



Simone Weil House

Catholic Worker & Public Household

Agronomic University 2024: The Order and Beauty of the World

Thursdays, 5-6:15pm Pacific via [Zoom](#), beginning February 1st

[Sign up here](#)

This year of the agronomic university will be devoted to contemplation of what Simone Weil calls “the order and beauty of the world.” In what will serve as the theme-setting piece, her essay “Forms of the Implicit Love of God,” she points to an underlying affinity between science, art, religion, and personal love. Each involves our relationship with particular “images” or models of God’s creation as a whole - as beautiful, as coherent, as obedient, or as responsive to us, respectively.

When we contemplate such images with attention, Weil claims they function as “sacraments”-- even the cosmological and mathematical models that will be our focus. Like sacraments [from Greek, *mysterion*] proper, these images are icons of the mystery of Truth itself--functioning this way for us because of, rather than in spite of, their limiting particularities.

With this potential in mind, we will turn our attention to an eclectic set of images/models: from cosmology (ancient Roman, modern, and Biblical), geometry (Pythagorean, Byzantine iconography, and as applied ethically/spiritually), and “pattern language” as it is described by the architect Christopher Alexander. Rather than a formal class, our time together will take the form of shared exploration with occasional help from guest presenters and facilitators.

Our discussions take place on **Thursdays, 5-6:15pm Pacific** / 8-9:15pm Eastern via [Zoom](#).

You can find a full (tentative) calendar below. [Sign up to join us here!](#)

*****Note that you are most welcome to join us this fall, even if you couldn’t join us in the spring. See below for a sense of what we’ve been reading together.*****

For background on the Simone Weil Catholic Worker’s “agronomic university” project, including past courses on recapitulation and Scripture, check out [our website](#).



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Looking Back: Spring 2024 Calendar

Introduction - Thursday 2/1: [Weil's "Forms of the Implicit Love of God"](#) **Note: Feel free to join us this Thursday to listen in, even if you don't have a chance to finish the full essay.**

Ancient and Modern Cosmology (with Andrew Brown, Princeton Physics PhD Candidate)

- Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* [Recommended: [Ronald Melville Translation](#) / [Online here](#)]
- Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* [Recommended: [10th Anniversary Edition](#)]
- Simone Weil, [excerpts from "Classical Science and After"](#) from *On Science, Necessity, and the Love of God*

March: Biblical Cosmology

- Cosmology of the Hebrew Bible (with Dr. Wen Yuan, Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino)
- Paul's Cosmology (Ephesians, Colossians, and secondary sources)
- David Bentley Hart on spirit, soul, flesh, and Christianity's "cosmic revolution" (from *The New Testament: A Translation*)
- Excerpts from *Cosmos, Life, and Liturgy in a Greek Orthodox Village* by Juliet Du Boulay

April & May: Dante & Medieval Cosmology

- C.S. Lewis, excerpts from [The Discarded Image](#)
- St. Dionysius (or Pseudo-Dionysius), [On the Celestial Hierarchy](#)
- Dante's *Paradiso* (with Paul Contino, Pepperdine University)

Summer 2024 - Middlemarch hiatus

Fall 2024 Calendar (Tentative)

- 10/24: Revisiting Simone Weil's ["Forms of the Implicit Love of God"](#) - especially the "Love of the Order of the World" section (p. 158-181)
- 10/31: selections from Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
- 11/7 & 11/14: selections from Christopher Alexander's *The Pattern Language*
- 11/21: James Gleick, "A Geometry of Nature" from *Chaos: Making a New Science*
- 12/5 & 12/12: Byzantine Iconography practicum
- 12/19: Wrapping up the year