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THEME: Leadership Formation – Part II

From the Desk of the Executive Director
Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy

Intensive Formation: Addressing Serious Formation Issues in Troubled
Seminarians
Dr. Lawrence M. LeNoir, L.C.P.C.

From Designated Spiritual Leaders to Real Spiritual Leaders: The Challenge
Facing Initial Priestly Formation
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The New Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy:
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Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2010-2011
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BOOK REVIEW

Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters: The Essential Collection by William H.
Shannon and Christine M. Bochen, editors
Reviewed by Rev. Martin Zielinski



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Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, *Executive Editor*

Katherine Schmitt, M.Div., *Associate Editor*

Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, *Copy Editor*

Beatriz Ruiz, *Graphic Designer*

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NCEA Seminary Department
Suite 525
1005 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22201

Telephone: (571) 257-0010
Fax: (703) 243-0025
E-Mail: seminary@ncea.org
Web site: www.ncea.org

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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.

Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word format and sent via e-mail attachment to seminaryjournal@ncea.org. Manuscripts will not be returned.

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From the Desk of the Executive Director



One of the central components of priestly training, according to *The Program of Priestly Formation* (fifth edition), is pastoral formation. The PPF states that “the basic principle” of pastoral formation takes its cue from paragraph 57 of the Second Vatican Council Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatam Totius* (and this same paragraph is repeated in Pope John Paul II’s important encyclical, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*):

The whole training of the students should have as its object to make them *true shepherds of souls after the example of our Our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest, and shepherd*. (Italics in text, PPF paragraph 238)

More expansively, the PPF highlights distinctive aspects of the pastoral formation process, including a significant paragraph on “Leadership Development.” According to the PPF, “Pastoral formation means that seminarians learn how to take spiritual initiatives and direct a community into action. That leadership also includes a dimension of practical administration.” These practical skills, of course, require ongoing education as seminarians acquire experience and expertise as future priests.

In these two issues of the journal, the theme of leadership is a special focus. I am pleased that our authors have given careful thought to significant issues and best practices in this area. One of my objectives for the journal is to provide opportunities for seminary educators to offer fresh perspectives on emerging trends in priestly formation and to identify best practices as seminaries implement the holistic vision of the PPF that integrates the four “pillars” of formation (human, spiritual, pastoral, intellectual).

Dr. Lawrence LeNoir offers a thoughtful process whereby seminary formators can engage seminarians with significant growth issues so that they can derive maximum benefit from the seminary experience to become effective priests and pastoral leaders. Dr. LeNoir carefully notes that this process, however, depends upon

a solid assessment by the faculty that the seminarian can remain in the program. As I have noted in another context, growth is a reasonable expectation, but seminaries are not miracle workers, and, if a student manifests an intractable lack of capacity to be ordained, he should be dismissed from the program. With that caveat in mind, Dr. LeNoir’s essay provides a growth plan that has benchmarks for success and multiple layers of accountability for both the seminarian and the seminary faculty.

Fr. Ron Knott, who teaches at St. Meinrad Seminary, insightfully notes the challenge to help seminarians demonstrate the capacity for leadership prior to ordination. The key human and interpersonal skills that are essential for leadership must not be assumed. Rather, the seminary faculty should devise clear expectations and structures of accountability to help seminarians succeed in their formation program.

Anne Garrido and Carolyn Wright reflect on an extremely well-received program of conflict management developed at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis. Their essay draws valuable lessons from this experience that is replicable in other seminary settings. Given the complexity of the demands of pastoral leadership today, skill in resolving conflicts is essential for the successful parish priest.

Fr. Jim Clarke and Dr. Pat Mitchell at St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo contribute an essay on the practical lessons they and the St. John’s faculty have learned over the years in the areas of pre-theology education and immersion experiences. The pioneering work of then Msgr. George Niederauer (now Archbishop Niederauer of San Francisco) in developing the “Intensive Program of Spiritual Formation” (IPSF) is a predecessor to the Institute for Priestly Formation in Nebraska that is widely used today by a number of seminaries.

Dr. William Murphy provides a detailed analysis of the recent decree from Rome on the reform of ecclesiastical studies in philosophy. While the decree has direct implications for the curriculum of ecclesiastical degrees in philosophy, nonetheless, it is likely that particular

themes and emphases in this document may also be helpful for the structuring of pre-theology programs. I hope that Dr. Murphy's essay will be a springboard for further conversation from our membership.

I am most grateful to Dr. Mary Gautier, senior researcher at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for granting permission to re-print the most recent CARA statistics for 2010-2011. There is a wealth of information in the data that is timely and absolutely vital for effective planning and development by seminary administrators and their boards of directors.

Fr. Marty Zielinski has submitted a fine review of a new book on the letters of Thomas Merton. This newest addition to Merton scholarship by William Shan-

non and Christine Bochen will, I think, be welcomed by all of us who continue to draw inspiration from the great Trappist monk.

As always, I am at your service. Please know that the journal is your publication and that I welcome your submissions. To help me to ensure the ongoing excellence of the journal, I am happy to announce that Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, has agreed to serve as copy editor. Sebastian will be helping the Editorial Board to identify themes, as well as articles and prospective authors. Stay tuned-you may be hearing from Sebastian, and, if so, I would be most grateful for your generous response.



Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy
Editor



Calendar of Events • NCEA Seminary Department

2012

- ◆ **April 11-13**
NCEA Convention & Exposition
(Priests Day, April 12)
Boston, Massachusetts
- ◆ **June 10-13**
A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts, Part II. Cultural Competency– A focused conference for vocation directors, formation directors and psychologists
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ◆ **June 13**
Paresia Project Consultation
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ◆ **June 14-15**
A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts, Part I. Psychological Assessment Conference – An Introduction for vocation directors, formation directors and psychologists
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ◆ **June 4-8**
Verbum Domini Festival of Preaching
Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
Huntington, New York

Announcing the 2nd Biennial Joint Conference in Philadelphia, June 2012!



A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts Part II

Save the dates June 10-13, 2012 for *A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts, Part II*. This conference will focus on the issues of Inter-Cultural Competency: Multi-Cultural Assessment and Enculturation. Our creative, innovative and research-based agenda will help you better serve the Church of today and tomorrow.

A post-conference workshop will be offered for those not able to attend the 2010 conference. Save the dates June 13-15, 2012 for *A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts, Part I*. Vocation directors, formation directors and assessing & treating psychologists are strongly encouraged to attend.

Our 2012 conference will again be co-hosted by Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary and Saint John Vianney Center. We hope you will join us!

For information on the 2010 conference, go to our website: <http://www.sjvcenter.org/sjvc-events.php>.

For details about the 2012 conferences, please contact Reverend Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.,
at gmcglone@sjvcenter.org

Please – Save the 2012 dates: June 10-13 and June 13-15. Spread the word!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NCEA SEMINARY DEPARTMENT

Very Rev. Tom Dragga

Rector
Borromeo Seminary
28700 Euclid Avenue
Wickliffe, OH 44092-2527
(440) 943-7648 (office)
tmd@dioceseofcleveland.org

Rev. Gerald McBrearity, SS

Director of Human Formation, Theological College
401 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202) 756-5535 (office)
gmcbrearity@hotmail.com

Very Rev. Samuel Russell, OSB (NACS)

President-Rector
Conception Seminary College
P.O. Box 502, Conception, MO 64433-0502
(660) 944-2810 (office)
samuel@conception.edu

Sr. Katarina Schuth, OSF, Ph.D.

Endowed Chair for the Social Scientific Study of
Religion, Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity
2260 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105
(651) 962-5066 (office)
kmschuth@stthomas.edu

Very Rev. Dennis J. Lyle

Rector/President, Mundelein Seminary
1000 E. Maple Avenue, Mundelein, IL 60060
(847) 970-4800 (office)
dlyle@usml.edu

Rev. Justin Matro, OSB (East Coast Rectors)

Rector, St. Vincent Seminary
300 Fraser Purchase Rd.
Latrobe, PA 15650-2690
(724) 532-6600 (office)
justin.matro@email.stvincent.edu

Rev. Leon Hutton

Director of Human Formation
St. John's Seminary School of Theology
5012 Seminary Road
Camarillo, CA 93012-0637
(805) 482-2755 (office)
lhutton@stjohnsem.edu

Rev. Tom Knoebel

Vice Rector, Sacred Heart School of Theology
P.O. Box 429
Hales Corners, WI 53130-0429
(414) 529-6984 (office)
tknoebel@shst.edu

EX-OFFICIO

Dan Aleshire (ATS)

Executive Director
Association of Theological Schools
10 Summit Park Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15275
(412) 788-6505 (office)
aleshire@ats.edu

Rev. Shawn McKnight (CCLV)

Executive Director, USCCB Committee on Clergy,
Consecrated Life and Vocations
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202) 541-3033 (office)
smcknight@usccb.org

STAFF MEMBERS

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy

Executive Director, NCEA Seminary Department
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
(800) 711-6232 (office)
jmccarthy@ncea.org

Kathy Schmitt, M.Div.

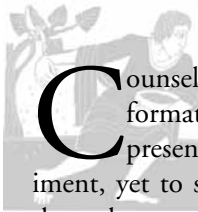
Administrative Assistant, NCEA Seminary Department
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
(571) 451-2881 (direct to desk)
(800) 711-6232 (office – receptionist)
kschmitt@ncea.org

Dr. Karen Ristau, Ph.D.

President, National Catholic Educational Association
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
(800) 711-6232 (office)
kristau@ncea.org

Intensive Formation: Addressing Serious Formation Issues in Troubled Seminarians

Dr. Lawrence M. LeNoir, LCPC



Counseling is expensive and not a substitute for formation. A seminarian's formation issues may present with an underlying psychological impediment, yet to suggest that addressing such impediments through counseling will in turn ameliorate the formation issue is like expecting apple juice when squeezing a lemon.¹ Thousands of dollars are spent on a single seminarian in the hopes that counseling will help him cope better or respond better to the demands of seminary life, and often this simply does not happen. Consider the following case:

Sam attributes his conversion experience, at the age of twenty-four, to a Mass he attended at the behest of a friend. Sam reported that he "just felt at home there." He went through the RCIA program two years later and was baptized a Catholic at the age of twenty-seven. Within a year, he contacted the Vocation Director about applying for the priesthood. The Vocation Director told him he needed to enjoy being Catholic for a year or so and then apply. Eventually, Sam's diocese accepted him as a candidate for priesthood studies and sent him to the seminary.

After a month at the seminary, the formation faculty noted a number of issues regarding Sam's social acumen. He had been experienced as socially awkward with tendencies toward isolation, often failing to read social cues and speaking rather boorishly in public settings. One incident involved Sam's using a derogatory slur to describe a classmate's brain when that student questioned the authority of the Magisterium during a class on ecumenism. Sam admits that he struggles with depression that is related to his experiences of physical abuse at the hands of his father; it is quite possible that Sam suffers from an undiagnosed, complex post traumatic stress disorder.² Sam has also been observed lashing out at seminarians who were unable to per-

The Intensive Formation (IF) process addresses observable behavior, establishes important behavioral goals, insists on measures of accountability and aids the formation team in determining priestly suitability of a seminarian.

form certain tasks to his expectations. Others have noticed that his moods shift toward sullenness and irritability prior to class examinations or when he serves as an acolyte at mass (serving mass causes him great anxiety). He does not understand why other seminarians refuse to study with him and believes that they are not acting like "men of God."

It is difficult to know who Sam's friends are in the seminary. The scowl on his face leaves many intimidated in his presence, and the report from his field placement, a soup kitchen and social service agency, suggests that his countenance does not change. When he does attend social gatherings, he speaks loudly, will tell off-handed jokes, dresses slovenly, and whenever food is present, eats as if he has ten thumbs. He, nonetheless, is the type of person who is a) willing to drop what he is doing to help someone in need, b) loves the Church and the priesthood, and c) has the courage to confront others when their behavior warrants the confrontation.

Sam was encouraged to enter counseling. After six months of counseling (\$2,400+) the therapist reported that Sam had begun to unlock the shaming and abuse he experienced at the hands of his father along with its ensuing impact upon his self-esteem and seems to accept himself more. Meanwhile, Sam continues to distrust his formation advisor, skipping or forgetting meetings. When he does show up for those meetings, he is evasive, deflects questions and resists self-disclosure. He reports that most of his troubles are due to the behaviors of others. Sam has become more isolated in the community, has few, if any, friends in the seminary, and, to a lesser extent, continues to act in ways that are off-putting and inappropriate.

First, it is not the goal of therapy to form a seminarian. It is the goal of therapy to assist the client in 1) determining what the issues are, 2) gaining relief from the distress these issues cause, 3) finding better ways of coping with conflict and 4) healing past hurts.

Second, when a seminarian enters a counseling relationship, in some cases he is asked to provide his advisor/formator a signed “Consent to release information” form. The consent form allows the therapist to speak to the formator about the therapeutic sessions. The inherent conflict in this request lies in the fundamental alliance between the therapist and client. A client must believe that the therapist will maintain confidentiality, thus, providing an arena to disclose the intimate details of the client’s life. The seminarian-therapist relationship is compromised as privileged communication may be shared with the formator.³

Third, as is the case with Sam, issues of a therapeutic nature are significant to address, and Sam must face the abuse he experienced at the hands of his father. In addressing these issues, Sam may find his capacity to engage in a formation program, but the impact will be distal, or remotely situated. Proximal impact emerges when the seminarian engages a well-trained formator who can invite the seminarian into a dialogue about the “here and now.”

In a related issue, Sam’s psychological evaluation indicated that Sam is of average intelligence while his personality profile suggested that he suffers from depression, has a tendency toward somatic complaints, and a number of narcissistic and dependent features. It also suggested that Sam has experienced and continues to experience a high degree of familial discord. In his clinical interview, he revealed that he had spent three years with his grandmother from age 7 to 10 when his mother was incarcerated for writing bad checks. His parents divorced

The success of the IF process relies heavily (but not completely) on the skill of the formator and his capacity to engage the seminarian in meaningful dialogue that 1) minimizes resistance, 2) challenges the seminarian through invitations for self-disclosure, 3) presents clear and concrete evidence of behavioral change (or no change) based on observable behavior and 4) allows for and expects idiosyncratic responses from the seminarian without taking such responses personally.

when he was five. His dad had left shortly after the divorce, but Sam remembers the yelling and beatings he and his mother experienced before his departure. Such information is further evidence of Sam’s difficulties and is predictive of Sam’s struggles in the seminary.

Sam has had a rough life. Sam’s early trauma plays a significant role in his coarse interactions with peers and inability to read social cues. Sam, unfortunately, represents many individuals who are accepted as candidates and struggle with the “rule of life” in a seminary environment. In this regard, a vocation’s office and seminary formation program would do well to insist on an individual formation process for candidates like Sam, who present with a troubling background, and on whom they would like to “take a chance.” Individuals like Sam may respond well to a formation program given a structured process of formation. Intensive Formation offers just that option.

Intensive Formation (IF)

Intensive Formation is a process utilized by formators to assist troubled seminarians in developing the personal tools for adaptation, social interaction, pastoral skill acquisition and leadership demanded by the responsibilities associated with the professional practice of priestly ministry. The IF process addresses observable behavior, establishes important behavioral goals, insists on measures of accountability and aids the formation team in determining priestly suitability of a seminarian.

In this regard, the IF process is goal-oriented and solution-focused, using frequent meetings between the seminarian and his formator. These meetings are structured and time sensitive, typically lasting twenty-five minutes. The success of the IF process relies heavily (but not completely) on the skill of the formator and his capacity to engage the seminarian in meaningful dialogue that 1) minimizes resistance, 2) challenges the seminarian through invitations for self-disclosure, 3) presents clear and concrete evidence of behavioral change (or no change) based on observable behavior and 4) allows for and expects idiosyncratic responses from the seminarian without taking such responses personally.

The Troubled Seminarian

Like Sam, seminarians who are well-suited for the IF process may suffer from trauma or family dysfunction or they may struggle as a result of peculiar family of origin experiences.⁴ A seminarian's personal history will emerge as behavioral inhibitors for the formation of qualities necessary for effective ministerial practice. Seminarians who present with these types of backgrounds will predictably struggle with the following:

1. *Trusting others* – When trust is absent, individuals focus on survival. When a man presents with trauma or family dysfunction, he will struggle trusting those with whom he lives and the authorities in the seminary. Sam forgets or misses advising sessions and will deflect question and act evasively when he attends those meetings.
2. *Coding and decoding behaviors* – Experience teaches each of us how to interpret another's behavior. The more peculiar the family of origin experience or the more trauma the person experiences throughout his life, the more biased and vigilant he becomes with regards to certain behaviors. Sam remains confused regarding his isolation, especially during exam preparation and about why the seminarians

become easily frustrated with the things that he says. Sam will interpret another's behavior through a distorted lens (appraisal), leading him to "see" things that may not be there or interpret actions as hostile that may not be (attribution), triggering defensive reactions that support and maintain the distortion (response) (Gross & Thompson in Gross, 2007). The process of appraisal, attribution and response for seminarians with troubling backgrounds leads to behavioral misinterpretations and ineffective ministerial practice. When unchecked and therefore, untransformed, yet ordained, these seminarians become priests who inflict themselves on a community. The appraisal, attribution and response process for such seminarians must be unpacked in order for these men to learn about appropriate social intercourse and social competence, pro-social patterns of communication and impulse control.

3. *Controlling impulses* – An impulse represents a subconscious spark for action, and through the socialization process individuals learn how to subdue such impulses (Cozolino, 2006) and/or channel such impulses into more socially acceptable behaviors. Some impulses trigger a fight, flight or freeze response to a perceived threat. A seminary system, which includes personal evaluations, will be inherently stressful for these seminarians often triggering their fight, flight, or freeze reactions. These reactions will always be defensive in nature and may appear, at times, obstinate, passive-aggressive and/or obsequious.
4. *Managing emotions* – Each family teaches its members which emotions are "okay" and which are not. Families will train their members to clip some emotions that are considered inappropriate for the family system. For instance, if anger was suppressed in a person's family, it is likely that when that person feels anger, he or she will struggle expressing that anger in appropriate ways (Thompson & Meyer in Gross, 2007). Sam struggles to understand how he should act in social settings. Such settings cause significant anxiety for Sam who relies on poorly formed social behaviors that may have served him in the past or in another environment, but currently narrow his capacity to determine the appropriate social

response.

5. *Understanding social rules* – Through family of origin, school and community systems, a social context emerges that informs an individual's value and belief system. The family, school and community systems represent the primary educators of individuals. Poor leadership within those systems can lead to diffuse or rigid boundaries, which inadequately prepares members to manage conflict effectively (Olson, 1999). Sam experiences the isolation within the seminary community and is at a loss to ameliorate the situation, often leading to reactions that maintain his isolation.

Since the life-style of the priesthood is a life-style of relationships, spiritual leadership skills demand that a priest possess high levels of social and emotional intelligence. Troubled seminarians like Sam present with many deficits in the context of social and emotional intelligence; thus, they require a more formalized, individual approach to their formation.

Why can't these seminarians be treated just like the others?

Any one working in seminary formation knows men like these, knows how frustrating it is working with individuals who struggle with formation. Formators often feel trapped between wanting to give the seminarian a chance and wanting him removed. A seminary formation process is not easy. It places a seminarian in a fishbowl and demands that he conform to the seminary's "rule of life" while exposing his growing edges, thus presenting data that may lead to the seminarian's expulsion from the seminary. A relatively wholesome, emotionally healthy person would find that scenario nerve-racking at times. The more emotionally troubled seminarian will perceive the system as threatening and adopt a guarded disposition. The struggles these men have had and their concomitant behavioral responses reflect imbedded neural patterns. Such neural patterns suggest how individuals are "wired" to act. New behaviors that are consistently displayed may, however, change these neural patterns (Cozolino, 2006). It would be helpful to consider the significance of neural patterns and its implication for a seminarian's behavior.

Trauma and the Brain

Imagine a golf net. A golfer will stand before the net and hit golf balls. When the net is strong, the balls

hit the net and fall to the ground harmlessly. For our sake, let's imagine at the center of the net is a square that is the strongest portion of the net, much stronger than the outer portion. The expectation is that since most golfers will hit the ball in that square, it's more important to make that center square stronger, but the errant golfer will sometimes hit a ball outside the center. If a ball continues to hit outside the center, where the net is not as strong, the result could be a loosening of the ties and/or a rip in the net at that point. Our brains operate in a similar fashion.

At birth, our brains are capable of managing appropriate levels of stress, like a golf net getting hit with a ball at its center. Imagine that a golf ball hitting the net represents an experience of stress. The center of the net, the portion of the net that is strongest, represents the age-appropriate levels of stress a child can manage. When stress increases, like golf balls hitting outside the dimensions of the center, one or two things can happen: the child, through the help of the parents, learns to cope, develops a new skill and increases the size of its center, or the stress overwhelms the child, survival instincts take over and a child develops distortions that serve him or her at the time. One can imagine in the second case that the center square grows in a distorted way in order to manage the stress the child encounters.⁵ Eventually, if those "errant golf balls of stress" continue to hit outside the core of the net, the net will tear. In this regard, the devastating impact of that type of stress on a child can be fatal, but for our purposes, a tear in the psychological net of a seminarian's brain will lead to poor impulse control, defensive reactions and an internalized (and too often an unarticulated) sense of social and psychological inadequacy.

Our brains are amazingly adaptive and do not mature until we reach our early to mid-twenties (Cozolino, 2010). During development through a process of support, our brains mature, and the individual develops the ability to manage emotions, code behavior, decode behavior, focus attention and employ rules of social engagement (Cozolino, 2010). The more positive interactions a person has and the more age-appropriate stress that person successfully contends with, the more resilient his or her brain becomes (Cozolino, 2010). Chronic stress and trauma overwhelm the brain, causing cognitive distortions to emerge in perception, thinking and impulse control. Eventually, the brain adapts and the distortions appear as the norm.

Our seminarian, Sam, has had repeated early childhood experiences of physical abuse, abandonment and

affective neglect, but he is a survivor. Learning how to survive such traumatic situations is a testimony to Sam's resilience; however, what comes with that learning are the distortions and embedded processes that bias Sam's ability to perceive a situation unfolding before him. Such biases are embedded in his thoughts and feelings and tend to emerge without much consideration and/or reflection. The IF process is intended to help Sam rein in the functioning structures (impulses, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, defenses) associated with those embedded distortions and alter their impact on his behavior, leading to more effective ministerial practice.

Functioning Structures of Troubled Seminarians

As anxiety increases, an individual's capacity to cope narrows, leaving him with fewer alternatives to manage the situation. An individual's capacity to manage his anxiety will tend to mirror that of his parents. It is beyond the scope of this article to address the full extent of this concept. Suffice it to say that individuals will tend toward one or two ways of dealing with increasing levels of anxiety: they will either gravitate to what is familiar, or they will "cut off" and avoid the anxiety-provoking event.

If the seminarian grew up with an unbalanced family structure, where dishonest interactions were the norm, chaos ruled and unpredictable behavior characterized the leadership, the seminarian may gravitate toward these behaviors when tension and stress increases. Our understanding that a troubled seminarian's brain has been formed to react in this fashion enables us to perceive clearly the difficulty a formation team will experience in assisting these seminarians in changing behaviors.

Second, since the seminary structure is inherently stressful, tension will be experienced by these individuals no matter what a formator does to ease the tension.⁶ All seminarians understand that they will be evaluated. For the more troubled seminarian, the chaos he has experienced has already sown suspicion within him toward those around him, especially authority. He will externalize this suspicion (anxiety related to threat) and act out in some fashion.⁷ The troubled seminarian will experience critique or reproach as unfounded, and these encounters leave him more suspicious and on guard, with more names to add to his psychological trash heap of life's disappointing people. He will enter this arena somewhat defensively; he will experience advising as threatening; he will expect the environment to disap-

point him; and he will possess little self-awareness to articulate such an expectation.

Third, these types of seminarians are survivors and will utilize those skills to survive a stressful environment. In a formation program, the expectation is that a seminarian will do more than just survive. Survival skills are utilized in the service of the self for the self, but he must flourish, and that requires that survival skills be understood and, when necessary, replaced. Remember, a troubled seminarian's cognitive filter – that component that gives the seminarian a felt sense of the world and how to act in it – narrows during periods of increased stress and tension, leading to poor coping strategies and other defensive reactions. Formators who understand and anticipate such reactions from their troubled seminarian may develop a reasonable level of tolerance for such occurrences, providing an opportunity to assist the seminarian in adopting different methods of coping. This strategy is an important component of the IF process.

It is not impossible for these seminarians to relearn and alter embedded neuro-patterns that have maintained and/or supported the cognitive distortions. Intensive formation is a means by which re-learning can take place.

Seminarians who present with troubling personal histories will have well-established patterns of relating based on cognitive distortions associated with the type of stress and trauma they have experienced and from which they have survived. It is not impossible for these seminarians to relearn and alter embedded neuro-patterns that have maintained and/or supported the cognitive distortions. Intensive formation is a means by which re-learning can take place.

Intensive Formation is not Psychotherapy

The standards established for suitability, through

the guidance of the PPF, paint a portrait of the type of person a seminary formation team feels confident recommending to a bishop for holy orders. These standards represent the goals and objectives for seminarians to adopt. They are broad enough to allow for uniqueness and specific enough to suggest an intervention when seminarians fail to measure up to the standards. Each seminarian knows that these standards represent the basis for his evaluation.

A seminarian who presents with a troubling past and demonstrates social and emotional deficits will struggle to internalize the standards. Intensive formation is a two-fold process of assisting such seminarians in acquiring the behaviors and internalizing the value system the seminary sets forth. Acquiring the behaviors and internalizing the value system is important for personal growth and ensuring that a seminarian is not “jumping through hoops.”

Second, the primary objective of the IF process is aiding seminarians in their quest to acquire the necessary qualities that the Church wants its priests to possess. All feedback, interventions and out-of-session assignments are suggested with an eye toward those qualities.

Conditions for Intensive Formation

It cannot be emphasized enough that the success of intensive formation heavily rests on the abilities of the formators. These individuals must possess high levels of emotional and social intelligence and are capable of open and honest dialogue with the seminarian that addresses the seminarian's idiosyncratic behaviors with an eye toward the priesthood. Effective formators possess the language skill that invites more dialogue and, consequently, self-disclosure, on the part of the seminarian. The formator offers challenges that merit a seminarian's personal reflection, and, ultimately, provides the seminarian access to new ways of thinking and behaving. Second, all challenges are offered with an eye toward the priesthood. A formator will thus utilize language that expresses the need for change as it serves the individual in his quest for priestly identity.

Formators who possess such abilities recognize that they are on a similar journey and believe the process of formation continues throughout life. The formator's personal on-going formation assists him or her during the IF sessions in maintaining rapport and encouraging the seminarian's human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral growth. In this regard, formators create an environment for the purpose of fostering “other positive regard” (OPR).

Effective priests possess the quality of “other positive regard” that allows them to extend to those they meet friendship instead of suspicion. Possessing the quality of OPR does not suggest naiveté, but rather a strong sense of self, a gentle and welcoming demeanor and a deep appreciation for the quality of humility.

Other Positive Regard

Carl Rogers (1961) in his landmark essay on the client-centered approach to therapy created the concept “unconditional positive regard.” Rogers admonished therapists to adopt an unconditional positive regard for their clients in an effort to create an arena for growth and change. While it is very difficult to extend to another unconditional positive regard, it is not impossible to develop a high degree of “Other Positive Regard” (OPR). OPR represents an attitude that “All whom I encounter deserve respect; and I will maintain the integrity of our relationship no matter how the other is acting.”⁸ Effective priests possess the quality of “other positive regard” that allows them to extend to those they meet friendship instead of suspicion. Possessing the quality of OPR does not suggest naiveté, but rather a strong sense of self, a gentle and welcoming demeanor and a deep appreciation for the quality of humility. This quality is best manifested in the formator who encounters a seminarian's resistance yet does not lose a basic desire to maintain a high level of OPR for that seminarian.

Individuals who adopt the OPR attitude operate in a manner that rids themselves of self-deception. Formators must be vigilant to ensure that their actions with a seminarian are not emerging from a secondary agenda. It is not unlikely that troubled seminarians will cause the formator to experience a significant degree of

consternation. Formators who adopt the OPR attitude recognize that conflict in the relationship is ordinary; therefore, some consternation is expected. When resistance persists, the formator who adopts an OPR attitude will first reflect on how he is contributing to the resistance. Once the formator has reflected on his actions and has discussed them with trusted personnel, he is given a clearer understanding of the reasons behind a seminarian's resistance, thus putting himself in a position to address such resistance with the seminarian. When that occurs, the formator will utilize language skills to challenge the seminarian in a manner that invites more self-disclosure and dialogue, reducing the tension in the session. The formator who adopts an OPR attitude presents a powerful model for appropriate priestly behavior and identity for all seminarians.

Phases of the Intensive Formation (IF) Process

As the reader considers the phases of IF, it may be helpful to consider a seminarian for whom IF would be beneficial. There are four phases in the IF process: assessment, creating the IF plan, conducting an IF meeting and terminating the IF process.

Phase One: Assessment

Formators have at their disposal the psychological evaluation of the seminarian and their initial observations. Seminarians who present with a troubled past or whose MMPI scores suggest poor impulse control or rigid personality features are flagged as potential IF participants.⁹ A seminarian is placed in an IF track once observations confirm the necessity of IF. During the assessment phase of the IF process, the formator is looking for the following:

1. *Demonstrated capacity for OPR* – Questions that need to be answered are these:

- Does the seminarian willingly offer his assistance to others?
- How does he tell stories or jokes, or reveal personal history? Does he do so inappropriately, demonstrating little conscious awareness of his impact on others? Does he use humor as a weapon?
- How does the seminarian engage in social discourse? Does he remain at ease, have a pleasant demeanor, seek out other's opinions, avoid monopolizing conversations and demonstrate a willingness to listen?
- Does the seminarian tend to stay to himself at

social gatherings?

- Does the seminarian tend to appear sullen, moody, or maintain an unpleasant countenance? Is he comfortable with his smile?

2. *Demonstrated capacity for Social Intelligence* –

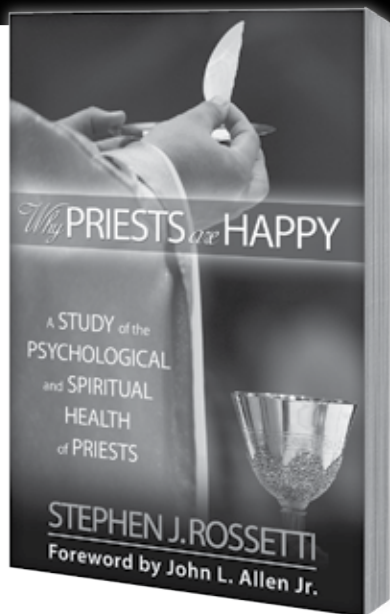
Questions that need to be answered are these:

- How does the seminarian respond to the needs of his peers?
- Does the seminarian understand how to interject his ideas or comments in a conversation or ask questions in class appropriately? Does he “shoot from the hip,” remain silent, or present his concerns or comments with an edge of suspicion?
- Does the seminarian understand how to sit at a dining room table, conduct conversations and excuse himself from the table?
- Does the seminarian deal with conflict through yelling, passive-aggressive behaviors, hiding out, manipulation, irresponsibility or suspicion, or does he demonstrate self-control, thoughtfulness, prudence, and/or curiosity?
- Does the seminarian solicit the ideas and thoughts of others? Can he reflect back to others what they have said or how they might be feeling? Can he demonstrate empathy?
- Does the seminarian engage in playful activities, exercise and respond appropriately to requests for play and recreation?

3. *Demonstrated capacity for impulse control* – Questions that need to be answered are these:

- During social settings, does the seminarian abuse alcohol?
- When performing tasks, how does the seminarian manage his anger or frustration?
- What happens when the seminarian experiences stress or becomes anxious? Can he moderate his actions?
- Does the seminarian use humor appropriately or is he caustic, manipulative?
- When the seminarian makes a mistake, how does he repair or reconcile with the offended parties? Can he acknowledge his mistakes or does he become defensive?
- When others have failed him, does he lash out, ignore them or challenge them appropriately?
- Does the seminarian appear capable of engaging in the formation sessions without suspicion or reluctance?

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4. Demonstrates capacity to internalize charism –

Questions that need to be answered are:

- Is the seminarian open to being influenced?
- Does he demonstrate the self-reflective capacity to internalize the values and beliefs necessary in order to become an effective priest?
- Does the seminarian's resistance reflect a hidden agenda, inability to trust authority or a pervasive sense of personal vulnerability with little personal agency?
- Does the seminarian allow himself to be known by the formation team? Can he internalize the qualities of the religious order or the diocese?

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list of questions. What is important during the assessment phase are the conclusions to which a formation team comes. The answers will provide the formation team concrete observations that suggest the need for phase two of the IF process.

Phase Two: Creating the Individual Intensive Formation Plan (IIFP)

The formation advisor, through the assistance of the formation team, engages in a process of creating a contract with the seminarian to address and ameliorate the observed behaviors. Such behaviors present the cause for concern and are of a nature that may indicate that the seminarian is not suited for a formation program at the current time. There are six steps to creating the IIFP.

Step 1 Outline the presenting issues. It is advisable that there be at least three and no more than six presenting issues. These issues must be spelled out explicitly from observed behavior. Speculation about the origins of the presenting issues is not important. Second, any observation that is not tethered to a specific observed behavior is not documented. A formator cannot develop the IIFP based on his or her feelings or speculations.

Step 2 Once the presenting issues have been explicitly stated, the behavioral goals must be explicitly stated.

Step 3 The course and frequency of the meetings will be stated. The course represents how, when and where the meetings will be conducted and who will be invited to provide feedback.

Step 4 The names of the personnel who will be invited to provide feedback will be provided. These are individuals who are well-known by the formation team and can provide valuable feedback regarding a seminarian's behavior. Second, these are individuals who have earned the trust of the formation team, have demonstrated the willingness to serve in this capacity, and have the disposition to provide worthwhile feedback. These individuals may need some training in giving this type of feedback (this requirement will be discussed below under Tools of Measuring Accountability). These individuals will not need to know the issues presented in Step 1. They will be asked to provide feedback regarding their observations of the seminarian in question. Their feedback will present a measure of accountability that suggests that the presenting issues are being addressed and that the seminarian has begun to demonstrate behavioral changes.

Step 5 The IIFP will explicitly state that the content of the meetings will focus on observations made and the interactions between the formator and the seminarian during the IF sessions. A significant source of formation material will come from the interactions between the formator and seminarian. The formator's ability to address "here and now" interactions during the session highlights the relevance and immediacy of the presenting issues.

Step 6 Create the IIFP (see appendix A for a sample IIFP contract), discuss it with the seminarian and have him sign the document. Remember, this document is intended to be used as a formation tool for individuals who are preparing for priesthood. All issues must be presented in a manner that suggests their relevance for those preparing for priestly service. This instrument is not a psychological document intended to address a psychological evaluation of the seminarian. It represents the standards by which seminarians are evaluated for continuance in the seminary. It does not suggest that a seminarian is called or not called to priestly ministry. It does suggest whether or not a seminarian has the capacity to engage in a formation program at the current time.

Once the IIFP has been created, the formation advisor sets up the meeting with the seminarian to go over the document. Following that initial meeting, IF sessions commence.

Phase Three: Conducting IF Sessions

The formator prepares the seminarian to engage in the IF process by discussing the IIFP and how the IF sessions will be conducted. It is important to note that

the formator will be saying something like the following in the first session:

Sam, as you know, each seminarian meets with his formation advisor to discuss how things are going, and how he's being perceived by the formation team. You also understand that the standard by which we measure a seminarian's suitability for priestly ministry is found in the documents on the rule of life of the seminary, and expectations are outlined in that document for each year he's in the seminary. No one does formation perfectly, and as a matter of fact, formation is not an easy project. So, it's important for you to receive feedback periodically from me and the formation team. First, let me start by saying . . . (at this point, a formator needs to offer the seminarian positive feedback based on observable behavior). Those are good things we see and they lead us to conclude that you may have a calling to the priesthood. We also have some serious concerns that we would like you to address. (It is best that the number of serious concerns reported is less by half of the number of commendations.¹⁰) What I would like to do with you is talk about how these issues can be addressed and why we think they are important for you to change. We may, from time to time, invite others into our session to assist with the process. What you must be clear about is that we want you to succeed and this process is a means by which you may achieve that success.

The IF sessions are solution-focused and goal-directed. The objective is to address the presenting issues, assist the seminarian in understanding the need to focus on these issues and solidify behavioral change. The formator will consider the presenting issue, discuss the issue and the seminary expectations and encourage the seminarian to focus his attention on the dynamics surrounding the presenting issue. The IF session involves a three-step process.¹¹

Step 1 After initial rapport building, the focus needs to be on a specific issue outlined in the IIFP. The issue is presented to the seminarian and discussion ensues regarding the seminarian's understanding of the issue, where the issue has been observed and ways in which the seminarian can alter previous behavioral patterns. The seminarian is then encouraged to discuss other times when the issue has emerged. Two important questions the seminarian needs to answer are the following:

- What is he being asked to consider by the seminary and what would he like to have happen when he is involved in similar situations?
- What must change inside of him in order for him to realize what he would like to have happen?

The IF process is similar to a probationary period in which the seminarian must achieve measurable changes in his behavior to warrant continuance in the seminary.

Step 2 Encourage the seminarian to collect data around the issue. The seminarian will focus his attention on the issue throughout his day and note the “whats, whys, and how comes” of the presenting issue. Collecting data involves mental notes or journaling about the issue. It is important for the seminarian to spend time reflecting on the issue in order to garner greater self-awareness. One of the most important aspects of the IF process is assisting the seminarian in developing self-knowledge and self-awareness in the moment when behavioral change is required. The greater the self-awareness in the moment, the more proactive the seminarian may choose to act, and the better the opportunity to make behavioral changes.¹²

Step 3 Wrap up. Recap what was discussed and note what the seminarian will complete before the next session. Formators ought to keep a log concerning these sessions. The log will record the content of the conversations (no speculations), other concerns that the formator would like to discuss that were not addressed and the specific post-session work the seminarian will conduct.

These sessions should not last more than twenty-five minutes and should occur weekly. It is important to note that rapport-building occurs throughout the session. Rapport-building on the part of the formator occurs with the basic skills of empathy, listening, paraphrasing and reflecting feelings that all seminarians are trained to demonstrate in the helping relationship course. The formator is, thus, constantly modeling appropriate one-on-one skills.

Phase Four: Termination of the IF Process

Termination of the IF process occurs when the formator and seminarian have achieved success in altering behavior or when the formator, in consultation with the formation team, concludes that the seminarian is not ready to fully engage in a formation program at the

current time. The IF process is similar to a probationary period in which the seminarian must achieve measurable changes in his behavior to warrant continuance in the seminary. As a seminarian demonstrates the necessary behavioral change, the meetings can be held less frequently.

Throughout the process, it is important for the seminarian to receive feedback about his behavior. Keep in mind that his anxiety will be high; therefore, he will need encouragement and assurances. The skilled formator will provide his critique in a manner that encourages the seminarian to want more feedback. Being positive, caring and kind are experiences this man may not have had too often in his life, leaving him suspicious or “waiting for the other shoe to drop.” The formator who can consistently respond to the seminarian in this manner will have an important impact on him. Remember, the IF process is utilized to assist seminarians in achieving their goal of priesthood.

Tools for Measuring the IF Process

The most important measure of the process is the seminarian’s behavior. Has he demonstrated noticeable differences with respect to the presenting issues? Second, since other areas of accountability are demonstrated through his disposition, does he seem more curious about his behavior? Does he seem more willing to discuss the issues? Does he freely speak of the insights he has gained as a result of collecting data around the presenting issues? Does he discuss the issues with openness and honesty? Does he talk about them with respect to his emerging priestly identity? These are just a few questions a formator may use to determine the extent to which the seminarian is internalizing the value system of the “rule of life.”

A third crucial measure of progress is found in the oral reports from professors, members of the formation team and peers. When considering a conjoint session between the seminarian and a peer or professor, it is important to prepare that individual for the session. A conjoint session provides the seminarian immediate feedback about his behavior. The formator and seminarian agree to invite the individual into the session for the purpose of sharing feedback about the seminarian’s behavior. Once the individual has shared his or her impressions, the person is excused from the meeting, and the IF session continues between the formator and the seminarian. In a conjoint session, the formator will need to be highly directive and steer the course of the conversation toward clear, concrete and concise observations.

Individuals providing feedback in this manner need to understand before they enter the session that once they have given their feedback, they will be excused and will not participate any further in that session. Individual professors unclear about the process of formation are not to be included.

Formators should use questions such as, “What’s it like having X in class?” and “How does he interact with the other students?” to gather more data about the impact the seminarian is having on those around him. It is possible that X can “jump through a hoop” and act more refined, but these types of behavior are difficult for seminarians to sustain without genuine maturation. It will be important to ask the seminarian simply to listen to what is being said and not respond. Once the guest has been excused and the session continues, the formator will engage the seminarian in a discussion about what he heard, helping the seminarian gain perspective and using the information to assist the seminarian in becoming more aware of his impact on others. The astute formator will quickly recognize the seminarian’s defensive reactions and act to defuse them so that learning can take place. The best learning occurs when individuals are not stressed (Cozolino, 2010).

Conclusion

Seminarians raised in troubling and distressing situations will struggle in a formation setting. The seminary setting is not easy and is inherently stressful even for seminarians who possess a relatively healthy ego. The evaluative setting of a seminary environment will cause seminarians who have experienced trauma or come from rather peculiar family environments to struggle with trust, openness, social discourse and impulse control.

The IF process is intended to encourage significant attention on the seminarian’s behavior in order for the seminarian to make behavioral changes and gain insight into effective community leadership.

Formators who have high levels of emotional and social intelligence will be quick to observe a troubled seminarian’s deficits in social intercourse. Such seminarians will demonstrate deficits in their capacity for empathy, listening, encouraging others and understanding their impact upon a situation. The IF process is intended to encourage significant attention on the seminarian’s behavior in order for the seminarian to make behavioral changes and gain insight into effective community leadership. Seminarians presented with these issues who cannot demonstrate behavioral change are not emotionally ready for a seminary formation program at the current time.



Dr. Lawrence M. LeNoir, LCPC, is assistant professor of pastoral studies at Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC.
(larrylenoir@hotmail.com)

Appendix A

Individual Intensive Formation Program Contract – A Sample

Seminarian: Sam Jones

Diocese: Toronto

Date: Oct. 4th, 2011

Commendations:

1. Sam is willing to pitch in without being asked and has been observed doing so at seminary events.
2. Sam has a deep love of the Church and a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.
3. Sam supports other seminarians through the use of his car, picking them up late at night, and on a couple of occasions has assisted seminarians in the early hours of the morning whose cars had broken down when returning from weekend trips.
4. Sam reports a strong desire to be a priest.
5. Sam has the intellectual capacity to perform well academically.

Presenting Issues:

1. Sam has a tendency to speak off the cuff in public settings without much self-awareness of his impact on others.

Example 1: In his intro to philosophy class, while the professor was talking about Aristotle, Sam blurted out, "Aristotle sucks." Taken aback, the professor admonished Sam for his outburst at which point Sam said, "This is bulls**," thinking no one had heard him.

Example 2: Sam was overheard telling a joke of a questionable nature at the lunch table with a visiting bishop sitting across from him. The visiting bishop spoke to the rector about his experience.

Example 3: While visiting Sam at his placement, the field education director walked the halls of his placement with Sam, who, when he encountered one of the workers in the building who was pregnant, said to her chuckling, "So, how're the babies in there," pointing to her very pregnant womb. The worker was

embarrassed, but Sam registered no sense of the inappropriateness of his comment.

2. Sam isolates at community gatherings, tending to stay by himself.

Example: Members of the formation team have attempted to engage Sam in polite conversation but he remains evasive, rarely engaging in social discourse.

3. Sam's formation advisor has noted that Sam has been late or does not show up for morning prayer at least once, sometimes twice, per week. Sam has also been consistently late for advising sessions.

Examples: When confronted by this, Sam blamed others for his behavior, e.g. a) when Sam's formation advisor discussed with Sam missing morning prayer, Sam's response was that he had too much homework from Dr. Savali, b) when Sam missed his formation advising session, Sam's response was that he needed time to write his paper, c) when failing to show up on time to serve Mass, Sam's response was that the head acolyte failed to inform him it was his turn to serve. All seminarians understand that it is their responsibility to check the schedule.

Goals:

1. Sam will develop a greater awareness of his impact on others, learn to place a "governor" on his speech, and become more considerate of those around him. Priests who fail to develop these skills sabotage their efforts as leaders.
2. Sam will learn to define what a mutually supportive and affectively mature relationship is and looks like. Sam will establish mutually

supportive, affectively mature relationships with other seminarians and formation faculty. Priests who do not understand how to establish such relationships tend to isolate from others. Since the priesthood is a life-style of relationships, priests who fail to socialize will fail as spiritual leaders, leaving parishioners trying to sort out the confusing behavior of their pastors. Eventually, these priests are isolated from the presbyterate. When this occurs, these priests experience feelings of dissatisfaction with the priesthood that may lead to more problematic, potentially scandalous behavior.

3. Sam will be punctual with all of his responsibilities. Priests who are not punctual lose credibility with their parishioners.
4. Sam will address the issues presented to him in a mature, adult manner that will develop within him a) sensitivity toward those around him, b) insight into another's motivations, c) a charitable character and d) an internalized articulation of the priesthood as a life-style of relationships. Priests who fail to develop these skills in the seminary inflict themselves on the community, creating discouragement and resentment among the staff and parishioners, ultimately becoming priests who are difficult to assign.

Meetings:

Sam will meet with his formation advisor for a period of six weeks in twenty-five minute sessions. These sessions will be held twice a week until otherwise specified. These sessions will address the issues and goals presented above. Sam's Old Testament professor, Fr. Malachi Jenkins, S.J., and his philosophy professor, Dr. Daniel Glumenten, have accepted invitations to provide additional feedback. They will be invited to the session when warranted.

The expectation is that Sam will allow himself to be influenced and avail himself of the process. It is the intention of this process, with the guidance of the formation team and the Holy Spirit, to assist Sam in achieving the goal of priestly identity and service. The rector, along with the formation team, has the confidence that Sam will succeed.

Seminarian

Formation Advisor

Date

Endnotes

1. Therapy can be a good complement to the work of formation, but it should not be the first option when a seminarian is struggling living within the parameters of the “rule of life” at the seminary due to his experiences of trauma.
2. Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) is a condition that emerges through repeated experiences of trauma from which the person cannot escape, for instance, someone raised in a violent family in which he received or witnessed repeated experiences of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.
3. The attitude of the formation team to a seminarian’s use of therapy should be no different than if he were going to confession.
4. I use the term “peculiar” as it has been my experience that some seminarians are raised in families that provided a secure environment yet also had a few idiosyncratic dynamics that caused some social deficits to emerge in its members. These peculiarities would not be well characterized as dysfunctional and would only become problematic in the individual’s desire to pursue the priesthood.
5. I have developed this idea through my reading of various brain researchers on the social brain and psychological trauma to the brain. For those interested, I would encourage reading Atkinson (2005), Cozolino (2006), Cozolino (2010), Goleman (2006), LeDoux (1996) and Seigel (2010).
6. It is helpful to note that seminarians need some training in how to receive feedback, how to respond to feedback and how to make the best use of the feedback that they will receive from their formators.
7. A seminarian who has worked through the trauma of his life and found a means to manage his emotional welfare may not act out.
8. As a concept, unconditional positive regard (UPR) represents a therapist’s capacity to receive all reactions from clients without judgment. The difficulty in applying the concept rests in the limitations of individuals (therapists) to know themselves fully and, thereby, extend UPR without distortion or self-deception.
9. Seminary teams and vocation directors need to develop honest working relationships that encourage full disclosure regarding a seminarian’s family of origin experience, in addition to observations from the vocations department regarding a seminarian’s growing edges.
10. Individuals respond best to positive appraisals. As a matter of fact, it is possible that the more positive the feedback, the more apt the individual will respond to the required changes.
11. In the course of conducting these sessions, the seminarian may conclude that he needs therapy to deal with the trauma he experienced. That is a welcome choice on his part. It does not, however, preclude the responsibility he has to the demands of the formation program and most

especially that of the IF process. Second, a seminarian cannot use his therapy as a shield against dealing with the issues presented to him. When seminarians resort to comments like, “Oh, well, I’m addressing that in therapy,” the astute formator will then say, “That’s good. I still want to talk to you about X, and how you understand what’s going on there.” You are not asking him to reveal what’s happening in therapy. You are emphasizing his accountability with the issues that have been raised.

12. It may be helpful to ask the seminarian to speak to a trusted seminarian about the issue being presented. The danger here is that the seminarian will choose someone who will enable the seminarian’s resistance. Formators will need to encourage the seminarian to speak to someone who will give him honest feedback. The goal, of course, is for the seminarian to develop a new intrapersonal culture. The intrapersonal culture of survival and vigilance is replaced with a culture of OPR.

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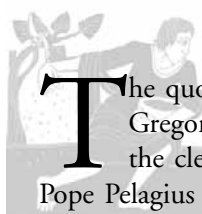
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From Designated Spiritual Leaders to Real Spiritual Leaders: The Challenge Facing Initial Priestly Formation

Rev. J. Ronald Knott

Although those who have no knowledge of the power of drugs shrink from presenting themselves as physicians of the flesh, there are those who are utterly ignorant of spiritual precepts but not afraid of professing themselves to be physicians of the heart.

—On Pastoral Care, *Saint Gregory the Great*



The quote above is from the classic work of St. Gregory the Great who was acclaimed Pope by the clergy and people of Rome on the death of Pope Pelagius in the year 590. Gregory sought to decline the office, and in this he was utterly sincere. He wrote that he “undertook the burden of the dignity with a sick heart,” that he was “so stricken with sorrow that he could hardly speak” and that “the eyes of his soul were darkened with grief.” When John, Archbishop of Ravenna, chided Gregory for his reluctance in assuming the office to which he was elevated, Gregory wrote his treatise *On Pastoral Care* as a reply. He seemed to understand quite well that “fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

For the last seven years, I have taught at Saint Meinrad Seminary a course I call “The Transition Out of the Seminary and Into Ministry.” I even wrote a book for this course entitled *From Seminarian to Diocesan Priest: Managing a Successful Transition*.¹ One of the texts I use in that class is St. Gregory’s *On Pastoral Care*. I have always understood a classic as a work that has withstood the test of time and one that contains wisdom that is ageless. Gregory the Great meets these criteria very well.

In teaching my class, I have discovered there are

Simply *being* a priest (as a noun) is not enough. Future priests will need to know how to *priest* (as a verb).

several critical insights that these priests-to-be need to understand and understand quickly in light of the fact that some of them are made pastors on their ordination days or shortly thereafter.

One of the most fundamental issues I try to address with them is that simply *being* a priest (as a noun) is not enough. They will need to know how to *priest* (as a verb). In other words, a valid ordination is not enough in today’s church. They also need to be effective as priests. As Gregory the Great knew, a *designated* spiritual leader does not mean that one is a *real* spiritual leader.

This affirmation is a vital distinction because I believe that seminaries are overly focused on personal piety and are not focused enough on developing effec-

I define spiritual leadership as the ability to influence people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be through invitation, persuasion, example and the skillful use of the Church's rites, rituals and rules.

tive spiritual leaders for our faith communities. As I like to joke, their job as priests will not consist in having people see golden light come out of their rectories, but in seeing golden light come out of the homes of their parishioners. It is not good enough today for them to be champions of the truth; they must have the skills to lead others to want to accept and live out of the truth.

When I began to teach this course, I looked around for texts that I could use on the subject of spiritual leadership only to find out that there is a shocking lack of material on this particular subject. Most of the books I came across focused on personal spirituality (mostly Catholic) or parish management (mostly Protestant). As a result, after several years of teaching that course, I decided to write a second text book entitled *The Spiritual Leadership of a Parish Priest: On Being Good and Good At It*. The thesis of that book is that personal holiness is essential, but it is not enough. The skills and ability to lead others to holiness are also needed. Even Pope Benedict XVI has noted that it is easier to define the truth in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith than it is to inspire and motivate people to want to live it.

In my second book, I make a distinction between spiritual leadership and pastoral leadership, phrases that we tend to use interchangeably.

Religion has two sides – an esoteric side and an exoteric side. In the words of St. Paul, the esoteric (private, interior) side of religion has to do with “the treasure” (the content of faith) and the exoteric (public) side has to do with “the earthenware jar” (human beings) (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7). This seems to be the locus of the battle between Jesus and the Pharisees in the gospels. The Pharisees seemed to fixate only on the forms of

religion or its exoteric side, while Jesus seemed to focus on healing the split between the two sides. Jesus said he did not come to “destroy the law, but to fulfill it” (Matthew 5:17). I am trying to make that precise case when I say though different, there is a relationship between spiritual leadership and pastoral leadership and that we need both.

In this article I focus on spiritual leadership. I define it as the ability to influence people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be through invitation, persuasion, example and the skillful use of the Church's rites, rituals and rules.

The focus of spiritual leadership is to cause an internal movement to deeper discipleship. The focus of pastoral leadership, on the other hand, is on an external skillful use of the tools of the Church while coordinating the charisms within the community.

This idea is confirmed in Scripture in Jesus' teaching on the Good Shepherd. In that Greek text, there are at least two possible words for good, *agathos* and *kalos*. *Agathos* means good as in morally good while *kalos* means good as in good at or effective at something. The Good Shepherd in the gospel is said to be *kalos*, good at shepherding. Personal holiness and goodwill alone in a *designated* spiritual leader will not suffice. He must also be effective if he is to be a *real* spiritual leader. In other words, today's good shepherds must not only appreciate and value green grass and flowing water and have their own supply, but they must also be able to seek and find it and to lead their flocks to it!

Spiritual leadership, the ability to influence people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be, is critical today. Surely, there is no doubt that organized religion has lost its ability to impose unquestioned rules of behavior on people and that one of the most pressing needs facing Catholicism today is the quality of its priestly leadership. No amount of ranting and raving about how we priests ought to be listened to will change this situation. We simply must get better at our ability to *influence* and *persuade* instead of blaming people for their lack of faith and the culture for its moral relativism. Nor can we merely collect good tools (write new editions of the rule books); we must be able effectively to influence people to follow the rules of faith.

There are at least two very different ways to herd sheep. One way is to walk in front of them, gently calling them with a convincing voice, while they willingly follow to where they need to go. The other way is to bark and snap from behind, like a sheepdog, chasing

and intimidating them into going where they need to go. Good shepherds lead by invitation. Sheepdogs drive the sheep. Leaders pull and bosses push. It is no surprise to me that in a time when priests are losing more and more credibility, the barking and snapping seem to be growing louder and louder and gaining more popularity, especially among those priests newest to spiritual leadership. When we cannot influence people with convincing voices to follow the Good Shepherd, we end up becoming barking sheepdogs. This may drive some sheep into the pen, but more and more sheep will, no doubt, run away from us or simply become more irritated by our barking and snapping.

Instead of facing our spiritual leadership crisis, there seems to be a growing avoidance response in the Church that is downright curious. I liken it to a theme park response in which people put on period costumes of nineteenth century Catholicism and build realistic stage sets from the good old days. These folks pretend that nothing has changed and attempt to convince themselves that this will somehow make all the confusion go away.

Would not a better response be the one Thomas Merton wrote about in his *Seven Storey Mountain*?

(Robert) Lax's picture of America...is a picture of a country full of people who want to be kind and pleasant and happy and love the things of God, but do not know how. And they do not know where to find out. They are surrounded by all kinds of information which only conspires to bewilder them more and more. Lax's vision is a vision of a day when they will turn on the radio and somebody will start telling them what they have really been wanting to hear and needing to know. They will find somebody who is capable of telling them of the love of God in language that will no longer sound hackneyed or crazy, but with authority and conviction, the conviction of sanctity.

In his apostolic letter *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, Pope John Paul II lays out the work of presbyterates and seminaries for the years ahead. In that document, he reflected on the practical significance of Vatican II's theology of "the universal call to holiness" for today, calling it an intrinsic and essential aspect of Church teaching. He makes these two crucial points: "All pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness" and (2) "stressing holiness remains more than ever an urgent task."

Seminaries must not only address the growing need for *real* spiritual leadership but also a related issue, the problem of those, in the words of Gregory the Great, who "profess to be physicians of the heart" but who are "utterly ignorant of spiritual precepts."

As leadership expert Daniel Sweet writes, our people want their visions lifted to higher sights, their performance to a higher level and their personalities stretched beyond normal limitations – they want to become holy – but they are often left like sheep without a shepherd.

Seminaries must not only address the growing need for *real* spiritual leadership but also a related issue, the problem of those, in the words of Gregory the Great, who "profess to be physicians of the heart" but who are "utterly ignorant of spiritual precepts."

Father William Moorman, a coordinator of spiritual formation at St. Luke Institute, a treatment center for priests, says this about some of our spiritual-leaders-in-the-making. As spiritual leaders,

we are entrusted with the unique responsibility of embracing the sacred intimacy of another's spiritual life. Can this be possible if we are unable to embrace the mystery and the sacred sanctity of our own identity? Too often candidates are looking for the identity of priests/religious as a vicarious personal identity, which is always a formula for disaster. Most often these individuals insist on external order to balance their internal chaos, and they never achieve the inner peace they long for in their spiritual lives. Spirituality for such persons resides outside themselves in spiritual practices, as opposed to embracing the mystery of God, others and self.

When seminaries emphasize personal piety over training spiritual leaders, do they inadvertently play into this phenomenon?

We have a spiritual leadership crisis, and seminaries must find better ways to rise to the occasion in meeting the need for *real* spiritual leaders.

Any formation of spiritual leaders assumes reasonably integrated individuals, but Father Moorman notes that because of the shortage of seminarians, screening and formation programs tended in recent decades to accept and tolerate candidates with demonstrable personality traits such as dependency, avoidance, narcissism and obsessive/compulsive behavior.

Priesthood, even today, offers seductions of power, prestige and flattery. These seductions attract those who are drawn to the status and practice of ministry because it helps satisfy their need to be the focus of attention and affirmation.² Is this not manifested among some candidates in an exaggerated emphasis on the theology of the priest as “a man set apart,” the need to wear cassocks even in public places like airports and at sporting events and the rise in the numbers of some young priests sent to treatment centers simply because “they cannot relate to people?” These behaviors become even more pernicious if they are couched in the religious language of orthodoxy and being servants.

My sense, from years of pastoral experience, is that most Catholics want to be good and serve God, but many do not know how and many of us priests do not know how to lead them there. It seems that the more we try to define truth for people, the more they feel uninterested and bored by it. Some leave the Church to look for greener grass in other denominations while others simply give up the search. This crisis, if not addressed, will get worse in the next generation. We have a spiritual leadership crisis and seminaries must find better ways to rise to the occasion in meeting the need for *real* spiritual leaders. Our people need wise shepherds and they deserve good spiritual leadership. Our whole *raison d'être* as priests is to “help the People of God to exercise faithfully and fully the common priesthood which it has received.”³ As priests, we must become who we say we are. We must, more and more, “walk our talk.”



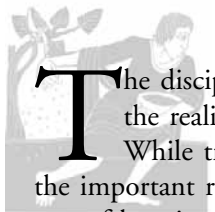
Rev. J. Ronald Knott, D.Min., a priest of the Archdiocese of Louisville, is founding director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at Saint Meinrad School of Theology, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

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1. Father Knott's books can be accessed through scholarshop@saintmeinrad.edu or nfpc@nfpc.org.
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Contextual Education in Conflict Management: An Experimental Approach

Ann M. Garrido and Carolyn A. Wright



The discipline of field education is grounded in the realization that environment is educational. While traditional classroom pedagogy identifies the important role that the instructor plays in the process of learning, field education draws attention to the often hidden role played by context. All environments teach, but whether their teaching conforms with what we would like our students to learn remains a perennial question. All environments form, but whether the formation they offer is consonant with our ambition of human health and wholeness or, in reality, is deforming, is not always clear. Field education recognizes that we should be intentional about the environments in which our students learn because, in the end, it is not what we say that most shapes our students' practices, but what they see and do.

The Church's ministry formation documents for the priesthood, diaconate and lay ministry all emphasize the importance of conflict management and resolution as a critical skill set for ministry.¹ At Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri, we have included, for a number of years, a unit on conflict within our pastoral formation curriculum that accompanies students' field education placements. Students are introduced to the Harvard Negotiation Project text *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*² and work through a variety of hypothetical case studies related to conflict. They are also invited to bring case studies involving conflict in their field work for theological reflection with their peers and field supervisor. Our work in this area, however, had not felt sufficient in light of the increasing ecclesial tensions that our alumni reported in their ministries, and in light of the increasing tension

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that we felt within the classrooms of our own institution.

In 2007, the Aquinas faculty initiated a concerted effort to shape the conflict practices of the academic and field environments in which our students' learn. Grounded in the pedagogical principles of field education, the faculty chose not to add additional units into the curriculum for teaching about conflict, but rather to attempt to create educational environments in which healthy, Christian conflict was consistently modeled and integrated into the student's life. On the field education front, the school delegated funds from a Lilly grant project to host two all-day workshops on conflict management and negotiation for the pastors and parish staffs of approximately sixteen partner parish communities where our students served in field placements.³ On the academic front, the school pursued a separate

\$20,000 grant from the Wabash Center to help the faculty and staff of Aquinas shift the operative practices of the institution around conflict.⁴ In applying for the grant, the faculty recognized that the primary subjects of the grant effort were not the students, but themselves. They would need to learn, practice and commit to the principles of *Difficult Conversations* and be able to utilize them in conversations with students and each other. They would need to create a culture within the school wherein students could witness conflict being handled in a productive way, leading to greater cohesiveness in the community.

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Upon reception of the Wabash grant, the faculty embarked upon a two-year series of activities in partnership with Triad Consulting, an auxiliary of the Harvard Negotiation Project. All faculty and staff read and discussed the text *Difficult Conversations*. They engaged in a series of role plays around conflict situations that emerge in the ordinary day-to-day life of an educational institution both inside and outside the classroom. In May 2008, the faculty participated in a two-day retreat with one another, facilitated by Sheila Heen of Triad Consulting, in which they entered into a lengthy difficult conversation about a particularly neuralgic topic regarding liturgical practice within the institution. Heen continued to work with a small group of faculty and select students the following year through an equally challenging topic: "Truth. What is it? Who has it? And, how do we know?" In April 2009, this small team hosted a school-wide symposium on Truth, attempting to model what meaningful difficult conversation on the topic might look like.

After the official grant ended, the faculty and

Heen chose to extend their focus on this area an additional year through a book study of the Harvard Negotiation Project's *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*.⁵ They also held a day-long workshop on negotiation and arranged additional coaching for six faculty members who might serve as ongoing resources within the school regarding conflict management. The effectiveness of the grant effort was tracked via a faculty/staff pre-study survey followed by a post-study survey at the end of year one for staff. Tracking continued with faculty post-study surveys at the end of years two and three. Evaluation surveys were also collected from all participating pastors and parish staffs, and seven of the parish teams were identified for more extensive focus group conversations with the grant director. Additional questions were added to student exit interviews in Spring and Winter 2010 to see whether the students were able to perceive a cultural shift within their learning environments. Finally, in December 2010, a select group of recent alumni were invited to share their reflections on their experiences since graduation, and special attentiveness was given to the role difficult conversations played in their ministry.

The surveys gave evidence of significant movement in the faculty in regards to their comfort level in addressing the difficult conversations that arose in their classrooms and with one another. Before the Difficult Conversations grant was implemented in 2008, the faculty were asked to evaluate their comfort with difficult conversations in the classroom on a scale of 1-10. Their answers ranged from a 3 to a 10. In 2010, when the same question was asked again, the entire faculty clustered between a 7 and a 9. The median score rose from a 7 to an 8.5. The following comments are representative:

- "I can truly say engaged – and, yes, at times difficult – conversation is now part of my daily work repertoire and that of many of my colleagues."
- "Admitting officially that we are in great need of addressing difficult conversations has led many of us to actually take them on. This means, minimally, that many will understand and cannot fault me if I actually do take them on."
- "I find myself living pretty constantly now in the 'stance of curiosity.' Instead of things making me angry, they make me curious. I also am more optimistic that the conflict can be worked out if I'm willing to initiate it, so I do

so more readily and with less anxiety. I find myself triangulating less, and instead speaking directly to the other party.”

- “I am much more comfortable raising issues in faculty meetings, and meeting with students, faculty and staff in my (and their) office. Since the students usually know this process, I can always expect them to use it and understand when I use it.”

Parish pastors and staffs reported gratitude for the two workshops and indicated a shift in their team dynamics. Focus group participants were asked to rate their understanding of engaged conflict and confrontation as a reconciling practice both prior to and following the workshops. Prior to the event, 24% rated themselves as fairly to very strong in their capacity, and after the workshop 96% rated themselves fairly to very strong in their capacity. Equally as interesting, before the event, 36% rated themselves fairly weak or weak in their capacity. Afterwards, 0% assigned this rating. In response to the question regarding their capacity to separate people from the problem, before the workshop 35% of the participants rated themselves fairly to very strong in this capacity. After the workshop, 80% did. Comments included:

- “I understand better why people need to feel valued and how important it is to consider my and the other’s interests. . . . Our interests provide common ground.”
- “I see how these conversations are necessary for growth in holiness – and should be approached from a curiosity stance.”
- “Strong emotions and convictions are proof of dedication on behalf of both parties. These conversations although difficult can be managed and fruitful.”

Student exit interviews indicated that many of the students were unaware of the conscious efforts the faculty had put into creating cultures of healthy conflict within the institution and many of their field placement sites. Some had, however, noticed a shift in the climate:

- “Disparaging remarks have been addressed in class.”
- “There has been an improvement in the lay/cleric relationship among students.”

Alumni comments indicated both that they now recognized conflict management as an essential skill

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for effective ministry and that, while they didn’t necessarily welcome conflict in their communities, they felt equipped to address it:

- “I am aware of the need for empathy in the Church. My communication and listening skills have improved through my studies at Aquinas.”
- “All of the time in ministry, I try to remember to take on the stance of curiosity.”
- “It’s forever a challenge, [I’m] forever re-defining. I say, ‘Keep bringing yourself back to the center and remind yourself of what your purpose is. It is not always easy. It is a dream. It is going to come true.’”

Key Learnings

Aquinas Institute’s extended efforts in the area of conflict education over the past four years have resulted in several insights that may benefit other ministry formation programs interested in pursuing a similar strategy.

- ***The Value of Shared Vocabulary.*** One of the greatest gifts of the grant projects to the school was that it gave faculty, staff, field placement communities and students a shared vocabulary to use in situations of conflict. By and large, our entire school community understands the difference between what one “intends” and the “impact” that it might have. We distinguish between assigning “blame” for an incident and “mapping contribution.” We differentiate between assumptions of “truth” versus “perception.” Learning helpful vocabulary before the fact can help make difficult conversations easier when they emerge because we know in advance what kind of language will help us make it through with integrity.
- ***The Challenge of Real Life Application.*** There is a difference between role playing a theoretical conflict and being able to engage

One of the greatest gifts of the grant projects to the school was that it gave faculty, staff, field placement communities and students a shared vocabulary to use in situations of conflict.

in actual conflict. Persons who work through difficult conversations successfully in practice sessions still often forget to draw upon what was learned in the middle of an actual conflict. Workshops and reading help, but individualized coaching for real life situations has shown the greatest success in actually transforming a person's patterns of behavior in a conflict.

- ***Studying Conflict Management Does Not Lead to Less Conflict.*** An unspoken assumption going into the grant was that if we learned good conflict management we would have less conflict in our institution. In fact, the reverse seems to be true. In retrospect, this only makes sense. When persons feel more skilled at having difficult conversations, they are more likely to bring them up. The subsequent positive experiences of conflict in a community make members less afraid of conflict, resulting in even more difficult conversations. The benefit is greater honesty within the institution and less triangulation or repressed anger, but that does not mean things are necessarily more pleasant.
- ***The Practice of Difficult Conversation Can Highlight Gaps in Human Formation.*** Engaging the questions and tools that we learned in our study of conflict management led us to a new depth of conversation with each other, and human formation issues quickly began to surface.⁶ Not only students, but faculty, staff and field supervisors found themselves at various stages of relational maturity. Good difficult conversations, it turns out, tend to expose one's capacities for and obstacles to collaboration in sometimes rather humbling ways. Some persons may respond to this exposure with

commitment to be more attentive to their personal psycho-sexual development, and others may experience such a level of discomfort that they back away from the original interest in being part of the environmental shift around conflict. In the end, overall institutional culture will change to the degree that its members are willing to be attentive to personal development.

- ***Difficult Conversation Skills Find a Complement in Negotiation Skills.*** Learning about difficult conversations allows a community to better understand why its members hold the perceptions and convictions that they do, leading to a better understanding of why its members behave the way they do. Sometimes this understanding alone is sufficient to break through an ongoing conflict. Other times, it is not: we understand each other, but we still cannot agree on how to come to a decision about what to do. We discovered that our study of the dynamics of difficult conversations bore its greatest fruit only after we also studied negotiation, which gave us tools to arrive at action plans. We found that the Harvard Negotiation Project text *Getting to Yes* provided an approach to negotiation that was consonant with our institution's core Christian values.
- ***Contextual Learning is Often Slower, Yet Deeper.*** It is far easier to teach a text about difficult conversations than it is to create an environment in which difficult conversations are regularly practiced with integrity. It can also be difficult not to grow impatient with the approach: Why are we not seeing changes faster? How can we concretely know whether what we are doing is making a difference? At the same time, if education does not stop at the passing of content but is also concerned with assuring the graduates' capacity to practice ministry, we must acknowledge that the measure of our success as a school regarding the skill of conflict management cannot be assessed via an exam or even classroom discussion but only in the pastoral practice of our alumni. Self-reporting from our recent alumni and current students does not indicate that they currently perceive themselves as highly successful in negotiating conflict, but it does indicate they have a heightened awareness of

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the importance of doing so and that – should they choose to engage the conflict – they know exactly the resources to which to turn. Their frequent reference to the vocabulary of difficult conversations, even in a joking way, lets us know that our efforts have permeated the every-day culture of our institution and conveyed a sense that healthy conflict is valued by the school. While the methodology of contextual education is slow and its results sometimes difficult to assess, we have seen enough to persuade us that learning gained in a contextual manner has a “staying power” that information gained in a classroom alone often does not.

In the second century *Epistle to Diognetus*, the writer Mathetes responds to Diognetus’ curiosity about Christianity – a curiosity provoked not so much by the faith’s teachings but by the quality of life that Christians lived in the middle of the world. While not distinctive in their dress or food or customs, Christians stood out from their neighbors because “They love all men, and they are persecuted by all. . . . They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and they respect.”⁷ The scant historical details that surround this letter suggest that Mathetes, and now Diognetus, were learning about Christianity by being in the field with Christians, observing their practices, especially around conflict. The epistle is almost two thousand years old. Evaluative data from our conflict education effort at Aquinas Institute indicates to us that this ancient Christian pedagogy of learning by watching and doing is still the most effective, long-lasting means of education we possess.



Ann M. Garrido, D.Min., is associate professor of homiletics and former director of the field education program at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri. From 2006-2010, she oversaw the institute's Pursuing a Culture of Engaged Conversation Project.



Carolyn A. Wright, M.Div., is assistant professor of pastoral theology and the current director of both the field education program and the Apollos Project at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri.

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1. USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation, 5th edition* (November 15, 2005) – see #76, #239. USCCB, *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (December 26, 2004) – see #107 and Basic Standards of Readiness. USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (November 2005) – see pp. 30 and 48.
2. Douglas Stone et al., *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).
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6. Terminology used in *PPF5*, see esp. #76-77, and *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, see esp. p. 36 ff.
7. Epistle to Diognetus, ch. 5, available at: <http://www.early-christianwritings.com/text/diognetus-lightfoot.html>

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: THE TESTING AND SCREENING OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE U.S. CATHOLIC CHURCH

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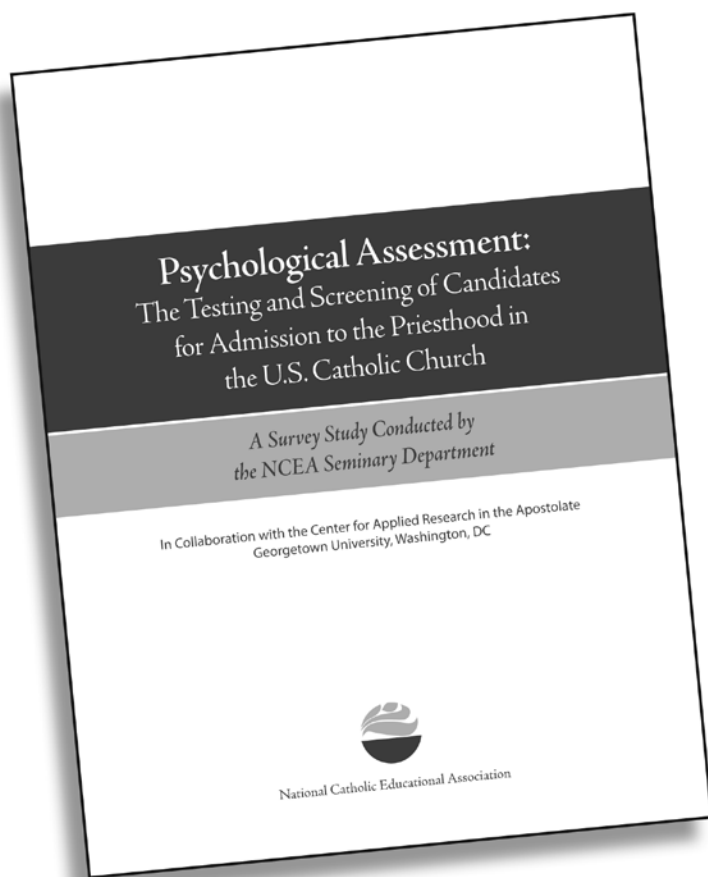
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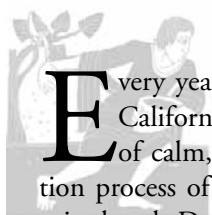
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Another Look at Seminary Formation

Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D.



Every year at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, the month of July brings a moment of calm, steadied focus to the ongoing formation process of men preparing for ordination to the priesthood. During that month, the men in Theology II and III participate in a four-week intensive period of spiritual formation (IPSF). This immersion experience is spread across two summers of four weeks each (A and B). The programs are guided by at least two trained faculty members.

IPSF A links together the two pillars of spiritual formation and human formation, while IPSF B addresses and links spiritual formation and pastoral formation. The whole process is distilled through an intense multicultural experience of community, grounded in prayer and spiritual practices. Academic seminars are presented in diverse formats in order to accommodate the different learning styles of the seminarians. Each participant is provided with a journal in which to write his reflections and notes as well as a folder book of handout material summarizing the seminar contents over the four weeks. Each week, seminarians are asked to read a designated book which focuses on and expands the topic of that week. Seminarians also meet weekly with a facilitator who monitors their progress and general well-being.

This program has been an integral part of the formation process at St. John's since 1983. Fr. George Niederaeur (now Archbishop Niederaeur of San Francisco), former Spiritual Director of St. John's Seminary, first envisioned this program as a "mini-novitiate" focusing on specific themes of spiritual formation. Originally, the Theology I seminarians, accompanied by two priests, would go to the old minor seminary campus for eight weeks during the beginning of their second semester. Each day consisted of liturgical prayer and a series of

The whole process [of IPSF] is distilled through an intense multicultural experience of community, grounded in prayer and spiritual practices.

presentations on specific topics. When Fr. Niederaeur became rector in 1987, Fr. Jack Stoeger took over the leadership of IPSF and enhanced it by offering a more process-oriented approach as well as adding a retreat experience. With the encouragement of the faculty, IPSF was then moved to the summer. In the early 1990's, Cardinal Mahony mandated a year-long parish internship program at which time IPSF was split over a period of two summers.

Since that time, thanks to ongoing input from faculty and students, it has evolved from a one-summer, eight-week lecture series, covering a wide range of spiritual and formation issues, to its present form -- a dynamic, process-oriented, eight-week experience of immersion in the spiritual life. Through the use of a balanced mix of presentations, praxis and discussion, we have created a regular, supportive daily schedule which weaves together the celebration of Eucharist, Eucharistic adoration, lectio divina, Liturgy of the Hours, spiritual reading, physical exercise, leisure time and community building activities.

The men learn some helpful skills in addressing . . . painful aspects of their lives so that they will not pass them on to others. They are also encouraged to seek further professional assistance if needed.

Intensive Period of Spiritual Formation - Year A

In the first week, the seminarians are asked to prepare a guided faith history report. The purpose of this is to help them see the movement of their own growth in grace. It allows them to conceptualize their personal patterns of grace and sin in the midst of life's vicissitudes. We spend the week focusing on contemporary, multicultural forms of prayer, together with plenty of praxis.

Pope Benedict XVI, following the lead of John Paul II, highlights the need for a holistic approach to seminary training through the four pillars of academic, human, pastoral, and spiritual formation. The *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th Edition, unpacks these pillars in a general manner. St. John's Seminary has followed these guidelines and created some practical ways in which seminarians can live up to this ecclesial vision of formation for priesthood.

Our encouragement of a healthy lifestyle throughout priestly life comes in several forms in this week:

- cooking class, to teach and provide practice opportunities to develop their culinary skills, in preparation for the possibility of living alone
- daily physical exercise, with choices made by the seminarians. These "healthy body" exercise regimes range from team sports to walking, biking, swimming and weightlifting.
- community building activities, which, over the years have taken the form of beach outings, mountain hikes, movies, landscaping projects, barbecues, obstacle courses and camping

Depending upon the topic for discussion, or the type of exercise chosen by the seminarians as a learn-

ing experience, we either invite outside presenters to the campus or draw upon the expertise of the two faculty facilitators or, sometimes, the wider faculty.

During the second week of IPSF A, the focus is on different aspects of human formation. For two days, the seminarians learn more about their unique personalities and preferences through the use of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator testing instrument. This leads to some powerful insights and often is a source of encouragement to more readily see and accept differences in people—an important tool for effective parish ministry. Two days are also devoted to looking at personal issues. The men learn some helpful skills in addressing these painful aspects of their lives so that they will not pass them on to others. They are also encouraged to seek further professional assistance if needed. Finally, a whole day is spent on teaching the seminarians how to care for their bodies through healthy eating practices and self-care. This process is led by a qualified nutritionist.

At this mid-point, the seminarians are given a free weekend before returning for Week 3, for the topic of spirituality. In this week, we focus on some of the major traditional streams of Catholic spirituality: Benedictine, Ignatian, Franciscan and Carmelite. Each day, one of these traditions is explored in detail from a pedagogical and experiential perspective. The men are encouraged to integrate these experiences into their seminary life. They also learn about the range of contemporary spiritualities and psychology of modern men and women—again, to enable them to take a broad-based approach to parish life. One option offered to the seminarians in this area of exploration is to participate in a three-day camping trip; this gives them an experience of the outdoors while discussing and experiencing some aspects of masculine spirituality.

The fourth week consists of a silent, directed retreat at a local retreat house. Each seminarian chooses a retreat director to help him with reflection and discernment concerning the previous weeks' input. At the end of this week, he writes an extensive evaluation of the IPSF experience, plus a personal reflection, which includes a statement of his goals for the coming year. A copy of this document is given to his spiritual director and to his faculty advisor; thus, he finds support for his process of integrating the IPSF experience into the rest of his curriculum. Year after year, the seminarians report back to the faculty that the IPSF experience has been enormously helpful for them, both in their formation and in their priesthood.

The aim is a greater integration and understanding of the connectedness and health of their body, mind and spirit in ministry.

Intensive Period of Spiritual Formation - Year B

This second four-week program is provided for the third-year men upon their return from a nine-month parish internship. They spend the first week debriefing their pastoral experience through a combination of input, facilitated discussion and theological reflection. As in IPSF A, the regular daily schedule includes the Eucharist, personal meditation, Eucharistic adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, spiritual reading, physical exercise, leisure time and community building activities. The seminarians spend one day coming to a deeper understanding of their own ministerial gifts and limitations through a useful instrument.¹ The aim is a greater integration and understanding of the connectedness and health of their body, mind and spirit in ministry.

The second week is spent in a five-day silent retreat at a local retreat house. In the third and fourth weeks, the seminarians are back at the seminary, hearing from several invited diocesan priests about the practical details of a healthy diocesan spirituality. This process includes input, large group discussion, question and answer sessions and praxis. The schedule of the days is constructed to offer a good balance between input and reflection. This heightens and enhances the experience for the men so that it does not become another “academic hurdle” but rather gives them a meaningful perspective for their future ministries. Once again, they conclude their experience with a written evaluation and a reflection with their personal goals for the coming year.

The annual assessment instruments, drawing on both direct and indirect evidence, point to a high rate of integration and application of the principles presented. It is important to note that the quality of a seminarian’s participation in the IPSF process usually determines how well he will do in the rest of his seminary formation and in active parish ministry.

What is it about this experience, both for the seminarians and the faculty, that makes it so attractive and successful, year after year? The IPSF experience works because it is

- Nurtured and surrounded by prayer
- Respectful of the need for balance between input and reflection
- Experiential
- Integrated
- Designed according to the specific needs of the participants
- Varied in content and learning styles
- Holistic
- Multicultural

The St. John’s IPSF program is obedient to the call of Pope John Paul II, and most recently, as reiterated by Pope Benedict XVI, is recognized “to have the right balance of heart, and mind, reason and feeling, body and soul, and to be humanly integrated.”² We are proud of it and are continually gratified at the results we see in our men, both as seminarians and as ordained priests.



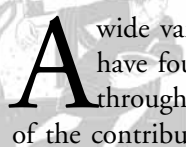
Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D., is director of spiritual formation at St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, California.

Endnotes

1. Richard Johnson, *Mind, Body and Spirit*, Available online at www.healyourillness.com.
2. *Letter to Seminarians*, Oct. 18, 2010. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20101018_seminaristi_en.html

Immersion Experiences as a Learning Tool for Seminary Formation

Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D.



A wide variety of adult pedagogies exist, but we have found that adults generally learn best through structured immersion experiences. Some of the contributing factors include the following:

- The whole person is involved in the process
- Feedback is immediate
- The individual is goal-focused
- There is community involvement
- The process utilizes a variety of learning tools.

At St. John's Seminary, we adopt the principle and the practice of immersion learning in meeting a number of the challenges of contemporary priestly formation. Various immersion experiences have been designed for the entire span of the formational years a candidate will spend at St. John's. At each stage of development, we are more readily able to focus on specific learning goals for the individual candidate while advancing the process of integration. Immediate feedback enhances this experience.

During the Pre-Theology years (I and II), Friday mornings are allocated as a time for immersion into specific spiritual, human and pastoral topics, with a structure involving both discussion and praxis. This process has proved to be especially valuable since most candidates enter the seminary without having been effectively evangelized or catechized as Catholics. We rely heavily on praxis and interactive activities to engage the candidates in their own formational work. The seminarians have found this framework to be extremely helpful in their efforts to enter more quickly and completely into the formation process.

At St. John's Seminary, we adopt the principle and the practice of immersion learning in meeting a number of the challenges of contemporary priestly formation.

Each year on the first full weekend of October, the whole seminary community comes together for the St. Jean Vianney Conference to pray, reflect and discuss the Christian counsels of living a simple life, chaste celibacy, prayer and obedience. We divide into specific class groupings and focus on a particular theme according to year of formation. The day is divided into time for prayer, presentation, discussion and reflection. Some classes go off campus as a way of heightening the fact that this is not "business as usual." Faculty and students challenge themselves to assimilate these counsels in a deeply personal way.

The St. Martin de Porres Experience is an option offered to the seminarians to be completed sometime during their formational years during a summer of their choice. This event is a 30-day supervised poverty-immersion experience in an inner city, rural or international setting. It provides the men with the opportunity to experience and reflect upon the poverty of the hu-

man condition in its many manifestations. The secondary goal is to help them connect with their own inner poverty/limitations. This opportunity has proven to be transformative for the participants.

A four-week intensive period of spiritual formation (IPSF A) takes place in the summer before Year II. This program is similar to a diocesan novitiate, focusing on prayer, spirituality, silent retreat and reflection on personal issues for greater self-understanding and healing.

In the third year of theology, the seminarians participate in a ten-month Pastoral Internship Program which immerses them in a typical parish setting. In this pedagogy of performance, the seminarian interns discover that their “way of thinking and being is revealed in the act of doing” parish ministry.¹ We find that they return the following summer with greater self-confidence; they are more grounded and secure in their vocational

We rely heavily on praxis and interactive activities to engage the candidates in their own formational work.

discernment. Practice in the pastoral setting also leads them to develop the skills and particular types of knowledge they now realize they need, to be effective as future ecclesial ministers. As a result of this pastoral immersion experience, we notice a greater commitment to the final two years of theological studies.

This pastoral internship year is immediately followed by another four-week period of intensive spiritual

In Fulfillment of Their Mission: *The Duties and Tasks of a Roman Catholic Priest*

By Joseph Ippolito, M.A., Rev. Mark A. Latcovich, Ph.D. and Joyce Malyn-Smith, Ed.D.

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formation (IPSF B), which includes a week of debriefing, development of a “gift discernment profile,” a silent retreat, plus two weeks of learning about diocesan spirituality.

The seminary community itself provides an immersion into the multicultural reality of the Church in the Southwest. At any time, we represent at least sixteen different cultures, each with its own language, customs and communication style. Added to this diversity are the widely varying ethnic and cultural preferences in liturgy, music, food and entertainment within the community. Obviously, this experience presents a wonderful challenge and opportunity for us to grow as a community in a reflection of the global Church we serve.

In the summer after Theology II and/or Theology III, following a discernment process examining the individual needs of each candidate, the students are sent to another country for a two-month summer language and cultural immersion experience. During this time, they live with a local family or in the local rectory. The preparation time and follow-up debriefing process help them to integrate their experience into their overall seminary formation. Some of the countries visited include Mexico, Vietnam, Korea, Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador and Costa Rica. The benefits of this program are obvious: not only do the students have the opportunity to learn a new language and experience a different culture first hand, but they are placed into a situation where they have a chance to face their anxieties and feelings of powerlessness while serving in a new and unfamiliar setting. Ideally, this experience helps them not only to acquire a broader vision of the global Church but also to develop a greater compassion for immigrants in particular and the People of God in general.

The three-week supervised Hospital Immersion Experience takes place in the summer following Year III. The students work closely with a chaplain from the hospital Pastoral Care Department, learning in the process to partner effectively with existing human and institutional resources as a pastor or ecclesial minister. Another option offered is the ten-week intensive Clinical Pastoral Experience (CPE). We have noted some profound changes in the levels of maturity in the men who have participated in a CPE course.

These learning experiences outside the seminary classroom offer imaginative practices and mechanisms to address students’ blind spots as well as their areas of discomfort (c.f., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, Charles Foster et. al). The supervisor develops and monitors these experiences as a means

of accompanying the intern on his journey of development. The curriculum and the faculty advisors also reinforce the lessons learned and assist the students to integrate the process. Theological reflection is an important component of this endeavor, as is spiritual direction.

The immersion experiences we offer to our seminarians here at St. John’s Seminary provide the men with wonderful opportunities to be stretched, challenged and deeply affirmed in their call to be ecclesial ministers.

The immersion experiences we offer to our seminarians here at St. John’s Seminary provide the men with wonderful opportunities to be stretched, challenged and deeply affirmed in their call to be ecclesial ministers. As an added bonus, the faculty assessment process is enhanced by the professional feedback provided by the external supervisors involved in some of the programs. We are, through these programs, offering the seminarians the best possible holistic preparation for a priesthood marked by wisdom, compassion, breadth of knowledge and deep understanding of their own humanity and that of the people they will serve.




Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D., is director of spiritual formation at St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, California.

Endnotes

1. Charles Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 158.

An Experiment in Pre-Theology Preparation

Patrick Mitchell, Ph.D. and Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D.



To appreciate the present Pre-Theology Program now in place at St John's Seminary, Camarillo, it might be helpful to know a little of the history of its development.

In the years preceding Vatican II, the normal path towards priesthood for a young man began in the high school seminary, known then as the Minor Seminary. He was perhaps fourteen years old, and would, if he persevered, be ordained twelve years later, at the age of about twenty-six.

The Minor Seminary program included four years of high school and the first two years of college. In the college years, the studies represented a fairly typical liberal arts curriculum. The seminarian would be well-schooled in Latin and the classics of Western Civilization. When these six years of study were completed, he would move on to the Major Seminary, where, for the first two years, he would follow an intense program of philosophical studies. During the last four years, his attention was entirely fixed on theology and its related disciplines.

In the early 1960s, just prior to Vatican II, the program for seminarians in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles changed a little with the opening of the seminary college. Men who had attended the high school seminary then went on to the college where they received a solid liberal arts education, graduating with a BA in philosophy.

The more important aspect of both models was the concept of "formation," as distinguished from education. In this respect, the seminary was more like a military academy or medical school in the sense that its aims went beyond purely academic education. Its goal was to "form" priests, men whose character had been shaped by their experience in the seminary. Such a for-

The seminary is meant to provide fertile soil in which seeds can grow in a healthy environment.

mation process is, by nature, a gradual one, likened to the nurturing of a plant through its stages of growth from seed to maturity – thus the term "seminary." The seminary is meant to provide fertile soil in which seeds can grow in a healthy environment.

In the mid- to late-1970s, a somewhat new phenomenon began to occur. Men who had already completed their college education, or had spent several years in the workforce after graduating from high school, experienced a call to the priesthood. Initially, they were sent to the seminary college in order to study philosophy – specifically, the Catholic approach to philosophy, with its unique understanding of the harmonious relationship between faith and reason. Even more important than this learning, though, was the human and spiritual formation received in the seminary environment. Catholic philosophy could, after all, be learned just as well at any Catholic college or university.

At this time, Fr. Charles Miller, CM, held the position of Academic Dean at the seminary (or "theologate," as it was also known). He recognized the shift that had occurred in the seminary population, and became concerned that the formation being given across the board for all the men, irrespective of age or stage of maturity, did not address the specific needs within this



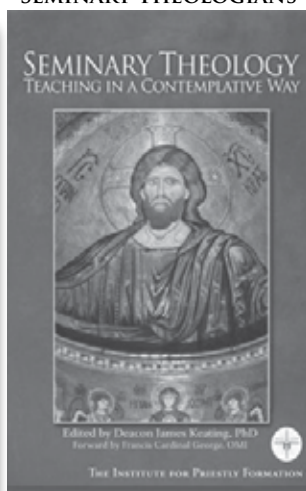
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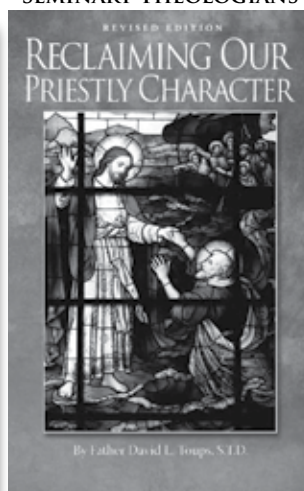
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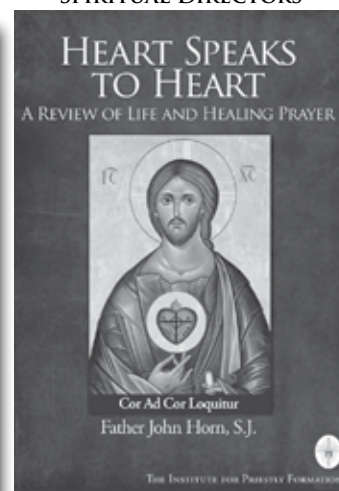
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diverse group. As a result, he developed the idea of a pre-theology program for the older men. The program would not only prepare them for the study of graduate-level theology, but also, and more importantly, it would provide them with formation more appropriate to their age and maturity.

**Even more important
than academic learning in
Catholic philosophy, though,
was the human and spiritual
formation received in the
seminary environment.**

Early Attempts to Structure a Program

Sometime in the late 1970s, the first version of St. John's Seminary pre-theology program was instituted.

At this time, it was called the "Pre-Candidacy Program" because the participants were not yet officially received as candidates for the priesthood. Known simply as the PC Program, the pre-candidates spent their time in class as students of Fr. Jack Battle, CM, a retired Vincentian priest who had taught philosophy at De Paul University in Chicago. Fr. Jack was a colorful man who regaled his students with his stories and his strongly held opinions about the philosophers they studied and just about everything else as well. Well liked by his students, he *was* the PC program, although his teaching was supplemented by other faculty members in the areas of church history and homiletics.

Fr. Jack died of a heart attack on New Year's Eve, 1985. Fr. Miller (by now the seminary rector), phoned Dr. Patrick Mitchell, who was in London at the time, asking him to take over Fr. Jack's classes. During the spring semester of 1986, Dr. Mitchell was encouraged to redesign the program to give it greater academic rigor. At this time, Dr. Ronda Chervin joined the faculty of the Pre-Candidacy Program, teaching philosophy. The program continued as a one-year program, as it had been under Fr. Jack's leadership, but with the addition

of a “mini-semester” during the month of January. The core curriculum followed the historical development of philosophy from its earliest days in Greece to the European philosophers of the twentieth century. In addition to this core material, electives were offered on subjects like the philosophy of art, the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of history. As before, the program included such courses as church history and homiletics. Formation was, however, still the dominant focus.

By the mid-1990s, the practice of providing a separate program, tailored to the needs of more mature-aged men, had become widespread, and the US bishops saw a need to ensure the integrity of both the theology program and the formation process which accompanied it.

It was at this time that the program at St. John’s became officially known as the Pre-Theology Program, instead of the Pre-Candidacy Program. A new protocol was established in which the pre-theology students lived in the seminary, where they received the formation component of the program, but took their classes at the college.

The positive aspect of this creative program was that with a broader faculty provided to teach this group of men, the seminary was able to focus more adroitly on the formation process. The negative aspect, however, was that the men were actually living in two separate communities – college and seminary. This unwieldy separation was resolved with the closure of the college in 2004 and the development of the current Pre-Theology program.

As the program stands today, students complete a two-year certificate course in philosophy and theology, ironically a return, although in a slightly improved way, to the format in place prior to Vatican II. This development occurred in response to the US Bishops’ document entitled *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th Edition.

In recent years, the faculty has noticed that the majority of the students entering the seminary system have received an inadequate experience of Catholic evangelization and catechesis. This has served to affect the seminarians detrimentally in several ways, but especially in the area of their spiritual formation. As a result, we began using Friday mornings to address this need by offering an immersion experience into the different themes of Catholic spirituality. In the second year, we include themes from human and pastoral formation to assist the students to more fully enter the seminary community.

Since its inception in 1986, the program has been directed by Dr. Patrick Mitchell, who retired in June,

2010, and was succeeded by Dr. Mark Fischer. The core faculty consists of Fr. Aelred Niespolo, O.S.B., and Dr. Alan Vincelette teaching the philosophy courses and Dr. Mark Fischer teaching the theology courses. This teaching staff is supported by specialist faculty members from the seminary. Classes take place in the old college library and in two newly established classroom spaces, both equipped with the latest audio-visual technology.

We have learned that this program is a successful way of preparing men to enter full-time theological studies and formation at St. John’s Seminary.

The Pre-Theology Program continues to evolve in creative and meaningful ways as we learn from and collaborate with the faculty and the seminarians. Through both direct and indirect evidence, we have learned that this program is a successful way of preparing men to enter full-time theological studies and formation at St. John’s Seminary.



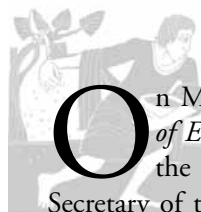
Rev. Jim Clarke, Ph.D., is director of spiritual formation at St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, California.



Patrick Mitchell, Ph.D., retired as director of the Pre-Theology Program at St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, California, in 2010.

The New Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy: Historical Context and Content

William F. Murphy, Jr.



On March 22, 2011, a new *Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy* (hereafter the *Decree*) was presented by the Prefect and Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education at a press conference held at the Holy See Press Office.¹ According to no. 15 of the *Decree*, it has “three fields of implementation.” These include the following: first, “Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy,” those approved directly by the Holy See; second, philosophical education in other “Faculties of Theology,” which apparently includes both Ecclesiastical Faculties and certain other “Catholic Institution[s] of Higher Education”; and third, seminaries.² On July 15, 2011, the *Decree* was followed by a “Note Regarding the Implementation of the Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy” (hereafter, the Note) which reinforced its central points and further specified the calendar for its implementation.³

The *Decree* will obviously be of great interest to those involved in the *philosophical* formation of seminarians because of the subject matter indicated in the title and because (at least) two years of philosophical studies begin the program of priestly formation. It also has significant relevance for the *theological* education of seminarians for several interconnected reasons: because of its claim—citing 1998 remarks of then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—that “the crisis of postconciliar theology is, in large part, the crisis of philosophical foundations”;⁴ because of the *Decree’s* clear but lofty requirement of the “assimilation of firmly acquired contents,” in a way that leads to the development of “intellectual ‘habitus’ (plural)” and thus of “a solid philosophical *forma mentis*”

Speaking most broadly, the Catholic intellectual tradition grows out of God’s saving deeds in salvation history and the words of the inspired Scriptures which mediate them, along with the writings of the Fathers, who drew upon the wisdom of ancient Greece and Rome, as part of their tendency to embrace and contemplate all truth, whether attained through faith or reason.

(no. 11); because of the unambiguous emphasis on the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas as the “exemplary” (though “not exclusive”) representative of the *philosophia perennis* (no. 12); and because of the way the *Decree* describes the entire five-year “first cycle” of theological studies—the basic model for seminary formation—as leading to a “synthesis at the end of the philosophical and theological studies” (no. 15b). In institutions where there are both faculties of theology and philosophy, the *Decree* further manifests its concern for theology

by specifying that “the authority who makes decisions regarding the [philosophy] program is the dean of the Faculty of Theology, who will make those decisions in conformity with the law in force, and while favoring close collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy” (no. 14). The *Decree* envisions, therefore, not only that the philosophical training of theologians (including seminarians) begin with the assimilation of “a solid and coherent synthesis of [philosophical] doctrine” (no. 15a), but that this sapiential perspective—firmly rooted in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas—be expanded through theological studies. Because some key points of the *Decree* have relevance to other sections of it, I will err on the side of repeating these key points (including the one just cited on the dean of theology), rather than putting the burden on the reader to keep them in mind and make all the connections.

In order to facilitate the thoughtful consideration and successful implementation of this important and challenging document, this essay will proceed in two steps. First, I will trace the mostly twentieth-century documents preceding the new *Decree* that provide the historical context for understanding it. Second, I will outline the structure and essential content of the *Decree*. By so doing, I will provide the bases for a subsequent essay in which I discuss potential obstacles to the implementation of the *Decree* and also offer some initial suggestions toward a robust and fruitful implementation.

I. Locating the *Decree* in a Broad Historical Context

In order to recognize the *Decree* as an example of Pope Benedict XVI’s principle of understanding the Second Vatican Council and postconciliar Church through a “hermeneutic of reform,” of renewal in continuity,”⁵ it will be helpful to survey some of the preceding practices and directives in order to locate this new document in the broader tradition of intellectual formation in the Church. Presupposing the proper place (the articulation of which is beyond the scope of this essay) of Scripture, the Fathers, the broader tradition and contemporary questions, I will summarize the various preceding Church directives regarding intellectual formation, precisely as they have specified a privileged place for the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas in philosophical and theological training. The basic thesis of my narrative is that the new *Decree* should be understood primarily as a stronger and more explicit statement of this requirement than some earlier statements (such as that found in Vatican II’s *Optatam totius* and some of the other docu-

A primary burden of my essay is to argue that the new Decree should be understood primarily as a restatement and specification of this message for our day.

ments that follow it) because, although the strong continuity of that conciliar text with the preceding mandates regarding Aquinas should have been clear to readers, the postconciliar references have instead been read through a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture, resulting in a failure to realize the true reform in continuity that would follow from a proper reading of the council and subsequent documents.⁶

Speaking most broadly, the Catholic intellectual tradition grows out of God’s saving deeds in salvation history and the words of the inspired Scriptures which mediate them,⁷ along with the writings of the Fathers, who drew upon the wisdom of ancient Greece and Rome, as part of their tendency to embrace and contemplate all truth, whether attained through faith or reason. Building upon these sources and others, including the broader corpus of newly recovered Aristotelian thought, the great medieval doctors like St. Bonaventure and especially St. Thomas Aquinas produced even richer syntheses within the emerging context of European universities. As is well-known, the modern seminary system has its roots in the reforms of the council of Trent, which sought to improve the formation of clergy in order to address the unprecedented challenges of that era. Central to seminary education in the post-Tridentine Church were “manuals,” written precisely for the education of seminarians and frequently claiming St. Thomas Aquinas as their primary authority, though often departing quite significantly from his actual teaching.⁸ The place of Aquinas’s thought in the broader Catholic intellectual life, which followed directly from its role in seminary education, was further strengthened through Pope Leo XIII’s 1879 encyclical *Aeterni patris: On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy*.⁹

Deus scientiarum dominus

In the decades of the twentieth century preceding

the Second Vatican Council, the document governing philosophical (and other) education in Ecclesiastical Faculties was the Apostolic Constitution *Deus scientiarum dominus*, which had been promulgated by Pope Pius XI on May 24, 1931. According to a 1943 article by Augustin Bea on the origins and spirit of the constitution, this document marked “the first time that the Church had promulgated a plan of studies that would be common to all ecclesiastical faculties throughout the whole world.”¹⁰ It had its origin in the changing circumstances in which civil authorities came to impose regulations on institutions of higher education, even faculties of theology; its occasion also involved a situation in which the more speculative or philosophical thought that marked scholasticism had diminished at the expense of the growing place given to other subjects, especially the “positive sciences.”¹¹ As to its spirit and content, the document seeks an ordered and organic hierarchy of subjects, with theology in the highest place, resulting in “a wide and comprehensive synthesis.”¹² As we will see, this corresponds closely with what the new *Decree* will describe as “sapiential” and “a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine” (15a, and Article 59, §2). The educa-

tion is, according to *Deus scientiarum dominus*, to be “founded on the sure methods and principles of St. Thomas,” preceding academic studies in theology with a two year “course in Scholastic philosophy.”¹³

Optatam totius

Although a fuller discussion is beyond the scope of the present article, the place of Aquinas in the documents of the Second Vatican Council needs to be understood in light of the preceding decades of what is typically called the anti-modernist era in Catholic thought.¹⁴ In this context, a certain kind of neo-Thomism was the quasi-official philosophy and theology of the Church, and professors were required (from 1910-1967) to swear an anti-modernist oath and pass examinations in philosophy structured around twenty-four Thomistic theses (these addressed essential points concerning the philosophy of being, of nature, of the soul and of God). Many subsequent Catholic thinkers would agree with the observation of Fergus Kerr, OP, that this form of quasi-official neo-Thomism (he prefers the term neo-scholasticism) “kept very much to the same canons of rationality as we find in the Enlightenment,” as can be seen in its frequent (and sometimes heavy-handed) opposition to characteristically modern appeals to experience, tradition and historical studies as ways to attain truth (which were not without their difficulties).¹⁵ To a degree that varied over time, unofficial censors—including, from 1907 until at least 1921, the *Sodalitium Pianum* (Fellowship of Pius X)—monitored the work, and sometimes even the activities (e.g., library borrowings), of suspect Catholic scholars. Although the intellectual climate of the anti-modernist era could be quite stifling, the challenges that modern thought posed to Catholic intellectual life were real.

By the 1960s, however, many of the council Fathers had been convinced by thinkers like Henri de Lubac of the merits of a “return to the sources” or *ressourcement*, fostering a broader recovery of the tradition that gave greater emphasis to Scripture and Patristics, while encouraging particular attention to historical concerns and a more sympathetic engagement with the questions raised by modern thought. While also well aware of the influence of *ressourcement* thought, Joseph A. Komonchak—in a 1998 essay that will be even more valuable in light of the new Decree—writes that “the diminished presence of St. Thomas in the final texts of Vatican II was due less to any lack of appreciation of Aquinas’ genius and accomplishment than to reactions to what de Lubac called ‘the narrow and sectarian

In light of the widespread failure to follow the directives of the Magisterium, Pope Paul VI acknowledges those who disagree and writes that “their distrust or repugnance is often due to a superficial or casual acquaintance with his teaching” (no.3). In explaining the various intrinsic merits that underlie the Church’s directives, he encourages such persons to study Thomas’s works and come to appreciate why the Church still recognizes him as the “common doctor.”

Thomism' imposed as an integral part of a quite modern, untraditional ecclesiastical and intellectual system."¹⁶

At the Second Vatican Council, seminary education was addressed in the Decree on Priestly Training *Optatam totius* in the section on "The Revision of Ecclesiastical Studies" (nos. 13-18).¹⁷ Because they are the place where the role of Aquinas is to be specified, paragraph nos. 14-16 addressing philosophical and theological training are of the most relevance for the present article, and they were the center of considerable debate among the council Fathers. For our purposes, the key text of no. 14 is the following: "In revising ecclesiastical studies the aim should first of all be that the philosophical and theological disciplines be more suitably aligned and that they harmoniously work toward opening more and more the minds of the students to the mystery of Christ."¹⁸ We will see the same goal of a harmonious relation between philosophy and theology in the new *Decree*.

Philosophical training is addressed in no. 15, the first sentence of which states the basic point. "The philosophical disciplines are to be taught in such a way that the students are first of all led to acquire a solid and coherent knowledge of man, the world, and of God, relying on a philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid and taking into account the philosophical investigations of later ages." The reference to "a philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid," instead of an explicit reference to Aquinas, was a point of considerable debate. In the original drafts, Aquinas was explicitly mentioned; when a later text removed such explicit mention, over 550 Fathers submitted *modi* requesting that St. Thomas be explicitly mentioned, while 117 others signed a *modi* requesting "that no particular philosophical system be prescribed."¹⁹ The solution that was eventually approved by the council Fathers was to attach footnote 29 to the above citation from *Optatam totius*, which referenced Pius XII's 1950 encyclical *Humani generis*; in a nutshell, the footnoted encyclical had strongly reaffirmed the value of Thomistic philosophy and the directives of the Church that "future priests be instructed in philosophy 'according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor.'"²⁰ After the text of *Optatam totius* was promulgated (October 28, 1965), it seems that many interpreted the text through a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture, either claiming that—or proceeding as if—it intended to initiate a shift away from the privileged place given to Thomistic philosophy and theology in the curricula of Catholic institutions, and especially in the training of

Although *Fides et ratio* was well-received among important segments of Catholic (and broader) intellectual life, its relevance for the curricula of ecclesiastical faculties of philosophy and theology, other Catholic institutions of higher education, and for seminaries had yet to be specified, and the document to do so was long in coming.

priests. Indeed, as early as December 20 of 1965, the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities had already responded to a question about the meaning of the phrase "*patrimonio philosophico perenniter valido*" of no. 15 by referring to the encyclical *Humani generis* and the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas.²¹ As we will see in the discussion of the 1972 document on "The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries," the reiteration that this phrase indeed refers precisely to the thought of Aquinas has been made repeatedly; a primary burden of my essay is to argue that the new *Decree* should be understood primarily as a restatement and specification of this message for our day, a restatement made precisely under the Pontificate of the last great theologian of conciliar era *ressourcement* theology, whose central attention is now on the theme of faith and reason, and the recovery of reason, which he considers crucial for the Church to carry out its mission in the contemporary postmodern context.

Theological instruction is addressed in no. 16, which directs that dogmatic theology begin with "biblical themes," after which Patristic contributions to "the faithful transmission and development of the individual truths of revelation" are to be studied, followed by the "further history of dogma." "Next, in order that they may illumine the mysteries of salvation as completely as possible, the students should learn to penetrate them more deeply with the help of speculation, under the

guidance of St. Thomas, and to perceive their interconnections” (compare the concern for interconnections with the discussion to follow below regarding the emphasis of the *Decree* on a coherent and sapiential vision). This last citation was also the point of considerable debate. As Neuner discusses in his commentary on *Optatam totius*, the final text regarding Thomas is meant to indicate he is “not only the master who formulated in his time the contents of revelation in the intellectual and linguistic forms of Aristotelianism,” but also “a teacher in as much as he arrived at permanent insights which have to be taught in theological instruction.”²² This interpretation is clearly consistent with the previously discussed footnote attached to paragraph no.15, with its reference *Humani generis* which reiterates the traditional requirement that “that future priests be instructed in philosophy ‘according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor.’” Though only in *Optatam totius* indirectly, this insistence on the method, doctrine and principles of St. Thomas is frequent in the governing documents; as we will see below, this will be expressed a bit differently in the new Decree, no. 12 of which will affirm that “The Church’s preference for his method and his doctrine is not exclu-

[A] three-year course of studies is now required for all Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy. The reason given is that “experience of over thirty years has gradually led to the realization that three years of formation are required to achieve more completely the objectives indicated for philosophy in the aforementioned Apostolic Constitution, and especially in order for the student to reach “a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine.”

sive, but ‘exemplary.’”

Whereas we shall see below that the thought of St. Thomas fell quickly into disfavor in the years immediately after the council, Komonchak’s essay concludes that the council’s intention was instead to end only “the ideologically driven reign of one of the many forms of neo-Thomism.” He cites the words of Yves Congar, OP, that “the council was right”: “it is less that we should be repeating [Thomas’] theses than we should go to school with him, after which we should set to work with whatever strength we have, but in his spirit and relying on him.” For Congar, the council wanted the Church to appreciate Thomas as “master of thought who helps us to structure our minds, a master of honesty, rigor, and respect for every particle of truth.”²³ As we will also see below, this reference to the role of Thomas in structuring the mind will recur in the Decree, which will speak of developing intellectual habitus and a *forma mentis*.

“The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries”

I will next summarize some key points regarding the previously-cited “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries,” which was published in 1972 by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in response to the rapid decline in philosophical studies following the 1965 close of the council and the publication of *Optatam totius*. It includes three parts: I. Current Difficulties in Philosophical Studies; II. The Necessity of Philosophy for Future Priests; and III. Some Indications for the Teaching of Philosophy. The discussion of difficulties in Part I culminates in a summary of three points. The first two of these difficulties concern the neglect of philosophy due to the increasing attention and trust given to the “positive sciences.”²⁴ The third difficulty concerns contemporary philosophy, which is seen by those who would minimize the philosophical studies of seminarians as being too esoteric and technical for them. Part II of the document explains how engagement with the questions common within modern culture is well-served by, and even requires, the philosophy prescribed by the Church; this second part further explains the importance of this philosophy for biblical studies, pastoral ministry and evangelization. Part III addresses especially the challenges posed by contemporary philosophical pluralism. In discussing them, “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries” emphasizes five points: (i) the need for “solid professional preparation” for teachers; (ii) that “we have unfortunately to admit that not all seminaries are following these lines wished by the Church” (this disappointment is expressed even more strongly by now

Blessed Pope John Paul II in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*, and the *Decree* and Note would seem to be reasonably read as a yet stronger and more specific intervention by the Magisterium); (iii) that because of this failure to follow what the Church has prescribed, “uncertainty” has arisen regarding the content and purpose of the philosophy being taught; (iv) the necessity of helping students to “arrive at a coherent vision of reality” that includes the fundamental nucleus of philosophical truths that are connected to revelation; and (v) that “the repeated recommendations of the Church about the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas remain fully justified and still valid.”²⁵

Lumen ecclesiae

The most extensive text by Pope Paul VI regarding the place of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas in Catholic thought was his 1974 Apostolic Letter *Lumen ecclesiae*, which was addressed to the Master General of the Dominican Order, marking the seventh centenary of the death of Thomas. The letter develops at length the reasoning behind Paul VI’s earlier remarks about “the wisdom of the supreme Magisterium in declaring [Thomas] to be the authoritative, irreplaceable guide in philosophy and theology” (no.1). It is quite reasonably read as the Holy Father’s personal affirmation of the message given in “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries.” Here, Paul VI writes about “the continuing relevance of [St. Thomas’s] principles, teaching and method” (no. 2). In light of the widespread failure to follow the directives of the Magisterium, Pope Paul VI acknowledges those who disagree and writes that “their distrust or repugnance is often due to a superficial or casual acquaintance with his teaching” (no. 3). In explaining the various intrinsic merits that underlie the Church’s directives regarding the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, the value of which the future Paul VI had experienced in his “apostolate among Catholic university students” (no. 2), he encourages such persons to study Thomas’s works and come to appreciate why the Church still recognizes him as the “common doctor.”²⁶

Paul VI notes how “the Church has recognised the perennial value and importance of Thomistic teaching... especially at certain solemn moments, such as the Ecumenical Councils of Florence, Trent and Vatican I, the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law and in Vatican Council II,” but he makes clear that “this approval... represents ... a careful choice based on objective considerations that are intrinsic to the philosophy and theology of Aquinas” (no. 14).²⁷ Because most of

[S]eminarians are normally expected to devote two years to philosophical studies whereas the learning outcomes they need to achieve require three.

Paul VI’s eight-thousand-word text is an exposition of these intrinsic merits, it is better to refer the reader to the text than to attempt a summary in the present context. As we approach the fortieth anniversary of this letter, however, there are reasons to hope that the intrinsic merits of St. Thomas’s thought may be appreciated more broadly today than when Paul VI’s text was originally written. The reasons for hoping the message of documents like *Lumen ecclesiae* and the new *Decree* may be better received today include the fact that Thomistic studies have enjoyed a considerable renaissance in recent years based on their intrinsic merit, the fact that both revisionist and more-conservative alternatives do not suffice (especially when read through a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture, and neglecting what the ecclesial documents specify about Aquinas), and that a Pope with personal connections to *ressourcement* and *communio* theology has promulgated the new *Decree* and done so precisely on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Sapientia christiana

“*Sapientia christiana*: Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties,” which was promulgated on April 29, 1979, is the next text to be considered in our chronological survey of the documents preceding the new *Decree*. It was written to replace *Deus scientiarum dominus*, taking into account almost fifty years of subsequent developments, including those of the Council. As the text of *Sapientia christiana* explains (in no. VI), it had been written by the Congregation at the direction of Pope Paul VI, who “was about to” and “ardently desired to promulgate” it “when he died.” Because the sudden death of Pope John Paul I prevented him from doing so, it was left to John Paul II, who did so after “long and careful consideration.” For our purposes, the key point regarding the place of Aquinas is addressed in Article 79, which directs that “[a]n Ecclesiastical Faculty

of Philosophy has the aim of investigating philosophical problems according to scientific methodology, basing itself on a heritage of perennially valid philosophy,” with the expected footnote citing *Optatam totius* no. 15. There is nothing in this text of *Sapientia cristiana* itself, however, that explicitly reminds the reader that the “perennially valid philosophy” refers to that of Aquinas, whereas John Paul II’s later remarks in *Fides et ratio* (nos. 60-61)—which express his displeasure at the widespread failure to follow the directives on this point—seem to indicate a growing recognition that stronger statements were needed. Article 80 of *Sapientia cristiana* continues with the following: “[i]n the teaching of philosophy, the relevant norms should be observed which are contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in other recent documents of the Holy See concerning academic studies.” *Sapientia cristiana* here references both *Optatam totius* and the 1972 document on “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries,” so one would have hoped that those to whom it was directed would have interpreted it correctly. Several months after the promulgation of *Sapientia cristiana*, John Paul II gave an address at the Angelicum in which he further expressed his views on the continuing importance of St. Thomas’s thought in the Church after the Council. After referring to the conciliar references to St. Thomas in *Optatam totius* no.15 and The Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum educationis* no. 10, he makes the following statement: “The words of the Council are clear: the [conciliar] Fathers saw that it is fundamental for the adequate formation of the clergy and of Christian youth that it preserve a close link with the cultural heritage of the past, and in particular with the thought of St. Thomas; and that this, in the long run, is a necessary condition for the longed-for renewal of the Church.”²⁸

1983 Code of Canon Law

Also worthy of mention is the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which was promulgated by John Paul II on January 25, 1983. Philosophical education of seminarians is addressed in canon 251, which echoes *Optatam totius* 15: “Philosophical instruction must be grounded in the perennially valid philosophical heritage and also take into account philosophical investigation over the course of time. It is to be taught in such a way that it perfects the human development of the students, sharpens their minds, and makes them better able to pursue theological studies.” Theological education of seminarians is addressed in canon 252, §3 of which addresses

the central but delicate topic of the role of Aquinas in a way that parallels the text of *Optatam totius* 16: “There are to be classes in dogmatic theology, always grounded in the written word of God together with sacred tradition; through these, students are to learn to penetrate more intimately the mysteries of salvation, especially with St. Thomas as a teacher.”

Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis

The next key document addressing these matters was the “Basic Norms for Priestly Formation” or the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, which was published in 1985 by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. It is the most extensive and authoritative text governing priestly formation, which gives rise to national documents like the *Program of Priestly Formation* in the United States.²⁹ In nos. 70-75 treating “Philosophical and Kindred Subjects,” the extensive footnote 168 on the opening no. 70 offers various insights including that the “relationship of reason and faith needs to be increasingly highlighted in the teaching of Philosophy,” which foreshadows the new *Decree*. Like the recent note, no. 71 had emphasized the “particular importance” of systematic philosophy, which “must be based on that always valid philosophical patrimony.” It did so by citing *Humani generis* and Paul VI’s *Lumen ecclesiae*, which were both stronger and more explicit about the teaching of Aquinas than *Optatam totius* no. 15 (though this conciliar text is cited in subsequent footnotes of the *Ratio fundamentalis*). Systematic philosophy courses “should also be directed to contemporary Philosophy, and in particular, to the schools of thought which exercise special influence in their own country.” According to no. 72, teaching of the history of philosophy must help students “to discern the truth, detect error, and refute it.” The *Ratio fundamentalis* is especially concerned, therefore, with helping students make judgments about approaches proposed over time in light of the systematic courses rooted in Aquinas; foreshadowing the new *Decree* and Note, this approach to the historical courses is to be distinguished from one based on an irenic survey of thinkers without critical assessment of their proposals.³⁰ “Related sciences” should be taught “insofar as they are related to Philosophy” (no. 73), foreshadowing—as we will see—another point of the new *Decree* that is further reinforced in the Note, which requires “a discernment regarding the method and the contents of the human sciences in the light of philosophical and theological reasoning.” The paragraphs on theological studies (nos. 76-81) follow closely and

cite *Optatam totius* no 16, specifying the need to ground theology in Scripture, to study the Fathers, and to ensure that, in dogmatic theology, “there should be a full, speculative study, based on St. Thomas, of the mysteries of salvation and their interrelation.”

Pastores dabo vobis

The formation of priests is also addressed in John Paul II’s 1992 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, although the discussion of intellectual formation is a small subsection of a large document (nos. 51-56 of 82).³¹ In its historical context, the document reflects John Paul’s efforts to overcome a postconciliar crisis in priestly identity and vocations, to cultivate a proper confidence that God will provide shepherds, to foster vocations, to provide a rich reflection on the nature of the priesthood within the Church and the Universal Call to Holiness, and to provide a wide-ranging reflection of priestly formation. The subsection on intellectual formation opens in no. 51 by affirming the deep connections between intellectual, human and spiritual formation, and the importance of intellectual formation for “ordained ministry, and the challenge of the ‘new evangelization.’” It repeatedly emphasizes the importance of intellectual formation before discuss-

ing the “crucial stage” of “the study of *philosophy*” (no. 52). This paragraph on philosophy does not explicitly mention St. Thomas, but it includes a footnote to the 1972 “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries” before insisting on the need for “a sound philosophy” serving the “cult of truth.” The discussion on theological formation is addressed in nos. 53-56 and it treats a number of important points: these include Sacred Scripture as the soul of all theology, “the coordination of philosophy and theology,” the “permanent question of the relationship between faith and reason,” the need to theological formation to lead to “*a complete and unified vision*,” (foreshadowing the emphasis of the *Decree* no. 8 on the “sapiential horizon” and “integrating vision”) and some contemporary tensions between theologians and the Magisterium. This section is not explicit about the place of Aquinas in theological training, but it mentions him by name, cites him multiple times, and refers the reader to “the indications of the Second Vatican Council and their application in the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*,” which as we have seen are more explicit in this regard. Although *Pastores dabo vobis*, therefore, says relatively little about the role of Aquinas in intellectual formation—and might have been misread by some as an indication that the Blessed John Paul II meant thereby

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to depart from the mandate of the documents discussed above—his 1998 encyclical *Fides et ratio* should make abundantly clear that he meant no such thing, and that it is not legitimate to appeal to *Pastores dabo vobis* as an alternative authority against the specific requirements of the *Decree*.

Fides et ratio

Because the new *Decree* cites *Fides et ratio* so frequently, it is of special interest to the present survey.³² The encyclical reflects the fruits of several additional years of reflection on a range of philosophical, theological and cultural matters, and apparently the recognition of a need to be more explicit about the place of Aquinas, especially for seminarians. It addresses the place of philosophy in priestly formation beginning in the second paragraph of no. 60, which cites the standard text from *Optatam totius* no. 15 about “the philosophical heritage which is enduringly valid” (though, of course, “taking into account currents of modern philosophy”) noting that “its recommendations have implications for Christian education as a whole.” The third paragraph of no. 60 makes clear how frequently the Magisterium has reaffirmed this charge:

These directives have been reiterated and developed in a number of other magisterial documents in order to guarantee a solid philosophical formation, especially for those preparing for theological studies. I have myself emphasized several times the importance of this philosophical formation for those who one day, in their pastoral life, will have to address the aspirations of the contemporary world and understand the causes of certain behaviour in order to respond in appropriate ways.

Attached to the above citation is note 84, which lists a number of texts calling for the study of St. Thomas Aquinas, including *Sapientia christiana* Articles 79-80, *Lumen ecclesiae*, and multiple addresses by John Paul II. Paragraph number 61 continues as follows:

If it has been necessary from time to time to intervene on this question, to reiterate the value of the Angelic Doctor’s insights and insist on the study of his thought, this has been because the Magisterium’s directives have not always been followed with the readiness one would wish. In the years after the Second

Vatican Council, many Catholic faculties were in some ways impoverished by a diminished sense of the importance of the study not just of Scholastic philosophy but more generally of the study of philosophy itself. I cannot fail to note with surprise and displeasure that this lack of interest in the study of philosophy is shared by not a few theologians.

As of the 1998 promulgation of *Fides et ratio*, therefore, John Paul II sees the as yet to be overcome problems that led to the 1972 “The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries” and Paul VI’s *Lumen ecclesiae*, namely what Benedict XVI will call the misreading of Vatican II through the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture, especially as it regards intellectual formation. Although *Fides et ratio* was well-received among important segments of Catholic (and broader) intellectual life, its relevance for the curricula of ecclesiastical faculties of philosophy and theology, for other Catholic institutions of higher education, and for seminaries had yet to be specified, and the document to do so was long in coming.³³

With the new *Decree*, we therefore have a well-considered response by the Magisterium of Pope Benedict XVI to strengthen especially philosophical education in the Church in light of John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et ratio*, and in light of a reading the Second Vatican Council through a hermeneutic of reform and renewal in continuity. As we have already noted, the *Decree* also concerns theological education, as is clear from Benedict’s previously-cited view that “the crisis of postconciliar theology is, in large part, the crisis of philosophical foundations.” The *Decree* can be seen in harmony with two consistent emphases in Benedict’s Papal ministry. The first concerns—against what he calls the modern “self-limitation” of reason—the recovery of reason in the relationship between faith and reason. The second concerns his emphasis on the intellectual formation of seminarians so that the Church is able to confront the postconciliar challenge regarding this perennial problem which the Church now faces in a new form. Benedict’s emphasis on the relation between faith and reason has been present in his thought for decades, dating back to his 1959 inaugural lecture as professor at the University of Bonn, which was entitled “The God of Faith and the God of Philosophy.”³⁴ The theme was also central to his speech on “Europe’s Crisis of Culture” at Subiaco on April 1, 2005, just before the death of Pope John Paul II,³⁵ and to his previously-mentioned address to the Ro-

man Curia on December 22, 2005, where he observed how, after the Council, “the perennial problem of the relationship between faith and reason ... is re-emerging in ever new forms.” It was also key to his Regensburg Lecture of September 12, 2006, entitled “Faith, Reason and the University — Memories and Reflections,” in his planned (but not delivered) speech of January 2008 for La Sapienza University,³⁶ and in his September 12, 2008 Address at the Collège des Bernardins in Paris.

Integrally related to the Holy Father’s concern that the Church of our day is able to address the challenge of an adequate reason is his insistence that seminarians focus especially on their intellectual formation. This can be seen especially in no. 5 of the October 18, 2010 “Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Seminarians.” Here he emphasizes the following:

Above all, your time in the seminary is also a time of study. The Christian faith has an essentially rational and intellectual dimension.... I can only plead with you: Be committed to your studies! Take advantage of your years of study! You will not regret it. Certainly, the subjects which you are studying can often seem far removed from the practice of the Christian life and the pastoral ministry. Yet it is completely mistaken to start questioning their practical value by asking: Will this be helpful to me in the future? Will it be practically or pastorally useful? The point is not simply to learn evidently useful things, but to understand and appreciate the internal structure of the faith as a whole, so that it can become a response to people’s questions, which on the surface change from one generation to another yet ultimately remain the same. For this reason it is important to move beyond the changing questions of the moment in order to grasp the real questions, and so to understand how the answers are real answers.³⁷

Keeping in mind the well-considered judgment of Pope Benedict XVI about the importance of the Church being able to address the rational challenges to the faith in the contemporary context, along with his concern that seminarians devote themselves to study, we are ready to consider the *Decree* itself.³⁸

II. Structure and Basic Content of the *Decree*

In this second part of the essay, I will first offer a

few words on the structure of the new *Decree* and then summarize its essential contents. The *Decree* is comprised of three parts: a sixteen-paragraph “preamble,” providing the interpretive lens through which to read the subsequent text; a concise second part, entitled “Norms of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana*,” that “revises” three of the 94 articles of the 1979 Constitution (nos. 72a, 81 and 83); a more extensive third part that revises the Congregation’s *ordinationes* or “applicative norms” for the implementation of *Sapientia christiana* (namely Articles 51, 52, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, and 66). In the rest of this second section, I will summarize first the main points of the preamble, second the three updated norms of *Sapientia cristiana* itself, and finally the new norms for implementation.

The Interpretative Preamble

The Preamble of the *Decree* has five subsections: 1. The Current Situation; 2. The “Original Vocation” of Philosophy; 3. Philosophical Formation within the Perspective of an Open Reason; 4. Philosophical Formation in Ecclesiastical Institutions of Higher Learning; and 5. The Current Reform of Philosophical Studies. In what follows, I will summarize the basic content of each.

In the first subsection on “The Current Situation,” the *Decree* locates the ecclesiastical study of philosophy (including the formation of theologians and seminarians) as integral to the Church’s “work of evangelizing the world” and as necessary to address “the consequences of scientific and technological developments [that] stimulate new challenges for the Church.” This current situation is marked by “profound” changes in “the predominant culture” where “there is often mistrust in the capacity of human intelligence to arrive at objective and universal truth – a truth by which people can give direction to their lives” (no. 1). The *Decree* here aligns itself with Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et ratio*, which emphasized “the need for philosophy, so as to advance in the knowledge of the truth and to render earthly existence ever more human” (no. 2).

The second subsection on ‘The Original Vocation of Philosophy’ (nos. 3-4) summarizes the different philosophical “trends” (i.e., emphases) that have marked the course of history, which show “the richness of the various rigorous, sapiential searches for truth.” These trends include the following: the ancient search for wisdom, which “contemplated being from the perspective of the cosmos;” the Patristic and medieval deepening and purification of this ancient vision, by “identifying the cosmos as the free creation of a God who is wise and

good;” modern philosophies, which “emphasized human freedom, the spontaneity of reason, and its capacity to measure and dominate the universe; “contemporary schools of thought,” marked by their sensitivity “to the vulnerability of our knowledge and our humanity,” with their focus “on the mediating roles of language and culture;” along with the general category of non-Western thought. While appreciating whatever truth can be found in any of these approaches, the *Decree* insists with *Fides et ratio* that the “metaphysical element is the path to be taken in order to move beyond the crisis pervading large sectors of philosophy at the moment, and thus to correct certain mistaken modes of behavior now widespread in our society.” It cites the encyclical in inviting philosophers to strive resolutely to recover philosophy’s ‘original vocation’: “the search for truth, and its sapiential and metaphysical characteristic” (no.3).³⁹ Drawing heavily upon nos. 81 and 83 of *Fides et ratio* and St. Thomas Aquinas, paragraph no.4 of the *Decree* further develops these central characteristics of philosophy as sapiential, a wisdom that “considers the first and fundamental principles of reality,” that “seeks the ultimate and fullest meaning of life,” and that is of “genuinely metaphysical range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth.”

The third subsection of the prologue (nos. 5-7) is entitled “Philosophical Formation within the Perspective of an Open Reason” and relates the *Decree* to central points made by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI regarding the need to recover a sufficiently robust understanding of human reason.⁴⁰ For the former, it cites *Fides et ratio* once again: “I wish to reaffirm strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era” (no. 5).⁴¹ Similarly, it cites Pope Benedict’s insistence on the need to offer “an organic vision of knowledge” (no. 6), “to take up the challenge of exercising, developing and defending a rationality with ‘broader horizons,’” “to enlarge the area of our rationality” and to recover the “breath of reason” (no.7). Whereas some might fear or object that such a robust philosophical training will make theologians or priests too argumentative, the *Decree* claims that “[f]rom a Christian perspective, truth cannot be separated from love. On the one hand, the defense and promotion of truth are an essential form of charity.”⁴² Along these lines, it cites no. 9 of Pope Benedict XVI’s *Deus caritas est* which states: “[t]o defend the

truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity” (no. 7). Especially when read in light of the fourth subsection, paragraph nos. 6-7 of this third one illustrate the profound harmony between the writings of Pope Benedict—who is seen to be more Bonaventurian and Augustinian—with the *Decree*, which clearly emphasizes the *philosophia perennis* as exemplified by St. Thomas Aquinas.⁴³

In the fourth subsection on “Philosophical Formation in Ecclesiastical Institutions of Higher Learning” (nos. 8-12), the prologue discusses the importance and content of philosophical education in Catholic institutions and gives some strong indications of the learning outcomes to be achieved. Against the threat of relativism, it emphasizes “the capacity that reason has to serve the truth” when that reason is within an integrated sapiential horizon (no. 8). Consistent with a central theme from the beginning of the *Decree*, this section makes special mention of theology, including a striking and twice-noted claim, namely that “the crisis of postconciliar theology is, in large part, the crisis of philosophical foundations” (no. 9). These points are then applied to the training of seminarians (no. 10), citing John Paul II’s 1992 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* to remind them that “only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ.”⁴⁴

In nos. 11-12, the *Decree* makes its most explicit statements regarding what we might call the “learning outcomes” to be achieved and the specific philosophy to be studied, including the particular areas needing special attention. These paragraphs are worth studying in full, but substantial citations and commentary will suffice for the present context. The pedagogical objectives envisioned by the *Decree* are substantial: “both intellectual ‘habitus’ (plural) and contents;” “a solid philosophical *forma mentis*,” “a rigorous and coherent knowledge.” “The ‘habitus’ are ... connected with the assimilation of firmly acquired contents.”⁴⁵ The particular areas of contents to be assimilated include the classical themes “of man, the world and God,” and several that are of “central importance” and particular relevance today. From *Fides et ratio*, these include “the capacity to reach objective and universal truth as well as valid metaphysical knowledge,” “the unity of body and soul in man,” and “the dignity of the human person.” From *Veritatis splendor*, these include “relations between nature and

freedom,” “the importance of natural law,” “the ‘sources of morality,’” “particularly of the object of the moral act,” “and the necessary conformity of civil law to moral law” (no. 11).

Citing Canon 251 of the Code of Canon Law and the 1972 document by the Congregation for Catholic Education on *The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries*, the *Decree* states that development of the *habitus* or *formae mentis* regarding these topics requires “that the teaching of philosophy be rooted in ‘the eternally valid philosophical heritage,’ developed over time, and, at the same time, be open to accepting the contributions that philosophical research has provided and continues to provide” (no. 11). Although—as we have seen in the above discussion of *Optatus totius* no. 15 and *Fides et ratio* nos. 60–61—there were some in the postconciliar decades who apparently assumed the reference to the *philosophia perennis* in postconciliar documents was meant to lessen the place of the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas in philosophical training, no. 12 of the *Decree* removes all ambiguity. It makes clear that “[t]he philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas is important both for the acquisition of intellectual “habitus” and for the mature assimilation of the philosophical heritage” and that “[t]he Church’s preference for his method and his doctrine is not exclusive, but “exemplary.” In this paragraph, the *Decree* lauds Thomas for placing faith in a positive relation with reason, for being the “apostle of truth,” and for his “realism” which “was able to recognize the objectivity of truth and produce not merely a philosophy of ‘what seems to be’ but a philosophy of ‘what is.’”⁴⁶

The fifth and final subsection (nos. 13–15) is entitled “The Current Reform of Philosophical Studies” and begins by explaining how the *Decree* includes updates to *Sapientia christiana* itself and of the *Ordinationes* or applicative norms (no. 13). It emphasizes the need to keep clear the distinction “between, on the one hand, studies in Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy and, on the other hand, the course of philosophy that forms an integral part of the studies in a Theology Faculty or in a seminary.” The concern of the *Decree* for the philosophical training of seminarians within the five-year first cycle for ordination is evident in the following directive (which is echoed in Article 59, § 4 of the applicative norms to be discussed below).

In an institution which simultaneously has both an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy and a Faculty of Theology, when the philosophy courses that are part of the five-year first-cycle of theology are taken at the Faculty of Philosophy (according to their specific nature

and the existing norms), the authority who makes decisions regarding the program is the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, who will make those decisions in conformity with the law in force, and while favoring close collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy (no. 14).

The concern for the philosophical training of seminarians is evident in this authority given over philosophical curricula to the Dean of Theology; of course, this authority is given precisely for the end of ensuring that the philosophical education of future theologians meets the requirements specified by the *Decree*.

As previously noted, the final paragraph of the prologue (no. 15) addresses the “three fields of implementation” for the *Decree* including Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy (in part a), Faculties of Theology and seminaries (b): it concludes with a discussion of Qualifications of the Teachers (c). I will comment on what seem to be the most important points. The first of these concerns the Baccalaureate in Philosophy, regarding which a three-year course of studies is now required for all Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy.⁴⁷ The reason given is that “experience of over thirty years has gradually led to the realization that three years of formation are required to achieve more completely the objectives indicated for philosophy in the aforementioned Apostolic Constitution and especially in order for the student to reach ‘a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine.’”⁴⁸ The second point worth noting concerns the theology and seminary contexts, where the *Decree* emphasizes that the student should “arrive at his or her own point of synthesis at the end of the philosophical and theological studies.” It indicates how not only the philosophical dimension of seminary education, but also how the theological is ordered to a sapiential synthesis, which seems to be an indirect indication of how theological studies also need to be rooted in the thought of Aquinas.

A third point concerns how a philosophical education that is ordered to the development of intellectual *habitus* must avoid “excessive mixing of philosophical and theological subjects—or, indeed, [mixing] of subjects of another sort.” The reason to avoid such mixing—jumping between various subjects and perspectives—is that it results in giving “students a defective formation in the respective intellectual ‘habitus,’ and introduces confusion between the methodologies of the various subjects and their specific epistemological configurations.” Given that this point is made under the heading of “Philosophical Formation in Faculties of Theology and Seminaries,” the concern would not seem to be with teachers who would illustrate the importance

to theology of the philosophical matters under study, but with philosophical education that draws upon other disciplines in a way that undermines (it warns against a “manipulation” of philosophy) the ability of students to distinguish (and cultivate) a properly philosophical manner of thinking.

Unfortunately, the *Decree* provides no examples of the problems it seeks to exclude, but—regarding the excessive mixing with theology—readers may think of twentieth century debates about nature and Grace and about the claims of some that it is impossible to understand, for example, the created order without considering it in light of the incarnation. I would hope that no one would propose rooting a study of a topic like natural philosophy in the incarnation, but the *Decree* would apparently oppose such an approach. Similarly, the Note seems to discourage novelty in general; regarding course titles, for example, it insists on standard ones and allows little room for creativity (see 1d on “Variation of Titles,” which gives examples of the permitted degree of variation: “‘anthropology’ instead of ‘philosophy of man,’ ‘ethics’ instead of ‘moral philosophy’”).

Regarding the “excessive mixing” of properly philosophical studies with “subjects of another sort” (besides theology), the tendency in the postconciliar era to neglect philosophy for the social sciences (e.g., sociology, psychology) comes to mind; in the contemporary post-modern context, there seems to be a danger of allowing literature to improperly intrude into philosophical studies, perhaps with the justification that its appeal to the imagination and creativity is more enticing to contemporary students. According to the *Decree*, however, this approach would apparently undermine the formation of the crucial philosophical *habitus*. In order to achieve this properly philosophical *forma mentis*, the *Decree* not only rejects mixing, but even specifies a distinctively philosophical approach to complementary subjects in the human sciences.⁴⁹

Fourth, the *Decree* sees a need to “avert the increased risk of fideism” by ensuring “that the philosophy courses be concentrated in the first two years of philosophical-theological formation,” apparently presupposing that the remaining three years will build upon this philosophical foundation and thereby further avoid this risk of fideism. It seems to me that this risk is especially acute in countries like the United States, where biblically-oriented forms of Christianity are often both influential in the culture and deficient in philosophy; the *Decree* can provide a vital immunization against both fundamentalism and forms of piety that fail to

uphold the Catholic tradition on the harmony between faith and reason.

Still under subheading (b), which addresses “Philosophical Formation in Faculties of Theology and Seminaries,” the fifth notable point of no. 15, as cited in a previous footnote, reads: “All that concerns the duration, number of credits and contents of the study of philosophy are also to be applied in those countries where the study of ‘philosophy’ is integrated within a Baccalaureate program in a Catholic Institute of Higher Education, outside the context of an Ecclesiastical Faculty.” Clearly the *Decree* applies beyond Italy and Europe. Although its references to “Catholic Institute of Higher Education” and “Ecclesiastical Faculty” are not fully specified, this text seems to mean that the requirements of “duration, number of credits and contents of the study of philosophy” for an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy are meant to apply to at least some other Catholic institutions “outside the context of an Ecclesiastical Faculty.” If I have understood correctly, this would mean, for example, that the Baccalaureate in Philosophy would require three-years of study in other Catholic institutions of Higher Education, including seminaries, and not just Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy; from this it would follow that programs in the United States that currently grant a Baccalaureate in Philosophy for two years of study would need to add an additional year of course work. The content, moreover, would take Aquinas as the exemplar within the *philosophia perennis* and be ordered to achieving the above-mentioned *habitus* and *forma mentis*.

The Updated Norms of *Sapientia christiana* Itself

As previously noted, the *Decree* updates only three of the 94 norms of *Sapientia cristiana*, with the most substantive change made to Article 72a. Consistent with the above claim that although the title of the *Decree* specifies philosophical studies, its impact for theological studies is considerable, Article 72a addresses that which comprises “*The curriculum of studies of a Faculty of Sacred Theology*”—and precisely for subsection “a”—“*the first cycle, fundamentals, which lasts for five years or ten semesters, or else, when a previous two-year philosophy course is an entrance requirement, for three years.*” It will be convenient to view the old and new text side-by-side, aligning the roughly parallel texts (see Table 1).

As can be seen above, whereas the original text begins with reference to “a solid philosophical formation,” the new text strengthens this first sentence to specify that “[t]he first two years [of the five year cycle] must

be primarily dedicated to a solid philosophical formation.” The next two sentences in the *Decree* are additions, addressing students who have earned a Baccalaureate degree in philosophy prior to their theological studies. Such a degree from an Ecclesiastical Faculty—and presumably from a program that meets the standards of the new *Decree*—substitutes for the philosophy courses in the first-cycle of theology. Although the *Decree* does not explicitly say so (as I will indicate in the next paragraph), it seems to suggest that such a Baccalaureate is the preferred prerequisite to theological studies. A Baccalaureate in philosophy from a non-Ecclesiastical Faculty, on the other hand, should not be presumed to substitute; the implication seems to be that remedial work is likely needed so that the student meets the requirements of the *Decree*.⁵⁰ Those who both read the *Decree* with attention to the requirements to achieve intellectual *habitus* in the *philosophia perennis* and are familiar with philosophy curricula in non-Ecclesiastical Faculties will likely conclude that the remedial work could be significant.

The changes in Article 81 are straightforward, increasing the duration of the first-cycle of philosophy courses (for the Baccalaureate degree in philosophy) from “two years or four semesters” to “three years or six semesters.” The rationale for this change can be seen in no. 15 of the prologue: “The experience of over thirty years has gradually led to the realization that three years of formation are required to achieve more completely the objectives indicated for philosophy in the aforementioned Apostolic Constitution, and especially in order for the student to reach ‘a solid and coherent synthesis

of doctrine,’” or what the *Decree* elsewhere (nos. 11-12) describes as a firm grasp of specific contents, the development of habitual knowledge, and of a *forma mentis*. This last point brings out what seems to be a tension in the document, namely that seminarians are normally expected to devote two years to philosophical studies whereas the learning outcomes they need to achieve require three.

The essential change in Article 83 is the addition of the following sentence. “If a student, who has successfully completed the regular philosophy courses in the first cycle of a Theology Faculty, wants to continue philosophical studies in order to obtain the Baccalaureate in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, due account must be taken of the courses that the student has attended during the aforementioned studies.” Clearly, the new *Decree* wants to remove obstacles to the completion of a Baccalaureate in Philosophy for those in the first-cycle of theology, which includes both seminarians and others pursuing graduate studies in theology.

The New “Applicative Norms” for the Implementation of *Sapientia cristiana*

The Congregation for Catholic Education’s *ordinationes*, or “applicative norms” for the implementation of *Sapientia cristiana*, are considerably more extensive than those made to the constitution itself, addressing the eight articles mentioned above (51, 52, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, and 66) in a way that builds upon the basic message of the prologue. In what follows, I offer a concise summary of these changes.

The revisions to Article 51 concern the obliga-

Table 1

Original Text	Text of the New Decree
Besides a solid philosophical formation, which is a necessary propaedeutic for theological studies,	The first two years must be primarily dedicated to a solid philosophical formation, which is necessary for undertaking correctly the study of theology. The Baccalaureate obtained in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy substitutes for first-cycle philosophy courses in Theology Faculties. A Baccalaureate in Philosophy obtained in a non-Ecclesiastical Faculty does not give grounds for dispensing a student completely from the first-cycle philosophy courses in Theology Faculties.
the theological disciplines must be taught in such a way that what is presented is an organic exposition of the whole of Catholic doctrine, together with an introduction to theological scientific methodology.	<i>The theological disciplines must be taught in such a way that what is presented is an organic exposition of the whole of Catholic doctrine, together with an introduction to theological scientific methodology.</i> (Italics in original)

tory philosophical disciplines to be studied in the first-cycle of a faculty of theology, further reflecting the significance of the *Decree* for priestly formation. Three points are emphasized under subheading “a”: a list of the required courses “needed for theology,” emphasizing “*above all systematic philosophy and the history of philosophy*”⁵¹ (italics as in original); a clear statement of the minimum number of credits (60% of the total in two full years of study) in the “strictly philosophical disciplines”; and the importance that these courses “be concentrated in the first two years of philosophical-theological formation” and “undertaken in view of theology studies.”

Also under the applicative norms for the first cycle of theology, the *Decree* adds two sentences to Article 52 regarding the qualifications of the Professors of Philosophy in a Faculty of Theology. The first reads as follows: “The number of professors who teach philosophy must be at least three, who have the required degrees in philosophy (q.v. Ord., Art. 17 e 61, b).” This statement about the number of required professors is clear enough. Their qualifications are specified in Norm 17, which is unchanged by the *Decree*, and simply requires a suitable doctorate.⁵² This first sentence also includes a parenthetical reference to Norm 61, which is completely rewritten to document the qualifications of teachers in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, which center in holding a doctorate from an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, presumably one meeting the standards of the new *Decree*.⁵³ Given that Article 52 concerns Faculties of Theology, but references Article 61 concerning Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy, it seems reasonable to conclude that the *Decree* expects philosophy professors preparing students for theology (and perhaps priestly ordination)—that is, philosophers teaching in the first two years of the first-cycle of theology—to meet the same professional standards as those on an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy. The second sentence added by the *Decree* to Article 52 further emphasizes the expectations of these professors: “They must be dedicated full-time to the teaching of philosophy and to research in that field.”⁵⁴ The expectation seems to be that they will be doing research and teaching in areas of expertise.

Article 59 on the “Aims of an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy” includes four paragraphs and is greatly expanded over the 1979 text. The old and new text for §1 read as indicated in Table 2.

The change is significant. In the postconciliar era document *Sapientia cristiana*, there is no explicit indication in the body of the text as to which philoso-

This survey of ecclesiastical directives revealed not only a fundamental continuity in what the Church has specified, but also—as evident in *Lumen Ecclesiae* and *Fides et ratio* nos. 60-61—a failure of some to recognize or accept what was being asked, which may be a manifestation of the tendency to misread the Church after the Second Vatican Council through a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture.

phy is to be learned, as long as students “come to a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine,” while the goal is to arrive at “personal philosophical reflection.” The *Decree* specifies much more strongly that both “research and teaching of philosophy in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy must be rooted in the ‘philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid,’ which has developed throughout ... history, with special attention being given to the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas.” This reflects the previously-cited text from no.12 of the prologue that quotes Pope John Paul II regarding the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas: “The Church’s preference for his method and his doctrine is not exclusive, but ‘exemplary’.”

Paragraph §2 of Article 59 of the new *Decree* begins with the following sentence. “In the first cycle, philosophy is to be taught in such a way that the students in the basic cycle will come to a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine, will learn to examine and judge the different systems of philosophy, and will also gradually become accustomed to personal philosophical reflection.” It has therefore echoed the 1979 reference to “a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine” after having specified the centrality of the *philosophia perennis* and Aquinas as representative thereof. On precisely this basis,

students can “examine and judge the different systems of philosophy” and “become accustomed to personal philosophical reflection.”⁵⁶

While acknowledging the need to “distinguish clearly between, on the one hand, studies in Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy and, on the other hand, the philosophical courses that form an integral part of the studies in a Faculty of Theology or in a seminary,” paragraph §4 of the new Article 59 includes the previously-cited and striking statement (almost identical to one in no. 14 of the prologue) about the extent to which the philosophical education of theologians (and seminarians) needs to be done in a way that addresses the theological needs of those students. It states as follows:

In an institution which has, at the same time, both an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy and a Faculty of Theology, when the philosophy courses that are part of the five-year first-cycle of theology are taken at the Faculty of Philosophy, the authority who makes decisions regarding the program is the dean of the Faculty of Theology, who will make those decisions in conformity with the law in force, and while favoring close collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy.

In other words, although the dean of the Ecclesiastical Faculty of Theology will obviously seek to work in close collaboration with the Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, he has the authority to make decisions regarding philosophy courses, precisely to ensure that they achieve their proper ends. From this, it is clear that the *Decree* requires that the philosophical training of such theology students be of a particular kind, one

oriented to the sapiential and coherent synthesis, and the development of *habitus* and *forma mentis*, mentioned elsewhere.⁵⁷

Deserving of special attention is Article 60, on the “Curriculum of Studies in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy,” including the disciplines taught in various cycles (again, this seems to also have relevance for philosophy in Catholic Universities and seminaries). The first cycle is to begin with “A general introduction which aims, in particular, at showing the sapiential dimension of philosophy.” Given the high level of learning objectives to be achieved in an initial program of three years (or in only two years for seminarians who don’t do the Baccalaureate), this general introduction seems to be located in order to introduce the discipline of philosophy to be studied through the curriculum, emphasizing how the program of studies is ordered toward the attainment of wisdom. Such a course could greatly facilitate the achievement of the desired learning objectives by providing to students a programmatic introduction to how the curriculum—through especially the various systematic courses, but also the historical ones—is designed to help them to “assimilate firmly acquired contents,” to achieve “a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine,” to acquire “intellectual, scientific and sapiential *habitus*” and a *forma mentis* (emphases present in the Note).

As a “supplementary obligatory” subject, the Article 60b of the *Decree* specifies, with reference to the encyclical *Fides et ratio* “[a] study of the relationship between reason and Christian faith—that is, between philosophy and theology—from a systematic and historical point of view, paying attention to safeguarding both the autonomy of each field as well as their interconnection.” Such a course on “faith and reason” would be of great benefit to those preparing for theology and seminary be-

Table 2

Original Text	Text of the New Decree
§1. Philosophy is to be taught in such a way that the students in the basic cycle will come to a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine, will learn to examine and judge the different systems of philosophy, and will also gradually become accustomed to personal philosophical reflection.	§ 1. The research and teaching of philosophy in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy must be rooted in the “philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid” ³² which has developed throughout the history, with special attention being given to the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas. At the same time, the philosophy taught in an Ecclesiastical Faculty must be open to the contributions that more recent research has provided and continues to offer. One must emphasize the sapiential and metaphysical dimensions of philosophy.

cause it would help them not only to distinguish properly between philosophy and theology, but also to understand the important role of philosophy in theology. Depending upon the design and credit hours allocated for the introductory course, it seems that this study of faith and reason could be part of the introductory course. For example, the curriculum could begin with a course on “Faith and Reason” that provides a programmatic introduction to philosophy as addressed through the curriculum, indicating its sapiential ordering and the path toward achieving it, including a basic introduction to the central topics and thinkers, indicating how philosophical inquiry relates to other fields, including theology, and introducing a basic glossary of terms and definitions to be learned in the first year as the basis for establishing the desired *habitus*.

Article 60 specifies the main philosophical disciplines as follows: “1) metaphysics (understood as philosophy of being and natural theology), 2) philosophy of nature, 3) philosophy of man, 4) moral and political philosophy, 5) logic and philosophy of knowledge.” As we saw especially in the prologue, the study of metaphysics is highlighted. “Given the particular importance of metaphysics, an adequate number of credits must be accorded to this discipline.” This comment reflects the challenge presented to faculties who have a limited number of courses and credits within which to address a topic that is not only complex, but contested and important (especially for theology). For this reason, it would seem opportune that the introductory, systematic and historical courses—and even a capstone bringing the curriculum to a sapiential culmination—be carefully coordinated to achieve the desired end. Article 60 also changes the prior description of the historical courses as seen in Table 3.

The principles of sound exegesis would require that the meaning of this change be understood in light of the complete text of the *Decree*, especially its interpretative prologue, and in light of its historical con-

text. In this way, what may seem to be an insignificant change regarding the first-cycle courses (including for seminarians) in the history of philosophy would seem to be more significant. According to the original text of *Sapientia christiana*, first-cycle courses on the history of philosophy might be taught much as they would be in a secular university, a “great books” program in a liberal arts college, or in a graduate school. In the latter, for example, this would include—in the words of the original text—a “careful study of the systems which are exercising a major influence.” Such courses, which (depending on their context) would give particular attention to primary texts and leading interpreters (but not make critical judgments about them in light of the *philosophia perennis*), certainly have their place, especially in liberal arts colleges or in the second and third cycles of graduate programs, but the *Decree* seems to envision something different. This involves “[c]areful examination of the various currents of thought”; here the study of “currents of thought” seems less concerned with particular thinkers than major trends in the history of philosophy, while “careful examination” suggests students are expected to learn how to make judgments. Here it is helpful once again to recall no. 11 of the prologue, which speaks of how students are to acquire *habitus* in the *philosophia perennis*, which “make[s] it possible to think, know and reason with precision, and also to dialogue with everyone incisively and fearlessly.” The new text, therefore, directs that the first-cycle courses on the history of philosophy focus on critical examination of “currents of thought,” with a primary concern for where they attain truth or fail to do so. In the statement that the examination of “currents of thought” is “to be accompanied, when possible, by the reading of texts of the more important authors,” the *Decree*—by specifying “when possible”—does not seem to presume that first cycle courses rely mostly on primary texts, but would apparently see a place for textbooks ordered to ensure achievement of learning outcomes.⁵⁸

Table 3

Original Text	Text of the New Decree
history of philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, with a careful study of the systems which are exercising a major influence	The history of philosophy: ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary. Careful examination of the various currents of thought are to be accompanied, when possible, by the reading of texts of the more important authors. Depending on requirements, a study of local philosophies is to be added.

Whereas the original 1979 text of *Sapientia christiana* had a brief reference in Article 60 to “the auxiliary disciplines, namely selected natural and human sciences,” the new *Decree* deletes that language and replaces it with a lengthy discussion of “supplementary obligatory subjects,” which makes even more clear that the philosophy to be studied is the *philosophia perennis*. The *Decree* mandates the study of the Latin language (“the knowledge of which must be verified”), and not just any Latin (i.e. classical), but precisely “so as to be able to understand the philosophical works (especially of Christian authors) written in that language.” Under “optional additional subjects” the *Decree* and Note make clear that these are to be studied, not in the way that might be done in other kinds of institutions, but in a way that contributes to the achievement of a sapiential synthesis, precisely in light of the *philosophia perennis*. Regarding the “human sciences” or “natural sciences,” for example, it directs that “care must be taken to establish a connection between the sciences and philosophy.” Other topics are to be addressed from a distinctively philosophical perspective: “philosophy of science, philosophy of culture, philosophy of arts, philosophy of technology, philosophy of language, philosophy of law or philosophy of religion.” According to 1b of the Note, this must be done to “avoid the twofold risk of a scientific formation separated from the philosophical and theological vision of man and of the world, and that of an a-critical vision of these disciplines.”

As discussed above in reference to Article 52 on “Qualifications of the Professors of Philosophy in a Faculty of Theology,” Article 61 is an expanded replacement of the 1979 text, specifying requirements for “Teachers in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy.” For the Faculty of Philosophy, the minimum number of professors dedicated to teaching and research in philosophy moves from three to “at least seven.” “In particular, the first cycle must have at least five full-time teachers allotted as follows: one in metaphysics, one in philosophy of nature, one in philosophy of man, one in moral philosophy and politics, one in logic and philosophy of knowledge.” It is worth noting that it is not sufficient for professors to be generalists; they are expected to be specialists in a discipline of systematic philosophy, who teach and do research in their fields of expertise and also teach the other mandatory courses, such as those in the history of philosophy. Article 61 also expands on the basic qualification of teachers being a doctorate from an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy.⁵⁹

The remaining Articles of the *Decree* address ad-

missions requirements (62), adaptation of the norms for “affiliated” institutions (five full-time teachers) and (in 62 bis) “aggregated” institutions (six full-time teachers), along with (65) the required date by which “Ecclesiastical academic institutions of theology and philosophy must conform to this *Decree*.” The dates are spelled out most fully in no. 8 of the Note.⁶⁰ First, “all students who [begin to] matriculate [for “an ecclesiastical bachelor’s degree”] in philosophy for academic year 2012-2013 must attend the first cycle of three years” as opposed to the prior two years. Second, Faculties of Philosophy must adapt their statutes to the norms proposed by the *Decree* and submit them by January 31, 2012, for approval by of the Congregation (8b). Third, by the same date, Faculties—including “Faculties of affiliated or aggregated Institutions”—should submit to the Congregation “a brief presentation of each course and seminar, with the essential bibliography of books and articles, considered essential for the studies” (8c). Fourth, Faculties will need to adapt their “body of teachers to the different requirements emanated by the *Decree*, in particular regarding the required number and qualifications,” which “for some Institutions will require some time.” (8d). Fifth, “[f]or this reason, the Congregation asks that the respective ecclesiastical institutions adapt to the norms of the *Decree* and send, within a period of time of no more than five years (i.e., by the beginning of academic year 2016-2017), the *curriculum vitae, operum et studiorum* of each teacher.” Sixth, “[i]n anticipation of that date, Institutions who must send a report should specify in what way the subjects of the program of studies are covered and by which professors.” The list of stable professors who teach the “obligatory basic subjects...will be sent to the dicastery” (8d). “Finally, the Congregation will proceed with a verification of the adaptation of Institutions to the *Decree* after academic year 2015-2016. Therefore, Institutions must prepare a summary of the measures taken and send a report to this dicastery, indicating the positive steps and any difficulties regarding the implementation of the *Decree*” (8e).

Conclusion

In this article, I have first contextualized the new “Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy” in light of preceding documents on intellectual formation. The goal here was to show the unbroken continuity in these documents regarding the central place they give to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas in philosophical and theological education (his method, principles and conclusions), precisely so that students

can benefit from an ordered, coherent and sapiential intellectual formation; for seminarians, moreover, it is significant that this intellectual formation is readily integrated with a human and spiritual formation (i.e., one rooted in the cultivation of virtues) that is conducive to pastoral ministry.⁶¹ My opening survey of ecclesiastical directives has shown a fundamental continuity in the specifications of the Council, the recent Popes, the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Code of Canon Law; my opening survey has also shown—through texts like Paul VI's *Lumen ecclesiae* and John Paul II's *Fides et ratio* (nos. 60-61) — that these directives have not always been followed as readily as one might hope. The uneven implementation of these directives can be seen as a manifestation of the tendency to misread the documents of the Second Vatican Council through a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture. Second, I have offered a detailed discussion of the *Decree* itself, and the subsequent Note, to illustrate the thesis that it should be understood as a stronger and more explicit statement of what is required regarding the central role of the *philosophia perennis* (as exemplified in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, no.12) in Catholic institutions of higher education (especially ecclesiastical faculties of philosophy and theology), including seminaries. As we have seen, this more explicit statement includes “the assimilation of firmly acquired contents,” “the acquisition of intellectual, scientific and sapiential ‘habitus’” and of “a solid philosophical *forma mentis*,” which “make[s] it possible to think, know and reason with precision, and also to dialogue with everyone incisively and fearlessly.”⁶²

My hope is that this essay will help to stimulate a thoughtful discussion of the *Decree* and of the best means to achieve its specific goals in order to facilitate its timely and robust implementation in Catholic institutions, which—if Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI are correct—will make a significant contribution to the renewal of Catholic intellectual life and priestly formation, precisely by enabling—in the words of the latter—a true reform and renewal in continuity.⁶³



Dr. William F. Murphy, Jr., S.T.D., is professor of moral theology and editor of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio.

Endnotes

1. According to the Vatican Information Service release (VIS 20110322), this *Decree* had been previously “ratified” by the same Congregation; on the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, January 28, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI “approved ‘in specific form’ the modifications” that the *Decree* made to *Sapientia cristiana* and he “confirmed the rest of the text ‘in common form.’” All citations from the *Decree* are from the Vatican web page, although I have changed UK spellings to American English. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20110128_dec-rif-filosofia_en.html. Unless otherwise specified, all references to Vatican documents are to the official versions on the Vatican website.
2. Within no. 15, the main point in the discussion of Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy (subsection “a”) is that the Baccalaureate degree in philosophy now requires three years of study. Subsection “b”) emphasizes that philosophical formation in Faculties of Theology and seminaries requires two years of studies and is ordered to “synthesis at the end of the philosophical and theological studies.” The concluding text of 15b suggests a broad, rather than narrow, applicability of the *Decree*: “All that concerns the duration, number of credits and contents of the study of philosophy are also to be applied in those countries where the study of ‘philosophy’ is integrated within a Baccalaureate program in a Catholic Institute of Higher Education, outside the context of an Ecclesiastical Faculty.”
3. This note, written in Italian and yet to be published, was addressed as follows: “To Grand Chancellors, Rectors and Deans of Ecclesiastical Faculties *and, for their information*, to Rectors [i.e. Presidents] of Catholic Universities and to Presidents of Episcopal Conferences.” It has not been published, nor has an official English translation been provided. My citations from it will be taken from an unofficial translation.
4. This citation is from no. 9 of the *Decree*, the reference for which is given in note 20 as follows: Joseph Ratzinger, “L’unità di missione e persona nella figura di Giovanni Paolo II [The Unity of the Mission and Person in the Figure of John Paul II]”, 1998, in Id., *Giovanni Paolo II. Il mio amato predecessore [John Paul II, My Beloved Predecessor]*, Vatican City and Cinisello Basalmo, 2007, p. 16 (unofficial translation).
5. This phrase is taken from the December 22, 2005 “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering Them his Christmas Greetings,” which can be found at the Vatican website (accessed Nov 18, 2011). http://www.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html.
6. Regarding misreadings of the Council, the reader is referred to the various writings of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, such as his *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building*

- Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), especially his "Review of the Postconciliar Era," including his remarks about *Gaudium et spes* on pages 75-93. For Ratzinger, such conciliar documents are like medicine for the maladies of the time in which they were written, and should not be seen as the basis for a new beginning; taking them in the latter sense was, for him, a fundamental error made by those he criticizes.
7. See, for example, no. 2 of the Second Vatican Council's *Dei verbum*: "This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having in inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation."
 8. From the perspective of moral theology, a brief but helpful overview of the role of Aquinas in seminary education can be found in Part Two of Servais Pinckaers, O.P. *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995). Pinckaers emphasizes how especially those aspects of Thomas's moral teaching that connected it with Scripture and the spiritual life were often lost, such that his virtue-oriented account of the moral life was transposed into a more legalistic framework.
 9. In comparison to the legalistic tendencies of some post-Tridentine manuals, the "neo-Thomistic" manuals following *Aeterni patris* begin to recover Aquinas's actual teaching. This recovery can be seen by comparing, on the one hand, Pinckaers' discussion of the post-Tridentine reduction of fundamental moral theology (to the themes of acts, law, conscience and sin) under the influence of the sixteenth century Jesuit Juan Azor with, on the other hand, the study of twentieth century "neo-Thomistic" manuals in John A. Gallagher's *Time Past Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1990), especially chapters 3-5, which show a more adequate recovery of Aquinas.
 10. Augustin Bea S.J. "The Apostolic Constitution *Deus scientiarum dominus*: Its Origin and Spirit," in *Theological Studies* 4.1 (1943): 34-52, at 35. This is available at <http://www.ts.mu.edu/content/4/4.1/4.1.2.pdf>, accessed July 7, 2011.
 11. For a discussion of "positive sciences" in the context of such Ecclesiastical documents on education, see the 1972 document of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education entitled "The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries," which is included in *Norms for Priestly Formation*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993). See especially pp. 101-2. These positive sciences, which tend to be contrasted with the traditional use of philosophy within theology, are basically disciplines following some kind of explicit and repeatable methodology, as in the fields of textual criticism, exegesis, historical study, or the natural or social sciences. The concerns of the 1972 document will be discussed at greater length below.
 12. Bea, "Origin and Spirit," 39-40.
 13. Bea, "Origin and Spirit," 51.
 14. See, for example, Fergus Kerr, O.P. *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neo-Scholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), especially chapter 1.
 15. Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 2.
 16. See Komonchak's "Thomism and the Second Vatican Council," in *Continuity and Plurality in Catholic Theology: Essays in Honor of Gerald A. McCool, S.J.*, ed. Anthony J. Cernera (Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 1998), 53-73, quoted at page 72. In the opening section of this essay, entitled "The Preparation of the Council," Komonchak discusses the original texts prepared by the commissions before the council, but rejected by the council Fathers; these texts were strongly Thomistic, including the canonical language regarding Thomas's "method, doctrine and principles," which was not included in the text of *Optatam totius* (though we might say it was included indirectly through a footnote reference to *Humani generis*). For an introduction to the important interaction between ressourcement theology and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, see the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 18:1, especially my "Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie: A Dialogue Renewed?," 4-34.
 17. Although a full discussion is beyond the scope of this essay, another feature of *Optatam totius* sheds light on why the Magisterium has had to reiterate its emphasis on the thought of Aquinas; I refer to no. 1 which refers to the "special 'program of priestly training' ... to be undertaken by each country or rite. It must be set up by the episcopal conferences, revised from time to time and approved by the Apostolic See. In this way will the universal laws be adapted to the particular circumstances of the times and localities so that the priestly training will always be in tune with the pastoral needs of those regions in which the ministry is to be exercised." This text reflects the delegation of responsibility to local episcopal conferences, which apparently involved a delegation of responsibility for the details of seminary curricula to the different institutions.
 18. Notice here how the text appeals to what we might call the "object of revelation" using the Pauline language of the "mystery of Christ," as found in key documents like *Dei Verbum* (no. 2) and *Fides et ratio*. Whereas, for some, this more Christological language necessarily excludes a Thomistic perspective, I see no reason why such language cannot be reconciled with a Thomistic understanding of theology centered in God, and all things in relation to God, including His plan of salvation. Put otherwise, a profound harmony can be shown between the Thomistic

- synthesis and the more Pauline and Christocentric, or Johannine and Logocentric, teachings of the New Testament. See, for example, my “Christ as a Principle of Moral Action in Thomistic Ethics,” *Angelicum* 79 (2002): 147-175.
19. For a helpful discussion, see Josef Neuner’s “The Decree on Priestly Formation” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Volume II, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder, 1968), especially 395-7. See also Anthony A. Akinwale, O.P. “The Decree on Priestly Formation,” *Optatam Totius in Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, eds. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 240-6.
20. In light of challenges that had been raised, the reaffirmation of Thomistic thought by *Humani generis* is concentrated in nos. 29-35. No. 31 of *Humani generis*, cited above, reads as follows. “If one considers all this well, he will easily see why the Church demands that future priests be instructed in philosophy ‘according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor,’ since, as we well know from the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly preeminent both of teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with Divine Revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress.”
21. I am indebted to Dr. Patricia Pintado for bringing to my attention this response of December 1965.
22. See his “The Decree on Priestly Formation,” 398-9. In note 39, Neuner remarks that the validity of his teaching “is to be examined in particular cases.”
23. See Komonchak’s “Thomism and the Second Vatican Council,” 72-73.
24. The first difficulty is described as follows. “Philosophy does not any longer have a proper object. It has been in fact absorbed and substituted for by the *positive sciences* [emphasis added], natural and humane, which are [seen to be] concerned with true and real problems and which are studied with the help of those methods which are recognized today as uniquely valid. This is the attitude inspired by the currents of positivism, neo-positivism, and structuralism.” The second difficulty for philosophy also relates to positivism, holding that “theological studies must detach themselves from philosophical speculation as from a useless word-game and must build up in full autonomy on a positive base, furnished by historical criteria and by special methods of exegesis. Theology of the future will, therefore, be the special competence of historians and philologists.” The text can be found in the previously-cited *Norms for Priestly Formation*, vol. 1, 101-2.
25. For the references to parts II and III, see *Norms for Priestly Formation*, vol. 1, 104-7.
26. My citations are from the English translation of *Lumen ecclesiae* by Matthew O’Connell, which can be found in *The Pope Speaks*, Vol.19, n.4, 1975, p.287-307.
27. This text by Paul VI might be have a therapeutic value for those who—apparently under the influence of a postmodern “perspectivism” (which is traced back to Nietzsche)—would object that a philosophical and theological education that gives central place to Aquinas’s thought presupposes the error of thinking that this “perspective” gives absolute truth, whereas in reality (they would claim), it is essentially another perspective among the many one could take. See, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, 1st edition (New York: Random House, 1967), # 481, p.261, where he writes: “In so far as the word ‘knowledge’ has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. — ‘Perspectivism.’” Pope Paul VI’s text can also be of great value to those who fear that today’s seminarians need to be dissuaded from developing a special love for the thought of St. Thomas, presuming that such attachment will make them argumentative, judgmental and “rigid,” or that it will oppose them to the more biblical and patristic emphases of the Second Vatican Council.
28. John Paul II’s “Address at the Angelicum” was given on November 17, 1979; the Italian original was published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 71 (1979): 1472-1483. For English translation, see *Angelicum* 57 (1980):133-146.
29. “Basic Norms for Priestly Formation” in *Norms for Priestly Formation*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993), 15-60. See the Decree of Promulgation on p.7 of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, fifth edition (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2006). This page describes the PPF as “the *Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis* for the United States to be observed in seminaries for the formation of priests,” [and] ... “which is to be observed in all seminaries, whether diocesan or interdiocesan, from the date of this same decree.” This fifth edition of the PPF was initially approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education in November of 2005 for a period of five years, and was extended in December of 2010 for an additional five years. As we will see below, the calendar of implementation for the *Decree* (which can be understood as calling for a more complete implementation of what has always been in documents like the *Ratio fundamentalis*) calls for specific actions as soon as the Spring semester of the current academic year (January 31, 2012), with the Congregation proceeding “with a verification of the adaptation of Institutions to the Decree after academic year 2015-2016” (part 8 of the Note).
30. Of course, there is a place for careful studies of individual philosophers by true experts in their thought, and giving careful attention to historical context, primary texts and secondary literature. It seems clear that the ecclesial

- documents, however, are looking for something different, especially in the first-cycle courses offered to philosophy and theology students, and especially to seminarians. This distinct expectation has implications for the selection of faculty to teach such first-cycle courses, and the institutions in which theologians and seminarians are taught. Because universities will typically look to hire experts in particular philosophers or periods, and will thus often hire philosophy professors who do not have doctorates from Ecclesiastical Faculties, these professors will often not be well-prepared to teach first-cycle courses of the kind the ecclesiastical documents indicate.
31. "I Will Give You Shepherds (*Pastores dabo vobis*)" in *Norms for Priestly Formation*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 1993), pp. 263-351.
 32. John Paul II, *On the Relationship between Faith and Reason. Fides et ratio* (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 1998).
 33. According to the *Vatican Information Service* report on the press conference in which the *Decree* was presented (which was accessed on July 10, 2011 from <http://www.radiovaticana.org/en1/articolo.asp?c=472076>), "[t]he preparation of the text dates back to 2004 when the Congregation established a commission of specialists in philosophy. That commission, possessing both intellectual and institutional expertise and representatives of the principal linguistic and geographical areas, was charged with presenting a reform project. . . . After the Plenary Session of 2005 the first draft was sent to a certain number of deans around the world of ecclesiastical faculties of philosophy, but also of theology." The definitive version "was ratified in the Congregation for Catholic Education's ordinary meeting of 16 June 2010." See also http://press.catholica.va/news_services/bulletin/news/27073.php?index=27073&lang=it for excerpts from the press conference (in Italian).
 34. This is included in his *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 137-150.
 35. *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, eds. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 325-336.
 36. Pope Benedict XVI, "January 18, 2008, Lecture at the University of Rome, 'La Sapienza'" in *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, vol. 15, Number 1: "Theology and Philosophy 10 Years after *Fides et Ratio*."
 37. This can be found at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20101018_seminaristi_en.html.
 38. See also the three audiences on St. Thomas Aquinas given by Pope Benedict XVI during the month of June 2010, which can be found at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2010/index_en.htm.
 39. For the decree, therefore, the philosophy to be taught in Catholic institutions including seminaries is one centered on the search for truth and wisdom, and even a significant attainment of these (through the development of intellectual habitus and *forma mentis*); it must not be cast under a fundamentally modern heading of "freedom" or "critical thinking," or "making arguments," nor should it be reduced to "asking questions" in a way that neglects the valid and true insights that have been gained.
 40. According to the Note (1.a), "The Preamble emphasizes in particular the main philosophical contributions of the Magisterium of John Paul II – expressed especially in the encyclical *Fides et ratio* (no. 2 f.) – and of Benedict XVI (nn. 6-7)."
 41. For an important example of a recent text that can be of great use in a philosophical curriculum to achieve this sapiential goal of the decree, in a way consistent with its Thomistic orientation, see Benedict M. Ashley, O.P. *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).
 42. Similarly, no. 11 affirms that "[t]hese 'habitus' make it possible to think, know and reason with precision, and also to dialogue with everyone incisively and fearlessly."
 43. We have seen that, in places like the previously-cited audience of June 2, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI lauds St. Thomas for his "great achievement" of "show[ing] that a natural harmony exists between Christian faith and reason." (See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100602_en.html.) On the other hand, Cardinal Ratzinger demonstrates his characteristic intellectual honesty and reverence for truth when he offers the following criticism of especially the late writings of St. Bonaventure (whom he otherwise reveres) regarding the place of philosophy in theology. In his *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Essays to Orient Theology in Today's Debates* (San Francisco, Ignatius, 1997), 18, he wrote the following: "Opposition to philosophy as the alleged corruptor of theology is very ancient. It can already be found in Tertullian, who expressed it with bitter acrimony, but it flared up again in the Middle Ages and attained a remarkable radicality in the later work of Saint Bonaventure, to cite one example. Martin Luther inaugurated a new era of antagonism to philosophy for the sake of the unadulterated Word of God."
 44. A key point to keep in mind is that for John Paul II, who like Benedict XVI eschews the hermeneutic of rupture and discontinuity, there is no conflict—but instead a profound harmony—between biblically-grounded, spiritually rich and edifying texts like *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the especially Thomistic philosophy emphasized by the new *Decree*.
 45. Although this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the philosophy of education, I would argue that Catholic institutions seeking to achieve the goals of the Decree need to be cautious about some educational presuppositions current in the surrounding culture. There

has been, for example, a strong bias in much American education against the place of memorization (so called “rote learning”), a bias that traces to the educational theories of thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey. It seems to me, however, that the firm grasp of the *philosophia perennis* specified by the Decree will require a significant amount of memorization, which has implications for pedagogy. Rather than accepting either the denigration of memorization or, for example, an exaltation of “critical thinking” without first establishing a foundation, careful thought and argumentation will be required regarding the philosophy of education as it applies to implementation of the decree. For a helpful 2008 essay, see D.C. Philipps “Philosophy of Education” in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy/>.

46. The Note (1.a) comments as follows. “The reference to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas – which ‘is not exclusive but ‘exemplary’” (n. 12) – is aimed at avoiding two errors: that of historical reduction (according to which this thought belongs only to the past) and that of a-historically absolutizing it (i.e. understanding the philosophy of St. Thomas as the point of arrival of philosophical endeavor) (cf. Ord., Art. 59, par. 1).” Regarding the first error, see the distinguished phenomenologist Robert Sokolowski’s “Intellectual Formation in Catholic Seminaries” in *Seminarium* 4 (2006): 840, where he writes, “We must avoid saying, for example, that Thomas Aquinas did wonderful things for his time and that we have to do wonderful things for ours. This is not how Aquinas should inspire us. Because Aquinas gets to the bottom of things, he speaks to us as much as he spoke to people of his age, and if we don’t see this, it is either because we don’t want to listen to him or because we are inadequate to him; the problem is with us, not with Aquinas.”
47. The Note clarifies (in 8.a) that “Students who matriculated to the bachelor-level cycle in philosophy prior to the emanation of the Decree can continue their studies according to the prior norms, thus earning an ecclesiastical bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 2 years. On the other hand, all students who matriculate in philosophy for academic year 2012-2013 must attend the first cycle of three years.”
48. Given that the Decree seems also to require “a solid and coherent synthesis of doctrine” by seminarians (e.g., the required development of habitus, a *forma mentis* and the firm acquisition of specific contents), this seems to imply that the Baccalaureate in Philosophy would also be highly desirable, if not the preferred preparation for seminarians, since the three-year program is of the length that postconciliar experience has proven to be required. The objections that might keep this third year from becoming more common for especially diocesan seminarians would include the following: limited ability and interests of some students; the pressing need for them in the parish; the view that the extra year is not worthwhile for parish priests; and the expense. On the other hand, it would seem that at least some seminarians—i.e., the gifted and motivated ones—could gain much of the firm philosophical knowledge envisioned by the Decree with only two years of philosophy, but only if the program made good use of the newly-required courses (Introduction and Faith and Reason), and if first-cycle theological studies that followed the two years of philosophy were solidly grounded in the Thomistic tradition and ordered toward a comprehensive synthesis.
49. In Article 60, subsection “c,” of the applicative norms (discussed in part II (c) below), the Decree touches upon how disciplines besides philosophy are to be addressed. Under the heading of “optional additional subjects,” it calls for a distinctively philosophical approach: “philosophy of science, philosophy of culture, philosophy of arts, philosophy of technology, philosophy of language.” This last point about a distinctively philosophical approach to “human sciences” or “complementary disciplines” is reiterated in the Note (1b), which states that “[t]he instructor must not simply assure a formation in the human sciences, but [also] propose, in close connection with the teachings of philosophy – and especially the philosophy of man – a discernment regarding the method and the contents of the human sciences in the light of philosophical and theological reasoning.”
50. The Note is clear that such students must meet the requirements of the Decree. “To validate the studies done elsewhere, as well as in admitting to the second and third cycle students who have done their philosophical studies in non-ecclesiastical Institutes and ask that they be recognized, two things must always be evaluated: that the student has acquired a philosophical habitus, and that he/she has studied all of the material listed in the Decree (cf. Ord. Art. 60) in the spirit of the encyclical *Fides et ratio*. These two aspects are relevant especially for those who, having done philosophical studies, are to begin the first cycle of theology. It is extremely important that in each academic Institution, one of the professors be charged with becoming particularly qualified specifically so as to be able to make this evaluation.”
51. The first paragraph of Article 51a reads as follows: “*The philosophical disciplines needed for theology, which are above all systematic philosophy and the history of philosophy (ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary).* Besides a general introduction, the systematic teaching must include the main areas of philosophy: 1) metaphysics (understood as philosophy of being and natural theology), 2) philosophy of nature, 3) philosophy of man, 4) moral and political philosophy, 5) logic and philosophy of knowledge.”
52. “By a suitable doctorate is meant one that corresponds to the discipline that is being taught. If the discipline is sacred or connected with the sacred, the doctorate must be

canonical. In the event that the doctorate is not canonical, the teacher will usually be required to have at least a canonical licentiate.”

53. The complete text of the new Norm 61 comprises the remainder of this footnote:
 - a) The faculty must employ, on a full-time basis, at least seven duly qualified teachers, who thus can ensure the teaching of each of the obligatory basic subjects (q.v. Ord., Art. 60, 1°; Art. 45, § 1, b). In particular, the first cycle must have at least five full-time teachers allotted as follows: one in metaphysics, one in philosophy of nature, one in philosophy of man, one in moral philosophy and politics, one in logic and philosophy of knowledge. For the other obligatory and optional subjects, the Faculty can ask the help of other teachers.
 - b) A teacher is qualified to teach in an Ecclesiastical institution if he or she has obtained the necessary academic degrees from an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy (q.v. Ord., Art. 17).
 - c) If the teacher possess neither a canonical Doctorate nor a canonical Licentiate, he or she may be appointed as full-time teacher only on the condition that his/her philosophical training is consistent with the content and method that is set forth in an Ecclesiastical Faculty. In evaluating candidates for teaching positions in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, the following must be considered: the necessary expertise in their assigned subject; an appropriate openness to the whole of knowledge; adherence, in their publications and teaching, to the truth taught by the faith; an adequately deepened knowledge of the harmonious relationship between faith and reason.
 - d) It is necessary to ensure always that, in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, the majority of full-time teachers holds an ecclesiastical Doctorate in philosophy, or else an ecclesiastical Licentiate in a sacred science together with a Doctorate in philosophy obtained in a non-Ecclesiastical University.
54. Elsewhere the *Decree* requires that teachers be “capable of an updated presentation of the rich heritage of the Christian tradition” (#15c), which will require that faculty have a high level of expertise in their fields.
55. The footnote in the Decree reference reads as follows: “Cf. CIC, can. 251 and Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decr. Optatum totius, n. 15.” It seems significant that whereas these earlier documents, reflecting a postconciliar questioning about the role of Aquinas, referred to the philosophia perennis without explicit mention of Aquinas, the Decree is now very explicit that he is the exemplary representative of this philosophy, which of course remains open to the appropriation of further insights.
56. Paragraph §2 goes on to discuss the need for students to be able to distinguish “the content and method” of the philosophical and theological educational tracks while §3 discusses how the second cycle builds upon the first.
57. Even if one fully recognizes the benefits of structuring some philosophical courses to meet the (philosophical) needs of theologians and seminarians, it is not hard to envision philosophers wishing to defend the autonomy of their discipline and courses. It would seem likely that such an ordering of philosophical courses would become more difficult as one goes beyond Ecclesiastical Faculties, to other Catholic institutions of higher learning, and even some seminaries. That such ordering of philosophical courses is expected by the *Decree* to apply beyond Ecclesiastical Faculties seems to follow from 15b, which claims that “All that concerns the duration, number of credits *and contents of the study of philosophy* [Italics added] are also to be applied” to “a Catholic Institute of Higher Education, outside the context of an Ecclesiastical Faculty.” On the other hand, it is not hard to envision Catholic professors of philosophy who would see the optimization of certain philosophy courses for the benefit of their theology and seminary students to make perfect sense and to be completely compatible with an understanding of academic freedom that is subordinated to institutional mission.
58. This last point will challenge the wisdom of recent decades according to which the earlier practice of having specialized “textbooks” for seminary training has been rejected out of hand. It can only be hoped that those seeking to implement the new *Decree* will have the freedom to think creatively about how to best achieve the desired learning objectives, especially for first-cycle students. See how in the chapter on “Philosophy in the Seminary Curriculum” Robert Sokolowski recommends the use of textbooks. *Christian Faith and Human Understanding* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America, 2006), 309.
59. Those without a canonical Doctorate or Licentiate “may be appointed as full-time teacher only on the condition that his/her philosophical training is consistent with the content and method that is set forth in an Ecclesiastical Faculty. In evaluating candidates for teaching positions in an Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy, the following must be considered: the necessary expertise in their assigned subject; an appropriate openness to the whole of knowledge; adherence, in their publications and teaching, to the truth taught by the faith; an adequately deepened knowledge of the harmonious relationship between faith and reason.”
60. If I read the *Decree* (i.e., no. 15) and Note correctly, this timeline applies most properly to “Ecclesiastical Faculties of Philosophy” (no. 15a), but it also applies in particular ways to other “Faculties of Theology and Seminaries” (15b), especially those with theology or philosophy programs affiliated with or aggregated to ecclesiastical facul-

ties. Especially in light of the recently extended approval of the Program of Priestly Formation (Fifth Edition), the exact dates of applicability of the *Decree* to particular institutions in the United States requires further investigation; it seems clear, however, that seminaries should begin efforts toward a robust implementation of this timely *Decree* without delay.

61. This should in no way be understood as closing off the broader riches of the Tradition. Instead, I would argue that it reflects the recognition of the value of having a common (from the Common Doctor) and time-tested (reflecting its many intrinsic merits) intellectual formation, that provides a solid foundation for further and broader studies.
62. A thorough discussion of these learning outcomes as sought by the *Decree*, and the best means to achieve them, is beyond the scope of this article, but a few remarks may be helpful in stimulating discussion. The *Decree* seems to be expecting not just familiarity with the relevant terms, or even the ability to demonstrate objective knowledge of them, but instead a deep and stable appropriation that results in the establishment of relatively permanent virtues of the intellect. With these ends clearly specified, deliberation and experimentation regarding the best means to achieve them can begin in earnest. Judicious use of the newly-specified introductory course will be required to achieve the desired ends in the limited time available, especially for those doing a program of only two years. If this introductory course includes the following objectives, for example, it would provide seminarians a foundation upon which the ends

specified by the *Decree* could be achieved: to offer a programmatic introduction to the curriculum, to introduce a comprehensive glossary of terms and definitions, to teach students to make distinctions and establish connections, to illustrate the importance of these philosophical studies for subsequent work in theology, and to cultivate a love for learning. This presumes a coordination of the entire philosophy curriculum towards these goals, and support of the broader formation program. As noted above, such a curriculum will prioritize the courses in systematic philosophy, organizing the historical courses to help in achieving the desired ends; for this, a combination of well-chosen textbooks and selected primary sources would seem to be most effective. Given that a serious commitment to the life of learning is not common in the surrounding culture, and that not all seminarians will take easily to studies, it will also be important that studies are valued and exemplified by the seminary priests, faculty and staff.

63. In a subsequent essay, I hope to offer a discussion of both potential obstacles to, and some means to facilitate a successful implementation of the new *Decree*. In it, I would also take into account the new document from the International Theological Commission entitled “Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria,” and sketch how philosophy and theology curricula might be structured to achieve the ends specified by these new documents. Special thanks are due to Dr. Patricia Pintado who has been a well-informed conversation partner on these matters over the last several years, and who made numerous helpful suggestions regarding this text.

CARA Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2010-2011

Priestly Formation

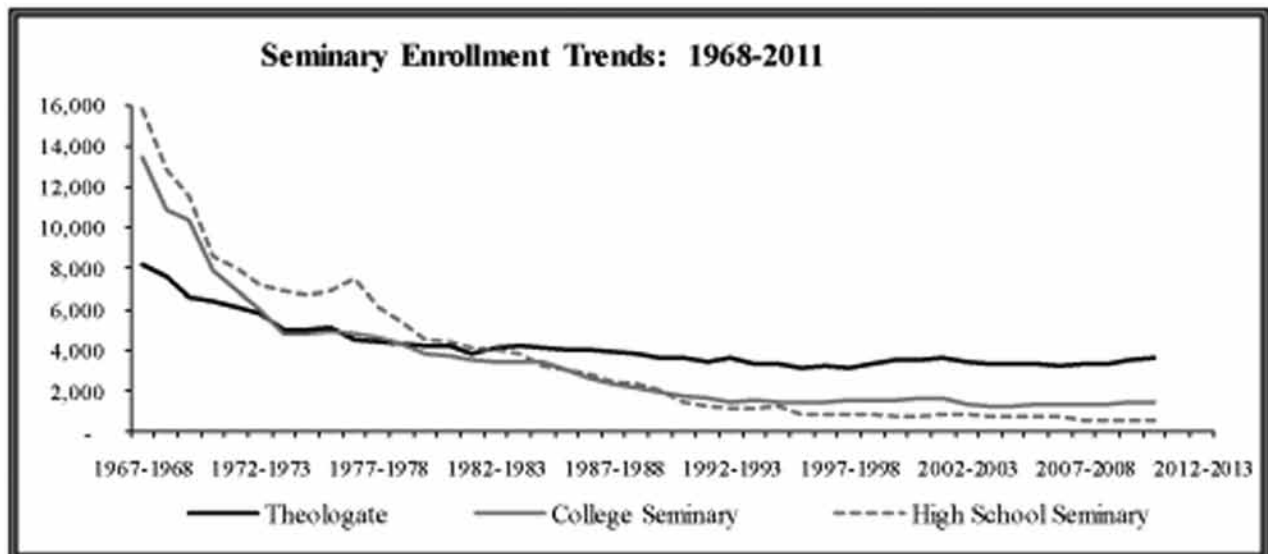
During academic year 2010-2011, enrollment in the post-baccalaureate level of priestly formation totaled 3,608, a net increase of 125 seminarians (4 percent) above last year's theologate enrollment. Of these, 2,742 (76 percent) were candidates for dioceses and 866 (24 percent) were from religious orders. Diocesan enrollment increased by 86 seminarians (up 3 percent from last year) and religious enrollment increased by 39 seminarians (up 5 percent from last year). These totals include pre-theology students who may have undergraduate degrees in another academic discipline but need additional work in philosophy, theology, or formation to qualify for theologate enrollment. The number of seminarians enrolled in theologates this year is nearly identical to the number enrolled in 2001-2002. As in previous years, the number of seminarians enrolled in pre-theology continues to increase, with 835

Diocesan enrollment increased by 86 seminarians (up 3 percent from last year) and religious enrollment increased by 39 seminarians (up 5 percent from last year).

enrolled in pre-theology this year, making up 23 percent of all theology-level students.

This year's college seminary enrollment of 1,460 seminarians reflects an increase of 17 seminarians, up 1 percent from last year. High school seminary enrollment in eight high school seminary programs increased by 22 (4 percent) from last year and is now at 532 seminarians.

Overall Seminary Enrollment Trends, 1968-2011



Seminary Enrollment: 1968-2000					
Year	Theology Diocesan	Theology Religious	Total Theology	Total College	Total High School
1967-1968	4,876	3,283	8,159	13,401	15,823
1968-1969	4,561	3,045	7,606	10,889	12,875
1969-1970	3,978	2,624	6,602	10,362	11,603
1970-1971	3,874	2,552	6,426	7,917	8,611
1971-1972	3,864	2,225	6,089	6,943	8,029
1972-1973	3,640	2,162	5,802	5,996	7,172
1973-1974	3,336	1,699	5,035	4,856	6,928
1974-1975	3,299	1,708	5,007	4,796	6,712
1975-1976	3,385	1,752	5,137	4,871	6,920
1976-1977	3,005	1,538	4,504	4,844	7,517
1977-1978	2,941	1,506	4,447	4,574	6,069
1978-1979	2,844	1,469	4,313	4,316	5,380
1979-1980	2,811	1,386	4,197	3,816	4,474
1980-1981	2,872	1,315	4,187	3,689	4,448
1981-1982	2,649	1,164	3,813	3,514	4,117
1982-1983	2,742	1,361	4,103	3,430	4,039
1983-1984	2,793	1,431	4,224	3,437	3,807
1984-1985	2,799	1,351	4,150	3,430	3,186
1985-1986	2,719	1,314	4,033	2,978	3,051
1986-1987	2,736	1,275	4,011	2,670	2,872
1987-1988	2,729	1,167	3,896	2,285	2,448
1988-1989	2,724	1,064	3,788	2,091	2,295
1989-1990	2,607	1,051	3,658	1,923	2,051
1990-1991	2,516	1,057	3,573	1,760	1,476
1991-1992	2,536	896	3,432	1,634	1,210
1992-1993	2,695	921	3,616	1,459	1,140
1993-1994	2,545	826	3,371	1,529	1,178
1994-1995	2,396	884	3,280	1,395	1,221
1995-1996	2,348	774	3,122	1,488	817
1996-1997	2,331	898	3,229	1,445	816
1997-1998	2,343	771	3,114	1,490	841
1998-1999	2,551	793	3,344	1,527	810
1999-2000	2,536	938	3,474	1,576	732

(Continued on next page)

Seminary Enrollment: 2000-2011(continued)					
Year	Theology Diocesan	Theology Religious	Total Theology	Total College	Total High School
2000-2001	2,549	934	3,483	1,647	787
2001-2002	2,621	963	3,584	1,594	816
2002-2003	2,489	925	3,414	1,376	808
2003-2004	2,348	937	3,285	1,268	761
2004-2005	2,307	1,001	3,308	1,248	758
2005-2006	2,397	909	3,306	1,297	763
2006-2007	2,410	864	3,274	1,365	729
2007-2008	2,489	797	3,286	1,381	536
2008-2009	2,530	827	3,357	1,384	524
2009-2010	2,656	827	3,483	1,443	510
2010-2011	2,742	866	3,608	1,460	532

Beginning with the 1967-1968 academic year, CARA has collected enrollment data for priesthood formation programs at the theologate, college and high school levels in the United States. CARA also collects data about U.S. seminarians from the two priesthood formation programs abroad that are sponsored by the hierarchy of the United States – the Pontifical North American College in Rome and the American College at Louvain, Belgium.¹ Another program located outside the United States that is included in these counts is Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe in Mexico City. This seminary was established in 2000 by the Archdiocese of Mexico and accepts Hispanic students from dioceses in the United States who have a particular ministry to Hispanic Catholics in the United States.

The data are gathered in the fall of each year. The total number of seminarians enrolled in these programs, shown in the table above and on the previous page, includes pre-theology students studying at theologates, college seminaries and other sites.

Pre-Theology

Since 1994, CARA has counted pre-theology students studying at theologates, college seminaries and other sites in its totals of theology-level seminarians. The accompanying graph shows the trend in pre-theology students since 1980, the first year that CARA began monitoring this group. In more recent years, as enrollment in college seminaries, declined and as more men

apply for seminary with a college degree in hand, the need for pre-theology programs has increased. These programs provide the philosophical and theological preparation necessary to pursue graduate-level theology. The most recent documents regarding priestly formation now recommend two years of pre-theologate formation for those who did not complete college seminary.²

In academic year 2010-2011, the 835 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology made up almost a quarter (23 percent) of all theology-level seminarians, an increase of 155 seminarians in pre-theology in the past decade.

The table below displays the total number of seminarians enrolled in pre-theology and compares that figure to the total theologate enrollment as a percentage of theologate students.

College seminary enrollment of 1,460 seminarians reflects an increase of 17 seminarians, up 1 percent from last year.

Pre-Theology Relative to Total Theologate Enrollment, 1980-2011				
Academic Year	Enrolled in Pre-Theology	Enrolled in Theology	Total in Theologate	Percentage in Pre-Theology
1980-1981	157	4,030	4,187	4%
1981-1982	138	3,675	3,813	4%
1982-1983	175	3,928	4,103	4%
1983-1984	171	4,073	4,244	4%
1984-1985	166	3,984	4,150	4%
1985-1986	182	3,851	4,033	4%
1986-1987	232	3,779	4,011	6%
1987-1988	192	3,704	3,896	5%
1988-1989	250	3,538	3,788	7%
1989-1990	206	3,452	3,658	6%
1990-1991	288	3,285	3,573	8%
1991-1992	315	3,117	3,432	9%
1992-1993	473	3,143	3,616	13%
1993-1994	501	2,870	3,371	15%
1994-1995	511	2,769	3,280	16%
1995-1996	489	2,633	3,122	16%
1996-1997	551	2,678	3,229	17%
1997-1998	536	2,578	3,114	17%
1998-1999	635	2,709	3,344	19%
1999-2000	577	2,897	3,474	17%
2000-2001	680	2,803	3,483	20%
2001-2002	725	2,859	3,584	20%
2002-2003	637	2,777	3,414	19%
2003-2004	571	2,714	3,285	17%
2004-2005	562	2,746	3,308	17%
2005-2006	624	2,682	3,306	19%
2006-2007	623	2,651	3,274	19%
2007-2008	716	2,570	3,286	22%
2008-2009	749	2,608	3,357	22%
2009-2010	820	2,663	3,483	24%
2010-2011	835	2,773	3,608	23%

Theologate Profile

The table on the next page lists the 45 theologates that prepare seminarians for the priesthood in the United States.³ For institutions that have both theology- and college-level programs, enrollment figures for pre-theology seminarians are reported the way the institution reports them. For example, Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT, treats its pre-theology seminarians as part of the theologate division, and so these ten students are counted in its theologate enrollment figure of 74. The pre-theology program at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia is administered under the college division, so its pre-theology students are included with its college enrollment rather than in its theologate enrollment figure of 62. All pre-theology students, however, are included in the CARA totals for theology-level enrollment provided elsewhere in this report. The total theology enrollment of 3,608 reported earlier, thus, includes 2,773 in theology, 537 in pre-theology, and an additional 298 in pre-theology who are enrolled in college seminaries.

Diocesan priesthood candidates typically live at the seminary and get their education and priestly formation at the theologate they attend.⁴ For 2010-2011, the average tuition was \$15,505, an increase of \$836 from 2009-2010. The average room and board for the 37

programs that reported room and board separately was \$9,687, an increase of \$500 from 2009-2010. Blessed John XXIII National Seminary and Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe are excluded from these calculations since they have a single fee that covers the costs of both tuition and room and board. Seminarians at Oblate School of Theology reside at Assumption Seminary. The other programs that do not report room and board are for religious priesthood candidates, who usually live in a house sponsored by their order and attend a nearby theologate for academic training.

CARA identified a total of 79 residences that currently house seminarians; 54 of these residences have seminarians who are studying at theologates. Apart from the exceptions listed below, all of the theology-level priesthood candidates at these residences are enrolled in one of the theologate programs listed in the 2010-2011 theologate profile table. The exceptions are nine Norbertines in study at St. Michael's Abbey, six Trappists in study at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, and two seminarians from religious institutes studying at theologates outside the United States and not included in the 45 theologates counted here. One other residence – the Dominican Missionaries for the Deaf Apostolate in San Antonio – is singular in that it is the only formation program for deaf candidates to the priesthood in the United States.

Priesthood Candidates Enrolled at Theologates, 2010-2011

Theologate	Tuition	Room & Board	Diocesan	Religious	Total
American College at Louvain, Belgium	\$9,100	\$9,800	14	5	19
Aquinas Institute of Theology, MO	15,360	—	0	28	28
Athenaeum of Ohio - Mount St. Mary's of the West, OH	18,900	9,450	37	0	37
Blessed John XXIII National Seminary, MA	23,500	—	61	4	65
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	22,410	—	3	62	65
Catholic Theological Union, IL	13,650	10,350	0	109	109
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	17,295	8,475	79	25	104
Christ the King Seminary, NY	16,000	10,000	17	0	17
Dominican House of Studies, DC	15,120	—	0	55	55
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, CA	14,160	—	0	20	20
Franciscan School of Theology, CA	12,600	15,000	0	4	4
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT	11,950	9,700	48	26	74
Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, NJ	20,144	9,938	150	36	186
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	14,000	—	0	34	34
Kenrick School of Theology, MO	19,708	9,030	96	2	98

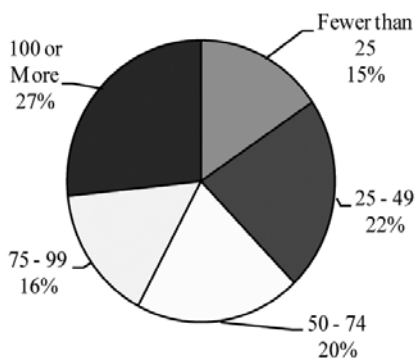
Priesthood Candidates Enrolled at Theologates, 2010-2011					
Moreau Seminary of the University of Notre Dame, IN	30,000	8,000	0	48	48
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	12,461	10,047	90	25	115
Mount St. Mary's Seminary, MD	16,766	10,580	158	5	163
Mundelein Seminary - St. Mary of the Lake, IL	20,622	8,673	158	1	159
Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology, LA	17,500	11,424	71	14	85
Oblate School of Theology, TX	12,350	—	60	30	90
Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary, NE	3,500	3,500	0	62	62
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	20,944	8,146	65	0	65
Pontifical North American College, Rome	11,950	11,155	222	0	222
Sacred Heart Major Seminary School of Theology, MI	21,970	8,268	48	0	48
Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI	14,100	9,500	90	17	107
Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary, MN	13,500	6,050	0	7	7
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	17,710	11,940	130	6	136
Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, MN	17,146	10,064	90	2	92
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, PA	18,888	11,472	59	3	62
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	15,200	9,475 ----- —	128	1	129
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, CA	14,000	11,500	69	6	75
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, MA	13,750	6,250	91	11	102
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	7,100 ----- —	5,500 ----- —	20	26	46
St. Mary's Seminary Graduate School of Theology, OH	9,825	7,260	32	3	35
St. Mary's Seminary, University of St. Thomas, TX	14,800	9,830	78	10	88
St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	15,216	12,012	79	1	80
St. Patrick's Seminary and University, CA	14,649	12,862	106	3	109
St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, FL	20,000	11,000	71	0	71
St. Vincent Seminary, PA	20,220	9,784	37	22	59
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary School of Theology, PA	10,000	10,000	10	0	10
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary, MI	14,314	14,196	40	0	40
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe, MX	16,000	— ----- — ----- —	8	0	8
Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, NY	12,000	8,000	43	0	43
Washington Theological Union, DC	15,840	10,180 ----- —	0	39	39
Average Costs and Total Enrollment	\$15,505	\$9,687	2,558	752	3,310

Theologates with the Highest Enrollment

The 12 theologates with enrollment above 100 account for 1,641 or 50 percent of the 3,310 seminarians reported by theologates in 2010-2011. The table below lists these institutions in terms of enrollment of diocesan or religious priesthood candidates. New to the list this year are St. Patrick's Seminary and University in Menlo Park, CA, Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, WI, and St. John's Seminary School of Theology in Brighton, MA.

Theologates by Size of Enrollment

The figure at right groups the theologates according to their reported enrollment for the 2010-2011 academic year. One in four theologates (12 of the 45 theologates) are relatively large, enrolling 100 or more seminarians. One in three (16 of the 45 theologates) have between 50 and 99 seminarians enrolled, and another two in five (17 in all) have fewer than 50 seminarians enrolled this year.



of the Congregation for Catholic Education and operate under special norms determined by the Holy See. These norms include the requirement that faculty members meet particular qualifications, including an upper-level canonical degree, and that the president, rector or dean be appointed or confirmed by the Holy See. These faculties are entrusted with “the task of preparing with special care students for the priestly ministry, for teaching the sacred sciences, and for the more arduous tasks of the apostolate.”⁵ The table below displays the six ecclesiastical faculties of theology in the United States, the year they were established, and the number of faculty in each.

CARA identified 15 theologates that offer a canonical degree in theology to seminarians. Six of these institutions grant canonical degrees under the authority of their own ecclesiastical faculty, as shown in the table above, and the other nine grant their canonical degrees through affiliation or aggregation to the ecclesiastical faculty at another institution.

- The American College at Louvain was established in 1857.⁶ Students enrolled there earn canonical degrees from the Catholic University of Louvain.
- The Pontifical North American College in Rome was established in 1859. Students enrolled there earn canonical degrees from the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum) in Rome.
- The Pontifical College Josephinum in Colum-

Canonical Degree Granting Theologates

Some theologates, as well as some other universities and academic departments, have special approval

Theologates with Highest Enrollment, 2010-2011				
Theologate	Diocesan Priesthood Candidates	Religious Priesthood Candidates	Total	Change from 2009-2010
Pontifical North American College, Rome	222	0	222	+8
Immaculate Conception Seminary, NJ	150	36	186	-5
Mount St. Mary's Seminary, MD	158	5	163	+9
Mundelein Seminary – St. Mary of the Lake, IL	158	1	159	-26
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	130	6	136	+15
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	128	1	129	+12
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	90	25	115	+7
Catholic Theological Union, IL	0	109	109	-23
St. Patrick's Seminary and University, CA	106	3	109	+15
Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI	90	17	107	+16
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	79	25	104	+8
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, MA	91	11	102	+11

Ecclesiastical Faculties of Theology in the United States, 2010-2011			
Theologate	Year Established	Ecclesiastical Faculty	
		Full-time	Part-time
Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, IL	1936	23	4
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	1945	16	5
Pontifical Faculty of Theology of the Immaculate Conception, Dominican House of Studies, DC	1941	14	1
School of Theology, St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	1822	13	2
Faculty of Theology, The Catholic University of America, DC	1900	13	5
Faculty of Weston Jesuit, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	1932	10	3

Seminarians Enrolled in Canonical Degree Programs at Theologates, 2010-2011			
Theologate	Seminarians Enrolled		Expected to Earn the Degree in 2011
	S.T.B.	S.T.L.	
Pontifical North American College, Rome	159	42	53
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	129	0	10
St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	80	0	8
St. Patrick Seminary and University, CA	87	0	8
The Catholic University of America, DC	76	2	9
Sacred Heart Major Seminary, MI	44	0	9
Mundelein Seminary, IL	29	21	23
Dominican House of Studies, DC	29	6	4
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	9	0	8
The American College at Louvain, Belgium	7	3	3
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	20	0	3
St. Vincent Seminary, PA	6	0	2
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	4	0	4

bus, OH, has been affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome since 2005.

- Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, OR, established in 1889, is affiliated to the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome.
- St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY, has been affiliated to the Angelicum in Rome since 1994.
- Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, is aggregated to the Angelicum in Rome since 2004 to grant both the S.T.B. and S.T.L. degrees.
- St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, CA, has been affiliated to the ecclesiastical faculty at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, MD, since 1997. St. Vincent Seminary in

Latrobe, PA, has had a similar affiliation to the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, since 2000.

- St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, CO, has been affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome since 2001.

In addition to the seminarian numbers listed above, these institutions report another 144 priests and 34 lay persons or deacons enrolled in their canonical degree programs. They anticipated awarding canonical degrees to 80 priests and nine lay persons or deacons in 2011.

Theologate Enrollment by Year of Study for the Priesthood

The accompanying table shows enrollment in the-

ologates by levels of study. The category “All Others” in the figure includes theologate students who are reported to be on their pastoral year, on leave of absence or in other special circumstances.

Students Enrolled in Theologates by Level of Study 2010-2011

Pre-Theology	537
First Year	725
Second Year	626
Third Year	549
Fourth Year	535
Pastoral Year	163
Leave of Absence	35
Other	140
Total	3,310

Pre-Theology Enrollment

Pre-theology seminarians are more likely to be enrolled in theologates than at other formation sites designed for college-level seminarians. Theologates report 537 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology. Free-standing and collaborative college seminaries report 180 enrolled in pre-theology while other seminary residences count 118 in pre-theology outside the seminary system.

In addition to the seminarians previously reported in the table on seminary enrollment, there are also nine Norbertines studying theology at St. Michael's Abbey, six Trappists studying theology at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, and two seminarians from religious institutes studying abroad. These 17 seminarians are not included in the earlier total.

Theology-Level Enrollment by Type of Program and Institution 2010-2011

Theologates	
Theologate, excluding pre-theology	2,773
Theologate, pre-theology only	537

Pre-theology at College Priesthood

Formation Programs

Free-Standing College Seminaries	120
Collaborative College Seminaries	60
Other Seminary Residences	118
Total Enrollment	3,608

Other Houses of Formation*	17
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*Not included in the total count on page 3.



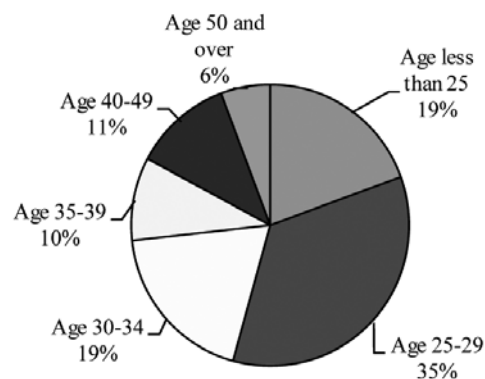
Retention of Seminarians in Theology

Although individual exceptions occur, the typical pattern for seminarians entering their first year of theology is to have an undergraduate degree from a college seminary or to have completed a pre-theology program. The table below highlights the 2010-2011 class of seminarians through their four years in theology, that is, those who began theologate studies in 2007-2008 and who will be completing their theologate studies in 2010-2011. Each class of seminarians in theology can also be compared to its corresponding cohort in the preceding academic year by following the same diagonal.

Of the 622 seminarians who began theologate study in 2007, 535 are completing their fourth year in 2011. The retention rate for the Class of 2011 throughout their four years of theologate study was expected to be 86 percent, approximately the same rate as that reported for the Class of 2003 and higher than in recent years. The average retention rate for those who began theology from 1999-2000 to 2006-2007 was 77 percent.

Age Distribution of Theologate Students

The age distribution for theologate students preparing for the priesthood is shown at left. Just over half of all seminarians enrolled in theologates (54 percent) are

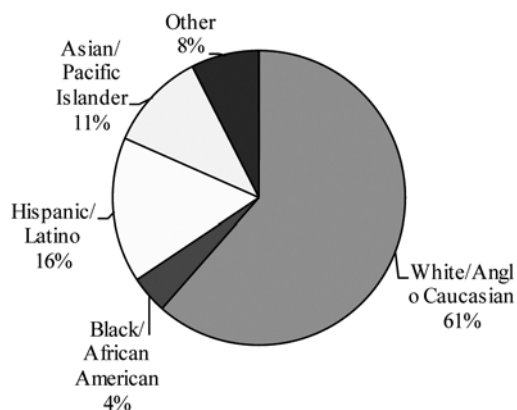


Retention of Seminarians in Theology					
	Year of Study in Theology				Retention Rate
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	
1999-2000	681	687	582	625	
2000-2001	704	606	573	570	
2001-2002	716	670	595	536	
2002-2003	738	625	543	576	85%
2003-2004	727	614	512	509	72%
2004-2005	691	633	542	519	72%
2005-2006	631	617	573	495	67%
2006-2007	656	566	546	555	76%
2007-2008		607	541	535	77%
2008-2009	709		524	500	79%
2009-2010	646	600		497	76%
2010-2011	725	626	549		86%

under age 30 and another fifth (19 percent) are in their early thirties. One in ten (10 percent) is between 35 and 39. One in five (17 percent) is age 40 and above. Just over a quarter of seminarians enrolled in theologates (27 percent) are age 35 or older. The proportion of older seminarians has been decreasing in recent years. For example, five years ago more than a third of seminarians enrolled in theologates were age 35 or older.

Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Theologate Students

Six in ten priesthood candidates enrolled in theologates (61 percent) are white/Anglo/Caucasian. One in six (16 percent) is Hispanic/Latino, 11 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander and 4 percent are black/African American. Another 8 percent are listed as “other,” which includes Native Americans, multi-racial and international

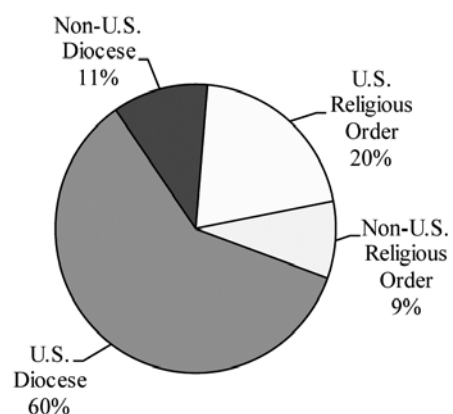


students that do not identify with these racial and ethnic categories.

The racial and ethnic distribution of theologate students is gradually becoming more diverse. In 1993, the first year CARA collected racial and ethnic data, 79 percent of theologate seminarians were white/Anglo/Caucasian, 11 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 8 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander and 2 percent were black/African American.

Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates

In 2010-2011, 28 percent of seminarians in theologates, 938 seminarians, were from countries other than the United States. This is a slight decrease of 25 seminarians from the number reported last year. In 2009-2010, foreign-born seminarians were 30 percent of all seminarians in theology, compared to 25 percent



Free-Standing College Seminary Enrollment, 2010-2011

Free-Standing College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre-Theology	College Level
Conception Seminary College, MO	109	12	121	9	112
Divine Word College Seminary, IA	2	53	55	10	45
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT*	3	3	6	0	6
Legionaries of Christ Center for Higher Studies, NY	0	107	107	0	107
Mount Angel Seminary, OR*	67	3	70	0	70
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH*	85	0	85	18	67
Sacred Heart Major Seminary College, MI*	49	0	49	24	25
Saint Joseph Seminary College, LA	75	0	75	9	66
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria, MX*	24	0	24	0	24
St. Basil College, CT	1	0	1	0	1
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary College, PA*	92	6	98	29	69
St. Gregory the Great Seminary, NE	44	0	44	3	41
St. John Vianney College and Seminary, FL	67	0	67	18	49
Total Enrollment	618	184	802	120	682
* Also has a theologate division.					

in 2008-2009, 27 percent in 2007-2008, 25 percent in 2006-2007 and 23 percent in 2005-2006.

In all, 85 foreign countries are represented by these seminarians. Most of them, 60 percent, are preparing to be ordained for a diocese in the United States. Another 11 percent of foreign-born seminarians are studying for a diocese outside the United States. Seminarians from religious orders, 274 in all, comprise the remaining 29 percent of these foreign-born seminarians. Breaking down that 29 percent, seminarians studying for a U.S.-based religious order account for 20 percent, while another 9 percent are studying for a religious order based outside the United States.

College Seminaries

In 2010-2011, there were 1,460 seminarians enrolled in 35 college-level priesthood formation programs. This does not include the 180 pre-theology students in college seminary programs since pre-theology students are calculated in the theology-level counts. College-level priesthood formation programs may be divided into three categories: free-standing seminaries (682 seminar-

ians), collaborative seminaries (647) and seminary residence programs (131).

Free-Standing College Seminaries

Free-standing college seminaries are accredited in their own right to grant a college degree. They combine all aspects of a seminary program in one institution. There are 13 such institutions reporting enrollment for the 2010-2011 academic year. The 682 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these institutions is an increase of 25 seminarians (4 percent) from the 657 seminarians reported last year.

Six of the free-standing college seminaries are sponsored by a diocese or archdiocese. Three of these diocesan institutions have a combined college and theologate seminary program. These institutions include Sacred Heart Major Seminary, College of Liberal Arts, in Detroit, MI; St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, College Division, in Wynnewood, PA; and the Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe, Philosophy Division, in Mexico City.

There are six religious-sponsored programs, of

which three are Benedictine – Conception Seminary College in Conception, MO; Mount Angel Seminary College in St. Benedict, OR; and Saint Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, LA. The other three free-standing college seminaries sponsored by religious orders are Divine Word College Seminary in Epworth, IA; Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT; and the Legionaries of Christ Center for Higher Studies in Thornwood, NY.

The Pontifical College Josephinum, in Columbus, OH, which also has both a free-standing college and a theologate, is not sponsored directly by either a diocese

or a religious order but is operated instead by an independent board of trustees.

Collaborative College Seminaries

Collaborative programs usually have a formal relationship with an accredited undergraduate program at a Catholic college or university. They tend to be long-established programs, are typically diocesan-administered and in many cases had originally been separate, stand-alone programs. This directory includes 22 programs in the category of collaborative college seminaries. The 647 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these

Collaborative College Seminary Enrollment, 2010-2011

Collaborative College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre-Theology	College Level
Ave Maria University, FL	13	7	20	0	20
Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, IN	27	0	27	0	27
Bishop White Seminary, WA	17	0	17	3	14
Borromeo Seminary, OH	24	7	31	0	31
Cardinal Glennon College, MO*	22	0	22	0	22
Cardinal Muench Seminary, ND ⁷	4	0	4	0	4
Cathedral Residence of the Immaculate Conception, NY	39	0	39	8	31
College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Andrews Hall, NJ*	29	0	29	0	29
Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH	47	5	52	0	52
Holy Trinity Seminary, TX	58	0	58	14	44
Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, MN	59	1	60	2	58
Old College Seminary at Notre Dame, IN*	0	21	21	0	21
Seminary of Our Lady of Providence, RI	23	0	23	2	21
St. Francis DeSales Center, CA	7	0	7	3	4
St. John Fisher Seminary Residence, CT	19	0	19	2	17
St. John Neumann Residence and Hall, NY	48	1	49	14	35
St. John Vianney College Seminary, MN	137	0	137	0	137
St. Joseph and St. Peter Seminary, TX	4	0	4	0	4
St. Joseph College Seminary, IL	28	5	33	0	33
St. Mark Seminary, PA	20	0	20	3	17
St. Paul Seminary, PA	21	0	21	9	12
St. Pius X Seminary, IA	14	0	14	0	14
Total Enrollment	660	47	707	60	647
* Also has a theologate division.					

programs is an increase of four seminarians (less than 1 percent) from the 643 seminarians reported last year.

The pre-seminary discernment programs at Franciscan University of Steubenville and Ave Maria University are unique. Each prepares men for theologate-level formation and follows the U.S. Bishops' *Program for Priestly Formation* in a liberal arts college setting. Although they do not strictly meet the criteria for a collaborative college program, they most closely resemble this model.

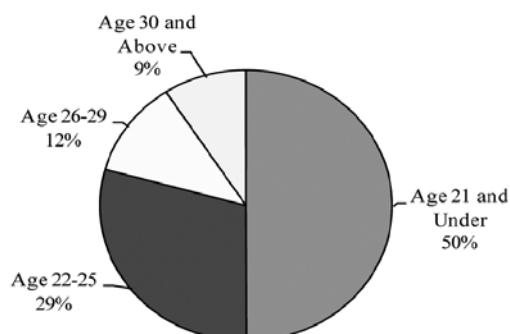
The newest collaborative college program, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, was established in 2004 in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. It is affiliated with Marian College in Indianapolis, IN.

Other College Level Formation Programs

Other college seminary residences generally have much smaller numbers of students than free-standing or collaborative college seminaries. They tend to be conducted by religious institutes for their candidates completing college degrees. CARA has identified 58 college-level programs that fit this model. Nineteen of these house only college-level candidates; the other 39 currently function as joint college and theology residences. In 2010–2011, the combined number of priesthood candidates pursuing college-level studies in these residences was 131, excluding pre-theology. Another 118 were enrolled in pre-theology course work. In both cases, these seminarians were not enrolled in programs reported here as theologates, free-standing colleges or collaborative colleges, and are not therefore double-counted when added to the enrollment totals for these institutions.

Age Distribution of College Seminarians

The age distribution of priesthood candidates at college seminaries largely mirrors the traditional ages of college enrollment, although 21 percent of college seminarians are men in their late twenties and above. This is due in part to the pre-theology programs at many of

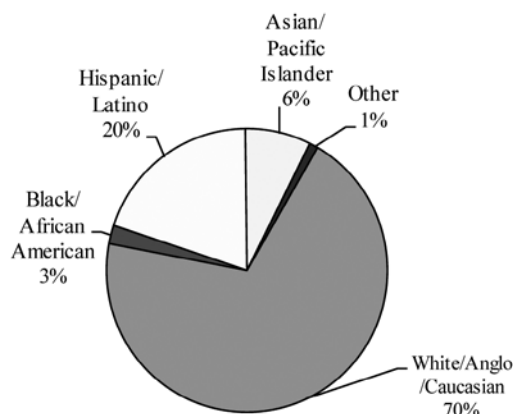


these seminaries that prepare men who already have undergraduate degrees in other fields.

The figure depicts the age distribution of seminarians enrolled in free-standing or collaborative college seminaries during the 2010–2011 academic year. Half of these seminarians are the typical college age of 21 or below. Another three in ten are between the ages of 22 and 25 and a fifth are older than 25.

Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of College Seminarians

Seven in ten college seminarians are white/Anglo/Caucasian, compared to about six in ten theologate seminarians. Hispanics/Latinos and Asians/Pacific Islanders comprise about a quarter of the priesthood candidates at free-standing and collaborative college seminaries during the 2010-2011 academic year and blacks/African Americans make up 3 percent. Seminarians of other racial/ethnic categories, including Native Americans and multi-racial seminarians, make up the other 1 percent.



High School Seminaries

In 1967, there were 36 diocesan and 86 religious high school seminaries as well as 17 junior college seminaries, 38 combined high school and junior college seminaries and a few others that also provided a high school education in a seminary context. Historically, seminaries at this entry level provided important training in Latin, Greek and other subjects formerly essential for advanced seminary studies. Today, only eight active high school seminary programs remain, with a combined enrollment of 532 students. Of these programs, six are independent, free-standing institutions. Only one of the six is diocesan (Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in Elmhurst, NY) and five are sponsored by a religious institute. One is sponsored by the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin,

High School Seminary Enrollment, 2010-2011			
Free-standing High School Seminaries	Sponsorship	Tuition	Enrollment
St. Lawrence Seminary, Mount Calvary, WI	Religious	\$5,840	191
Cathedral Preparatory Seminary, Elmhurst, NY	Diocesan	7,000	169
Immaculate Conception Apostolic School, Center Harbor, NH	Religious	5,250	38
Sacred Heart Apostolic School, Rolling Prairie, IN	Religious	6,000	36
Immaculate Conception Apostolic School, Colfax, CA	Religious	10,385	25
Blessed Jose Sanchez Del Rio High School Seminary, MN	Religious		10
Collaborative High School Seminary Programs			
Cathedral Preparatory Seminary House of Formation, Yonkers, NY	Diocesan	— -----	57
Holy Cross Seminary House of Formation, La Crosse, WI	Diocesan	3,600	6
Total High School Seminary Enrollment			532

one is sponsored by the Institute of the Incarnate Word and the other three are sponsored by the Legionaries of Christ. The other two diocesan programs collaborate with local Catholic high schools.

The diocesan high school seminary (Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in Elmhurst, NY) does not have a residential program. The five religious free-standing high school seminaries do have residential programs. Both collaborative high school programs (Cathedral Prep Program in Yonkers, NY, and Holy Cross Seminary in La Crosse, WI) have residential programs. Room and board at institutions with separate charges for a residential program averages \$4,257. Tuition averages \$6,346 among the six programs that reported the information. Average tuition increased by \$1,167, an 18 percent increase over that reported in 2009-2010.

ANNOUNCEMENT

This statistical overview of candidates preparing for priesthood is but one part of a more comprehensive overview of all candidates preparing for priesthood, the permanent diaconate and lay ecclesial ministry in the United States. CARA collects this information each fall and publishes this statistical overview every spring as well as a full directory of all programs every other year.

Begun in summer 2001, CARA's *Ministry Formation Directory* is now available in both print and electronic formats. Subscribers to the electronic volume will have access to a searchable online database of all

ministry formation programs in the United States. The *Directory* includes up-to-date listings of the addresses, officers, degrees, certificates, tuition and enrollment for more than 600 ministry formation programs. The *Directory* includes three sections:

- Priestly Formation, which includes information on every high school, college, pre-theology and theology level program.
- Diaconate Formation, which includes information on every diocesan program for the formation of men for the permanent diaconate.
- Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation, which includes diocesan-sponsored programs as well as programs affiliated with universities, seminaries and schools of theology.

Each entry in the *Directory* includes a listing of current leadership for each program, enrollment data, contact information, and a detailed program description as well as a statistical overview of ministry formation enrollments. The online *Directory* features an easy-to-use search function, as well as downloadable data and customized reports for an annual subscription fee of just \$30. Visit CARA.Georgetown.edu for more information.

CARA is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964, CARA has three major dimensions to its mission:

- to increase the Church's self understanding
- to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers

- to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism.


CARA has more than 40 years of experience in quality social science research on the Catholic Church, offering a range of research and consulting services for dioceses, parishes, religious communities and institutes, and other Catholic organizations.



Mary Gautier, Ph.D., is a senior research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University.

Endnotes

1. This seminary is scheduled to close in June 2011.
2. Paragraph 60 of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, fifth edition (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006) reads: "If a person has no previous preparation in a formation program, then the pre-theology program should extend over a two-year calendar period. Pre-theology programs are designed to address all four pillars of formation, not simply to meet academic requirements."
3. St. Anthony's Seminary in El Paso, TX, declined to participate and has been removed from the annual data collection. This seminary is owned by the Franciscan Province of St. Peter and St. Paul in Michoacan, MX, and prepares Franciscan seminarians for priestly ministry in Mexico.
4. In the case of The Catholic University of America, Latin Rite diocesan seminarians reside at Theological College, the official house of formation at The Catholic University of America. Seminarians pay half the graduate CUA tuition (the seminarian tuition is listed in the table). Because room and board for most seminarians at Catholic University is provided at Theological College, room and board charges are reported with Catholic University's tuition. In the case of St. Joseph's Seminary, students of the Archdiocese of New York are subsidized through scholarships and endowments. In the case of Washington Theological Union, the cost is based on an average M.Div. priesthood candidate living in a religious community.
5. Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, April 29, 1979, Foreword III.
6. This seminary is scheduled to close in June 2011
7. This seminary is scheduled to close in June 2011.



VOX CHRISTI

A JOURNAL BY THE SEMINARIANS AT KENRICK-GLENNON SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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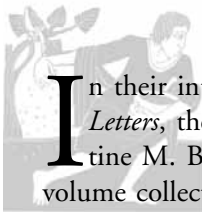
BOOK REVIEW

Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters: The Essential Collection

William H. Shannon and Christine M. Bochen, editors

HarperCollins, 2008

Reviewed by Rev. Martin Zielinski



In their introduction to *Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters*, the editors, William H. Shannon and Christine M. Bochen, state that their goals for this single volume collection of Thomas Merton's letters were as follows: "First, we wanted to communicate a sense of Merton the letter writer, for whom letters were not just a vehicle for exchanging information but a way to initiate, maintain, and deepen relations. . . . Second, we wanted to let Merton's letters demonstrate the breadth of his interests and concerns" (pp. xii-xiii). These goals are met admirably in this single volume that is subtitled "The Essential Collection" and based on their judicious selection of the best letters from the five volumes of Merton's letter that have been previously published.

This book is organized into nine parts that encompass thematic interests of this well-known and admired Cistercian monk/hermit. The short, first part concentrates on Merton's own life and serves the purpose of being a biographical introduction. The thematic focus of the second part looks at his life as a monk. In the third part, reflections on his life as a writer emerge through a series of letters to his publishers, literary agents and archivists. The fourth part contains a series of letters to other writers such as Boris Pasternak, author of *Dr. Zhivago*, Czeslaw Milosz, the 1980 Nobel Prize winner for literature, and Pablo Cuadra, the Nicaraguan poet and editor of *La Prensa*. The fifth part then turns to Merton's interior life with the emphasis on contemplative spirituality. From the interior to the exterior world, the sixth part contains numerous letters critiquing mod-

There is a bittersweet quality to many of his letters. It reminds me of the Pauline line from Romans 8 about the groaning and agony of creation. Thomas Merton had a perceptive ability to appreciate that groaning and anxiety, whether he was examining the contemplative life or questioning the human delusions of modern society.

ern culture. This section of the book is organized along two themes: "Signs of Destruction, Signs of Hope" and "The Race Question." The seventh part contains a number of Merton's famous "Cold War Letters" as he comments on the struggle against war, violence, and oppression. Merton's thoughts in the eighth part about the Catholic Church in a time of change from 1959, the year Pope John XXIII announced his intention to

call the Second Vatican Council, to a few months before Merton's own death, explore the challenges to fidelity. The final part contains a series of letters to religious people from the major non-Christian religions as Merton sought ground for unity through engaging in inter-religious dialogue. Each individual part of this book contains a short but helpful introduction by the editors and, when necessary, some biographical information on Merton's correspondents.

The editors note that the director of the Thomas Merton Center and Archives at Bellarmine University indicated that this contemplative monk had twenty-one hundred correspondents. To pick the best of "the best" from this book is unlikely to be helpful to other readers and just reveals the biases of this reviewer. Despite this frustration and likely disagreements of others, some letters do stand out to this reviewer. In Part I, Merton writes in a letter to a "Dear Friend" in 1963,

People often ask why I am here in the first place, and what the contemplative life means to me. It means to me the search for truth and for God. It means finding the true significance of my life, and my right place in God's creation. It means renouncing the way of life that is led in the 'world' and which, to me, is a source of illusions, confusion and deceptions (8).

In these few sentences, Merton gives the touchstone for many of the other letters in this book. The letters from the sections on monastic life (Part 2), contemplative spirituality (Part 5), the struggle against war, violence and oppression (Part 7) and, finally, reflections on the Catholic Church (Part 8) give a fuller and more detailed explanation of what is beneath the words of the sentences quoted above.

In Part II (Becoming and Being a Monk), Merton wrote a letter on February 14, 1964, to Fr. Ronald Roloff, a monk at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. In it, Merton said:

I am wondering if in fact we come to the monastery and *lose our monastic vocation when we have got there*. I mean, is it somehow squeezed out of us, so that we are left with a husk of outward forms and no inner vocation? Does our monastic life become so artificial and contrived that it is no longer

really a life; it is just an existence which we put up with. (39)

This type of reflective self-examination is found in many of Merton's letters. There is a bittersweet quality to many of his letters. It reminds me of the Pauline line from Romans 8 about the groaning and agony of creation. Thomas Merton had a perceptive ability to appreciate that groaning and anxiety, whether he was examining the contemplative life or questioning the human delusions of modern society.

Even with the serious nature of many of the letters in this "essential collection," the reader will find some surprising and light-hearted ones. The best example of that is a letter to a sixth grader in 1967 who was studying monasticism for a class project. She asked for "any information whatsoever." Merton generously supplied that information.

Although Thomas Merton died almost fifty years ago, his letters retain a timely quality expressive of the signs of the times. We still ask questions about the contemplative life. We still wonder about changes in the Church. We still worry about the stability of the world. We still struggle with global violence and oppression. The topics and themes of Merton's letters are some of the core issues in the modern world. His insights and comments on those issues bring a thoughtful and holy perspective that is worth reading again.

One final thought concerns the medium that Merton used so effectively – written correspondence. For historians, letters and diaries are one of the best sources to get into the mind of historical figures. Historians are fortunate that Thomas Merton was such a prolific writer. His letters help us to understand him as a person as well as the times in which he lived. Given our modern technological achievements, these written resources may become like archeological artifacts for future generations of historians.



Rev. Martin Zielinski is associate professor of church history, University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois.



THE CORE ELEMENTS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION PROGRAMS

In recognition of the 10th anniversary of *Seminary Journal*, the Seminary Department has introduced a new publication series: *The Core Elements of Priestly Formation Programs*. These collections of articles celebrate the “best practices” and wisdom and insight of a wide variety of seminary professionals and church leaders. With only a few exceptions the articles were selected from the archives of *Seminary Journal* (1995-2005). Articles included from other sources are printed with permission.

The Core Elements series will be an ongoing publishing effort of the Seminary Department. The framework for the first three volumes reflects the four pillars as identified in the Bishops’ Program of Priestly Formation: *Intellectual, Spiritual, Human* and *Pastoral*. The fourth addresses the topic of “addictions” and their implications for ministry formation.

These four volumes are produced as an in-service resource for faculty and staff development and personal study and as a potential source book of readings for those in the formation program. New collections of readings will be added annually.

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