

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course studies and discusses the physiological, psychological and sociological considerations for understanding and responding to the needs of aging adults, the role of aging people in the community, the unique spiritual concerns of aging adults, a spirituality for aging, and the pastoral challenges for the church in its ministry with the aging and their families.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** To help those who minister to the aging better understand and respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of our older sisters and brothers. To assist pastoral minister to develop effective methods and skills to better serve the ageing in the community. To reflect with those who minister to older members of the community on the elements of a pastoral theology and spirituality for serving the elderly.

Required Texts:

1. Successful Ageing, Spirituality and Meaning: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Johan Bower. ed. Studies in Spirituality: Titus Brandsma Institute, Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010.
2. Deep River. Shusaku Endo. New Directions Books: 1995.
3. Winter Grace: Spirituality and Aging. Kathleen Fischer. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.
4. Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life. Richard Rohr. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
5. Special Topic Reading Assignments: Will be posted on Blackboard Learn.

Discussion Topics:

- A. The cultural, sociological, and psychological aspects of aging in our society especially related to elderly (retirement, family relations, health, loss, generativity, death, meaning, etc.).
- B. The theological and spiritual aspects of aging in the Christian religious tradition (grace, suffering, death, meaning, integrity, etc.)
- C. The various elements of ministry with the aging from a Christian perspective (learning, wisdom, relationship to God, role of the minister, role of the local faith community, lay ministers, caring, advocacy, counseling, word and sacrament, the process of dying, etc. ).

These topics along with the assigned readings will be the focus on-line discussions for each weekly session.