

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME EIGHTEEN

NUMBER ONE

SPRING 2012

Theme: Evangelization

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy

The New Evangelization and the Formation of Priests for Today

Most Rev. Edward W. Clark, S.T.D.

A Worldly Priest: Evangelization and the Diocesan Priesthood

Rev. Matthew Ramsay

For I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me

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BOOK REVIEW

Life and Lessons from a Warzone: A Memoir of Dr. Robert Nyeko Obol
by Robert Obol

Reviewed by Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., Ph.D.



National Catholic Educational Association



The logo depicts a sower of seed and reminds us of the derivation of the word "seminary" from the Latin word "seminarium," meaning "a seed plot" or "a place where seedlings are nurtured and grow."

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME 18

NUMBER ONE

SPRING 2012

Note: Due to leadership changes in the Seminary Department, this volume was actually published in April 2013.

The *Seminary Journal* is a journal of opinion, research and praxis in the field of seminary education and formation for priesthood within the Roman Catholic tradition. Articles are selected, edited and published by the Executive Director of the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association.

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Seminary Journal is published 3 times a year: spring, fall and winter. NCEA Seminary Department members are entitled to 6 copies of the *Seminary Journal*. They are mailed to the president/rector, the academic dean, three directors of formation and the librarian. Additional copies may be purchased based on the following pricing structure:

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 1-5 copies: \$8.00 each
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 10 or more copies: \$3.00 each

(Index for issues since 1995 may be accessed and orders placed online at www.ncea.org/departments/seminary.)

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Endnotes, not footnotes, are to be used in articles, as needed. Not all articles will need endnotes.

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Index to Seminary Journal

Indexed in *The Catholic Periodical and Literature Index*.
For an online index of articles featured in *Seminary Journal* since 1995 go to www.ncea.org/departments/seminary.

ISSN 1546-444X
Published by the National Catholic Educational Association
1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201

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National Catholic Educational Association
Seminary Department

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

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What are the exemplary practices in spiritual direction?
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How does our priestly formation today help change youth culture tomorrow?

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



From the Desk of the Executive Director



This issue of the journal is devoted to the theme of evangelization, and specifically, the call for the “new evangelization” as outlined in the writings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and signaled, originally, by Pope Paul VI. Bishop Edward Clark, my distinguished seminary classmate, has written wisely on this topic and offers further insights on the new evangelization with a particular focus on priestly formation. I think that you will find his thoughts on how evangelization can be addressed in each of the four dimensions of the *Program for Priestly Formation* to be especially timely, astute and practical.

Complementing Bishop Clark’s perspective is a fine essay by a recently ordained priest, Fr. Matthew Ramsay, who attended Mt. Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Oregon, and is ordained for priestly service in the Diocese of Saskatoon, Canada. By a “worldly priest,” Fr. Ramsay means a priest who knows how to engage and minister to the diverse and challenging contexts in this particular period of the church’s history.

Cardinal Roger Mahony, emeritus Archbishop of Los Angeles, shares his wisdom and expertise about the enormous need to respond to the immigrant Catholic community. Cardinal Mahony has a strong legacy of care for the poor and his article captures the passion and zeal that he brings to this vital ministry.

Dr. Jim Rigg and Dr. Diana Dudoit Raiche have contributed two essays on the importance of catechetical ministry and the critical leadership role that priests exercise, which are essential for the success of the new evangelization. Both of our writers address the role of the seminary formation program in fostering the attitudes and skills that are essential for future priests, with a keen sensitivity to approach the task of formation for catechetical leadership without adding yet more course work to the crowded seminary curriculum.

Fr. Aniedi Okure, O.P., has provided a wonderful update to his landmark research on international priests (*International Priests in America: Challenges and Opportunities*, co-authored with the late Dean Hoge). Fr. Okure

is our foremost expert on these trends, and his work should be read in light of the data on seminarians and seminaries from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), authored by Dr. Mary Gautier and re-printed with permission in this issue of *Seminary Journal*. Caring for the needs of international priests and supporting them is essential not only for the well-being of presbyterates and seminaries, but also for the parishes and Catholic communities that receive them and are blessed by their distinctive gifts and talents.

It is no secret that advances in technology are changing the landscape of higher education, including theological education. Critical questions, however, remain with respect to the role of technology in professional education. Can a medical practitioner, pilot or seminarian be trained virtually to such an extent that face-to-face, real-time learning is no longer necessary? An emerging consensus among professional educators is that technology can support but not supplant traditional forms of learning, especially for skilled professionals. Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., and Sr. Paul Pierre Barbeau, O.S.B., provide a thoughtful analysis of how new technologies can be useful in supporting relational skills that are so essential in the areas of human spiritual formation. This contribution to an ongoing debate provides much food for thought and discussion.

A hallmark of the Catholic theological tradition is its holistic conception of the intellectual and spiritual life as mutually complementary dimensions of our graced humanity. Sr. Mary Carroll, S.S.S.F., Dr. Ann Garrido, and Deacon James Keating, in their elegant essays addressing a diocesan spirituality, a Dominican theological vision, and the connection between pastoral practice and spiritual maturity, respectively, testify to this integrative Catholic sensibility. These essays provide rich reflection for seminary formators and seminarians.

Msgr. Anthony Ireland provides a timely assessment of the virtues necessary to engage not only the bright promise of the Internet and social media, but also the skills necessary to avoid the dark shadows of por-

nography and sexual addiction that sadly bedevil these new technologies. Equipping future priests, indeed, all of the Catholic faithful, to navigate these troubled waters of modernity with wisdom and firm boundaries is a critical task for the seminary formation program, and I am grateful for his contribution to this ongoing conversation.

Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., offers a fine review of an insightful memoir, written by a Ugandan priest, Fr. Robert Obol, on lessons to be learned from Christianity under fire in a war-torn country. This offering by Fr. Obol is a great gift to all of us in priestly formation.

Bishop Edward Rice has submitted a short, but powerful, reflection on the importance of simple fidelity to the task of prayer.

As always, I welcome submissions, comments, and suggestions for future issues of the journal.

As we celebrate Easter, may the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ, from his beautiful poem, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, inspire you with hope: “let Him Easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness that lies within us.”



Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy
Editor



Calendar of Events • NCEA Seminary Department

2013

- ◆ **April 24-26, 2013**
International Priest & Seminarian Policy Writing Seminar For Diocesan/ Seminary Officials
Sacred Heart Institute
Huntington, NY
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- ◆ **June 2-5**
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- ◆ **June 3 - July 12, 2013**
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- ◆ **May 31 – June 7**
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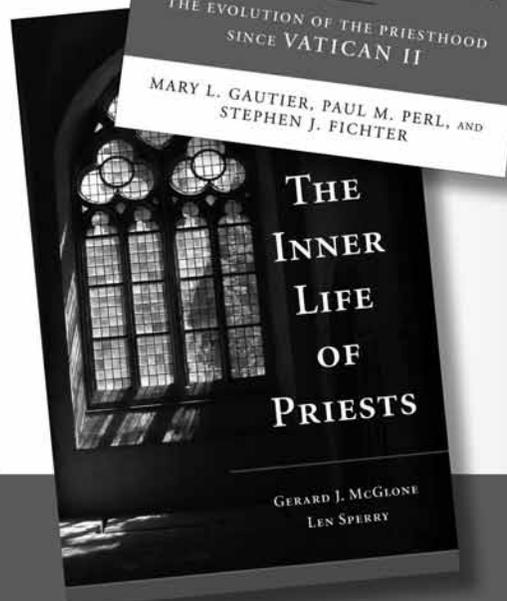
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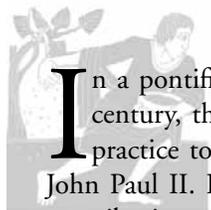
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The New Evangelization and the Formation of Priests for Today

Most Rev. Edward William Clark, S.T.D.



In a pontificate that stretched more than a quarter century, there is very little in church teaching and practice today that does not bear the mark of Pope John Paul II. Perhaps the most significant and lasting contribution of this remarkable pope will be his conceptualization and development of *The New Evangelization*. Also of lasting significance, certainly, will be his naming and explication of the “four pillars of priestly formation,” which he set forth in his apostolic exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.¹ The aim of this article is to begin a discussion of the now essential relationship between these “four pillars of priestly formation” and *The New Evangelization* of Pope John Paul II.

The term “new evangelization” was first introduced by Pope Paul VI in his 1975 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* when he referred to the necessity of a “new period of evangelization.”² In using this phrase, Pope Paul VI primarily had in mind a renewed emphasis on the primary apostolic task of preaching the gospel to those who had not yet heard the word of God or been introduced to the person of Jesus Christ, traditionally called the *Missio Ad Gentes*. However, together with this basic concept, Pope Paul VI called for an entirely new response to the new challenges that the contemporary world was creating for the mission of the church—new responses to new questions.

Elsewhere in the same apostolic exhortation, Pope Paul VI addressed the second aspect of a renewed evangelization in greater detail. Among the new challenges facing the church is the need to provide a deeper awareness of faith “for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children,

“The first evangelization, the *Missio Ad Gentes*, is addressed to those who are non-Christian, but The New Evangelization is addressed to those who are, in some way, and to some degree, already Christian.”

—Archbishop Fisichella

and for many others.”³

Evidently, this second aspect of “a new evangelization” continued to percolate in the thoughts of his successor until the historic event of 1983 when Pope John Paul II launched *The New Evangelization* while addressing the Council of Latin American Bishops at Port-au-Prince, Haiti.⁴ From that day until his death in 2005, Pope John Paul II continued to develop the unique theology of *The New Evangelization*, a theology and practice of faith that continued to resonate in the addresses, writings and actions of his successor, Pope Benedict XVI.

The New Evangelization and the First Evangelization

It is of utmost importance to recognize the difference between the *Missio Ad Gentes*, traditionally the primary evangelizing work of the church, and *The New Evangelization* developed by Pope John Paul II. *The New Evangelization* is not a mere renewal of traditional

methods of evangelization. It is not an outreach to those who have not yet been introduced to the full word of God and the person of Jesus Christ. It is not addressed to those who are non-Christian. It is not, simply, “new evangelization” or even “a new evangelization.” It is a specific and delineated focus and work of the church known as “*The New Evangelization*.” The use of the article “the” is essential to understanding the nature of this very specific evangelizing work of the church.

This understanding of The New Evangelization was clearly reiterated by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the new Pontifical Council for Promoting The New Evangelization, during the *ad limina* visit of the bishops of Region XI in April 2012. Archbishop Fisichella stated, “The first evangelization, the *Missio Ad Gentes*, is addressed to those who are non-Christian, but The New Evangelization is addressed to those who are, in some way and to some degree, already Christian.”⁵ He went on to speak of the importance of The New Evangelization for the formation of the Christian faithful, presenting ideas that are equally relevant to the formation of priests for today’s church. Before turning to this essential relationship between The New Evangelization and priestly formation, however, we need to explore in more detail what The New Evangelization is, what it is intended to accomplish and how it might best be implemented.

The first evangelizing mission of the church is to proclaim the word of God to those who have never known it in an explicit way and who have no conscious relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Characteristically, Pope John Paul II persistently referred to this form of evangelization as the *Missio Ad Gentes*.⁶ While continuing to use this phrase, Pope Benedict XVI also made use of the term “classic evangelization.”⁷ Archbishop Fisichella often uses the term “first evangelization.” Allied terms are “traditional evangelization” and even “the old evangelization” (not a particularly fortuitous appellation). For the sake of clarity and simplicity, the term *The First Evangelization* will be used in this article.

The mission of The First Evangelization is to make converts, to baptize non-believers and non-Christians, to introduce them to the person of Jesus Christ and to instruct them in the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. By contrast, the mission of The New Evangelization is to deepen the conversion of those who have already come to an awareness of Jesus, who have already been baptized into the church and who already have some knowledge of the Catholic faith and its practices.

Nearly all of us have points of resistance to the message of the gospel and the teaching of the church, and until we confront those areas of resistance and submit to a deeper conversion, we remain, to that extent, inadequately prepared to share the gospel of Christ with others.

Eight Aspects of the New Evangelization

There are eight particular aspects of The New Evangelization that set it apart from The First Evangelization. First, the intended audience is different, as already noted. The New Evangelization is not directed at non-Catholics, non-Christians, or non-believers, but at those already baptized into the Christian faith and the Catholic Church.

Second, The New Evangelization begins with fostering a deep personal relationship with Jesus the Christ. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “The New Evangelization is not a matter of merely passing on doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Savior.”⁸ The point of departure is Christ himself, his person, because he himself is our salvation. Still, it must be kept in mind that Christ is inseparable from his church. The deeper, personal relationship with Jesus that is at the heart of The New Evangelization is a relationship that takes place both in and through the church, the living Body of Christ, and never apart from it.

Third, The New Evangelization is directed at enlightening the still-dark corners in the lives of believers where the light of the gospel has not yet penetrated. In this sense, The New Evangelization is for *all* believers, because all of us certainly stand in need of further conversion. Nearly all of us have points of resistance to the message of the gospel and the teachings of the church, and until we confront those areas of resistance and submit to a deeper conversion, we remain, to that extent, inadequately prepared to share the gospel of Christ with others. This is, perhaps, the most significant aspect of The New Evangelization.

Fourth, The New Evangelization is concerned with deepening the religious experience and commitment of nominal believers, those who are uncatechized or undercatechized in the faith into which they have already been baptized. This includes those whose faith may be personally strong but remains based on a cultural assimilation of the faith. It also addresses those who find personal fulfillment in religious practices but whose personal faith is not fully aligned with the gospel or in unity with the faith of the entire church.

Fifth, The New Evangelization seeks to call back non-practicing believers to an active participation in the faith. This is the work of the Good Shepherd seeking the lost sheep.

Sixth, a particular aspect of The New Evangelization that held a high priority with Pope John Paul II, and continued to do so with Pope Benedict XVI, is the re-evangelization of traditionally Christian countries and populations that have been weakened by secularization. The mission is to transform these nations and peoples by recalling them to the very gospel values that are identical with the human and cultural values belonging to the common heritage of humankind. These are fundamental human values that, in practice, have been rejected or marginalized by the widespread cultural assimilation of dissonant secular values.

Seventh, The New Evangelization calls for new methods of communicating the gospel—new methods, new technologies and new theories of communication. The quickly changing and ever-expanding technologies of social communication provide a particular challenge and opportunity for the church.

Finally, The New Evangelization involves all members of the Christian community, all members of the church and, in particular, the laity. This, in itself, calls for a new appraisal of the ecclesiology from which the church functions and presents a challenge to those whose personal ecclesiology is at some variance with the mind of the universal church.

Since the introduction of The New Evangelization by Pope John Paul II in 1983, it has quickly become a preoccupation of the church on both the universal and local levels. The term is widely used, although often not correctly. (It must never be taken as a renewal or revitalization of the traditional forms of The First Evangelization to non-Christians). Nearly every local synod held in dioceses of the United States in the intervening years has focused on The New Evangelization as a principal outcome of the synodal process and the unifying focus of the diocesan agenda for the years to follow. In 2010,

Pope Benedict XVI established the new Pontifical Council for Promoting The New Evangelization, and the theme “The New Evangelization” was his selection for the Year of Faith in 2013 and the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2012. It is safe to say that The New Evangelization will be the context of church teaching and practice for many years to come. With this in mind, we now turn our attention to the formation of priests for the church of The New Evangelization.

The Formation of Priests for the Church of Today

In 2006, the bishops of the United States issued the fifth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* as the authoritative guide for seminaries and the formation of future priests in this country. Like the fourth edition before it, the fifth edition relies heavily upon *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the 1992 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II. With considerable detail, the four pillars of priestly formation are delineated, beginning with article 70.

The seminary and its programs foster the formation of future priests by attending specifically to their human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation – the four pillars of priestly formation developed in *Pastores dabo vobis*. These pillars of formation and their finality give specificity to formation in seminaries as well as a sense of the integrated wholeness of the different dimensions of formation.⁹

The First Pillar of Formation: The Human

The first and stabilizing pillar is human formation. It is an axiom among bishops and seminary personnel that “what you see is what you get.” To a very great extent this is true. By the time a man enters the seminary, his basic character, his values and his personality traits are already set. For this reason, the process of discernment prior to applying to the seminary must be thorough and cautionary. The vocation personnel, not the seminary, ought to be the gatekeepers. The admissions procedure should verify the worthiness of the candidate and the recommendation of the vocation director and not find itself in the circumstance of having to countermand that recommendation.

At the very foundation of The New Evangelization lies Pope John Paul II’s conviction that the values of the gospel are completely consistent with the fundamental

values of redeemed humankind, the individual who acts consistently in accord with integral human nature. This notion, arising from his “philosophy of the acting person,” found apostolic expression beginning with his first encyclical letter, *Redemptor Hominis*.¹⁰ This same notion underpins the sixth aspect of The New Evangelization as presented above, the transformation of secularized Christian countries and peoples. The mission to transform these traditionally Christian countries by recalling them to the very gospel values that are identical with authentic human and cultural values resonates with his notion of the authentic human being, the acting person. This same call for transformation and authentic personalism underlies Pope John Paul II’s explication of the first pillar of priestly formation—the human.

In accepting a man for admission to the seminary, his basic personality and character must be sound. He must exemplify the most basic characteristics of a healthy human being. The degree to which he has been affected by the values of an overwhelmingly secular culture must be evaluated. This is most necessary with regard to his ability to live lifelong celibacy and chastity. It is also necessary to know that he is comfortable with himself, has good self-esteem, can work collaboratively with others, exemplifies sound anger management and is not resistant to authority.

Is he patient under stress? Is he capable of handling criticism? Does he give consideration to the opinions of others? Is he more ambitious for the gospel than for himself? Is he low-maintenance and not overly dependent on outside support? Is he willing to live life simply and unencumbered? Does he possess genuine concern and care for others, along with a willingness to submit himself to a servant’s role? All of these characteristics give expression to an individual deeply in touch with authentic humanity. Only with such a foundation will he be capable of responding to the second pillar of priestly formation. A person who is not in possession of a sound human life is not capable of developing an authentic spiritual life.

For future priests, an important aspect of human development is immersion in Catholic culture, something that many candidates today do not seem to have experienced or consciously reflected upon. Living in a Catholic environment; experiencing a Catholic ethos firsthand; absorbing the Catholic influence in art and architecture, history, music, drama, literature, and in the development of culture—all of this plays a fundamental role in the human development of a man called to

priesthood, and all of it provides a solid base for spiritual development.

The Second Pillar of Formation: The Spiritual

In accord with the principles of The New Evangelization, the conversion to a deeper spiritual life is completely dependent on developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Conversion to the person of Jesus should precede conversion to the church. Being a priest is more than celebrating the sacraments, preaching the word of God and safeguarding the authentic teaching handed down from the apostles and explicated by the magisterium. Being a priest is communicating to others the relationship with Jesus that he himself has experienced. Without such an experience, a priest cannot lead others to a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus.

For the priest, developing a spiritual life is not merely a matter of religious discipline—praying the Divine Office, participating in the daily Eucharist and performing the canonical requirements of the priesthood. Nor is it a matter of practicing particular devotions or submitting himself to a method of spirituality that he finds personally appealing. Least of all, it is not a matter of foisting on others spiritual practices or a form of spirituality to which he himself is attracted, as though sanctioning and ratifying his own religious preferences. In accord with The New Evangelization, authentic spirituality is, above all, a continuous, personal and profound meeting with the Lord, an ongoing interior dialogue with Jesus that shapes the full dimension of one’s life. All else is secondary.

At the same time, this personal relationship with Jesus must take place in and through the church, for Jesus is never separated from his church. While the priest’s relationship with Jesus is personal, it is never private. It always involves an interpersonal relationship with the whole living Body of Christ. All too often “seekers after Jesus” focus solely on what they perceive to be a private relationship, rejecting the importance of the faith community as the locus and guide for an authentic and verifiable relationship with the Lord. The priest, above all, must model for his people the inseparable connection between Christ and the church. He must demonstrate for them that one’s personal relationship with Jesus can only fully take place within the community of faith itself. The second pillar of priestly formation, the spiritual pillar, corresponds with the second aspect of The New Evangelization as outlined above—the primacy of knowing Jesus in a way that is personal, profound and inclusive.

Significant instruments of both The New Evangelization and the formation of men for the priesthood are spiritual direction and the Sacrament of Penance. Both practices, however, stand in need of some refocusing. Both need to be experienced as genuine encounters with the person of Jesus Christ. Revealing one's soul in spiritual direction needs to be more than a review of life and an opportunity for personal and ministerial support. Sacramental Penance and the reception of absolution should not be limited to a juridic process of confession and acquittal. Both should take place as an encounter with Christ where his presence is both felt and absorbed. Attention needs to be given to developing exactly this type of encounter. Having experienced this himself during his period of formation, the priest is better able to facilitate the same experience for others through his ministry.

The Third Pillar of Formation: The Intellectual

Because of the doctrinal polarization so often experienced among church members today, the third pillar of priestly formation, the intellectual, deserves serious attention. These days, many candidates come to the seminary fresh from an experience of personal conversion. Too often this conversion is deeply private and devoid of any conscious relationship with the church. Consequently, it is experienced as something to be protected and defended from a threat of false teaching perceived to arise from theological inquiry. The candidate seeks to build a wall of doctrinal orthodoxy around his personal encounter with Jesus. Anything that would appear to threaten that encounter is perceived as suspect and heterodox. Rather than expanding the boundaries of his theological perspective, this candidate wishes to know only what the church officially teaches and how to defend that teaching.

Very often, especially in an election year in which Catholic candidates are campaigning for public office, reference is made to "cafeteria Catholics." These are described as Catholics who pick and choose among the doctrines and teachings of the church, selecting the ones with which they most easily agree and rejecting the ones that present a conflict for them. Candidates for the seminary are not excluded from being cafeteria Catholics. With all candor, it must be admitted that most Catholics have difficulty accepting all that the church teaches, especially in the application of church teaching to particular issues of moral behavior and social justice. They harbor an inner consciousness of those church teachings that they easily accept, as well as those they

A person who is not in possession of a sound human life is not capable of developing an authentic spiritual life.

reject, ignore or dispute.¹¹ Even many otherwise loyal and devout Catholics forthrightly reject particular teachings of the church. One need only call to mind issues related to immigration, the death penalty, fetal stem cell research, homosexuality, single sex marriage, preemptive warfare and the programmatic elimination of terrorists and dictators, to name but a few. On all of these issues, there are members of the church who believe themselves to be faithful Catholics, but who think and speak and act—as well as vote—in contradiction to authoritative church teaching.

Whenever any member of the church finds himself bristling at a formal statement or pronouncement of the Holy Father—or of the bishops—or feels himself in opposition to what is presented as the authoritative teaching of the church, this may well indicate a dark corner of his life that still needs to be enlightened by the gospel.¹² This corresponds with the third principle of The New Evangelization as outlined above. Admittedly, almost all of us have such dark corners and stand in need of the enlightenment that comes from faith in the church. What is essential is our willingness to confront these issues openly and open-mindedly, with objectivity and docility. If this is true for all members of the church, it is especially true for men preparing for the priesthood. The willingness to engage objectively in theological discourse speaks a great deal about the ecclesiology out of which a seminarian operates. For the church, it is essential that her priests share and support the same basic ecclesiology as the magisterium of the Holy Father and the bishops.

The church asks of her bishops, priests and deacons that they "adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authoritative Magisterium."¹³ In practice, this means that they speak, act, preach and instruct in accord with the mind of the church. It also means that when they find their minds and hearts are not fully in

accord with the teachings of the church, that they possess the intellectual humility to admit that the church has a greater wisdom than they do and that they continue to seek and understand the greater wisdom that the church possesses. Without such intellectual humility and openness to gospel enlightenment, no one can expect to profit from the experience of The New Evangelization.

Men training for the priesthood today also need to be well-informed about the persuasive influence of post-modernism as the dominant philosophical context out of which the majority of Americans and Western Europeans think and act today. Archbishop Fisichella drew special attention to this when he met with the bishops of Region XI. "It must be recognized," he said, "that today we are in an entirely new era from a half century ago. One era has closed and a new era is unfolding. We are now immersed in the era of Post-Modernism. The great challenge for The New Evangelization is to confront Post-Modernism."

The Fourth Pillar of Formation: The Pastoral

The challenge of The New Evangelization for the pastoral formation of priests is the challenge to move beyond the comfort zone of parochial life and to become missionaries once again, at least in spirit. The New Evangelization calls for seeking out and welcoming back those who have left the practice of the faith, to form and educate the uncatechized and the undercatechized and to deepen the religious experience and commitment of nominal believers. Courses in pastoral administration need to do more than teach future pastors how to deal with issues of finance, facilities and the organization and governance of parish life. Such courses need to teach these future pastors how and when to delegate such activities to others so that they can develop and focus on the very activities that will inflame faith in the lives of their parishioners. Attention needs to be given to the best methods of bringing back to the faith those who have left it, the best methods of catechizing adults as well as children and the best methods of drawing youth and young adults into a more vibrant experience of faith. Among such practices, attention should definitely be given to the practice and effectiveness of "whole family catechesis" as a genuine expression of The New Evangelization.

Formation in pastoral ministry also needs to evaluate a seminarian's ability to work collaboratively with laity and religious, as well as with other priests. Before ordaining a man to the priesthood, the bishop should ask himself whether or not this candidate will be capable

of delegating without needing to be in control and of working on an equal footing with members of the laity and the religious without feeling threatened or diminished in his authority. As pointed out above, The New Evangelization involves all members of the Christian community and all members of the church, but in particular the laity. Archbishop Fisichella reiterated this very point to the bishops of Region XI when he said that the laity would lead The New Evangelization, not the clergy and the religious. In the age of postmodernism, the voice of the laity, he said, will be more persuasive than the voice of the clergy.

The witness of charity is essential to The New Evangelization, a point emphasized by Archbishop Fisichella with great enthusiasm. The New Evangelization is based on witness, and the most effective witness is the witness of charity. Our motivation must be clear in reaching out to the poor and the marginalized, in caring for the weak and the disenfranchised, in defending the immigrant and the stranger—we do these things because we are disciples of Jesus Christ. We do it because of our faith. We do not act out of some vague humanistic notion of solidarity or altruism. Our solidarity with others is based on the fact that we are all children of the same Father, redeemed by the Son and bonded together by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We should never shy away from giving voice to this motivation or from giving witness to the hope that is within us (1 Pet 3:15).

As important as words are, the most important witness is derived from the style of one's life and the sharing of one's experience. Recalling the time-honored words of Pope Paul VI, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."¹⁴ Many of today's seminarians and younger clergy have been drawn into ministry by an experience of personal conversion and were away from the church for a period of time in their lives. Answering the New Evangelization's call, the experience of these newer and future priests can prove invaluable to drawing others back to the faith, including those who have never experienced faith, even though baptized. Their seminary formation should instruct them in ways of sharing their life journeys in an effective and appropriate manner: in homiletics, in counseling, in evangelizing and in teaching.

In forming seminarians to proclaim and preach the word of God, emphasis should be placed on the homily as a prime opportunity for witnessing to the experience and importance of faith in one's own life. It is through this sharing of faith experience that one is best able to

reach the minds and hearts of hearers. The didactic sermon, while informative and often interesting, is never as persuasive as the homily that gives witness to the significance of a particular passage of scripture in one's own life and experience. Again citing Archbishop Fisichella, attention needs to be given to developing a new homiletics rooted in the principles of The New Evangelization.

One final aspect of The New Evangelization involves the emerging forms of social communication that quickly and effectively touch the lives and interests of today's populations, especially youth and young adults. *Facebook* and *Twitter*, iPhones, iPads, Web sites and blogs provide instantaneous, and often the most persuasive, forms of communication between individuals and groups. Because of the anonymity and the rapidity of searching for information online, electronic and digital forms of communication have become the most used methods of seeking information and acquiring data. It is significant that both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II drew special attention to the need for the church to immediately begin adopting these new forms of communication.¹⁵ Pastoral studies and formation in our seminaries need to include both discussion and training with regard to the effective use of these new technologies and emerging forms of social communication.

In all likelihood, The New Evangelization will be a defining characteristic of the church for many years. It may prove to be the only effective tool that the church has in dealing directly with the influence of postmodern thinking and the increasing secularization of culture and society. Because of the frequency with which both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI used the term "The New Evangelization," the phrase itself has captured the imagination of the church throughout the world. Whether the concept will be consciously and effectively implemented throughout the church has yet to be seen. To truly advance the theory and practice of The New Evangelization will necessitate a paradigm shift within the church itself. In many ways, both attitudes and practices will have to change if the church truly comes to embrace The New Evangelization. Should this happen, both attitudes and practices in the formation of priests for the present day will also have to change.



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Endnotes

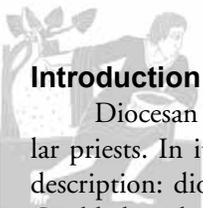
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A Worldly Priest: Evangelization and the Diocesan Priesthood

Rev. Matthew Ramsay

"I shall recall the straying; I shall seek the lost. Whether they wish it or not, I shall do it. And should the brambles of the forests tear at me when I seek them, I shall force myself through them all straits; I shall pull down all hedges. So far as the God whom I fear grants me the strength, I shall search everywhere."

—Saint Augustine of Hippo, "On Pastors"



Introduction

Diocesan priests are traditionally known as secular priests. In its origins, this term is simply a negative description: diocesan priests are not religious priests. Could there be a positive reading of the term, though? This article examines the ways a diocesan priest ought to be worldly, in the sense that the world is the proper location for diocesan priestly ministry.

The bible uses the word world in two very different ways. First is the world as an occasion of sin: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).¹ This is the world as opposed to God, and in this sense a priest should never be worldly.

There is, however, a second meaning: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, so that anyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17). As one working *in persona Christi*, a priest's job is not to condemn the world, but to help the world experience the salvation won by Christ. In this sense, a priest must be worldly.

Thus, this article is based on three convictions. First, priests are obliged to evangelize, by which I mean presenting the Gospel message and inviting a response. Recent church documents list evangelization as a key responsibility of all priests.² Second, among diocesan priests and in seminary formation, evangelization is

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rarely talked about or prioritized. Proving this claim would be the work of another article, but a few questions may help illustrate the point. How many diocesan parishes or university Newman Centers have ministries or committees dedicated to evangelization? How many pastoral theology courses, formation dimensions or pastoral ministry programs at seminaries mention evangelization? The answer in my experience is, sadly, few. So we come to a third conviction: diocesan priests need to engage the world and spread the Gospel. I will refer to this type of work as worldly ministry. Assuming the first two convictions are accepted, this article examines point three.

To examine the third conviction, I will look at worldly ministry from three different perspectives: personal experiences of worldly ministry, possible dangers a priest who engages in worldly ministry must be aware of, and other positive examples of worldly ministry. Finally, I will attempt to synthesize these perspectives by addressing the possible dangers and closing with a

few practical points for priests who wish to engage in worldly ministry.

Unexpected Grace: Ministry in a Pub

The foundations of the ministry I reflect on were laid during my pastoral year at Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The ministry developed during that year and through the subsequent summer after I was ordained to the diaconate. I should point out that I did not plan on engaging in ministry in a pub. My sister worked there (she is now manager), and I spent time there to spend time with her. Through my sister, I built relationships with many of the staff members and regulars at the pub. Word quickly spread that I was preparing for the Catholic priesthood, and ministry opportunities followed.

The pub in question is a respectable Irish pub set in the independently artsy Broadway district of Saskatoon. The clientele during the winter consists primarily of thirty- to fifty-year-old regulars who live within walking distance of the pub. In summer, younger tourists and college students appear and give the pub a slightly rowdier feel.

Respect for the privacy of the people I encountered means that I cannot be too specific describing the ministry that occurred. Suffice it to say that over the months I encountered men and women from all walks of life and types of faith. I met evangelical Christians who loved their faith and sought encouragement living and growing it without strong community support. I talked with fallen-away Catholics, some with a great deal of animosity toward the church and others who needed just a little acceptance and encouragement before returning. I was engaged by people with a smattering of theological beliefs and ideals, and I found that almost everyone wanted to ask, challenge and be challenged by one on his way to the priesthood.

Shortly after my diaconal ordination, I visited the pub on the same night Iron Maiden was performing in the city. My sister introduced me to a couple of Catholic regulars who asked excited questions about my ordination. Next to this couple was a young man, dressed in a black Iron Maiden tee-shirt, sitting alone and nursing a beer. When the Catholics asked if as a deacon I can now “make” holy water, the young man suddenly interjected, “If you blessed me with holy water, would I burn?” Not sure if he was making fun of me or not, I answered quickly, “No, you wouldn’t burn.” To which he replied, “No! I’ve done bad things. I’ve sinned. I think I would burn.” This was not blasphemy, and it

Many people have faith but need support and encouragement. In every case, a priest must listen before speaking and build a relationship in order to know how to engage each person in a helpful way.

was not teasing. It was despair. The man believed in God and his goodness, but he did not understand God’s mercy. An opportunity for ministry presented itself.

From these experiences, we can differentiate three levels of evangelization. The Iron Maiden fan is an example of pre-evangelization. He was not yet ready for conversion but was seeking. In this case, the priest’s job is to encourage that seeking and accept the person with charity. After pre-evangelization, comes evangelization proper, in the sense of presenting the Gospel and inviting the person to respond and join the community of believing Christians. Moving from pre-evangelization to evangelization proper is a matter of prudence and courage: prudence to know when the time is right and courage to step out in faith. Encounters with other believers are opportunities for post-evangelization. Many people have faith but need support and encouragement. In every case, a priest must listen before speaking and build a relationship in order to know how to engage each person in a helpful way.

Dangers of Worldly Ministry: Three Potential Problems

I have no doubt that good has come from worldly ministry, but the first scriptural use of world above warns of potential dangers as well. Three particular dangers are sin, scandal and clericalism.³

We know, first, that the world can be an occasion of sin. This is clearly seen in the example of a bar. Alcohol and an active community that may not share Catholic moral norms can be a dangerous combination for a priest. Even apart from a bar, a priest spending his time in a rectory would not face the temptations he may face outside the rectory.

Second, the world can be an occasion for scandal. Even if a priest is personally morally upright, his pres-



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makes the same point more succinctly: “Even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world;” “Each individual layman must stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the living God” (LG 35, 38).

Theologian Jean Galot follows the presentation of Vatican II in his comparison of the priesthood of the laity and the ordained priesthood. Beginning with baptism, a faithful Christian life witnesses to the power of the Incarnation and continues Christ’s work in the world: “In this sense, the baptized are the priests of mankind.” Elsewhere, Galot argues that for a priest to take upon himself the laity’s worldly work “would entail the danger of clericalism.”⁴ In light of Vatican II’s emphasis on the lay vocation, this is an important concern. The assumption

ence may be seen as condoning sinful behavior in others. It may also give the appearance that the priest is engaging in morally problematic behavior.

Third, Vatican II has clearly explained that the sanctification of the world is the vocation of the laity. It is the job of the lay faithful to engage the world and present the Gospel while diocesan priests encourage and equip them for this ministry.

The third point deserves a closer examination. The Second Vatican Council strongly emphasized the vocation of the laity, primarily in *Lumen Gentium* and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* but also in many other documents besides (see AA n. 2). *Lumen Gentium* states, “What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature” (31). This does not mean they have no vocation, but that their vocation is in the world: “They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity” (LG 31). Elsewhere, the document

that the Gospel is not being proclaimed unless priests are proclaiming it is clericalism.

Benefits of Wordly Ministry: Three Positive Examples

Good reasons for diocesan priests to practice worldly ministry also exist. For this reflection I look to the examples of Jesus, Cardinal Carlo Martini, former archbishop of Milan, and Protestant pastor Tim Huff of Toronto.

Jesus often engaged in ministry in abnormal settings, such as the call of Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13 and parallels), the encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), welcoming the woman who washed his feet (Luke 7:36-50), and forgiving the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11). This approach was scandalizing to Jesus’ contemporaries, but Jesus insisted that it was a necessary part of his mission: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. 9:13); “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Lutheran scripture scholar Ernst Kaseman describes how Jesus prac-

ticed his ministry outside what would have been considered sacred space: “[T]he gospels tell us that even during his lifetime Jesus turned from his devout contemporaries to tax-collectors and sinners, thus thrusting forward in the very name of God into what was thought, religiously speaking, to be alien ground. The people surrounding Jesus found this scandalous.”⁵ Jesus went outside what was considered sacred, and there he brought and found sacredness. A priest whose work never takes him beyond the parish or chancery is not living according to Jesus’ example.

The second example, Cardinal Martini of Milan, illustrates both the importance and the feasibility of ministry outside the parish in a contemporary context. Martini realized that, in a secularized culture, a priest cannot wait for people to come to him. If we do not go out to meet them, we will never meet. To that end, Martini founded a “*Cattedra dei Non Credenti*” (Cathedral for the Non-Believers), a program of lectures, dialogues, and discussions held in a theatre in downtown Milan. He realized that his city was full of people who were raised in the faith, had left it, but were still seeking. Martini sought out such people on their own terms to discuss the realities of life with and without faith.⁶

Related to this example is the recent study of Charles Taylor. Taylor argues that the culture of Western Europe and North America pushes strongly against acceptance of faith.⁷ We must admit this fact and face the culture head on, being witnesses in the world of how the faith can be found and lived today.

Tim Huff, the third example, works with homeless people on the streets of Toronto and has written a short book, *Bent Hope*, chronicling his experiences. This book, a collection of stories he experienced in his twenty years of work, is at times difficult reading. He writes of encounters with drug addicts, neo-Nazis, prostitutes, the insane, abused, unwashed, uneducated and unaccepted. Explaining why he shared these experiences, he writes,

From the first word to the last, my hope was to *reveal* the very art of life. To *introduce* a world of unlikely giants with the warmth of music. To *shed light* on wonderfully sculpted images of strange beauty throughout the book. And in closing, to now *present* a painting. The canvas has indeed been the street. Its smudged hues of sorrow, joy, exhaustion and promise. . . . I truly do believe that the eternal artist of all creation has invited every one of us to stop and experience his handiwork. And to look upon none of

his creations without hope. It has been my honour to attempt to reveal, introduce, shed light and present the hidden art of lives too glorious to miss.⁸

It is this ability to see hope and beauty, to see Christ in the most distressing disguises, that makes Huff’s stories readable and even beautiful. Like Huff, a priest who makes real encounters with people in the world will find incredible courage, kindness, drive and faith. All of this may be hidden and with an admixture of error, but it is there, nonetheless.

Experiences such as these illustrate the second scriptural use of world: the good place loved by God that Christ came to save. God is at work in the world, and a priest who is there and aware can see what God has begun and help it grow into faith in his Son. As Russian Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn has written, “Should one rage against the apostates, the doubters, the seekers who refused to find? Should one not rather marvel at the way in which the idea of God is awakened even in those whom the Good News has not reached? . . . Let us curse no one for his imperfection.”⁹ Close encounters with people outside the church show that everyone is redeemable. The question that remains is, “How can they call on the one they have not heard?” (Rom 10:14).

Calling Priests to the World

Worldly ministry has great benefits and serious potential dangers. Being aware of the dangers can allow a priest who engages in worldly ministry to avoid falling into sin, scandal or clericalism.

The first danger is the temptation to sin. Every priest must be honestly self-aware and able to name occasions of sin for himself. If a particular circumstance is an occasion of sin, it must be avoided. A strong life of prayer, honest spiritual direction and close community support are essential if a priest is to engage in ministry in the world without endangering his vocation.

The second danger is the possibility of scandal. It was noted above that Jesus scandalized some by his ministry to and with sinners. Scandal may mean shocking religious sensibilities, and it may mean leading others to sin. If scandal (in the first sense) was not a sufficient reason for Jesus to avoid such ministry, neither is it for the priest.¹⁰ A priest in the world, however, must be aware of the possibility of scandal (in the second sense) and take care that he does not even appear to partake in or condone immoral behavior. A priest must always re-

main aware that he is a man of the church, acting with integrity to his vocation.

Regarding the dangers of sin and scandal, the virtue of prudence is essential. A priest must be aware of these dangers, take them seriously and avoid them at all costs. Prudence is not prudery or duplicity; it is honest and accurate knowledge of a situation, the good to be sought in the situation and the right means of achieving that good (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1807). A prudent priest will have self-knowledge, wisdom and the courage needed to make proper decisions. This virtue is essential for any priest but especially for a priest who engages in worldly ministry.

The third danger is clericalism. Is the priest usurping the proper mission of the laity? The answer to this danger is collaboration. Galot correctly roots the lay vocation of evangelization in baptism. Priests, of course, are baptized as well, which means that they share in the call to evangelize. Vatican II's *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* specifically mentions evangelization as a place where "the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary" (AA 6). *Gaudium et Spes* is similarly balanced: "Secular duties and activities belong properly although not exclusively to laymen" (43).

A priest is ordained to live *in persona Christi*. If Jesus engaged in ministry in the world, a priest who wants to model his Master must do the same. Jesus sought out and saved the lost, and a priest who completely delegates this ministry to lay people is not living as fully *in persona Christi* as he could. Canon law in fact gives this responsibility to pastors.¹¹

The lesson to be learned from Vatican II is not that priests should not minister in the world, but that they should minister with the laity. A priest by nature of his consecration has an authenticity that adds weight to the witness. Also, many lay people are encouraged working side by side with a priest in worldly ministry.

Priestly consecration adds authenticity in terms of celibacy and orders. First, celibacy is meant to be a sign of the kingdom, and practically speaking it is often very effective as such. In a culture as sex-soaked as ours, the example of someone willingly giving up sexual intimacy and marriage for the sake of God is an almost unavoidable witness. Many people outside the church are initially skeptical of believers, but such a sacrifice gives a strong dose of authenticity to the witness. Second, the presence of one consecrated to the mission of Christ gives others permission to talk about their own faith. I have often found that people with faith who work in

a worldly setting assume they are the only believer in the room. A priest's presence somehow frees others to talk about their faith. Third, a priest's presence naturally drops Jesus into a situation, bringing to mind questions of life, faith, meaning and eternity. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* mentions the importance of keeping such questions alive:

Christians must work so that the full value of the religious dimension of culture is seen. This is a very important and urgent task for the quality of human life, at both the individual and social levels. The question arising from the mystery of life and referring to the greater mystery of God is in fact at the centre of every culture; when it is eliminated, culture and the moral life of nations are corrupt (559).

Sometimes, the goal is not to give answers but to create questions. Dropping Jesus and a consecrated life into a secular situation may force questions and thoughts about the mystery of life and the mystery of God. No amount of preaching will touch a soul that is not asking these questions.

The priest is, thus, not usurping the laity's role but equipping them to carry it out. Servant leadership often means working with and modeling the work to be done. A priest should never call people to do work he will not do himself, so if a priest is to call his people to their Vatican II vocation, he must be willing to work with them in the world.

Conclusion: A Few Practical Points

Pope Benedict XVI begins the Motu Proprio *Ubi-cumque et Semper*, establishing the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, with the words, "It is the duty of the Church to proclaim always and everywhere the Gospel of Jesus Christ." In closing, he writes, quoting his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*,

"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (n. 1). Likewise, at the root of all evangelization lies not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life.

How are diocesan priests to follow the Holy Father's words, sharing their new life *ubicumque et semper*? Drawing on the thoughts of this article, I offer the following five points in conclusion.

First, priests must build real relationships. Pretending to be interested in another merely for the sake of talking about Jesus is dishonest and manipulative. Charity means real charity for each person one meets, loving them for their own sake. Evangelization may flow naturally in a relationship when the time is right, but the primary motive for the relationship is simple charity.

Second, priests must look and listen well. Huff has a remarkable ability to see grace, and Cardinal Martini listens honestly to the fears and concerns of non-Christians. We cannot share the Gospel effectively if we do not know the people we encounter.

Third, a priest must be recognizable as a priest. The above-mentioned benefits of consecration and orders are useless unless a priest is known to be a priest. It follows that a priest who is visibly recognizable as a priest (i.e. dressed as one) has a head start.

Fourth, every priest must pray. The one true evangelist is Jesus. If a priest is to avoid sin and scandal, he must pray. If a priest is to share the light of Christ, he must spend time with Christ. Only prayer gives one the strength to be always ready to encounter people as Christ.

Finally, if the second conviction on which I based this article is true (that diocesan priests and seminaries rarely talk about evangelization), we need to make a change. In the context of this article I need to ask two questions. What are seminaries doing to prepare diocesan priests to evangelize? What can they be doing that they are not?

With these thoughts in mind, a priest can bring Christ to the world. This may entail helping people to ask questions about life, death, meaning and God. It may mean building relationships with people who appear to have no religious element. If a priest is ready and aware, the time will always come to console the sorrowing, strengthen the weak, invite the lonely, counsel the seeker and simply share the hope that is within. This is necessary priestly pastoral work, even if the parish is physically far away.



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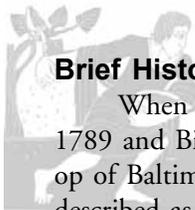
Endnotes

1. All scripture quotations taken from the Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996).
2. E.g. Vatican II's *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (3-6) and the Congregation for the Clergy's *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (15, 35, 45-47).
3. I write this section with thoughts of (and a certain sympathy for) the priest-worker movement of mid-twentieth century France. This unfortunate example reveals the trouble ministry in unusual situations can bring about. See, for example, Henri Perrin, *Priest and Worker: The Autobiography of Henri Perrin*, Trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).
4. Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, Trans. Roger Balducelli (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985), 123, 228.
5. Ernst Kasemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, Trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 36-37.
6. The interested reader can look to Umberto Eco and Carlo Martini, *Belief or Nonbelief? A Confrontation*, trans. Minna Proctor (New York: Arcade, 2000). The Introduction (6-9) describes Martini's work, and the dialogue that follows is a fine example of Martini's worldly engagement.
7. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007), 1-22.
8. Tim Huff, *Bent Hope: A Street Journal* (Pickering, ON: Castle Quay, 2008), 174. This remarkable and regrettably little-known book should be read by everyone who reads this article.
9. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Solzhenitsen Reader: New and Essential Writings 1947-2005*, eds. Edward Ericson and Daniel Mahoney, trans. H. T. Willetts (Wilmington, DE: ISI, 2006), 362-363.
10. This article was written long before the election of Pope Francis, but since his election I have been gratified to see that he too wants the church to be active in the world despite possible dangers. For example, see the following quote unearthed by John Allen: "We have to avoid the spiritual sickness of a self-referential church," Bergoglio said recently. "It's true that when you get out into the street, as happens to every man and woman, there can be accidents. However, if the church remains closed in on itself, self-referential, it gets old. Between a church that suffers accidents in the street, and a church that's sick because it's self-referential, I have no doubts about preferring the former." <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/papabile-day-men-who-could-be-pope-13>.
11. "A pastor is obliged to make provision so that the word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish. . . . He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, so that the message of the gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith" (CIC 528.1).

For I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me*

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony
Archbishop Emeritus of Los Angeles

*For an online presentation on immigration by Cardinal Mahony, please see http://www.la-archdiocese.org/cardinal/Media/For_I_Was_a_Stranger.htm



Brief Historical Context

When the Diocese of Baltimore was established in 1789 and Bishop John Carroll was named the first bishop of Baltimore, the emerging United States was best described as a great blend of peoples from all around the world. All of those people were immigrants. The church begun in 1789 was an immigrant church, and it has continued to be so through the centuries. Early efforts were made by heroic priests and religious to serve the varied and newly arrived immigrants to our shores. “New Religious Communities” were established precisely to welcome and to meet the needs of these immigrants, and the immigrant imprint upon the church in our country is visible everywhere.

In those early years, new immigrants tended to settle in neighborhoods where they would have friends and neighbors who shared language, faith practices, culture and foods. Churches sprang up in those neighborhoods to serve the immigrant communities.

Bishop Carroll established the first seminary in our country in 1791, St. Mary’s College and Seminary in Baltimore. As one can imagine, those early seminarians reflected the many immigrant communities along the East Coast. New priests were ordained early in the infant church’s formal existence in the United States, and they also reflected the great diversity of peoples who made up our early Catholic Church. It is not the intent of this article to outline the essential role of immigrants as seminarians, priests and women and men religious; rather, it is helpful to recall our immigrant beginnings and the journey we have been on for some 220+ years as we walked with our brothers and sisters from so many countries and offered them spiritual and pastoral services.

[I]t is helpful to recall our immigrant beginnings and the journey we have been on for some 220+ years as we walked with our brothers and sisters from so many countries and offered them spiritual and pastoral services.

Three important realities have shaped our efforts to recruit and train new priests over the decades. First, history shows that the vast majority of vocations to the priesthood and religious life came from newly arrived immigrants down through the second and third generations, after which there is a steep drop in the number of priests and religious as immigrant families become more assimilated into the broader American culture.¹

Second, the United States has been understood to be a “missionary country” since our founding, and countless numbers of priests and religious have come here as missionaries over the decades to serve our emerging local churches. This reality continues to our present day as more local presbyterates are comprised of priests from around the world.

Third, immigrant Catholics did not always find a warm welcome in their new land; rather, over the course of the years the perceived “value” of newly arrived im-

migrants rose and fell along with the economic strength of the country. Discrimination against newly arrived Catholics is a phenomenon experienced by each generation, and indeed, even now. It is important to keep these three factors in mind as we invite today's seminaries to continue the graced tradition of staffing our parishes with priests who have pronounced immigration roots.

Biblical Underpinnings and Church Teaching on Immigrants

Because our seminaries all offer excellent Scripture curricula, this is a good opportunity to give seminarians the Scriptural underpinnings needed for understanding immigrants in God's plan of salvation. The Old Testament has several remarkable instructions from God to the chosen people on how to deal with strangers in their midst.

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God. (Lev 19:33–34)

Other references include Exodus 12:43–49 and 23:9, Leviticus 18:26, and Zechariah 7:8–11.² For Catholics, the premier Gospel mandate is found in Matthew's Gospel: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (25:35) This simple and clear instruction from Jesus has served the church well over the centuries as our guide to receiving those who are migrants, immigrants, refugees, strangers, foreigners and aliens in our midst.

Throughout the centuries, it has been church practice to recognize the movement of peoples for many reasons, many of which remain valid today: flight from oppression, persecution, violence and wars; the search for food; the quest for a better life for families; and disruption due to natural disasters such as volcanoes, earthquakes and dramatic weather shifts. Century after century the church's pastoral ministers not only reached out to migrants and refugees spilling into their own countries, but they also sent missionaries to peoples on the move in order to provide spiritual and pastoral assistance. It was in 1891 that Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*, established that people have

a right to work to survive and to support their families. This right includes the right to migrate to other lands. In 1952, following the massive disruptions following the Second World War, Pope Pius XII issued an Apostolic Constitution precisely on this issue entitled *Exsul Familia*. That document begins with a poignant introduction:

The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil.

In 1963 Pope John XXIII clearly articulated the right to migrate in his Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*. This theme was continued in the discussions at the Second Vatican Council, and, following the publication of *Gaudium et Spes*,³ more attention began to focus on the increasing numbers of people on the move. Pope John Paul II reaffirmed this right in his 1985 Address on the pastoral care of immigrants. In his 2008 trip to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI continued this positive message and called on us "...to continue to welcome the immigrants who join your ranks today, to share their joys and hopes, to support them in their sorrow and trials, and to help them flourish in their new home."

Pope Benedict XVI addressed a group of U.S. bishops in Rome on May 18, 2012, and reaffirmed the church's special mandate to care for peoples on the move:

The Catholic community in the United States continues, with great generosity, to welcome waves of new immigrants, to provide them with pastoral care and charitable assistance, and to support ways of regularizing their situation, especially with regard to the unification of families. A particular sign of this is the long-standing commitment of the American Bishops to immigration reform.

On January 22, 2003, the Bishops of Mexico and the United States issued a joint Pastoral Letter on the care of migrants and immigrants entitled *Strangers No*

Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope. Today, there are approximately 212 million people on the move around the world—a truly staggering number. The church remains committed to walking with them on their journeys as well as to helping correct the problems and pressures that force them to leave their homelands.⁴

Our seminaries are not only forming and educating seminarians to be active in the spiritual and pastoral care of immigrants in our midst, but they are also critical players in the struggle to bring about needed immigration reform in our country.

Seminaries and Immigration Reform

Our seminaries are not only forming and educating seminarians to be active in the spiritual and pastoral care of immigrants in our midst, but they are also critical players in the struggle to bring about needed immigration reform in our country. The United States Congress has consistently refused to take any meaningful legislative action to protect the dignity and rights of some eleven million undocumented immigrants living here. As noted earlier, anti-immigrant rhetoric emerges periodically in our nation's history, almost always during times of economic downturn and recession.

There have been four major waves of immigration to the United States over the years, and it is helpful to briefly review them here. The first wave of immigration began in 1620 and continued until 1720. Many people fled to the New World to escape religious persecution, while others were seeking economic opportunity. Britain also sent many of their convicts to the colonies in order to rid their jails of them.

The second wave of immigration lasted from 1720 to 1770. The depression of 1770 created suspicions about the immigrants living among the population—a phenomenon that we continue to witness today.

The third wave of immigration began in 1770 and

continued until 1965. In the 1800s, increasing resentment for immigrants gave birth to the America Party, also known as the “Know Nothings.” They demanded laws to reduce immigration, and to make it harder for immigrants to become citizens. Much of their ire was directed towards Catholic immigrants. In 1870, another depression developed and immigrants were targeted once again. 1875 saw the first restrictive law passed limiting immigration, and, in 1870, California enacted an anti-Chinese law.

The fourth wave of immigration began in 1965 and traces its history to our own time. The recessions of 1994, 2002 and 2008 saw a reemergence of anti-immigrant rhetoric and attacks. After each recession, when the unemployment rate sinks below 5%, anti-immigrant voices tend to die out. The reason is simple: with a more robust economy, our country needs the labor of immigrants who typically take low-skilled and low-paying jobs. Historically, our nation has wanted it both ways: when the economy is robust, we send out an unofficial “help wanted” plea; when the economy falters, we replace that with “no trespassing.”

Our seminaries are preparing priests to go out into the real world and serve all of the people in their parishes and dioceses. Given the likelihood of fluctuating economic realities during their future ministry, those seminarians will occasionally find themselves in the midst of heated, and even vicious, attacks upon immigrants. Historically, the church has always stood with those immigrants—we have served as their voice against discrimination and injustice. In our country, the church has pursued immigration reform decade after decade. Five principles govern how the church responds to public policy proposals:

1. People have the right to find opportunities in their homeland to work and to support their families. Fleeing to another country is always a last resort.
2. People have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families if they cannot find that support at home.
3. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
4. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection in the country to which they flee.
5. The human rights and the human dignity of undocumented migrants should be fully respected in law and in fact.

The elements necessary for comprehensive immigration reform include the following:

1. *Global Anti-Poverty Efforts.* Trade, international economic aid, debt relief and other types of economic policies should be pursued so that people do not have to migrate in order to survive.
2. *Family Reunification.* Visa backlogs for family members result in waits of 5, 10, 15 or more years.
3. *Temporary Worker Program.* The bishops call for a more rational and humane system by which laborers from other countries can legally enter the country to fill positions in the labor force, including on a temporary basis. Many protections are required for such programs, and are listed on the USCCB Website (www.usccb.org).
4. *Broad-Based Legalization.* The 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country need to have an earned path to legal residency. This is the most pressing social issue of our time.
5. *Restoration of Due Process.* Certain practices need to stop, such as indefinite detention without charges being filed, secret hearings and ethnic profiling, as well as policies that confuse immigration with terrorism.

Opportunities for Today's Seminaries

It is interesting to note that, from 1791 to the present, our seminaries have enrolled applicants who were actual immigrants or early generation sons of immigrants. This trend continued through time and across the country until a unique anomaly occurred. From approximately 1945 to 1985 our seminaries had a large spike in the number of applicants and seminarians. During this period of time, many new seminaries opened across the country, including high school seminaries, college seminaries and theologates. Contrary to the historical norm, this period of time saw unprecedented growth in the number of seminarians and ordinations to the priesthood. Following the Second Vatican Council, and as a result of dramatic cultural and societal shifts in our country, those numbers began to drop steadily. With the fewer numbers came the consolidation and closure of many seminaries that had opened during that peak of unprecedented expansion.

In my own Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a large high school seminary was built and opened in 1954. It followed the six/six model, with four years of high

[N]ew forms of education are emerging that have become very effective in meeting the varied needs of today's seminarians – needs that no longer fit the stricter institutional model of the past.

school and two years of college at that campus; and the second two years of college and four years of theology at the theologate. The increasing numbers required the archdiocese to build a separate college seminary on the campus of the theologate, where the four/four/four system of formation and education was used.

One hears now and then a refrain such as, “I wish we could go back to the good old days of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Our seminaries would be full once again.” They assume that we had various decades of “boom times” throughout our history. We did not, and I do not foresee that historical anomaly returning. As the number of applicants began to significantly decrease around 1980, many of those seminaries began to consolidate and to close. During my time as Archbishop of Los Angeles, I was involved in the closure of both our high school seminary and our college seminary. Instead, new forms of education are emerging that have become very effective in meeting the varied needs of today's seminarians—needs that no longer fit the stricter institutional model of the past. Some of the new opportunities that I see for our seminaries include the following:

- It is essential that each seminary understand its own roots and history as a place where immigrants were our first seminarians, and that the mission statement of the seminary reflect that history and reality.
- While most of our seminaries are taking steps to welcome diverse students and to assist all of the seminarians in knowing and appreciating their respective cultures and religious practices, that is not sufficient.
- The faculty and staff of our seminaries must reflect a broad and rich diversity, especially representing the backgrounds of today's seminarians. It is not possible to have a faculty

[T]here is no need to add more to the curriculum. Rather, if we instill a broader awareness in the seminarians that we continue to be sons of immigrants serving immigrant peoples, it will suffice to keep the spark of ministry sharp.

who are mainly of Anglo background teaching seminarians who are Hispanic, Asian Pacific, African and European.

- Seminarians must understand the church's teachings on immigrants and immigration, and they must be prepared to help parishioners understand our immigrant roots and the value of immigrants.
- There is no need for new classes or programs; rather, immigration and its reform could be easily integrated into several existing courses.
- Seminaries need to prepare today's immigrant seminarians in how to serve pastorally in parishes with several different ethnic groups and teach them that they are not being ordained to serve just their own ethnic community.
- Seminary faculty should be available to give workshops and offer programs outside the seminary for priests, religious and pastoral ministers on the role of immigrants in the church in the United States, and how we must embrace each other in bonds of solidarity and faith.

Unlike in past decades, today's seminarians come from a wide and varied background, with different educational achievements and different cultural and linguistic abilities. The new norm is to tailor a formation and educational program for all of the seminarians until they complete their philosophical studies and reach a more uniform level to enter the theologate.

Many dioceses and religious communities have begun houses of formation, especially for students at the

college level. Most of these men attend local secular colleges and universities but live in community where they receive their spiritual formation and learn to be part of a group preparing for theological studies. To date, these new models seem to be achieving remarkable success.

It seems that whenever there is some new need in society or in the church, one of the first responses is to "add a new course at the seminary." If we recall that all of our seminaries historically began with immigrant students and continue to prepare sons of immigrants to serve an immigrant church, it is obvious that there is no need to add more to the curriculum. Rather, if we instill a broader awareness in the seminarians that we continue to be sons of immigrants serving immigrant peoples, it will suffice to keep the spark of ministry sharp. Jesus points the way: "For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me"!



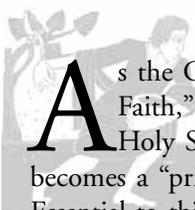
Cardinal Roger Mahony was archbishop of Los Angeles from 1985-2011. He was the third archbishop of Los Angeles to be created a cardinal.

Endnotes

1. An interesting seminary research project would be to do a sample survey of the ancestral lineage of students in our seminaries over the years. My assumption is based on knowledge of seminarians in three seminaries on the West Coast, but more serious research should be fascinating on this issue.
2. A helpful reference book is: James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigration, Immigrants and the Bible* by (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009).
3. Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965).
4. A good source for more information on the church's active pastoral service for immigrants and the steps necessary to achieve sound and just immigration reform is the Justice for Immigrants Web site: www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Teaching Catechesis to Seminarians: A Fusion of Knowledge and Pedagogy

Jim Rigg, Ph.D.



As the Catholic Church concludes the “Year of Faith,” we will continue to be called by the Holy See to engage in a “renewal of faith” that becomes a “priority for the entire Church in our time.”¹ Essential to this renewal of faith is the presence of engaging, relevant and high quality catechesis in our church. Such catechesis must be driven and modeled by members of the clergy; as vital sacramental and catechetical leaders, priests play a vital role in the dissemination of the Word of God. Examples of clergy-educators abound throughout church history, culminating in the divine example of Christ the Teacher. Indeed, the priesthood is commonly identified as a *teaching ministry*,² and the Sacrament of Holy Orders constitutes priests as educators of the Catholic faith. Most seminary programs incorporate courses dedicated to examining the principles of catechesis. The purpose of these courses generally revolves around exposing the seminarian to the basics of catechesis, the relationship of catechesis to scripture and prevalent church documents, and the role of evangelization.

In addition to understanding these critical concepts, it is important that seminarians be equipped with effective methods of instruction and communication. While a seminarian may be well versed in what should be taught, he must also be adequately trained on how to teach it. The importance of catechetical methodology, or pedagogy, cannot be understated. Indeed, the *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) states that “Sound catechesis...involves more than the presentation of the content of Christ’s message.” Such presentation “depends on the methodology employed in the transmission of the Good News.”³ Instruction and practice in pedagogy is critical and should be featured within any seminary program.

**Priests nurture catechists
and ensure that they
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proclaim the Word of God.**

Yet such instruction and practice are often not strongly integrated into seminarian education. In the words of then-Bishop Richard J. Malone of Portland, Maine, in addressing the annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), “We don’t talk about pedagogy...we don’t touch the methodology issue.”⁴ Seminary programs run the risk of focusing too centrally on catechetical principles as reflected in Sacred Scriptures and in prevalent documents of the church. While such principles are important, methodology is equally vital.

At the Athenaeum of Ohio, we have built a second-year theology course that effectively marries catechetical content with actual teaching methods. The course, entitled *Principles in Religious Education*, is designed to offer real-world, practical instruction and practice in effective teaching models. Seminarians emerge from this course with a basic understanding of such pedagogical concepts as educational psychology, lesson design and execution, and behavior modification techniques. When coupled with such courses as homiletics, which help to build fundamental communication skills, this course can be a powerful force in shaping the future priest to be an effective transmitter of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Catechesis as an Essential Ministry of the Church

The church identifies catechesis as an essential ministry in the modern world.⁵ In the typical parish, catechetical programs abound, including Catholic schools, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programs, adult faith formation and so forth. The Mass itself represents a form a catechesis: “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity.”⁶ Through the Liturgy of the Word, we are taught the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, and such lessons are expounded upon through the homily. The Eucharist allows the faithful to directly encounter the person of Christ, the ultimate teacher.

The priest is constantly engaged in teaching; through his interactions with parishioners, both formal and informal, the priest is charged to spread the Good News of Christ. Evangelization, to believers and non-believers alike, is the font from which all catechesis flows.⁷ The future vibrancy of our church depends upon the effectiveness of our ability to evangelize and catechize the people of God.

Christ Himself calls us to “Go into all the world and preach the good news” (Mk 15:16). He calls all Christians to espouse Divine Pedagogy and the mes-

Thus, there is a critical need to ensure that all clergy are properly catechized and are poised to foster a culture of continual formation of lay catechists that serve the church.

sage of salvation. Catechists of all types are called to evangelize and catechize the people. Priests, as ordained ministers of God’s church, are charged to take on a special role in catechesis. In addition to directly educating the faithful, they must nurture catechists and ensure that they zealously and authentically proclaim the Word of God.

Thus, there is a critical need to ensure that all clergy are properly catechized and are poised to foster a culture of continual formation of lay catechists that serve the church.

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Knowledge and Pedagogy

Catechesis is a practice of both the mind and the mouth. In order to effectively catechize, priests must possess a firm grounding in the teachings of Christ and his church. They must understand and believe in the sacred calling to catechesis. Most seminary programs emphasize this area of knowledge and understanding. Such courses provide a foundational study by examining prevalent Church documents, such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, to provide seminarians with a base of knowledge of how and why we teach the faith.

Yet priests cannot be effective catechists without also possessing an understanding of effective pedagogical techniques. Future priests must be trained on how to passionately, strategically and effectively transmit their knowledge to their students. Catechesis, as an “event of grace,”⁸ requires both knowledge and pedagogy.

By providing an emphasis only on knowledge, many seminary programs differ from the training programs of other institutions. The preparation of traditional schoolteachers, as an example, stands in stark contrast to the approach of many seminaries. When schoolteachers conclude university-based education programs, they have completed numerous hours of preparation in basic educational fundamentals. They receive rigorous training in developmental psychology and in teaching learners with a variety of backgrounds and needs. Most significantly, teacher education programs typically provide students with an extensive residency experience in which the student teacher is immersed in a real-world school setting. He or she is paired with an experienced mentor teacher. Over a period of weeks (and even months), the student teacher gradually assumes more direct control of instruction. While some seminary programs offer practicum programs in catechetical settings, this often does not accompany a thorough training in basic pedagogical principles. Such programs typically do not dedicate significant amounts of time to the practicum experience, as seminarians must meet other obligations associated with their education.

As a result, priests who are assigned to Catholic schools after ordination typically do not benefit from the grounding in basic pedagogy or the extensive student teaching experiences of their colleagues on the faculty. Even priests who serve as catechists in other settings can suffer from a lack of pedagogical knowledge. It is possible that a newly ordained priest could enter educational ministry with no real catechetical experiences whatsoever.

This is not to imply, however, that seminarians

should experience formation programs identical to lay Catholic schoolteachers. Priests must receive a wide grounding in a variety of areas in order to live out their ministry. There is clearly not enough time within a seminary program to offer seminarians advanced training in instructional methods.

**A basic understanding
of teaching methods
therefore cultivates good
verbal communication and
confident presentation
skills.**

The Need for Methods Instruction in the Seminary Preparation Program

For the seminarian, the necessity of a reasonable degree of intensive training in pedagogy is clear. In general, such training fulfills basic needs:

1. Priests need to be effective communicators.
2. The priesthood is a catechetical ministry.
3. Pastors serve as educational administrators.
4. Priests must understand and appreciate catechesis, and Catholic schools in particular.

Each of these areas is described in more detail below.

Priests Need to Be Effective Communicators

Effective communication is an essential part of good teaching. In a recent study by the NCEA Seminary Department on homilies, parishioners identified the clarity and organization of the priest’s message as most important.⁹ Such clarity depends upon a convincing and provocative communication style. Often teachers of all types are restricted by their ability to communicate.

Educational methods help provide priests with a basic knowledge of effective communication and public speaking. Certainly, the unique personality and confidence of the priest can significantly impact communication style. However, a basic understanding of how to present complex subject matter to different audiences (particularly children) can be extremely beneficial. The very process of organizing a lesson, forming questions and assessing understanding can help to foster good teaching.

The *Principles of Religious Education* course at the Athenaeum attempts to merge both catechetical principles and teaching methods. In this course, seminarians are exposed to basic pedagogical concepts. They learn how teachers plan lessons and how to formulate educational objectives. They receive instruction in various forms of assessment to gauge whether students understand the presented concepts. They learn about various educational researchers, such as Robert Marzano and Howard Gardner. In short, the seminarians learn how to design and implement effective classroom lessons. This skill can easily translate to many forms of catechesis, and public speaking in general. A basic understanding of teaching methods therefore cultivates good verbal communication and confident presentation skills.

The Priesthood Is a Catechetical Ministry

The connection between the priesthood and catechesis has already been outlined. Clearly, priests engage in constant teaching to a variety of audiences and in a number of different forums. Many priests also serve as catechists in parish and school programs. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, newly ordained priests often teach for 2-5 years in Catholic high schools. Unlike their fellow lay faculty members, they do not have the advantage of a teacher preparation program, nor are they professionally licensed as teachers by the state. Instead, they are thrust into the classroom with minimal knowledge of how to design lessons, modify student behavior or manage a classroom.

Our seminary course helps to address this deficiency. Although we cannot put our seminarians through a traditional teacher preparation program, we hope to provide them with something of a foundation in basic teaching. Thus, when they enter a classroom as a formal instructor, they have something of an understanding of the basics of their job. Similarly, many priests serve as catechetical leaders, youth ministers and other religious instructors. A grounding in teaching methods helps to facilitate good instruction.

Pastors Serve as Educational Administrators

Pastors are called by canon law to act as stewards of the “goods” of the local parish.¹⁰ Among these “goods” are the temporal resources that support the parish ministries. Many of these ministries are educational in nature, including Catholic schools, parish religious education programs, RCIA, adult faith formation programs and so on. Even if the pastor does not serve directly as a catechist in these programs, he is still called

upon to provide faithful leadership. The pastor hires the various catechetical leaders. He monitors all catechetical programs to ensure that teaching is of high quality and authentically reflects the Catholic faith. The pastor makes certain that catechetical programs interface appropriately with other parish programs and also that catechetical leaders contribute to the wider vibrancy of the parish community.

In short, the pastor serves as an educational administrator. The pastor must be trained to identify good education, even if he is not directly engaged in teaching classes in parish or school catechetical programs. The pastor must be poised to provide advice, direction and accountability for catechetical leaders.

This is not to imply that the pastor serves as educational administrator in isolation. Indeed, the savvy pastor should be ready to draw upon diocesan resources, as well as the services of other organizations, in supporting parish catechetical programs. For instance, in managing the Catholic school, the pastor is wise to cultivate a close relationship with the Catholic Schools Office of the diocese, as the personnel of this office most likely possess a deeper knowledge of the science and craft of education. Similar relationships should be built with the Religious Education Office, the Office of Youth Ministry and the like. In spite of the availability of outside help, the pastor must still possess a basis of knowledge of what constitutes good teaching. Because he is the parish canonical leader and possesses an intimate knowledge of the needs of this parish community, the pastor must remain involved, informed and apprised of the quality of all catechetical programs.

Priests Must Understand and Appreciate Catechesis, and Catholic Schools in Particular

Catechesis, as a process of transmitting the faith, is essential to the church. Priests are called to be teachers, and so too all Catholics are called to spread God’s Word. It is therefore vital that the priest understand the importance of catechesis as central to the work of the modern church. The priest, through his daily ministering to the people of God, must constantly model and nurture a culture of catechesis.

Catholic schools, in particular, merit particular attention by the clergy. The church has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to sustaining vibrant Catholic schools to serve our youth. Catholic schools benefit from a centuries-old track record of effectiveness, particularly amongst the urban poor.¹¹ Moreover, studies have demonstrated that students in Catholic schools (includ-

ing non-Catholics) score higher on religious knowledge assessments than public school students who attend religious education programs.¹²

In spite of their demonstrated success, Catholic schools are experiencing an intensifying array of challenges. These challenges have emerged from a much-documented change in the climate surrounding Catholic education, and the church as a whole. In 2011, Leonard DiFiore described a “multiple whammy” effect that has contributed to a significant decrease in the long-term viability of our Catholic schools.¹³ This effect includes the following developments:

1. Changes in the demographics of the Catholic population, and the population of the country as a whole
2. The financial ramifications of the demise of vocations to religious life
3. The leadership vacuum created by the decline of religious vocations
4. The halting of construction of new Catholic schools
5. The decline in financial contributions to the church
6. A general lack of long-term strategic planning for Catholic schools

As a result, enrollment rates in Catholic schools have dropped dramatically over the last several decades. In the United States, Catholic school enrollment has declined from its peak in 1965 with 5.5 million students to just over 2 million students in 2011.¹⁴ This drop has mirrored declines in church attendance and a dwindling of financial resources.

In spite of these changes, the church continues to affirm the importance of Catholic school education. Indeed, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has stated that “Catholic schools are often the Church’s most effective contribution to families who are poor and disadvantaged...as well as for other families.”¹⁵ Catholic school education, as a significant form of catechesis, is a critical part of the educational ministry of the church.

Priests are pivotal in the future of Catholic school education. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI has appealed to clergy and religious to help sustain our schools; in a speech to the Catholic University of America, he asked that we “Do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed renew your commitment to schools...[Catholic schools are] an outstanding apostolate of hope...their long term sustainability must be assured.”¹⁶ Through championing

Catholic school education in their own parishes and ensuring that schools are prioritized in strategic and financial planning, priests help assure that schools can remain vibrant and sustainable into the future.

Such support for Catholic schools can be self-serving. Data shows that, historically, the majority of seminary graduates attended Catholic schools.¹⁷ By appreciating and supporting the many benefits of Catholic school education, priests help to nurture future vocations to the clergy and religious life.

Through an understanding of educational methods, seminarians obtain an important connection to all forms of catechesis, particularly Catholic schools. By doing so, they are able to provide important moral support and leadership for these programs and ensure that they remain an important priority in the future of our church.

The Seminary Course: Fusing Knowledge and Pedagogy

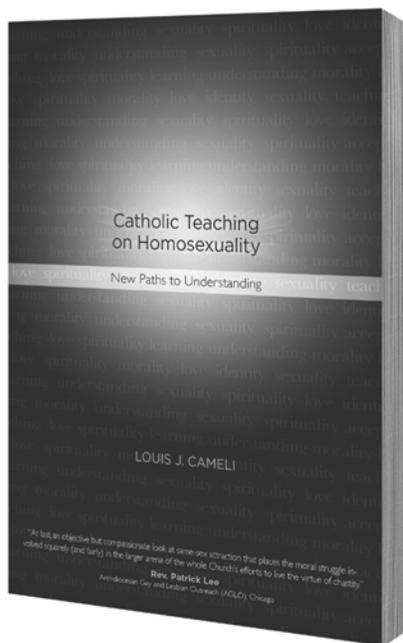
Beginning in the fall of 2011, the Athenaeum of Ohio, the seminary of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, embarked on an initiative to more closely pair knowledge and pedagogy in the formation of future priests. The Athenaeum had historically offered a course on the principles of catechesis as a part of its second-year theology program. Pedagogy was featured in the course, though not overly emphasized, and seminarians were placed as interns in an RCIA program of a nearby parish.

In 2011, the Athenaeum invited the Archdiocesan Director of Educational Services and Superintendent of Catholic Schools to teach its *Principles of Religious Education* course. In hiring the director, the Athenaeum sought a heavier infusion of educational methods into the course. This change was initiated, in part, by an identified need to better train priests in communication and pedagogy. Additionally, the Archdiocese has prioritized the placement of priests as high school religion teachers within their first 2–5 years of ordained service.

The director, a layperson, was seen to possess knowledge of both catechetical and pedagogical principles. The course was redesigned to join these two concepts more closely. Through the 10-week course, seminarians were exposed to foundational teaching concepts, and these concepts were lived out through their practicum placements.

The course is being continually evaluated, and modifications are constantly considered. In short, this course remains a “work in progress” (as all courses are,

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to one degree or another). Nevertheless, it is our hope that, by describing the key components of this course, seminary teachers and administrators will be converted to the need to emphasize pedagogy along with catechetical knowledge. What follows is a basic description of the redesigned *Principles of Religious Education* course. This description will commence with an outline of the course purpose and objectives.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the *Principles of Religious Education* course reads (as indicated in the syllabus): "to provide the seminarian with the fundamentals of catechesis as well as effective pedagogical methods with the ultimate purpose of forming the seminarian as an effective transmitter of the divine pedagogy of God."¹⁸

Flowing from the purpose, the objectives can be defined as threefold:

1. To equip the seminarian with a knowledge of the basic principles of catechesis, as reflected in the *National Directory of Catechesis* and other prevalent church documents
2. To cultivate the seminarian's pedagogical skills through the learning and practice of instructional methods
3. To inspire the seminarian that catechesis is an "event of grace" that should be constantly recognized, encouraged and fostered through the ministry of the priesthood.

Texts and Resources

Like the course objectives, the chosen texts of *Principles of Religious Education* reflect the basic areas of knowledge and pedagogy. In the "knowledge" arena, the church has published numerous documents reflecting the importance of catechesis. Indeed, it can be difficult to pare down church catechetical documents to the mere essentials that would fit the time limitations of the course. However, two distinct texts have been selected, each reflecting an abundance of church teachings on catechesis. These are:

1. The *National Directory of Catechesis* (NDC), promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This text is designed to "be a source of inspiration for catechists in the dioceses and parishes of the United States and an important reference point for the formation of catechists and the preparation of catechetical resources."¹⁹ The *NDC* is a foundational text that clearly out-

lines the basic tenants of catechesis. It draws heavily upon the *General Directory of Catechesis* (GDC), a text of the Holy See, but infuses its pages with references to the modern works of the U.S. Church. The *NDC* forms clear connections to sacred scripture, outlines a process for sacramental preparation, describes parish and diocesan catechetical structures, and offers suggestions for additional sources. As this text is essential to modern catechesis in the United States, the *NDC* functions as the central textbook for the *Principles of Religious Education* course.

Fittingly, chapter four of the *NDC* is dedicated to “Divine and Human Methodology.” This chapter focuses first on the “Divine Pedagogy” of God, who was made incarnate through the person of Christ the Teacher. Through the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the church, believers are inspired to educate the people, leading to “a profession of faith in the Triune God and to a genuine personal surrender to him.”²⁰

The *NDC* further states that catechists must rely upon diverse instructional methods that utilize God’s divine pedagogy as a “reference point.” However, aside from outlining the processes of inductive and deductive reasoning, the *NDC* offers little guidance in the area of pedagogy. It does not describe how to adequately prepare and rehearse a lesson, or how to assess the knowledge of students. It does not delve into developmental psychology or discuss differentiation of learning styles. As the *NDC* is directed at a broad audience of catechists teaching in diverse settings, it focuses on the very basics of methodology, devoting much of its attention to the establishment of a direct (and very necessary) connection between catechesis, the Divine Pedagogy of God and the tenets of the faith.

In short, the *NDC* is an excellent source for providing the seminarian with basic catechetical principles that are fundamental in understanding why we teach. However, a greater base of knowledge in methodology is likely necessary for engaging in catechesis in a practical setting.

2. *At the Heart of the Church: Selected Documents of Catholic Education* by Ronald J. Nuzzi and Thomas Hunt.²¹ This recently published work exposes the student to a number of essential church documents related to Catholic education. The most significant education-related texts published by the Holy See and the USCCB are present and can be drawn upon easily by the instructor. This book strongly complements the *NDC* as it provides primary sources of encyclicals, articles and letters, and contributes to a broader understanding of how the church has supported catechesis through the centuries.

By utilizing the *National Directory of Catechesis* and *At the Heart of the Church*, seminarians are provided with a strong understanding of the basic principles of catechesis.

As per the three objectives of this course, seminarians are also exposed to the fundamentals of good teaching. Given the time limitations of the course, it was decided not to use a central textbook devoted to this subject. Instead, the instructor made use of a variety of resources that reflect a broad overview of teaching styles. Many of these resources are not used in their entirety; rather, selections from these publications were made available through a “classroom set” of these books. The resources for pedagogy include:

1. Portions of *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* by Robert J. Marzano.²² This book succinctly outlines how to design lessons that provide for a deep understanding by learners. Marzano draws heavily upon the “Taxonomy” of Benjamin Bloom and describes how teachers should ensure that lessons not only appeal to surface knowledge, but also provide opportunity for deeper comprehension, analysis and application.
2. Various resources dedicated to lesson-plan design and assessment. There are a number of written sources available for these topics. Such resources are readily available through university websites and can be used (with permission) free of charge. For instance, this course has drawn upon the 7-step lesson plan design structure developed by Dr. Madeline Hunter of the University of California, Los Angeles.²³
3. Portions of *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher* by Harry and Rosemary

Wong.²⁴ For many years, the Wongs' book has been the "bread and butter" of teacher education programs. Their most significant work, this book focuses on how the teacher establishes a learning environment that is most conducive to good instruction. *Principles of Religious Education* draws most heavily upon the chapters devoted to establishing instructional procedures and routines as methods for maximizing student attention and performance.

4. Portions of *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice* by Howard Gardner.²⁵ In this book, Gardner provides a clear description of his monumental "Multiple Intelligence Theory." In essence, Gardner describes several areas in which learners can demonstrate intelligence. These can vary from the verbal and mathematical areas, to music, kinesthetic and interpersonal dimensions. Teachers must be able to assess the learning styles and intelligences of their students and be nimble enough to modify their instruction to meet those differing needs. In a catechetical setting, this allows priests to "take serious account of the circumstances and cultures in which the faithful live in order to present the meaning of the Gospel to them in understandable ways."²⁶

These resources are obviously directed at classroom teachers and not traditional seminarians. However, even if a priest does not enter a classroom as a schoolteacher, the skill areas outlined in these resources translate easily to a variety of catechetical settings.

Finally, two resources have been included that directly address catechesis through Catholic schools. As previously described, priests must have an understanding and appreciation of all forms of catechesis, but Catholic schools merit particular attention. These resources were selected for their ability to highlight the need for thriving Catholic schools in the modern church.

1. "The Catholic Schools We Need:" In September of 2010, Timothy Cardinal Dolan published a stunning call for support for Catholic school education. His article, which appeared in *America* magazine, called for the "reawakening of common ownership of Catholic schools."²⁷ He called on Catholics and the church to "recover our nerve and promote our schools for the 21st century"²⁸ through widespread advocacy and support. As a treasured

institution of the church, Catholic schools cannot be allowed to fade away. Cardinal Dolan's article represents a rallying cry for Catholics to understand and embrace Catholic school education as an essential part of the future of our church.

2. *Weathering the Storm: Moving Catholic Schools Forward*: Like Cardinal Dolan's article, this book begins with a concise justification for the importance of Catholic schools.²⁹ In its few pages, *Weathering the Storm* outlines why Catholic schools in the United States have changed and frankly acknowledges the array of challenges facing our schools. This book also calls for a resurgence of support for Catholic schools and conveys a sense of hope in the future of this ministry. *Weathering the Storm* advocates for thoughtful and prayerful strategic planning on the part of diocesan and school leaders, and for a coordinated effort to build a culture of advocacy around our schools.

The Practicum Experience

In addition to the provided resources, seminary students in *Principles of Religious Education* are provided with a lengthy practicum experience. Each seminarian is placed in a separate RCIA program in a nearby parish. The seminarians are paired with a catechetical leader who, along with a designated field supervisor provided by the Athenaeum, mentors and guides the seminarian through their practicum experience.

In many ways, the practicum experience mirrors a student teaching program for a teaching intern. However, seminarians are not fully immersed in their practicum; they still participate in a full load of courses, as well as the communal life of the seminary. The seminarian participates in their practicum for only a few hours per week. Over the course of two terms (approximately 20 weeks), the seminarian gradually takes on a strong instructional role in the catechetical program. They are assessed by their catechetical leader and field supervisor on their ability to construct and execute effective lessons and their capacity to gauge the growth of the participants in the course. In the end, the seminarian becomes an integral part of the formation program for the candidates and catechumens in the program.

Course Expectations and Grading

The expectations of the *Principles of Religious Education* course are not unlike other classes; students must

actively participate in the class and demonstrate knowledge on papers and the final exam. The seminarian's performance in the practicum also features heavily in course grading. The student's final grade is determined according to the following criteria:

- RCIA Practicum: 25%
- Class Discussion: 15%
- Papers: 35% (17.5% per paper)
- Final Exam: 25%

Both papers reflect the three objectives of the course. The first paper asks the seminarian to reflect upon a contemporary catechetical issue (such as the New Evangelization or teaching to diverse populations). The second paper asks the seminarian to reflect upon a specific catechetical initiative of the church (such as Catholic schools or RCIA programs) and asks how, through strong knowledge and effective pedagogy, catechists can achieve superior teaching and learning.

Sequence

As previously indicated, *Principles of Religious Education* spans a period of one term (or 10 weeks). The three course objectives of the class are entwined throughout the sequence. The list below offers a rough outline of how course themes, or "units," are presented in the course. This list does not offer a breakdown of lesson topics for specific days, as these details are constantly being modified for the course. Nevertheless, this list should offer a sense of the sequence of *Principles of Religious Education*:

1. **Evangelization and Basic Catechetical Principles:** This unit explores the fundamentals of catechesis, the role of evangelization and the various documents of the Church that relate to catechesis. These concepts are paired with an exploration of effective communication techniques, and such techniques are presented as a form of evangelization.
2. **The Building Blocks of Effective Catechesis:** The objectives of this unit are twofold. First, students explore how catechesis emerges from Sacred Scripture, the teachings of Christ, the magisterium and a deep understanding of a Triune God. This is paired with an awareness of how to prepare effective lessons through defining objectives, drawing upon instructional standards and lesson-plan design.
3. **Those Whom We Catechize:** This robust unit embraces a discussion of the various popula-

tions served by catechesis. Particular attention is given to teaching diverse groups of students, and learners with special needs. The various types of catechesis are presented, such as Catholic schools, parish religious education programs, RCIA and so forth. Likewise, the topic explores effective lesson execution. High-quality teaching emerges from a strong understanding of the target audience, as well as an ability to keep a group of learners focused and on task. Thus, the research of such educators as Howard Gardner and Harry Wong are integrated into this unit.

4. **The Priest as Catechist:** This topic area steps away from the classroom and instead examines how the priest (and particularly the pastor) participates in, and helps support, quality catechesis. Through engaging in effective teaching, hiring and supporting strong catechetical leaders, and championing catechesis, the priest has a dramatic impact upon the success of catechesis in a parish community. The Catholic school is particularly emphasized in this unit. Parish and diocesan governance structures are also depicted, as the priest must understand how catechetical programs interface with appropriate parish and diocesan personnel.

As the central resource for this class, the *National Directory for Catechesis* is drawn upon with great frequency. Similarly, students are asked to continually share personal experiences, successes and challenges from their practicum so that the learned pedagogy from this class is practiced in the practicum setting.

Lessons Learned

A seminary course cannot accomplish everything; so too for *Principles of Religious Education*. In an ideal world, adequate time would be made available to immerse seminarians in a rigorous student teaching program that would build strong pedagogical and communication skills. However, given the busy schedule of the seminarian and the need to expose seminarians to other subject areas, such an intense program is not possible. Nevertheless, *Principles of Religious Education* ideally provides the seminarian with a strong grounding in both catechetical concepts and practical, real-world teaching methods. The course is meant to provide a balance between these two objectives without becoming unmanageable in the full schedule of the seminarian.

Seminarians must realize that the way in which they teach, and how they support quality educational programs, is vital for the future of our church.

This balance can be difficult to achieve, and our course is continually examined and evaluated for this reason.

Likewise, the inclusion of the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools provides a unique opportunity to bridge the seminary experience with a central diocesan official. Once the seminarian emerges as an ordained priest, he will have an existing relationship with the director and hopefully will possess a common understanding of catechetical principles, programs and priorities. However, the presence of the director depends upon his or her willingness to lead this course and make it a scheduling priority in spite of numerous other demands. The permission of the local Ordinary should also be obtained in retaining the director to lead this course.

Finally, this course depends upon the ability to indoctrinate seminarians with the belief that catechesis, both knowledge and pedagogy, is a vital part of the works of the church. Seminarians must realize that the way in which they teach, and how they support quality educational programs, is vital for the future of our church. Some seminarians may blanch at the emphasis on fostering teaching methods in this course. Nevertheless, the instructor must build a consensus of support and understanding for all three objectives of this course.

A Final Appeal

As indicated in the *National Directory for Catechesis*, “The Church is faithful to her deepest identity when she brings all her considerable resources to bear on proclaiming the Christian message completely and authentically to all nations.”³⁰ This article has attempted to demonstrate that seminary programs must equip future priests with both the knowledge and pedagogy needed to be effective catechists and catechetical administrators. While many seminary programs devote instruction time to the foundational principles of catechesis, building good pedagogy is oftentimes neglected. Seminarians

must be provided with training on how to teach effectively.

By outlining the purpose, objectives and structure of the *Principles of Religious Education* course at the Athenaeum of Ohio, it is hoped that seminary administrators and instructors will realize the importance of emphasizing pedagogy in the formation of priests. We have been called to embrace a “new evangelization” in our faith. Such evangelization must be built upon strong instruction. As the ultimate teacher, Christ not only possessed the divine wisdom of God, but was also able to effectively convey his message of salvation through relevant and engaging teaching. We are called to follow in his example; to carry on Christ’s teaching ministry and ensure that the next generation understands and lives out the faith.



Jim Rigg, Ph.D., is the Director of Educational Services and Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. A veteran Catholic school teacher, administrator, and parish catechist, Dr. Rigg also teaches the Principles of Religious Education course at the Athenaeum of Ohio.

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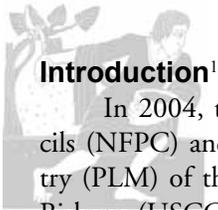
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International Priests in the United States: An Update

Rev. Aniedi Okure, O.P.



Introduction¹

In 2004, the National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC) and the Office for Priestly Life and Ministry (PLM) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned a study to examine the increasing number of priests born abroad and now ministering in the United States and the implication for the church in the United States. The study, published in 2006,² addressed a number of questions: What ministry are international priests engaged in? Are they here solely to serve immigrant communities? Are they here as a pastoral response to the decreasing number of American-born priests? What is the effectiveness of this response? How are international priests received by the presbyterate and the laity? What are the pastoral implications of this new presence? What current practices need improvement?

Participants in the Study

The study included a broad range of people across dioceses, both lay and ordained, including clergy born in the United States and clergy from other countries currently working in the United States. Specifically, the study included U.S.-born bishops, vicars for clergy, pastors, diocesan officials, lay pastoral workers and a stratified random sample of more than one thousand international priests from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America – including Brazil and the Caribbean.

The study also gathered information from three focus groups of international priests. The first focus group was drawn from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area – namely, the Archdioceses of Washington, Baltimore and the Diocese of Arlington. The second focus group included priests from several dioceses in Texas gathered in San Antonio at the Oblate School of Theology for a cultural orientation program. The third focus group was comprised of priests serving in the San Diego metro-

The new wave of international priests in the United States beginning in the mid-1980s has not reversed the overall downward trend in the number of priests.

politan area. The study limited its input from international priests to those who arrived in the United States in 1985 or thereafter.

The United States in Historical and Global Context

To provide a context for understanding the present situation, the study examined the history of priests in the United States from the 1800s to 2004, the ratio of priests per laity from 1900 to 2004 and the origins of international priests from 1985 and thereafter. It also examined the worldwide ratio of laity to priests and the increase or decrease of seminarians worldwide. The study found that earlier international priests came from Europe. Initially, Spanish priests came with Columbus. Before 1830, most priests were French. From 1830 to 1985, arriving priests were mainly Irish. From 1985 onward, international priests came predominately from Africa, Asia and Latin America, reflecting also the demographic composition of the new arrivals in the United States.

The study found that at the turn of the twentieth century there were about 1,000 laypeople per priest in the United States. The church experienced a boom of

priests in the 1940s and 1950s such that there were 614 laypeople for every priest; these two decades enjoyed the lowest number of laypeople per priest. After these boom decades, the number of laypeople per priest began to rise, beginning in the 1960s. By the year 2000, there were 1,313 laypeople for every priest, double the ratio of the 1940s (see Table 1 in the Appendices). The presbyterate experienced a more than 50% drop in the numbers of priests between the highpoint in 1980 (58,398) and 2012 (27,594).

The new wave of international priests in the United States beginning in the mid-1980s has not reversed the overall downward trend in the number of priests. In 1980, although the number of priests was 58,398 – much higher than the 1940s and 1950s – the number of laypeople per priest continued to rise to 856 laypeople per priest. By 2004, there were 1,478 laypeople for every priest. This shows an increase of 2.4 times the number of laypeople per priest over the boom decades, that is, a 71% increase of laypeople per priest compared to the 1940s.

The number of laypeople per priest doubled between 1980 and 2009, rising from 856 to 1,680, and more than tripled since the boom decades. While the laypeople per priest ratio in the United States is relatively low compared to most countries, the reality of ecclesial arrangements and neighborhood parishes in the United States, especially in metropolitan areas, makes this change an acute one, and the “priest shortage” from that standpoint is a harsh reality. Despite parish mergers, closings and clustering, American Catholics who were accustomed to priests’ availability in the 1980s have experienced a sharp decrease in the number of priests who are available to celebrate the sacraments.

Official ecclesiastical statistics confirm this. Data from the USCCB website and from the *Official Catholic Directory* show 40,788 priests in 2009,³ a decrease of 17,610 from 1980 or a decline of 31%. In the same period, the number of Catholics rose from 48 million to 68 million, an increase of 20 million or 41%. The dual trend of increasing numbers of Catholics and decreasing numbers of priests continued in 2011.⁴ Of the 36,128 priests listed in the 2011 *Official Catholic Directory* (OCD), 7,851 are classified as “retired, sick or absent,” leaving 28,277 in active duty. The downward trend continues. Data from the 2012 OCD show a total of 35,460 priests of which 7,868 are classified as retired, sick or absent, leaving 27,594 in active service or one priest for 2,815 Catholics. Projections that take into account the age of American priests and the enrollment of

In 2010, most international priests came from Africa, Asia and Latin America. European priests came mostly from Poland.

seminarians indicate that the trend will definitely continue into the near future.

The figures for 2009-2012 from which calculations are generally based include significant numbers of priests who are retired and who are classified as “sick or absent” by their dioceses. The latter (“sick or absent”) are therefore excluded from pastoral ministry, making the overall figure of active priests even lower. The percentage of diocesan priests in this category varies from 8% to as much as 38% of the total priests in the diocese. Collectively, of the total number of priests in the United States, retired and “sick or absent” priests constitute 25% of the presbyterate in 2009, 21.4% in 2010, 21.7% in 2011 and 22.2% in 2012.

Additionally, some priests in the active workforce have other full time assignments and can only provide part-time pastoral ministry. When all these factors are taken into consideration, the number of laypeople per priest is much higher than normally indicated (see Table 1).

Data on International Priests

Data collected from dioceses indicate that about 25% of priests in active service (8,500) in the United States were born outside of the country. About 300 new international priests are added to the American presbyterate each year, 80% of whom are diocesan. Of these, 30% received part of their seminary training in the United States. They are located mainly in the Pacific states, the Southwest, the South, the New York metropolitan area and dioceses on the Atlantic coast of the United States. They come predominately from India, the Philippines, Vietnam, Nigeria, Mexico, Colombia and Poland.

Origins of International Priests 2010

In 2010, most international priests came from Africa, Asia and Latin America. European priests came mostly from Poland. About 300 continue to arrive every

The number of international priests added to the presbyterate between 1985 and 2010 is less than half the overall decline in the number of priests during that period, so the need for lay leadership has continued to grow.

year. Compared to their American-born counterparts, foreign-born priests are much younger. They are located mostly along the eastern and western coasts of the United States and in dioceses in major metropolitan areas. Thirteen dioceses have more than one hundred priests who were born abroad: New York, Los Angeles, Newark, Galveston-Houston, the Archdiocese for Military Service, San Antonio, San José, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Atlanta, Orlando, Chicago and Rockville Center. New York City and Los Angeles boast the largest numbers of international priests, 319 and 250 respectively. Not all are recent arrivals. Many have been here for some time and have naturalized as United States citizens. A majority of the more recent arrivals, especially those from Africa, Asia and Latin America, feel that they are not fully accepted as equal partners in ministry. Some feel that they are not trusted by their American counterparts.

The average age of international priests in active ministry is 46, comparatively younger than the average age of U.S.-born priests.⁵ Among the international priests are full-time students (11% diocesan, 16% religious) who provide pastoral services on a limited basis. The majority are full-time ministers who expect to be in the United States for a much longer period (73% diocesan and 77% religious). Some have naturalized as U.S. citizens (37% diocesan and 31% religious) and are incardinated into dioceses within the country.

American Catholics' Views of International Priests

A 2009 survey of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University indicates that about 34% of American Catholics have

experienced international priests in their parishes. The responses to their presence vary. Some are wary of the practice of bringing international priests to serve in parishes. Others advocate bringing more international priests to fill the pastoral needs of the church and to make up for the declining number of local vocations to the priesthood. Still there are others who are eager to see the diversity in American society reflected in the Catholic presbyterate. The CARA survey indicates that 53% of American Catholics say they are very satisfied with international priests, and about 34% say they are somewhat satisfied.

Those For More International Priests

American Catholics who favor bringing more international priests into the United States say that we need them to serve the growing immigrant populations in our parishes and to fill the gap opened by our shortage of priests. Many say that international priests help universalize the church and that the presence of international priests is a practical expression of our Catholicity.

In 2011, more voices from the pews echoed these sentiments, especially in culturally diverse communities and communities with recent immigrant populations. Catholics wanted to see the demographic diversity in the broader American society and the increasing diversity of faces in the parishes reflected in the Catholic presbyterate. Some indicated that even if the international priests do not minister directly in their parish communities, seeing these priests as part of the presbyterate in the United States makes them feel at home in the Catholic Church.

Those Against More International Priests

Those who oppose an increased presence of foreign priests in the United States point to language problems, cultural misunderstandings and differences in ecclesiology.⁶ They consider bringing foreign priests into the United States to be an irrational deployment of priests, a postponement of the restructuring of church leadership and a limitation on lay involvement in ecclesiastical leadership. Others think that the presence of international priests hinders efforts to recruit local vocations, implying that augmenting the American presbyterate with international priests makes American-born Catholics lazy in promoting vocations to the priesthood.

While some feel that the presence of international priests delays the ascension of the laity in leadership roles within the church, there is evidence to the contrary. The number of international priests added to the

presbyterate between 1985 and 2010 is less than half the overall decline in the number of priests during that period, so the need for lay leadership has continued to grow. More than ever, a growing number of women religious, deacons and laypersons are in church leadership across dioceses in the United States. They hold such positions as parish administrators, officers of ecclesiastical tribunals and diocesan chancellors. Ruth Wallace has documented the rising trend of the laity who serve as parish administrators.⁷ The number of laity in leadership positions within the church in the United States has risen regardless of the presence of priests from overseas.

According to a 2010 CARA survey, the number of laypeople (catechists, women religious, members of secular institutes and lay missionaries) and deacons providing pastoral care increased from 3.2 million in 1998 to 3.8 million in 2002 to about 4.5 million in 2009. At the same time, the survey indicates that 56% of American Catholics prefer the presence of a priest in their church communities, given the sacramental orientation of the church, to 47% who are comfortable with laypersons leading their church communities.⁸

The role of international priests can be limited by the growth of lay leadership within the dioceses of the United States. With laity running parishes, international priests are often seen merely as dispensers of the sacraments. They serve as parochial vicars and chaplains in hospitals, retirement communities and nursing homes. Few international priests are pastors.

Three main issues affect international priests deeply: (1) loneliness and isolation, (2) lack of acceptance – especially among other priests, and (3) lack of proper orientation.

Experiences of International Priests

International priests are generally appreciative of the opportunity to minister in a different country. Nonetheless, many feel that they are not treated fairly in placements and appointments and that they are not well-appreciated. There is a general feeling that they are

seen as second-class priests and that they are not fully accepted as equals by brother priests born in the United States. Some international priests feel that they are often made into scapegoats for whatever goes wrong in dioceses. Three main issues affect international priests deeply: (1) loneliness and isolation, (2) lack of acceptance – especially among other priests, and (3) lack of proper orientation.

Loneliness and Isolation

In February of 2010, Cardinal Roger Mahony called upon priests to cultivate “affective priestly fraternity.” He emphasized that fraternity does not just happen; fraternity must be cultivated, among other means, through praying together and sharing meals. He noted that cultivating a habit of fraternity leads priests to see themselves as collaborators. The cardinal cautioned that a “creeping isolation” among priests poses a danger not only to the presbyterate, but also to the pastoral life of the church, since “no priest thrives spiritually or pastorally in isolation.”⁹ The “creeping isolation” observed by the cardinal among the general presbyterate, and confirmed by a CARA survey about the lack of genuine closeness among American priests,¹⁰ is exacerbated among international priests.

There is an urgent need to address this issue. Many international priests feel they are alone in their ministry and disconnected to co-workers within the church. They feel that they are seen as religious contractors whose pastoral expertise is needed within the church but who are not welcomed as persons or as leaders. One international priest expressed it thus: “Our pastoral expertise is needed within the church but we are not invited to hang around.”

Acceptance Issues

In addition to the challenges facing the general presbyterate, international priests struggle with issues of acceptance and acculturation in their new cultural and ecclesial environments, along with the trials of being far away from home. International priests feel they are not treated fairly and that they are not accepted as part of the local community or as equals by their U.S.-born brother priests. The issue of acceptance runs deep among many international priests. The issue is captured in some of the quotes that follow. “The attitude is that when they see you they think ‘here comes one of them’ and they ask you ‘When did you come?’ ‘How long are you going to stay?’ ‘Are you going to go back?’” Another puts it this way: “When you come, it is like they are

torn between seeing the necessity of your presence and the needs of the ministry here, and the fact that you are an intruder. They give you the idea that this is just by-

Some laypeople note that international priests trained abroad bring diversity in their preaching style and tend to revive 'lost' devotions in the church.

the-way, and you are not going to be accepted on a permanent basis." One international priest in hospital chaplaincy observed: "The church here does not welcome us fully, yet the most difficult part of ministry is usually pushed to us, like hospital chaplaincy where you have to carry the pager day and night even on holidays. The American-born priests in general do not like this kind of ministry, yet they do not show appreciation for those of us who do it." While these may seem like sweeping generalizations, the feelings run deep, and many international priests express similar sentiments.

Still another priest noted, "Sometimes it feels as if there is a huge difference in the practice of Catholicism. I mean the attitude of the people and how it affects your spirit. We preach one church, one family, yet the way you are treated tells you that the oneness does not include you." One priest expressed sorrow at being seen first and foremost as a foreigner rather than as a priest and member of the church he serves: "Many people see you as foreign no matter what, even if you are naturalized. They see the part of the world you come from rather than the fact that you are a priest of the Catholic Church. They equate the poverty of your country of origin with intellectual poverty and then you have to prove yourself." In the same vein, another priest observed: "The attitude of American superiority and constant questioning to validate your authenticity makes one doubt the universality of the Catholic faith. There is so much of having to prove yourself here and your validity as an ordained priest." Some international priests believe that Americans perceive their training, which took place abroad, as somewhat deficient. This perception might come from the fact that some international priests are technologically less savvy or lack the

mastery of American-style parish administration.

International priests in special ministry, especially hospital chaplaincy, feel that they are made scapegoats by American Catholics for whatever is going wrong in the church and whatever they may consider to be unreasonable rules in parishes. One priest observed that, "the issues they (American Catholics) talk about took place before I came to the United States, not to mention that I was not even born at the time. Yet they blame me for it." One hospital chaplain reflected: "Those of us in hospital ministry attending to the sick and dying seem to bear the brunt of the misdeeds of pastors in their parishes. We seem to do the dirty job which I don't mind but I need to be appreciated." International priests feel strongly that fellow Catholics born in the United States are quick to publicize their shortcomings but slow to show appreciation for their ministry.

Orientation is vital to equip the newly arrived international priest with essential practical skills for living in the United States, including legal and civic requirements, getting a social security number, and cultural "dos" and "don'ts."

Orientation to American Society and the Church

The issue of orientation continues to challenge dioceses that invite the services of international priests. Many international priests indicate that they were not given adequate orientation, not shown how to "work the ropes" and not provided with time to adjust to life in the United States. Many indicate that they could have avoided one or another faux pas, "if someone told me about it." Some dioceses have adopted and used the USCCB's *Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States*.¹¹ But much remains to be done. The need to administer sacraments to the faithful often trumps the need for structured orientation and acculturation of international priests. Furthermore, dioceses incur financial costs for structured orientation. Yet the

great benefit to international priests, their host pastors and parishioners has proven that it is money well-spent.

Orientation is vital to equip the newly arrived international priest with essential practical skills for living in the United States, including legal and civic requirements, getting a social security number, and cultural “dos” and “don’ts.” A structured orientation program prepares the priest for ministry within the church in the United States and facilitates his ability to interact within the structure of the local parish. International priests who attended structured orientation programs in addition to continuous mentoring found it very helpful (99%).

We can borrow a leaf from the medical profession. Every medical personnel employed in a new facility, regardless of qualifications and experience, undergoes a period of structured orientation. In some respects, every local church is different. Sometimes, there are stark differences within the same diocese. Newly arrived international priests should be apprised of these differences and oriented to their new field of ministry.

Both international priests and American-born priests must take the time to work at inclusion. Doing so is mutually beneficial.

Inclusion Efforts on Both Sides

The international priest and his host community need to work at inclusion. Inclusion does not spontaneously happen. Rather, inclusion demands calculated effort on both sides. The “new kid on the block” can be seen as a disruption to the circle of friends formed over many years, beginning in the seminary and enjoying common experiences and cultural understandings. Both international priests and American-born priests must take the time to work at inclusion. Doing so is mutually beneficial.

Views of International Priests from the Pews

Most American Catholics are happy with the presence and ministry of international priests. They note that international priests manifest the universality of the Catholic Church. Their presence marks a difference

between the Catholic Church and the many Christian denominations here. One recent convert observed that he was motivated to become a Catholic because of the demographic diversity within the Church: “In my former church it was just us. But in the Catholic Church, you see priests and people from all over the world. The Catholic Church is truly universal.” The United States is very cosmopolitan, and the fact that the church reflects this ever-growing demographic diversity is a wonderful testimony to her universality. The faces of American Catholics continue to change. In addition to a growing number of Catholics from recent immigrant populations, the 2010 U.S. census showed that 3.2% of Americans identified themselves as multiethnic. Interracial marriages grew by 28% between 2000 and 2010 and account for 10% of all marriages in the US.¹² Some laypeople note that international priests trained abroad bring diversity in their preaching style and tend to revive “lost” devotions in the church. One parishioner commented regarding the international priest in her parish: “He is a good storyteller and uses symbols in his homily that make us remember the homily long after.”

Perceptions by American-born Priests

American-born priests are aware of the challenges within the presbyterate in regard to international priests and of the call for open dialogue about the presence of international priests and multicultural issues within the Church. Some native priests, however, perceive that some international priests are more concerned with the pecuniary rewards of the ministry, are reluctant to adapt to their new cultural and ecclesial environment, see themselves as “nobility,” and put on an air of superiority – especially if they have to “take orders” from the laity. These perceptions, while generalizations, are not entirely unfounded. Individual idiosyncrasies are brought to bear in the process. Some of these perceptions, however, result from cultural misunderstandings. Overall, the negative perceptions among some American-born priests of their international brothers highlight the need for open dialogue and for structured and continuous orientation so that the church can fully benefit from the presence and invaluable services provided by international priests. In the 2009 CARA survey, 69% of American priests indicate that it is important to engage in open discussion about collaborating with international priests working in the United States.¹³ Some individuals have even taken the initiative to create a forum for addressing this issue.¹⁴

Conclusion

The need for orientation cannot be overemphasized. International priests feel they could have avoided some mistakes if they had been given proper orientation. Some allegations of sexual misconduct against international priests are cases of the invasion of “boundaries,” which could have been avoided with proper orientation to American culture. Nonetheless, not all international priests welcome the idea of orientation with enthusiasm. They are uncomfortable with structured orientation and consider it an attempt at “re-education.” With a proper and culturally sensitive approach, however, these fears are laid to rest. The directors and staff of orientation programs are developing such approaches.

The American-born presbyterate must work consciously at including international priests. Although this task is not simple, where it is achieved, the benefits

include mutually enriching trust and friendship. The “creeping isolation” indicated by Cardinal Mahony can generate a feeling that affects the self-esteem of international priests. Many American priests have made great efforts to reach out to international priests. Sometimes, they are at a loss at what to do, being cautious not to offend the international priests. Structured orientation is necessary not only for international priests, but also for the local pastors who will host them.



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APPENDICES

Table 1
Ratio of Priests to Laypeople 1900 - 2012

Year	Number of Priests	Millions of Catholics	Ratio of Priests to Laypeople
1900	11,987	12	1:1,001
1910	16,550	16	1:967
1920	21,019	20	1:951
1930	27,864	20	1:718
1940	35,839	22	1:614*Lowest
1950	43,889	29	1:661
1960	54,682	42	1:768
1970	58,161	48	1:825
1980	58,398	50	1:856
1990	53,088	59	1:1,111
2000	45,699	60	1:1,313
2004	43,304	64	1:1,478
2009	40,788 (ALL)	68	1:1,680
2009	32,223 (ACTIVE)	68	1:2,110 (ACTUAL) ¹⁵
2010	28,653 (ACTIVE)	68.3	1:2,383 (ACTUAL)
2011	28,277 (ACTIVE)	68.5	1:2,422 (ACTUAL)
2012	27,594 (ACTIVE)	77.7	1:2,815 (ACTIVE) ¹⁶

Sources: Hoge & Okure (2006) *International Priests in America*; Collegeville, Liturgical Press and USCCB Statistics for 2010 – 2012 from <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/2010-International-Priests.pdf> Accessed May 13, 2011

Table shows a steady decline in the number of priests beginning in 1980 when the number peaked at 58,398. Between 1980 and 2009 the number had dropped by 17,610 or a loss of 30%, despite the increasing number of international priests. In the same period, the number of Catholics rose by approximately 18 million from 50 million to 68 million or a gain of 36%.

Table 2
Dioceses with 50 - 99 International Priests (IP) in 2009

Diocese	Total # Priests	# of IP	% of IP
Arlington, VA	222	56	25
Austin, TX	222	53	24
Boston, MA	1,338	76	6
Brooklyn, NY	699	91	13
Brownsville, TX	114	63	55
Corpus Christi, TX	177	91	51
Denver, CO	286	73	26
El Paso, TX	122	50	41
Honolulu, HI	128	51	40
Metuchen, NJ	233	82	35
Miami, FL	236	94	40
Oakland, CA	385	70	18
Palm Beach, FL	142	75	53
Patterson, NJ	384	70	13
Phoenix, AZ	238	90	38
Portland, OR	316	51	16
San Diego, CA	264	81	31
San Francisco, CA	386	69	18
Seattle, WA	253	70	28
St. Petersburg, FL	252	79	31
Stockton, CA	77	64	83
Tucson, AZ	180	83	46
Tyler, TX	81	57	70
Venice, FL	196	85	43
TOTAL	6,931	1724	25%

Source: Percentage calculated from the total number of priests in *The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 2009*, P. J. Kenedy & Sons (Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 2009) and a report on international priests (USCCB – 2009).

Table 3
Dioceses with More Than 100 International Priests (IP) in 2009

Diocese	Total # of Priests	# of IP	% of IP
Atlanta, GA	251	113	45
Chicago, IL	1,600	103	6
Galveston-Houston, TX	408	187	46
Los Angeles, CA	1,092	250	23
Military Service, DC	--*17	147	--
New York, NY	1,489	319	22
Newark, NJ	911	187	21
Orlando, FL	185	105	57
Rockville Center, NY	413w	101	24
Sacramento, CA	270	132	49
San Antonio, TX	344	144	42
San Bernardino, CA	245	120	49
San José, CA	340	134	40
Total	7,548	2042	27%

Source: Collated from *The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 2009*, P. J. Kenedy & Sons (Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 2009) and USCCB statistics on international priests.

Table 4
Dioceses with 30 -49 International Priests

Diocese	Total #Priests	# of IP	% of IP
Alexandria, LA	75	34	45
Biloxi, MS	73	40	55
Bridgeport, CT	296	44	15
Charleston, SC	118	33	28
Dallas, TX	171	48	28
Detroit, MI	618	41	7
Fort Worth, TX	115	43	37
Hartford, CT	426	39	9
Joliet, IL	287	41	14
La Crosse, WI	183	34	19
Lafayette, LA	202	37	18
Laredo, TX	52	35	67
Las Cruces, NM	70	32	46
Monterey, CA	127	41	32
New Orleans, LA	360	32	9
Pensacola/Tallahassee, FL	86	33	38
Philadelphia, PA	977	43	4
Richmond, VA	178	48	27
Santa Fe, NM	221	30	14
Santa Rosa, CA	86	34	40
Savannah, GA	100	34	34
St. Augustine, FL	121	41	34
St. Louis-Our Lady of Lebanon	50	40	80
Stamford Ukrainians, CT	48	36	75

Table 5
Profile of International Priests¹⁸

	Diocesan	Religious
Average age	47	45
Full time student	11%	16%
Attended orientation after arrival	33%	35%
Expect to be in the US 5 plus years	73%	77%
Program less than two weeks	49%	33%
Found program useful	96%	100%
Naturalized US Citizens	37%	31%
Issues Facing International Priests		
Loneliness	18%	29% ¹⁹
Too much work	12%	17% ²⁰
Not accepted as equals	64%	43%
The way authority is exercised	8%	17%

Endnotes

1. This study was presented as a report to a combined meeting of the United States bishops' committees for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations; Cultural Diversity in the Church, and Child and Youth Protection during the June 2011 meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Seattle. It has been updated for inclusion into the present volume.
2. Dean R. Hoge and Aniedi Okure, *International Priests in America: Challenges and Opportunities* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006).
3. From *The Official Catholic Directory, Anno Domini 2009*, P. J. Kennedy & Sons (Berkeley Heights New Jersey 2009)
4. *The Official Catholic Directory, Anno Domini 2011*, P. J. Kennedy & Sons (Berkeley Heights New Jersey).
5. According to a 2009 CARA survey, one-third of American priests in active ministry are sixty-five years of age or older. One-third of the presently active priests will be retired or on limited service in ten years. The results of this survey are presented in Mary Gautier, Paul Perl, and Stephen Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012).
6. These first three issues (language, culture and ecclesiology) were held against European priests 100 years earlier.
7. Ruth Wallace, *They Call Her Pastor: A New Role for Catholic Women* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992); *They Call Him Pastor: Married Men in Charge of Catholic Parishes* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003).
8. Mary Gautier, Paul Perl, and Stephen Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012).
9. Cardinal Roger Mahoney, "Affective Priestly Fraternity," *Origins* 39, no. 37 (25 February 2010).
10. The CARA survey shows that 70% of American priests believe "what is lacking is that closeness among priests," according to Mary L. Gautier, "Emerging Trends in Priestly Life and Ministry: Findings from 40 Years of Research," a talk delivered at the NFPC Annual Priests' Conference (Albuquerque, NM, 2-5 May 2011). See Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*.
11. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003).
12. See US Census 2010 at: http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-68.html, Accessed February 15, 2013
13. Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*.
14. An example of this is the Parresia Project initiated by Msgr. Richard Henning of the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY, and Dr Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., of Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT. See Parresia Project at <http://parresia-project.org>
15. The "actual" priest/lay person ratios for 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 are derived from the total number of priests listed as active in the Official Catholic Directory for those years. Previous years were calculated on the total number of priests, including those listed as "retired, sick or absent."
16. Between 1980 and 2012 the laity per priest ratio more than tripled, from 1:856 to 1:2,815.
17. Priests in the Archdiocese for the Military Services are listed in their original dioceses of incardination and are therefore not listed here.
18. The Profile of International Priests is limited to those who arrived the United States in or after 1985.
19. In the 2009 CARA survey, 70% of American priests indicated that genuine closeness is lacking among priests. See Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men* (Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2012).
20. Coincidentally, 17% of American priests in the 2009 CARA survey considered "too much work" to be a great problem for them personally. See Gautier, Perl, and Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men*.



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Emphasizing Relationality in Distance Learning: Looking toward Human and Spiritual Formation Online

Sebastian Mahfood, OP, PhD, and Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau, OSB, PhD



Every teaching and learning environment (an educational setting that cultivates an openness to a new idea or disposition) is necessarily a formative setting, and the participants within it have to recognize it as such. This recognition involves a real understanding of the relationship between the teacher, the students and the course materials as being grounded simultaneously in the realm of ideas and in the realm of dispositions.

In every teaching and learning environment an intellectual formation process is cultivated. In theological educational settings, furthermore, a human and spiritual formation process is cultivated. Such is the formative power of the teaching and learning environment that it also prepares students to apply their learning in their vocational contexts, which may be an unintentional (if it is not what is directly pursued) kind of pastoral formation. Online teaching and learning environments are like face-to-face teaching and learning environments in this way; although the mode of delivery is different, the understanding and acceptance of a formative setting is the same. The cultivation of formative processes is, in fact, the primary work of the teacher (a person engaged in forming some quality in the student), during the act of parsing and packaging his or her course materials for student engagement.

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within the so-called teaching and learning environment. The teaching and learning environment derives its authority, in fact, from the intentionality of the communicants. On the one hand, the teacher makes an intentional effort to form an idea or a disposition in the mind and heart of the student. On the other hand, the student attends to the teacher with an intentional goal of having an idea or a disposition formed in his mind. We might even call this the nuptial meaning of the aca-

demic body, which is nothing else than one's seeking a formative relationship within an academic discipline and participating in that relationship.

Intellectual Formation in Distance Theology Courses

To understand how ideas shape attitudes within formative environments, where communicative intent is cultivated to a particular end, it is helpful to think of intellectual formation in two ways: 1) that it has priority over human and spiritual formation in the way that knowledge precedes love, and 2) that it is tied to prudence, the intellectual virtue that, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (1806). In this way, the intellectual virtue is the guiding principle of the moral virtues. Of course, a reciprocal relationship also exists between these virtues, for it is the moral virtues that rescue us from becoming, in the words of Dr. Randall Colton, professor of philosophy at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, MO, “evil geniuses.”

Human Formation in Online Theology Courses

According to the *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th Edition, “human formation is linked to intellectual formation by the cultivation of the human functions of perception, analysis and judgment. It also contributes to intellectual formation by enabling seminarians to pursue theology as a response to the questions of the human condition.”¹ Msgr. Michael Hull has written that “because the end of a seminary is to prepare men to serve as priests, a seminary education is ordered to more than the attainment of an academic degree; it is ordered to the formation of a whole person, a priest, who has a very specified vocation in the church.”² The emphasis that Catholic seminaries place on human formation brought Dr. Dan Aleshire, executive director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), to recognize in an address to the 2010 ATS biennial meeting of presidents and rectors that Catholics have contributed a great deal to theological education in the work done in defining and shaping human formation.

What does it mean, though, to form someone “humanly”? According to *Pastores dabo vobis* and the fifth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*, human formation endeavors to ensure that “the human personality of the priest...be a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the human race.”³ Human, or personal, for-

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mation is therefore about forming the personality to be other-oriented in a way that aids seminarians in helping others move toward Christ, and that prepares “them to be apt instruments of Christ’s grace from wherever they are.”⁴ The Very Rev. John Canary emphasizes this point when he writes, “if a person wants to grow in holiness, he/she must engage in the challenging task of growing humanly.”⁵ The *PPF* specifically describes the outcomes that we are looking for when we intentionally set out to foster the growth of a seminarian. A seminarian, according to the *PPF*, who has been properly formed can be described as follows:

- *A free person*: a person who is free to be who he is in God’s design, someone who does not—in contrast to the popular culture—conceive or pursue freedom as the expansion of options or as individual autonomy detached from others.
- *A person of solid moral character with a finely developed moral conscience, a man open to and capable of conversion*: a man who demonstrates the human virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, humility, constancy, sincerity, patience, good manners, truthfulness, and keeping his word, and who also manifests growth in the practice of these virtues.
- *A prudent and discerning man*: someone who demonstrates a “capacity for critical observation so that [he] can discern true and false values, since this is an essential requirement for establishing a constructive dialogue with the world of today.”
- *A man of communion*: a person who has real

and deep relational capacities, someone who can enter into genuine dialogue and friendship, a person of true empathy who can understand and know other persons, and a person open to others and available to them with a generosity of spirit. The man of communion is capable of making a gift of himself and of receiving the gift of others. This, in fact, requires the full possession of oneself. This life of communion should be one of inner joy and inner peace—signs of self-possession and generosity.

- *A good communicator*: someone who listens well, is articulate, and has the skills of effective communication. Someone capable of public speaking.
- *A person of affective maturity*: someone whose life of feelings is in balance and integrated into thought and values; in other words, a man of feelings who is not driven by them but freely lives his life enriched by them. This might be especially evidenced in his ability to live well with authority, to take direction from another, to exercise authority well among his peers, as well as an ability to deal productively with conflict and stress.
- *A man who respects, cares for, and has vigilance over his body*: a person who pays appropriate attention to his physical well-being, so that he has the energy and strength to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him and the self-knowledge to face temptation and resist it effectively.
- *A man who relates well with others, free of overt prejudice, and willing to work with people of diverse cultural backgrounds*: a man capable of wholesome relations with women and men as relatives, friends, colleagues, staff members and teachers, all encountered in areas of apostolic work.
- *A good steward of material possessions*: someone who is able to live a simple style of life and “avoid whatever has a semblance of vanity;” someone who has the right attitude toward the goods of this world, since his “portion and inheritance” is the Lord; someone who is generous in making charitable contributions and sustaining the poor.
- *A man who can take on the role of a public person*: someone both secure in himself and convinced of his responsibility, who is able to live not just as a private citizen but also as a public

The species and number of the communicative media they use, then, are not important; it is the relationality these media enable, and the relationality inherent within any given learning community, that is the key to that community’s success.

person in service of the Gospel and representing the church.⁶

Because we consider this list of qualities as outcomes for the purposes of our assessment teams, we have already developed instruments by which to measure them in face-to-face formational environments. It is harder to envision assessing them through communicative media, however, because faculty assist students in cultivating these gifts in all kinds of tacit ways during classroom discussions, in hallway and lunchroom conversations and in the modeling of their lives in ways that are seen and heard by the students. In what ways can this sort of tacit assessment be applied in an environment where the primary contact a professor has with a student is task-oriented, where presence is measured in terms of postings? When we are able to be present to others only through communicative media, we have to be more creative in how we measure the quality of the relationships that form and the human development of each of the individuals who form them.

For those who think that communicative media impinges upon authentic community, what is deemed as problematic is this idea of relationality, on the ability of persons within communities brought together exclusively by communicative media to demonstrate empathy toward one another. Geographically-based learning communities (the traditional seminary setting) are indeed able to be present in real and meaningful ways to their members; however, this reality does not exclude the ability of communicative media to enable us to be really and meaningfully present to others as well. The September 11 bombings caused us to see, for instance, not only

faculty and students within every seminary community coming together in prayer and mutual support, but also faculty and students turning to their families through phones and various other forms of communicative media. Almost a dozen years after that tragedy, we have additional methods (Skype, Facebook and Twitter, for instance) that connect us via iPhones, iPads, and other video conferencing hardware. People turn to those they know for support, and the way they provide support to others is a measure of their level of intimacy with them. The species and number of the communicative media they use, then, are not important; it is the relationality these media enable, and the relationality inherent within any given learning community, that is the key to that community's success.

The question of relationality is what makes it permissible to argue that people who engage others solely through online learning communities have fewer opportunities to express empathy because they are not positioned to stumble upon even the most rudimentary of social cues (for instance, someone sitting on a chair crying, or the spontaneous celebration of a joy or success that has just happened to someone). Because many virtual communities are task-driven, bringing a group together for specific work on a given project, some relationships may not endure beyond the task at hand, and empathy may be subsumed by an overemphasis on efficiency. It is perhaps for reasons such as these that Paul House, Associate Dean and Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, has argued that online education “depersonalizes mentor-student relationships, de-emphasizes collegial student life, marginalizes community worship, isolates faculty, and undercuts collegiality between institutions.”⁷ Concerning the first point, House laments that

[t]he teacher becomes a reference point and a grader. Students do not see teachers respond to other students, deal with colleagues, worship the living God, minister to family, or fail to do these. Students are not accountable to the teacher in these areas either. The course becomes a transfer of information, and the teacher a conduit of credit, not of grace and wisdom.

Concerning the second point he writes, “Friendships formed in seminary often endure, sustaining us in terrible trials. To argue that online forms of communication are equal to face-to-face contact and friendships

is to misunderstand the soul.” Concerning the third point he points out, “Chapel services offer models for ministry. More importantly, they offer opportunities to pray for others, receive the sacraments, and practice the means of grace. They give communities a chance to glorify God together as one and offer times to bring others into the community.” Concerning the fourth point he writes, “Online education works faculty long hours. Indeed in many places it treats them as commodities. How can any of us recruit online faculty members by email, hire them for low pay, have them teach multiple sections, offer them few or no benefits, and claim to be a Christian institution?” Concerning the fifth point, he writes

We recruit students as consumers, and we treat sister seminaries as competing stores. We often do it for the money. Sadly, there is insufficient evidence that online courses pay for themselves if the budgetary aid of regular programs is subtracted. Ironically, we may undercut our best programs and friends and not make money.⁸

In establishing these points, House has a particular kind of distance learning program in mind, specifically what he calls the prevalent kind. The solution to the problems that House enumerates—from what he understands as the prevalent model and the knowledge of the structure that he assumes of his reader—is found, meaningfully, by simply pursuing the outcomes that the *PPF* has identified as evidence of a seminarian's growth. A program that authentically pursues the human formation outcomes mentioned above is a program that would find ways not only to bring them about, but would also measure the degree to which they are brought about within each of the persons of whom the learning community is composed. It is the kind of program that would also value its stakeholders as persons instead of treating them as objects. We might use the rubric provided in *Pastores dabo vobis* as the basis of that measurement:

A simple and demanding program for this human formation can be found in the words of the apostle Paul to the Philippians: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8).⁹

In an online course, we find these things in the artifacts the students provide. Starting with the most prevalent way in which communities of learners interact with one another, namely, asynchronous discussion boards, we might posit for our students the following:

- That posting on discussion boards may foster the human qualities of truthfulness, respect for others, justice, integrity, affability, generosity, kindness, courtesy, and prudence; the capacity to relate to others in a positive manner and the ability to get along with others and work with them in the community;
- That responding to other students' posts may foster good self-knowledge, self-discipline and self-mastery, including emotional self-control; making good judgments; affective maturity;
- That entering into continuing dialogue in the postings may additionally foster the capacity to receive and integrate constructive criticism;
- That interacting in a non task-oriented forum (for example, at a water cooler) may foster an ability to establish and maintain wholesome friendships;
- That the judicious choice of venue (academic discussion board versus social board), as well as posting appropriate content within each board, may foster the capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships;
- That the example set by the course professor who is also interacting on the discussion boards is essential in helping the students mature as human persons;
- That the individual feedback by the professor on the postings or other assignments (via email) to the student enable areas for human growth to be highlighted or reinforced;
- That collaboration on group projects foster leadership as well as organizational skills.

While this is certainly not an exhaustive list, it does affirm that the current practice of human formation in face-to-face communities, namely, the active involvement of a formator within the community of learners as a witness to all these interactions, is an essential part of the formation process. As formators, we have to be intentional about the type of interaction we need to pursue in order to create the kind of online teaching and learning environment that enables us to adequately measure student growth. If, as *Pastores dabo vobis* explains, "it is important that the priest should mold his

human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man,"¹⁰ then we, as formators, should also ensure that we develop adequate instruments to assess student growth in the courses we offer them online.

Spiritual Formation in Online Theology Courses

The PPF points out that a bridge exists between human and spiritual formation, as the two are linked "by the Incarnate Word and by the fact that grace builds on nature and perfects nature."¹¹ The PPF adds, "human formation leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation."¹² If spiritual formation is "the core that unifies the life of a priest, stands at the heart of seminary life and is the center around which all other aspects are integrated,"¹³ then it should be conducted, as *Optatem Totius* explains, "in such a way that the students might learn to live in an intimate and unceasing union with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."¹⁴ Sound spiritual formation, furthermore, assures that "seminarians will suffer the death of their egos while concurrently welcoming communion with the Trinity."¹⁵ As such, spiritual formation necessarily involves the development of a strong prayer life and particularly "the prayerful and meditated reading of the word of God (*lectio divina*), a humble and loving listening of him who speaks."¹⁶

As with human formation, in order for online spiritual formation to work, it has to be targeted intentionally by faculty and seminarians alike. Because it is "formation," the initiative should come from the faculty who ought foremost to encourage their students to engage with the course materials in a prayerful, rather than a purely intellectual, manner. The seminarian should thus be encouraged to meditate on the material and to incorporate it into his prayer life. Seminarians, for their part, should be seeking opportunities to strengthen their prayer lives.

A profound prayer life is an essential element of spiritual formation in that it strengthens the seminarian's relationship with God and bridges the physical and spiritual lives. "Communion with Jesus Christ, as fostered by an intense prayer life," furthermore, "is the essential source from which pastoral charity flows."¹⁷ This is particularly relevant, because priestly ministry is one of total self-giving, and, as such, spiritual formation must include a profound understanding of God's presence and love in our world, and the "link between everyday life

and spirituality.”¹⁸ Without a strong prayer life, a priest is unable to adequately minister to his parishioners; for this reason, faculty who teach online within a theological context ought to develop methods that cultivate and encourage their students to demonstrate prayerful reflection in their interactions with others online.

Through this more intentional melding of study and prayer life, the seminarian will be drawn into greater communion with Jesus Christ via his increased awareness and knowledge of God’s mysteries. Furthermore, the cultivation of a habit of prayerful study, which is measurable in the online postings, can help the seminarian develop the practice of a regular prayer life. Outcomes related to this aspect of spiritual formation could include journaling on a blog (accessible only to a closed cohort) about some of the seminarian’s prayer experiences, as well as the aids and obstacles he has found to regular prayer.

One of the potential benefits of this prayerful study is the discovery and development by the seminarian within himself of God’s own grace.

Failure to develop this skill of discernment within all seminarians is to send them out to the parish ill equipped to assist the laity in naming their experiences of grace and awakening their receptivity to being taken up in the Paschal Mystery—the birthplace, in faith, of all of life’s meaning.¹⁹

Faculty can play a significant role in helping the student in this process by highlighting important self-discoveries that the seminarian may touch upon in discussion board postings or other assignments, by posing questions that can lead the seminarian to further questioning and by encouraging the seminarian in his progress. In these ways, seminarians can be led to a “greater appreciation for [the] link between human growth and holiness of life...and to notice the movements of God in those moments.”²⁰ Intentional discussion board threads meant to stimulate discussion of these links can be monitored and evaluated as outcomes of the seminarian’s progress in deepening his relationship with God.

Part of the spiritual formation related to evangelization is the realization that the knowledge acquired is not only intellectual or spiritual, but also pertinent in a very real way to daily life with others. It is the faculty’s task to direct discussion board conversations in such a way that discussions include this important aspect of connecting to daily life. This is done directly within

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context, and it can also be done indirectly, as with the establishment of peripheral discussion boards where students may engage in non-course-related content or post prayer requests. This develops a spiritual community among the students that fulfills the “human” community. Participatory assessment would be especially relevant to these peripheral discussion boards.

With regards to prayer itself, while the content of prayer is difficult to evaluate—whether one is studying in a physical seminary or through distance education—the method of prayer and the fruit of prayer are fairly easily evaluated. The earnestness of a seminarian’s prayer can be observed by seeing him sitting in the chapel, but it can also be discerned by online formators through reflection papers, journaling, online discussions with others and face-to-face opportunities using technology such as Skype.

One of the key elements of spiritual formation “involves seeking Christ in people.”²¹ In order to see Christ in others, the seminarian must first be able to see Christ in himself.

This very meeting with God and with his fatherly love for everyone brings us face to face with the need to meet our neighbor, to give ourselves to others, to serve in a humble and disinterested fashion, following the example which Jesus has proposed to everyone as a program of life when he washed the feet of the apostles: “I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (Jn. 13:15).²²

In the context of distance education, online discussion forums are an adequate opportunity for seminar-

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ians to realize not only that the knowledge they are acquiring is meant to be shared, but also that the forums themselves provide them with a venue to practice communication skills related to the evangelization of others. These skills, along with the human formation skills also acquired through this type of venue, will be invaluable to seminarians who will use them when reaching out to members of their parish in face-to-face encounters and through the various communicative media their parishioners use.

Another important way faculty may facilitate spiritual formation in online courses is by reminding students that the knowledge they acquire resides within a deposit of faith, within the communion of the church. Again, it is the faculty's task to facilitate the discussions in such a way that seminarians feel free to question and challenge theological knowledge, within the bounds of acceptable doctrine, and to make sure that no untruths or heresies are mistakenly propagated within the course. This requires the active and vigilant presence of the course professor within the discussion board, because unanswered student posts may be rife with misinformation, which, if left unaddressed by the chief formator of the class, may be considered as valid not only by the student who authored the post, but also by his classmates who have read it in light of their own limited but developing understanding of church doctrine.

Spiritual formation is the thread that "unifies and gives life to [every priest] and his acting as a priest."²³ It is rooted in prayer and bears fruit in charity. Priests who are "profoundly rooted in God and stirred in response to a Love beyond all imaging" will be assured a "faithful, zestful service in a diocesan priestly vocation," rather than "sheer survival."²⁴ This spiritual formation, which occurs in traditional seminary settings, may also occur through distance learning. In both cases, the formation must be intentional, and the outcomes must be measur-

able to ensure that the specific formative goals are met.

Spiritual formation outcomes may be assessed partially and subjectively in a traditional setting by observing a seminarian's behavior and demeanor, whereas assessment of outcomes in distance learning is, of necessity, likely to be somewhat different. Assessment techniques would include: looking at an evaluation of the seminarian for changes in affect displayed in online posts and reflection papers, observing the way the seminarian interacts with classmates and noting the topics brought up by the seminarian both in "classroom" discussion boards and peripheral discussion boards. One would then be able to assess whether the online course was designed in a way that brought about the changes noticed within the student. Equally important, a professor could look at the expressed spiritual formation goals on which the course was grounded and determine whether the accountability exercises provided an adequate means by which students could demonstrate meeting those goals.

Conclusion

In June 2012, the presidents and rectors of the member schools of the Association of Theological Schools gathered in Minneapolis to consider whether residency for many programs might be waived provided the school could demonstrate that it is meeting its outcome goals. Consequently, this very issue of human (or personal) and spiritual formation in online teaching and learning environments was among the primary talking points. Methods for assessing the quality of human and spiritual formation within online teaching and learning environments will have to be developed, beginning with course-level planning

If a faculty member teaching within such mediated environments is to intentionally pursue human and spiritual formation, then he or she will need to approach the question on a programmatic level, which will require the support of the program director, the academic dean, the various vice-rectors, provosts, deans of students and human and spiritual formation directors—all essential parts of the conversation. As with traditional courses, not every human and spiritual formation goal will need to be targeted in every online teaching and learning environment. Likewise, much more learning than what is assessed within any teaching and learning environment may be occurring within the students over the course of a given semester.

We suggest that seminary formators identify one or two goals from human formation and from spiritual

formation and create a rubric that makes sense to the particular course being taught, based on the characteristics of someone who has met these goals. For example, if a chosen goal in human formation is to develop a man of communion, or in spiritual formation is to develop a man of prayer, then the rubric should demonstrate how those characteristics would be observable within the particular online teaching and learning environment the professor has created. When the faculty members bring their lists together across disciplines, they will provide their institution with a starting point for this conversation.



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Pastoral Ministry: Receiving Even While Giving

Deacon James Keating, Ph.D.

Man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf. Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf. Jn 19:34).¹



Within this statement by Pope Benedict XVI lies the key to faithfully executing pastoral ministry. If a man desires to minister the Gospel of Christ throughout his life, then this truth taught by Pope Benedict XVI must be interiorized: Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Ministry always takes the form of its evangelical reality. The apostles were sent to serve the poor from within their internalized intimacy with Christ. They did not serve the poor looking to do good or to find meaning in life. First they knew Christ and, in knowing Him, they received the “eyes” of his heart, thus enabling them to “see” the poor and respond to their pain (Acts 3:6).

If a priest or deacon is engaged in pastoral ministry, he is sent by Christ and remains with Christ. All other kinds of acts are simply expressions of virtue or charitable kindness. Ministry flows from deepened intimacy with the heart of Christ within the ambit of obedience (a rapt listening out of love). It is also sustained by this same intimacy and rapt listening to Christ and his chosen apostolic successors. In this way ministry is both ecclesial and personally meaningful. It is a call—a personal call—but one that configures a man to the objective reality of Christ’s own pastoral authority.

On the personal level, to minister is not to become selfless or a “martyr,” in the neurotic sense, seeking nothing in return. Such a vision is the recipe for a man to invite an emotional crisis. It is against God’s will to seek nothing in return because we know through Christ, the Revelation of the Father, that God wants to give and what God gives he desires to be received. If one wishes to use the term to “seek nothing” in a cor-

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rect context, then it can mean only one thing: a cleric is to expect grace to be operable in his ministry. God is true to his nature as love: he will fulfill his promises. God will work within the ministry of clerics and his love will overflow with beauty, goodness and life. This Divine work never ceases. God is always giving, first at the level of our being, our very existence, culminating in a cleric’s sharing in Trinitarian, eternal life through the Sonship of Christ. In this correct sense, then, a cleric is to seek nothing but God.

To see ministry as exclusively “giving,” “sacrifice” and “thankless work” is to have entered a darkened emotional and spiritual world. For the affectively and spiritually mature cleric, ministry is first learned in the suffering known as prayer, where he has been tutored on what true beauty is and what, in contrast, only artificially pleases. Such a man has sought Christ sufficiently, and so in grace he longs to “see” Christ and desires to be with Christ. He has, in other words, attained the pleasure of prayer,² he has learned through affective purification and healing how much Christ desires to never leave him orphaned or desolate (Jn 14:18). Without

such spiritual maturity there is always the danger that clerics will attempt to use ministry to meet their own needs for natural affective consolation, or on the other pole, to salve an unhealed wound through excessive ministerial work.

Do clerics need people to say “thank you” or “you are a blessing to the church?” Of course they do. Even the most mature ministers need to receive encouragement, but this level of receptivity is ultimately hollow and misleading if it is not built upon the most substantive consolation known through intimacy with Christ. What is crucial, then, in ministry, is to remain vulnerable, to receive the living God. In so doing a cleric deepens his capacity to share the Good News. By deepening this capacity, one enters the mystery of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, calling down the grace to pray unceasingly. John Paul II acknowledged that to minister in this vulnerable, receptive way assures a man that he can deepen his communion with the pastoral charity of Christ.

Pastoral study and action direct one to an inner source, which the work of formation will take care to guard and make good use of: This is the ever-deeper communion with the pastoral charity of Jesus, which—just as it was the principle and driving force of his salvific action—likewise, thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of orders, should constitute the principle driving force of priestly ministry. It is a question of a type of formation meant not only to ensure scientific, pastoral competence and practical skill, but also and especially a way of being in communion with the very sentiments and behavior of Christ the good shepherd: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).³

While serving, the minister is invited to be in communion with the very sentiments of Christ. This gift from the Spirit allows the minister to be unencumbered with inordinate thoughts of self or measurements of “success” in ministry. Instead, the cleric rejoices that he brings with him not only the sacraments, but also the graced effects upon his character that flow from his own communion with Christ, a communion that all seek but few can immediately identify as their real need. When the cleric remains with Christ and chooses to stay in Christ’s Presence, his choice brings about beautiful effects within his own character, effects that appear attractive to those whom the cleric serves. This attraction

gives birth to vulnerability within those whom he serves, a vulnerability that leads to questions: “Who is this Christ, and who is this man upon whom Christ has had such an effect?” And so when a believer allows the beauty of a cleric’s ministry to reach his own heart, spiritual affectivity is awakened. She or he says, “I *want* Christ, too.” The evocation of desire for Christ is what faithful ministry aims to facilitate within others. The goal, in other words, is not to leave parishioners with simply a philosophy or a therapeutic “value” system or a service of some kind, but with the person of Christ. “The typical loss of faith today has to do with affectivity not with ideas because what has died is the feeling of a presence of God in our lives.”⁴

Because the cleric’s spiritual character can “become a source from which rivers of living waters flow,” his service can restore, or assist in establishing within others, a “feeling” for the presence of God in their lives. This communication of feelings between a cleric and those to whom he is sent is not incidental to conversion. Conversions are ignited when an encounter happens, and encounters are between persons and thus full of affect, affect that directs one toward the Source of the perceived beauty: prayerful reception of God.

A Cleric’s Formation

Catholics might also be directed away from such a Source due to the aversion that is felt in the presence of a cleric who is not regularly receiving divine love as a gift. In the formation of clerics, the church acknowledges that each man who aspires to be ordained must first become a man of communion.⁵ He is called to place no obstacle between himself and the truth about where he needs to emotionally develop, spiritually convert or morally repent. A fertile field for receiving grace is being readied within such a man. For a man who refuses to see that his humanity and its expressive personality are instrumental in evangelization, the Church can only hope that circumstances within his formation will alter this blindness.

The *Program of Priestly Formation* acknowledges that a man’s capacity to withstand the needed changes to his moral and emotional character contribute to his capacity to make a full gift of himself to the church and receive the gift of love from God and others in return. Men in formation have to be honest with formators about the potential of their colleagues, other seminarians or deacon candidates, to truly become men of communion; men whose character and personality attract others to the divine Mystery, a Mystery that ought to rest at

the heart of a cleric's being.⁶

It is not uncommon to have a man with personal difficulties go through formation with few, if any, real friends. After ordination, this same man suffers loneliness and alienation from other clerics, leaving him isolated and therefore less effective in ministry. If one's peers were not attracted to the personality of a fellow cleric, why would formators think he would make a good spiritual leader, attracting parishioners to the Gospel? The *Program of Priestly Formation* notes, "As the humanity of the Word made flesh was the *instrumentum salutis*, so the humanity of the priest is instrumental in mediating the redemptive gifts of Christ to people today" (§75). Can a man love? Can he love God, himself and others? Does a man possess friends? Can he be loved by others? Or is his personality such that he repels the love of others through no moral fault of those others? An ecclesial leader should have an attractive personality. Receiving love from God and being spiritually vulnerable under the guidance of skilled formators will equip a man to suffer the emotional conversion he may need if he is to be an effective pastor or servant of the Gospel. Prayer and divine love are not clinical therapy, but for the psychologically normal candidate (that is, the only ones who should be in formation) they are powerful conveyances for many layers of spiritual and affective healing.

Allowing God to Love Us

Ultimately, if a man is to excel in pastoral ministry and mediate the saving Word of God to others, he must first and continually withstand the intimate love of God, which he receives in Christ, and as a result, has the fullness of his affectivity brought to life. I say "withstand," because allowing God to love us is not always a welcomed reality in the initial stages of conversion where we are moving from natural, and perhaps disordered, founts of pleasure and meaning, to locating the source of our pleasure within the truth of Christ's own love for us.⁷

In this prayerful intimacy with Christ, affective healing and spiritual insight are given, thus freeing the cleric to be present to both God and parishioners even while in the depths of ministry. To sustain such availability of affect, reason and will to both parishioner and God, the cleric needs to steadily increase his trust in God, surrendering more and more of his authentic self in prayer. Hiding nothing in prayer renders a man less self-conscious, self-centered and defensive in ministry. Not allowing Christ to heal the deepest of our painful

affective movements, or clinging to them out of fear of "being known," only invites a half-hearted or measured presence toward God and those in need.

In this stance, a cleric cannot be refreshed while giving because he is truly not receiving the love he needs to sustain such a generous posture toward life. Instead, the man ends up being guarded, serving his own fears, fatigue and calculations, rather than responding to others' needs empowered by the stream of God's own, poured-out love. "If training for the priesthood is, as it should be, essentially the preparation of future 'shepherds' in the likeness of Jesus Christ...who better than Jesus himself, through the outpouring of his Spirit, can give them and fully develop in them that pastoral charity which he himself lived to the point of total self-giving?"⁸

Behold the Cross

As noted above, the cleric needs to surrender himself to God in prayer more and more each day. This can only occur if the man is in the prayer of Christ. To be in such prayer is to be in communion with the Paschal Mystery through faith, hope and love. This way of praying, of really becoming prayer, opens a man to know deep beauty, a beauty that Christ wants to share as a gift flowing from within Christ's own surrender to love.

The ultimate beauty of Christ's life is, paradoxically, the breathtaking beauty of the crucifixion.⁹ The cross is beautiful because it manifests the essence of Trinitarian love: a vulnerable reciprocity of divine self-donation. As Christ gives to his Bride from the cross he is simultaneously receiving the self-gift of the Father within his own heart. What kept Christ faithful to his mission was this continual communion with the Father. It was this communion that held Christ to the cross, not nails. Christ's reception of the Father's love sustains and empowers him to make his own self-donation the constitutive dimension of his earthly ministry. This donative act of trust in the Father's love will, moreover, be the fountain of Christ's own resurrection. In the Holy Spirit we too can give ourselves to others as Christ did because his grace makes us capable of receiving love from the Father.

Beauty radiates the truth. And the truth is that God is love. Thus, in and through the Spirit, who is the love between the Father and Son, ministry can share in this beauty, moving a cleric to do in this world what Christ did in his ministry right up to and upon the cross: choose the beauty of being faithful to love despite all circumstances. In the Holy Spirit this is what love

can do: it can give of the self even in the face of death. Due to Christ's Spirit in us, we see the beauty in this kind of giving.

As intimated above, prayer and ministry are not always consoling; they often contain the suffering of Christ's own abandonment upon the cross. If received deeply and honestly, there is yet another layer of love to be known from the Father in this pain. He is there with the cleric, sustaining him and communicating grace to him during the difficulties of ministry and the dryness of prayer. The beauty of the cross is paradoxical: upon it we have a share in the love of the Father received by Christ, as well as the sense of abandonment by the Father that Christ knew (Mk 15:34)—an abandonment so deep that Jesus cries out, looking for the Father, while in the same act surrendering to him in love and trust (Lk 23:46). The cleric is called to enter this reality of abandonment, the absence of God, while simultaneously, in dark faith, knowing that God is the only reality to trust.

Entering the Prayer of Christ

Some of our deepest fears revolve around this act of trusting God, acts of giving without thought of self: What will happen to me if I give? Will I be remembered? Will I receive what I need? Even, will I go out of existence if I give? Who or what sustains me while I am thinking of others' needs? Can I trust God's providence enough not to count the cost to myself that giving exacts? Christ has answered all of these questions in his act of love upon the cross: while we are thinking of others, the Father is thinking of us.

In order for ministry formation to be complete, each cleric is invited to learn how to enter the prayer of Christ, which consists of receptivity toward the Father's love even while Christ is loving others, and further, to allow Christ's prayer to enter him. This prayer enters the cleric through faith, hope and love, as lived within the sacramental life and enlightened by the Word of God and the magisterial teachings of the church. It is only when the cleric enters the prayer of Christ and allows his prayer to enter the cleric's self that ministry is accomplished in "power." "Participation in the mind of Jesus, i.e. in his prayer, which is an act of love...is not some kind of pious supplement to the reading of the Gospels...On the contrary, it is the pre-condition if real understanding...is to take place."¹⁰

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Any version of clerical academic formation must be built upon a man's capacity to understand the nature of Trinitarian love and so desire to enter the prayer of Christ.

Christ. What is this prayer? It is the communion between the mind of Christ and the mind of the Father in love; it is the Logos in sustained and continual unity with the Father in love. When the cleric allows his mind, affect and will to be taken up into Christ's prayer, then he receives "real understanding;" without such his ministry is only built upon an academic understanding, which is "important" but not "sufficient."¹¹ Does clerical academic formation lead to a deepening of a man's desire to possess "real understanding," a participation in the prayer of Christ? This is another way of asking if clerical academic formation facilitates pastoral desire.¹²

In the end, clerical formation is to be asked: Does formation assist in a man's desire for real understanding? And does it inculcate pastoral desire? Both of these are ways of asking: How can clerical theological formation assist a man to enter the prayer of Christ and have it enter him? The prayer of Christ is the reciprocal love of the Father for Christ and Christ's love for the Bride. This communion between Christ, his Father, and his Bride becomes the matter for contemplative reflection within the curriculum of clerical formation. Such formation opens a man to desire that this mystery of communion define the way he thinks and feels. Clerical formation ought to be an ecclesial response to Paul's invitation, "have in yourselves the mind of Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5).

Now the natural person does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God, for to him it is foolishness, and he cannot understand it, because it is judged spiritually. The spiritual person, however, can judge everything but is not subject to judgment by anyone. For "who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him?" But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

As the cleric reflects upon the Mystery of Christ's own communion with the Father and his concomitant response to serve his Bride, the church, the cleric desires, in the Spirit, to come to possess the same mind; one that appropriates the truth, a truth that in its beauty moves the cleric to serve.

Prayerful Communion Right Within Ministry

When the process of possessing the mind of Christ is under way through desire and purification, clerics can begin to taste a new intimacy with Christ right within their own ministerial acts.

Not only does prayer lead to action, prayer penetrates across the threshold of the apostolate and permeates the entire action. Not only is there a connection between prayer and action, but a vital union of the two....Action has become a prolongation of prayer, or, to put it in another way, prayer prolongs itself in and through action.¹³

It is possible that prayer prolongs itself in and through action because both the prayer and the ministerial action share in the grace that is Christ's own prayer: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him. Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:27-8). Here we return to the crux of Pope Benedict XVI's meditation upon giving and receiving, "one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God" (cf. *Jn* 19:34). To receive anew from the original source is rest. In this receptivity, a cleric's ministry becomes an expression of his prayer, his participation in the prayer of Christ and the communion Christ has with his Father.¹⁴ From within these interpenetrating communions we find the source of ministry, and it is "rest."

To "rest" is to stand continually at the well in Samaria (*Jn* 4:10) like the woman receiving the living water of Christ. This well is the ordinary post of the cleric; a life of paradoxical simplicity wherein he receives even while giving. The cleric is to "rest" with Christ, letting Christ give him what he needs in order to become an authentic minister of the Word. The rest comes from Christ, it is not carved out from what we call leisure time; it is always flowing from the pierced heart of Christ. It is spiritual re-creation. Does the minister at-

When the process of possessing the mind of Christ is under way through desire and purification, clerics can begin to taste a new intimacy with Christ right within their own ministerial acts.

tend to his post at Christ's pierced side (the authentic well), receiving Christ so that he might simultaneously give Christ? By contemplatively beholding the Source, Christ's own mind and prayer, the cleric then becomes what he has paid attention to, a source of healing and refreshment for his parishioners and others.

"Man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift."¹⁵ In the complex interpenetration of spiritual, human and academic clerical formation, pastoral formation is summoned to teach seminarians and candidates for the diaconate to receive the love of Christ even while giving to others in need. In this way, the minister is spiritually refreshed in the giving, and the recipient of the cleric's service is touched by far more than the effects of a charitable kindness.



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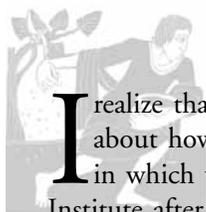
Endnotes

1. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 January 2006), §7.
2. Pleasure, here, is not restricted to simply the experience of pleasing, embodied emotions. Pleasure also includes the experience of an embodied person beholding in the soul the love of Christ. It is a spiritual "seeing" that pleases and satisfies the deepest desire of humanity: to have continual communion with the Divine.
3. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day *Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §57.
4. Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ, *Faith Maps* (NJ: Paulist Press,

- 2010), 124. “At the root of this loss of hope is an attempt to promote a vision of man apart from God and apart from Christ. This sort of thinking has led to man being considered as ‘the absolute centre of reality, a view which makes him occupy—falsely—the place of God and which forgets that it is not man who creates God, but rather God who creates man. Forgetfulness of God led to the abandonment of man.’ It is therefore ‘no wonder that in this context a vast field has opened for the unrestrained development of nihilism in philosophy, of relativism in values and morality, and of pragmatism—and even a cynical hedonism—in daily life.’ European culture gives the impression of ‘silent apostasy’ on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist.” John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Europe Ecclesia in Europa* (28 June 2003), §9.
5. “Of particular importance for deacons, called to be men of communion and service, is the capacity to relate to others. This requires that they be affable, hospitable, sincere in their words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening themselves to clear and brotherly relationships and quick to understand, forgive and console.(79) A candidate who was excessively closed in on himself, cantankerous and incapable of establishing meaningful and serene relationships with others must undergo a profound conversion before setting off with conviction on the path of ministerial service.” Congregation for Catholic Education Congregation for the Clergy, *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* (22 February 1998), §67. See also *Pastores dabo vobis*, §43.
 6. This suggestion about peer evaluations has to be kept within the full context of clerical formation checks and balances. It is clear that human nature does not always welcome a man’s attempt to evaluate a peer “honestly” and “objectively.” Certainly over the history of clerical formation there have been times when peers have been envious of the one being evaluated, or had some unconscious, unhealed emotions that were powerfully projected upon a peer producing uncalled for negative evaluations. Caution is advised; however, peer evaluations remain essential. Even beyond such measurements as pastoral ministry evaluations and academic grades, it remains true that how a seminarian treats the men he lives with is a real test of priestly suitability.
 7. St. Thomas Aquinas noted that beauty is that which when beheld gives pleasure. *The truth of Christ’s own love for us* is the foundation of all beauty and the source of authentic pleasure. One sign of authentic spiritual conversion is the shift in one’s center of gravity from pursuing natural pleasure (unpurified *eros*) to pursuing supernatural pleasure (purified *eros*, or the desire for holiness). To contemplate the truth of Christ’s own love for us is just such a shift where the source of authentic pleasure, true beauty, is relocated in prayer. Christ holds in Himself the integrated perfection of truth and authentic affect. It is up to Him, as well, to lead us to that integration within our own love for truth.
 8. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §65.
 9. “The beautiful is above all a Form, and the light does not fall on this Form from above and from outside, rather it breaks forth from the Form’s interior.” Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone*, trans. and ed. by Alexander Dru (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 157.
 10. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology* (G. Harrison, trans.; San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 26.
 11. Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 26-7.
 12. “Of fundamental importance is awareness that the Church is a ‘mystery,’ that is, a divine work, fruit of the Spirit of Christ, an effective sign of grace, the prescience of the Trinity in the Christian community. This awareness, while never lessening the pastor’s genuine sense of responsibility, will convince him that the Church grows thanks to the gratuitous work of the Spirit and that his service—thanks to the very grace of God that is entrusted to the free responsibility of man—is the Gospel service of the ‘unworthy servant’ (cf. Lk. 17:10).” *Pastores dabo vobis*, §59. We see here that continual openness to the source of pastoral ministry, the Spirit, will assure a deepening of pastoral desire. Such work is not one’s own, but the fascinating unfolding of the desire of God, a desire that He offers to share with and by way of our participative freedom. Who schools clerics to ask for this desire?
 13. Joseph Conwell, SJ, *Walking in the Spirit* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2003), 137.
 14. Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 26.
 15. *Deus Caritas Est*, §7.

On a Dominican Vision of Theological Education

Ann M. Garrido, D.Min.



I realize that each of us has our own story to tell about how we came to the particular institutions in which we serve. I personally arrived at Aquinas Institute after mysteriously receiving a summer session advertisement in the mail. This would not seem to be an unusual path to graduate school, unless you consider that at the time I was living in Guam. How I got to be on the Aquinas mailing list, I will never really know. But my brand new husband at the time said, “I think you should go there and see if you can save your faith.”

I was a young Catholic schoolteacher, and in my first two years of teaching I had seen the school battered by a typhoon, not one time, but five. I was fairly certain that there was inappropriate sexual conduct going on between one of the teachers and a student. The school secretary had been accused of embezzling \$50,000. And the pastor had developed the habit of locking himself in his bedroom for 23½ out of 24 hours each day, coming out only to say Mass, and only if it was not too hot. Saving my faith was probably a very good idea at that point.

I did not know any Dominicans when I came to Aquinas, nor heard of their passion for saving people’s faith. I had a picture of St. Dominic in the saint book I had read as a child. I knew he had a dog and a torch (I was not sure what that was about). So suffice it to say, I arrived at Aquinas as a fairly blank slate with regard to Dominican spirituality. I had not come to Aquinas because of its Dominican identity; I came because it was located near my parents’ home, where I had free housing and, later, a major source of free babysitting.

But if I were as informed then as I am now eighteen years later, and if I had the financial and geographical freedom then that I have now, I would again choose—with much greater intentionality—to study

[T]he disposition the Dominican heritage cultivates in theologians serves the theological task exceedingly well, and furthermore, sustains a life of ministry even in trying times.

theology in a Dominican institution. I say this because I have come to believe so strongly that the disposition the Dominican heritage cultivates in theologians serves the theological task exceedingly well, and furthermore, sustains a life of ministry even in trying times.

In this essay, I will speak to that Dominican heritage as I have come to understand it by highlighting three practices that I believe serve the student of theology and ministry in an extraordinary way. These are practices that I hope my institution, and other Dominican institutions like it, will aspire to model and nurture consistently in fidelity to our founding identity. However, they are also dimensions that share resonance with many other institutions, and I believe they are worth lifting up in wider circles as we look toward the sustaining values in theological education.

I describe these core practices as follows:

- Pursuing truth;
- Speaking truthfully; and,
- Being true to one another.

Pursuing Truth

The Dominican motto—widely known—is “*veritas*” or “truth.” The word seems straightforward enough, until one tries to give a definition of what “truth” is, at which point we find ourselves at a loss for words, not unlike St. Augustine when asked to give a definition of “time.” “When no one is asking me, I know exactly what time is,” he said, “but as soon as someone asks me what time is, I don’t know how to respond.”

The classical definition of truth, as aptly articulated by Thomas Aquinas, and that still finds a home in *Webster’s Dictionary* today, defines truth as “being in accordance with the actual state of affairs; the body of real things, events, and facts.” In Thomas’ words: “*Veritatis est adaequatio rei et intellectus*,” or “Truth is the adequation of things and intellect.”

The Dominican quest for truth is the quest to know what is real at its most essential level. The quest implies engagement of the world; coming to know through one’s senses what actually exists. It implies experiencing life in all of its nooks and crannies. What exists out there to be known? What do I see? What do I hear? What can I learn?

The Dominican mind fears no knowledge, avoids no knowledge, because if it is real, the Dominican mind is interested in it. Dominicans love philosophy because philosophy, in its broadest, original sense, encompasses all human knowledge: mathematics, physics, music, biology and literature. It sees all human study as a “handmaiden” in the continual pursuit of what is real.

But the pursuit of the real is more than just the acquisition of lots of information; it inevitably brings to the surface hard questions such as “*What is really real?*” In essence: What do I do with the bits that I discover that do not fit into what I already know? What do I do about the fact that two of us, who are both studying the same thing, come to different conclusions about reality? Is there more than what I am seeing? If I find out something is *more* true, can I let go of what I *thought* was true...even if I like it a *whole, whole lot*?

The Oxford Dominican, Herbert McCabe, captures this aspect of the quest well when he says, in the end, “you must love the real more than the true.” I do not think he means to pit the two against each other, because eventually they are synonymous. I think he is simply emphasizing: If you really *love* Truth, if you really claim Truth as your motto, you have to always be open to finding out something that would make you let go of what you think now, even though letting go might be very painful indeed.

You have to love what really *is* more than what you would like it to be.

The pursuit of truth, if one is really serious about it, is always a Paschal journey. When it comes right down to it, you are going to find out things you did not actually want to know. And sometimes the pieces are not all going to fit, and sometimes not all make sense, and sometimes seem contradictory. If you really value truth above all else, you will need to learn to live in a place of radical incoherence for periods of time, sometimes long periods of time. And still, you must desire to know what is *really real*.

The Dominican mind fears no knowledge, avoids no knowledge, because if it is real, the Dominican mind is interested in it.

The Dominican intuition holds that, beyond the last digit of *pi*, beyond the farthest star at the edge of the universe, beyond the tiniest atom, beyond the morass and all the pieces of the puzzle that we cannot understand, beyond what the senses are able to grasp, there is something even more: an Ultimate Reality that does not contradict what we have perceived by the senses, but is nevertheless far beyond them. This “something” is not a “thing” at all, but a “Who”—not an object, but a subject.

In the end, this ultimate reality flavors how we talk about “knowledge” in a Dominican context. When we talk about “knowing God,” we are not talking about knowing a chemical formula or all of the countries of Africa. We are not even talking about knowing all of the Vatican II documents or the entirety of the catechism. We are talking about relational knowledge, Biblical knowledge, knowledge such as Mary hints at when she says, “How can this be? I do not *know* man” (Luke 1:34). Intimate knowledge. Heart knowledge. Gut knowledge. The Italian Dominican, Dalmazio Mongillo, who taught at the *Angelicum* in Rome for many years, notes: “Christianity has become very messed up. People think it is about rules and regulations. No, Christianity is about the enjoyment of a Person.” There is a difference between knowing about Jesus Christ and knowing Jesus Christ.

In sum, when a school seeks to embrace a Dominican disposition to learning, it wholeheartedly embraces the pursuit of truth. It does not restrict any direction of inquiry, even though it might seem frivolous or ill-conceived. If the pursuer is genuine in his or her love of truth, and willing to keep pursuing, keep asking questions, keep letting go when discovering something more true, then all roads will eventually lead to the same place. Rather than restricting, a Dominican school instead helps its students and faculty (because we are all learners) in their truth pursuits by asking hard questions and cultivating critical thought. “Have you considered this piece of information?” “What would be the implications of that direction for this issue?”

Yet Dominican schools, while well-known for being intellectually rigorous and for nurturing the life of the mind, cannot stop there. The Dominican heritage reminds us that knowledge of the Ultimate Reality is not solely—or even primarily—a question of a sharp mind; it requires a capacity for relationship. Dominican education engages the head, but if it is genuine about the pursuit of truth, it must be just as attentive to enhancing students’ (and again, I would add faculty’s) capacities for relationship.

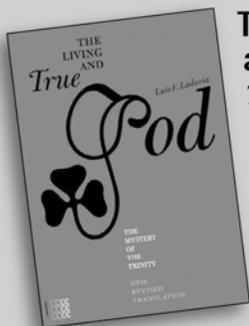
This brings me to the next two points, both of which I believe are very Dominican, but perhaps have evoked less explicit reflection in conversation about Dominican education.

Speaking truthfully

Dominicans are known throughout history for being great pursuers of truth, burning the midnight oil scouring Aristotle like St. Thomas, or conducting fantastical research projects in the countryside like St. Albert. They are known for looking and hearing and touching and “taking it all in.” However, they are also known as preachers “contemplating, and giving the fruits of their contemplation.” In the original Latin, “*Contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere.*”

Dominican experience over the course of the past 800 years has much to teach us about the power of speech; about speech that has served the church well as well as speech that has not. One of the things that I believe is clearer at this moment in history than perhaps it has ever been is that there must be a consonance between the content we wish to communicate and the method we use to communicate it. (For example, there is something not quite right when a teacher instills quiet

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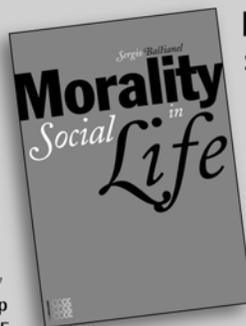
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in a classroom by yelling, “Be quiet!!”) We must always be looking for ways of speaking about truth that are consonant with the Truth we encounter.

As with defining truth, trying to speak truthfully is harder than it first appears. I want to lift up just three clues discovered over time about consonance:

First, as St. John says, God is love, and love, by its very nature, is not coercive. It cannot be forced. It always allows the other to freely respond. No one wants to be “loved” by someone who has been commanded to do so. If God is perfect love, then it means there is no violence in God, no coerciveness in God, and so it must be with our speech. Speaking truthfully implies a simplicity in which persons try to say what they see as accurately as possible, without manipulation, without twisting, without pressure, without obfuscation.

In academia, there can sometimes be a temptation to use one’s language to impress, even to confuse, others. There is no space for that in a Dominican school. Speaking truthfully means being as clear as one can be, and open about one’s intent without guile or duplicity. It implies transparency. It even implies vulnerability; being open to the fact that the other might not respond as desired.

Second, even as we strive for clarity, it is also helpful to remember that God, as St. Thomas, Meister Eckhart and so many others would remind us, is mystery, a living mystery. Our speech must be very careful because we are never going to pin God down and wrap God up in a tidy box. A butterfly that has been pinned to the scientist’s collection board is no longer really a butterfly. We gather a clue about truthful speech by looking at Jesus, who when trying to communicate great mysteries always spoke in parable, not because he was hiding things and trying to be ambiguous, but because when one is dealing with great mysteries, parable is the best speech can do.

In our own speech, we must guard against speaking too definitively and avoid exaggeration. We should not pretend to know what we do not. We should not attempt to convey mastery of what is not master-able. We acknowledge what we still wonder about. The Dominican maxim comes to mind: “Seldom affirm, never deny, always distinguish.” Or, as one of my former professors often repeated to me when I badgered him with questions, “You cannot expect more clarity than the subject matter itself allows.”

Lastly, as Catherine of Siena highlights repeatedly, God is mercy—“slow to anger, rich in compassion” (Psalm 103:8). Our speech should put each other in

the best possible light and assume the other has a positive motive. It should not back the other into a corner, nor seek to embarrass the other in their error, but allow them space to explain themselves and to change their mind if they want to. It should open *us* to changing *our* minds if we are persuaded to do so.

In summary, bringing a Dominican disposition to the study of theology implies that we are intensely careful and thoughtful in our speech; about God and to God, about one another and with one another. My own experience of living in a Dominican educational community these past two decades has led me to keep the Bible and Stone, Patton and Heen’s book *Difficult Conversations* (New York: Penguin, 2010) next to each other in the most frequently referenced section of my bookshelf. One tells me what I believe; the other gives me a compatible way to communicate it.

We must always be looking for ways of speaking about truth that are consonant with the Truth we encounter.

Being true to one another

The last dimension is the one that I think the larger public knows least about when considering Dominican education, but it is perhaps the most central of them all.

If it is true, as Mongillo asserted, that Christianity at its very core is about enjoyment of a person, then it makes sense that enjoyment—particularly enjoyment of persons (also known as “friendship”)—is at the heart of Dominican life. We learn lots of things from textbooks, from reading and from observation of the world, but there is a particular kind of education that happens in the context of friendship. In my first moral theology class at Aquinas Institute, we read that friendship is the school of virtue. It is a rich concept that I continue to ponder to this very day.

Dominican history is filled with friendships from its very origins, including those between persons that you might not expect and across boundaries that are not often crossed. Fifty some odd letters have been preserved between Jordan of Saxony, Dominic’s successor in the Order, and Diana d’Andalo, one of the first Dominican women.

In Dominican life, friendship is the place where we learn the truth about ourselves and others and what it means to be in relationship.

In Dominican life, friendship is the place where we learn the truth about ourselves and others and what it means to be in relationship. If we proclaim God as Trinity—in essence, if we proclaim that God in God’s very being is *relationship*—there is no truth more pressing to pursue than the truth discovered in friendship. It is where we practice the love that we preach. It is where we find out about God at the experiential level.

Real friendship is a difficult thing to achieve, yet it is the most fertile soil for theological endeavor. It is in the free sharing that happens around a table that great new insights are born and fallacies are gently pointed out and let go. We can make mistakes and still be loved. We can test out ideas without fear. Competition fades. We become more daring and free in our theological explorations.

Dominican educational settings, while striving for high professional standards, should continue to model the ethos of the institution on the paradigm of friendship. Any policy or process that diminishes the potential for collaboration and the nurturing of friendships

among students and faculty goes contrary to the fundamental impulse of Dominican education. Our classroom environments, whether physical or online, and our common faculty life should be constructed in such a way that they are not simply about mastery of content, but enjoyment of persons. Content and relationship do not need to be pitted against one another; rather, we acknowledge that learning is strongest when pursued in the context of genuine community.

Conclusions

Pursuing truth. Speaking truthfully. Being true to one another.

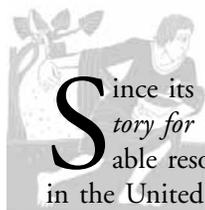
These three practices, learned from the Dominicans I have encountered and studied alongside, have profoundly shaped my vocation as a theologian and lay minister. They have helped to “save the faith” with which I struggled so deeply two decades ago. They are practices that I have been privileged to witness in action at the institution where I serve. At the same time, they always stand before me as a challenge to be more fully realized. Each school year now begins with an acknowledgment and a question: These characteristics of the 800-year-old Dominican project have been entrusted to our care. How shall they flourish this year in this place?



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Priest as Catechetical Leader

Diana Dudoit Raiche, Ph.D.



Since its appearance in 2005, the *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)* has proven to be a reliable resource and guide for catechetical ministry in the United States. Particularly helpful to seasoned professionals as well as those new to catechetical ministry, the *NDC* provides a comprehensive summary of the more than thirty documents that have preceded it and articulates “back-to-basics” catechetical principles in clear, compelling language. Cardinal Donald Wuerl in his Foreword to *The Nature, Tasks and Scope of the Catechetical Ministry: A Digest of Recent Church Documents* contextualizes the *NDC* in this manner:

Throughout the decades, from the General Catechetical Directory on through our own National Directory for Catechesis and with the intervening Catechism of the Catholic Church and our own United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, there is a healthy recognition in these texts of the developments in catechetical method taking into account age-appropriate formation and underscoring the primary role of adult faith formation and at the same time a necessary insistence on the content of the faith – the very substance of the message that introduces us both to the person of Christ and his saving message.¹

Proclaiming Jesus and transmitting the gospel message generation after generation is the central catechetical task. Notwithstanding the critical role of grace in relation to an assent in faith, it is necessary to acknowledge that human beings play a significant role in facilitating the conditions that make it possible to accomplish the catechetical task in helping one to accept Jesus in faith. One important contribution of the *NDC* is its description of the differing roles of those who catechize,² coupled with its unique blend of inspira-

“Priests are absolutely essential contributors to an effective catechetical program. Their zealous leadership is essential to parish catechesis.”

—National Directory for Catechesis

tion and essentials that experienced clergy and pastoral ministers readily recognize. This article focuses on the priest’s role in relation to catechesis: for “[p]riests are absolutely essential contributors to an effective catechetical program. Their zealous leadership is essential to parish catechesis.”³ Before addressing this more targeted focus, as it plays out in the current catechetical climate, it is necessary to examine the back-story and context that has contributed to present-day catechetical realities.

Post-Vatican Council II: Catechetical Context

In addition to the official sources about the role of priests in catechesis, input from pastors currently engaged in shepherding parish catechesis is also instructive. One response I received from a seasoned pastor reveals how he views his role as a catechetical leader in the parish. A former seminary rector and pastor in several parishes since 1990, he said that

Over the years, I found that the Lord’s Day homily is the best pre-catechesis. An entire generation, if not more because of the confusion in religious education following the Council, lost out on learning the fundamentals of the faith. As a consequence, I preach and teach the fundamentals (catechesis).

The *NDC* underscores that the homily has pride of place in the catechetical enterprise and is an essential component in liturgical catechesis.⁴

It is painful to acknowledge that too many Catholics have not received an adequate foundational education in faith. That reality was brought home to me as a guest presenter on the sacraments to a group of First Communion parents in a parish. After the presentation, a young woman waited for the crowd to depart. It is not unusual for a person to ask a question in a more private setting after such a presentation; however, her question stunned me. A young, single mother of an only child, she presented herself as a conscientious parent who wanted to teach the right information. This was the first of a series of sessions for parents, and she understood that the parish expected her to work with her child at home in preparation for First Communion. However, she was confused because, she said: “You talked about the seven sacraments; what are they?” We talked. I wrote out basic information, encouraged her to contact the pastor and parish catechetical leader and referred her to print resources beyond the child’s First Communion book. Her question haunts me still and has prompted further reflection as well as concern: How is it possible that an adult who goes to communion missed such basic catechesis on the sacraments? Could not the homily have provided even the most basic catechesis without reducing the homily to an instructional didactic exercise? What missing links in this person’s faith story needed pastoral attention?

Religion and Sociology

When one ponders the wide-spread sociological changes that occurred simultaneously with implementation of directives for renewal after Vatican Council II, such anecdotes from a pastor and a former parish director of catechetical ministry may be easier to understand. In the early years after the close of the Council, certain aspects of Catholic culture, such as popular piety, which had served a distinct catechetical role, disappeared as if overnight and quite unexpectedly. Such a transformation in culture is no small thing. In the unintended vacuum that ensued, some Catholics just “dropped out” of practice of the faith. Those who lived through this era may recall that the average Catholic was little prepared to understand, much less whole-heartedly embrace, changes in the Mass or catechetical materials in the late 1960s and 1970s. In some situations, parents whose children were in Catholic schools balked at the fact that the *Baltimore Catechism* was no longer the ubiquitous reli-

In the early years after the close of the Council, certain aspects of Catholic culture, such as popular piety, which had served a distinct catechetical role, disappeared as if overnight and quite unexpectedly.

gion textbook. Unaccustomed to teaching roles, parents with children in parish religious education programs, as well as those with children in Catholic schools, were surprised when asked to attend parent sessions to assist them in preparing their children for their first celebration of the sacraments of Penance and First Communion. As a new, emerging reality, catechesis for adults was not yet on the radar. There were few ongoing formation initiatives to help adults learn about liturgical and catechetical changes, reasons for the changes and what the Catholic faithful were “called to” as a result of the changes.

Since that time, we have come through a transitional phase in catechesis. Sometimes these transitions are referred to as “liminal space”—a time betwixt-and-between. Relative to the catechetical enterprise, early catechetical innovations have given way to a period of consolidation that exudes a new character. A student of history will recognize this recurring pattern: 1) it begins with reform, 2) moves to innovative, creative implementation and 3) finds balance in a consolidation phase. At times, consolidation is brought about by consensus; at other times, it is the result of legislation. The rapid succession of catechetical documents in such a brief period of time, as a response to reform, has had a significant impact on the development of multifaceted catechetical methods. By giving foundational principles and clear directives, these documents call for catechesis to remain faithful to the content of the faith while encouraging leaders to be responsive to new realities by means of innovation and creativity. With the exception of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the directives of which are part of liturgical law⁵ and the catechesis of which demonstrates diverse and not yet harmonious practice,⁶ the directories and catechetical documents are not binding legislation. However, they are also not to be

ignored. In particular, the *NDC* represents a new character of integration, consolidation and movement toward harmony and balance that is consistent with the natural progression following paradigm shifts, such as those experienced after Vatican Council II.

During the period of innovation (following the reforms of Vatican II), Catholic catechesis, as an education in faith, incorporated new insights from educational theory, psychology and “age and stage” theory of faith development.⁷ While direct instruction is an essential component in catechesis, whether in Catholic schools or parish-based programs, the church has recognized that catechesis cannot be reduced merely to instruction. Looking to the example of the Patristic Era, the *NDC* highlights the “revived interest in the writings and teachings of the Fathers of the Church and the restoration of the catechumenate” as a means to inspire catechesis.⁸ Direct instruction using the deductive method works best when joined with the inductive method that integrates experience with the gospel message and links catechesis to a community of faith that has a clear Catholic identity based on cohesive religious practice.⁹

Liminal space has left its mark, however, especially with regard to ambivalence concerning the Sunday celebration of Eucharist. For example, it is estimated that in 1945, 76% of adult Catholics attended Mass weekly. By 1965, that number had dropped to a 70% rate. Twenty years later in 1985, 53% of Catholics attended Mass weekly and by 1995 the percentage in attendance had dropped to 43%. By 2005, 34% of Catholics were attending Mass every week,¹⁰ despite the fact that Church teaching on Sunday Mass attendance has not changed. Academic analyses by sociologists of religion help us to understand better how the loss of a cohesive Catholic culture has influenced Catholic belief and behavior.¹¹ The Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate (CARA) 2008 study entitled “Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics” revealed that only 23% of all Catholic adults on average attend Mass every week. While some 31% may attend Mass with some regularity, on a weekly basis 8% of these are not in attendance.¹²

Sunday Mass attendance is more than a litmus test of Catholicity; it is foundational to continued formation in Catholic identity, sacramental spirituality and Catholic catechesis. “When its significance and implications are understood in their entirety, Sunday in a way becomes a synthesis of the Christian life and a condition for living it well.”¹³ With a mere 23% of Catholics attending Mass every Sunday; with fewer parents bringing

their infants for baptism; with fewer children enrolled both in Catholic schools and parish-based religious education programs; and with the challenge of forming adolescents in the faith in a culture sometimes overtly hostile to Catholic beliefs, values and practices, today’s priests minister in a challenging cultural context.¹⁴ Whether during Mass with the faithful few or in ways that are external to the Sunday Eucharistic gathering, priests are essential agents in catechesis, for as *Catechesi Tradendae* (CT) reminds us, “All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have a duty to provide it.”¹⁵

Sunday Mass attendance is more than a litmus test of Catholicity; it is foundational to continued formation in Catholic identity, sacramental spirituality and Catholic catechesis.

Looking for a convenient scapegoat (such as parents, textbooks, teachers and catechists, priests or homilies) to lay blame for the current state of education in faith is clearly counterproductive. Reading the signs of the times is of utmost importance in order to engender acceptance of current reality; this reality is the catechetical starting point in our time. In 2012, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC); it is worth noting two concurrent developments: 1) the sensibilities of average Catholics toward religion have changed along with, and at about the same pace as, the rest of the culture, and 2) a significant catechetical renewal has been ongoing, improving and strengthening our understanding of what constitutes systematic catechesis and appropriate catechetical method.

National Directory for Catechesis: Pastors and Parish Leadership

The *Code of Canon Law* is an authoritative resource regarding the priest’s role in catechesis, but it cannot give specifics regarding the aim, object and goal of catechesis, catechetical collaboration and catechetical methodology. The *NDC*, however, provides considerable detail concerning these practical matters in relation to

the priest's role. The number of duties described in the *NDC* for which the pastor is responsible is daunting, especially if the priest's seminary or previous education and formation have not addressed in depth the distinguishing characteristics of catechesis. As we are well aware, the current reality shows that more and more parishes have a single pastor with no parochial vicar. Some pastors are responsible for the sacramental life of more than one parish. Even with responsibility for a single parish, the pastor's responsibilities in relation to catechesis are too many for any one person to handle alone. With or without a parochial vicar, a pastor needs collaborators. This reality calls for significant interpersonal skills coupled with the capacity to work in collaboration with qualified personnel to ensure the prescribed approaches detailed in the *NDC*, no. 54B, are in place at the parish level.¹⁶

According to the *NDC*, a pastor is responsible for the following:

1. That suitable catechesis occurs for celebration of the sacraments.
2. That catechetical instruction occurs for children and youth prior to first reception of penance, Eucharist and confirmation.
3. That those who are physically or mentally challenged are provided with catechetical formation.
4. That faith of youth and adults is strengthened, enlightened and developed.
5. That all catechesis is age-appropriate for all age groups.
6. That a total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with parish council (and the finance committee to ensure appropriate funding) and parish catechetical leadership.
7. That parishioners should recognize adult formation as the parish's primary catechetical mission.
8. That catechesis for youth and young adults is part of a comprehensive plan for youth ministry (which is part of the comprehensive parish catechetical plan).
9. That catechists for all levels are well-formed and trained.
10. That catechesis is available for all language groups.
11. That the baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish.

Catechesis is inherently linked to the sacramental and liturgical life of the church, for which the pastor has particular responsibility.

12. That the catechumenate is an essential process in the parish, one that serves as the inspiration for all catechesis.

In addition to hiring trained, qualified pastoral staff, the pastor needs to engender a sense of common responsibility for catechesis in the parish. Parishioners with necessary qualities should be encouraged to become catechists. Parish catechetical programs need to approach catechesis as an essential moment in the whole process of evangelization,¹⁷ linking catechesis, sacraments and liturgy. Catechetical programs should include systematic and complete coverage of the content of the faith. The above merely indicates what the pastor is responsible for providing. It does not provide interpretation of these elements or prescribe how these elements are to be delivered. In catechesis, we call those latter skills catechetical *savior faire*.

Nature and Purpose of Catechesis

The aim of all catechesis is maturity in faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The object of catechesis is communion with Jesus Christ,¹⁹ for "catechesis is essentially an ecclesial act," an action of the church, which is the "historical realization of God's gift of communion in Christ."²⁰ Catechesis intends to build up the Body of Christ, the church, which is also the goal of catechesis.²¹ The Body of Christ is further built up by a true profession of faith, an inherent element in the sacraments of initiation. Therefore, catechesis is inherently linked to the sacramental and liturgical life of the church, for which the pastor has particular responsibility.

The occasion of the implementation of the third translation of the *Roman Missal* "has been an opportunity for education and formation of priests and faithful alike."²² The Bishops encourage ongoing, mystagogical catechesis on the Mass, which begins with the manner in which the Mass is celebrated. According to the *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*,

In a society ever more sensitive to communication through signs and images, the priest must pay adequate attention to all of that which can enhance the decorum and sacredness of the Eucharistic celebration In fact, a lack of attention to the symbolic aspects of the liturgy and, even more, carelessness and coldness, superficiality and disorder, empty the meaning and weaken the process of strengthening the faith. Those who improperly celebrate the Mass reveal a weakness in their faith and fail to educate the others in the faith. Celebrating the Eucharist well, however, constitutes a highly important catechesis on the Sacrifice.²³

For example, the Church has reminded us that “[f]aith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy faith.”²⁴ With regard to the liturgy, the role of the pastor is critical. It is not merely the homily and proclamation of the word that are important in liturgy. Every aspect of ritual performance requires the utmost attention: choreography of the rite in gestures, movement and postures; architecture, art and environment; and music and reverent silence all facilitate “full, active, conscious participation”²⁵ in liturgies that elicit external as well as internal engagement with Christ. Pope Benedict XVI has highlighted this need for a balance of external and internal participation in the liturgy in *Sacramentum Caritatis (SacCar)* by stating that interior dispositions correspond to gestures and words.²⁶ Eucharist is not merely a celebration for a particular group of people; it is the prayer of the church forming the church. It is a door to the sacred that intends to deepen conversion to Christ and commitment to participating in building the kingdom of God in our time and place. Celebrating Eucharist well to facilitate “full, conscious, and active participation” in liturgy has huge implications for Catholic identity and for equipping Catholics to do the works of social justice in all the private and public aspects of life.

With the more recent calls for mystagogical approaches to catechesis, the quality of our liturgical celebrations takes on even greater importance. According to Mark Frances, “It is in the liturgy that Catholics experience the faith and come into contact with the traditions of the church. This was known in the first millennium as ‘first theology’ (*theologia prima*).”²⁷ Following the 2005 Synod on the Eucharist, Pope Benedict XVI suggested that the best approach to formation that

balances external and internal participation in the liturgy is mystagogy, that is, using our experience of liturgical signs and symbols as a point of departure for catechesis and reflection on the faith.²⁸

Tasks and Methods for Catechesis

In concert with these developments and approaches, the *NDC* carefully recapitulates the interrelationship between and among the six tasks of catechesis that have been evolving since the close of the Council:

1. Knowledge of the faith
2. Formation in how to pray with Christ
3. Formation in how to live in community and participate actively in the life and mission of the church and
4. Knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments
5. Moral formation in Jesus Christ
6. Formation in a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present in society.

These six tasks “constitute a unified whole” and “each task . . . realizes the object of catechesis [the Church] and all the tasks are interdependent.”²⁹

Knowledge of the Christian faith, for example, leads to celebrating it in the sacramental liturgy. Participation in the sacramental life encourages moral transformation in Christ. Christian moral living leads to prayer, enhances community life and encourages a missionary spirit.³⁰

To accomplish these tasks, catechesis depends on the “transmission of the Gospel message and experience of Christian life.”³¹

Interrelationship: Liturgy and Catechesis

Just as “full, conscious, and active participation” in the liturgy has two dimensions, external and internal, so too, there are two types of catechesis, initiatory and ongoing, that rely on two forms of catechetical method, deductive and inductive. Although these elements are present in previous documents, the distinctions that clarify the catechetical tasks are most clearly evident in recent catechetical directories: the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005). It is hoped that with clarity in articulation there will emerge a greater clarity in understanding, and, therefore, improvements in implementation. However, the catechetical enterprise cannot be isolated from the liturgical experience of the people. The two work in a mutually formative manner.

Hiring individuals who can work as a team is one of the most important aspects of bringing a pastoral team together.

Collaboration: The Pastor's Vision

Because the catechetical tasks are interrelated and multidimensional, the pastor needs competent, faith-filled collaborators to assist in implementing them. First among these collaborators are parish catechetical leaders. According to the *NDC*, “[t]he single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader.”³² The titles and scope of responsibilities may vary, depending on the size of the parish. For example, one location may use the term “parish director of catechesis” or “director of religious education.” Another may prefer “director of catechetical ministry” or “parish catechetical leader” with its acronym PCL, which is the terminology used in the *GDC* and *NDC*. The person with the title “director,” a title used alongside the newer terminology of PCL, typically has a master’s degree in theology, religious education or catechetics and responsibility for the administration of multiple catechetical programs. Although this may not be the case in every diocese, directors typically have responsibility for guiding and directing those with particular responsibility for age-specific programs, or “area coordinators,” who typically do not have as much theological education or administrative experience as a director. The key point is that a standard nomenclature for catechetical leadership is still evolving, as are the job descriptions. One cannot make assumptions about titles or duties as normative across all dioceses in the United States.

There is growing awareness that youth ministers, who are also part of a pastoral team, must also be trained in catechetics and work in collaboration with parish catechetical leaders under the direction of the pastor. Hiring individuals who can work as a team is one of the most important aspects of bringing a pastoral team together. Knowing how to work as a team and being able to work in collaboration are skills that do not necessarily come naturally. With the pastor’s vision and leadership, however, these can become normative, establishing teamship and collaboration as “usual and

customary” characteristics in the culture of a parish. If we are to fulfill the mission of the church, which is to evangelize, then we may do well to take a lesson from others who have had a significant mission.

For example, the space program, one of the more positive accomplishments of the twentieth century, offers a point of reflection on the kind of collaboration and teamwork required to send a person to the moon. It was characterized by a culture of excellence focused on a mission. Gene Kranz, founder and flight director of NASA’s Mission Control, recalls that when the commander of Apollo 13, Jim Lovell, called with the message: “Hey Houston, we’ve got a problem,” all they had in the control room was a great team and a lot of trust that the right people were in place to solve the problem.³³ In many ways, the clarion call to the Catholic Church is akin to Jim Lovell’s. We’ve got a problem, and we need real *communio* to address the current issues in a manner that advances our mission.

Conclusion

Certainly, our knowledge of and appreciation for catechesis has been deepened and enhanced by studying how catechesis has developed and evolved over time. Catechesis in the Patristic Era benefited from the Church Fathers, bishops who knew the faith well and how to adapt it to meet the needs of those with little secular education.³⁴ The innovations that emerged from the Modern Catechetical Movement, which began in Europe and gained momentum in the United States in the late 1930s, introduced new methods of education into the area of catechesis. The emergence of a new genre of literature to guide catechesis, that is, the catechetical directory, plus no fewer than thirty authoritative documents on the subject, has given a historical perspective on a “semantic evolution” in catechesis.³⁵

Catechesis cannot be reduced to teaching theology although it is absolutely rooted in sound theology. Catechesis cannot be reduced to merely “hanging out” with children and youth although it absolutely requires authentic pastoral presence with children and youth on the part of the pastor, parochial vicar and priest. Catechesis cannot be assumed to occur only through liturgy even though liturgy has the power to transform people and reflection on liturgy builds on such transformation to form our Catholic faith and identity. Catechesis begins with authentically witnessing to the faith and sharing that faith in suitable and appropriate ways with a particular audience.

Through the study of catechetics, we can now

be more precise in speaking of two major forms of catechesis: initiatory and ongoing. Within those two major forms are several types, such as evangelizing, sacramental, perfective, life-long, liturgical and mystical catechesis, each with its own methodology. In the same way that a physician must assess a patient's medical condition before prescribing a particular remedy or protocol, catechetical leaders, including priests, need the kind of *savior faire* that equips them to adapt the Christian message to people who are at various stages of faith development. This means selecting appropriate approaches and methods so that the message of Jesus may be "heard" and, by God's grace, "received." Such catechesis cannot occur separate or apart from good liturgical celebrations.

Catechesis is first and foremost aimed at bringing a person in touch and in communion with Jesus Christ in such a manner that it furthers maturity in faith. At every stage in life, we can experience a maturity in faith that is consistent with our age and stage of development. The new concept in catechesis is that we never arrive! Conversion is ongoing; we are never "done." Conversion to Jesus Christ as Savior is the first step in evangelization, which always precedes catechesis proper. Catechesis is a moment in the whole process of evangelization. Systematic and comprehensive catechesis follows that initial acceptance of Jesus as the center of faith. As the center of one's life, Jesus calls each person to a radical re-visioning of how to live, how to conduct one's business, how to relate to others with respect and how to share faith. Such faith compels us to celebrate it in liturgy, which has life-long implications for how one leans into life.

The pastor as catechetical leader may not need to be an expert in all things catechetical. He does, however, need to be aware of the catechetical landscape. Knowing what is involved, he is better equipped to create a culture of excellence and gather a trustworthy team who are equally committed to Jesus Christ and the mission he has entrusted to his church.



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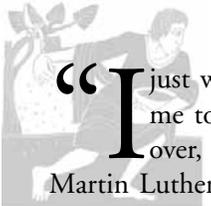
Endnotes

1. Berard L. Marthaler, *The Nature, Tasks and Scope of the Catechetical Ministry: A Digest of Recent Church Documents* (Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 2008), xii.
2. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)* (Washington, DC: US-CCB, 2005), no. 54B.1-2, pp. 218-224, names the bishop and his diocesan staff; pastors and parish leadership; deacons; women and men in consecrated life; parish catechetical leaders; youth ministers; campus ministers; catechists; Catholic school principals, religion teachers, and all teachers; and finally parents and families.
3. *NDC*, 54B.2, p. 222.
4. *NDC*, no. 17C, p. 50. *NDC*, no. 35D, p. 118, quotes Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our Time, Catechesi Tradendae (CT)*, no. 48 in that as one of the forms of lifelong catechesis, "the homily occupies a privileged position since it 'takes up again the journey of faith put forward by catechesis, and brings it to its natural fulfillment.'" See also *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)*, no. 52 available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.
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Mountain Men: Preparing Seminararians for the Spiritual Trek

Sr. Mary Carroll, SSSF



“I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the Promised Land. . . .”¹ Martin Luther King’s words still, after fifty years, stir up a visceral response to a spiritual vision that seems reachable. Mountaintops, literally or figuratively, lend a sense of awe.

Blessed John Paul II was a vigorous hiker and it may account for his claim that there is a lesson to be learned when scaling the heights. It “requires rigorous virtues . . . strict discipline and self-control, prudence, a spirit of sacrifice and dedication, care and solidarity with others.” It not only demands physical strength and a strong will to endure obstacles but includes an “intelligent passion for beauty.”²

Because mountains are demanding and dangerous, one cannot casually pursue the climb. It is not a “walk in the park” or a spectator sport; nor does it allow “doing your thing” based on opinion or whim. Because of the discipline, one can eventually view the grandeur of the expansive blue sky, the snowy peaks on the jagged landscape, and stand in awesome silence at the top.

Mountains are symbolic for the spiritual journey. There are visions in the valley but an attraction to the mystery of the heights is alluring. Divine encounters frequently happen on mountains, whether on Sinai, Tabor or Calvary. Jesus delivers the eight revolutionary attitudes or beatitudes on a mountain (Matthew 5:1-7:29). Conversely, in the Matthean account, Jesus’ last temptation takes place on a *very* high mountain (4:8-11). Saints Benedict, Francis and John of the Cross are associated with the mountains of Subiaco, La Verna and Carmel respectively.

A candidate’s personal story can be a source of inspiration and integration when embedded within the framework of the spiritual giants.

Seminarians themselves come with both the enthusiasm and the fear of a mountain climber. Like experienced guides, formation and spiritual directors have the task of assessing and advising before a challenging trek. Ultimately, the candidate has to be a “man for others,” but he will not be credible unless he does the “spiritual climb” himself.

Our purpose here is to consider two questions faced by seminaries and to offer possible responses. They are:

1. What “mountaintop” or conversion experience influenced the call of the seminarian and how do we build on it?
2. What practices will sustain the seminarian in the future?

We will attempt, albeit in a limited way, to demonstrate how a candidate’s personal story can be a source of inspiration and integration when embedded within the framework of the spiritual giants. Secondly, we will describe a pilot program and a subsequent prayer course supportive of a sustaining praxis.

Building on “Spiritual Mountain” Experiences

To understand the life experience of our students, a description of the seminary is relevant. Located in suburban Milwaukee, Sacred Heart School of Theology (www.shst.edu) is a Roman Catholic seminary specializing in priestly formation for men of all ages, with an emphasis on seminarians over 30 years of age. With about 100 seminarians representing 37 dioceses and religious orders, its men are a diverse group. Some have never married; others are widowed or divorced with an annulment. There are “cradle Catholics” transformed from earlier mediocrity, converts seeking to understand their new faith, and others continuing a search for God’s will. Many have a call to priesthood which can be a “far country and a steep climb.” Therefore, “Candidates whose faith has been rediscovered and rekindled in a powerful way through significant religious experience,” as described in the *PPF* 5th edition, certainly applies to us.³

Although all courses are cognizant of the seminarian’s call, *Foundations in Christian Spirituality* is connected to the larger Catholic *mystical* tradition. Therefore, the first major written class assignment is to:

1. Describe, in three to four pages, a significant moment or conversion experience, and
2. Relate this – if possible – to someone in scripture or the spiritual tradition.⁴

The resulting assignment produces interesting—if not surprising and certainly humble—connections to the great spiritual trail blazers. Encouraging students to discover personal similarities often leads to further research, thereby serving as an integration tool for the other pillars: spiritual, human and pastoral within the academic setting. Cited below are some of those conversion stories.⁵

Peter: A Loving and Awesome Response

Greg is especially moved by the gospel of John’s account of the third post-resurrection appearance of Jesus which occurred at sunrise near the water’s edge. After creating a reassuring environment with a charcoal fire and food, Jesus repeats the great test and task: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” (John 21:14-17). Peter’s “yes” means attending to Jesus’ loved ones with intense solicitude.

Like a confident Peter, Greg said that he was on fire after a Cursillo retreat and applied to a diocese that rejected the request since he was too newly converted. He changed direction and almost married but something

Encouraging students to discover personal similarities often leads to further research, thereby serving as an integration tool for the other pillars: spiritual, human and pastoral within the academic setting.

told him to call off the engagement. While on a tour of the Holy Land at the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus questioned Peter, Greg had an inner experience of a presence in the church. As he stated, “I heard a voice asking me if I loved him. Then in as clear a voice as I have ever heard Jesus said to me, ‘Will you feed my sheep?’” Greg’s response was, at first, reluctance. But he intuitively knew that if he did not say “yes” there would not be an invitation as clear as this one. He then related, “I began to shake all over and I looked at the crucifix and nodded yes.” Upon leaving the church, an older woman noticed that Greg’s face was different and asked what was wrong. She then immediately said, “God wants you to be a priest, doesn’t he?” Greg nodded and they embraced, cried and prayed. From that moment on, Greg – like Peter – had a new clarity in his call.

Paul: Hardened and Blinded

Jose’s story is more like Paul of Tarsus’ story but not as dramatic. As we recall, Paul issued violent threats against followers of the Way and wanted to haul them back to Jerusalem, but was overwhelmed on the road by an apparition of Jesus (Acts 9).

Jose’s years of police work hardened his assessment of others and, as he said, “I did a lot of things against those people who lived on the streets.” With a sense of arrogance, Jose rejected and oppressed them until he met Miguel. They began sharing conversations and even lunch. Jose was impressed because this man was not looking for money to spend on drugs or prostitutes and had some interesting insights and wisdom. Jose’s attitude gradually felt the impact of the words, “Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:3-5). This pierced Jose’s cemented heart and Miguel helped to remove, so to speak, the scales from his eyes. A more compassionate attitude led Jose to later pursue the priesthood.

Gregory of Nyssa: Mystery of the Water

The symbolic rendition of the *Life of Moses*, penned by Gregory of Nyssa, claims that disordered inclinations are like the Egyptian army that went after Moses and the Israelites. The Egyptians are drowned in the sea and disordered inclinations are changed. The water destroys or it purifies.

In reading this account, Tim was reminded of the white sandy beach of Cancun in the Gulf of Mexico where he was lured into the calm water by the warm weather. While swimming, he turned around to see the outline of the beach umbrellas but they had vanished from sight. He started to swim vigorously in the proper direction but no luck. He tried another way and realized he was being pulled out by a rip tide. Panic started to set in but he calmed himself by floating, waiting and praying. Like some others facing death, his life flashed before him; he did not expect to die so young.

After rocking in the waves for some time, Tim said, “I felt something touch my body and my reaction was to grab onto it with all of my might. I had grabbed onto a human being who was trying to rescue me but my grasp was preventing him from staying afloat.” Tim was eventually pulled from the water and owes his life to a waiter on the beach who dove in fully clothed. After he was pulled to safety, Tim felt that just walking on the hot afternoon sand was like being a “new man,” for he knew the power of purification. This rescue became the catalyst for reviewing his life choices. Tim admitted that a call to serve as a priest occurred before but he was now ready to say yes to God.

When Tim first read the words of Gregory of Nyssa, using the symbolic language of the Red Sea, it had a deep resonance within his very being.

No one who hears this should be ignorant of the mystery of the water. He who has gone down into it with the army of the enemy emerges alone, leaving the enemy's army drowning in the water. . . . For if the enemy came out of the water with them, they would continue in slavery, even after the water, since they would have brought up with themselves the tyrant, still alive, whom they did not drown in the deep. . . . We should make a totally new beginning in life after these things, breaking the continuity with evil by a radical change for the better.⁶

Augustine: Reform of Desire

Although knowing something of Augustine's life

In actual mountain climbing, the pristine freshness of air is invigorating but at high altitudes, without slowly ascending to acclimatize the body and carrying oxygen bottles, illness or even unconsciousness can occur. Preparation for the spiritual climb is no less serious.

before entering the seminary, Jeff claimed that actually reading the *Confessions* was “eerie” since he saw so much of his own life in it. The angst and frustration mirrored in the early vacillating behavior of Augustine struck a chord in Jeff. The often quoted “Give me chastity, but not yet” phrase was a truism for sure. In reading Augustine, Jeff identified – in retrospect – with Augustine's same unfilled pathos and painful search and says of himself.

No wonder I could not find happiness, even after I got married. Rather than having a marriage based upon self-giving, I had a marriage based upon a “church approved” vehicle Yet, as I have learned from reading and studying Augustine, my sexuality or lustful thoughts and actions were not satisfied by getting married; rather, they were increased to the point where I had an affair. As time went on, things got worse, and I turned to alcohol This vicious cycle continued until my wife and I divorced. . . . I climbed the corporate ladder at several companies and even owned my own, yet my heart was still restless. I was never satisfied, no matter how much money I made, how many women I dated, or how much liquor I drank.

The start of Jeff's movement back to God came when his mother had a stroke and all the family said “good-bye” except him. He arrived too late, causing him overwhelming remorse. Nevertheless, Jeff later found some comfort in the prayerful words of Augustine about his own mother.

I was brought back to my old feelings about your handmaid, recalling her devout attitude to you and her holy, gentle and considerate treatment of us, of which I had suddenly deprived myself. Now I let flow the tears which I held back so that they ran freely as they wished. My heart rested upon them, and it reclined upon them because it was your ears that were there, not those of some human critic who would put a proud interpretation on my weeping . . . [Y]ou are the Father of all the brothers of your Christ.⁷

Unfortunately, the conversion moment for Jeff was short-lived because, upon returning home, the old cycle started again. However, after accepting an invitation to go on a men's retreat, Jeff heard the story of the Prodigal Son and the phrase that stunned him was: "coming to his senses." With the assistance of Father Bob, his spiritual director, Jeff intuitively felt that he would never see his mother again if he did not turn his life around. The shocking reality confronted him: this is not about physical death; this is about spiritual death.

Jeff found it intriguing that Augustine also found direction in opening scripture to Paul's statement: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, in concupiscence" (Romans 13:13). In these words Augustine finds an infusion of light and a serenity of soul that allows his doubts to dissipate.⁸

Alypius, Augustine's friend who was with him in the garden, reminded him to read further in the text of Paul. The next passage indicated that friends are strengthened by one another when faith is weak and there is unity of resolution. Similarly, Fr. Bob was equally moved by this new experience of God's grace. After the retreat, Jeff became involved in church and was later encouraged to consider priesthood. However, the struggle is not over – even at the seminary – and as Jeff said, "When my heart becomes restless, I go to chapel and sit in front of him and rest in his presence." Jeff found the work of grace awesome but not to be taken for granted.

Ignatius Loyola: Gratitude and Tears

In his autobiography there is a story about Ignatius' indecision about either going down a path to punish a Moor, who is disrespectful of Our Lady, or taking another road to the highway. Unable to decide, he followed the lead of the mule. Providentially, he took the latter road and – with a turn of historical irony – later

became the master of discernment, writing his *Spiritual Exercises* under the better guidance of the Holy Spirit. As founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius often reflected on his dare-devil life and potential pitfalls and shed tears of contrition and gratitude. Some people were even concerned that his tears might cause blindness.

To some degree, Tom had a taste of the Ignatian moment when, after leaving the gym, he came to an intersection and in a split second chose to go to a nearby chapel. Upon entering, he glanced at the monstrance and reverently knelt down. As Tom poignantly stated:

It was when I looked up from that position that everything changed within my person. There was an interior understanding that I was the child and He was the Master, the Messiah. The relaxed, self-assured, suave demeanor – that I possessed coming in – had vanished. I was now a little boy experiencing the divine love and mercy of God. My eyes filled with tears as my gaze stayed locked on Him. I felt that I could stay there forever.

After Tom got up and shuffled down the length of the pew, he knelt again and wept. He felt weak and flawed but loved. In retrospect, Tom said that "this experience changed my prayer life profoundly. Subsequently, I found myself spending the majority of my time giving thanks to the Lord." This became the catalyst to ask how he could serve the God who is so gracious to him.

Unlike Tom, the sixteenth century Fr. Nicholas Goudanus specifically wanted to ask God for the gift of tears and turned to Ignatius for advice. Although he had the gift himself, Ignatius suggested that a "heart filled with compassion" for the difficulties of others and a desire to alleviate them was more advantageous for mission.⁹ Nevertheless, being full of gratitude and contrition is salutary and encouraged.

John of the Cross: Divine Peace and the Hidden Beloved

Mark was the quiet, cautious, reflective seminarian with perhaps a slight mirroring of John of the Cross' dark night of the soul. John, as we recall, suffered imprisonment at the hands of his own friars since they fear his reform fervor. Ironically it is in the midst of John's oppression, especially at Toledo, that an unusual grace granted him a deep peace and the ability to compose passionate poetry – based on the *Song of Songs* – which

The priesthood is not permanently lived on a mountain but requires wisdom to guide others through the crags and crevices of despair, disappointment and loss of the foothold of faith.

he carried with him after his bold escape.

Mark for a long time eschewed telling his story but there seemed to be an unsung melody in him. His reluctance was honored but he made occasional references to his “mysterious” experience. Asked why he doesn’t share it, he says, “I don’t want people to think that I am some kind of nut.” It was suggested that he pray and, if he felt inclined, to write it out. The anonymous narrative would be given to two spiritual directors for an opinion. He agreed and both directors indicated that his account was a grace and not all together unusual. Eventually, Mark felt more willing to share his story if it helped others.

In his early life Mark had three goals: a good wife, a good job and a quiet life. He found the job but finding the right woman was more difficult. Friends claim he was too discriminating. Some women “came and went” and, as he said, “mostly went.” Finally, the perfect person appeared and they spent a glorious time together until another man arrived at her door and – without words – her real choice was apparent. Devastation or a “descent into hell” followed when he did not care about anything, including his own well-being but, at least, he functioned – somewhat – at his place of employment.

One day, at his work desk, he entered a mental dialogue with God and, for the first time, accepted with full conviction whatever God might give or take from him. This was not done with resignation or bitterness but with humility and sincerity. He really meant it. A feeling of utter peace descended upon him and the feeling of a presence moved through his whole body; he didn’t want to even move. Mark went outside and, as he said, “I was aware of my surroundings but was in such a state of ecstatic peace, time lost its meaning. Truly, if this is what peace in heaven is like, it is worth anything or any price to be possessed by it for eternity.”

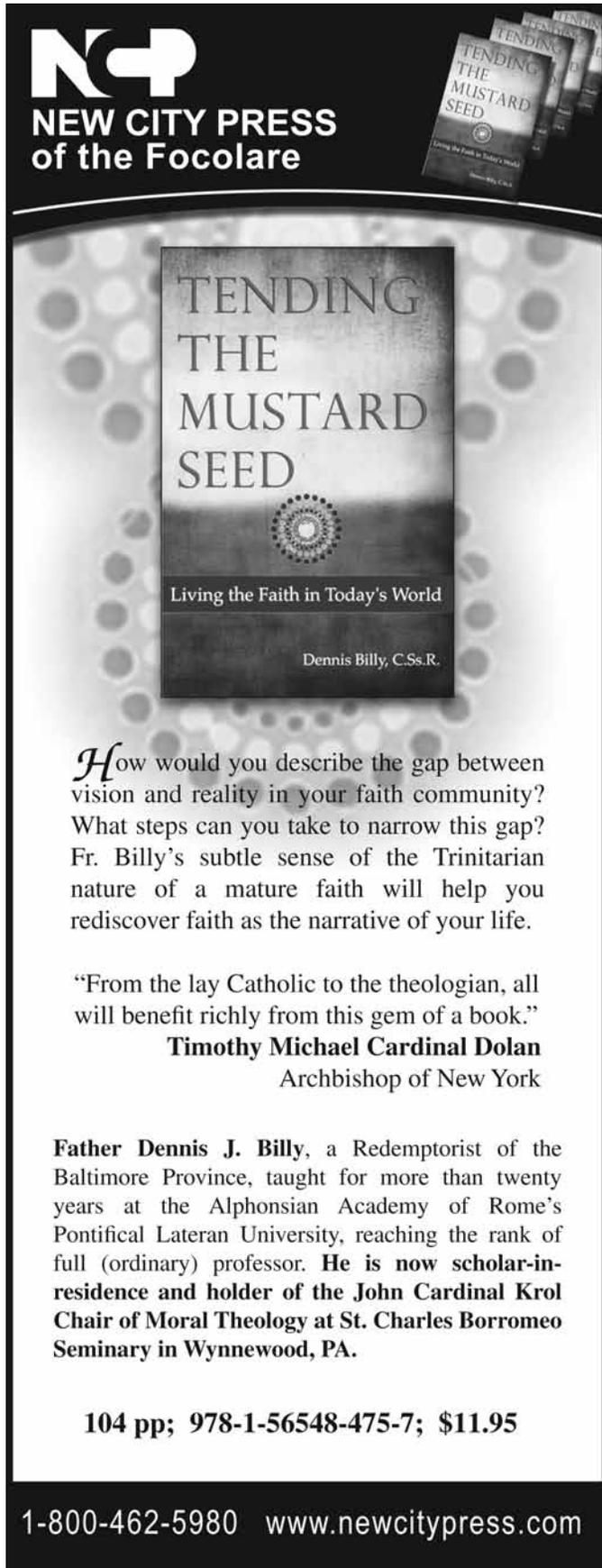
He marveled at the birds, at the wonderful taste of food and, felt if he only had minutes live, he would embrace death with tranquility.

During the ensuing months the incredible state of peace stayed with him. Then Mark tested the gift, as though it belonged to him by right, and found that it could be lost when deliberately making bad choices. It was overwhelming to feel its departure based on unethical action. He was stunned to find that he could lose the “most precious gift” he ever had.

A return to tranquility, prayer, and careful discernment eventually led him to consider priesthood. Nevertheless, in the seminary, his peace was waning and he looked for the right spiritual director. Was his gift departing because he made the wrong move or because, as John of the Cross indicates, “Souls begin to enter this dark night when God, gradually drawing them out of the state of beginners, begins to place them in the state of proficients”?¹⁰ Mark had tested God and wondered if God was now testing him in order to purify him. Was this the “lamentable darkness” of wrong choices or the “luminous darkness” of God’s presence?

Hearing his story, I knew why Mark was reluctant to share. Even John of the Cross was not initially willing to write a commentary on the verses of his poetry on the *Canticle* even at the request of his friend, Ann of Jesus, prioress at Granada’s Carmelite convent. “He at first excused himself, saying that he was no longer in that state of spiritual exuberance in which he had been when composing the *Canticle*, and that there only remained to him a confused recollection of the wonderful operations of Divine grace during the period of his imprisonment.”¹¹ Ann of Jesus is not dissuaded and, fortunately for posterity, John acquiesced to her request. Without encouragement and trust, Mark too might not have written his experience and witnessed to the power of the Spirit in him.

Mountaintop glimpses or conversions are significant but how are they assessed in relationship to ordination? Msgr. Charles Murphy, former rector of the North American College in Rome, claims that the formation faculty and the spiritual director must be skilled in discerning the seminarian’s call. “In the emotional power of that event they sometimes confuse a calling to become a Christian with a vocation to the priesthood.”¹² Msgr. Murphy points to six converting challenges that he observed: theological engagement, living in a foreign country, working with the poor, immersion in the diocese of Rome, living in community, and fidelity to prayer. This last challenge of “fidelity to prayer” brings us to the



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second question posed earlier. What practices will sustain the seminarian in the future?

Sustaining Strength and Endurance for the Climb

In actual mountain climbing, the pristine freshness of air is invigorating but at high altitudes, without slowly ascending to acclimatize the body and carrying oxygen bottles, illness or even unconsciousness can occur.¹³ Preparation for the spiritual climb is no less serious. Growth and survival through the dark storms of disenchantment and avalanches of confusion or unbelief are dependent on prayer.

In *Pastores Dabo Vobis* John Paul II points to the scriptural passage, "And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those who he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" (Mk 3:13-15). The words "to be with him" are deliberately stressed (42). Jesus is calling them to a friendship and to witnessing his own relationship to the Father.

Although Eucharist, the sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours are absolutely central in a seminary milieu, students search for other prayer modes along with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the rosary. Many come with limited knowledge of prayer forms that are actually quite ancient. The *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF) 5th edition (123) specifically suggests that "guidance and instruction in methods of meditation, contemplation, *lectio divina*, and daily examen" are to be encouraged.

Pilot Program on Prayer Styles

Although the pilot program on prayer, initiated twelve years ago, predates the PPF 5th edition, it was in alignment with the intent mentioned above. The two-semester program begins with about twenty volunteers for each semester.¹⁴ The theory/praxis experiment is designed to fill a perceived lacuna and – depending on the outcome – be the basis of a future course. Evaluations are taken at the end of each semester.

First Semester: *Lectio Divina*

The first semester of the experimental program includes: twelve (12) one-hour sessions of the image/word-based (kataphatic) prayer of *lectio divina*, Ignatian guided meditation, spiritual journaling, praying with icons, etc. Both evening and morning sessions are offered in a secluded, quiet conference room to make it fully available.

A typical session includes a twenty-five minute commentary on the scripture or icon to be used before entering into prayer. Although the *lectio divina* method – reading, meditating, praying and contemplating – is the common practice, the guided meditation is enhanced by more vivid use of the imagination. The basic procedure is:

1. Participants attend to proper posture and breathing within an environment of appropriate lighting and music.
2. The leader reads the Bartimaeus healing account (Mk 10: 46-52) reflectively.
3. Participants close their eyes and allow the leader to describe the scene, e.g., each one becomes Bartimaeus by sensing the damp earth underneath, the cool breeze from the palm tree, the warmth of sun on the wall of Jericho and the crowd whispering about this Jesus from Nazareth approaching the city gate. The participants are aware of the darkness of blindness and the rush of emotion when like Bartimaeus they stand before Jesus and he asks, “What do you want me to do for you?” They then have time to answer silently from the heart. After some quiet time, they are asked to open their eyes but they usually sit in silence until someone chooses to speak, allowing the group to respond. Gradually the leader moves the group to a short ending prayer.

Second Semester: Centering Prayer

There is some over-lapping from the first semester in terms of participants who are both seminarians and faculty. While a form of the Benedictine *lectio divina* and the Ignatian meditation is employed during the first semester, the theology from the fourteenth century *Cloud of Unknowing* is the basis for understanding the praxis of the second semester. A non-image based (apophatic) prayer method from Thomas Keating’s Contemplative Outreach program is used.¹⁵

A five-hour introductory workshop is given at an off-campus site on a scheduled retreat day. The emphasis here is entering into the silence and attending to the divine presence. The method is:

1. Choose a sacred word (i.e., *abba*, Jesus, Spirit) as the symbol of the intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
2. Sit with eyes closed, settle in and introduce the sacred word.

Although the lectio divina method – reading, meditating, praying and contemplating – is the common practice, the guided meditation is enhanced by more vivid use of the imagination.

3. When aware of thoughts, return gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the twenty minute session, remain in silence with eyes closed until ready to return. It is best not to be abrupt but always gentle.

After three months of daily centering prayer, a concluding Saturday is chosen for another five-hour workshop. The group gathers for a teaching segment, further sharing, and to watch Contemplative Outreach’s DVD. There is a centering prayer of about twenty minutes at the beginning and end of the time together.

Does This Make a Difference?

These two experiments received rather positive evaluations. However, my question is: “Does it make a real difference?” It seems impossible to answer this; nevertheless, I am influenced by what happened when using the Bartimaeus meditation on a college campus many years ago. One young woman said she would not come back for another guided meditation. I asked, “Why?” With hesitation and honesty she said, “I feel that he (Jesus) is knocking at my door and I am not sure I want him to come in.” Sr. Briege McKenna, OSC, known internationally for her work with priests, also said that in her prayer she saw an imaginative room that said: Private Property. She knew that inside that room was her reputation and even Jesus was not going in. But in prayer she heard, “[I]f you do not open that door, you will never know what it means to be truly free.”¹⁶ We can refuse out of fear; however, is this not the “personal relationship with God in Jesus” that Benedict XVI is referring to in his “Letter to Seminarians?”¹⁷

Courses: Doorways to the Divine and Prayer Styles

In fall 2002, we offered a two-credit elective course combining the pilot program results with information on the mystical traditions of major world religions while placing emphasis on Christian history and practice. The one hundred and ten minute class met once a week for fourteen weeks. Each class reserved the last twenty-five minutes for a specific practice, e.g., guided meditation, centering prayer, spiritual journaling, etc. This course has been slightly altered by personnel changes and the introduction of the required *Prayer Styles* class influenced by the directives of the *PPF* 5th edition after 2006.¹⁸

Conclusion: Holy Spirit the Guide, Jesus the Way, the Father the Vision

We have attempted first to examine how a seminarian's conversion or mountaintop experience can be enlivened and enlightened by scripture or tradition. Secondly, we have shared how a broad understanding of prayer forms is important; however, forging a living relationship with Jesus is even more so. The priesthood is not permanently lived on a mountain but requires wisdom to guide others through the crags and crevasses of despair, disappointment and loss of the foothold of faith. There are constant valley visits to usher others up the steep hills. Although God is one, the Spirit guides and breathes in us "spiritual oxygen," Jesus is the Way and shows us the way, and the Father envelops us in the great vision which is gloriously beatific. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., the priest encourages others with: "And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land."



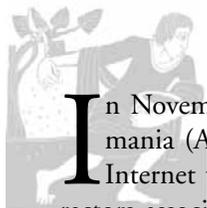
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Endnotes

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, April 3, 1963 <http://www.history1900s.about.com/ed/martinlutherkir> (9/30/12).
2. John Paul II, "The Spirituality of the Mountains" <http://www.faihandenvironment.wordpress.com/20> (9/23/12). Pius XI was known to be a mountain climber but in this article John Paul II quotes Pius XII to be "docile to the lessons of the mountain: . . . it is a lesson in spiritual elevation, of an energy which is more moral than physical."
3. USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation, 5th edition* (November 15, 2005), section 12.
4. The other two assignments link primary sources with current issues, e.g., the emphasis on listening in the Prologue of the Rule of Benedict is connected to more current research on the skill of a director's listening and its effect on the directee. Another example is when Catherine of Siena's work with an executed prisoner is compared to the work of Helen's Prejean in *Dead Man Walking*.
5. Examples are used with permission but the names have been changed.
6. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*, trans. A. Malherbe, E. Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press) chapter 2, 8.
7. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), IX, 33.
8. *Confessions*, VII, 28-31.
9. Ignatius of Loyola, "Letters: On the Gift of Tears" <http://www.woodstock.georgetown.edu/ignatius/let>. (9/24/12).
10. *John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, ed., intro., Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), Book I, section 1.
11. www.catholicfirst.com/thefaith/catholicclassics/johnofthecross/canticle/canticle1.html page 3, (9/18/12).
12. Msgr. Charles M. Murphy, *Models of Priestly Formation: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2006) 11.
13. Air pressure decreases because altitude air is less dense and has less oxygen molecules.
14. See Mary C. Carroll, OSF, "Divine Therapy: Teaching Reflective and Meditative Practices," *Teaching Theology and Religion* (October 2005), 232-237.
15. www.contemplativeoutreach.org This site provides materials or links to further research.
16. Briege McKenna, OSC, with Henry Libersat, *Miracles Do Happen* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987), 11.
17. Benedict XVI, "Letter to Seminarians," <http://www.zenit.org/article-30685?l=english>, (9/30/12).
18. The current course objective is to introduce students to vocal prayer (liturgical and devotional), meditation, contemplative prayer, *lectio divina*, preparatory components of prayer (time, place, posture, atmosphere, method and examination of conscience), the relationship of personal prayer to liturgy, the sacraments and scripture.

Virtual Reality: Requiring *Real Virtue*

Rev. Msgr. Anthony J. Ireland, S.T.D.



In November 2008, the bishops of Victoria and Tasmania (Australia) asked me to address the use of the Internet with the seminarians and the spiritual directors associated with the provincial seminary. The use and misuse of the Internet is an important matter to be addressed in seminaries around the world. In an edition of *Church*, then-Archbishop Edwin O'Brien of Baltimore (and Chairman of the Pontifical North American College Board of Directors) wrote:

... the all too proximate danger of addictive Internet pornography is a culture-wide phenomenon that surely can find entry into [the] seminary ... And what of the technophile seminarian more comfortable speaking to computers than with parishioners?¹

At our meeting with the spiritual directors, all of the priests mentioned that their religious houses have concerns from time to time with the use of the Internet. To help us address this issue, we look to the Australian *Program for Priestly Formation* and the rules of life that govern seminaries. Additionally, the recent report from the visitation of the American seminaries is helpful. The letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education says this among other things:

In light of the visitation's results, many seminaries will want to revise their respective rules of life in order to make them more demanding. This will help the seminarians to take on a more priestly and ascetic character, and shed a worldly style of life. Issues to be included in the rule include the appropriate use of alcohol, when the seminarians need permission in order

The use and misuse of the Internet is an important matter to be addressed in seminaries around the world.

to be absent from the seminary, the curfew, the areas of the seminary that are off-limits to guests, etc.²

The *Program for Priestly Formation* and the rules of life in Australian seminaries address these matters in ways that are healthy and maintain balance.

The very next paragraph in the *Report on the Visitation of U.S. Seminaries* says this:

Seminaries face extra challenges today as compared to recent years. Among these is how to monitor the students' use of the Internet. In order to prevent problems occurring, most U.S. seminaries have sensibly invested in Internet-filtering programs. Some have restricted Internet use to public places within the seminary.³

There are various methods of supervision of the Internet. One of our spiritual directors said that, in his religious house, the students are told that their access to the Internet will be regularly examined, and he said that their accounts are, indeed, examined each month.

My view is that, at present, seminarians' Internet accounts should not be examined unless there are sig-

nificant grounds for doing so. Some seminaries instead restrict Internet use to public places such as libraries. This is a prudent measure designed to protect the integrity and reputation of all associated with the seminary community. However, like everyone else seminarians have access to the Internet almost anywhere and everywhere as fixed and portable wi-fi technology has developed. The report on the U.S. seminaries visitation also says: “seminaries will need to examine how they ensure the good behavior of their students outside the seminary buildings.”⁴

My recommendation is that we need to state our expectations very clearly, for one task of a seminary is to promote virtue. We want seminarians to be honorable men whose virtue does go deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees. We want them to be men of integrity who are seen to be good in public and who are indeed good in private. We want them to have a consistency wherein what is whispered in the dark is decent and honorable so that, should it ever be brought into the light, the result will always reflect well on the seminarians, the seminary and the diocese.

Let us have a look at some issues regarding the use of the Internet. The sources for this material come from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The Internet offers a different form of communication to the book, the journal and the newspaper. It can provide text, video and audio information on a range of subjects at the touch of a button. Used properly, a Web site can ensure that the most up-to-date information is accessible to all.

Modern technology undoubtedly provides the church with powerful tools that can be used to the benefit of the mission of Gospel proclamation. The organization of, and communication during, Sydney’s World Youth Day relied on Web sites, emails, mobile phone calls and text messages. This is just one example of how electronic and satellite communications can be employed at the service of the Gospel.

The Archdiocesan Office for Youth in Melbourne uses a web site, email, Facebook and twitter as its preferred means of communicating with youth. The Holy See recognized this powerful means of communication as an aid to evangelization and education across the world:

The Internet offers people direct and immediate access to important religious and spiritual resources—great libraries and museums and places of worship, the teaching documents of

We want seminarians to be honorable men whose virtue does go deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees.

the Magisterium, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and the religious wisdom of the ages. It has a remarkable capacity to overcome distance and isolation, bringing people into contact with like-minded persons of good will who join in virtual communities of faith to encourage and support one another.⁵

At the same time, the Holy See also draws our attention to some less than savory things that are accessible on the Internet: violence, pornography and sites which are devoted to defaming and attacking religious and ethnic groups.⁶ It should be clear to readers that accessing any material of that kind is inconsistent with a vocation to the priesthood and life as a seminarian.

As well as these concerns, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications wisely draws our attention to the biases of the Web sites we read. Not everyone calling themselves “Catholic” in cyberspace will be presenting a balanced doctrinal view. This is what the Council says:

The proliferation of Web sites calling themselves Catholic creates a problem of a different sort. ... it is confusing, to say the least, not to distinguish eccentric doctrinal interpretations, idiosyncratic devotional practices, and ideological advocacy bearing a ‘Catholic’ label from the authentic positions of the Church.⁷

We have to be aware that “the Internet can unite people, but it also can divide them, both as individuals and as mutually suspicious groups separated by ideology, politics, possessions, race and ethnicity, intergenerational differences, and even religion.”⁸

No doubt, many readers have heard of “cyber bullying” which can be a problem in schools. The Australian Government’s *NetAlert* service describes “cyber bullying” as:

Bullying which is carried out through an Internet service such as email, chat room, discussion

group or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS).

Examples of cyber bullying are: Teasing and being made fun of; Spreading of rumours online; Sending unwanted messages; Defamation. Anyone can be bullied online and the bully can act anonymously.⁹

Unfortunately, some of these types of behavior do happen on blog sites and in Facebook entries by those who would otherwise claim to be in line with, or promoting, the teachings of the Catholic Church. As the Pontifical Council says, “Data suggest that some visitors to religious Web sites may be on a sort of shopping spree, picking and choosing elements of customized religious packages to suit their personal tastes.”¹⁰

Father James Wehner, then-rector of St. Paul’s Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, penned an article titled, “Challenging Chastity: Cyberspace.” In that article, Father Wehner talked about the balanced use of the Internet. He avoided the issue of seminarians who might access sexually explicit Web sites or violent Web sites, but questioned the amount of time seminarians are spending on the Internet, asking: “Are you spending more time on the Internet than before the Blessed Sacrament each day?”¹¹ Wehner posed the question as to whether use of the Internet was taking one away from studies, spiritual reading and real friends. He plainly said, “The Internet is not a replacement for friendships.”¹²

Father Wehner also asks seminarians to examine whether they use blogs, chat rooms, Facebook and the like in healthy and appropriate ways. Of course, it would be absolutely wrong and inconsistent for a seminarian to use these as means for sexual gratification. And, it would be absolutely wrong for seminarians to have “anonymous” relationships, which undermine their commitment to chastity for the sake of the Kingdom. However, Wehner adds:

Are those “friends” you claim on your Facebook really friends? Do these people have a right to know your journal each day? What is your real motive for posting information on Facebook? For those of you who have your own Web site – are these social by nature? If you are posting any doctrinal, theological, liturgical or catechetical information..., is it truly expressed with the mind of the Church?¹³

The annual Mass of the Corpus Christi Priests’ Association used to be held in the chapel at Clayton outside Melbourne.¹⁴ The chapel was large enough for all the priests and seminarians. I vividly recall one year when the preacher was having a “shot across the bow” to challenge some of the priests present. He used words similar to these:

When these men were ordained, priests said Mass with their backs to the people on Sunday and then went and faced them every day of the week in their homes and schools. Now, priests say Mass facing the people on Sunday and spend the rest of the week with their backs to the people as they sit at their computers.

Father Wehner made the same point very sharply: “Even nonsexual and non-perverted uses of the Internet can be addictive, narcissistic and...unhealthy.”¹⁵ The Holy See also reminds us, in stark terms, that priestly life is personal, face-to-face, and heart-to-heart:

Virtual reality is no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh-and-blood human community. There are no sacraments on the Internet; and even the religious experiences possible there by the grace of God are insufficient apart from real-world interaction with other persons of faith.¹⁶

The way we use the Internet surely is a mirror into our own lives. It can be a powerful tool for good, which the Pontifical Council suggests that we must learn to use for good. It is good for us to note that, here in Australia, Pope John Paul II chose the Internet as the means by which he launched the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* that addresses the pastoral issues particular to our part of the world. As active pastoral ministers it will be insufficient to ignore the technology that can profitably be employed to announce the Good News, to maintain contact with brother priests and to be available to your people. The Second Vatican Council made this same point in these words:

All the children of the Church should join, without delay and with the greatest effort in a common work to make effective use of the media of social communication in various apostolic

endeavours ... Pastors should hasten, therefore, to fulfill their duty in this respect, one which is intimately linked with their ordinary preaching responsibility.¹⁷

At the same time, users of the Internet, mobile phones, blackberries, iPhones and whatever will come along in the future have to employ this technology in wholesome and holy ways. It means that our use of these items has to be an expression of our theological tradition and be informed by, and flow from, our spiritual lives.

The safeguard to Internet use, according to the Holy See, is the cultivation of the Cardinal virtues:

We would suggest some virtues that need to be cultivated by everyone who wants to make good use of the Internet; their exercise should be based upon and guided by a realistic appraisal of its contents.

Prudence is necessary in order clearly to see the implications—the potential for good and evil—in this new medium and to respond creatively to its challenges and opportunities.

Justice is needed, especially justice in working to close the digital divide—the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor in today's world. This requires a commitment to the international common good, no less than the "globalization of solidarity."

Fortitude, courage, is necessary. This means standing up for truth in the face of religious and moral relativism, for altruism and generosity in the face of individualistic consumerism, for decency in the face of sensuality and sin.

And temperance is needed—a self-disciplined approach to this remarkable technological instrument, the Internet, so as to use it wisely and only for good.¹⁸

The way we use the Internet and social media is a reflection of our own inner lives. If our inner life is focussed on the Lord and all that his plan holds for us; if our desire is to be faithful ministers of his church; if we

are really tilling the soil of a deep and personal spirituality of service that impels us to a chaste loving availability to our people, then our use of all that the Internet offers will be holy and wholesome, reflecting well on ourselves, the seminary and on the dioceses from which seminarians come, and in which, with God's grace, they will serve the Lord and his people in the years to come.



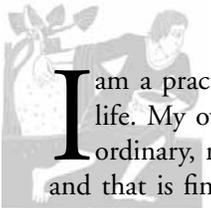
Rev. Msgr. Anthony J. Ireland, STD is the Episcopal Vicar for Health and Aged Care in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Australia). He is a parish priest and teaches Moral Theology at Catholic Theological College in Melbourne.

Endnotes

1. Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, "The Importance of Seminary Formation," *Church*, (Spring 2009), 28.
2. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation of U.S. Seminaries (15 December 2008)," *Origins* 49 (January 2009), 29, 38-33.
3. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation of U.S. Seminaries (15 December 2008)," 29, 38-33.
4. Congregation for Catholic Education, "Report on Visitation of U.S. Seminaries (15 December 2008)," 29, 38-33.
5. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *The Church and Internet* (22 February 2002), §5.
6. *The Church and Internet*, §8.
7. *The Church and Internet*, §8.
8. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Internet* (22 February 2002), §9.
9. NetAlert, "What is Cyber Bullying," www.netalert.gov.au/advice/risks/cyberbullying/What_is_cyber_bullying.html, (12 March 2009).
10. *The Church and Internet*, §9.
11. James A. Wehner, "Challenging Chastity: Cyberspace," *Priest*, April 2008, 22.
12. Wehner, "Challenging Chastity," 23.
13. Wehner, "Challenging Chastity," 23.
14. The location of Corpus Christi College from 1972–1999 was Clayton, Victoria, Australia.
15. Wehner, "Challenging Chastity," 23.
16. *The Church and Internet*, §9.
17. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Media of Social Communications *Inter Mirifica*, (4 December 1963), §13.
18. *The Church and Internet*, §12.

The Heart of the Matter

Most Rev. Edward Rice



I am a practical man when it comes to the spiritual life. My own spiritual journey has been marked by ordinary, mundane experiences in prayer and liturgy, and that is fine. Actually, it is more than fine; I prefer it that way. I prefer to “trust in the slow work of God,” as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin would say. And yet, daily, I present myself before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, offering that first hour of the day with the conviction that this is the best place for me to be, that my fidelity to that hour is pleasing to the Lord and fruitful for me. I think St. Thomas Aquinas would say that to trust in that slow work of God results in virtue, “the habitual and firm disposition to do the good.”

Seminary programs are guided by the fundamental principles expressed in Blessed John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores dabo vobis* (PDV),¹ and the *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF).² In *Pastores dabo vobis*, Blessed John Paul II offered those charged with seminary formation the framework by which to form men for the priesthood, namely, the four pillars of priestly formation: spiritual, intellectual, apostolic and human formation. These four guiding principles operate with a beautiful complementarity and interplay, enhancing the desired goals of each individual pillar. It is important to recognize the goals specific to each area while appreciating their interdependence. This is clearly recognized in PDV and the PPF. Section 73 of the PPF states: “Spiritual formation informs the other three. Intellectual formation appropriates and understands the other three. Pastoral formation expresses the other three pillars in practice.” Section 57 of *Pastores dabo vobis* states, “The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd.”

What I purposely saved for last is the reference to human formation. “Clearly human formation is the

The development of sound and lasting habits and attitudes in the spiritual life is a challenging process.
PPF, III

foundation for the other three pillars.”³ In order to have an authentic, integrated approach to the formation of future priests and a thorough implementation of the goals specific to the remaining three pillars, the key role of human formation must be appreciated. Again, Blessed John Paul II acknowledged this point: “Human formation...leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation.”⁴

The goals of spiritual formation are clearly outlined. Reflecting the work of Pope Paul VI in *Optatam Totius*,⁵ PDV outlines the threefold work of “faithful meditation on the Word of God, active participation in the Church’s holy mysteries, and the service of charity.”⁶ These aspects of spiritual formation are further outlined in the PPF, focusing on a whole list of spiritual practices including the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Liturgy of the Hours, spiritual direction, *lectio divina*, retreats, personal meditation, solitude, simplicity and apostolic outreach.

After listing these practices, Section 111 of the PPF states, “The development of sound and lasting habits and attitudes in the spiritual life is a challenging process.” I would add that this development of habits and attitudes has just as much to do with human formation as it does spiritual formation, if not more. The daily schedule of Holy Mass, the Divine Office, meditation, and so forth, presupposes that the seminarian has

“I have really stopped thinking that time is my own.” This is a momentous realization in the area of human formation for a college seminarian.

the necessary self-discipline and maturity to recognize these moments as good for him and then to conform his life to them. A college seminarian recently wrote in his self-evaluation, “I have really stopped thinking that time is my own.” This is a momentous realization in the area of human formation for a college seminarian. He is no longer thinking about himself, but rather how his choices, especially his use of time, have greater consequences. This is a positive step in affective maturity, self-discipline, self-direction and personal responsibility. Only with such growth in human formation—the “foundation” for the other three pillars—can spiritual formation, “the core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and his acting as a priest” occur.⁷

Again, I am a practical man when it comes to the spiritual life. It has often been said that ninety percent of the spiritual life is simply showing up. I believe in that principle. Get out of bed and make it down to chapel on time. Not because the director is telling you to be there, but because you have come to realize the virtue in such a mundane decision. Only then will spiritual formation, the “heart” of the matter, be able to build on a firm human foundation.



Most Reverend Edward Rice is auxiliary bishop of St. Louis, Missouri. He was bishop in residence at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary and directed the Cardinal Glennon College Seminary program of formation from fall 2011 through fall 2012.

Endnotes

1. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day *Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §1 “I will give you shepherds.”
2. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)
3. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §73.
4. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §45.
5. Pope Paul VI, Decree on Priestly Training *Optatam Totius* (28 October 1965).
6. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §48.
7. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §45.

Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2011–2012

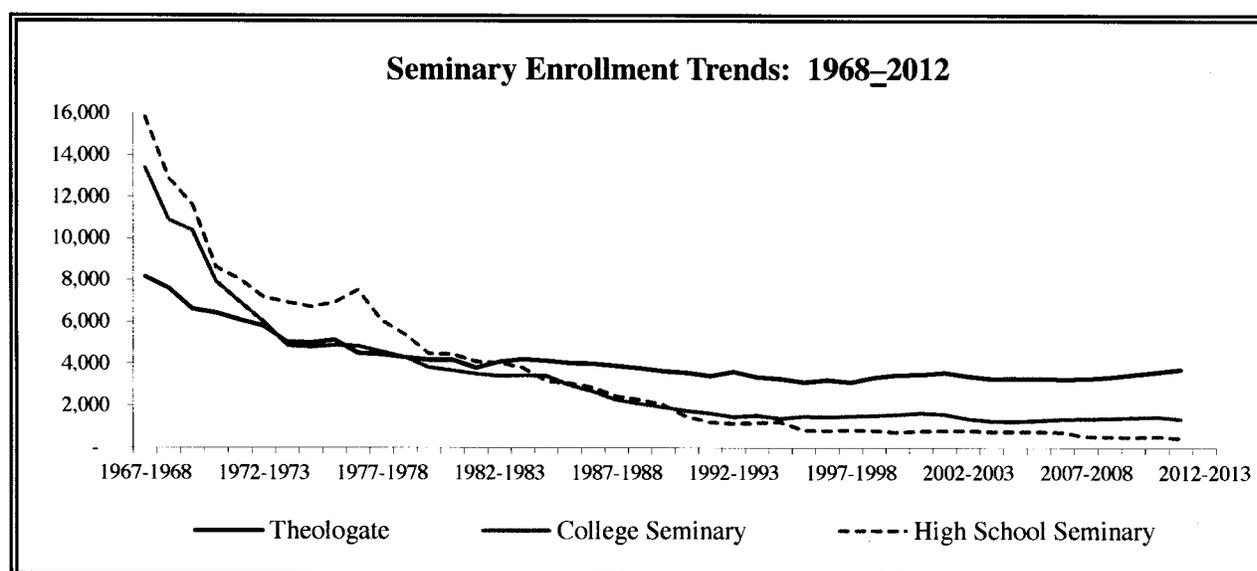
Mary Gautier, Ph.D.

Priestly Formation

During academic year 2011–2012, enrollment in the post-baccalaureate level of priestly formation totaled 3,723, a net increase of 115 seminarians (3 percent) above last year's theologate enrollment. Of these, 2,805 (75 percent) were candidates for dioceses and 918 (25 percent) were from religious orders. Diocesan enrollment increased by 63 seminarians (up 2 percent from last year) and religious enrollment increased by 52 seminarians (up 6 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 greater than any year since 1988–1989. As in previous years, the number of seminarians enrolled in pre-theology continues to increase, with 878 enrolled in pre-theology this year, which makes up 24 percent of all theology-level students.

This year's college seminary enrollment of 1,355 seminarians reflects a decrease of 105 seminarians, down 7 percent from last year.¹ High school seminary enrollment decreased by 84 (16 percent) from last year and is now at 448 seminarians in four high school seminary programs.²

Overall Seminary Enrollment Trends, 1968–2012



¹ Two college seminaries closed in 2011, one was reclassified as a House of Formation, and two discernment programs that did not meet the definition of a collaborative college seminary were removed from this count at the request of the USCCB.

² One high school seminary closed in 2011 and three declined to participate in data collection.

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

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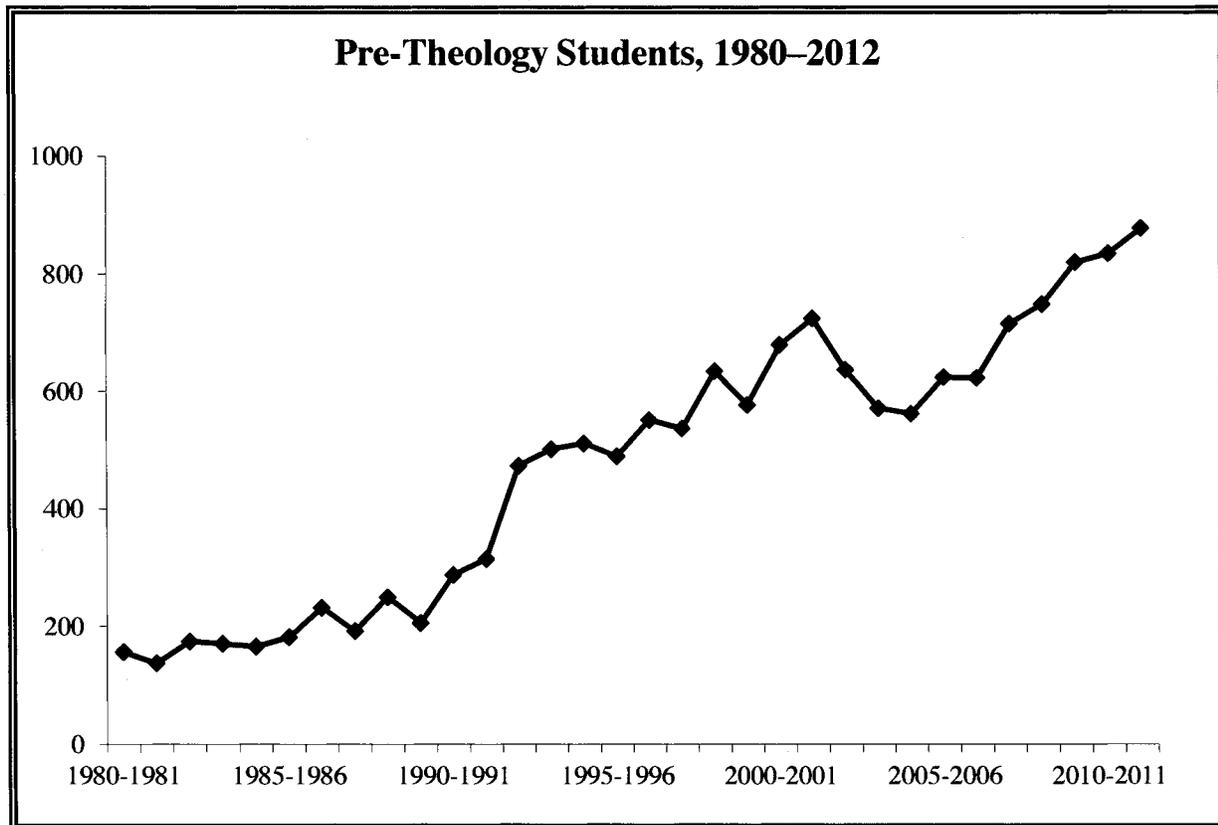
Seminary Enrollment: 2000–2012 (continued)					
Year	Theology Diocesan	Theology Religious	Total Theology	Total College	Total High School
2000–2001	2,549	934	3,483	1,647	787
2001–2002	2,621	963	3,584	1,594	816
2002–2003	2,489	925	3,414	1,376	808
2003–2004	2,348	937	3,285	1,268	761
2004–2005	2,307	1,001	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
2011–2012	2,805	918	3,723	1,355	448

Beginning with the 1967–1968 academic year, Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (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 United States seminarians from the only priesthood formation program abroad that is sponsored by the hierarchy of the United States—the Pontifical North American College in Rome. 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.³



In academic year 2011–2012, the 878 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology make up one quarter (24 percent) of all theology-level seminarians, an increase of 153 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.

³ Section 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.”

Pre-Theology Relative to Total Theologate Enrollment, 1980–2012

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%
2011–2012	878	2,845	3,723	24%

Theologate Profile

The table on the next page lists the 43 theologates that prepare seminarians for the priesthood in the United States.⁴ 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 nine students are counted in its theologate enrollment figure of 78. 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 68. However, all pre-theology students are included in the CARA totals for theology-level enrollment provided elsewhere in this report. Thus, the total theology enrollment of 3,723 reported earlier includes 3,332 enrolled in theologates (2,845 in theology and 487 in pre-theology), and an additional 391 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.⁵ For 2011–2012, the average tuition was \$16,486, an increase of \$981 from 2010–2011. The average room and board for the 35 programs that reported room and board separately was \$10,216, an increase of \$529 from 2010–2011. Blessed John XXIII National Seminary and Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe are excluded from these calculations because 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 74 residences that currently house seminarians; 53 of these residences have seminarians that 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 2011–2012 theologate profile table. The exceptions are nine Norbertines in study at St. Michael's Abbey, seven Trappists in study at the Abbey of New Clairvaux and eight seminarians from religious institutes studying at theologates outside the United States and not included in the 43 theologates counted here.

⁴ Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Denton, NE, declined to participate and has been removed from the annual data collection. This seminary is owned by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. The American College at Louvain, Belgium, closed in June 2011.

⁵ 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 on the next page). 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.

Priesthood Candidates Enrolled at Theologates, 2011–2012

Theologate	Tuition	Room & Board	Diocesan	Religious	Total
Aquinas Institute of Theology, MO	15,360	—	0	28	28
Athenaeum of Ohio—Mount St. Mary's of the West, OH	19,500	9,750	40	1	41
Blessed John XXIII National Seminary, MA	24,500	—	57	5	62
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	23,112	—	3	58	61
Catholic Theological Union, IL	13,965	10,485	0	114	114
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	18,135	11,000	84	32	116
Christ the King Seminary, NY	16,800	10,500	19	0	19
Dominican House of Studies, DC	15,120	—	0	70	70
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, CA	14,520	—	0	20	20
Franciscan School of Theology, CA	13,000	15,000	0	6	6
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT	12,250	9,940	57	21	78
Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, NJ	14,910	10,236	138	51	189
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	14,350	—	0	34	34
Kenrick School of Theology, MO	20,499	9,482	86	6	92
Moreau Seminary of the University of Notre Dame, IN	30,000	8,000	0	50	50
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	12,586	10,148	85	22	107
Mount St. Mary's Seminary, MD	17,438	10,822	163	8	171
Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology, LA	18,582	12,124	76	12	88
Oblate School of Theology, TX	12,740	—	48	26	74
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	21,573	8,390	100	0	100
Pontifical North American College, Rome	12,316	12,200	232	0	232
Sacred Heart Major Seminary School of Theology, MI	23,069	8,681	50	15	65
Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI	14,700	9,500	75	11	86
Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary, MN	13,500	6,050	2	13	15
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	18,596	11,940	126	14	140
Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, MN	17,745	10,418	97	3	100
Saint Vincent Seminary, PA	21,736	10,784	36	20	56
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, PA	19,455	11,820	66	2	68
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	15,200	9,475	124	0	124
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, CA	15,000	13,000	71	10	81
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, MA	13,750	6,250	79	22	101
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	7,100	5,500	30	15	45
St. Mary's Seminary Graduate School of Theology, OH	9,825	7,260	33	3	36
St. Mary's Seminary, University of St. Thomas, TX	15,420	10,000	80	10	90
St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	15,824	12,492	87	1	88
St. Patrick's Seminary and University, CA	15,381	13,505	103	4	107
St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, FL	20,000	11,000	80	3	83
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary School of Theology, PA	10,500	10,000	10	0	10
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary, MI	14,900	14,780	31	0	31
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe, MX	17,000	—	12	0	12
Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, NY	12,000	8,000	44	0	44
University of St. Mary of the Lake /Mundelein Seminary, IL	21,115	8,881	165	1	166
Washington Theological Union, DC	15,840	10,180	0	32	32
Average Costs and Total Enrollment	\$16,486	\$10,215	2,589	743	3,332

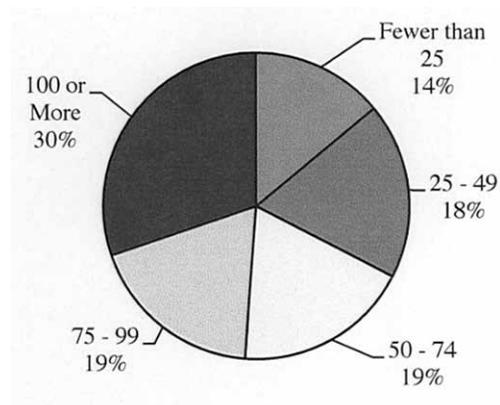
Theologates with the Highest Enrollment

The 13 theologates with enrollment above 100 account for 1,767 or 53 percent of the 3,332 seminarians reported by theologates in 2011–2012. The table below lists these institutions in terms of enrollment of diocesan or religious priesthood candidates. New to the list this year are The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity in Saint Paul, MN, and Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, OH.

Theologates with Highest Enrollment, 2011–2012				
Theologate	Diocesan Priesthood Candidates	Religious Priesthood Candidates	Total	Change from 2010-2011
Pontifical North American College, Rome	232	0	232	+10
Immaculate Conception Seminary, NJ	138	51	189	+3
Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, MD	163	8	171	+8
University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, IL	165	1	166	+7
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	126	14	140	+4
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	124	0	124	-5
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	84	32	116	+12
Catholic Theological Union, IL	0	114	114	+5
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	85	22	107	-8
St. Patrick’s Seminary and University, CA	103	4	107	-2
St. John’s Seminary School of Theology, MA	79	22	101	-1
Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, MN	97	3	100	+8
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	100	0	100	+35

Theologates by Size of Enrollment

The figure at right groups the theologates according to their reported enrollment for the 2011–2012 academic year. Three in ten theologates (13 of the 43 theologates) are relatively large, enrolling 100 or more seminarians. Four in ten (16 of the 43 theologates) have between 50 and 99 seminarians enrolled, and another one in five (14 in all) have fewer than 50 seminarians enrolled this year.



Canonical Degree Granting Theologates

Some theologates, as well as some other universities and academic departments, have special approval 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.”⁶ 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.

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	22	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	15	2
School of Theology, St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	1822	11	4
Faculty of Theology, The Catholic University of America, DC	1900	15	5
Faculty of Weston Jesuit, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	1932	10	3

CARA identified 14 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 eight grant their canonical degrees through affiliation or aggregation to the ecclesiastical faculty at another institution.

- 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 Columbus, OH, has been affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome since 2005.
- Established in 1889, Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, OR, is affiliated to the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties *Sapientia Christiana* (29 April 1979), Foreword III.

- 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.

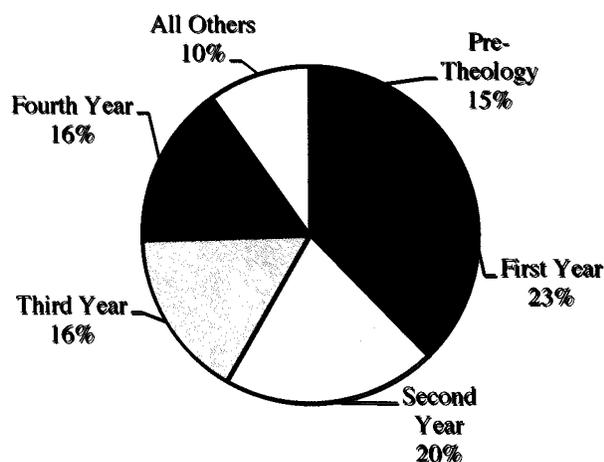
Seminarians Enrolled in Canonical Degree Programs at Theologates, 2011–2012			
Theologate	Seminarians Enrolled		Expected to Earn the Degree in 2012
	S.T.B.	S.T.L.	
Pontifical North American College, Rome	185	65	56
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	129	0	13
St. Mary’s Seminary and University, MD	75	3	13
St. Patrick Seminary and University, CA	81	0	2
The Catholic University of America, DC	116	0	10
Sacred Heart Major Seminary, MI	57	5	7
Mundelein Seminary, IL	35	14	17
Dominican House of Studies, DC	42	6	8
St. Joseph’s Seminary, NY	9	0	4
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	35	0	7
St. Vincent Seminary, PA	5	0	3
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	4	0	4
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	3	8	8
Weston Jesuit Department, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	0	7	0

In addition to the seminarian numbers listed above, these institutions report another 155 priests and 33 lay persons or deacons enrolled in their canonical degree programs. They anticipate awarding canonical degrees to 64 priests and 13 lay persons or deacons in 2012.

Theologate Enrollment by Year of Study for the Priesthood

The accompanying table shows enrollment in theologates 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.

Pre-Theology	487
First Year	768
Second Year	686
Third Year	542
Fourth Year	520
Pastoral Year	164
Leave of Absence	30
Other	135
TOTAL	3,332



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 487 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology. Free-standing and collaborative college seminaries report 192 enrolled in pre-theology, while other seminary residences count 199 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, seven Trappists studying theology at the Abbey of New Clairvaux and eight seminarians from religious institutes studying abroad. These 24 seminarians are not included in the total on page 87.

Theologates	
Theologate, excluding pre-theology	2,845
Theologate, pre-theology only	487
Pre-theology at College Priesthood Formation Programs	
Free-Standing College Seminaries	127
Collaborative College Seminaries	65
Other Seminary Residences	199
Total Enrollment	3,723
Other Houses of Formation*	24
*Not included in the total count on page 3.	

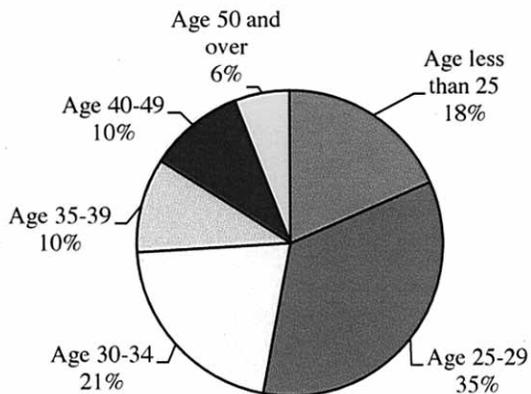
Retention of Seminarians in Theology

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 2011–2012 class of seminarians through their four years in theology, that is, those who began theologate studies in 2008–2009 and who will be completing their theologate studies in 2011–2012. Each class of seminarians in theology can also be compared to its corresponding cohort in the preceding academic year by following the same diagonal.

	Retention of Seminarians in Theology				Retention Rate
	Year of Study in Theology				
	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	622	607	541	535	77%
2008–2009	709	546	524	500	79%
2009–2010	646	600	568	497	76%
2010–2011	725	626	549	535	86%
2011–2012	768	686	542	520	73%

Of the 709 seminarians who began theologate study in 2008, 520 are completing their fourth year in 2012. Thus, the retention rate for the Class of 2012 throughout their four years of theologate study is expected to be 73 percent, approximately the same rate as that reported for the Classes of 2004 and 2005, and a little lower than in recent years. The average retention rate for those who began theology from 1999–2000 to 2007–2008 was 77 percent.

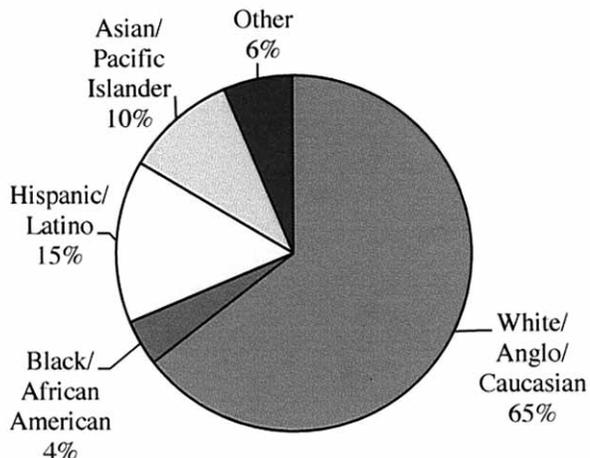
Age Distribution of Theologate Students



The age distribution for theologate students preparing for the priesthood is shown at left. Just over half of all seminarians enrolled in theologates (53 percent) are under age 30 and another fifth (21 percent) are in their early thirties. One in ten (10 percent), is between the age of 35 and 39. One in six (16 percent) is aged 40 and above. Thus, just over a quarter of seminarians enrolled in theologates (26 percent) are aged 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 aged 35 or older.

Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Theologate Students

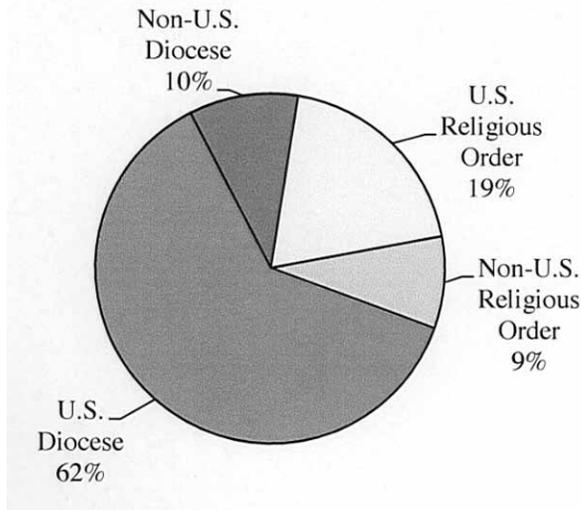
Two in three priesthood candidates enrolled in theologates (65 percent) are white/Anglo/Caucasian. One in six (15 percent) is Hispanic/Latino, 10 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander and 4 percent are black/African American. Another 6 percent are listed as “other,” which includes Native Americans, multi-racial 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 2011–2012, 24 percent of seminarians in theologates (892 seminarians) are from countries other than the United States. This is a slight decrease of 46 seminarians from the number



reported last year. In 2010–2011, foreign-born seminarians were 28 percent of all seminarians in theology, compared to 30 percent in 2009–2010, 25 percent in 2008–2009, 27 percent in 2007–2008, 25 percent in 2006–2007 and 23 percent in 2005–2006.

In all, 81 foreign countries are represented by these seminarians. The greatest numbers are from Mexico (132 seminarians), Colombia (118), Vietnam (110), the Philippines (76), Poland (64) and Nigeria (40).

Most of these seminarians, 62 percent, are preparing to be ordained for a diocese in the United States. Another 10 percent of foreign-born seminarians are studying for a diocese outside the United States. Seminarians from religious orders, 250 in all, comprise the remaining 28 percent of these foreign-born seminarians. Breaking down that 28 percent, seminarians studying for a U.S.-based religious order account for 19 percent, while another 9 percent are studying for a religious order based outside the United States.

College Seminaries

In 2011–2012, there were 1,355 seminarians enrolled in 29 college-level priesthood formation programs.⁷ This number does not include the 175 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 (652 seminarians), collaborative seminaries (532), and seminary residence programs (171).

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 2011–2012 academic year. The 652 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these institutions is a decrease of 30 seminarians (4 percent) from the 682 seminarians reported last year.

Free-Standing College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre-Theology	College Level
Conception Seminary College, MO	100	12	112	8	104
Divine Word College Seminary, IA	2	64	66	12	54
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT*	4	2	6	0	6
Legionaries of Christ Center for Higher Studies, NY	0	75	75	0	75
Mount Angel Seminary, OR*	64	4	68	0	68
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH*	118	0	118	33	85
Sacred Heart Major Seminary College, MI*	45	5	50	25	25
Saint Joseph Seminary College, LA	80	0	80	5	75
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria, MX*	25	0	25	0	25
St. Basil College, CT	1	0	1	0	1
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary College, PA*	72	2	74	19	55
St. Gregory the Great Seminary, NE	34	0	34	2	32
St. John Vianney College and Seminary, FL	67	3	70	23	47
Total Enrollment	612	167	779	127	652

* Also has a theologate division.

⁷ Two college seminaries (Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo, ND, and St. John Neumann Seminary College in Yonkers, NY) closed in 2011. St. Francis De Sales Center in San Diego, CA, was reclassified as a House of Formation, and the Priestly Discernment programs at Ave Maria University and Franciscan University of Steubenville were removed from this count at the request of the USCCB.

- 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 Wyncott, 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, also has both a free-standing college and a theologate; however, it 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 16 programs in the category of collaborative college seminaries (see footnote 7, above). The 532 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these programs is a decrease of 115 seminarians (18 percent) from the 647 seminarians reported last year. Most of this decrease is due to the removal of the two Priestly Discernment programs, whose combined enrollment totaled 72 last year.

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.

Collaborative College Seminary Enrollment, 2011–2012

Collaborative College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre- Theology	College Level
Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, IN	35	0	35	0	35
Bishop White Seminary, WA	13	0	13	1	12
Borromeo Seminary, OH	21	8	29	0	29
Cardinal Glennon College, MO*	20	0	20	0	20
Cathedral Residence of the Immaculate Conception, NY	77	0	77	19	58
College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Andrews Hall, NJ*	31	0	31	0	31
Holy Trinity Seminary, TX	67	0	67	21	46
Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, MN	47	0	47	2	45
Old College Seminary at Notre Dame, IN*	0	16	16	0	16
Seminary of Our Lady of Providence, RI	27	0	27	5	22
St. John Fisher Seminary Residence, CT	16	0	16	8	8
St. John Vianney College Seminary, MN	135	0	135	0	135
St. Joseph College Seminary, IL	28	3	31	0	31
St. Mark Seminary, PA	22	0	22	2	20
St. Paul Seminary, PA	17	0	17	7	10
St. Pius X Seminary, IA	14	0	14	0	14
Total Enrollment	570	27	597	65	532
* Also has a theologate division.					

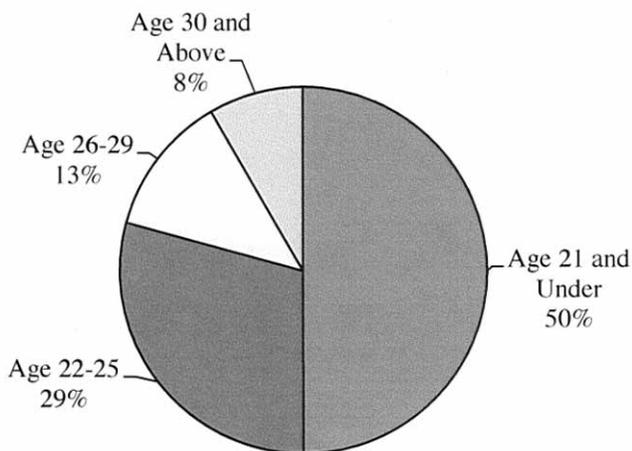
Other College Level Formation Programs

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. Twenty-one of these house only college-level candidates; the other 37 currently function as joint college and theology residences. In 2011–2012, the combined number of priesthood candidates pursuing college-level studies in these residences was 171, excluding pre-theology. Another 199 were enrolled in pre-theology coursework. In both cases, these seminarians were not enrolled in programs reported here as theologates, free-standing colleges, or collaborative colleges, and therefore, are not double-counted when added to the enrollment totals for these institutions.

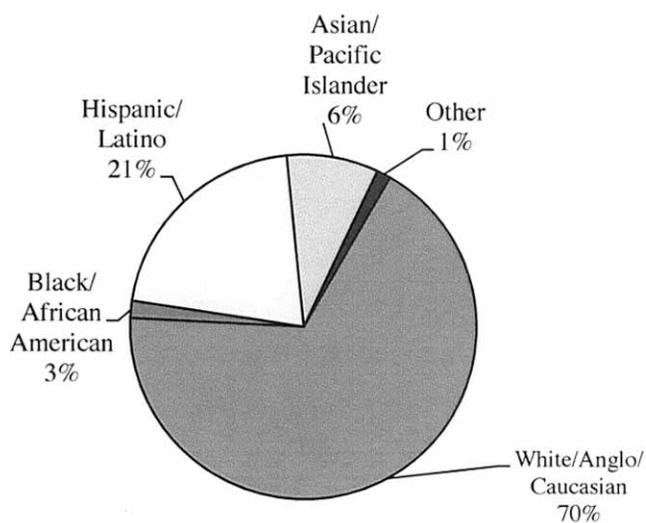
Age Distribution of College Seminarians

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 at right depicts the age distribution of seminarians enrolled in free-standing or collaborative college seminaries during the 2011–2012 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 one-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 and Latinos comprised about one-fifth of the priesthood candidates at free-standing and collaborative college seminaries during the 2011–2012 academic year. Asians and Pacific Islanders, and blacks and African Americans make up about one-tenth. Other racial or ethnic categories, including Native Americans and multiracial seminarians, make up the other one 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 four active high school seminary programs remain, with a combined enrollment of 448 students.⁸ These programs are all independent, free-standing institutions. Only one of the four is diocesan (Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in Elmhurst, NY) and the other three are sponsored by a religious institute. One is sponsored by the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin, and the other two are sponsored by the Legionaries of Christ.

The diocesan high school seminary (Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in Elmhurst, NY) does not have a residential program. The three religious high school seminaries do have residential programs. Room and board at institutions with separate charges for a residential program averages \$5,657 and tuition averages \$6,482. Average tuition increased by \$137, a 2 percent increase over that reported in 2010–2011.

High School Seminary Enrollment, 2011–2012			
Free-standing High School Seminaries	Sponsorship	Tuition	Enrollment
St. Lawrence Seminary, Mount Calvary, WI	Religious	\$6,680	202
Cathedral Preparatory Seminary, Elmhurst, NY	Diocesan	\$7,000	175
Immaculate Conception Apostolic School, Center Harbor, NH	Religious	\$5,250	38
Sacred Heart Apostolic School, Rolling Prairie, IN	Religious	\$7,000	33
Total High School Seminary Enrollment			448

ANNOUNCEMENT

The *CARA Catholic Ministry Formation Directory* is now available in both print and electronic format. Subscribers to the electronic volume have access to a searchable online database of all catholic ministry formation programs in the United States. The Online Directory includes up-to-date listings of the addresses, officers, degrees, certificates, tuition and enrollment for more than 600 catholic 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.

⁸ Immaculate Conception Apostolic School in Colfax, CA, closed in 2011. The Blessed Jose Sanchez Del Rio High School Seminary and the two remaining collaborative high school seminary programs declined to participate in the data collection. Their combined enrollment in 2010–2011 was 73 students.

- ...Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation, which includes diocesan-sponsored programs as well as programs affiliated with universities, seminaries and schools of theology.

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.

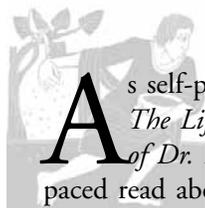
Mary Gautier, Ph.D., is senior researcher at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The Life and Lessons from a Warzone: A Memoir of Dr. Robert Nyeko Obol

Robert Obol

Published on Lulu.com, 2012

Reviewed by Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., Ph.D.



As self-published books go, Father Robert Obol's, *The Life and Lessons from a Warzone: A Memoir of Dr. Robert Nyeko Obol*, is a well-told, fast-paced read about a young man from the Acoli tribe of Uganda. Persevering in his priestly vocation as war rages around him, he spends three years in Pajule parish in the Archdiocese of Gulu, Uganda, a country riddled with internecine conflict and bloodshed.

Identified among his motives to write the book, Father Obol desired to “communicate to readers who have not had an actual experience of war in their lives the feeling and nature of what daily life is like in politically unstable and volatile areas.” What defines people living in warzones is the daily violence and uncertainty they experience as they come to learn that “the rules and norms that govern human conduct and human relations as we all know them do not apply.” Warzones are places where questions of theodicy are framed, but they are also places, as Father Obol points out, where “family, faith, relationships, and the church community... provide meaning and strength” to the lives of the people who endure them.

The book begins in the middle of a gunfight: thirteen-year-old Robert Obol's father flees the compound to avoid capture by armed thugs who had attacked his home in the town of Buda in eastern Uganda. Over the next dozen pages, Father Obol races through his discernment process and seminary career to reach what will be the bulk of his focus in this 210-page biography: his years as a priest serving the people of Pajule while facing the Lord's Resistance Army of Joseph Kony. A

significant part of the story is devoted to how Father Obol survived a direct military attack on his parish, was briefly captured, escaped and nearly captured again. Obol writes about the constant forgiveness that pours out from people who suffered greatly toward those who are the cause of their suffering.

Speaking in terms of peace and reconciliation, Father Obol asks the question: “If a society has gone through so much violence, pain, and suffering, how will it ever put its past behind it and lead a normal life?” He answers by calling upon an Acoli practice in which “society as a whole embarks on a journey of reconciliation and forgiveness to restore harmony among its members through a ritual ceremony.” Father Obol thinks this method will work not only because it has proven effective in the past, but also because it is “rooted in the spiritual value systems of the people, which are forgiveness, reconciliation, and love.” True justice for the people of Northern Uganda, he writes, “is based on a restorative system of justice in which one comes face to face with the perpetrator of a crime against one, and after going through a cultural ritual process, forgiveness takes place.” This process could be a model for how all conflict should be resolved, for it values everyone's humanity.

A number of things about this book are useful to our seminarians, most importantly the opportunity to expand their minds beyond the comparatively calm seminary walls in which they live to a developing understanding of global realities. Father Obol provides a misanthropic vision that understands the role of Providence

in each of our lives and how it moves us to evangelize our worlds, even when we are at our most desperate. The book also demonstrates a living ecclesiology: the church is shown to be ever present in people's lives, both in their moments of joy and their long hours of suffering. When the diocesan authorities asked Father Obol to abandon his parish after an attack had killed two people in it, he refused to leave. He remained in the war zone precisely because he was convinced that as a shepherd he could not abandon his flock. One also experiences a church that cares for everyone irrespective of faith tradition, a church that is open to engage with the world around her.

We also learn something important about the international priest, about 5,000 of whom are already

working as missionaries within the United States. The international priest who comes to serve in a U.S. diocese is often met by his parishioners as a problem—he is difficult to understand, his dietary needs are impossible to grasp and his motive for coming is often suspect—when in fact he is a real treasure who should be valued as a person whose life experience can teach us how to better love the Eucharist, the source and summit of all Christian life.

Sebastian Mahfood, O.P., Ph.D., was a Peace Corps Volunteer for two years in Tunisia, North Africa, in the mid-1990s, next door to the Algerian civil war. His book, *Radical Eschatologies* (Lambert, 2009), speaks about how African Marxists use Abrahamic eschatologies in pursuit of their social vision. Dr. Mahfood serves as Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Director of Distance Learning at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, CT.



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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