

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME EIGHTEEN

NUMBER TWO

Theme: Intercultural Competency

From the Desk of the Executive Director
Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy

Intercultural Competencies: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Present Reality
Rev. Allan F. Deck, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D.

The Formation of Holy Priests and the New Evangelization
Archbishop José H. Gomez, S.T.D.

Perspectives on Vocation and Formation: The Joys and Challenges
Very Rev. Trung Nguyen, J.C.L.

Model for Intercultural Competencies in Formation and Ministry: Awareness, Knowledge, Skills and Sensitivity
Fernando Ortiz, Ph.D., ABPP and Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.

Becoming Who We Are: Beyond Racism and Prejudice in Formation and Ministry
Fernando Ortiz, Ph.D., ABPP

Becoming Culturally Competent is a Process, Not an Event
Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D.Min.

How Cultural Competence Develops
Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D.Min.

Intercultural Psychological Assessment of Clergy and Candidates to the Priesthood and Religious Life in the Catholic Church
Richard Dana, Ph.D.

A Delicate Balance: Clergy-Psychologist Collaboration in Service of Priestly Formation
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Fully Understanding the Moment and Embracing the Future: Seminary and Religious Candidates
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Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited—Part I: The Role of the Spiritual Director
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Internet Pornography Addiction and Priestly Formation: Medium and Content Collide with the Human Brain
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BOOK REVIEW

The Inner Life of Priests by Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., and Len Sperry
Reviewed by Kenneth G. Davis, O.F.M. Cap.



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The *Seminary Journal* editors welcome articles related to seminary life, policy issues and the priestly formation process.

If you would like to submit an idea for an article or a document, please contact us as soon as possible. We prefer advance notice rather than receiving submissions without prior notification. Journal space fills up quickly.

Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word format and sent via e-mail attachment to seminaryjournal@ncea.org.

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Views expressed in the articles are those of the respective authors and not necessarily of NCEA or the Seminary Department. The editors reserve the right to either reject submitted copy or edit it for clarity of presentation. If necessary, a document will be returned to the authors with recommendations for revisions.

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National Catholic Educational Association
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Seminary Journal Call for Articles

***Seminary Journal* is pleased to announce a call for articles for 2013.**

Spring 2013 – Spiritual Direction in Priestly Formation

What are the exemplary practices in spiritual direction?

What are the fruits of those practices that demonstrate their value for spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral formation?

Deadline: June 1, 2013

Fall 2013 – Human Formation in Light of the John Jay Study

How can we apply *Pastores dabo vobis* to what the John Jay Study reveals?

What are the implications of the John Jay Study for priestly formation and training?

Deadline: August 1, 2013

Winter 2013 – Leadership Formation for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

How do particular academic disciplines help in leadership formation for youth and young adults?

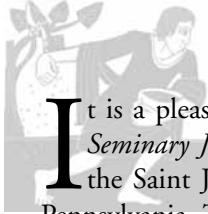
How does our priestly formation today help change youth culture tomorrow?

Deadline: October 1, 2013

Please send submissions c/o Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, to seminaryjournal@ncea.org.
Please include a short biography and photo with each submission, and use endnotes not footnotes.



From the Desk of the Executive Director



It is a pleasure to introduce this special issue of *Seminary Journal* developed in collaboration with the Saint John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. This issue is dedicated to the topic of Intercultural Competency, which formed the basis for a conference co-sponsored by Saint John Vianney Center and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, in June 2012. Fr. Gerard McGlone S.J., Executive Director at the Saint John Vianney Center, worked with the NCEA Seminary Department to publish the talks given at the conference, and this issue is the fruit of that collaborative effort.

Titled “A Necessary Conversation: 2nd Biennial Joint Conference on Intercultural Competency: Multi-Cultural Assessment, Treatment and Understanding These Dynamics in Formation Today,” the conference focused on the importance of facilitating greater collaboration between professional psychologists, vocation directors and seminary formation personnel in the screening of candidates for the priesthood and religious life, as well as sustaining their growth in the capacity for affective maturity.

Affective maturity is a term that is used to capture a number of interpersonal capacities, most notably the panoply of skills necessary to relate to others, or emotional intelligence. This capacity is the centerpiece of Pope John Paul II’s encyclical, *Pastores dabo vobis*. The encyclical emphasized the critical importance of human formation as the foundation for all aspects of priestly formation described in the *Program for Priestly Formation*. Memorably, the Holy Father stated that the humanity of the priest is to be a “bridge and not an obstacle” to the proclamation of the Gospel.

The particular focus of this issue of the journal, intercultural competency, highlights the critical importance of affective maturity as the basis for effective engagement with the gift of diversity in the church. The increase of international priests and seminarians demands attention to their reception, formation, and ongoing education in order for them to be effective in

serving in the US. This capacity is a *sine qua non* as well for those who are native-born priests, seminarians and lay faithful. In the lead essay, Fr. Allan Deck S.J., who teaches at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, provides an excellent overview of our current situation and identifies several concrete and practical skills that everyone should acquire in order to be interculturally competent.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles links the formation of holy priests with the New Evangelization and prescribes several important strategies to strengthen priestly identity. Fr. Trung Nguyen, rector of St. Mary’s Seminary, Houston, Texas, contributes an excellent set of reflections from a seminary administrator about how to help faculty members and administrators make the seminary experience a welcoming and supportive environment for multi-cultural ministry.

Building on this theme, Dr. Fernando Ortiz, a psychologist at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, and Fr. Gerard McGlone, S.J., collaborate on an insightful essay that develops a model for a comprehensive formation program in the area of intercultural ministry. The model includes not only intellectual understanding of the psycho-social dynamics of intercultural ministry, but also the emotional awareness and sensitivity that are essential for holistic seminary education. Dr. Ortiz amplifies this model with another article on how to transcend the barriers of racism and prejudice that can, in very subtle ways, undermine even the most intentional and well-thought out curriculum.

Dr. Len Sperry provides two articles. Most importantly, he emphasizes that becoming interculturally competent is a process that requires ongoing effort and cannot be reduced to a one-time learning event or activity. This process can be further delineated in terms of distinctive, developmental stages, which Dr. Sperry elaborates in his second article.

Dr. Richard Dana provides a thoughtful description on how to conduct psychological assessment and screening of candidates for the priesthood and religious

life, with a particular focus on intercultural competency. A well thought-out process in this endeavor requires not only attention to culturally sensitive psychometric instruments, but also to well-designed interviewing strategies that provide appropriately rich and contextually nuanced conversations with prospective candidates.

Dr. Antony Boyd, who serves as a post-doctoral resident psychologist at St. John Vianney Seminary, Denver, Colorado, addresses the complex relationship between seminary formation personnel and psychological professionals. Navigating this relationship for the benefit of both the candidate and the faculty who are charged with making recommendations for ordination and profession to religious life requires careful monitoring of the boundaries between therapeutic care of the individual candidate and the public responsibilities of seminary educators to bishops, vocation directors and religious superiors.

Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., who teaches at the St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, provides an astute assessment of the current state of formation issues facing the present generation of students and seminary formators. Her analysis is both timely and insightful.

Sr. Joseph Marie Ruessmann, R.S.M., contributes two essays that explore the roles of seminary rectors, spiritual directors and seminary formation personnel. The issue of confidentiality and the interplay between the arena of private conscience and the public arena (external forum) of evaluation and behavioral assessment are

both complex and challenging. Sr. Joseph Marie deftly analyzes this complex relationship and provides helpful suggestions to maintain the integrity of each arena as well as to note the limits and boundaries that must also be pursued.

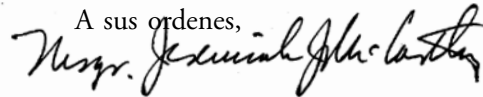
Rounding out our issue are two essays on the topic of Internet pornography. Fr. Duane Reinert, O.F.M., and Sr. Marysia Weber, R.S.M., contribute compelling and insightful assessments of this alarming addiction in society and its impact on seminarians caught in its insidious web. Both authors provide concrete strategies and plans to help free seminarians from this addiction and to embrace holy and healthy celibate living.

Finally, Fr. Kenneth Davis, O.F.M., reviews the new book *The Inner Life of Priests*, by Fr. Gerard McGlone, S.J., and Len Sperry.

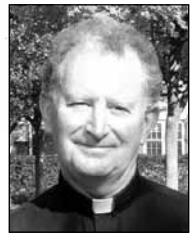
I am grateful to all of our contributors and, especially, to Fr. McGlone, S.J. and Dr. Ortiz for collaborating with *Seminary Journal* to publish this outstanding issue. I know that our readers will benefit from this timely set of articles.

As always, I welcome submissions to the journal.

A sus ordenes,



Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy
Editor



Calendar of Events • NCEA Seminary Department

2013

- ◆ **May 31 – June 7**
11th Institute for the Preparation of Seminary Formation Staff & Advisors
Theological College
Washington, DC

- ◆ **June 2-5**
International Symposium on Priestly Formation
Universite Laval, Quebec,
CANADA
- ◆ **June 3 - July 12, 2013**
Faculty Summer Institute on Teaching Research Design
www.catholicdistance.org

- ◆ **Beginning June 3, 2013**
"Online Teaching and Learning," "Teaching Research Design," "MOOC Design," "Dante's Inferno," "Dante's Purgatorio," "Dante's Paradiso," and "The Way of Love: Step by Step – A 100-Day Spiritual Marathon"
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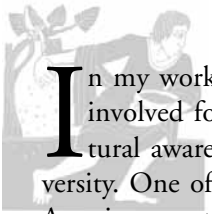
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Intercultural Competence: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Present Reality

Rev. Allan F. Deck, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D.



In my work in ministry and academia, I have been involved for many years in the promotion of cultural awareness and the recognition of cultural diversity. One of the things I have noticed is that, in our American context, we frequently take a “hands-on” or “let’s-deal-with-the-problem” approach to things. I am going to begin, then, by going against the grain and say this: nothing is more practical than a good theory. The American context wants to get down to practicalities as soon as possible. Today’s reality involves great diversity in the priesthood and in the church’s ministries, as well as changing demographics in our parishes, seminaries and schools. Our attitude is probably this: we just want to know how to deal with this and move on. It seems to me, however, that we need to back up a bit because the response is not just a pragmatic “how-to” matter of knowing what to do. More than anything else, what we are concerned about here is *having a vision*. The vision behind intercultural competence for ministry is closely linked to the central role of culture, cultural awareness, and expertise, and how evangelization is understood in church teaching since Vatican II.

Evangelization and Cultural Competence

Toward the end of his life, the late Cardinal Avery Dulles presented a series of talks that pointed out that the church’s understanding of her very identity in terms of the concept of evangelization and the new evangelization has not been nearly as well received as one would expect. This has been particularly true in the United States. I say this because the words *evangelization* and *new evangelization* are used, but the underlying vision regarding the central importance of culture is often ignored or dismissed. The rhetoric is there, yet we have

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not necessarily gone through the task of unpacking it or penetrating the underlying vision of and for the church in our time. We often do not ask ourselves the nitty-gritty question regarding what these words really mean. Archbishop Gomez has pointed out that what we fundamentally need to understand is the anthropological concept of culture: What is culture and how does it work?

We have a problem with this in our country particularly because our history suggests that we can just forget about culture, forget about our roots—whatever they may be—in order to create a common civil society that somehow is beyond all of that. As long as you obey certain rules of civil behavior and have certain values, you can be okay in this country. Where you come from, the language you speak and your deepest values (rooted in faith, tradition and culture) are more or less irrelevant as long as you jump into the melting pot and get with the American Dream.

Indeed, the story of American Catholics is a story of a rather successful, if at times painful and drawn out, process of assimilating to the American Way. Do not get me wrong: this is not all bad; neither is it all good. At this point in history, we are beginning to discover that

we have sadly been assimilating ourselves out the front door of the church. At least ten percent of today's U.S. Catholics no longer identify with the church of their baptism, and the number of fallen-away Catholics would constitute the second largest religious denomination in the country! This is occurring because we do not appreciate culture, how it works and how it truly defines who we are and what we are about. Culture does this not consciously, but unconsciously or subconsciously. In other words, for the most part, we do what we do because it feels right and conforms to the cultural values we have been imbibing over the decades, often without even realizing it.

For example, I got up this morning without thinking about it. The reason I got up this morning without thinking about it is because I always get up in the morning without thinking about it. If I were to think about it, I would have to ask, why get up rather than just stay in bed? If forced to think about it, I would discover that, at least in my case, I get up as I always do unless I am ill because deep down I have an image that motivates me. I am not usually aware of it, but it is one of the most powerful images and experiences any of us will ever have: *mother!* It is the image of my mother coming into my room, standing over my bed in the morning and saying, "Are you going to sleep there all day? You lazy kid!" No, of course not. I get up and get going. Indeed, practically every morning I get up without even thinking about it at all.

It is a very elementary thing, but culture is usually like that. It is like the water in which fish swim; they are not aware of it. Culture is like the air in this room: we are not aware of it until someone adverts to the fact that air is in the room. What is at play in this conversation about intercultural relations is insight into culture, what the Second Vatican Council clearly put forth as the fundamental target of all of the church's teaching and preaching, indeed, the target of its very mission. When we teach and preach, the object of our discourse and communication is always culture because culture is who I am. Culture is what makes me move and what makes me the person that I am. The Gospel aims at transforming each person and identifying him or her, first and foremost, with Jesus Christ, not with American culture, or any other for that matter. To do that successfully, one must get to the level of culture, be consciously aware of it and discern the *shared meanings and values* that constitute one's lived reality.

The Gospel aims at transforming each person and identifying him or her, first and foremost, with Jesus Christ, not with American culture, or any other for that matter. To do that successfully, one must get to the level of culture, be consciously aware of it and discern the *shared meanings and values* that constitute one's lived reality.

Vision Beyond Simple Practicalities

The communication of the message of God in and through Jesus Christ is precisely what needs to happen through successful evangelization. It is important that we understand that our conversation here is not just about an *ad hoc* practicality. We are not here just because, "Oh my goodness gracious! All of these diverse, exotic seminarians are showing up," or "My goodness, one-third of our seminarians are international," or "Oh, a growing number of presbyterates are more international than local in origin." We see that people are speaking various foreign languages, and we then ask, "What do we do? Tell me what to do, please!"

We do need to know what to do, but we also need to understand what is really at play in the experience we are having right now. It is about accomplishing the church's overarching purpose, which is unity and communion in difference; community *and* diversity. Indeed, it is about becoming what we are by baptism and through the sacraments: the image of the Trinitarian God.

This brings me back to my first point: we need to think about our subject these days not as an *ad hoc* practical matter that we can resolve and move on from. We need to address the dogmatic and theological grounding of diversity in our community, because it goes to the heart of what we are as a church.

Theological Basis for the Church's Focus on Intercultural Relations

This takes me to my second point: this is about culture, and multicultural and intercultural relationships. The language we use to describe these realities in our culture and in our American society does not usually come from theology. It comes from universities and from marketing and education. In an increasingly intercultural and multicultural country like ours, the conversation is driven by businesses with a product to sell. In order to sell your product, you need to understand who your audience is. You have to understand their culture. I first learned this lesson forty years ago when I became aware of Anheuser-Busch's marketing strategy to win Mexican immigrants in the United States over to their product, Budweiser. Otherwise, they would not be number one in the market. In the 1970s, I was struck by the fact that Budweiser ads began appearing in Spanish. Within a few years Anheuser-Busch succeeded: they somehow convinced Mexican beer drinkers in the U.S. to shift from their own excellent Mexican beers to their American product. The beer company figured out how to successfully communicate across cultural divides.

Similarly, in the 1980s, Bank of America decided that if they wanted to get Latinos to put their hard-earned money in Bank of America, they had better reach out in Spanish. That is why consumers are given a choice to use English or Spanish in bankcard transactions today. This is big business. Interestingly, I noticed back then—and sometimes even now—how hard it was to convince pastors to offer a regular Sunday Mass in Spanish. Some pastors reasoned that the people would not Americanize if one reaches out to them in the only language they speak. I tried to teach them the lessons of Anheuser-Busch and Bank of America and how these insights into language and culture from the world of marketing had applications for the church.

This lesson has been working its way very slowly across our country. What we are about as a church, of course, is not business and marketing. Rather, we are talking about something rooted in the essence of the Christian faith and identity, in the very mission entrusted to the Apostles by the Lord. Something essential is lacking in this conversation unless we ground it in the sources of the faith and in theology.

We can get a handle on what cultural diversity is all about, how to properly assess seminary candidates for priestly ordination or religious life and how to create successful environments for their human, spiritual and intellectual development. But until, and unless, we have

an adequate sense of how culture and intercultural relations relate to the fundamental mission of priestly and ministerial formation in the church (and, indeed, to all forms of ministry), we are not going to be motivated nor prepared to respond to the challenges we face today. In other words, stress must be placed on the *missiological* character of the ministerial priesthood.

In Sacred Scripture there is a background—we cannot go into it because there is not enough time—regarding God's universal love for all, for each and every person that God has created. Is there anything that we do not understand about the word *all*? It is rather simple. This fundamental theme of the Scripture was really brought to its fullness in the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ. This is the foundation of the Catholic Church's mission *ad gentes*, to all people without exception. This requires a fundamental kind of hospitality and openness to others, those who are different and even on the margins. Indeed, these are the persons God loves in a special way. Such an attitude is simply a gospel imperative, the bottom line, not the product of an ideology of some time or place. If we are going to love, we need to experience, know about, respect and honor the cultural realities of others.

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In Christian theology, particularly in the central teaching of the early Christian Church, we begin with the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, which is about *otherness*. In the very divinity of God, one finds a fundamental regard for difference, reaching out to what is *other*. Mysteriously, that relates to why we have a Father, a Son and a Holy Spirit. It is a great mystery, but it is profoundly about otherness. How do we deal with otherness? This is the great challenge for the world in which we live in today. Otherness in the form of cultural difference and people's identity is coming into play more than it has ever before in our history. The Catholic Church, because it is catholic or universal, is better positioned to work with—indeed, even flourish—in this reality than any other institution in the world.

Living with Diversity Does Not Come Naturally

I recently read Harvard researcher Robert Putnam's book *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*¹ after having read his earlier essay "*E Pluribus Unum*."² In both works he talks about diversity. He discovers that people's reaction (and, I would venture to add, our reaction) to diversity, if we're normal human beings, is not a positive one. In parish life, we strive to be open and kind, but diversity of languages, cultures, races and social classes stresses us. Trying to be open and kind to people that are "different" is just not easy; it does not come naturally. The fact of the matter is that most human beings, as Putnam discovered, are not terribly open to others beyond a relatively small circle of contacts. When confronted with difference, with otherness, our first response tends to be negative and fearful. The phrase Putnam uses is "hunker down;" people become turtles. Indeed, Putnam's study "*E Pluribus Unum*" shows how our country (and perhaps even our church) has suffered a decline in what he calls "social capital" as a result of intercultural and multicultural realities, diversity and pluralism. "Social capital" means trust across social and cultural barriers; trust among people. It is interesting to note, as Putnam indicates, that three institutions in the United States actually handle diversity fairly well: the U.S. Army, interdenominational mega-churches and the Catholic Church.

This is good news for us. It means that the Catholic Church really is "catholic" and faithful to its deepest identity and calling. As I roam around the country and see what is going on, it is evident that something very beautiful and significant is happening, if only in fits and starts. We are struggling to create true integration, one that is respectful of the *cultural particularities* of all the groups that constitute the U.S. Catholic Church and, according to Putnam, doing so with measurable success.

As a slightly tangential reflection on Putnam's findings, it is noticeable that two of those institutions are clearly hierarchical. Hierarchy sometimes gets a bad rap. One positive result of hierarchy in the Catholic tradition is rather fundamental: we are still together, we are more or less one, because we have a principle of order in the Catholic Church that encourages and requires us to bring everyone together, whatever their differences may be—cultural, ethnic, race, social class—and to maintain them in a remarkable worldwide unity and communion. This is powerfully expressed, if at times only symbolically, through the role that hierarchal leadership plays in the church. The pope, the bishop and our pastors function as responsible agents of communion whose

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first care is the service of all, especially the marginal and poor. We do not vote upon whom to include, as is the case in congregationally-based churches, which would undoubtedly lead to exclusion for some. The Catholic Church keeps striving for *inclusivity*. This is an irreversible mandate for the hierarchy, for all pastors and for both clerical and lay leadership.

This drive toward inclusivity is an underrated advantage that Catholics have as we move forward in trying to work with the reality of diversity in the church and the world. Christian anthropology also speaks to us about fundamental teachings regarding communion, mission and catholicity. We do not have time to discuss all of these, but if we stop and think about them, it is evident that all of these doctrines have rich potential for motivating us to continue creating more unity in an increasingly diverse nation and world.

Highlighting the Teaching of the Popes and Bishops

What are some of the sources in church teaching for the vision I am sharing with you now? I believe that *Evangelii Nuntiandi*³ is the single most important document that has been written in the years after the Second Vatican Council and up to this very moment. For further study, consult *Catechesi Tradendae*⁴ and *Redemptoris Missio*⁵ of Pope John Paul II, or any number of documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Here I want to stress *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, because it lays out, in no uncertain terms, the fundamental role that insight into culture has on the church's identity and mission today. Both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI reinforced the teaching of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and built upon it with their emphasis on the New Evangelization. The New Evangelization has to do precisely with engaging the culture of secularity that powerfully influences us all, including youth everywhere, and the ethnic cultures that exist in the world today.

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The culture of secularity is relentlessly projected by the mass media, the Internet, social media and so forth. All of these realities are in play when we refer to culture.

Intercultural Competence for All, Not Just for European Americans

One of the points I want to make in connection with intercultural competence is that growth in cultural sensitivity and in knowledge about other cultures is particularly crucial for the prevailing or dominant cultural group. For the U.S. Catholic Church, then, intercultural competence is very important for the European American community, which still makes up most of our Catholic leadership despite their declining numbers. People of European background, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, German Americans, and so forth, comprise the first wave that made the church what it is. However, a second and third wave—made up of Latinos, African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Caribbean people and Africans—actually constitute the majority of U.S. Catholics today. We have gotten used to thinking that we just need to develop intercultural competence among European Americans, the “white people” as it were. Beat them into shape; make them culturally sensitive and aware. This is true, but “what’s good for the goose is good for the gander.” We must also form Latinos (and others) in intercultural competence. While migration, bilingualism and biculturalism certainly give an advantage to Latinos in the church who have to deal more directly with daily cross-cultural encounters, their experience of intercultural competence is not infused nor does it come about just by wishing it for them. Something similar can be said about all other cultural groups, including African Americans, Vietnamese, Chinese or Koreans. Moreover, guess who is in charge these days? Increasingly, it is not the European American commu-

nity and leadership. This is evident in California. For example, when the Archbishop of Los Angeles calls a meeting of catechetical leaders, the attendance includes four hundred Latinos and one-hundred-fifty European Americans. In many places throughout the country the mounting influence of the church’s work is no longer a matter of European American leadership, but more about the rising tide of non-European communities. The point is this: intercultural competence is needed *across the board*, not just by some dominant group, whichever it might be. The other thing that has to occur—and is not occurring fast enough in my view—is that non-European communities must consider moving beyond their silos and admittedly hard-fought comfort zones. Silos are good. They have a positive function. That is why the church has what are called by Archbishop Gómez personal or national parishes. We can still have national parishes because Canon Law provides for them. At the same time, however, national parishes are limited and becoming less relevant, because the tendency of each group to stay in their comfort zone works against the larger evangelizing mission of the entire church. Pastoral care requires a both/and approach to this question, not an either/or one. The effective pastoral care and evangelization of the youth in all of these communities requires, in particular, an ability to bridge the parents’ culture with that of others and with the dominant secular culture around us.

The reality is forever moving in the direction of *more* rather than *less* diversity. In the recent past, it was not unusual to have a mainly *bilingual* and *bicultural* parish or school. Today dioceses, parishes and schools are dealing with *multicultural* populations because Catholic cultures from all over the world make their home in the United States. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, for example, Sunday Mass is offered in at least forty-two different languages. Consequently, it is no longer sufficient to work biculturally or even triculturally: interculturality is a fundamental need. What does it mean to do an intercultural liturgy as distinct from a bicultural or tricultural liturgy? This is a very challenging question.

Understanding Culture: Back to the Basics

The building blocks of culture are symbol, ritual and story. We need to understand how these three elements of culture function. In the United States, for example, we have a powerful national story forged in the nineteenth century by the historian Fredrick Jackson Turner—the “Frontier Theory.” Our politicians, whether Democrats or Republicans, are constantly

reminding us about this myth. The idea of the American Dream is closely linked to the Frontier Theory as well as to other influential narratives such as Manifest Destiny and American Exceptionalism. Catholics have to ask how these narratives relate to the Christian message; otherwise, our faith simply becomes a function of the national myth, a function of a certain culture's interpretation of itself and the world, and not a faithful expression of the core values of the gospel, which, as we know, are always in some respects transcultural (beyond the limits and framework of any given culture). Nationalism can take the place of religion for many Christians, both Protestants and Catholics. When push comes to shove, national rather than Christian identity trumps every other consideration. Sadly, we saw this in the run-up to the 2012 elections in regard to the bishops' strong advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform. Some Catholics are among the most outspoken critics of the bishops on this issue. We have to inquire about and develop a critical, discerning eye regarding our own cultural myths and those of others. Americans, of course, are not the only ones that have a myth. The Mexican people with whom I have worked all my life as a priest have their own stories, as do Asians, blacks and all other groups. A people's way of life is very much affected by those stories.

Archbishop Gomez gives a simple example of how cultural rituals work. Do you greet people with care or are you quite informal about this? Something as simple as saying good morning or not is full of meaning for some people. I learned this years ago when I was a young parish priest. I walked in to say mass one morning and waved my hand, saying hello to everyone waiting for Mass. When Mass was over, I was in the sacristy and one of the elderly Latina ladies immediately came in and asked, "Father, are you all right?" I replied, "I'm fine, thank you." She said, "Well, *no saludó*, you didn't greet us." The people interpreted my casual hello as a sign that I was not well, was in a bad humor or was ignoring them for some reason. In many cultures more formal greetings are very important, as is saying good-bye. Saying good-bye and personalizing the good-byes is well received in Hispanic cultures. Different cultures have different rules and, consequently, miscommunication occurs if one does not understand what people are expecting.

We know how symbols operate and how important they are. How many of us remember 9/11 and experienced firsthand the function of the American flag on that day? In times of stress, people really lean

on symbols and cherish them. I like Father Gerald Arbuckle's definition of a symbol, "emotionally experienced meaning." We are all looking for meaning. Cultures are understood precisely in terms of the symbols raised up by those cultures. Our American culture has examples like the American flag, the Statue of Liberty and the Marlboro cowboy. I think about different symbols that express people's values and interests. In the Latino culture, I think about stellar figures like Vicente Fernández or Antonio Aguilar, the *Charro*, the guy on horseback and the Mexican version of John Wayne. Of course, the overpowering symbol of Mexican culture is Our Lady of Guadalupe. She might be compared to another popular lady in America, the Statue of Liberty. They are both ladies, but rather different ones. One begins to get a sense of the differences between cultures and what those cultures are about when one ponders their symbols.

Another powerful symbol of Latin culture is the crucified Christ. American churches emphasize the risen Christ for good theological reasons. It is often hard for Latinos to grasp why Christ is taken off the cross in the contemporary U.S. Catholic imagination. U.S. Catholics put up what are considered by many Latinos to be Protestant crosses.

We have to ask questions on a road of discovery: we cannot be locked into a search for certainty. Certainty is great, but it is not always appropriate.

Focusing on Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills

To grow in intercultural competence, one should focus on attitudes, knowledge and skills. To grow in competence, one needs to identify and cultivate certain attitudes, such as curiosity. Some people completely lack curiosity. If you are a pastor or deacon and you have no curiosity about those who are different, you are in a lot of trouble. If you are not curious, you are not going to be motivated to reach out and get to know other people. One cannot love what one does not know. This does not necessarily stem from being against those unknown to you, or that you do not like them; it is just that you are not interested in them. Some of us tend to

be that way, and this can be a personal challenge. I notice that, as I get older, I like to inhabit my world more and more and not be bothered with all this variety and change from the tried and true routines and patterns of my life. That attitude, however, does not work in today's globalized world and certainly not in Catholic Church ministry. It is not a good attitude to have because we need to be curious about others, other ways of life and other ways of doing things.

We have to ask questions on a road of discovery: we cannot be locked into a search for certainty. Certainty is great, but it is not always appropriate. Before we can be sure, we have to explore what is different, see other possibilities and even pass through a time of am-

biguity and doubt. Is not that how it works in real life? I am all for certainty, but I also think we need to move towards understanding, beyond that to wisdom and finally into the mystery of God, which is downright inflexible. So, there are a number of attitudes that affect our understanding of others, whether God or our neighbor.

There is no end to the quest for knowledge about other cultures. You learn, for instance, that one does not touch a Vietnamese child on the head. In contrast, in Latino cultures we do touch children on the head. On the other hand, in some Latino cultures, staring at a baby may strike fear in the hearts of parents who may interpret it as the "evil eye."

There are all kinds of cultural taboos and unac-



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ceptable gestures that, if nobody ever told you about them, could cause you to experience serious misunderstandings. You would simply fail to communicate. In a word, we need knowledge about the details of the cultures we encounter in ministry; otherwise, we will miscommunicate with the people with whom we are working. These simple, little things are actually significant cultural values that seriously affect people and make them who they are.

Unpacking Intercultural Competence

Unpacking the theme of intercultural competence takes time and care. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has designed a program called *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers* (BICM) that consists of five learning modules. This two- or three-day experience is gradually going to be offered to dioceses, schools and parishes in various regions of the country over the next several years. One of the modules dedicated to skills talks about simple things like organizing a meeting in an intercultural context. Attitudes towards meetings vary from culture to culture. This is a simple thing, and yet, perhaps you have never even thought about it. As a Mexican-American, I have a certain approach towards a meeting that may differ from my Irish-American friend. One of the great benefits of going to a meeting with people from many cultures is developing relationships from being together with those people. I view meetings as eminently social in character, not first of all “business.”

Does that sound okay? Does that sound reasonable? In the American culture, however, meetings are not so much about developing human and social relations as they are about getting something done! In many parishes, there is a considerable amount of frustration when the pastor, deacon or lay ecclesial minister convenes a meeting. Certain people of whatever culture come, sit down and have a great time and talk about things, but they do not necessarily follow the agenda or get anything done. The priest or deacon might conclude that the meeting was a terrible waste of time; but if you ask the people, they just might say it was wonderful getting to know each other and chatting. There is a difference between cultures where relationships are paramount and those that are driven by practical results. In the world today, cultures are coming together that look at those kinds of experiences in different ways. I am not saying that one is better than the other, but rather that they are just different. If we do not understand those differences we are going to be rather annoyed.

The ability to distinguish the differences between individualistic and collectivist cultures is crucial today and takes us back once again to the need for cultural discernment. At the heart of the U.S. culture is a strong and even growing emphasis on the unencumbered free-floating individual, the unencumbered self. This tendency departs significantly from a Christian view of the human person, yet it is the one that seems to be valued more and more in the United States. Opposing that is what is called a collectivist vision, one that conceives of the human person as primarily *in relationship*, in family and in community. Each person’s individual pursuit of equality, for instance, is important, but that pursuit does not take precedence over every other pursuit such as the common good, the good of marriage, of family, and so forth. The collective pursuit of the common good is primary. Such a moral framework, however, is fairly counter-cultural in the United States, even among mainstream Catholics.

Another example of differing cultural norms is the need to acknowledge and respect what is called “face.” Different cultures take face very seriously; accordingly, it is very important to respect elders and those in authority. By contrast, in the United States one will occasionally see a bumper sticker with the message “question authority.” We certainly do question authority in this country, but many traditional cultures that live here do not.

Many traditional cultures simply defer to their elders, period. This approach is often annoying to Americans. The pastor may keep asking for leaders to come forward because, in the United States, leaders are often self-appointed or self-motivated. Yet they will not come forward because, in many cultures, leadership is not something you assume or grasp for yourself. One is a leader by virtue of who one is. You are a leader by reason of where you stand in the hierarchy or seniority—that makes you a leader in many cultures. These are examples of cultural standards about which we need to know and be sensitive to; otherwise, intercultural relations will languish and we will be frustrated.

Doctrine Is Not Enough in Order to Effectively Evangelize

The simple unambiguous proclamation of what the church teaches is not enough for building intercultural competencies and relationship. Communicating doctrine is important, but it is not enough. What really makes the difference, that allows us be successful in what we are doing, is getting beyond the idea that evangelization

is about fidelity to, and clarity about, beliefs. We need to know our doctrine. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a wonderful resource for doctrine. Catechisms, however, will not automatically communicate the values and deepest meanings of the faith into the lives of the people. The church teaches that the gospel must be translated *in a way that it can be received by others*. Doctrine becomes life through culture. When what the Gospel proclaims (and the church teaches) is somehow received into the heart and identity of a person, when it is inculturated, then it is transformative. Conversion is taking place. Short of that, one is merely *hearing without really listening*.

Here are the five guidelines that the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity has formulated regarding intercultural competence:

- Theologically frame issues of diversity in terms of the church's identity and mission to evangelize.
- Seek an understanding of culture and how it works.
- Develop multicultural communication skills in pastoral settings.
- Expand one's knowledge of the obstacles that impede effective intercultural relations.
- Foster ecclesial integration, rather than assimilation, in church settings with a spirit of hospitality, reconciliation and mission.

Conclusion

Sixty years ago, there was clarity about how to be Catholic and American in the United States. Today, that clarity has disappeared. How are we going to be Catholic and American today? The drama unfolding before us makes intercultural competence for ministry a central concern. If we find creative ways to work with the pluralism, cultures and philosophies of life surrounding us, the Gospel will advance. However, this will not happen by blending this country's rich diversity into some standardized whole characterized by uniformity, but by discovering how to be one and many at the same time, united in differences, a communion in diversity. Real conversion to Jesus Christ means being drawn into the life of the Trinitarian God whose essence is *loving relationship among persons*. Intercultural competencies, therefore, are not simply practical tools, but the nitty-gritty way in which the church's mission to evangelize will be achieved in the future. They are fundamental aspects of the Christian way of love. Intercultural competence is essential for meeting the challenges of the New Evan-

gelization among all U.S. Catholics today, especially for those in positions of ministerial leadership.

Finally, I think it is important that we keep our eye on the ball, on the greater vision, and understand that the conversation about intercultural relations is part of a much bigger picture. How do we respond to the opportunity before us? So many culturally diverse candidates for priestly life, for the permanent diaconate, and for lay ecclesial ministries are seeking to follow the call of Christ. What is at stake here is nothing less than the identity, vitality and growth of the Christian life in this country for ages to come. Let us, then, enthusiastically take the necessary means to carry out the joyous mission entrusted us by the Lord.



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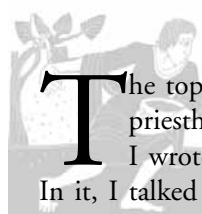
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The Formation of Holy Priests and the New Evangelization

Archbishop José H. Gomez, S.T.D.

This article originally appeared in Origins, 42 (9), 141-143.



The topic of calling and forming men for the priesthood is close to my heart. A few years ago, I wrote a little book called *Men of Brave Heart*.¹ In it, I talked about the need for us to form our priests in the virtues based on St. Thomas Aquinas' theological anthropology. That book is coming out later this year in a Spanish edition. My hope is that it will help us in forming our Hispanic seminary candidates.

I have been asked to offer some views on priestly formation in a multicultural context, including questions of cultural integration and the use of psychology in our seminaries. I am glad for the chance to do that. I also think we need to talk about the wider challenges we face in our culture today because we are not forming men in a vacuum. Men today are trying to hear God's call and follow it within the environment of our dominant American culture. We are forming men in order to send them out as apostles to this culture, this highly diversified and secularized culture in which God has become irrelevant to so many of our brothers and sisters.

To begin our conversation, I want to mention an important new film that came out in June 2012, *For Greater Glory*.² It is a good, strong movie about the *Cristeros*—the men and women who defended our Catholic faith when the church was being persecuted by the Mexican government in the 1920s and 1930s. The *Cristeros* included many priests whom the church has since canonized and beatified, many as martyrs. These priests were some of my heroes when I was a young priest, and I hope this movie will help more people know their stories because they are inspiring models of what the priesthood is meant to be.

We are forming men in order to send them out as apostles to this culture, this highly diversified and secularized culture in which God has become irrelevant to so many of our brothers and sisters.

I have special devotion to one of these priests, St. Rafael Guízar Valencia. He was also a bishop; in fact, he was the first bishop born in the Americas to be made a saint. During the persecution, the government forced St. Rafael to shut down his seminary. He did what he was told—at least on the surface. What he really did was start an underground seminary. For the next fifteen years, he ran this secret seminary. It was the only seminary in the entire country and he formed more than 300 priests there. These priests, through heroic charity and sacrifices, risked their lives to keep the faith alive in Mexico during a very dark time. St. Rafael said, "A bishop can do without the miter, the crosier and even without the cathedral. But he cannot do without the seminary, since the future of his diocese depends on it."³ I have always taken his words seriously in my apostolic ministry as a bishop.

As I see it, there is no more important work in the church today than the spiritual preparation of

St. Rafael said, “A bishop can do without the miter, the crosier and even without the cathedral. But he cannot do without the seminary, since the future of his diocese depends on it.”

men for the priesthood. The work you are doing is absolutely crucial to the church’s mission and to the mission of Jesus Christ.

In June 2012, I had the joy of ordaining four new priests at our cathedral. They are really good guys. They are solid men with good hearts. They are men of prayer with zeal to be God’s messengers and to be shepherds to his people. What is interesting is that they come from totally different backgrounds. One was born in Seoul, South Korea; another in Jalisco, Mexico; the other two came from Ohio and Arizona—one is Mexican-American and the other is Anglo. They are different ages, ranging from 27 to 53, and they come from all different walks of life: engineering, management and even prison ministry. In a way, these newest priests in Los Angeles fit the “profile” of the types of good men that God is raising up all over our country so that our church is able to meet the demands for the new evangelization in our time.

Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has said that “The origins of a priestly vocation are nowadays more varied and disparate than in the past. Today the decision to become a priest often takes shape after one has already entered upon a secular profession.” As a result, the pope says, “candidates for the priesthood often live on very different spiritual continents.”⁴ That is true. Our seminarians today are not only from different “spiritual” continents; they are from almost every geographical continent, and from many ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Throughout our country, we are aware that our American church is becoming more multicultural. That means that our formation of priests also needs to become more multicultural. We need to work hard to find ways to integrate and build community in our seminaries, and we need to be sensitive to cultural differences in our education and formation programs. Many of our

traditional assumptions about spirituality and prayer were formed over the centuries in a European context. However, today we are more aware that cultural backgrounds have a big influence on the way people pray and see the world.

We need to work hard to find ways to integrate and build community in our seminaries, and we need to be sensitive to cultural differences in our education and formation programs.

For instance, we know that Anglos think, pray and see the world much differently than Hispanics do. Anglos tend to be rugged individualists with a big independent streak. They say, “Let me know what I have to do, and then I’ll go and do it.” They want guidance, but then they want to be left alone to do things themselves, on their own. Hispanics are different; they are more communitarian. They say, “Let me know what I have to do, and then let’s do it together.” They need to be “accompanied” in making progress in spiritual direction. They need to feel that they are members of a family, part of a community.

We do not have separate seminaries for each nationality and immigrant group. That is good. It is better that we are studying together and learning each other’s languages and traditions.

The seeds of the Gospel have been sown in every culture. And from every cultural soil these seeds have born rich fruit. Every culture has yielded its own distinctive brand of popular Catholic literature and art, songs and customs, patron saints, pious devotions and feast days. The challenge for us is to learn together from all of our Catholic traditions. The challenge is to be open to take advantage of this rich variety and to celebrate and share our traditions—first among ourselves and then with our culture. Our Catholic traditions of piety are not only cultural or personal devotions, they are part of the good news that the church is called to bring to the men and women of our world today. So we want to make sure that we do not impose in our semi-

naries a “one size fits all” model of spiritual direction, formation and piety.

We have to be especially sensitive about cultural differences in our use of psychology. Personally, I think psychology can be a very good instrument, but it is not the only prerequisite for deciding whom to select and admit to the priesthood. We have to remember that most of our psychological tests and other instruments were largely developed in Anglo and European contexts. It is important to keep this in mind when we are evaluating and interpreting the findings we get from these measures. For example, if you apply the standard U.S. psychological test to Hispanic candidates and base your admissions decisions only on that, it may not work too well!

What is important is to remember that everything we do in the seminary must be based on a sound Christian anthropology. The Vatican’s Congregation for Education reminds us that the psychology we use must always be “inspired by an anthropology that openly shares the Christian vision about the human person, sexuality, as well as vocation to the priesthood and to celibacy.”⁵

Used properly, good Christian psychology can greatly help us in the human formation of our future priests. It can help us promote men who love the truth; who are loyal, compassionate and respectful; who have a sense of justice, generosity and a readiness to serve. Christian psychology helps form men of human maturity whose sexuality is integrated into their whole personality, men with what Pope Benedict describes as “the right balance of heart and mind, reason and feeling, body and soul.”⁶ This human formation is important⁷ because the priest’s humanity is what will make his ministry attractive and credible in the eyes of others. Blessed John Paul II put it beautifully: he said the priest’s human personality should be “a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ, the redeemer of humanity.”⁸

Those are some of my thoughts on psychology and cultural integration in priestly formation. I want to turn now to talk about the wider cultural context of our formation efforts.

Culture is crucial to the new evangelization. I do not think we spend enough time thinking about it. We talk a lot about *multiculturalism*, and that is an important reality, as I just pointed out. But we should also be talking about *counterculturalism* and what our Holy Father has called *interculturalism*.⁹

This is not the place for me to offer a theory of culture or a critique of American culture; however, we

Culture influences how people think and what they think about.

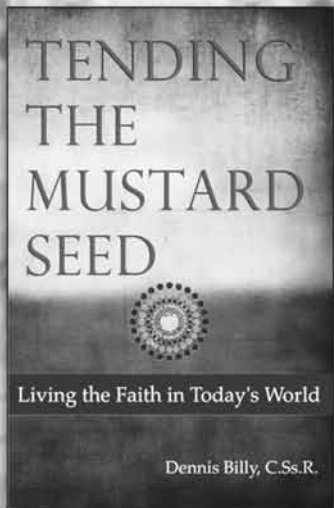
need to understand two things for our formation and evangelization. First, culture matters—a lot. Culture influences how people think and what they think about. Culture shapes people’s assumptions about human nature, and what they can hope for and what they should aspire to. Second, we need to understand that the new evangelization is the evangelization of culture. The church’s mission has always been to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19–20). That means transforming every culture so that those cultures serve the human person in his search for the living God and for salvation.

The first missionaries to America were serious students of the indigenous cultures they found here. I am thinking of pioneering priests like Blessed Junípero Serra and Father Eusebio Kino on the Pacific Coast and in the American Southwest. I am also thinking about Bishop Frederic Baraga in the Midwest. On May 10, 2012, our Holy Father declared him a venerable. Venerable Baraga was an amazing missionary priest. He wrote catechisms and prayer books in the Ottawa and Chipewewa languages.

These early missionaries studied the native cultures in order to transform them, in order to lead people to the encounter with Jesus Christ through and within these cultures.

These early missionaries studied the native cultures in order to transform them, in order to lead people to the encounter with Jesus Christ through and within these cultures. We have to be thinking the same way. We need to prepare priests who can counteract our American culture by their preaching, by their pastoral

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care and by their style of life. We need to form priests who can purify and sanctify our culture with the values and vision of the Gospel.

We all know that there are many negative tendencies in American culture today: secularism and moral relativism; a highly sexualized and materialistic outlook; radical individualism; family breakdown; crises in marriage and fatherhood and personal commitment; and religious indifference and the "eclipse of God." We are confronted with a culture in which more and more people are living as if God does not exist or as if he does not matter. It is a culture in which even good people seem to be creating gods in their own image, based on their own desires to feel good about themselves.

I think we all need to be better students of American culture, to understand our culture's worldview. We need to understand this culture's values and assumptions. We need to understand the impact this culture is having on our Catholic identity, on our people's faith and their ability to know and believe in Jesus. We need to understand our culture in order to convert it, in order to lead men and women toward the truth.

Everything we do in our efforts to promote vocations and to form priests should have this goal: to create faithful and credible witnesses to the reality of Jesus Christ and to the power of this Gospel to change lives and save souls.

I want to leave you with one last consideration. The final point I want to make is this: the world will be converted not by words and programs but by witnesses. Everything we do in our efforts to promote vocations and to form priests should have this goal: to create faithful and credible witnesses to the reality of Jesus Christ and to the power of this Gospel to change lives and save souls. That is why the most important part of a priest's formation will always be his personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

We need to do everything we can to promote our

seminarians' growth in intimacy with God: through *lectio divina*, the prayerful reading of the sacred Scriptures; through adoration of the blessed Eucharist; and above all, through their constant conversation with God in prayer.

Blessed Pope John XXIII once told a gathering of seminarians and their teachers:

In view of the mission with which you will be entrusted for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, this is the purpose of your education: forming the mind, sanctifying the will. The world awaits saints: this above all. Before cultured, eloquent, up-to-date priests, there is a need of holy priests who sanctify.¹⁰

That is the whole point. That is the purpose of everything we do in our vocation and formation efforts. This above all: to make saints.

We are here to accompany men on their journey to the priesthood; to work with the grace of God to form their souls so that they are holy priests who thirst to make others holy through the holiness of their own lives. We are here to make true men of God in whom the men and women of our time can see Jesus Christ.

I started out by saying that the *Cristeros* priests were the kind of holy men of God that we should be trying to form in our seminaries, so let me conclude my remarks by invoking one of them, Blessed Miguel Pro.

During the persecutions, when priests were being shot on sight, Blessed Miguel took his ministry underground. Sometimes, he would dress like a mechanic and other times like a dashing playboy. He would ride around Mexico City on his brother's bike, hearing confessions and secretly celebrating Mass in people's homes. He gave alms to the poor. He encouraged people to live their faith in the face of an atheist culture.

Growing up, we had prayer cards made from a grainy photograph of Blessed Miguel's martyrdom. The authorities thought it would frighten other priests if they photographed his execution. They expected him to crumble and to beg for his life. Instead, Blessed Miguel stood before the firing squad without a blindfold, his arms stretched wide like Jesus on the cross, and he cried out his last words: "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" (Long live Christ the King!)

These are the kinds of future priests we want: men who preach the Gospel with their lives; who live the mystery they celebrate at the altar; who make themselves a total gift for the love of God and the love of souls;

men who present their bodies as a holy and living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1).

This is the spirituality that you and I are called to foster and to promote in our seminaries. Thank you for your service to our Lord. I entrust us all to the maternal care and guidance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of priests and the mother of the new evangelization.



Archbishop José H. Gomez, S.T.D., is the fifth archbishop of Los Angeles. He previously served as Archbishop of San Antonio (2004-2010).

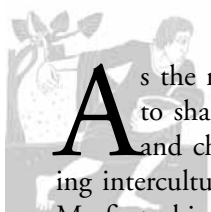
Endnotes

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Perspectives on Vocation and Formation: The Joys and Challenges

Very Rev. Trung Nguyen, J.C.L.

This article is drawn from a talk given at the 2nd Biennial Joint Conference in Conshohocken, PA on Intercultural Competency: Multi-Cultural Assessment, Treatment and Understanding these Dynamics in Formation Today.



As the rector of St. Mary's Seminary, I am happy to share my experiences with you on the joys and challenges of formation, especially the growing intercultural aspects of vocations and formation. My first objective is to describe the church's view of the role of psychology and cultural competency as it relates to formation. Secondly, I will describe the former and current involvement of psychologists in seminary formation in light of the current Vatican statement. Thirdly, I will describe the current formation of candidates to the priesthood and religious life, taking into account a new proposed model of intercultural competency.

St. Mary's Seminary

Before I describe the joys and challenges of formation, I would like to say a few words about St. Mary's Seminary because this article is based on my personal experience as rector and formation director. Prior to 1986, three seminaries in Texas provided undergraduate and graduate studies in philosophy and theology: Assumption in San Antonio, Holy Trinity in Dallas, and St. Mary's in Houston. In 1986, an agreement was reached between the Diocese of Dallas and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston whereby St. Mary's Seminary became the theologate and Holy Trinity became the undergraduate program in conjunction with the University of Dallas.

On November 4, 2011, St. Mary's Seminary celebrated its 110th anniversary. The Seminary was originally located and founded in Laporte, Texas, following the "great hurricane of 1901," and moved in

Bishops rely on their vocation directors to screen candidates for admission and to assist seminarians throughout their formation. This, in itself, brings about challenges because many vocation directors are young and inexperienced.

1954 to its current site in Houston. Consequently, the Seminary established a relationship with the University of St. Thomas, launching St. Mary's Seminary Graduate School of Theology. This unique relationship offers many strengths, but at the same time, it creates weaknesses and challenges.

In 2012 the Holy Father established a Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter and appointed Msgr. Jeffrey N. Steenson as the first Ordinary. The hub for the Ordinariate is St. Mary's Seminary. Msgr. Steenson was a key player in the establishment of a formation program for Anglican priests applying for the Catholic priesthood at the Seminary in Houston. Consequently, St. Mary's developed a nine-month program of priestly formation for Anglican clergy. In relation to the accul-

turation aspect, imagine the difficulty in transitioning from the role of Anglican priest to Roman Catholic priest.

Formation

St. Mary's Seminary is recognized as one of the best formation programs in the country and we take great satisfaction in having a diverse student body and faculty. Our seminarian population consists of 10 percent Asian, 10 percent African, 12 percent Hispanic and 68 percent identified as American. However, a closer look at the statistics reveals differing numbers if one considers the Vietnamese-American and Hispanic-American populace, which is approximately 40 percent.

Our student body originates from Colombia, the Congo, El Salvador, Honduras, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Vietnam and Puerto Rico. We have 83 seminarians from 12 different dioceses, coming predominantly from Texas dioceses, but also from New Mexico and South Carolina. This number does not include the ten Redemptorist seminarians from Vietnam who only participate in intellectual formation at the Seminary. The median age of our seminarians is 24, and the 2012 graduating class included 16 seminarians—four from Africa, ten Caucasians, one Vietnamese and one from Mexico.

The formation faculty at St. Mary's Seminary is the most diverse in the United States, including a Vietnamese rector; a Canadian director of spiritual formation with Italian ancestry who has completed five years of formation in the Diplomatic Corps and has extensive intercultural experience; two Hispanic spiritual directors; and four formation advisors consisting of one Hispanic, one Filipino, one African-American, and one Euro-American. The median age is 58.

Given the diversity at St. Mary's Seminary, the cultural aspect of formation is tremendously important to us, so much so that the faculty considers it the fifth pillar of our formation program. The faculty meets weekly to discuss program updates to the four pillars; however, I am reminded of the relevance of the fifth pillar (the cultural aspect) in relation to special events for our international students.

Joys and Challenges of Formation

The culmination of our academic year is always a joyful time for our formation faculty. We consider it such a blessing to celebrate the gifts and talents of our seminarians who have been through many years of formation and who are now ready to be ordained to the

The absence of an experienced faculty interferes with the quality of formation and with the ability to evaluate and mentor candidates, especially international candidates.

priesthood. Our alumni maintain contact with us and it is always rewarding to hear about their growth and progression in ministry. It is particularly gratifying to hear from a foreign-born alumnus who is successful in his parish ministry, considering his past formation struggles. We are not surprised by these success stories and they give us tremendous affirmation and hope for our programs at St. Mary's Seminary. However, we must never overlook the challenges in formation, especially for our international students.

- A particular concern among bishops is how to address issues that evolve in connection with the rise of Hispanic ministry, especially the quality of the screening process for applicants. Bishops are compelled to accept foreign students to meet the demands of ministry, and seminaries are expected to acquiesce. The quality of candidates is sometimes at risk; at times, we are obliged to fast-track candidates through formation. Is it possible for seminaries to avoid this pressure? Yes, through collaboration and with unambiguous communication with the dioceses we serve.
- Bishops rely on their vocation directors to screen candidates for admission and to assist seminarians throughout their formation. This, in itself, brings about challenges because many vocation directors are young and inexperienced. In addition, many vocation directors are fulltime pastors while also functioning in the role of vocation director, so they rely upon the seminaries to screen their candidates. This places an additional burden on seminaries and their formation faculty.
- Some dioceses provide training for vocation directors, as well as boards or committees to assist them in the candidate interview process; however, the majority of dioceses do not due to lack of personnel

and finances. Some dioceses have formation houses, giving vocation directors an opportunity to closely observe and evaluate seminarians, particularly the international candidates. This is a valuable resource for both the vocation director and the seminarian, but very few dioceses are able to provide this service.

- As rector, I find the greatest challenge is to retain a fully trained and stable faculty. During my first year as rector, four faculty members left the seminary. That was a challenging year for me, and my energy was entirely focused on finding highly qualified faculty members. The absence of an experienced faculty interferes with the quality of formation and with the ability to evaluate and mentor candidates, especially international candidates.
- Ongoing training for faculty is practically nonexistent, but providing training and in-service at St. Mary's Seminary is a major objective I will strive to accomplish during my tenure as rector. During a recent faculty in-service, we examined Sr. Kathleen Bryant's article "Discernment and Formation Issues Regarding Seminarians Born in Nigeria Preparing to Serve in the U.S."¹ Articles like this one are invaluable in fostering understanding of formation issues related to international students. It is extremely important to provide resources for the faculty in order to facilitate good formation practices.
- As mentioned previously, seminaries are sometimes pressured to fast-track the ordination of international candidates in order to satisfy the need for diocesan priests. I am often cautious about complying with such requests because of the time needed for international candidates to become assimilated into western society and familiar with the American church. Due to immigration requirements, some candidates enter the country and go directly to the seminary without getting acquainted with their dioceses. Most of these candidates speak very little English and have little or no experience with American culture. Cultural differences make it difficult for them to comprehend our evaluation and formation process. Some international candidates believe that only problem students are evaluated: such a disparity in their thinking inhibits their growth in formation as seminarians.
- Cultural differences in educational practices and the quality of previous educational programs clearly impact how international seminarians encounter academic programs in U.S. seminaries. In order to accommodate some international seminarians, pro-

grams are adjusted to meet the scholastic needs of these students. Our faculty and administration have had to reevaluate our academic program. Some of our best and brightest students are foreign-born, but the majority of students struggle culturally with academics. Moreover, academic dishonesty and plagiarism are ongoing challenges for international students. Many have poor writing skills and they must be taught how to write and properly reference resources. We provide workshops and tutors to assist students, and our faculty is encouraged to be tolerant and make their assessments on a case-by-case basis.

- Language barriers present another challenge. During a seminarian's pastoral year and diaconate assignment, pastors and parish staff are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback to the seminary on the student's progression in ministry. In this communication, we find that pastoral supervisors tend to overlook or minimize some cultural aspects. For example, in reporting that international students do not take enough initiative in their pastoral assignments, we have come to realize that the international students perceive "initiative" quite differently from their American counterparts. It is not that they lack enthusiasm, but that they rely upon the pastor, the authority figure, to provide guidance and direction in all matters. Here in the United States, pastors do not have the luxury of time to "micro-manage" seminarians. They expect seminarians to be resourceful without being supervised. Many times, however, pastoral administrators tend to disregard how these cultural differences affect international students and assume inappropriate intentions on the part of the seminarian. Open dialogue between pastors and the seminary is essential to ensure clarity of expectations, particularly as they relate to international students.
- St. Mary's Seminary takes satisfaction in providing one of the best accent modification programs in the United States. Through open dialogue with bishops, we learned that parishioners often complain about the communication skills of international priests. We initiated a program through the University of Houston for accent modification in formation. However, two years into the program, we were dissatisfied with our progress. This past year, we improved the program by utilizing 14 trained volunteers under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Woolfolk. (Dr. Woolfolk developed a master's level pro-

gram in speech for Our Lady of the Lake University and authored numerous publications on Phonetics of American English.) We have subsequently seen a dramatic improvement in our American Phonetics Program. The program focuses on three categories of accent modification—Asian, African and Hispanic—because each group has different needs. The program has been very successful, so much so that the Archdiocese of Houston has appealed to us to assist with their international priests program. We expect to hire a full-time phonetics staff member to assist both the Seminary and the Archdiocesan program. At the end of this last academic year, we invited sponsors, benefactors and volunteers to our first annual American Phonetics Reading to hear firsthand the improvements and progress of our candidates as they read from the Scriptures.

- Boundary issues are also relevant to this topic. It is imperative that the formation faculty clearly articulates information relating to particular boundary issues for all seminarians, but especially for international seminarians, whose mindset or comprehension of particular issues can be distorted as they relate to American culture. Two years ago, our faculty addressed such a case. One of our international students was dismissed during his pastoral year for committing a boundaries violation. It was discovered that he had sent inappropriate text messages to a 15-year-old girl. During formation, this man had participated in workshops on celibacy and boundary issues. In addition, he was required to attend diocesan workshops on child endangerment intended to raise the level of awareness and consciousness of boundaries placed upon him. Despite this training, boundary violations did occur, and continue to occur because, on the subconscious level, the international seminarian does not understand the heightened sensitivity of these issues in the current American cultural climate.
- A critical question that seminary formators and faculty must ask themselves when conducting evaluations of international candidates is: “Is it a cultural issue or a personal issue?” It can be challenging to differentiate, and sometimes it can be both cultural and personal. In this situation, expert feedback can make a dramatic difference in clarifying perceptions.
- Spanish-language Ministry is another great challenge to all seminarians because of the increase in the Spanish-speaking Catholic population. St. Mary’s Seminary does provide a fulltime Spanish teacher

It is imperative that the formation faculty clearly articulate information relating to particular boundary issues for all seminarians, but especially for international seminarians, whose mindset or comprehension of particular issues can be distorted as they relate to American culture.

for our students. We find that international students can steadily improve in Spanish, but they rarely master the Spanish language well enough to minister effectively in Spanish. Seminarians are required to learn a second language well, but some international students struggle a great deal with English; therefore, we do not expect them to be proficient in Spanish.

The Role of Psychological Evaluations

Psychological evaluations play a vital role in screening candidates for formation to the priesthood. The *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)* developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the guidelines found in the document *Psychological Assessment: The Testing and Screening of Candidates for Admission to the Priesthood in the U.S. Catholic Church*, published by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), illustrate that the church has a positive view of psychology in formation. However, it is a sensitive topic and the church is very cognizant of the legalities of doctor-patient confidentiality.

As a young seminarian from Vietnam, I was not expected to undergo a psychological assessment for admission into the seminary in the United States. In foreign cultures, seminarians are asked to seek counseling only if they are experiencing problems, so psychological testing has a negative connotation for them. However, now that I am a rector, I value this resource. There is an obvious disparity between American-born seminar-

ians and international candidates as to how they view psychological assessment. The latter is stigmatized by the feeling of being socially unacceptable if asked to be assessed, and it takes considerable persuasion for them to overcome this misconception and appreciate counseling as a positive tool for growth. Americans, on the other hand, particularly the younger generation, value psychology and counseling; some even seek out counseling without faculty motivation.

How do we utilize psychology in seminary formation? Many years ago, counseling was infrequently used in assessment for formation. Currently, psychological assessments are significant in determining suitability of candidates for formation; so much so that we recently partnered with the Shalom Center in Houston to assist our faculty and seminarians in the formation of men. A local Catholic psychologist volunteered to assist our admissions board when interviewing candidates for the theologate. She also serves as a consultant to our human formation team, and her involvement has been beneficial to the seminary.

We recognize the value of psychological assessment as a tool for formation. However, when we reflect on our program's weaknesses, we are cognizant that an inadequate formation program is a misuse of time, effort and financial resources; we therefore strive for excellence, particularly in the area of communication, among those involved in formation. I was delighted to learn that two-thirds of rectors who responded to a survey reported that their seminaries have a written policy regarding psychological counseling during priestly formation.² At St. Mary's Seminary, we are presently developing a written policy regarding the utilization of the results of psychological testing and assessment during the period of formation. The guidelines will benefit the seminarians, the formation team, the psychologist and the vocation directors. They will also address the quality of communication during the assessment, the referral and the follow-up. The written policy will specify those who should have access to the assessment results and state whether the results should be utilized in both an internal and external forum.

Our faculty is receptive to, and has a very positive view of, counseling and relies on both internal and external referrals to assist seminarians addressing areas of dysfunction. Psychological counseling is not an exact science and is only beneficial when participants are open to seek healing. What becomes a point of conflict, at times, is the financial concern of dioceses. Counseling can be a costly process; however, what may seem ex-

treme now could eventually cost even more in the long-term.

Our number of seminarians continues to grow each year. Following 81 hour-long evaluations throughout the spring semester of this past year, we were immediately confronted with 29 new candidate interviews for the coming year, most of whom were foreign-born. At this time of year, the stress level for faculty is somewhat pressing and can sometimes affect the quality of candidate interviews. At St. Mary's Seminary, the rector alone has access to the psychological reports, and making accurate assessments can be a daunting task. If an interview raises "red flags," the rector reevaluates the psychological reports and tests vigilantly. Having a full-time psychologist on staff to assist the rector in the review process of psychological reports and to observe candidates during the interviews could prove to be worthwhile and cost-effective.

International candidates create additional demands for the admissions team. The scrutiny of the candidates depends upon their level of formation, and they are more likely to succeed if they enter formation early, such as in First Theology. Accomplishing five years of formation is hopeful assurance that a seminarian will be well-prepared for ordained ministry. Fast-tracking seminarians through formation is frustrating for seminaries, but the urgent need for priests is a shared concern among bishops. When fast-tracked, the seminarian has limited time to acculturate into American society and the church, emphasizing the significance of having informative psychological testing and evaluation throughout the formation process.

Evaluating our formation system and programs is an ongoing exercise. There is no perfect system, so we celebrate our successes, and at the same time, we consider our limitations. Providing a sustained and well-trained faculty from year to year is a constant challenge. When the faculty turnover rate is high, it affects the quality of the program. The quality of mentorship and evaluation then becomes questionable because of the lack of continuity resulting when seminarians advance from one formator to another. Until a perfect system is achieved, providing a full-time psychologist to monitor the seminarian's growth in human formation is essential.

Our pastoral year program is another strong point of St. Mary's Seminary, and it is a requirement for which we rarely make exceptions. I am proud to say that we have one of the best supervised pastoral year programs in the country. Before the seminarians leave the seminary for their pastoral year assignments, they

are required to take a pastoral counseling course taught by a trained psychologist, in addition to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and pastoral formation in the second year of theology. With this intensive preparation, seminarians are better prepared to undertake the work involved in parish ministry. Our three-person team visits the pastoral year men five times during their parish assignments to assess and mentor their progress in the experiences they encounter in ministry.³ The team includes the director of pastoral formation, the formation liaison and a trained counselor. In addition to the three-person team, seminarians are evaluated by the pastor or supervisor, the parish advisory team and the parish staff. These reports are sent to the director of the pastoral year, who composes the final evaluation report for the formation faculty.

The pastoral year is normally a seminarian's most enjoyable experience in formation. They are happy to take a break from academics and delve into the daily routine of parish life. On their return to the seminary, it puts the remaining years of formation into perspective. I cannot stress enough how important the pastoral year is, and I am surprised that many seminaries forego this requirement in their formation programs. We believe that the pastoral year is essential for international students to be given an opportunity to work with a pastor and relate to parishioners and parish staff members, particularly women. The role of women in society, of course, depends on the culture of the seminarian's native country, and because this issue is so important in American culture, it must be addressed during formation. The significance of the pastoral year is undeniable, because it will usually determine whether or not a candidate is suitable for the priesthood.

Other issues worth mentioning, and which normally surface following an international student's diaconate ordination, are (1) an entitlement mentality and (2) a false sense of security, which may lead to certain behavioral concerns. If a seminarian "submarines" during formation, these issues will surface if he is overconfident that "all is right in his world" because of his diaconate ordination. Two of our graduating seminarians will not be ordained to the priesthood this year because of observable issues such as these that arose during their diaconate year.

Conclusion

As I prepared this article, it was inescapable for me to examine my personal experiences with psychology and cultural competency as they relate to formation.

I can only say that challenges abound at the seminary, but they do not diminish our successes. Every ordination is a success story, and we celebrate the obstacles our seminarians rise above to reach their long-awaited goal. The faculty must exemplify patience, understanding and tolerance during all levels of formation, particularly in relation to international candidates. I am convinced that a trained and qualified psychologist would enhance human formation by supporting the faculty in their delicate deliberations, especially as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of today's modern candidates and the increased numbers of international students.⁴ As we go forward, I continue to believe that the Lord's words to St. Paul are still true today: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).



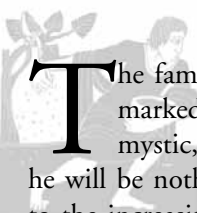
Fr. Trung V. Nguyen, J.C.L., currently serves as Rector of St. Mary's Seminary of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Prior to his appointment as rector in 2010, he served as Formation Director.

Endnotes

1. Kathleen Bryant, "Discernment and Formation Issues Regarding Seminarians Born in Nigeria Preparing to Serve in the United States," *Seminary Journal* 14, no. 3 (2008), 53–68.
2. NCEA Seminary Department and CARA, *Psychological Assessment: The Testing and Screening of Candidates for Admission to the Priesthood in the U.S. Catholic Church*, (Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 2010), 33.
3. Because seminarians work in different parishes from many dioceses, the pastoral year team travels and meets with the seminarians as well as their supervisors (or pastors) at different centers (usually five seminarians per center), throughout the pastoral year to assess and process many areas of growth and challenges, such as: love, boundaries, loneliness and rectory living. The team meets and processes with the seminarians as a group in the morning and separately with their pastors in afternoon sessions.
4. In an effort to improve formation of the seminarians entrusted to St. Mary's Seminary, in 2012 the Rector and formation faculty submitted a proposal to the Board of Advisors to add a full-time psychologist to its staff. The proposal emphasized the rewards of providing a staff psychologist position, which would tremendously enhance the quality of human formation and help the faculty to better articulate the issues that seminarians encounter.

Model for Intercultural Competencies in Formation and Ministry: Awareness, Knowledge, Skills and Sensitivity

Fernando A. Ortiz, Ph.D., ABPP and Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.



The famous Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, remarked “the Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will be nothing.” One could apply this prediction to the increasingly diverse church in the United States, highlighting the importance of intercultural competencies among the clergy and noting that “the priest of tomorrow will be interculturally competent, one who has authentically and fully experienced culture, or he will be nothing.” Intercultural competency is understood as the capacity to notice, respect, appreciate and celebrate individual differences. These competencies were traditionally considered a one-sided reality that resided primarily within the individual. However, this individualistic focus has recently been challenged to incorporate a more holistic conceptualization of competencies including the environment, organizations, institutions and macro-systems that directly or indirectly influence priestly and religious formation. The seminary is inherently a richly complex environment where diversity is found in symbol, ritual and community. The development of these competencies ultimately builds on this organizational and communal infrastructure.

Holistic Interculturality in Formation

Definitions of culture abound. In this article, we understand culture broadly, not narrowly confined to ethnicity and race. In his address to the presidents of the Asian bishops’ conferences, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger defined culture:

Intercultural competency is understood as the capacity to notice, respect, appreciate and celebrate individual differences.

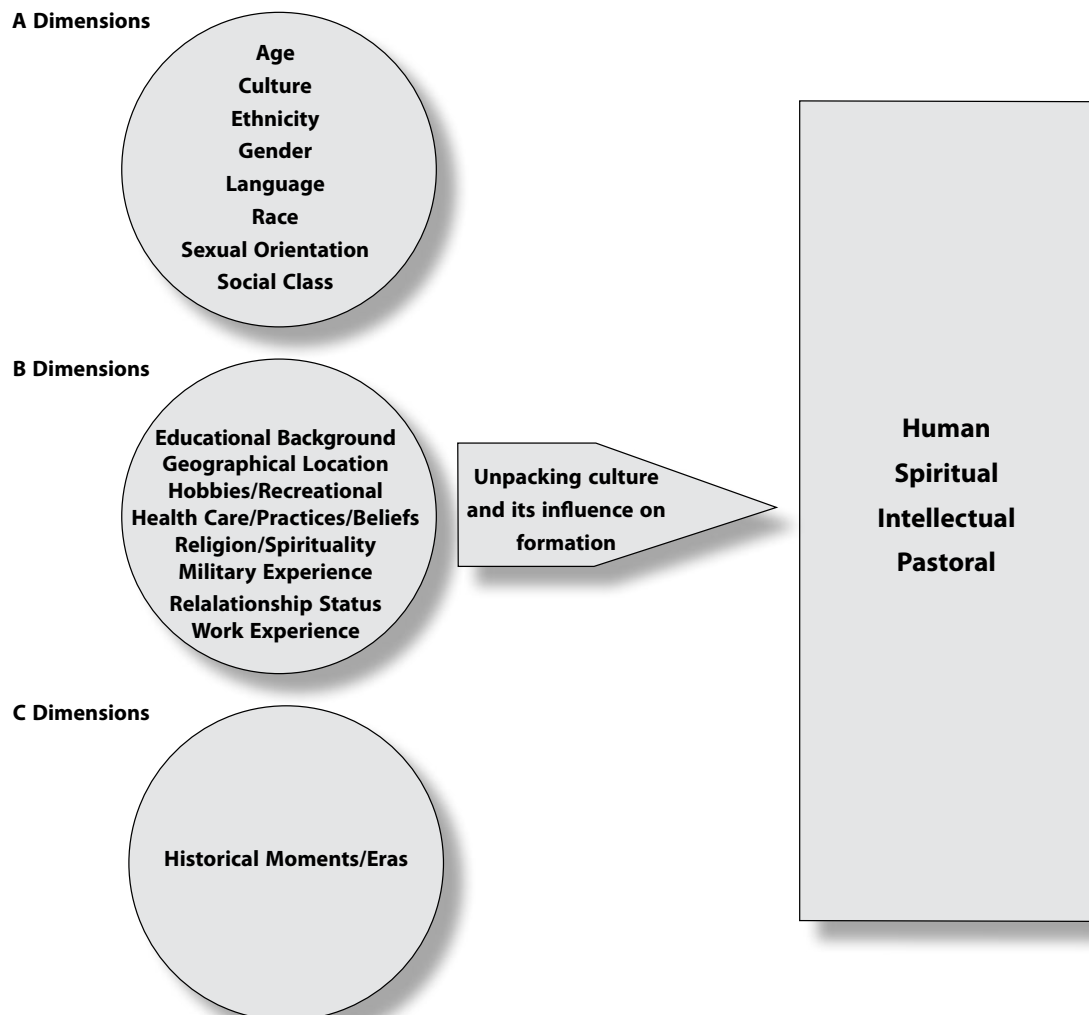
[The] historically developed common form of expression of the insights and values which characterize the life of a community...culture has to do with knowledge and values. It is an attempt to understand the world and man’s existence in the world, but it is not an attempt of a purely theoretical kind. Rather it is ordered to the fundamental interests of human existence. Understanding should show us how to be human, how man is to take proper place in this world and respond to it in order to realize himself in his search for success and happiness. Moreover, in the great cultures this question is not posed individually, as if each individual could think up a model for coming to terms with the world and life.¹

A holistic understanding of culture links the meaning and expression of culture to life in the community,

and this expression is never purely individualistic. Furthermore, a holistic understanding of someone's culture considers all the dimensions of a person's identity as intrinsically related to values and meanings. We include here a framework that can be used by formators and evaluators to more holistically understand the complexity and beauty of culture. Comprised of three dimensions, this model was initially developed by Arredondo et al.² In the context of formation, dimension "A" would include characteristics a candidate is born with or born into, including age, gender, culture, ethnicity, language, physical disability, sexual orientation and social class. Dimension "B" consists of factors such as educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, religion, work experience, citizenship status, military experience and hobbies or recreational interests. Dimension "C" consists of historical moments and eras; major historical, political, sociocultural and economic contexts; or events affecting a candidate's vocational development. Figure 1 illustrates all of these dimensions and their relationship to formation.

It is important to point out that, in advancing the development and maintenance of intercultural competencies that holistically respect these individual differences, one does not engage in cultural and moral relativism. A mistaken notion of cultural diversity attempts to tolerate and naively embrace the ills of secularism and moral relativism. Some have expressed distrust of this type of multiculturalism, particularly when it is used as an ideology to embrace a centerless and incoherent variety of perspectives that are ultimately incompatible with a sound Catholic anthropology. This is especially important when one examines the interface between seminary and religious formation and curricula, which is strongly rooted in Western Christianity:

In general critics of multiculturalism argue that it will cause much greater problems than those it is intended to address. Some even depict it as a threat to freedom, progress, reason and science. In their view, the very notion of multiculturalism denies the standards of objectivity and



truth which are the foundation of Western civilization and that widespread acceptance would therefore lead to barbarism. One author who does not endorse multiculturalism, speaks of objectivity as the search for the widest possible intersubjective agreement. It is true that at one extreme, the assumption that all cultural values are equal could lead to an empty and valueless moral and cultural relativism. Multiculturalism recognizes that all should enjoy the presumption that their traditional culture has value but it does not assume that all cultures are of equal value.³

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If one takes to heart the exhortation of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, “to find God in all things”—that is, in every person, every place and every thing—it makes sense that one can find God in all cultures. However, cultures are also wounded and limited. One therefore engages cultures with respect and a healthy hermeneutic of suspicion, without assuming that all components and dimensions of culture are absolutely healthy or have equal value. The Gospel can transform these elements of culture. In dialoguing with cultures, one adopts an attitude informed by a theology of listening and encounter. In 1995, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger offered helpful perspectives on this dialogue:

But what does the word “dialogue” really mean? After all, dialogue does not take place simply because people are talking. More talk is the deterioration of dialogue that occurs when there has been a failure to reach it. Dialogue first

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comes into being where there is not only speech but also listening. Moreover, such listening must be the medium of an encounter; this encounter is the condition of an inner contact which leads to mutual comprehension. Reciprocal understanding, finally, deepens and transforms the being of the interlocutors. Having enumerated the single elements of this transaction, let us now attempt to grasp the significance of each in turn.

The first element is listening. What takes place here is an event of opening, of becoming open to the reality of other things and people. We need to realize what an art it is to be able to listen attentively. Listening is not a skill, like working a machine, but a capacity simply to be which puts in requisition the whole person. To listen means to know and to acknowledge another and to allow him to step into the realm of one’s own “I.” It is readiness to assimilate his word, and therein his being, into one’s own reality as well as to assimilate oneself to him in corresponding fashion. Thus, after the act of listening, I am another man, my own being is enriched and deepened because it is united with the being of the other and, through it, with the being of the world.

All of this presupposes that what my dialogue partner has to say does not concern merely some object falling within the range of empirical knowledge and of technical skills, that is, of external know-how. When we speak of dialogue in the proper sense, what we mean is an utterance wherein something of being itself, indeed, the

person himself, becomes speech. This does not merely add to the mass of items of knowledge acquired and of performances registered but touches the very being of men as such, purifying and intensifying his potency to be who he is.⁴

Intercultural competencies then include (a) awareness of the other, (b) knowledge about the uniqueness of the other, (c) sensitivity to the dignity of the other, and ultimately, (d) a set of skills to enter into dialogue and listening with otherness.

Examples of Development of Intercultural Competencies

Those in formation audit their own biases, prejudices and insensitivities while developing awareness of themselves as cultural beings. They critically examine the existence of racism and xenophobia in ecclesial institutions, particularly prejudices against foreigners and immigrants, and advocate for a more interculturally respectful church and society. This is consistent with the gospel mandate to go to all nations and cultures while preaching the good news. Instead of seeing others by focusing on differences (such as, He is from India), men and women in formation learn to focus primarily on the identity of the person as a son or daughter of God. This requires the ability to step out of one's own worldviews and accept every person for who they are in God's creation. This is essential in fostering a true sense of community in formation. When building intercultural competencies, one is especially understanding of those men and women in formation who may be apprehensive about engaging cultures because they fear a loss of identity or faith. It may be challenging for some to transcend or move out of this apprehension, cultural inertia and personal comfort zone. Motivated by Christian charity, formators can gently and gradually engage these men and women, encourage them to be reflective of culture and invite them to enter into cultural dialogue.

We would like to reiterate that the development of intercultural competencies is both an individual as well as an organizational endeavor. Moreover, this endeavor should not be viewed as a burden or a problem to be resolved, but rather as a gift and a blessing. The manner in which professors, for example, approach the study of Scripture, Theology, Anthropology or Ecclesiology could include references to cultural diversity. Critical questions posed within the academic pillar of intellectual formation can be framed in a reflective and systematic manner

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while also referencing unity, otherness and diversity. In discussing the nature of the trinity, for example, a class discussion can focus on the concepts of unity and diversity from a theological perspective and the implications of this Trinitarian analogy for human relations.

Similarly, intellectual formation could challenge ethnocentric attitudes and raise cultural awareness as men and women critically converse about concepts such as American exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny and ethnocentric individualism. Similarly, students can engage expressions of xenophobia outside the United States that may include nationalistic tribalisms and ethnocentric notions imbued with hateful anti-American attitudes. The seminary culture, with its rich repertoire of theological and philosophical skills, can reflectively encourage those in formation to dialogue on these important cultural realities. These conversations should take place in a context of respect, inclusion and acceptance. As part of an ongoing and holistic faculty development on intercultural competencies, it may be necessary to invite experts on different cultures for in-services and educational experiences with faculty and formators.

Given the profound cultural differences among men and women in formation, some of these dialogues may be challenging. Because cultural groups are often organized and structured around power or class, it is important that formators be mindful of international candidates, their relative standing and their cultural experience regarding power, class and the stratification of privilege. International candidates will have most likely internalized some of these sociological realities into their

worldview. Students' own definitions of social and economic class may express themselves in their relationships and interactions while in formation. International candidates, for example, who come from relatively privileged backgrounds, will socialize differently than those from relatively impoverished socioeconomic backgrounds. Formation programs strive to facilitate healthy intercultural communication among these diverse populations so that those individuals from diverse backgrounds can learn how to interact appropriately and effectively with people from any sociodemographic strata. International candidates are often being formed to serve the needs of middle-class American parishes and churches, and not necessarily the church of the poor. They need to develop the competencies necessary for these pastoral assignments and seminary formation programs can play a major role in their development.

Formators also need to pay attention when men and women in formation react negatively against diversity. One may notice that a seminarian is consistently aggressive, resistant and reactive in the face of any conversation about cultural diversity. Instinctive reactions to difference such as aggression, distrust or avoidance may be serious symptoms suggesting prejudice. A different example may be the tendency to self-segregate and form exclusive relationships with those who are ethnically and linguistically similar. The concern with self-segrega-

Formators ultimately foster a seminary culture that is helpful in supporting, challenging and forming men and women who are interculturally competent.

tion or separation among racial groups that occurs by choice in a formation context is that members of different racial groups can become isolated from, rather than in contact with, each other. Voluntary separation can be brought about because different racial or ethnic groups perceive each other as lacking common ground upon which to build friendships. In some extreme cases, unwritten rules may exist among ethnic minority seminarians that interaction with White seminarians, for example, might engender scorn or ostracism from other ethnic minority seminarians. In some instances, racial grouping is desirable so that members of specific groups celebrate, rehearse and relish their own culture. This would be understandable due to commonalities within racial groups. Formators need to discern what may be contributing to self-segregation and encourage positive

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interactions among all the ethnic groups. Excessive ethnic separation may be unhealthy for a truly inclusive seminary culture and may predict ethnocentric encapsulation in future pastoral assignments.

At a more fundamental level, the development of intercultural competencies presupposes an attribution of goodness and dignity to other individuals, especially to those who may be ethnically, racially, linguistically and culturally different. One develops a welcoming, warm and hospitable attitude. Psychologically, a cultural narcissism and entitlement that believes in the superiority of one's own cultural identity and status while denigrating the cultures of others is intrinsically incompatible with this intercultural attitude and competency. Because culture embodies differences, those in formation become comfortable with ambiguity and the capacity to be open and respectful to the perspectives of others. With this openness comes the opportunity to be immersed in other cultures, while being flexible and adaptable with one's identity.

Intercultural competency is not simply about learning how to get along with others; it is essentially about being Catholic. It is the fostering of an ongoing spirituality of Eucharistic consistency. The meaning of the Eucharist penetrates the mystery of culture; therefore, those in formation are called to cultivate Eucharistic consistency, ongoing conversation and conversion to develop intercultural knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and skills. It is in this Eucharistic context that they challenge their own cultural privileges and embrace the mystery of otherness. Communion or participation in the Eucharistic banquet while in formation authenticates intercultural encounters. Men and women are no longer Jews or Greeks, but one in Christ. Respectful and life-giving intercultural competencies are an extension of the significance of the Eucharist. It challenges men and women in formation to show consistency between liturgy and their cultural lives.

Psychological Considerations

The development of intercultural competencies is positively correlated with emotional intelligence and affective maturity. Formators need to pay particular attention to how international candidates adjust to culturally diverse settings. It is not uncommon to see international candidates suffer in silence while coping with acculturative stress. Because these candidates appear emotionally steady and serene on the surface, one may assume that they are emotionally fine; however, they may be feeling lost in the classroom setting. They may also be having

difficulty understanding seminary practices. Attentive formators can engage these students in small group conversations by using different learning strategies that encourage them to articulate their worries and fears. Classroom spaces need to create a sense of safety where these students can grow intellectually, emotionally and culturally. In some cultures, modesty and reserve is encouraged in classroom discussions: a safe classroom environment is conducive to meeting these students at their own level of cultural comfort. This is particularly critical during the first days of the semester so they can successfully adjust to the academic school year and to the formation program.

The development of intercultural competencies is also positively correlated with intellectual curiosity, cognitive flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity.

The development of intercultural competencies is also positively correlated with intellectual curiosity, cognitive flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity. In evaluating international candidates, psychologists assess the capacity for interpersonal relationship and the flexibility to relate to cultural differences with ease. In some instances, candidates may struggle with modifying their cultural patterns and values, for example, in their relationships with women or nonverbal communication. Cultural prescriptions and proscriptions around interpersonal space and touch should also be evaluated. These assessment findings will then need to be translated into formation recommendations. In the event that an international candidate rigidly holds onto cultural scripts that may be offensive to women, or to patterns of touching that are inappropriate in the United States, psychologists can provide formators with recommendations on how to address these cultural values and belief systems, emphasizing what is appropriate in the receiving culture. It takes flexibility and affective maturity for international candidates to acculturate their patterned ways of thinking, feeling and relating.

Evaluators are also mindful that international candidates may carry wounds from their culture. With candidates from countries torn by war, poverty and crime,

one must pay attention to the person's history, capacity to address these wounds in a healthy manner and ability to come eventually to a peaceful and therapeutic resolution. International candidates from profoundly impoverished backgrounds whose families are suffering may have limited freedom of discernment due to preoccupation with their family's plight. Moreover, in evaluating a candidate's vocational profile, it is important to assess their cultural background and to what extent cultural biases may have contributed to misguided assumptions about the priesthood. One may encounter cases where an overly domineering parent has exerted pressure and parental influence on a candidate's vocational aspiration. This circumstance is especially problematic in some candidates from traditional cultures where filial piety and deference to parental expectations and demands are particularly strong and deterministic of one's vocational self-concept. These candidates may seek to join the seminary because of fear and through obedience to parents—another factor that limits their freedom of discernment. Similar to this misguided motivation is a distorted image of the priesthood as one imbued with elevated status, power and self-importance, that is commonly found in deeply hierarchical cultures.

Conclusion

The objective of this article is to raise awareness about the intercultural reality in the church, how this can be lived more authentically and how it contributes towards building the Kingdom of God. The message of the Kingdom of God that the early Christians received from Jesus was an inclusive one that accommodates people of all races, languages, ages and economic and social statuses.⁵ Saint Paul reminds us that cultural differences no longer separate nor divide us. The clearest articulation of his theology of oneness and inclusivity is found in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Strengthening this new identity in Christ, this article calls for the development and maintenance of intercultural competencies. These competencies will allow us to truly see the dignity of the "other" created in the image and likeness of God. Intercultural competency includes awareness of our biases, misperceptions and prejudices. Coupled with self-knowledge and knowledge about the "other," we are able to more competently relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Once we achieve awareness and acquire intercultural knowledge, we may develop the necessary interpersonal *skills* to interact and

relate respectfully to the members of our communities. This process requires the cultivation of *sensitivity*. It is at both the individual and institutional level that we develop and maintain intercultural competencies in formation and ministry. Ultimately, intercultural competence (or interculturalization) is the set of competencies held by people from diverse cultures and religious worldviews, who mutually and respectfully demonstrate awareness, knowledge, skills and sensitivity with the intention of discovering the vision of the gospel, which was uniquely revealed by Jesus Christ within a particular cultural and historical context.



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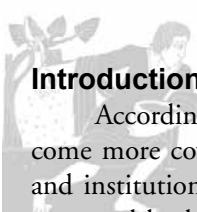
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Becoming Who We Are: Beyond Racism and Prejudice in Formation and Ministry

Fernando A. Ortiz, Ph.D., ABPP



Introduction

According to behavioral scientists, racism has become more covert and unconscious in both individuals and institutions. This insidious form of racism can be expressed both verbally and nonverbally, for example, in what psychologists call “racial microaggressions.” In this article, I present the case of a Latino, Mexican-born priest (“Jesús”) to illustrate how microaggressive themes can contain invalidating and possibly racist acts. I summarize research on this type of behavior and its psychological and emotional impact on the targets. To shed light on the development of intercultural competencies, I discuss the meaning and importance of developing these skills from the perspective of intercultural communication and the concept of catholicity found in the New Testament. In *Welcoming the Strangers Among Us*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated that the church as a whole needs to have a change of heart toward these “strangers” in our midst. While there are many challenges relating to language and intercultural barriers, this article offers some practical suggestions for more authentic and respectful intercultural encounters in formation and ministry.

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: The Case of Jesús

Jesús is a Mexican born priest in a Southwest diocese.¹ He was born in Mexico and attended high school in his native country. He was then admitted to the seminary in the United States, ordained and has had several pastoral assignments since his ordination. As a priest for 15 years, he has held several administrative positions, mostly as associate pastor. He was recently assigned to a parish in a rela-

This insidious form of racism can be expressed both verbally and nonverbally, for example, in what psychologists call “racial microaggressions.”

tively rural area with a predominantly Caucasian population and a Euro-American pastor. Jesús came to counseling after having lived with the pastor for one year. Jesús reported feeling sad most of the time, bored, alienated, stressed and demoralized. Clinically, I initially hypothesized that his depressive and stress symptoms may have a dispositional or personal cause. However, as I probed further it became apparent that situational factors may have been contributing to his dysphoric emotional state. Jesús had been assisting the pastor in their assignment to four neighboring parishes and he reported truly enjoying his priestly ministry. Nevertheless, Jesús reported several incidents with this pastor and other parishioners that had negatively affected him at an emotional level. He recounted some of these experiences and shared conversations he has had with those involved in these interethnic and intercultural incidents.

He noted that he had become increasingly bored and isolated at the parish. He stated that the pastor was always watching TV shows on hunting and fishing, activities and hobbies the priest avidly enjoys and does on his days off. Prior to this assignment, Jesús was at a predominantly Hispanic parish where he was well connected with the com-

munity and the pastor was Latino. There he had access to cable TV with a variety of Spanish programs, including telenovelas and soccer, two hobbies quite predominant among U.S. Latinos. At his current parish, Jesús noted that the pastor had explicitly told him that the current channels were the only ones allowed at the parish. During their leisure time, Jesús had to sit for hours, socializing with the priest and pretending he was interested in hunting and fishing. The pastor then invited Jesús to go hunting and fishing, something Jesús reluctantly agreed to.

Jesús noted that the pastor always called him after every Mass or pastoral activity to ask how things went. Jesús began to notice some level of distrust and constant supervision by the pastor. Because Jesús had some administrative experience at prior assignments, he volunteered to do payroll. One day, the pastor came into the office and incredulously asked, "You know how to do payroll?" He then proceeded to examine what Jesús had done, only to conclude with dismay that Jesús had actually done it correctly.

Jesús wanted to reach out to a few Latino families in a neighboring parish. However, on several occasions the pastor organized parish events at the local golf club where the majority of the Euro-American families could attend, but not the Latino families. Jesús reported feeling powerless. In a brief conversation with the pastor when Jesús brought up the need for a Spanish Mass for these families and suggested finding alternative venues for parish related events, the pastor reportedly remarked, "We are in the United States and it would be good for these families to learn English and assimilate with the other American parishioners." On one occasion, after resigning himself to the idea that Mass would not be celebrated in Spanish for the Latino families, Jesús brought an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and displayed it on the right side of the church, away from the altar area. He was surprised to find out on the following Sunday that the image had been removed. Although it was the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th, the chairperson of the parish liturgy committee remarked to Jesús that nobody in the English speaking parish community understands the "myth of Guadalupe, anyways, and that the Latinos should get over their superstitions." When Jesús went to the pastor to inquire about these actions, the pastor confronted Jesús with the affirmation that, "Why are they complaining about inclusion, they're already included, after all we're brothers and sisters in the Lord?" After these conversations, Jesús noticed that the pastor came to Mass on several occasions when Jesús was celebrating, and sat in the back pew of the church. Jesús then overheard the pastor asking a couple of elderly Euro-American parishioners, "Is Jesús' English understandable?" to which the parishioners re-

sponded, "Well, my hearing may not be that good now, but certainly, his English is very good." Most likely unconvinced by these responses, the pastor discreetly attended Mass again and asked Jesús about his seminary training in homiletics. More poignantly, he asked him, "Do you make a difference between a sermon and a homily in Spanish?" Jesús completed all of his seminary training in the United States and all of his teaching was actually imparted by Euro-American faculty with advanced degrees in philosophy and theology.

Perplexed by the experiences he was having at his current pastoral assignment, and with some hesitation, he decided to share his current struggles with his monthly priestly support group "Jesus Caritas." All of the members of this group were Euro-American. The first reaction from one of the members was, "Have you considered that you may be overreacting to this? We all know Father Jim. He's such a nice guy." Jesús felt frustrated, but contained his emotions while internally struggling with his dilemma and asking himself if the experiences at his parish were really racially motivated or just his own overreaction, as the members of the priestly support group seemed to imply.

Racial Microaggressions

What is Jesús experiencing? Most likely, Jesús is coping with what is known in the psychological and sociological literature as "racial microaggressions." These are defined as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group."²³ To differentiate this complex interethnic phenomena, Sue and colleagues distinguish between *microinsults* and *microinvalidations*.⁴ Microinsults include incidents that are perceived as offensive or insulting, whereas microinvalidations are incidents in which a person of color feels devalued, ignored or delegitimized. Their detailed taxonomy has identified at least nine racial microaggressions with specific themes and hidden offensive and devaluing messages that have a cumulative, detrimental psychological effect on people of color. These aggressions are experienced differently by the microaggressor and the target, with the perpetrator usually minimizing them and the victim feeling confused and in a catch-22 experience.

The themes, examples of the microaggression, and hidden messages include:

1. *Alien in Own Land*: For example, a person asking a U.S.-born Latino, "Where are you from?" with its message of "You are not American."
2. *Ascription of Intelligence*: For example, the remark "You are so articulate," with the deni-

grating message of “It is unusual for someone of your race to be so intelligent.”

3. *Color Blindness*: Such as, the comment by a white person, “There is only one race, the human race,” with the intention of denying the ethnic minority person’s individuality and specific ethnic experiences.
4. *Criminality and Assumption of Criminal Status*: For example, the presumption that a Latino person may be dangerous, criminal or deviant, such as when a Latino person is followed around a store, with the prejudice that he does not belong because he is deviant.
5. *Denial of Individual Racism*: For example, the self-defensive comment, “I’m not racist, I have several Latino friends,” with the intention of conveying that one is not racist by the mere fact that I have friends like you.
6. *Myth of Meritocracy*: For example, the opinion that “Everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough,” with the hidden message that “Ethnic minorities are lazy and incompetent and need to work harder.”
7. *Pathologizing Cultural Values and Communication Styles*: For example, the biased question to a Latino, “Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal,” with the implicit demand to assimilate to the American culture.
8. *Second-Class Citizen*: For example, a Mexican always confused for a laborer, with the prejudice that all Mexicans are unsophisticated, manual workers.
9. *Environmental Microaggressions*: For example, churches with only white pastors and white parish personnel, with the racist, covert message that only whites are able to lead and ethnic minorities cannot be trusted.

Additional microaggressions have been identified and researched among specific ethnic groups, including African-Americans,⁵ American Indians⁶ and Asian Americans.⁷ Sue et al.⁸ identified eight major macroaggressive themes directed toward Asian Americans: (a) alien in own land, (b) ascription of intelligence, (c) exoticization of Asian women, (d) invalidation of interethnic differences, (e) denial of racial reality, (f) pathologizing cultural values and communication styles, (g) second class citizenship and (h) invisibility.

Among African-Americans, Sue et al.⁹ found the

denigrating messages: “You do not belong,” “You are abnormal,” “You are intellectually inferior,” “You cannot be trusted” and “You are all the same.” Clark et al.¹⁰ identified the following microaggressive expressions targeting American Indians: (a) advocating sociopolitical dominance (such as, settler colonialism), (b) allegations of American Indian oversensitivity (such as being excessively emotional and too easily offended when protesting racialized characterizations in university mascots), (c) waging stereotype-based attacks (such as, all American Indians are alcoholics, casino gamblers and primitive), (d) denial of racism, (e) using logic of elimination and replacement (such as, American Indians are becoming extinct or vanishing), (f) expressing adoration for racialized symbols depicting American Indians in stereotypical roles and (g) conveying grief (for example, sadness, loss or perceived collective nostalgia in response to the discontinuation of Chief Illini week).

Examples of Microaggressions in Church Settings

Microaggressions are not necessarily verbal incidents, but may include environmental communications that subtly express rudeness and insensitivity to a person simply because of their background and identity. In the past, these environmental cues used to be more overt and explicit and included offensive visual displays meant to hurt the person of color while creating noninclusive and unhealthy environments (displaying the Confederate flag, for example). In church settings, environmental, implicit communications that convey to an individual that he or she is unwelcome or not appreciated have become more covert. People of color are offended by their insidiousness and they often report anger, isolation and indignation at these microaggressive offenses. Windsor¹¹ interviewed Catholics of color and found some poignant examples of these subtle environmental or contextual forms of relational aggression in church settings.

- “Vivian Juan, a member of the Tohono O’odham tribe and an assistant dean for Native American student affairs at the University of Arizona in Tucson, remembers attending Mass with her brother ‘and an Anglo person getting up and moving away from us in church because of who we were. I consequently quit going to that church and selected one that had a more diverse ethnic population.’”
- “Luis Vargas, a Puerto Rican man in his mid-30s who is business manager at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, says many Catholics come to his predominantly Hispanic parish

after being turned away from neighboring parishes and even denied a funeral Mass for a loved one because they are not registered. For many Hispanics who do not link church affiliation with signing a slip of paper, this act is extremely offensive.”

- “Take the images in a church, says Holy Ghost Father Al McKnight, executive director of the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. ‘All your pictures of saints are white. What does that do to a black child coming up? It’s a racist environment. Any people should be able to see God in their own image because we are all created in the image of God.’ ‘You go to church for the kiss of peace. You’re black, and someone else is white. You extend your hand, and in some churches people do not extend their hands, or they give the tips of their fingers—and they just heard the priest talking about the body and blood of Christ!’ says Isabel Dennis, an African American Catholic leader from Harlem.”
- “Socorro Durán, a Mexican Catholic grandmother from California, describes her experience: ‘I’m the Spanish coordinator at my church. An Anglo priest told me to tell the readers not to genuflect when they go to the altar. He said not to do that because it was superstition. I told him the only gringo there was him—people do that because of respect for the altar. Nobody has the right to tell us how to experience God in our lives.’”
- “Burton Pretty on Top, a spiritual leader on the Crow reservation in eastern Montana and a lay minister to five parishes, says he feels left out at diocesan gatherings. There are no Native American people on the diocesan liturgical committee.”

The Invisible Veil: Covert Racism in Formation and Ministry

The racial microaggressions framework is particularly helpful for understanding Jesús’ psychological and emotional experience, and the complexities of interethnic encounters often reported by international clergy and ethnic minority men and women in seminary and religious formation and ministry. These microaggressions are typically unconscious, subtle and covert. Social scientists have noted that racism in American society has morphed substantially from the blatant and overt acts of discrimination and hostility of the pre-Civil Rights era, to more insidious expressions of racism.¹² These new racist behaviors have been labeled *aversive racism*, *implicit racism* and *modern racism* and reside in well-intentioned individuals who are not consciously aware that

These new racist behaviors have been labeled *aversive racism*, *implicit racism* and *modern racism* and reside in well-intentioned individuals who are not consciously aware that their beliefs, attitudes and actions often discriminate against people of color.¹³

their beliefs, attitudes and actions often discriminate against people of color.¹³ Regarding the indirectness, ambiguity and implicitness of these evolved forms of racism, especially in the Catholic Church, Cardinal George of Chicago states, “The face of racism looks different today than it did 30 years ago. Overt racism is easily condemned, but the sin is often with us in more subtle forms.”¹⁴ Psychologists have likened this type of racism to carbon monoxide: invisible, but potentially lethal.¹⁵

Extensive qualitative research has documented the detrimental consequences on targets of microaggressions. They generate feelings of invisibility and marginalization,¹⁶ powerlessness, anger and feeling trapped. With little control over stopping the continuing onslaught, these microaggressions are ultimately detrimental to the mental and physical well-being of the recipient.¹⁷ Empirical studies have linked perceived racial discrimination with adverse mental health outcomes.¹⁸ Racial discrimination has a negative and deleterious effect on self-esteem.¹⁹ Targets of microaggressions appraise these insults as threatening and stressful, and this may cause the onset of negative mental outcomes.²⁰ The detrimental power to hurt and oppress people of color has been attributed to their invisible nature. Sue et al. have found that “many Black individuals may find it easier to deal with microassaults because the intent of the microaggressor is clear and obvious, whereas microinsults and microinvalidations involve considerable guesswork because of their ambiguous and invisible nature.”²¹

To fully and accurately assess Jesús’ experience, and for analysis of similar experiences in formation and ministry, the dynamics of microaggressions can be examined along a continuum of five highly interactive and sequen-

tial domains: (1) incident, (2) perception, (3) reaction, (4) interpretation and (5) consequence. This heuristic tool for analysis of microaggressions was proposed by Sue et al. because it is surmised that

a potential microaggressive incident [*incident*] sets in motion a perceptual questioning aimed at trying to determine whether it was racially motivated [*perception*]. During this process, considerable psychic energy is expended [*reaction*]. If the event is deemed to be a racial microaggression [*interpretation*], the reactions involve cognitive, emotive, and behavioral expressions [*consequence*].²²

Nonverbal microaggressions include the frequent presence of the pastor in the back of Mass followed by his questioning parishioners about Jesús' English fluency.

Incidents. Based on the taxonomy already outlined, these are verbal, behavioral or environmental situations reported by Jesús that have potentially derogatory racial undertones. The direct or indirect verbal comments by the pastor are clear examples of verbal incidents, such as “You know how to do that?” and “We are in the United States and it would be good for these families to learn English and assimilate with the other American parishioners.”²³ Nonverbal microaggressions include the frequent presence of the pastor in the back of Mass followed by his questioning parishioners about Jesús' English fluency. A more obvious environmental microaggression would be the subscription to only English TV channels and the promotion of hobbies and entertainment typically associated with a specific ethnic group and the exclusion of Jesús' own preferences. The most blatant environmental microaggression is the organization of events at an elite place (such as a golf course) that subtly marginalizes the majority of the Latino parishioners.

Perception. This refers to Jesús' conjecture about whether these incidents are racially motivated. Many victims of covert indignities such as those experienced by

Jesús have reported that it would be easier to deal with clear acts of bias because the intent of the perpetrators would be clear. Racial microinvalidations, on the other hand, create a “guessing game,” a real dilemma between the accuracy of the statements and the motivation of the microaggressor.²⁴ In counseling, Jesús reported being extremely confused. On the one hand, the majority of people, both in the parish and among priests (mostly of Euro-American ancestry), praise the pastor for being very pastoral, dedicated and a decent human being. But Jesús has been left perplexed by the pastor's multiple, indirect verbal and environmental behaviors.

Reaction. This includes Jesús' immediate responses beyond a simple “yes,” “no,” or “ambiguous” perception. It captures the process of inner struggle that has evoked strong cognitive, behavioral and emotional reactions. Jesús has reported at least four specific reactions to the accumulation of microaggressive acts: *health paranoia*, *sanity check*, *empowering* and *validating of his own self*, and *rescue attempts*. He has been harboring a generalized suspiciousness around the pastor. Every time he goes to the parish where the Latinos attend Mass, he is paranoid about answering the phone because he knows the pastor will invariably call and ask the Latinos about every single detail about the Mass. Speaking to the priestly support group is a clear example of a sanity check. To verify the accuracy of his perceptions, he would like to know if his reactions are reasonable or if he is merely “overreacting,” as his peer Euro-American priests suggested. In speaking to his family in Mexico, he has been provided with emotional support to validate his own self. His family thinks that the blame and fault lies with the pastor and with the community in general for their lack of sensitivity to Latino experiences. Jesús has relied on this emotional support as a means of empowerment and to better cope with the onslaught of microaggressive acts. On several occasions, he has also felt the pull to take care of the pastor, partly because Jesús understands that the pastor may have been conditioned by societal and institutional forces outside of his conscious awareness. The pastor may be a victim of naïveté, internalized biases and prejudices resulting from being socialized in a primarily Euro-American milieu with overt racism.

Interpretation. This refers to Jesús' attempts to make sense of the microaggressions as he tries to attach meaning to them and ask why they have occurred, what the intentions of the pastor are and what social patterns may be related to them. After repeated verbal, indirect and environmental incidents, Jesús has begun to connect the dots and is gradually reaching a conclusion on the

following recurrent microaggressive themes:

You are intellectually inferior and unsophisticated. The frequent questioning by the pastor, even when subtle, about Jesús' abilities and skills, both administrative and ministerial, has led Jesús to interpret these acts as intentional on the part of the pastor to imply that Jesús is not sufficiently intelligent.

You are not trustworthy and you are not welcome here. The micromanaging displayed by the pastor and his constant questioning of Jesús' preaching abilities, along with the blatant dismissal of culturally meaningful rituals and symbols has led Jesús to interpret these incidents as a lack of trust and hospitality towards him for being Mexican.

You are a second-class citizen. The imposition of primarily Euro-American hobbies and forms of entertainment, the promotion of Euro-American values and the lack of respect toward Jesús' culture, language and values has strongly made the impression that he is a second-class citizen who needs to assimilate and negate his culture.

Consequence. This includes all the psychological effects (such as behavioral patterns, coping strategies, cognitive reasoning, psychological well-being and physical health) of microaggressions on Jesús. The inherent power dynamic in the relationship between the pastor and Jesús, whereby the pastor holds evaluative and administrative power over him, renders Jesús powerless. Therefore, Jesús reported feeling a general sense of powerlessness. The pastor was constantly defining his reality, causing him to feel trapped with little control. Jesús became increasingly isolated, bored with his ministerial duties and depressed. He disclosed that he had become increasingly disillusioned due to the constant invalidations of him as an ethnically, culturally and racially diverse individual. He experienced a gradual loss of integrity, especially when the pastor questioned his abilities by resorting to the reports of parishioners.

Intercultural Competencies: Perspectives from Intercultural Communication

Thus far the emphasis has been primarily on the pastor's behaviors and attitudes. Both the pastor and Jesús can develop and strengthen their intercultural competencies with a priority on improving their intercultural communication. This form of communication is inherently problematic in that "culture is largely responsible for the construction of our individual social realities and for our individual repertoires of communicative behaviors and meanings."²⁵ To what extent Jesús' lack

of assertiveness in communicating is contributing to the distressing interactions and microaggressive acts should be considered. Banks, Gao, and Baker have noted that "culture must embrace a group's logic of expression that members accept as natural and foundational to the group's way of being. This approach places participants' meanings and motives at the center of intercultural miscommunication."²⁶ Therefore, any model of intercultural communication competence must take into account communicators' interpretations and motivations as well as their skills.²⁷ Socialized in the Mexican forms of interpersonal communication, Jesús most likely values *simpatía*, friendly respect, and *personalismo*. *Personalismo* (stemming from *persona*) refers to a Mexican value that prefers a distinctive interpersonal style with the human person at its center. Ortiz has found that this is a core value in Latino cultures, and it is conceptualized affectively, cognitively and behaviorally.²⁸ *Personalismo* affectively prescribes for people to be interpersonally warm and affectionate. Cultural anthropologists have noted that this "cultural script" is characteristic of a cultural worldview of highly collectivistic and relational cultures that value people over tasks, things and time. Latinos engage in several verbal and nonverbal behaviors to show personable traits. They prefer face-to-face contact; personal, close and informal attention; shaking hands when greeting someone and hugging to express closeness and rapport; and formal and informal forms of address (*usted* versus *tú*, respectively). Microaggressions are, therefore, countercultural to the Latino cultural interpersonal ethos. Ideally, the pastor and Jesús would engage in effective intercultural communication by exhibiting *simpatía* (friendly respect), and inspiring *confianza* (trust) and *respeto* (respect), three foundational characteristics and values of Latino interpersonal communication. In their pastoral document, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops suitably underscores how important it is that we are mindful of these differences in intercultural communication:

Intercultural communication—sustained efforts, carried out by people of diverse cultures, to appreciate their differences, work out conflicts, and build on commonalities—will thus be an important component of coming to know and respect the diverse cultures that make up today's Church. The dominant culture in the United States stresses the individual and his or her feelings and decisions. In less individualistic cultures, individuals may feel hesitant to express

their own opinions openly, even in a friendly setting, without reinforcement from the group.²⁹

The intercultural dynamic between the Samaritan woman and Jesus (Jn 4:3–42), for example, mirrors the respectful interethnic interaction that must exist in our contemporary formation and ministerial structures.

Intercultural Competencies: Perspectives from the New Testament

At a more fundamental level, microaggressions (and any other form of racism or prejudice) directed at cultural, racial, ethnic or linguistic differences undermines our catholicity. The New Testament contains vestiges of an increasingly formed, inclusive consciousness, respectful of cultural differences rooted in the universal salvation for all humankind. The intercultural dynamic between the Samaritan woman and Jesus (Jn 4:3–42), for example, mirrors the respectful interethnic interaction that must exist in our contemporary formation and ministerial structures. Jesus skillfully dismantles deeply embedded cultural and linguistic microaggressions within a conversation that captures the intricacies of intercultural competence. Jesus creates a new intercultural consciousness and gently elevates the interethnic encounter to a new level that transcends historical particularities and human ethnic, cultural and linguistic boundaries. He finds a common ground between them, recognizing God as Spirit (Jn. 4:24), which transcends historical, cultural and religious boundaries.

As the Samaritan woman enters into dialogue, her prejudices are immediately evoked and expressed in a racial and ethnic microaggression: “You a Jew ask me a Samaritan for a drink” (Jn. 4:9). This microaggressive theme, “You are an outsider,” is deeply rooted in the cultural and religious experiences of both the Jews and Samaritans, dating back to the exile and post-exile eras when the Samaritans began to be perceived by Jews from Judea as apostate and corrupt for mingling with foreigners. The woman is stuck with Jesus’ Jewishness and her prejudices, but Jesus strategizes to raise the

conversation toward transcendent realities. She continues to be blinded by the circumstances of her history and context. Jesus continues the dialogue by educating her about his identity and mission. The invisible veil is gradually lifted off the woman’s ethnocentric worldview. This is achieved through an emphatic and respectful dialogue within her particular situation and interests, for example, Jacob’s well, marital record and worshipping in Gerizim versus Jerusalem. As a model for intercultural dialogue, Jesus is aware of cultural differences, knowledgeable of the woman’s particularities, skillful in his approach and sensitively attentive to her needs.

In his profound reflections “Ecclesiology for a Global Church,” Gaillardetz notes that the church is fundamentally a community where people are called to affirm their differences. He reminds us that the church’s catholicity is always a differentiated unity—a unity in diversity—and that “the oneness of faith is often discovered only by first courageously attending to what manifests itself as foreign or different.”³⁰ Furthermore, he grounds this ecclesial consciousness in the theology of creation, for “if creation has been created good, then much that appears different and threatening in the world must be open, in principle, to a unity that celebrates rather than recoils from the reality of created difference.”³¹

The Pentecost narrative essentially underscores how the first-century church moved from an ethnocentric congregation in Jerusalem to a multiethnic congregation in Antioch.

The early church also gradually came to this realization. At Pentecost, worship “in Spirit and truth,” as described in the intercultural dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, is actualized. When the Holy Spirit came down upon the believers, they gave testimony to God’s deeds, and Jewish foreigners heard and comprehended. Gaillardetz points out, “the differences of language were transcended by the Spirit, allowing each to understand each other. Yet note that those from other lands heard those giving witness in their

own languages. Cultural difference was not destroyed but became the very instrument for a realization of a more profound spiritual unity.”³² He concludes by affirming that “this biblical narrative of the origins of the church suggests an essential ecclesiological principle: the Holy Spirit does not erase difference but renders difference nondivisive. The account suggests that the church, born of the Spirit, is from its beginning open to diverse languages and cultures.”³³ The Pentecost narrative essentially underscores how the first-century church moved from an ethnocentric congregation in Jerusalem to a multiethnic congregation in Antioch. God’s Spirit made it possible for the hearers to experience the Gospel in their native tongue and within their historical, cultural and diverse particularities. This is the vision of the intercultural, Spirit-filled church we should strive as a community to recapture.

Practical Suggestions and Recommendations

As the U.S. Catholic Church becomes a more mission-receiving—rather than a mission-sending—church, foreign-born clergy and their receiving communities need practical recommendations to more successfully navigate issues of adjustment.³⁴ Msgr. William Belford, current vicar for clergy at the Archdiocese of New York, provides some excellent suggestions for welcoming the stranger among us. His recommendations for being more hospitable towards international clergy are worth quoting in their entirety:

1. Everyone wants to make a good start in a new place, but we need help to do that. A new co-worker will make the most of his mistakes from ignorance. My fault as pastor is expecting a new priest to know the big picture and also figure out the details without my help. And even for the priest who has been in several American parishes, each new parish is different from the last. We should write things down for the newcomers, and urge them to ask how things are to be done in this place. There is also the matter of expectation, which affects our feelings. There is a stunningly realistic quote on p. 55 in *International Priests in America* about how differently a pastor and a new associate can experience his first day in the parish.
2. Priests come in many styles and personalities: friendly and cold, *laissez faire* or controlling, happy or bitter, team player or lone ranger, etc. International priests also have styles and attitudes, defense mechanisms and worries, agendas

and survival strategies. All of us have likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, which we probably won’t change. Better to mention them, and deal with them, than to act as if they don’t exist or don’t matter.

3. The happiest rectories and working places are those where communication exists, where compromise and cooperation are a way of living. Decades ago, pastors had all the power, and curates³⁵ had most of the work. Now the pastor really needs assistance, and theoretically has a greater stake in making each priestly relationship a lasting and productive one. But his disappointments, poor health, or bad experiences might have lowered his risks.
4. Every new and international priest deserves assistance and repeated answers from the time of arrival until he is confident and competent. It is onerous but useful for pastors, before the man comes, to write down the details of duties, procedures, phone numbers and other advice, but that makes life simpler. And also, if the pastor cannot do this himself, let him delegate a kind and friendly person—perhaps a deacon or wise parishioner—to be a mentor for the new priest, show him the neighborhood, eat with him, take him shopping for what he needs, help him move in and set up his room, and in general make sure that adjustment is not too overwhelming, lonely, or mysterious.³⁶

Adopting an attitude of openness and respect when engaging persons of other cultural groups is essential.

For receiving communities of immigrants and international clergy and religious, Lumas³⁷ has articulated the necessary attitudes needed to dismantle racism, ethnocentrism and behaviors that perpetuate microaggressions. Adopting an attitude of openness and respect when engaging persons of other cultural groups is essential, and the following specific intercultural actions are highly recommended:

- (1) Articulate a vision of church and society that invites the spiritual inheritance of diverse

cultural groups to complement and enrich each other. (2) Promote cultural awareness such that persons and groups not only become more conscious of their normative values, assumptions, worldview, preferences, behavioral norms, etc., but they can also identify how their culture resonates with or resists the gospel message and/or the faith tradition. (3) Foster cultural affirmation by enabling persons and groups to identify ways that their ethno- or socio-cultural religiosity gives fuller voice to latent dimensions of the Gospel and/or faith tradition, as well as ways that their religiosity can assist the larger faith community to have a fuller knowledge and appreciation for new theological insights, prayer forms, pastoral priorities and expressions of discipleship that are consistent with the Gospel, but not adequately explored. (4) Cultivate cross-cultural literacy by providing varied and ongoing opportunities for persons to view events, situations, ambitions, and problems from the perspective of other cultural groups and learn how these groups engage the gospel message and the faith tradition to address these realities. (5) Facilitate ongoing opportunities for intercultural sharing that enables persons from different cultural communities to participate in each other's communal life and celebrations, prayer, community service, education of the public and theological reflection. (6) Acknowledge that some persons may use referents other than ethnicity to name their cultural identity, i.e., youth culture, American culture, etc., and invite them to help their conversation partners see the convergent injustices of racism, classicism, ageism, sexism, homophobia and cultural arrogance. (7) Remember that culture belongs to a group, not simply a person, and ensure that the conversation partners who help construct the vision and plan of our catechetical efforts actually constitute diversified group of well-informed and representative spokespersons of their respective communities. And, (8) anticipate the need to work through the stressful feelings of isolation, alienation, fear or anger that are inevitably evoked by the challenges of meaningfully engaging with persons unlike ourselves.³⁸

Conclusion

According to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the USCCB), "racism is an evil which en-

"It is one of the properties of the human person that he can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture." The implication of this conciliar message is that God works through culture and culture has a redeeming value.

dures in our society and in our Church."³⁹ This evil is so pervasive and is masked through an intricate web of both overt and covert systems of power and control, as well as unconscious rationalizations. As Fr. Bryan Massingale poignantly remarks, "Racism connotes a network of unearned and unmerited principles, advantages, and benefits conferred to some and denied to others because of racial differences and a complex of beliefs, rationalizations, and practices used to justify, explain, and defend this network of unearned advantage and privilege."⁴⁰ The case of Jesús, and so many others in both formation and ministry, clearly demonstrates the struggle with these racist structures and the ideological rationalizations that perpetuate them. While enjoying supremacy and status over Jesús, the pastor imposed on him what, in his view, was normative and accepted. This resonates with Kovel's nuanced assessment that, "Racism has been defined as the uncritical appropriation of what is normative to only one race, the one deemed dominant...in a racist society, the oppressor assumes the power of definition and control, while the oppressed is objectified and perceived as a thing."⁴¹ This oppressive power to define Jesús' priestly and ministerial roles increasingly led to his marginalization and delegitimization. When Jesús sought out counseling, he was on the verge of abandoning the Catholic priesthood.

Aware of these experiences, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has urged all of us to a conversion:

The presence of so many different cultures and religions in so many different parts of the United States has challenged us as a Church to a profound conversion so that we can become truly a sacrament of unity. We reject the anti-

immigrant stance that has become popular in different parts of our country, and the nativism, ethnocentricity, and racism that continue to reassert themselves in our community.⁴²

The call is to respect and truly honor everyone's culture. According to Section 53 of the Council document *Gaudium et Spes*: "It is one of the properties of the human person that he can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture." The implication of this conciliar message is that God works through culture and culture has a redeeming value.



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Endnotes

1. This is a true story and the name of the priest has been modified to protect his confidentiality. Some of the experiences reported by the pastor are compiled from other cases the author has seen in the course of counseling international clergy and seminarians, and from intercultural consultations with diverse individuals in ministry.
2. This article uses the term "minority" in several quotations and references to the psychological and sociological literature where the original sources use this designation. The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, auxiliary bishop of St. Louis, has noted that "the common use of the word 'minorities' as the collective designation of these groups of people perpetuates negative stereotypes and is contradicted by what it means to be an American citizen...In its present usage, the term 'minority groups' often connotes the haves versus the have-nots, the powerful versus the powerless, the assimilated versus the non-assimilated. It may even implicitly advance the argument that some American citizens are 'inferior' because they have not assimilated middle-class mores and the cultural heritage of Western Europe," from: Edward K. Braxton, "There Are No 'Minority' Americans," *America*, 182, 20, (2000), 6.
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21. Sue et al., "Racial Microaggressions in the Life Experience of Black Americans," 331.
22. Sue et al., "Racial Microaggressions in the Life Experience of Black Americans," 334.
23. Contrary to efforts "to Americanize" ethnic groups from other countries, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a series of statements beginning in the 1980s defending the right of all people to their cultural and ethnic traditions as long as they are congruent with the faith. In their pastoral letter *Beyond the Melting Pot: Cultural Pluralism in the United States* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1980), they urged dioceses to enable cultural groups to worship in their own space and own language, with their own clergy and cultural practices. In Section 5 of *Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1983), the bishops stated even more strongly that cultural pluralism should be the policy within both the church and society: "The church shows its esteem for this dignity by working to ensure that pluralism, not assimilation and uniformity, is the guiding principle in the life of communities in both the ecclesial and secular societies." In Section 60 of *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2001): "It is not a call for 'assimilation' or the disappearance of one culture into another, but for continuing cooperation in pursuit of the common good and with proper respect for each cultural tradition and community." The Pope has also voiced caution on assimilation. In his 1995 address for *World Migration Day*, Pope John Paul II argued that immigrants "must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy, and spirituality, and particular traditions are concerned."
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33. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 38.
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Becoming Culturally Competent is a Process, Not an Event

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The pastor at Holy Martyrs called the vicar of clergy and demanded that the new priest assigned to his parish be removed. The reason: insubordination and health problems. Severe Crohn's Disease symptoms had curtailed many of the priest's pastoral responsibilities in the past eight weeks, which meant that the pastor had to cover three more weekend masses. This priest had been recently incardinated in this Midwestern diocese after being recruited from a rural Mexican diocese nearly three years before. When he came to his current parish assignment, his command of English was limited and he was given no cultural orientation. Instead, the vicar told him, "Your pastor will show you the ropes." However, in those three years the pastor—who did not speak Spanish and knew little of Mexican culture—had minimal contact with the priest. According to the priest, he was never invited to share a meal with the pastor and only met with him briefly when the pastor made changes to the mass and hospital visitation schedules. Parishioners in this urban parish were mostly retired, working-class Euro-Americans. The priest had been treated for Crohn's Disease—diagnosed five years ago—but it had worsened in the past two years. He had become so symptomatic and depressed that he had recently been hospitalized. A medical-psychiatric consultation suggested that pastoral demands and high levels of acculturative stress probably exacerbated the priest's longstanding Crohn's Disease and accompanying clinical depression. The pastor's complaint about insubordination was unclear. Unfortunately, the vicar could not replace the priest—even temporarily—if he had wanted to because there were none to spare.

The Impact of Culture on Ministry

In the above scenario, the outcome was quite dev-

Becoming culturally competent is a developmental process and not simply an event.

astating and no one was spared the consequences: not the international priest, not the pastor and not the vicar. The question is: might ministry personnel have dealt with this scenario more effectively?

This scenario reflects common cultural challenges facing dioceses and priests today. From a cultural perspective, the situation was mishandled. It reflects problems with cultural competence (also referred to as intercultural competence), particularly cultural sensitivity. Cultural insensitivity is evident in both the vicar and the pastor.

Today, developing a high level of cultural competence is essential for effective ministry. Few would disagree with the observation that cultural competence is in short supply these days among ministry personnel and that something needs to be done about it. But what should be done? Guidelines, workshops, immersion experiences? Developing this competence requires more than just a set of intercultural guidelines, an intercultural workshop or series of workshops or a brief immersion experience in another culture. Together these three efforts or "events" may be a useful starting point, but they are hardly sufficient to achieve the level of cultural competence, particularly cultural sensitivity, needed in today's church. This article outlines the components and the levels of cultural competence. It emphasizes

that becoming culturally competent is a developmental process and not simply an event. It then focuses on how cultural sensitivity develops and revisits the opening scenario from the perspective of a higher level of cultural competence.

Cultural Competence and Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural competence is the capacity to recognize, respect and respond with appropriate words and actions to the needs and concerns of individuals from different ethnicities, social classes, genders, ages or religions. There are four components to cultural competence:¹ cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural action. Cultural awareness builds on cultural knowledge with the added capacity to recognize a cultural problem or issue in a specific individual and a particular situation. Cultural sensitivity is an extension of cultural awareness and involves the capacity to anticipate likely consequences of a particular cultural problem or issue and to respond empathically.² Cultural action follows from cultural sensitivity. It is the capacity to translate cultural sensitivity into action that results in an effective outcome. In short, cultural action is the capacity to make appropriate decisions and respond skillfully with effective actions in a given situation. Table 1 highlights these four components.

While these four dimensions are typically described separately and are often taught in a linear and sequential manner (for example, sensitivity building on cultural knowledge and awareness), the development of cultural

Cultural competence is the capacity to recognize, respect and respond with appropriate words and actions to the needs and concerns of individuals from different ethnicities, social classes, genders, ages or religions.

competence is more accurately understood as a spiral whereby development in one component fosters progress in the others.³

Levels of Cultural Competence

Four levels of competence are described below; however, any number of levels could be described and differentiated.

Very Low Cultural Competence. This level reflects a lack, or minimal acquaintance and recognition, of cultural knowledge or awareness. Because there is a lack of cultural sensitivity, the individual or individuals do not take action, or the decisions and actions taken are inappropriate, ineffective or both. Such actions can be harm-

Table 1: Cultural Competence and its Components


Cultural Competence. The capacity to recognize, respect and respond with appropriate words and actions to the needs and concerns of individuals from different ethnicities, social classes, genders, generations or religions. It consists of four components: cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural action.

Cultural Knowledge. Acquaintance with the specifics of another culture, particularly facts about ethnic values, mores, rituals, cuisine, language, social class differences, issues about acculturation, disability, religious beliefs and practices, gender codes, and age and generational differences.

Cultural Awareness. The capacity to recognize one's own cultural worldview and biases, as well as the capacity to recognize a cultural problem or issue of another individual or individuals in a particular cultural situation.

Cultural Sensitivity. The capacity to respond in a respectful, empathic and welcoming manner, as well as recognize the likely impact and consequences of specific attitudes, words and actions on another individual or individuals in a particular cultural situation.

Cultural Action. The capacity to demonstrate appropriate decisions and behaviors, based on sensitivity to operative cultural factors in a specific situation, that foster the safety and well-being of another individual or individuals in a particular cultural situation.



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inability to anticipate or appreciate the likely negative consequences and impact on another. Because of such limited cultural knowledge and awareness, subsequent cultural decisions and actions are unlikely to be as appropriate, skillful or effective as they otherwise could be. Some vestiges of cultural encapsulation may persist, or there may be inconsistency in responding to the other.

Moderate Cultural Competence. This level reflects the availability of more cultural knowledge and awareness than at the minimum level of cultural competence. The experience of cultural sensitivity is thus qualitatively different than at the minimum level. The other is likely to experience some sense of respect, acceptance and even welcoming, although this experience is not as consistent and unconditional as with very high levels of cultural competence. Furthermore, cultural

decisions and actions are more competent than at the minimal level. There are no obvious vestiges of cultural encapsulation, and the individual is likely to function at moderate or even high levels of professional or clinical competence.

Very High Cultural Competence. This level reflects considerable cultural knowledge and awareness. Cultural sensitivity reflects this knowledge and awareness and is experienced by the other as respect and an ongoing sense of being welcomed and accepted. Unlike the moderate level of cultural competence, this experience is consistent and unconditional. Cultural decisions and actions are appropriate and skillful. Conceivably, the actions are effective and the outcome may be positive, although this outcome is not a requisite of this level of competence. These individuals are also likely to function at high levels of professional or clinical competence.

Cultural Competence and Self-Transformation

How does one become more culturally competent? It was suggested earlier that, as with affective maturity,

ful or destructive. Common at this level is cultural encapsulation, which is a way of relating to another from one's own worldview and perspective. Besides a failure to understand the worldview and cultural identity of another, it involves the failure to incorporate whatever cultural knowledge one might have of the other into interactions with the other.

Minimal Cultural Competence. There are two variants of this level. The first variant involves circumstances where limited cultural knowledge and awareness results in limited or misguided cultural sensitivity and, subsequently, cultural decisions or actions. The other may experience some degree of respect or acceptance, but not necessarily a sense of being welcomed as in higher levels. The second variant is not uncommon, particularly among individuals who are easily accepting, welcoming or empathic toward others. Accordingly, they come across as culturally aware and culturally sensitive; however, this awareness or sensitivity may not be based on cultural knowledge, but on an empathic sense of another's distress, shyness, discomfort or uneasiness. This variant of cultural sensitivity is only partial because of an

becoming culturally competent is a process. Perhaps the most basic developmental process in humans involves growth and transformation of the cognitive and emotional domains.⁴ At the earliest stages of development, these two domains are separate and, if the development process continues unimpeded, a transformation occurs in which both domains interact and eventually become integrated.

At an early stage of cognitive-emotional development, called the pre-operational stage, an individual only thinks and experiences life in emotional terms. Individuals at this stage tend to gravitate toward situations that engender pleasure and avoid situations that engender fear, pain or other negative emotions. At this stage, individuals are so egocentric that empathy is impossible. They have yet to develop the cognitive capacity to anticipate consequences, so they repeatedly make mistakes because they cannot learn from experience. Accordingly, individuals at this stage tend to be culturally insensitive because they lack the capacity for empathy and the ability to anticipate consequences.

In the next two next stages of cognitive-emotional development, the cognitive domain develops alongside the emotional domains. In the second of these stages, known as “formal operations,” individuals now have the capacity to think and make more rational decisions. As a result, they have more capacity to anticipate consequences, but their capacity for expressing empathy and a welcoming attitude toward the culturally different is limited. Accordingly, they can exhibit some cultural sensitivity, which means that their capacity for cultural competence is increased, but not at a high level.

The highest level of cognitive-emotional development is the post-formal stage. At this stage, individuals have developed a relatively high level of affective maturity, which manifests in their capacity to integrate their cognitions and emotions. Having developed this capacity, individuals can make realistic decisions and take appropriate actions based on situational circumstances, even in the face of uncertainty and contradiction. In the face of negative bias, strong emotion, ambiguity and intolerance from others, they are able to rely on subjective experience, intuition and logic. Despite influences that may be operative in cultural situations, such individuals have the capacity for a high level of cultural sensitivity.

Described above is one of the most basic developmental factors operative in increasing cultural competence. Moving from the lower stages to the higher stages of cognitive-emotional development is a process of transformation that, for most individuals, occurs in-

crementally over time, rather than from a discrete event. Therefore, participating in a course or workshop, or acquiring cultural knowledge through reading, observation, language acquisition or conversation is useful and necessary, but it is not sufficient to increase cultural competence. Similarly, increasing cultural awareness by direct involvement in the lives of others from a different culture through immersion experiences is useful and necessary, but it is not sufficient to increase culture competence.

My first mentor in cultural competence, the late executive director of the Evanston Human Relations Commission, warned against experiences of “body mixing” (his term for short, cultural immersion experiences) as “evidence” that an individual had increased their cultural competence. Looking back, it is clear that he understood that increasing cultural competence was a process and not an event. He insisted that unless an individual underwent a transformation experience in what they thought and felt and how they acted, real change—an internalization and integration of another culture into one’s worldview—did not occur. Although the terms cultural sensitivity, cultural action and cultural competence were not in vogue at the time, at some level of consciousness he understood that a welcoming attitude, the capacity to anticipate both positive and negative consequences and the capacity to decide and act in ways that promote the safety and well-being of another were essential to a high level of cultural competence.

Comparing Differences in Cultural Competence

Optimal cultural competence is visually represented by (A) in Table 2.⁵ In my consultation with various professionals, including priests, very high or optimal cultural competence is somewhat rare, seen in about 10 percent of professionals. This contrasts with about 70 percent who are very low (B); not surprisingly, cultural competency training programs target this group. Unfortunately, these programs tend to focus primarily on increasing the cultural knowledge and awareness components, while underemphasizing cultural sensitivity and action. In my estimation, the best of these training programs can only increase cultural knowledge and cultural awareness to a moderate level, while cultural sensitivity remains low and the degree of cultural action remains even lower (C). Overall, this approach translates to a low-moderate level of cultural competence. In other words, good cultural training programs can add some value to the sponsoring corporation or religious institu-

Some priests and seminarians might appear to be quite culturally competent when they are not.

tion; however, the reality is that these programs tend not to be effective for most participants, particularly those who come with a low or minimal level of cultural competence.

Finally, it should be noted that some priests or seminarians might appear to be quite culturally competent when in reality they are not. This situation occurs in those who are naturally empathic and exhibit a welcoming presence (the first element of cultural sensitivity), but lack the capacity to anticipate consequences of cultural actions (the second element) and do not have sufficient levels of cultural knowledge or awareness, which negatively impacts effective and appropriate cultural action. This pattern is illustrated as (D) in Table 2, wherein the degree of cultural knowledge and cultural awareness is low, cultural sensitivity is moderate, and the degree of cultural action is low, translating to a low moderate level of cultural competence. Presumably, individuals with this natural degree of cultural sensitivity would do quite well in a typical cultural training program. Such programs would provide them with cultural knowledge and opportunities to increase their degree of cultural awareness, which, together with their already

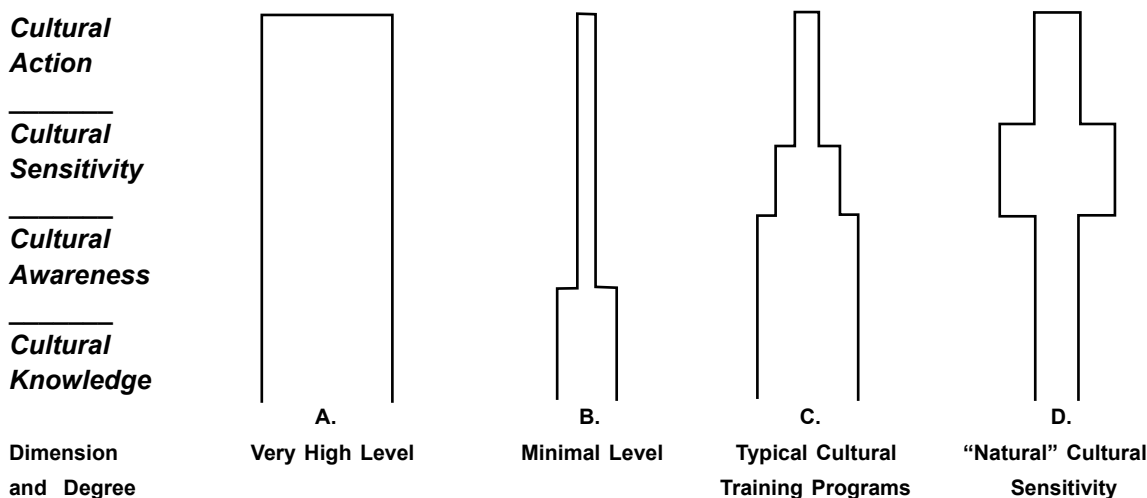
high degree of cultural sensitivity, would prepare them for a higher degree of cultural action.

Cultural Competence in Action: Revisiting the Scenario

Let us revisit the opening scenario from the perspective of a high level of cultural competence. Notice the high level of cultural sensitivity that informs the cultural action taken. While this heightened cultural sensitivity is based on both cultural knowledge and awareness, it also reflects the capacity for post-formal thinking and processing of specific situations and circumstances. This outcome, of course, is a requisite stage of cognitive-emotional development essential in high levels of cultural competence.

A higher level of cultural competence would be evident in the vicar's and the pastor's attitudes, awareness, sensitivity and actions. Directed efforts to inculturate international priests in the dominant American culture and diocese are not optional—they are essential. There are an increasing number of formal programs in which international priests can participate prior to their diocesan assignment. After beginning their assignments, additional inculturation is essential for priests to learn the language and customs of a particular parish or assignment. Arranging for a culturally sensitive priest within the diocese to serve as a mentor can be an effective way of orienting the new priest to the specific cultural dynamics of the diocese and the parish. If the parish pastor will be the mentor, the pastor must possess a reasonably high level of cultural sensitivity, unlike the pastor at Holy Martyrs described at the start of this article.

Table 2: Cultural Competence: Visual Characterizations



Arranging for a culturally sensitive priest within the diocese to serve as a mentor can be an effective way of orienting the new priest to the specific cultural dynamics of the diocese and the parish.

As noted earlier, cultural sensitivity involves both a welcoming attitude and the capacity to anticipate the consequences of the vicar's decisions and actions on the new priest. The pastor could have demonstrated a welcoming stance by meeting regularly with his new priest, as well as sharing meals—a perfect venue for learning about Mexican cuisine and culture. The second element of cultural sensitivity is anticipating the consequences of one's actions. Both the vicar and pastor could and should have made the effort to anticipate the “fit” between the new priest and the cultural dynamics of the parish, the “fit” between the priest and the pastor, and the “fit” between the pastoral demands and the priest's experience and pastoral skills. In addition, they should have considered the priest's health status and how it might be affected by a particular pastoral assignment. After such considerations, the vicar might have made a different parish assignment, or collaborated with the pastor to specify stipulations that would have facilitated the acculturation process and limited the priest's acculturative stress.

Conclusion

Dioceses, religious orders and corporations are foolhardy and mistaken if they believe that increasing cultural competence is an event. Events such as cultural seminars, guidelines or brief immersion experiences that primarily emphasize cultural information and cultural awareness do not noticeably increase cultural competence. In truth, achieving a high level of cultural competence is a developmental process that requires a transformation of the individuals' values and the way they think, feel and act about life in general, and about cultural matters in particular. In terms of priestly formation, a high level of affective maturity is a prerequisite for a high level of cultural competence. While learning a second language and an immersion experience in an ethnic parish may be valuable components in a seminarian's quest for cultural competence, they are seldom sufficient, particularly if the seminarian's affective maturity is limited. Finally, it bears repeating: cultural competence is a process—a transformational process—and not an event; and there are no shortcuts on this journey.



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Endnotes

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How Cultural Competence Develops

Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D.Min.



Cultural competency (or intercultural competency) has traditionally been conceptualized in psychology as the development of awareness of the professional's cultural identity and belief systems, and the knowledge and skills necessary to work with diverse populations.¹ In this article, cultural competence is defined as the capacity and capability to recognize, respect and respond with appropriate action to the needs and concerns of individuals from different ethnicities, social classes, genders, generations or religions. It consists of four components: cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural action.² This definition emphasizes capacity, capability, appropriate action, scope and components.

Capacity refers to ability, while *capability* is the attitude to strive to achieve more than the minimal level of competence. A full range of appropriate *actions* are emphasized including words, attitudes, decisions, policies and other behaviors that are informed by knowledge, awareness and sensitivity of a given cultural situation. *Scope* refers to all aspects of culture, including socioeconomic status, and religious and generational differences that are often overshadowed by a focus on ethnic differences. Finally, the definition includes the four *components* of cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural action.

Of these four, cultural sensitivity is the most critical component of cultural competence because it includes both the capacity for a welcoming attitude and a recognition and appreciation of the likely consequences of cultural actions. In my opinion, the absence of cultural sensitivity significantly limits the theoretical value and practical utility of the traditional conceptualization of cultural competency. However it is conceptualized, there is some consensus that everyone possesses some level of cultural competence, although that level may

Cultural competence consists of four components: cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural action.

range from very low to very high.

Most professionals, including ministry personnel, are concerned about levels of cultural competence and how cultural competence can be further developed and increased. It is commonly assumed that higher levels of cultural competence are associated with more effective ministry. This concern was evident in both panelists' remarks and the general discussion during the 2nd Biennial Joint Conference on Intercultural Competency held in June, 2012, in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. Three themes from those discussions are the focus of this article: respect and tolerance, mutuality, and full-scale cultural sensitivity. Each theme is described and illustrated with a segment from the movie script of *Gran Torino* starring Clint Eastwood.³ An analysis of the components and levels of cultural competence is provided for each scene.

Respect and Tolerance

A deep and abiding respect and tolerance for the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of others is essential to developing higher levels of cultural competence. While it is true that cultural knowledge may be useful in this theme, cultural awareness—particularly awareness of one's own values, worldview and biases—is even more important. Furthermore, in this theme, capability (the

A deep and abiding respect and tolerance for the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of others is essential to developing higher levels of cultural competence.

attitude to strive to achieve more than the minimal level of competence) is as important as capacity for tolerance and respect.

Cultural Situation Number 1:

Let's begin with a situation from *Gran Torino* in which respect and tolerance are absent in both parties. The scene involves Walt Kowalski, a retired, lower-middle-class Polish widower and Korean War veteran who lives in an ethnically changing neighborhood. He has tried to ignore a Hmong family that moved next door. The other individual is Phong, the grandmother of Sue and Tao and matriarch of the Hmong family. Phong does not speak English and has traditional Hmong values and worldviews. She immigrated to the United States about 20 years ago and has never forgiven U.S. soldiers for the way they treated those in her village in Southeast Asia. Her level of acculturation would be considered low.

Both are sitting on their porches; Walt is reading the newspaper and Phong is knitting. Under his breath he mutters that it used to be a nice neighborhood before the Hmong moved in. Phong looks over at Walt and gives him the "evil eye" and says to herself that he must be too dumb to realize that he is not welcome in the neighborhood and that he should just move out like the rest of the white people. Walt glances at her and spits and she glares back at him and spits a large amount of beetle juice.

The cultural parameters in this situation include ethnic, language and acculturation differences between Walt and Phong. Following are assessments of both Walt's and Phong's levels of cultural competence.

Walt's Cultural Competence. This situation suggests that Walt's level of cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity are relatively low. Thus, it is not surprising that his cultural actions are

negative, as shown by his racist and prejudicial words along with his sneering and contempt-filled spitting. Overall, his level of cultural competence is very low.

Phong's Cultural Competence. Similarly, an assessment of Phong's cultural competence suggests she has minimal cultural knowledge, cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity. Thus, it is not surprising that her cultural actions are negative, as shown by her prejudicial words, evil eye glance and her contempt-filled spitting, which seems to make her the winner of this interchange.

Commentary on Respect and Tolerance. Respect and tolerance are essentially absent in both parties in this scene. Neither appears to demonstrate any positive or even neutral response, such as ignoring the other. Instead, they both openly demonstrate their negative evaluation of the other, with spitting serving as a marker of their mutual disdain.

Mutuality means that the relationship demonstrates some elements of sharing and caring. It also requires that both parties are open to learning and changing as a result of that relationship.

Mutuality

Also essential in developing higher levels of cultural competence is the theme of relational mutuality and the willingness to learn from one another. Beyond being civil or even courteous to those who are culturally different, this theme requires that a relationship is developed and nurtured. Mutuality means that the relationship demonstrates some elements of sharing and caring. It also requires that both parties are open to learning and changing as a result of that relationship. When this theme is operative, increased cultural competence is possible.

Cultural Situation Number 2:

In this situation, Walt has just rescued Sue, Phong's granddaughter, and her Caucasian boyfriend from the harassment of an African-American gang. Walt offers to drive her home in his pickup truck. As they are driving Sue asks Walt if he has a "savior com-

One might assume that ministers who are naturally empathic and easily demonstrate a welcoming attitude are high in cultural sensitivity.

plex.” He sarcastically comments that if Asian girls were so smart, why was she walking around in a neighborhood that was so unsafe? She agrees that it wasn’t very smart, and is not ruffled at all by Walt’s gruffness and racism as they continue to drive. Walt then asks why she was hanging around with a white boyfriend, when she should be dating one of her own kind, a “Hmong.” She asks if he means “Hmong” to which he responds by asking who the Hmong are and where they are from. She gives him a brief culture and geography lesson, to which he asks why they are in his neighborhood and not back in Southeast Asia. She recounts how the Hmong had joined the American forces in fighting the Communists in Vietnam, and the aftermath in which the Hmong were killed after the American forces left Vietnam. This led to large numbers of Hmong immigrating to the U.S. Walt then quips about how the cold and snowy weather of the Midwest should have deterred the Hmong immigrants. Sue just laughs at his racist remark. Walt then asks about Sue’s brother who appears to be retarded. Sue says that her brother, Tao, is actually quite smart but hasn’t found a sense of direction in his life. As she gets out of Walt’s truck she adds that Hmong girls find it easier to adjust to American culture than Hmong boys, and that while Hmong girls go to college Hmong boys go to jail.

The cultural parameters in this situation include ethnic, generational and language differences between Walt and Sue.

Walt’s Cultural Competence. Walt’s cultural competence in this situation is relatively low due to the low levels of cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity that he demonstrates in this interchange. Nevertheless, the cultural action of rescuing Sue from being harassed by the gang showed caring and concern despite his racial and stereotyped comments.

Sue’s Cultural Competence. Sue’s cultural competence in this situation is very high because she displays

high levels of cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. Accordingly, her cultural actions and responses suggest she is more amused than offended by Walt’s racial remarks and attitude. In contrast to her grandmother, Sue is highly acculturated to lower-middle-class American values and way of life.

Commentary on Respect and Mutuality. What is remarkable about this scene is that despite Walt’s lack of basic cultural knowledge, mispronunciations, disrespect and disparaging comments Sue does not take offense by withdrawing or reacting defensively. Instead, she is willing to engage with Walt in a relationship that will eventually become very close and life-giving for both of them. She is an effective teacher of Hmong culture. The reality is that Sue “passes” Walt’s “rite of initiation” in which he is disrespectful and provocative. For his part, Walt shows a willingness to learn about Hmong culture and social mores from Sue. This scene shows the beginnings of mutuality, which will result in a relationship of increasing respect, sharing and caring as the story unfolds.

Cultural Situation Number 3:

In this situation, Father Janovich, the associate pastor of the local Catholic church, shows up at Walt’s home a few weeks after the funeral for his wife. The two have never formally met, although the priest ministered to Dorothy regularly in the months before she died and preached the homily at her funeral mass.

The priest greets Walt by his first name, to which Walt makes it clear that he is to be addressed as “Mr. Kowalski.” Then the priest describes how he had become close to Dorothy, Walt’s wife, in the months before her death and that he promised her that he would “keep an extra sharp eye on you.” Walt’s response was to say he appreciated the priest’s kindness toward his wife but asked that he leave. In response the priest says that Dorothy specifically said her wish was for Walt to go to confession. To that Walt responds that he never much liked church and only went because of his wife. He adds that he has no desire to confess to a boy who has just been ordained.

The cultural parameters in this situation involve both generational and socioeconomic differences between Walt and Father Janovich.

Walt’s Cultural Competence. Walt’s cultural competence is relatively low in this situation because of the low levels of cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity that he demonstrates in this interchange. This is especially reflected in his actions, harsh

words and lack of hospitality in not inviting the priest inside his home.

Father Janovich's Cultural Competence. Father Janovich's cultural competence in this situation is also low, particularly because of his lack of cultural knowledge and awareness of generational and socioeconomic differences. Even though they both share the same ethnicity, Polish American, the two could not be more different. The priest is likely from an upper-middle-class background with a college education, including a graduate degree and ordination. Walt, by contrast, has a high school diploma, endured heavy combat in Korea, worked for 28 years on the Ford assembly line before retiring, and lived for 40 years in a blue-collar community in which he is the only remaining Caucasian. The sad irony is that the priest has a higher level of cultural competence with regard to the Hmong culture than he does with the elder Polish American. He knows Hmong values and is aware of their needs, economic and social pressures and acculturation issues; he even works with some Hmong gang members in the community.

Commentary on Respect and Mutuality. Father Janovich's assumption that he had permission to call a parishioner—more than twice his age—by his first name in his initial meeting reflects both disrespect and some degree of cultural insensitivity on the part of the priest. On three subsequent occasions with the priest, Walt also objects and demands to be addressed as Mr. Kowalski. Despite that, Father Janovich worked to engage Walt in a mutual relationship. These efforts paid off and both learned from each other and grew as the relationship developed. This mutuality and reciprocity is evidenced in the homily Father Janovich preaches at Walt's funeral, where he reports that "Walt Kowalski said that I didn't know anything about life or death because I was an overeducated, 27-year-old virgin who held the hands of superstitious old women and promised them eternity." The priest added that Walt had no problem calling things the way he saw them. The priest admitted that he knew little about life or death until he got to know Walt.

Full-Scale Cultural Sensitivity

As noted in the introduction to this article, cultural sensitivity is critical to developing high levels of cultural competence. That is because cultural sensitivity builds on cultural knowledge and cultural awareness, and is manifested in both the capacity for a welcoming attitude and a recognition and anticipation of the likely consequences of cultural actions. One might assume

that ministers who are naturally empathic and easily demonstrate a welcoming attitude are high in cultural sensitivity. However, this assumption is incorrect unless these ministers also exhibit the second aspect of cultural sensitivity, the capacity for anticipating the likely consequences of cultural actions. Full-scale cultural sensitivity includes both aspects. The reality is that failures in cultural competency often result from failure to anticipate the negative consequences of what appeared, at first, to be appropriate cultural actions.

Cultural Situation Number 4:

In this situation, Walt is faced with his lack of anticipation of the dire consequences of his cultural action. Earlier in the story, when Walt began developing a relationship with his Hmong neighbors, Tao and Sue, a Hmong gang also began to intimidate Tao. When a fight breaks out that spills over onto Walt's property, Walt threatens to kill anyone that messes with Tao. When the gang continues to target Tao, Walt steps in and attacks one of the gang leaders, demanding that they leave Tao alone or deal with Walt directly. The gang's response is to shoot up Tao's house and kidnap Sue, who is beaten and raped. Walt is overcome with grief at the news and staggers across the yard to his house where he slumps into an easy chair and cries. It is the first time in fifty years that Walt has cried. He cries for Tao, Sue, his wife, his kids and himself.

Commentary on Respect, Mutuality and Cultural Sensitivity. Not only has Walt become more respectful and capable of mutually caring relationships, he has been able to demonstrate the first aspect of cultural sensitivity with his welcoming attitude toward Sue, Tao and their extended family. However, he did not demonstrate the second aspect, because he failed to anticipate the inevitable, and disproportionately intense, retaliatory response of the gang.

Cultural Situation Number 5:

The next scene follows immediately afterwards when Father Janovich appears at Walt's home. The front door is partly open and the priest, addressing Walt as Mr. Kowalski, asks if he can come in. Walt invites the priest to enter and sit down across from him. The priest asks if Walt is OK to which Walt nods. The priest comments that the police have left and that, out of fear, the Hmong neighbors were unwilling to identify the perpetrators. Walt suggests that neither Tao nor Sue are going to experience any peace until the gang members are no longer around, until they "go away forever." The priest

The reality is that failures in cultural competency often result from failure to anticipate the negative consequences of what appeared, at first, to be appropriate cultural actions.

asks Walt what he means, to which Walt says, "You heard what I said." He adds that he is not afraid of the gang. Walt asks the priest what he would do if he were Walt. The priest replies that he believes Walt would want vengeance. Walt next asks what the priest would do, to which Father Janovich says that he would come over and talk to Walt. He also acknowledges how close Walt has become with his Hmong neighbors. Pleased by this, Walt asks if the priest wants to share a beer, to which the priest says he'd love one. The priest grabs four beers out of the cooler next to the couch, two for each of them. After taking a big swig of Pabst, the priest says that it just isn't fair, to which Walt responds, "Nothing's fair, Father." They sit in silence for a while and the priest asks, "What are you going to do, Mr. Kowalski?" to which Walt responds "Call me Walt." The priest nods and asks what Walt is planning. Walt responds that he is not sure yet, but that "they don't have a goddamned chance."

Commentary on Respect, Mutuality and Cultural Sensitivity. Unlike previous meetings between Walt and Father Janovich, this dialogue exhibits much more respect and mutuality. It is the first time that Walt asks and permits the priest to call him Walt. In response to Walt's first query, the priest says what he imagines Walt will do, which is impulsive action. However, in response to Walt's second query, the priest says he would step back, talk about options and presumably consider the consequences of each. This makes a deep impression on Walt, as his final cultural action attests, when he draws the gang members into an ultimate showdown. Both want justice for Sue and Tao, and both pursue different options, while clearly aware of the consequences. In their respective ways, both Walt and Father Janovich manifest high levels of cultural sensitivity. This results in overall high levels of cultural competence for both.

Conclusion

The overriding assumption is that everyone has some level of cultural competence, although that level may range from very low to very high. The article began with the questions, how does cultural competence develop and how can it be increased? These questions can be answered with the following three-theme formula:

Respect and tolerance +
mutuality and a willingness to learn
from one another +
full-scale cultural sensitivity
= cultural competence.

What the narrative suggests is that all three themes are essential to developing and increasing cultural competence. If even one theme is missing or weak, the level of cultural competence will be lower than if all three themes are present, strong and vibrant.



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Intercultural Psychological Assessment of Clergy and Candidates to the Priesthood and Religious Life in the Catholic Church

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Introduction

Edwin Boring¹ imported and established experimental psychology as a plausible and acceptable psychological science in the United States. Reliable data were obtained using methods to ensure objectivity by separating observers from their human subjects. As a result, this redoubtable science was deficient for applications to social problems. The credibility of Boring's psychology was due to his iconic status, described by Dana:

This psychohistory is compelling because we cannot imagine any rendition that could be more lucid or informative. It thus quickly became the fundamental statement of our faith, words set in stone that identified us as scientists who belonged to an experimental tradition of natural and physical science...By selection and emphasis, method in psychology preceded the definition of the human problems that would be elucidated by method.²

This representation of European psychology, however, was incomplete because a necessary experiential component was minimized. Juxtaposition of method with human experience permits ethical applications and generality to research by endowing human behavior with meaning.³

The APA today recognizes that professional psychology requires adequate and uniform education concerning individual and cultural diversities.

Psychology in the United States now incorporates human experience to guide practice, encourage professional training and facilitate gradual changes in methods and practice. The American Psychological Association (APA)⁴ has gradually fused method-driven experimental psychology with a necessary experiential component. Professional practice now endorses an expanded psychological science that embraces cultural and racial minority populations and responsiveness to societal problems. As a result, the APA today recognizes that professional psychology requires adequate and uniform education concerning individual and cultural diversities. Although recently proposed core competencies include assessment,⁵ culturally competent assessment continues as a secondary professional activity.⁶

A new method-oriented, culturally relevant assessment science will be briefly reviewed later in this paper.

This new science endorses rigorous methodological and psychometric training for adequate construction and validation of instruments for contemporary applications. This paper reviews historical and contemporary assessment training and cultural competency applications, and it also introduces essential and recommended assessment instruments and methods described in a proposal for vocation-relevant assessment of clergy.

Assessment History and Contemporary Applications

Training Origins and Outcomes, Terminology and Instruments: Boulder and Vail Model Origins

The 1949 Boulder conference espoused a method-driven experimental science as impetus for acquisition of specific assessment skills using a small number of standard monocultural tests. Although the Boulder model failed to integrate theory and practice, Shakow understood training as a combination of scientific and humanist values, as well as divergent approaches to achieve “other-understanding through self-understanding by way of science...(and) a sensitive, humanistic approach to the problems of persons and their societies.”⁷

The 1973 Vail conference designed a professional model for training across conventional academic levels, including a clinical core, and specializations embracing populations of women, children, the elderly, non-middle class persons and ethnic minorities.⁸ The core included program development and administration as well as design and evaluation of community service delivery systems. Specific assessment instruments were not identified. The divergent research and practice origins of these models were diluted over time, and their original differences in assessment perspectives are no longer apparent in professional psychology training programs.⁹

Training Outcomes

During the 1990s in the United States, assessment practice was degraded because many available instruments were not routinely used in mental health settings due to limited assessment objectives and severe time restraints.¹⁰ In managed care, cost-containment practices of risk-benefit analysis, provider usage, supply and demand manipulation, gate keeping, medical necessity and formulation negatively impacted quality and adequacy of care.¹¹ Brief, objective, diagnostic, symptom-focused measures of psychopathology were preferred.¹²

Terminology and Instruments

The following historically relevant cross-cultural terminological distinctions were described in a recent review.¹³ *Behaviors* are limited, overt and objective, while *personality* is global, inferential and projective. *Nomothetic* measures compare responses from one individual with many individuals while *idiographic* methods describe personality characteristics of one individual. *Etic*, or universal, and *derived* or *pseudo-etics* are considered culture-general in application, while *emics* identify culture-specific, cultural/racial and personality information. Combined *etic-emic* applications simultaneously describe universality and uniqueness and are useful in developing services for vocation-specific and other emergent populations.

Historically, measurement objectives and specific instruments emerged from independent paradigms determining the scope of assessment practice in the United States.¹⁴ Psychodynamic, interpersonal, multivariate and empirical paradigms were predicated on assumptions consistent with measures and normative data primarily representing majority populations. These four paradigms employed relatively small numbers of standard instruments, primarily with low inference interpretation, to identify behaviors, traits and psychological distress or psychopathology. A fifth paradigm, Personological Assessment, employed a high inference, two-hour Life Story Interview in order to recognize and focus on cultural issues.

In a survey, frequently used and highly regarded standard instruments—the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and intelligence tests—were effective for diagnosing psychopathology and describing personality in their original, normative, culture-specific populations.¹⁵ Separate courses for projective, objective and intelligence measures were considered necessary for practice in over one-half of training programs although projective assessment courses decreased markedly during the time period following the earlier survey.¹⁶ Until very recently, all of these *emic* instruments, except for the TAT, were erroneously believed by professional psychologists to be universal in application in the absence of cross-cultural or multicultural validity.¹⁷

Other ostensibly universal *etic* and *pseudo-etic* self-report trait measures were widely applied as a result of more respectable research histories. McCrae¹⁸ described the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire¹⁹ and the NEO-Personality Inventory-Revised.²⁰ However, the general traits in these measures predicted only specific skills, rather than intercultural adjustment *per se*,²¹ while

culture-specific traits, as well as samples with extreme cultural differences, were omitted.²²

Both *emic* and *etic* or *pseudo-etic* measures were not adequately adapted for multicultural and cross-cultural applications by translations, normative data, special norms and interpretive guidelines.²³ As a result, belated and necessary corrections for culture were controversial until professional psychology recognized and accepted assessment methodologies and research outcomes in cross-cultural psychology and other venues. However, implementation has not occurred to date because of inadequate training in professional psychology.

Although some recent assessment texts combine cross-cultural and multicultural assessment, they cannot compensate for the pervasive training limitations that continue to curb the usefulness of assessment practice in professional psychology.²⁶

Education and Training

Diminished Assessment Training

Quality assessment training was downgraded in professional psychology despite continued advocacy and practice with standard instruments within the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA). Students in a majority of programs were rarely exposed to psychometric deficiencies in standard tests used with multicultural populations, reliability and validity coverage was limited, and very few programs addressed norming, test or item bias, test theory and item response theory.²⁴ These deficits, omissions and inadequacies continue to characterize contemporary graduate training in professional psychology.²⁵ Although some recent assessment texts combine cross-cultural and multicultural assessment, they cannot compensate for the pervasive training limitations that continue to curb the usefulness of assessment practice in professional psychology.²⁶ In addition, training in cultural issues was not available within all phases of ethnic

minority assessment research,²⁷ and opportunities for supervised practice with multicultural populations were infrequent during practica or internship.²⁸

Recovery Initiatives

APA guidelines²⁹ encouraged culture-centered research and appropriate practice skills using a broad range of existing standardized instruments and new personality and psychopathology measures as well as interviews and other data-generating procedures. Equivalence in constructs and translations has required alternative research paradigms, method diversity and adapted psychometrics recommended by other venues and incorporated into the new assessment science. To date, however, the APA has not implemented these recommendations in professional psychology programs.

Awareness of pathology-culture confounds and diagnostic limitations resulting from excessive reliance on monocultural normative data stimulated a cultural competency focus in professional psychology assessment training data during the 1970s. Originally present primarily in counseling psychology, cultural competency *per se* has been identified in 27 exemplary clinical, counseling and school programs.³⁰ These programs recognized the complementary nature of qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as both high and low inference interpretation of standard and new measures. Recent APA publications now uniformly emphasize culturally competent practice.³¹

Despite APA endorsement and these recent publications, disseminating cultural knowledge in specific professional psychology programs remains a work in progress. Research and practice are still relatively independent, and a legacy of false dichotomies continues to artificially separate scientists and practitioners.³² Historically, knowledge was acquired largely by distal variables, providing inadequate and insufficient linkages to processes resulting in effective assessment and psychotherapy. By contrast, proximal variables represented by concrete operations and strategies must be identified, examined and consistently applied in training. By transforming cultural knowledge represented by distal variables to proximal variables, research and practice become a continuous and unified process.³³

Cultural Competency

Culture is increasingly perceived as central for describing and understanding human beings within a global international perspective.³⁴ In the United States, professional psychologists were encouraged to become

Culture is increasingly perceived as central for describing and understanding human beings within a global international perspective.³⁴

culturally competent for therapy and intervention on the basis of relevant courses, internships, continuing education and working with multicultural persons. In a national survey, however, predominantly white practitioners exposed to these educational experiences did not use professional development resources, seek culture-specific consultation or make referrals.³⁵ Instead, 52 recommended competencies were generally flouted. As a result, 35 percent of their clients who were cultural minorities received minimal benefit from relevant skills or empathic relationships. Contemporary professional psychology training has been criticized as ineffective because routine evaluation of training outcomes for empathy, intercultural sensitivity and extraversion was omitted.³⁶

A common European framework for competence training emphasized selection of students for abilities and personality characteristics including: emotional intelligence and stability, conscientiousness, friendliness, flexibility and self-confidence. Six key professional role categories described individual, group, organizational and situational assessment competencies. Twenty necessary primary competencies were identified as essential for practice in health, work and education contexts.³⁷ The European Diploma in Psychology specifies six training years and endorses “a person-focused common knowledge scientist-practitioner approach within an emerging international consensus on the nature and practice of psychological science.”³⁸

An ABC cultural competency model incorporates “affective (motivational), behavioral (skills), and cognitive (knowledge) aspects.”³⁹ These authors recognize that “the scientific status of cultural competency remains a many-splendored albeit equivocal construct beset by problems.”⁴⁰ Trait measures of cultural competency consistent with this model were selected for psychometric adequacy.

A third cultural competency model, adapted from an earlier triadic model, contains attributes, construct dimensions, training modalities and outcomes.⁴¹

The California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS)⁴² was developed from an item pool assembled from five earlier measures and contained factors representing multicultural knowledge, awareness of cultural barriers, sensitivity to consumers and multicultural skills including assessment and interviewing. A comprehensive training program was developed for pre-post evaluation in mental health agencies.⁴³

Training Venues

The presence of pervasive cultural issues and awareness of the need for culturally competent professional practice during the 1970s and 1980s in counseling psychology, clinical psychology, cross-cultural psychology, organizational psychology/management and social work has profound implications for assessment research and practice contributions. These venues differed in how they recognized and incorporated training in quantitative methods, research design and sophisticated methodologies.

Counseling psychology recognized that a research basis incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods for multicultural training necessitated interviewing in addition to assessment instruments. Clinical psychology embodied, elaborated and preserved Boulder model scientific values that included standard assessment instruments but was skeptical of the necessity for adapting these instruments for multicultural populations. Cross-cultural psychology independently developed a repertoire of revised and new standard instruments, recognized research and practice continuity and interpenetration, and focused on culturally competent research and practice. Organizational psychology/management focused on personality variables in vocational assessment and employed the term “intercultural competency” to describe benefit from all available methodologies in constructing these instruments. Child care professionals applied a cross-cultural imperative to their multicultural populations of interest in the United States. The subsequent social work system included a broad spectrum of personality assessment instruments.

Differences between clinical and counseling psychology have become more diluted over time in professional psychology. This uneasy union has been increasingly responsive to the development of sophisticated and culturally competent assessment instruments. These discipline-specific islands of awareness originally had different conceptualizations of psychopathology and personality but may now be described as having a common, culturally competent frame of reference.⁴⁴ The fol-

lowing sections reexamine and elaborate the relevance of these venues for cross-cultural vocational selection.

Counseling Psychology

In the 1970s, a non-medical approach to cultural competency training introduced in counseling psychology emphasized individual differences and psychological development.⁴⁵ Research-derived knowledge was used to tailor professional services for culturally distinct groups within a multicultural competency training aegis. Implementing this training required an extended range of methodologies, qualitative designs and measures of *emic*, or culture-specific, cultural/racial identity information.⁴⁶ Counseling psychology advocates social justice training as an ethical imperative also present as a hallmark of social work practice. Social justice invokes respect for clients and communities, defines practice responsibilities for underserved groups and endorses social action as a means to transform social policy.⁴⁷

Counseling psychology recognizes the Cultural Assessment Interview for independent application as an assessment method.⁴⁸ This interview provides a conceptual framework for gathering and integrating data with 11 content components for cultural assessment:

1. Problem conceptualization and attitudes toward helping
2. Cultural identity
3. Acculturation status
4. Family structure and expectations
5. Extent of racial or cultural identity development
6. Experiences with bias
7. Immigration issues
8. Existential or spiritual issues
9. Counselor characteristics and behavior
10. Implications of cultural factors between the counselor and the client
11. Summary of cultural factors with relevance for diagnosis, case conceptualization and treatment

It should be noted that the development of culture-focused interviews has not been seriously undertaken by clinical psychology due to a historic reliance on standard assessment instruments and because interview training has generally been meager or unavailable.

Developed explicitly for multicultural and cross-cultural assessment, a less formal supplemental interview contains three questions:⁴⁹

1. What is the reason for this assessment? This question elicits culture-specific and setting-

The development of culture-focused interviews has not been seriously undertaken by clinical psychology due to a historic reliance on standard assessment instruments and because interview training has generally been meager or unavailable.

specific test-taking expectations as well as attitudes relevant to anticipated cooperativeness, responsiveness to feedback, adequacy of data and validity of inferences.

2. How typical or representative of the culture is the client? This question examines differences between individual and group cultural identity, and invokes acculturation, educational and social class or social role information, exposing traditional health-illness and mind-body relationship beliefs, as well as loci of control and responsibility.
3. What is the cultural orientation of the client? This question requires moderator data describing cultural identity, acculturation status and outcome information, particularly for first and second generations, recent immigrants and sojourners.

This information is useful for decisions to employ group-specific measures and suggest cautious interpretation of standard tests, non-standard measuring formats and qualitative interviews that permit direct incorporation of relevant cultural contents. In addition, a review of the Who-Are-You or Twenty Statements Test provides responses that facilitate cultural identity description.

Clinical Psychology

In the late 1940s following World War II, clinical psychology was allied with psychoanalysis, and subsequently with psychiatry, in Veterans Administration Hospitals. Trained in Boulder model programs, these psychologists were responsible for diagnosing individual

psychopathology using standard assessment instruments in medical settings. As these psychologists proliferated in other community settings and private practice, psychotherapy became an additional primary professional responsibility. These psychologists were frequently conservative, with strong belief in the potential universality of their preferred low inference, *etic* instruments and available monocultural normative data. As a result, many practitioners remained relatively insulated from cultural adaptations of standard tests and were unable to appreciate the meaning and importance of race and ethnicity issues.

MMPI-2 cross-cultural relevance has been examined for methodological issues including linguistic equivalence, standard and identity norms, construct equivalence, and predictor bias, as well as disputed adaptations.⁵⁰ Flawed MMPI-2 psychometric properties including constructs, items and norms were recognized in the restructured MMPI-2RF.⁵¹ This revision reinterprets the nature and contents of psychopathology consistent with clinical utility in the forthcoming DSM-5 revision.⁵² The MMPI-2RF contains 338 items, nine validity scales, 51 empirically validated scales and eight restructured clinical scales. Assessment of population differences in new groups can be examined with this revision.

The Rorschach Inkblot Method (RIM)⁵³ employed Rorschach Comprehensive System (CS) applications, providing evidence that available normative data and response components could be used for cross-cultural and multicultural interpretation within a set of interpretive procedures.⁵⁴ Bornstein⁵⁵ describes RIM as a performance-based model with established basic psychometrics focused on integrating process and outcome validity. RIM provided a rationale for the new Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS) developed by Meyer, Viglione, Mihura, Erard and Erdberg⁵⁶ that provides a clinically rich, evidence-based, internationally focused system transforming CS practice. Fifteen international, adult normative samples were collected and translations into multiple languages are in progress.

The TAT has a long history of cross-cultural usage by anthropologists as a universal or *etic* method with many sets of pictures and standards for interpretation that are useful in training, research and practice.⁵⁷ As an idiographic method, the TAT provides a richness of clinically relevant content concerning implicit attitudes, cognitions, emotions and need states. The TAT is unlikely to be offered as a separate course due to trivialization and oversimplification despite a wide range of available objective scores.⁵⁸ A recent handbook presented objec-

These major standard instruments—MMPI, Rorschach and TAT—have been modified, adapted and reexamined by translations, normative data, special norms and interpretive guidelines for multicultural applications.⁶⁰

tive clinical scores as well as an *etic-emic* psychocultural system.⁵⁹

These major standard instruments—MMPI, Rorschach and TAT—have been modified, adapted and reexamined by translations, normative data, special norms and interpretive guidelines for multicultural applications.⁶⁰ The usefulness of revised tests and new instruments has been improved by recently available culture-general and culture-specific moderators for acculturation status and culture-specific instruments.⁶¹

Historically, assessment training for practice with multicultural and cross-cultural populations was limited, and only four culturally sensitive courses were reported.⁶² The larger issue of incorporating training for cultural competence in all phases of graduate education, described in a 2002 conference reported by Rodolfa et al.,⁶³ was subsequently examined in detail with program examples.⁶⁴ The cube model proposed six foundational competency domains (including individual and cultural diversity) and six functional competency domains (including assessment/diagnosis/conceptualization), which are applied during each of five stages of professional development. Despite examples of culturally competent programs described earlier,⁶⁵ multicultural education to date remains elusive, unsystematic and infrequently implemented.

Cross-Cultural Psychology

During the 1970s, cross-cultural psychology described cultural equivalence in universally applicable instruments, genuine *etics* combined with presumed universals or *pseudo-etics* of undemonstrated equivalence in national settings.⁶⁶ Assessment across cultures was described within ability, personality and vocational settings,

and ethical issues were identified in test selection, application and interpretation.⁶⁷ Contemporary examinations of methodological issues suggest their complexity and importance.⁶⁸ However, multicultural and cross-cultural psychologists require competence in sophisticated methodologies, as well as familiarity with the range, availability, quality and utilities of *etic*, *imposed etic* and *emic* instruments.

Several exemplar instruments developed by cross-cultural psychologists exceed minimum psychometric adequacy standards consistent with cultural knowledge, personality characteristics and specific vocational objectives. These instruments include the Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS)⁶⁹ and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)⁷⁰ that measure specific traits;⁷¹ The 55-item ICAPS measures Critical Thinking, Emotional Regulation, Flexibility and Openness as components predicting intercultural adjustment. The 78-item MPQ measures Cultural Empathy, Emotional Stability, Flexibility, Open-Mindedness and Social Intelligence traits relevant for intercultural adjustment represented by psychological and social well-being in several cultures.

Organizational Psychology/Management

Management training in the 1970s initiated development of a variety of training methods and an extensive repertoire of instruments for selecting employees for intercultural competency training prior to international assignments. Fowler and Mumford⁷² described training methods including role-plays, contrast-culture, simulation games, critical incidents, culture assimilator and case studies. A topical review of a full range of available intercultural training instruments is also available.⁷³ Although their primary objective is workplace adaptation and demonstration of comfortable relationships in foreign work environments, these instruments frequently provide cogent examples of measurement and human qualities identified with moral character and integrity.

A major organizational psychology research arena was responsible for the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), a measure of the capacity for effective functioning in culturally diverse settings with “strong psychometric properties and construct validation evidence.”⁷⁴ The 20-item CQS was developed from a model positing differential relationships with effectiveness outcomes of cultural judgment and decision-making, cultural adaptation and performance in culturally diverse settings.⁷⁵ The CQS is composed of metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral factors,⁷⁶ and it was preceded by a

non-academic intelligence conceptualization and research history.⁷⁷

Social Work

During the late 1980s, mental health, child welfare, education, health and juvenile justice personnel in counseling psychology, clinical psychology and psychiatry advocated for comprehensive children's mental health services within a culturally competent interdisciplinary system of care. Sophisticated personality assessment research and training in social work originating in cross-cultural psychology was subsequently integrated with practical community applications.⁷⁸ Social work benefited from this early awareness by recognizing the need for a major assessment presence.⁷⁹ Assessment employed ongoing, multiple methods including cognitive-behavioral, eco-behavioral, family systems, life history, multimodal, problem-solving, psychosocial, solution-focused, strengths and task-centered models. These methods included interviewing, behavioral observations, reviews of written documents and a variety of measurement instruments. The models required shared, brief, time-limited, collaborative processing of information on impinging social and interpersonal environments using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The cultural competency perspective has lucid proponents in social work⁸⁰ and multicultural ethical issues have been examined,⁸¹ although cultural competency has not been routinely or uniformly incorporated in training programs.⁸²

Assessment Science

Globalization afforded opportunities in professional psychology for assessment training, practice and research with multicultural and cross-cultural populations.⁸³ Cultural issues in assessment research are now coalescing into a contemporary frame of reference for assessment practice to be recognized as a new assessment science. This autonomous, “person in culture” assessment model fosters intercultural competency training⁸⁴ by recognizing the potential interrelatedness of new and revised standard instruments and effectiveness indicators (for example, communication competence, cultural empathy and communication behavior). A renaissance of quality test construction and methodology is needed to integrate assessment science with contemporary APA training aspirations that are designed to reconcile science and practice. This integration can have positive societal outcomes as part and parcel of an expanded human science.⁸⁵

This paper examined instruments and methods developed in professional psychology, cross-cultural psy-

chology, organizational psychology/management and social work that are consistent with assessment science and are useful for describing personality characteristics and evaluating individuals. These areas have all contributed new instruments and revisions of standard instruments recently validated for use with culturally diverse populations. These arenas provide a number of psychometrically sophisticated instruments measuring personality attributes that are relevant to the selection of clergy.

Selection of Clergy

A model for selection of clergy was suggested in *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*⁸⁶ and augmented by McGlone, Ortiz and Viglione in "Cause for Hope and Concern, A Commentary on the Vatican Statements."⁸⁷ McGlone elaborated on the importance and relevance of key candidate capacities for intimacy and affective maturity by self-awareness, internal locus of control, self-acceptance, growing self-esteem, establishing healthy identity, dealing with change, relational flexibility and healthy solitude. Awareness of strengths and weaknesses in oneself and others during formation was contained within a holistic approach to "body, mind, spirit, social, cognitive, and affective dimensions."⁸⁸ These initial documents eloquently express the necessity, importance and difficulty of developing rigorous psychometrics while simultaneously emphasizing the clinical skill and wisdom needed by formators.

Formators need such instruments to describe personality characteristics associated with moral integrity. They also require training in clinical skills so they can maximize relevant interpretations of these instruments.

These measurement issues suggest the necessity to conceptualize and develop new instruments in addition to recognizing and including existing instruments. Instruments were proposed for evaluation of affective maturity, healthy intimacy, and relationship quality and

competence. Formators need such instruments to describe personality characteristics associated with moral integrity. They also require training in clinical skills so they can maximize relevant interpretations of these instruments. In addition, interviewing contents are needed to evaluate identity, including acculturation process and status, as well as relevant cultural beliefs.

Proposal

A proposed model for assessing vocation formation includes selection and outcome evaluation designed to reconcile assessment research, training and practice domains. This model contains descriptions of desirable components:

1. Interview and Therapeutic Assessment
2. Standard professional psychology instruments
3. Instruments developed in cross-cultural psychology and organizational psychology/management
4. Moral integrity measurements
5. Personal growth evaluations

Additional essential contents of these components, including evaluating English-language proficiency, are suggested for different configurations that maintain a four-hour time limit that is optimal for intelligent and motivated adults. An ongoing research process is necessary to examine data collection procedures by formators, leading to formal discussions of assessment contents and outcome evaluation within a test-retest format. These elements can potentially constitute a formation process that, when conducted by skilled individuals, can provide relevant, reliable and valid data for the selection and evaluation of clergy.

Interview contents selected and modified from the Cultural Assessment Interview⁸⁹ encourage personal history linkages to existential and spiritual issues in identity development and relationship with formators. Therapeutic Assessment contributes a relationship model that maximizes rapport and mobilizes empathy by fostering a collaborative test-interpretation dialogue.⁹⁰

Standard instruments include the new *Rorschach Performance Assessment System* (R-PAS), MMPI-2RF and selected TAT cards. The R-PAS assesses acculturation status and has scores associated with externally assessed personality characteristics and interactive behaviors. The MMPI-2-RF restructured the MMPI-2 by nine validity scales that evaluate defenses and response sets and contain revisions for personal growth. TAT card selections for interpretive hypotheses include: (1, 2, 19) family re-

relationships/dynamics; (3) central value; (7BM) father-son relationship; (11) symbolized current problem; (12M) attitudes about receiving help; (17BM) and symbolized current problems.⁹¹

Measuring cultural intelligence (CQS) to determine effective functioning in culturally diverse settings is essential, economical, reliable and valid, and this instrument should be routinely applied in selecting and evaluating clergy. ICAPS and MPQ include measurements for judgment and adaptability in diverse cultural settings. ICAPS measures critical thinking, emotional regulation, flexibility and openness. The MPQ measures cultural empathy, emotional stability, flexibility, open-mindedness and social intelligence. Decisions need to be made regarding the development and validation of short forms, including specific scales contained in these instruments.

“Personal Soundness,” a term coined by Barron,⁹² refers to good moral character and includes compassion, fairness and honesty. A meta-analysis derived from 43 measures by Ones, Viswesvaran and Schmidt⁹³ found positive relationships between integrity and agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness traits. Unfortunately, these results were compromised by faking, social desirability responding and questionable data. The “Personal Soundness” concept is an early attempt to approximate moral integrity that includes intimacy and affective maturity.⁹⁴ Measures of moral integrity need to be conceptualized, constructed, validated and published in a peer-reviewed assessment journal and subsequently used in the selection test battery.

Personal growth issues are thus complex, difficult to measure directly and probably can only be understood and communicated by inferences from a variety of data resources.

Post-trauma personal growth instruments are available as indicators of holistic health potential.⁹⁵ These instruments have not been applied in vocational selection, probably because they assume a history of personal trauma. Instead, the following conceptualization

describes human growth: a personal responsibility with external signs of internal self-development, preferable because future-orientation is limited by internal and external growth constraints. Growth is painful and always involves risk, crisis, hurt and anguish. Occurring in the present and interfacing with processes in other persons, growth is directed toward mutual interdependence. Political climates in both authentic and inauthentic societies affect personal growth and are experienced as “quality of life” within the context of conditions that encourage or impair humanization.⁹⁶ Personal growth issues are thus complex, difficult to measure directly and probably can only be understood and communicated by inferences from a variety of data resources.



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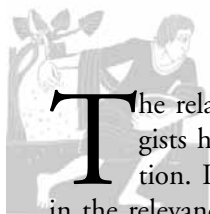
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A Delicate Balance: Clergy-Psychologist Collaboration in Service of Priestly Formation

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The relationship between the clergy and psychologists has rarely proved simple or lacked contention. In recent years there has been new interest in the relevance of psychology to priestly formation, stimulated by the publication in 2008 of the *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood* (the “Guidelines”). There have been conferences at Alma in Michigan, as well as those organized by the St. John Vianney Center in Pennsylvania; regular conversations within the newly formed Catholic Psychotherapy Association; and a large-scale study of psychological assessment conducted in 2010 by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). All of these have brought welcome information on, amongst other things, the nature of a Christian anthropology and discussion of developmental markers.

Despite the renewed interest, I suggest that collaboration “in the field” still remains a distinctly mixed affair. A priest colleague who attended one of the conferences above, recalled that, halfway through the proceedings, it dawned on him that all the psychologists seemed to be sitting on one side of the room and all of the formators on the other.¹ When the most enthusiastic collaborators in the country would rather not sit next to one another, there is a problem. If the collaboration merely concerned an occasional psychological assessment, perhaps this would not matter; however, what of the psychologist who seeks to establish a presence within a seminary faculty or diocese, or offer long-term assessment or consultative services to the church? The Guidelines require psychologists to develop a degree of moral, anthropological and spiritual integration (§6) in their work, which is a radical notion in the profession (Ana-

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trella, 2008). Collaboration seems unlikely to emerge without the help and friendship of formators and the possibility of long-term working relationships that place psychology at the service of the church.

In his recent book, *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries* (2011), psychologist Robert Kugelman outlines deep-seated traditions across much of the twentieth century that are seen to have produced antagonisms, misunderstandings and instability in the relationship between psychology and the church in America. Len Sperry (2012a) provided a helpful account of the immediate background on collaborative relationships and suggested ways in which certain themes in psychology may have impacted priestly formation. What interests me here is how the controversies and difficulties might affect the collaborative relationship itself.

In this article I will examine past and present collaborations to explore how problems might appear in practice. The danger is that such a condensation of conflict might lead even the most enthusiastic collaborator to experience a kind of learned helplessness, yet the capacity to consider *in print* the vicissitudes of what

goes on in a relationship is surely a necessary foundation for change. I will first provide a context to my inquiries before looking at ways in which clergy-psychologist collaboration may be thought overenthusiastic and under-enthusiastic in the area of priestly formation. To conclude, I will share some brief reflections on where collaborators might go from here.

Context for the Inquiry

The manner in which clergy and psychologists relate is a neglected field of study that has long intrigued, and indeed, troubled me. When I first informed priest friends of mine that I would study clinical psychology, I was greeted with concern and a kind of anxious disdain. I was given *Goodbye Good Men* by Michael Rose (2002), a collection of colorful and disturbing accounts of seminary life. I learned of mental health professionals being allotted a role in the seminary likened to that occupied by psychiatrists in the Soviet Union. A man was sent to therapy for reprogramming to a “party line” of acceptable attitudes by a faculty of the “hard left,” and they were very often never seen again. It left me wondering whether seminarians dreaded psychologists as Russians did the *gulags*. Michael Rose’s work did not seem obscure; many of the seminarians and clergy I spoke to seemed to have read it—indeed it was not too difficult to find many who were convinced they were in it.

Whilst I was training, I sought to assure the clergy and seminarians I met that I was in a Catholic program, but this only seemed to make things worse. I was told a somewhat gruesome tale of seminarians being made to sit in a circle on the floor around a religious sister (who was also a therapist) passing around an orange. Each would peel a piece of it off before having to reveal secrets about their sex lives. This activity was begun, in graphic detail, by the nun. Could this be true? Prior to commencing my doctorate, I met only one priest who was particularly enthusiastic about psychology (a superior in a religious house), and he was wildly enthusiastic, proposing that all seminarians needed compulsory counseling, as did most priests, and in particular every bishop he had ever met. I wondered whether this dear man, with his thick-rimmed 1970s-style tinted specs, was to be my only clerical friend, and if so, would he prove to be more of a liability than an ally?

Of course, the clergy are not alone in contributing to a rich tradition of mutual disparagement. Those who are interested in the role of religion within clinical practice may soon be engaged by colorful stories of the cognitive theorist, Albert Ellis. Purportedly, it was once

pointed out to Ellis in a debate that whilst most clients in America were Christians, most therapists were atheists or agnostics, and this must be leading to mistakes in treatment and probably highly unethical attacks on faith. Ellis remained unmoved: the patients were sick and, therefore, religious; the therapists were healthy and, therefore, were not. What did these people want?² It was not a view that appeared unrepresentative in my studies. Early in my training in London, I recall listening to a clinical psychologist who sought to distance clinical practice from the legacy of Sigmund Freud. He struggled for a suitably damning descriptive phrase: Freudian thinking was so bizarre and unattractive, he proclaimed, it could only be compared, in all sincerity, to religion. No one complained. Freud would have been livid.

Despite this, there is room for optimism. The relationship with, and use of, psychology has suffered, along with other aspects of the life of the church, in the polarizations of the post-conciliar period. However, perhaps a greater stability and sense of balance has been found within seminaries over the last twenty years. Certainly there have been some positive movements in psychology. Multicultural and postmodern sentiments have, for some practitioners and theorists, led to the qualification of the inheritance of early twentieth century positivist structures. The pleasing factor is that clinicians in particular have come to find the person simply more mysterious and complex than a natural science paradigm or the dogmas of personality theory have been able to contain. Empirical studies show the association between religion and mental health, in contradiction to the assumptions of many early theorists, to be at worst neutral and often, positive.³ Leading figures, particularly clinicians who take a more relational or “depth” perspective, may recognize the need for a variety of philosophical assumptions about human nature and psychological systems in approaching the person.⁴ There are therapists who specialize in religious work that strive to be “receptive to the meanings of psychological difficulties within a broad and transcendent context” (Shafranske & Sperry, 2005, p. 25).

Nevertheless, it remains that I am not entirely convinced collaboration is much easier. Is it a question of old rivalries, personal biases and narrow agendas? It would be extraordinary if there weren’t struggles with anthropology. Even when anthropological foundations are agreed upon, as the Guidelines mentioned above require—and there are some helpful modern formulations (Brugger, 2009)—a Christian anthropology proclaims the mysterious unity of the person. The essence of

The Guidelines state that both formator and psychologist are required to work only from their own expertise (§§5–6), yet neither the distinctions between the disciplines nor the area for cooperation are always clear cut in application; the way forward is influenced by the capacity of each to contribute to a balanced integration.

“personalness” has been seen to be “always to point beyond” (Ware, 2008, p. x). The psychological, moral and spiritual dimensions interact in fluid ways. Man is experiential, developmental and social, situated in time and relationship. Anthropology is not something that can be tied up or applied in a rationalistic fashion. The Guidelines state that both formator and psychologist are required to work only from their own expertise (§§5–6), yet neither the distinctions between the disciplines nor the area for cooperation are always clear cut in application; the way forward is influenced by the capacity of each to contribute to a balanced integration. Ortiz & McGlone (2010) have made admirable strides in providing a framework for this intellectual conversation. Yet, the process is so delicate: what happens when the conversation is subject to less than optimal conditions?

Several years ago, I set about trying to read everything I could find on the practical difficulties in collaboration between psychologists and the clergy, particularly relating to priestly formation. The articles were small in number and often obscure: indeed, it took far more time to assemble the collection than to read it. I then conducted a small study, interviewing formators and the clinicians who work with them, to explore whether anything had changed.⁵

The literature relates a tale of collaborators who are all too willing to deviate from a balanced Christian anthropology and to oversimplify and reduce the person. Early in the relationship between psychology and

the church, two religious psychologist sisters, Walters & O’Hara (1953), identified two errors: first, the secular formulations of psychology may be accepted with insufficient discernment, disregarding the anthropological and moral points of difference; second, psychology may be totally rejected because aspects of it are untrue, thereby negating what it contains of value. Both can appear in relation to collaborative relationships, though what is interesting is the very human context in which they are found: psychology and formation may be used or manipulated to meet personal or professional ends or to support preexisting anthropological distortions.

The seminarian’s personality needs to be a bridge and not an obstacle (*Pastores dabo vobis*, § 43), yet how far might an inappropriate use of psychology subject him to micromanagement?

Overenthusiasm in the Collaborative Relationship

From the earliest days of the use of psychology in formation contexts, it was noted that a seminarian’s “emotional problems” may not be a “primary” concern in referrals to a psychologist (Muldoon, 1965, p. 43). This position seems to be true even before Rose’s reports of Soviet-style policies of a “hard left” faculty, and is far from unknown after it. A seminarian’s ability to freely accept priestly formation is always a legitimate topic, yet is it the case that any seminarian who has “a little push” is seen by the clinician or formator to have a pathology (Kennedy, 1964, p. 43)? In recent times, two formators and a psychologist, Jerome Bracken, John Harvey and Maria Valdes (2008), observed from their own experience where there is a complaint that a man is insufficiently “pluralistic” the man may suffer from obsessive-compulsive type thinking, yet equally the complaint may also reflect conflicts concerning differences that are generational, theological or simply the result of a clash of personalities. Questions arise whether these areas can be effectively separated in the presentation of the seminarian and, if so, is it clear which ones the psychologist is being asked to address? The seminarian’s personality

needs to be a bridge and not an obstacle (*Pastores dabo vobis*, § 43), yet how far might an inappropriate use of psychology subject him to micromanagement?

Moral and spiritual issues may be quickly overlooked and psychologists may take on unrealistic expectations. The lay psychologist Paul Muldoon (1965) critiques those formators who “subtly avoid... responsibility” to a candidate by “relying too much” on psychological interventions (p. 49), yet equally admits struggling with the temptation to believe he can fulfill their hopes. In anthropological terms, the man’s capacity for self-direction—in this case, responsibility for his own formation—as well as his particular nature and dignity are being undermined. Problems arise either by ignorance of an appropriate role for psychology or from wishful thinking, as featured in the discussion of Fr. Gerard Francik, the vocation director in Baltimore, and his collaborating psychologist, Dr. Ronald Karney, (2010) at the first *A Necessary Conversation* conference. In my own study, several formators and clinicians seemed highly enthusiastic about psychology as a tool to increase control. A psychological evaluation would provide a template for growth for each man in his first year of formation. This would be obligatory, with limited alterations, given that the collaborators knew what was best for the seminarian. Rather than to provide treatment, counselors would be employed at a later stage in order to unearth more information to disclose to formators. I recall from my interviews that some formators had a palpable anxiety, feeling pressure to gain momentum towards formation goals and to do something to avoid the risks of resurgent scandal. Are the possibilities offered by assessment and the nature of counseling being misunderstood? Are we in danger of an anthropological mistake here?

Of course, enthusiasm for psychology need not entail being highly directive. Even if sex therapy with oranges is a thing of the past, secular humanism remains. The Jesuit psychiatrist Charles Shelton (1994) warned that wherever there is an “indiscriminate mixing” of spirituality and humanist psychology, wherein “the subjective self becomes the moral reference point and redemptive suffering is reduced to self-serving victimhood,” there is a danger that the church’s understanding of “grace, forgiveness and sin” will be reduced “to mere psychological platitudes” (p. 43, 47–48). Much has been said about the impact of Encounter Groups and the effects of Rogerian psychology on seminaries and religious orders (Reidy, 1970, Coulson, 1994; Kugelman, 2005). Likely, there will always remain a temptation to over-stress or isolate emotional regulation. Muldoon (1965)

noted that it does little good to indulge a seminarian in his emotional dysfunction such that a sick role brings such “pleasure...in the additional attention” as to make the seminarian reluctant to abandon it (p. 48).

My own study of contemporary attitudes, although on a very small scale, provides little indication that secular humanism is, in itself, a pressing threat. Although most interviewees could recount tales of the overly-sentimental and indulgent use of psychology from twenty or thirty years ago, no one was able or willing to cite an instance of this kind of work in the present time. I wondered what function the telling and re-telling of such tales offers. Is it a defense against a return to abusive practices? Or does it fulfill a different function: to defend against the challenge of addressing difficult psychological questions or collaborating with clinicians of a contemporary rather than a bygone age?

If psychology is used in a way that taps into or promotes anthropological distortions, it does not serve formation well, and it arguably undermines the case for the usefulness of psychology and the value of collaboration.

Perhaps what is most pertinent here is that the misuse of psychology, whether from a secular humanist or behavioral perspective, can set up destructive tensions. If psychology is used in a way that taps into or promotes anthropological distortions, it does not serve formation well, and it arguably undermines the case for the usefulness of psychology and the value of collaboration.

Under-enthusiasm in the Collaborative Relationship

An alternative approach involves the “underuse” of psychology. Pathological problems amongst seminarians may be ignored or go undetected when individuals simply do what they are told and are “not a problem.” Prior to the Council, psychologists saw docility—due to a lack of emotional development rather than spiritual

maturity—as the really serious danger (D’Arcy, 1964). It seems significant that the majority of those accused of child abuse emerged from this period (John Jay College Research Team, 2011). Further, depression may often be hidden in compliance. A lack of interior coherence produces unhappiness, which is only exacerbated by not being expressed, so that a silent misery too often becomes “the cost of conscious decency” (Hinsie, 1945, cited in Braceland & Stock, 1963/1966, p. 281).

It seems likely this is still a problem, though, by its nature, it is difficult to prove. A study of who is dispensed from ministry, as well as incidents of serious emotional or behavioral problems amongst clergy, in the five years after ordination might provide some indication of the current scope of the problem; however, few dioceses or religious orders appear willing to have these figures examined.⁶ C. S. Lewis (1960/1991) pointed out in *The Four Loves* that there is a perennial danger of “mistaking the decays of nature for the increase of grace” (p. 118). My own study includes one seminary where counseling is freely available for any man to attend in confidence. Notably, the clinician involved estimates that, at some point, almost every seminarian chooses to take advantage of counseling during his time at the seminary, even if only for a consultation. The seminary is not noted for being theologically progressive, and the psychologist is an orthodox practicing Catholic seeking to be at the service of the formators and spiritual directors. The level of interest in counseling is attributed to cultural “deterioration” and interpersonal and developmental failings. Not all under-enthusiastic collaborations are passive. Some vocations directors are, at times, accused of being positively unwilling to be too discerning. The most common complaint from the clinicians I interviewed was against vocation directors who wished the clinician to tell them what they needed to do to “get men through,” rather than work with the problems the psychologist observed. The troubled seminarian seems less likely to be “flying under the radar” as walking in the front door. Extreme pressure on vocation directors combined with a lack of training undoubtedly contribute to this situation. Yet it is difficult to believe, given the scandals and the evident anxiety concerning safety, that this issue has not been better resolved.

At the best of times, convincing formators of the value of psychology might be thought a difficult task. Work in counseling is often preventative – preventing the worst behaviors and problems from happening – and this benefit is difficult to quantify. It is the nature of the psychologists’ role in assessment or

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counseling to reveal the unmet needs and problems of their patients as much as their strengths. As stated, it is almost impossible for the clinician not to venture into areas of concern shared with formators, which have clear moral and spiritual implications. Psychological assessment may be expected to bring a useful degree of prediction as well as a number of hypotheses; however, at times, it may provide no more than this. Joyce Rid-dick (1994), a therapist and religious sister who worked on staff in seminaries, described her job in terms of repeated assertions to formators that non-intensive therapy could be effective only under certain conditions: when the man is in some way open to engaging the therapeutic process; when part of a broader, long-term program including “solid modeling” and supportive healthy relationships; and where the seminarian “bring(s) his problems to reflective and intercessory prayer” (p. 82). A vocation director or formator who is already infuriated by a seminarian’s lack of cooperation and elusiveness may not welcome the limitations of a psychologist’s ability to bring certainty or change in the given time frame.

Further, when psychologists promise more than they can deliver, or collaborations involve or develop a distortion of Christian anthropology as described above, it is easier to dismiss the use of psychology. The child abuse crisis deserves mention here. Although bishops, formators and psychologists were all criticized in the reports by the John Jay College Research Team and the National Review Board, it has left something of a wound in the church with regard to psychology. Recently qualified, one clinician featured in my study recalled a tongue-lashing he received from a senior cleric concerning the bad advice the cleric had been given by psychologists—none of whom the clinician had ever even met.

Of course, as indicated, the problem with engaging psychologists in a more searching role is that formators are right to be highly skeptical, indeed they

must be. Sperry (2000) warns clergy of the spirit of “an age when psychological explanations for complex realities are often uncritically reified and accepted” (p. 1). Even psychologists who are enthusiastic Christians may have uncritically accepted “trends in contemporary psychology” during their training, which are based in “anthropological presuppositions that cannot be reconciled with Christian anthropology” (John Paul II, 1987, §2). In this respect psychologists need the assistance of working in close mutually respectful relationships with formators. One clinician I interviewed simply admitted he was “embarrassed for his profession” at the poverty of reports he had read from his colleagues, who seemed both unwilling and incapable of engaging with a Catholic worldview or legitimate requests of the church. It remains that for all the enthusiasm for multiculturalism, philosophy, religion or spirituality, collaboration with the clergy form almost no part of the vast majority of psychology degrees (Shafranske, 2001; Walker, Gorsuch, Tan, 2004; Plante, 1999).⁷ The anthropologies of clinicians may be overly pessimistic and deterministic, or overly humanistic and optimistic (Sperry, 2012c). There are also Catholic psychologists who have personal problems with the faith who would “not be good therapists at all” for work in this field (Wallace, 1985, p. 157).

Psychologists are not alone in presenting problems. Interestingly, the following material is largely drawn from formators, clergy or religious critiquing one another, and not from lay psychologists. Bracken, Valdes and Harvey (2008) note, “among some spiritual directors there is ‘pan spiritualism’ which argues that...with grace...prayer and the sacraments alone, the directee will...overcome his psychological difficulties” (p. 259). There are faculty who personally appear “uncomfortable with or feel threatened by the presence of the psychologist” (Riddick, 1994, p. 81). The Jesuit Charles Shelton (1994) believes “lingering feelings of inadequacy” may tempt priests to not make necessary referrals (p. 61). Riddick reveals she has “serious concerns” about the emotional maturity of some faculty members (p. 90). Is it, as the Jesuit psychologist and psychiatrist Luigi Rulla (1986) proposed long ago, the formation of the formators that is at times the problem, promoting a vicious circle which bedevils the work of priestly formation? In my survey one cleric recalled that, at formation meetings, there are always “some...[who] frankly have their own issues and [are] not willing to deal with them—and they project and are dismissive about any evaluation as they wouldn’t want the same attention brought to them.” Another formator suggested there are simply col-

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leagues who have not entered “into the mystery of the person themselves as formators.”

Collaborators are likely to bear the scars of failed encounters between faith and psychology. There may be insecurities of a personal and professional nature, moral infirmity and the defense of personal accommodations with emotional and moral issues, stress and overwork, and indeed psychopathology. As the interpersonal psychologist, Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), famously quipped, “we are all much more simply human than otherwise” (p. 7). At times in my survey, it seemed less a question of firm intellectual or personal opposition to deeper collaboration than simply a kind of indifference to, or lack of time or interest, in the possibilities it offered. Some formators simply reported that their order or dioceses did not accept men with emotional or psychological problems and, therefore, they did not need to collaborate very often with psychologists. There are Catholic clinicians (Linacre Institute, 2008) who, in response to the horrors of the child abuse scandal, advocate stringent standards for entry. It appears to be held that the maladjustments of seminarians should either be susceptible to coaching in virtue utilizing willpower, prayer, the example of formators and moral reasoning, or the man should not be in seminary. Therefore, collaboration with psychologists is not necessary. In the Guidelines (2008), the church certainly holds that psychologists have no intrinsically necessary role within assessment or during formation (Miller, 2012). Where human formation has laid a firm foundation, this makes perfect sense: good formators should be able to address most issues that arise. Surely most clinicians would agree that the seminary is not the place to treat major psycho-

pathologies. Yet, is this the problem?

Arguably, the real question facing the church is whether in contemporary America a seminarian does not need a clear major psychopathology to prove unresponsive to formation—he needs only to have been immersed for twenty or thirty years in emotional, moral and psychological instability—to be, in the somewhat dramatic words of John Paul II, “imprisoned by an individualistic, materialistic and hedonistic interpretation of human existence” (*Pastores dabo vobis*, §8). Surveys suggest that around half of all seminarians are now converts or re-verts, those who return to the faith after a period away from it (Coleman 2006; Hoge 2006). Indeed, one formator I interviewed put the figure at closer to 100 percent of the men in his seminary. These men can be thought significantly formed “in the world.” Gerald Coleman (2006), a psychologist and former seminary rector, reports that a pervasive individualism and inappropriate sexualization, particularly through use of the Internet, is creating serious problems in formation. Sperry (2012b) finds the very serious characterological problem of pathological narcissism on the rise in American society and “particularly in the priesthood” (p.123).

Contemporary neuroscience offers an interesting perspective. Wexler (2007) suggests neurological evidence indicates that experiences which occur in childhood and adolescence create distinct and foundational neural networks that predispose the person to process notions of the self, the other and the environment in predictable ways. Problems occur where there is a radical difference between this way of experiencing and understanding the world and the social environments available during early adulthood. In childhood, the brain is shaped according to the environment, yet this period of neuroplasticity (the flexibility to create or change neural networks in the brain) is significantly reduced by early adulthood. The individual will try to ensure the environment is coherent in relation to internal, foundational ways of understanding oneself and the world. If this cannot happen, it may result in serious dysfunction.

In relation to priestly formation, one might wonder what happens when seminarians grow up in a fragmented, overly narcissistic environment with a Catholic infrastructure that offers a somewhat ambivalent, dissipated and confused response to secularism. There will need to be continual assessment of whether the change in environment is beyond the seminarian’s capacity to adapt. This is not to reduce the issue to purely developmental or neurological features, nor to discount the role of grace and freewill; it is to note that it seems

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more likely seminarians will struggle in societies where a Catholic worldview and understanding of the priesthood appears in many ways countercultural.

Does the contemporary seminarian have the desire and capacity for the appearance of natural virtues, but lack the mental infrastructure for the necessary integration of will, intellect and affect to be truly virtuous?

Complicating the matter, candidates will often lack ‘the psychological mindedness’ or reflective capacities to fully address these questions. The capacity for reflection on oneself and others appears, according to some authorities, to be related to one’s capacity for and history of stable, early relationships of loving attachment (Bateman & Fonagy, 2012). An ‘insecure attachment style’ is one way of talking about the kind of problems produced by a fragmented society – it both impacts the capacity to think and limits the person’s capacity for intimacy and self-gift.⁸ If the rate of divorce amongst Catholics does not differ from those in the population as a whole, many seminarians may well be insecurely

attached. It is notable that interpersonal struggle is the common theme in surveys of the mental health of the clergy.⁹ Further, the literature on contemporary seminarians complains precisely that they are rigid and inflexible in their thinking.¹⁰ The question must be asked: Does the contemporary seminarian have the desire and capacity for the appearance of natural virtues, but lack the mental infrastructure for the necessary integration of will, intellect and affect to be truly virtuous? Are the early cognitive foundations for a virtuous life, the mental flexibility that facilitates change and the secure attachment style that allows for deep relationships of self-gift so weak in many candidates that the formation practices of the past are no longer as effective?

As indicated, to focus on psychologists alone distorts a Christian anthropology, works against the balanced formulation of the Guidelines (2008) and ultimately, I would suggest, harms collaboration. Formation centers on the life of grace, the influence of formators who can be fathers, the love of the seminary community, the effects of pastoral experience and prayerful support of the laity and the spiritual relationships of the men.¹¹ However, in societies that seem to be forming many young men outside a Christian understanding of human flourishing, efforts in formation can benefit from a close, collaborative relationship to provide consultation and assessment, and for the less pliant cases, counseling.

Psychologists have developed helpful ways of approaching problems with insecure attachment (Wallin, 2007) and difficulties with empathy and breadth of thinking (Bateman, & Fonagy, 2012). The importance of relationship cannot be underestimated; at times, contact with formators and spiritual directors may simply be too infrequent or general in nature. McGlone (2010) has suggested there is a gap in the system: “we don’t have templates for how to go from internal forum conversations to external forum conversations which are so artificial.” For men who are struggling most, the counseling relationship can provide the experience of intimacy and trust, the “supportive authentic relationships that [the priest must] have on a long term basis.”

Moncher & Titus (2009), clinician and theologian respectively, have concluded that, after many years of attempting to develop virtue (within a Catholic understanding of the term) in therapy with Catholic clients, “the majority...are suffering in ways that require immediate and compassionate attention at preliminary levels of motivational, emotional and relational well-being and these must be resolved in order to best situate the person to work with cognitive interventions and finally

According to one clinician interviewed in my study, the problem with the seminarians who are referred for counseling is that there is often “so much trust broken” that it has a destructive effect on the man’s capacity for relationship both with God and other people. They need to experience what close adult relationships look like and to “understand how theirs have been disordered.”

pursue fuller growth in virtue” (p. 23). According to one clinician interviewed in my study, the problem with the seminarians who are referred for counseling is that there is often “so much trust broken” that it has a destructive effect on the man’s capacity for relationship both with God and other people. They need to experience what close adult relationships look like and to “understand how theirs have been disordered.” In this sense, counseling becomes less a question of a discrete cure as one of enabling the man to engage more fully in a Christian community.

Are some dioceses or orders or seminaries really more discerning—with a more “virtuous pool” of men more resistant to secularism—or is there a degree of denial? Given developmental realities, men who tend towards insecure attachment, negative views of human nature and poor relational styles are “not likely to shift” without anything less than a radical intervention (Sperry, 2012c, p. 143). Certainly there is an argument for more pre-seminary, lay formation programs, or work with families; arguably, this does not negate the need for collaboration, it simply shifts it to an earlier period. Interestingly, in the interviews I conducted, “pre-seminary” work or work whilst a seminarian was “on a break” from seminary, were regularly cited as new areas of interest.

Several of the clinicians interviewed complained of referrals coming far too late. Referrals appeared to be a last resort or last chance for a seminarian, and these had little realistic chance of success given the number of sessions that would be funded. The purpose seems designed to confirm and offer validation to preexisting opinions that the man was unsuitable.

It seems difficult for collaborators—either formators or psychologists—to win: they intervene in intrusive and unbalanced ways or do not intervene in ways that seem to neglect opportunities or responsibilities. Personal or collective responsibility seems either over- or underemphasized. The judgments are difficult and each man provides a fresh challenge.

Mark McMinn, a founding member of the Center for Church-Psychology Collaboration at Wheaton, a Protestant theological college, suggests that where there is a minimum of mutual respect and good communication, there may be “basic” collaboration (McMinn, Aikins & Lish, 2003). More “advanced” collaboration requires a shared worldview and has greater capacity to affect the system and meet the needs of the Christian community and ministers. A basic level is currently most common in Catholic seminaries and dioceses.

Structural, financial and organizational obstacles appear to support a basic approach. As the 2010 NCEA report, “Psychological Assessment: The Testing and Screening of Candidates for Admission to the Priesthood in the U.S. Catholic Church,” made clear, the rapid turnover of vocation directors affects the quality of collaboration and assessment. One formator indicated, “we should be putting more money beforehand than afterwards” into human formation. In other words, invest before ordination rather than coping with the fees entailed by treatment centers or legal proceedings after ordination. Yet he felt that for some bishops psychology is only relevant when it is “a necessary legal requirement.” At a local level, difficulties caused by a packed seminary schedule, lack of adequate training opportunities and attempts to implement economy were cited. The almost complete lack of interest by the psychology departments of Catholic universities after Vatican II in providing clinical training that aims to integrate a Catholic anthropology and morality may be thought to have done a terrible disservice to the church. Braceland & Farnsworth (1969) warned against those faculty and clinicians who would always associate cross-disciplinary dialogue with a “reprehensible,” compromised, “less interested” faith or psychological practice. It is seen to emerge from “a basic misunderstanding of the whole human ideal” (p. 4).

I believe anything less than advanced collaboration will struggle to contain the forces described here. Bracken, Valdes & Harvey (2008) argue that the overly timid nature of contemporary collaborations struggles even to work on its own terms. They describe an “exaggerated” respect and a “fear of trespassing on the other person’s territory” (p. 257). With inadequate collaboration, “often the spiritual director and the therapist are set in opposition to one another by the directee” in a purposefully manipulative or unconscious fashion. A common scenario is that one or both professionals “back off” from a particular problem or intervention because the seminarian tells them that the other has suggested something different (p. 258). The dynamic thus enables, rather than exposes, defensive maneuvers. McGlone, Ortiz & Viglione (2009) have pointed to the inadequacies of psychological instruments available to provide a suitable assessment; however, as they point out, improvements cannot take place without a culture and tradition of close working relationships with formators.

Riddick (1994) notes that, when cynicism about a clinician’s work is repeatedly communicated, “consciously or unconsciously,” by one or two faculty or spiritual directors in a seminary, it makes the failure of a psychologist all but inevitable (p. 81). She proposes that some seminaries are incapable of supporting “the presence of the psychologists in their midst” (p. 85). A similar opinion can be found in my own contemporary survey. One psychologist, with more than twenty years of experience working in the field, believed she could work in three out of five seminaries. A little under half had faculty members or spiritual directors who would, in effect, undermine men seeking psychological assistance, and seminarians needed no encouragement to avoid having to address dysfunctional behaviors.

Concluding Remarks

Given the nature of this issues, the way forward is highly complex and beyond the immediate scope of this article. I would suggest, however, that knowing the pitfalls of a psychologist-formator relationship is an essential starting point if one is to attempt awareness of problematic patterns in one’s own attitude as well as that of one’s collaborators. Like all reform, it begins within.

In a 2005 study, Mark McMinn and his colleagues concluded that ideographic relational factors are more important in collaboration than abstract credentials—professional or religious. Success is a question of the experience of relationship, in particular, a sense of shared

mission and partnership (McMinn et al., 2005). At the first *A Necessary Conversation* conference, McGlone (2010) appealed for an increase in “gospel values,” a deepening of a “relational ontology.” I would suggest this need for increased receptivity and deeper relationship is implicit in The Guidelines. Ironically, this is precisely the kind of problem seminarians struggle with in counseling and formation: how can collaborators hope to work in this area and be unwilling or unable to develop a close working relationship?

One of the most interesting aspects of my own study was the existence of a number of flourishing col-

laborations. One priestly formator suggested that to support the inevitable difficulties that feature in collaboration, there must be “something much deeper...personal relationships which allow the tension to exist.” In sum, he proposes that “relationships are...what we are about here. It starts with a personal relationship with God and that flows into our relationship with each other.” He suggests that when personal relationship is not present in collaboration, it cannot endure, or at least not in a way that effectively serves seminarians and the church.

Edward Albee wrote a Pulitzer-winning play in 1967 entitled *A Delicate Balance*. In this domestic



FR. GREGORY HEILLE, O.P., is the latest recipient of an honorary certification in online teaching and learning conferred by the Catholic Distance Learning Network of the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association. Fr. Heille, who is Vice President and Academic Dean at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, MO (www.ai.edu), has demonstrated excellence in teaching online within the D. Min. in Preaching program that Aquinas has offered since 1993 in response, according to its website, “to the call of the U.S. Catholic bishops in their document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* for the creation of doctoral programs in preaching grounded in the Catholic tradition. To date, it remains the only such doctoral program in a Catholic institution.”

Fr. Heille’s honorary certification was initiated by a recommendation from one of his former students, Deacon Alan Bowslaugh, who teaches sacred scripture at the College of Theology at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ. Deacon Bowslaugh commended Fr. Heille for his excellence in teaching within his online courses and is now himself an online teacher following the model he learned from Fr. Heille, namely one in which the professor is highly engaged with his students in a relational manner. This is the very thing that the Catholic Distance Learning Network advances as a demonstration of excellence in online teaching given its credo that the most fundamental principle in the relationship between a teacher and a student is that they both recognize that there is one.

The materials within the Catholic Distance Learning Network’s online certification program are freely available on its website at www.catholicdistance.org. Not only can faculty acquire a strong understanding of the fundamentals of online teaching and learning through a study of those materials, they can now also cultivate an understanding of teaching research design thanks to a series of learning modules designed by William Badke, author of *Teaching Research Processes: The Faculty Role in the Development of Skilled Student Researchers* (Chandos Publishing, 2012).



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drama, the family is, needless to say, somewhat unbalanced. Each member struggles with the limitations of narrow vision and is lost in restless hopes, fears, desires and his or her own agenda. In a moment of clarity, one proclaims: "We're not a communal nation...giving but not sharing, outgoing but not friendly." In the end, the problem is that a balance seems impossible: instead of finding a delicate balance, they come to more of an interminable impasse. A Christian worldview offers so much more. Our challenge is to find a depth of relationship that can contain and soften difficult and potentially destructive forces, which surely must apply in professional as much as personal lives. In Christ and a life of grace, there is the possibility for precisely the kind of trust, understanding, openness, secure identity and, ultimately, love, which is required for collaboration. In service of the church, a more delicate balance can and must be sought.



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- religions, for this is equivalent to trying to help them live successfully with their emotional illness ” (p.15). Later Ellis (1992) revised his views to specify more dogmatic, absolutist or devout expressions of religion or secular values as a problem for mental health.
3. James Nelson (2009) provides a summary of current research in the role of religion in physical and mental health in chapters 10 and 11 of *Psychology Religion and Spirituality*. “Traditional ideas within psychology that religion is a negative force are generally false. Particularly noteworthy is the destruction of the supposedly scientific view held during much of the twentieth century that organized religion is particularly problematic and to be avoided. In fact research suggests that involvement in institutional religion may be more important to the maintenance of positive...mental health than individual spiritual practices” (p. 390).
4. “My observation [is] most therapists seek to assimilate a diversity of models and metaphors, whether or not they are controversial or conceptually problematic. Effective psychodynamic therapists...mistrust those whose professional identity centers on the defense of one way of thinking and working...[they]...value humility about the extent of contemporary understanding and...appreciate ambiguity and complexity” (McWilliams, 1990, p. 20–21).
5. Bond, A.C. (2012). *Clinical Consultation and Collaboration in a Multicultural Setting*, retrievable via the database of dissertations, Proquest, or at the library of the Institute for the Psychological Sciences, Arlington, Virginia. Chapter 5 of the dissertation features an empirical study, involving a small sample of convenience: 10 interviews conducted with formators (vocation directors, spiritual directors and formators) and clinicians working in the area of priestly formation during 2011–2012. As the participants were being asked to provide comment on current working relationships, the interviewees were granted anonymity and any identifying features removed as a condition of participating in the study. The resultant texts were submitted to analysis using Grounded Theory, a qualitative technique used in sociological and psychological studies. Restrictions on the scale of the study limit the capacity to draw conclusions relating to collaboration as a whole; however, it provides a “snapshot” of the field and a number of hypotheses emerged for further investigation.
6. At the first *A Necessary Conversation* conference, Fr. McGlone (2010) speculated from his own experience as a psychologist, the numbers who either leave within the first 5 years or have “severe psychological or sexual misconduct problems” seem likely to be “to the tune of almost, consistently... 20 to 25% of newly ordained clergy.”
7. Over 80 percent of therapists stated they rarely discussed spiritual or religious issues in training (Walker, Gorsuch, Tan, 2004). The understanding of vocation in the Guide-

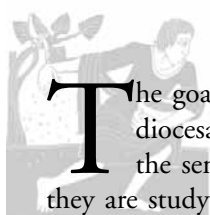
Endnotes

1. I use the term ‘formators’ to refer collectively to vocation directors, spiritual directors and those responsible in the external forum for human formation.
2. Albert Ellis (1913–2007), one of the foremost psychologists of the twentieth century, described himself as a ‘probabilistic atheist’. He contributed to a series of famous academic exchanges concerning the relationship between religion and psychology with the Mormon psychologist Allen Bergin in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* and also a number of debates at academic conferences (Slife & Whoolery, 2003). The charismatic Ellis (1980) possessed a characteristically acerbic style of delivery. He was for many years a strident critic of religion - “Obviously... the effective psychotherapist should not... go along with the patient’s religious orientation and try to help these patients live successfully with their

- lines “drastically differs” from that with which psychologists are familiar, and there are few places it may be explored in a therapist’s development (McGlone, Ortiz & Viglione, 2009, p. 18).
8. Attachment Theory was developed by a British psychoanalyst, John Bowlby (1907-1990). It is an empirical and biologically based theory which suggests that experience of close emotional relationships (or the lack of them) throughout life, though particularly during early childhood, shapes the way people subsequently think, feel and behave, often doing so at an implicit and unarticulated level (Bowlby, 1988). It was developed in part from the scientific observation that pre-verbal children (aged 2 to 3 years) appeared to have predictable patterns of emotional regulation and behavior in response to caregivers according to the kind of parenting which had occurred up until that time. An “insecure” style of attachment has been found to be strongly correlated with psychosocial problems and psychopathology. See Mikulincer, M. & Shaver, P. R. (2007) or Len Sperry (2012c) has a helpful brief summary (p. 139–141).
 9. In her survey of psychologists who work with clergy and religious Wallace (1985) found the “key issue” identified to be that of life in community and interpersonal failures (p.155). She observes “those who become sexually involved” with others are those “who have a poor community life” These “clients frequently lack the skills for productive involvement in community such as skills in listening, conflict management, affirmation and confrontation, being able to be angry...and skills for the development of relationships” Wallace notes in particular “diocesan priests particularly need to develop community supports” (p. 155). The sociologist Fr. Hemrick believes “the challenge above others” suggested by Dean Hoge’s (2006) survey of priests is that there has been a failure of love, “a new breed of loneliness” (Hemrick 2006, p. ix). Gautier, Perl & Fichter (2012) point out: “the one question in our survey that best predicts priest’s general happiness is the extent to which loneliness is a problem” (p. 68). Rossetti (2011) notes two things about priests in crisis: many have no real relationship with God, and few have had “true friendships before or any real chaste intimacy” (p. 720). His recent study found not only that the highest correlation for priests’ happiness was the perceived strength of their relationship to God ($r=.53$), the strongest predictor “by far” for that relationship, was not prayer, the Divine Office, or private devotions (though all of these were strong), but “the presence of close friendships” ($r=.46$), (p. 720).
 10. Coleman (2006) complains seminarians “suffer from a narrow technological education” with “little exposure to the humanities,” which leaves them lacking “a certain imagination” (p. 21). Jeremiah McCarthy (2012) notes often candidates come with “a debilitating form of rigidity in ordinary interpersonal encounters and pastoral settings” (p. 211), and Munroe (2006) suggests at the deepest level it appears to come down to a limited ability to be adaptive, to think flexibly and broadly. Existing degrees often seem to be in the secular field such as business, science or technology (Schuth, 1999). Katarina Schuth (1999) notes the seminarians who were converts and re-verts appeared somewhat fearful or vulnerable about losing what they had gained. Hoge (2006) agrees the converts “tend to be somewhat inflexible...since they desire security and stability in their newfound faith” (p. 12).
 11. The Catholic psychiatrist Conrad Baars (1978/2008) provided early evidence in the psychological case for the need for formators to be a “father” to the men, making up for any lack of appropriate sense of self-worth, which might be considered also in terms of “secure attachment.” Two leading researchers in attachment theory suggest there is a “positive side of religion that Freud failed to emphasize:” “faith in ‘stronger and wiser forces’” in the form of “close relationship partners” or of “figures and forces [such as] God” that help generate “felt security” (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, p. 469). Interestingly, one study has considered how the prospect of a loving relationship with God and the Saints can promote secure attachment (Vitz & Lynch, 2007).

Fully Understanding the Moment and Embracing the Future: Seminary and Religious Candidates

Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Ph.D.



The goal of this article is to more fully understand diocesan and religious order seminarians and the seminaries and schools of theology where they are studying. This familiarity is essential for those who work with candidates for the priesthood, whether involved in full-time ministry in these schools or serving as consultants or advisers. The objectives of this article will therefore include information that is quite familiar to some and somewhat new to others.

I will first describe the demographics of various types of seminaries and the seminarians who are enrolled in them. Second, in an effort to increase knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to the background and experience of diverse students, I will identify the cultural and ethnic or racial characteristics of seminarians. Third, in order to enhance understanding of intercultural factors in the assessment, treatment and formation of seminary and religious candidates, I will give examples of curricular programs and faculty preparation that are effective in working with these candidates. Finally, I will include suggestions of formation practices for use in multicultural settings where seminarians prepare for future ministry.

The Demographics of Seminaries and Seminarians

Three levels of institutions are involved in seminary formation, encompassing four types of students. These figures, representing seminary enrollment data at all levels, have been gathered annually since 1967 by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). As is evident in the chart on the following page, the four high school seminaries enroll only 448 students. CARA identifies two types of college seminaries: 13 are freestanding and provide the entire program of forma-

Types of Seminaries (2011-2012)

Theologates	43
Diocesan	33
Religious Order	10

Colleges	29
Free-Standing	13
Collaborative	16

High Schools	4
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Source: CARA Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment

tion; 16 are collaborative and operate in conjunction with a college or university, which provides the academic program. The college seminaries offer typical four-year college programs as well as pre-theology programs for students who have earned a college degree. College seminary enrollment also has declined significantly in the past forty years. Pre-theology students need to supplement their degrees with philosophy, theology and other formation before they are admitted to major seminary.

In the past, almost all students went through four years of college seminary to prepare for major seminary, but this pattern has changed in recent years. Since 1980, many older men entering seminary have needed additional formation, and so pre-theology programs have been established in both college and theology-level seminaries. The 43 theologate programs—the highest level of formation before a candidate is ordained—include 33 diocesan and 10 religious order schools. The diocesan schools may

College/High School Enrollment (1967–2011)

Year	College Enrollment	High School Enrollment
2011-12	1,355	448
2001-02	1,594	816
1991-92	1,634	1,210
1981-82	3,514	4,117
1971-72	6,943	8,029
1967-68	13,401	15,823

Pre-Theology Enrollment (Included in Theologate Numbers)

Year	Numbers	% of Theology #
2011-12	878	24%
2001-02	680	20%
1991-92	315	9%
1981-82	138	4%
1980-81*	157	4%

* 1st year CARA collected data on Pre-Theology Enrollment

include some religious order candidates, as well.

In 1967, a total of 8,159 men were enrolled at the theology level; now the number is 3,723, less than half the number from forty years earlier, yet the most since 1988. Interestingly, from 2001 through 2009 theology school enrollment was quite low, ranging from 3,274 to 3,584, but recently a higher trend seems to be emerging. Comparatively speaking, recognizing that the number of Catholics is 23 million more than in the 1960s, not nearly enough priests are being ordained each year. The average number of ordinations since 1995 is only about 500 per year, yet at least 1,000 new priests are needed simply to replace the priests who are dying, retiring or leaving ministry.

From a psychological point of view, what do these statistics mean for vocation directors, admissions committees and those doing psychological evaluations? Many vocation directors experience great pressure to bring in more students, even if those students are not quite ready, or perhaps do not have the potential, to enter

Theologate Enrollment (1967 to 2011)

Year	Diocesan	Religious Order	Total
2011-12	2,805	918	3,723
2001-02	2,621	963	3,583
1991-92	2,536	896	3,432
1981-82	2,649	1,164	3,813
1971-72	3,864	2,225	6,089
1967-68*	4,876	3,283	8,159

* 1st year CARA collected data

seminary. Meanwhile, there is countering pressure on the other side to only admit applicants who will be capable pastoral priests. Nevertheless, marginal students are sometimes accepted. Therefore, the psychological reports and the plans for improving the individual during formation become very important—crucial—to the success of that person in seminary. It is critical that vocation directors, psychologists and admissions committee members make clear the nature of the deficiencies in applicants who are accepted without being fully qualified.

About three-fifths of the seminarians in theology are Caucasian and two-fifths are members of other racial or ethnic groups.

Ethnic, Racial and Cultural Backgrounds of Seminary Students

It is notable that CARA first recorded ethnic and racial data in 1993. Recalling that they began collecting seminary statistics in 1967, it is evident that awareness about this phenomenon was very low until about 20 years ago. During the first period of this ethnic and racial data collection, 1993 to 2001, the proportion of Caucasian students decreased by 11 percent, from 79 percent to 68 percent, and the other ethnic groups increased by the same proportion from 21 percent to 32 percent. Hispanic, Asian and Black students are specifically identified on the chart; “other” includes Native

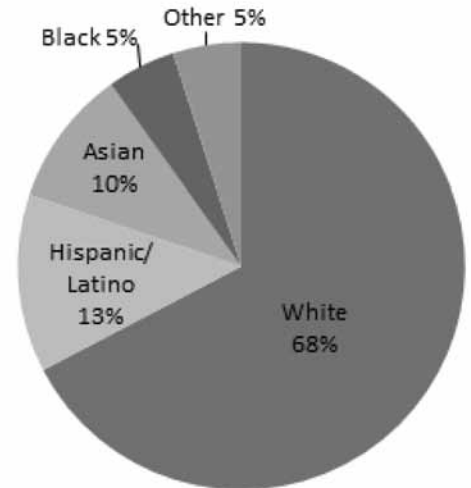
American, multiracial and international students who are not listed in the three main categories. When comparing the changes in the second period, between 2001 and 2011, the multiracial proportion increased by another 7 percent, to 39 percent from 32 percent, while the Caucasian proportion decreased to 61 percent from 68 percent. At present, this means that about three-fifths of the seminarians in theology are Caucasian and two-fifths are members of the other racial or ethnic groups identified above. This change is significant given the rather short period of time being considered. The numbers include both students who were born in this country and are in the named groups and students coming from other countries who have the same ethnic or racial heritage specified in those groups.

A closer look at international students is informative. In 2001, 75 countries were represented, comprising 616 students, or 20 percent of the total. Of these seminarians, 83 percent were studying for the United States; the remaining students were destined to serve outside the U.S. Concern about inculturation is critical because 20 percent of the seminarians enrolled in theology are from other countries, most of whom will minister in the U.S. Ten years later, the total was nearly 28 percent, with 80 percent of those studying for the U.S. Of the 39 percent in racial or ethnic groups other than Caucasian, only 11 percent were born in the U.S. This distinction is important, considering the complexity of the seminary population that now includes a significant number of students who are Vietnamese, Filipino, Hispanic and from many other backgrounds.

Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Theologate Students: 2001 CARA Data

Background	1993*	2001
Caucasian	79%	68%
Hispanic	11%	13%
Asian	8%	10%
Black	2%	5%
Other	-	5%

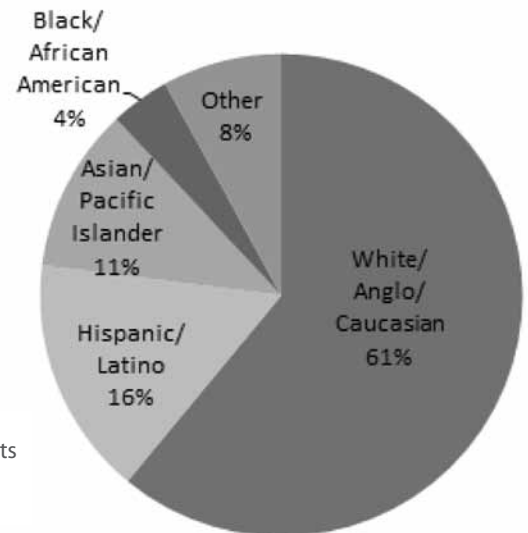
* 1st year CARA collected racial/ethnic data



Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Theologate Students: 2011 CARA Data

Background	2001	2011
Caucasian	68%	61%
Hispanic	13%	16%
Asian	10%	11%
Black	5%	4%
Other	5%	8%

Other includes Native American, multiracial and international students not in the listed categories.

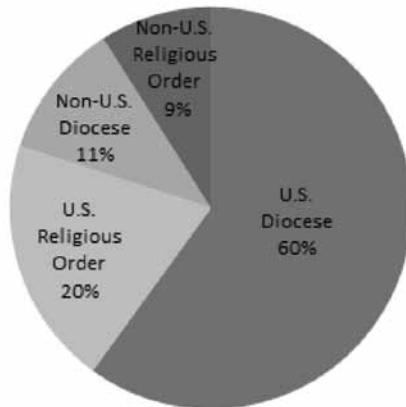


Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates: 2001 CARA Data

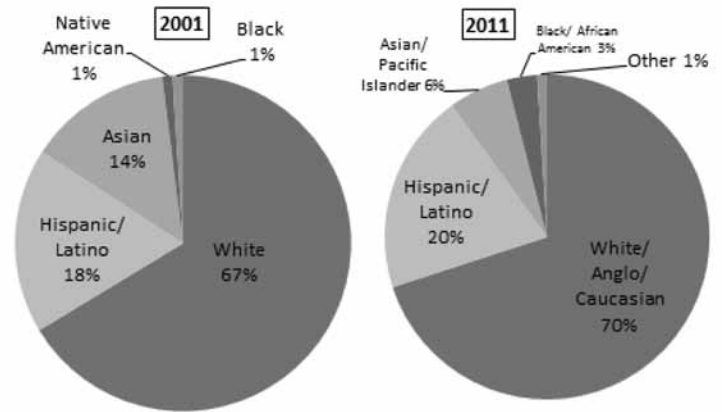
- 75 countries represented
- 616 seminary students
- nearly 20% of total
- 83% studying for U.S.

Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates: 2011 CARA Data

- 85 countries represented
- 938 seminary students
- 28% of total
- 80% studying for U.S.



Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of College Seminarians: 2001 and 2011 CARA Data



Destination of Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates: Percentages in 2001 and 2011 CARA Data

Studying For	2001	2011
U.S. Diocese	61%	60%
U.S. Religious Order	22%	20%
Non-U.S. Diocese	15%	11%
Non-U.S. Religious Order	2%	9%

Regarding colleges, the picture is a bit different and has changed since 2001. The proportions of both Hispanic and Asian students are greater in college than in theology. However, the opposite is true for Black students, whose proportion is greater in theology.

When comparing college students between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of Caucasians and Hispanics is slightly higher in 2011. Of particular interest is the significant decrease in the proportion of Asian students, down from 14 percent to 6 percent, due mainly to the drop in Vietnamese students, a well-represented group among Asians. Vietnamese of college-age are less likely to enter seminary, though the numbers in theology are still relatively high. However, they will not be replaced at the same rate from the third generation, most of whom were born in the United States.

The change in the number of foreign-born seminarians has been gradual, but significant. From one year to the next, the increases are relatively small, but over

the ten-year period from 2000 until 2011, some 376 more seminarians are coming from other countries each year. Taken in three-year increments, the average numbers rose from 680 in the first period to 931 in the last period. The racial and ethnic mix is likely to remain diverse and may well increase as the proportion of international students increases. The most recent CARA data show that the highest percentage of international students come from Mexico, followed by Colombia, constituting one-fourth of all international students. Other countries that have supplied large numbers are Vietnam, the Philippines, Poland and Nigeria. These data give a sense of the complexity of the backgrounds of seminary students. Great care is needed to incorporate and work with all students, including American-born seminarians who will be ministering with a wide range of priests from other countries. Such collaboration should begin in the seminary and continue after ordination.

Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates and Number of Countries Represented

School Year	Countries	Seminarians
2011 – 2012	81	892
2010 – 2011	85	938
2009 – 2010	91	963
2008 – 2009	80	825
2007 – 2008	81	832
2006 – 2007	83	761
2005 – 2006	84	772
2004 – 2005	80	729
2002 – 2003	72	744
2000 – 2001	75	616

Combined Years	Average
2009 – 2012	931
2006 – 2009	806
2004 – 2006	751
2000 – 2003	680

Countries of Origin 2011-12

Mexico = 132 (14.8%)

Colombia = 118 (13.2%)

Vietnam = 110 (12.3%)

Philippines = 76 (8.5%)

Poland = 64 (7.2%)

Nigeria = 40 (4.5%)

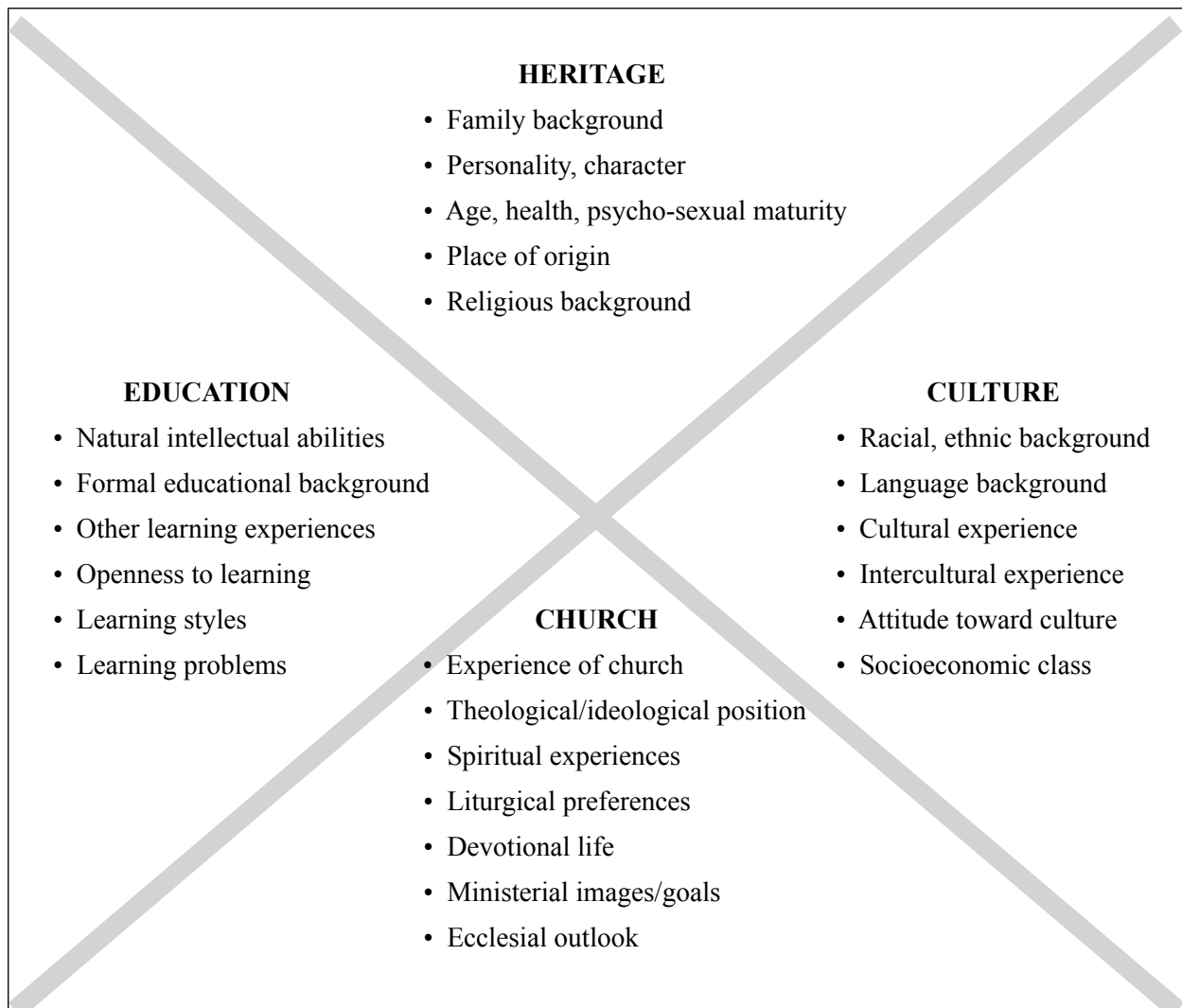
All Other = 352 (39.5%)

Total International Students = 892

Characteristics of Students: Other Dimensions of Diversity

In an effort to increase knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to the background and experience of diverse candidates, the article will move from considering a seminarian's racial or ethnic background and place of origin to additional characteristics that relate to formation. We will consider heritage, sociocultural backgrounds, ecclesial and spiritual experiences and outlooks, and education and intellectual aptitude. Taken together, these categories provide a rather comprehensive overview of all seminarians and make it possible to understand more completely who they are and how they can be served. During the thirty years of my research on this topic, I have made note of what seminary faculty pay attention to when they evaluate and assess students. These observations are incorporated into what follows and form the greater part of the descriptions of seminarians in the chart below.

Characteristics of Students: Dimensions of Diversity



Heritage

Many factors may be included under this heading. Family background plays a crucial role for the situations of some students because it is closely related to the development of their personality and character. Depending on their age when entering into the formation process, their psychosexual maturity and relational abilities will be at different stages. Fairly often, older candidates have health issues that need to be considered. Because religious matters are so important in working with students, it is necessary to explore the religion and patterns of practice of their family of origin. A student's place of origin (including the region in which U.S. candidates were raised) can assist in understanding their status.

Heritage: Racial and Ethnic

Heritage	1993	2011
Hispanic/Latino	11%	16%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	11%
Black/African American	2%	4%
Other	-	8%
Caucasian	79%	61%

Some specific issues related to heritage were identified in *The First Five Years of Priesthood* by Dean R. Hoge. Some relevant survey results in Hoge's book included:

- A remarkable number of priests had alcoholic fathers and had mothers who were dominant in their lives.
- Some priests experienced strong parental pressure to enter the priesthood.
- During adolescence, some priests were socially shy and did not participate in activities and relationships typical of their peer group.

Exploration of these topics may reveal effects on attitudes toward seminary and future ministry, for example, in the form of resistance to formation, lack of internal commitment or difficulty in embracing relatively outgoing activities required in ministry.

Age is another factor of diversity that is worth noting. Especially between the years 2001 and 2011, the proportion of those in the two youngest age categories

(those under 30) increased by 13 percent, while those in their 30s decreased by the same proportion. The perception that younger candidates are now entering seminaries is confirmed by the data. Interestingly, the oldest candidates, those 40 and older, are holding steady. Seminary faculty indicate that age significantly affects the formation process, particularly in terms of openness to change. Formators report that as people get older they are often more set in their ways and sometimes exhibit rigid attitudes when asked to adopt new patterns of behavior. Psychological testing may reveal similar patterns, making it a factor that might be monitored and reported to seminary personnel. On the other hand, older students have more experience and many are familiar with the changes brought about by Vatican II and are aware of the positive effects that change can promote when properly understood. With younger students, a faculty member recently observed, "When you are teaching about Vatican II, students see both this recent Council and the Council of Trent as old history that happened a long time ago."

Heritage: Age Profiles

Age	1997	2001	2011
24 and Under	27%	14%	19%
25 – 29	28%	27%	35%
30 – 34	21%	24%	19%
35 – 39	11%	18%	10%
40 and Over (1997)	13%	-	-
40 – 49 (2001, 2011)	-	12%	11%
50 and Over	-	6%	6%

Culture

The first part of this article considered the racial or ethnic backgrounds of seminarians, mainly from the demographic standpoint. Other factors are also influential in relation to cultural concerns. Language comprehension can be approached from at least two perspectives. Students coming from other countries who are studying for ministry in the U.S. have a particularly steep learning curve if they have not studied English before arriving in this country. They are too often expected to enter into theology classes without proper language training, resulting in several unfortunate consequences. Some may not learn essential theological content, and even if they are able to manage that feat, future ministry is in

jeopardy if they cannot be understood when speaking to a congregation. Another perspective concerns American-born seminarians who are expected to learn another language, usually Spanish, and may or may not accomplish that task.

Cultural experience varies greatly among students. Some who come from other countries have little experience in a variety of cultures; the same is true of U.S. seminarians who come from a very narrowly restricted locale. For the most part, future priests will be serving parishioners of diverse backgrounds and would benefit from intercultural experience, including international studies. It is important to note the attitude of students toward people who are not the same as they are to see how welcoming and open they are to differences among people. Another factor that contributes to the cultural experience of students may be their socioeconomic background, which can shape their attitudes, beliefs and political opinions in significant ways, especially at a time of heightened political tensions.

Church

The religious experiences of candidates cover a wide spectrum. As men enter seminary, we find it useful to develop an inventory that assesses their relationship to the church. Awareness of their spiritual, devotional and liturgical practices, and prior familiarity with opportunities they have had would enable formation faculty to find the best starting point for development in this area. Among the topics to be included would be their theological positions and understandings, ecclesial outlook and ministerial goals and images. Country of origin can also affect foreign-born seminarians' understanding of church. Their previous liturgical practices may vary, for example, in the style of music, use of instruments, incorporation of dance and participation of the congregation. Spiritual practices often include devotions particular to a given culture. Familiarity with the teaching of Vatican II may also vary. In addition, parish arrangements, pastoral practices and relationships often are different when compared to the U.S. Those responsible for each of the four pillars of formation might contribute to assessment of this complex area.

Education

Compared to other topic areas, few current statistical studies are available on intellectual ability of seminarians, whether American-born or international. Generally, foreign-born seminarians have the same range of capability as their U.S. peers, but intellectual forma-

Intellectual formation may be a greater challenge here in the U.S. because of language and cultural barriers, cultural differences in educational practices and quality of previous education. These potential drawbacks must not be confused with intellectual capacity.

tion may be a greater challenge here in the U.S. because of language and cultural barriers, cultural differences in educational practices and quality of previous education. These potential drawbacks must not be confused with intellectual capacity. Some of the same factors pertain to U.S. seminarians.

The topic of education covers a wide range of concerns, from natural abilities to educational background to other learning experiences, such as homeschooling. At least 10 to 15 percent or more of seminarians have been homeschooled, a reality that can make a difference in their ability to relate to others and in their openness to different learning styles. Besides these matters, learning disabilities of one sort or another are appearing more frequently and may include dyslexia, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder or simply lack of discipline because of a long period of time since previous studies. Addiction to computer games is a new phenomenon that also concerns formators.

Admissions, Screening and Initiation into Seminary Life in the United States

Screening and Selection of Candidates

The third part of this article will make some practical suggestions relative to admitting and orienting candidates to seminary life. Returning to the theme of knowledge, awareness and sensitivity in working with multicultural and international students, faculty will benefit by learning about the nature of the future ministry of these students. Some will stay in the U.S., and others will return to their countries of origin. It is

possible to acquire basic intercultural understandings through collaboration with priests, other professionals and people in parishes who come from other cultures and countries. Their knowledge and backgrounds can be of benefit in multiple ways, for example, psychologists who have intercultural training can interpret psychological tests and personal histories with special insight. Their assistance with screening can help seminary formators arrange appropriate programs and experiences in a new context. Priests and other professionals can help with understanding of the religious practices in other countries as well as their educational and family systems.

On another level, it is necessary to confirm the authenticity of the admissions information received by the seminary. Beyond accurate translation, it is useful to have an explanation of what is presented. Apparent misrepresentation is not necessarily intentional, but the candidate will sometimes appear to be more or less qualified than the written documents convey. One of the problems with seeking advice or further information about applications is receiving materials in a timely way. It seems to be very difficult for candidates to complete their applications on time, and they often arrive with inadequate references. In light of problems that can arise, it is preferable to wait until the process is complete before accepting international students. Unfortunately, little patience is exhibited on either side of the transaction.

Making Appropriate Programs Available

Once international seminarians are accepted, it is highly desirable for them, if at all possible, to arrive at least one month before classes begin. Those who arrive only a few days before the start of the semester begin at a great disadvantage. They need time to acculturate and to take any additional tests that may be needed. Seminary formators need to be realistic about what can be expected of seminarians as they adapt to a new culture. Teaching and learning styles, for example, are vastly different, and it takes a long time to adapt. Faculty should have special training on how to be good advisers and teachers to students in a cross-cultural setting. At this point in time, about half of U.S. seminaries provide adequate programs for both faculty and students. English language studies, special orientation programs and multicultural courses for both international *and* American-born students are all important avenues to successful inculturation. Although some seminaries have been slow to respond to accommodating this new kind of student body, there has, nonetheless, been an improvement.

In the mid-1980s, only five seminaries had developed programs of any substance to address the needs of these students.

Screening and Selection of Candidates:

- Learn what should be required for admission of candidates from other countries.
- Collaborate with priests and other professionals of the same ethnic or racial backgrounds to learn more about how to interpret admission data, especially relative to psychological testing and history.
- Confirm the authenticity of the information provided with the sponsoring or local bishop.
- Insist on receiving completed applications far in advance of admission, even if it means delaying admission for a year.
- Require international candidates to arrive at least one month before classes begin and have a program set up to help them with acculturation.
- Arrange for additional psychological and educational testing of candidates once they arrive.
- Be realistic about what can be expected of seminarians as they adapt to a new culture.
- Provide close supervision by trained advisors, especially during the first year.

Multicultural Ministry Preparation for All Seminarians

Hispanic (Latino/a) Related Programs

- | | |
|--|----|
| • Academic Programs | 18 |
| • Immersion Programs in Spanish-speaking countries and/or parishes | 13 |
| • Spanish Language Courses | 32 |

Other Immersion Experiences

- | | |
|---|----|
| • Holy Land/Jerusalem | 8 |
| • Italy, England, Ireland, Greece, Ghana, Philippines, and others | 15 |

Setting the Context and Preparing the Faculty

Other practical steps can be taken to create an environment in which international and multicultural students can thrive. It is the responsibility of formators to establish an environment of tolerance, inclusion and acceptance. This process begins by making it clear to all students that each person is to be treated with dignity

and respect, for the way we treat each other is the way that we will treat people who come from other countries and cultures. All students should know that diverse views on a wide variety of lifestyle, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral topics can and must be respected. In classes, some students may participate and join in discussions in ways that annoy others or incline them to make fun of the respondent. The result may be that the student will be silent in the future, afraid or embarrassed to say anything that might offend somebody. Faculty need to notice, identify and deal with these behaviors.

Training is needed to educate students that some behaviors are inappropriate and even to recognize that they are occurring. For the sake of the whole learning process, behaviors must be identified, and their meaning examined, before they are dealt with. Students from other cultures often have difficulty understanding the role of authority figures. Foreign-born students are not usually accustomed to any discussion about class assignments or formation practices, but rather give in absolutely to whatever is asked even though something very unreasonable might be asked of them. On these occasions, formators have the opportunity to gain the confidence of students by making appropriate interventions. Awareness and analysis of the makeup of the student body can also change the pattern of behavior of those in authority.

One of the toughest jobs in seminary ministry is the important task of evaluation. The success of the endeavor depends significantly on how open and honest a student is in formation sessions. Clarity is needed concerning the student's ability to establish and sustain friendships; to work with other people; and to interact with those who are different from them in age, culture and family life. Formators should have a sense of each student's core values. What does he really hold as true? Is he putting on a show so that he can get through formation? Does he really believe in and respect the dignity of others? How open is he to change? In what ways has he demonstrated care and concern for others by reaching out to those encountered in ministry situations? Gaining a clear sense of internal attitudes and external behaviors is part of the constructive evaluation of any student.

Working Effectively with Diversity

Set the Context:

- Establish an environment of tolerance, inclusion and acceptance.
- Let students know that views may be diverse

and must be respected.

- Clearly explain expectations for communal life and participation in seminary activities (liturgical, social, academic and pastoral).
- Generate ground rules for participation of all students in class discussions.

Formators and Human Formation:

- Train formators to notice, identify and deal with seminarian behavior: be aware of conduct that is incompatible with the desire for priesthood, and model behavior that is acceptable.
- Understand cross-cultural dynamics relative to authority figures, peer relationships and sexuality.
- Provide opportunities for formators to gain confidence in making appropriate interventions and recommendations with students from other cultural backgrounds.

Understand the Nature of Diversity:

- Increase faculty awareness of cultural and intellectual diversity.
- Analyze the makeup of the student body and acknowledge differences.
- Be attentive to personal pieties that exist among students.
- Recognize the natural deference of students toward teachers and other authority figures that is inherent in some cultures.

Human Formation and Developmental Tasks:

Formators should be competent measuring seminarians' progress in such areas as:

- How open and honest they are in one-on-one conversations and group settings.
- Whether or not they can establish and sustain friendships in which they deal appropriately with issues of intimacy and respect for boundaries.
- If they are capable of working effectively with people who are different in race, sex, economic class, ethnicity, personality, ideology or role in the church.

Formator's Example—Value Diversity:

- Model approaches to learning that incorporate a variety of viewpoints.
- Be specific about how particular student experiences broaden the vision of all in the seminary.

- Make clear the implications for ministry, noting what is to be gained through diversity in the classroom and seminary.

Effective Formation Practices in Multicultural Settings

Finally, in order to enhance understanding of intercultural factors in the assessment, treatment and formation of seminary and religious candidates, we will review some examples of curricular programs and faculty preparation that have proven useful in developing satisfactory student learning experiences.

Curricular Content

Faculty need to be fully aware of and knowledgeable about the curricular content of programs in their institutions. This step involves taking an inventory of courses and experiences that are available to students to ensure that topics are covered that broaden the vision of seminarians beyond their place of origin. The topics should match the ministerial contexts in which students will be working. The analysis should measure the extent of diversity by looking at course syllabi, lectures, discussions, case studies, bibliographies and assignments. Further, the variety of techniques used in the classroom should incorporate the giftedness of those with diverse cultural, educational and theological backgrounds and experiences.

Raising Awareness & Student Learning Experiences

Students should be taught to recognize the importance of knowing their own culture. They can learn from guest lecturers as living models of dialogue who have made valuable cultural connections with diverse peoples and situations. Student sensitivity can be heightened in other ways. Their horizons can be broadened when they share their experience of church and how various cultures interpret traditions. When students from other cultures describe their preferred devotions and pious practices, it can open the minds of others to the multiple ways God intervenes in the lives of the faithful. The goal is to honor those different pathways and adapt religious experiences to match the people who are being served. Understanding the pastoral goal behind the practices makes them much more acceptable. As seminarians are exposed to the broad range of prayers and devotions, the many styles of liturgical celebration and the many forms of pastoral activity, the more likely they are to be accepting of differences. It is important to be aware of

the time it takes for students to acculturate to new practices, new material, new ideas and new situations.

Pastoral Considerations

Patient working together pays great dividends in the long run and ensures more competent pastoral ministry with an increasingly diverse Catholic population. The reason for working so diligently to understand other cultures is that the church needs effective priests to minister with and to people of many cultures and backgrounds. Currently, it is estimated that nearly half of the Catholic population comes from multicultural origins. About 24 million (35 percent) are Hispanic, 3.5 million (4 to 5 percent) are Asian, about 3 million (3 to 4 percent) are African and African-American, and about half a million (nearly 1 percent) are Native American. These people join some 38 million Caucasians to form a church with great potential for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ wherever they are found.



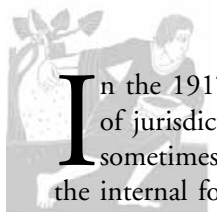
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Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited – Part I: The Role of the Spiritual Director

Sr. Joseph Marie Ruessmann, R.S.M., J.D., J.C.D., M.B.A.



In the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* (c.196), the power of jurisdiction or of governance was said to be sometimes in the external forum and sometimes in the internal forum, which was stated to be the forum of conscience. The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* changed this description of the power of jurisdiction and of the internal forum. The internal forum is not simply the equivalent of the forum of conscience. The Commission for the Revision of the Code,¹ stated, “Certainly, this power which is exercised only for the internal forum cannot be called the forum of conscience.”²

[I]f the forum of conscience is ‘man’s most secret core, and his sanctuary, [where] he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths’ (GS 16), the canonical internal forum certainly cannot simply be identified with the forum of conscience, because it is subject not only to the human intellect, as making judgments in close and exclusive relationship with God, but is also subject to the power of governance of the Church.³

The internal forum is one of the two ways of exercising the power of jurisdiction (or power of governance)⁴ in the church, the other way being the external forum.

Canon 130: Of itself, the power of governance is exercised for the external forum; sometimes, however, it is exercised for the internal forum alone, so that the effects which its exercise is meant to have for the external forum are not

The internal forum is one of the two ways of exercising the power of jurisdiction (or power of governance)⁴ in the church, the other way being the external forum.

recognized there, except insofar as the law establishes it in determined cases.

The Code does not speak of persons as being in either the external or internal forum, but refers to acts of governance taking place in one of the two fora. The internal forum is the exercise of the power of jurisdiction in the church in a hidden way, such as the celebration of a secret marriage that is recorded only in the diocesan secret archives, or the dispensation by the Sacred Penitentiary of a candidate for Orders from the irregularity of having procured an abortion.

Thus the difference between the exercise of power for the internal forum and for the external forum lies neither in the matter ruled on, nor in the nature of the act itself, but in the way in which the power is exercised.⁵

Additional clarity in this area was provided by Prof. Juan Ignacio Arrieta, now Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts:

The concept of the internal forum is usually employed either as a synonym for, or at least in the logical context of, the idea of “privacy,” as the field of personal autonomy and, thus, not subject to external laws. The internal forum is also used to designate issues pertaining exclusively to personal conscience, which can be found in the moral field.

None of these meanings corresponds to the proper use of the concept employed in the present juridical system of the Church. In canon law, the “internal forum” is simply a “mode” of action of the ecclesiastical power of governance (*potestas regiminis*, c.129). In other words, it is a “way” through which the above-mentioned juridical power expresses itself, under proper and original juridical rules, when pastoral needs require it. It is a way to exercise the ecclesiastical power of jurisdiction...The internal forum is a juridical forum, in which the one and *only potestas regiminis* present in the Church is exercised (c.129)...In both cases [sacramental or extra-sacramental], it is always a jurisdictional activity derived from the *potestas regiminis*.⁶

Arrieta states, “Administrative acts of the internal forum consist of absolutions, dispensations, commutations, sanctions, remissions, or other kinds of favors.... Those situations or facts, which usually require the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the internal forum, are hidden impediments, canonical irregularities, and undeclared censures...”⁷

On this subject, Cardinal Peter Erdo writes, “[T]he internal forum in the Church has a juridic character. It is juridical because it must consider situations deriving from juridical-canonical norms, from provisions of ecclesiastical authority (such as dispensations, other favors, etc.) and from other juridic acts.”⁸

The Congregation for Clergy, in a guide published in 2011 for priests on Confession and spiritual direction, indicated that spiritual direction is not part of the jurisdictional activity of the church:

The exercise of the power of jurisdiction in the Church should always respect the reserve and the silence of the spiritual director.

The authority of the spiritual director is not one of jurisdiction, rather it is of counsel and guidance.⁹

This distinction between the power of jurisdiction and the role of the spiritual director would seem to indicate that spiritual direction is not of the internal forum, as that term is used in the *Code of Canon Law*.

This distinction between the power of jurisdiction and the role of the spiritual director would seem to indicate that spiritual direction is not of the internal forum, as that term is used in the *Code of Canon Law*.

For the same reason that, according to the Code, spiritual directors would not be said to be “in” the internal forum, formators would not be said to be “in” the external forum since formation is not an exercise of the power of jurisdiction.

Despite the change in the Code, a number of church documents on seminary formation or religious formation still seem to consider the internal forum to be the forum of conscience since they speak of spiritual direction as being in the internal forum and seminary formators as being in the external forum, unable to ask about matters of conscience or of sin.¹⁰ Consequently, there is confusion as to whether all or only some spiritual direction is in the internal forum. Is it in the internal forum only if done by a priest for a seminarian? Only if done by a priest? What about if done by a nun for a nun? What about if done by a laywoman for a laywoman?

If every matter of conscience were considered to be in the internal forum, why is that which a seminarian reveals to a psychologist not in the internal forum? The Congregation for Catholic Education recently stated, without further explanation, that “the internal forum... covers only sacramental confession and spiritual direction; psychological counseling may be confidential, but it is not in the internal forum.”¹¹

If the internal forum is not the forum of conscience, one might ask, “Why is Confession in the internal forum?” The answer is not because the matter revealed is confidential. The answer is that it is an exercise of the power of jurisdiction because, according to the

Council of Trent, the priest confessor acts as a judge, exercising judgment, pronouncing sentence of the remission or retention of sins; the sacramental absolution is a judicial act.¹² Consequently, the confessor must have both the power of Orders and the power of jurisdiction.

The idea that spiritual direction should be given the same secrecy as the seal of Confession fails to distinguish the unique nature of the Sacrament of Confession. Spiritual direction is guidance or counseling, not a Sacrament in which a person's sins are forgiven. The matter revealed in Confession may never be revealed to anyone, not because the matter is confidential but because the seal of Confession is by divine law, not human law, and because the Sacrament of Confession is about a relationship between the penitent and Christ. The priest confessor acts *in persona Christi*; it is Christ Himself, through the priest, who is forgiving the sins of the penitent, reconciling him to God and to the church. If a priest confessor were to reveal any matter that he had learned in Confession, he would not only be sinning grievously, but he would also be reducing the Sacrament to only a human relationship of priest and person revealing intimate matters.

The 1983 Code does not say that spiritual direction is in the internal forum or that the spiritual director of a seminarian may never reveal to anyone that which he learned in spiritual direction. It only says (in c.240 §2) that the opinion of the confessor and of the spiritual director may not be asked in regard to whether to admit a seminarian to Orders or to dismiss him from the seminary:

Canon 240 §2: In deciding about the admission of students to orders, or their dismissal from the seminary, the vote of the spiritual director and the confessors may never be sought.

Since the spiritual director could be the seminarian's confessor, this restriction is in line with c. 984, which prohibits the confessor from using knowledge acquired in Confession for the purpose of external governance (if the confessor is in a position of authority) or to the detriment of the penitent. The 1917 Code (c.1361 §3) had said that the opinion or vote of the confessor may not be sought; the 1983 Code added the spiritual director.

If spiritual direction in the seminary, according to the Code's use of the term "internal forum," is not in the internal forum, what is it? It is a confidential relationship:

Canon 246 §4: ...It is recommended that each [student] should have a director of his spiritual life [*moderator vitae spiritualis*], freely chosen, to whom he can open with confidence his conscience.

As a confidential relationship, spiritual direction is subject to the rules of moral theology regarding the extent of obligation of secrecy for the matter divulged.

The documents of the Congregation for Catholic Education and the USCCB's Program for Priestly Formation call "spiritual director" the person whom the Code, in this canon, calls the "moderator of the spiritual life."

As a confidential relationship, spiritual direction is subject to the rules of moral theology regarding the extent of obligation of secrecy for the matter divulged. According to Catholic moral tradition, there are three levels of secret or confidentiality: 1) natural, which are those matters that common sense (right reason) tell us are to be kept confidential; 2) promised, if the one who learns of confidential knowledge promises, expressly or impliedly, to keep it secret; and 3) entrusted, or committed, secrets, which must be kept hidden because of an agreement reached before the confidential information was given. The third category is the most rigorous or binding type of secret (the highest level of confidentiality) outside of the seal of Confession, and would apply to professional secrets that a person learns by virtue of his office or position in society, such as a lawyer or counselor.¹³ The spiritual director has the obligation of secrecy because, according to moral theology, the directee entrusts secrets to him. The directee expects that the spiritual director will not reveal the divulged information to anyone and that the information will not be used against him (in decision-making regarding him).

A canonist commenting on the canons relating to the seal of Confession states, "The canons [cc.983 and 984] do not touch extra-sacramental confidentiality [outside of the Sacrament of Confession], to which the

ordained minister is bound as is any recipient of confidences, but bound even more so when the relationship of the minister to the individual is analogous to that of a professional counselor.”¹⁴ Similarly, the USCCB’s *Program for Priestly Formation* (“PPF”)(no.134) states, “[T]he spiritual director is held to the strictest confidentiality concerning information received in spiritual direction. He may neither reveal it nor use it.”

It is said that the confidentiality of spiritual direction promotes disclosure by the seminarian and, if the seminarian thought that the spiritual director would not hold things in confidence, the seminarian would not reveal his intimate secrets. This could suggest that spiritual direction could be a place for hiding vices, not for striving to improve oneself by consciously working to overcome one’s faults or defects under the guidance of the spiritual director so that one will be a good priest. It could also suggest that spiritual direction is the place for a seminarian’s self-disclosure, rather than self-disclosure to formators. Such an approach might be expected to limit the extent to which formators could form the seminarian. The PPF (no.131) advises, “Care should be taken to ensure that issues of human formation that properly belong to the external forum are not limited to the spiritual direction relationship for their resolution.”

If the spiritual director, fulfilling a part of his role, educates the seminarian as to what one’s conscience is and helps him to form his conscience if it has not been properly formed, then perhaps the seminarian will be more likely to reveal behavior to the spiritual director that he comes to realize is morally wrong, as a step toward conversion, so that he can become a better person and better priest.

If the seminarian reveals to the spiritual director something about himself that is contrary to the nature of the priesthood, such as his occasional or habitual viewing of Internet pornography, the spiritual director normally would take other options rather than reveal the confidence to the seminary rector. The spiritual director could encourage the seminarian to tell his formator or rector about the matter, and, if the seminarian refuses to do so, the spiritual director should stop being his spiritual director and inform the rector that he has terminated the relationship. The rector would then be alerted that there is some problem with the seminarian. The spiritual director would hope that the rector would do something about this implicit warning and that he would be able to determine what the problem is with the seminarian.

What if the seminarian assures the spiritual direc-

tor that he will tell the formator, but the seminarian does not do so? How does the spiritual director know if the seminarian has actually done so? What if time passes and no action is being taken by the director of formation or by the rector in regard to the seminarian? Normally, the spiritual director still would not be able to reveal a confidence.

Even the highest level of confidentiality that spiritual direction in the seminary represents is not the same as the seal of Confession, which is inviolable. It seems that it would help if the Vatican Congregation responsible for seminaries would adopt terminology for spiritual direction that is consistent with the Code of Canon Law. The Congregation for Catholic Education found that some U.S. seminaries “dilute the confidential nature of the internal forum: the spiritual directors and students are presented with a list of ‘exceptions’ to the confidentiality of spiritual direction (even if it is always emphasized that the seal of confession is inviolable).”¹⁵ The PPF (no.134), however, which was approved by the Congregation, makes three exceptions to the strict confidentiality of information received in spiritual direction of seminarians (unless the matter was learned of in Confession): if there is a grave, immediate or mortal danger involving the directee or another person. In the situation of mortal danger, while secrecy would protect the natural law right to privacy and respect of the personal dignity of the revealer (directee), the revealing of the secret would protect the natural law right to life (of the person threatened) and the (director’s) right to defend another’s life, which seem to be of a higher level than one’s dignity.

Would a “grave danger” include a morally grave danger?¹⁶ It would seem so, since “mortal danger,” which would be a physical danger, is listed separately. A grave moral danger to the directee would be, for example, if a seminarian is accessing Internet pornography. The viewing of Internet pornography can become a physical addiction from which it is very difficult to withdraw. If a seminarian who is accessing Internet pornography is helped to change his behavior, then perhaps he will not become addicted to it. The spiritual director could refer the seminarian to a psychologist for therapy,¹⁷ but how will the spiritual director know if the man has been cured or how committed the seminarian is to working on the matter? If a seminarian is unable to live chastity in celibacy, then his formation needs to be interrupted.¹⁸

If a tracing was done of the Internet use at a seminary, and it was found that some seminarians were

accessing Internet pornography, perhaps even child pornography, would it not be a scandal for the public, not only in regard to those seminarians, but also in regard to the seminary?

Another particular application of the principle of revealing a confidence if there is a grave, immediate, or mortal danger to someone would be the situation of potential or actual child abuse by a seminarian. If a seminarian reveals that he is sexually attracted to children or that he has sexually abused a child, he is a danger to children. Sexual abuse reporting statutes in some states require anyone who has information about sexual abuse of a child to report it to the state. Even if there is no statutory duty to report, there might be civil liability if the person with knowledge fails to report a case of child abuse to the state child protection agency. What should a spiritual director do if a seminarian tells him that he has sexually abused a child? Should the spiritual director keep the secret? The PPF would not require the spiritual director to maintain the confidentiality since the seminarian would pose a danger to children. Many seminaries have adopted policies that make this explicit.

The spiritual director does have the option in general of asking the seminarian to see a psychologist to help him work through a psychological problem,¹⁹ but that solution would not apply to a situation of child abuse, since the recent thinking of psychologists seems to be that child abusers are unable to be cured, and also since the PPF (no.96) requires a seminarian to be dismissed if there is credible evidence against him of sexual attraction to children.²⁰

Even if the spiritual director stops being the spiritual director of the seminarian, that will not save him from the state's child abuse reporting statute that requires him to report it.²¹ The spiritual director could still be prosecuted and face sanctions for failure to report. Civil law in the United States has distinguished between spiritual counseling and the priest-penitent relationship in the Sacrament of Confession. In some states, the priest/penitent privilege has been abrogated in cases of child abuse except for information learned in the confessional.²² If the spiritual director is prosecuted for keeping secret what he learned in spiritual direction, he might appear to be a criminal for contributing to the danger of child sexual abuse in society.

If a seminarian told his spiritual director that he was sexually attracted to children or that he had abused a child, and the spiritual director thought he should keep the information confidential, would it not be a scandal for the public, not only in regard to the semi-

The nature of spiritual direction in the seminary needs to be clarified to be consistent with canon law by speaking of it not as “in the internal forum” but as a confidential relationship with exceptions permitted for breaking confidences, as listed in the PPF, and with a clarification of “grave danger” to include grave moral danger.

narian, but also in regard to the seminary, if the seminarian's abuse of a child became known?

In conclusion, it seems that the nature of spiritual direction in the seminary needs to be clarified to be consistent with canon law by speaking of it not as “in the internal forum” but as a confidential relationship with exceptions permitted for breaking confidences, as listed in the PPF, and with a clarification of “grave danger” to include grave moral danger.



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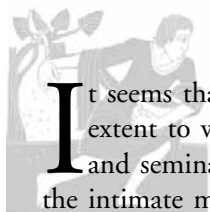
Endnotes

1. “*Praenotanda allo Schema de Normis Generalibus*,” *Communicationes*, 9 (1977), 235.
2. “*Ceterum non potest haec potestas quae pro solo foro interno exercetur dici fori conscientiae*.” [translation mine] (reported in Urrutia, Francisco J., “Internal Forum-External Forum: The Criterion of Distinction,” pp. 634-667, in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, vol.1*, ed. Rene’ Latourelle (Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1988), p. 657, n.8).
3. Urrutia, Francisco J., “Internal Forum-External Forum: The Criterion of Distinction,” pp. 634-667, in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, vol.1*, ed. Rene’ Latourelle (Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1988), p.637.

4. See c.129 §1.
5. Urrutia, p.645.
6. Arrieta, Juan Ignacio, "The Internal Forum: Notion and Juridical Regime," pp. 27-45 in *Studia canonica* 41 (2007), pp. 27-28, 36, 38.
7. Arrieta, p. 37.
8. "Il foro interno nella Chiesa ha un carattere giuridico anch'esso. Giuridico, perché deve tener presente delle situazioni provenienti da norme giuridico-canoniche, da provvedimenti di autorità ecclesiastiche (come le dispense e altre grazie ecc.) e da altri atti giuridici." [translation mine] Erdo, Cardinal Peter, "Foro interno e foro esterno nel diritto canonico," pp. 3-35 in *Periodica* 95 (2006), p. 32.
9. Congregation for Clergy, *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: an Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta' del Vaticano, 2011), nos. 103-104.
10. The church documents include:
 - a) Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation of US seminaries" (15 Dec. 2008), nos. 5, 6;
 - b) Congregation for Catholic Education, "Instruction concerning the criteria for the discernment of vocations with regard to persons with homosexual tendencies in view of their admission to the seminary and to Holy Orders" (Nov. 4, 2005), no. 3;
 - c) Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, *Directives on Formation*, 1990, no. 63;
 - d) USCCB's *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th ed. (2005), nos. 57, 80, 131, 134, 280(b), 325, 328, 333;
 - e) USCCB's "Norms Concerning Applications for Priestly Formation from those previously enrolled in a Formation Program", (*Program for Priestly Formation*, Addendum A), Norms for Evaluation of Applications in these Cases, no. 2.
11. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation," no. 6.
12. Session 14, *Decree on Penance*, chapter 6, DS 1685; and canon 9, DS 1709. See also Conc. Trid. Sess. XIV, De Poenit. c.2,5, can.9, in DS 1671, 1679, 1709, as reported in Erdo, Cardinal Peter, "Foro interno e foro esterno nel diritto canonico," in *Periodica* 95 (2006), 3-35, p.4, n.2. See also De Paolis, Velasio, "Natura e Funzione del Foro Interno," pp.115-142 in *Investigationes Theologico-Canonicae* (Universita' Gregoriana Editrice, Rome, 1978), p. 141.
13. See Hardon, John A., S.J., *The Catholic Catechism* (NY. Doubleday 1981), pp. 404-406.
14. McManus, Frederick R., "The Sacrament of Penance (cc. 959-997)," in *Commentary on the Code*, ed. John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green (Paulist Press, NY, 2000), pp. 1138-1178.
15. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation of U.S. Seminaries" (15 Dec. 2008), no. 6.
16. Because of grave danger to the seminarian's soul, and, consequently, to his salvation, the answer would be "yes" based on Can. 1752: "the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the Church, is to be kept before one's eyes."
17. See Congregation for Catholic Education, "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood" (June 28, 2008), no. 14.
18. See "Guidelines," no. 10.
19. See "Guidelines," no. 14.
20. Although the seminarian would not be allowed to continue in formation, the spiritual director might recommend psychological treatment to him as a means for him to gain awareness as to how to live as less of a threat to society after he has departed from the seminary.
21. Similarly, the attorney general of Texas has ruled that a minister would be responsible for reporting a case of child abuse, even when that information was confidentially disclosed to him by a parishioner and would be required to testify in a child abuse proceeding. Since no exceptions were created under the statute which requires such reporting, it appears that the Texas law does not excuse the clergy from a duty to report suspected child abuse. Serritella, James A., "Confidentiality, the Church and the Clergy," pp. 83-93 in *CLSA Proceedings 1986* (CLSA, Washington D.C., 1987), p.89, referring to a note in "Texas' Clergyman-Penitent Privilege and the Duty to Report Suspected Child Abuse," 38 *Baylor Law Review* 231, Winter, 1986, at 238-239.
22. Liekweg, John A. and Harris, Phillip, "Legal Considerations: Civil Law and Confidentiality Issues," pp. 195-243 in *Psychology, Counseling and the Seminarian*, ed. Robert Wister (NCEA Seminary Department, Washington, D.C., 1993), p. 211.

Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited - Part 2: The Role of the Rector and Formators

Sr. Joseph Marie Ruessmann, R.S.M., J.D., J.C.D., M.B.A..



It seems that, in referring to confidentiality and the extent to which the diocesan bishop and diocesan and seminary rector and formators can ask about the intimate matters of a candidate to the priesthood, it would be more in accordance with canon law to speak in terms of the candidate's right to privacy and to protect his reputation under c. 220 than to speak in terms of "external forum" and "internal forum."

The right to privacy and right to protect one's reputation are listed in the Code under the rights and obligations of all the faithful, in c. 220. Canon 220 states, "No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy."

Part of the background to c. 220¹ was c. 2355 in the 1917 Code, which required satisfaction and repair of harm by anyone who harmed the reputation of another and provided for possible penalties. It did not mention the right to privacy. Another source of the 1983 canon was the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII. Pope John XXIII wrote of the natural right of every person to be treated with respect or due honor (no.14), the right to one's good reputation (no.12) and the right of a person to protect his privacy. In calling for the upholding of a person's dignity as a free and rational being, the encyclical warns that no one in authority can compel a person to comply internally (no.48).

The third source of canon 220 was the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. In this document, the Second Vatican

No one may try to enter or investigate the inner core of a person without the person's consent.

Council speaks of a growing awareness of the dignity of the human person (no.26), stresses reverence for people (no.27) and lists basic human rights, including the rights to a good reputation and to protection of privacy (no.26), which proceed from human nature; they originate in the natural law.

Shortly before the Council, in a 1958 address, Pope Pius XII spoke to psychologists of the need to protect every person's right to protect his inner core, his interior domain or world, including matters which one discloses to a few confidential friends and shields against the intrusion of others, personal matters which the individual keeps secret from everyone, matters which the person himself is unable to face and tendencies and dispositions of which the person himself is unaware. The Pope wrote that what is in a person's psyche belongs to him, and taking it from him or attempting to penetrate it without his consent is the same as stealing from him or doing violence to him. Even with the person's consent, having him reveal his psyche can be immoral if the techniques used are themselves immoral. Using a drug

or lie-detector machine to induce disclosure would be an example of an immoral technique even if the subject consented to it.

Also in *Gaudium et Spes* (no.16), the Second Vatican Council stated, “[M]an has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged....Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths.”²

“Conscience” is more than the judgment regarding the morality of one’s act(s) or matters of sin; it also includes one’s inner core, where he is alone with God. The right to protect one’s privacy is the right not to have to manifest one’s conscience, with “conscience” understood as one’s psychological and moral state or intimacy; the intimacy of one’s interior; the private psyche. No one may try to enter or investigate the inner core of a person without the person’s consent.

The right to protect one’s privacy is not the same as the right to one’s good reputation. Privacy refers to things that are secret, and the right to protect one’s privacy is the right not to have one’s secrets taken from oneself unwillingly or unwittingly. Reputation refers to what has been divulged, and the right to one’s good reputation is the right to have unfavorable matter kept confidential rather than made public. Also, one’s private life is a reality, whereas harm to one’s reputation could be from a false statement (libel or slander). Protection of privacy could extend to matters that would not affect one’s reputation, such as one’s dreams, plans, opinions or feelings.

In 1976, an Italian professor of psychology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Vittorio Marcozzi, who was commissioned by the Vatican Secretary of State to write an article about psychological tests and the rights of the person, wrote that without the free and informed consent of the subject (for a psychologist) to enter into the subject’s interior is an arbitrary and irreverent interference in the relations that a person has directly with God. It is to God alone, not to any human authority, that a person is responsible in regard to his conscience.³

In 1976, the Vatican Secretary of State issued an Instruction to the pontifical representatives throughout the world, accompanied by a *Nota indicativa* which stated:

Canon 530 of the [1917] *Code of Canon Law* is concerned with a question connected with the manifestation of conscience, in the sense of a defense of privacy for the subjects of religious

The seminary rector should allow an atmosphere of openness and trust at the seminary, not fearing when seminarians want to open their hearts to him or to a formator.

superiors. In fact, there are many abuses, above all in novitiates and seminaries, in order to obtain a manifestation of conscience with projective psychological methods or by other means.

The Instruction stated, “It is illegal for anyone, even religious or diocesan superiors, to enter into the psychological or moral intimacy of a person without having obtained his previous, explicit, informed, and absolutely free consent.”

The pontifical representatives were directed to share Father Marcozzi’s article with the bishops’ conferences of the nations to which they were assigned.⁴

The draft of the new *Code of Canon Law* that was given to Pope John Paul II for his review spoke only of the right to one’s good reputation. Pope John Paul II inserted into the *Code of Canon Law*, before it was promulgated in 1983, in c. 220, the right of the faithful to protect their privacy.⁵

The same year as the Code was promulgated, Marcozzi published a second article about the subject, in which he indicated that the right to protect one’s privacy in the new c. 220 meant the same as what the Vatican Secretary of State had said in 1976 (see above).⁶

In 1998, the Congregation for the Clergy, responding to an appeal by a pastor who was refusing to submit to a psychological assessment as ordered by his bishop, upheld the pastor’s refusal, explaining:

It is the consistent teaching of the Magisterium that investigation of the intimate psychological and moral status of the interior life of any member of the Christian faithful can not be carried on except with the consent of the one to undergo such evaluation, as is clearly written about in the instruction of the Secretariat of State in their 6 August 1976 letter to pontifical representatives.⁷

Some writers have interpreted the right to protect one's privacy mentioned in c. 220 by referring to c. 630, which states that superiors are not to hear the confessions of their subjects unless the subject requests it of his own initiative; and that religious can freely and on their own initiative open their minds (hearts) to their superiors, but superiors are forbidden from inducing a religious to make a manifestation of his conscience:

§4. Superiors are not to hear the confessions of subjects unless the members request it on their own initiative.

§5. Members are to approach superiors with trust, to whom they can freely and on their own initiative open their minds. Superiors, however, are forbidden to induce the members in any way to make a manifestation of conscience to them.

These writers interpret c. 630 §5 as meaning that a superior may talk with a subject (member) about an intimate personal matter only if the subject himself, on his own initiative, divulges it to the superior. Such an interpretation is inconsistent with the documents of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education,⁸ Congregation for Clergy (see above), and Secretary of State (see above), which allow a superior (or other person) to question a person about his inner core if the person gives his prior, explicit, informed and free consent.

If a superior, per c. 630 §5, had to wait for a member to make a self-disclosure and could not initiate a question about the member's inner core, then there would be no need to obtain the member's consent for the discussion. If a superior was unable to initiate an inquiry into a person's inner core, then the superior or rector could not ask any intimate personal questions on an application for admission to a seminary and could do no scrutiny of candidates for priesthood (see below). Also, if the superior could not do through another person, such as a psychologist, what he could not do directly himself, then the superior could never ask a person to undergo a psychological assessment. These conclusions are all contrary to church documents regulating religious life and priesthood, as discussed elsewhere in this paper. Consequently, such an interpretation of c. 630 §5 seems incorrect.

The source of the 1983 c. 630 §5 was the 1917 c. 530 §1,⁹ which used the same language in the crucial phrase: "induce in any way to make a manifestation

of conscience to them."¹⁰ Since writers agree upon the meaning of "conscience" as one's inner core or sanctuary, the issue for interpretation is the meaning of "induce."

The Decree *Quemadmodum* of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Dec. 17, 1890, strictly forbade religious superiors to insist on the manifestation of conscience of a subject. This decree was addressed to superiors of lay religious institutes. The 1917 Code c. 530 §1, by not specifying the type of institute, extended this restriction to all religious institutes.¹¹ Consequently, based on the source of c. 630 §5, to "induce a manifestation" means "insist on a manifestation," or "to pressure a person to make a manifestation."¹²

Therefore, the right to privacy in c. 220 should not be interpreted to mean that a superior may not hear any self-revelation by a member unless the member offers it on his own initiative. It cannot be interpreted to mean that superiors (and formators) may not ask a person for a self-revelation. The superiors may indeed make the request, but if the person refuses the superiors must accept his refusal.

The superiors may indeed make the request, but if the person refuses the superiors must accept his refusal.

In the interpretation of c. 630 §5, it should also be recalled that c. 630 §5 has two sentences, not just the sentence forbidding superiors from inducing a manifestation of conscience. The first sentence says, "Members are to approach superiors with trust, to whom they can express their minds freely and willingly." The 1917 c. 530 §1 had similar language. While the second sentence is from the perspective of the superior, this first sentence is from the perspective of the member. As a general rule, the opening of one's conscience to superiors remains commendable and in this way the most ancient tradition of the religious state, going back to the desert Fathers, is maintained.¹³ Consequently, a manifestation of conscience by a member to a superior, other than in the Sacrament of Confession (if the superior is a priest),¹⁴ is not to be discouraged of the members. A trusting, open attitude by the member shows a mature attitude toward authority, docility and obedience; an acceptance of God's will as manifested through one's su-

periors; and the desire for self-knowledge as a means to open oneself to conversion.

The argument can be made that this would apply not only to the mature member in an institute of consecrated life but also to the mature seminarian. One might deduce from this understanding of “manifestation of conscience” that the seminary rector should allow an atmosphere of openness and trust at the seminary, not fearing when seminarians want to open their hearts to him or to a formator (although not in Confession, so that the rector or formator is not bound by the seal of Confession), and not discouraging a seminarian from doing so; not telling him that such matter belongs only in spiritual direction.

In support of that conclusion, the Congregation for Catholic Education, (no.12), states:

Let the formators guarantee an atmosphere of trust, so that the candidate [applicant or seminarian] can open up and participate with conviction in the work of discernment and accompaniment, offering “his own convinced and heartfelt co-operation” [*Pastores dabo vobis*, n.v69b]. The candidate is asked to be sincerely and trustingly open with his formators. Only by sincerely allowing them to know him can he be helped on that spiritual journey that he himself is seeking by entering the seminary.... Important, and often determinant in overcoming possible misunderstandings, will be both the educational atmosphere between students and formators—marked by openness and transparency—and the motivations and ways with which the formators will present their suggestion to the candidate that he should have a psychological consultation.

The formator may ask the seminarian directly about manifest troubles, such as the seminarian’s looking troubled, or his being late for a scheduled activity, or a report that he was seen using the Internet late at night. The right to protect one’s personal intimacy (privacy) covers what cannot be known from external manifestations, that is, from behavior.¹⁵

If an applicant or seminarian has given his prior written consent, a formator may receive the report of the psychological evaluation of the person. The PPF supports this practice, since it says,

Understanding one’s psychological history and

developing strategies to address elements of negative impact can be very helpful in human formation (no.80); ... the observations and conclusions that emerge from the admissions process should serve as a significant resource for the seminarian’s human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation within the seminary. The sharing of this information presumes a due respect for the rights of the seminarian and a prudent maintenance of confidentiality (no.40); ...the applicant should understand that the testing results will be shared with select seminary personnel in a way that permits a thorough review (no.52); This [respect for the applicants’ and seminarians’ right to privacy and the careful management of confidential materials] is especially true in the case of sharing confidential information with a team of formators... Clear directives must be in place to determine any further use of psychological testing results or other admissions materials for formation or even counseling purposes (no. 57).¹⁶ The PPF (no.131) also states that [c]are should be taken to ensure that issues of human formation that properly belong to the external forum are not limited to the spiritual direction relationship for their resolution.

When he is to undergo a psychological evaluation, the seminary applicant should be asked to consent to the release of information not only to the rector and bishop, but also to eventual formators designated by the bishop or rector to whom the seminarian is entrusted. The formators should use these reports in their formation work. The Congregation for Catholic Education’s *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*, (“Guidelines”) states that the assessments are to be incorporated by the dioceses and seminary formators as part of the overall vocational discernment process (no. 6).

The formator may ask the seminarian to see a psychologist, but the seminarian has the right to refuse.¹⁷ If the seminarian refuses to give consent for a psychological evaluation, the formators are not to force the seminarian’s will in any way.¹⁸

If a psychological assessment is considered essential for all applicants, as the PPF states, the implications are that it is very important to identify potential problems in the candidates for priesthood, with an understanding that the applicants might not be suit-

able candidates, or might need special help to become suitable candidates for priesthood. This would suggest that the problems discovered in the assessment should be addressed with the seminarian during his years in the seminary, and, to be sure that is done, the formator needs to do it.¹⁹ Based on the understanding of c. 630 §5 discussed above, the formator (or superior) could ask intimate questions of a seminarian, but he cannot pressure the seminarian to answer the questions, or else he would be inducing a manifestation of conscience. Based on the understanding of c. 220 discussed above, the formator (or superior) could ask intimate questions of a seminarian, but, to protect the seminarian's right to protect his privacy, he needs to precede the questions with an explanation and obtain the seminarian's consent to the questioning and to the use of the information he reveals. The seminarian should be told in advance the nature and purpose of the questions and that he can choose whether to answer the questions. He should be told the uses that will be made of the information that he reveals, who else will have access to the information, and for how long.²⁰

The rights of a candidate to the priesthood to protect his privacy and good reputation are real but not absolute. "Ecclesiastical authority is entitled to regulate, in view of the common good, the exercise of rights that are proper to Christ's faithful" (c. 223 §2). Ordaining only suitable ministers is part of the common good of the church—in regulating the exercise of the individual's rights, the bishop would need to consider the needs of the church as a whole; of the church hierarchy, especially those with whom the priest will work or live; of the faithful whom he will serve; and finally of the priest himself. The bishop deciding whether to admit a seminary candidate to the Sacrament of Orders "must be satisfied...that, as a result of the investigation prescribed by law, the suitability of the candidate has been positively established."²¹

From the start of a candidacy as a seminarian, the bishop must investigate the candidate. "The diocesan Bishop is to admit to the major seminary only those whose human, moral, spiritual and intellectual gifts, as well as physical and psychological health and right intention, show that they are capable of dedicating themselves permanently to the sacred ministries" (c. 241 §1). The PPF describes the questioning that is necessary as part of the admissions procedure:

The admissions procedure should include an open and frank discussion of the life experiences

that applicants bring to the seminary. Their level of insight or self-knowledge and their willingness to address important human issues, such as their interpersonal abilities, evidence of sound peer relationships, their manner of dealing with authority, and their psychosexual development, can be important gauges of their readiness to enter a seminary program (no.54); ...The seminary is also obligated to determine the freedom of the applicant from impediments to orders and from conditions that must be addressed prior to the reception of orders [such as irregularities to Orders](no.64).

It seems that mandatory psychological testing does not violate the right of the applicant to protect his privacy since no one is requiring him to be a candidate for priesthood and, therefore, to undergo a psychological assessment.

The PPF (nos. 39, 47, 52) mentions the necessity of having psychological and physical assessments made by expert consultants.

The Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for Catholic Education has indicated that the use of a psychologist should not be mandatory for all applicants, so as not to violate the person's right to privacy, but to use a psychologist only in necessary cases.²² In the context of the United States, however, the PPF (no.52), which was approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education, states, "A psychological assessment is an integral part of the admission procedure." Provided that the testing results are kept confidential except as the applicant has authorized they be released, it seems that mandatory psychological testing does not violate the right of the applicant to protect his privacy since no one is requiring him to be a candidate for priesthood and, therefore, to undergo a psychological assessment.²³ The value of mandatory testing is indicated by an observation by the Congregation for Catholic Education

that “errors in discerning vocations are not rare, and in all too many cases, psychological defects, sometimes of a pathological kind, reveal themselves only after ordination to the priesthood. Detecting defects earlier would help avoid many tragic experiences.”²⁴ Also, this mandatory psychological testing should be seen as a service of charity and truth for the candidate for priesthood in deepening his self-knowledge and awareness of vocation and its consequences.²⁵

As indicated in the PPF,²⁶ the candidate for priesthood must be asked to attest to his freedom from all the canonical impediments and irregularities to ordination.²⁷ The “Scrutinies” must be carried out for each of the four moments in the process of priestly formation: the admission, the ministries of lector and acolyte, the diaconate and the priesthood.²⁸

The Congregation for Catholic Education (Guidelines, no.11), in regard to the evaluation of candidates for priesthood, states,

Canon 1051, 1° of the *Code of Canon Law* foresees that, for the scrutiny of the qualities required in view of ordination, one should provide, *inter al.*, for an evaluation of the state of the candidate’s physical and psychic health.... the Church has the right to verify the suitability of future priests, including by means of recourse to medical and psychological science.

In its “Some Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports Concerning Promotion to Orders (can. 1029),” the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments lists (in no.11) various items to note in a candidate for priesthood, such as “Sufficient affective maturity and clarity of male sexual identity (no.7); Presence of defects: duplicity? ...lack of regard for celibate chastity? arrogance? lack of honesty? difficult character?... hypocrisy?”²⁹ The fact that duplicity, lack of honesty, and hypocrisy are all listed indicates the Congregation’s concern regarding the difficulty of judging the suitability of applicants if they are not forthright.³⁰

Nevertheless, the candidate for priesthood does not forfeit his right to protect his privacy. “[T]he candidate’s psychological consultation can only proceed with his previous, explicit, informed and free consent” (Guidelines, no.12). Similarly, in regard to religious, for the admission to the novitiate, c. 642 indicates that superiors’ consultation with experts (regarding the suitability of an candidate to novitiate) is subject to the right of the candidate to protect his privacy and good reputation.

As discussed above, the standard for the protection of a person’s right to protect his privacy under c. 220 is that his consent be previous, explicit, informed and free.³¹ The seminarian or religious, when asked by someone in authority to reveal his inner core, or when asked by someone to whom the authority has referred him, must give his previous, explicit, informed and free consent, or else the questioner or investigator may not proceed. Since the reasons for the superior’s or formator’s asking a person in formation to reveal his inner core would be similar each time, including the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to promote to the priesthood only suitable candidates and the potential benefits to the person himself—his vocational growth, development and discernment—it would seem that a superior (diocesan bishop, rector or religious superior) or a formator could make a request to an applicant or person in formation to allow questions about his inner core during the years that he is in formation at the institute/seminary (i.e., to sign a consent form), rather than having to ask him for consent each time.

Alternatively, perhaps this consent form, rather than for an individual formator, could be for a diocese, seminary or religious institute, naming the persons at the institute (such as the bishop, vocation director and formation faculty) whom the applicant or person in formation permits to address with him the issues of discernment, vocational growth, development and capacity for celibate priesthood. After having given the general consent, the person could revoke that permission at any time if he decided he no longer wanted to answer personal questions or if he decided that he wanted to be asked first each time, before being questioned. Even with a general consent form, the authorized person could only ask the intimate questions; he could not insist that the person in formation answer the questions. If the person refused to answer, the questioner could not persist.

It will then be seen that these rights can and must be balanced with the church’s need for suitable candidates to the priesthood.

In conclusion, the extent to which the diocesan bishop, seminary rector and seminary formators can ask about the intimate matters of a candidate for priesthood needs to be clarified to be consistent with canon law by speaking in terms of the candidate's right to privacy and to protect his reputation under c. 220, rather than speaking in terms of "external forum" and "internal forum." It will then be seen that these rights can and must be balanced with the church's need for suitable candidates to the priesthood.



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Endnotes

1. See *Codex Iuris Canonici fontium annotatione et indice analytico - alphabetico auctus*, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico auctus. Pontificia Commissio Codici Iuris Canonici Authentice Interpretando (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta' del Vaticano, 1989), p. 59.
2. This is quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), no. 1776.
3. Marcozzi, Vittorio, S.J., "Indagini psicologiche e diritti della persona," pp. 541-551, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Anno 127, 1976, vol. II, p. 547.
4. See Ingels, Rev. Gregory, "Protecting the Right to Privacy when examining Issues affecting the Life and Ministry of Clerics and Religious," pp.439-466 in *Studia canonica* 34 (2000), pp. 443-444. Also reported in Dunn, Rev. Brian, "Canonical Issues Associated with the Psychological Testing of Seminarians," pp. 50-63 in *Seminary Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2, Fall 2003, p. 53.
5. See Marcozzi, Vittorio, S.J., "Il diritto alla propria intimità nel nuovo codice di diritto canonico," pp.573-580 in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Anno 134, 1983, vol. IV, p. 574.
6. Marcozzi, *Il Diritto*, p. 579.
7. Ingels, p. 445.
8. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood" (June 28, 2008).
9. 1917 c. 530 §1. *Omnes religiosi Superiores districtae vetantur personas sibi subditas quoquo modo inducere ad conscientiae manifestationem sibi peragendam. §2. Non tamen prohibentur subditi quominus libere ac ultro aperire animum suum Superioribus valeant; imo expedit ut ipsi filiali cum fiducia Superiores adeant, eis, si sint sacerdotes, dubia quoque et anxietates suae conscientiae exponentes.*
10. "...quoquo modo inducere ad conscientiae manifestationem sibi peragendam."
11. See Woywod, Rev. Stanislaus, OFM, revised by Smith, Rev. Callistus, OFM, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, (Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., New York: 1957), p. 231.
12. This conclusion is supported by *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique VI*, Parigi 1957, p. 720, in its definition of the meaning of "manifestation of conscience," which says that it is forbidden to religious superiors to pressure their subjects, directly or indirectly, by means of commands, threats, or flattery, to manifest their conscience: "...il était absolument interdit a ces superieurs "de pousser leurs sujets, directement ou indirectement, au moyen d'ordres, de conseils, de crainte, de menaces ou au contraire par des flatteries, a leur manifester leur conscience." This conclusion is also supported by the different language used in the Code regarding a superior's or rector's hearing the confession of a seminarian or religious. See n. 14 below.
13. "On aurait tort d'oublier cette partie du can. 530 et de se contenter de rappeler aux supérieurs leur devoir d'abstention. En règle générale, l'ouverture de conscience aux superiors reste louable et ainsi on maintient les plus anciennes traditions de l'état religieux, celles qui remontent aux Pères du désert." *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique VI*, Parigi 1957, p. 723.
14. Confession to a superior should be discouraged since the superior would not be able to act on the information revealed in Confession. The relevant canons, c. 630 §4 and c. 985, specify that the subject would have to request the Sacrament of Confession "on his own initiative," or "spontaneously."
15. See Marcozzi, *Il Diritto*, p. 576.
16. See also *Guidelines*, no. 13.
17. See *Guidelines*, nos. 8-9, 12, 13.
18. See *Guidelines*, no. 12.
19. The PPF (no. 93) states that appropriate self-disclosure and a cultivated capacity for self-reflection and accountability are among the requisite habits and skills of a man in seminary formation. The PPF (no. 131) also advises, "Care should be taken to ensure that issues of human formation that properly belong to the external forum are not limited to the spiritual direction relationship for their resolution."
20. This requirement of obtaining the seminarian's consent would not apply to postulants and novices in a religious institute because, for postulants and novices, the formator and the spiritual director is the same person, not two persons. See cc. 650-652; see CIVCSVA, *Directives*, nos. 44,52. The *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* states that the director of novices is the spiritual guide for each and all of the novices. CIVCSVA, *Directives*, no. 52. (In regard to the stage prior to the novitiate, the *Directives* [no. 45] state that, during this time, one or more religious, actively collaborating with the director of novices,

- will guide the candidates and help them to discern their vocation.) Consequently, the spiritual direction of the postulants and novices does not have the same expectation of confidentiality, and their formator-spiritual guide could use the information revealed in spiritual direction as part of his or her evaluation of them as candidates.
21. c. 1052 §1; see also c. 1029.
 22. Congregation for Bishops, *Apostolorum Successorum*, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, Feb. 22, 2004, no. 88, citing *Ratio Fundamentalis*, no. 39; *Guidelines*, nos. 5, 11.
 23. Although a psychological assessment can be required of candidates for the priesthood and religious life since the candidates are not required to be candidates and there is also the overriding concern for the common good of the church for suitable candidates, the same cannot be said of someone who has finished the candidacy program, i.e., a psychological evaluation cannot be required if the person asked to undergo a psychological evaluation is already a priest or a religious who has professed vows. Bishops and religious superiors cannot insist on asking a revelation of his inner self from a professed religious or a priest. See Marcozzi, *Indagini*, p.551; Ingels pp. 445, 459-460. See also 1969 *Instruction of the Congregation for Religious [Renovationis causam]*, as reported in Ingels, p. 447; Huels, John M., opinion no. 11 (regarding c. 618), pp. 52-55 in *Advisory Opinions* (CLSA, Washington, DC,1997), p. 53; and McDonough, Elizabeth, "The Troubling Religious: Further Considerations," pp. 618-624, in *Review for Religious*, 49 (1990), p. 620.
 24. Guidelines, no. 4.
 25. Dunn, p. 53.
 26. See also Congregation for Catholic Education, Circular Letter of 27 July 1992, Prot.N. 1560/90/18; and Circular Letter of 2 Feb. 1999, Prot.N. 1560/90/33; and Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Circular Letter, "Scrutinies regarding the Suitability of Candidates for Orders," 10 Nov. 1997, Prot. 589/97, *Notitiae* 33 (1997), 507-518 ("Scrutinies").
 27. The (c. 1041) irregularities include having a psychic defect; having committed apostasy, heresy, or schism; having committed voluntary homicide or having procured an abortion; attempted suicide; mutilated himself or another; illegally or invalidly performed an act of Orders; or attempted marriage invalidly. The (c. 1042) impediments include having a wife, holding a position forbidden to clerics, a neophyte [recently baptized].
 28. Scrutinies, no. 4.
 29. Scrutinies, Enclosure V.
 30. This concern is also evidenced by the Congregation's cover letter to diocesan bishops, 28 November 1997, regarding the scrutinies of candidates to the priesthood.
 31. See Guidelines, no. 12; see Marcozzi, *Il Diritto*, p. 579.



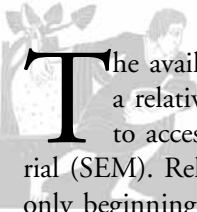
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Use of Internet Pornography: Consequences, Causes and Treatment

Rev. Duane F. Reinert, O.F.M. Cap., Ph.D.



The availability of the Internet has brought with it a relatively new phenomenon: use of the Internet to access pornography or sexually explicit material (SEM). Reliable, peer-reviewed, empirical research is only beginning to emerge concerning the effects of the use of SEM, its correlates, as well as treatment for those with problematic use of Internet pornography or SEM. In this article, I summarize a select sample of psychological and psychiatric research conducted among male participants in the general population. I share some observations on addressing this problem in a religious context, particularly in seminaries.

Psychological and Psychiatric Research in Males

A recent study¹ of religiously committed male college students, all of whom agreed that the use of SEM is wrong, revealed some instructive results. Compared to users of SEM, those who were non-users had a higher frequency level of religious practices (both in the present and historically in their family of origin), higher levels of self-worth and identity development, and lower levels of depression. Low self-worth or depression may contribute to being predisposed to the use of SEM (for example, to stimulate mood, dissipate pent up anxiety or tension, or to address the negative feelings of social isolation). Alternatively, as the researchers suggest, it may be that the conflict between believing that it is wrong, yet using SEM, may contribute to lower self-worth and to depression. A strong sense of identity is associated with nonuse of SEM. Those who have not yet developed a sense of identity are more vulnerable to SEM use, and the SEM use may, in turn, undermine

Research suggests that those who use SEM on the Internet tend to have lower degrees of social integration, conduct (behavior) problems, a higher incidence of depressive symptoms and a decreased emotional bonding with their caregivers.

their confidence in their ability to appropriately control and channel their sexual drive.

A 2012 review of the research² concludes that adolescents who consume pornography tend to have higher levels of permissive sexual attitudes, sexual preoccupation and sexual experimentation at an earlier age. Research suggests that those who use SEM on the Internet tend to have lower degrees of social integration, conduct (behavior) problems, a higher incidence of depressive symptoms and a decreased emotional bonding with their caregivers. It also suggests that the use of SEM tends to affect attitudes and beliefs (such as viewing sex as physical and casual rather than affectional and relational), as well as contributing to sexual preoccupation in their cognitions. Although research on SEM and the developing adolescent brain is, at this time, inconclusive,

researchers caution that the brain is vulnerable at this stage of development.

Wolak, Mitchel and Finkelhor³ researched the impact of unwanted exposure (although 21 percent were aware of the sexual nature but were lured by curiosity) and wanted exposure to online pornography in a national sample of young Internet users. Among the results was an association between unwanted exposure to SEM and both borderline and clinically significant depression. There was also an association between unwanted exposure to SEM and the risk of being interpersonally victimized, such as through harassment or solicitation. Characteristics of those with wanted exposure were delinquents (rule-breaking youth), people with personality tendencies toward sensation-seeking and people who seek SEM to relieve dysphoria. Sexual curiosity, of course, is normal for teens, but exposure to SEM can lead to negative consequences, such as undermining social values and attitudes about sexual behavior, earlier and promiscuous sexual activity, sexual deviancy and sexually compulsive behavior. Depressed Internet users can be more vulnerable to sexually compulsive behavior that may interfere with daily obligations or with healthy peer relationships. It is still unclear what long-term effect unwanted exposure may have on very young adolescents (“primacy effects”), such as arousal patterns, anxieties, sense of normative standards or sexual compulsivity.

Kaplan and Krueger⁴ noted that the problem of hypersexuality is so frequently reported in the literature that it has led the American Psychiatric Association to consider adopting a specific diagnostic category, Hypersexual Disorder, in its next revision of the diagnostic manual.⁵ Indeed, the manual that is scheduled for clinical use beginning in May 2013 includes the category in the section of those diagnoses in need of further study. The proposed diagnosis includes such behaviors as repetitively engaging in sexual fantasies or behaviors (such as online pornography, cybersex, masturbation, telephone sex, strip clubs and sex with consenting adults), to regulate dysphoric mood states (such as anxiety, depression, boredom or irritability) or to cope with stressful life events when these behaviors cause personal distress or significant impairment in social or occupational functioning.

Religious and Seminary Context

Although some of the claims from vigorous opponents of the use of pornography cannot be supported by research (for example, that it leads to sex crimes,

committing child abuse or to the dehumanization and mistreatment of women), authors grounded in the moral and religious teachings of Mormonism, Evangelical Christianity, Catholicism and others have identified legitimate and troubling concerns, not the least of which is that the use of SEM is contrary to the purposes of sexuality as God created it.

Those who come from strong religious backgrounds and who maintain their religious commitment, on average, are better at avoiding the use of SEM; however, there are some who struggle with SEM use and who may even be considered to be sexually addicted. From clinical experience, we observe that some young men find that the more they try to resist the temptation to use Internet SEM and avoid masturbation, the more difficulties they have. How do we understand this?

Developmentally speaking, when a young man reaches the age of puberty, the strength of his newly developed sexual drive typically exceeds his ability to control it.

Young men who enter the seminary today have grown up with Internet access. They have been exposed to both unwanted and wanted SEM. Developmentally speaking, when a young man reaches the age of puberty, the strength of his newly developed sexual drive typically exceeds his ability to control it. He does not yet know how to channel or cope with such strong desires and energies. In addition, puberty presents a young man with a “new self” that he needs to understand and accept. Not only does he go through the bodily changes of an emerging adult, he also faces social relationships in a new way. For teens, social acceptance, fitting in with peers and knowing where he fits in is front and center.

In this state, SEM encounters combined with masturbation stimulates the brain’s pleasure systems. Dr. Jeffrey Satinover, in his PET Scan imaging of the brain, found similarities between pornography-addicted and cocaine-addicted brains and ventured this comment in testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce: “With [the] advent of the computer, the delivery

system for this addictive stimulus has become nearly resistance-free...we have devised a form of heroin 100 times more powerful than before, usable in the privacy of one's own home and injected directly to the brain through the eyes."⁶ At puberty, the strong sexual impulse is unleashed, fueled by Internet SEM, and many young men do not yet have the tools or strategies in place to cope with it. At the same time, SEM is not just available on a computer tethered by a wire as it was just a few short years ago, but is now constantly available, 24/7, on mobile smartphones.

The research literature suggests that, initially, problematic use of the Internet for sexual purposes may begin when a young man impulsively seeks SEM. This behavior is sexually rewarding and physiological responses provide added reinforcement, which maintains the behavior. For some, negative emotional experiences (such as loneliness, anxiety, depression, stress or interpersonal difficulties) add to the cycle that leads to impulsively seeking mood-altering sexual experiences. Once the impulsive or compulsive cycle has begun, the young man may resolve to take steps to stop it without much success.

The religious man may experience a great deal of guilt and shame for violating a serious moral expectation of his faith. As more than one young man has told me in words similar to these, "once I committed the mortal sin, I thought, 'what the heck, you're going to hell anyway' and for several days I binged on porn and masturbated." Kwee, Dominguez and Ferrell⁷ noted their experience with Evangelical youth:

Many Christian college men who are distressed by masturbation attempt to resolve their guilt by intensifying their efforts to completely stop masturbation, developing what Jones and Jones (1993) have called a "compulsion to stop" (p. 192) that becomes just as driven as the urge to masturbate, leading to a vicious positive feedback cycle that reinforces rather than eradicates masturbation.

Some of our seminarians find themselves in an addictive cycle: using SEM, acting out for a time, going to confession, and, before long, accessing SEM, masturbating and feeling shame for failing again.

In an attempt to understand the above-described dynamic, a recent study⁸ proposed that a phenomenon called experiential avoidance may unwittingly contribute to the problem. That is, the very attempt to fight the

problem through such strategies as thought suppression or avoidance of sexual thoughts and fantasies may have the paradoxical effect of intensifying the urge or desire to engage in problematic Internet pornography use. Indeed, researchers found that, for the group identifying their Internet pornography use as problematic, experiential avoidance was correlated with their use of SEM. However, for the group identifying their Internet pornography use as non-problematic, measures of experiential avoidance were not correlated with Internet pornography use.

He is taught that he is not the sum of his thoughts, desires or urges; rather his real self *has* thoughts and desires.

Treatment

Initial research⁹ using a relatively new treatment, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, suggests it may be an effective approach to reducing the amount of pornography viewed over time. This particular therapeutic approach seems especially compatible with the religious setting because it embraces and builds on the participant's own set of values. In summary, this therapeutic approach teaches the seminarian not to fight the thought to view pornography because the fight keeps the sexual issues in awareness. Paradoxically, the fight actually makes it more likely that the struggle will end in viewing the objectionable material. Rather, he is taught that arousal and urges are normal aspects of being human and is asked to practice acceptance of that fact. In addition, he is taught that he is not the sum of his thoughts, desires or urges; rather his real self *has* thoughts and desires. Therefore, he can make choices based on what he values. He is asked to review his values with the therapist and discuss behaviors that implement those values (for example, spending time talking with friends, doing homework or praying). He is challenged to put his efforts and energy into engaging in those positive activities that express his values, as well as committing to spend less time viewing sexual material.

Treating the problematic use of the Internet to access SEM is certainly a multifaceted task, from spiritual direction that emphasizes sexuality as a God-given

Developing a healthy and positive attitude about their own sexuality can help them view their normal sex drive and impulses as a God-given energy that should be channeled toward the Other and others, not an enemy to be feared, fought or extinguished.

gift, to supportive guidance in human formation, to peer support such as chastity groups. One goal is to help our young men grow in self-awareness and arrive at a secure sense of identity that incorporates their faith-based values. Once they are able to recognize what adds to their normal level of sexual energy (such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, feeling unloved, interpersonal conflicts, feeling overwhelmed, stress or boredom), they can take appropriate steps to cope with the issue or issues identified. Developing a healthy and positive attitude about their own sexuality can help them view their normal sex drive and impulses as a God-given energy that should be channeled toward the Other and others, not an enemy to be feared, fought or extinguished. When seminarians are in the throes of an addictive process, professional counseling can be helpful, offering them patient support and guidance as they engage in a long-term solution with a degree of self-understanding. Often, after they no longer have to use pornography and masturbation to regulate their negative emotional states, they are able to manage their impulses with some degree of freedom and peace.



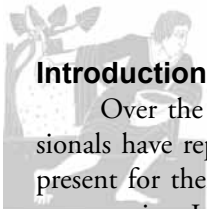
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Internet Pornography Addiction and Priestly Formation: Medium and Content Collide with the Human Brain

Sr. Marysia Weber, R.S.M., D.O.



Introduction

Over the last two decades, mental health professionals have reported a growing number of people who present for therapy seeking to address their increased urge to view Internet pornography. Accurate statistics regarding the use of Internet pornography are difficult to locate; however, available research demonstrates prolific numbers of pornographic Internet sites. According to available data, “sex” is the number one search topic on the Internet, with at least 4.2 million reported pornographic websites currently available, signaling a fourfold increase since 2003. Daily, there are 68 million pornographic search engine requests.¹ An estimated 40 million adults in the U.S. regularly view Internet pornography, 10 percent of whom admit to having an addiction to Internet pornography. While males constitute the majority of users, one in three women view pornography.² Researchers now predict that millions of Americans are addicted to Internet pornography. In fact, sources assert that the number of users of Internet pornography has skyrocketed, making Internet pornography the foremost addiction in the world.³

Studies also indicate that boys aged 12 to 17 are the largest consumers of Internet pornography. This is because of hormonal changes during puberty that enhance sexual arousal and curiosity and contribute to interest in sexual exploration. Recent surveys report that 90 percent of teenage boys view online pornography while doing homework.⁴ Additionally, young, sexually

An estimated 40 million adults in the U.S. regularly view Internet pornography, 10 percent of whom admit to having an addiction to Internet pornography.

inexperienced persons, especially males, find it easier to engage in sexual behavior through Internet pornography than to risk rejection in the context of a face-to-face encounter with a real person.

The expansive reach of Internet pornography has also touched a very young demographic. Notably, the average age of children who are first exposed to Internet pornography is 11 years old.⁵ Exposure to Internet pornography in children four to five years old is also being reported. In his pastoral letter, *Bought at a Great Price*, Bishop Paul Loverde writes:

The [pornography] industry preys on the most vulnerable: the poor, the abused and marginalized, and even children. This exploitation of the weak is gravely sinful. Whether need, confusion, or alienation leads men and women to become pornographic objects, their choice to do so cer-

tainly cannot be seen as free. Those who produce and distribute pornography leave a wide path of broken and devalued men and women in their wake.

More and more of these victims are younger, even children. When these, the most vulnerable and innocent of our society, become victims of the dehumanizing demands of an industry willing to destroy innocence for profit, it is an unspeakable act of violence.⁶

Narrowing the focus, Internet pornography also has a substantial impact on men who enter seminaries. Affecting their understanding of interpersonal relationships, the dignity of the human person and the purpose of human sexuality, Internet pornography is a menacing presence for men who seek priestly formation, especially in light of a lifestyle of chastity and the discipline of celibacy. To address this newest challenge to priestly formation, it is essential for seminary personnel to increase their awareness of the effects of Internet pornography.

In the context of this article, I will lead formators in an initial exploration of this unsettling developmental, moral and social shift. At the onset, I will establish a connection between addictive behavior and pornography. Further, I will consider contributing factors to the skyrocketing prevalence of Internet pornography use. Next, I will address the neurological effects of Internet pornography, which prompt many users to seek more intense erotic images in order to achieve heightened experiences of sexual arousal. Finally, I will suggest treatment protocols that can promote affective maturity and reverse the changes in the brain created by viewing Internet pornography.

Criteria for Internet Pornography Addiction

Originally, mental health care providers connected the term “addiction” to the use of chemicals such as alcohol, drugs and nicotine. Psychiatrically, addiction refers to levels of tolerance and withdrawal that hinder affective or psychosocial functioning. These are physiologically mediated symptoms.⁷ Tolerance is present when the same amount of substance elicits less response. For example, a person who drinks two glasses of wine will be affected by the alcohol. With continued use, the same person will need more than two glasses of wine to produce physiologic reactions. In this way, a person has developed a tolerance for the effects of alcohol. On the other hand, withdrawal refers to the physiologic reaction

elicited when the amount of a substance is less present or absent in the body. Withdrawal symptoms include tremors, anxiety, elevated blood pressure and increased rate of pulse and respirations. Affective or emotional disturbances may include depression, irritability, impulsivity, impaired concentration, disrupted sleep or aggressive behavior. These symptoms are observable when an individual is experiencing withdrawal from alcohol and street drugs, often diminishing relationships either in quantity or in quality.

Following a similar pattern of tolerance and withdrawal, experts in addiction disorders describe five successive and interdependent stages through which people pass on the way to an addiction to Internet pornography: discovery, experimentation, habituation, compulsivity and hopelessness. Progression through these stages may be gradual or rapid after discovering pornographic websites.⁸ In the discovery stage, a person stumbles onto a pornographic website, opening the door for further exploration. Encouraged by the anonymity of electronic transactions, users secretly experiment with sexual material online without getting caught. With repeated exposure—similar to building a tolerance to alcohol—users develop a habit of sexual fantasies and access pornographic material to increase arousal levels. As users become desensitized to online sex, heightened sexual intensity is necessary to achieve desired levels of arousal. Over time, to avoid life’s complications and responsibilities, the habit of accessing Internet pornography becomes a compulsion. Sexual excitement becomes associated with tension reduction and relieving feelings of guilt, anxiety or depression. Compulsive Internet pornographic behavior is driven largely by tension and agitation, much like an alcoholic is driven to drink at moments of excessive stress. At this stage, men and women jeopardize careers and relationships in order to satisfy their compulsive urges. Despite potential risks, men and women deceive family members and friends to conceal the extent of their involvement with Internet pornography, which is no longer a voluntary activity. Restlessness and irritability emerge when attempting to abstain from this behavior. At the height of their compulsion, users of pornography are unable to find the willpower necessary to stop, and they feel hopeless and impotent against persistent and dominant urges to view sexual images online.

Reasons for the Addictive Nature of Internet Pornography

Over the last 40 years, several factors have created a solid platform for the introduction and acceptance of

Internet pornography into American society. Principally, the introduction of the birth-control pill in the 1960s intensified the heat of the smoldering sexual revolution, as American society separated sexual intimacy from its core purposes of unity and procreation. Artificial contraception reduced sexual intimacy to pleasure-seeking recreation while limiting the possibility of conception. The advent of the World Wide Web made immediate the availability of adult entertainment and amplified the perceived recreational purpose of sexuality. Following this trend, today, more teenagers are becoming sexually active at an age when they are emotionally vulnerable, uncertain about their moral beliefs and confused about the purpose of sexuality.

Pornography remains the second most frequent diversion and misuse of the Internet in the workplace, after accessing personal email.⁹

Three primary features have added to the appeal of Internet pornography. First, the omnipresence of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices allows men and women immediate access to the Internet, which makes Internet pornography very accessible. Most households today have at least one computer and most workers have access to a computer at their jobsites, with 20 percent of men and 17 percent of women admitting to accessing Internet pornography at work. Pornography remains the second most frequent diversion and misuse of the Internet in the workplace, after accessing personal email.⁹

Second, because many pornographic websites offer free access, they are affordable to viewers of every age and social status. Studies indicate that 80 to 90 percent of people who use online pornography pay nothing, and 10 to 20 percent of users pay an average of \$60.00 per month.¹⁰ Pornographic preferences generally vary by gender. For example, male viewers seek photographs, videos and live-camera feeds for sexual gratification, while women are twice as likely as men to enter chat rooms¹¹ seeking friendly conversations that eventually lead to sexually explicit exchanges.

Third, the anonymous quality of the Internet enables users to pretend to be anyone or no one when accessing pornographic websites, contributing to the false belief that no untoward repercussions will occur from accessing them. The cybersex “relationship” feels more intimate than actual relationships while allowing the user to remain “safely” anonymous. Fostering dishonesty, fear, self-focus, desensitization and self-deceit, men and women addicted to Internet pornography value their anonymity and enhanced sexual stimulation, resulting in increased incidences of compulsive masturbation and more deviant sexual activities, sometimes leading to overt illegal behavior.¹² Accessibility, affordability and anonymity, blending with the change of sexual mores in the use of the Internet, contribute to the highly addictive quality of Internet pornography.¹³

Neurological Implications of Internet Pornography

Scientific research indicates that alterations in the human nervous system can also result from Internet pornography use. The human nervous system¹⁴ has the capacity to build new nerve¹⁵ connections, strengthening and increasing some connections while weakening and decreasing others. This change ultimately alters the functioning of the nervous system, modifying the process the brain employs to arrange information. To illustrate, when a child first learns to ride a bike, he initially teeters back and forth on the wheels of his bike until he falls. By repeatedly riding the bike, the child’s central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and peripheral nervous system (nerves in the body that carry messages from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body) communicate more effectively so that the motor skills necessary to ride the bicycle become more precise and efficient. In this way, the youngster develops the skills necessary to balance himself on the bicycle and propel himself forward with a pedaling motion. The brain’s capacity to adapt the operation of the nervous system to various stimuli is a normal lifetime phenomenon.

In the same way, studies show that intense and repetitious sexual images initiate modifications at the synapse (the space between nerves through which nerve cells communicate with one another), which changes information processing in the human nervous system.¹⁶ I propose that two primary factors are responsible for this modulation.

First, we learn from Marshall McLuhan, a pioneer in the study of the effects of television on the human brain, that more than content or message, the *medium*

of the message plays a significant role in altering the process function of the human brain.¹⁷ In other words, McLuhan's research demonstrates that the volume and rate of delivery of media alter the user's response to stimuli more than the content of the media and radically impacts the response processing function in the user. As such, the effects on the human nervous system from electronic media are increased exponentially with the emergence of high-speed Internet. Handheld devices such as iPads and cell phones can alter how the human nervous system processes information because of the speed and volume of electronic stimuli they produce.

Second, neurochemical responses to sexual stimuli factor into the Internet pornography addiction equation. Consider the following scenario: upon viewing, pornography triggers two pleasure centers in the brain of the viewer. Initially, the appetitive or excitatory pleasure system releases dopamine, which the body experiences with enjoyable activities, such as laughing, eating a good meal, running or being sexually aroused. Acetylcholine¹⁸ is also discharged into the brain, which plays an important role both in learning and memory and helps the brain focus and form sharp recall of pleasurable experiences. Acetylcholine stores these pleasurable images in the brain and makes them readily available for recall. Second, the consummatory pleasure system, which produces sensations of calm and satisfaction *after* recreational experiences, secretes oxytocin and serotonin, bringing feelings of serenity and bonding. Endorphins are also released, heightening euphoria.

Beyond viewing pornography in magazines or film strips, viewing pornography over high-speed Internet, with its capacity for delivering rapid bursts of endless images, hyperactivates the appetitive pleasure center, powering a surge of dopamine through the pleasure center and forcing the attentional and motivational mechanisms of acetylcholine to focus most intensely on what is triggering the dopamine surge. With repeated, excessive stimulation, the brain adapts to the stimuli, dampening the pleasure system's ability to respond not only to the same sexual stimuli, but to all ordinary pleasures. Understimulated, the addict needs more and more novel Internet pornography to experience pleasure. For example, pornography addicts may turn to child pornography, not because they are clinical pedophiles, but because they have become habituated and desensitized to other forms of pornography.¹⁹ Introducing new pornographic images, such as scenarios of sex with violence or humiliation, sparks the release of more dopamine and generates more arousal. They keep watching be-

cause they like the "pleasure rush" of dopamine release, dismissing the significance of how the changes in the pleasure centers of their brain have altered what sexually arouses them.

Acetylcholine, which both stores pleasurable images in the brain and makes them readily available for recall, along with oxytocin, a neurochemical that contributes to creating an enduring experience of pleasure, combine to create an associative quality to Internet pornography use. To illustrate, a pianist who becomes sexually aroused when viewing Internet pornography while playing classical music can associate classical music with sexual stimulation. Additionally, typing on a computer keyboard can remind him of playing the piano, which also triggers sexual arousal. At this juncture, the addict can "play the keyboard" of his computer to become sexually aroused.

While Internet pornography addicts begin using Internet pornography for pleasure, they end up viewing pornography to alleviate feelings of depression and irritability.

Addictions often begin with voluntary choices to repeatedly engage in a particular behavior, like the choice to consume alcoholic beverages, smoke cigarettes or use drugs. Over time, the body builds a tolerance to the stimuli and consumption thresholds increase. In the same way, Internet pornography use may begin with the occasional choice to view sexual images. However, high-speed Internet and the release of neurotransmitters like dopamine and acetylcholine blend to create a powerful force that temporarily pleases while creating a malfunction in the pleasure centers. The addict's neurons, assaulted by abnormally high levels of dopamine, respond defensively by reducing the number of receptors to which dopamine can bind. The addict thus experiences a dopamine deficit. While Internet pornography addicts begin using Internet pornography for pleasure, they end up viewing pornography to alleviate feelings of depression and irritability. Reclaiming power and control over the pleasure centers of the brain will require a formidable effort.

Treatment Protocols: A Case Study

The highly addictive quality and deleterious effects of Internet pornography require parents, educators, pastors and religious formators to aggressively address the use of Internet pornography. Simply suppressing the sexual appetite will not reverse the addiction. After several weeks of holding oneself in, the sexual appetite will wait for a chance to explode, illustrated in the following example.²⁰

Father Raymond is a 33-year-old priest who was ordained five years when he presented for psychiatric evaluation and treatment. He was referred by his bishop, who was concerned that Father Raymond expressed struggles with chastity and exhibited symptoms of depression.

During his psychological evaluation, Father Raymond disclosed that he first looked at Internet pornography at age 17 "out of curiosity." He was aroused by the images and began to masturbate. Desiring a more intensely pleasurable experience, Father Raymond began to search for more stimulation by exploring various pornography sites.

As a seminarian, Father Raymond told his spiritual director that he was struggling with Internet pornography use. His spiritual director instructed Father Raymond to pray and to stop viewing pornography; however, he was not given specific direction on how to address the problem, nor did his spiritual director ask him more questions about his reported concerns.

After countless relapses as a seminarian, Father Raymond deserted efforts to resist pornography use. He avoided being honest with his spiritual director because he felt like a failure. Unable to resist the urge to view Internet pornography, Father Raymond feared his formators would dismiss him from the seminary, keeping him from bringing this problem into the external forum with his seminary formator. He soon withdrew from other seminarians and professors. Believing that he was helpless to address his problem, Father Raymond despaired of being free of his addiction.

As described earlier, the medium for transmission is more influential than the content that is transmit-

ted. The volume and rate of delivery of these images is much slower in magazines, but is endless and rapid via the Internet. To successfully and thoroughly treat Internet pornography addiction, I propose that a three-pronged approach is necessary.

Shifting Neural Pathways

First, Father Raymond will need to block stimuli that contribute to hyperstimulation of the pleasure center and renew or create healthy stimulation tracks for the pleasure centers. The following metaphor provides a helpful perspective. When navigating a mountain slope covered with a fresh layer of snow, a skier creates a track that is determined by the contour of the slope and the movement of the skier. On the skier's second run down the mountain, the track will be very similar to the first set of tracks, based on minimal amount of change to the contour of the slope, the movement of the skis and the texture of the snow. After navigating this mountain slope for the remainder of the day, the skier will create a reliable track that will be preferable to uncharted areas of the slope.

A similar phenomenon occurs in the human nervous system. With repeated exposure to stimuli, the brain slowly changes itself neurologically²¹ to create mental tracks or neural pathways, which can lead to either good habits or bad habits. In other words, through repeated exposure to helpful stimuli, good habits become embedded in thought processes and provide reliable and useful skills. In the same way, through repeated exposure to harmful stimuli, bad habits are embedded in thought processes, limiting the capacity for healthy and effective functioning.

By limiting exposure to sexually arousing material, roadblocks can modify established neural pathways and shift the focus from sexual stimulation to pleasure that results from good habits and healthy recreation.

Through repeated and rapid consumption of sexual images, people addicted to Internet pornography have developed neural pathways that quickly and efficiently hyperstimulate the excitatory pleasure system. Roadblocks are necessary to create new tracks or neural pathways and alter stimulation sequences. For example, a person addicted to Internet pornography needs to destroy all pornographic material in their possession, such as books, magazines, videos, CDs, DVDs or games. They should also install protective software that limits access to pornographic websites.²² A person seeking to create new neural pathways may also find committed accountability partners to be helpful. By limiting exposure to sexually arousing material, roadblocks can modify established neural pathways and shift the focus from sexual stimulation to pleasure that results from good habits and healthy recreation.

Values-Based Motivation²³

When Father Raymond came to me for evaluation and treatment, he told me it was his “last resort.” He had already participated in therapy between the ages of 18 and 26 and he was unconvinced that additional therapy would be beneficial. He privately agreed to therapy so that he could say one more time that therapy did not help. He said, “I have tried everything and I am sick of trying.”

While strategies for healing from Internet pornography addiction are not complicated, the key to success resides in the person’s willingness to face the hurt, shame, guilt and anger of his past and to begin living a values-based life.

At the beginning of treatment, Father Raymond also admitted he had mixed feelings about becoming free of his Internet pornography addiction. He reported, “All of my adult life I have used pornography to survive and deal with my frustrations and loneliness. The thought of never looking at pornography again scares

me.” While strategies for healing from Internet pornography addiction are not complicated, the key to success resides in the person’s willingness to face the hurt, shame, guilt and anger of his past and to begin living a values-based life. This process included identifying his personal, interpersonal and work values, and acting on his goals in order to avoid derailment by urges to access Internet pornography.

Values guide and motivate our lives, adding richness and fulfillment. They are compasses that direct the way we interact with God, the world, the community and other individuals. Above all, values form foundations for our convictions, behaviors, personal vision and the strengths and qualities we want to develop. There are three primary areas of values-based living: personal, interpersonal and work. For example, people who choose to live by the value of personal health might focus on the spiritual, physical and emotional areas of their lives. Interpersonal values include relationships within the community, as well as family and friends. Work values might include specific aspects of vocational ministry.

By virtue of the primacy of values in daily life, values-based living informs and directs a person’s decisions and behaviors as well as his or her long-range plans. Values alone are insufficient, however, to treat Internet pornography addiction. While value-congruent goals *direct* choices and behaviors, committed action is required for *success*. In other words, a person addicted to Internet pornography can safely stare at the compass of his or her values. Embracing committed action, the person addicted to Internet pornography will apply the means to live by core values to overcome the influence of pornography and pleasure, even in the face of pain and discomfort. In the end, values and committed action are necessary for affective maturity, which contributes to a meaningful, healthy life.

In the context of therapy, Father Raymond identified growth in holiness, emotional balance and physical well-being as specific and desired values for his personal health. To live these values and to engage committed action, it was necessary for Father Raymond to create SMART goals (a descriptive acronym for goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Trackable). Goals are committed actions guided by our values.

For example, Father Raymond developed a SMART goal for growth in holiness. He committed to scheduling one hour each day for recitation of the Divine Office and rosary, 15 minutes of daily reading from Sacred Scripture, and a daily five-minute examination of conscience. Realizing that he was most vulnerable

to relapse when he concealed his urge to view Internet pornography, felt isolated or ignored emotional issues, Father Raymond created SMART goals for emotional balance that reflected his value of personal well-being. These goals included calling his accountability partner daily, turning off his computer every evening by 5:00 pm, discontinuing Internet service for his cell phone, identifying and participating in a weekly priests' support group with clergy from his diocese and attending a Dale Carnegie course to learn new communication skills. He also developed SMART goals for his interpersonal values, which he identified as connecting, caring and contributing to family, friends and parishioners in keeping with his vocation. Additionally, he named evangelization through preaching, teaching and witnessing to Christ as his work or ministerial value. His SMART goals for this value are offering Mass and mentoring the Bible study teachers, RCIA instructors, religious education teachers and all persons God brings to him. These values and goals were not new for Father Raymond; what was new was his commitment to engage these values and SMART goals as roadblocks to accessing Internet pornography through competitive alternative action. In so doing, Father Raymond was creating neural pathways that led him to a life of virtue and away from the vice of lust. However, he was still struggling with urges to view Internet pornography.

Defusion²⁴

Father Raymond acknowledged the conflict between his use of pornography and his promise to live chastely. Ashamed of his behavior, Father Raymond isolated himself from close friends and even kept his family at a distance. He was late for Masses, did not return phone calls and missed appointments. He told his superiors that he had a sleep problem and suffered with depression, which his doctor was trying to treat.

A further step in therapy was to identify self-limiting thoughts, feelings and imaginings that impeded his efforts to live by his values; namely, to distinguish negative ruminations that kindle urges to access Internet pornography. This step involves a two-part process known as defusion and engaging the observing-self.

Over the course of time, people begin to link negative ruminations (thoughts, feelings and imaginings) to particular events, acting as if these ruminations are objective truths rather than subjective experiences. In other words, a person relates to his or her negative ruminations as if they are one hundred percent accurate. This psychological dynamic is referred to as fusion.

Father Raymond fused with distorted thoughts, feelings and imaginings, especially when he was under stress. His repetitive story line went something like this: "I am stressed out, frustrated and have to handle all this alone; I feel inadequate to meet these expectations; no one knows how hard I am trying; I need a break; I feel sexually aroused; I deserve some pleasure that does not hurt anyone else."

In our conversations, Father Raymond began to explore the power he surrendered to his negative ruminations. He had not realized how fusing with his ruminating self had negatively guided his daily life until he was willing to acknowledge and observe its effect on him. We worked together to defuse from his negative ruminations.

The process of defusion is an effective strategy that diminishes the influence of painful and unpleasant thoughts through acknowledging their presence while refocusing on values and SMART goals pertinent to the present moment.

The process of defusion is an effective strategy that diminishes the influence of painful and unpleasant thoughts through acknowledging their presence while refocusing on values and SMART goals pertinent to the present moment. Defusing from negative ruminations and choosing values-based committed action gradually refashioned the neural pathways in Father Raymond's brain, making them more congruent with healthy activation of the pleasure centers. For example, his "good-for-nothing" story was triggered by news that one of the eighth grade kids at his parish school was being bullied online by another eighth grader from his school. Rather than allow his overwhelmed thoughts and feelings about this problem to result in accessing Internet pornography, Father Raymond refocused on the present moment and contacted the school principal to plan an intervention, which had several positive results. One, the intervention addressed the present bullying problem and provided

an occasion to educate parish staff, children and parents about bullying. Two, through parent-teacher meetings and a staff workshop on how to address bullying, they developed an educational anti-bullying program for each grade level in the parish school. This approach of connecting, caring and contributing to his values-based life situation of parish school relationships was hopeful and inspiring for him. Most significantly, no longer thinking about Internet pornography, Father Raymond succeeded in blazing healthier neural pathways of committed action when feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

The chief element in the process of defusion is the *observing-self*. Responsible for focus, attention and awareness, the observing-self is an internal viewpoint from which a person gains awareness of self and awareness of the external environment. With the observing-self, men and women connect more fully with experiences in the present moment, enabling them to fulfill committed action that is consistent with their personal values and intended SMART goals. Alternatively, without the observing-self, a person does not gain self-awareness nor engage in values-based committed action. For example, when feeling lonely and unappreciated, Father Raymond acknowledged that his “good-for-nothing” story was playing. He refocused his attention, engaged his observing-self to defuse from this story line and employed one of his values-based SMART goals. He could have also chosen to call his accountability partner, exercise, call a family member, call a friend to schedule a game of golf on his day off, wash his car, do a kind act for another or pray. He discovered that there were numerous values-based committed actions he could perform, regardless of what he was thinking, feeling or imagining. Over time, his committed actions, congruent with his values, diminished both the intensity and frequency of sexual arousal.

Father Raymond became freer to ask himself, “What are my deepest desires? What do I want to stand for? How do I want to relate to others and the world around me?” Committed to values-based action, Father Raymond began to experience a sense of vitality and joyfulness, even in the midst of stress and disappointment. More significantly, Father Raymond began to exercise much more control over lustful thoughts or urges. Striving for the virtue of chastity, he was winning his battle with lust.

Today, Father Raymond continues to take radical steps to resist renewing old tracks and deepen neural pathways that lead to healthier, more satisfying and more meaningful pleasures. For example, making a daily,

In this light, formators must instruct seminarians to employ committed actions as they engage with the Internet in order to fashion and refashion their neural pathways toward values-based living.

heartfelt decision to break free of Internet pornography, Father Raymond purged his computer of all pornographic images, moved his computer to an open location, uses the Internet minimally, installed a filter and found an accountability partner whom he calls daily as well as when he is tempted to view pornography. Additionally, daily recitation of the Divine Office, daily Mass, reading Sacred Scripture, spiritual reading, frequent confession and regular spiritual direction anchor Father Raymond when sexual urges rage. Even though he has begun to reclaim his self-esteem as a priest, Father Raymond still faces a daily battle with pornography. Essential to his continued human growth and development, values-based living will result in healthier neural pathways, which build virtue.

Conclusion

With its inexhaustible abilities, the Internet can be a powerful tool for learning and communicating. In his address on the occasion of the 2002 World Day of Communications, Pope John Paul II wrote:

The Internet causes billions of images to appear on millions of computer monitors around the planet. From this galaxy of sight and sound will the face of Christ emerge and the voice of Christ be heard? For it is only when his face is seen and his voice heard that the world will know the glad tidings of our redemption. This is the purpose of evangelization. And this is what will make the Internet a genuinely human space, for if there is no room for Christ, there is no room for man. Therefore...I dare to summon the whole Church bravely to cross this new threshold, to put out into the deep of the

Net, so that now as in the past the great engagement of the Gospel and culture may show to the world “the glory of God on the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). May the Lord bless all those who work for this aim.²⁵

The new frontier of the second millennium, cyberspace, is replete with the interplay of danger and promise. Providing a flood of information, the Internet offers facts, but it does not teach values. In this light, formators must instruct seminarians to employ committed actions as they engage with the Internet, in order to fashion and refashion their neural pathways toward values-based living. Armed with the vision of our transcendent dignity as persons, each one of us is summoned to the great adventure of using the Internet’s potential to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.²⁶



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Endnotes

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15. The central and peripheral nervous systems are comprised of neurons or nerves. A neuron or nerve has three parts. The portion of the neuron that receives input from other neurons is called the dendrite and is shaped like tree branches. The dendrites lead into the cell body, which contains DNA, and the other elements necessary to keep the neuron alive. The axon is the cable of the nerve and varies in length depending on its location and function. The nerves in the leg, for example, can be several feet long depending on the height of the person. The neurons in the brain are microscopic in length. These axons are similar to electric cables and carry electric signals toward the dendrites of the neighboring neurons. Axons, or cables of the nerves, do not touch the neighboring dendrites. They are separated by a microscopic space called a synapse. Once an electric signal gets to the end of the axon, it triggers the release of a chemical messenger, called a neurotransmitter, into the synapse. The neurotransmitter floats over the dendrite of the adjacent neuron, exciting or inhibiting it. If a neuron receives enough excitatory signals from other neurons, it will fire off a signal. When it receives enough inhibitory signals, it will not fire.
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involved in memory, learning and mood use acetylcholine extensively. It is also responsible for sending messages from the brain to certain muscles causing them to move; helps maintain optimum muscle tone; ensures that mucous membranes are always lubricated and moist; and helps to schedule REM or dream sleep, necessary for restful sleep.

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26. I am grateful for suggested revisions to this article from the following people: Rev. Kevin Huber, DMin; Sister Mary Judith O’Brien, RSM, JCD; and Sister Mariana Koonce, RSM, MD.

The *Digital Dante* Competition

*Who can declare the mighty acts of the Lord,
or show forth all his praise?*
(Ps. 106:2)

The *Divine Comedy*, the masterpiece of Dante Alighieri, contains images that impressively describe the pilgrim’s arduous ascent from the darkness of sin to the light of glory in the presence of God. These images are vivid expressions of the profound salvific truths which, as Catholic teaching demonstrates, must be *experienced and lived*, and not simply *learned*.

The year 2014 marks the 700th anniversary of the publication of Dante’s *Inferno*, and to celebrate this septuacentennial, the Catholic Distance Learning Network is hosting a contest for the best digitally-produced rendition of any aspect of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

This contest will be an annual event through the year 2021, which marks the 700th anniversary of the completion of the *Paradiso* and also of the death of Dante Alighieri.

The winning submission each year will provide an accurate rendering of Dante’s intent concerning the aspect of his poem that is being pursued, employing the latest digital photographic, animation and sound technology.

See <http://www.digitaldante.org> for details.



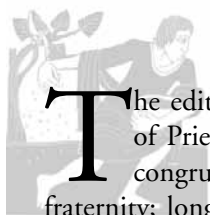
Allegorical portrait of Dante by Agnolo
Bronzino, c. 1530

The Inner Life of Priests

Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., and Len Sperry

Liturgical Press, 2012

Reviewed by Kenneth G. Davis, O.F.M. Conv.



The editors begin in Chapter One-The Inner Life of Priests: Introduction and Overview with incongruity: priests desire to live alone, yet crave fraternity; long for celibate intimacy, yet do not know how to realize that longing, and minister to laity while generally failing to care for themselves or their brother priests. Like most men, priests perform well in their professional lives but not in their inner work of self-care and prayer.

Paradoxically, when we investigate cultural diversity in our church, the same elements of knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and action that are effective for ministry to “the other” are congruent with those elements necessary for the effective care of priests’ inner lives. The integration of these elements, however, is “not just an individual requisite; it is also an organizational or institutional requisite” (71). In other words, a corporate answer to pastoral formation that addresses diversity is only possible if it is based upon a human formation program that responds to complexity; for pastoral formation and human formation are reciprocal pillars of formation rather than isolated silos of information.

Such reciprocity is clear in Chapter Six-The Journey Within and Intercultural Competencies, which outlines a culturally sensitive assessment of seminarians while also suggesting specific intercultural competencies that seminarians should embody. Further, these same implied competencies are congruent with those explicitly ascribed to affective maturity among celibates in Chapter Seven-The Inner World of Today’s Celibate. Note the reciprocity between the following paired indirect quotes from Chapters Six and Seven, respectively:

- (1) Monitor own attitudes, values, biases / know what one feels and appropriately express and

manage emotions;

- (2) Recognize limits and establish consultative relationships / deal with feelings of authority and collaborate;
- (3) Consult and get feedback / seek and ask for help;
- (4) Avoid cultural hubris / avoid narcissism;
- (5) Give close consideration to Catholic anthropology / promote a healthy Catholic anthropology.

Far from reducing either chapter to the other (the treatment of sexuality in Chapter Seven in general, and its last three pages in particular, should be studied by every formator), the book’s model of the priest as “man of communion” provides unity to its chapters. To be in communion with God, one’s (increasingly diverse) parish and one’s presbyterate requires similar capacities and abilities from the priest. However, these common elements between human and pastoral formation are not innate; they must be taught, modeled and evaluated within positive, supportive institutions. That pedagogical process begins with the proper assessment of prospective seminarians.

It is proper to assess in order to address; that is, to provide understandable reports to seminarians and staff that include measurable recommendations to be evaluated throughout formation. Such assessments would be facilitated by an agreed-upon protocol and a shared Catholic anthropology. Familiarity with seminary culture, as well as the cultural diversity of seminarians, is a welcomed emphasis of Chapter Two-The Inner Life of Priests: A Model in the Journey of Holiness and Wholeness. Chapter Eight-Assessing the Journey Within makes

an excellent background for such discussions among vocation directors by addressing the limitations of current psychological assessments and offering specific recommendations. Chapter Three-Psychology's contribution to the Church complements Chapter Eight with insights from vocational and organizational psychology. The historical context in Chapter Four-The Church and the Role of Psychology grounds these experts precisely in the ecclesial culture they respect and serve. Chapter Five-Inner Life and Cultural Competence, describes cultural competency, and again implies that elements of human formation, such as self-control and empathy, are congruent with pastoral formation because both the seminarian and those he serves are unique in their respective "way of being embodied" (63). Such an incarnational approach reiterates that formation only occurs when it is a "requisite feature of positive institutions" (59).

Author Len Sperry looks at narcissism in Chapter Nine-The Psyche and the Soul: Personality and Spirituality, which may occasion controversy by its critique of the organizational and personal dynamics of clerical culture and clericalism. Most readers readily accept ingratitude, grandiosity and exploitation as incompatible with the priesthood, but an exaggerated sense of special call and being set apart are values consistent with narcissism.

Nuances between role and identity or subtleties between status and service inform different models of priesthood. This book emphasizes "man of communion;" other models make different emphases. Sperry addresses this tension somewhat in Chapter Ten-Reclaiming Our Catholic Anthropology. However, it arises again in Chapter 11-The Joys and Struggles of Priests across the Life Span in View of the Sexual Abuse Scandal: "They [priests], like most men in America, have a sense of identity that is linked to their job or ministry and they often confuse *who they are* with *the role they fulfill*" (150). While psychologists call for a healthy integration, but distinction, between professional persona and the ego, some theologians assert that the ontological change at ordination erases such distinctions. They further argue that this new priestly identity is appropriately supported by a clerical culture, which necessarily marks hierarchy through distinctive dress, titles and functions.

In Chapter 12-Reflections on the Inner Life of Priests, Sister Katarina Schuth seems to sense this internal ecclesial tension surrounding core values of the priesthood: "the core values one is looking for in a person are affective maturity with deep relational capacities, a prudent and discerning man, open to God's design and free from self-preoccupation. On the contrary, 'core

values' of clerical culture have been identified as privilege, entitlement, separateness, and status" (167). However, in the same chapter, Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy suggests a resolution: "priesthood cannot be understood as acquiring a role or identity that one assumes as an exoskeleton...Priestly identity, especially the ability to relate to others, must be developed from the inside out as endoskeleton that enables the priest to be the selfless servant" (172). Jan Slattery follows with a sobering analysis of the consequences of presuming that grace (including the grace of ordination) builds on a human nature made of sand rather than solid ground. Allan Figueroa Deck concludes that an integrated, embodied formation articulated as cultural competency is personal and institutional, human and pastoral, "a requirement for effectiveness of ministry across the board" (178).

**Our changing
demographics require the
next *Program of Priestly
Formation (PPF)* to address
cultural competency.**

Our changing demographics require the next *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)* to address cultural competency. If cultural competency was treated not just as skills practiced in the presence of others but as knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and actions expressive of who we are (all people and all institutions have cultures), then those who embody such elements will be priests of congruent, rather than incongruent, lives. What we do (ministry to others) will be a reciprocal, personal and organizational expression of who we are (men of communion). The PPF's challenge will be to articulate the personal and ecclesial truth that the same attributes needed to minister to the "minority" without are the same ones required to heal the *minoritas* within.



After fifteen years in seminary teaching and administration, **Father Kenneth G. Davis, O.F.M. Conv.**, now serves as the spiritual director for Saint Joseph College Seminary in Louisiana.



THE CORE ELEMENTS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION PROGRAMS

In recognition of the 10th anniversary of *Seminary Journal*, the Seminary Department has introduced a new publication series: *The Core Elements of Priestly Formation Programs*. These collections of articles celebrate the “best practices” and wisdom and insight of a wide variety of seminary professionals and church leaders. With only a few exceptions the articles were selected from the archives of *Seminary Journal* (1995-2005). Articles included from other sources are printed with permission.

The Core Elements series will be an ongoing publishing effort of the Seminary Department. The framework for the first three volumes reflects the four pillars as identified in the Bishops’ Program of Priestly Formation: *Intellectual, Spiritual, Human* and *Pastoral*. The fourth addresses the topic of “addictions” and their implications for ministry formation.

These four volumes are produced as an in-service resource for faculty and staff development and personal study and as a potential source book of readings for those in the formation program. New collections of readings will be added annually.

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____