

Course Information

Course: Temple and the Presence of God
A Journey through Sacred Scripture

Instructor: Deacon Dana McCarthy

Course Length: Five sessions, each approximately one-hour in length

Scheduling: Wednesday 5:30-6:30 p.m. (6/7, 6/21, 7/5, 7/19, 8/2)

Online Material: <http://catholic-scripture.myfreesites.net/documents>

Course Overview: Among the many themes that run through the entirety of Sacred Scripture is that of the Temple. Indeed, the related themes of Covenant and Temple are critical keys to aid us in understanding God's plan for His people. Temple is not only an important element of the Old Testament, but plays a key role in the Gospels and other books of the New Testament.

From the beginning God is present in His Temple. His Presence as the Living God is first manifested in the Temple of Creation, or Cosmic Temple, in which all that comes from the hand of God is holy. God creates an earthly paradise, nature in a state of grace. In this Temple, God is the "known" God who walks with men. He reveals Himself personally, through theophany and His creation.

God then reveals His Presence as the "hidden" God of Sinai in the Tabernacle (the Mosaic Temple), which alters its form, but not its purpose, as it becomes more elaborate – from Sinai, to Shiloh, to David and Solomon, to Nehemiah, and to the Temple of Herod.

With the Incarnation we encounter God's Presence in the Temple of Christ, a new order manifested in the Person of Jesus Himself. The earlier Temple must disappear because the "Glory of the Lord" is now present in Jesus, the Word of God who "dwelt among us."

With Pentecost the Church is born. The Presence of God, His dwelling, His Temple, is the Christian community. Its head is God Himself and its members are in the midst of their earthly pilgrimage. As St. Peter instructs us, *"like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"* [1 Pt 2:5]. Indeed, every Christian is a consecrated Temple that must not be profaned [1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16].

Finally, we enter the Heavenly Temple, the consummation of the work of salvation. Indeed, as John describes the heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation, *"I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb"* [Rev 21:22]. Humanity enters the Heavenly Temple to dwell there for eternity. Through Jesus, who in His Person unites humanity with divinity, we too share in the divine Presence.