



*St. Athanasius Academy
of Orthodox Theology*

Prisoner Education Project

— Offering —
A Correspondence Study Program
leading to a:

**DIPLOMA IN ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN STUDIES**

**Bringing the Living Doctrine
of the Church to the People**

**The Most Rev. Metropolitan PHILIP Saliba, Primate
Paul Goetz – Correspondence Director
V. Rev. Fr. Jon Braun, President**



AN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF THE ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA



St. Athanasius Academy seeks to bring students into direct and personal contact with the sources of traditional Orthodox spirituality -- nothing less than the Life of the Holy Trinity in the Church. This spirituality has been described as "Living Doctrine."

Seven Characteristics of Orthodox Christian Spirituality

Orthodox spirituality is (among other characteristics):

1. TRINITARIAN

I believe in one God, the Father All mighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made ... and I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified..." [Nicene Creed]

2. INCARNATIONAL

'Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man..." [Nicene Creed].

3. EUCHARISTIC

This is My Body" ... "This is My Blood" [Mark 14:22, 24]. In the Eucharist, one enters into joy. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Mt 25:21). And we have no other means of entering into that joy except through the Eucharist.

4. SCRIPTURAL

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to

condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." [John 3:16-18].

5. ECCLESIAL

"And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." [Nicene Creed]

6. PATRISTIC

"This, beloved friend, is the preaching of the truth, the means of our salvation and the way of truth. Foretold by the prophets and carried out by Christ, it was delivered to the Church by the apostles and handed down by her to her children throughout the world. We must keep it with all certainty, maintaining a sound will, pleasing God, practicing good works, and aiming always at what is right."

[St. Irenaeus, *The Preaching of the Apostles*]

7. SYNERGISTIC

All along man's road from his fallen state to union with God, divine grace helps him to overcome corruption, then to surpass himself, and finally shows God to him. The effect of grace is "to establish the inner powers of soul and body,...in conformity with their nature." [St. Gregory Palamas].

COURSES of STUDY

St. Athanasius Academy offers correspondence and tutorial studies designed to assist interested people gain a basic grasp of the Orthodox Christian faith, through directed individual study.

Each course consists of ten lessons and a final examination. Each lesson has a written assignment to be mailed in as it is completed. The final examination is sent when the tenth written assignment is returned. You will also receive a Certificate of Completion when the final exam is graded and returned to you.

Courses in the listing are taken individually by anyone who desire to do so. And when you complete 12 of our courses, you will receive a DIPLOMA from St. Athanasius Academy.

WE ARE READY TO REGISTER YOU TODAY!

The study programs of St. Athanasius Academy have been established for your benefit. That means that everything we do is adaptable. If you wish to study an aspect of the Orthodox Christian faith for which we presently have no course offering, let us know. We will attempt to structure a study program to your needs.

If your financial situation makes it impossible for you to pay the entire cost of a course at one time, just send us a note. We will arrange a plan for paying in installments or you may be able to qualify for our Scholarship Program. Just be certain to tell us.

DIPLOMA PROGRAM

St. Athanasius Academy offers the **Diploma in Orthodox Christian Studies**, designed particularly to serve those who are engaged in or wish to become engaged in Missions and Evangelism. This **Program** includes courses in Biblical Studies, Church History, Patristics, Theology, Liturgics, Orthodox Spirituality, and other areas of importance for those who wish to understand the Orthodox Christian faith or to bring it to others through teaching.

To complete the **Diploma Program**, the minimum requirements for the student are:

CS: SERIES I- In The Beginning; Three courses of three offered

CHST: SERIES II-Core Studies; Five courses of five offered

CLTS: SERIES III-Worship; Three courses of four offered

SS: SERIES IV- Specialized Studies; Two courses of five offered

We are prepared to construct Independent Studies for students who have been in the **Program** for some time and wish to concentrate on specific areas of study. Such Independent Studies may include: Old Testament, New Testament, Biblical History, History of the Christian Church Orthodox Christian Theology, Orthodox Christian Spirituality, Orthodox Christian Ecclesiology, Mission Formation, or other selected areas of study of interest or concern to the student.

The **Diploma Program** is set up on an individual basis. The students signing up will be under the direction of a faculty member who helps the student design his specific course of studies. Time of completion of the **Program** depends upon the amount of time the student is able to devote to his studies. A student able to devote full time to the **Diploma Program** should be able to complete it in two years. Since this is rare, we would expect the typical student to take 24-30 months.

This is a unique program in the Orthodox Church - a much needed one, we may add, in these days in which alternatives to the Orthodox Christian Faith have shown themselves to be spiritually bankrupt. We urge anyone interested in learning the basics of the Orthodox Christian faith, helping build an Orthodox Mission or leading in the establishment of such a Mission to inquire about entry into the **Diploma Program in Orthodox Christian Studies**.

Correspondence Study Courses

CS SERIES: IN THE BEGINNING

Tuition: Three-Course Set (CS 100, 101 & 102) - \$225; No Text

1. CS 100: In The Beginning- HUMILITY & SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

A course that, in one sense, starts from the beginning, as if the reader were just beginning to inquire about following God. In another, the content is so deep that any Christian, at any point in life, can receive help from starting at the beginning. This is a start on the essence of Christian spirituality.

2. CS 101: In The Beginning - GRACE & MERCY BEFORE RIGHTEOUSNESS

A continuation of the above course. The one and primary goal of this course is to help the student progress into an unceasing journey of communion with God – including the goal set forth in the Scriptures for our spiritual development, exemplified in such passages as 2 Peter 1:2-11.

*“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the
knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,...*

3. CS 102: In The Beginning - PRAYER LIFE ETERNALLY ESSENTIAL

The goal of this course is to guide the student to a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance of a disciplined prayer life and how developing a habit of prayer is a necessary ingredient if one desires to build and grow in understanding the grace of God and the fulness of His Church.

CHST SERIES: CORE STUDIES

I. CHST 100: Salvation and Spiritual Growth

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$200; Text Materials, \$10.00

(Textbook : Divine Energy by Fr. Jon Braun)

A step-by-step development and presentation of the Orthodox Christian answer to our dilemma as human beings descended from Adam, of God's plan for salvation and our response. Includes an examination of the nature of spiritual combat, the unseen warfare -- who our real enemy is, Who God is and Who Christ is, what it means that God forgives our sins, how we are joined to Christ, and where we go from there. Provides assistance with prayer and other vital aspects of the life of a Christian, relating the personal to the corporate.

II. CHST 200: History of the Church in the First Century

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$200; Textbook, \$11.95

(Textbook : Eusebius, Church History)

A chronological study, progressing from the Ascension and Pentecost through the end of the first century. In addition to following the activities of the Apostles, course material provides data on the context within which the Church was established and grew. Natural events as well as political events are covered, and their consequences are examined. Along with the Scriptures, the writings of the early Church fathers and historians are used to provide a picture of the development of the Church in the first century.

III. CHST 300: The Apostolic Fathers, Part 1: Clement and the Letters of Ignatius

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$200; Textbook \$11.95

(Textbook: The Apostolic Fathers -- We use the edition by Jack N. Sparks, published by Thomas Nelson Company - Light and Life Publishers)

An historical and theological introduction, stressing the continuity of these writings with the New Testament, and their inherent orthodoxy. Attention is given to the historical significance of the authors and various other people whose names come up in the course of study. Each letter is examined from beginning to end, and the sections most pertinent theologically, ecclesiologically, and liturgically are given particular attention. In addition to dealing with the historical contexts underlying specific issues, contemporary applications are made wherever appropriate.

IV. CHST 301: The Apostolic Fathers, Part II: St. Polycarp and the Shepherd of Hermas

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$200; Textbook, \$11.95

(Same text as Apostolic Fathers, Part I)

A continuation in the studies of CHST 300, centering on the letter and martyrdom of St. Polycarp and on the second century document, The Shepherd, written by Hermas of Rome. The relationship of each to the doctrine and practice of the Church is given special attention.

V. CHST 400: The Incarnation: Basic Considerations

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$200; Textbook, \$7.95

(Textbook: St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation)

A detailed study of those aspects of the Incarnation of the Son of God dealt with by St. Athanasius of Alexandria in his famous work commonly called On the Incarnation. The historical and theological significance of St. Athanasius receives first attention, followed by a study of his book from beginning to end. Topics range from the Fall and resulting dilemma, through implications of the Incarnation - Christ's death and resurrection, to refutations of both Jewish and Gentile unbelief. The course closes with a discussion of the great and holy things gained in and through Christ.

CLTS SERIES: WORSHIP

I. CLTS 100: Introduction to the History of Christian Liturgy

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$250; Textbook, \$65.00

(We use Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy - Supplement)

An historical introduction, demonstrating the continuity and early development of Christian worship. Starting with the Old Testament, the course of study moves on through worship in the New Testament to the earliest descriptions of Christian liturgy in Church writings. Finally, study is made of the shape taken by the Sunday Liturgy throughout the ancient Church, up to the fourth century A.D.

II. CLTS 200: Introduction to the Divine Liturgy

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$200; Textbooks, \$15.00

(Text:: Alexander Schmemmann's *Liturgy and Life and For the Life of The World*)

A topical study of the Divine Liturgy (the Sunday and Feast Day Worship Liturgy of the Orthodox Church), concentrating on the Liturgy as a vehicle for worship. It describes its intrinsic connection with Scriptures found throughout its basic rites and activities, including processions, the Sign of the Cross, censing, etc. It notes the significance and meaning of Church art, architecture, fixtures, vestments, and the general shape of the liturgy. It discusses the role of the liturgy in our procession to and preparation for the heavenly realm.

III. CLTS 300: The Orthodox Church Year

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$200; Textbook \$12.50

(Test: *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, published by St. Vladimir's Press).

A scriptural and liturgical commentary on the calendar of the Church, including topical approach to the annual cycle of movable and fixed feasts. Content evolves generally around the Gospel lesson read on a given Sunday or feast day. The annual cycle of movable feasts centers on Easter, while the annual cycle of fixed feasts highlights the major and minor feasts not included in the movable cycle. Themes of feasts and times of the year are expounded and explained.

IV. CLTS 400: The Use of the Holy Scriptures in the Orthodox Church

Three hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$250; Text Materials \$30.00

(We use *The Bible and the Orthodox Church* by Jack N. Sparks, plus Supplementary Materials)

A study of the history of use of the Scriptures in the Church from ancient days to the present, including an analysis of the relationship between the Scriptures and Tradition. Subjects include: What is the Bible? How did we get the Bible? Doctrine -- what shall we teach and how do we know? How do we interpret the Scriptures? The relationship between history and Tradition. The nature and task of the Church. History of Orthodox Tradition and how to discern between the true Tradition and "old error."

CS SERIES: SPECIALIZED STUDY

I. SS 100: Foundations of Orthodox Christian Ethics

Three hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$250; Textbook, \$15.00

(We use Stanley Harakas, *Toward Transfigured Life*).

Introduces some basic issues involved in ethics from an Orthodox perspective, establishing theological foundations and relating them to philosophical and practical issues. Evil and sin are discussed in terms of experience and therapy. Human moral capacity, natural moral law and related issues are covered in connection with the Scriptures and the Fathers. Deals with ethical decision making, evangelical ethic and confrontation to the image and likeness of God. Some background in

theology and philosophy helpful.

II. SS 200: Christological Issues of the Fourth Through the Eighth Centuries

Four hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$250; Textbooks, \$45.00

(We use Percival, The Seven Ecumenical Councils, and a Supplementary Text.

A study of those issues concerning the Son of God and His Incarnation which the Church dealt within its famous Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Fourth through the Eighth century. The theological issues, historical circumstances, personalities, and other pertinent background materials provide the setting for a study which concentrates on how these matters relate to Christian belief, our salvation, life and worship.

III. SS 300: Comprehensive Study of the Prologue (1:1-18) of the Gospel of John

Three hours credit.

Cost: Tuition \$300

Textbook: Includes the textbook developed by Jack N. Sparks, which is a new edition prepared especially for this course, of writings of St. John Chrysostom and St. Cyril of Alexandria on the Prologue.

In the Easter Morning Service of the Orthodox Church, the first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John is the Gospel reading. In this course we offer a comprehensive study of this Gospel portion, with emphasis on interpretation and application. Content and lessons center on the teachings of the Church Fathers on the Prologue.

IV. SS 500: A Study of the Spiritual Direction of St. John Climacus

Two hours credit.

Cost: Tuition, \$200; Textbook, \$13.95

We use John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*

A study of the teachings of St. John Climacus (John of the Ladder) contained in the work which earned his nickname, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. In that classic presentation, said to be, next to the Holy Scriptures, the most widely read in the whole Eastern Church, John sets forth thirty steps one may take in growth in Christ. The course examines those thirty steps in detail and leads the student along a path designed to encourage spiritual growth.

CS SERIES: FUTURE STUDIES

Holy Scriptures:

- 1. Gospel of John**
- 2. Romans**
- 3. Genesis**

Ancient Orthodox Theology

Ancient Orthodox Philosophy

St. Athanasius Academy
of
Orthodox Theology



From the Desk of the Academy:

The Prisoner Education Project / Correspondence Studies Program for prisoner-students at St. Athanasius Academy are offered to any prisoners seeking to turn back to the Lord. We maintain about 85 student with a waiting list. We offer the program as a free Scholarship Program. Since 1996, we have studied with over 1,000 students. A prisoner-student in good standing needs to submit one lessons every other month. Our current pace is over 120 lessons per month. Our questions are not true / false but essay with probing questions to bring their lives and answers together in an interactive way. We provide detailed responses to correct or complement their efforts.

The need is great and growing and we are most thankful to Fr. Jack Sparks and Fr. Duane Pederson for making this possible. We offer our students a *Diploma in Orthodox Christian Studies* as well as Certificates of Completion. Eight prisoner-students have obtain diplomas while 5 others have been tonsured monks. Our efforts are to orient them toward the beliefs, practices, and lives of the Orthodox Church. It is a great joy to see and participate with them, as they begin to accept a living faith in our Lord's love for them and their salvation.

Our courses do teach and we rejoice in every student who comes to and then decides to stay the course. It is hard work and they have shown great determination to understand and answer the questions. By the grace our Lord Jesus Christ, our program is successful in turning lives to the Orthodox Christian faith.

Your servant in Christ our Lord,
Paul Goetz, Director of Prisoner Education Project

An Academic Community of the
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

In Coordination with,



**Parish of
St. Silas
Ministry**

**ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
PRISON MINISTRY**

**ST. ATHANASIUS ACADEMY
OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**

**An Academic Community of the
Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America**

"I was in prison and you came to visit me . . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matt 25: 36,40