



AMERICAN  
NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC  
THEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTE

## TH-128 PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Summer Semester 2026

### COURSE SYLLABUS

#### COURSE TITLE

<b>Course Title:</b>	TH-128 Prayer and Meditation
<b>Credit Hours:</b>	3
<b>Class Day:</b>	Saturday (8 Sessions)
<b>Class Meeting Time:</b>	11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time
<b>Format:</b>	Live Online via Zoom
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2026
<b>Language of Instruction:</b>	Spanish with simultaneous English interpretation

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Rev. Fr. Bernardo Cardona, FCM

**Email:** [Bcardona@anccmail.org](mailto:Bcardona@anccmail.org)

**Phone:** 475-449-0891

#### INDIVIDUAL TUTORING AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

The instructor is available to provide individual tutoring and guidance to students who require additional assistance related to the course. To ensure these meetings are productive and beneficial, all tutoring requests must be submitted by email first.

In their message, students should clearly identify the reason for their request and describe the specific questions, difficulties, or concerns they wish to discuss. This will allow the instructor to prepare appropriately and provide more effective assistance.

The instructor prefers that the initial contact be made by email unless the matter is urgent. Communications will be answered as promptly as possible. If a student

would prefer a phone conversation, they should include their telephone number in the email and indicate whether the matter is urgent.

Because this course addresses topics related to Christian prayer and meditation, some concerns may involve a spiritual dimension. In such cases, the tutoring provided by the instructor is intended to be academic, methodological, and formational in nature. It is not intended to replace or substitute for the guidance provided by the student's spiritual director. Therefore, matters involving personal discernment or spiritual direction should be addressed first with the appropriate spiritual director.

The instructor welcomes students' questions and concerns with openness and respect and seeks to ensure that each interaction contributes meaningfully to their human, spiritual, and academic growth.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**

TH-128 Prayer and Meditation is a formative course designed for theology seminarians seeking to deepen their understanding and practice of Christian prayer as the foundation of spiritual life and future priestly ministry.

Prayer is the foundation of all Christian life and the central axis of priestly ministry. Before becoming a person of activity, the future priest is called to become a person of God, inwardly formed by a profound life of prayer. This course provides a practical and theological introduction to Christian spirituality, examining the biblical, theological, and pastoral foundations of prayer, as well as the principal methods of meditation developed within the spiritual tradition of the Church.

Through study, personal reflection, and guided practice, participants will explore vocal prayer, meditation, contemplation, Lectio Divina, the Liturgy of the Hours, Marian spirituality, and the inseparable relationship between prayer, charity, and pastoral mission.

#### **By the conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:**

- Explain the biblical and theological foundations of Christian prayer.
- Distinguish between vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplation according to the Catholic spiritual tradition.
- Practice various methods of prayer and meditation developed by the saints and spiritual masters of the Church.

- Integrate the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, and Marian prayer into a personal spiritual discipline.
- Relate the life of prayer to vocational discernment, charity, and pastoral ministry.
- Develop a personal spiritual life plan applicable to their present formation and future priestly ministry.

## **TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE READINGS**

In addition to the required texts listed below, supplementary readings and instructional materials prepared by the instructor may also be assigned.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

#### **1. Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Part Four: Christian Prayer (nn. 2558–2865)

- Class 1: nn. 2558–2565 – The Mystery of Prayer
- Class 2: nn. 2598–2622 – Jesus, Teacher of Prayer
- Class 3: nn. 2653–2654 – The Word of God and Prayer
- Class 4: nn. 2705–2708 – Meditation; nn. 2709–2719 – Contemplative Prayer
- Class 6: nn. 2759–2865 – The Lord's Prayer

#### **2. Sacrosanctum Concilium (Second Vatican Council Constitution)**

- Class 7: nn. 5–13 (The Liturgical and Spiritual Life)
- nn. 83–101 (The Liturgy of the Hours)

#### **3. Dei Verbum (Second Vatican Council Constitution)**

- Class 8: nn. 21–26 (Lectio Divina and Sacred Scripture)

#### **4. Lumen Gentium (Second Vatican Council Constitution)**

- Class 5: Chapter VIII, nn. 60–69
- The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and the Church
- Mary as a Model of Prayer

**RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (NOT REQUIRED)**  
**RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (OPTIONAL)**

- The Way of Perfection, Chapters 21–42. Saint Teresa of Jesus
- Spiritual Exercises, Annotations and Examination of Conscience. Saint Ignatius of Loyola
- Jesus of Nazareth, Chapter 5: *The Lord's Prayer*. Benedict XVI
- Writings of Saint Francis of Assisi: *Letter to the Entire Order* and *The Office of the Passion*.
- Gaudete et Exsultate, nn. 147–175. Pope Francis

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND HOMEWORK**

All participants, including auditors, are expected to participate in class discussions and to complete the assigned readings in advance of each class. Throughout the course, the instructor will ask participants, including auditors, to take a role in presenting a particular subtopic, which will require additional preparation.

Students who are auditing the course are exempt from the course requirements but are asked to be diligent in attendance and reading and to participate fully in class discussions. While not required, auditors are encouraged to complete homework and other assignments.

Participants in formation and all those taking this course for credit are required to complete the following:

## **ACADEMIC AND FORMATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

### **1. Supplemental Readings and Weekly Reading Reports**

Each class session will be accompanied by a supplemental reading related to the topic discussed during class. These readings are intended to expand, deepen, and enrich the material presented by the instructor.

Students are expected to complete the assigned reading during the week following each class session and submit a brief reading report. In this report, students should identify the principal insights, themes, or contributions they consider most significant and reflect on how these materials may strengthen their prayer life, spiritual growth, and future ministry.

The report should demonstrate personal understanding of the text and practical application rather than extensive academic research.

## **2. Spiritual Journal**

Beginning with the first week of class and continuing through the conclusion of the course, each student will maintain a personal spiritual journal.

The purpose of the journal is to foster greater awareness of one's prayer life and to encourage the development of stable spiritual habits. At the end of each day, students should record specific actions related to their spiritual life.

This journal is not intended to be a lengthy narrative or a detailed account of personal experiences. Rather, students should provide a simple and objective record of the spiritual practices carried out during the day, such as: Personal prayer, Participation in the Liturgy of the Hours, Meditation on Sacred Scripture, Praying the Holy Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, Examination of Conscience, Works of Charity, and Other significant spiritual practices

As the course progresses, students should gradually incorporate the themes and practices presented in each class session so that the journal reflects the practical integration of the various dimensions of prayer explored throughout the eight-week course.

The journal will serve as an important instrument of personal formation and a primary resource for the preparation of the final project.

## **3. Final Project: Personal Spiritual Growth Plan**

At the conclusion of the course, each student will prepare a Personal Spiritual Growth Plan for the next twelve months.

This project should be based on the material studied throughout the course, the assigned readings, and the student's experience documented in the spiritual journal. Its purpose is to assist seminarians in establishing realistic and concrete commitments that will support their spiritual growth beyond the duration of the course.

The plan should include specific goals and practical commitments related to: Personal prayer, Meditation on the Word of God, The Liturgy of the Hours, Marian spirituality, Eucharistic Adoration, Examination of Conscience, Works of Charity, Other spiritual practices that the student considers necessary for strengthening his relationship with God and preparing for future priestly ministry, The completed

project should demonstrate spiritual maturity, pastoral realism, and a sincere commitment to developing a consistent and persevering life of prayer.


## **GUIDELINES FOR WEEKLY READING REPORTS**

### **Length and Format**

- Each report should be approximately two pages in length.
- Reports must not exceed 500 words.
- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- Line spacing should be set to 1.5.
- Margins should be one inch on all sides.
- Reports must be submitted in PDF format.

### **Required Header**

All weekly reports must use the following header format:

	<b>COURSE: TH-128 MEDITATION AND PRAYER</b>			
	<b>Weekly Reading Report</b>			
<b>Instructor:</b> Rev. Fr. Bernardo Cardona FCM	<b>Student:</b>			
<u>Weekly Reading:</u> (Cite the name of the text and numerals)	<b>Week:</b>		<b>Due Date:</b>	

### **Use of Sources and Citations**

When students use direct quotations or references from assigned texts, they must follow basic academic citation standards and properly acknowledge all sources consulted.

However, given the formational nature of this assignment, students are encouraged to focus primarily on their personal understanding of the text, the insights gained, and the practical application of these concepts to their spiritual, pastoral, and ministerial lives.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Reading reports will be evaluated primarily according to the following criteria:

- Completion of the assigned reading.

- Ability to identify central ideas and significant contributions.
- Personal reflection and application to spiritual life.
- Clarity and quality of writing.
- Compliance with formatting and submission requirements.

The quality of reflection will be valued more highly than the quantity of information presented.

Students auditing the course are exempt from these requirements; however, they are expected to attend classes faithfully, complete the assigned readings, and participate actively in class discussions. Although not required, auditors are encouraged to complete assignments and other course activities.

## **Final Project**

### **Formatting and Submission Requirements**

The final project must be prepared using Microsoft Word or a compatible word-processing program. All submissions must comply with the following requirements:

#### **Font and Text Style:**

Use Times New Roman, 12-point font. Standard font formatting should be used throughout the document. Emphasis may be indicated through boldface, italics, underlining, or an appropriate combination of these styles.

#### **Margins, Paragraphs, and Line Spacing:**

Documents must have one-inch margins on all sides.

Paragraph settings should be configured as follows:

- 0 points before each paragraph.
- 6 points after each paragraph.
- 1.5 line spacing throughout the document.

These settings help maintain a professional academic format and eliminate unnecessary blank spaces between paragraphs.

#### **Page Numbering:**

Page numbers must be inserted and centered in the footer of each page.

#### **Citations and Notes:**

Proper documentation of sources and ideas is an essential part of academic writing. Students should use a recognized and consistent citation style throughout the document. Either footnotes or endnotes may be used.

**Length:**

The final project must be an integrative paper of 5–8 pages.

**PLAGIARISM AND THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Students should consult the ANCTI Policies and Procedures regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in coursework.

**ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

Students are expected to attend all eight class sessions. Perfect attendance is desirable, although circumstances beyond a student's control may occasionally make attendance difficult. One unexcused absence may be permitted. Additional unexcused absences will result in a reduction of the student's final grade.

A student who misses more than three class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, will automatically be withdrawn from the course, and the final evaluation will reflect this status.

Students are expected to participate actively in the course material and class discussions. Participation is an important component of the final grade for students taking the course for academic credit. Even those auditing the course are encouraged to participate fully, since discussion is an essential part of the learning experience.

**Camera Requirement for Live Online Instruction**

All participants should be aware of the requirements for live online instruction. Unless expressly excused by the instructor, each student must remain visible on camera and actively present throughout the class session. The use of static screenshots, profile pictures, or similar substitutes is not permitted, except for brief periods of less than five minutes when a student must temporarily step away for personal reasons.

If a longer absence is necessary, the student should obtain the instructor's permission, preferably in advance. Such permission is granted solely at the instructor's discretion and should not be abused during any class session.

**Zoom Classroom Conduct**

Since all classes are conducted via Zoom, students should keep their microphones muted once class begins and unmute only when asking a question, making a comment, or responding during discussion.

Participants should exercise care not to speak over one another and should contribute to maintaining an orderly and respectful learning environment.

Students are expected at all times to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy, professionalism, and Christian respect toward fellow participants.

### **Additional Policies and Procedures**

Students should consult the ANCTI website (<https://ancti.org>) for additional institutional policies and procedures related to academic courses.

### **Course Withdrawal**

Students should also review the Institute's official Policies and Procedures, available on the ANCTI website, regarding withdrawal from courses.

### **GRADING**

Final grades for this course will be determined through evaluation of class participation, written assignments, spiritual formation activities, and the final project.

Students will be evaluated according to the following grading scale.

Participants will be evaluated using the following indicators of performance:

#### **GRADING SCALE**

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>4.0 Scale</b>
93-100	<b>A</b>	<b>4.0</b>
90-92	<b>A-</b>	<b>3.7</b>
87-89	<b>B+</b>	<b>3.3</b>
83-86	<b>B</b>	<b>3.0</b>
80-82	<b>B-</b>	<b>2.7</b>
77-79	<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>
73-76	<b>C</b>	<b>2.0</b>
70-72	<b>C-</b>	<b>1.7</b>
69 or less	<b>F</b>	<b>1.3</b>

### **GRADING RUBRICS**

Course evaluation considers both mastery of course content and the student's ability to integrate that content into his spiritual, pastoral, and ministerial life.

The following standards guide the assignment of grades according to the institutional grading scale.

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
93–100	A	Outstanding work demonstrating exceptional understanding of course content, deep reflection, mature integration of theory and spiritual practice, excellent writing quality, complete adherence to instructions, and active participation.
90–92	A-	Excellent work that fulfills course objectives with only minor limitations in depth, clarity, or development.
87–89	B+	Strong and well-developed work demonstrating good comprehension of course material and meaningful application to spiritual and ministerial life.
83–86	B	Satisfactory achievement of course objectives with adequate reflection and understanding, though with less depth or personal integration.
80–82	B-	Acceptable work showing basic comprehension of course topics but requiring greater development, analysis, or practical application.
77–79	C+	Minimum satisfactory completion of requirements. Reflection and participation are limited or inconsistent.
73–76	C	Basic understanding of course material with significant deficiencies in integration, analysis, or completion of assignments.
70–72	C-	Performance below expectations with notable difficulties in comprehension, reflection, or participation.
69 or below	F	Failure to meet minimum course requirements due to insufficient participation, incomplete assignments, or inadequate understanding of course content.

## **WEIGHTED COMPONENTS OF THE FINAL GRADE: Description of Graded Components**

### **Attendance and Participation (20%)**

This component includes punctual attendance, active engagement during class sessions, meaningful participation in discussions, and contribution to the overall learning and formational environment of the course.

### **Weekly Reading Reports (30%)**

Students will submit brief reflections on the assigned readings, highlighting key insights gained and explaining how the material contributes to their personal prayer life, spiritual growth, and future ministry.

### **Independent Spiritual Practices and Formation Activities (20%)**

This component evaluates the student's faithful completion of the spiritual exercises assigned throughout the course, including meditation, Lectio Divina, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Holy Rosary, examination of conscience, and other spiritual practices introduced during the course.

### **Final Project: Personal Spiritual Growth Plan (30%)**

The final project consists of a comprehensive 5–8-page document in which the student reflects on his experience throughout the course and presents a practical spiritual growth plan for the next twelve months.

Final grades for this course will be submitted to the Registrar. Participants will receive official notification of their grade and, upon successful completion, a Certificate of Completion issued by the Rector.

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

Students who become aware of circumstances that may prevent them from submitting an assignment on time or completing a presentation as scheduled should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

When appropriate, an extension may be granted at the instructor's discretion. If approved, the instructor will establish a revised due date no later than two weeks after the original deadline.

Assignments or presentations submitted late without prior approval will not receive credit.

Late work resulting from unforeseen emergencies may be accepted if a reasonable explanation is provided and approved by the instructor.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topics / Readings / Assignments	Major Deadlines
<b>Class 1</b> July 11, 2026	<b>The Mystery of Prayer</b> Introduction to prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Spiritual methods within the Catholic tradition.	Begin Spiritual Journal. Reading Report 1 due July 17 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 2</b> July 18, 2026	<b>Jesus, Teacher of Prayer</b> Prayer in the life of the disciple and future priest. The prayer life of Jesus in the Gospels: moments, places, and teachings. The Lord's Prayer as the school of Christian prayer. Jesus at decisive moments of His mission: Baptism, Transfiguration, Gethsemane, and the Cross. Learning to pray with Jesus. Fasting, penance, almsgiving, and charity.	Reading Report 2 due July 24 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 3</b> July 25, 2026*	<b>The Word of God and Prayer</b> God speaks to His people. Sacred Scripture as a dialogue of salvation. The Word of God and Lectio Divina.	Reading Report 3 due July 31 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 4</b> August 1, 2026	<b>The Liturgy of the Hours</b> Origins, history, and development. Structure and principal elements. The Psalms as a school of prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours in the spiritual and ministerial life of the future priest.	Reading Report 4 due August 7 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 5</b> August 8, 2026	<b>Marian Devotion</b> Mary in Sacred Scripture. The Magnificat: Mary's prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Mary as a contemplative disciple. Mary's spiritual motherhood and her role in the prayer life of Christians and priests. Marian prayer and the Holy Rosary.	Reading Report 5 due August 14 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 6</b> August 22, 2026	<b>Obstacles and Growth in the Life of Prayer</b> Distractions, routine, and common difficulties in prayer. Spiritual dryness, desolation, and the dark night of faith. Perseverance in prayer through discipline,	Reading Report 6 due August 28 at 10:00 p.m.

Date	Topics / Readings / Assignments	Major Deadlines
	fidelity, and trust in God. Spiritual growth through discernment, conversion, and grace.	
<b>Class 7</b> August 29, 2026	<b>Prayer, Contemplation, and Charity</b> Christian contemplation as a transforming encounter with God. Charity as an authentic fruit of prayer and contemplation. Prayer as the source of mission and pastoral service.	Reading Report 7 due September 4 at 10:00 p.m.
<b>Class 8</b> September 12, 2026	<b>Integrating Prayer into the Spiritual Life of the Future Priest</b> Developing a personal spiritual life plan. Discipline, accompaniment, and perseverance. Prayer, holiness, and pastoral fruitfulness: challenges for contemporary priestly ministry.	Reading Report 8 due September 18 at 10:00 p.m.

## FINAL PROJECT

### Personal Spiritual Growth Plan for the Next Twelve Months

**Due Date:** September 18, 2026, by 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time

The final project should integrate the themes studied throughout the course and demonstrate thoughtful reflection on the student's personal prayer life, spiritual practices, and vocational development.

The project should present realistic and concrete commitments designed to foster sustained spiritual growth during the coming year.

### EXPECTED COURSE OUTCOME

By the completion of this course, the seminarian will have strengthened a consistent and intentional life of prayer, recognizing daily communion with God as the indispensable foundation of authentic priestly life and ministry.

Furthermore, each student will possess a practical and personalized spiritual growth plan that integrates prayer, contemplation, liturgical life, and charity into the future exercise of priestly ministry.

# Oración y Meditación

## Prayer and Meditation

