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NUMBER TWO

FALL 2013

Note: Due to leadership changes in the Seminary Department, this volume was actually published in September 2014.

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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.

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National Catholic Educational Association
Seminary Department

Seminary Journal Call for Articles

***Seminary Journal* is pleased to announce a call for articles for 2015.**

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.

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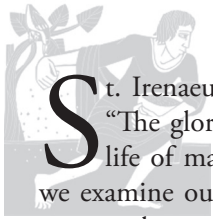
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From the Desk of the Associate Editor



St. Irenaeus of Lyons wrote in *Against Heresies*, “The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God” (IV 20.7). As we examine our relationships with ourselves and with one another, we do so most authentically through an understanding of the primordial relationship that we as human persons have with God. It is in this light that I write this introduction for an issue themed specifically on the John Jay Study, entitled “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010,” and more generally on human formation.

While all four pillars, or dimensions, of priestly formation are integrative, “human formation is the foundation for the other three pillars” [spiritual, intellectual and pastoral] (*PPF*, §73), and “[t]he foundation and center of all human formation is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. In his fully developed humanity, he was truly free and with complete freedom gave himself totally for the salvation of the world” (*PPF*, §74).

In general, “The basic principle of human formation is to be found in *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 43: the human personality of the priest is to be a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the human race. As the humanity of the Word made flesh was the *instrumentum salutis*, so the humanity of the priest is instrumental in mediating the redemptive gifts of Christ to people today. As *Pastores dabo vobis* also emphasizes, human formation is the ‘necessary foundation’ of priestly formation” (*PPF*, §75).

More specifically, for the purposes of this issue, “Human formation comes together in a particular way in the domain of human sexuality, and this is especially true for those who are preparing for a life of celibacy. The various dimensions of being a human person—the physical, the psychological, and the spiritual—converge in affective maturity, which includes human sexuality. Education is necessary for understanding sexuality and living chastely. Those preparing to live out a celibate commitment face particular challenges,

especially in today’s cultural context of permissiveness” (*PPF*, §77). The essays in this issue of the journal endeavor to provide just that – continuing education for our seminary formators concerning the foundational dimension of human formation.

Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB, rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, Indiana, calls us to learn to speak evangelically, a way of speaking “grounded in the Truth, which we proclaim in Jesus Christ,” for “we speak Good News to one another when we challenge one another to higher living, to better living. . . . realizing full well that preaching with our lives is the most effective evangelical speech there is.”

Dr. Fernando Ortiz, the Counseling Center Director at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and consultant at the Guest House, speaks to the very useful information for formators that the John Jay Study has provided in terms of risk factors and protective factors in human formation for the purpose of our taking preventative steps against abuse.

Dr. Len Sperry, a professor at Florida Atlantic University and the Medical College of Wisconsin, examines the organizational culture of our institutions and the divide within them between stated and actual core values that invariably bring out a hidden curriculum if left unexamined.

Rev. Robert M. Vallee, Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami, Florida, calls us to look at what we as formators are advancing in terms of priestly character.

Dr. Patricia Cooney Hathaway, Professor of Spirituality and Systematic Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan, brings back the spiritual dimension, which informs the human dimension, in her discussion on the relationship between sexuality and spirituality.

Dcn. James Keating, director of theological formation for the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, and a permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of Omaha, focuses on the value of mentorship through the interpenetration

of human formation with spiritual formation in bringing the seminarian into an understanding of the truth about himself for the purpose of his developing into a man of communion, into “a man who draws his priestly identity and sustains it in communion with the Trinity.”

Dr. Emily Cash, director of Saint Luke Institute’s Candidate Assessment Program and director of Saint Luke Center, a ministry of Saint Luke Institute in Louisville, Kentucky, affirms the use of psychological evaluation as “a tool for positively impacting the formation experience of men coming forward for service in the church.”

Mr. Daniel Kidd, Executive Director and CEO of Shalom Center, a residential treatment facility for Catholic clergy and religious in Splendora, Texas, considers “the importance of language as part of the cultural sensitivity that is necessary to provide effective treatment services to a specialized population of recipients.”

Dr. Ralph Martin, Associate Professor and the Director of Graduate Theology Programs in the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit, discusses the program in New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary.

Dr. Robert H. Albers, former editor of the *Journal of Ministry in Addiction and Recovery*, and Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, Vice President of Administration and Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut, discuss a workshop entitled “Addiction and the Family: A Seminary Curriculum,” which is available in print and online.

Rev. Peter Eberle, a former rector and now Director of Human Formation and Vice Rector of the Theologate and Professor of Moral Theology at Mount Angel Seminary in Saint Benedict, Oregon, explores the value of Edwin O’Connor’s *The Edge of Sadness*, Jon Hassler’s *North of Hope* and J.F. Powers’ *Wheat That Springeth Green* as a way for priests to think about their needs for ongoing formation for the purpose of facilitating their redemption.

Professor John Joy, Adjunct Professor of Sacraments and Divine Worship at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut, and a Teacher of Theology and Philosophy at La Lumiere School in La Porte, Indiana, provides a Thomistic understanding of the nature of sacrifice, outlining Cardinal Ratzinger’s explanation of the crisis in spiritual identity and affirms that the priest “cannot be understood apart from the sacrifice he offers, the action toward which he is ordered (ordained).”

Finally, Dr. Paul Vitz, senior scholar/professor at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences in Arlington, Virginia and professor emeritus of New York University, has provided a compelling review of a book entitled *Seminary Theology III: Seminary Formation and Psychology* edited by Dcn. James Keating. This collection provides a meaningful contribution to the field of human formation in its affirmation of the importance of priests’ having the capacity for positive interpersonal relationships.

We hope you find this issue of the journal both insightful and thought-provoking in the assistance that it will provide to your work in priestly formation. We look forward to your feedback in the form of articles of your own, which you can email us at any time.



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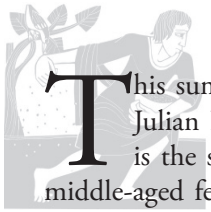
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The Rector's Conference

Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB



This summer, I re-read a wonderful book by Julian Barnes called *The Sense of an Ending*. It is the story of a man named Tony Webster, a middle-aged fellow who believes that he has everything worked out, everything settled. His solitary life is lived by following strict schedules and routine ways of going about things. He likes it. He is boring. He thinks he has everything under control.

Except, of course, he doesn't. A few visitors from his past remind him that life is full of challenges and that, most of the time, the challenges, and indeed life itself, are beyond our control. Most of us love control. We like living with the idea and the ideal that we can make things happen, that we can keep things from happening and, mostly, that we can predict precisely how things are going to come out.

In our lives, we live from moment to moment, filled with the supreme confidence that we can do it by ourselves. In fact, it is a cultural imperative. We even think that we can control God. We can take him as we want him, and put him away when it suits our schedules and our needs. That means, of course, that most of us flee conflict. In our lives, we avoid anything that makes us uncomfortable, that creates situations of argumentativeness, that makes us, well, all too human.

There is a problem, however, and that is God cannot be controlled. In fact, our attempts to put God in a bottle or box or to place God precisely in the paradigm of my issues and my situation, are often what cause the most trouble in our lives. We are somewhat caught off guard by what we hear in the Gospel: Take up your cross. Now, how can anyone want to do that? How can anyone claim to *desire* to be crucified? This is the usual misinterpretation of the Gospel.

But in point of fact, what we are asked to do is not take up the cross of Jesus, the instrument of torture and death. We are asked, rather, to take up the cross,

the Chi, the X of the Greek alphabet. Now you are wondering: where is all of this going? That is precisely the point. Who isn't wondering where things are going? If we are really paying attention to life and not merely trying, like Tony Webster, to keep things under control, if we are really living, then we have to continually stand in that rather uncomfortable place, the crossroads.

The crossroads is that place where we are faced with decisions, moment-by-moment decisions that can take our life in this direction or in that. In Julian Barnes' book, he states that there are two kinds of people, those who have "clear edges" and those who imply mystery. Authentic living resides in the latter.

Conflict, perpetually seeing the options that God affords each of us, is the only authentic way of living. All of us live with conflict even when we try to hide its crenelated edges. We try hard to get rid of conflict and thus create a life that is not real, a life hidden behind the barriers of falsehood, such as alcohol, drugs, sex, the pursuit of money, just name it. We read about these attempts every day in the news. The cross is inevitable; it offers choice, options, openness, opportunity.

Every day we are faced with crosses, sometimes of our making, often not. Jesus says: Embrace the cross. Another way of saying this is: really live. What doors will be open to us if we just lose control, if we give control to God? What possibilities are awakened when we realize that we are living in a world in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female? What if St. Paul's ideal was a reality and things were not quite as predictable as we something think or wish they were? What if little miracles could happen?

All of the mechanisms we have in place to keep things orderly are broken open in the profound message of the Gospel. So it is with each one of us. In the novel *The Sense of an Ending*, the protagonist Tony Webster learned more about life when he realized that he knew

so little. John Henry Newman remarked famously that the more we know, the more we know we do not know. Perhaps in our age, that is the new evangelization.

In my rector's conferences, I am addressing the question of the new evangelization. Before we can consider ourselves as agents of the new evangelization, we must ask: What are the challenges of our world? Perhaps we must ask even more: What are the challenges in us? Authentic evangelization cannot happen until the world is ready to receive the Good News.

It also cannot happen if its proclaimers are unable to be channels of the Good News. These challenges are not merely acts of the will. Our true questions in advance of a new evangelization are quite profound: How can the seminary provide the impetus for a new world vision? Or perhaps even more profound: what precisely *is* the new evangelization?

To begin this conversation, I want to focus on two contemporary figures in Catholic thought. The first is Christopher Dawson. When I was planning my Eucharist lectures, I had an epiphany (a fairly rare occurrence, I assure you). Why is the question of the Eucharist so difficult to grasp in the church today? Why is it the case that a large section of the Catholic population neither understands nor accepts the received Catholic ideal of Eucharistic presence?

Dawson wrote two books that address the cultural crisis of contemporary faith. The first is called *The Formation of Christendom*. In this book, he outlines the way in which the church transformed the prevailing culture in the late antiquity period and beyond, seeing in the medieval synthesis the important means by which the church and culture found their authentic coalescence.

The book is interesting, but even more fascinating is its sequel, *The Dividing of Christendom*, in which he relates the means by which this unique synthesis of faith and culture were dismantled in the misnamed renaissance, the reformations and the so-called enlightenment of culture in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

These are theories that ignite the maelstrom of cultural discontent that has come full-force into our contemporary ideology. These are theories such as individualism, the fluidity of the social order, the unexamined ideals of democracy, the sense of contemporary "freedoms" that often act in precisely the opposite way.

In *The Formation of Christendom*, Dawson states: "Catholicism does not rest on the consensus of human

wisdom – even on its highest and most spiritual plane – but on a divine revelation which is also an act of creation." In other words, the paradigm of culture in Catholicism is not a choice among equally viable choices; it is the human character in its fullness, which in the economy of the Incarnation is also the Divine Character.

Now we can turn to the second contemporary figure, J. R.R. Tolkien. To begin, I would like to offer a few biographical words about Tolkien. John Ronald Ruel Tolkien was by education and profession a philologist, primarily focusing on Icelandic languages. Perhaps we do not see this as a very promising beginning for a man destined to re-establish the primary mythic basis of Christianity in the 20th century.

In other words, the paradigm of culture in Catholicism is not a choice among equally viable choices; it is the human character in its fullness, which in the economy of the Incarnation is also the Divine Character.

Tolkien was born in South Africa to English parents in 1892, the closing years of the 19th century. At an early age, he moved with his mother and brother to England, leaving his father in Africa. He would never see his father again, as he died a short time later. Tolkien was raised by his mother, and the entire family converted to the Catholic faith when Tolkien was in his teenage years.

His mother also died young and Tolkien and his brother came under the protection of the Oratorian Fathers of Birmingham, still in the early 20th century very much influenced by Newman's memory. After his education at Oxford, he married and later fathered children, one of whom became a priest.

Tolkien's life is interesting enough and his career is fairly straightforward for Oxford scholars of this time. However, during his long teaching sojourn in Oxford, Tolkien met some very important friends, among them C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams, who formed a social and intellectual group known as the Inklings. It was in

Catholicity in Tolkien's writings is less about its specific content and more about its method. His Catholicism speaks to the world, not as another world-view or an alternative vision, but as Truth, not only a truth but the Truth, the Truth for which all are striving, at least implicitly, and the Truth that is our primordial center and destiny.

the context of the Inklings that Lewis invented his allegorical world of Narnia and Tolkien created the mythos of Middle Earth.

Tolkien's best known works, *The Hobbit*, published in 1937, and *The Lord of the Rings*, which finally appeared in 1955, are just the most widely read aspects of a larger project. Tolkien's novels are the result of a vision that incorporated thousands of pages of writing on the history of Middle Earth, the creation of entire languages, mythic origin stories and many other writings that have never been published.

What Tolkien intends with the saga of Middle Earth is nothing short of the demonstration of what true myth is, which is nothing short of this: In our creative capacity, we are participating with the divine vision.

Catholicity in Tolkien's writings is less about its specific content and more about its method. His Catholicism speaks to the world, not as another world-view or an alternative vision, but as Truth, not only a truth but the Truth, the Truth for which all are striving, at least implicitly, and the Truth that is our primordial center and destiny.

Here Tolkien differs distinctively with his long-time colleague and friend, C.S. Lewis. For Lewis, who advocated the extensive use of allegory as a mode of Christian storytelling, the symbolic world stood in the midst of another world, the world of distinct secularity. In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the world of Narnia represents a type of existence that existed apart from the world, a world for the few and the select, or elect.

Tolkien's Catholic vision could not abide such a distinction. Tolkien dislikes allegory because he does not really believe there is another, non-allegorical world. The entire world is encompassed in the far-reaching myth of Christianity. It is a daring vision that promotes not only the universality of the church, but its permanent center in human existence, an existence overshadowed by the Holy Eucharist.

I believe what Tolkien is promoting, and indeed what I am recommending, is the centrality of the Eucharist in contemporary discourse. Do we see the world as decidedly centered in the reality of the Holy Eucharist? Is the Blessed Sacrament the working center of our lives? To me, this is the new evangelization. We must live by this principle, this ideal, if we are to make any sense at all of what we do in the context of our lives as followers of Christ every day.

We must learn, we must speak, the cadences of evangelical speech, a truly catholic form of speech geared toward building up the human enterprise rather than tearing it down through the constant barrage of critical, indeed hateful, engagement. Our language must perpetually be the language of praise and blessing, even when we understand praise and blessing are authentic challenges for us to live better lives.

Evangelical speech is not grounded in an unfocused and unrealistic sense of good feeling. Evangelical speech is grounded in the Truth, which we proclaim in Jesus Christ. We speak Good News to one another when we challenge one another to higher living, to better living. We speak Good News to one another when we challenge one another to be saints, realizing full well that preaching with our lives is the most effective evangelical speech there is. Praise and blessing are not highlights of life. They are a means of life, a way of life, a true life.

Opposed to evangelical speech is evangelical terrorism, murmuring, complaining, criticizing, backbiting, all disguised as the promotion of a value that is not at all worth pursuing. I will state again what I have said many times. When charity fails, when good will breaks down, there is no longer any evangelical goal worth pursuing. In our lives in the world (not just in this place, but in the world), the responsibilities of an Evangelical People take hold of us. What are they?

First: Authentic listening. Here we must learn that the first skill of a priest is to learn to listen, listen to what people are saying in confession, in the hospital room, in the prison cell, and in the daily engagements of life.

We must learn to authentically listen to the needs of others, even when we do not fully understand those needs, even when those needs are not our needs. Authentic listening means learning to keep silence while the story of the other is poured out. It means authentically appreciating the story of the other, even when that story is not our story.

Second: We must learn to speak, speak sparingly but meaningfully. Trivial, useless speech that intends to cause laughter or impress others with its very triviality is not Christian speech. That is not to say that there is no place for humor in our discourse (in spite of what the *Rule of St. Benedict* says). There is room for humor, and even a bit of silliness, but ultimately we must ask ourselves: Does it build up or does it tear down? Is our speech meaningful?

One criticism I often hear about our common life in the seminary is that our table conversations tend to be fairly focused on the trivial. While I think a little small talk is not a bad thing, I tend to agree with this criticism.

The question of table conversation, or casual conversation, or small group discussion, or even theological reflection, may not be bad will, but a lack of skill, an inability to engage the other in somewhat meaningful discourse in which there is no technological interface. We must learn to speak meaningfully to one another; maybe that starts at the table tonight.

Third: We must act. How willing are we to act as evangelical people? Our lives here and our lives in the future as priests are lives poured out. They are not lives that look primarily to self-preservation. The opposite is true. Martyrdom is our goal, a martyrdom frequently realized in the mundane events of daily life, in the momentary yet momentous opportunities that come every day in the priesthood and often go unnoticed, surprisingly, even by ourselves.

Tuning into the smaller things of life and maximizing each minute encounter truly separates the men from the boys, so to speak. Life must be filled with action, but it must be action laced with subtlety. Subtlety is a lost art. Can we revive it?

Finally: This evangelical life is lived by a full awareness of what might be termed organizational literacy. This means knowing where we are, knowing the people around us, and knowing and understanding the mission. We are called to a ministry, an important ministry that is also a supernatural call.

That ministry is not in some future place, at some distant time. That ministry is here. It is now. Our

evangelical call is to be Christ for one another and if we can learn to be Christ for one another, we can certainly learn the skills, the ways and means of realizing Christ for a world that so desperately needs to be totally open to him.

Tolkien was a great writer, I believe, because he was completely imbued with an authentic Catholic identity and ethos. What does an authentic Catholic identity and ethos offer us? I believe, if we are truly attuned to our own Catholicity, it offers us the opportunity for four things.

Four Opportunities

The first thing our Catholicity offers is the opportunity for cultural reappraisal. In our world today, we are asked to accept without question the cultural cards we are dealt. Brothers and sisters, they are marked cards. Tolkien demonstrates in his writings that we live in a mixed world. One way he accomplishes this is through his characters. All of Tolkien's characters are somewhat flawed; they are all "on the way" to perfection.

Here Tolkien captures perfectly the dilemma in which we find ourselves: we are folks on the way to something better and something greater, our destinies in God, but we often do not realize it. Our lack of intention, our lack of realization, does not, however, change who we are. Elves are selfish, human beings are weak, dwarves are greedy and halflings are, well, half. But for Tolkien, if all are half, we are all half full rather than half empty.

All are in the process of becoming perfect by becoming authentic to themselves. That is a profound Christian message. While Middle Earth is a decidedly mixed lot, Tolkien is also convinced that those who are pure of heart are able to see its goodness and to understand and, ultimately, to reject its evil.

Good is not a matter of learning only. It is also something that is innate in the human person. We naturally recognize goodness. We abhor evil instinctively. We are confused when our natural predilections are contradicted by the social message telling us that something is good when we know it to be evil in the depths of our hearts.

The second evangelical tool we are offered is cultural regeneration. If we are down, we are not out. Just as we have it within us to recognize the Truth, so we have it within us to do the good. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien demonstrates the worth of the human spirit in the courage of the hobbits.

What is true and good is not often easy, or at least it may not appear to be, but doing the good is ultimately easier than doing wrong because to do wrong is contrary to our spirit; it is alien. As we learn to do the good (and think and engage the Good), then it becomes easier. It becomes not second nature, because it is our first nature.

Our third opportunity as Catholics is cultural reinvigoration – we do not take the culture for granted. Everything is changed by our authentic presence in the world. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the hobbits return to Hobbiton after their adventure. They are not the same. Having engaged the world, having confronted evil, having learned the good, they are different. They cannot return to their homes, their familiar surroundings with the same spirit.

It is interesting that I often hear seminarians expressing this same realization after a year or so in the seminary. They are not the same men who left home. They do not engage their “hobbit holes” with the same spirit they had before. An authentic search for holiness in the depths of myself often means, in the words of Thomas Wolfe, you can’t go home again, at least not the same home.

As we progress in Christian life, home is no longer where I grew up. It is not even my rectory, my monastery, my assignments. Home is heaven. As we move through life, we become increasingly homesick. At the end of the *Lord of the Rings*, Frodo realizes that he cannot live in Hobbiton anymore. He must go to the Grey Havens. He must set sail toward that distant shore, toward eternity.

Finally, the fourth opportunity is cultural re-evangelization. Having gone “there and back again,” we know that evangelization, even the new evangelization, must begin in my own heart, by my own hearth, in my own home. What is new about the new evangelization is not the need or means, but the understanding of whom. It is us; we are the ones to evangelize others, but first we are the ones to be evangelized.

In light of these cultural challenges, we have to ask ourselves: what is the condition of our seminaries, of these privileged places where we hope to instill in each one the authentic spirit of the church? When we look around at our new men, we are aware that not all of them will rise to the priestly state. Perhaps some of them are aware of that, too.

Ultimately, perhaps strangely, that is not our goal. Our goal is to make each man a better person for having been here. Our goal is to sharpen the Christian

identity of each one, no matter where he may go from this place. Our goal is to assure that he is prepared to receive the call to ordination that will come, God willing, one day from his bishop or religious superior. We must prepare for that call.

This is indeed a house of discernment, but that discernment (on the part of seminarians) is only authentically realized when they give themselves fully to being formed for priesthood, not by standing back and trying to do that work on their own. God will call them in time or he will make apparent to them that they are called to something else.

All of us are called to live our lives in full submission to the Gospel of Christ. There is no other vocation. We live those lives in different states, but there is no other definitive call. We are defined by Christ. Our resting and our rising are defined by Christ. The work we do in this place of prayer is defined by Christ. Our toil in the classroom and the library is defined by Christ. Our recreation, our eating, our friendships and relationships with family; all are defined by Christ.

Everything we do is manifested in that essential relationship, and our sole reason for being on this earth is to give him glory. That is the new evangelization. When we realize that, we have evangelized ourselves. And when we are fully alive in the Gospel, we will speak, we will act, and we will be in and for Christ and his church.

What is next in the new evangelization?

This summer I was perusing an article on CNN about the faith of the millennial generation. The Evangelical author had something interesting to say. Let me quote her at length:

Time and again, the assumption among Christian leaders, and evangelical leaders in particular, is that the key to drawing twenty-somethings back to church is simply to make a few style updates – edgier music, more casual services, a coffee shop in the fellowship hall, a pastor who wears skinny jeans, an updated Web site that includes online giving.

But here’s the thing: Having been advertised to our whole lives, we millennials have highly sensitive BS meters, and we’re not easily impressed with consumerism or performances. In fact, I would argue that church-as-performance is just one more thing driving us away from the church, and evangelicalism in particular.

Many of us, myself included, are finding ourselves increasingly drawn to high church

traditions – Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, the Episcopal Church, etc. – precisely because the ancient forms of liturgy seem so unpretentious, so unconcerned with being “cool,” and we find that refreshingly authentic.

What millennials really want from the church is not a change in style but a change in substance.¹ Perhaps that is at least the start of the new evangelization.

A few months ago, I came across a quote from a contemporary of Tolkien, a great philosopher who said, in speaking to his dearest friend, “Promise me you’ll always remember you’re braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”²

In our troubled world, I believe that this may well be the new evangelization. That may well be the true sense of an ending and a beginning.

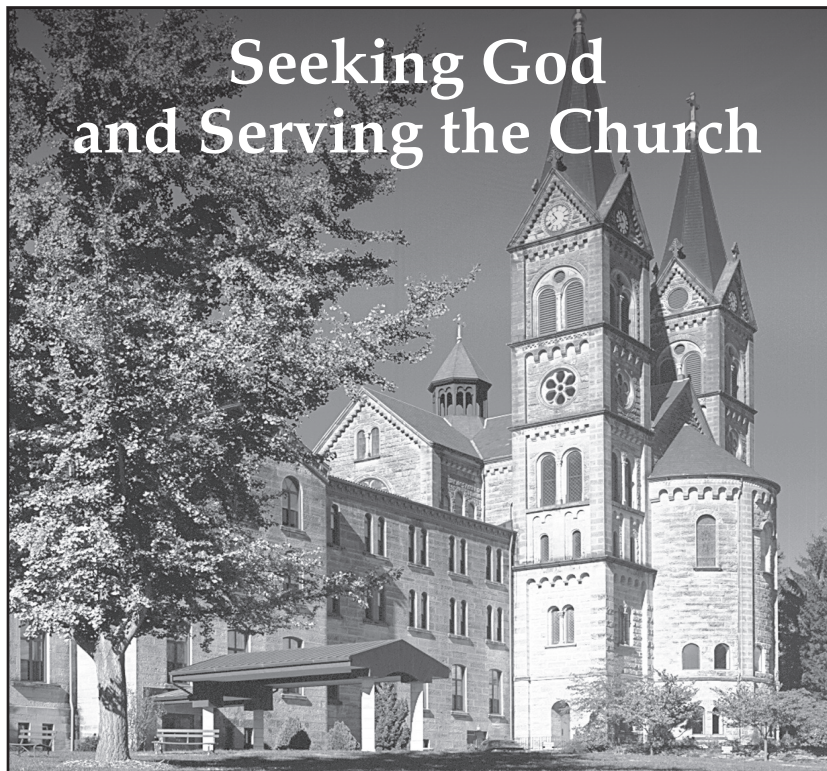


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Endnotes

1. Rachel Held Evans, “Why Millennials are leaving the Church” CNN Belief Blog, July 27, 2013.
2. Written by A.A. Milne, Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh.

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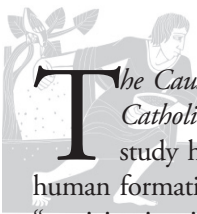


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Seminary Human Formation: Lessons From the *Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse Study*

Fernando A. Ortiz, PhD, ABPP



The *Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010*¹ study has significant implications for seminary human formation. For example, the study noted that “participation in human formation during seminary distinguishes priests with later abusive behavior from those who did not abuse. The priests with abusive behavior were statistically less likely to have participated in human formation training than those who did not have allegations of abuse.”² More specifically, it emphasized that, for these individuals, “the training in self-understanding and the development of emotional and psychological competence for a life of celibate chastity was extremely limited.”³ Recently, human seminary formation has become more robust and the report attributed this to several improvements, including: “many seminaries adopted the language of personal development ... more than a few seminaries adopted the practice of providing a formation advisor for each student to monitor growth in all areas of formation.”⁴ In light of these developments in seminary formation, it is important to outline the main lessons learned from this study. This article seeks first to place human formation within a psychological framework of human development, and second, to describe the study’s most salient findings related to seminary human formation.

Human formation is an essential component in the education, training and preparation of women and men in religious and seminary programs. It provides the basis for the integration of other equally important dimensions (spiritual, intellectual and pastoral) in the vocational development of individuals

The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010 study has significant implications for seminary human formation.

aspiring to serve in ministerial and pastoral settings. Human formation is, then, a multidimensional experience because it encompasses the existence of both personality traits and the development of specific skills. Human formation, moreover, can be greatly influenced by the person’s background, cultural and developmental experiences. It is important to note that human seminary formation is not purely understood psychologically, but also theologically. *The Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF) underscores that formation is “foremost cooperation with the grace of God.”⁵ It is all God’s doing as we make ourselves humanly available to God’s work of transformation. Ultimately, the foundation and center of all human formation is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.⁶ Religious and seminary formation programs are consequently structured so that they seek to form the individual in most aspects of their personality within this Christological foundation.

The study is particularly important because it has provided useful information for formators regarding risk factors and protective factors in human formation.

The study is particularly important because it has provided useful information for formators regarding risk factors and protective factors in human formation. These constructs are widely used in the sociological and psychological literature to understand vulnerabilities and coping strategies associated with maladaptive behaviors. In this particular case, risk factors are conditions correlated with an increased probability of behaviors that are incompatible with a fully integrated and healthy human formation. For example, a seminarian with a significant risk factor for alcoholism could have an increased likelihood of engaging in substance abuse. On the other hand, protective factors are conceptualized as decreasing the likelihood of engagement in problem behaviors. These protective conditions may exert a direct or indirect influence on the individual to inhibit unhealthy behaviors, enhance the opportunity for positive human formation and development, and contribute to resilience.

Risk Factors

The study identified the following specific risk factors as measured by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a widely used multidimensional personality assessment instrument.⁷ It is important to point out that these are considered to be psychological vulnerabilities and not scientifically exact predictors of someone's behavioral and psychological functioning. The study specifically concluded:

Collectively, results from analyses using clergy classifications based on referral information, as well as analyses based on information obtained during treatment, suggested that the strongest (though not statistically significant) personality-based risk markers for clergy sexual abuse of minors included elevations on the following MMPI subscales: Denial of Social Anxiety, Authority Problems, Persecutory Ideas, Amorality, and Overcontrolled Hostility. Other possible risk markers for sexual abuse of minors included elevations on the following MMPI subscales: Need for Affection, Social Imperturbability, Imperturbability, and Inhibition of Aggression.⁸

As the study rightly pointed out, these risk factors should be used with caution in formation. The following table provides a detailed classification of these scales and their psychological interpretative meanings.⁹

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Table 1: Personality Risk Factors—MMPI Findings

Personality Risk Factors MMPI Findings			
Name of Scale	Scale Label	Number of Items	Interpretative Meaning
Denial of Social Anxiety	Hysteria (Hy1)	6 items	Items on this subscale have to do with social extroversion, feeling comfortable interacting with other people and not being easily influenced by social standards and customs. In general, these individuals deny problems with shyness or difficulty in social situations. They also value freedom or independence from the influence of others.
Need for Affection	Hysteria (Hy2)	12 items	Individuals with high scores on this scale describe strong needs for attention and affection from others, as well as fears that these needs will not be met if they are honest about their feelings and beliefs. They describe others as honest, sensitive and reasonable, and they deny having negative feelings about other people. It may well be that by not having any critical attitudes toward others they seek to meet their own strong needs for attention and affection.
Inhibition of Aggression	Hysteria (Hy5)	7 items	These individuals deny hostile or aggressive feelings. They report feeling sensitive about how others respond to them.
Imperturbability	Mania (Ma3)	8 items	These individuals are confident in social situations. They will profess little concern about the opinions, values and attitudes of others. In general, they do not care what others think.
Amorality	Mania (Ma1)	6 items	High scorers on this subscale describe other people as selfish, dishonest and opportunistic. Because of these perceptions, they may feel justified in behaving in similar ways. They may derive vicarious satisfaction from the manipulative exploits of others. In general, they are callous toward others and feel justified in this.
Authority Problems	Psychopathic Deviate (Pd2)	8 items	High scorers on this subscale express resentment of societal and parental standards and customs, have definite opinions about what is right and wrong and stand up for their own beliefs. They may admit to having been in trouble in school or with the law. In general, these individuals are resentful of authority and may report problems with the law.
Social Imperturbability	Psychopathic Deviate (Pd3)	6 Items	Individuals who show an elevated score (higher than 65) on this scale express feeling comfortable, competent and confident in social situations; having strong opinions about many things; and defending their opinions vigorously.
Persecutory Ideas	Paranoia (Pa1)	17 items	These individuals tend to see the world and/or other people as threatening, and they often feel misunderstood and unfairly treated. They blame others for their problems.
Overcontrolled Hostility	O-H	28 items	This scale helps to identify individuals who are prone to overcontrolling their hostility until they are suddenly provoked and, consequently, have sudden aggressive episodes. This scale has been particularly helpful with prison populations.

From the perspective of seminary and religious formation, the profile that emerges from these clinical indicators is someone who is emotionally needy and engages in possibly ingratiating or attention-seeking behaviors in order to meet deeply rooted emotional vulnerabilities for intimacy, affection and affirmation (*Need for Affection*). Socially, this individual will appear confident, cocky and charming, and will engage in sophisticated impression management strategies to gain favors from others (*Denial of Social Anxiety*). Remarkably, this individual will impress others as outgoing, talkative and socially competent (*Social Imperturbability*). At a deeper level, however, this person is unperturbed by what others think because he is primarily motivated by satisfying his own egoistical needs (*Imperturbability*). On the surface, he may deny having hostile or aggressive feelings. He may have learned to wear a social mask of benevolence and camouflage himself to appear in a good light before others (*Inhibition of Aggression*), and rigidly defend himself against any extreme aggressive impulse, but eventually succumb to aggressive outbursts (*Overcontrolled Hostility*). What makes individuals with these profile markers particularly high-risk is that they appear to be callous and unconscionable in their behavior and worldview (*Amorality*). They may have had significant traumatic experiences in their lives and consequently view the world and other people as malevolent and threatening (*Persecutory Ideas*). They are particularly suspicious of those in positions of authority (Authority Problems).

The profile that emerges from these clinical indicators is someone who is emotionally needy and engages in possibly ingratiating or attention-seeking behaviors in order to meet deeply rooted emotional vulnerabilities for intimacy, affection and affirmation.

Serious consideration should be given to reject a candidate for ordination whose profile presents elevations on several of these risk factors.

Evaluation of Personality Risk Factors

Most would agree that if the above risk factors were found to be significantly elevated in a candidate to religious or seminary formation, it would be very important for the evaluating psychologists and formators to seriously consider the candidate's overall application. Moreover, serious consideration should be given to reject a candidate for ordination whose profile presents elevations on several of these risk factors. The following are additional traits based on the main themes emerging from such risky and high-liability profiles that should prompt serious consideration.

Callousness

Callousness is often thought of in association with the antisocial, sadistic and narcissistic personalities. Callousness suggests lack of empathy and compassion, resulting in personality profiles that are highly irascible or hard-hearted. In extreme cases, individuals with noticeable callousness will be perceived by others as belligerent, vicious, malignant, brutal, vengeful and vindictive. If an evaluating psychologist were to detect a significant level of callousness, it should be probed further to determine if it is associated with a pervasive maladaptive personality structure. If this person is admitted into a formation program, he will most likely engage in behaviors charged with defiance of conventional formation rules and will interpret the tender emotions of others as a sign of weakness. In a religious community, he will be prone to interpret the goodwill and kindness of others as hiding a deceptive ploy for which he will react with cold-blooded ruthlessness. Minors and vulnerable adults are particularly at risk with this type of personality.

Imperturbability

Some candidates to the priesthood may be characterized by a marked air of nonchalance

and feigned tranquility. They may appear coolly unimpressible or buoyantly optimistic, except when their narcissistic confidence is shaken, at which time they will display rage, shame or emptiness. This imperturbability will be self-deceptive and facile. They could also be perceived as naively self-assured and happy-go-lucky, and serious matters will not affect these individuals in formation.

Amorality

Any evidence during the screening process of unprincipled behavior should be closely evaluated. Others will experience these individuals as unscrupulous, exploitive and deceptive. The psychologist should include in the report any evidence suggesting that a candidate to seminary formation has previously demonstrated a flagrant indifference to the welfare of others, willingness to harm, and fearlessness by humiliating and dominating others. A rigorous clinical interview should attempt to uncover any evidence of extreme self-interest and, if this is coupled with any veneer of politeness and civility, this should be interpreted with caution. An evaluating psychologist should ask detailed questions to rigorously uncover if the candidate has any history of behavior suggesting that he has been fraudulent, a con man or a charlatan.

Neediness

Emotional neediness is another psychological vulnerability and concern in this profile. Extreme examples of dependency with a marked need for affection and approval would be highly suspect in a seminary applicant. If the person is already in formation and appears to have an insatiable need for attention and nurturing while also exhibiting childlike behavior, he would likely be detrimental to peers in the community. This would be the case if, underneath, this individual is seething with helplessness and thoughts of revenge at those who fail to recognize his need for approval. This ineffectual dependency should be seriously considered when determining suitability for the priesthood.

Hostility

The *Causes and Context* study stated that “the experience of having been sexually abused by another youth or by an adult during childhood or adolescence was reported by more than a third of the priests in treatment for sexual abuse of children at the third treatment center.”¹⁰ The negative consequences of sexual abuse are not necessarily found in every priest who has been abused. Some of them have been able to overcome

their trauma, yet it can be considered as a risk factor for some, and it may be experientially linked to hostility. Children exposed to neglect, indifference, hostility and physical abuse, for example, are likely to learn that the world is a cold and unforgiving place. Such infants lack normal models of empathic tenderness. Rather than learning how to be sensitive to the emotional states of others, they instead develop enduring resentments and an unwillingness to reflect on the consequences of their actions. The study suggests that individuals prone to abusing minors display an elevated level of over-controlled hostility. Under pressure, it is very likely that the peaceful surface of these individuals will quickly give way to impulsive hostility. Relating to these individuals in a seminary or religious community would be an arduous process, and in a parish or ministerial assignment it would require more patience than most people are likely to offer. These individuals may attempt to sabotage the formation of others and may displace their hostility onto the community superior or seminary rector. It is very telling that the *Causes and Context* study examined the difference between priests who seek out help and those who do not, concluding,

when differences between accused and nonaccused priests were observed, it was in their willingness to reach out to peers for advice. Although a majority of priests were willing to seek advice from peers, accused priests reached out less often than nonaccused priests; approximately three-quarters of accused priests reached out for work role advice and two-thirds reached out for personal advice, while about 90 percent of nonaccused priests were willing to consult peers for either work or personal advice.¹¹

It is very likely that priests that have overcontrolled hostility toward others, who experience persecutory fears and who endorse callousness will find it unhelpful to reach out to others for solace and emotional support.

In addition to these personality risk factors, the study also identified several risk factors in the area of sexuality. It found that priests who engaged in sexual behavior prior to and while in the seminary were significantly more likely to participate in post-ordination sexual behavior. This risk factor applies to both homosexual and heterosexual individuals. Masturbation and access to pornography after ordination was also correlated with other sexual behavior post-ordination. Of priests using pornography, those who accessed pornography post-ordination in various modalities (paper, video, Internet) were more likely to have child

victims than adult victims. Family formation was also found to have an influence on post-ordination sexual behavior. Priests who, in their family of origin, approached the topic of sex as a taboo or who were not allowed to discuss sex were more likely to engage in sexual behavior after being ordained.

Protective Factors

The study stated that, many accused priests began abusing years after they were ordained, at times of increased job stress, social isolation, and decreased contact with peers. Generally, few structures such as psychological and professional counseling were readily available to assist them with the difficulties they experienced. Many priests let go of the practice of spiritual direction after only a few years of ordained ministry.¹²

This clearly implies that self-care for clergy should be a priority in formation. Especially when suffering from psychological distress, seminarians or those in formation need to be proactive and seek out those resources that would provide them with emotional support and guidance. Human formation programs have evolved to pay particular attention to the vulnerability and brokenness of those in formation. Spiritual direction and prayer can provide strength. Continuing education and learning experiences can help an individual navigate the complexities of a crisis and contribute to a sense of competence and understanding when dealing with challenging situations. Formators can encourage students to be healthy and to utilize counseling services when needed.

Stress

Clergy stress is a debilitating experience that can be harmful to both the ordained and the community. Stressful demands will always be present in the life of ministry. Formation can address this problem by encouraging individuals to develop stress-relieving practices in the form of healthy recreation and rest. This in turn can lead to resilience, which is the capacity to return to well-being after a stressful situation. The *Causes and Context* study found the following specific stressors among priests: transition to parish life, negative early parish life, uprooting (for example, reassigned to a new parish without being asked), distance ministry (“rural” or “roving” ministries) and family stress. A strong human formation program can raise awareness of these potential stressors and prepare candidates accordingly.

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Support Systems

Formation should also encourage individuals to learn how to create and access social and emotional support systems. In the life of the ordained, this would be the network of relationships experienced as nurturing and emotionally supportive. This type of support is a basic human need, and lack of it can be a contributing factor to burnout. Those in formation should learn to prioritize the development of an adequate support system and, most importantly, learn how to identify relational isolation. Learning how to access family, friends, a priest’s support group, professional peers, a counselor and a spiritual director should be part of a man’s formative development prior to being in full ministry. It is worth mentioning that the *Causes and Context* study indicated that,

priests who lacked close social bonds, and those whose family spoke negatively or not at all about sex, were more likely to sexually abuse minors than those who had a history of close social bonds and positive discussions about sexual behavior. In general priests, from the ordination cohorts of the 1940s and 1950s showed evidence of difficulty with intimacy.¹⁴

Those in formation can learn to address their need for intimacy through the healthy formation of relationships. Additionally, through mentoring, these individuals can gain knowledge and understanding of stress, along with useful coping strategies.

Balance

Individuals doing pastoral work are deeply committed and dedicated, and this often places extraordinary demands on their lives. As noted by the *Causes and Context* study, this can lead to exhaustion, fatigue, decreased effectiveness, negative attitudes and other problems. For example, many priests reported that they never took time off due to parish understaffing and commitment to too many events and responsibilities. They found it very hard to have a clear boundary between home and work. This eventually led to a poor diet and lack of exercise, resulting in obesity. A human formation program may include, therefore, the development of wellness skills to teach future priests how to maintain a holistic sense of balance in their lives.

Formative Growth

The study distinguished between priests who underwent human formation and those who did not. Human formation encourages individuals to look at their own areas of growth and to address them proactively. For example, some candidates who are attracted to the priesthood may be interested in this

Similar to the assessment of risk factors, individuals entering human formation should be evaluated in their capacities, competencies and strengths.

commitment because their personality structure craves admiration and they see this pathway as a way of meeting those emotional needs. Once in ministry, people may notice this and demand personal sacrifices from this person while also putting them on a pedestal. Entering formation with the narcissistic perspective of obtaining a position whereby one would meet personal needs at the expense of others is incompatible with an authentic religious calling. This same reasoning can be applied to those with marked low self-esteem and who are emotionally needy. These individuals may be unable to set emotional and problem-solving limits as well as limits on time commitments when pastorally



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helping others. Regarding self-esteem, the *Causes and Context* study found that “when there was low esteem, accused priests were slightly more likely to have a lack of positive attitude about themselves and their priestly roles.”¹⁵ Formation provides a critical venue where students can address these issues and achieve the needed formative growth prior to ordination.

Evaluation of Protective Personality Factors

Similar to the assessment of risk factors, individuals entering human formation should be evaluated in their capacities, competencies and strengths. Each individual arrives with some deeply seated tendencies, including an entire psychological makeup, cognitive abilities and personality traits. Some of these predispositions have genetic and biological bases. Of specific importance to formation are personality traits, generally defined

as pervasive patterns of thinking, relating and feeling. Personality psychology has developed a comprehensive classification system for personality traits, which provide structure to the most important functional and adaptive traits mentioned by the *Program of Priestly Formation*. Evaluators and formators can use this system to gauge the normal aspects of someone’s personality and, more specifically, the strengths that an individual brings to the formation program. The Big Five personality trait theory posits that human personality comprises six domains: *Neuroticism*, *Extraversion*, *Openness to Experience*, *Agreeableness* and *Conscientiousness*. A comparable system includes six similar dimensions: *Honesty–Humility*, *Emotionality*, *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness* and *Openness to Experience*. The following table integrates these two personality systems, outlining the most salient traits in human formation.

Table 2: Comparison of Personality Systems

Personality Dimension	<i>Program of Priestly Formation Traits</i>
Honesty–Humility	A person of truthfulness, integrity and humility. (§280)
Emotionality	A person of affective maturity: someone whose feelings are in balance and integrated into thought and values. A man of feelings who is not driven by them, but freely lives his life enriched by them. This might be especially evidenced in his ability to live well with authority and take direction from another, to exercise authority well among his peers, and an ability to deal productively with conflict and stress. (§76)
Extraversion–Introversion	A good communicator: someone who listens well, is articulate and has the skills of effective communication. Someone capable of public speaking. (§76) A man who can take on the role of a public person. Someone both secure in himself and convinced of his responsibility who is able to live not just as a private citizen, but as a public person in service of the gospel and representing the church. (§76)
Agreeableness	A man who relates well with others, free of overt prejudice and willing to work with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. A man capable of wholesome relations with women and men as relatives, friends, colleagues, staff members, teachers and as encountered in areas of apostolic work. (§76)
Conscientiousness	A person of solid moral character with a finely developed moral conscience, a man open to and capable of conversion. A man who demonstrates the human virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, humility, constancy, sincerity, good manners, truthfulness and keeping his word, and who also manifests growth in the practice of these virtues. (§76)
Openness to Experience	A free person: a person who is free to be who he is in God’s design. Candidates have the potential to move from self-preoccupation toward an openness to transcendent values. (§76)

Honesty–Humility

To counter the risk factors presented by hostility and rebelliousness, it would be preferable for individuals in formation to have high scores on honesty and humility. Lee and Ashton define this psychological construct as measuring sincerity, fairness, greed, avoidance and modesty.¹⁶ These individuals would be appropriately equipped for formation given their authenticity and truthfulness. Formation programs are interested in individuals who are genuine in their interpersonal relations and who do not engage in manipulative behaviors. Similarly, these individuals avoid fraud, corruption and the abuse of others. They do not take advantage of minors and vulnerable people. Evaluating psychologists can closely assess whether applicants to the seminary are interested in possessing lavish wealth, luxury goods and signs of high social status. A sense of modesty would also be more amenable to a healthy human formation.

Emotionality

Individuals with low levels of fearfulness, emotional neediness, anxiety and dependence will most likely do better in formation. They will be self-assured and able to deal with problems without necessarily needing someone else's help. They will maintain healthy emotional bonds and demonstrate empathic sensitivity to the feelings of others.

Extroversion

An appropriate level of expressiveness and social competence would also be optimal for human formation. Given the social nature of ministry, which demands being able to navigate complex social relationships, an individual in human formation will work on improving their ability to enjoy conversation and social interactions. Being communicative is highly valued as well.

Agreeableness

The *Program of Priestly Formation* points out that human formation speaks to the need for individuals who can relate well with others and are willing to work with diverse cultural backgrounds. They are characterized by forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility and patience. These individuals have an ability to establish friendly relations with others, are reluctant to judge others harshly and, when interpersonal conflict arises, they remain calm and open to resolving such conflicts.

Conscientiousness

The *PPF* also mentions that individuals participating in human formation are individuals of solid moral character who demonstrate the virtues of diligence and prudence. They have a tendency to be self-disciplined and an ability to deliberate carefully and inhibit their impulses.

Openness to Experience

Human formation is also about being a free person. This person has intellectual curiosity and seeks additional knowledge (such as philosophical or theological) with a profound interest and desire to know others.

Conclusion

The *Causes and Context* study implicated institutional, psychological, behavioral and contextual factors as contributors to the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. When there is a risk for unhealthy and destructive behavior, there is greater chance that associated problems will occur. We have all witnessed the unspeakable damage that perpetrators of sexual abuse—who were educated, trained and formed in Catholic seminaries and religious formation programs—have inflicted on minors and vulnerable people. From a psychological perspective, then, examining potential etiologies and the associated risk factors at play may help us take preventive steps against abuse. We have to be realistic that some of these abusive behaviors are extremely difficult to detect, measure or accurately evaluate. Some individuals are also very adept at deception. It is particularly useful to know, therefore, what experiences evaluating psychologists and formators can focus on in order to design prescriptive and preventive interventions at the screening level, during formation and prior to ordination.

Similarly, a protective factor is defined as an element or process that buffers an individual who is predisposed to an undesirable outcome when risk is present. It is not simply the opposite of a risk factor; it instead interacts with a risk factor to determine the outcome. Through interaction, a protective factor moderates the effect of a risk factor and increases the likelihood of a positive result. A comprehensive human formation program attempts to reduce risk factors, aggressively promotes and enhances strengths such as resilience, emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills and the acquisition of healthy support systems, and is committed to engendering well-integrated individuals. A

From a psychological perspective, then, examining potential etiologies and the associated risk factors at play may help us take preventive steps against abuse.

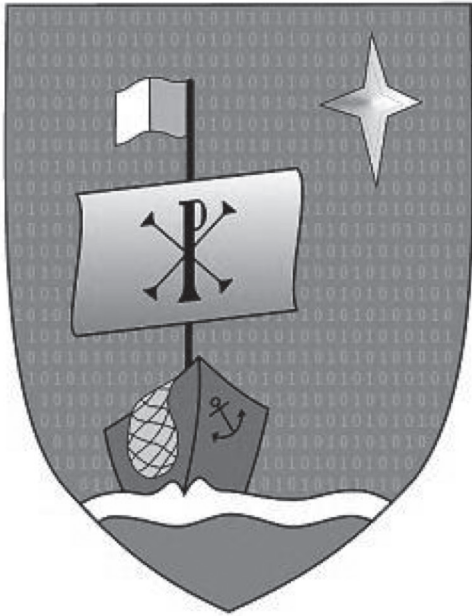
rigorous psychological evaluation should focus on accurately evaluating protective factors and providing formators with useable suggestions on how to maximize the potential of these factors during human formation.



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Organizational Dynamics and Seminary Formation: Reflections on the John Jay College Report: *Causes and Contexts*

Len Sperry, MD, PhD



The John Jay College of Criminal Justice report entitled *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010* was made public by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 18, 2011. The report (hereafter referred to as *Causes and Context*) made a number of recommendations to reduce sexual misconduct of minors by clergy. Among these are some recommendations for priestly formation. This article will briefly review the report and its recommendations, including those specific to seminary and ongoing formation. The article will then address the question: how valuable and useful are the report's specific recommendations? After reviewing organizational dynamics operative in seminary and formation settings, it will propose an additional recommendation.

Causes and Contexts: Findings and Recommendations

Based on an analysis of reported cases of sexual misconduct involving children and adolescents by priests during a period of sixty years (1950–2010), the *Causes and Context* study provides a detailed discussion of the various causes of misconduct and their contexts. The report concluded that there was no single cause or predictor of sexual misconduct by Catholic clergy. The report found that situational factors and opportunities for misconduct played a significant role in the onset and continuation of abusive acts.

The report offered a number of recommendations for preventing such misconduct. It advocated for

The report offered a number of recommendations for preventing such misconduct. It advocated for prevention policies in three areas: situational prevention actions, oversight and accountability, and education.

prevention policies in three areas: situational prevention actions, oversight and accountability, and education. The majority of the report focused on situational prevention, oversight and accountability. It argued that, because most crimes are opportunity-based, the basic strategy for reducing sexual misconduct in priests should be “opportunity reduction.” Accordingly, they analyzed the opportunity structure and situational factors that facilitated such misconduct and provided related recommendations.

The report also briefly addressed the role of education as a preventative strategy. It noted that the majority of clergy with abuse allegations against minors received their training in national, mainstream seminaries prior to the 1970s. The authors of the report indicated

that, when in seminary, these individuals had little or no exposure to a “human formation” curriculum, which would later be included as the “human” pillar of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, fifth edition.¹ As a result, these priests had minimal training in self-understanding and the necessary emotional and psychological competence for a life of celibate chastity. Formation recommendations were then provided for seminarians, for continuing formation and for seminary faculty.

With regard to seminary formation and ongoing formation they concluded that:

A clear delineation of behavioral expectations appropriate to a life of celibacy must be part of formation goals during seminary education and also throughout priests’ time in ministry. The *Causes and Context* data indicate that abuse is most likely to occur at times of stress, loneliness, and isolation. Such stressful or challenging situations triggered the desire in some priests to form inappropriate relationships with others—such relationships were most often with adults, but sometimes with minors.²

The addition of formal educational models related to human formation would be one step toward reducing the likelihood of abuse at times when priests are most vulnerable. This formation should include a thorough understanding of the major findings of this study. Toward that end, those responsible for the human formation programs for seminarians, including seminary administrators and faculty, should put educational opportunities in place, such as workshops and online courses.

In addition, the report had a recommendation for seminary and formation personnel. “The findings of the *Causes and Context* study should be digested and used as the basis for a mandatory curriculum for a workshop for all seminary faculty.”³

How adequate—specifically, how valuable and useful—are these formation recommendations? While these recommendations may be necessary to prevent and reduce sexual misconduct, they are far from sufficient. There are a number of reasons for this conclusion. The main reason is that these formation recommendations are based on a rather limited view of organizational dynamics. The next section briefly describes this limited view and then provides a broader and more realistic view of organizational dynamics, emphasizing core values and its implications for formation curriculum.

Organizational Dynamics

Causes and Context admits that solely focusing on individual-level risk factors, such as homosexuality or celibacy, fails to acknowledge the organizational and institutional contributions to the root problem. They agree that an organizational explanation is necessary both for comprehending the nature of sexual misconduct by priests and as a basis for recommendations for change. The report is quick to point out, though, that “(t)his focus on organizational explanations for the crisis does not exclude the possible existence of ‘rotten apples,’ the colloquial term for deviant individuals who may elude even the most sophisticated of the exclusionary criteria for acceptance into the ministry.”⁴ To its credit, the report does mention a few organizational dynamics such as situation factors, lack of transparency and accountability in seminaries, dioceses and provinces. It does not discuss many dynamics, however, such as hierarchical authority, the clerical subculture and core values.

What are organizational dynamics? Organizational dynamics include the organization’s strategy, its design (including its role, power and normative structure) and its culture.⁵ These dynamics can significantly affect the attitudes and behaviors of priests and seminarians. In fact, organizational factors typically exert considerably more influence over an individual than one’s personality and personal values. Because Americans are enamored with self-determination, they tend to downplay the influence of organizational dynamics on their lives. Psychologists refer to this as the fundamental attribution error.⁶ Far too many examples of the overpowering influence of such organizational factors exist, however.

On such example is the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in the 1980s. After Daryl Gates became police chief, the LAPD earned the reputation for having more formal complaints of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abusiveness than any other organization or corporation in the state of California. While the public was aware of police brutality in the community—largely due to the Rodney King incident—few knew about the extent of the abusiveness and brutality that occurred within the LAPD among officers and other employees. Because there were relatively few complaints of abusiveness prior to Gates’ tenure as police chief, organizational researchers were able to analyze the structure and culture that developed under Gates’ leadership. They found that the structure and culture fostered—even rewarded—abusiveness by police officers toward citizens of Los Angeles and within the department itself.

A similar phenomenon has been noted in seminaries and male religious orders that shifted from a respectful attitude toward women to one of misogyny, hatred and disrespect after a new administration came into leadership and vice versa. Such major shifts are often observable within six to twelve months. Following are descriptions of organizational strategy, design and culture.

Organizational Strategy

An organization's strategy refers to its plan for achieving its mission and vision. Strategy is based on and reflects the organization's core values. Core values are traits or qualities that represent the organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs and fundamental driving forces. The organization's statement of its core values answers the question: "What are the basic values that guide this organization?" The vision statement answers the question: "What can the organization become and why?" The mission statement answers the question: "What is the organization's basic focus (service or product) and whom does it serve?"

Core values are central to understanding an organization and its dynamics. It is important to distinguish between the stated and actual core values of an organization because there may be a discrepancy between the two. The greater the discrepancy, the greater the confusion and distress is for members of the organization. For example, a first-year seminarian who read that the seminary's stated values are holiness, integrity and transparency may likely become disillusioned when he learns that another seminarian is not disciplined for plagiarizing an assignment or that secrecy is more common than transparency.

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Organizational Design

Organizational design refers to the formal, rational properties of an organization that can be readily controlled by those responsible for designing and managing it, such as the bishop of a diocese or a major superior.⁷ Accordingly, the organizational design of the church itself may be a primary source and cause of stress experienced by priests, seminarians, other ministry personnel or laity. Components of organizational design that are particularly important in a discussion of priestly formation are its role structure, power structure and normative structure.

Role Structure.

Role structure refers to the ways in which tasks and duties are stated, organized and allocated among specific roles in a setting. Person-role conflict becomes evident in situations in which the minister's ideals come in conflict with organizational self-interest and the church's bureaucratic mode of functioning. Role ambiguity occurs when a priest lacks information necessary to perform his role. Some sources of role ambiguity may be inherent in the priest's role, such as the lack of clear feedback concerning the results of his work among others. In short, role structure affects priests' job-related stress through its impact on role conflict and ambiguity. Role conflict and ambiguity make it difficult for priests to meet the demands associated with their vocation. Priests may find it difficult or impossible, consequently, to achieve a sense of psychological and personal well-being in their work.

Power Structure.

Another aspect of organizational design is the power structure. The degree to which a minister is able to exercise power and control over his work setting will influence the extent to which he feels helpless. Research

convincingly shows that individuals with high job demands and little to no decisional control over their work situation tend to experience more serious medical conditions, such as heart attacks, strokes and cancer, and psychiatric conditions, such as clinical depression, than individuals with high job demands but more actual or perceived decisional control over their work situations.⁸ The church's centralized and hierarchical approach to decision-making effectively limits the autonomy and decisional control that priests experience in their work, contributing to their sense of helplessness, stress and health problems.

Normative Structure.

The normative structure of the church consists of its goals, norms, beliefs and culture. The church's normative structure has not typically rewarded innovation, creativity or risk-taking. It has, rather, emphasized its mission of service to others in the organization with minimal encouragement for personal growth or the pursuit of knowledge as legitimate goals and activities in themselves. Accordingly, individuals who advocate for innovation are not perceived as loyal and hardworking people within the church.

In short, role, power and normative structures significantly influence and impact priests and their personal and ministerial life.

Organizational Culture

Culture refers to the shared values, attitudes, beliefs, stories, memories, rituals and actions that characterize an organization. It also includes the norms, the organization's unwritten "policies," about what is and what is not acceptable. Culture is to the organization what personality is to the individual.⁹ While an organization's culture is often difficult to describe, those in the organization can feel or sense it. Three aspects of a culture are notable. One is called a cognitive aspect, which reflects how members of the organization think and are expected to think about specific issues. The second is an affective or emotional aspect, which reflects how members of the organization feel and are expected to feel about matters. The third is a behavioral aspect, which reflects how things are to be done in the organization.

Much has been written lately about the church's culture and its far-reaching impact on individual members. At least three types of church culture can be described: ecclesial, clerical and episcopal. Ecclesial culture refers to the values, behaviors and actions associated with the institutional church in terms of

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diocese, religious orders and the Vatican. The dark side of ecclesial culture is characterized by denial, evasion, secrecy and status.¹⁰ Clerical culture refers to the values, behaviors and actions associated not only with the ordained clergy but also in some non-ordained individuals working at the parish or diocesan level who identify strongly with clergy. The clerical culture is characterized by privilege, separateness, status and entitlement with its attendant upside and downside. The downside of such a culture is that it can foster a sense of narcissistic entitlement and self-absorption, "tend[ing] to keep priests emotionally immature and excessively dependent on the approval of their superiors and parishioners."¹¹ Clericalism, which is a dysfunctional form of this culture, is notable for its "authoritarian style of ministerial leadership, a rigidly hierarchical world view and a virtual identification of the holiness and grace of the church with the clerical state and, thereby, with the cleric himself."¹² Episcopal culture is a variant of clerical culture reflected in the values and behaviors associated with bishops and cardinals. The upside of this culture is wisdom and humility, while the downside is entitlement, arrogance and a lack of respect and accountability.

To the extent that ecclesial, clerical and episcopal cultures reflect entitlement, denial, arrogance, a lack of respect and accountability, and self-absorption, these values influence the diocese's or province's culture and can foster emotional and physical abusiveness, and even sexual misconduct. Accordingly, the culture of some religious organizations can be characterized as entitlement- and abuse-prone.

Abuse-proneness refers to organizational dynamics that promote and condone abusiveness and its expression. The impact of such a culture can and does have disparate effects on different individuals.

For example, such an entitled and abuse-prone culture would more likely foster sexual acting-out in priests with lower levels of psychosexual development than those with higher levels. It may be that priests with low levels of psychosexual development and high levels of narcissistic entitlement or even narcissistic or antisocial personality disorders will act out sexually even when the diocese or religious order's ecclesial culture is not particularly abuse-prone. On the other hand, there are situations wherein the ecclesial culture tolerates and "encourages" entitlement and abusiveness. Such circumstances can "tip the balance" such that a vulnerable, but otherwise reasonably sexually and emotionally mature priest may engage in sexual impropriety when he is under considerable stress and fails to maintain appropriate boundaries in interpersonal relationships.

Just as core values are central to the organization's strategy in terms of its vision and mission, core values are reflected in an organization's culture. Higher functioning organizations regularly undertake so-called value audits to identify any discrepancy between stated and actual core values. The premise is that the closer the match between stated and actual core values, the higher the levels of employee job satisfaction, commitment, morale and productivity. Organizations that are characterized by transparency (actual core value) are likely to specify it as a stated value.

Matching Stated Values and Actual Values: An Example

Here is an example of a religious organization with stated and actual values that are matched. Catholic Health Services (CHS) is the largest not-for-profit, comprehensive post-acute healthcare system in the Southeast United States. It is a unit of the Archdiocese of Miami and its CEO reports directly to the archbishop. CHS has four medical campuses in South Florida, which include acute medical rehabilitation hospitals, specialty outpatient clinics, home health services, hospice care, long-term care, skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. It provides over \$10 million in local community benefit services each year. It was chosen by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to be one of 17 national demonstration sites on evaluating quality assurance and performance.

The stated mission statement of CHS is "to provide health care and services to those in need, to minimize human suffering, to assist people to wholeness and to nurture an awareness of their relationship with God." The stated vision statement of CHS is "to

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strive to improve the health, independence and spiritual life of the elderly, the poor, and the needy in the Archdiocese, through innovative and proactive approaches to: managing care and providing services; facilitating transitions across levels of care; community partnerships and collaboration; and advocacy efforts."¹³ Their value statement indicates that their first priority is to their patients, the second is to their employees and the third is to their community.

The stated core values of CHS are dignity, commitment, excellence and stewardship. Dignity means that patients, families and employees are accorded respect regardless of race, creed, religious affiliation or economic status. Commitment is a firm decision to focus energy on the successful completion of goals in the spirit of a specific mission. Excellence is a dedication to establishing and meeting high personal, spiritual, professional and organizational goals and standards. Stewardship is the good use of organizational resources, both human and material.

Patient satisfaction measures patients' opinions of the quality of customer service provided to them and to their family members and visitors during their hospital stay. CHS uses a patient satisfaction system that is uniquely designed to provide immediate feedback to CHS management and employees. Within 24 hours of receiving any low ratings on the survey from a patient or family—ranging from concerns about food to nursing care—the family is called to learn how the matter might be resolved. Management simultaneously contacts supervisors of the unit caring for the patient so that they can work to rectify the concern through collaboration with appropriate employees and the patient and patient's family. This immediate attention to its patient-customers reflects CHS's intentional effort to live up to their value statement: "Our first responsibility is to our patients, residents, our families." What is particularly impressive is that current and prospective patients and their families have direct access to recent

patient satisfaction scores. A tab on the CHS website allows easy access to the “Realtime Patient Satisfaction Survey Report” results for all of its medical facilities. In contrast, most other healthcare facilities would not imagine permitting this degree of transparency.

CHS is committed to regular value audits and uses an outside consulting firm to ensure the validity of the results. The results of a recent audit revealed that there was a very high degree of match on nearly all of the items of the survey, and a subsequent effort to increase the degree of match on one item. Overall, this value audit was consistent with the low employee turnover, high productivity and high levels of employee satisfaction, morale and commitment.

In many respects, CHS seems too good to be true. One of its rehabilitation hospitals is consistently rated the best in the country: it has the lowest turnover rate of any hospital in the region; most employees retire with thirty or more years of service; patient satisfaction is near 97 percent; and mobbing has never been reported there. In contrast to most of its peers, it is profitable. Above and beyond all these accomplishments is their level of transparency. In fact, transparency is the key indicator of how CHS demonstrates its core values of dignity, commitment, excellence and stewardship.

The Formal and Hidden Curriculum in Seminary Formation: Clericalism Teaches Itself

In all forms of education there are two kinds of curricula: formal and hidden. The “formal” or explicit curriculum involves the stated and planned educational activities that are commonly understood by all participants. While long hours may be devoted to writing syllabi and planning formal learning experiences, these are generally much less influential than the “hidden” or implicit curriculum. According to Perry Shaw, “The hidden curriculum are those pervasive environmental features of education (and formation) that include such things as the nature of behaviors which are encouraged, the type of relationships modeled, and the values emphasized in the learning community.”¹⁴ The operative term in hidden curriculum is values, specifically actual values.

The hidden curriculum is subtle, but far more powerful than the explicit curriculum because of the messages that embed themselves deeply within learners’ psyches and influence learners’ “attitudes, motivations and behaviors in a way that words rarely accomplish.”¹⁵ In short, the hidden curriculum is a set of cultural and

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organizational influences that can affect seminarians’ attitudes and behavior over time.

Within every learning encounter, including priestly formation, a formal curriculum exists on which learners are graded and an implicit curriculum about which learners are never directly told. Learners are, nevertheless, evaluated in other ways because of it. Frequently, this hidden curriculum revolves around how the instructor expects students to behave or think. Seminarians inevitably pick up cues about faculty and formation staffs’ professional and personal attitudes, both inside and outside the classroom. Sometimes, these formation personnel model behaviors they would never want learners to emulate, such as mistreatment of staff, prejudice against or neglect of certain individuals or religions, backstabbing their colleagues or disrespect for certain types of seminarians. Likewise, where a culture of clericalism exists, there is no need for a formal course in it since clericalism teaches itself.

If seminarians are to develop the habits of heart and mind characteristic of emotionally healthy priests, formation personnel must let seminarians know when they are performing well and give them opportunities to change their behavior or correct mistakes. For example, seminarians exposed to the hidden curriculum may come to accept a form of hierarchy as involving humiliation. In personal conversation with priests, it is not uncommon for them to say that competition and humiliation—not cooperation—was the defining characteristic of their seminary experience.

Shaw contends that the hidden curriculum found in much of seminary education is profoundly negative. He argues that the formation methods and structures

used in most seminary and theological education subtly undermines the content and intent of seminaries, and produces graduates who are often ill-equipped for their subsequent roles in ministry. "Theological education can only be effective when the hidden curriculum receives as much attention as the explicit curriculum, when it is intentionally designed rather than unintentionally accepted."¹⁶ Shaw recommends that seminaries, and presumably other religious organizations, take steps to carefully review their formal curriculum against their hidden curriculum. In my experience as an organizational consultant, I find that periodic value audits are a useful and necessary process in this evaluation.

Concluding Comment

The remedy for reducing sexual misconduct in clergy offered in *Causes and Consequences* is twofold: institute situational control procedures and continue focusing on the human formation pillar in both

It would seem that a more useful and valuable recommendation would be for formation personnel to examine their formation curricula in light of the actual values "taught" and learned by seminarians and priests in their ongoing formation.

seminary and continuing education for priests. This article began with the question: Are the John Jay report's recommendations for priestly formation useful and valuable? Arguably, the reported remedy may be a necessary condition to reduce sexual misconduct, but it is an insufficient one in my estimation. As already noted, the report's recommendations are based on a rather limited view of organizational dynamics. A broader and more realistic view of organizational dynamics includes the organization's strategy and culture, which reflect its core values. Core values are reflected in every aspect of seminary formation. Not uncommonly, a religious organization's core values differ from its actual values. This is evident in formation

programs when the formal curriculum (stated formation values) differs from the hidden curriculum (actual formation values). It would seem that a more useful and valuable recommendation would be for formation personnel to examine their formation curricula in light of the actual values "taught" and learned by seminarians and priests in their ongoing formation.



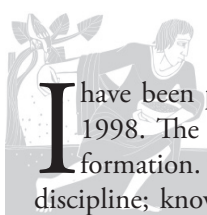
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Recognizing and Affirming a Priestly Character for the Sake of Formation

Rev. Robert M. Vallee



I have been part of a seminary formation team since 1998. The hardest part of my ministry is, indeed, formation. Knowing when to cajole and when to discipline; knowing when and how hard to challenge a man; and, most of all, determining that a man is suited for the ministerial priesthood—these are the most delicate and difficult aspects of our work. I have been blessed with uncommonly wise and wonderful rectors who have borne the brunt of this responsibility. The responsibility is heaviest when you have to determine, for the good of the man and the people of God, that he is not suited for priesthood. In such situations, I have found that the *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF)¹ is not as helpful as it is when all is going well.

The PPF is a beautiful document, but it is also very idealistic. As such, it is a wonderful text for seminarians on which to meditate and challenge themselves. It may not be quite so helpful, however, in helping them focus on the essence of a priestly

It is a wonderful text for seminarians on which to meditate and challenge themselves. It may not be quite so helpful, however, in helping them focus on the essence of a priestly character.

character. In short, if we are to determine that a man is not suited to take on that character, we need to focus very narrowly on what is missing. After sixteen years of seminary formation and twenty-six years of priesthood, I do not pretend to know it all. I think, though, that I have figured out at least this much: there are three very basic questions that must be answered in the affirmative—the third question being the most critical.

1. Is He Capable of Honest Self-critique?

This is a delicate issue. St. Frances de Sales said, “Humility is the first virtue, not the highest virtue, that would be charity, but the first in terms of order. Humility is the gateway to all the other virtues.” In another place, the Doctor of spiritual theology says: “True humility is to see yourself as you are seen in the eyes of God, not more than you are and not less than you are.” The word “humility” gets bandied about with much enthusiasm and too little insight. Masochism is not humility; self-hatred is a vice, not a virtue. If you account yourself too high, you sin against humility by pride. If you account yourself too low, you sin against humility by humiliation. St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, held that a virtue is a mean between two extremes: we do not want arrogant men in the priesthood, but we do not want self-loathing masochists either.

Healthy self-critique requires that we understand ourselves as imperfect—but still beloved—children of God. We are not gods, but neither are we garbage. Can a man perceive his areas for growth in a joyous and peaceful manner? Does he know, way down deep

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in his bones, that God loves him whatever his crosses, and perhaps even because of the way he carries those crosses? If the answer to those questions is at some point “yes,” then we can begin the process of formation. If the answer is “no,” then there is no reason to begin the process of formation. As St. Thomas Aquinas stated, “*Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur.*” (Whatever is received is received according to the capacity of the receiver.) Humility makes us receptive to any and all virtues—priestly or otherwise.

2. Is He Capable of Real Self-sacrifice?

Some people have a very strange idea of what a priest is and how a priest should be. A priest is not a nice guy who does nice things for people; that is the definition of a boy scout, not a priest. I know because in my first few years of priesthood I was so desperate to please everybody that I nearly left the priesthood. A new priest will not endure if being a good scout is the extent of his spirituality of priesthood. A priest is one who offers sacrifice. To offer sacrifice (*sacrum facere*) is to make holy in the etymologically authentic sense of that phrase. Of course, the sacraments are the quintessential expression of that role, but as the saying goes, “*Gratia Dei non alligata sacramentis.*” (God’s grace is not confined to the sacraments.) In this sense, everything a priest does is sacrificial. Whether teaching a class, fighting for justice, helping the poor, cooking a dinner or even cutting the grass, a priest remains a priest and all of his life should be an attempt to *sacrum facere*, to make holy. We suffer, of course, but not as animals suffer—to no end and as a matter of mere endurance. We suffer to make others and ourselves holy.

Making holy is a process of continual self-donation, “*Nemo dat quod non habet.*” (No one can give what they do not have.) The man who has an answer to “why” can bear any “how.” Likewise, in the absence of an answer to “why,” the smallest “how” will break you. Combining these two notions, the priest gives of himself, but he must do so as a perpetual

offering of consecration—for his transformation and the transformation of the people. Perhaps this may be an odd word to use, at least for non-Catholics. At ordination, a priest promises, with God’s help, “to minister the body and blood of Christ faithfully to the people.” All that a priest does, no matter how seemingly trivial or banal, must be part and parcel of that mission. As I tell my students in homiletics classes, “You must be willing to show the hurt and often embarrassing place where Jesus Christ has touched you and made you whole.” All else is vanity and self-posturing. No one gives what he or she does not have.

3. Is He Kind?

I was recently teaching fourth grade at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami, Florida where I am chaplain. I asked the girls what was the most important characteristic they were looking for in a priest. One little girl raised her hand and said: “A priest should be kind.” From the mouths of babes! I would paraphrase St. Ignatius of Loyola in a talk he once gave to a group of young Jesuits: “I always expect of a good Christian gentleman that he is more willing to believe good of the other so as to build him up, rather than believe evil so as to tear him down.” This is so exactly and perfectly right. It does not matter how talented, smart, musically inclined, liturgically elegant, homiletically eloquent or administratively competent a man might be; if he is not kind, he is unfit for ministry. The Gospel’s core message says that we are sons and daughters to God, Our Father—Father in the sense of *abba*, *papi*, and *daddy*. If a man perceives that he has not been loved by God in that very intimate way, he cannot share that love with others.

An old adage says, “A prophet’s job is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.” At times in the church, I fear that we tend to ordain men who comfort the comfortable and afflict the afflicted. Consider a pastor who curries favor with the wealthy yet

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will not give tuition breaks in the school. St. Augustine famously asserted: “*In fides, unitas; in dubiis libertas; in omnibus, caritas.*” (In faith, unity; in doubt, freedom; in all things, charity.) Above all things, charity: even if you are right, a lack of charity makes everything wrong.

Let us consider what signs of vocation we are looking for in a man (young or not) that might serve on this score. Is the man gentle, first with himself and then with others? To quote Nietzsche: “When I saw my devil, he was serious, thorough, profound. He is the spirit of gravity, through him all things fall ... I could only believe in a God who knew how to dance.” The critical spirit brings death to the spirit. Very serious and grave men scare me to death. They are too hard on themselves and, consequently, they tend to be too hard on everyone else. Spiritual masochists will ineluctably turn into spiritual sadists. As St. Bonaventure opined: “You cannot love your God lest you love your neighbor, that would be a lie. You cannot love your neighbor lest you love yourself, that, too, would be a lie.”

Years ago, when I did spiritual direction, I would tell my charges: “Examine your conscience by looking at the things you laugh at. Is your laughter gracious and affirming, or is it cruel and mocking?” As Gabriel Marcel observed, “Attention is the low-water mark of love.” In a similar way, kindness—simple and easily recognizable kindness—is the surest sign of a man’s fitness for ministerial priesthood. I conclude with one of my favorite meditations on priesthood, Chaucer’s *Prologue to the Parson’s Tale*.

A holy-minded man of good renown,
There was, and poor, the Parson to a town,
Yet he was rich in holy thought and work.
He was also a learned man, a clerk,
Who truly knew Christ’s gospel and
would preach it
Devoutly to parishioners, and teach it.
Benign and wonderfully diligent,
And patient when adversity was sent

(for so he proved in much adversity)
He hated cursing to extort a fee,
Nay rather he preferred beyond a doubt
Giving to poor parishioners round about
Both from church offerings and his property;
He could in little find sufficiency.
Wide was his parish, with houses far asunder,
Yet he neglected not in rain or thunder,
In sickness or in grief, to pay a call
On the remotest, whether great or small,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a stave.
This noble example to his sheep he gave
That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught;
And it was from the Gospel he had caught
Those words, and would add this figure too,
That if gold rust, what then will iron do?
For if a priest be foul in whom we trust
No wonder that a common man should rust;
And shame it is to see—let priests take stock—
A shitten shepherd and a snowy flock.
The true example that a priest should give
Is one of cleanness, how the sheep should live.
He did not set his benefice to hire
And leave his sheep encumbered in the mire
Or run to London to earn easy bread
By singing masses for the wealthy dead,
Or find some Brotherhood and get enrolled.
He stayed at home and watched over his fold
So that no wolf should make the sheep miscarry.
He was a shepherd and no mercenary.
Holy and virtuous he was, but then
Never contemptuous of sinful men,
Never disdainful, never too proud or fine,
But was discreet in teaching and benign.
His business was to show a fair behaviour
And draw men thus to Heaven and
their Saviour,
Unless indeed a man were obstinate;
And such, whether of high or low estate,
He put to sharp rebuke, to say the least.
I think there never was a better priest.
He sought no pomp or glory in his dealings,

Kindness—simple and easily recognizable kindness—is the surest sign of a man’s fitness for ministerial priesthood.

**None of us is perfect, but
the essential receptivity
to priestly formation must
be present before a man
can conform himself to
priesthood.**

No scrupulosity had spiced his feelings.
Christ and His Twelve Apostles and their lore
He taught, but followed it himself before.²

Albeit in poetic form, I believe that Chaucer has captured the essence of the ministerial priesthood. We could go line by line and elaborate a spirituality of priesthood on this text. Suffice it to say that formators would do well to consider these ideas in order to clarify the essential marks of a vocation. None of us is perfect, but the essential receptivity to priestly formation must be present before a man can conform himself to priesthood.



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Sexuality and the Spiritual Life

Patricia Cooney Hathaway, PhD



*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*

The purpose of this article is to examine the relationship between sexuality and the spiritual life within the context of a required course in spiritual direction for seminarians at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. The course begins by introducing seminarians to the nature and goal of the ministry of spiritual direction as distinct from other forms of spiritual guidance. In their book, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, authors William Barry and William Connolly describe the ministry of spiritual direction as helping a person “pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her; respond to this personally communicating God, grow in intimacy with God, and live out the consequences of the relationship.”¹ Given the sublimity of this task, Thomas Dubay observes, “it is easy to see why in the tradition it has been called the *ars artium*, the art of arts.”²

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direction?” “Plenty,”
I responded.**

One topic covered in the course is the theological foundations of spiritual direction. I will never forget a class wherein a seminarian raised his hand and

asked, “What does theology have to do with spiritual direction?” “Plenty,” I responded. “Each one of us carries around an understanding of God, Jesus Christ, grace, sin, sexuality, salvation, and so forth, through which we mediate the tradition to others. Our family backgrounds, personalities, life experiences, and education inform and color how we have internalized the tradition and the lens through which we listen, guide and teach others.”

I introduce this topic by sharing the distinction Janet Ruffing makes in her book, *Spiritual Direction*, between one’s espoused theology (what we think we believe) and one’s operative theology (the beliefs out of which we actually live and minister).³ This part of the class includes a reflective exercise that enables the seminarians to become more aware of the meaning they bring to such terms as image of God, grace, sin, suffering, world, cross, and sexuality. As future spiritual directors, they need to realize that their internalized, operative theology informs the spirituality out of which they will minister to directees.

We then examine the relationship between our own sexuality and our spiritual lives. I begin by asking them to reflect on three questions: What message do I carry in my head about sexuality? What attitudes and messages regarding sexuality did I receive from my family, my church and from contemporary culture? What is the relationship between sexuality and the spiritual life? Many seminarians acknowledge that their families did not talk about sexuality—the subject was taboo. The church often gave them mixed messages about it. And their experience of culture was saturated with a utilitarian view of sexuality that had hurt and disillusioned some of them as well as their friends and relatives. Many seminarians had not given much thought to sexuality as it relates to their spiritual lives.

Consequently, the goal of this session is to explore the meaning seminarians bring to sexuality, to present

an overview of the theology that should undergird it, and to examine its implication for their spiritual lives, especially in their role as future spiritual directors. In an article by Brother James Zullo entitled, “Educating Seminarians for Healthy Sexuality,” he emphasizes that our male and female attitudes toward sexuality can either hinder or facilitate our growth toward healthy spiritual lives. He further states, “One cannot develop a healthy spirituality when one has misguided or misinformed notions about human sexuality.”⁴ The most recent edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* stresses the importance of an integrated sexuality in the lives of priesthood candidates. “Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the attitude for forming bonds of communion with others.”⁵

Because spiritual direction involves the whole of our lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is imperative that seminarians are aware of the meaning they bring to sexuality as well as the church’s present teaching on it. As one seminarian commented, “It is very helpful to have a course which relates the theology we have learned to the life experiences which men and women bring to spiritual direction.”

The Meaning of Sexuality

The word sex has a Latin root, the verb *secare*, literally signifying “to cut off, to sever, to disconnect from the whole.”⁶ Many are surprised by the negative meaning of the term; yet, does it not express our experience of life? We are pushed out of the warm, nurturing womb of our mother into a world that will often be experienced, even in the best of circumstances, as arbitrary, inhospitable or not necessarily committed to our well-being. We often feel incomplete or

disconnected, so we search out those relationships that will make us feel connected, secure and whole.

Sexuality refers to our way of being in the world as gendered human beings, including our self-understandings as male or female, and of our bodies, feelings and attitudes. Most importantly, sexuality refers to the all-encompassing and powerful energy within us that drives us toward love, community, friendship, family, affection, wholeness, joy, delight and self-transcendence. In his book, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology*, James Nelson states that sexuality is nothing less than “God’s ingenious way of calling us into communion with others through our need to reach out and touch and embrace – emotionally, intellectually and physically.”⁷ In his work, *The Intimate Connection*, Nelson further describes sexuality as,

the physiological and psychological grounding of our capacity for love. At its undistorted best, our sexuality is that basic Eros of our humanness –urging, pulling, luring, and driving us out of loneliness into communion, out of stagnation into creativity. Sexuality, thus, is a deep human energy driving us toward bonding and compassion, and without it life would be cold and metallic. Even in its distorted and destructive expressions, sexuality betrays its fundamental longing. It is God-given for no less than that.”⁸

Sexuality, then, has a much broader meaning than “having sex” – a contemporary descriptive term for sexuality’s genital expression. A healthy, mature sexuality is composed of the following dimensions:

- Physical: the genetic, biological factors that influence our sexual response from the first moment of conception and throughout our lives.
- Cognitive: accurate and adequate sexual knowledge that reveres self and others.
- Emotional: being “at home” with our bodies; being aware of and comfortable with our sexual feelings.
- Social: having a capacity for self-disclosure; being able to sustain friendship and intimacy.
- Moral: valuing the attitudes and actions necessary for ongoing sexual integration; expressions of sexuality that are faithful, healthy and other-enriching; behaviors that are congruent with our life commitments.
- Spiritual: affirming the presence of God and the sacred in our sexual feelings and expressions; coming to recognize that sexuality and spirituality are not enemies, but friends.⁹

Sexuality refers to the all-encompassing and powerful energy within us that drives us toward love, community, friendship, family, affection, wholeness, joy, delight and self-transcendence.

A Theology of Sexuality

It is important to acknowledge that in their role as future spiritual directors, seminarians may meet women and men who have not grown up with a positive understanding of sexuality. In the past, sin was primarily identified with sexual offenses. From this narrow understanding, sexuality has been viewed by many as an obstacle to their relationship with God. This perspective found expression in theologies influenced by a Neoplatonic dualism which taught that to reach God one had to leave the world, (the body), and ascend to God who is spirit. A spirit (good) and body (bad) dichotomy emerged, followed by a distorted view of sexuality. Spirit came to be understood as the eternal and good part of the self, while body came to be understood as the mortal, temporal part of the self, subject to decay and death. As such, sexuality and everything associated with the body was viewed with deep suspicion and as the chief source and vehicle of sin. In his book, *Theology of the Body Explained*, Christopher West states:

A suspicion toward the physical world and discomfort with all things sexual is by no means a neurosis induced by Christianity. It hangs like a dark shadow over all human experience. Like the rest of humanity, Christians have been and still are infected by it. Through the centuries the Church has defended the goodness of the physical world and the sacredness of the human body against many heresies. The Church still battles today to counter the heretical “spirit good – body bad” dichotomy that many people assume to be orthodox Catholic belief.¹⁰

Such messages can be difficult to unlearn as a spiritual director seeks to guide his or her directee to a more positive view of sexuality that is informed by the church’s teaching.

In this particular section of the spiritual direction class, we review the church’s teaching regarding the foundational principles of Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*.¹¹ This discussion reveals the degree to which the seminarians have internalized church teachings. More importantly, it exposes the mindset they will use to guide directees who bring issues of sexuality to spiritual direction.

Pope John Paul II’s addresses on the *Theology of the Body* flesh out his approach to the church’s teaching on love and sexuality as they eventually find expression in a person’s vocation to the single life, celibacy or

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marriage. The pope’s vision is built on the good news of revelation that God is love and that God has created us to participate in his love as the meaning and fulfillment of our lives. In *Redemptor Hominis*, (10) he states, “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.”¹²

One goal of his theology is to describe the biblical anthropology that is the foundation for our capacity to love – a capacity rooted in our experience of human embodiment. John Paul II presents his vision in four stages: Original Humanity, Fallen Humanity, Redeemed Humanity, and Glorified Humanity.¹³ In “Original Humanity” John Paul II takes us back to Genesis 1:26-27, which presents the following truths:

- God created man and woman in His image and likeness. We are created different yet equal.
- From the beginning human beings have had a special relationship of love and intimacy with God that is unlike any other creature.
- Sexuality is a “good” gift created by God.
- In creating us male and female, our very embodiment is central to who we are and to our relationship with God.
- We are not souls that happen to be attached to bodies; rather we are body persons. Pope John Paul II presents the human body not as a biological organism, but as the *sacrament* of the human person. He uses the word *sacrament* in the broad sense to mean “a visible sign of an invisible reality.” He states, “The body and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God and thus be a sign of it.”¹⁵

We are not souls that happen to be attached to bodies; rather we are body persons. Pope John Paul II presents the human body not as a biological organism, but as the sacrament of the human person.

The lynch pin of John Paul II's teaching resides in what he identifies as the nuptial meaning of the body; that is, our capacity for self-giving love. However, there is no such thing as love without freedom.¹⁶

"Fallen Humanity" describes Adam and Eve's free choice to disobey God's commandment not to eat of a particular tree in the garden. The consequence of sin was disunity, not only between humanity and God, but also among human beings, and between spirit and body. Concupiscence entered the human heart as the disorder in our desires that inclines us toward sin. *Eros*, what John Paul II describes as "the interior force that attracts man toward what is true, good and beautiful," is now tempted to express itself as mere lust; that is, using someone as an object of one's personal pleasure and satisfaction. When this occurs, the body ceases to be an expression of self-giving love.¹⁷

God does not leave us without the promise of restoration. In the stage of "Redeemed Humanity," the Word becomes flesh in Jesus as the source of our redemption. John Paul II explains:

This means He has given us the possibility of realizing the entire truth of our being; He has set our freedom free from the domination of concupiscence. And if redeemed man still sins, this is not due to an imperfection of Christ's redemptive act, but to man's will not to avail himself of the grace which flows from that act.¹⁸

In regard to the dignity of the body, John Paul II emphasizes, "Through Jesus, the body entered theology...through the main door."¹⁹ The fact that God inhabited a body in Jesus through the incarnation implies not only a blessing of the highest degree upon the physical world, but most importantly a blessing upon our human flesh. In Jesus *eros*, (our drive to communion), finds its fulfillment in *agape* (self-giving

love). John Paul II reminds us that, in Jesus, it is neither the spirit nor the body alone that loves; rather it is the total person who loves, body and soul. Only when both dimensions are truly united do men and women attain their full stature.

Jesus further reminds us that the greatest proof of love is caring for others even to the point of self-sacrifice. (Jn 15:13). True love, whether expressed through our vocation to the single, married or celibate state of life, always involves the donation of self for the well being of the other.

In the final stage, "Glorified Humanity," John Paul II reflects on the body and sexuality as we will experience them in the resurrection when all things will be reunited in Christ. He states:

The truth about the resurrection clearly affirmed, in fact, that the eschatological perfection and happiness of man cannot be understood as a state of the soul alone separated (according to Plato: liberated) from the body, but it must be understood as the state of man definitely and perfectly "integrated" through such a union of the soul and the body, which qualifies and definitely ensures this perfect integrity.²⁰

The spiritualization of the body, then, refers to the perfect integration of body and soul when the "war within" will finally be over and we will experience union with God in his Trinitarian mystery and intimacy with him in the perfect communion of persons.²¹

John Paul II then shifts his message from a description of the components of a Theology of the Body to applying them to the vocational choices of celibacy for the kingdom, the single life, and the sacrament of marriage. His repeated emphasis on the nuptial meaning of the body reminds us that men and women fully realize themselves through the sincere gift of self that unites *eros* (our attraction to and desire for communion with others), with *agape* (self-giving love).

This presentation is followed by an opportunity for the seminarians to ask questions regarding John Paul II's Theology of the Body. The next step is an exercise in the practical, pastoral application of the seminarians' understanding of the course material. They are asked to think of themselves as members of a supervisory group composed of spiritual directors, considering a sample case that involves a difficulty that a directee is having in the area of sexuality. They constructively evaluate the role of the director and suggest ways he or she could

have offered better guidance to the directee, thus honing their skills in spiritual direction.

Following is a list of convictions regarding the relationship between sexuality and the spiritual life that I hope the seminarians will internalize from this session:

- As we see in our culture, sexuality, as a most powerful energy, can be a force for love, life and blessing, or hate, death and unimaginable destruction. Spirituality helps us understand and channel our sexuality in a positive, life-affirming way.
- Sexuality refers to the primordial drive within each person toward physically, emotional and spiritual intimacy and communion. It is the physiological and psychological grounding for our capacity to love. Thus, the meaning of sexuality is much broader than “having sex.” The energy that drives us toward communion with others is the same energy that drives us toward union with God. Our sexuality and spirituality are inextricably intertwined.
- All men and women – whether celibate, single or married – need intimate relationships characterized by self-disclosure and mutuality in order to mature into healthy adults. Not all relationships, however, are meant to express that intimacy through genital expression. For the Christian, chastity is the virtue that enables us to be faithful to our commitments and respectful of the personhood of others.

Too often, people insulate their sexuality from their spiritual lives because they view sexuality as an obstacle rather than an avenue of God’s grace.

- Spirituality refers to our response to God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit as exhibited by our response to the people, circumstances and experiences of our daily lives. One cannot develop a healthy spirituality when one has misguided or misinformed notions about human sexuality. Too often, people insulate their sexuality from their spiritual lives because they view sexuality as an obstacle rather than an avenue of God’s grace. Spiritual directors should be on the lookout for such distortions and patiently guide directees to a more positive view of their sexuality.

- Body/Soul dualism is not found in a gospel way of life. The New Testament presents a unitary view of the human person. “Spirit” refers to that which is ordered to, led by and influenced by the Spirit of God whereas “flesh” refers to all that is opposed to this influence. The opposition is not between the body and spirit, but between two ways of life.
- Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body provides insight into the nature of sexuality as the foundation for our spiritual lives; that is, the spirit is manifested through the body. It is through our bodies that we experience the divine call to love and self-donation.
- When reduced to sex, *eros*—our drive toward communion with others—becomes a commodity. A person becomes objectified as a source of personal pleasure and satisfaction. To prevent such an occurrence, *eros* must mature into *agape*—a self-giving love which regards the well-being of others as our most basic concern.

Spiritual directors need to be aware of the interconnection among theology, spirituality and ministry. Our theology informs our spirituality. We then minister out of our spirituality. It is essential that a spiritual director’s operative theology is rooted in the church’s teaching regarding sexuality.

- Spiritual directors need to be aware of the interconnection among theology, spirituality and ministry. Our theology informs our spirituality. We then minister out of our spirituality. It is essential that a spiritual director’s operative theology is rooted in the church’s teaching regarding sexuality. One expression of the church’s teaching on love and sexuality is found in Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body.

- A spiritual director cannot give what he or she does not have. Affective maturity is essential for effective, nurturing spiritual direction. Regarding the importance of this maturation in the seminarian, the *Program for Priestly Formation* states:
Human Formation comes together in a particular way in the domain of human sexuality, and this is especially true for those who are preparing for a life of celibacy. The various dimensions of being a human person – the physical, the psychological, and the spiritual – converge in affective maturity, which includes human sexuality. Education is necessary for understanding sexuality and living chastely.²²

Education regarding the relationship between sexuality and the spiritual life begins with the seminarian's own attitudes and convictions regarding sexuality. The fruitfulness of his ministry as a spiritual director will be dependent upon the affective maturity he brings to this most important ministry within the church.

In John 10:10 Jesus tells us, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." A spiritual director facilitates that life by helping a directee grow in his or her relationship with God, thus becoming ever more sensitive to encountering God in his or her life. One of those experiences is our sexuality. Through spiritual direction a directee must come to value his or her sexuality not as an enemy of the spiritual life but as a friend, not as an obstacle but as an avenue of God's grace.



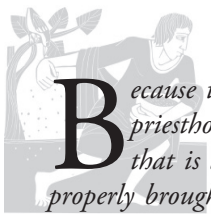
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Human Formation and Communion with Christ

Deacon James Keating, PhD



Because the ecclesial call to prepare one's life for priesthood originates in the external forum, that is also where the question of priesthood is properly brought to resolution.... Spiritual direction... guides the man when he needs to say in the external forum anything he does not want to say. Because catholic vocational discernment is ecclesial, a condition for peace in discernment is deep mutual trust and total transparency in the external forum.¹

A seminarian who speaks about the most personal aspects of his journey to affective and spiritual maturity in the external forum may seem imprudent to some seminary formators. Isn't spiritual direction the place to explore feelings and the content of one's relationship with Christ? That is correct. And yet, the church understands human formation to be a relationship of "mutual trust and total transparency," and further, "freedom, openness, honesty."² Most profoundly, human formation invites the seminarian to "give evidence" that he has "interiorized" his formation.³ The *Program of Priestly Formation* also highlights how vital it is for the seminarian to trust the church and its agents of formation, to be a seminarian who pursues truth⁴ and possesses a spirit of joyful trust and open dialogue with seminary authorities.⁵ It appears that the internal forum is not the only place a seminarian can exercise personal transparency or develop a relationship of trust with formators. Becoming a priest is not a private action but a public one and, therefore, those who discern a call from Christ receive such from within the church and not simply from within the confines of their conscience. No one discerns a call to Holy Orders as a private or isolated act.

There exists in priestly formation, then, the same creative tension that is present in marriage; one is

The Program of Priestly Formation also highlights how vital it is for the seminarian to trust the church and its agents of formation, to be a seminarian who pursues truth⁴ and possesses a spirit of joyful trust and open dialogue with seminary authorities.

chosen, another responds to being chosen and their actions have social impact. These interpenetrating selections, although personally profound, come under public scrutiny. The seminary human formators, whom I will call mentors, do not necessarily have to read "the love letters" between a seminarian and God, but they do need to know that they are being written and that their content reflects the true nature of sacrificial and faithful love. A tension exists between what a mentor does and what a spiritual director does. This tension is sustained because the goods of confidentiality and the church's need to have an appropriate level of disclosure on the part of seminarians coexist—reducing that tension is infidelity to the formational task.

How can the mentor help seminarians give evidence that they have interiorized seminary formation

so that the church can accept a man's offer to live out Christ's own spousal love as a priest? In order to answer this question, we first need to define the mentor's call within seminary formation.⁶ This mentor is a priest who is also most likely on staff as a professor, administrator or pastoral formator of some kind. This role of mentor is new and evolving in the seminary since Blessed Pope John Paul II first wrote about human formation in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.⁷ Pope John Paul II had in mind the need for mentoring a seminarian into spiritual and affective maturity when he used Saint Paul's exhortation as an expression of the way human formation must be modeled: "Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me" (Phil 4:9). This is the very character of mentoring. Because the mentor functions in the public realm and not the internal forum of a spiritual director, his goal is to attend to the whole man, to evaluate (with others on the formation staff) the seminarian in the areas of spiritual, pastoral, academic and human formation. The mentor

The mentor ministry is, then, the axial point of each seminarian's formation. The mentor brings the seminarian into an encounter with the four key areas of evaluation.

ministry is, then, the axial point of each seminarian's formation. The mentor brings the seminarian into an encounter with the four key areas of evaluation. The mentor summons the seminarian to look at himself, to receive the truth about himself, not in isolation, but in communion with Christ. What is most crucial in the ministry of mentoring—an evolving seminary role—is the priest's own formation in Christian anthropology, the tradition of virtue development and the development of key competencies, such as spiritual listening and discernment. Because the mentor meets the "whole man" and has to evaluate him for the church, it is essential that the mentor move easily among all four areas of formation, instilling within the seminarian: a capacity and a vocabulary to speak about his own priestly identity in relationship to his

deepening communion with Christ (spiritual); his affectively imbued grasp of theology (intellectual); his vulnerability to receive intimacy from the Trinity even while ministering to others (pastoral); and his courage to face the moral truth about himself (human). Moreover, while each area of formation has a specific focus, all of these areas—singularly and in combination—conspire to deepen a man's communion with Christ.⁸

The mentor seeks to assist the seminarian in deepening his own participation in the mysteries Christ offers to him: spousal dedication to the church, healing gifts for the sinner, paternal wisdom for the parishioners' consciences and leadership qualities to shepherd a community. Foundational to participating in these mysteries is the seminarian's acceptance of the mystery of sharing in Christ's own beloved sonship. This sonship establishes the seminarian in spiritual freedom as one who pleases the Father (Mt 3:17). In deeply receiving this filial grace, the seminarian can courageously give his life away as a gift because he knows the Father's continual love for him.

How can the mentor help a seminarian give evidence that he has internalized seminary formation, and in so doing give knowledge to the church about his fitness as one called by Christ to share in his own priestly ministry?

1. The mentor is invited to focus conversations with seminarians in the following ways: How are you (the seminarian) meeting Christ as you progress in human maturation, classes and pastoral work, and what may be some obstacles preventing you from meeting him? This question integrates the spiritual life with the other areas of formation⁹ and gives evidence that the seminarian has internalized his formation.
2. The mentor is invited to consider that he is serving the Lord by listening to all the seminarian wants to surrender to Christ, including all that delays or blocks that surrender. Simple participation in seminary programs does not exhaust formation; this participation must be based upon a seminarian allowing Christ to penetrate his heart:

The seminary provides the possibility of re-living the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve. In fact, the Gospels present a prolonged and intimate sharing of life with Jesus as a necessary premise for

the apostolic ministry.... Before being sent...they are called to be with Him.¹⁰ To refuse intimacy with Christ is to refuse formation.

3. Maturity in Christ is the emphasis of seminary human formation. Such maturity grants the seminarian the freedom to move toward a presumption of permanence as he progresses through formation. This permanence emerges from the reality of his falling in love with God. To fall in love and stay in love generates the possibility that he will make a gift of himself in a sustained way. The mentor ushers the seminarian into the mystery of self-giving, the maturation of a bachelor into a spouse, a cultural American into a man of deep receptivity to the gift of God's love. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote:

Man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf. Jn 7:37–38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf. Jn 19:34).¹¹

In judging this desire for permanence, the formation faculty needs to see “a priest in the man.” Is this seminarian one who can receive even while giving, a man who knows that the source of his ministry will be drinking from Jesus Christ's pierced heart? Does this seminarian see such a “drinking” as the definition of ministerial love itself?¹² In this hope the formation team can encourage the seminarian to participate in Christ's priestly mysteries throughout his future priesthood.

In human formation, communion with Jesus Christ is everything. Jesus is the measure of our humanity—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are at the center of all formation areas. When Christ is at the center, human formation changes; however, it does not change into spiritual direction. Human formation, therefore, welcomes the deepest and most mysteriously imbedded theological reality there is, the Incarnation. The living Spirit of Christ is already working deep within the seminarian to mature him into a future priest who will not run from sacrifice

Formators see the spiritual life of the seminarian as enabling an encounter between the seminarian and his own personality so that he can develop into a man of communion. This process is public to the extent allowed by prudence and formational norms and canons.

but embrace it as the way of his own love. What most interests the church about human formation is evidence that the seminarian is no longer preening for attention, but just the opposite: has he become one who allows himself to be pierced by the needs of other. Even though direction in human formation is fundamentally a reality of the external forum, it is NOT an exclusively secular endeavor. Formators see the spiritual life of the seminarian as enabling an encounter between the seminarian and his own personality so that he can develop into a man of communion. This process is public to the extent allowed by prudence and formational norms and canons.

Spiritual directors, on the other hand, guide the seminarian to name the places of intimacy between himself and Christ, so that—in prayer and through sacramental living—nothing can separate him from Christ.

Spiritual directors, on the other hand, guide the seminarian to name the places of intimacy between himself and Christ, so that—in prayer and through

sacramental living—nothing can separate him from Christ. Spiritual direction creates a space where the indwelling Spirit can freely speak the words of love and salvation received at Baptism and appropriated over the length of adult living. In human formation, communion with Christ is present as a power that enables the seminarian to courageously speak his truth. In spiritual direction, communion with Christ is present as a direct end, which enables the seminarian to listen intently to the Spirit as the Spirit speaks the truth about the seminarian (traditional area of human formation) in relationship to Christ (matters of conscience, or listening to the voice of God).¹³ These are ultimately different dimensions of the same reality, but they are handled distinctly from each other so that each facet can be more solidly fixed in place, assuring both affective maturity and self-gift in and through

At its depths, the interpenetration of human formation with spiritual formation is simply a description of the reality of Christian life: in Christ, human nature is capable of receiving the power of the resurrection.

the power of accepting God's love in Christ. At its depths, the interpenetration of human formation with spiritual formation is simply a description of the reality of Christian life: in Christ, human nature is capable of receiving the power of the resurrection.

Some Cultural Realities for Mentors to Consider

Upon entrance to priestly formation, some men do not have clear affective, psychological or spiritual identities. They are attracted to Christ, his church and his ministry, but they may be hesitant to explore how Christ wants to live his own spousal and paternal love within them.¹⁴ One of mentoring's primary gifts is the opportunity for men to see the clear identity of the priest modeled before them. In this witness, the mentor begins to heal the mentee of any cultural wounds they

might bear. It is the mentor, with his affective maturity and lively communion with Christ, that helps draw the priest out of the American who is before him.¹⁵ Being a product of the American culture, some seminarians carry the common vice of entitlement into formation.¹⁶ The mentor abides with these men, leading them to the freeing knowledge that a priestly vocation is a gift and not the result of having earned God's attention through achievement and talents. The mentor teaches seminarians that they need the Father. Does the seminarian know he can only be a good priest if he trusts the Father enough to make him a good spiritual husband and father? The mentor ushers them into this truth: "You can't give your vocation to yourself; you can only receive it from a relationship with the Trinity." In this way, the mentor works with the seminarian, not to diminish all the natural talents he possesses, but to place them at the service of the Father's will. Here the mentor assists in the development of humility, not simply so the seminarian will possess an attractive virtue ("a man of communion"), but so that the Trinity has an abode from which to powerfully operate during this future priest's ministry. God can inhabit humility, but there is no room for him in a man who "deserves" the priesthood.

By ceaselessly inviting the seminarian to inhabit a true priestly identity, the mentor is committed to coaxing him into freedom. The Spirit then dissolves the cultural or familial identities that thwart his accessibility to God within future ministry. The enemy always assaults the seminarian through a confused and defective identity. As the axial point of formation, the mentor reminds seminarians of what their true identity is and how it is coming to be internalized through study, pastoral work, prayer and maturation in affect and virtue.

To this end, the mentor makes inquiries about the seminarian's interior life: what does he think about the most; what is the content of his affective life, his intellectual life, his life among peers; and so forth. Formation helps men open their beings to be affected by the Truth, who is Christ. Is the seminarian willing to disassociate himself from those realities that can be clear targets for Satan's attacks, those realities that undermine priestly identity?

The mentor invites the seminarian to enter a conversation that helps him identify where he really lives. It helps him come to full possession of his priestly call as his true and abiding home. "Are you at home and are you willing to stay where you have been called?" When answered with a clear "yes" to live with Christ, the seminarian realizes his primary formational objective is

to stay in a posture of receptivity toward the Father. In this, he receives his identity. In this, he experiences the truth that intimacy with the divine leads to generativity. Such intimacy, and such receptivity to the truth about the Father and the truth about the seminarian revealed by such intimacy, leads to a capacity for self-gift (service) that then sustains priesthood (sacrifice).

The mentor is crucial because the seminarian's humanity is the clay of his priesthood. The mentor oversees the birth of this priesthood in a way that the spiritual director and professor do not because the mentor sees the whole man. The mentor does, however, need some training in the ways of theological anthropology and spiritual discernment so he can listen at deeper levels. The mentor's ability to listen deeply brings him through and beyond conversations that only contain checklists for reporting to rectors and bishops (seminarian is faithful to prayer, succeeds at studies, is friendly toward the elderly and so forth).

As noted above, there is a tension between what a mentor does and what a spiritual director does—between the external forum and the internal forum—but this tension must remain because the goods of confidentiality and the church's need to have an appropriate level of disclosure coexist. Striving to reduce that tension is infidelity to the formational task.¹⁷ It is normal for all in formation to experience this tension because, by definition, a seminary forms a man before God (conscience, internal forum) so that he might publicly give his life (common and public good) as priest for the spiritual needs of the church.

No one area of formation should dominate a house of formation. Rather, all four areas are held together by one overriding goal—the development of a man who draws his priestly identity and sustains it in communion with the Trinity. This communion is born when the seminarian's complete humanity (intellect, affect, will) yields to Christ's desire to live his priestly mystery over again in this man. The privilege to help guide such development is entrusted to the mentor, who knows that intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit is the sure foundation for all human formation.¹⁸



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Endnotes

1. James Shea, *Discernment in the Church* (Bismarck: University of Mary, 2012), 16–17.
2. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006), §85.
3. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §86.
4. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §100.
5. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §101.
6. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §80.
7. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day *Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §§43–44.
8. “The foundation and center of all *human formation* is *Jesus Christ*, the Word made flesh. In his fully developed humanity, he was truly free and with complete freedom gave himself totally for the salvation of the world.” [author's emphasis] *Program of Priestly Formation*, §74; “The basic principle of *spiritual formation* is...to live in *intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit*. This is the foundational call to discipleship and conversion of heart.” [author's emphasis] *Program of Priestly Formation*, §107; “The first task of *intellectual formation* is to acquire *a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the fullness and completion of God's revelation and the one Teacher. This saving knowledge is acquired not only once, but it is continuously appropriated and deepened, so that it becomes more and more part of us.” [author's emphasis] *Program of Priestly Formation*, §137; “*Pastoral formation* is the culmination of the entire formation process: The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into *communion with the charity of Christ* the Good Shepherd. Hence, their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.” [author's emphasis] *Program of Priestly Formation*, §236.

9. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §115.
10. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §30.
11. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful on Christian Love *Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), §7.
12. *Deus caritas est*, §12.
13. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 1777.
14. CCC, 521: "Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us."
15. Hence, we can see that mentor formation may need to be developed as a specific preparation for those priests appointed to be mentors in seminary human formation. All will attest that little is now offered to specifically prepare seminary formators for this crucial ministry. Using the term "mentor" or "advisor" is, of course, not absolute. The important thing is that these priests are not the seminarians' peers or "friends," but guides to the truth about one's personal readiness to sacrifice all for the priesthood. The mentors or advisors are called to support one another and live with one another in the seminary as true colleagues.
16. This common feeling of entitlement may flow from the need to assuage self-pity after failure to achieve success. The masculine need for success in all endeavors makes a man susceptible to self-pity in even the smallest of failures, including venial sin. To be perfect is unattainable, and inevitable failure sets up the strangely consoling habit of self pity, which in turn seduces the man to feel entitled to enter artificial or sinful consolations (internet pornography, gluttony, laziness and so forth) all because "I worked so hard and failed."
17. "The power of governance...in the external forum provides primarily and directly for the common and public good of the church; it regulates the social action of the faithful, their relationship to the external and visible society of the church.... Governance in the internal forum, the forum of conscience, provides primarily and directly for the private welfare of the faithful; it regulates their private actions and their moral relationship to God." John Huels, *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1995), 19. See also: 402, 404.
18. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §45; *Program of Priestly Formation*, §74.

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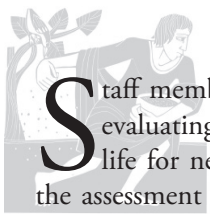
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Candidate Assessments: Navigating Psychological Reports Successfully

Emily R. Cash, PsyD



Staff members at Saint Luke Institute have been evaluating candidates for priesthood and religious life for nearly 20 years. In refining and improving the assessment process, we have learned that there are basic elements of a good psychological evaluation, as well as ways to interpret and use the assessment report for the betterment of the individual applicant. The assessment process is also informed by cultural and social trends influencing the candidates themselves: identifying and addressing some of the challenges presented by those trends increases the effectiveness of the overall assessment process.

Cultural and Social Trends

Seminaries, seminary staff and formation personnel are faced with a multitude of challenges today as they attempt to walk with and support men coming forward for service in the church. Certain trends have surfaced in the last several years that offer unique challenges to seminaries. For example, young men are “digital natives,” used to being plugged into one form of technology or another all the time and heavily reliant on social media for their sense of connectedness to others. In addition, this generation of seminarians brings a greater awareness of mental health issues: there are fewer stigmas associated with mental illness, and they speak more openly about struggles with depression, anxiety and even addiction. They have also been exposed to Internet pornography at an early age. As a result, by the time they apply for seminary, they may have been exposed to and struggled with Internet pornography use or abuse for several years. Accompanying this exposure, however, is a greater openness to talking about their struggles and naming areas of difficulty around healthy Internet use.

Seminaries, seminary staff and formation personnel are faced with a multitude of challenges today as they attempt to walk with and support men coming forward for service in the church.

The Psychological Evaluation

Element One: Psychosocial History

A core component in the psychological evaluation is a thorough psychosocial interview. A well-written and conducted psychosocial interview provides a clear understanding of the candidate’s upbringing, core relationships and experiences that ultimately form the foundation from which he lives out his vocation.

The psychosocial interview typically gathers basic information about the candidate’s personal and family history. Content areas explored include the candidate’s family history, his academic and occupational history, and his peer support and relational history. Recommended topic areas include but are not limited to: relationships with parents, siblings and extended family members; overall experiences of childhood; parenting and discipline styles within the home; traumas or difficulties endured as a child or adolescent; experience of school (e.g., was he ever bullied, did he have a best friend and/or a consistent peer group); academic performance (e.g., notable learning difficulties or areas in which he excelled), and interests outside of school.

There are other recommended topic areas that reflect some of the cultural and social trends affecting current seminary applicants: amount of time spent on social media or gaming websites; level/nature of engagement with Facebook; amount of time spent with peer group in face-to-face interactions.

The psychosocial interview should also include a psychosexual interview. This is a series of questions posed to explore the candidate's understanding of his own sexuality and sexual identity as well as his dating/relational history.

The psychosocial interview should also include a psychosexual interview. This is a series of questions posed to explore the candidate's understanding of his own sexuality and sexual identity as well as his dating/relational history. This interview can assist with exploring potential problem behaviors related to sexuality and also shed light on his understanding of celibacy and what it means to live an authentic, chaste lifestyle. While this part of the interview can be a source of anxiety for the candidate, facilitating healthy dialogue on this topic is paramount. It creates the opportunity to identify and explore problematic behaviors and also encourages the candidate to think honestly about his own sexuality. This is critical for his understanding of how his sexual identity and experiences influence living a celibate life.

Element Two: Clinical Interview

A clinical interview is another core component of a thorough psychological evaluation of a candidate for priesthood or religious life. For mental health professionals, a clinical interview refers to a structured interview focused specifically on the presence of mental health issues. For example, a screening for depression, questions about the presence of bipolar disorder or exploration of a history of panic attacks might be included in this interview. This is also the point at which issues with alcohol use/abuse, addictions and

other problematic behaviors are addressed. Candidates are asked to reveal areas of difficulty either in their mood or behavior so clinicians may determine whether or not the issue is diagnosable. Additionally, the clinician can form a professional opinion about how the problem area may affect the individual's ability to succeed in seminary and beyond. In addition to their own personal mental health history, candidates are asked to describe the mental health history of their immediate and extended families; given the genetic implications of many mental health conditions, this is an area not to be ignored. One's medical health, including significant conditions or injuries, along with family medical history is also often discussed during the clinical interview.

Element Three: Psychological Testing

Psychological testing should also be included in the candidate assessment process. Testing typically includes a measure of intelligence accompanied by personality testing. Intelligence measures provide the candidate and vocation director with an idea of the candidate's cognitive abilities, ensuring that there are no areas of concern that would interfere with his ability to meet the academic demands of obtaining an advanced degree. Psychologists rely on personality testing for two reasons: 1) to assess the presence of acute distress at the time of evaluation, and 2) to help understand the candidate's personality traits and the strengths and vulnerabilities associated with those traits. Personality testing also provides pertinent information about how a candidate views relationships with others and his perception of himself. It can be helpful in understanding how the candidate reacts to or deals with stressors in his life.

Element Four: Spiritual Assessment

For many clinicians, the psychological evaluation ends with the first three components described above. However, others feel it is important to include an interview in the area of spirituality and vocational history. Many psychologists do not have appropriate training to assess a candidate's spirituality and vocational background. Some organizations, like Saint Luke Institute, use a team-based approach to candidate evaluation that includes two mental health professionals and a trained spiritual director. The spiritual director meets with the candidate to discuss his family religious background, his image of God, his personal religious practices, his prayer life, his understanding of his vocational call and his understanding of what it means to be a priest or consecrated religious. The inclusion

of this spiritual assessment can provide the vocation director and the seminary with a better sense of the candidate's vocational call and understanding of his spirituality. In addition, when integrated with the psychological interviews and testing, a more holistic picture of the candidate can be seen and understood.

Element Five: Summary and Recommendations

The final component of a thorough psychological evaluation is a summary or discussion section that is accompanied by recommendations for the candidate as he moves forward. The summary section provides an overview of the pertinent findings. It pulls together areas of strength the client possesses; highlights emotional, psychological or behavioral vulnerabilities that could warrant concern or further investigation, and puts together the pieces of the psychological evaluation puzzle. Following the summary, many clinicians offer recommendations on how to best address areas of vulnerability identified in the report. The recommendations should outline tangible ways to effectively address the noted areas. A well-written evaluation that includes thorough and comprehensive recommendations can help the seminary guide the candidate toward achieving his ongoing formation goals beyond the initial evaluation process.

Element Six: Verbal Feedback Summary

Many clinicians choose to meet privately with the candidate to discuss the evaluation findings; others choose to meet jointly with the candidate and his vocation director. Regardless of the participants, a verbal feedback session is an important part of understanding and interpreting the findings for two key reasons: 1) it can help model how to engage in healthy dialogue on strengths and areas for growth, and 2) it gives the candidate, who has invested a great deal of effort and anxiety in the process, clear and direct feedback about the results. Ideally the goal is for the entire process to be helpful for the candidate and provide him with a clearer understanding of his strengths, a better grasp of his vulnerabilities, and some tools that will aid him in a full and healthy discernment around his vocation.

Psychological evaluations also can be used as a tool for positively impacting the formation experience of men coming forward for service in the church.

Psychological Evaluation As A Tool

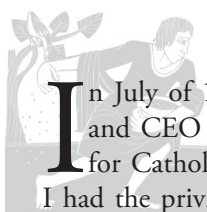
Certainly one of the primary reasons for the psychological evaluation of candidates is to screen for psychopathology or obvious reasons that the priesthood or religious life is not a good fit for the candidate. However, psychological evaluations also can be used as a tool for positively impacting the formation experience of men coming forward for service in the church. The combination of a thorough personal and relational history accompanied by psychological testing and clear, tangible recommendations can provide seminary staff and formation personnel with a better understanding of how to help a candidate succeed in a seminary environment and how to guide him toward a healthy formation experience.



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A Process to Improve Treatment for Spanish-Speaking Clergy and Religious

Daniel Kidd



In July of 1998, during my first year as President and CEO of Guest House, a treatment organization for Catholic priests and religious with alcoholism, I had the privilege of meeting with Roger Cardinal Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles. After gathering on the top floor of the tower on Wilshire Boulevard, I entered the meeting room with great anticipation, as I was in my “listening mode” to gather input for the improvement and growth of Guest House services.

Also attending the meeting were Monsignor Terrence Richey, the Cardinal’s delegate for clergy with alcoholism and Father Curtis Bryant, S.J., the clinical consultant to the Vicar for Clergy of the Archdiocese. After appropriate introductions, I asked the Cardinal, “What can we do to help you in the great Archdiocese of Los Angeles?”

I should have been prepared for a question to answer my question. “What are you doing at Guest House to help priests whose first language is Spanish?” he inquired. I hemmed and hawed for a few seconds, as I formulated my incredibly articulate reply to his very pointed question.

“Well,” I began, “you know, ah, most of the Spanish-speaking priests, you know, speak English, so we can do really good work with our, um, English-speaking counselors, and your Spanish-speaking priests can, you know, get our treatment that way.”

The Cardinal, trained in social work and with a master’s degree in it, smiled slightly, and pointed to his heart and said, “But the language of therapy needs to be the language of the heart, and the language of the heart is the priest’s first language, not the one of the head

into which he must translate his feelings. That kind of treatment would be a help to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.”

Cardinal Mahony proceeded to describe an incident of sending one of his priests to a Spanish-language lay treatment program which he said was not at all successful. He seemed to wish for a treatment program for his Spanish-speaking priests, what we would call a special population treatment program.

I duly noted the Cardinal’s words on my note pad, and we proceeded to discuss a few other items, and the meeting concluded with his blessing.

The Cardinal set my mind on a new course. Aware as I was of the growth of the Spanish-speaking populace in the Catholic Church in the United States, I began to consider that we had not adequately considered the importance of language as part of the cultural sensitivity

I began to consider that we had not adequately considered the importance of language as part of the cultural sensitivity that is necessary to provide effective treatment services to a specialized population of recipients.

that is necessary to provide effective treatment services to a specialized population of recipients.

I flew back to Guest House considering what we might do to help meet Cardinal's Mahony's request. He expressed a clear need with a clinical rationale to support it, and I wanted to respond appropriately. I called the program director of the Rochester, Minnesota, Guest House and discussed the meeting that I had had with Cardinal Mahony. I explained the rationale for the position, and we agreed to move forward with a plan to hire a bilingual Spanish-English counselor. At that point in time, we had a few Spanish-speaking priests and religious brothers who came into our treatment center each year.

After soliciting the Minnesota listing of counselors, we hired Rosita Torres, who served capably for about five years before she returned to her native Puerto Rico, causing us to hire another bilingual therapist who served until 2011. In that time-frame, we had as many as five priests with us who were Spanish-speaking persons.

During the tenure of the two bilingual counselors, we were able to conduct individual counseling sessions in Spanish. Group therapies and other modalities of treatment were still in English. My thought was for us to try to do more.

In January of 2011, upon arriving as executive director of Shalom Center, another Catholic treatment and renewal center for Catholic clergy and religious located north of Houston, Texas, I resurrected ideas about treatment for those whose first language is Spanish and how we might accomplish improved services. I was happily surprised to learn that Shalom Center had not just a therapist who spoke Spanish but had three bilingual Spanish-English therapists, two of whom were Ph.D.-level therapists and one who held a master's degree. All of these persons were able to provide individual counseling sessions in Spanish and English to residents of Shalom Center.

Geographically, Shalom Center is located in a true hub city for providing services to those whose first language is Spanish. After I arrived there, two of the first seven persons admitted to our program were first generation immigrants to the United States from Mexico. Over time we had as many as seven Spanish-speaking residents. The necessity of further development of services to them seemed to be calling us. But, the question was, "How do we do this?"

I wrote a grant request to a foundation that was interested in our cause. The grant was approved to establish an advisory board or task force to study

and make recommendations about improving mental health treatment services to Spanish-speaking clergy and religious in the United States. I then solicited members of the task force from persons I knew who were in leadership positions in the United States and had a role with Latino clergy or religious.

The task force requests were positively received, and we compiled a group that consisted of

- Most Reverend Felipe de Jesus Estevez (Bishop of Saint Augustine),
- Most Reverend James Tamayo (Bishop of Laredo),
- Most Reverend Daniel Flores (Bishop of Brownsville),
- Most Reverend Roberto Gonzalez Nieves (Archbishop of San Juan),
- Most Reverend Eduardo Nevares (Auxiliary bishop of Phoenix),
- Most Reverend Joseph Strickland (at the time Vicar General of the Diocese of Tyler),
- Very Reverend Domenico Di Raimondo, MSpS (Provincial Superior of Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and representative of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men),
- Monsignor Heberto Diaz (Chancellor of the Diocese of Brownsville),
- Reverend Antonio Flores (Provincial Superior of the Theatine Fathers),
- Reverend Daniel Groody, CSC (Director of the Center for Latino Spirituality and Culture at the University of Notre Dame),
- Reverend Gonzalo Martinez Benitez, MSpS (Director of Fundacion Rougier of Mexico),
- Reverend Richard Vega (Former President of the National Federation of Priests' Councils), and
- Sister Miriam Perez, MCSH (Provincial Superior of the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary).

Two day-long planning sessions were scheduled and held at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston in July and November of 2012. More than half of the task force attended the meetings which were facilitated by Dr. William Schmidt, a bilingual therapist at Shalom Center and by Dr. Patricia Reed, a bilingual psychologist of Shalom Center.

Interaction among the participants was lively as we considered the current state of Spanish-language treatment for Catholic clergy and religious available in the United States, reviewed treatment options available in Mexico, surveyed the specific need for language-specific treatment in the United States and considered

the cultural complexities for the variety of Spanish-language cultures and nationalities represented in the United States.

From these bases we proceeded to consider the kinds of treatment services necessary to meet identified needs, the specific components of treatment necessary, the language requirements and other issues such as the language of the liturgy in a multi-lingual environment, housing needs, cultural competencies of therapists and adjunct staff, and adaptations of testing for cultural bias issues and interpretation.

Serious needs affecting potential utilization of a treatment program for Spanish-speaking individuals emerged in the meetings of the advisory board. The issues of relocation of populations and stresses of acculturation were emphasized as important items leading to a higher potential rate of incidence of illnesses and dysfunction. The demographic facts of increasing numbers of Catholics and a decreasing number of priests to serve them were shown to add to the stresses on international priests in the United States, many of whom arrived with little time allowed for acculturation and formation before being placed into needed service.

The result of these trends is an increasingly fatigued and worn-down population of priests feeling somewhat marginalized, happy to be priests and religious, but more vulnerable to the kinds of irrational thinking processes that lead to acting out behaviors and to the corresponding need for treatment to deal with unhealthy situations and living.

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religious, but more vulnerable to the kinds of irrational thinking processes that lead to acting out behaviors and to the corresponding need for treatment to deal with unhealthy situations and living.

The advisory board agreed that the treatment environment needs to address the culturally different relationship issues of Latino populations. Story-telling is a big part of Latin American cultures; it passes on truths and heritage. The board recommended that our treatment program incorporate this aspect into its treatment modalities even though it takes longer when

In Latino cultures, the prime values of personal relationships and story-telling require that treatment be more relational than “clinical” in nature, especially as perceived by the recipients of services.

compared to other managed care services, which reward speed and efficiency in delivering service. In Latino cultures, the prime values of personal relationships and story-telling require that treatment be more relational than “clinical” in nature, especially as perceived by the recipients of services.

The advisory board expressed strong support for the principle that assessment tools that are culturally-adapted and that are reliable and validated be utilized for priests and religious whose first language is Spanish. Other treatment centers are invited to share such materials as they are developed and become available. The Fundacion Rougier in Mexico agreed to share its assessment tools with Shalom Center to ensure the soundness and reliability of the instruments (and correct translation.) The necessity for the clinical interviews to be in Spanish during the assessment phase of services was evidenced by a recent incident when a resident came to Shalom Center after an experience in another treatment facility where all clinical interviews were in English. As he related his experience in the other treatment center, he said, “I don’t think I was able in English to find the right words to answer their questions, so I think I was very misunderstood.”

The board recommended that assessment instruments be more dynamic types, including interviews, autobiographies, and group interaction in which ascribed meaning and context are as important as content. Although administering tests (MMPI, MCMI, etc.) in Spanish is important and helpful, for Spanish-speaking clients the more relational processes of interactive assessment are more fitting and helpful. Latino therapists can understand and appreciate the unique perspectives of Spanish-speaking residents by entering his or her life history through story and the heart without tripping over the Anglo perspective. Active listening by a Spanish-speaking therapist includes a review of the vocation story of the resident, the resident's family of origin story, the experiences of cultural differences and the impact of these on the resident's well-being. These actions lead to better identification of issues to address in treatment.

The task force also looked at institutional questions and expressed a need for Shalom Center to ensure that the good of the individual be emphasized over that of the institution. Person-centered care, rather than institution-centered programming, is more important for the efficacy of special population treatment and for the institution's long-term success, as well.

In the second task force session, the advisors looked at the treatment process and the implementation of programming to meet the identified needs noted above and to address cultural issues. The necessity of individual therapy sessions in the Spanish language was affirmed by the members, thereby validating strongly Cardinal Mahony's earlier statements. This requires the availability of therapists fluent in Spanish at the treatment location.

Process group therapy in Spanish was named as the second priority. This, of course, requires a sufficient number of participants for the group therapy to take place. Group therapy by its nature is relational, and Spanish-speaking participants can respond, express feelings, and confront each other naturally without the need for a cerebral translation into English.

The advisors did not recommend that the Spanish-speaking residents in treatment be housed apart from the Anglo residents as long as there was plenty of opportunity for interaction in Spanish during recreational activities or casual time after treatment. In one treatment center I managed we had a saying that "the most important treatment happens after the staff goes home." The social support provided by residents in a treatment program is an important part of the

The social support provided by residents in a treatment program is an important part of the healing and change process and should allow for persons of different languages to interact accordingly. It helps build a sense of community across the languages of the participants, thereby promoting the kind of mutual respect that facilitates health and wellness.

healing and change process and should allow for persons of different languages to interact accordingly. It helps build a sense of community across the languages of the participants, thereby promoting the kind of mutual respect that facilitates health and wellness.

The Eucharistic Liturgy is celebrated daily at Shalom Center and is deeply appreciated by our population. Discussions among the advisors about what language the liturgy should use in a multi-lingual population did not reveal a strong preference for a Mass in Spanish. An occasional Mass in Spanish for the mixed group of clergy and religious was deemed acceptable. The use of Spanish hymns at Mass on occasion was acceptable, much as is done by multi-cultural parishes across the United States every Sunday.

Task force participants also encouraged the development of clergy support groups for those who have received the benefits of residential treatment. Ongoing support reinforces the principles of treatment and helps group participants meet new challenges to their wellbeing, thereby promoting shalom. Shalom Center currently offers one support group in Spanish and two groups in English. In addition, the advisors recommended ongoing programs of education for priests from Spanish-speaking cultures. The challenges of clergy and religious transplanted from their native populations


are stressors that call for support systems and outreach efforts, as well.

Shalom Center is uniquely blessed to have already been on the path to providing quality and effective treatment for priests whose first language is Spanish. The erudition and wisdom of our Advisory Board members have helped us to implement changes this year in assessment techniques and tools, environment of care, and structure of programming to improve our capabilities to provide respectful treatment to those of Latino heritage in a multi-cultural treatment center. Person-centered care, rather than institution-centered care, is our goal, and integrity and balance are our desired outcomes for our residents. We are continuing to implement the recommendations of our most helpful Spanish Treatment Advisory Board. As we help those special persons who come to Shalom Center, the


personal integral change each experiences will assist him or her in making spiritually, physically and emotionally healthy choices, the results of which will be a healthier church for the people of God.



Daniel A. Kidd has been Executive Director and CEO of Shalom Center, a residential treatment facility for Catholic clergy and religious in Splendora, Texas, since 2011. He was president of Guest House for thirteen years from 1997-2010. He has more than 32 years of experience in administration of treatment centers for substance abuse and emotional illness.


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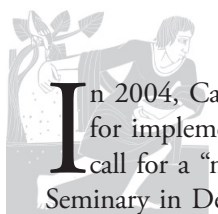
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Forming Priests for the New Evangelization: One Seminary's Response

Ralph Martin, STD



In 2004, Cardinal Adam Maida articulated a vision for implementing a response to Pope John Paul II's call for a "new evangelization" at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. Working with then Auxiliary Bishop Allen Vigneron (currently Archbishop of Detroit) and Rector/President Father Steven Boguslawski, OP (until recently President of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC), the seminary determined that offering a Pontifical Licentiate (STL) with a focus on the New Evangelization would be of great help to the church. In addition, they determined that there should be a new motto for the seminary: Preparing Heralds for the New Evangelization. It was their intention that all of the degree programs offered by the seminary and school of theology include the opportunity to take courses and undertake *practica* with a focus on evangelization. Fortunately, we had a sufficient number of faculty with both pontifical degrees and actual evangelization experience to create a credible program.

Working with the appropriate Roman Congregations and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (the Angelicum), we eventually received permission to grant this pontifical degree in pastoral theology with a focus on the New Evangelization. Recently, we received permission to offer an online/summer program version of the STL in addition to our residential program.

There was a strong international interest in Sacred Heart's STL program from the very beginning. Since the program began, we have admitted sixty-five students from thirteen different countries. The most strongly represented countries outside of the United States include Ghana,

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India, Canada and Nigeria. We currently have nineteen students enrolled and, after successfully completing their degree program requirements, twenty-one have graduated. These first graduates include sixteen priests, one permanent deacon and four laypeople. Five of our graduates are currently enrolled in doctorate programs.

We have worked over a number of years to make the preparation of Heralds of the New Evangelization more than just a motto, but an actual reflection of what our students are exposed to in all our degree programs. At the beginning of the 2013/2014 school year, we had about 120 seminarians in both our college and graduate theology programs and about 400 lay students and Deacon candidates in a variety of other programs. Our Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) students are now required to take a three-credit course in Theology of the New Evangelization and another three-credit course in Spirituality of the New Evangelization. They also

have room in their schedule to take another three-credit elective in Models of Evangelization or Cultural Milieu of the New Evangelization.

In the Theology of the New Evangelization course, we cover the foundations of the renewed emphasis of evangelization in the church in Vatican II and examine the post-conciliar documents related to it. We closely examine the content of the *kerygma* and discuss how to present it in today's culture. We also examine theological schemas that tend to undermine evangelization and discuss how confusion about whether evangelization is "necessary or nice" can be cleared up.

In the Spirituality of Evangelization course, we study in depth the work of the Holy Spirit in both the contemplative and charismatic dimensions of his actions. We consider the need for a "new Pentecost" for the effectiveness of the new evangelization in response to the recent pope's calls for such a new Pentecost. We examine the theology and pastoral wisdom available for helping realize a new Pentecost. We also explore the depth of holiness and union with God that is the foundation for spiritual fruitfulness. Normally taught by one of our biblical scholars, the course intensively reviews the lessons to be learned from the Acts of the Apostles for the challenges of today. Additionally, we offer students the opportunity to participate in the "lab" portion of this course by attending periodic meetings held by "The Fellowship of St. Paul," a group of students and faculty who offer further teaching and practical experience on recognizing and experiencing the work of the Spirit and his charisms.

In the Models of Evangelization class, we study examples of evangelization throughout the church's history, encompassing a study of the monastic movement including: St. Anthony of the Desert, St. Benedict, the work of St. Patrick in Ireland, St. Boniface in Germany, St. Vincent Ferrer in medieval Europe, St. Francis de Sales' works of apologetics in Calvinist France and other contemporary models being successfully utilized in many parts of the church today. As much as possible, actual practitioners of these contemporary models are present in class and available for interaction with students.

In the Cultural Milieu of the New Evangelization course, we examine the philosophical presuppositions of the culture in which we must now evangelize. In addition, we discuss strategies for responding to these presuppositions.

If they wish, our Masters of Arts and Masters of Arts in Pastoral Studies students are given the

opportunity to do a concentration in the New Evangelization. Our STL and other degree students who choose the New Evangelization concentration are also required to do a two-credit *practica*. The *practica* involves hands-on experience with actual evangelization work and extensive reflection on the theology, spirituality and methodology inherent in that particular work. In their Homiletics classes, M.Div. students are taught how to clearly proclaim the basic Gospel message as well as give personal testimony to their own faith in Christ and the church. We teach students to give their testimonies in a way that will be intelligible to nonbelievers and fallen away Catholics. Students learn how to avoid using "in-house jargon" because even the baptized increasingly do not understand it. Students are also taught how to lovingly, yet in an uncompromising way, discuss those challenging aspects of the Gospel to which our culture is most resistant. In their apostolic formation, students are also exposed to direct evangelization as a complement to their clinical, social justice and catechetical experience.

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Our residential STL program normally takes two full years to successfully complete the required credit hours, the thesis and the *Lectio coram*. We have discovered that many who are interested in obtaining our STL degree have bishops or job situations that will not allow so long an absence. Our current Rector/President, Monsignor Todd Lajiness, recently announced that the Congregation for Catholic Education and the *Angelicum* have given permission for us to offer the

STL in a way that will not require the full two-year residency. In the summer of 2014 we hosted our first cohort of non-residential STL students for their first of 4 five week summer sessions, a group of 12 priests from all over the country and Sudan and India as well, and we got rave reviews for the experience of spiritual renewal, community life, and the courses taught. These same priests are now taking their first on-line course back in their pastoral assignments. Our website (www.shms.edu) contains details about this new option.

Sacred Heart Major Seminary's response to the church's call to a New Evangelization is a work in progress, but a work we are happy to have begun and from which we are already seeing fruit for the kingdom. We share this in the hope that it will be of interest to other seminaries that are also seeking to respond to the call to the New Evangelization. We look forward to learning from others about what they are doing.

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Ralph Martin, STD, is Associate Professor and the Director of Graduate Theology Programs in the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit. He is also a Consultor to the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization and was named to assist at the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization held in October, 2012.

The *Digital Dante* Competition

Who can declare the mighty acts of the Lord, or show forth all his praise? —(Ps. 106:2)

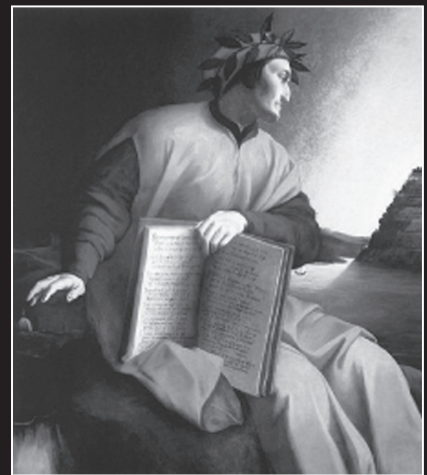
The *Divine Comedy*, the masterpiece of Dante Alighieri, contains images that impressively describe the pilgrim's arduous ascent from the darkness of sin to the light of glory in the presence of God. These images are vivid expressions of the profound salvific truths which, as Catholic teaching demonstrates, 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.

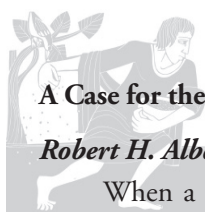
See <http://www.digitaldante.org> for details.



Allegorical portrait of Dante by Agnolo Bronzino, c. 1530

A Case for the Curriculum: NACOA's Workshop for Addiction and the Family

Robert H. Albers, PhD, and Sebastian Mahfood, OP, PhD



A Case for the Curriculum

Robert H. Albers, PhD

When a man or woman experiences a call to ministry, whether as a lay or ordained person, proper preparation is essential. Ministry is a multi-faceted and complex calling. By way of a general overview and introduction, irrespective of the religious community with which students are affiliated, I present for them three specific roles that emerge as paramount. These roles are not listed in order of priority as they overlap in some instances and can appear as antithetical to one another in other instances.

The role of *priest* defines the religious leader as one who has a particular priestly character and who engages in functions associated with worship, sacraments and ritual. A second function is that of *prophet*, as the religious leader proclaims and implements the basic tenets of the community predicated on sacred texts and tradition. This role historically involves speaking truth to power and aligning one's self with the marginalized and ostracized of society as well as with those who are oppressed or suffering the exigencies of life. A third function is that of *pastor*, often illuminated by the metaphorical image of the shepherd who tenderly cares for the flock entrusted to his care.

Historically, this pastoral function engages people in the provision of care through healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling.¹ To these four functions, one should also add, as does Emmanuel Lartey, liberating, nurturing and empowering.² It is the role of the clergyperson as a spiritual leader to relationally engage

**Training and understanding
of the phenomenon of
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given to the faith community.**

the people of Yahweh/God/Allah to promote health and well being, where there are hurts and wounds occasioned by the vicissitudes of life.

A more specific aspect of the priest or lay caregiver is to give attention to one of the most prevalent sources of pain among people, namely to minister to those who are afflicted with and those affected by addiction. In my own pastoral experience that has spanned two decades, as well as in my role as professor of pastoral theology for two and a half decades, the clarion call to provide care in such situations has pervaded the totality of my ministry. Training and understanding of the phenomenon of addiction is critical if competent care is to be given to the faith community.

Case Study

A young clergyman (Jim), fresh out of seminary, received a call from a female member (Pat) of his parish. The presenting problem was that her husband (Joe) had been drinking heavily. Joe came home and was verbally and physically abusive. Their two daughters Amy, age 9, and Amanda, age 6, were frightened and traumatized.

They retreated to their room and hid under the bed. The request was that the clergyperson come and talk to the family about the situation. An appointment was made for the following evening. As the narrative was reviewed, Joe *denied* that anything of consequence had occurred despite Pat's insistence that she was abused and that the children were traumatized. After a long conversation, Joe reluctantly relented and said that if all of this was true, he loved his family and promised never do this again. Jim was relieved, Pat was uncertain, but Joe was convincing. Two months later, Pat took Amy and Amanda and moved to her parents' home a few hundred miles away. Joe was never seen again, and likely died of his illness. As the pastor, Jim was obviously not even remotely prepared to deal effectively or constructively with this scenario! His lack of knowledge, understanding and skills about addiction precluded his ability to act as an effective instrument of grace on behalf of this family.

The intent of this article is to discuss *Addiction and the Family: A Seminary Curriculum* as a helpful resource that equips lay and ordained ministers to care more adequately for individuals and families caught in addiction, and to advocate its use in ministry preparation programs. To that end, four modules were developed, designed to incorporate the core competencies for clergy and lay caregivers of any faith community to respond in a more judicious and effective way to the illness of addiction. The term illness is used advisedly to preclude using pejorative terminology that is judgmental, moralistic and condemning of those who are afflicted with or adversely affected by addiction.

Several core principles guided the development of the curriculum. The first was that the material provide flexibility and thus be adaptable contextually. The second principle was inclusivity; the curriculum is drafted so that irrespective of religious tradition, culture, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation or identity, no one is excluded from receiving ministry. The curriculum, thirdly, was designed for applicability to the existential realities of life in the 21st century. It was created to be eminently practical and accepting of various expressions of spirituality. Finally, the material is replete with handouts and optional activities in which participants can engage, so as to honor a variety of learning styles. The title of each of the four modules is indicative of the comprehensive nature of the curriculum, namely that it addresses the critical issues of: attitude, awareness, assimilation and action.

Module I – Attitude

“We do not have attitudes, attitudes have us!”³

This initial module investigates the sources that shape our attitudes toward mood altering substances such as alcohol, which is America's drug of choice. Careful consideration of the attitude toward addiction and addicts is also crucial. Attitudes are caught and not taught, as children listen to parents, peers, media, priests/pastors/rabbis/imams as they grow up. Most formative are their personal experiences as they recall and relive their memories associated with addiction in their respective households.

My conviction is that addiction creates a lifestyle disorder composed of physical, psychological, social and spiritual components that bring “dis-ease” to the individual and her/his social system.

My conviction is that addiction creates a lifestyle disorder composed of physical, psychological, social and spiritual components that bring “dis-ease” to the individual and her/his social system. It is imperative that persons engaged in addiction ministry are cognizant of their own attitudes and that they are aware of the origin of such attitudes. Ministerial students often require an attitude adjustment regarding their reactions to addiction as their concomitant actions regarding the afflicted and affected betray their innermost biases and prejudices. One of my teachers in the School of Alcohol Studies said that an addict is capable of smelling your attitude a mile away, whether you are compassionate or condemning. Hence a significant amount of time is spent helping students get in touch with their attitude toward addiction.

It is important to create an atmosphere of acceptance where explicit and implicit trust is developed so that seminary students can look candidly and honestly at their attitudes. It is imperative then to develop attitudes that reflect the grace and love of God that is at the core of all faith traditions. Once

seminarians recognize their own attitudes and adjust them, they are usually much more open to learning the essential facts concerning addiction as opposed to capitulating to their negative attitudes that have been acquired as a consequence of their formative context.

Module II – Awareness

It is essential that seminary students be aware of the salient features of the illness of addiction as it impacts the afflicted and those adversely affected by it—family and friends. In this module, one can research the most recent statistics nationally and communally. The incalculable cost in terms of human life—the carnage on the highways, the deleterious effects on households, the misery of children impacted by the illness and the despair and hopelessness that strangles all who have encountered the illness—are taken into account.

Preeminent is the awareness that this is a total illness or disease that takes its toll physiologically, psychologically, sociologically and spiritually on the addict and those adversely affected. Denial is the hallmark of this illness, preventing the one addicted and often the addicted person's loved ones from honestly admitting that addiction is the primary problem. A major factor in the phenomenon of denial is the deep sense of disgrace and shame, that one has an unsanctioned illness.⁴ A pervasive conspiracy of often forestalls interrupting this vicious and pernicious cycle of addiction.

The impact on children is considered by suggesting paradigmatic responses that children adopt as coping mechanisms for their plight. The dysfunctional system results in a lifestyle disorder and often in the dissolution of the family if assistance is not secured. The sequence appears to be that the system adjusts to the illness, then readjusts and finally mal-adjusts.

The varying stages of the illness are outlined, detailing its total impact on the addict. Also illustrated is the parallel process that impacts the addicts' loved ones. A variety of films graphically depict the dynamics operative in these households, brings to life the abject suffering that all experience.

Module III – Assimilation

The assimilation module challenges the theological student to integrate his or her theological heritage with this new knowledge of addiction, since addiction challenges the spiritual life of all people. The concept of the hermeneutical circle in which the theological student appropriates his religious tradition and considers its

The multiple roles that the priest or minister is encouraged to adopt are outlined in detail for student consideration.

applicability to the illness constitutes half of the circle. Then the student is required to appropriate the knowledge and understanding of the illness to determine how those realities inform and shape his or her theology. This process necessitates that students look seriously at their embedded theology⁵ and consider whether this theology is relevant and efficacious in meeting the concerns of those afflicted or affected by the illness.

The multiple roles that the priest or minister is encouraged to adopt are outlined in detail for student consideration. These roles are as catalyst, coordinator, correlator, confessor and conciliator. The expectations associated with these various roles are considered by the student, in terms of their viability for the context in which the student is serving or will serve.

The phenomenon of enabling and codependence are critical components for understanding those who are adversely affected by addiction. Enabling behaviors are coping mechanisms intended to deal with the stress and strain that those adversely affected feel in their lives. Those behaviors are soon concretized into a lifestyle called codependency. Codependency is “a primary lifestyle disorder occasioned by adaptation to and enmeshment with an unhealthy relationship or relationships which results in the loss of a person's sense of self or a group's sense of identity.”⁶

The characteristics of codependency are exhibited in people-pleasing, external referencing, relinquishment of power, the fear of rejection and reluctance in taking risks. These factors circumscribe the person's entire being and preclude an abundant life that is promised for God's people. In my nearly two decades of parish ministry, I can state without equivocation that the majority of my pastoral care work was done with parishioners who suffered from codependency. I can likewise assert that many theological students suffer from this same illness since many come from homes where some form of addiction, either to mood-altering substances or to a certain behavior, is experienced. As a

seminary professor, my counseling work with seminary students was lodged principally in this arena of care-giving. It is imperative to name this phenomenon for what it is and to encourage students to receive the necessary help so that their ministry is not adversely affected by unconscious codependent behaviors.

Module IV – Action

The earlier modules having dealt with attitudes, awareness and theological integration with the work of ministry. The final module devotes itself to what actions might be taken and expected of those who are called to ministry.

This module identifies and makes available written and visual resources that clergy and parishioners can access for their own information and edification. It proposes that whenever possible in preaching and teaching, clergy should address the topic of addiction, lest we become oblivious to “the elephant in the sanctuary.” Clergy can make information available about referral services and provide educational opportunities, relying on professionals in the field but also utilizing people who are in sustained recovery. Hearing the joyful story of recovery is a powerful testimony.

Students are also informed about the intervention process as a way of stemming the tide of addiction. Clergy are NOT intervention specialists, but they should know about this service and where to refer people for such action. Increasing public awareness through community involvement in addiction and recovery is another important dimension of ministry. Information about relapse and prevention is critical to have at one’s disposal.

For each module, the curriculum provides multiple handouts so that ministry students have a hard copy for critically important concepts and information.

From my own years of experience in ministry, the validity and value of 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and their counterparts for family and friends adversely affected, namely Al-Anon, Al-Ateen or Nar-Anon, are invaluable.⁷ There are 12-step programs for all addictive behaviors whether related to mood altering substances or compulsive addictive behaviors such as gambling, eating disorders, internet use, sex, shopping and a host of other obsessive-compulsive activities.

A specific service that clergy can render to parishioners and other people in the wider community is listening to fifth steps. In Step Four, people take a moral inventory of themselves and then, in Step Five, “Admit to God, to ourselves and to another human

being the exact nature of our wrongs.”⁸ Theologically this is not confession, per se; rather, it is an admission of the carnage created in the wake of addiction. A handout provides a logical sequencing for students on how to listen to this spiritual experience for the addicted person. Step Five is a crucial step in the recovery process and is essential in order to attain sobriety with serenity.

Students are encouraged to attend “open” meetings of 12-step groups in order to personally experience the communal dynamics of trust, acceptance and love that characterize the attitudes that prevail in the recovering community. It is important to lift up the reality of hope and help for an illness that creates a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. It is strongly suggested that those providing ministry not go it alone, but themselves find help and support as they engage in this demanding ministry. Often, the help is within the parish itself, with recovering individuals and their family members, with social workers, nurses, psychologists or treatment professionals who are knowledgeable and have experience in supporting recovery. There are never any guarantees that accompany this illness as to whether or not the

**Recovery is visual evidence
of the grace of God in
action in the lives of people.**

addicted person will recover. Recovery is possible with treatment and with the communal support provided by 12-step programs. Recovery is visual evidence of the grace of God in action in the lives of people.

Case Study Revisited

We return to the case study of clergyman Jim whose encounter with Pat, Joe and their young daughters resulted in nothing of significance happening in relationship to Joe’s drinking. Jim was not in touch with his own feelings of fear that were evoked as a result of his growing up in an alcoholic home. Had he gained some personal self-awareness through a curriculum like *Addiction and the Family: A Seminary Curriculum*, he could have dealt with his own initial reactions. He might have spoken to the couple about the nature of alcoholism, its effects on the afflicted and its impact on those affected. He might have provided Joe with information about AA meetings or referred him

to a hospital that had an alcohol and drug rehab unit. He could have encouraged Pat to go to Al-Anon. He might have volunteered to pick her up and go with her himself and even help to make provision for someone to take care of the children. Jim might have consulted with other professionals in the field and/or others who had experienced long-term recovery for guidance. He might have started a cooperative effort to get help for the whole family, including the children traumatized by the drinking and physical abuse in the home. There would be no guarantees that Joe would have accepted treatment or that Pat would attend an Al-Anon group, but at least if Jim had received training, he would have been better prepared to meet the challenges he faced with this young family and to refer them for adequate and appropriate help.

**The online version of
Addiction and the Family:
A Seminary Curriculum is
currently available.**

Digitalization of the Curriculum

Sebastian Mahfood, OP, Ph.D.

The online version of *Addiction and the Family: A Seminary Curriculum* is currently available at http://www.nacoa.org/Seminary_Curriculum/curriculum_home.html. Note that this is a seminary curriculum, not a university curriculum, and that difference is significant enough to merit a short preamble. Cardinal Avery Dulles explained that the difference between the two curricula is this: “theology [has] managed to find a place in the secular university, but only as a professional school, parallel to other learned professions such as law and medicine” while “the seminary operates under the direct authority of the bishop or bishops” and “seeks to prepare priests who will nourish the people with the food of God’s Word.”⁹ For these reasons, “the seminary is alert to preventing the truths of faith from being ignored or denied.”¹⁰ The seminary ties intellectual formation, such as the content of what may be learned in this workshop, to the other dimensions of formation, namely the human, the spiritual and the pastoral.

Dulles explains that “By its very nature, [the seminary] concentrates on those aspects that are particularly pertinent to the formation of future priests,

who must be equipped to serve as ministers of word and sacrament and as pastoral leaders.”¹¹ This brings about an integration of the content of workshops like this into the moral and spiritual realms of a seminarian’s experience, and that is necessarily played out in the future ministry of that person.

All of this is to underline the reasons why we are calling this a “seminary” curriculum, but it has its place in the university, too, because those who are being intellectually formed as theologians would do well to recognize the pastoral realities of ministers in the field. Students are the future authors and publishers of theological journals that seek to provide ongoing intellectual formation for priests and ministers. The theology they are studying will be passed on to their students and parishioners a decade hence. It is for this reason, among others, that Dulles exhorts “university faculties [to] find ways of integrating their theology more successfully into the life and mission of the Church.” Attending and making use of a workshop, even one delivered online, provides one way for them to do that.

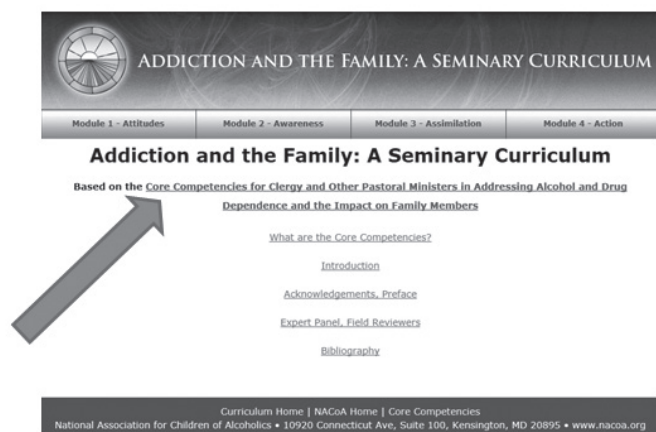
**Materials such as Addiction
and the Family: A Seminary
Curriculum should be
inserted into all programs
of pastoral formation,
both pre-ministerial and
ministerial.**

Finally, continuing formation for ministers is crucial. Saint John Paul II wrote in *Pastores dabo vobis*, “The idea that priestly formation ends on the day one leaves the seminary is false and dangerous.”¹² A priest or deacon must be open to ongoing formation his whole ministerial life just as Catholic lay ministers and ministers in other traditions must be, including the effective use of new media. For these reasons, materials such as *Addiction and the Family: A Seminary Curriculum* should be inserted into all programs of pastoral formation, both pre-ministerial and ministerial.

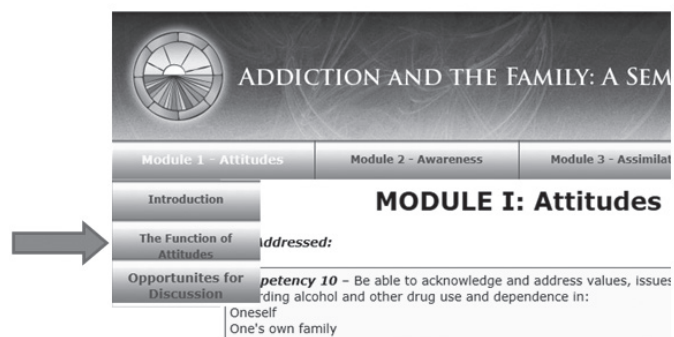
Dulles ends his article in drawing a connection between the seminary and the university. He explains, “In the present situation one may hope for a more vital

interaction between the two types of institution. The seminary, as it typically exists today, relies on university theologians to address new and complex questions and to engage in creative research. The university, conversely, needs the seminary to maintain a deeper ecclesial sense and a firmer pastoral commitment. Faculties of both types can assist one another.”¹³

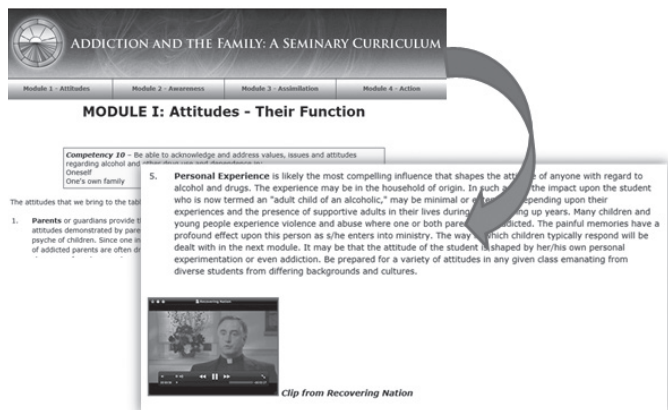
Below, you will find a brief tour of the online modules. Our journey begins on the home page. Just to lay it out for you, notice that the core competencies are available on the home page as a downloadable, printable and emailable PDF.



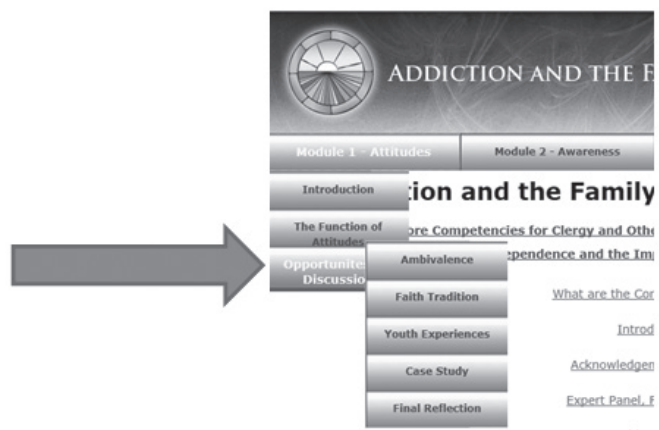
Also available are the four modules: attitudes, awareness, assimilation and action. Starting with the first one, Attitudes, we see that there are three sections to it. The first section provides an introduction to attitudes, the second the function of attitudes, and the third, opportunities for discussion.



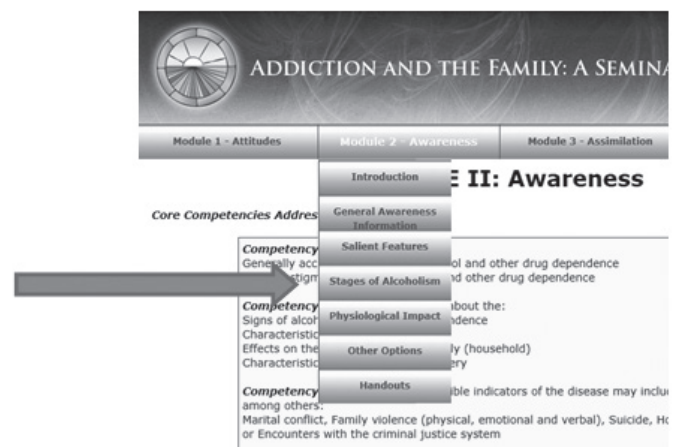
If we select The Function of Attitudes, we find a list of several functions that are useful for us to know along with an example of one of the key features of the digital version of this workshop, namely, short video clips from films and documentaries that address the topic of alcohol addiction and the effects it has on our children.



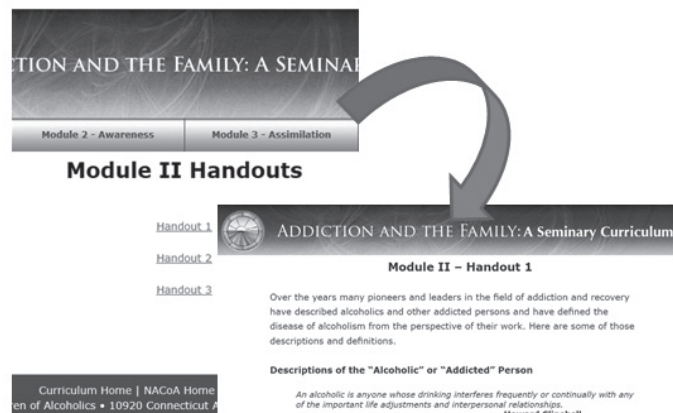
Under Opportunities for discussion, to which participants move after they have read and watched the introductory materials for this module, we find five areas of engagement: ambivalence, faith tradition, youth experiences, case study and final reflection.



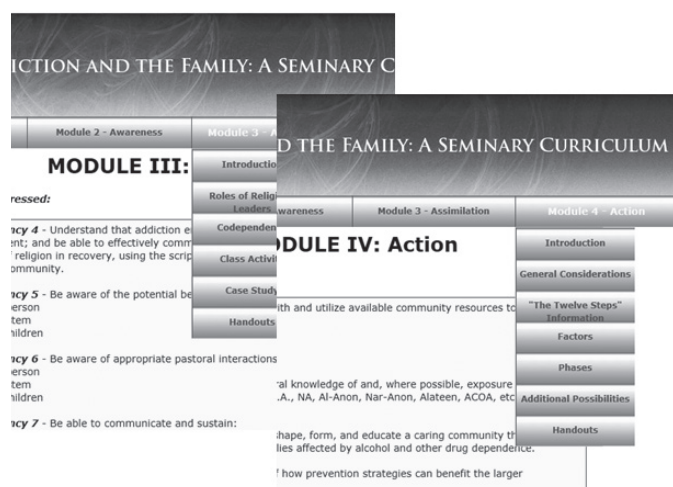
Module 2: Awareness is similarly structured and includes additional sections on the stages of alcoholism and their physiological impact. It also includes a section on handouts.



Links to each handout are found when it is discussed within the module, but having a section where all handouts from that module are found makes for quick and easy reference.



Module III and Module IV are also similarly structured.



To assist seminaries and theological schools in their use of this curriculum, Holy Apostles College & Seminary in partnership with the Catholic Distance Learning Network of the National Catholic Educational Association will work with NACOA to turn this curriculum into a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) in the fall of 2014. Details on this offering are available at <http://www.hacsmooc.cc>. The mini-course will also be offered online November 10 – December 6 through the continuing education office for priests and deacons at Sacred Heart Institute. Details on this offering may be found at <http://www.cor-jesu.org/online-workshops.html>

For additional training materials and films that will become available over time, please visit www.nacoa.org.



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10. Dulles, 14.
11. Dulles, 17.
12. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, Section 76. (March 25, 1992.) Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis_en.html
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Pastores Dederunt Nobis: **Three Novelists, Three Priests and a Few Thoughts On Priestly Formation**

Peter Eberle, OSB



I have a confrere and colleague who, for many years, was a member of the admissions board at Mount Angel Seminary. Inevitably, when it was his turn to ask the applicant a few questions, he would begin with, “Do you read?” The reply was invariably, “Yes.” Next my confrere would ask, “What do you read?” Almost always the applicant responded by citing a few spiritual authors. (In recent years Fulton Sheen has become a favorite.) Finally my colleague would ask, “Do you read novels?” More often than not, that question stopped the applicant in his tracks, mostly because he had not.

Many an applicant or seminarian might wonder why my confrere asked such a question. This applicant was giving up everything to answer Christ’s call. Why should he do something so secular or frivolous as waste time reading novels? After all, there are so many great spiritual classics awaiting his perusal, not to mention volumes and volumes of theology. Nevertheless, my colleague had a very valid point. A novelist often understands the human journey as well as many spiritual writers, and usually describes it in a much

more engaging way. Moreover, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (NCCB) 2001 document, *The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, if only in passing, observes that “human formation entails contact with culture: the arts, sciences, and politics of human life. These studies and involvements keep priests in touch with their own lives and the lives of those whom they serve.”¹

Beginning with this conviction, this article will consider three novels: Edwin O’Connor’s *The Edge of Sadness*,² Jon Hassler’s *North of Hope*³ and J.F. Powers’ *Wheat That Springeth Green*.⁴ There are, of course, many novels written about priests. The three I have chosen offer poignant and insightful portraits of a priest’s journey to God even if they are, at times, exaggerations and caricature. My objective is to consider three questions. First, who are the shepherds these novelists have given us? Second, do these shepherds deserve our attention? Finally, what can we learn about the continuing formation of priests from the depiction of pastors in these novels?

A novelist often understands the human journey as well as many spiritual writers, and usually describes it in a much more engaging way.

Who Are the Shepherds the Novelists Have Given Us?

Perhaps the shepherd furthest removed from contemporary experience is Father Hugh Kennedy, the narrator and main character of Edwin O’Connor’s *The Edge of Sadness*. The story is set in an Irish enclave of the pre-Vatican II church around the mid- to late-1950s. The plot revolves around Father Kennedy’s reconnection with his roots after receiving an unexpected call from old Mr. Carmody inviting Hugh to his birthday party. Mr. Carmody is the patriarch of the most prominent

Irish clan in Hugh's old neighborhood, which Hugh has not been in contact with for years. As the novel unfolds, we learn why Hugh has drifted away from his roots and is languishing in a rundown parish (St. Paul's) on the other side of the city; why Mr. Carmody invited him to the birthday party in the first place; and how Mr. Carmody, for all his Irish good cheer, has poisoned the lives of everyone he has ever met, especially his own children. Everyone in this novel lives "on the edge of sadness," as the story plays out to its melancholic, yet satisfying, climax and conclusion.

If Father Hugh Kennedy lives "on the edge of sadness," Father Frank Healy, the priest in Jon Hassler's novel, lives somewhere north of hope. Set in northern Minnesota, this novel is closer to our time and probably also to our post-Vatican II experience. As in *The Edge of Sadness*, ghosts from Father Healy's distant past provide the ingredients for the plot. The story centers on the relationship between Father Healy and Libby Girard, whom Frank has known since he was sixteen, and who was, from the very first moment they met, the most beautiful girl he had ever laid eyes on.

Having first described this relationship in two earlier periods of their lives, the novel explores their relationship when it comes to full flower amidst a crisis when Frank and Libby reconnect as both are approaching middle age. They meet again purely by chance. Frank ministers to the Native Americans on the reservation at Basswood. Libby has just moved from Chicago with her husband, the reservation's new doctor. The basic contours of this novel's plot revolve around their developing relationship as shaped by crisis and disaster, especially in Libby's life.

Of the three shepherds, surely the most comical, but perhaps also the most instructive, is Father Joe Hackett, the main character in J. F. Powers' 1988 novel *Wheat That Springeth Green*. I say both comical and instructive because J. F. Powers does with words what Mike Lukovich of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* does with cartoons. Neither literally depicts reality, but they inevitably manage to grasp deep underlying truths both succinctly and comically. Powers is a superb caricaturist. His characters are hardly people one will ever meet, but they incisively depict traits found in real life. This is certainly the case with Father Joe Hackett.

In essence, the novel presents a character sketch of a man who begins his priestly career as an aspiring ascetic, eventually gets caught up in the hurly-burly of pastoral administration (becoming quite worldly in the process), and then finally comes to a point where he

again sees signs that "Wheat Springeth Green." Indeed, the progression of the plot can be divined from the words of the hymn by the same name included on the frontispiece:

Now the green blade riseth
from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth
many days has lain;
love lives again, that
with the dead has been:
Love is come again like
wheat that springeth green.

For now, those lines can serve as a summary of Powers' colorful and playful depiction of Father Joe in all his vain and hilarious shenanigans. We shall meet him in more detail later in this article.

We might generally characterize the shepherds in these novels as men who are unique, yet ordinary. The experiences of Fathers Hugh Kennedy and Frank Healy are peculiar to themselves, yet they arise from the stuff of ordinary life as they teeter on the edge of sadness or drift off to the north of hope. While Joe Hackett is probably not someone we will meet in real life, the underlying truths of his comical experiences can be easily recognized and appreciated.

Do These Shepherds Deserve Our Attention?

The short answer is yes, they do. However, it demands a significantly longer explanation. To that end, imagine a diptych being set before you. On either panel is a figure of a priest. The first is a model provided by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores dabo vobis*. The other shows a composite portrait drawn from the three pastors given to us by the novelists. It must be acknowledged that both portraits are sketchy and perhaps somewhat subjective, though (I hope) not entirely so. One will inevitably notice that the diptych is a study in contrast. The composite portrait is much different from the one sketched by Pope John Paul II. Let's take a look.

To start with, consider the priest sketched by Pope John Paul II. The first thing that even the casual viewer notices is that he is luminous. He might be painted in the style of Caravaggio, the *chiaro* of the priest standing out brilliantly against the *scuro* of the background. Moreover, the very brilliance comes precisely from the qualities that John Paul's priest possesses. Most importantly, he is "the sacramental representation of Jesus Christ."⁵ As such, he is one who proclaims the

Word, repeats Christ's acts of forgiveness and extends his offer of salvation "particularly in Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist."⁶ He is so committed to his ministry that he unhesitatingly makes a "total gift of self for the flock, which [he] gather[s] into unity and lead[s] to the Father through Christ and in the Spirit."⁷

In Pope John Paul II's portrait, his priesthood shapes the priest's very spirituality and call to holiness. It is thus marked by an attitude of "service to the People of God."⁸ The priest is filled with compassion, seeking out the straying sheep and reflecting Christ's spousal love for his church. The priest ought to "be capable of loving people with a heart which is new, generous and pure, with genuine self-detachment," even with a "divine jealousy," as well as a "maternal tenderness," which bears "the pangs of birth" until 'Christ be formed' in the faithful (cf. Gal 4:19).⁹ Burning with a pastoral charity, the church and souls "become his first interest."¹⁰

That he is minister of the Word, celebrant of the Sacraments and leader of the community will enter into the formation of his spiritual life.¹¹ As are all Christians, the priest is called to live the radicalism of the Gospel, but he does so by his life of willing obedience, committed celibacy and detached simplicity.¹² Finally, the priest recognizes that the Spirit calls him, knowing it is a call to which he has freely assented. Thus, the call does not hinder the priest's freedom, but enhances it.¹³ All in all, Pope John Paul II presents a stunning priestly figure on his panel of our diptych, so much so that it becomes a very model of priesthood against which every other model can be compared. This brings us to the second panel. How does the composite figure compare? Is he a priest of equally sterling character? Again, let's take a look.

In all truth, both individually and collectively, the priests from the three novels are quite the opposite of the one in Pope John Paul II's portrait. Certainly none are "fallen" priests, as one finds, for example, in Graham Green's *The Power and the Glory*, but in each case their predominant qualities create a composite

that is far removed from Pope John Paul II's luminous portrait. I will highlight here three qualities that create what I shall call a *jaded* shepherd, a *reluctant* shepherd and a *wavering* shepherd. Keep in mind that this is a composite portrait, so it does not fit any of the three characters exactly, but each quality is a predominant trait in at least one of the shepherds in our novels.

Jaded Shepherds

For Fathers Hugh Kennedy, Frank Healy and Joe Hackett, the luster of their early idealism has long worn off. While all three continue to function as priests—even good priests in the eyes of their parishioners—they are weary and worn. They can be described as jaded, even cynical. Father Joe Hackett best illustrates this quality, although typically, his character has more than a little of the caricature in it.

In the seminary and immediately after ordination, Joe was a young zealot. ("Prig" might be the best word to describe him.) He was not popular with his classmates, which he found "flattering in a way—in the light of 'If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you,' but that was pushing it in Joe's case."¹⁴

As a newly ordained priest, Joe was always ready to harangue his classmates at their monthly gatherings about the need for contemplation. Indeed, at Holy Faith Parish (his first assignment) under Father Van Slaag, the diocese's one great contemplative, Joe decides to become a contemplative as well. He finds an old prie-dieu and drags it to his room, where he spends much time on his knees, even when he answers the phone. However, "when he discovered the state of his knees, . . . which were only lightly calloused (nothing like those he'd once seen on a visiting Trappist monk in the showers at the seminary—horny grey growths like the chestnuts on the legs of a horse). . ." Joe was certain he still "had a long way to go."¹⁵ In this state of first fervor, he wonders "whether in time, after constant, close association with parishioners and coming under their subtle influence, he wouldn't cease to be spiritually, perhaps even mentally, an adult."¹⁶

That zeal soon fades. Even at Holy Faith, Joe lets down his guard a bit "and no longer distinguished as he had before, sharply, between the religious and social demands of parishioners."¹⁷ Even the housekeeper, Mrs. Cox, noticed it. "'What,' she'd say. 'Stepping out again?'"¹⁸ And so it goes. By the time Joe is pastor of his own parish, SS Francis and Clare in Inglenook, he is far removed from those heady days of contemplation under Father Van Slaag. He's worldly. He's vain.

I will highlight here three qualities that create what I shall call a *jaded* shepherd, a *reluctant* shepherd and a *wavering* shepherd.

He's cynical. He drinks too much. As drawn, he is a caricature and, like all good caricatures, the episodes are always humorously exaggerated. However, it is clear that while Joe is by no means a wicked man or an unfaithful priest, he is not exactly a poster boy for Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter either. He's jaded.

Fathers Kennedy and Frank Healy are portrayed in a more upright manner, but—if not quite as jaded and cynical as Father Joe Hackett—they are certainly both weary and even disillusioned men. Both are laboring with significant personal issues that have taken their toll. Both men exude a sense of the “jaded pastor.” However, Fathers Kennedy and Healy better illustrate the other two qualities in our composite portrait, to which I will now turn.

Reluctant Shepherd

In *Pastores dabo vobis*, Pope John Paul II emphasizes that the very spiritual life of a priest should be marked by an attitude of “service to the people of God”¹⁹ and he develops this theme at great length. None of the priests in the novels under consideration are exemplary in this respect and, in two of the three novels, priestly service to God's people does not even enter into the heart of the story. It is quite a different matter with Father Hugh Kennedy and his childhood friend, Father John Carmody. Both are “reluctant shepherds,” and it is this very point that brings the novel to its climax.

From the opening pages, it is evident that Father Kennedy is a “reluctant shepherd.” As mentioned earlier, he is pastor of the run down St. Paul's Parish, an old church that was not “merely old, but whose best days [were] obviously over, and whose slow quiet fade [had] long ago begun.”²⁰ It is located in what has become a derelict part of the city, inhabited by transients, newly arrived immigrants, the poor and powerless, and the weary and indifferent.

These fields are ripe for the harvest, but Father Hugh Kennedy is not interested. He is not criminally negligent by any means. He says Mass for his flock each day, and he hears confessions and administers the sacraments when people come to him. The trouble is, they rarely come. During his homilies he can only pick out one regular parishioner, old Mr. Yee, who at least seems to listen intently. Unfortunately, Mr. Yee does not understand a word of English. In contrast to his naive but enthusiastic young curate, Father Danowski, Father Kennedy does not know any of his parishioners by name. Ironically, the comparison with Father Danowski does not provide the most piercing insight into Father

Kennedy's failure as pastor; it instead comes from Father John Carmody, pastor of St. Raymond's, the large bustling Irish parish where both priests grew up.

I say “ironically” because Father Carmody is the reluctant pastor *par excellence*. This fact is evident from the moment we meet him. Early in the novel, John drives Hugh back to his rectory at St. Paul's after the birthday party for Mr. Carmody. Hugh invites him in for a few moments, but John declines:

“No, I can't. I have to get back. Something rare is going on in my place right at this moment.

Do you know what it is?”

I did not; he said triumphantly, “Nothing. Pure, blessed nothing.”²¹

There follows a long bitter complaint of his garrulous parishioners who are always hovering around, even to the point of hiding behind pillars in church, ready to leap out and interrupt him when he has a moment for prayer. At this point, we only get a glimpse of Father Carmody's weariness and deep-seated abhorrence of his flock.

The real climax—where not only his failure is highlighted, but Father Kennedy's is brutally unmasked—comes much later. The setting is the rectory at St. Raymond's. John and Hugh are alone. John begins to reveal the deep-seated discontent he suffers as pastor of St. Raymond's. It is a long, disheartening monologue. He complains:

They [parishioners] won't quit. Every day I get up, I walk across to the church, I say Mass--and that's the end of the day for me. Because they begin to come in. Good God in heaven, how can people *talk* so much? It's endless, Hugh. Endless, endless, endless. My day is spent listening to one continuous supplicating whine.²²

His diatribe goes on and on. This might be any priest's complaint, but for Father Carmody, the weariness and disgust have become a way of life, not the passing mood of a man who happens to be tired. Moreover, he knows it, but is powerless to do anything about it. Thus, he asks Hugh:

It's all fairly elementary pastoral theology, isn't it? We all know what we're supposed to do: the shepherd-flock relationship. But, Hugh, what if the shepherd knows all this, what if he understands exactly what his duties are, what if he realizes that in a very special way this flock is his responsibility and nobody's but his, and that it is in fact the only reason he's where he

is and what he is—what if he knows all this and tells himself all this at half-past seven every morning, just after he’s finished saying Mass, just after thirty minutes of proclaiming—quite honestly, he thinks at the time—his own love of God, and what if he comes out of the side door of the church with every good intention in the world and suddenly he meets the flock in person? What if, then and there, he sees some old biddy streaking down the street towards him, her jaws already working, or he sees some old slob with his hat in his hand hanging around, waiting, outside the rectory door—what if the shepherd sees this and suddenly his stomach turns and all he can feel for his beloved flock is a total, overwhelming disgust! Not apathy, not indifference, but disgust. Disgust for the whole whispering, confiding, sordid, sniveling lot!²³

By this time, John is on a roll. He is not content to confess only his sins. He soon manages to turn the conversation to Hugh’s pastoral shortcomings as well. It is not so much, he observes, that Hugh despises his flock; no, it is a matter that he totally ignores them. He does not know them at all. Again the attack is sharp and bitter:

Do you know them? Are you ever with them? All those Syrians and Greeks and Portuguese and whatever else you’ve got over there: how much time do you spend with them in the course of the week? I appreciate the fact that in a place like that they don’t rush you the way they do over here, but—do you rush them? At all? Even? Or do you keep away from them except for doing what you absolutely have to? Do you know what goes on in their houses? Do you even know their names? Or do you let that Polish comedian you’ve got in the house with you take care of that end of it?²⁴

In short, John accuses Hugh of failing to go out “into [what he calls] those salami-cured tenements” and make them into a “living, breathing, spiritual community,” something that all of them were “enjoined to do” at their ordination.²⁵

For Hugh, John goes on, old St. Paul’s has been little more than “a haven,” a “nice quiet recovery room. For someone who’s licked a Problem.”²⁶ In fact, he continues, Hugh could hardly consider it a

parish at all. How could he? After all, it is a church that is “shopworn and obsolete and falling apart at the seams,”²⁷ and all Hugh ever sees in it are “a few hundred strangers who look like extras in an Italian movie and who eat funny food and who plant fig trees in the back yard.”²⁸ How, John asks, could Hugh ever shepherd a flock like that when, for him, a real parish is one with a “big, fine, old-fashioned, well-kept church with—and here’s the important things—lots of Irish to put inside it! . . . The kind of people who can sing ‘Ave Maria’ inside the church, but can give you a chorus of ‘There’s a Little Devil Dancing in Your Laughing Irish Eyes’ on the way home.”²⁹

It is a cruel attack (out of which the novel’s resolution comes), but Hugh has to admit that it is mostly true, for sadly, Hugh, like his friend John Carmody, is a very reluctant pastor. The difference between the two, John says, is like the difference between the boy who says he dislikes oatmeal and refuses to eat it and the boy who says it’s OK, but has never eaten any. It is quite clear from this excerpt that Hugh is not a model priest, and because that quality plays so prominently in his life, we feature it in our diptych’s panel portraying the priests the novelists have given us.

Wavering Shepherds

In his Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II depicts a pastor who is fully committed. He realizes that, by answering the call God addresses to him, he comes to fuller freedom.³⁰ Moreover, he fully embraces the charism of celibacy, which “is to be welcomed and continually renewed with a free and loving decision as a priceless gift from God.”³¹

In two of our three novels, vocational discernment and celibacy are not big issues. Joe Hackett sowed some very wild oats one summer before he entered the seminary, but there is no carryover into his priesthood. Helen Carmody could easily have fallen in love with Hugh Kennedy, but, again, priestly celibacy does not enter into that story. The case is different with Frank Healy. *North of Hope* revolves around Frank’s relationship with Libby Girard. Frank never does betray his commitment of celibacy; nevertheless, celibacy is clearly an issue for him. It is not so much that Frank falls madly in love with Libby followed by a vocation crisis; rather, the situation is the exact opposite. He is ambivalent about his vocation and that heightens the tension in his relationship with Libby. His ambivalence arises from the fact that Frank has never been certain about from whence his call came. Is he a priest because

God chose him, or because it was his mother's dying wish? Moreover, Frank is not even sure it was his mother's dying wish. She died when he was eleven, and Eunice Pfeiffer, his mother's best friend (who also happened to be the pastor's housekeeper and a very pious spinster), told Frank that, as she lay dying, his mother clearly said she wanted Frank to be a priest. That is a heavy burden to put on the shoulders of an eleven-year-old boy. When a lovely young woman with whom he is hopelessly smitten arrives on the scene, things become complicated indeed.

There is a wonderful conversation early in the novel that captures Frank's ambivalence. Libby and Frank are both in high school and have established a platonic relationship. As they are walking to school one day, Libby asks Frank about his desire to be a priest "Will I be a priest?"³² he asks. He goes on: "If it's my decision, it's hard to know what to do." Then he brightened a little. "But if it's my mother's, then it's easy."³³

Libby responds, "Frank, can I tell you something? You're not making sense." She concedes that one has to take a deathbed wish seriously, but "don't take it as your decision."³⁴ She also ventures the opinion that she doesn't see how anyone could ever want to be a priest. Frank suggests this is so because she isn't Catholic, but she disagrees.

"No, it's because I believe every man should have a woman, and every woman should have a man."

To which Frank replies, "Really?"³⁵

During her senior year in high school, Libby marries Vernon Jensen, the class bully/macho man who owns a green pickup. It is there that Libby was introduced to the joys of sex, and there that she became pregnant well before any plans for marriage were made.

On the face of it, this should have resolved Frank's ambivalence. At the time he thought it did. Shortly after her marriage, Libby brings in a crate of eggs to Schultenover's egg house where Frank is employed. He waits on Libby. They talk about old times, and after she leaves, Frank decides "what was missing" from the otherwise amiable conversation "was love." For Frank this brings a "sudden and wonderful sense of liberation. He was no longer the slave of his love for Libby Girard. Surely this was a sign."³⁶ Shortly thereafter Frank signs up for the seminary.

Would that affairs of the heart and vocational discernment could be so easily resolved. In this case,

they were not. Three years later, Libby appears at the seminary and asks to see Frank. Though against seminary rules, Frank climbs into the pickup and they talk. Libby is in a crisis: she is leaving Vernon, and wonders if she and Frank can get together again. She admits she is lonesome for him and adds, "I'm wondering if it's love." She is coming to see that she had never been in love with Vernon. She asks Frank if he "can tell me what love feels like." Frank replies, "No, not me," but he knows he is lying. He knows because what Libby was feeling was "the same yearning he had felt so intensely for her from the first time he saw her" until that last time at the egg house "when she became merely one more farmer's wife supplying eggs to the egg house"³⁷ Nevertheless, he tells Libby that they cannot resume their relationship because, "probably for sure" (as he puts it), he is going to be a priest. The encounter ends, though Frank does have a fantasy—very difficult to shake—of running off with her in the old pickup. He prays fervently that the Lord keep her out of his life.

And so the Lord does for twenty-three years. When Frank meets Libby again he is going through a crisis. Frank is experiencing, as he tells the psychologist treating him for depression, a "big leak" of the spirit. The seminary where he taught and coached baseball has closed and he is trying to find his way as a parish priest. It has not been easy. One bitterly cold Saturday night he finds himself at the mission church in Basswood. The old oil stove has just exploded, and as Frank cleans up the spilled oil he tells God, "I know I'm not the priest you called to your service—if indeed that was your calling—but I'll get it right yet. Please stay amused as long as possible."³⁸ The cold soon forces him to go over to the doctor's house to ask for lodging for the night. The doctor and his wife are new on the reservation, having just arrived from Chicago. As it turns out, the doctor's wife is Libby.

So again the relationship begins. Frank soon discovers the old feelings have not gone away. In one scene, as Libby and Frank are driving to the cabin of a man who had frozen to death in a drunken stupor, Libby asks, "Over the years . . . did you ever wonder if you did the right thing?" "Yes," Frank said. He didn't tell her he that he was wondering now."³⁹ Later at Libby's house, she spontaneously reaches out and touches his cheek. "The touch suddenly made him warm and nervous. Dear God, this is it. . . . My heart is kicking with something I'm afraid is love. I've got enough trouble putting my vocation back together without a woman stealing my heart."⁴⁰

In the midst of this crisis, Frank complicates things by deceiving himself into thinking that his feelings for Libby can be—in fact, actually are—purely platonic. After that touch on the cheek, Frank takes his leave and begins to feel much better as he heads toward Linden Falls. In fact, his feelings turn to elation as he muses,

Dear God, am I not the happiest man in the world and doesn't life make perfect sense? Libby is Tom's wife and my bond with her has nothing to do with sex because it's a pure mingling of souls. Are we not lucky to have run across each other at this precarious midpoint in our lives, and will we not go on in this perfectly sensible and gratifying manner, satisfied to do nothing more than make one another a discreet part of our weekends?⁴¹

In fact, Frank does gradually get his bearings in parish ministry, experiences some success and begins to find the ministry rewarding. Still, things are not so easily resolved between Frank and Libby because he has not considered her feelings. As Frank gets his bearings, Libby's crises increase. She relies on him more and more. Then she falls in love with him. Her love is not platonic. She cannot imagine a man–woman relationship being a brother–sister affair. Perhaps more than Frank, she also recognizes his strong sexual attraction to her. All of which eventually leads to a seduction scene.

I will return to that later. For now, we can simply note that here again, in the area of vocational commitment, at least one of the shepherds in our three novels is not exemplary. Rather than embracing the vocation of celibate priesthood and cherishing it as a gift by which he can give witness to the Kingdom, Frank hangs on by his fingernails for much of the novel, wondering if God has called him to the priesthood at all.

Can We Learn Anything About Continuing Formation From These Shepherds?

Clearly, the shepherds the three novelists have given us are not heroes. They are ordinary men living quite ordinary lives. Compressing them into one, the composite portrait depicts a priest whose first fervor has long vanished, resulting in a shepherd who is jaded, sadly disinterested in his flock and even uncertain of his call. The portrait is much different from Pope John Paul II's magnificent description in *Pastores dabo vobis* that depicts a dynamic, zealous shepherd who gladly answers Christ's call and eagerly takes up his priestly work. This brings us to the third question posed at the

Making contact with his culture through these works of literature is not only an insightful way for a priest to “keep in touch with [his] own [life],” but it is also a way for him to think about his own need for ongoing formation.

beginning of this article. Can we learn anything about the continuing education of a priest from the shepherds in these novels? I suggest that we can. Making contact with his culture through these works of literature is not only an insightful way for a priest to “keep in touch with [his] own [life],”⁴² but it is also a way for him to think about his own need for ongoing formation. I shall develop the latter consideration by means of the following observations.

First of all, we should note that, although the combined portrait the novelists have given us is quite far removed from the one Pope John Paul II has drawn, all of these novels are wonderful tales of redemption. Take the case of Joe Hackett. Throughout much of the novel he is far removed from the one aspiration of his youth (to simply grow in holiness), and far from his youthful conviction that the greatest priestly work is done on one's knees. However, as the novel ends, thanks to a seemingly insignificant but quite providential reunion with a young man he knows, a real change comes to birth. By no means is Joe such a new man that the old Joe has disappeared, but J. F. Powers would have us know that the wheat, rising out of the dead seed, is once again springing green.

In like manner, Father Hugh Kennedy has to admit that John Carmody's vicious attack has more truth to it than he cares to acknowledge. As painful as it is, this is a moment of redemption. In the final scene of the novel, we see Father Kennedy take up his work anew and in a new way. He may never step back from the edge of sadness, but he has experienced redemption.

All through that winter of doubt and discontent when Libby reentered his life, Father Frank Healy flirted with disaster. Never one to distinguish very clearly

between love and need, she threw herself at his feet. Frank was mightily allured, and he did little to flee the temptation. Yet, in a final “make or break” moment after Libby lures him into her bedroom where she stands naked, Frank remains steadfast. He has discovered his vocation. Even after Eunice Pfeiffer, his mother’s best friend, confesses that she had misrepresented his mother’s deathbed wish, Frank finds peace in the priestly vocation about which he had always been so ambivalent. *North of Hope* is also a story of redemption.

Secondly, we should note that the redemption depicted in these novels does not center on capital matters. None of these priests have repented of an affair or have been liberated from the chains of destructive addictions. Nowhere is there a hint of that most heinous of sins: sexual abuse of a youngster. Instead, though their battles were intense and serious, the demons they battled are not uncommon. As Father Joe Hackett became more of a business tycoon than a shepherd of souls, the lofty ideals of his youth became sadly tarnished. For his part, Father Hugh Kennedy, worn and wearied by his personal struggles and failures, ended up as a shepherd who had lost all interest in his flock. Father Frank, who never fully faced the feelings he had for Libby and had never quite decided whether he was called to the priesthood, had to resolve both questions once and for all as he endured a midlife crisis. In short, the crises these men faced were intense, but also ones with which many priests can identify.

Thirdly, if redemption touched and transformed the lives of these quite ordinary men who struggled with not such extraordinary issues, then they might teach us that redemption can touch our own ordinary lives as well. All priests have issues (to use a word seminary formators are so fond of employing), and often the things most priests are so guilty of—cynicism, weariness and self-deception—are quite common. But, wonder of wonders, when Fathers Kennedy, Healy and Hackett responded to the offer of redemption, those same flaws become their means of transfiguration. Ought it not to be the same for every priest?

This brings us, in the fourth place, precisely to the point where continuing formation makes its entrance. Fathers Kennedy, Healy and Hackett apparently did not have the benefit of ongoing formation in their priestly lives. They floundered. In real life, ongoing formation in one form or another is available to most priests. If many, or even most, priests know from their own experience the struggles (perhaps so different and yet so similar) that Fathers Kennedy, Healy and

In short, ongoing formation can facilitate in every priest’s life the redemption that the three priests have experienced in these novels.

Hackett endured, then formation has a real role to play. The *Basic Plan* notes that formation is, by definition, “making ready a place for the Lord to dwell in us and transform us.”⁴³ In short, ongoing formation can facilitate in every priest’s life the redemption that the three priests have experienced in these novels.

Finally, a priest in another novel, the country curate in Georges Bernanos’ *The Diary of a Country Priest*, best expresses one last observation.⁴⁴ Famously, Bernanos tells the story of a curate who has not been terribly successful in his ministry. His attempts to raise the standard of living in his poverty-stricken parish have been rebuffed. Nor has he had much success in raising the spiritual standards there. He is misunderstood and his one pastoral success is even turned against him. To make matters worse, he is dying of stomach cancer. Indeed as the novel closes, we learn that he has died. However, as we learn from his friend who was with him at death, it was precisely at this moment that the curate demonstrated how successful he really was. This last moment well expresses our final point. As he breathes his last, he whispers, “Grace is everywhere.”⁴⁵

“Grace is everywhere.” Perhaps in the last analysis, that sums up everything these novels teach us about ongoing formation. Like Fathers Kennedy, Healy and Hackett, most priests will live quite ordinary lives. They will enjoy some successes and they will suffer some failures. From time to time they might wonder whether their labors have borne any fruit at all, and at other times they will struggle with their own issues. However, because all is grace, each priest is called to become the subject, not of the novelists’ panel on the diptych with which we began, but the centerpiece of a triptych. On one side is the priest Pope John Paul II has given us, which every priest will spend a lifetime trying to attain. On the other is the composite priest the novelists have given us, which every priest is all too capable of mirroring. In the center, it can be hoped, is portrayed the priest in real life: so ordinary, so prone to

In the center, it can be hoped, is portrayed the priest in real life: so ordinary, so prone to failure, so far removed from total success, yet so formed and transformed by the grace of Christ to whom he has remained always faithful that he truly is a shepherd given by the Lord to his church.

failure, so far removed from total success, yet so formed and transformed by the grace of Christ to whom he has remained always faithful that he truly is a shepherd given by the Lord to his church.



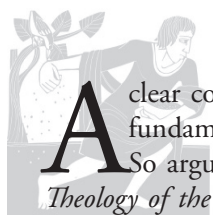
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Saint Thomas Aquinas's Theology of Sacrifice: Toward a Renewed Conception of the Sacred Priesthood

John P. Joy, STL



A clear conception of the nature of sacrifice is fundamental to a sound theology of the liturgy. So argued Joseph Ratzinger in a paper on *The Theology of the Liturgy*, which he presented at the July 2001 Fontgombault Liturgical Conference. He writes: “The fact that I can, or cannot, recognize a sacrifice in the Eucharist as our Lord instituted it, depends most essentially on the question of knowing what I understand by sacrifice, therefore on what is called pre-comprehension.”¹ If Ratzinger’s interpretation is true—that understanding the Mass as a sacrifice depends upon a pre-comprehension of the nature of sacrifice—then all the more so does the conception of the sacred priesthood. The scholastic axiom is *agere sequitur esse*, action follows upon being. To grasp the essential nature of a being, one first looks at its proper action; the action of the priest *qua* priest is to offer sacrifice. As it is written in the Letter to the Hebrews: “every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1; cf. 8:3). The Council of Trent also declares: “Sacrifice and priesthood are so joined together by God’s foundation that each exists in every law.”² The priest, therefore, cannot be understood apart from the sacrifice he offers, the action toward which he is ordered (ordained).

In this article,³ I begin by outlining Ratzinger’s diagnosis of what he calls a crisis of the concept of the priesthood. He sees this crisis of priestly identity as rooted in a deeper crisis of the concept of sacrifice. At the

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heart of this crisis, he finds a misconception regarding the place of destruction, or suffering in the act of sacrifice. Ratzinger uses a text from Saint Augustine as a point of departure for relating a positive account of the nature of sacrifice in general, and of Christ’s supreme sacrifice in particular. I supplement Ratzinger’s approach by taking up the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas in a similar manner. I am convinced that Saint Thomas’s understanding of sacrifice (especially of satisfactory or expiatory sacrifice) strengthens and preserves the essential insights stressed by Ratzinger, while also filling in certain gaps of his treatment. The second part of the article will therefore consider: firstly, the place that Saint Thomas assigns to destruction in the act of sacrifice; secondly,

the place he assigns to pain in the act of satisfaction; and thirdly, his application of both categories to the satisfactory sacrifice of Christ. This article aims to contribute to a renewed concept of the sacred priesthood at the level of its presuppositions and foundations. When the nature of sacrifice is rightly understood, the office of the priest stands forth as something entirely necessary and noble, such that we can begin to understand why Saint John Vianney exclaims: “Oh, how great is a priest! The priest will not understand the greatness of his office till he is in heaven. If he understood it on earth, he would die, not of fear, but of love.”⁴

Joseph Ratzinger: Priesthood and Sacrifice in Crisis

In an essay reflecting on the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*),⁵ Ratzinger posits that it was important for the Council Fathers to make a statement about the priesthood for a variety of reasons. These included the extended consideration that the Episcopal office had received in *Lumen gentium*, the desire to offer some encouragement to priests in the midst of their labors in the vineyard of the Lord, and especially the need to address a developing crisis of the concept of the priesthood. He writes:

The Catholic concept of what a priest is ... had lost currency and acceptance as a self-evident concept even within the heart of the Church’s consciousness; the crisis of this concept, which soon became evident following the Council and developed into a crisis of priestly life and priestly vocations, though it had not yet reached its full stature, was already underway.⁶

Ratzinger sees the roots of this crisis in a convergence of sociological and theological causes. The concept of sacrality had already lost much of its meaning in the day-to-day lives of a growing number of people. The ever-increasing dominance of functionality as the only determinative category for thinking and living led to a diminished sense of the sacred. On the other hand, the theological root of the problem lay in the dominant New Testament exegesis of the twentieth century, which seemed to show that the ministries of the early church were entirely non-sacral. There seemed to be a complete break between the priests (*hiereis, sacerdotes*) of the Old Testament and the elders (*presbyteroi*) of the New Testament. The very newness of the New Testament was seen as lying especially in its de-sacralization of ministerial offices. According to Ratzinger:

It is clear that the Protestant origins of modern

exegesis were substantially at work in this way of looking at the New Testament, yet that altered nothing about the obviousness that seemed attributable to such exegesis—on the contrary, it became a burning question as to whether Luther, as opposed to Trent, had not been right after all.⁷

These two concepts of the priesthood stand in opposition to each other. On the one hand is the sociological view, in which functionality dominates. This view of priesthood is seen as “ministry”—specifically, says Ratzinger, “ministry to the congregation in carrying out a function in the social institution called the Church.”⁸ On the other hand is the sacramental and ontological view, which—far from denying the ministerial role of the priesthood—sees it as rooted in the very being of the priest, in the sacramental character that conforms him to Christ the High Priest who took “the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7). In the former view, the word “priesthood” tends to be replaced by the non-sacral word “office.” Preaching the word comes to be seen as the priest’s primary task. Thus Ratzinger writes: “As opposed to the view of the priest’s life being centered on the Eucharist, in a way that has become classical in Catholicism (*sacerdos—sacrificium*), there emerged the primacy of the Word, which had hitherto been regarded as typically Protestant.”⁹ This “typically Protestant” concept of the priest as primarily a minister of the Word (as opposed to sacrificial of the Eucharist) gained ground within the Catholic Church in the late twentieth century and is still firmly entrenched in many places. The question posed is this: should not the church finally admit, after more than four centuries of stubbornly clinging to the Tridentine decrees, that Luther really was right about the nature of the priesthood, namely that it is entirely non-sacral and non-sacrificial?

In the text at hand, Ratzinger merely proceeds to show that there is, of course, no inherent contradiction between the priesthood as ministerial and as sacramental, or between preaching the written Word of God and offering the sacrifice of the incarnate Word of God. Elsewhere, however, Ratzinger uncovers a deeper problem: the widespread denial of the sacrificial nature of the Mass. If the Mass is not a sacrifice, then its minister is not a priest. In his paper on *The Theology of the Liturgy*, Ratzinger offers an analysis of a crisis of the concept of sacrifice that in many ways parallels his discussion of the crisis of the concept of the priesthood. He begins by pointing out that the very idea of

“A sizeable party of Catholic liturgists,” he writes, “seems to have practically arrived at the conclusion that Luther, rather than Trent, was substantially right in the sixteenth century debate.”

sacrifice has been called into question in the decades following the Second Vatican Council. “Who still talks today about ‘the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist’”¹⁰ he asks, ironically quoting the actual text of the Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*).¹¹

Ratzinger proceeds to cite Stefan Orth, who, on the basis of his research into recent works on the theme of sacrifice, concludes that: “In fact, many Catholics themselves today ratify the verdict and the conclusions of Martin Luther, who says that to speak of sacrifice is ‘the greatest and most appalling horror’ and a ‘damnable impiety.’”¹² Ratzinger humorously points out that Orth does not mention his own book, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, in coming to such a conclusion about the current state of Catholic scholarship concerning the concept of sacrifice, but he does admit that Orth has touched on a real problem: “A sizeable party of Catholic liturgists,” he writes, “seems to have practically arrived at the conclusion that Luther, rather than Trent, was substantially right in the sixteenth century debate.”¹³ Here again it is a question of Luther and Trent, and Ratzinger explicitly connects this problem with the crisis of the concept of priesthood when he continues: “one can detect much the same position in the post-conciliar discussions on the Priesthood.”¹⁴ The question posed here is, therefore, a very similar one: was not Luther right about the nature of the Eucharist after all? Is it not simply a commemorative meal rather than a sacrifice?

The liturgical reform that followed the Second Vatican Council, and especially the suppression (*de facto*, even if not *de jure*) of the so-called “Tridentine Mass,” was construed by many as a sign that Tridentine dogma and theology could—perhaps even should—also be left behind. The renewed conflict between Luther and Trent

provides a context for understanding the ecclesiastical battles waged over the continued use of the traditional form of the Roman Rite. Ratzinger writes:

It is only against this background of the effective denial of the authority of Trent, that the bitterness of the struggle against allowing the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal, after the liturgical reform, can be understood. The possibility of so celebrating constitutes the strongest, and thus (for them) the most intolerable contradiction of the opinion of those who believe that the faith in the Eucharist formulated by Trent has lost its value.¹⁵

Made prior to his election to the Chair of Peter, this statement illuminates a new dimension of Pope Benedict XVI’s Apostolic Letter *Summorum pontificum*. This important *Motu proprio* not only affirms that priests of the Roman rite have the right to use the liturgical books in force prior to the Second Vatican Council, but it also serves as a vindication of Tridentine doctrine. The former consideration is of great importance, especially for those priests and faithful who adhere to the older forms of the liturgy. But the latter is of surpassing importance for the whole church because it touches upon the very nature of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, irrespective of liturgical rite, and hence also touches on the nature of the sacred priesthood.

Like links in a chain, rejection of the sacrificial nature of the Mass follows a distorted idea of sacrifice and in turn leads to a distortion of the concept of the priesthood. A crisis of priestly identity flows from this, followed by the further crises of priestly life and priestly vocations. These contribute to a chaotic experience of the liturgy for many of the faithful, which is often painful to endure, as Pope Benedict XVI bore eloquent witness in the letter that accompanied *Summorum pontificum*.¹⁶ Nor should the seriousness of such liturgical experimentation be underestimated. As Ratzinger puts it: “Theories, in the area of liturgy, are transformed very rapidly today into practice, and practice, in turn, creates or destroys ways of behaving and thinking.”¹⁷ *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*. Faith and morals alike are deeply rooted in prayer. The way a man worships shapes what he believes, and his actions are guided by his faith. Sacred liturgy, received and handed on, is a tremendous aid to (although certainly not a self-sufficient guarantee of) right faith and moral living. Banalized liturgy, on the other hand, freely fabricated and manipulated, tends to dilute faith

and loosen morals. From this perspective one can appreciate the perspicacity of Ratzinger's insight when he writes in his book of memoirs: "I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy."¹⁸

The path forward, then, as Ratzinger indicates in his paper on *The Theology of the Liturgy*, must begin at the most fundamental level with a renewed understanding of the concept of sacrifice. Returning to the words with which we began, he writes:

The fact that I can, or can not, recognize a sacrifice in the Eucharist as our Lord instituted it, depends most essentially on the question of knowing what I understand by sacrifice, therefore on what is called pre-comprehension The debates to which Stefan Orth refers show how confused and muddled is the idea of sacrifice among almost all authors, and clearly shows how much work must be done here.¹⁹

Ratzinger expressly urges us to bring some clarity to the present state of confusion over the idea of sacrifice. Only thus can the sacrificial nature of the Mass be properly understood, and thus also the nature of the priesthood.

What, then, is sacrifice? A classic text from Saint Augustine's *City of God* provides Ratzinger with his point of departure: "Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed."²⁰

Drawing on Saint Augustine's fundamental insight, Ratzinger outlines an understanding of sacrifice as the transformation of man into conformity with God, who is love (1 Jn 4:8). Briefly put, "sacrifice equals love."

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Ratzinger then contrasts this definition of sacrifice as an act of love against the common opinion that sacrifice is essentially an act of destruction. He writes:

People commonly consider sacrifice as the destruction of something precious in the eyes of man; in destroying it, man wants to consecrate this reality to God, to recognize his sovereignty. In fact, however, a destruction does not honour God. The slaughtering of animals or whatever else, can not honour God. "If I am hungry, I will not tell you, because the world is mine and all it contains. Am I going to eat the flesh of bulls, shall I drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, fulfil your vows to the Most High," says God to Israel in Psalm 50 (49): 12–14. Of what then does sacrifice consist? Not in destruction, not in this or that thing, but in the transformation of man; in the fact that he becomes himself conformed to God. He becomes conformed to God when he becomes love.²²

Thus far, Ratzinger's treatment of sacrifice is general, applicable to every sacrifice, whether before or after sin; but sin introduces a new aspect into sacrifice. After sin has broken man's relationship to God, Ratzinger explains that worship now has a new aspect: the healing of wounded freedom, atonement, purification, deliverance from estrangement. The essence of worship, of sacrifice—the process of assimilation, of growth in love, and thus the way into freedom—remains unchanged. But now it assumes the aspect of healing, the loving transformation of broken freedom, of painful expiation. Worship is directed to the Other in himself, to his all-sufficiency, but now it refers itself to the Other who alone can extricate me from the knot that I myself cannot untie.

Redemption now needs the Redeemer.²³

Although sacrifice as such, according to Ratzinger, has nothing to do with destruction, it nevertheless involves painful expiation after sin. Ratzinger admits that a certain kind of destruction enters the picture with expiatory sacrifice, but insists that it is not the fundamental principle; this is always love. Love, above all else, is manifested on the cross—this is the essence of Christ's supreme sacrifice—but it is manifested precisely in and through suffering and death (destruction).

Why so? And how are these related? Ratzinger tries to elucidate this interplay between suffering and love in the act of sacrifice in his *Introduction to Christianity*, wherein he writes:

Now to the extent that this exodus of love is the ec-stasy of man outside himself, in which he is stretched out infinitely beyond himself, torn apart, as it were, far beyond his apparent capacity for being stretched, *to the same extent* worship (sacrifice) is always at the same time the Cross, the pain of being always torn apart, the dying of the grain of wheat that can come to fruition only in death. But it is thus at the same time clear that this element of pain is a secondary one, resulting only from a preceding primary one, from which alone it draws its meaning. The fundamental principle of the sacrifice is not destruction but love. And even this principle only belongs to the sacrifice to the extent that love breaks down, opens up, crucifies, tears—as the form that love takes in a world characterized by death and self-seeking.²⁴

Sacrifice equals love, but suffering is “the form that love takes” in a broken and sinful world.²⁵ Such is Ratzinger’s conclusion on the relationship between love and suffering in sacrifice; or rather, it is a starting point for further reflection. At least this much is clear: if the concept of sacrifice has become, as Ratzinger says, “confused and muddled”²⁶ and if it has been “buried under the debris of endless misunderstandings,”²⁷ then the source of this confusion is an exaggerated emphasis on destruction, on pain and death, in the act of sacrifice. The question Ratzinger leaves us with is how to account for their undeniable presence. This is where I think Saint Thomas can contribute some additional clarity.

Saint Thomas Aquinas: Sacrifice and Satisfaction

Like Ratzinger, Saint Thomas’s treatment of sacrifice is firstly a general one. He considers sacrifice to be an act of worship that is simply due to God, even before and apart from sin. After sin, and on account of sin, some sacrifices (such as the sin offerings of the Old Law, as opposed to the peace offerings or the holocausts) take on the additional task of expiation, of making satisfaction for sin. Sacrifice and satisfaction are thus clearly distinct concepts for Saint Thomas. We will treat them separately before looking to see how they come together in the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

Sacrifice as an Act of Justice

Saint Thomas considers the act of sacrifice as a precept of natural law, which man is bound to fulfill even apart from sin. Original sin did not alter the natural law. Adam and Eve were bound to offer sacrifice

Sacrifice, at its core, is about something more than atonement for sin. Sacrifice is principally about worship, about the adoration of God.

before their fall from grace, just as all their descendants are still bound today even apart from their sins. This means that sacrifice, at its core, is about something more than atonement for sin. Sacrifice is principally about worship, about the adoration of God.

Saint Thomas’s consideration of the nature of sacrifice appears under the heading of the virtue of religion, which is a species of justice insofar as it concerns man rendering what is due to God as Creator and Lord of the universe. The natural debt that man owes to God is reverence or honor, rendered by acknowledging God’s surpassing excellence and man’s own complete dependence upon him. God’s superiority and man’s relative inferiority are correlative aspects of every act of religion, which always bear the twofold character of worship and service. As Saint Thomas writes:

By the same act man serves God and worships him; for worship regards the excellence of God, to whom reverence is due; but service regards the subjection of man, who by his condition is obliged to show reverence to God. And to these two pertain all the acts which are attributed to religion, because through all of them man acknowledges the divine excellence and his own subjection to God.²⁸

Devotion and prayer are the principle interior acts of religion, whereby man serves and worships God. Devotion, in Saint Thomas’s terminology, denotes an act of the will whereby man wholly subjects himself to the service of God, ready to perform whatever further acts are required in the worship and service of God. This is the will’s act of submission to God.²⁹ Prayer is similarly the intellect’s act of submission to God.³⁰

The place of sacrifice within the field of religion first appears when Saint Thomas asks whether the virtue of religion has both external and internal acts. His answer is well worth quoting in full:

We show reverence and honor to God, not on his account because he is of himself full of glory to which nothing can be added by a

creature, but on our account, namely because when we reverence and honor God our mind is thereby subjected to him, and in this consists its perfection; for each thing is perfected by being subjected to its superior, as the body is perfected through being vivified by the soul, and the air is perfected through being illumined by the sun. But the human mind needs to be led by the hand of sensible things in order to be conjoined to God, for “the invisible things of God are understood through the things which were made,” as the Apostle says (Rom 1:20). And therefore in divine worship it is necessary to use corporeal things, so that the mind of man may be excited by them, as if by certain signs, to the spiritual acts by which he is conjoined to God. And therefore religion has indeed interior acts pertaining as it were principally and per se to religion, but it also has exterior acts which are as it were secondary and ordered toward the interior acts.³¹

Man is not a pure spirit, as are the angels, but a composite of body and soul. In order to worship God fully, he must subject to God not only his soul (with its spiritual powers of intellect and will), but also his body and even his external possessions. By man’s very nature, he must express his interior acts of prayer and devotion through exterior acts of bodily adoration (such as prostrations and genuflections), as well as by offering sacrifices, oblations and first fruits, and tithes.³² In the strict sense defined by Saint Thomas, sacrifice is the act of offering external goods to God as an expression of internal reverence or honor.

When Saint Thomas explicitly addresses sacrifice within the treatise on the virtue of religion, he first asks whether the offering of sacrifice belongs to the law of nature. His answer, again in full:

Natural reason dictates to man that he is subject to something superior on account of the defects which he perceives in himself, in which he needs to be helped and directed by something superior. And whatever that might be, it is this which is called God by all. But just as in natural things the inferior are naturally subject to the superior, so also natural reason dictates to man according to a natural inclination that he should show honor and subjection according to his mode to that which is above man. But the mode befitting man is that he should use sensible signs for expressing things,

because he receives cognition from sensible things. And therefore it proceeds from natural reason that man should make use of certain sensible things, offering them to God as a sign of due subjection and honor, according to the similitude of those who offer things to their lords in recognition of their dominion. But this pertains to the account of sacrifice. And therefore the offering of sacrifice pertains to natural law.³³

In asserting, as a precept of natural law, that man should offer external sacrifice to God, Saint Thomas again refers to man’s composite nature according to which he is naturally led from external sensible things to internal intelligible things.

Following Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas then identifies these interior acts of religion as true spiritual sacrifices:

Exterior things of this kind are not offered to God as if he were in need of them: according to the Psalm (49:13), “Is it possible that I shall eat the flesh of cattle or drink the blood of goats?” But they are offered to God as certain signs of interior and spiritual works, which God accepts for their own sakes. Hence Augustine says, “The visible sacrifice is the sacrament, i.e. the sacred sign, of the invisible sacrifice” (*City of God*, X, 5).³⁴

This relationship of signification between exterior sacrifice and interior sacrifice is a recurring theme in Saint Thomas’s thought: “the sacrifice which is offered exteriorly signifies interiorly the spiritual sacrifice, by which the soul offers itself to God, according to the Psalm (50:19), ‘My sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit.’”³⁵ The principal sacrifice is therefore of the soul, which offers itself to God by acts of devotion and prayer. While exterior acts of sacrifice are secondary

By practicing exterior acts of sacrifice and adoration, man is led to inward devotion and prayer, and the devout soul in turn seeks to express its devotion in sensible signs and actions.

and subordinate to interior acts, they are nonetheless necessary. Man is not a pure spirit, but rather a composite of soul and body; his nature requires that his interior acts find completion in outward expression. At the same time, man is led from exterior things to interior things. This creates a kind of circular or upward spiraling motion in which the exterior sacrifice both proceeds from and returns to the interior sacrifice. By practicing exterior acts of sacrifice and adoration, man is led to inward devotion and prayer, and the devout soul in turn seeks to express its devotion in sensible signs and actions.

But what place does Saint Thomas assign to destruction in the act of sacrifice? The word “immolation” appears nowhere in this question on sacrifice; nor is destruction ever mentioned. Saint Thomas says only that: “sacrifices are properly so-called when something is done with the things offered to God; as when animals were killed and burned, and when bread is broken, and eaten, and blest.”³⁶ He distinguishes sacrifices from oblations by referencing the literal meaning of the words. *Oblatio* is derived from *oblatum*, the perfect passive participle of the verb *offerre* (to offer). *Sacrificium* comes from *sacrum-facere*, which means “to make (something) holy.” In the question on oblations, where Saint Thomas repeats this distinction, he adds that a sacrifice is meant to be “consumed” (*consumendum est*), whereas an oblation should “remain whole” (*integrum maneat*).³⁷ But this consumption of the sacrifice must be understood in terms of its signification with reference to the interior sacrifice. Whereas Ratzinger seems to reject destruction in favor of love, Saint Thomas insists upon destruction precisely as the sign of that love. Death and destruction as such are not pleasing to God; but they can be when they signify pleasing interior acts. For Saint Thomas, destruction of the material gift signifies God’s sovereignty and man’s dependence on him. This is precisely that common opinion against which Ratzinger argues, namely that by destroying something valuable in an act of sacrifice, thereby removing it from his own use, man signifies his total dependence upon God from whom all good things come. Furthermore, the exterior act of giving something material to God is meant to signify a complete interior giving of oneself to God. And the physical consumption of the gift offered externally signifies the spiritual consummation of the soul offered internally. The soul, of course, is not killed or destroyed in its act of self-surrender to God. Consumption of the sacrifice—which in the material world necessarily entails its destruction—

Spiritual sacrifice, the inward sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart transformed by love, is the heart and soul of all true sacrifice.

signifies, albeit imperfectly, the purity of a prayerful devotion, which says to God: “Zeal for thy house has consumed me” (Ps 69:9; cf. Jn 2:17). As the Roman Missal expresses it in one of the Pentecost Friday prayers: “May the Sacrifice which we offer up in Thy sight, O Lord, be consumed by that divine fire which, through the Holy Ghost, enkindled the hearts of the disciples of Christ Thy Son.”³⁸

Spiritual sacrifice, the inward sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart transformed by love, is the heart and soul of all true sacrifice. Here, Ratzinger is in complete agreement with both Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas. Destruction, however, also has a rightful place in the exterior sacrifice. But if we wish to avoid the misconceptions that Ratzinger is at such pains to overcome, we must maintain that it has its place precisely at the level of signification. Destruction is not pleasing to God in itself—this, too, Ratzinger rightly stresses—but it is pleasing to God as signifying the interior sacrifice of love. This must not be overlooked if we are to obtain a complete understanding of sacrifice, and thus of the cross, of the Mass, and of the priesthood.

Satisfaction as an Act of Justice

The question of religion, of what man owes to God in justice, changes dramatically once sin entered the picture through the fall of Adam. By nature, man owes God reverence and honor; after sin he owes these along with reparation. Man remains bound to serve and worship God, but now he is also bound to make satisfaction for his sins. The concept of satisfaction is crucial for our question; it is here that a certain kind of pain or punishment becomes necessary, such that the destruction of the exterior sacrifice takes on an additional signification.

Saint Thomas introduces the concept of satisfaction in his consideration of the debt of punishment (*reatus poenae*), which man incurs by transgressing the order

of justice. In response to sin, which is a disordered act introducing a certain inequality, punishment maintains order by restoring the equality of justice. Saint Thomas explains:

The act of sin makes a man deserving of punishment insofar as he transgresses the order of divine justice, to which he does not return except through some recompense of punishment, which restores the equality of justice, namely so that he who indulged his will more than he ought to, acting against the command of God, should, according to the order of divine justice, suffer, willingly or unwillingly, something contrary to that which he would want.³⁹

It befits divine justice that every sin should be punished in some way, but the kind of punishment due to a man on account of his sin varies according to his will, that is, depending on whether he suffers willingly or unwillingly. So long as a sinner resists his punishment it is simply penal, but if he accepts and embraces it on account of a love for justice, it becomes a means for his liberation from sin. The unrepentant sinner endures his punishment unwillingly. But the repentant sinner, who loves God for his own sake, hates sin and loves justice. Hence, cleansing does not occur unless a sinner in some sense wills his own punishment. This is where Saint Thomas introduces the concept of satisfaction:

The stain of sin cannot be removed unless the will of man accepts the order of divine justice, namely that either he should spontaneously take on a punishment in recompense for his previous fault, or likewise patiently endure one inflicted by God. For in both ways, punishment has the account of satisfaction.⁴⁰

Satisfaction is a kind of punishment, yet it is distinct from that which is properly called punishment. Satisfaction is punishment according to a certain consideration (*secundum quid*), but not simply speaking (*simpliciter*). Saint Thomas explains:

Satisfactory punishment (*pœna satisfactoria*), however, diminishes something of the account of punishment. For it belongs to the account of punishment that it should be against the will. Satisfactory punishment, however, although it is against the will according to an absolute consideration, is nevertheless voluntary then and there. Whence it is voluntary *simpliciter*, but involuntary *secundum quid*, as is clear from the things that were said above about the voluntary

and the involuntary. Therefore it is to be said that, with the stain of sin having been removed, a debt can indeed remain, not of punishment simply speaking (*pœna simpliciter*), but of satisfactory punishment (*pœna satisfactoria*).⁴¹

Interpreting this text requires familiarity with the difference between that which is said *simpliciter* and that which is said *secundum quid*, for which Saint Thomas refers the reader to his prior discussion of volition and involution in actions.

Consider actions done out of fear, such as when sailors jettison their cargo for fear that the ship may otherwise sink. Saint Thomas concludes that such actions are voluntary “simply speaking” (*simpliciter*). When facing a dangerous storm, the sailors really *do* want to throw their cargo overboard, even though “speaking in a certain respect” or “according to a certain abstract consideration” (*secundum quid*) they certainly

As long as the stain of sin remains, punishments are inflicted on the sinner against his will, yet when he embraces his punishment out of love for divine justice, the stain of sin is wiped away by grace and his punishment is transformed into satisfaction.

do not want to lose their cargo. In the concrete case, their action is voluntary. Only by abstracting the action from the real situation does the (nonetheless real) involuntary aspect of their action appear.⁴² Similarly, it is only in abstracting the work of satisfaction from the concrete circumstances that the (also very real) aspect of punishment appears; for punishment is by definition against the will, whereas satisfaction is voluntary. Hence, as long as the stain of sin remains, punishments are inflicted on the sinner against his will, yet when he embraces his punishment out of love for divine justice, the stain of sin is wiped away by grace and his punishment is transformed into satisfaction.⁴³

Speaking formally, then, satisfaction aims to give to the offended party what is due to him in compensation for a prior offense. It thus belongs at the most general level to commutative justice, which is concerned with equality between individuals.⁴⁴ More specifically, satisfaction belongs to vindictive justice (taken broadly), which moderates the restoration of equality presupposing the inequality of a prior offense.⁴⁵ This equalization can happen in different ways. When a judge simply punishes an offender, the act of punishing belongs to the virtue of vindictive justice (taken strictly), for he renders to the offender what is due to him, namely punishment. On the other hand, if the offender voluntarily wishes to make amends by compensating the offended party for his injury, this act of satisfaction belongs to the virtue of penance. Penance is a species of justice, because the sinner renders to the offended what is due to him, namely compensation.⁴⁶ Justice is served in either case, but the agent and recipient of the act differ. In simple punishment, the judge renders what is due to the offender. In satisfaction, the offender renders what is due to the offended.

In this distinction between simple punishment and satisfaction lies the whole difference between the Calvinist doctrine of penal substitution and the Catholic doctrine of vicarious satisfaction. For the Reformers, it was necessary for Christ to endure pain proportionate to mankind's entire collective guilt—hence the odious doctrine of a damned Christ.⁴⁷ For Saint Thomas, on the other hand, it is rather Christ's charity that is set in the balance against the weight of man's sin. This is because, while satisfaction is formally an act of justice, and materially a kind of punishment, it derives its efficacy from charity. Saint Thomas explicitly refers to the pain endured in satisfaction as the quasi-matter of the act, whose principle is charity:

Satisfaction ... indeed has as its quasi-matter the pains which one endures.... But it has for a principle the habit of soul from which it is inclined toward willing to satisfy..., and from which satisfaction has efficacy; for satisfaction would not be efficacious unless it proceeds from charity.⁴⁸

Saint Thomas's distinction between satisfaction and punishment hinges on the volition of the pain suffered in each case, which means that satisfaction must flow from love, for "it is manifest," he says, "that what we do out of love we do most willingly."⁴⁹ The virtue of charity must inform the virtue of justice, such that charity directs the act of satisfaction to the higher

Satisfaction is precisely the exterior act of the virtue of penance that accomplishes this interior intention, and it does so in two ways corresponding to the purpose of amendment: to make up for past sin and to avoid sin in the future.

end of friendship. In satisfaction, writes Saint Thomas, "it is not only the reintegration of the equality of justice that is sought, as in vindictive justice; but more, the reconciliation of friendship."⁵⁰ As such, the act of satisfaction cannot achieve its ultimate goal of friendship with God unless it proceeds from charity, for charity is the love of friendship with God.

Despite the predominant role assigned to charity in Saint Thomas's consideration of works of satisfaction, he insists that they must be at least materially painful. Satisfaction is still a kind of *pœna*, even if only *secundum quid*, and this is necessary in order for a man to be fully liberated from sin. The conversion from sin to God takes place primarily in the will, which must renounce sin in order to be free of it. But a fallen man cannot do this without the aid of divine grace wiping away the stain of sin and justifying him. Man must also cooperate with grace through free acts of will whereby he moves toward God (by an act of faith formed by charity) and away from sin (by an act of penance, which hates sin out of love for God and includes sorrow over past sin and the purpose of amendment). Satisfaction is precisely the exterior act of the virtue of penance that accomplishes this interior intention, and it does so in two ways corresponding to the purpose of amendment: to make up for past sin and to avoid sin in the future.⁵¹ In order to accomplish each of these ends, works of satisfaction must be penal.

First of all, regarding compensation for past sin, works of satisfaction must be penal because, "although nothing can be taken away from God, so far as it is on his part; nevertheless, the sinner, so far as it is in him, deprives him of something by sinning," namely of the honor due to him, "and therefore for a work to

be satisfactory, it must be good in order to honor God, and it must be penal in order to withdraw something from the sinner.”⁵² An act of satisfaction must render something good to God. The formal aspect of satisfaction means giving God what is due to him with respect to previous sin. This must also deprive the sinner of something good, without which the material aspect of satisfaction is incomplete. The sinner must offer some good to God in a way that deprives himself of some good. By penalizing himself in this way, the sinner also renders to himself what is due on account of his sin. Indeed, writes Saint Thomas, “in this way he will be established totally apart from disorder.”⁵³

Secondly, acts of satisfaction should be penal in order to prevent future sins, for: “a man does not easily return to sins for which he has experienced punishment.”⁵⁴ Justice seeks not only to restore equality, but also to preserve it. Satisfaction brings to completion the conversion of the will whereby it renounces sin and clings to God. It is therefore fitting that, as the turning of the will away from God and toward lower goods was characterized by a certain pleasure, so this contrary motion should involve something painful.⁵⁵

Pain has a proper and necessary place in the act of satisfaction, and hence in every satisfactory or expiatory sacrifice. Destruction (involved in every sacrifice) is not

Ratzinger is perfectly correct in highlighting the charity of Christ as the cause of our salvation. Saint Thomas, though, helps us to see more precisely why that love had to take the form of suffering in order to make satisfaction for sins.

pleasing to God as such, but it is necessary from the point of view of justice, both for making amends for past sins and for preserving the sinner from future sins. From the point of view of Saint Thomas’s doctrine of satisfaction, therefore, Ratzinger is perfectly correct in

highlighting the charity of Christ as the cause of our salvation. Saint Thomas, though, helps us to see more precisely why that love had to take the form of suffering in order to make satisfaction for sins.

The Satisfactory Sacrifice of Christ

At the heart of his treatise on the passion of Christ, Saint Thomas considers the various ways in which it was the cause of our salvation, namely through the modes of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and redemption. He then considers God as the principal cause, and Christ’s sacred humanity as the instrumental cause, of our salvation.

Merit is the first mode of efficacy that Saint Thomas considers. Any action proceeding from grace and charity is meritorious, and hence, by his every action, Christ merited salvation for both himself and his members.⁵⁶ Christ merited salvation especially by his passion, not because the love manifested therein was greater (it was and is always perfect), but because the act itself was more suited to the end of salvation. Despite the fact that Christ merited our salvation even from the moment of his conception, the obstacle of sin remained in man, the removal of which required other modes of efficacy.⁵⁷

Regarding man’s liberation from the obstacle of sin Saint Thomas turns to satisfaction, which he again describes as the recompense made by the offender to the offended in order to counterbalance the offense: “He properly satisfies for an offense who offers to the offended one something which he loves as much or more than he hated the offense.”⁵⁸ This definition makes no mention of the necessity of pain and instead focuses on the formal account of the act. “But Christ,” he goes on to say, “by suffering out of charity and obedience, offered God something greater than the recompense of the entire offense of the human race would have required.”⁵⁹ He then briefly lists three reasons why Christ’s passion more than compensated for all the sins of men:

- 1) firstly, indeed, on account of the magnitude of his charity, from which he suffered;
- 2) secondly, on account of the dignity of his life, which he laid down for satisfaction, which was the life of God and man;
- 3) thirdly, on account of the generality of his suffering and the magnitude of pain that he assumed.⁶⁰

Here we find, in superabundant measure, those very same things necessary for satisfaction: the pain, which

is the quasi-matter of satisfaction; the gift offered in compensation, belonging to the formal account of satisfaction; and the charity from which the act derives its efficacious power. Two of these three points reappear in the next article, where Saint Thomas takes up the theme of sacrifice. "A sacrifice," he writes, "is properly speaking something done unto the honor due to God alone, for the sake of pleasing him."⁶¹ No gift offered on the altar could please God more than the self-offering of his perfect Son, nor could anything make such a gift more acceptable than Christ's charity. In the words of Saint Thomas: "because he endured his passion voluntarily, it was most acceptable to God, as coming forth from the greatest charity."⁶² Christ's offering of himself out of pure charity is a true and proper sacrifice, which showed reverence and honor to God. Because Christ offered this sacrifice explicitly as recompense for sin ("this is my blood poured out for you and for many for the remission of sins"), because it involved something painful, and finally, because the gift offered in this sacrifice was more pleasing to God than all the sins of the world are hateful—because of all this, his sacrifice also made satisfaction. It is a perfect satisfactory sacrifice.

From this standpoint, Saint Thomas is then able to explain the biblical metaphor of redemption. Christ's passion and death, precisely by making satisfaction through sacrifice, frees man from his bondage to the devil in the slavery of sin and from his obligation to God to undergo just punishment. The "price" of Christ's passion, therefore, "pays" the debt of punishment demanded by God, allowing man to be restored to grace while also liberating him from his slavery to sin and the devil.

A constant theme underlying Thomas's consideration of the efficacy and effects of Christ's passion is the important question of how the fruits of the passion are applied to individual men and women. Individuals must be brought into contact with Christ's passion in order for it to work its effect in them. This happens by the spiritual contact made through faith and the sacraments of faith.⁶³ First of all, baptism brings a man into spiritual contact with the passion of Christ by conforming him sacramentally to Christ in his passion (cf. Rom. 6) and by inwardly justifying him. Regenerated into a new spiritual life of grace, the baptized become members of Christ, the source and fountain of this life. They are said to be incorporated into the body of Christ through baptism, made one with him through grace and charity. From this point of view, the vicarious aspect of Christ's work comes into sharper focus. Saint Thomas writes:

For because he himself is our head, he has by his passion, which he endured out of charity and obedience, liberated us as his members from our sins, as it were by the price of his passion, just as if a man by some meritorious work that he does by his hand should redeem himself from a sin which he committed with his feet. For just as the natural body is one, consisting of a diversity of members, so also the whole Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is regarded as if it were one person with its head, which is Christ.⁶⁴

The ecclesiological vision expressed here applies equally to satisfaction. The union of two persons in charity, which is a necessary condition for vicarious satisfaction, reaches perfection in man's incorporation into Christ: "The head and members are, as it were, one mystical person; and therefore the satisfaction of Christ pertains to all the faithful as to his members."⁶⁵ The full weight Saint Thomas gives to the union of Christ and his faithful, *quasi una persona mystica*, appears in the question as to whether baptism liberates man from the entire debt of punishment. In answer, Saint Thomas repeats that baptism incorporates one into Christ—specifically into the passion of Christ—and concludes from this that every baptized person is healed by Christ's passion "just as if he himself had suffered and died.... [H]e who is baptized is liberated from the debt of every punishment due to him for his sins, just as if he himself had sufficiently satisfied for all his sins."⁶⁶

Saint Thomas's complete vision of salvation (through incorporation into Christ and conformation to Christ, especially in his suffering and death), places his understanding of the vicarious nature of Christ's passion in stark contrast to the Lutheran idea of substitution. The persons of Christ and the sinner are not exchanged, but united. Christ on the cross did not do something so that sinners would not have to; he did something that sinners could not do, so that through him, with him, and in him, they would be able to do it.

The Mass and the Priesthood

Saint Thomas's understanding of sacrifice and satisfaction, both in general and as applied to Christ's sacrifice in particular, confirm the principal points that Ratzinger emphasized in order to counter mistaken notions of sacrifice: namely, the primacy of the interior sacrifice of love over the exterior sacrifice of material things (although with Saint Thomas we can also affirm the necessity of the exterior sacrifice on account of man's

Understanding sacrifice as essentially an act of worship due to God in justice on account of his majesty and satisfaction as essentially an act of compensation owed to God in justice on account of our sins, we can better comprehend the sacrificial nature of the Mass as well as the sacrificing priesthood.

composite nature); and secondly, the primacy of Christ's love manifested on the cross over the pain endured thereupon (although again, with Saint Thomas we can also account for the pain as befitting so great an act of satisfaction).

Understanding sacrifice as essentially an act of worship due to God in justice on account of his majesty and satisfaction as essentially an act of compensation owed to God in justice on account of our sins, we can better comprehend the sacrificial nature of the Mass as well as the sacrificing priesthood. As for how exactly the Mass is a sacrifice, Saint Thomas is content to say only that it is so inasmuch as it represents (sacramentally, of course) the sacrifice of Christ and applies its fruits.⁶⁷ The Council of Trent simply defines the Mass as "a true and proper sacrifice."⁶⁸ Unwilling to leave his church empty-handed, Christ placed into her hands a visible sacrifice, as the nature of man requires, to be offered perpetually through the ministry of her priests, so that men might finally be able to offer pleasing worship to God and make satisfaction for the sins that they daily commit.⁶⁹ As a sacrament, the Eucharist benefits only those who receive it, provided that they receive it worthily. As a sacrifice, it benefits all those who offer it and all those for whom it is offered.⁷⁰ By the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, man first fulfills the requirements of justice. By receiving the Eucharistic sacrament, he is then perfected in union with Christ by charity. Justice is perfected by

charity, but charity presupposes justice and man is bound in justice to offer sacrifice to God.

Saint Thomas's discussion of the three basic types of Old Testament sacrifices is highly instructive here. The holocaust "was offered to God specially to show reverence for his majesty, and love of his goodness."⁷¹ The whole sacrifice was consumed by fire in order to signify that "the whole man, and everything that is his, should be subjected to the dominion of God, and should be offered to him."⁷² The sin-offerings were evidently offered to God for the remission of sins, while the peace-offerings were offered either in thanksgiving for benefits already received or in the hope of future benefits. Each kind of sacrifice reflects one of the ways in which man is bound to honor God. Saint Thomas writes:

man is bound to God most of all on account of his majesty; secondly, on account of the offense he has committed; thirdly, on account of benefits already received; fourthly, on account of benefits hoped for.⁷³

The four ends of the Mass as traditionally enumerated (adoration, propitiation, thanksgiving, and petition) are clearly evident in this list, highlighting the fundamental nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice as an act of justice. Far from excusing man from his duties toward God in justice, Christ's sacrifice actually enables man finally to fulfill them. Having once offered up his perfect sacrifice to the Father, Christ placed it into the hands of the church to be offered daily by her priests.

Fallen man, having no gifts of his own worthy to offer to God in honor of his majesty, in devout and prayerful worship, in satisfaction for our many and grievous sins, in thanksgiving for the many underserved benefits that we have received from his bounty, in humble petition for all the things we yet need, and for which we rely upon his providence; in short, having no means at our disposal adequate for the worship that God deserves and that man, in the highest and most noble aspirations of his nature, longs to offer him, and having likewise no means of making satisfaction for our sins, which is our most urgent need; being empty-handed, God sent his Son into the world to be our sacrifice, and Christ, having offered himself upon the altar of the cross, gave his perfect sacrifice into the hands of his priests, so that, through their ministry, we would at last have a worthy gift to offer upon the altar of the most high. This is what the venerable Roman Canon expresses so graciously in the *Unde et memores*: "we offer unto Thy most excellent majesty of Thine own

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most high.**

gifts bestowed upon us, a pure Victim, a holy Victim, an immaculate Victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.”⁷⁴

What light does Saint Thomas's theology of sacrifice shed on the nature of the sacred priesthood? The priest is the “mediator between God and the people.”⁷⁵ As *sacerdos* (priest) he is *sacra-dans* (the one who gives sacred things).⁷⁶ He is the mediator who gives sacred things from men to God and from God to men. To God he offers the Eucharistic sacrifice on our behalf; to men he offers the Eucharistic sacrament on God's behalf. As mediator on our behalf, it is through the sacrificial ministry of the priest that we are enabled to stand erect as men who act with justice before God. As mediator on God's behalf, it is before the priest that we kneel to receive the sacrament of charity. At the hands of the priest, we offer to God in sacrifice the same Christ whom we then receive from the hands of the priest. The priest, as a true pastor of souls, first feeds the souls of those who hunger and thirst for justice and then turns and nourishes them with the bread of angels.



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Endnotes

1. Joseph Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” trans. Margaret McHugh and John Parsons, in *Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger: Proceedings of the July 2001 Fontgombault Liturgical Conference*, ed. Alcuin Reid (Farnborough: Saint Michael's Abbey Press, 2003), 22.
2. “*Sacrificium et sacerdotium ita Dei ordinatione coniuncta sunt, ut utrumque in omni lege exstiterit.*” Council of Trent, Session 23, *Doctrina de sacramento ordinis*, 1 (15 July 1563), in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, *Trent to Vatican II*, ed. and trans. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 742.
3. This was originally written as a paper in honor of Fr. Neil J. Roy, reverend priest, learned professor, generous mentor, and valued friend, on the occasion of the silver jubilee of his priestly ordination, celebrated in 2011.
4. Saint John Vianney, “Catechism on the Priesthood,” in *The Spirit of the Curé of Ars*, trans. Alfred Monnin, ed. John E. Bowden (London: Burns, Lambert, and Oates, 1865), 71.
5. Vatican Council II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis* (7 December 1965).
6. Joseph Ratzinger, “The Ministry and Life of Priests,” in *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 153–154.
7. Ratzinger, “The Ministry and Life of Priests,” 154.
8. Ratzinger, “The Ministry and Life of Priests,” 154.
9. Ratzinger, “The Ministry and Life of Priests,” 155. There can be no doubt that one of the goals of the 2009–2010 Year for Priests proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI was to recover the understanding of the priesthood as something primarily sacred and sacramental. Indeed, Benedict XVI returns to the theme of competing concepts of the priesthood in his first General Audience of the Year for Priests (24 June 2009).
10. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 19.
11. Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium* (4 December 1963), §2.
12. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 19.
13. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 20.
14. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 20.
15. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 20. In his memoirs, Ratzinger recalls his reaction to the prohibition of the traditional missal: “The second great event at the beginning of my years in Regensburg was the publication of the Missal of Paul VI, which was accompanied by the almost total prohibition, after a transitional phase of only half a year, of using the missal we had had until then. I welcomed the fact that now we had a binding liturgical text after a period of experimentation that had often deformed the liturgy. But I was dismayed by the prohibition of the old missal, since nothing of the sort had ever happened in the entire history of the liturgy.... The prohibition of the missal that was now decreed, a missal

- that had known continuous growth over the centuries, starting with the sacramentaries of the ancient Church, introduced a breach into the history of the liturgy whose consequences could only be tragic.” Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 146–148.
16. He writes: “in many places celebrations were not faithful to the prescriptions of the new Missal, but the latter actually was understood as authorizing or even requiring creativity, which frequently led to deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.” Pope Benedict XVI, Letter to the Bishops Accompanying the Apostolic Letter *Summorum pontificum* (30 April 2011).
 17. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 21.
 18. Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 148.
 19. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 22.
 20. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 183.
 21. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 26.
 22. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 25; see also the parallel text from Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 27–28: “In all religions sacrifice is at the heart of worship. But this is a concept that has been buried under the debris of endless misunderstandings. The common view is that sacrifice has something to do with destruction. It means handing over to God a reality that is in some way precious to man. Now this handing over presupposes that it is withdrawn from use by man, and that can only happen through its destruction, its definitive removal from the hands of man. But this immediately raises the question: What pleasure is God supposed to take in destruction? Is anything really surrendered to God through destruction? One answer is that the destruction always conceals within itself the act of acknowledging God’s sovereignty over all things. But can such a mechanical act really serve God’s glory? Obviously not.”
 23. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 33.
 24. Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J.R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, Communio Books, 2004), 289.
 25. Much the same description of suffering love appears in Ratzinger’s liturgical writings: “The way of unity, the way of love, is then a way of conversion, a way of purification: it takes the shape of the Cross, it passes through the Paschal Mystery, through death and resurrection” (Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 26); “But now sacrifice takes the form of the Cross of Christ, of the love that in dying makes a gift of itself. Such a sacrifice has nothing to do with destruction. It is an act of new creation, the restoration of creation to its true identity” (Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 34).
 26. Ratzinger, “The Theology of the Liturgy,” 22.
 27. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 27.
 28. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2. [All translations of Saint Thomas’s Latin texts are my own.]
 29. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 82, a. 1.
 30. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 83, a. 3.
 31. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 81, a. 7.
 32. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, qq. 84–87.
 33. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 85, a. 1.
 34. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 81, a. 7, ad 2.
 35. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 85, a. 2.
 36. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3.
 37. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 86, a. 1.
 38. Secret Prayer for Ember Friday after Pentecost: “*Sacrificia, Domine, tuis oblata conspectibus ignis ille divinus absumat, qui discipulorum Christi Filii tui per Spiritum Sanctum corda succendit.*” Latin text and English translation taken from *The Roman Catholic Daily Missal (Missale Romanum) 1962* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2004), 687.
 39. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 87, a. 6.
 40. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 87, a. 6.
 41. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 87, a. 6.
 42. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 6, a. 6.
 43. The precise relationship between satisfaction and punishment can be further refined in reference to Saint Thomas Aquinas’s statement that the account of satisfaction is found both in punishments spontaneously taken upon oneself and in punishments inflicted by God but patiently endured. In the *Summa contra gentiles*, Saint Thomas distinguishes between these, calling the former more properly “satisfaction” and the latter “purgation” (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, III, cap. 158, n. 5).
- The complete picture, therefore, divides *pæna* (taken in its generic meaning as “pain,” which is something that is against the will according to an abstract consideration) first into *pæna simpliciter* (punishment) and *pæna secundum quid* (satisfaction taken broadly) on the basis of whether or not the pain is against the will in the concrete circumstances. *Pæna secundum quid* is then subdivided into *pæna satisfactoria* (satisfaction taken strictly) and *pæna purgatoria* (purgation) on the following basis: in the former case the pain is self-assumed, and in the latter case it is accepted from God. Saint Thomas is thinking especially of the traditional Christian penitential practices of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting as voluntary works of satisfaction (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 4c; see also *Summa theologiae*, II-II, qq. 32, 83, 147). Purgative punishments are the “scourges by which we are punished by God in this life” (*In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 4b), as well as, of course, the pains of Purgatory after this life (*In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 21, q. 1, a. 3b).

44. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 61, a. 1.
45. *In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 1b.
46. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3.
47. The *descensus* article of the Creed is meant, according to Calvin, “to teach us that not only was the body of Christ given up as the price of redemption, but that there was a greater and more excellent price—that he bore in his soul the tortures of condemned [*damnati*] and ruined [*perditi*] man.” John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1863), bk. II, ch. 16, §10). See also Luther’s *Commentary on Romans* 2:18, where he writes that Christ “really and truly offered Himself to the Father for eternal punishment on our behalf. His human nature behaved as if He were a man to be eternally condemned to Hell.” Cited in Anthony W. Bartlett, *Cross Purposes: The Violent Grammar of Christian Atonement* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2001), 90.

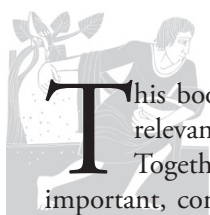
Hans Urs von Balthasar takes this line of thought to its utmost point. For him, the redemptive suffering of Christ continues, and is even increased, on Holy Saturday. While his body lay in the darkness and silence of the tomb, Christ suffered in his soul all the pains of the damned, and indeed his pain even surpassed theirs in a horrific, unmediated *visio mortis*, a direct vision of death itself analogous to the beatific vision of God enjoyed by the blessed in heaven. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2005), 168–176.

For a thorough critique of Balthasar’s *descensus* theology in light of traditional Catholic teaching, see Alyssa Lyra Pitstick, *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ’s Descent into Hell* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); see also the lively debate that ensued between Pitstick and Edward T. Oakes: “Balthasar, Hell, and Heresy: An Exchange,” *First Things* (December 2006), 25–32; “More on Balthasar, Hell, and Heresy,” *First Things* (January 2007), 16–19.
48. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 14, a. 1, ad 1.
49. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 114, a. 4.
50. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 90, a. 2.
51. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 85, a. 3.
52. *In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 4a.
53. *Summa contra gentiles*, III, cap. 158, n. 4.
54. *In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 4a. Saint Thomas thus combines the definitions of satisfaction given by Saint Augustine, who regards it as preventative of future sin, and Saint Anselm, who regards it as curative of past sin. See *In IV librum Sententiarum*, d. 15, q. 1, a. 1c.
55. *Summa contra gentiles*, III, cap. 158, n. 1.
56. Merit is thus a broader category than satisfaction. Any good work flowing from grace and charity is meritorious, whereas only good works flowing from grace and charity that are also penal are satisfactory. Hence, every work of satisfaction is also meritorious, but the converse is not true.
57. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 1, co., ad 2, ad 3. In this context, “necessity” always means a relative necessity, something without which the end in view could not be so well or fittingly attained.
58. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 2.
59. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 2.
60. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 2.
61. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 3.
62. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 3.
63. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2.
64. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 49, a. 1.
65. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 48, a. 2, ad 1.
66. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 69, a. 2; see also *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 49, a. 3, ad 2.
67. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 83, a. 1.
68. “*Si quis dixerit, in missa non offerri Deo verum et proprium sacrificium, aut quod offerri non sit aliud quam nobis Christum ad manducandum dari: a.s.*” Council of Trent, Session 22, *Doctrina et canones de sanctissimo Missae sacrificio*, canon 1 (17 September 1562), in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, *Trent to Vatican II*, ed. and trans. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 735.
69. See Council of Trent, *Doctrina et canones de sanctissimo Missae sacrificio*, 1.
70. *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 79, a. 7.
71. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 8.
72. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 8.
73. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 10.
74. Prayer of the Canon of the Mass *Unde et Memores*: “*offerimus praeclarae majestati tuae de tuis donis ac datis hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam, Panem sanctum vitae aeternae, et Calicem salutis perpetuae.*” *The Roman Catholic Daily Missal (Missale Romanum)* 1962, 896–897.
75. *Summa theologiae*, II, q. 22, a. 1.
76. Saint Thomas employs this etymology with regard to Christ’s high-priesthood in *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 22, a. 1.

Seminary Theology III: Seminary Formation and Psychology

By Deacon James Keating, PhD (Ed.).
Institute for Priestly Formation, 2013

Reviewed by Paul C. Vitz



This book is an excellent treatment of the relevance of psychology to priestly formation. Together the different authors give this important, complex topic—a topic with a checkered past—a variety of useful perspectives.

One major theme in the book is that priests need to have a good capacity for positive interpersonal relationships. Suzanne Baars addresses this through the importance of affective (emotional) maturity for priestly identity as expressed in the following relationships: in fatherly love, as a spiritual physician and as a good shepherd. Kathryn Benes provides an informative introduction to an important and relatively new psychological approach known as “attachment theory.” She notes the particular psychological features of insecure parental attachment and discusses how attachment insecurity can affect priestly identity and inhibit a priest’s ability to form good interpersonal relationships. Walter Oxley approaches the interpersonal theme by focusing on the special importance of such relationships for the priesthood as: beloved son, chaste spouse, spiritual father, good shepherd and spiritual physician. Christopher Stravitsch moves beyond psychology to consider the central spiritual relationship of being with Christ. He often begins with a negative psychological state and then deals with the movement to a positive spiritual state. For example, Stravitsch writes on moving from loneliness to solitude, from hostility to hospitality, from the “illusion of immortality” to

One major theme in the book is that priests need to have a good capacity for positive interpersonal relationships.

prayer. He also addresses the need for a reconciling spirit and for self-giving love.

From a broader, more general perspective, Christina Lynch describes some of the major negative psychological consequences of contemporary American culture, such as moral relativism, consumerism, over use of drugs and alcohol, civic withdrawal and pre-occupation with the self. She then proposes in some detail how the formation and development of the virtues in seminarians and priests can serve as an answer to much of the previous personal psychological damage.

Two chapters focus on a quite different theme—the clergy-psychologist collaborative relationship. Anthony Bond discusses the conflicted history of this collaboration. He addresses both over-enthusiastic and today’s more common under-enthusiastic attitude toward psychology by formators. He also addresses how such collaboration can be renewed in a way that can be of genuine benefit in the formation of priests. Ed Hogan

presents a good case for the usefulness of actually measuring spiritual formation in the external forum. He is not opposed to the distinction between the internal and external forum but proposes that they can work together more closely and effectively than in the past. To this end he provides some data and specific questions to be used in evaluating spiritual formation in seminarians.

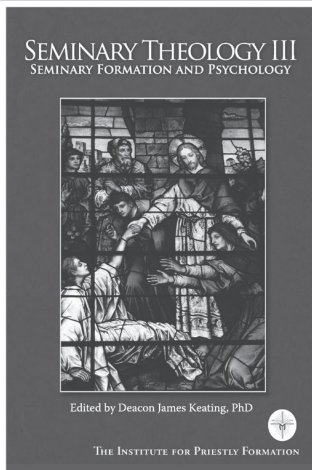
No doubt the issues of how psychology can best help in evaluating seminarians and in priestly formation have some years to go before a fully established positive arrangement is in place—but this collection gives an excellent early treatment of the topic. I am confident that the chapters in this book will be of interest to formators and others interested in priestly formation. Certainly formators and seminary libraries should have a copy of this book.



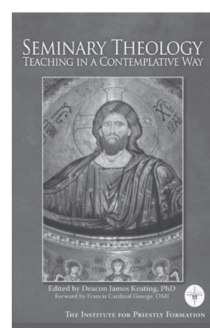
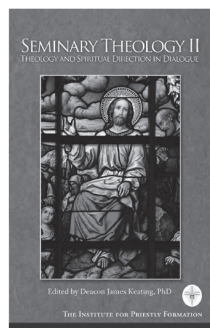
Paul C. Vitz, Ph.D., is senior scholar/professor at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences in Arlington, Virginia and professor emeritus of New York University.



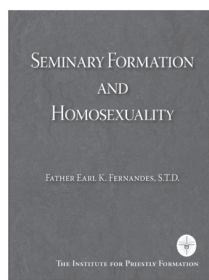
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Seminary Theology III: Seminary Formation and Psychology deepens the conversation begun in *Seminary Theology: Teaching in a Contemplative Way* and *Seminary Theology II: Theology and Spiritual Direction in Dialogue*, covering in detail the topic of human formation.

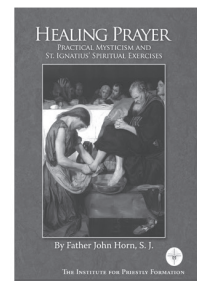


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In recognition of the 10th anniversary of *Seminary Journal*, the Seminary Department has introduced a new publication series: *The Core Elements of Priestly Formation Programs*. These collections of articles celebrate the “best practices” and wisdom 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.

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- ☐ Check enclosed (Made Payable to NCEA)
☐ Credit Card Number (Master Card/Visa ONLY):

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

- ☐ Send Invoice (S&H will be added)

Member ID _____

Name _____ Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____