. (4 semester hours)

**4. Math**

The student receives a thorough introduction to trigonometry by means of the classical geometry-based approach and then with an algebraic focus necessary for application to higher-level mathematical course work or scientific and technological disciplines.

**5. Physics**

This course provides the same information as a traditional, non-calculus-based, first-semester physics course without the laboratory work. The course consists of three modules:

- A. Introduction to Mechanics**
- B. Mechanics beyond Newton’s Law**
- C. Thermodynamics; Vibration and Wave Motion**

**6. Elective Courses**

Members have the choice of a variety of elective courses including Astronomy, Psychology, Art History or additional literature, history or science courses. (4 semester hours)

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF COURSES**  
**CATALOGUE OF THE PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY STUDIES**  
**YEAR 4 AND 5**

**1. Introduction to Philosophy**

Using Jacques Maritain's Introduction to Philosophy, and the Prologues of St. Thomas' Aristotelian Commentaries, the students are given a *manuductio* into the discipline of philosophical science. The definition of philosophy and of its branches, along with the "degrees of abstraction" are covered, and the subject of each branch of Philosophy to be studied is clarified, so that the student has some grasp of the whole at the beginning of his studies. (2 semester hours)

**2. Ethics**

Both the general principles of the moral act, and the specific virtues and their parts, are covered from the Secunda Pars of the Summa of St. Thomas. This is a seminar reading course in which the entirety of the moral questions of the Summa are read. (6 semester hours)

**3. Social Ethics**

Family and State and their respective economies are understood in the light of the common good of human society and the innate tendencies of human nature. Fagothey's Right and Reason is the manual adopted. (2 semester hours)

**4. Philosophy of Nature**

The nature of bodily, mobile being is studied from the principles of motion and the four causes to the definition of motion and the concomitants of motion. A dialectical consideration of the demands and objections of contemporary physics to the Aristotelian account of movement and place is undertaken, as well as the aspects of traditional cosmology which have become theological loci, especially in protology, eschatology, and sacramental theology. (3 semester hours)

**5. Philosophy of the Soul**

This course exists in close continuity with the Philosophy of Nature, passing from the analysis of transient movement and its definition to immanent, vital activity and its degrees. The composite nature of Man and his personhood, the rational soul, its abstractive mode of knowing, its will and its freedom, and its incorruptibility are carefully considered in what constitutes the greater part of the course. (3 semester hours)

**6. Metaphysics**

By the discovery in the Physics of separated, immaterial causes, the notion of "being as being" beyond mere composite substance is justified as the subject of the first and highest of the philosophical disciplines. A careful reading of the De Ente et Essentia of St. Thomas, along with large portions of his Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, and various articles of the Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate provides the student with the most comprehensive of summaries of the whole of philosophical wisdom. (3 semester hours)

**7. Natural Theology**

This course continues the study of Metaphysics with the consideration of the highest cause of being, His existence and attributes, as well as His government and providential ordering of the universe of beings. The problem of theological language and the ordering of the Divine Names is placed in special relief, as well as the problem of evil. (3 semester hours)

## **8. Epistemology**

This "branch" of philosophy is in reality a composite of Rational Psychology and Metaphysics, or better, that part of Metaphysics which deals with the defense of first principles. It is necessary as an apologetic for Modern and Contemporary Philosophy, insofar as the critical problem is nearly always at least implicitly the starting point of its method. The proper and effective method for the resolution of the critical problem is explained in the context of a review of the principles of human knowing. (2 semester hours)

## **9. Logic**

The three acts of the intellect, with their corresponding logical forms are studied with particular emphasis on the principles of demonstration. Oesterle's Logic is the text and exercise book. Portions of St. Thomas' Commentary on the Posterior Analytics are analyzed. (4 semester hours)

## **10. History of Philosophy**

Two semesters of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and two of Modern and Contemporary are offered. The unity and continuity of philosophical experience is illustrated. Care is taken to point out the harmony, or at least relation, of philosophical development with the progress of revelation and theological science. (12 semester hours)

## **11. Summa Seminar**

Over two semesters the questions in the Summa of St. Thomas dealing with created natures in particular, especially angelic and human natures, are read and discussed. This consideration "applies" numerous principles studied, especially in Metaphysics. (4 semester hours)

## **12. Spiritual Classics**

This is a non-credit reading course of one hour a week over the two years of philosophy covering the Conferences of St. John Cassian and the works of St. John of the Cross.

## **13. Latin**

The Latin study begun upon entrance continues during the two years of philosophy. This is either a reading course concentrating on Patristic texts and some composition for advanced students who have studied Latin before entering the abbey, or of grammatical study aiming at perfecting the confrere's grasp of Latin. (8 to 10 semester hours)