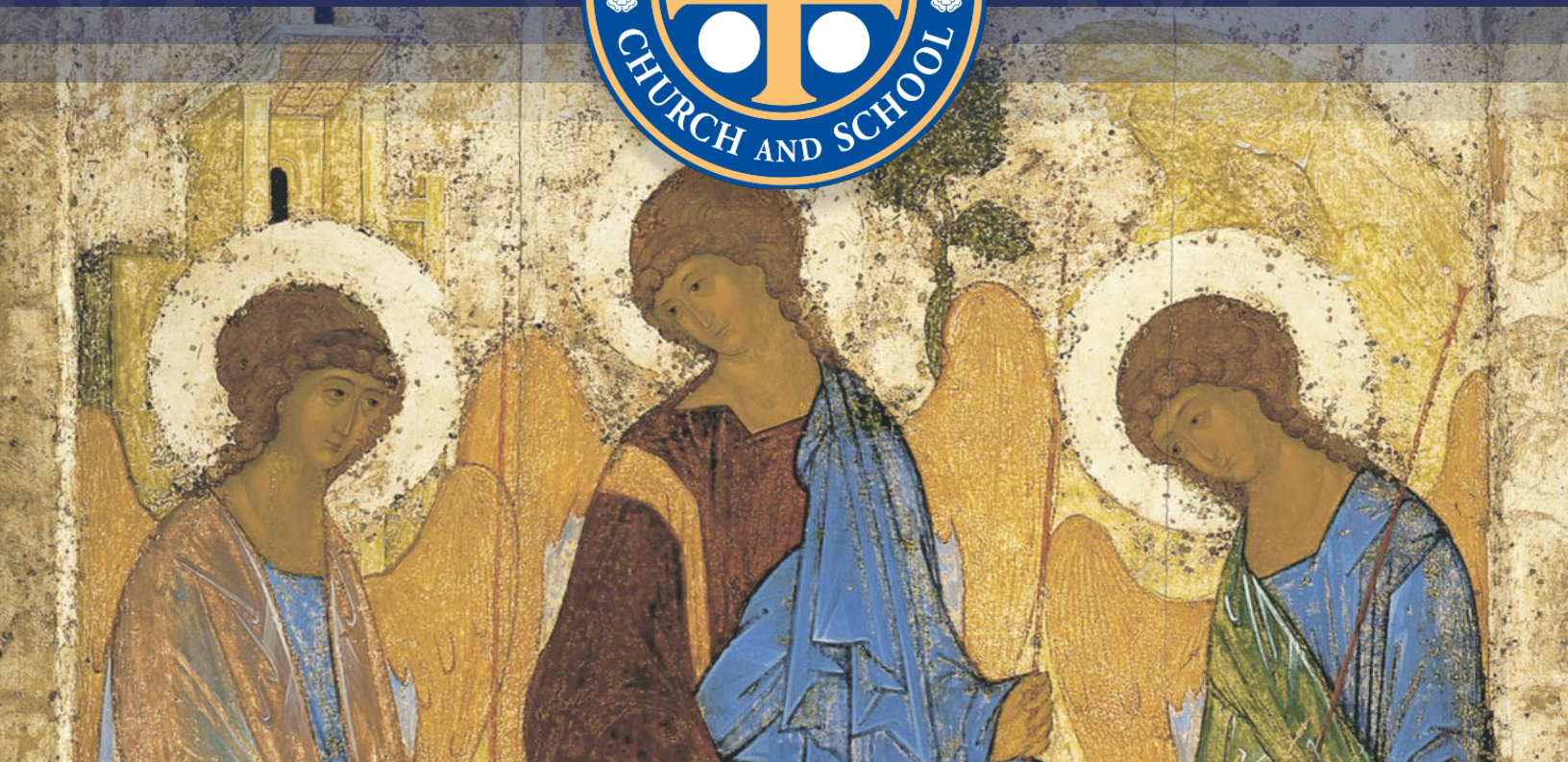
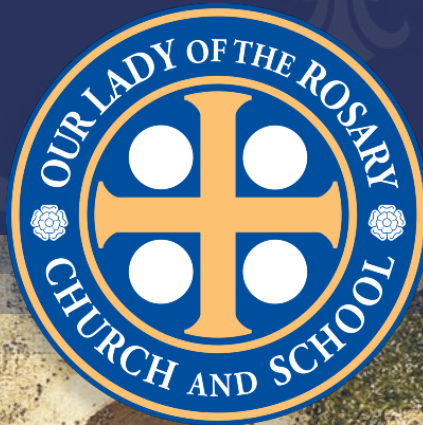




Theology Curriculum

Grade 11



Course Overview

Course Description

This course examines the Catholic intellectual tradition through two guiding questions: Who is God? and What has He revealed? Beginning with St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophical understanding of God's nature, students explore the divine attributes—existence, simplicity, eternity, and pure actuality—through reason and sacred tradition. Boethius' insights on providence and freedom illuminate the harmony between divine sovereignty and human agency. The course then turns to the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, where the Church's dogmatic definitions defend the truth of Christ, fully God and fully man. Drawing from Vatican II and the Church's sacramental life, students engage with the call to holiness in the modern world. They are summoned not only to learn doctrine, but to live the faith that has been handed down.

Why We Teach It...

We teach this course because every human person longs to know God and to understand His revelation. In a time marked by confusion, unbelief, and moral drift, students need the clarity and confidence that come from sound doctrine and the wisdom of the Church. By engaging the great texts of the Catholic tradition, they learn to think theologically, love truth, and receive the mysteries of the faith with reverence. This course forms students not only intellectually, but spiritually—preparing them to live as faithful Catholics in the world, bearing witness to the eternal truths entrusted to the Church.

Course Objectives









By the end of this course, students will be able to:



Trace the development of Catholic dogma from the early Church through the Second Vatican Council.



Course Objectives | Continued...

-  Compare philosophical and theological approaches to understanding God, emphasizing the harmony between faith and reason.
-  Interpret primary texts from Aquinas, Boethius, the Church Fathers, and the Magisterium with clarity, depth, and fidelity to tradition.
-  Analyze doctrines related to the nature of God, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the sacraments using precise theological language.
-  Distinguish between heretical and orthodox formulations of key Christian mysteries.
-  Apply principles from Catholic theology to questions of providence, salvation, liturgy, and the moral life.
-  Defend the coherence and beauty of Catholic teaching through both oral and written expression.
-  Evaluate modern misunderstandings of God, revelation, and human freedom in light of classical and conciliar teaching.
-  Cultivate the habits of theological reflection by pursuing truth, reverence, and joyful submission to divine revelation.

Source Material

The Compendium of Theology, St. Thomas Aquinas

The Consolation of Philosophy, Boethius

First Seven Ecumenical Councils (Excerpts)

Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Second Vatican Council

Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium











The Spirit of the Liturgy, Cardinal Iosef Ratzinger

The History of the Liturgy: The Major Stages, Marcel Metzger

Letter to the Families, Pope John Paul II



Central Themes

-  The Desire for God – Man’s natural longing to know the Creator and be united to Him.
-  Faith and Reason – The harmony between human reason and divine revelation in the pursuit of truth.
-  The Mystery of God – The ineffable nature of the divine being, who is both knowable and beyond comprehension.
-  Unity in Trinity – The paradox of one divine essence in three distinct persons.
-  Christ the Mediator – The union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
-  The Life of Grace – The supernatural elevation of man through the sacraments and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
-  The Church and Her Authority – The visible and invisible dimensions of the Church as the guardian of truth.
-  The Sacred Liturgy – The liturgy as the privileged place of encounter between God and man.
-  The Call to Holiness – The universal vocation to sanctity in every state of life.
-  Dogma and Freedom – The liberating power of truth rightly believed, guarding against error and leading to beatitude.



Key Concepts

<i>Analogia Entis</i>	<i>Substance & Person</i>	<i>Mystery</i>
<i>Actus Purus</i>	<i>Consubstantial</i>	<i>Sacrament</i>
<i>Divine Simplicity</i>	<i>Homoousios / Homoiousios</i>	<i>Liturgy</i>
<i>Immutability</i>	<i>Incarnation</i>	<i>Ecumenical Council</i>
<i>Eternity</i>	<i>Revelation</i>	<i>Creed</i>
<i>Providence</i>	<i>Inspiration & Inerrancy</i>	<i>Sanctifying Grace</i>
<i>Predestination</i>	<i>Scripture & Tradition</i>	<i>Theosis (Divinization)</i>
<i>Free Will</i>	<i>Magisterium</i>	<i>Theological Virtues</i>
<i>Trinity</i>	<i>Dogma & Doctrine</i>	<i>Communion of Saints</i>
<i>Hypostatic Union</i>	<i>Faith & Reason</i>	<i>Mariology</i>

On Writing

All written work in this course integrates Our Lady's Writing Curriculum, a program rooted in the tradition of the classical oration and the progymnasmata—the ancient exercises that trained students in the art of eloquence, clarity, and persuasion. Students will be guided through structured stages of composition, learning to narrate, describe, argue, and exhort with both precision and grace.

Writing is not treated as a mere skill, but as a moral and intellectual discipline—a means of pursuing truth and communicating it rightly. In keeping with the classical model, students will imitate excellent forms, internalize timeless principles, and ultimately express their own judgments with charity, courage, and rhetorical power.



Assessments

Summative: 45%

- Unit Exams
- Persuasive Essays
- Expository Essays
- Recitations

Formative: 35%

- Seminars/Debates
- Concepts Quiz
- Essay Process

Conscientiousness 20%

- Homework
- Classwork
- Participation



Scope & Sequence

Unit 1 | The Philosophy of God

8 Weeks

- Week 1-5** **Overview: Thomistic Philosophical Understanding of God**
This first part of unit one is an overview of St. Thomas Aquinas' treatment on the nature and attributes of God, including God's: existence, immobility, eternity, necessity, simplicity, essential existence, pure actuality, transcendent of genus/species, unicity, immateriality, infinity, lack of accidents, indefinability, analogous model of all perfection, pure intellect, and pure will. Students will also be able to use their skills in Latin to assess the original Latin text of Aquinas alongside the English.
- Theme**
God's nature is analogously knowable, yet in itself ineffable and unknown to us, the "mysterium tremendum".
- Great Question(s)**
How is God's existence known? What is the "analogia entis," and how does it shape St. Thomas' philosophy of God? What are the implications of God being "actus purus"? How do we respond to the New Atheist misunderstandings of God? Does prayer change God or us?
- Sources:** *St. Thomas Aquinas - Compendium of Theology - Chapters 1 - 34.*



Week 6-9

Overview: God's Providence & Predestination

This second part of unit one provides a deeper exploration into the paradox of man's free will and God's eternal providence and predestination of man. The insights of Boethius provide a way to understand both free will and predestination as harmonious with one another when understood from their proper metaphysical perspectives, either from man in time or from God in eternity. Students will also be able to use their knowledge of Latin to assess the original text of Boethius alongside the English translation.

Theme

Free will and God's eternal providence can coexist without contradiction.

Great Question(s)

Does God's all-knowing providence take away man's free will? How should Christians view "success" and "failure" in life, given Boethius' insights?

Sources: *The Consolation of Philosophy, Chapter V, Boethius*



Unit 2 | The Trinity & The Hypostatic Union 9 Weeks

Week 10-13

Overview: The Theology of the All Holy Trinity

We will study the All Holy Trinity through Boethius', *On the Holy Trinity*. This text is an attempt to understand the Holy Trinity by using Aristotle's 10 Categories, especially the category of relation and how it is uniquely applied to God. Students will be challenged to use their knowledge of the structure of grammar and their knowledge of Logic to attempt to contemplate the highest form of Theology. Students will also be able to use their knowledge of Latin to assess the original text of Boethius alongside the English translation.

Theme

All language undergoes purification when attempts are made at speaking about the Divine essence.

Great Question(s)

Just as Isaiah's lips were purified with a hot coal, why must all language be purified if we are going to speak properly about God?

What can and cannot be said about the Holy Trinity?

What is the proper understanding of "mystery" as Christians?

Sources: *On the Holy Trinity, Boethius*



Week 14-18 Overview: The Nature of the Son

This section of unit two covers the doctrines regarding the person of Christ, specifically within the context of the first 500 years of the Church and the controversies that took place, specifically Arianism and Nestorianism. Students will draw upon the philosophical vocabulary learned from previous readings in the course to properly understand the Church Father's use of terms like "consubstantial", "hypostasis," and "homoousias" vs "homoiousias".

Theme

Theological precision matters, and the Church must work to properly define such mysteries as Christ being both fully God and fully man.

Great Question(s)

What is the role of the theologian in the history of the Church?

Why are credal formulas essential for Christianity?

What proper theological formulas can be said of Christ?

Sources: *Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople I & II, & Ephesus (Excerpts)*

Unit 3 | The Second Vatican Council9 Weeks

Week 19-21 Overview: Fundamental Theology & Revelation

This first part of unit three is drawn from the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on divine revelation and covers foundational topics in how Catholic theology is done, such as understanding: What constitutes authentic public revelation, how Biblical inspiration and inerrancy work, and how Scripture, Tradition make up the Deposit of Faith, which is continually guarded and interpreted by the



Week 19-21 **Overview: Fundamental Theology & Revelation**
(Continued...) which is continually guarded and interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church.

Theme

To be done properly, Theology must be understood in the framework of revelation and interpretation that the Church has been given.

Great Question(s)

What precisely does it mean that the Bible is “inspired by God”?

Who has the correct interpretation of the Bible today?

What role does the Magisterium play in defining Catholic dogma and doctrine?

Sources: *Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Second Vatican Council*

Week 22-27 **Overview: The Church & The Modern World**
This second part of unit three is drawn from the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and covers a variety of topics which are important for Catholics to understand, living in today’s culture. These include analogies of the Church, theology on salvation, the vocation to religious and married life today, the universal “call to holiness”, the saints, and the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Theme

To be done properly, Theology must be understood in The laity have an important role in today’s Church to bring Christ into all places through the holiness of their personal life and of family life.



Week 22-27 Overview: The Church & The Modern World

This second part of unit three is drawn from the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and covers a variety of topics which are important for Catholics to understand, living in today's culture. These include analogies of the Church, theology on salvation, the vocation to religious and married life today, the universal "call to holiness", the saints, and the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Theme

To be done properly, Theology must be understood in The laity have an important role in today's Church to bring Christ into all places through the holiness of their personal life and of family life.

Great Question(s)

What is the Church necessary when people claim they can go "directly to Christ"?

Can non Catholics be saved?

What does holiness look like in the modern world?

What role do the Saints and Mary play in the Church?

Sources: *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Second Vatican Council*



Week 28-30 Overview: Liturgical Reform After Vatican II

This first part of unit four covers key themes in the “reform of the reform” movement in the Church, such as: the directionality of liturgical prayer toward the east, an authentic understanding of “active participation,” and the rich theology of liturgical worship in general.

Theme

*To be done properly, Theology must be understood
There was a “hermeneutic of rupture” regarding the
liturgy in the decades after Vatican II, and Benedict XVI
called us to revive key aspects of our liturgical heritage.*

Great Question(s)

What is the symbolism implicit in the early Church’s insistence on praying facing east? What does it truly mean to participate in the liturgy? What reforms in the liturgical life of the Church still need to be made?

Sources: *The Spirit of the Liturgy, Cardinal Iosef Ratzinger*

Week 32 Overview: Confession in the Early Church

This next part of unit four covers the development of the Sacrament of Confession in the Early Church as a pastoral response to Christians aposticizing under threat of torture and execution from the Romans. This pastoral problem pushed the Church to create a “penitential system” through which serious sinners could receive a type of second baptism, i.e. Confession, and helped develop the Church’s theology of penance and indulgences.

Theme

*Post-Baptismal sin was taken very seriously which
helped push along the development of the Sacrament of
Confession we know today.*



Week 32

Great Question(s)

In the Early Church penances were extremely harsh, often lasting for the rest of one's life, while in today's Church penances seem to be overly easy. Have we gone from one extreme to the other? What should a healthy penance be for confessed sin?

Sources: *History of the Liturgy: The Major Stages*, Marcel Metzger

Week 33-34

Overview: Principles of the Theology of the Body

This final section of the year will cover key principles in John Paul II's Theology of the Body. It will draw on previous knowledge from our study of the Trinity to draw an analogy to the nature of the family, love, and relationships that God set up when he made man male and female. This will provide a context to understand the Church's teaching on marriage, family, and children. It also requires an understanding of the Thomistic notion of personhood and will draw upon the first reading from Aquinas from the year.

Theme

Only in understanding God's nature as a Trinity of love can we begin to fully understand the nature of human love between men and women in marriage.

Great Question(s)

How is the Trinity a model for human love? What is the logic of God making us both male and female, different but complimentary?

Sources: *Letter to the Families*, Pope John Paul II



Course Catechism

This section is structured as a series of questions and answers—intended to cultivate wisdom, virtue, and a love of tradition in the soul of the reader. Drawing from classical education, Christian orthodoxy, and the accumulated insights of Western civilization, this catechism aims to form not only the mind but the moral imagination.



Each question is crafted to provoke contemplation, and each answer is more than mere information—it is a small liturgy of truth, designed to be memorized, internalized, and lived. In the tradition of ancient catechisms, this section assumes that learning is not just for passing tests, but for becoming someone.

Section I | Becoming a Lover of Wisdom

Q: What is the beginning of theology?

A: *The beginning of theology is awe before the mystery of God, who is known by analogy but remains infinitely beyond all human thought.*

Q: Can we prove God exists?

A: *We can reason to God's existence through the effects He causes, though we can never comprehend His essence.*

Q: What does it mean to say that God is “actus purus”?

A: *“Actus purus” means God is pure act, without potentiality or change, always fully and eternally Himself.*

Q: How is God both knowable and unknowable?

A: *God is knowable in what He has revealed and in His effects, but in Himself, He is the “mysterium tremendum”—infinitely beyond all categories and concepts.*

Q: What is the “analogia entis”?

A: *The “analogia entis” is the analogy of being: we can speak truly, but not univocally, about God by comparing creaturely perfections to their divine source.*



Section I | Continued...

Q: How should we respond to modern atheism?

A: We respond not with scorn or slogans, but with clarity, reverence, and love—showing that belief in God is both reasonable and beautiful.

Q: Does prayer change God?

A: Prayer does not change God, who is eternal and immutable; rather, it changes us and conforms our will to His.

Q: What is providence?

A: Providence is God's eternal wisdom by which He orders all creation toward its proper end.

Q: Can God's providence and man's free will both be true?

A: Yes; what seems contradictory to us in time is harmonious in God's eternal vision.

Section II | The Trinity & The Hypostatic Union

Q: What is the mystery of the Trinity?

A: The mystery of the Trinity is that God is one essence in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—equal, eternal, and indivisible.

Q: Can human language truly speak about God?

A: Human language can speak truly about God, but it must be purified by reverence, analogy, and silence.

Q: What makes the category of “relation” unique in Trinitarian theology?

A: In God, relation does not divide the essence, but distinguishes the persons who are one in being and love.

Q: Why must our speech about God be careful and precise?

A: Because careless words breed heresies, but precise words preserve the mystery and safeguard the truth of who God is.

Q: What is the role of logic and grammar in theology?

A: Logic and grammar are handmaids to theology, guiding us to speak truly of what we cannot fully comprehend.



Section II | Continued...

Q: What does it mean to call the Trinity a mystery?

A: *A mystery is not a puzzle to be solved, but a reality to be adored—a truth revealed by God that exceeds the reach of reason.*

Q: Who is Jesus Christ?

A: *Jesus Christ is one divine person with two natures, fully God and fully man, united without confusion, change, division, or separation.*

Q: Why are the terms homoousios and hypostasis important?

A: *Because a single letter can protect or destroy the truth of our faith; these words defend the unity and divinity of Christ.*

Q: What was the purpose of the early ecumenical councils?

A: *The councils preserved the apostolic faith by defining what must be believed and rejecting what must not.*

Section III | The Second Vatican Council

Q: What is revelation?

A: *Revelation is God making Himself known to man, not by human discovery, but by divine initiative and grace.*

Q: Where is divine revelation found?

A: *Divine revelation is found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, guarded and interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church.*

Q: What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?

A: *The Bible is inspired because God is its author; He moved human writers to write what He willed, without error, for the sake of our salvation.*

Q: Can the Bible be rightly understood without the Church?

A: *No; the Bible belongs to the Church and must be interpreted within the living tradition of faith she has received from the apostles.*

Q: Who has authority to interpret Scripture and define doctrine?

A: *The Magisterium—the Pope and the bishops in union with him—has the authority to interpret God's Word faithfully and definitively.*



Section III | Continued...

Q: Why is dogma necessary?

A: *Dogma protects revealed truth from distortion and unites the faithful in one mind and heart across time and place.*

Q: What is the Church?

A: *The Church is the Body of Christ—visible and invisible, hierarchical and mystical—through whom Christ continues His work in the world.*

Q: Can someone be saved outside the visible bounds of the Church?

A: *Those who seek God sincerely and strive to do His will may be saved by the grace of Christ, which flows through the Church even if they do not fully know it.*

Q: What is the vocation of the laity?

A: *The vocation of the laity is to sanctify the world by living lives of holiness in family, work, and community.*

Q: What is the role of the Saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary?

A: *The Saints are our elder brothers and sisters in Christ who intercede for us; Mary is the Mother of God and of the Church, our model and our advocate.*

Section IV | The Liturgy & Sacraments

Q: What is the liturgy?

A: *The liturgy is the public worship of God by the Church, in which heaven and earth are joined and Christ's sacrifice is made present.*

Q: Why did the early Church pray facing east?

A: *Praying toward the east is a symbol of awaiting Christ, the rising Sun of Justice, and of turning one's whole life toward God.*

Q: What does “active participation” in the liturgy mean?

A: *It means interior union with the sacred mysteries through prayer, silence, and reverent attention—not mere external activity.*



Section IV | Continued...

Q: What is the “reform of the reform”?

A: *It is the call to renew the liturgy by recovering reverence, beauty, and continuity with the Church’s tradition, as urged by Pope Benedict XVI.*

Q: Why was the catechumenate necessary in the early Church?

A: *Because Baptism was a total rebirth into Christ, the Church formed souls deeply before initiating them into so great a mystery.*

Q: What does it mean to be “born again” in Baptism?

A: *It means to be spiritually regenerated—to die with Christ and rise to new life as a child of God and member of His Body.*

Q: Why did the Sacrament of Confession develop?

A: *It developed as a pastoral response to grave post-baptismal sin, offering a way back to grace through penance and absolution.*

Q: What is the purpose of penance?

A: *Penance heals, strengthens, and purifies the soul; it is a participation in Christ’s suffering for the sake of restoration and renewal.*

Q: What is Theology of the Body?

A: *Theology of the Body is St. John Paul II’s vision of the human person, rooted in the Trinity, revealing the meaning of love, the body, and human sexuality.*

Q: Why did God make us male and female?

A: *God made us male and female to reflect the mystery of divine love—different, yet complementary, called to union, fruitfulness, and communion.*

Section V | Recitations

Q: What is the nature of God, and how do we speak of Him?

A: *“Therefore nothing is said to be according to its matter, but according to its proper form. But divine substance is form without matter, and it is therefore one, and it is what it is: but other things are not what they are. For every single thing has its particular being from those things from which it is. But that which is not from one thing and another, but is entirely one, such a thing truly is what it is: and it is most beautiful and strong, for it depends on nothing.”*

— Boethius, *On the Holy Trinity*, §III

Q: How has God revealed Himself to man?

A: *“In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known the mystery of His will... so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love. The most intimate truth thus revealed about God and human salvation shines forth in Christ, who is Himself both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, §2

Q: What is the Church’s role in the world?

A: *“The Church is, in Christ, like a sacrament or a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race... All men are called to this catholic unity which prefigures and promotes universal peace. Believers, therefore, have an obligation to spread the Word of God to all peoples and to bring the light of Christ into every corner of the world.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, §1 & §13

Q: What is man, and what is he made for?

A: *“Man is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, and he cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself. Indeed, only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. Christ... reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear: to share in divine life, and to be conformed to the image of the Son.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22 & §24



Section V | Recitations (Continued...)

Q: What does the Church confess about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?

A: *“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages: Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.”*
— Nicene Creed, Council of Nicaea & Constantinople (325/381)

Q: What is the liturgy, and why does it matter?

A: *“The liturgy is not a matter of ‘doing something,’ but of being drawn into the great act of worship of the Logos, of being taken up into the communion of the eternal love that is the Blessed Trinity. The liturgy is the actio of God. It is not the expression of the community’s identity or creativity, but the entering into the cosmic liturgy already taking place in heaven. It is only in this way that it can lift up the human world and open it to the divine.”*
— Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part II, Chapter 3



Week 1

Weekly Logos | The Philosophy of God

Students will be introduced to the philosophical theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, beginning with God's existence and attributes as understood through reason. They will explore Aquinas' teaching on actus purus, divine simplicity, and immateriality, and reflect on the limits and language of theological speech. Students will compare Aquinas' Latin text with the English and wrestle with how we can speak truly, yet inadequately, of the One who transcends all thought. By the end of the week, students will be able to articulate the meaning of "analogical knowledge" of God and explain why the divine essence is both revealed and veiled.

What Are We Assessing? | The Facts

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☞ God is not a being, but Being itself—His essence is His existence. | ☞ God is utterly simple and immaterial—He is not composed of parts. |
| ☞ God exists as pure act (actus purus), without potentiality or change. | ☞ Human language about God is always analogical, never univocal. |

What Are We Assessing? | The Skills

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☞ Interpret metaphysical terms and divine attributes with precision. | ☞ Translate and compare key Latin theological terms. |
| ☞ Distinguish between univocal, equivocal, and analogical language. | ☞ Summarize and explain Aquinas' argument for God's immateriality. |
| | ☞ Annotate philosophical texts |



What Are We Assessing? | The Truths

God is not the highest being among beings—He is Being itself. All created things participate in His existence, but none can grasp Him as He is. He is infinite, eternal, simple, and perfect. The more we understand, the more we fall into reverent silence. Our words can point toward the Divine, but never contain Him. Man was made for truth, but he must first admit his ignorance before he can be taught.


These truths unify every element of the lesson:


God is knowable by reason, but never fully comprehended.

Language about God must be precise, humble, and analogical.

Theology is worshipful wonder, not just intellectual mastery.

Assessments | Suggested Types

 **Essay Prompt:** Explain the meaning of actus purus. Why does Aquinas say God cannot change? What does this imply for how we pray? (2-page analytical essay)

 **Seminar Question:** Can we speak truly of God if we cannot know His essence?
Format: Guided Socratic discussion using selections from Compendium of Theology and key Latin terms.
Assesses: Reasoned dialogue, metaphysical reasoning, theological humility.

Pacing | By Week

<i>Day</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Monday	Introduce Aquinas' view of God as pure act and simple being	None
Tuesday	Discuss divine immutability, eternity, and immateriality	Define key terms in your own words (1–2 sentences each)
Wednesday	Explore the concept of analogical language and <i>analogia entis</i>	Begin drafting expository essay for Friday's seminar.
Thursday	Translate key Latin terms from Compendium of Theology (Ch. 2–5)	Continue working on Friday's seminar essay.
Friday	Seminar & Reflection: Can man know God?	Reflect and journal: How has your understanding of God grown this week?



Teacher Tips

Begin with the Mysterium: *Write “God is not a being, but Being itself” on the board—invite students to sit in silence for a moment before discussion begins.*

Latin Matters: *Use Aquinas’ Latin to elevate the theological tone; assign phrases like *actus purus* and *Deus est ipsum esse subsistens* for students to recite and explain.*

Use Analogies Cautiously: *Discuss metaphors that help but also fail—“God is like the sun,” but unlike anything.*

Anchor Wonder in Reason: *Keep returning to the truth that philosophy can lead us to God—but never past Him.*

Anticipate Objections: *Let students voice modern objections (“Does prayer work?” “Is God personal?”) and guide them into Aquinas’ responses.*

Model Theological Humility: *Remind students that to say “I do not fully understand” is not weakness in theology, but reverence.*



Appendix

Essays In This Course...

Each of the three major essays in this course will follow the structure and spirit of our Classical Writing Curriculum at Our Lady of the Rosary. Students are expected to write with clarity, order, and persuasive force, employing the Classical Oration form:

- Exordium – The introduction that gains attention and builds ethos
- Narratio – Background/context, statement of facts/narration of events
- Divisio – Outline of major arguments
- Confirmatio – 3 Proofs & Sub-Proofs (body paragraphs)
- Refutatio – Address and refute opposing arguments
- Peroratio – The conclusion: moving the heart, restating the truth

Each essay must be a minimum of 6 full pages, MLA formatted, and include a bibliography with at least five primary sources and three scholarly secondary sources. This level of work prepares students not only for collegiate academic writing, but more importantly, for thoughtful, ordered argument in service of truth, which lies at the heart of classical education.

Prompt I

In what way is God's nature both knowable and unknowable, and how does this shape our language about Him?

Objective: This essay asks students to explore Aquinas' teaching on the analogical knowledge of God and the limits of human understanding. Students will demonstrate their grasp of divine simplicity, actus purus, and immateriality, while also examining the implications of calling God "mysterium tremendum." The essay must show an awareness of how theology both reveals and veils, and how reverent speech protects divine mystery.

Sources: Compendium of Theology, Ch. 1–7; Boethius, On the Holy Trinity (supporting excerpts on simplicity and analogy)



Prompt II

How do precise theological terms like homoousios and hypostasis safeguard the mystery of the Incarnation?

Objective: Students will explore the Christological controversies of the early Church and defend why specific terms were necessary to avoid heresy. They must show why wording matters in theological truth.

Sources: Seven Ecumenical Councils

Prompt III

Why are both Scripture and Tradition necessary for a full understanding of divine revelation?

Objective: Students will contrast Protestant views of sola scriptura with the Catholic understanding of a living Tradition. Essays should include historical and theological examples.

Sources: Dei Verbum §§7–10

Prompt IV

Why must liturgical prayer face east—both physically and spiritually?

Objective: Students will explain the symbolism of ad orientem worship and its relation to eschatology, cosmic order, and theological orientation.

Sources: The Spirit of the Liturgy, Ratzinger

