

Berakah
Descriptions of Course Offerings and Weekend Workshops
2008 - 2009

COURSE OFFERINGS FALL 2008

Tuesdays September 9—November 25

MID-WIVES OF OUR FAITH: WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

The story of women in relation to Jesus is only beginning to be discovered, reflected upon and proclaimed. Jesus demonstrated a special concern for women, and women played very active and important roles in his life and ministry. This course invites participants to meet and to be encouraged, inspired and challenged by these strong, faithful, and loving women.

Tuesdays September 9—October 14

MEANS FOR HOLISTIC GROWTH

Pauline Plante, CSC, MEd, Licensed PRH Educator

There are a variety of tools and approaches that support and enrich personal and spiritual growth, and thereby open the way to a fuller and more meaningful existence. The search for wholeness and inner freedom is significantly enhanced when persons live in awareness. This course will suggest a number of ways to keep a personal/spiritual journal if we are to live with insight and awareness, move toward greater freedom and wholeness, and thereby live fuller and more meaningful lives. The course will include presentations, personal reflection, and experiential processes.

Tuesdays October 21—November 25

HOLISTIC GROWTH: DISCOVERING THE POSITIVE POWER OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Pauline Plante, CSC, MEd, Licensed PRH Educator

Anger, shame, guilt, and grief are painful feelings and thus are usually assumed to have only a negative impact upon our lives. But when these emotions are lived with insight and awareness, they can be very positive experiences and have a beneficial effect. In this course participants will explore the role of these important emotions in their lives, and learn more effective means of dealing with them so as to benefit from their positive power.

Wednesdays September 10—October 15

**ENCOUNTERING GOD IN OUR EXPERIENCES:
APPROACHES TO PERSONAL PRAYER**

Hélène Côté, PM, MTS

God enters our lives in many ways and the response of each one is unique. Through input, prayer, sharing, and the use of mandalas, the course will explore some of the ways of prayer and promote a deeper awareness of God's presence in the ordinary "stuff" of our everyday lives.

Wednesdays October 22—November 26

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE BEATITUDES

Hélène Côté, PM, MTS

The heart of Jesus' teachings is found in the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes express the essential characteristics of the genuine disciple. We will explore how the Beatitudes can impact, challenge, and shape our personal lives and the world in which we live.

Wednesdays September 10—October 15

MYSTICS, PROPHETS AND LEADERS I

Berakah Staff

To whom can Christians turn today to discover a spirituality that resonates with the reality of our contemporary world -- with new world views, insights, and experiences? Who are our mentors for living our lives as faith-filled and faithful Christians? In this course we will focus on the spiritualities of women and men from a variety of historical periods, backgrounds and walks of life in order to gain wisdom, inspiration and encouragement for our own spiritual journeys. Each class will have two parts: the first half will consist of a brief overview of the person's life, and a presentation of key aspects of her/his spirituality; the second

half will consist of individual and shared reflection on her/his relevance and contributions to contemporary spirituality and especially to our own personal lives.

Wednesdays October 22—November 26

GOSPEL VALUES I

Rosina Bechard, FCSCJ, MTS

Gospel values—what do we understand by this phrase? Once we know what we mean, how do we incorporate these values into our daily lives? How do we incarnate these values in our communal, ministerial and social relationships so that they become authentic values which witness to the Gospel? These are some of the questions and reflections which will be explored in this course.

Thursdays September 11—October 16

LIVING A CONSECRATED LIFE: A SEMINAR ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

Berakah Staff

Tapping the wealth of wisdom and experience found in each one's lived experience, and using a process of theological reflection, participants will be invited to reflect upon, claim, and grow in their living of religious life. Some of the topics that will be considered include charism/mission/vision, the prophetic dimension of religious life, spirituality and prayer, the vows, and community life. This approach will, hopefully, situate religious life within a broader context inclusive of the whole of life, and serve to connect and integrate all of life.

***NB: October 11-12 weekend,**

Roots and Wings: Past, Present and Future of Religious Life

with Nancy Schreck, OSF, is recommended to complete the course.

Thursdays September 11—October 16

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? IMAGES OF JESUS, OLD AND NEW

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

Since Jesus is the central figure upon whom our Christian faith is built, a true understanding of Jesus is essential to our Christian identity and way of life. This course will focus on a variety of images found in the four gospels that witness to the one Jesus, as well as some contemporary images that can help to enrich our relationship with him.

Thursdays September 11—October 16

INVITATION TO MYSTERY: INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSE STORY

Norman Comtois, OMI, MA, LMHC

The recent scientific investigations of the universe, earth life, and the human person have given us a new world view, a larger framework to interpret our spiritual and religious experience in the evolutionary process. The purpose of this course is to introduce participants to the awe and wonder of life in an emerging universe.

We will discuss the basic principles found in the story of the universe and re-discover where we come from, where we are and where we are going. Topics such as the Origins of the Universe, Paradigm Shifts, and Chaos Theory will be presented. These classes will draw on the works of Thomas Berry, Miriam MacGillis and Brian Swimme.

Thursdays October 23—November 20

AWAKENING TO THE POWERS OF THE UNIVERSE I

Norman Comtois, OMI, MA, LMHC

This course involves an interactive viewing of Brian Swimme's series, Powers of the Universe. In this series, Brian helps to situate the larger challenges of our day as part of the journey of the Universe. In the process, he demonstrates how science and spiritual traditions can find common ground in a worldview that is evolutionary, scientific, and filled with reverence and wonder.

In the first semester we will view presentations of the first five powers of the universe: Centration, Allurement, Emergence, Homeostasis, and Cataclysm. We will then discuss:

How the powers of the Universe move within each of us.

How to align with these Universal powers.

How to recognize the powers of the Universe in the world and in each other.

How to resolve the tensions that are tearing apart our planet.

How to develop a deeper intimacy with the Earth.

***NB: In order to participate in "Powers of the Universe", it is suggested that you attend "Invitation to Mystery" or an equivalent course.**

Fridays September 12—November 21

FAITH-FILLED AND FREE: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO THE CREED

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

What do we really believe about what we claim to believe in our recitation of the creed? Is it possible to be truly faithful and truly free at the same time? Using the Apostles' Creed as our framework, we will explore our fundamental Christian beliefs in the context of our discipleship in today's world.

Weekend Offerings Fall 2008

September 13 (9AM) September 14

THE GIFT OF SEXUALITY

Presenter: Dorothy Heiderscheid, OSF, Licensed CSW, RN

This weekend will explore our religious sexual history, our psycho-sexual developmental stages and many issues we encounter as sexual celibates. The perspective will be focused on women with consideration given to identifying those areas that may be different for men. Common concerns addressed will include physical sexual expression as celibates, masturbation, homosexuality and heterosexuality, sexual fantasies and thoughts and sexual feelings. Time will be allowed for questions from the group and for small group sharing/process.

September 20 (9AM) September 21

PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES: SOURCE OF CONFLICT OR VITALITY

Presenter: Pauline Maurier, CSC, MA, MEd

This weekend offers a theoretical and practical application of Carl Jung's psychological types as developed and explained by Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs. Often referred to as The Myers-Briggs Workshop, this two-day session aims at helping participants gain a better understanding of self, as well as a deeper appreciation of the diversity of types at work in all relationships and human enterprises. Time is also given to learning how to apply our knowledge about psychological types in the workplace, in the family, and in any group situation.

September 27 (9AM) September 28

SPIRITUALITY, MINISTRY, AND THE FUTURE CHURCH

Presenter: John Walsh, MM

The purpose of this workshop is twofold: to do an in-depth study of the quantum leap that is taking place in Christianity today and to examine a core ministerial process so necessary in this time of change.

October 4 (9AM) October 5

CENTERING PRAYER

Presenter: Bill Sheehan, OMI

"When you pray, go to your inner room and pray in secret." (Mt 6:6) Using the centering prayer practice, this workshop seeks to draw participants into deeper communion with the divine. Reflective content will include: Who is called to the inner room? How do we access the inner room? What goes on in the inner room?

October 11 (9AM) October 12

ROOTS AND WINGS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Presenter: Nancy Schreck, OSF

Roots and Wings: an exploration of the rich tradition, present realities, and future possibilities of the institution of religious life. The special role and contribution of women religious to the life of the church and world will be the lens through which the presenter and the group will look at this lifestyle.

October 25 (9AM) October 26

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES: SEASONS TO REMEMBER, TO CULTIVATE, TO TRANSFORM, TO CELEBRATE

Presenter: Marge Burkle, OSF

In mid-life and in the mature years we unfold new gifts and blessings as we experience new transitions and inner transformation. In this workshop we will explore how the "sacredness and the ordinariness" of the autumn and winter seasons of our lives hold potential for both spiritual and personal growth. As we reflect on each of life's seasons, we will experience how one season prepares us for the next

step of our journey.

November 15 (9AM) November 16

TENDING THE DREAM

Presenter: Patricia Ann Dwyer, CND, MA

The spiritual language of the unconscious manifests itself in dream symbols, their concealed truths waiting to be actualized for fuller, richer lives. Inherent to the “Dream”, transformative power and hidden resources will be explored through input, dream work, the wisdom of dream tasks and active imagination...a glimpse of the universal energy of love...Bring a dream!

November 21 (7PM) November 23

ADVENT THEMES

Presenter: Michael Crosby, OFM, Cap., Author, Lecturer

This retreat/workshop builds on the first two chapters in Matthew’s gospel, the infancy narratives. It discusses our genealogy, angels, finding our names, seeking the child, violence, grieving the child, withdrawal and coming home.

COURSE OFFERINGS WINTER/SPRING 2009

Tuesdays February 3—March 10

PARABLES: STORIES TO CHANGE OURSELVES AND OUR WORLD

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

Jesus used parables to shake us out of our usual way of seeing things in order to help us see as God sees — to see ourselves, our world, and life through God’s eyes, in order that we might be more effective in helping to bring about the kind of world that God desires for us. This course invites us to open ourselves to risk the challenge of the parables — a challenge that will undoubtedly change our whole perspective on reality.

Tuesdays March 17—April 28

JUSTICE OR MERCY? WISDOM IN MORAL DECISION MAKING

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

Claire Coll, CSC, MA, MEd

We live in a time of rapid change that both introduces new moral questions and at the same time calls into question many traditional values and responses. This course will identify some principles and guidelines for dealing with the many difficult and controversial moral issues of our society today.

Tuesdays February 3—March 10

HOLISTIC GROWTH: CLEARING THE WAY FOR INNER FREEDOM AND WHOLENESS

Pauline Plante, CSC, MEd, Licensed PRH Educator

There are areas in our lives that continue to require healing, and there are obstacles that prevent us from experiencing freedom and wholeness or integration. We will explore some of these, such as defense mechanisms and disproportionate reactions, and we will consider some of the core recovery issues that prevent us from experiencing our true self and living healthy and free relationships.

Tuesdays March 17—April 28

HOLISTIC GROWTH: LIVING LIFE FULLY

Pauline Plante, CSC, MEd, Licensed PRH Educator

Growth in self-knowledge leads to a greater sense of wholeness and oneness with all creation. Our lives are a process and, when lived in awareness, even the most ordinary events have transforming power. This course will explore our hunger for wholeness and emphasize the need for healthy self-esteem, self-actualization, and self-transcendence in order to experience fullness of life—here and now.

Wednesdays February 4—March 11

ENCOUNTERING GOD IN OUR EXPERIENCES: APPROACHES TO PERSONAL PRAYER

Hélène Côté, PM, MTS

God enters our lives in many ways and the response of each one is unique. Through input, prayer, sharing, and the use of mandalas, the course will explore some of the ways of prayer and promote a deeper awareness of God’s presence in the ordinary “stuff” of our everyday lives.

Wednesdays February 4—March 11
MYSTICS, PROPHETS, AND LEADERS II

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Wednesdays March 18—April 29
WALKING WITH NAOMI & RUTH: TWELVE MOMENTS IN A WOMAN'S LIFE

Hélène Côté, PM, MTS

This course is for women who desire to reflect on their life experiences. With the biblical figures of Naomi and Ruth as our companions, we will explore what it means to be whole women, spiritual women, women of God. To do so, we will ponder some of the defining moments in every woman's life...moments of loss, change, transformation, and survival...and how our responses to these shape who we become.

Wednesdays March 18—April 29
GOSPEL VALUES II

Rosina Bechard, CSCJ, MTS

Gospel values—what do we understand by this phrase? Once we know what we mean, how do we concretely incorporate these values into our daily lives, into our communal, ministerial and social relationships so that they become authentic values which witness to the Gospel? These are some of the questions and reflections which will be explored in this course.

Thursdays February 5—March 12
LIVING A CONSECRATED LIFE: A SEMINAR ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

Berakah Staff

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Thursdays March 19—April 30
WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

The story of women in relation to Jesus is only beginning to be discovered, reflected upon and proclaimed. Jesus demonstrated a special concern for women and women played very active and important roles in his life and ministry. This course invites participants to meet and to be encouraged, inspired and challenged by these strong, faithful, and loving women.

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In the second semester we will view presentations of the last five powers of the universe: Synergy, Transmutation, Transformation, Interrelatedness, and Radiance. We will then discuss:

How the powers of the Universe move within each of us.

How to align with these Universal powers.

How to recognize the powers of the Universe in the world and in each other.

How to resolve the tensions that are tearing apart our planet.

How to develop a deeper intimacy with the Earth.

***NB: In order to participate in "Powers of the Universe", it is suggested that you attend "Invitation to Mystery" or an equivalent course.**

Fridays February 6—May 1

FAITH-FILLED AND FREE: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO THE CREED

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

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Weekend Offerings Winter/Spring 2009

February 7

COMMUNICATION

Presenter: Hélène Côté, PM, MTS

The ability to communicate effectively with ourselves, God, and others is an important part of growing into wholeness and holiness. Effective communication challenges us to go beyond our human tendency to judge, to give advice, to offer solutions, or to withdraw into silence. This workshop will help us become more conscious of patterns of behavior that block or hinder communication and it will offer techniques that foster and enhance our communication skills.

February 14 (9AM) February 15

INTIMACY

Presenter: Dorothy Heiderscheid, OSF, Licensed CSW, RN

This weekend will build on the Gift of Sexuality by doing a brief overview of sexuality as an opening. The primary focus will be on intimacy and healthy interpersonal relationships of celibates. The qualities and characteristics of intimacy will be identified. Common pitfalls and concerns in intimacy will be addressed. Focus will also be given to same sex and opposite sex intimacy. Process/sharing time will be provided in small groups and questions that concern the group will be addressed.

February 21 (9AM) February 22

VOWS: TIES THAT BIND ... WINDS THAT FREE

Presenter: Nancy Schreck, OSF

This workshop builds on the Roots and Wings session by looking at each of the three traditional vows, their development and implications for our time as well as for the new millennium. The enduring yet changing nature of commitment will be explored.

February 23 (9AM) March 1

FAITH AND JUSTICE

Presenter: Joseph Nangle, OFM

In this workshop we will explore ways in which our Christian/Catholic Faith calls us to "Action on Behalf of Justice", and the ways our work on behalf of Justice affects our Faith.

March 27 (7PM) March 29

THE SPIRITUALITY OF ICONS

Presenter: Françoise DeMers, CSC

Come travel through the timeless journey of Icons, learn about their origin, the writing process, the use of materials and how they can be a truly spiritual adventure.

April 18 (9AM)—April 19

CELEBRATE OUR UNIVERSE STORY

Presenters: Denise Turcotte, CSC, MS and Marlene Bosch, CSC

Come celebrate the mystery and experience the awe of the universe's 13.7 billion-year journey and our connection to it. Journey together to deepen our love relationship to this evolving mystery from stardust to cells, from flowers to an expanding universe. The time together engages our whole being: body, mind, heart, and spirit. It includes the Cosmic Walk, rituals, input, personal reflective time and group sharing.

April 25 (9AM)—April 26

USING OUR GIFTS TO MINISTER IN THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

Presenters: Pauline Plante, CSC, MEd Licensed PRH Educator

Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

Come discover, explore, claim and celebrate the unique gifts God has given you for sharing in and furthering the vision and ministry of Jesus.