

## The Christian Classics

Formation in the M.Div. program includes familiarity with the major voices of the Christian past. As we delve into the great tradition of theology we understand who we are today as Church, and we can think creatively about new challenges in our lives. So we have embedded a number of classic texts in the required courses in the program. In the process of studying toward an M.Div., students will work their way through a number of great works of our Christian heritage. Authors like Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Luther, and Hooker will be intellectual companions in preparation for ministry.

The Principal of Wycliffe College, The Rev. Dr. George Sumner introduces the new Christian Classics program:

The tradition here at Wycliffe is most closely associated with the Reformation, one emphasis of which was the idea of *ad fontes*, back to the sources, back to the spiritual wellsprings. For this means going back to the Bible, but toward this end going back to the great teachers and expositors of that Word. Surprisingly, in this move *ad fontes* we find ourselves headed "back to the future," for in this listening anew all the radical new movements and orders have emerged. By contrast the revisionist who supposes he or she can discard the past is doomed to recapitulate the cultural assumptions of their time.

It is in this spirit of *ad fontes* that we at Wycliffe are adding, or in many cases highlighting, a dimension to our Basic Degree curriculum. We as a faculty have developed a list of Christian Classics, or "Great Books" in the spirit of the Chicago program of Mortimer Adler. One may find other schools with a similar emphasis at King's College and Augustine College, and a major new program at Baylor designed by David Jeffreys also builds on this idea. All the works on the list may be found below.

A large majority of the works are included in the readings for required courses for an M.Div., so that you will be encountering the original texts of the great minds of the Christian faith naturally as you work your way through the curriculum. You will wrestle with Origen over allegory in interpretation, Augustine about grace, Anselm on the atonement, Thomas Aquinas on the natural knowledge of God, Luther on justification, Hooker on the stool, and so on. Some of the great female voices in theology, for example Julian of Norwich's vision that "all will be well" and Hannah More on the "practical religion" of evangelicalism are included.

It is equally important to acknowledge that new and contemporary works must also be encountered, and students will read many of them too in our required course. But we move more faithfully and radically "back to the future" as we hear the great voices of interpretation. The great books will not be the whole of our curriculum, but it will be a crucial part of it.

## Honors Track

The Christian Classics aspect of the curriculum is accompanied by a second new feature, in this case optional. This will also be an opportunity to dig deeper into the great tradition of Christian theology. Students who have done well academically in their first semester and who wish to, may pursue an Honors Track for the M.Div. There will be the following additional requirements:

- a) the study of a Biblical language
- b) a second-year seminar reading a major theologian or writing a book together
- c) a third-year thesis

Our hope is that all Basic Degree students will be formed as they go back to the wellspring, as they listen, with the help of the greatest Christian minds, to the Word written.

### **The Christian Classics**

The Bible

An Apostolic Fathers: Ignatius or the *Didache*

Hippolytus

*Acts of Perpetua*

Justin's *Second Apology*

Origen, *Homily on the Song of Songs*

Chrysostom, *Homily on St. John*

Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*

Gregory Nazienzen, *On the Appollinarians*

Augustine, *The Confessions*

Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*

Gregory the Great, *The Pastoral Rule*

Venerable Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of England* (selections)

Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*

Julian of Norwich, *Showings of Divine Love*

Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I/1, q.1-11, et. al.

Luther, *Freedom of the Christian Man* et. al.

Calvin, *Institutes* (selections)

Hooker, *The Laws* V et. al.

John Jewel, *Apologia*

*Book of Common Prayer*, 1549.

*Book of Common Prayer*, 1552.

*Canadian Book of Common Prayer*, 1962.

*Book of Alternative Services*

*Homily on Justification*

*Thirty-Nine Articles*

*Westminster Confession*

George Herbert, *The Country Parson*

Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

Hannah More, *Practical Piety*

J. Wesley, *On the Use of Money* (sermon).  
E. Pusey, *On the Real Presence* (sermon).  
*Resolutions of Lambeth*  
Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*.  
*Barman Confession*  
Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*.  
Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*.  
Alexander Schmemmann, *For the life of the World*.  
B. De Los Casus, *On the Devastation of the Indies*.  
Phoebe Palmer, *Praise of the Father*.