



# Diploma in Theology

Level 7 (NFQ)



**THE PRIORY INSTITUTE**  
A Dominican Centre for Theological Studies

**This course is aimed at those who wish to study their Christian faith at an academic level with the intention of deepening their understanding of the central themes in Christian theology following the 800-year old Dominican tradition.**

## **Stage 1**

### **INTRODUCTORY MODULE**

#### **1. Learning to Learn: Critical Skills (5 Credits)**

This short, introductory module demonstrates how distance learning fits in with the human experience of lifelong learning. It shows how learning styles are quite personal, and involve a great deal of reflection and self-appraisal. Reading is important, as is the discipline of writing assignments. The module also touches on study skills, time management and examination techniques. There is no fee for this module.

### **AUTUMN SEMESTER**

#### **2. Doing Theology (15 Credits)**

Jesus made people think! And Christianity from its earliest days has honoured the human capacity for reflection. Whenever human enquiry touches on the big issues of life 'its origin and destiny' and relates these issues to the question of God, then the world which opens up is the world of theology. This module traces how the Judeo-Christian tradition reveals a God who is unique, personal and involved in human affairs. The module also treats of moral theology and the Church, and shows how a questioning mind is a key element in the journey of faith.

#### **3. The God of Christian Faith (15 credits)**

God is One and Three (Trinity); God is the source of all created reality (Creator); and God has become human (Christ). This module addresses each of these aspects of God. The module then outlines how God can be understood as both transcendent and immanent. The Creator is transcendent, but is involved with creation in a manner that rules out pantheism, modalism and dualism. Since God is the ultimate point of reference for meaning in life, this impacts on the relationship between human beings and the wider world. The trinitarian teaching of the Eastern Orthodox churches has a special place in this module.

### **SPRING SEMESTER**

#### **4. Church and Sacraments (15 credits)**

From the outset the Christian community has identified itself as 'an assembly', a church 'with rituals and sacraments. How the Church

developed its understanding of itself as the Body of Christ is traced through the patristic period, the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Council of Trent. The most comprehensive expression of this theology "the Second Vatican Council" shows that a theology of worship now occupies a central place in the Catholic Church. The sacraments of initiation, "Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist", are examined in detail. Participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, has focussed the ecumenical search for a common Christian theology. The sacraments of Orders, Marriage, Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are defined as sacraments "for the time of waiting".

#### **5. Christology, Soteriology and Eschatology (15 credits)**

The module begins with the Arian controversy and the trinitarian responses made by the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. The christological controversies and the reactions of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon are studied, with particular reference to the debates about the identity of Christ. Contemporary ideas of the Trinity and Incarnation as found in Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches are explored. Theologies of redemption (soteriology) focus on the human and divine aspects of Christ. The destiny of creation (eschatology) is explored beginning with the Old Testament apocalyptic literature and its adoption by the New Testament writers and the Church fathers.

## Course Overview

This Diploma in Theology by blended learning is particularly suitable for those who cannot attend classes regularly. The modules are delivered by suitably qualified and experienced scholars who are specialists in their disciplines. The Diploma provides an excellent foundation for further studies, teaching, pastoral and retreat work.

*An option exists to exit the course with the academic credits/qualification earned at each stage.*

## Assessment

Students submit a written assignment for each module during the semester and, at the end sit a written examination. For some modules a journal of exercises is also required.

## Course Duration

Each module is studied during a fifteen-week semester. The Diploma in Theology is achievable in one year if you study two modules per semester. You may, if it suits you, work at a different pace, e.g. one module per semester.

## Course Delivery

Delivery is through blended learning, with a mixture of onsite and online study.

Attendance in person at semester launch days is required. In addition, each module has two study days and two tutorial days, which students must attend either in person at St Mary's Dominican Priory, Tallaght, Dublin 24, or later online. Ongoing support is available from a coordinator and in-depth help from specialist academic tutors.

## Admission Requirements

Mature students (aged 23 or over) do not need formal qualifications to undertake one of our courses.

Applicants submit a 500-word account of why they would like to study theology.

Applicants should have basic computer skills

## Fees

Fees are payable at the beginning of each semester and vary depending on the number of modules taken. Consult

[prioryinstitute.com](http://prioryinstitute.com) for our current fees

## Accreditation

The Diploma in Theology is validated by Technological University Dublin and is aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

## When to Apply

By early September for the autumn semester. You can find the cut-off date on [prioryinstitute.com](http://prioryinstitute.com)



The Priory Institute is a centre for theological, biblical and philosophical studies, established by the Irish Province of the Dominican Order and is Catholic and ecumenical in its approach. It seeks to engage with the best thinking of our times and brings the insights of different philosophical and religious thinkers to bear on the study of theology and religious studies.

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