

**Church History I**  
**Ministry Formation Program**  
**Diocese of Rockford**  
**Instructor: Deacon Jason Stewart**

**Overview:**

People of faith have sometimes referred to history as “His Story”. Catholics believe that every nook and cranny of the history of the world has been governed by our good and all-powerful God. Nothing happens without the influence of his sovereign will. This is especially true of the history of the Catholic Church. All the twists and turns, triumphs and tragedies of the Church Jesus established have unfolded according to an eternal plan known only to God before time began. It is a history that has already spanned two millenia, and if God wills it, many more.

Our baptisms make us witnesses to this history, but God wants us to go a step further and become students of it. There is much to learn. The great figures and events of this story can kindle our faith, give us hope, and bring us into a more profound relationship with our God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the ugliness found in the story serves as a warning about the bad paths to avoid, and reassures us that there have always been periods of darkness and light in the life of the Church, and that the Catholic Church always endures with God’s help.

Here then is your invitation to become a student of church history. Learn it well and it will become an encouragement to both your faith and the faith of those to whom you minister.

**Church History I - Reading/Assignment:**

This course covers the apostolic church through the modern era, roughly 1500 years. We will be using Dr. Alan Schreck’s book *The Compact History of the Catholic Church: Revised Edition*. Your reading will help orient you to the historical figures and events that will be covered in the class. There will be an assignment given during our class session that will be submitted later for grading.

Please read pp. 1-63 in preparation for Church History I. As you read, keep in mind the following questions:

- 1) Where do I see God’s providence at work in this person or story?
- 2) What is worthy of imitation and what should be rejected? Why?
- 3) Are there any similarities between what happened in the Church then and what’s happened in the Church during your lifetime?
- 4) Imagine you had lived during the period you are reading about. How might you have thought or felt about the situation? It’s interesting to note that there have been many times in the history of the Church when Christians believed the world was about to end.
- 5) Can you see important Catholic teachings about Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium at play in the story or person?