

Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church
Tacoma, Washington
www.OrthodoxTacoma.com

Inquirers Class
Beginning January, 2020

This series of 17 classes presented by Fr. John Pierce is composed of talks, PowerPoint presentations and discussion. The class is offered most Saturday afternoons at 5:00 p.m. at Holy Resurrection Church. Please check the current monthly calendar on our webpage, OrthodoxTacoma.com, for dates. In the unlikely occurrence of Fr. John being called away on a pastoral emergency, he will indicate the class has been cancelled using the online calendar, and attempt to contact class members via email.

You may join the classes at any time. When a series is over, a new one begins within a short amount of time. If you join mid series, you can catch up on the next.

Who is this class for?

People who would like to learn more about Orthodox Christianity. Anyone may attend, and there are no commitments required of anyone who attends this series of classes.

People who especially desire to follow Christ in the Orthodox Christian way, becoming members of the “household of faith.” Gal. 6:10. Requests for admittance into the Orthodox Church will be addressed when this series is over. Further talks, in the form of scheduled appointments with Fr. John will then take place prior to baptism/chrisamation.

Orthodox Christians seeking to deepen their understanding of the faith.

Section One: Orientation

1. January 11, Tour of the Church

The Christian Temple. The vision of Solomon’s Temple in the Old Testament and early Christian worship. Learn about the layout and furnishings of the building, as well as the items used in Orthodox worship. Orthodox ‘manners.’”

2. January 25, The Church in Time & Space I: History and Mission

We claim to be the continuation of the historic church of the first Christian centuries. How do we understand this? The development and spread of Orthodox Christianity from Jerusalem to America. Divisions among Christians in the fifth, eleventh and sixteenth centuries. The Orthodox Christian patriarchates and national churches. Overlapping Orthodox jurisdictions in North America.

3. February 1, The Church in Time & Space II: Sacred Time, Sacred Space

What we think we are doing when we gather in Jesus Christ as the Church. The transcendent understanding and transformation of our lives as we are joined together as members of the Body of which Christ is the Head. How we fit into the “fullness of Him who fills all in all. Eph. 1:23”

Section Two: Christian Tradition

4. February 8, Ultimate Authority within the Church

Models of Christian authority: the Latin church and the Papacy, the Reformed churches and “Sola Scriptura.” Traditions “of men” and Apostolic Tradition. The role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. The role of Scripture in Christian Tradition. Where did the Bible come from? Who decides? The sources of Orthodox Christian Tradition.

5. February 22, Councils & Canons

The role of councils and canons in Christian Tradition. The conciliar vision of Acts 16. Local and Ecumenical Councils. Church law: understanding the “canon” as a rule of faith. Examples and interpretation of the canons: strictness and leniency. Struggles with canonical interpretation.

6. February 29, Liturgy I

The role of liturgy in Christian Tradition. What is liturgy? Seasons, fasts and feasts. The five cycles of Orthodox Christian worship: Cycle of life, Daily, Weekly, Monthly/Annual, Paschal. The various services and liturgical books. Using the Church calendar.

7. March 7, Liturgy II

Focus on one of the five cycles: The great cycle of life. Entrance into the Church through baptism and/or chrismation. Marriage and monasticism. The Orthodox Christian funeral.

8. March 14 & April 4, Icons

The role of iconography in Christian Tradition. Scriptural prohibition of images. Jesus Christ, the icon of God (Col. 1:15). The theology of the icon. Distinctions between “worship” and “venerate.” *Reading* an icon.

9. April 25, Fathers & Lives of Saints

The role of patristics and hagiography in Christian Tradition. What is a “Father?” What about Mothers? The various forms of patristic writing: Apologetic, theological, pastoral, ascetic, and mystical. Major Christian fathers and their genres. Lives of the saints. Examples.

Section Three: Proclamation of the Christian Faith in the Nicene Creed

10. May 2, The Symbol of Faith

Introduction to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Other creeds; the Apostles Creed, the Athanasian Creed.

11. May 9, The Holy Trinity

Three Persons in one Essence. Orthodox theology.

12. May 16, Creation and the Fall, Christ and Redemption I

The creation of the world. Spiritual, physical creation. Image and likeness. Human vocation, possibilities and failures. “Original sin.”

13. May 23, Creation and the Fall, Christ and Redemption II

The incarnation. Sin and death. Why did God become man? What do we owe and whom do we pay? Deification.

14. May 30, The Holy Spirit: I, The Virgin Mary:

Theotokos. Most Holy Theotokos save us. The Ever-Virgin Mary. Healing our human will.

15. June 6*, The Holy Spirit: II, The Church

One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Body of Christ. Communion.

16. June 20*, Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come

Spiritual bodies. St. Nicholas Cabasilas and the cosmic Body of Christ.

17. June 27*, FAQs of Faith

Questions about relics, prayer to saints, wonder-working icons.

*If services are allowed by June 6, the eve of Pentecost, then we’ll bump that and remaining classes back one week.