

## COURSE SYLLABUS MNS 4894

**TITLE: MINISTRY TO THE ELDERLY**

**COURSE NUMBER: MNS 4894**

**Thur Sept 10. 09 – Dec. 2009. 7:00-9:00pm**

**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2009-2010**

**TERM: Fall 2009 – Semester I CREDITS: 2**

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### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

**MNS 4894: Ministry to the Elderly**

**2 cr**

A study of ministry to the aging: the aging process and the death and dying process and their personal, relational, theological, sacramental and pastoral dimensions; some ethical questions posed by modern medical technology.

**NOTE: The Syllabus for MNS 4894 has several “adjustments” to distinguish it from PM 700**

**Required Texts** does not include **ON THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF HUMAN SUFFERING**

**Student Outcomes** - Be a PARTICIPANT, but not a PRESENTER of a “theological reflection”

**Required Course Work includes ONE – not two visits** with an elderly person either at home or in a long term residential care..

### II. REQUIRED TEXTS:

- (1) **GROWING OLD IN CHRIST**. (310 pages) Stanley Hauerwas and others. Eerdmans, 2003. ISBN 0 8028 4607 6  
This is a “theological reflection on growing old in Christ” - a creative gathering of 14 essays prepared by theologians, philosophers, ethicists, and professors of the human person and community who have personalized and internalized their topic and their experience of being old or growing old. Three parts to this book are  
Part 1: Biblical and Historical Perspectives on Aging. ( articles)  
Part 2: Critical Perspective on Modern Problems of Aging. (5 articles)  
Part 3: The Christian Practice of Growing Old. (6 articles)

- (2) **FROM BROKENNESS TO COMMUNITY**. (52 pages) Jean Vanier. Paulist 1992 ISBN 0-8091-3341-5.  
Jean Vanier is the founder of the L’Arche communities in France in 1964. Now there are residential homes throughout the world for young and old persons gifted with wounded bodies and minds.  
This book contains two lectures given by Jean Vanier at Harvard Divinity School 1988.  
The title of the first lecture is “Through their wounds we are healed”. The second lecture is “Community: A place of bonding, caring and mission”. Each lecture is life-changing for who ever listens, reads and prays with Jean Vanier.

**Note: in PM 700 include John Paul II Christian Meaning of Human Suffering.**

- (3) **PASTORAL CARE TO THE AGED**. (115 pages) Neville Kirkwood. Morehouse 2005. ISBN 0-8192-2213-5  
The sub title of this pocket size book is “A Handbook for Visitors”. The author reflects on “understanding the aging process”, “guidelines for care”, “the pastoral art of listening”. He says “This book is an effort to encourage lay members of the Church to join the rewarding ministry of becoming pastorally responsible for older members of their congregation and their community “(p xi)
- (4) **COMMUNION OF THE SICK**. (48 pages) Collegeville ISBN 0-8146-1368-3  
This booklet is for ministers of Holy Communion and those who visit and pray with persons who are sick. The book begins with a “Prayer of Preparation for the Minister” and includes instructions from the official liturgy document called “*Pastoral Care of the Sick*”, rites, and Scripture selections for communion calls to persons sick at home or in the hospital. It includes special texts for a sick child.

### III. GENERAL OUTLINE: The Course includes the 40 plus topics in the four required texts.

The Topics are learned and applied in personal prayer, group conversation and a visit with an elder person

NOTE: The schedule and name of each topic will be specified after we decide on DATES for each class.

### IV. STUDENT OUTCOMES: At the end of this Course a successful learner is able to:

- (1) Converse with confidence on some developmental, religious, and medical-ethical dynamics of aging, suffering, dying, and caring – and the journey of Jesus suffering, dying and rising - as a paradigm for our aging and care of elderly persons.
- (2) Appreciate and incorporate various intercultural, pastoral, and theological themes into your association with the elderly;
- (3) Visit-with the elderly, and demonstrate parish wisdom, care, and leadership in your association and ministry with the persons who are elderly at home, in the family, neighborhood, hospital or nursing home.
- (4) Learn by research and reflection and “present / teach” specific topics about God centered aging, and redemptive suffering.
- (5) **PREPARE A “FINAL SYNTHESIS PROJECT” in the form of a binder or packet** for your own personal use in your family, parish, school, or professional group.

**Include:** Page 1 a list of the 6-10 topics significant to you during this Course

Such as:

- + “culture and aging”.
- + “Being a **human person** is not determined by rationality or productivity”.
- + “God centered Caring”
- + “The loving presence of God in every person is unconditional-not determined by the person’s awareness”.
- + Particular themes in any of our Required texts.
- + Particular theme or chapter from GROWING OLD IN CHRIST
- + “Praying the Eucharistic prayer of Jesus “This is my Body” over a person with a sick body and/or mind.”

Page 2 a synthesis of the learning, grace, conversion, integration occurring in you.

Page 3 describe the “Eucharistic meaning of touching and caring for the body and spirit of persons who are unconscious or seem to be partially conscious because of some form of dementia

Page 4 Please make comments about each of our Required Texts

What adjustments would you make in the Syllabus, especially in student outcomes and topics?

#### **Also include in your packet**

- + an article on “redemptive suffering”.
- + copy of your narrative and format for theological reflection

### V. REQUIRED COURSE WORK AND DUE DATES:

- (1) **Weekly** readings, assignments, class attendance and participation in the learning and conversation.
- (2) **Write** a short (several sentences) “weekly researched narrative” on some personal learning and conversion “going on” in you as you learn and experience various themes in “Ministry to the Elderly”
- (3) **Make One visit** -with an elderly person either in their home or in a long term residential facility..  
**Be a participant but not a presenter in the “Theological reflection”** DATE \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) **Have a focused conversation** with a person of a race, culture, or religious denomination other than your own about “ministry” and care of persons who are elderly in their family and culture Prepare a 8-10 minute presentation. DATE \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) **Contribute toward the creation of a useful Bibliography** of resources. Before the mid term do three hours of library research. Find articles/books/video on some theme associated with “Ministry with the Elderly”. Distribute a copy of the title, author during class Five. DATE \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) **Reflect on the 5 “student outcomes”**. In a one page summary describe how each Student Outcome is being accomplished by you. Please “add” another “outcome” new and personal to you for this Course. DATE \_\_\_\_\_
- (7) **Prepare a “prayer service”** appropriate to a “home visit” with an elderly person (5-8 minutes) and lead us in that prayer at the beginning or end of a class. (Week # 3 sign up for your date)
- (8) **PREPARE A FINAL SYNTHESIS PROJECT – described above in # 6 – Student Outcomes** DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**VI. ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEXTS** for your personal library and continued study. You may order these through THE CATHOLIC BOOK STORE at SHMS or 1234 Washington Blvd. 313-962-4490. Fax 313-962-0948. email:catholicbookstoore@aod.org..

- (1) **AGING: THE FULFILLMENT OF LIFE.** Henri Nouwen and W. Gaffney. Image Pub.ISBN 0-285-00918-6  
Part I. Aging as a way into darkness, into light.  
Part 2: Aging as a way to the Self; to the other.
- (2) **LETTER TO THE ELDERLY.** Pope John Paul II. Oct 1999. United States Cath Conference . ISBN 1-57455-369-0.  
This is a uniquely “personal” reflection by John Paul “to my elderly brothers and sisters... on “the autumn of life”, “the elderly in scripture” and “an encouragement to live life to the full”.
- (3) **FORGETTING WHOSE WE ARE.** David Keck. Abingdon Press. 1996. ISBN 0-687-02088-3.  
A tender reflection by a son on his mother is ill with Alzheimer’s disease. He reflects on “Alzheimer’s disease and the love of God. Alzheimer’s as a “theological disease”. What does it mean to be HUMAN? How is a person’s ability to REMEMBER related to WHO she or he is? How necessary is MEMORY to HUMAN-NESS? During the dark night of human memory, when the mind is no longer able to remember what happens to the SOUL and the PERSON? Even when we forget GOD ALWAYS REMEMBERS US !
- (4) **A HOSPITAL HANDBOOK ON MULTICULTURALISM AND RELIGION.** (130 pages) Neville Kirkwood. Morehouse Pub. 1998. ISBN 0-8192-1793-X.  
Cultural behaviors and religious beliefs and practices are especially significant to the person who is sick, and their family, and professionals who love and care for them. This book reviews ten religious faiths – their care of the ill and dying, and some practices of diet, fasting, autopsy, transfusions, abortion, family planning, sacraments, blessings, modesty
- (5) **HARVEST US HOME.** By Rea McDonnell and Rachel Callahan. St. Anthony Messenger. 2000. Written by two religious sisters about the second half of life – “life after 50 years”. They use the earthy religious image of “harvest” and describe God as the gardener of our life. Each chapter is an invitation to reflection and prayer and carries a title about “ground”, Sowing, growing, tending, bearing fruit, pruning, harvesting, and finally – homecoming.
- (6) **AGING.** Concilium Series., 1991. # 3. ed by Lisa Sowle Cahill. And D. Mieth.  
Part 1. “Aging and its social context”.  
Part 2: “Christian Interpretations.”  
Part 3: “Cross-Cultural aspects of Aging.”
- (7) **WISDOM KEEPERS.** Sharon Benton. St. Mary’s Press. 2000. This book is a spiritual reflection on 43 themes. Each theme/chapter is prepared as a resource for prayer and faith sharing by groups of seniors who gather to share wisdom.
- (8) **FROM AGING TO SAGING.** Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. Warner Books, 1995. Rabbi Zalman is founder of the “Spiritual Eldering Institute”. In this book and Workshops he proposes a “new model of late life development called saging...Sages draw on growth techniques from modern psychology, and contemplative techniques from the world’s spiritual traditions to expand their consciousness and develop wisdom”(p 5) He “recontextualizes aging”, describes elderhood as a time of unparalleled inner growth, and engages the participant in the “process” of spiritual eldering and personal transformation.
- (9) **HAVING OUR SAY. The Delany Sisters: first 100 years.** (also in video). Sarah Delany and Elizabeth Delany. Dell book 1993.  
This a delightful “history” of the African American family – especially the African American woman from 1880’s-1990’s. When you read the story of Sarah and Elizabeth you “believe” the human person can live more than a hundred years and be witty, wise, and wonder-full!
- (10) **THE BEST FRIENDS APPROACH TO ALZHEIMER’S.** Virginia Bell and David Troxel. Health Professions Press, 1997.  
This book is about the transforming power of a positive attitude toward caring for a person with Alzheimer’s...called the “Best Friend’s model of care”. A secret of good Alzheimer’s care is in the “art of friendship” and in developing “the knack”.
- (11) **ON THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF HUMAN SUFFERING.** (58 pages) Pope John Paul II.  
Daughters of St. Paul, 1984. ISBN 0 8198 1484 9  
In May 1981, three years before Pope John Paul wrote this letter on the “Christian meaning of human suffering” he was shot up close in St. Peter’s Square by Mehmet Ali Agca. He visited Ali Agca in Rome’s prison Dec 1983  
John Paul was born into political and family suffering. During the last years and months of his life John Paul grew old and suffered-in-public. The various mysteries in this LETTER include his reflection on our “quest for an answer to the question of the meaning of human suffering “ and “in Jesus suffering is conquered by love”.

