

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME NINETEEN

NUMBER ONE

Theme: Spiritual Direction

From the Desk of the Executive Director
Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy

The Rector's Conference
A Column by Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB

Spiritual Direction in a Seminary
Dr. Anthony Lilles, STD

Spiritual Direction in Catholic Seminaries: Grace and Challenge
Rev. Louis J. Cameli

Spiritual Direction and the Art of Active Listening
Rev. Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.

Spiritual Direction as Faith Seeking Understanding
Rev. Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.

We Have Seen and Heard: Astute Use of Formation Advising
Rev. Kenneth Davis, OFM Conv.

Seminary Formation: Assembly Line or Artisan's Workshop?
Rev. Michael Muhr

Emmaus Groups in Seminary Formation: An Experience of Fraternity and Faith Sharing
Rev. Michael Muhr

Falling in Love and Staying in Love: The Gift and Labor of Prayer in the Priesthood
Deacon James Keating

The Need to Teach About the Authority-Obedience Relationship
Cynthia Toolin, Ph.D.

Breathing with Two Lungs: (Re) Discovering the Eastern Churches
Rev. George Gallaro

Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview 2012-2013
Mary Gautier, Ph.D.

BOOK REVIEW

The Sulpicians of Montreal: A History of Power and Discretion, 1657-2007. Edited by Dominique DesLandres, John A. Dickinson, and Olivier Hubert.
Reviewed by Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette, SS



National Catholic Educational Association

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME 19

NUMBER ONE

SPRING 2013

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

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.

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, *Executive Editor*

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

Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, *Associate Editor*

Melissa Von Rohr, *Copy Editor*

Beatriz Ruiz, *Graphic Designer*

Distribution Policy

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:

Subscriptions & Back Issues

Individual Subscriptions: \$20.00 per volume year.

Multiple Copies & Back Issues:

1-5 copies: \$8.00 each

6-9 copies: \$5.00 each

10 or more copies: \$3.00 each

Make checks payable in U.S. currency to "NCEA Seminary Department" and send with your order to the following address:

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

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

Call for Articles

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

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

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

Endnotes

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

Disclaimer

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

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

SEMINARY JOURNAL

VOLUME 19

NUMBER ONE

SPRING 2013

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

CONTENTS

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy	1	From the Desk of the Executive Director
		Theme: Spiritual Direction
Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB	4	Column: The Rector's Conference
Dr. Anthony Lilles, STD	7	Spiritual Direction in a Seminary
Rev. Louis J. Cameli	17	Spiritual Direction in Catholic Seminaries: Grace and Challenge
Rev. Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.	22	Spiritual Direction and the Art of Active Listening
Rev. Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.	27	Spiritual Direction as Faith Seeking Understanding
Rev. Kenneth Davis, OFM Conv.	33	We Have Seen and Heard: Astute Use of Formation Advising
Rev. Michael Muhr	42	Seminary Formation: Assembly Line or Artisan's Workshop?
Rev. Michael Muhr	48	Emmaus Groups in Seminary Formation: An Experience of Fraternity and Faith Sharing
Deacon James Keating	50	Falling in Love and Staying in Love: The Gift and Labor of Prayer in the Priesthood
Cynthia Toolin, Ph.D.	59	The Need to Teach About the Authority-Obedience Relationship
Rev. George Gallaro	63	Breathing with Two Lungs: (Re) Discovering the Eastern Churches
Mary Gautier, Ph.D.	70	Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2012-2013
Reviewed by Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette, SS	85	<u>BOOK REVIEW</u> <i>The Sulpicians of Montreal: A History of Power and Discretion, 1657-2007.</i> Edited by Dominique DesLandres, John A. Dickinson, and Olivier Hubert.



National Catholic Educational Association
Seminary Department

Seminary Journal Call for Articles

***Seminary Journal* is pleased to announce a call for articles for 2014.**

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.



To All The World: *Preaching and the New Evangelization*

A Catholic preaching conference presented
by the John S. Marten Program
in Homiletics and Liturgics

June 25-27, 2014

The University of Notre Dame

Featured Speakers:

Cardinal Donald Wuerl
Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, O.P.
Fr. Virgilio Elizondo
Sr. Jamie Phelps, O.P.
Fr. Greg Heille, O.P.

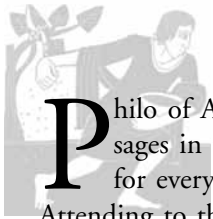
Fr. Paul Turner
Mr. Curtis Martin
Fr. Don Senior, C.P.
Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.
Dr. Christian Smith
Dr. Hosffman Ospino



martenprogram.nd.edu



From the Desk of the Executive Director



Philo of Alexandria, one of the greatest Jewish sages in the ancient world, once wrote: “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” Attending to the spiritual depths of the human condition, this wise observation comes to mind as I write this introduction for the issue of the journal devoted to the theme of spiritual direction.

Spiritual formation is an integrating dimension of priestly formation according to the *Program of Priestly Formation*: “Since spiritual formation is the core that unifies the life of a priest, it stands at the heart of seminary life and is the center around which all other aspects are integrated. Human, intellectual, and pastoral formation are indispensable in developing the seminarian’s relationship and communion with God and his ability to communicate God’s truth and love to others in the likeness of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and eternal High Priest” (PPF 115). The essays in this journal provide a rich set of reflections on the essential dimension of spiritual formation.

Fr. Denis Robinson OSB, rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, Indiana, challenges an assumption that spiritual direction, alone, is sufficient to accomplish the task of mature, spiritual formation in the seminary. The entire seminary program, including conferences by the rector, the liturgical and communal life of the seminary, indeed the entire culture of the seminary, contribute, in distinctive and important ways, to this overarching goal of spiritual growth and maturity.

Dr. Anthony Lilles, STD, associate professor of theology at St. John Vianney Seminary, Denver, Colorado, who teaches in the area of spirituality and spiritual direction, articulates a vision of spiritual direction that requires deep listening and attentiveness in order to generate an encounter with the mercy and compassion of Christ. Such a vision requires a wisdom that is more than technical skill, a form of faithful companionship that frees the seminarian to embrace his own relationship with the Lord.

Fr. Lou Cameli, a distinguished seminary educator, formator, and author from the Archdiocese of Chicago,

contributes a fine essay highlighting the grace and challenge of spiritual direction. In the seminary context, spiritual direction must address not only personal issues in the life of the seminarian, but also the integration of the human, intellectual and pastoral dimensions of the program to equip the seminarian for the challenges of priestly life and ministry. If spiritual direction becomes exclusively focused on persistent issues of vocational discernment or other areas in need of healing, then, it may be more appropriate for the struggling seminarian to attend to these issues in a setting away from the seminary and later to resume his preparation.

Fr. Dennis Billy, CSs.R., currently scholar-in-residence, professor and holder of the John Cardinal Krol Chair of Moral Theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, provides an astute appraisal of the seven characteristics of active listening that are crucial for effective spiritual direction. Fr. Billy then amplifies these insights in a second article in which he highlights the role of spiritual direction to lead seminarians to a sapiential, as opposed to merely rational, understanding of theology. Fr. Billy’s work, I think, provides a wonderful set of resources to help seminarians integrate their intellectual work with their hunger for spiritual growth and depth.

Fr. Kenneth Davis, OFM Conv., offers a thoughtful understanding of the relationship between the internal and external forum with respect to spiritual direction and evaluation of readiness for orders. The relationship between these two fora is an ongoing matter for discernment by seminary formators. To what extent, if at all, may the boundaries of strict confidentiality be breached? Fr. Davis suggests that careful clarity about these boundaries is essential if formation work is to be effective. Seminary educators will find his comments about the specific differences between spiritual direction and formation advising to be particularly helpful. His excellent set of questions for external forum advisers is insightful and engaging.

Fr. Michael Muhr, Dean of Spiritual Formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach,

Florida, has written two articles for this issue. His first essay identifies spiritual direction as an art rather than a functional role in the seminary. Rather than an item that is checked off on a “to do list,” spiritual direction is a form of companionship that deepens a seminarian’s relationship to Christ. In his second essay, Fr. Muhr points out the value of communal, supportive groups to strengthen spiritual formation. Emmaus groups provide fraternity and opportunities for faith-sharing that can sustain seminarians as they make the transition from the seminary to ministerial life as an ordained priest.

Deacon James Keating, Director of Theological Formation for the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, offers a thoughtful reflection on the love relationship that is so essential for the identity and mission of the seminarian and future priest.

Cynthia Toolin, PhD, Professor of Dogmatic and Moral Theology at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, Cromwell, Connecticut, attends to the important dynamic of obedience and authority for the well-being of the church. An organic model of the relationship between these two components, drawn from the work of St. Augustine, provides a helpful corrective to political models that assess the relationship in terms of power and conflict. As future leaders of church communities, seminarians need to embrace this relational understanding of authority as a capacity to build the life of the church and not as a prerogative for personal power.

Fr. George Gallaro, Professor of Ecumenism and Canon Law (both the Eastern and Western Code) at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS Cyril and Methodius, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, takes up the admonition

of Pope John Paul II that the “Church must learn to breathe again with its two lungs, its Eastern one and its Western one,” and provides an excellent overview of the structure of the Catholic Churches of the East with suggestions for fostering greater collaboration and understanding of the gifts of Eastern Churches in the United States.

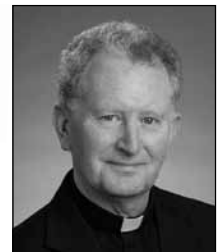
I am especially grateful to Mary Gautier and her colleagues at CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) for granting permission for the journal to publish “Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2012-2013.” The data presented are invaluable for seminary leaders and for planning purposes.

Fr. Mel Blanchette, SS, writes an excellent review of “The Sulpicians of Montreal: A History of Power and Discretion, 1657-2007.” This splendid collection of scholarly essays about the contributions of the Sulpician community to priestly formation in Canada enriches our historical understanding of the challenges these early pioneers faced and how that understanding can assist us with today’s challenges.

I hope that you find this issue of the journal to be insightful and thought-provoking. As always, articles are always welcome and I look forward to hearing from you.



Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy
Editor



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NCEA SEMINARY DEPARTMENT

Very Rev. Thomas Dragga
Seminary Rep, NCEA Board
Pastor
St. Luke Parish
1212 Bunts Road
Lakewood, OH 44107
(216) 521-0184 (office)
tmd@dioceseofcleveland.org

Rev. Leon Hutton
Seminary Rep, NCEA Board
Vice Rector
St. John's Seminary School of
Theology
5012 Seminary Road
Camarillo, CA 93012-0637
(805) 389-2009 (office)
lhutton@stjohnsem.edu

Msgr. James P. Moroney
Rector
St. John's Seminary
127 Lake St.
Brighton, MA 02135-3898
(617) 746-5411 (office)
rector@sjse.edu; tempio@aol.com

Rev. Benedict O'Cinnsealaigh
Rector
Athenaeum of Ohio - Mount St.
Mary's of the West
6616 Beechmont Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45230-2006
(513) 231-2223 (office)
bocinnsealaigh@athenaeum.edu

Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB
President-Rector
Saint Meinrad School of Theology
200 Hill Drive
Saint Meinrad, IN 47577-1010
(812) 357-6522 (office)
drobinson@saintmeinrad.edu

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

Rev. David Touns
Rector
St. Vincent de Paul Regional
Seminary
10701 S. Military Trail
Boynton Beach, FL 33436-4899
(561) 732-4424 (office)
dtouns@svdp.edu

EX-OFFICIO

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

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

Rev. James Myers, SS
Director of Spiritual Formation
Assumption Seminary
2600 W. Woodlawn Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78228
(210) 734-5137 x1451 (office)
jmyersss@aol.com

STAFF MEMBERS

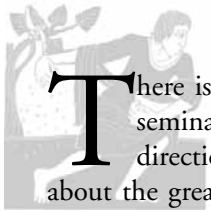
Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy
Executive Director
NCEA Seminary Department
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
(571) 257-1993 (direct to desk)
(800) 711-6232 (receptionist)
jmccarthy@ncea.org

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

Bro. Robert Bimonte, FSC
President
National Catholic Educational
Association
1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
(800) 711-6232 (receptionist)
(571) 451-2891 (Bro. Stephen
Comeau, assistant)
rbimonte@ncea.org

The Rector's Conference

Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB



There is always a bit of a dilemma when the seminary rector begins to speak about spiritual direction. Immediately, insiders begin to wonder about the great chasm between the internal and external forums. For many rectors, treading this difficult obstacle course is not only tricky but treacherous. And yet, spiritual direction forms a significant part of the overall formation program of the seminary in general and of spiritual formation in particular. I have recently been talking quite a bit about a novel that I will be using as the focus of my rector's conferences in the near future. The book is titled *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne (2006). There is a powerful image in the novel of two young boys who only meet through a fence. They have great conversations. They come to know each other quite well. They appreciate the other, share with the other, indeed have great affection for the other. Yet, there is always the fence. There is always a barrier. Sometimes this is the fence that can be thrown up in formation.

Another barrier in discussing spiritual formation or spiritual direction comes from my own Benedictine heritage. For Benedictines, indeed for most religious formators, there is a tension when working with diocesan students. We want to share our insights, built as they are from our particular religious perspective, but we also must acknowledge the need for an authentic diocesan approach to spiritual questions. Honestly, we must admit that most diocesan priests are not involved in an intensive, ongoing spiritual direction relationship in the same way religious are. Often dioceses do not have the resources to provide direction for all of their priests, or even a few. While these expectations have been changing over the past couple of decades, spiritual direction is not an ongoing experience for many. With these two realities in mind, I would like to turn to a discussion of spiritual formation that may help solve some of the dilemmas which the contemporary situation presents.

Historically, spiritual direction has formed the core of spiritual formation programs in seminaries. That must change.

Components of Spiritual Formation

First, spiritual direction is not the total sum of spiritual formation. Historically, direction has formed the core of spiritual formation programs in seminaries. That must change. This is not to devalue the importance of spiritual direction but only to indicate that spiritual direction must be seen as a component of a larger project. The spiritual reality of a person does not come from the product of the privileged relationship alone. It comes from many other components, including the importance of the community, especially in the Catholic context. So much of what must constitute quality spiritual formation has to take place in a very public forum. The relationship between director and seminarian should always point back to the communal aspect of spirituality. Another way to express this is that as the seminarian moves through formation he should gain a greater comfort with transparency.

Second, liturgy is a central point of spiritual formation. The diocesan priest is ultimately preparing for a liturgical reality. He will celebrate Mass. He will anoint the sick. He will hear confessions. He will celebrate the other sacraments. He will preach. His public life is largely defined by his liturgical role. Regarding the diocesan priest, then, it makes little sense to form the spiritual life of the individual outside of this essential public role. It is true of all priests, but perhaps especially true

of parish priests, that their lives revolve around the liturgical life of parishes and other communities. A diocesan priest may incidentally have mystical experiences, but he cannot be prepared for a mystic's life. His authentic spiritual life is lived within the day-to-day interactions in parishes.

Third, prayer is an essential point of spiritual formation. How can we make our seminarians authentic men of prayer? This does not happen by accident, nor do most of them come with any thoroughgoing ideal of prayer though they may come with a good bit of misconception. There are two components to prayer formation in the seminary: the first is the communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, and the second is private recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. I believe that young priests today are generally more concerned about the promise to pray the Liturgy of the Hours made at diaconate ordination than young priests of past generations. It is not enough, however, to merely throw the law in their direction and think that this will be enough to sustain an active prayer life centered on this important reality. Seminaries must assist seminarians by modeling good public celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. We must find ways to make the celebration of morning and evening prayer in the seminary meaningful. We must model good habits, a good pace and good music. We must be concerned about the context, the space and the ritual aspects of the celebration.

The second component to prayer formation seems almost like a contradiction: we must prepare them for private recitation as well. The Liturgy of the Hours exists at two distinct levels in the church, that of public celebration, which is fortunately gaining ground, and that of private recitation. Private recitation becomes a hinge in that priests who find a meaningful experience in private recitation are more likely to encourage public celebration. What is a meaningful experience? I often say to the seminarians that a successful employment of the Liturgy of the Hours comes not from outcome but from the fulfillment of duty. We might also say it comes from a mature approach. I pray the Liturgy of the Hours because I promised to do so, not because I get a particular charge from doing it or because I find it stimulating. Prayer at this level is doing my duty which only finds satisfaction in mature minds.

Fourth, an essential point to spiritual formation is devotional life. Catholic spirituality has historically been found in a rich devotional life. Various spiritual practices including the rosary, chaplets and novenas all play a part in Catholic spiritual practice. We must be careful that

Seminaries must assist seminarians by modeling good public celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.

we do not squelch the historical reality of the importance of devotions in seminarians because they do not suit our tastes or devotional temperaments. Devotions are options. That must also be carefully manifested to seminarians today. Each year, I have some new seminarian who comes up to me and says: "Father, I am very devoted to Saint (fill in the blank), and I would like to offer her chaplet as a devotion for seminarians." I am usually amenable to this request. The seminarian sends out an email. The devotion will take place every night at 10:00 in the chapel. The first night twenty show up. The second night ten, the third night, his four close friends. The fourth night, he shows up. Then the new seminarian loses heart. He says to himself: "Nobody is holy here because they don't pray the chaplet of Saint (whomever)." Devotions are by their nature options, but we should explore some options in the seminary. We may take this and leave this. We should probably not be so reliant on old forms but should bring to the fore new forms. A seminary should have a rich devotional life.

To these essential components one might add the necessity of prayer in classrooms, the centrality of spiritual conferences, the use of various techniques like pilgrimages, the importance of place and the appearance of the seminary itself. We need to look at culture, both high and low. We need to understand the ways in which our seminarians use media and Internet resources. We must understand all of this in an international context. In all of these components, intentionality is the key. The spiritual formation program of a seminary must seek to incorporate all of these things in a way that is productive, inspiring and attractive. We must constantly be seeking out spiritual directors who are well-prepared and seasoned for their work. We must also prepare our seminarians to do something that seems quite difficult to grasp. We must prepare them to be spiritual leaders, men ready to go into the fray of parish and diocesan life. We must prepare them to be men willing to take a chance. Going back for a moment to *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, the two boys are finally able to breach the fence that separates them, and the "inside" boy wel-

**Nothing will ever happen
in the realm of spiritual
formation until we are willing
to take a chance.**

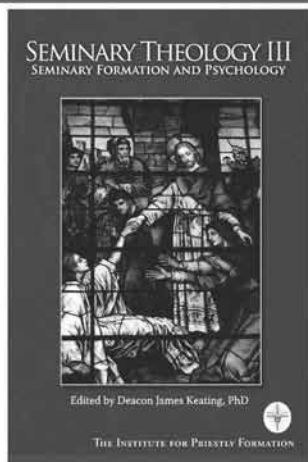
comes the “outside” boy in. Unfortunately, the boy inside the fence is in Auschwitz. Nothing will ever happen in the realm of spiritual formation until we are willing to take a chance.



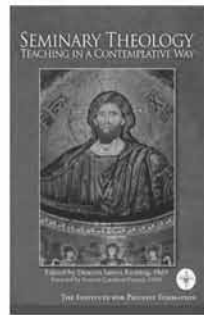
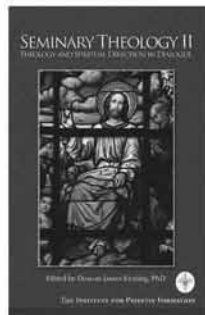
Rev. Denis Robinson, OSB, is rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad, Indiana.



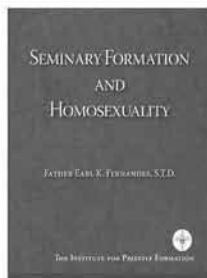
The Institute for Priestly Formation



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



To Order these and other IPF Publications, call 1-800-932-3826 or order online at www.catholicword.com/ipf



“In this sophisticated analysis of Church teaching, Fr. Fernandes explains why suitable candidates for priesthood must experience the renunciation of marriage and natural fatherhood as true sacrifices. Essential reading for seminary formators!”
Father Peter Ryan, S.J., S.T.D.

“This book will be of great help to those who guide others in the ministry of spiritual direction.”

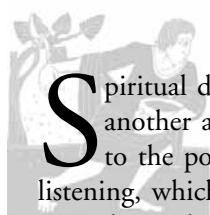
**Archbishop Paul Coakley,
Archbishop of
Oklahoma City, OK**



Spiritual Direction in a Seminary

Dr. Anthony Lilles, STD

It is possible to listen a person's soul into existence. – Catherine de Hueck Doherty



Spiritual direction is about entering the heart of another and listening a soul into existence, even to the point of bringing it new life. This kind of listening, which in its own way anticipates the resurrection, demands proficiency in mental prayer, the Bible, the wisdom of the saints and spiritual theology. Even more than this, spiritual fatherhood can never be reduced to the sum total of acquired spiritual skills and life experience; it is above all a gift, a gift that has the form of an art. In fact, it is the *Art of Arts*.

Spiritual Direction as a Listening of the Heart

Spiritual direction is a ministry of mercy. It is offered in fulfillment of the command to love our neighbor. Regarding this command in relation to those who suffer, Blessed Pope John Paul II notes that the plight of the man left to die on the side of the road *pierces the heart* (*misere cordia*) of the Samaritan. This piercing of the heart, this compassion, distinguishes the Samaritan from the others—despite their service to God.¹ Rather than pastoral office or religious authority, it is this experience of pain over the plight of another that makes the Samaritan “neighbor” to the man on the side of the road.

In spiritual direction, one listens to the interior plight of those entrusted to him until his heart is pierced and he can no longer be indifferent to the suffering of his neighbor or to the beautiful things God is doing. Successful spiritual direction is not a matter of mastering listening skills but of allowing one's heart to be vulnerable to another. A spiritual director is not indifferent or clinical, rather, he is deeply moved by what he sees and hears. Spiritual direction requires a listening of the heart, a listening in and for love.

Spiritual fatherhood can never be reduced to the sum total of acquired spiritual skills and life experience; it is above all a gift, a gift that has the form of an art.

Spiritual Direction as a Gift

The story of the Good Samaritan helps us ponder spiritual direction as a gift. To say that spiritual direction is a special gift is to acknowledge that our capacity to suffer the truth about each other is limited, especially concerning spiritual needs. Only the Lord has the power and authority to enter fully into the heart of another. He who is pure love won this right when he vanquished the powers of death and hell. By completely entering into the heart of humanity and suffering our misery and meaninglessness on the cross, Christ won the right to stand at the door of our lives and knock.

All too often, when we glimpse another in distress our natural instincts of self-preservation kick in and we calculate how to best deal with the situation without having to fully commit ourselves. We find ourselves discretely dealing with that other person's plight in order to prevent it from becoming an inconvenience to our own programs, especially when these are religious. We have thus become skilled at little routines and formulas that provide a protective wall for our own projects and for ourselves.

In spiritual direction, God gives a grace to see the truth at stake. Only when we see the truth about our neighbor and ourselves can we act against these natural impulses and go out of ourselves. In spiritual direction, God frees us to enter into the heart of another so that we might share in the distress we find there, even to the point that it inconveniences us and demands more from us than any onlooker might think is reasonable to give. In humble fulfillment of the command to love, the spiritual director, like the Good Samaritan, would not have it any other way.

Under the shadow of the cross, spiritual direction is a grace to become an instrument for the most beautiful of God's works. Divine and human art converge for the good of this soul in this moment of grace. Here, the spiritual director accompanies the Lord who is always seeking the lost sheep, always running off to meet his lost son no matter how far away, always trying to rescue the neighbor he finds beaten on the side of the road. Those who have the courage to stand with the Lord in this work discover that the most beautiful ways in which God moves within a soul concern healing the spiritual injuries suffered as we journey on the path of humanity, which is also the path of faith.

Spiritual Direction in the Mission of the Church and the Seminary

Today, as the church journeys on the pathway of humanity, she encounters many who have been left on the side of the road by material values and the banality of secularism. In many ways lifeless and abandoned, they hunger and thirst for a word of hope from someone who has the power and authority to give it. In situations like these, priests can play a special role as ministers of mercy for the spiritual life. This is reflected in recent documents that stress the importance of forming priests for spiritual direction during seminary:

In present circumstances, while there is an increasing demand for spiritual direction on the part of the faithful, there is, likewise, an increasing need to better prepare priests to give spiritual direction. Such training would enable them to afford spiritual counsel with greater diligence, discernment and spiritual accompaniment. Where the practice of spiritual direction is available it issues in personal and community renewal, vocations, missionary spirit, and the joy of hope.²

To be a minister of mercy, a priest needs to cultivate the capacity—the inner spiritual space—to be present to the particular suffering heart before him in any given situation.

To be a minister of mercy, a priest needs to cultivate the capacity—the inner spiritual space—to be present to the particular suffering heart before him in any given situation. When the priest surrenders, the Lord is given the freedom to deliver this particular loved one, neighbor, stranger or even enemy from the hell in which he or she is engulfed. This capacity is a gift, but under what circumstances can a seminarian best welcome this grace into his life? The “inner space” a man needs to have compassion for others is a work of God, a work he achieves interiorly through all kinds of trials, both exterior and interior. Without the support of an ecclesial community, suffering these purifications and expansions of the heart can be overwhelming. The cultivation of an inner spiritual space requires an exterior spiritual place established through a common way of life.

The seminary is primarily a spiritual place, a way of life where the church accompanies men in formation into “a living image of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church.”³ This assertion follows from the application of principles found in *Gaudium et spes* to seminary life. Christ constantly reveals to seminarians their deepest selves so that they learn to gaze on Christ in their day-to-day life and in doing so, discover how much they are loved by God the Father and also discover their highest calling.⁴ The astonishing presence of Christ in the daily life of the seminary is precisely what makes it “a spiritual place.”

The seminary ought to be spiritually alive, filled with the marvel of encountering Christ. This presumes a community that is filled with deep love and respect for each seminarian, his cultural context and his personal life history.⁵ In this way, the seminary is an instrument of mercy: a place where Christ reveals and heals all that is good, holy and true about each of the men entrusted to its care. Only in such a spiritual place can one dis-

cover those vast unexplored horizons of God's love that envelope one's personal existence.

Two dynamic values characterize this spiritual place: the search for God, *quaerere Deum*, and a radical commitment to the new *communio* that Christ's work of redemption makes possible."⁶ All formation efforts must be dominated by the search for God on the one hand and a commitment to this new solidarity, the Church, on the other. One is a movement of devotion and friendship with the Lord; the other is open to self-donation in loving service to new brothers and sisters. Any program introduced into seminary life must be evaluated against these dual values, and anything that distracts from the search for God and spiritual unity should be reconsidered.

To assist in the search for God and solidarity, it is not enough for the spiritual director to initiate conversations about the programs and daily schedules that are part of seminary life. He is a guardian of a whole way of life. He must constantly discern whether everything is ordered and informed by the Gospel of Christ for the community as a whole and each seminarian individually. There is a duty that he shares with the rector and other members of the administration to remind the whole seminary community about its true ecclesial and educational identity in light of the Gospel.

It is essential for the formation of candidates for the priesthood and pastoral ministry, which by its very nature is ecclesial, that the seminary should be experienced not as something external and superficial, or simply a place in which to live and study, but in an interior and profound way. It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community, a community that relives the experience of the Twelve who were united to Jesus.⁷

To *re-live* the experience of the Twelve suggests a profound journey of faith. This mystery opens one's own soul to the movements of Christ's soul as he taught, admonished and encouraged those he had entrusted with a great purpose. To journey into this mystery means to be made vulnerable to the whole paschal mystery, even to the point of completely renouncing one's former way of life in order to make space for something new that the risen Lord is doing in the world. Such a man is drawn by the dynamism of Christ's prayer, falls in adoration before the glory of Tabor, partakes of the messianic Banquet, follows the pathway to Golgotha, is pierced by the heartache of Christ's last wordless cry, gazes in

The seminary ought to be spiritually alive, filled with the marvel of encountering Christ. This presumes a community that is filled with deep love and respect for each seminarian, his cultural context and his personal life history.

wonder on the empty tomb and finally waits in prayer with his Mother for a new, astonishing outpouring by which he will be sent.

No one can enter into this transforming mystery by himself. It takes a whole community of penitents to open up this reality: brothers bound as fellow disciples, dedicated professors, mature formation advisors and directors, good administrators and support staff, as well as many wise preachers, confessors and a director for the interior life. One discovers a Eucharistic journey in this communion of life and love because the mystic Banquet alerts the ecclesial community to the real presence of the Lamb that was slain. Before this living and dynamic presence of Christ crucified, the whole community discovers together what it means to be called, chosen and sent. Animated with this spiritual food, fellow disciples, filled with questions in their journey with the one they have found, help form one another.

Spiritual direction's specific character unfolds in the life of the community within this Eucharistic context. When it is ordered to the act of faith, spiritual direction informs the very purpose of the seminary as an educational ecclesial community, helping seminarians renew this act moment-by-moment in their life together, just as the Twelve learned to believe.

Today, many suffer from a kind of belief that has the form of doubt. This is even true, in different ways, with some of the young people discerning a vocation to the priesthood. They look upon sacred doctrine as a kind of myth to adhere to (as much as it is not too inconvenient), in order to muddle through life. Once they recognize their lack of faith, they reject this approach because they desire authenticity. Self-deception is so culturally prevalent, however, that they need an au-

thentic community of faith to help them overcome their doubts.

[We] need knowledge, we need truth, because without these we cannot stand firm, we cannot move forward. Faith without truth does not save, it does not provide a sure footing. It remains a beautiful story, the projection of our deep yearning for happiness, something capable of satisfying us to the extent that we are willing to deceive ourselves. Either that, or it is reduced to a lofty sentiment which brings consolation and cheer, yet remains prey to the vagaries of our spirit and the changing seasons, incapable of sustaining a steady journey through life.⁸

Against this mentality, a seminary needs to be a place where belief takes on the form of faith. Spiritual direction lives at the heart of this effort, helping seminarians confront the doubts that threaten their effort to cling to God. It is a matter of proposing the risen Lord as truly present but accessible to living faith, faith informed by love:

Faith transforms the whole person precisely to the extent that he or she becomes open to love. Through this blending of faith and love we come to see the kind of knowledge which faith entails, its power to convince and its ability to illumine our steps. Faith knows because it is tied to love, because love itself brings enlightenment. Faith's understanding is born when we receive the immense love of God which transforms us inwardly and enables us to see reality with new eyes.⁹

By faith, then, each individual seminarian, as well as the entire educational ecclesial community, finds the ground to stand on and be rectified. Such faith is open to wonder and adoration because it learns to see the world through the resurrected eyes of Christ. This Eucharistic faith is vulnerable to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In his teaching on the Holy Spirit, Pope John Paul II proposed how, in the life of faith, the spirit of truth brings about the maturity of the inner man, his wisdom of heart, his openness to the wonder of the Lord and his capacity to share this wonder with others.¹⁰ Under the influence of the spirit of truth, one's conscience cannot rest in false judgment and evil action. This is because the Holy Spirit convinces us concerning sin (see John 16:8).

This kind of spiritual direction requires the confidence that God will allow many struggles with personal sin and temptation in order to prepare a man for the ministry of reconciliation.

Pope John Paul II explains that the Spirit of Truth convinces us of sin by enlightening us concerning the deep things of God. Without the Holy Spirit, we do not know what God thinks of sin; however, when we are vulnerable to the Spirit of Truth, it is a kind of mystical knowledge in which one suffers divine things. The spiritual director must not be afraid to help the seminarian discern this movement of the Holy Spirit. On this journey of faith, the Holy Spirit teaches the heart about the love that is stronger than sin and death.

With the right spiritual direction, a soul can contemplate the reality behind that anthropomorphic biblical language of regret attributed to God "at having created man."¹¹ Without diminishing the absolute perfection and transcendence of God, the logic of divine mercy provides us with a sense of the ache in God's heart over the plight of humanity, even to the extent that our own heart is pierced. To reveal sin, in the hermeneutic of the Father's mercy, Christ suffered death on the cross. The Holy Spirit communicates this truth to every soul in whom he dwells and, when it is received, this truth gives birth to the gift of tears, the contrition that heals the wounds of sin. In seminary life, the spiritual director gently collaborates with the Spirit of Truth who has the sole power to bring our personal sin in conversation with what Christ revealed on the cross.

This kind of spiritual direction requires the confidence that God will allow many struggles with personal sin and temptation in order to prepare a man for the ministry of reconciliation. As he helps his son to be vulnerable to the Holy Spirit, he is not disturbed that there should be many failures, shortcomings and weaknesses along the way. Nor should he be disturbed that these often get worse before they get better. Instead of trying to force God to act or anxiously trying to force the seminarian to amend his psychology and external

behavior, he marvels over how God allows each seminarian to confront the absence of love that afflicts human existence. He sees that each temptation, and even each failure, offers a new opportunity for his spiritual son to respond to God's mercy with an authentic expression of penance. A mature spiritual father hopes that, as his son suffers this mystery of sin with Christ, the divine things he himself knows and delights in might also pierce his son's heart.

With this hope, a true spiritual father also has an important role in helping a seminary cultivate a culture of conversion. Because of his highly specialized work, the spiritual director has a unique vantage point for how God aches over the sins in seminary life. The Holy Spirit who searches the deep things of God knows the pain God bears not just for each seminarian, but also for the whole communion of persons in the seminary. Just as he hopes individual seminarians might receive the gift of tears, he also prays and hopes that this gift might be lavished on the whole educational ecclesial community that constitutes the seminary.

The gift of tears speaks to the deep movements of heart that are an integral part of seminary life. Many kinds of trials and difficulties are also part of this life: struggles with simplicity, chastity and obedience all require the direction of someone who knows the ways of the Spirit of Truth. True interiority is developed through formative experiences that reach into the seminarian's very heart, ecclesial experiences that carry a man past his own subjectivism. The importance of spiritual formation that takes a man beyond the limits of his own psychological activity is a grave concern among those who have dedicated their lives to this contemplation:

The dominant spiritual climate manifests...an extreme individualism. It is not so much God who is of interest to us, to speak with Him and to belong to Him, but rather we look for personal experience, we shut ourselves up in our own spiritual search.... Let us admit that, at present, a spiritual self-centeredness reigns, which arises from the current opinion that the world is only an appearance and that, basically, the self and God coincide. If the supreme criterion of life in Christ is no longer adherence in faith to the Triune God, but personal experience, the change to a religious syncretism will be quickly made.¹²

How do we teach Christ so that he might be sought and found, felt and yearned for, so that a man

might learn to break free from his own bloated ego? We must distinguish what this Camadolese author means by "experience" from that with which the Holy Father is concerned. There is a kind of concern with personal experience that is consumerist, driven by curiosity about spiritual things. Centering Prayer, the Enneagram and the many other marketed fads—have these done anything more than indulge such curiosity, possibly even to the point of spiritual insobriety? The only experience someone driven by the desire to gratify such curiosity can attain is that which satisfies the narrow confines of his own ego. He has already closed himself off from a genuine encounter with God.

To counter this pastoral threat, seminarians need to be educated in a kind of prayer that goes beyond what can be achieved by techniques and methods of meditation. They need to root themselves in an encounter with God that completely transcends all desire for spiritual gratification and comfort. This is not to say that different forms and methods of prayer should not be taught as part of seminary life. All the same, beyond the natural operations of our psychological powers, when given the opportunity, the Holy Spirit can drive a soul into the desert, into a profound encounter with the otherness of God.

A seminary, as an ecclesial institution that relives the original experience of the Twelve, must also provide such deserts. This experience is not often gratifying or comfortable, but it is purifying and humbling. St. John of the Cross describes this as sheer grace, to be yearned for and prepared for with great personal effort. It is the Dark Night. This Night takes the form of an interpersonal encounter in which God gives himself as gift to the seminarian in incomprehensible ways so that the seminarian can learn to give the gift of himself to God in ways that go beyond his capacity to calculate. Fullness of life is found in just such a gift of self. When seminarians withdraw into this kind of Night their spirits can be healed of the wounds caused by our radical individualism with its gluttony for experience and lust for spiritual achievement.

When men behold and share the miracle of God's presence together, they are moved to ongoing acts of deep prayer, as well as fraternal communion and holy friendship. This new solidarity frees the men to find the inner resources for a more profound search for God in their lives. Formed by moments of wonder, men have the opportunity to discover a real friendship with the Lord marked by confidence, determination, humility, generosity of heart and joy that comes from him

alone. In reliving the original experience of the Twelve through sacred study, participation in the Holy Mysteries, silence, asceticism, the service of charity and, in a special way, formation for lifelong celibacy, the seminary community responds to these values in the way it orders itself.¹³ This is where spiritual direction fulfills a special purpose in seminary life.

Spiritual Direction and the Purpose of Seminary Life

In a seminary, a spiritual father is a priest whose heart is pierced by the plight of the seminarians entrusted to him. He does not see any seminarian as merely the object of spiritual formation to be measured against a list of observable outcomes. Nor is he principally concerned about the mastery of spiritual jargon or religious observances or the attainment of psychological benchmarks. Instead, he should see—or come to see with humble wonder—a neighbor, a spiritual son, a fellow penitent and a brother. He learns to listen from the vantage point of these relationships.

By listening in this way, he becomes an advocate for all that is genuinely human and good in seminary life. Because his vantage point provides keen insight into the way of life embraced by the educational ecclesial community, the spiritual director is often one of the few voices that can help the seminary remain a spiritual place. Whereas there is no end to the list of programs seminaries are asked to implement at any given time, his gift of discernment can help the rector, the administration and the faculty stay focused on the central program of mercy to which everything and everyone's efforts must be ordered.

In the eschatological fulfillment mercy will be revealed as love, while in the temporal phase, in human history, which is at the same time the history of sin and death, love must be revealed above all as mercy and must also be actualized as mercy. Christ's messianic program, the program of mercy, becomes the program of His people, the program of the Church. At its very center there is always the cross, for it is in the cross that the revelation of merciful love attains its culmination.¹⁴

If mercy is the program of the People of God, then it is also *the* program of the seminary. The formation of a man whose heart is pierced by God's merciful love, and who is capable of being pierced by the plight of his neighbor, is the very purpose of seminary life.

The formation of a man whose heart is pierced by God's merciful love, and who is capable of being pierced by the plight of his neighbor, is the very purpose of seminary life.

Spiritual direction works best in a seminary where every other program is discerned, ordered to or renounced before the cross of Christ. In other words, the spiritual director, because he attends to what God is doing in the hearts of those entrusted to him, is obliged to give voice to loyal opposition when institutional strategic plans and new programs obscure the revelation of merciful love for the men in formation.

The goal he proposes, against all other competing goals, is love in the face of sin and death. To prepare men for engagement in the ministry, the seminary's every resource must be directed toward helping seminarian's hearts be pierced by the plight of those entrusted to them—or they risk missing the opportunity to become a neighbor. Indeed, the most dangerous of all moments is to stand before someone who is suffering and to be paralyzed by our own indifference. It is a danger to our own humanity, a temptation to become inhumane, for "Merciful love is supremely indispensable between those who are closest to one another: between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between friends; and it is indispensable in education and in pastoral work."¹⁵

Every spiritual father who has suffered the depths and heights of the sons entrusted to him knows what Pope John Paul II identifies as "supremely indispensable." After all, there is no other moment of formation where seminarians discover the limits of human misery in the limitlessness of Divine Mercy than the intimate and sacred forum we call spiritual direction. By applying Pope John Paul II's message of mercy to spiritual formation, we also discover that brilliant splendor and human warmth without which a seminary risks degenerating into a cold corporate institution, unable to cast light into the darkness of our times.

If a seminary is to accomplish its mission, it must pay greater attention to the identity and mission of the spiritual director.

The Mission of the Spiritual Director

If a seminary is to accomplish its mission, it must pay greater attention to the identity and mission of the spiritual director. The special forum of spiritual direction needs to be protected from programmatic approaches that could pose unhealthy limitations on the holy conversations that constitute the essence of this ministry. Although some believe seminary spiritual formation should be supervised, I do not know how this could be done without doing violence to the very essence of this art of arts, at least as this conversation needs to unfold in a seminary. How does one supervise an art? Difficult cases always require ongoing formation and consultation with other experts. Some cases might even require referral to others with competencies other than spiritual direction. But it is not clear that a system of supervision is a necessary or desired part of our tradition. Would it not be much safer to appoint qualified, experienced priests who are themselves receiving spiritual direction and who are ordered to the wisdom demanded by this art? Supervision can neither replace nor produce this wisdom—it comes only to those who suffer it in their hearts.

Spiritual direction is the art of arts and, in the seminary, this greatest of arts stands at the heart of the whole enterprise. As an art, it does not rely on human wisdom, whether philosophical, sociological or psychological. It proceeds from and expresses a supernatural wisdom that is acquired by prayer, study and long years of perseverance in the discipline of Christian life. This divine wisdom has two forms: one that is theological and one that is mystical. In other words, the spiritual director should be both a man of deep prayer and of solid theology.

The Word of God, which reveals “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived” (1 Cor 2:9), opens up for human beings the way to a higher wisdom. This supernatural Christian wisdom, which transcends the

purely human wisdom of philosophy, takes two forms which sustain one another but should not be confused: theological wisdom and mystical wisdom.¹⁶

In theology, the effort to bring what is unconscious in our living of the faith to consciousness, where we can communicate with one another, helps us confront doubts that otherwise weigh us down. A loving, general knowledge is communicated in mystical prayer that allows us to suffer and delight in divine things. The saint is one who enthusiastically embraces both the wisdom that flows in prayer and the wisdom that comes from study, and does so out of devotion to God and love of neighbor.

More than anyone else, the spiritual director must master both of these forms of divine wisdom. He must be able to recognize and express doubts with which his spiritual son contends, especially when there is a lack of understanding or consciousness about the root of the affliction. He should also be able to validate genuine movements of God in his son’s soul. Scientific theology is not enough to do so; this requires the wisdom given in contemplation.

The study of spiritual theology and the spiritual life become always more urgent during the period of preparation for the priesthood. In reality, spiritual direction is an integral aspect of the ministry of preaching and of reconciliation. The priest is called to guide souls along the path of identification with Christ and this also includes the path of contemplation. Spiritual direction as a discernment of the Spirit is part of the ministry.¹⁷

Some have questioned whether contemplation or mental prayer is an appropriate pursuit for men who will be dedicated to active ministry. Pope John Paul II said that action proceeds from being and pastoral activity proceeds from contemplation.¹⁸ This suggests that there is room for a contemplative way of life in the seminary that does not compromise the pursuit of pastoral formation. It also implies that a seminary, as an educational ecclesial community, must avoid any attitude that assumes inherent contradictions in the pursuits of holy friendship, study, prayer, liturgy and the apostolate. This axiom even provides the basis for a deeper formation in pastoral charity by orienting spiritual formation towards building a new solidarity that is made possible through contemplative prayer.

Spiritual direction serves this new solidarity by facilitating greater intimacy with the Lord. This is not at the expense of human, intellectual or pastoral formation, but is a simultaneous, underlying effort. When spiritual direction is oriented to a deeper encounter with Christ, it makes fertile ground for all the other dimensions of formation. One-on-one direction in the depths of contemplation facilitates “this meeting with God and his fatherly love for everyone brings us face to face with the need to meet our neighbor.”¹⁹

The men entrusted to a spiritual director are never just seminarians who are fulfilling a formation requirement but are fellow penitents dealing with their experiences of sin and death.

The Identity of the Spiritual Director in the Seminary

In this vulnerability and spiritual nakedness before God, the art of spiritual direction opens up many rich relationships. The men entrusted to a spiritual director are never just seminarians who are fulfilling a formation requirement but are fellow penitents dealing with their experiences of sin and death. They are never just directees but are sons coming to their senses who need help finding their way home. They are never just future ministers of the Gospel who have formation goals to meet but are true brothers whom Christ gazes on with love.

Some would object to the idea of the spiritual director as the spiritual father of the seminary. Is not the local ordinary the true spiritual father of the seminary? What, then, of the rector or the religious superior? What in fact makes a spiritual father?

The truth is we only have one Father who is in heaven, and we know him through our faith in his only begotten Son. The grace of divine adoption allows us to truly participate in this great mystery of love – the eternal love shared by the Father and the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the order of grace established by the humility of the Son, the Father freely chooses to al-

low his paternal love to be encompassed and manifest through frail human instruments. The eternal source of all life, he continually blesses us with this love that is stronger than death. It is this blessing that brings us into existence, bestows life, communicates love, reveals truth, confers identity and entrusts mission. All created fatherhood (whether natural or spiritual) is only a radiation of this uncreated divine paternity, an imperfect extension of the Father’s eternal love within the limits of human weakness where divine power is made perfect.

While the complementary roles of spiritual director, bishop and rector are all instruments through which the fatherhood of God can be radiated to the individual seminarian, each exercises authority in the Body of Christ in accord with the gifts and ministry he has received. All three can exemplify what it means to be a minister of mercy in complementary ways. For each of these ministers to fully realize this, however, the *sine qua non* is the very personal submission of one’s whole ministry and life to the standard of the cross.

The spiritual director finds this standard by welcoming the heart of his spiritual son because the mystery of the cross stands in the center of the heart. Only when spiritual directors humbly enter into the hearts of the sons entrusted to them can they make known the delicate ways the merciful Father’s love manifests itself. With the support and authority of spiritual paternity, a man learns to be vulnerable to the grace of God in the misery and lack of love that haunts his existence and even at times threatens his life of faith. It also belongs to the spiritual director to unlock the beautiful connections and practical applications of divine mercy in the difficult situations that beset those who have resolved to serve the Lord. Through direction into the mystery of merciful love, a soul finds itself caught up in the wonder of God, in the truth about itself and in its neighbor.²⁰

Through a holy conversation characterized by unforced vulnerability and trust in God, the director and those entrusted to him humbly submit themselves to the subtle promptings of the Holy Spirit. These promptings are often very hard to discern: true art is accomplished by controlled and delicate actions. God’s power does not force, it influences, evokes and invites through love, in love and for love. Veiled by everyday struggles, it takes a special charism to notice the wonders God is working in a soul. The ability to unveil God’s work is not a skill that can be taught, but a gift that is received. Welcoming this gift demands generous hospitality and difficult personal sacrifice. Only a soul that is accustomed to re-

sponding to the gentle invitations of the Lord can help another recognize and respond to them.

A spiritual father can only teach his son to be vulnerable to truth through an exchange of hearts, through an attentive availability that leads to a shared attentiveness to God. Spiritual attentiveness recognizes, hears and welcomes the Word of the Father even as it reproves, corrects and rectifies. Another word for this is obedience. No one acquires obedience of heart by his own effort: one is led to this. Obedience, to listen with one's heart to the will of God must be modeled. This art of leading a soul to vulnerability requires the director to be free from all agendas, programmatic attitudes, prejudices and fears. He must be free to radically enter into the plight of another and to suffer with him that sorrow that no one can bear alone.

This kind of listening with the heart to the heart of another opens up the possibility of real obedience to God. We become obedient to the heart of God only when we are humbled by the fact that He has been listening to our own hearts first. How can anyone begin to know how much God is aware of one's own plight but for the ministry of a spiritual director?

Conclusion

The spiritual director of a seminary has an immense task. Entering deeper and deeper into the drama of merciful love, a spiritual father suffers the common struggle with personal sin with his son while at the same time striving to help the seminarian see the beautiful and unrepeatable things God accomplishes whenever a soul is moved to trust in him. This is the only way to bandage the seminarian's wounds and listen him into existence. It is a matter of the heart's humble attention to what is disclosed and what is not disclosed. It is a matter of loving words of truth that speak to the confusion men have about themselves and God. It is also a matter of inspiring both confidence and wonder at the inexhaustible treasury of merciful love Christ yearns to share with us.

This research was originally sponsored by the Institute of Priestly Formation for a seminar conducted by Deacon James Keating. My colleague, Father Raymond Gawronski, S.J., full professor and director of spiritual formation, formerly of Saint John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver, Colorado, also provided perspective and insight.



Dr. Anthony Lilles, S.T.D., is associate professor of theology teaching spiritual theology and spiritual direction at Saint John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver. A graduate of Franciscan University in Steubenville, he holds a licentiate and doctorate in spiritual theology from the Angelicum in Rome, specializing in the writings of Blessed Elisabeth of the Trinity and the Carmelite Doctors of the Church. His book *Hidden Mountain Secret Garden* was published by Discerning Hearts Publications in 2012.

Endnotes

1. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering *Salvifici doloris* (11 February 1984), §28.
2. Congregation for the Clergy, *The Priest, Minister of Mercy: An Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2011), §66.
3. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day *Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §42.
4. Paul VI, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), §22.
5. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §61.
6. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §46.
7. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §60.
8. See Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter on Faith *Lumen fidei* (29 June 2013), §24; see also §§2–3.
9. *Lumen fidei*, §26.
10. John Paul II, On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World *Dominum et vivificantem* (18 May 1986), §§58–59.
11. *Dominum et vivificantem*, §45; see also Gen 6:6.
12. Louis-Albert Lassus (ed), *In Praise of Hiddenness: The Spirituality of the Camaldolese Hermits of Monte Corona* (Bloomington, OH: Holy Family Hermitage, 2006), 53.
13. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §§46–50.
14. John Paul II, Rich in Mercy *Dives in misericordia* (30 November 1980), §8.
15. *Dives in misericordia*, §14.
16. International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (29 November 2011), §91. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_teologia-oggi_en.html.
17. *The Priest, Minister of Mercy*, §67.
18. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §45.
19. *Pastores dabo vobis*, §48.
20. See *Salvifici doloris*, §§28–29, *Dominum et vivificantem*, §39, and *Dives in misericordia*, §7.

Three new books on the *challenges* and *joys* of ministry today!



*Intersects Scripture and theology
with lived pastoral insight.*


GOLD TESTED IN FIRE

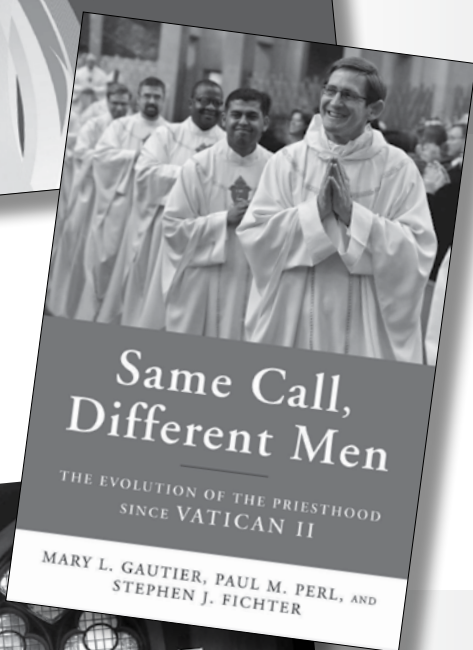
A New Pentecost for the Catholic Priesthood

Ronald D. Witherup, SS

Drawing on classic and contemporary understandings of the priesthood as well as scriptural and theological context, former seminary director Ronald Witherup makes the case that the present testing in the priesthood is, in fact, an opportunity for it to be cleansed, remade and strengthened.

S978-0-8146-3382-3

Paperback, 219 pp., 6 x 9, \$16.95 |  eBook \$14.99



*Filled with priests' own
stories and experiences.*


SAME CALL, DIFFERENT MEN

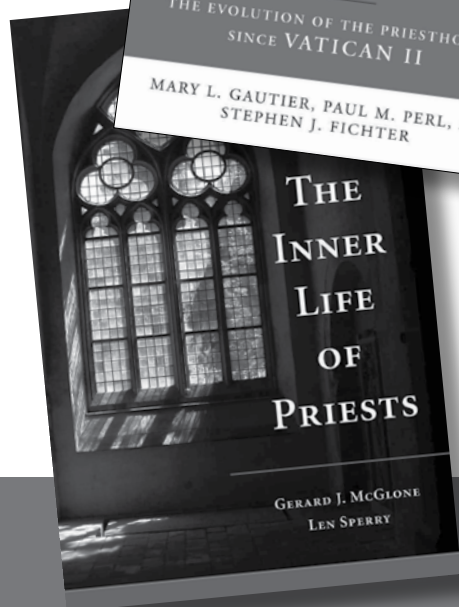
The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II

Mary L. Gautier, Paul M. Perl, and Stephen J. Fichter

Gain insights on the attitudes of today's priests toward their lives and ministry in this book based on solid research and filled with priests' experiences and stories.

S978-0-8146-3429-5

Paperback, 256 pp., 6 x 9, \$24.95 |  eBook, \$21.99




Authoritative and positive!

THE INNER LIFE OF PRIESTS

Gerard J. McGlone, SJ, and Len Sperry

A landmark exploration of how the categories and practices of psychology are contributing to a new health and vitality in the priesthood.

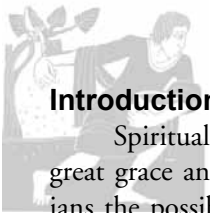
S978-0-8146-3438-7

Paperback, 190 pp., 6 x 9, \$19.95 |  eBook \$17.99

LITURGICAL PRESS
1-800-858-5450 • www.litpress.org •  

Spiritual Direction in Catholic Seminaries: Grace and Challenge

Rev. Louis J. Cameli



Introduction

Spiritual direction in a Catholic seminary is a great grace and a treasured resource. It offers seminarians the possibility of exploring and deepening their spiritual lives. It offers the church a way to encourage the preparation of future priests so that they can serve their people with the mind and heart of Jesus Christ. At the same time, spiritual direction in a seminary entails specific challenges precisely because of the seminary context and its role in priestly formation. How can we understand this?

A good place to begin is a description of seminary spiritual direction as we find it in the *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th Edition (PPF):

Because spiritual direction in a seminary context differs from spiritual direction more generally experienced in the Church, the seminary must explain to seminarians the purpose and process of spiritual direction in the seminary. This should include, for example: an understanding that spiritual direction is not an optional possibility but a seminary requirement; a recognition that seminary spiritual direction is concerned not only with the personal spiritual growth of seminarians but also with their preparation for service in the Church as priests; a knowledge that the spiritual direction process must take into account the limited time of the program and preparation for ordination and that, therefore, one ought to have passed certain thresholds of spiritual development and commitment at different points in the seminary program (in

The free-flowing and charismatic dimension of spiritual direction can be in tension with the more institutional and programmatic dimension of seminary formation. This tension, however, need not lead to conflict. In fact, it can be a dynamic and creative force for the good of the individual and the good of the church.

contrast to the open-ended nature of non-seminary spiritual direction); and an acceptance that a lack of readiness for spiritual direction itself ought to prompt a student to question his continuance in the seminary at this time and seriously to consider withdrawing from the program until he is ready.¹

When speaking of spiritual direction, the *Program of Priestly Formation* uses the language of our spiritual tradition.² At the same time, it qualifies the process because of the context of preparing for priestly ministry in a seminary program. Two dimensions come together

when we speak of spiritual direction in a seminary, and this combination can be a source of tension. From its earliest origins among the desert fathers and mothers, spiritual direction has meant an open-ended process designed to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Everything seemed to depend on the free gifts or charisms of the Holy Spirit for the director as well as for the dialogue of spiritual direction itself. In contrast, the above excerpt from the PPF introduces structured institutional concerns. Spiritual direction belongs to the requirements of a program with its own time parameters and its own focused goal of preparing men for priestly ministry. The free-flowing and charismatic dimension of spiritual direction can be in tension with the more institutional and programmatic dimension of seminary formation. This tension, however, need not lead to conflict. In fact, it can be a dynamic and creative force for the good of the individual and the good of the church.

In the sections that follow, I will indicate elements of spiritual direction in the seminary that belong to everyone who engages in this holy dialogue. Then, I will offer some specific themes that enter into the dialogue because it takes place in the context of priestly formation. Finally, I will suggest some potential difficulties that may need to be addressed along the way.

Common and Shared Elements of Spiritual Direction

Self-Reflection

Spiritual direction is somewhat different when it takes place in a seminary, but essential elements of our tradition remain in this great resource. A first and fundamental element of spiritual direction is the cultivation of a habit of self-reflection in faith. Human beings have never spontaneously stopped and taken careful stock of themselves. Our default mode is non-reflective. In today's hurried and rushed world, with all its distractions, it is even more likely that we will not automatically take a look at ourselves. Engaging in self-reflection requires a deliberate decision and some practice. When it is a matter of self-reflection in faith, we need even more help. The dialogue of spiritual direction often discourages us from taking ourselves or our lives of discipleship for granted. Spiritual direction encourages us to cultivate a habit of self-reflection in faith within the very process of speaking about our discipleship with another person.

Openness to Doing the Will of God

Through the dialogue of spiritual direction, we can

also cultivate a growing openness to doing the will of God. Theoretically, of course, we want to do the will of God. Daily we pray, "Thy will be done." Practically, however, things are not so easily resolved. Through the conversation that takes place in spiritual direction, we can address what would foster greater openness and availability to doing God's will. For example, the dialogue of spiritual direction ought to consider the purification of obstacles that either block or impede us in fulfilling our desire to do God's will. Our self-concern, anxieties or resentments can be formidable obstacles because they hold us bound. The conversation of spiritual direction can make us aware of the obstacles and, at the same time, offer us a word of encouragement as we move toward purification. That same spiritual direction can prod us to be more perceptive in detecting where God is leading us, which will also make us more pliable to doing the will of God. Finally, spiritual direction can encourage us to be more generous because without generosity we are not likely to embrace and fulfill God's will for us.

These three fundamental elements of self-reflection, openness to doing the will of God and deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ seem to me to be especially important for all Christians and, particularly, for seminarians.

Deepening Our Relationship with Jesus Christ

A third and final element of spiritual direction for seminarians and others on the Christian journey is the more conscious and ever-deeper rooting of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Every relationship of love needs deliberate attention. The same is true for our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is possible to deepen that relationship in a more attentive way, ordinarily through our contact with the Word of God, our celebration of the sacraments, our personal prayer and service directed to our brothers and sisters. The dialogue of spiritual direction presents a unique opportunity for us to consider

the relationship that is at the center of our lives in a deeply personal way. The dialogue of spiritual direction can open paths to deepening the relationship through our commitment to God's Word, the sacraments, personal prayer and service.

Obviously, much more could be said about spiritual direction, its dynamics and its benefits. These three fundamental elements of self-reflection, openness to doing the will of God and deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ seem to me to be especially important for all Christians and, particularly, for seminarians.

Specific Elements of Spiritual Direction in Seminaries

Seminaries are about preparing men for priestly ministry. In that context, spiritual direction takes on some specific themes that belong to the dialogue between a director and a seminarian. Seminarians should not be solely focused on their own spiritual development, as important as that is. They need to cultivate an ecclesial spirituality within themselves that broadens their outlook and expands their heart. For example, an important and fundamental theme that belongs to this dialogue is a growing solicitude for the whole Body of Christ. Just as husbands and wives and mothers and fathers find their spirituality centered in their marriages and families, so seminarians and priests discover their center in service to the Body of Christ, his church. There is a kind of practical ecclesial spirituality that must become part of the seminarian's personal spirituality. This does not happen automatically; however, the dialogue of spiritual direction can foster its emergence over time.

Spiritual direction for seminarians also ought to consider the challenges of serving as a priest and do so from the perspective of personal commitment and the spiritual support system that will serve the future priest. Celibacy will certainly form a part of that conversation. Additionally, spiritual direction should explore the challenge of balancing a healthy personal life with the multiple commitments to ministry—and all of this in the context of spirituality.

Seminary spiritual direction is a place for seminarians to begin developing a ministerial spirituality, one that finds God in the course of serving others and whose growth is measured in increased pastoral charity. A full sense of ministerial spirituality will probably not occur until after ordination and the experiences of priestly ministry, but it can begin in spiritual direction. Seminary-based pastoral experiences can be mined not

Seminary spiritual direction is a place for seminarians to begin developing a ministerial spirituality, one that finds God in the course of serving others and whose growth is measured in increased pastoral charity.

only for theological reflection but also for their spiritual and transformative impact.

Finally, the seminary experience of spiritual direction must extend beyond itself to the time after ordination. Seminary spiritual direction should be the foundation for spiritual direction for all of one's years of priestly ministry. As good and as helpful as the experience might be in the seminary, spiritual direction has not succeeded unless the newly ordained takes it with him into his priesthood. Spiritual direction should become an essential and indispensable ingredient of priests' ongoing formation.³

Some Potential Difficulties

As good and as valuable as seminary spiritual direction is, there are also some potential difficulties associated with it. Spiritual directors should certainly be aware of these difficulties and, as much as they are able, seminarians should also have a sense of these possible difficulties.

Unresolved Questions of Vocation

The first difficulty has to do with the discernment of a vocation. This may sound strange because seminary spiritual direction is often associated with vocational discernment. There is a place, especially in the early years, for vocational discernment. In other words, both the director and the seminarian listen for those indications that confirm a call to serve as a priest or, alternately, detect contraindications for that calling. If, however, in the second or third or even the fourth year of theology, the seminarian keeps asking "Should I become a priest or not?" then something is truly amiss. The major formational effort of the years spent in the theologate ought to be focused on preparing for priesthood, a preparation that gives not only adequate but

If the discernment question—should I become a priest or not?—takes center stage in spiritual direction or the personal life of the seminarian, the full potential for preparation will be thwarted. If the discernment question persists into the years of theology, it may be time to step out or step away.

generous attention to human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. If the discernment question—should I become a priest or not?—takes center stage in spiritual direction or the personal life of the seminarian, the full potential for preparation will be thwarted. If the discernment question persists into the years of theology, it may be time to step out or step away. Spiritual direction cannot be consumed with that basic question of decision. Of course, on occasion, seminarians may experience questions and hesitations, but these are not long-term or consuming. Such questions or hesitation certainly constitute legitimate material for discussion in the context of spiritual direction and can provide a moment of reaffirmation.

Unresolved Painful Experiences

A second difficulty has to do with the need for healing. Seminarians come to the seminary as they are and with their personal histories. Some of those histories are laden with considerable pain. Their histories can involve dysfunctional families, addiction, personal trauma of some kind and other wounding experiences. Fortunately, for many seminarians in need of healing, the healing process began before they came to the seminary, and the seminary can continue to foster that healing. Spiritual direction as attention to the healing power of God in our lives can always be very helpful. The potential difficulty lies in situations in which the pain has not been adequately addressed. Then, instead of attending to the spiritual life, spiritual direction becomes

ersatz therapy. The conversations keep returning to the same theme of hurt and woundedness that assumes the center of attention in the spiritual direction dialogue. If this happens, both the director and the seminarian need to recognize that another kind of help is needed. That help may not be possible while the seminarian continues in the seminary program. With serenity and confidence, both seminarian and director look to God's providential and healing presence, and they need to look for it in the right place.

Fixation on a Religious Experience or Devotion

A third potential difficulty centers on religious experience. It may seem surprising that religious experience can be a difficulty associated with spiritual direction because it is often viewed as an exploration of that experience. Still, it can happen. For example, when a seminarian has had an especially powerful religious experience associated with a particular devotion, he can easily become fixated on that experience and devotion. That special experience and its devotional expression become the sum and substance of his spiritual life and, therefore, of the whole process of spiritual direction. The problem is not necessarily in the religious experience or the particular devotion itself. The problem is the fixation and the narrowing down of the spiritual life, especially as one prepares for priestly ministry. The spiritual life of a seminarian and his spiritual direction ought to lead in the direction of expanded horizons, that is, envisioning new ways that God will act in his life and through his priestly service, as well as in the lives of the people whom he will serve. Fixating on a narrow slice of religious experience or a particular devotion moves him in the opposite direction. Should it happen, both director and seminarian must reckon honestly with it. They can then take steps to break open spiritual experiences into a larger field.

Anguish Over the Celibate Commitment

Finally, there is always the potential difficulty of exploring celibacy in the context of seminary spiritual direction. Of course, conversation about celibacy is absolutely appropriate and, indeed, necessary. Spiritual direction is an opportune forum for considering celibacy not as a psychological issue, but as a reality of one's spiritual life, a part of commitment and dedication and the workings of grace. The problem arises when celibacy becomes an agonizing question. The seminarian may be quite clear on his desire to become a priest. At the same time, he finds himself in anguish—and I use the word

deliberately—concerning the celibate commitment that he is asked to make. He very much wants to serve as a priest, but he also cannot imagine himself apart from the intimate relationships of marriage and family. He thinks that he may be able to push beyond those desires and needs that he experiences for the sake of being a priest. Still, the cost seems to be high. In short, he agonizes and maybe even obsesses about the issue of celibacy. This can become the sole topic of conversation in spiritual direction. If the struggle and the conversation are as I have described them, then spiritual direction is not the venue for resolving the difficulty. Again, this may require stepping out or away. Sometimes—and this is a prudential judgment—the director can and should pronounce these liberating words, “You do not need to be a priest. You can please God and do great things in another way of life.”

Conclusion

Seminary spiritual direction is truly a grace and a challenge. It can draw on the very best of our spiritual tradition. At the same time, it has its own particular dimensions within the context of preparing for priestly ministry. Because seminary spiritual direction has a dual

role as both a free gift of the spirit and a component of an institutional program, potential difficulties particular to this context can arise. With dedication and clarity of purpose and, of course, the Spirit’s help, the process and journey of spiritual direction in the seminary can bear much fruit.



Rev. Louis Cameli is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago whose doctorate is in theology with a specialization in spirituality. He has taught at University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, worked in priestly formation, served as a pastor, and authored a number of books and articles.

Endnotes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th Edition (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006), §132.
2. See, for example, a classic treatment of spiritual direction in: Jean Laplace, *Preparing for Spiritual Direction*, trans. J.C. Guinness (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), 26–44.
3. See the various references in: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2001).

The *Digital Dante* Competition

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

The *Divine Comedy*, the masterpiece of Dante Alighieri, contains images that impressively describe the pilgrim’s arduous ascent from the darkness of sin to the light of glory in the presence of God. These images are vivid expressions of the profound salvific truths which, as Catholic teaching demonstrates, must be *experienced and lived*, and not simply *learned*.

The year 2014 marks the 700th anniversary of the publication of Dante’s *Inferno*, and to celebrate this septuacentennial, the Catholic Distance Learning Network is hosting a contest for the best digitally-produced rendition of any aspect of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

This contest will be an annual event through the year 2021, which marks the 700th anniversary of the completion of the *Paradiso* and also of the death of Dante Alighieri.

The winning submission each year will provide an accurate rendering of Dante’s intent concerning the aspect of his poem that is being pursued, employing the latest digital photographic, animation and sound technology.

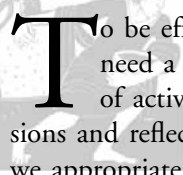
See <http://www.digitaldante.org> for details.



Allegorical portrait of Dante by
Agnolo Bronzino, c. 1530

Spiritual Direction and the Art of Active Listening

Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.



To be effective in what we do as directors we need a thorough understanding of the dynamics of active listening that we use in direction sessions and reflect upon during supervision. Over time, we appropriate this important helping skill and make it an integral part of our ministry. A brief presentation of the various elements involved in active listening can be of great help to us, especially for those in the beginning stages of practice.

The Proper Backdrop

Before listing these characteristics, we must say something about the proper backdrop against which the process of active listening takes place. The background of an artist's painting determines how the various elements in its foreground will be perceived and evaluated. In much the same way, the backdrop against which listening takes place in spiritual direction will determine both the content and the quality of what is heard.

As human beings, we are blessed with the power of self-awareness: we are conscious not only of the world around us, but also of ourselves. Our ability to look upon ourselves as both object and subject is manifested in the very structure of human thought. When we think, we carry on an internal dialogue with ourselves. This dialogue is both intuitive and discursive. It can be clinically detached or charged with emotion. It goes on within each of us at varying rates and intensities. It is capable of following specific rules of inquiry or, when left unbridled, proceeds by way of free association.

This internal dialogue forms the backdrop against which everything else in our lives takes place. Although this internal dialogue will never go away, its level and intensity can be disciplined so that other relevant fea-

It is important that we are conscious of the type of conversation going on inside of us when we are directing people.

tures of a person's character can come to the fore. For this reason, it is important that we are conscious of the type of conversation going on inside of us when we are directing people. It is also important that we take appropriate steps to quiet this inner dialogue so that an atmosphere of silence (and not incessant, disassociated thinking) will form the primary backdrop for what takes place during the direction process.

The best way to quiet our inner dialogue is for us to make an ongoing effort to foster a contemplative attitude toward life.

The best way to quiet our inner dialogue is for us to make an ongoing effort to foster a contemplative attitude toward life.¹ With such a disposition firmly rooted in our daily outlook, we should be able to make adequate adjustments as needed so that the level and inten-

sity of the dialogue within us does not get in the way of the direction process. A period of preparatory prayer or inner stillness prior to the session may also be of help. Whenever this internal conversation appears during the session, it should be concerned with making appropriate judgments about the movement of the direction process. Otherwise, it should move to the background so that the contemplative dimension of our lives may be the primary point of encounter between us spiritual directors and those seeking guidance.

The Elements of Active Listening

When the inner dialogue is adequately calmed and a backdrop of contemplative silence has come to the fore, we are ready to employ the art of active listening. This important skill is comprised of seven characteristics.

Inner Awareness

To begin with, we need to be aware of the continuing (though diminished) presence of the ongoing dialogue inside of us. To do so, we should, on occasion, advert to its intensity and gauge its appropriateness to our current level of listening. Failure to do so may cause unnecessary distractions to enter our minds and thus compromise the attention we strive to give those seeking guidance. We should also remember that, just because we began the direction process with a relative amount of internal calm, there is no guarantee we will stay calm throughout the entire session. For this reason, it is important for us to monitor our internal conversation and assure that the content and level of intensity remain appropriate for the direction session. On the other side of the coin, we should also occasionally focus on the backdrop of silence against which the direction process is taking place. Doing so will help to ensure a contemplative context for our dialogue with those seeking guidance as well as form the basis for an experience of communion with them. Whatever the reason, the need for such internal monitoring should remain on the periphery of our awareness and not interfere with the focused attention those before us deserve.

Emptying of Self

As important as it may be for the overall good of the direction process, awareness of the intensity of our internal dialogue needs to be accompanied by an active process of *kenosis* or self-emptying. This process represents a shift from self-centeredness to otherness, and involves a threefold activity. First, we need to identify

This threefold action of identification, detachment and refocusing helps us to empty ourselves of any unnecessary distractions that may be getting in the way of our attempts to listen.

those elements of our internal dialogue that are out of place and definitely do not belong to the direction session. Second, we need to detach ourselves from this unnecessary (and often obtrusive) interference. Third, we need to fill the intervening void by refocusing our energies on the dialogue we are engaged in with the one before us. This threefold action of identification, detachment and refocusing helps us to empty ourselves of any unnecessary distractions that may be getting in the way of our attempts to listen. It moves us out of ourselves and orients us toward those seeking direction. This process of self-emptying may need to be repeated numerous times during the direction session. Those who have perfected self-emptying perform it regularly and often unconsciously.

Disciplined Attention

Once we are solidly oriented toward those seeking direction, we enter into a process of disciplined, highly-focused attention. We try to experience those who come to us through the various dimensions of their human makeup: the physical, the emotional, the intellectual, the spiritual, the social and the environmental. In doing so, we seek to relate the various segments of their lives to the whole, and vice versa. This gives those seeking guidance a valuable filter through which the direction conversation passes. This filter will include numerous self-constituting narratives that have previously been agreed upon (either implicitly or explicitly) and should serve as touchstones for the various spiritual and moral values needing to be inculcated in the direction process. For Catholics, the Gospel narratives, the liturgy and the living tradition of the church (especially the teachings of the Second Vatican Council), provide an important basis for the dialogical process of self-reflection that takes place during spiritual direction. It is essential for us to be aware of the underlying narratives we use to

The Virginia Theological Seminary
invites you to consider its

Doctor of Ministry IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

*The next step for wise, skillful, faithful
Christian leadership.*

- Applies best theory and practice for strengthening organizational and spiritual leadership
- Sharpens capacities to read, understand, and shape communities of faith and learning
- Fosters clarity, wisdom, and courage to claim Christ's transforming work in one's context of ministry
- Concentrations in Ministry Development, Educational Leadership, and (beginning January 2014) Christian Spirituality
- Three-week residencies for three summers make it accessible to those in active ministry
- Ecumenical cohorts create a rich environment for learning



VIRGINIA
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304

A Seminary of the Episcopal Church. www.vts.edu

For more information,
visit our website
www.vts.edu/doctor,
or contact the
Director, Rev. David
Gortner, dgortner@vts.edu or Associate
Director, Dr. Kathleen
Hope Brown,
kbrown@vts.edu.

help those seeking guidance interpret their experience, otherwise various kinds of stereotyping and other latent prejudices can enter into the direction process. It is also crucial that we not impose our narratives on those who seek our guidance, but help them to engage in an ongoing process of correlation that will help them discover relevant themes that resonate with their own experience.

**Passive reception is an
ascetical practice that
requires openness to others
and a willingness to simply
be in another's presence.
It requires patience and
longsuffering, the kind
that is willing to suffer the
tediousness of the present
moment for the sake of a
higher good.**

Passive Reception

Only after we have given those seeking guidance our highly focused attention can we go to the heart of the listening process and engage in what is typically referred to as passive reception. Here, we welcome the thoughts, words and feelings of those before us with unconditional, positive regard. We receive these insights with respect and are careful not to make any judgments that would obstruct the process of self-revelation. Passive reception is an ascetical practice that requires openness to others and a willingness to simply be in another's presence. It requires patience and longsuffering, the kind that is willing to suffer the tediousness of the present moment for the sake of a higher good. Here, being takes precedence over acting. We listen to our clients, not in a superficial way, but from the heart. We receive everything said (and not said), and allow it to penetrate the very core of our being. Although the process of passive reception is a highly focused and disciplined activity, it appears to the external observer as nothing more than a quiet, attentive gaze. At this stage of the listening process, we undergo a silent suffering that receives the experience of the one before us into ourselves and renders the possibility of it being transformed.

Simple Understanding

The listening process continues with a movement from reception to synthesis. After allowing those seeking guidance to enter within themselves and penetrate their hearts, we must give ourselves time to gather the various elements of the discussion into a coherent whole. This part of the process is more intuitive than discursive. It requires listening attentively with your heart to the impact of what has been shared and attempting to grasp it from the other person's perspective. This understanding is simple because it does not seek to analyze what was said but merely to hold it and relish it as an authentic expression of another's self. To understand in this way, it is necessary to assimilate what we have heard and carry it in our hearts as a cherished offering from another. A genuine expression of self is a gift from one person to another. Simple understanding is the natural outcome of authentically receiving that gift. It involves turning inward during the listening process and holding what we have received in our heart in an immediate, apprehensive grasp. Once understood, what was shared must be allowed to rest in our heart and dwell in the home it has found there. Only when it has rested in another person's heart can something ever really be understood, let alone appreciated.

Open Acknowledgment

**An understanding heart,
however, is not enough;
if it is to bear fruit, the
process of listening must
lead us to acknowledge
what we have heard.**

An understanding heart, however, is not enough; if it is to bear fruit, the process of listening must lead us to acknowledge what we have heard. In fact, only when we are able to articulate our intuition of the whole will those seeking guidance be able to affirm whether or not we have actually understood them. Our first attempts to express newfound understanding should move from the general to the particular in small, incremental steps. We should be reluctant to reach conclusions (so as not to impose our preconceptions on our clients), and ask for frequent feedback. By giving those seeking guidance the opportunity to amend or correct what they are saying,

we help them take charge of their experience and refine it in such a way that we come to a mutual understanding of what has been shared. This process can, at times, be long and arduous. For directors, it also requires a great amount of humility. When acknowledging our version of what has been shared, we also risk being misunderstood by the very people we are trying to help. For this reason, we need to be flexible in acknowledging what will always be a limited and revisable presentation of our understanding. We must be willing to present one draft of their experience after another—until we get it right. Only when what we have expressed has been received—and accepted—by those seeking guidance can we be confident we have understood them correctly.

Humble Recognition

When spiritual directors genuinely attempt to understand, those seeking guidance find it easier to discern the truth about themselves. They may not like what we reflect back to them and, at the outset, may very well react against it. If they are faithful to the direction process, however, and if they have sincerely listened with their hearts, they will recognize the truth of what has been said and be willing to take whatever steps may be required of them. At this point, we have done everything in our power to help those seeking guidance get in touch with, examine and take ownership of their experience. It is now up to them to bring the listening process to an end by affirming what has taken place and humbly recognizing and accepting the truth of what has been said. That truth may be challenging, comforting or both. It may move them to action or even to deeper reflection on their experience. It may also confirm for them the value of the listening process for self-understanding. As the listening process draws to a close, those seeking guidance will also have been helped to internalize its various movements. By being listened to, they have learned how to listen. In the future, they will have the opportunity to refine this important skill and carry it over in their relations with others.

Conclusion

Even the best of directors can learn something more about their ministry. These seven characteristics of active listening demonstrate the deep spiritual moorings of the skill and why good listeners are so very difficult to come by. The very nature of a skill, however, is that it becomes increasingly easier through practice. As our experience increases, we should be able to regulate the intensity of our interior dialogue and become better and

These seven characteristics of active listening demonstrate the deep spiritual moorings of the skill and why good listeners are so very difficult to come by.

better listeners. If not, then something has probably gone awry in our understanding and implementation of the direction process.

For this reason, it is imperative that we belong to some kind of peer group where the free exchange of ideas can take place and where we may receive adequate supervision for our ministry. From time to time, these groups should focus specifically on the various listening skills involved in the direction process. The best way to do this is to have regular sessions with a trained supervisor where the actual manner of giving direction is closely scrutinized. In this way, others might be able to identify certain lapses in the listening process that have been previously neglected or, perhaps, purposely ignored.

Prayerfulness transforms the natural skill of listening and enables us to hear with a depth of mind and heart we never knew we had.

Finally, as directors we should remember that listening is a natural human skill that is quickened by the movement of the spirit in our lives. A fervent and dedicated life of prayer will help us deepen our contact with the promptings of the spirit and enable us to listen more and more as Christ listened to the God he called "Abba, Father" (Mk 14:36). Contemplative prayer, in particular, can be helpful for acquiring the necessary requisites of a listening heart. Prayerfulness transforms the natural skill of listening and enables us to hear with a depth of mind and heart we never knew we had. This transformation manifests itself in the depth of under-

standing that we attain and how we are able to correlate what we have heard with the Christian tradition, as well as articulate it in a simple, easily understandable manner. The skill of active listening deepens our prayer lives and helps us grow in wisdom and love.²



Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., an American Redemptorist priest of the Baltimore Province, taught for more than twenty years at the Alphonsian Academy of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University. He is presently scholar-in-residence, professor and holder of the John Cardinal Krol Chair of Moral Theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The author or co-au-

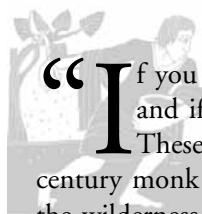
thor of more than thirty books and numerous popular and scholarly articles, he is also very active in retreat work and the ministry of spiritual direction.

Endnotes

1. For more on fostering a contemplative attitude toward life, see William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (Minneapolis, MN: The Seabury Press: 1982), 46–64.
2. For more on the role of listening in the ministry of spiritual direction, see Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992) and Teresa Di Biase, "Listening with the Ear of the Heart: Benedictine Values and Spiritual Direction," *Presence* 15, no. 4 (2009), 15–19.

Spiritual Direction as Faith Seeking Understanding

Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.



“If you are a theologian, you will pray in truth; and if you pray in truth, you are a theologian.”¹ These words of Nilus of Sinai (d. 450), a fifth-century monk from Ancyra in Asia Minor who lived in the wilderness of Sinai for over sixty years, remind us of the intimate connection between conversing with and understanding the mystery of the divine. True knowledge of God involves an experience with the divine mystery, not simply knowledge about it. Such experiential knowledge does not come through rational analysis, but from a living relationship with God that is nourished by prayer. This understanding of theology emphasizes the importance of knowing God by participating in the intimate community of divine love. It emphasizes the living reality of God over our theological constructions of God. That reality is closer to us than we are to our own selves. We tap into it by being present to it and by allowing it to be present to us. This article addresses how spiritual direction helps us get in touch with this deeper spiritual reality.

Praying in Truth

For Nilus, the theologian is one who knows how “to pray in truth.” To do so, we must strip off the old self and put on the new. Only then, by being renewed in the image of our creator, will we gradually progress toward true knowledge of the divine (Col 3:9–10). “To pray in truth” is to pray in Christ, the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6). Praying in truth involves opening our hearts and revealing ourselves to God as we really are. It means not being afraid of looking inside us and confronting the various masks and self-deceptions we find there. It means being willing to risk baring our

True knowledge of God involves an experience with the divine mystery, not simply knowledge about it. Such experiential knowledge does not come through rational analysis, but from a living relationship with God that is nourished by prayer.

souls to God so that God might bare his soul to us. Intimacy with the divine first requires intimacy with the self. We cannot communicate with God in truth if we are unwilling to know the truth about ourselves.

Intimacy with the divine first requires intimacy with the self. We cannot communicate with God in truth if we are unwilling to know the truth about ourselves.

Coming to an intimate knowledge of us, however, is no easy task. Most of us cannot go it alone and are in dire need of help. We find that facing our inner wants and insecurities is much too threatening. Left to our own resources, many of us would end up rationalizing away our fears and discounting our deepest hopes about who we are and who we want to become. Spiritual direction seeks to assist us in confronting ourselves and opening our hearts to God. It does so by gently helping us to recognize and then listen to the voice of the Spirit manifested in the nitty-gritty circumstances of our lives. More often than not, that voice, as the experience of the prophet Elijah reminds us, is found not in the tumultuous whirlwinds, earthquakes and fires about us, but in the still, small whispering sound that can only be heard in the solitude of our hearts (1 Kgs 19:11–13).

As a helping relationship between two people, spiritual direction focuses on our conscious and unconscious interaction with the divine.

Spiritual direction seeks to settle our hearts so we can rest in this solitude and come into our faith. As a helping relationship between two people, spiritual direction focuses on our conscious and unconscious interaction with the divine. It helps us sift through the conflicting, and often troublesome, personal narratives vying for our attention so we can make responsible judgments about where we have come from and to what we are being called. It pays special heed to our life of prayer, helping us discern the true self from the false self and authentic prayer from its mean and paltry imitation.

The ultimate goal of spiritual direction is to help us “to pray in truth.” To do so, spiritual direction seeks to empower us to confront ourselves so we can eventually discover our authentic voice. That voice alone will lead us to intimacy with the divine. To find it, however, we must be patient, still and ever so silent. We must listen to our hearts and not be afraid to hear what they have to say. When we speak from the heart, we soon discover the gentle voice of the Spirit yearning within us. To pray in truth is to pray in the spirit, the re-

Spiritual direction helps us identify these spiritual riches and allows them to do their quiet work within us. That work concerns an ongoing and gradual process of divinization that draws us into a deeper participation in the eternal celebration of love within the Godhead.

creative presence of God that hovers over and revives the primal forces within us. We know we are praying in the Spirit when our lives manifest their various gifts and fruits (Is 11:2–3; Gal 5:22–23). Spiritual direction helps us identify these spiritual riches and allows them to do their quiet work within us. That work concerns an ongoing and gradual process of divinization that draws us into a deeper participation in the eternal celebration of love within the Godhead.

Solitude of Heart

The primary means by which the Spirit accomplishes its task is by nurturing within us a deep desire and yearning for solitude. By helping us empty our hearts of unnecessary attachments, the Spirit enables us to make room for the divine indwelling. Solitude of heart is the precondition for experiencing the fullness of life. “The glory of God,” says Irenaeus of Lyons, “is a living human being.”² We who are created in the image and likeness of God become ourselves only by allowing God to become Himself in us. Spiritual direction seeks to help people open their hearts to the heart of God. It does so by helping them foster a contemplative attitude toward life, enabling them to see all that happens in the light of God’s providential plan.

Spiritual directors play an essential role in this process. By offering those seeking guidance the hospitality of a listening heart, we set the tone for all that happens during the session. When we are present in silence—with our full attention—we affirm the seriousness of what is taking place. The spiritual direction relationship often develops into a lasting bond of friendship springing from our reflective gaze upon the other person’s

unfolding experience, resulting in a shared experience of solitude. Three partners share in this solitude of heart: the director, the person seeking guidance and the Holy Spirit. One goal of the direction process is for the director and the one seeking guidance to gradually turn their attention to the presence of the silent third partner in their midst.

Directors need to help those seeking guidance recognize the factors in their lives that contribute to the further establishment of peace.

This is accomplished by discerning signs of the Spirit in the narrative that the one seeking guidance shares with his director. The Spirit leaves traces of its presence in the fabric of a person's life. When we look at our lives with prayerful reflection, these hidden vestiges gradually rise from obscurity and find their way into our conscious awareness. Once the signs are recognized, the task is to interpret what they mean so that the person seeking guidance can respond to them in an appropriate manner. One of these signs is peace. After his resurrection, Jesus comforted His disciples with a reassuring message of peace that stemmed from His immediate and unquestioning trust in the Father's love (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19, 21). This same message of peace comes to us today through the yearning of the Spirit in our hearts that intercedes on our behalf to the Lord with unutterable groaning (Rom 8:26). Directors need to help those seeking guidance recognize the factors in their lives that contribute to the further establishment of peace. Such peace does not come from the world, but by giving oneself wholeheartedly to the one thing that ultimately matters—the love of God dwelling in the human heart. “The paradise of God,” says Alphonsus de Liguori, “is the heart of man.”³ Christ's peace works its way outward from within. Rooted in the love of the Lord, it eventually finds outward expression in our striving to form right relationships with others on every level of human society (family, country, the community of nations). Peace, the “tranquility of order” as Augustine of Hippo refers to it, possesses personal, communal and transcendent dimensions.⁴ Solitude of heart is a neces-

sary prerequisite for discovering peace in our lives. Spiritual direction, in turn, is an important instrument given to us by God that allows that discovery to take place.

When understood as a sapiential (as opposed to a narrowly defined, rational) enterprise, theology's true task comes to the fore.

Faith Seeking Understanding

If the theologian is the person who prays in truth, then spiritual direction concerns the process that allows such prayer to take shape in a person's life. Theology, we are told, “denotes...far more than the learning about God and religious doctrine acquired through academic study. It signifies active and conscious participation in or perception of the realities of the divine world—in other words, the realization of spiritual knowledge.”⁵ To be even more specific, theology concerns our attempt to reflect upon our experience of the Trinity dwelling in our hearts. When seen in this light, the classical Western understanding of theology as “faith seeking understanding” (developed by Anselm of Canterbury under the influence of the Latin Vulgate and Augustine of Hippo) needs to be rescued from the over-rationalized interpretation it was subjected to in later centuries and exam-

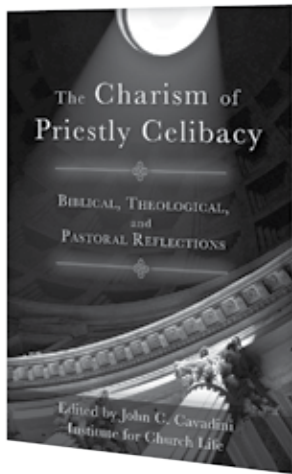
The ministry of spiritual direction is an important arena where the acquisition of spiritual wisdom occurs. With the goal of helping us become ourselves in our faith, it helps us to talk to God, to listen to Him and to engage in an ongoing process of discernment that ultimately leads to deeper intimacy with Him.

ined within the broader framework of the acquisition of Christian wisdom.⁶ When understood as a sapiential (as opposed to a narrowly defined, rational) enterprise, theology's true task comes to the fore.

We are all called to reflect upon the meaning of our lives in the light of the Gospel message. To accomplish this task well we must reflect upon the experience of God within our hearts and try to ascertain exactly what is being asked of us. When understood sapientially,

theology as "faith seeking understanding" tries to discern how the Spirit moves in our lives so that we can better understand how to live out our call to discipleship in mature and responsible ways. The ministry of spiritual direction is an important arena where the acquisition of spiritual wisdom occurs. With the goal of helping us become ourselves in our faith, it helps us to talk to God, to listen to Him and to engage in an ongoing process of discernment that ultimately leads to deeper intimacy with Him.

Explore Church Teaching



NEW!

The Charism of Priestly Celibacy Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Reflections

Institute for Church Life

Edited by John C. Cavadini

With contributions from Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M., Archbishop Allen Vigneron, and Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti, this timely collection of reflections on priestly celibacy explores its biblical, historical, and theological roots and affirms what current studies of priests reflect—that despite its challenges, celibacy has been a grace for priests personally.

192 pages, \$15.95

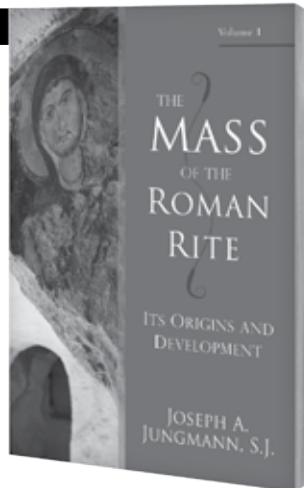
NEW EDITION!

The Mass of the Roman Rite Its Origins and Development

Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J.

First published in English in 1951 and one of the greatest achievements of twentieth-century theology, Joseph Jungmann's towering work is a comprehensive study of the origins, evolution, and theology of the Mass from its earliest forms to the dawn of Vatican II. It is now revised with a chapter unavailable in the previous English-language edition.

Two-volumes, 1,056 pages
\$90.00 hardcover, \$49.95 paperback



**"What a delight to have this
classic work in print again!"**

Paul Bradshaw

Professor of Liturgy, University of Notre Dame



ave maria press® | (800) 282-1865 | www.avemariapress.com
A Ministry of the United States Province of Holy Cross

**Our role as
directors is
to help those
seeking guidance
come to a better
understanding of
themselves and
their interaction
with, and ongoing
response to, the
divine.**

Spiritual direction achieves this goal through an honest, give-and-take relationship between two people. The dynamics of this relationship, while complex and manifold, are primarily focused on the relationship between those seeking guidance and their relationship with God. Within this framework, our role as directors is to help those seeking guidance come to a better understanding of themselves and their interaction with, and ongoing response to, the divine. We seek to enable them to draw closer to God, and we do so in a way that is, at one and the same time, both challenging and consoling. As directors, we need to challenge those coming to us to be honest with themselves and to identify significant areas of future growth. We also need to comfort them in times of discouragement and im-

minent loss. Knowing when to exercise this dual role of challenge and comfort comprises one of the primary skills necessary for the formation of competent directors.

Spiritual direction, in its many shapes, seeks to empower us to affirm our faith so we can more fully become ourselves in the process.

In the final analysis, the process of “faith seeking understanding” in spiritual direction requires flexibility and strength, the ability to adapt to changing times and circumstances and the capacity to withstand whatever adverse challenges come to the fore. The fruits of the process answer for themselves. As one searches for meaning in life, belief leads to a deeper understanding of one’s life situation and ultimately to one’s relationship with oneself, with others and with God. Spiritual direction, in its many shapes, seeks to empower us to affirm our faith so we can more fully become ourselves in the process.

Becoming Holy

Becoming our self in our faith is but another way of speaking about our desire for holiness. Spiritual direction does not simply help us gain greater insight into our relationship with God. It has very much to do with turning those insights into concrete practices that will help us walk further along the path of conversion.

These practices must not be imposed from without, but must arise from within. They must be based on a realistic assessment of our needs as seen in light of the insights gained during the direction process. A truly wise person is also a holy person—and vice versa. According to Thomas Aquinas, wisdom is the gift of the Spirit that corresponds to, is guided by and is the perfection of charity.⁷ The sapiential function of spiritual direction eventually leads us from knowing God to loving and serving Him. When seen in terms of “faith seeking understanding,” the work of spiritual direction not only helps us to see more clearly into the nature of our relationship with the divine, but to also incorporate those insights into our daily lives in concrete ways.

Living in communion with God is another way of becoming holy. It is a primary concern of the direction process and its ongoing mission to help people become themselves in their faith.

This close relationship between “being” and “action” is an important theme for the sapiential function of spiritual direction and how it manifests itself in the direction process. Virtuous actions are performed by people striving to be virtuous, and those actions contribute to making them even more virtuous. When the question “What should I do?” arises during the direction session, the person seeking guidance is ultimately asking about what kind of person he wishes to become. When properly executed, spiritual direction helps us see this important connection and encourages us to make “communion with God” the underlying motivating force for all of our actions. Living in communion with God is another way of becoming holy. It is a primary concern of the direction process and its ongoing mission to help people become themselves in their faith.

When seen as an ongoing process of “faith seeking understanding,” spiritual direction tries to help us not only discern, but also to act. By far, the most important action any of us can ever do is to pray. Prayer is often termed “the great means of salvation.”⁸ Our manner of prayer—its frequency, its form and its composition—is, and should always remain, a vital subject in the direction process. During direction, we need to ask if the prayer forms we are using address the various dimensions of our human makeup: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual. With the help of our director, we try to identify which dimensions are neglected in prayer and take appropriate steps to achieve a proper balance in our lives. The way we pray says a great deal about our own self-understanding and how we relate to God. By examining our manner of prayer with care and looking for ways to improve it, we demonstrate our love for God and our longing for holiness.

By teaching us to listen to the movement of the Spirit in our hearts and to respond accordingly, spiritual direction initiates us into the ways of wisdom. It does so by helping us view the world with eyes of compassion and with a sense of God's intense longing to dwell in our hearts.

Conclusion

Spiritual direction helps us understand and practice the nature of true prayer. It points the way to self-knowledge and invites us to deeper intimacy with God. This experiential knowledge transcends the conceptual world of the professional theologian. It invites us to participate in divine love and endows us with an intuitive sense of the divine mind.

By helping us “to pray in truth,” spiritual direction assists our faith-filled search for understanding and enables us to become ourselves in our faith. The goal of spiritual direction is to draw us closer to God so we can share in the full benefits of what it means to live in the Spirit. One of the primary benefits of this process is receiving and exercising the gift of wisdom, an intimate knowledge of God that comes to us through the ongoing perfection of charity in our lives. By teaching us to listen to the movement of the Spirit in our hearts and to respond accordingly, spiritual direction initiates us into the ways of wisdom. It does so by helping us view the world with eyes of compassion and with a sense of God's intense longing to dwell in our hearts.



Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., an American Redemptorist priest of the Baltimore Province, taught for more than twenty years at the Alphonsian Academy of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University. He is presently scholar-in-residence, professor and holder of the John Cardinal Krol Chair of Moral Theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The author or co-au-

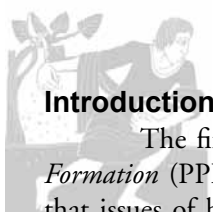
thor of more than thirty books and numerous popular and scholarly articles, he is also very active in retreat work and the ministry of spiritual direction.

Endnotes

1. Nilus of Sinai, *153 Texts on Prayer*, no. 61, in *Early Fathers from the Philokalia*, trans. E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 134.
2. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies*, 4.20.7, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 490.
3. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Way to Converse Always and Familiarly with God*, in *The Complete Works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori*, vol. 2, ed. Eugene Grimm (Brooklyn, NY: Redemptorist Fathers, 1926), 395.
4. Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, 19.13, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 409–10.
5. See the Glossary in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 2, trans. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 389.
6. See Anselm of Canterbury, *The Proslogion*, chap. 1, in *St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. S. N. Dean (Lasalle, IL: Open Court, 1962), 7; *Biblia sacra vulgata*, Is 7:9, vol. 2, ed. Robertus Weber (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), 1103; and Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, 8.5.8, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1962), 253.
7. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 8; II-II, q. 45, trans., *Fathers of the English Dominican Province*, 5 vols. (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981), 2.884-85; 3.1373-78.
8. Alphonsus de Liguori, *Prayer, The Great Means of Salvation*, in *The Complete Works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori*, vol. 3, ed. Eugene Grimm (Brooklyn, NY: Redemptorist Fathers, 1927), 23.

What We Have Seen and Heard: Astute Use of Formation Advising

Rev. Kenneth Davis, OFM Conv.



Introduction

The fifth edition of *The Program for Priestly Formation* (PPF) states: “Care should be taken to ensure that issues of human formation that properly belong to the external forum are not limited to the spiritual direction relationship for their resolution.”¹ Because such collaboration between spiritual direction and human formation requires the staff of each seminary to mutually understand and support each other’s distinct yet complementary responsibilities, this article contributes to that understanding by exploring the difference (but not dichotomy) between spiritual direction and formation advising.² It begins by addressing the continuum of confidentiality within the internal forum as distinct from the external forum by specifying differences between spiritual direction and formation advising and explaining how each may profitably refer to the other. It then explores more controversial distinctions while promoting a consensus and concludes with practical suggestions for formators.

The Continuum of Confidentiality

The PPF mentions several complementary roles at play in the formation of every seminarian—each with its own goals, questions and levels of confidentiality—that differ between internal and external fora. Among these roles is that of formation advisors: “They observe seminarians and assist them to grow humanly by offering them feedback....These formators function exclusively in the external forum and are not to engage in matters that are reserved for the internal forum and the spiritual director.”³

The internal forum includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation (which enjoys absolute confidentiality), during which a penitent makes an auricular confession of

In summary, discussions within the internal forum emphasize that which cannot be observed (such as conscience, emotions, motivations, desires and dreams) while those within the external forum emphasize that which can be observed (academic records, pastoral evaluations and patterns of behavior).

sin, accepts satisfaction, makes an act of contrition and receives absolution. The relationship is sacramental; its goals include healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. The confessor’s questions include the number and nature of any sin confessed.

Although confession is sometimes combined with spiritual direction, spiritual direction itself does not enjoy the seal of confession because it is not a sacrament and outside of seminary formation does not require a priest. Within the seminary, however, spiritual direction is a relationship between a priest (approved by the rector and appointed by the diocesan bishop or religious ordinary) and a seminarian. The priest helps the seminarian cultivate self-reflection and self-discipline with the goal of seeking “the interiorization and integration needed for growth in sanctity, virtue, and readiness for Holy Or-

ders.”⁴ Here, a spiritual director’s questions include personal history and relationships, temptations and prayer as well as vocational discernment, all aimed at attending to the seminarian’s relationship with God.

Finally, also enjoying a confidential relationship with the seminarian that is similar to the internal forum, are those who provide psychological counseling. This is a professional relationship based on trust, confidentiality and informed consent that is regulated by ethical and licensure requirements, as well as standard, professional codes of conduct. This relationship may examine a seminarian’s behavior for symptoms of emotional distress, past trauma or cognitive difficulties in order to remediate those issues and resolve unhelpful behavior.

In summary, discussions within the internal forum emphasize that which cannot be observed (such as conscience, emotions, motivations, desires and dreams) while those within the external forum emphasize that which can be observed (academic records, pastoral evaluations and patterns of behavior). Questions within the internal forum depend upon a level of presumed confidentiality, as well as the goals of the relationship, all to aid the seminarian’s internalization of the values of the priesthood.

A seminarian’s fitness for the priesthood, however, is evaluated based on how his behavior is consistent with his vocation. This is the province of the external forum, where a formator must observe signs of the anticipated outcomes of either spiritual or psychological growth indicated by appropriate patterns of verbal or non-verbal behavior. Therefore, questions within the external forum are distinctly evaluative: what observed external behaviors indicate this seminarian’s development toward mature manhood or demonstrate the fruit of spiritual growth? Is this progress adequate for his age and level of formation?

Of course, because we are talking about the same seminarian, there is a necessary relationship between these fora. An integrated person shows the fruit of his emotional and spiritual maturity through his behavior; in turn, his behavior also has a great influence upon his emotional and spiritual life. Therefore, forum is a distinction rather than a dichotomy, but it is a helpful distinction. Hence, the external forum deals mainly with what the seminarian demonstrates externally (patterns of observed behavior) and the internal forum deals mainly with what the seminarian experiences internally (conscience, desires, motivations).

An example of how a topic might better be brought to formation advising than to spiritual direc-

tion might be a seminarian who presents a superficial statement at spiritual direction such as, “I’m not praying.” As the issue is explored, however, the reasons for not praying are often poor time management (especially for newer seminarians who struggle with the fact that seminary makes more demands on them than classroom attendance and assignments), insufficient sleep (perhaps due to disordered social networking, excessive video gaming, poor exercise, unaddressed health issues or alcohol abuse) or chaotic personal boundaries (such as the inability to negotiate others’ demands). All of these issues eventually manifest themselves in patterns of behavior that are more suitably addressed in formation advising than spiritual direction, even though they influence issues such as prayer, which is a more fitting topic for spiritual direction.

Insofar as these patterns of behavior are properly attended in formation advising, they are less likely to affect the original dilemma of: “I’m not praying.” More time and attention would, therefore, be available during spiritual direction for other issues that also affect prayer but are more the province of spiritual direction: the seminarian is too guilty or ashamed to appear before God; the seminarian is angry with God, and, therefore, avoids prayer; the seminarian has an image of God any sane person would avoid; or he is simply inexperienced in prayer and needs supportive instruction.

Collaboration occurs when spiritual directors refer seminarians to formation advising when appropriate (for help with time management), and formation advisors refer seminarians to spiritual direction, rather than risk working at cross-purposes by delving into issues better explored in spiritual direction.

When formation advising addresses behavioral issues such as time management, spiritual directors are better able to address other issues such as shame, anger

or unhelpful God-images. Collaboration occurs when spiritual directors refer seminarians to formation advising when appropriate (for help with time management), and formation advisors refer seminarians to spiritual direction, rather than risk working at cross-purposes by delving into issues better explored in spiritual direction.

More Controversial Distinctions and a Suggested Consensus

However, because the distinction between formation advising in the external forum and spiritual direction in the internal forum may not be universally established, further exploration may contribute to a deeper discussion, beginning with Sister Joseph Marie Ruessmann's treatment of privacy and confidentiality according to the *Code of Canon Law* in two articles published in the Fall 2012 issue of *Seminary Journal*. She distinguishes spiritual direction from the Sacrament of Reconciliation in that the latter admits no exceptions to the absolute prohibition of the disclosure of anything the penitent confesses while the former admits exceptions, at least as required by civil law (for instance, when there is mortal danger or abuse of a minor). Thus far, the continuum of confidentiality from sacramental reconciliation (which admits no exceptions) to spiritual direction (which makes exceptions based on civil law) is little debated. Ruessmann cites section 134 of the PPF and summarizes: "The directee expects that the spiritual director will not reveal the divulged information to anyone and that the information will not be used against him (in decision-making regarding him)."⁵

Her later interpretation of what the PPF calls "grave danger" as "grave moral danger" is problematic however, because it would require the confidentiality enjoyed in spiritual direction to be breached if such grave danger (for example, pornography) is divulged to the spiritual director. There are two reasons why this interpretation is problematic.

First, while *The Code of Canon Law* is Universal Law, a Particular Law (such as the PPF), once given recognition by the Apostolic See, supersedes Universal Law. Hence, although the Code helps interpret the PPF, it does not supplant it in these specific instances. That is why we can and do legitimately speak of spiritual direction as pertaining to the internal forum, even if there is confusion between the language of the Code and the PPF (as there is between the Code and many Vatican documents).⁶ Therefore, the interpretation that the spiritual director may never reveal or use information from spiritual direction except as required by civil law, remains paramount.

Second, while the exceptions imposed by civil law (although differing by state) are readily understood by everyone in the formation process because they are limited, written and codified, the term "moral danger" is too open to individual interpretation. Each director and directee will have his own understanding of what constitutes moral danger (racism, homophobia, misogyny?). Further confusion would develop as bishops, vocation directors and rectors all have their own opinions concerning "grave moral danger" and may disagree among themselves or with spiritual directors. Who would be the arbiter? Fear concerning the consequences for these necessarily differing interpretations of "moral danger" would constantly cast doubt upon the confidentiality of anything divulged during spiritual direction.⁷

Fortunately, Ruessmann offers another possibility that is more generally acceptable in the case of grave moral danger divulged during spiritual direction. Just as a spiritual director must report to the rector when a seminarian consistently misses appointments (without in any way directly breaching the seminarian's right to privacy), so too a spiritual director may tell a seminarian that he must either bring a grave moral issue to the attention of formators in the external forum or the director will cease to serve the seminarian and will inform the rector that the relationship has been suspended (without ever divulging the reasons for the suspension). This leads the discussion out of the internal forum and into the external forum while still maintaining the confidentiality of the internal forum.

Here, too, Ruessmann offers canonical advice. She states that seminarians enjoy a right to privacy with those formators ("the right not to have one's secrets taken from oneself unwillingly or unwittingly") and the right to a good reputation ("the right to have unfavorable matters kept confidential rather than made public").⁸ She also states, however, that no one should discourage a seminarian from freely discussing his private secrets with his formators. Both of these assertions are widely accepted.

At least five difficulties arise, however, with her recommendation that external forum superiors may ask a seminarian to manifest his conscience (although not insist or persist) if the seminarian has given his "previous, explicit, informed, and absolutely free consent."⁹

First, how free and informed can this consent be when such an extreme power differential exists between the rector who asks and the seminarian who is supposed to feel absolutely free? It is difficult enough for a priest or vowed religious to exercise such informed

freedom before a superior, but seminarians are presumed to be less mature, less informed, and, therefore, less free (which is why we have a formation program for them) than a priest or religious.

Second, are all formators patient enough to always ask (but never insist), as well as always virtuous enough to ensure that there will be absolutely no consequences for the seminarian who resists? Are all formators always so self-aware and self-controlled that they can guarantee they will not harbor doubts about said seminarian?

Third, who interprets what is a question and what is a demand? Demands are often worded as polite questions, for example, “Would you please come to the rector’s office immediately?” Will all seminarians always be able to differentiate between what is asked and what is expected?

Fourth, even if the above ideals are possible, will other seminarians always perceive that the secret requested was freely divulged and that there have not been (nor will there ever be) adverse consequences for the seminarian who maintained his right to privacy? Justice must not only be done, but it must also be perceived to have been done.

Finally, there are practical obstacles. Ruessmann suggests the use of either consent forms for each request from superior to subject (an administrative challenge) or a general consent form, which would seem to erase the entire distinction between internal and external fora.¹⁰

Fortunately, Ruessmann makes two other, more helpful, observations. First, she agrees with the Congregation for Catholic Education that formators “guarantee...an atmosphere of trust.”¹¹ Second, reflecting the distinction made in this article between spiritual direction and formation advising, she observes: “The formator may ask the seminarian directly about manifest troubles, such as the seminarian’s looking troubled, or his being late for a scheduled activity, or a report that he was seen using the Internet late at night.”¹² However, she disagrees that the seminarian should be the only one to initiate a discussion of private matters with formators in the external forum, which is a contention of this article.

This article contends that the following three ideas offer firmer ground upon which to balance the seminarian’s rights to privacy with the right of the church to properly form and evaluate candidates to the priesthood within the external forum: 1) Guarantee an atmosphere of trust; 2) Formators may inquire about observable behaviors; 3) Internal forum matters may be brought into the external forum only at the seminarian’s initiative.

Finally, although internal forum matters may only be revealed at the seminarian’s initiative, recall that seminary formation happens within a community in which, not unlike a village, neighbors likely hear or see something about everyone.¹³

Formators who generate an atmosphere of trust receive such inside information as well as regular public reports about seminarians. Thus alerted, they are better able to attend to and interpret a seminarian’s pattern of behavior. Proper discernment occurs when such behavior is brought to reflection and staff discussion. Further, when the fruit of that collective discernment is brought to focused discussion in regular formation advising, proper evaluation occurs.

Therefore, Ruessmann’s recommendations about the manifestation of conscience seem unnecessary, even if canonically admissible. Asking for, rather than awaiting, the seminarian’s initiative to discuss private secrets is imprudent due to relational power differentials, improvident due to probable misinterpretations, injudicious due to likely perceptions of manipulation and counter-productive to an atmosphere of trust, which benefits all parties.

Consensus regarding the continuum of confidentiality within the internal forum (confession, spiritual direction) and a clear distinction between those levels of confidentiality and the external forum are necessary components to a complete formation program.

Ruessmann’s case may be correct *de jure*, but previous, explicit, informed and absolutely free consent is virtually impossible *de facto*. Consensus regarding the continuum of confidentiality within the internal forum (confession, spiritual direction) and a clear distinction between those levels of confidentiality and the external forum are necessary components to a complete formation program. The consensus promoted here is that a seminarian may, and in fact is, encouraged to speak his

conscience to whomever on the formation staff he believes will best help him, but he would not be asked to do so by anyone in the external forum. Further, in the case of grave moral danger, short of breaching confidentiality, those in the internal forum would do everything in their power to insist that the seminarian divulge the danger to the external forum (with due regard to civil law unless under the seal of the confessional). Finally, while these distinctions between internal and external formation are helpful, the necessary collaboration between the fora is best served by a clear consensus among staff and seminarians concerning such distinctions. The consensus promoted here is that the external forum deals mainly with what the seminarian demonstrates externally (patterns of observed behavior), and the internal forum primarily addresses what the seminarian experiences internally (conscience, desires, motivations).

While the continuum of confidentiality enjoyed within internal formation is necessary if a seminarian is to internalize the values of the priesthood, his observable behavior is the criterion used for advancement toward ordination. This is because, upon admission, the seminary presumes a certain human and spiritual maturity, as well as the capacity to grow in these areas. While the seminary offers assistance in the form of spiritual direction or psychological counseling, it is not the place for the long-term, residential care of young men who have not reached appropriate maturity in these areas.¹⁴

Within a defined timeframe and with the limited resources of the seminary, a seminarian must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the formation staff via the external forum, that he is qualified to advance toward ordination. The internal forum is only a necessary (to avoid scandal and safeguard confidentiality), though limited, aid to the seminarian in this endeavor. Hence, while it would be unhelpful for anyone in the external forum to request that a seminarian manifest his conscience, it would also be unhelpful for anyone in the internal forum to advocate for a seminarian based upon what has been shared confidentially (even with the seminarian's permission).

It is up to the seminarian to demonstrate sufficient integration of these areas in order to convince the formation staff, through his behavior, that he is ready for advancement. Valid evidence for advancement is the seminarian's consistent behavior cross-situationally ("across situations and settings") and longitudinally ("across time"), not his private reflections, motivations or emotions, no matter how moving or eloquent.¹⁵ For this reason, formators in the external forum should de-

liberately focus on the seminarian's observable actions in relation to his age and level of formation, as well as how those patterns of behavior compare to the clear, consistent, specific feedback the seminarian has received concerning his conduct, and not be distracted by matters best left to the internal forum. Such focus may also mean that issues influencing spiritual direction, but not directly related to it (such as time management), may be better addressed in the external forum, allowing more time and attention in spiritual direction for matters more congruent to that forum, such as God images or prayer styles.

Specific Differences Between Spiritual Direction and Formation Advising

This article specifically addresses formation advising (periodic meetings between a seminarian and his formation advisor) as distinct from spiritual direction. Each seminarian is required to meet individually with his formation advisor as well as with his spiritual director. How is the external forum meeting distinct from, yet related to, spiritual direction?

First, internal formation (spiritual direction) always enjoys some continuum of confidentiality; external formation does not. Second, and as a consequence, internal formation is not directly related to the evaluation of a seminarian while external formation is. Third, the PPF gives some guidance: spiritual direction must include discussions of celibacy and simplicity of life (PPF 110), as these are more likely to result in a manifestation of conscience; formation advisors are to look for behavioral markers, as part of human formation, that are appropriate to a seminarian's age and level of formation. A chief marker is affective maturity or the ability to form inclusive bonds with others (PPF 76).

Practical Suggestions for Formators

Bearing this guidance in mind, what follows are suggested topics that may help formation advising remain distinct from other aspects of formation while also integrating with these other aspects. Feedback to seminarians is most helpful: 1) when clear, consistent and specific; 2) when related to patterns of observed behavior; 3) when seminarians understand how their behavior is being interpreted in relation to the formator's expectations; 4) when reasonable behavioral goals for improvement are explained; 5) when help to reach these goals is offered; 6) and when the consequences of the seminarian's behavior is understood.

For example, "You have a bad attitude," is an am-

biguous statement. Unless the formator is clairvoyant, how can he know the seminarian's state of mind? How can a seminarian respond to such ambiguity? Although it requires greater self-reflection on the part of the formator, something more helpful might invite deeper discussion, such as: "I've noticed that when I mention cultural diversity, you roll your eyes and you sigh. To me that communicates dismissiveness. Moreover, I also notice you rarely dine with our Hispanic or African students. This leads me to think you resist engaging with people whose experience is different from your own." Like anyone else, a seminarian has a right to his own feelings, but not to his own facts. This example focuses on facts and their interpretation while concluding with an open-ended statement that invites discussion.

It is important for formators not to project their own experiences, assumptions or limitations upon the seminarians they evaluate. That is why formation advising must be a discussion and not just a teaching or disciplining moment.

Formators must be perceptive as well as self-reflective. It is important for formators not to project their own experiences, assumptions or limitations upon the seminarians they evaluate. That is why formation advising must be a discussion and not just a teaching or disciplining moment. While the external forum emphasizes a seminarian's behavior, seminarians should be given the opportunity to clarify facts. Perhaps formators did not observe the entire situation or understand its context. How such behavior is interpreted may also be open to discussion, especially if the seminarian and the formator are of different cultural backgrounds. For example, a formator may interpret the seminarian's consistent habit of not making eye contact as indicative of disingenuousness. In some cultures, however, proper deference to authority requires a seminarian to lower his eyes when addressing his superior.

Finally, formation advising is most helpful when both parties conclude with the same understanding of how the seminarian's behavior has been evaluated, what future expectations the seminary has for the seminarian, and what, if any, consequences will follow if the seminarian does not fulfill those expectations by the agreed deadline. Recall that this is a discussion, which may include an offer of appropriate aid to the seminarian. The formator must model appropriate behavior at all times, for example, through previous self-reflective preparation that allows for respectful firmness and focus, as well as honest approval or correction.

Keeping the focus on patterns of behavior maintains the boundary between the internal and external fora and also provides examples that can be used to make feedback clear and specific. Consistency is aided when the seminarian understands how his behavior is being interpreted in relation to the formator's evaluation of him and what expectations the formator has of him for improvement. Advice or aid for improvement is helpful.

The following topics related to each pillar of formation are offered to help formators focus on behavior and invite such discussions. Note that these are preparatory suggestions for the formator to consider about a seminarian and do not imply that it is incumbent upon the formator to indicate behavior inconsistent with the seminary's expectations. The *seminarian* must consistently demonstrate behavior congruent with these expectations. However, there are two reasons for such preparation by the formator. First, he will better model self-reflection and respectful, intelligent dialogue. Second, he will be better prepared to provide clear, consistent and specific feedback about patterns of behavior and how they are interpreted by the formator in relation to the formation faculty's expressed expectations of the seminarian commensurate with his age and level of formation.

Readers may wonder why there is no corresponding list of suggestions for spiritual direction. Simply put, while there are virtually limitless books, articles, seminars and even degree programs offering support for spiritual direction, there is comparatively less practical guidance for formation advising. This article attempts to address that lacuna.¹⁶

Below are more than sixty topics for reflection. About half relate directly to human formation because the seminary has other methods of evaluating (through grades and supervisory reports) or supporting (through tutoring, counseling or spiritual direction) the other

three pillars. Because these suggestions are designed to lead to a discussion focused on patterns of behavior, treatment of all of these topics could occupy the average seminarian's regular formation advising throughout his time in seminary.

Formators who model self-reflection through previous preparation, who respect boundaries by keeping the discussion focused on patterns of verbal and nonverbal behavior, who are consistently clear and specific and who try to be genuinely helpful, are more likely to generate trust.

Formators who model self-reflection through previous preparation, who respect boundaries by keeping the discussion focused on patterns of verbal and nonverbal behavior, who are consistently clear and specific, and who try to be genuinely helpful are more likely to generate trust. While such trust cannot be legislated, it is freely given once authenticated and likely reciprocated.

This is not meant as a simple checklist. Not every topic needs to be broached with every seminarian; for example, his appropriate grooming and hygiene might be readily apparent. Likewise, some topics may need to be frequently revisited with a particular seminarian. Each issue must be tailored to a specific seminarian, and other topics may be added. However, the following discussion guide may help seminaries distinguish formation advising from spiritual direction because the latter does not evaluate seminarians while the former does—just as the apostles appraised Christ through what they had seen and heard.

Human Formation

Is the Seminarian a Man of Community?

Have you seen and heard the seminarian: demonstrate sensitivity to others' needs?

- show good manners to everyone, especially guests?

- display openness to all, particularly those who are racially, linguistically or ethnically different from him?
- socialize with the community? Initiate contact with new community members?
- participate with the community on evenings and weekends?
- volunteer for community activities?
- resolve conflicts with other community members?
- offer constructive feedback to his peers?
- relate respectfully to people on campus who express opinions with which he disagrees?
- communicate directly, openly and clearly with peers, for example, talking to people rather than about people?
- maintain healthy relationships with both sexes without exclusivity or cliquishness?
- relate appropriately to benefactors who support his education, as well as to seminary staff who work on his behalf (secretaries, IT personnel, library workers, maintenance and janitorial employees, food service workers)?
- exhibit interest in hobbies, musical instruments, sports, cultural events or books? How does he share his interests with others?
- give evidence of being more of a bridge than an obstacle between those who encounter him and who wish to encounter Christ through him?

Does the Seminarian Demonstrate Markers of Human Formation?

Have you seen and heard the seminarian:

- assume responsibility for his actions?
- admit and learn from his mistakes?
- ask for or offer help?
- persevere in the face of adversity?
- respond flexibly to unexpected change?
- treat all other seminarians with brotherly respect despite his personal likes or dislikes?
- constructively express his emotions in ways that are mutually beneficial?
- respond well to others who express their emotions?
- convey sufficient docility (for his age and level of formation) toward the formation, pastoral and academic staff?
- express appreciation or recognize others' accomplishments?

Does the Seminarian Appropriately Act as a Public Figure?

Have you seen and heard the seminarian:

- dress appropriately for his station in life, for example, by honoring the community dress code?
- maintain appropriate grooming and hygiene?
- manage his time so as to fulfill all of his obligations?
- use vocabulary in his written and verbal communication (including recorded ones) suitable to the occasion?
- employ appropriate physical boundaries, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume and posture that is congruent with the message he wishes to communicate?
- listen well (without interruption or the need to argue)?
- express or appreciate humor that is proper for the setting?

Does the Seminarian Show Leadership?

Have you seen and heard the seminarian:

- take initiative?
- recognize a need and address it?
- motivate or cooperate with others?
- restrain his impulses for the common good?

What Observations Can You Make About the Seminarian's Health and Wellness?

Does the seminarian:

- have obvious dietary, weight or exercise goals that should be discussed? Once agreed upon, how is he meeting them?
- have health issues the administration should know about for the seminarian's own welfare?
- appear to get sufficient, quality sleep each day? Does he look rested? Is he alert?
- use social networking, texting, video games and television appropriately? Is there reason to think they interfere with proper rest, study, exercise, prayer or community relationships?
- give you reason to be concerned about his use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs?

Intellectual Formation

What Observations Can You Make About the Seminarian's Academic Performance?

Does the seminarian:

- carry an appropriate number of academic

Basic to all courses is interpreting the Scriptures, the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church and the confessional positions of ecumenical partners in the most favorable but accurate light.

hours?

- have a GPA that reflects his ability?
- miss or arrive late to class? What arrangements did he make for absence or tardiness?
- discuss any areas of academic concern? How might they be addressed?
- manage his time well? If needed, help him schedule a regular place and time to study for each subject. Help him establish a timetable that will allow him to complete one long-term assignment.

Ask him to share a significant question he raised in class. Provide feedback.

Ask what concepts were raised in class that he found challenging. Discuss them.

Ask him to offer an example of how study has been helpful to formation for the priesthood.

Spiritual Formation

What Observations Can You Offer About the Seminarian's Spiritual Formation?

Does the seminarian:

- demonstrate fidelity to, and punctuality for, community Mass and Liturgy of the Hours? Discuss any concerns.
- offer his talents in service to the community liturgy? Make suggestions.
- demonstrate fidelity to, and punctuality for, common devotions such as *lectio divina*, community rosary, benediction, Lenten penance and Triduum retreat? Discuss any concerns.

Pastoral Formation

Based on Feedback from His Supervisor, What Was Seen and Heard About the Seminarian's Pastoral Formation?

Does the seminarian

- fulfill his ministry responsibilities?
- demonstrate reliability in his ministry?
- demonstrate a healthy and realistic image of the role of a minister?
- show respect and cooperation with the laity?
- give evidence that the ministry assignment positively influences other pillars of his formation?
- play to his strengths and compensate for his weaknesses in his ministry assignment?
- collaborate with others, particularly women?
- appropriately manage stressful situations?



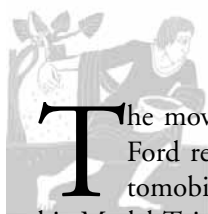
Franciscan Father Kenneth G. Davis, OFM Conv., is the spiritual director at Saint Joseph College Seminary in Louisiana. His last publication is *Discovering the Divine: Your Guide for Spiritual Direction* a recording of Now You Know Media, Inc.

Endnotes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., #131 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001), p. 52.
2. Although any errors are exclusively my own, I thank the following colleagues for their editorial assistance: Jack Hunthausen, SJ, and David Keong Seid, OP; I also thank Sr. Jeanne D'Arc Kernion, OSB, upon whose work many of the closing topics for discussion in formation advising are based, and who also offered invaluable editorial assistance.
3. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §80, describes this and other related roles.
4. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §110.
5. Joseph Marie Ruessmann, "Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited — Part I: The Role of the Spiritual Director," *The Seminary Journal* Vol. 18, 2 (Fall), 2012: 91.
6. Charles Benoit to kdavis@sjasc.edu, personal e-mail (12 June 2013).
7. This also appears to be a concern of the Congregation for Catholic Education's 2009 *Vatican Report on U.S. Seminaries*: "The internal forum needs to be better safeguarded. There is confusion, in places, as to what the internal forum is (it covers only sacramental confession and spiritual direction; psychological counseling may be confidential, but it is not internal forum). In places, seminarians are being asked to reveal (in formation advising, in psychological counseling, in public confessions of faults, etc.) matters of sin, which belong instead to the internal forum. Other seminaries dilute the confidential nature of the internal forum: the spiritual directors and students are presented with a list of 'exceptions' to the confidentiality of spiritual direction (even if it is always emphasized that the seal of confession is inviolable)." Congregation for Catholic Education, *Vatican Report on U.S. Seminaries* (15 December 2008).
8. Joseph Marie Ruessmann, "Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited — Part 2: The Role of the Rector and Formators," *The Seminary Journal*, 18, 2 (Fall) 201: 96.
9. Ruessmann, "Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited — Part 2," 96.
10. Although Ruessmann finds the terms "internal forum" and "external forum" inconsistent with canon law, they are the ones most familiar with readers of this journal. Moreover, she uses as an example the consent form required of an applicant to the seminary for this assertion. However, the difference is that an applicant enjoys protections from civil law and professional codes, is not resident under the rector's authority, and has not yet made the sacrifices of a seminarian who leaves home, often travels at some distance to the seminary, has made a public commitment, and may have left a girlfriend, sold a home or business or left a career, as well as taken out loans or made other financial sacrifices. Therefore, the free and informed consent of an applicant is qualitatively different from that of a seminarian because the former has not made the same kinds of sacrifices or commitments as the latter, enjoys distinct protections and is not resident under the rector's authority.
11. Ruessmann, "Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited — Part 2," 98. Note that in the document cited, it is incumbent upon the formators to guarantee such an atmosphere of trust; seminarians are only asked to respond to it.
12. Ruessmann, "Internal Forum and External Forum in the Seminary Revisited — Part 2," 98.
13. Mel Blanchette, "Discernment Within the Internal and External Forum," *Seminary Journal* 3 (2000), 11.
14. It is also presumed that the seminarian possesses sufficient intellectual capacity and prior academic training. Likewise, while some remediation is offered, seminarians must master coursework in a satisfactory manner within a reasonable time with the resources available.
15. Dr. Fernando Ortiz explains in an email: "Cross-situational ('across situations and settings') and longitudinal ('across time') behavioral consistency is absolutely important in evaluating a seminarian's criteria for advancement. Behaving in one way in a particular setting (e.g., seminary) and questionably in a different setting (e.g., home parish) would demonstrate cross-situational variability. Similarly, some relative temporal stability in character and behavior is expected, notwithstanding appropriate developmental changes resulting from normal maturation processes. One is not expected to behave the same at the age of 20 versus at the age of 40, but some relative stability in salient personality traits and their expression, for example, in pastoral settings is expected." Fernando Ortiz to Kenneth Davis, "manuscript for *Seminary Journal*" personal e-mail (12 June 2013).
16. It is worth noting that the PPF does little to explicate (beyond requiring ordination) the training, credentials and competencies needed for spiritual directors, or a standard profile of the qualifications and expertise required of formation advisors to accurately, competently and appropriately identify the behavioral markers the document names.

Seminary Formation: Assembly Line or Artisan's Workshop?

Rev. Michael Muhr



The moving assembly line as produced by Henry Ford revolutionized early twentieth century automobile production. It allowed Ford to produce his Model T in huge numbers with low cost and consistent quality. The assembly line workers each became specialized in their respective tasks. The pieces of each car were fit together with incredible speed, allowing a daily yield that was unthinkable in those days.

Seminaries As Assembly Lines

Could our seminaries be considered assembly lines? Although this comparison would be considered by many to be coarse and unfair, there are aspects of this image that are positive and attractive. The assembly line model allows for a uniform approach that, if engineered correctly, yields a predictable, quality product. If the program is well thought out and every faculty member does his part, seminarians would receive the tools needed to be “men of the church.” The essentials of the faith would be committed to memory through their study of theology and the moral manuals. Seminarians would learn the proper rubrics and canons necessary to be faithful and pastoral priests. The universality of the church’s teaching and the message of the gospel would be proclaimed with a single voice. The sacraments would be administered with appropriate reverence and validity. Catholics could trust that their priests were competent spiritual leaders. Spiritual formation using an assembly line framework would help candidates for the priesthood develop the disciplines of prayer that would bolster their faith, strengthen their resolve to live the virtuous life and provide hope in difficult times. Spirituality would be like the oil that keeps the machine running smoothly.

But human beings are not machines. They have self-awareness, free will and mysterious inner spiritual

At the core of formation is God’s call for personal transformation, and this requires openness and a willingness to grow. It is first and foremost a process of relationship.

lives. Although some might phrase the above attributes differently, these qualities are commendable and are part of the vision of the priesthood for the Catholic community. Priests are not built by attaching doctrines and canons to their brains. They do not become the presence of Christ merely by practicing pastoral counseling skills. Because the process of formation is a human process, it is intricately sophisticated and subtle. At the core of formation is God’s call for personal transformation, and this requires openness and a willingness to grow. It is first and foremost a process of relationship. As stated in the *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF), those aspiring to the priesthood “must first acquire the listening and learning heart of disciples.”¹ They must come to know Jesus. In his book, *Moving in the Spirit*, Richard Hauser writes about the importance of becoming aware of the presence of God in one’s life as absolutely necessary for growth in the spiritual life. He also describes what happens when this awareness is absent. “For the unawakened self,” Hauser contends, “Jesus is an acquaintance rather than a friend.” The goal of prayer then is reduced to “fidelity to the obligations for prayer that the Church prescribes.”² This hearkens back to the assembly line approach to formation.

The Need for Program Integration

I do not contend that anyone—even from the past—would espouse the assembly line as a proper metaphor for seminary formation. The basic nature of the spiritual life has always been envisioned as relational, from God's early covenant relationship with Israel as intimately described in the Old Testament to the close bond Jesus formed with his twelve apostles. This notion continues in the spiritual writings of the saints throughout the centuries. And yet somehow functionality happens. It creeps in. Conversations in spiritual direction may become, while still practical, superficial. As wise spiritual director John Cippel once put it, "Some seminarians move through the seminary like they are going through a car wash. Their windows are rolled up; the antenna is down and they come out at ordination all shined up, but little has changed inside."³ Compartmentalization is another scenario that may arise if seminary life begins emphasizing academics and perhaps apostolic work in relative isolation from each other and from spiritual formation. Compartmentalization is certainly a common problem in contemporary life, but in the seminary the unreflective operating principle would be that if the faculty members each do their part, the assembly will come together in the end. It's been designed to work.

The need for program integration in the preparation of priests has been noted for some time. The fourth edition of the PPF published in 1992 often mentioned the need for unity among the different areas of formation, stressing that "the program of spiritual formation must form a unified and coherent whole with the academic and pastoral programs. Unity and coordination are essential to effectiveness."⁴ In the fifth edition of the PPF published in 2006, there are ten paragraphs outlining the inner cohesion of formation's four pillars of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.⁵ The reality of putting this into practice, however, still remains elusive because the respective formation offices often work in relative isolation from each other. On the positive side, there seems to be a recent increase in the number of conversations and conferences on the topic of integration.

Spiritual Formation as an Art

If the process of forming priests is not meant to be an assembly line, could it be more accurately designated as an "art?" Although each area of formation might be described this way, I would like to concentrate on the area of spiritual formation. As stated above, the basis

of spirituality is our relationship with God. In their groundbreaking book, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, William Barry and William Connolly comment on how prayer as relationship was not always emphasized. For example, they refer to an excellent article published in 1957 entitled "*Direction Spirituelle*" in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* noting its insights, but also concluding that, "there is very little discussion of a personal relationship with God and of the nature of prayer."⁶ Spiritual guidance often took this form of advice-giving. Barry and Connolly do offer a balancing statement in which they recognize that "such spiritual direction has been and is helpful to people, especially if the director is a good and kind listener, experienced and knowledgeable."⁷ What makes Barry and Connolly's book so foundational for our day is its rediscovery of the dynamic of personal relationship with God as the essential quality of spirituality. This comes through in their definition of spiritual direction:

We define spiritual direction, then as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communications to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.⁸

Focusing on prayer as relationship is not something new, for it is fundamentally present throughout the Scriptures. There is the stunning revelation in the book of Exodus that "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend" (Ex 33:11). Later, in Hosea, we hear God's moving invitation to the wayward people of Israel, "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her" (Hos 2:14). This relationship with God reaches an unimaginable profundity as Jesus announces to his disciples, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (Jn 14:23).

The notion of encountering God in the relationship of prayer is also abundantly found in the rich tradition of Catholic spiritual writings. In *The Confessions* of Augustine we hear how passionate this relationship can be as he reveals his conversion:

You called and cried out to me and broke open my deafness; you shone forth upon me and you scattered my blindness; you breathed fragrance, and I drew in my breath and I now pant for you; I tasted and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for your peace.⁹

Bernard of Clairvaux describes his mystical experiences with God, explaining that “when the Bridegroom, the Word, came to me, he never made any sign that he was coming... Only by the warmth of my heart, as I said before, did I know that he was there.”¹⁰ Obviously, this wonderful journey towards ultimate mystery and intimacy cannot be a matter of assembling prayer practices, but rather an intimately personal spiritual formation received as gift.

Relationship is certainly implicit in every prayer (and in most anything written about prayer) and yet how quickly we shift away from living in relationship towards functionality. It incessantly seeps into our language.

Still, one may ask, “Is it really necessary to develop the notion of spiritual formation as an art form, and prayer as relationship at such length? Aren’t these realities self-evident?” Relationship is certainly implicit in every prayer (and in most anything written about prayer) and yet how quickly we shift away from living in relationship towards functionality. It incessantly seeps into our language. People will say, “I need to do my Office,” or, “I’m going to say Mass.” This could simply be a matter of semantics; however, language usually indicates intentionality and people often do confess how quickly their prayer can become rote and utilitarian.

Defining Spiritual Growth

This dynamic of prayer, as a sacred and intuitive conversation, presupposes that God communicates with us personally and individually, that God wants to communicate with us. This is certainly the consistent and remarkable message of the scriptures. God is always the initiator breaking into our everyday existence. Although it could happen in some spectacular way, most often God is encountered in the ordinary events of life. I remember reading about this when I began college seminary and wondering what this encounter would look like. Could this happen to me? I remember trying

to make it happen by willing it. Next, I tried different prayer methods, but spiritual growth is an art and, in prayer, this divine moment commences as gift, as a movement of the Spirit. It finally happened—unexpectedly—during my seventh year in the seminary on the day we were to make our promise of fidelity and to petition the bishop for Orders. I still had not received a confirmation in prayer that my vocation was real. I was experiencing emptiness, a concern that maybe I was making a mistake. For me, celibacy was a daunting sacrifice. If God wanted this, I would do it, but I needed assurance. It was now decision day, and I panicked. I remember finding the rector early on that day and asking for a delay. He asked me to review with him how things were going, and so I went down the list: studies, life in the seminary, parish ministry, etc. All were well, but I still wanted that certainty inside. He gave me wise counsel: “What kind of a God would give you all those little yeses only to give you a big no in the end?”¹¹ I knew that God couldn’t be that way, but I remained unconvinced. I later prayed in desperation, speaking to God from my heart: “What do you want me to do? Please, give me some assurance.” Then, from deep inside I felt the response: “I don’t work that way... You don’t trust me.” After seven years of edging toward this call, yet always holding back, I was finally facing the Truth. I received my answer: there are no certainties. It was all about trust. This was a deeply emotional moment. I considered this new reality and its cost. Then, I decided. I can still so clearly envision myself holding my life in my arms and giving it to God with only the tearful request, “Please, take care of me.” So I went to the mass of commitment that evening and made my pledge. I went with a great peace in my heart, like a comforting embrace. Savoring this moment much later in spiritual direction, I realized I was also feeling God’s great warmth and love, a love like I had never known before. God’s love from that encounter still resonates deeply within me today.

As I look back at that time, I realize that I never prayed about that moment again or processed my experience in spiritual direction until much later in life. I moved on, back into my normal routine of praying and saying prayers. The way I handled this encounter was similar to how I listened to others as a spiritual director in my early years in parish ministry. If someone mentioned a deeply moving encounter with God, I rejoiced with them, but then our conversation usually moved on rather quickly to something else. I did not know how to help them savor this grace. I would say something like,

If someone mentioned a deeply moving encounter with God, I rejoiced with them, but then our conversation usually moved on rather quickly to something else. I did not know how to help them savor this grace.

“Wow! That’s wonderful. God has really blessed you.” And that was it. We would start to talk about another topic. At other times, when directees were struggling in desolation, I mostly offered words of advice or simple encouragement. Even though I knew by faith and conviction that God was with them, I felt powerless to help them unpack their experience so that they might see how God’s love and healing grace was helping them in their pain and disquiet. I could not help them because I did not feel close to God in my own prayer and was unskilled in recognizing these windows of grace. As I quoted Barry and Connolly on spiritual advice earlier, I was probably somewhat helpful to my directees because I think I offered a kind and compassionate listening presence, but when reflecting now, I think there were wonderful opportunities of grace that passed us by. At that time, I lacked any notion of spiritual direction as art.

An Artist at Work

So, how do we describe spiritual formation as an art form? One of the many definitions for “art” listed in the *American Heritage Dictionary* is a “skill arising from the exercise of intuitive faculties.”¹² This fits well with spirituality because entering into and reflecting upon a relationship as mysterious and sometimes as intangible as spiritual communication with God certainly necessitates not only the use of the mind but imagination and affect as well. The American philosopher and artist Elbert Hubbard once said that “Art is not a thing—it is a way,”¹³ so perhaps an appropriate starting point would be an illustration of an artist at work. A while ago, I had a conversation with priest and artist Fr. Carlos Rojas¹⁴ who told me that he could not define art because

that was too wide a notion, but he could tell me what he thought a “realized” artist was. He used verbs from his native language to describe what happens to “realized” artists, endowing them to create works that truly inspire. First, there is something that attracts one’s attention and is seen (*mirar*), for instance, a painter who after many years revisits her childhood home. Then, what is viewed is admired in itself (*admirar*), so much so that one is moved to contemplation (*contemplar*). As she walks around her first home and neighborhood, all sorts of memories are rekindled. She often pauses for long periods of time to soak in the treasures of these recollections. It is out of this special place that one is drawn to embrace (*abrazar*) what is deeply encountered. Resting deeply in these moments, sometimes she laughs and sometimes she cries, but in the end she smiles in gratitude. What ultimately flows forth is creation (*crear*). Only after this personal assent is she ready to paint, and what flows from her colors and forms are the profound stories of her soul.

St. Ignatius of Loyola

This dynamic, creative process and how it relates to our relationship with God can clearly be seen in the wisdom and writings of St. Ignatius of Loyola. After experiencing a life-changing conversion, which set him aflame in love for Christ, Ignatius gradually recognized a pattern to the Holy Spirit’s movement in his and others’ lives. His subsequent notes and directives are outlined in his *Spiritual Exercises*,¹⁵ a thirty-day directed retreat written to assist others to hear and answer Jesus’ call to choose God in everything and to offer up their lives for God’s greater glory. This process of conversion is a highly intuitive, affective venture—an art form. The contemplations of the *Spiritual Exercises* closely parallel the dialogical relationship of the artist described above. In each exercise, after praying for a particular grace, Ignatius first directs us to look at something (*mirar*). For instance, on the first day of the second week he instructs us to contemplate the incarnation and nativity. We are invited into the vision of the Blessed Trinity as God looks at the world in all its complexity, “some in peace and others in war...”¹⁶ and decides, “Let us work the redemption of the human race.”¹⁷ Then, in the second contemplation, Ignatius bids us to imagine the birth of Jesus. In David Fleming’s contemporary reading of the *Spiritual Exercises*, he paraphrases Ignatius’ direction this way, “to be able to see this very human baby with all the wonder [*admirar*] which comes from the eyes of faith, to watch how Mary and Joseph handle themselves,

What flows throughout the contemplative dialogue of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the movement of the Spirit, which will eventually create in us (*crear*) a new way of being by falling in love with Jesus.

their own response to God at this time—these are the various aspects or focuses of the mystery to which I may find myself drawn.”¹⁸ Next, Ignatius directs us to three more periods of contemplation, proposing that we use “the five senses of the imagination.”¹⁹ As we become ever more present (*contemplar*) to the birth of Jesus, Ignatius wants us to see, hear, smell, taste and touch this incredible moment of God’s love for each of us. Finally, in the colloquy, we are asked to speak to the “three Divine Persons or to the Eternal Word Incarnate, or to our Mother and Lady,”²⁰ so that we might embrace (*abrazar*) the grace for which we have prayed. What flows throughout the contemplative dialogue of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the movement of the Spirit, which will eventually create in us (*crear*) a new way of being by falling in love with Jesus. The goal is total commitment to Christ and the desire to share everything with him, even his passion and death. Thus, we will come to rejoice with him in the resurrection and will be sent like the apostles to proclaim the kingdom, giving everything back to God, “my liberty, my memory, my intellect and all my will,”²¹ for God’s will and greater glory.

Because the writings of Ignatius are remarkably detailed, one may get the impression that the *Exercises* are fixed and automatic, but Ignatius offers guidance for a living encounter that is far from mechanical or superficial. If we enter into these contemplations our hearts will be changed, our lives will be transformed. Even though Ignatius specifically directs us towards certain images, once our imagination is engaged, all things are possible. How do we know what is of God and not of God? Therein dwells the art. In fact, this whole process of conversion is an art that only the Holy Spirit can inspire. Ignatius actually offers twenty notes (or annotations) and twenty-two rules for discernment to assist the

director in the art of listening with the retreatant for the Spirit’s movements. He counsels the director away from making interpretations of scripture or theology in favor of letting retreatants discover these for themselves. In other words, the director is not to talk too much.²² There are times for instruction on how to pray and, especially if no consolations or desolations are coming, to inquire about how one is praying.²³ There are times to be especially gentle and supportive, such as when one is in desolation, helping the retreatant understand the ways that human nature and the power of evil can hinder growth.²⁴ The timing for each of these interventions is part of the skill of good listening. Ignatius mentions that there will be times when, because of the consolations or desolations experienced, the director will need to explain the rules for the discernment of spirits to the retreatant. This is where the skill and art of spiritual formation are most noticeable. How do I know whether what I am experiencing is leading me toward God or away from God? The rules for the discernment of spirits help the director and retreatant discern the answer to that question. For instance, if a person is basically moving towards the Lord, Ignatius says that one can predict how the enemy will try to interfere. He says, “It is the way of the evil spirit to bite, sadden and put obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, that one may not go on.”²⁵ If, however, one is moving away from God, the enemy will tempt in a very different way. When a person is already caught in sin, “the enemy is commonly used to propose to them apparent pleasures, making them imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them and make them grow in their vices and sins.”²⁶ The work of grace is just the opposite in each case. When a person is walking towards the Lord, the Spirit gives courage, strength and consolations, but if he is walking away from God, he is pricked by conscience and reason. Determining which direction a person is traveling and what is of the Spirit and what

Determining which direction a person is traveling and what is of the Spirit and what is of the enemy is the art, the intuitive gift necessary for good spiritual direction.

is of the enemy is the art, the intuitive gift necessary for good spiritual direction. Another tricky moment may come as we are moving closer to God in our affection and commitment. Here, Ignatius says we are susceptible to a much more subtle and craftier approach by the enemy. The evil looks like good. In this case, Ignatius says the evil one forms himself “under the appearance of an angel of light... that is to say, to bring good and holy thoughts, conformable to such just soul and then little by little he aims at coming out drawing the soul to his covert deceits and perverse intentions.”²⁷ To help another person spot these kinds of shrewd temptations is where the director's skills are most crucial. One metaphor from Ignatius that may summarize the artisan's role throughout the *Exercises* is the director “standing in the center like a balance, [who] leaves the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.”²⁸ Fleming paraphrases it this way: “The director facilitates the movement of God's grace within us so that the light and love of God inflame all possible decisions and resolutions about life situations.”²⁹ Thus, the spiritual director, from the intimacy of his or her own relationship with God, uses the gifts of intuition and compassion, along with the skills of active listening, to accompany the directee while the Spirit, the Master Artisan, loves, heals and guides.

Conclusion

Many in the church believe that now is a critical time for a renewed emphasis on seminary formation so that our priests may be men who are healthy and holy. Although it may be more than obvious that any guidance offered to others in such a precious and sacred arena as spiritual formation would need to be considered more as an art form than a regimented program or as spiritual advice given to help seminarians remain on the “straight and narrow,” our human tendency towards habituation dictates that special emphasis continues to be required here. Imagining spiritual formation as an art form helps keep directors and seminarians alike from falling into functionalism and routine. Most importantly, it reminds us directors that each seminarian we companion in spiritual direction is unique and that his relationship to God and God's love for him is fresh and unrepeatable.



Rev. Michael Muhr is Dean of Spiritual Formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida.

Endnotes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., (Washington, DC: USCCB Publications, 2006), §107.
2. Richard J. Hauser, *Moving in the Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 14.
3. Fr. John Cippel is a spiritual director at St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami, Florida, and has served for many years as spiritual director for programs of the Institute of Priestly Formation, Omaha, Nebraska.
4. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB Publications, 1992), §271.
5. *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., §70, §106, §112–115, §136, §164, §236, §241.
6. William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), 200.
7. Barry and Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, 6.
8. Barry and Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, 8.
9. Louis Dupré and James A. Wiseman (eds), *Light From Light* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001), 63.
10. Dupré and Wiseman, *Light from Light*, 111.
11. Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, was rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, Florida, in 1982 when this conversation took place.
12. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004)..
13. Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Teachers: Thomas Arnold* (E. Aurora, NY: Roycrofters, 1908).
14. Fr. Carlos Rojas is a priest of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, serving at Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Wimauma, Florida.
15. Daniel L. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).
16. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §106.
17. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §107.
18. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §97.
19. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §121.
20. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §109.
21. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §234.
22. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §2.
23. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §6.
24. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §7.
25. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §315.
26. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §314.
27. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §332.
28. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §15.
29. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, §15.

Emmaus Groups in Seminary Formation: An Experience of Fraternity and Faith Sharing

Rev. Michael Muhr



Several years ago, the formation team of St. Vincent de Paul Seminary began offering students an opportunity to integrate their formation by sharing their personal ideas and experiences around several topics of significance to priestly ministry. These topics were outlined for each particular year of formation. Many topics were repeated, in varied form, from year to year; for instance, there was always a session on celibacy. As students progressed closer to ordination, other topics were introduced, such as rectory living, maintaining a prayer life in busy parish ministry, and so forth. The program was called Formation Nights, and its intent was clearly on target and important. The feedback over the years, though, from students and faculty moderators alike, was increasingly negative. These nights seemed stilted and the students lacked interest and enthusiasm. A common complaint was, "This is just one more thing to do." After leading a couple of groups myself, I also felt that the sessions seemed contrived and artificial. The seminarians were asked to comment about how they might feel or respond when they would one day be in certain situations. It did seem like we were attaching another cog on the engine of diocesan priesthood preparation. Formation Night seemed like a chore rather than an opportunity to encounter one another and the grace of God in our lives and ministry.

Then one day, as I was preparing for that night's topic, I had an idea to change the format along the lines of the Review of Life as we practiced it in my *Jesus Caritas* priest fraternity group. I asked the group of fourth year men that I facilitated if they would be interested in an experiment. They were unanimously in favor of it. We opened with silent meditation in which we asked for the grace of God to guide us to determine what moment of grace from prayer, pastoral ministry or our own

We would not give advice or comment but simply be an attentive, supportive presence.

personal lives we would share with one another. We also prayed for the grace to be good listeners. Each person was asked to share once while everyone else listened in silent attentiveness. We would not give advice or comment but simply be an attentive, supportive presence. After everyone had shared something, I asked if anyone wished to say a word or phrase that struck him personally from what another had shared. We ended our session with a simple prayer.

The difference between this session and what we had been doing was astonishing. We never went back to the original format. The sharing was surprisingly deep, personal and relevant. The students spontaneously integrated their studies, their pastoral ministry experiences and their prayer. I watched with delight as this intimacy drew these classmates closer together as a group. I saw how they offered one another respect and support by giving their attention as each person spoke and by the way they linked what was shared by another to their own experience of grace. These formation nights transformed from a programmed discussion with a pre-arranged curriculum into a graced encounter with one another and with God. It was clearly evident that the spirit was present. In fact, as we concluded one session, a student commented, "This is Holy Ground." Ironically, most of the topics that we were slated to discuss over the

course of the year surfaced anyway, but they did so with more significance because they were experienced in the moment. Also, because these were now personal testimonies, they were more relevant to the group. Since this change in format, which occurred some years ago, we have renamed Formation Nights “Emmaus Groups.” The name Emmaus obviously connotes that special time after Jesus’ resurrection on the road to Emmaus when the disciples’ hearts were burning inside them as they listened to the Lord. In spite of all their human weaknesses, Jesus the master artist, continued to patiently mold and form them just as He does us. The students participating in these groups are available to God’s handiwork because they are prayerfully reflective, vulnerable and trusting. It is vitally important that the moderator share something of deep value from his own spiritual life and ministry, because the group will only feel free to delve as far as they sense the moderator is comfortable. We have adjusted aspects of the Emmaus structure over the years, based upon an annual review by the facilitators and seminarians. This year, for instance, one group of fourth year students added time for the others in the session to respond from their own experience after each person’s sharing. Because of their prior experience in these groups, these respondents were able to avoid “advice-giving” and reported they found their time together to be more profound. I believe this openness to review and innovation helps Emmaus remain vital and relevant.

Without fail, after every one of these nights, I am so grateful to God for the graces that have poured forth in these special sessions. I consider these evenings among the most important of my ministry at the seminary. After beginning priestly ministry in their respective dioceses, many of the students from these classes form or join fraternity groups for the purpose of continuing this special experience of grace. I see it as a wonderful sign of hope that these new leaders are being supportive of one another and taking time to reflect deeply on their relationships with God and their people.

I see it as a wonderful sign of hope that these new leaders are being supportive of one another and taking time to reflect deeply on their relationships with God and their people.

Emmaus Group Format

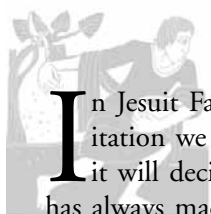
Each class of students at the seminary is divided into Emmaus Groups of six to eight students and a moderator. The students usually choose the groups. The spiritual directors serve as moderators at St. Vincent’s, each taking one class, or two to four groups. The Emmaus groups are considered external forum, yet we speak with the students about respect and keeping confidences in these types of groups, such as they will experience in their parish ministries. We also talk to them about appropriate levels of disclosure and developing the ability to share with different groups according to the nature of these groups.

- Our Emmaus Groups meet monthly
- We try to choose locations that are a little more comfortable than classrooms such as student or teacher lounges.
- The session begins with a prayer to the Holy Spirit for inspiration about what we would each like to share from our prayer, life or ministry. We also pray to be good listeners. The group spends about two to three minutes in silent prayer.
- For the first couple of sessions, it is helpful if the moderator shares first in order to set an example of time, tone and the depth possible in sharing. Keep in mind that the others in the group will usually only share to the depth that they sense the moderator and the group are comfortable.
- As each person speaks, the others listen attentively in silence, and when that person finishes, he passes a cross (or other suitable symbol) to someone else in the group who has not yet shared. The group spends ten to fifteen seconds in silent prayer to pray in thanksgiving for the blessing that was shared or for intercession and strength for a struggle being endured, then the next person shares.
- In this type of sharing group there are no questions or discussion, but rather support is given through attentive listening and presence. It is amazing how powerful this simple experience can be.
- After everyone has shared once, the moderator invites others to offer a word, phrase or short comment about something they heard from the brothers that struck them or that was helpful to them. After those who wish have shared, the moderator offers a final prayer and the session ends.
- Emmaus group sessions usually last from forty-five minutes to an hour.

Fr. Michael Muhr is Dean of Spiritual Formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida.

Falling in Love and Staying in Love: The Gift and Labor of Prayer in the Priesthood

Deacon James Keating, Ph.D.



In Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe's, greatly admired meditation we read this: "Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."¹ The term "fall in love" has always made some think that love is an accident, a reality that befalls a person, something one suffers like a wound.² In some ways this understanding of falling in love is true, at least within the initial phenomenon of beholding the beauty of the beloved. Once the energy of the phenomenon withers, however, all humans are left with a choice: how do I choose to love from within the stirred affections of falling in love that now reside in my heart as a memory? These stirred affections still have a vital role in my self-gift to the beloved, affections that guide this love as the chosen meaning of my life.

In this article, I meditate upon the theological meaning of falling in love and staying in love, first as a human phenomenon and then as one ordered toward God. In doing so, I hope to sketch out a vital spiritual truth: to fall in love with God is the vital point of energy³ for every choice that follows and is the sustaining truth that endures throughout one's relationship with God.

Falling in Love

Within falling in love, is there a role for free will? Yes. Once a person experiences the affective pull toward the beauty of the other, he or she then chooses to receive that person within his or her own returned gaze. One chooses to affirm the gaze and let it open the affectively imbued mind, which stirs the will to choose to behold the other's beauty. The ecstasy of love lies in knowing that such wounding and being wounded is re-

Yes, falling in love is primarily an affective experience, but, paradoxically, at the core of such an experience are stable truths that communicate to the intellect that this person is worthy of self-bestowal.

ciprocal. The joy of falling in love is found in both falling in love and being loved in return.

The choice present within falling in love is simple: will I choose to surrender to the mystery of this beauty and let the one who loves me actually do so? Without the falling aspect of love (that carries the wounding⁴), one would lack the affective adhesion to beauty that is necessary to render the self as a gift. The wounding that occurs through seeing the other as other, and not an extension of the self, begins the process of purifying the Eros from remaining trapped in pleasure. Yes, falling in love is primarily an affective experience, but, paradoxically, at the core of such an experience are stable truths that communicate to the intellect that this person is worthy of self-bestowal. The primary truth that the affect attaches itself to is the beauty of the beloved, not

simply his or her physical beauty, but a beauty flowing from the beloved's character or constitution.⁵ To maintain the drama of willing the good of the beloved long after the first accidental wounding occurs, the one in love has to continually choose to see this constitutive beauty. In seeing this beauty, the fullness of reality bids that the lover also suffers the beloved's limited, sinful human state. This sober seeing does not destroy the affect's attachment to beauty, but actually matures the affect, allowing it to cling more securely to all that is lasting about the self and the beloved.

Following the awakening of the affective life one must resist the lie that the falling was not real. In order to do so a person needs to regularly embrace the truth of their memory of falling in love. In light of human finitude and sin, the first falling is not to be jettisoned; the aroused attraction was not a mistake that now needs to be rejected. No, the falling is the most trusted part of love: in it the eyes were open to see the other in a way that was never known before. The beauty of seeing the beloved facilitates the death of the ego, and the choice to serve the beautiful one assists in convincing the ego to yield center stage to the beloved. The work of love functions to keep the lover open to seeing and serving the beloved. All of love's reality is built upon trusting that what the affectively-imbued mind saw when beauty first arrested it is the source for continuing to love forever. Falling in love was not only real but actually carries the seeds for mature love.⁶ Mature love is realized when one cultivates the primordial truth of falling in love: one has finally "seen" another as other and is no longer seen as simply useful. Part of falling in love is the real and dramatic welcoming of the other as mystery.⁷ One measures authentic falling in love by passing erotic emotions before this standard: one has received and is now cherishing the reciprocal respect each has for the other as mystery. By mystery, I mean that the lovers have received one another as gifts from God. This is nascent at first and the lovers are not even necessarily capable of articulating this divine component. The couple simply knows they have met an other, but beyond this other they detect something more. As the couple's spiritual consciousness expands and develops, the reception of the other as divine gift—the something more—explains how falling in love can simultaneously cause a radical conversion of behavior. As the lovers receive one another as gifts, their behavior transforms from seeking or taking to one of receiving in gratitude. In mature love, gratitude occupies the core of one's experience about the other. In mature love, it is gratitude toward the beloved and

toward God, the giver of all good gifts, which defines a person's relationship to the beloved.

The maturation wrought by falling in love has its origins in the death of the ego and the simultaneous reception of the other person as the meaning of one's life. Where the self was previously at the center of all thought and decision-making, the beloved now occupies the space once filled by the self. To have the deepest part of me be another, as Gabriel Marcel once noted, is the very definition of the fruit of love's conversion. The death of the ego is facilitated by beauty itself, but a person must be able to withstand the purification that beauty intrinsically carries to the fat, relentless ego. Without the necessary courage, a man may quickly corrupt his encounter with beauty by trying to possess it, take it and begin to relate to it out of fear of losing it. What is unknown to such fear is that beauty only remains when it is received as gift. Much love between a man and woman is corrupted by fear and its offspring: possessiveness.

Falling in Love With God

How does the above discussion regarding human love apply to one's love of God and God's love of us? In the case of human-divine love, the initiative is God's. God sees us first, so to speak, and then we respond to being loved. However, we have to affirm God's gaze, as he loves us within the very truth of our fallen and redeemed nature. We have to let the truth of such love wound us and open us to being affected by such awe-filled love. We receive God's love most securely through our vulnerability toward Christ. Christ is the face of God and he reveals that face when we are not afraid to let him affect the fullness of our humanity. Some, out of fear (Mt 14:27), only receive his presence with curiosity, remaining guarded, in control and refusing to allow divine beauty to inexorably lead to surrender. These people that remain scholars in the faith, regularly cautioning others not to trust the affect, as if distance guarantees clarity.⁸ No doubt both reason and affect are tainted by sin and weakness, but it is through deep engagement—not by acts of affective detachment—with the Word that both are purified. Deep engagement with the Word involves one's entire person: affect, intellect and will. Such engagement invites relationship rather than a form of 'enlightenment' objectivity. Detachment favors a narrow form of knowledge that is recognized only by modern scientists: distance, extrication and disengagement.

As Pope Benedict XVI notes:

Contact with the visible manifestations of God's love can awaken within us a feeling of joy borne of the experience of being loved. But this encounter also engages our will and our intellect. Acknowledgment of the living God is one path towards love, and the "yes" of our will to his will unites our intellect, will and sentiments in the all-embracing act of love. But this process is always open-ended; love is never "finished" and complete.... The love-story between God and man consists in the very fact that this communion of will increases in a communion of thought and sentiment, and thus our will and God's will increasingly coincide: God's will is no longer for me an alien will, something imposed on me from without by the commandments, but it is now my own will, based on the realization that God is in fact more deeply present to me than I am to myself. Then self-abandonment to God increases and God *becomes our joy* (cf. *Ps* 73 [72]:23–28).⁹

Communion with God within the sacramental life is what guarantees that a person will be touched by divine love in the fullness of his or her personhood—intellect, will and affect.

Communion with God within the sacramental life is what guarantees that a person will be touched by divine love in the fullness of his or her personhood—intellect, will and affect. Such communion has profound ramifications, truly raising within us a dramatic decision of the heart: will I, or will I not, resist Pentecost? "You have seduced me O Lord, and I was seduced; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed" (*Jer* 20:7). To resist the love of the Spirit within the sacramental life is to remain a skeptic or scientist within the church and to never move toward becoming a theologian.¹⁰ A theologian is one who desires to rest upon the heart of Christ and to receive all that he wishes to give from that heart.¹¹ What is in the heart of Christ? "Only by participating in what is most personal to [Christ], his communication

When we fall in love with the Crucified, we receive what all lovers receive: the deepest reality of the beloved, the heart.

with the Father, can one see what this most personal reality is; only thus can one penetrate to his identity.... The Church arises out of participation in the prayer of Jesus (cf. *Lk* 9:18–20; *Mt* 16:13–20)."¹² To love Christ, to become engaged in his love in the fullness of one's person and not simply engaged by emotion or intellect, is to participate in what is most personal to him, his communication with the Father.¹³ When we fall in love with God, then, we allow Christ to pray in us. To have Christ pray in us is the logical outcome of allowing him to behold us in love. As we respond to this beholding, we let what he has affected or wounded—namely, our mind, heart and will—to become entryways through which he passes in order to dwell within us. Christ bears in himself such beauty that it opens our deepest human elements and softens them to receive what we were previously hardened to or unconscious of: God wants to enter and possess and abide within the core of our humanity. When we fall in love with the Crucified, we receive what all lovers receive: the deepest reality of the beloved, the heart. The heart of Christ, astoundingly, is also shared with those who would rest against it. This heart is communication with the Father and this communication is the Holy Spirit; so in allowing Christ to see us, behold us and love us, we receive the Holy Trinity.

If we allow Christ to enter, we welcome his fidelity to who he is, the Father's Only Begotten Son, and thus our hearts become the arena within which he shares this fidelity with us as beloved adopted sons. This sacred exchange or prayer deeply etches our interiority; it becomes the point of contact between our identity and his transforming Spirit. It is the Spirit who draws us into eternal life. It is the Spirit who draws us more deeply into the mystery of Christ's own fidelity to the Father. Therefore, we see Christ beholding us most profoundly from the Cross, the bed of sacrifice and fidelity for the Bridegroom. Upon the cross, the Trinity's love is revealed: "See how I love...till the end." If we miss the weight of love upon the cross, we miss our only op-

If we miss the weight of love upon the cross, we miss our only opportunity to fall in love with God, for no other reality contains the true intentions of God toward us than the cross.

portunity to fall in love with God, for no other reality contains the true intentions of God toward us than the cross.

Staying in Love With God

God attracts the heart and, through the heart, the mind and the will. In order to stay in love with God, one must live in attraction to him. A person cannot simply choose to love; he or she must choose to love God from within the lived memory of falling in love with God. By memory, I do not mean a past experience that one recalls, but an ever-occurring grace that one receives in the present as a result of having endured a historical event that now etches the soul. In other words, one has a date and time of falling in love with God. As a result of this falling in love, one continually receives grace; it is the offer of love that one consented to as he gazed upon the cross of Christ. One gives this grace real assent; it is not simply a universal notion that applies to all persons, such as God loves us. No, God loves me and “shakes me to the roots of my being, raising my personal existence to an intense pitch.”¹⁴ Living within such an initial attraction and subsequent consent does not simply inform an individual, it moves him. To stay in love with God, one must stay within the effects—ever-given—of being one who said yes to the divine love that transpires between the human heart and the cross. As Marko Rupnik, SJ, noted about love and memory:

After having experienced...a real encounter with God, I surrender to the Lord, seeking to make this foundational event a lasting memory. It is a memory of love that permeates all my faculties, which are rooted in and grafted on love: my reason, sentiment, will, intuition...and even my sensory perception. This memory, this safeguarded taste, becomes the authentic starting point of all discernment.¹⁵

To stay in love with God is to know that one has fastened the soul to the ultimate good, thus this staying in love is a sober adhesion and not an untethered passion. It is a love secured by one's participation in the love offered from the cross, and sacramentally, from the altar.

The way to stay in love is a way of weakness before the truth of love; this way takes one through humility and from humility to deeper receptivity.

We stay vulnerable to the paschal mystery of Christ so that, in us, he can fulfill his eternal desire to share himself with his creation. Staying vulnerable to the love bestowed from the cross and received by the human heart is most effectively accomplished by a commitment to share all thoughts, feelings and desires with the Crucified; it is a commitment to never turn away from the cross, to never turn from the ever-pouring love gushing from the Sacred Heart. Here is true spiritual vulnerability: “I will turn toward you oh loving God even as this turning is filled with pain, shame and perhaps even nostalgia for my sins, sins I love so well...that I have loved more than You.” The way to stay in love is a way of weakness before the truth of love; this way takes one through humility and from humility to deeper receptivity. This way of staying does not lead down errant paths of uncontrolled passion, but rather establishes sober receptivity and gratitude, the true marks that one has been deeply affected by divine beauty. In this way, all the saved are caught up in a doxology of love, wherein “the Father does not keep His joy to Himself.”¹⁶

One stays concretely in love when one offers the truth about oneself in a sacred exchange with the truth of Christ's self-donation.

Therefore, one stays concretely in love when one offers the truth about oneself in a sacred exchange with the truth of Christ's self-donation. In this holy exchange we secure our love for God by unflinchingly sharing the deepest aspects of our thoughts, feelings and desires with him, not as a pious exercise, but as a profound dying of all that is kept secret and hidden in our souls. This sharing does not stem from scouring the psyche for content, but from inviting him to abide in us and elevate from our depths all that we need to offer him so that we might adhere to his kenotic love—pouring ever forth from his Sacred Heart.

Loving God Will Decide Everything

Staying in love with God leads to a great fruit of love: habitually making decisions out of communion with God. To be in communion with God is to dwell in a state of diminished interference between a man's heart and the Trinity. This state of diminished interference promotes the capacity to make decisions out of loving communion. To dwell in this state is to be gifted with rest (Mt 11:35), with an inhabited silence wherein a man and the Trinity converse on all manner of things in a fashion that is living, immediate and with consequence to behavior. An inhabited silence is one that reverences the deep quiet of the heart even as the divine presence lives within that heart, actively calling out through the conscience (the heart) to be gratefully received. By attending to this communion, a person reduces the appearance of stray thoughts in his prayer and increases his interior beholding of truth. He rests with God so that he can be still from within, not tossed to and fro by emotion. Instead of such interior turmoil, his affect is nourished by the truth of revelation as this truth is breathed forth (Lk 23:46) from within the Paschal Mystery.

Receiving the truth stabilizes a person's interiority and gifts him with rest, a rest that flows from an intimate relationship with the Trinity¹⁷ and from which his habits of decision making arise. Such interior silence gradually develops into a stable character trait. To stay in communion with the charity of Christ demands the way of interior silence. It is a way that will receptivity to truth just as such truth radiates from the beauty of Christ. In this case, silence is a thoroughfare of communion with the beauty of truth. One who makes decisions from a state of holy communion ought to emulate Jesus' own interiority: "Christ only speaks of that which He beholds."¹⁸ To behold the beauty of God in Word and sacrament, however, does not render a person

To behold the beauty of God in Word and sacrament, however, does not render a person speechless; it enables him to speak the fruit of his own silent communion with God.

speechless; it enables him to speak the fruit of his own silent communion with God.¹⁹ Only speech and action that flow from this silent communion, this gaze upon divine beauty, carry the potency of true divine-human exchange. For lovers of God, the optimal desire of life is to abide in this exchange.

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple (Ps 27:4).

The Priest and Loving God

Because the priest is a spiritual leader,²⁰ and he holds such leadership as his primary field of expertise, he needs to minister from his interior intimacy with Christ, out of falling and staying in love with him. Pope Benedict suggests this very point:

Do not become utterly absorbed in activism. There would be so much to do that one could be working on it constantly.... Not becoming totally absorbed in activism means...remaining with God.... One should not feel obliged to work ceaselessly; this is important for everyone...even more so for a Pope. He has to leave many things to others so as to maintain his inner view of the whole, his interior recollection, from which the view of what is essential can proceed.²¹

One can only make clear and faithful decisions if one learns how to listen, and listening necessitates interior silence. Interior silence depends upon the security of the lived memory of falling in love with God. A silent heart is a heart that has welcomed truth and now rests quietly while the truth of ecclesial doctrine nourishes the conscience, the love-soaked mind. For the priest, this

A silent heart is a heart that has welcomed truth and now rests quietly while the truth of ecclesial doctrine nourishes the conscience, the love-soaked mind.

interior silence enshrouds and protects staying in love with God and may well be one of the greatest gifts he can give to the church.²² External silence and the reading of scripture alone will not ensure interior silence, for experience tells us that deep within the human soul are a cacophony of voices: some from God, some from the self, some from past authority figures and even some from demons. Along with external silence (and other realities mentioned below), one must be schooled in how to discern, how to distinguish the voices within, and once distinguished, how to relate to them so that nothing can disturb the heart resting in the Trinity. In discernment we follow those affective movements that deepen our faith, hope and love, and we resist those movements that undermine those virtues.

Further, it is crucial that a man not simply be left in silence; the priest needs to contemplate the face of God, the beauty of God. He beholds the holy face of Christ by way of *lectio divina* and the sacramental life. In this way, he is also assisted by spiritual direction to acknowledge the movement of God within his heart and to relate all of his thoughts, feelings and desires to the Sacred Heart. In turn, the priest will receive divine love, which prompts him to respond to this love by deeper prayer, service or moral action.²³

The priest is also called to deepen his faith-filled decision making by dwelling in the beauty of the Paschal Mystery. "Beauty is the very way in which reason is freed from dullness and made ready to act."²⁴ If this is true of beauty in general, then imagine the quality of actions flowing from a priest's choice to stay in the presence of the Paschal Mystery, which is beauty itself. To stay in the presence of the Paschal Mystery is to choose to personally appropriate the grace of regular worship within the Eucharistic liturgy.

To stay in the presence of the Paschal Mystery is to be vulnerable to Christ communicating himself and so to bond the man to the living God.²⁵ For the priest,

the entryway for grace is directly through the sacramental character that defines his vocation. The character is the weak point of creation for him, the point at which the mystery of Christ can reach him most directly and most powerfully. The priestly character is Christ's own gift to the priest, rendering him permanently available to the sacrificial mystery of Calvary. The priest, then, most securely stays in the presence of the Paschal Mystery when he remains faithful to his priestly identity and charism.

A priest who is regularly affected by the radiation of truth and beauty that constitute the Eucharistic liturgy possesses a reason made ready to act. To be taken up in the life, death and resurrection of Christ frees reason to influence the affectively imbued will to act in faithful witness to the love that now defines the conscience. This love is a reciprocal dynamism between the Trinity and the priest, a love that has as its goal a sustained dwelling within the human heart. Such a love is beautiful and calls out to the priest to remain ever-engaged with its radiation of truth, thus securing divine love as the fount of all decision making.

In silence and from within a matrix of beauty, the priest appropriates the grace of falling in love and staying in love so that all of his decisions are marked by these realities.

In silence and from within a matrix of beauty, the priest appropriates the grace of falling in love and staying in love so that all of his decisions are marked by these realities. The capacity to decide out of love is received through purification and trial. It is, of course, the core of Christian life to both suffer this purification and be established in communion with the Trinity. One's priesthood can only become more dynamic in its expression as one embraces falling in love and staying in love with God as the constitutive elements of one's spiritual life.

I began this meditation with this idea: to fall in love with God is the vital point of energy for every choice that follows and is the sustaining truth that endures throughout one's relationship with God. To love

To love God is not something a person assumes as guaranteed throughout life and ministry. Communion is a wonderful mystery that must be guarded and protected in memory and contemplation so that all of one's actions will reflect the truth of having said yes to the searching gaze of divine love become flesh.

God is not something a person assumes as guaranteed throughout life and ministry. Communion is a wonderful mystery that must be guarded and protected in memory and contemplation so that all of one's actions will reflect the truth of having said yes to the searching gaze of divine love become flesh.²⁶



Deacon James Keating, Ph.D., is director of theological formation for the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska. He is a permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Endnotes

1. The full quote reads, "Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the mornings, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything." Pedro Arrupe, SJ, in an undated spontaneous address to women religious.
One can also see this threefold approach to the spiritual life in other traditions in the church, such as the Sulpicians. "Christianity consists in these three points, and the whole method of prayer is contained therein: that is, to

look at Jesus [to fall in love], to unite ourselves to Jesus [to stay in love], and to act in Jesus [and it will decide everything]." J. Olier, "Introduction to the Christian Life and Virtues," in *Berulle and the French School: Selected Writings*, ed. William Thompson (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 229.

2. See also Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Heart* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2007), 21.
3. I understand energy in the way Jean Corbon uses it on p. 17 in *The Wellspring of Worship* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005): "Energy is the life giving power of the Holy Spirit." Therefore, to fall in love is to become vulnerable to the transforming power of the love between the Father and the Word. This vulnerability to the love between the Father and Son is what true falling in love is ordered toward, as opposed to disordered eroticism, which always has at its core the disposition to take rather than make the self a gift.
4. "For Plato, beauty in fact is a cause of suffering. The encounter with it comes as a shock which takes the individual out of his everyday existence and nurtures in him a longing for the original perfection that was conceived for him and which he has since lost. The shock of the encounter with beauty is like an arrow that pierces man, wounds him and in this way gives him wings, lifts him upwards toward the transcendent.... The longing elicited by beauty finds its healing, through the revelation of the New Testament, in the Truth which redeems.... When men have a longing so great that it passes human nature...it is The Bridegroom himself who has wounded them. Into their eyes he himself has sent a ray of beauty." George Cardinal Pell, "The Concept of Beauty in the writings of Joseph Ratzinger" in *Benedict XVI and Beauty in Sacred Art and Architecture*, ed. D. Vincent Twomey and Janet Rutherford (Dublin: Four Courts, 2011) 25–26.
5. For some succinct and moving meditations on love and beauty see Thomas Dubay, *Deep Conversion, Deep Prayer* (San Francisco, Ignatius, 2006), 67–75.
6. Jose Noriega, "The Spark of Sentiment and the Fullness of Love" in *The Way of Love*, ed. Livio Melina and Carl Anderson (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), 297.
7. Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 105.
8. "The heart has its reasons; it has its own rationality, which reaches beyond 'mere' reason. On the basis of the logic of this sentence we can get to the meaning: Any perception presupposes a certain sympathy with what is perceived. *Without a certain inner closeness, a kind of love, we cannot perceive the other thing or person. In this sense the 'will' always somehow precedes the perception and is its precondition; and the more so, the greater and more inclusive is the reality to be perceived.* We are able to give the assent of faith because the will—the heart—has been touched by God, 'affected' by him. Through being

touched in this way, the will knows that even what is still not 'clear' to the reason is true." Benedict XVI, *Address on the occasion of the conferring of an honorary doctorate in theology by the Theological Faculty of Wrocław/Breslau*, (24 October 2011). [Emphasis mine.]

9. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter to the Bishops Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and All the Lay Faithful on Christian Love *Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), §17. Also: "Man is truly himself when his body and soul are intimately united; the challenge of *eros* can be said to be truly overcome when this unification is achieved. Should he aspire to be pure spirit and to reject the flesh as pertaining to his animal nature alone, then spirit and body would both lose their dignity. On the other hand, should he deny the spirit and consider matter, the body, as the only reality, he would likewise lose his greatness. The epicure Gassendi used to offer Descartes the humorous greeting: 'O Soul!' And Descartes would reply: 'O Flesh!' Yet it is neither the spirit alone nor the body alone that loves: it is man, the person, a unified creature composed of body and soul, who loves. Only when both dimensions are truly united, does man attain his full stature. Only thus is love—*Eros*—able to mature and attain its authentic grandeur." *Deus caritas est*, §5. And also: "Even if *Eros* is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to 'be there for' the other. The element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *Eros* is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, 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)." *Deus caritas est*, §7.
10. In saying theologian here, I do not mean a professional teacher, but a Christian who knows that all knowledge about God is *contained within and given from* the heart of Christ. It is to this heart that one needs to adhere. See Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, 167. Likewise, in saying philosopher, I do not mean a professor, but a person who gains all knowledge about God from only what the senses and reason can ascertain.
11. Evagrius Ponticus, *Ad Monachos*, trans. Jeremy Driscoll (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 320.
12. Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 19.
13. Although I will not explore it in this article, I must note the suffering one experiences in the felt absence of God. Saints have attested to knowing spare affectivity in their prayer and living in love by faith alone. To have low affect in prayer during any period in life is not a sign that one has fallen out of love with God or that God has pulled away from us. When Christ hung upon the cross He was in deep, intimate union with the Father and stayed in communication with Him even in the midst of aridity, pain and desire. I would argue that *His commitment to communing with the Father* even upon the cross was, in a very real way, a consolation with diminished affectivity. This paradoxical consolation resides in Christ's desire to be obedient, to be a listening Son. In this commitment to listen to the Father, even upon the cross, Christ secures and grows in loving intimacy with Him. To desire and then direct one's will to adhere to the Heart of God is the way to stay in love even in the midst of aridity and desolation. See, Joseph Langford, *Mother Teresa's Secret Fire: The Encounter that Changed Her Life and How it Can Transform Your Own* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2008), 247. Also, in Mother Teresa, this void of affect was itself a kind of intimacy with God. In a sense she was saying, "I do not want to feel His love because Love itself wants me not to feel His Love." In her own words, "I just have the joy of having nothing, not even the reality of the Presence of God.... With my whole heart I want it to be just like this—because HE wants it." I could hardly think of a more affectively full, spousally-ordered and transcendently erotic statement than that. Darkness contains affect, it can never be vanquished in its relation to love. See also Brian Kolodiejchuk, *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 227–228.
14. John F. Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2004), 234.
15. Marko Rupnik, *Discernment: Acquiring the Heart of God* (Boston: Pauline Books, 2006), 113.
16. Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, 66.
17. Ps 131:2: "I have stilled my soul, hushed it like a weaned child. Like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is my soul within me."
18. Blessed Columba Marmion, *Christ, The Life of the Soul*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Herder, 1925), 315.
19. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church *Verbum Domini* (30 September 2010), §294: "In this regard, however, one must avoid the risk of an individualistic approach, and remember that God's word is given to us precisely to build communion, to unite us in the Truth along our path to God. While it is a word addressed to each of us personally, it is also a word which builds community, which builds the Church. Consequently, the sacred text must always be approached in the communion of the Church." See also Adrian Walker, "Love Alone: Hans Urs von Balthasar as a Master of

- Theological Renewal” in *Love Alone is Credible*, vol. 1, ed. David L. Schindler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 33–34.
20. “The faithful expect only one thing from priests: that they be specialists in promoting the encounter between man and God. The priest is not asked to be an expert in economics, construction or politics. He is expected to be an expert in the spiritual life.” Benedict XVI, Address to the Clergy at Warsaw Cathedral (25 May 2006).
21. Benedict XVI, *Light of the World* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 71–72.
22. The contemporary master on the ways of discernment, Fr. Timothy Gallagher, notes this about his teacher, St. Ignatius of Loyola: “Ignatius does not ask that we become aware of, understand, and act in regard to *all the movements of our hearts*, but rather with respect to those which may impact our adherence to the will of God, as strengthening or weakening this adherence.” Timothy Gallagher, *The Discernment of Spirits* (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 25.
23. For more on this method of prayer, see John Horn, *Heart Speaks to Heart* (Omaha, NE: IPF Publications, 2009).
24. George Cardinal Pell, “The Concept of Beauty in the writings of Joseph Ratzinger” in *Benedict XVI and Beauty in Sacred Art and Architecture*, ed. D. Vincent Twomey and Janet Rutherford (Dublin: Four Courts, 2011) 25.
25. See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 43.
26. I would like to extend my gratitude to Msgr. John Cihak who read earlier versions of this essay.

RENEWING THE WEST BY RENEWING
COMMON SENSE
a conference

Opening Talk by Dr. Peter A. Redpath

Thursday, July 17 - Sunday, July 20, 2014

Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
440 West Neck Road
Huntington, Long Island, NY 11743

To register and/or make room reservations, please contact Deidre
at 585-899-1243 dcr@caritasconsulting.com



The Need to Teach About the Authority-Obedience Relationship

Cynthia Toolin, PhD



When I have conversations with seminarians about authority, especially after an introductory dogma course or one in Ecclesiology or the Vatican II Documents, their interest is in the magisterial teaching authority of the church. Less frequently, often after they have finished a course in Sexual Ethics or Marriage and the Family, their concern is authority in the household, specifically the authority of the husband over his wife. After a more advanced course, such as Catholic Social Teaching, their interest is in the authority of the government, or of state officials and their representatives, over citizens. These conversations have led me to conclude that few of my seminarians (or my lay students for that matter) understand authority in general or authority's complement, obedience.

Bishops, husbands and government officials have authority, my students have told me, and obedience is something subordinates must give these entities because of it. These examples are correct, if properly understood, assuming the superior is acting within his sphere of authority, for the common good of the community, and nothing immoral or unethical is being commanded.¹ I find this understanding of the relationship between authority and obedience as barren and dry as the desert, weighty and depressing, whereas the relationship between the two is, in reality, fruitful and uplifting. And so I try to improve this understanding in my courses by focusing not on dictatorial control and servile submission, but on familial leadership and filial obedience.

We know authority comes from God, as is oft quoted from Romans 13. We know this from the beautiful first verse, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist have been set up by

An accurate understanding of authority and obedience requires us not only to understand that God has given us the relationship between the two, but also to realize that God created man in his image, not only with intellect and will, but with a call to community that reflects the Trinity.

God." Although Paul is speaking of civil authority in this passage, the words are often used to explain authority in general and to lend divine support to it. Paul is not saying that God always gives authority to a particular person over others.² God did not, for instance, give Presidents Clinton, Bush or Obama authority over each and every individual citizen as if they were anointed with the mantle of divine right.

What comes from God is the relationship of authority and obedience, of complementary roles; this relationship is part of his eternal law, of his plan, that some people lead and others follow, according to the skill sets, abilities and experience of each person and their appropriateness for particular circumstances. Priest and parishioner, mother and child, teacher and student, doctor and patient, employer and employee, civil authority and

citizen, officer and soldier: all of these fall within social groups where the relationship of authority and obedience is needed for cooperative action. As a teacher I have particular skills that are employed in the classroom with the goal of exposing my students to more advanced ways of thinking and understanding. I do not have the skills to be an officer on a battlefield with the goal of informing my soldiers how to vanquish the enemy. My authority is in the classroom and my students should submit to my teaching; I should not try to strategize on a battlefield, nor—if I did attempt to be an authority in such a situation—should soldiers who value their lives obey my orders.

An accurate understanding of authority and obedience requires us not only to understand that God has given us the relationship between the two, but also to realize that God created man in his image, not only with intellect and will, but with a call to community that reflects the Trinity. We are social beings from the moment of our conception until our death and beyond in the life to come. We are conceived and born because of the social relationship between two people; we are socialized into the culture we live in by others; we are formed into adults by others; we are led as citizens by others; we are buried by others. In time, as we go through life, we perform these same functions for our family and friends, as well as for those usually outside our circle of intimates. The call to community is strong in us; it is there that we ultimately find our earthly fulfillment. If we give freely of ourselves, in ways appropriate to our various kinds of relationships, our rewards are greater than any material object or honor that could ever be given to us. Even after death, we are social beings. If we attain the Beatific Vision and see God face-to-face as he is, we will be part of the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit in our glorified bodies, in a way we cannot now even anticipate.

Living in a community, or many communities if we consider the many groups we belong to, is not sufficient for us to be fulfilled as social beings. We need to be more than part of the group; we need to participate in the group in some manner. Most of us, in most situations, will be followers. We all have spheres of authority, as a mother over her children, but only a few have authority over the whole social group, as a president over the nation's citizens.

For the common good of the community or the social group, we need someone to lead us. One person must be in authority to decide what goal the group

For the common good of the community or the social group, we need someone to lead us. One person must be in authority to decide what goal the group members should pursue and the means to attain it, to prioritize those goals and means, and to make a decision in case of an emergency.

members should pursue and the means to attain it, to prioritize those goals and means, and to make a decision in case of an emergency. In many social groups, such as in a family or volunteer organization for example, discussion can and should take place in non-emergency situations. However, if a consensus cannot be reached by at least the majority of group members, or if an emergency occurs, the authority should judge what to do, how to do it and prioritize those factors.³ For a family, a decision could be as minor as where to go for vacation or as major as what to do when a child falls and is bleeding profusely; in a nation, a decision could be as minor as what building should be used for citizens to cast votes or as major as whether to engage another nation in war. The function of each person in these relationships is clear. The authority judges the reality of a situation and gives direction; in response to this, the members of the group should obey and cooperate with each other in their actions.

Authority is not appreciated today because it is often seen as arbitrary; obedience or submission is even less popular. In this culture we see obedience as a violation of our dignity, our autonomy and our equality. We do not want to be in a relationship where one is superior and the other inferior, unless of course, we are the superior one. We not only do not want to submit, we also see it as an optional behavior. Optional submission means not only that everyone wants to be an authority and believes they know what is best, but that they are only willing to follow a leader with whom they agree.

We want to know all the reasons a decision was made before we are willing to obey. The idea of trust, that we do not have all of the information or know the overall plans, or that we should not even have access to that information, is not acceptable to us. This is partially because as a population, in this culture, we are better educated and better informed than those in previous centuries, and also because we assume that competency in one area translates into other areas.

Emotions run high in the authority-obedience relationship. Those who are in authority are confused. “Why won’t these people obey my decisions? Don’t they know I’ve done the best I can for them with the resources that are available?” Or “Why can’t they see I can’t give them all the information they want or I would be putting other people’s lives in danger?” Or “Why do they resent my directives after they elected me and I promised to do these things?” Those who are not in authority feel slighted and insulted. “Why should I obey you? You put your pants on one leg at a time, just like me!” Or “Who died and made you king?” Or “He may have won the election, but he isn’t my president!” These examples are silly, but they clearly show the sometimes-volatile emotions of those who are not in authority.

This is an example I use in class. Sometimes a priest is not a good homilist; those in the congregation are literally dying of boredom when he speaks. They start looking around, reading the parish bulletin and examining their watches every thirty seconds while the priest drones on about some obscure point of theology. Assume a layperson is listening who is a famous public speaker. He is an animated, informed and organized orator. Members of the congregation think, “He could do a better job than that priest!” Here is the bottom

The relationship should be one of cooperation and conformity, not of force, because both parties to it are in complementary roles. Without that relationship, which God has so graciously given us in his wisdom, there will be no order.

line: the priest has the authority to teach us and the public speaker does not. End of story. If we are really Catholic, if we are in Mass to worship God and learn more about him, we have to listen to the authority—the priest—even if he is boring, disorganized, rambles and mumbles. If we do not, we miss an opportunity to receive grace. We have to accept his authority and submit.

I conclude my class discussion of this authority-obedience relationship by turning to the words of Augustine. The relationship should be one of cooperation and conformity, not of force, because both parties to it are in complementary roles. Without that relationship, which God has so graciously given us in his wisdom, there will be no order. In Book 19, chapters 13 and 14 of *City of God*, Augustine sheds light on the relationship.⁴ In chapter 13, he says these beautiful words about order and peace:

The peace of the body then consists in the duly proportioned arrangement of its parts. The peace of the irrational soul is the harmonious repose of the appetites, and that of the rational soul the harmony of knowledge and action. The peace of body and soul is the well-ordered and harmonious life and health of the living creature. Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord. Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family who rule and those who obey. Civil peace is a similar concord among the citizens. The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God. The peace of all things is the tranquility of order. Order is the distribution which allots things equal and unequal, each to its own place.⁵

I tell my students that to understand order in society, we have to learn that order not only leads to peace, it *is* peace. Without the peace that is order, no social group can survive or thrive; members of a group that is in a state of disorder will not find earthly fulfillment in it.

Authority directs the social group so that there will be order within it. Everyone has an opinion (some good and some not so good) on how to achieve the common good. If everyone is contributing their ideas, it is unlikely that any decision will be made as to how to pursue the common good, or possibly even what is meant by the common good. Someone must lead or the members

of the group will stagnate in disorder. No progress will be made in deciding what goal the community should pursue or how. There will be no order and no peace.

Augustine continues in chapter 14, and applies this lesson to authority in human society. He says:

And this is the order of this concord, that a man, in the first place, injure no one, and, in the second, do good to every one he can reach. Primarily, therefore, his own household are his care, for the law of nature and of society gives him readier access to them and greater opportunity of serving them.... This is the origin of domestic peace, or the well-ordered concord of those in the family who rule and those who obey. For they who care for the rest rule—the husband the wife, the parents the children, the masters the servants; and they who are cared for obey—the women their husbands, the children their parents, the servants their masters. But in the family of the just man who lives by faith and is as yet a pilgrim journeying on to the celestial city, even those who rule serve those whom they seem to command; for they rule not from a love of power, but from a sense of the duty they owe to others—not because they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy.⁶

Docile compliance to this hierarchical structure will lead to earthly order, peace and fulfillment. Ultimately, with God's grace, with love of God and neighbor and with perseverance, it will lead to the Celestial City.

Docile compliance to this hierarchical structure will lead to earthly order, peace and fulfillment. Ultimately, with God's grace, with love of God and neighbor and with perseverance, it will lead to the Celestial City. As in all things, our actions while alive here on earth determine where we live for eternity.



Cynthia Toolin, PhD, is Professor of Dogmatic and Moral Theology at Holy Apostles College and Seminary.

Endnotes

- 1 This is something that is recognized in our popular culture. See, for example, the movies Rob Reiner, *A Few Good Men* (1992) and William Kauffman, *Saints and Sinners* (2010).
- 2 A quick perusal of the Old Testament shows many examples of this particular gift to individuals, including: Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Saul, David and Solomon.
- 3 An example of this is a person who takes charge of an emergency by turning to a specific person in a crowd, saying, "You call 911," instead of "Someone, call 911."
- 4 Thomas Aquinas deals with many of the same issues concerning authority and obedience. Some highlights include: in *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 96, he explains that even in Original Justice, inequality would have existed between people (although not due to defect or fault) such as by sex, age, beauty and so forth. He mentions that, even among the angels, some rule over others. There could be mastership among men, in the sense of "governing and directing free men...towards his proper welfare or the common good." Why? First, man is a social being and, for social life to exist, one must direct others based on their varied opinions. Second, if one has more knowledge and virtue, it would not be fitting if those gifts were not used for others. In *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 104, Aquinas talks about obedience. Inferiors must obey their superiors due to the requirements of both natural and divine law. Obedience is due to the authority as long as it is within the authority's sphere and the commands are just. This obedience should not be servile, but docile.
- 5 Augustine, *The City of God (Book XIX)*, at *The New Advent*, September 23, 2013 at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120119.htm>.
- 6 Augustine, *The City of God (Book XIX)*.

Breathing with Two Lungs: (Re)discovering the Eastern Churches

Rev. George Gallaro



Following the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), in the circular letter of 6 January 1987, “Concerning the Studies of the Eastern Churches,” the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education spoke of the frequent lack of understanding of the spiritual traditions and values of Eastern Christians. The Cardinal stressed the importance of these traditions for the life and well-being of the whole church, recalling the affirmation of Pope John Paul II that “the Church must learn to breathe again with its two lungs, its Eastern one and its Western one.”¹ We are thus challenged to look realistically at the church in North America through the hopes, ideals and achievements, as well as the disappointments and disillusionments, of Eastern Catholics. At times one can sense a universal church at work, which at other times appears to be a fractured church with different groups trying to justify their existence within it.

The last century has seen massive waves of people migrating from one part of the world to another. Events in Europe and the Middle East have led to the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of people from their homelands. The result is that millions of Christians from eastern traditions can be found in Europe, North and South America and Oceania. People from the eastern traditions are suddenly living alongside Catholics of the western tradition, creating new pastoral problems for the church as a whole. Issues such as education, spiritual formation, marriages between Catholics of the various churches and other needs of minority groups have had to be faced. Only when we face these issues can we accept the pope’s challenge and “learn to breathe with two lungs.”

We are thus challenged to look realistically at the church in North America through the hopes, ideals and achievements, as well as the disappointments and disillusionments, of Eastern Catholics. At times one can sense a universal church at work, which at other times appears to be a fractured church with different groups trying to justify their existence within it.

If we look at Table 1 of the “Genealogy of the Catholic Churches,” we can see the beauty of the church of Christ, the universal church. Within the unity of faith and dogma there is also the splendor of variety: one body, but many members and functions. The diagram tries to illustrate the place of every tradition within the universal church. The church is one, yet multiple. Each autonomous church belongs to her from the inside. Within her, we are the same, and yet different. Jesus appears at the top of the table; he is the founder, the cornerstone. The mission was given to the

Table 1: Genealogy of the Catholic Churches

Jesus							
Apostles							
Jerusalem							
WEST		EAST					
Rome	Antioch		Alexandria	Constantinople			Cilicia
	<u>West Syrian</u>	<u>East Syrian</u>		<u>Cappadocian Influence</u>			
1. Hispanic	1. Malankarese	1. Chaldean	1. Coptic (Egyptian)	1. Albanians	6. Hungarians	11. Ruthenians	1. Armenians
2. Milanese	2. Maronite	2. Malabarese	2. Ethiopian	2. Bulgarians	7. Italo-Greeks	12. Serbians	
3. Roman	3. Syriac		3. Eritrean	3. Belarusans	8. Melkites	13. Slovaks	
				4. Georgians	9. Romanians	14. Ukranians	
				5. Greeks	10. Russians	15. Former Yugoslavians	

Apostles directly by him. Then we have the patriarchal sees; Jerusalem is the first, the privileged city, because the mission started there. The patriarchates are divided into two groups: the West (Rome) and the East (Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Cilicia). The West was dominated by Rome and, to a certain degree, Milan and Spain. In the East, we first meet Antioch, a great intellectual and spiritual center in early Christianity. It was here that the followers of Christ received their name and the universalism of the new church was born. Here the Apostles gathered and organized and the See of Peter was established, before that of Rome. Antioch gave birth to different daughter churches: Malankarese, Maronite, Syriac, Chaldean and Malabarese. All of these have both Catholic and non-Catholic branches, except for the Maronite and the Italo-Greek, which are entirely Catholic. The Patriarchate of Alexandria gave birth to the Coptic, Ethiopian and Eritrean churches. The Byzantine Patriarchate (Constantinople, the second Rome) gave us at least fifteen churches.

Thus we can conclude from the diagram that: a) to be Catholic is not a privilege given only to Christians of the Latin Church; b) the west is monolithic, whereas the east is varied; and c) each church belongs to, and has a unique place within, the universal church. The Second Vatican Council proclaimed that "The Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of

We can conclude that: a) to be Catholic is not a privilege given only to Christians of the Latin Church; b) the west is monolithic, whereas the east is varied; and c) each church belongs to, and has a unique place within, the universal church.

Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government. They combine into different groups, which are held together by their hierarchy and so form particular Churches or Rites."²

The churches of the east are Catholic, but not Latin. They have their own liturgy, ecclesiastical institutions and discipline, history and spiritual heritage. In each church,

there remains conspicuous the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers and that forms part of the divinely

revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church.... These Churches are of equal rank, so that none of them is superior to the others because of its rite. They enjoy the same rights and obligations, even with regard to the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world, under the direction of the Roman Pontiff.³

The Churches

The Armenian Catholic Church

During the Crusades, the Armenian Orthodox Church in Cilicia came into full union with Rome. Political factors played an important part. At that time many Latin usages were introduced into the Armenian liturgy. The union collapsed, however, after the destruction of the Crusader kingdoms and the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia. A decree of reunion with the Armenians was issued at the Council of Florence in 1439, but nothing came of it. In 1742, Pope Benedict XIV established an Armenian Catholic patriarchate based in Lebanon. About 30,000 Armenian Catholics died in 1915 during the Armenian massacres. Several dioceses had to be suppressed and others were created, leading to an ecclesiastical reorganization in 1928. Today, the largest concentrations of Armenian Catholics in the Middle East are found in Lebanon and Syria. They are also present in Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, the Americas and Oceania.

The Chaldean Catholic Church

The Dominicans and Franciscans began Catholic missionary activity in the Assyrian Church of the East as early as the thirteenth century. This led to a series of individual conversions of bishops and to short unions, none of which were permanent. In the fifteenth century, a tradition was introduced into the Assyrian Church that made the office of patriarch hereditary, passing from uncle to nephew. As a result, one family dominated the church and untrained minors were elected patriarch. In response, some Assyrian bishops elected a rival patriarch in 1551, who in turn petitioned Rome for union and made a profession of Catholic faith. He was the first in a line of "Chaldean" patriarchs, as Assyrian Catholics came to be known. Centuries of conflict, and the union of several other significant groups of Assyrians with Rome, followed this period. Missionary activity was so successful that two-thirds of the Assyrian Church came into union with Rome. The Chaldean Church suffered heavily from deportations and massacres at the end

of World War I, when an estimated 70,000 Chaldeans died. Today the largest concentration of members of this church is in Iraq. They continue to use the Chaldean, or East Syrian, rite. They are also present in Syria, Lebanon, Europe, the Americas and Oceania.

The Maronite Catholic Church

The Maronites trace their origin to the community surrounding the monastery of Beit-Marun, which was located in the ancient patriarchate of Antioch. In the fifth century, the monks of the monastery were outspoken in their support for the Christological doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon. By the eighth century the monks had moved with their followers into the remote mountains of Lebanon, where they existed in relative isolation for centuries. It was also at this time that they began to elect their own head, with the title Patriarch of Antioch. In the twelfth century, the Crusaders set up a Latin kingdom of Antioch and a Latin Patriarch was enthroned there. In 1182, the entire "Maronite Nation" formally came into union with Rome through the Latin Patriarch of Antioch, but there is a strong tradition among the Maronites that their church was never out of communion with Rome. In 1860, the massacre of thousands of Maronites provoked intervention in the area by French military forces, and after World War I both Lebanon and Syria came under French control. Lebanon became independent in 1944 after a system had been established that guaranteed the president would always be a Maronite. The French had hoped to guarantee the safety of this eastern Catholic community in the Middle East by establishing Lebanon under Maronite control, but modern events have shown what difficulties are involved. Because of the continuing civil war, large numbers of Maronites have left their homeland for the West. The Maronites use a liturgy of East Syrian origin that has been strongly influenced by the West Syrian and Latin traditions. Maronite eparchies are present in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Europe, Mexico and the United States.

The Melkite Greek Catholic Church

The Melkite Church is made up of Catholics of the Byzantine tradition in the ancient Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria. The name "Melkite" comes from the Syriac word for king, referring to the orthodox faith professed by the king (the Byzantine Emperor) after the Council of Chalcedon. The Patriarchate of Antioch did not specifically break off communion with Rome after the excommunications between

the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople in 1054, and there were many examples of sacramental sharing between Latins and members of this patriarchate over the following centuries. The Jesuits began missionary activity in the region in the seventeenth century. Distinct Orthodox and Catholic hierarchies emerged in 1724 when the newly-elected patriarch advocated union with Rome and those opposed to the union elected their own candidate who was ordained in Constantinople.

The Melkite Catholic Church continues to be very close in spirit and tradition to its Orthodox counterpart. At Vatican II, Melkite Catholic Patriarch Maximos IV (Sayegh) spoke eloquently against the Latinization of the eastern Catholic churches and urged a greater receptivity to the eastern Christian tradition, especially in the area of ecclesiology. The Melkite Church in the Middle East is almost entirely Arabic speaking. It is centered in the historical area of the Patriarchate of Antioch; Jerusalem and Alexandria are personal titles that have been given to the Melkite Catholic Patriarch, although there are few Melkite Catholics living in those areas. Today about half the members of this church have emigrated from the Middle East, creating flourishing communities in the so-called diaspora, where substantial numbers of non-Arabs have joined them, through marriage or otherwise. Melkite eparchies exist in the Americas and Oceania.

The Romanian Catholic Church

The Romanian regions of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania were under Turkish rule for many centuries. The Orthodox Church was closely related to Romanian national consciousness. In 1687, the Austrian Emperor drove the Turks from Transylvania and annexed the province to his empire. Jesuit missionaries were sent into the region, and in 1701 a formal union was proclaimed between Rome and the Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop of Transylvania along with 1,500 priests and some 200,000 faithful. The Austrian government provided an incentive that denied full civil rights to the Orthodox. After World War I, Transylvania was reunited with Romania. By 1940 this church had five eparchies and about 1,500,000 faithful.

After the Communists seized control of the country in 1948, a synod was held (without the presence of any bishops) petitioning for reunion with the Romanian Orthodox Church. The church was made illegal and all of the Byzantine Catholic bishops and many priests died in prison. In 1990, Pope John Paul II reestablished the hierarchy of the Romanian Church by appointing bishops for the eparchies. In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI

raised the Romanian Greek Catholic Church to the rank of Major Archiepiscopal Church with its Sees of Fagaras and Alba Iulia. In Romania this church is known as "The Romanian Greek Catholic Church United with Rome." Outside of Romania, it has a presence in Canada and the United States.

The Ruthenian Catholic Church

The Carpathian-Ukraine is an area that now exists on either side of the Czechoslovak-Soviet border. The Rusyns, also known as Ruthenians, are related to the Ukrainians and speak a dialect of the same language. This area was under the control of Catholic Poland and Austro-Hungary for many centuries. Those governments encouraged Catholic missionary activity and provided incentives for the local Orthodox to come into union with Rome. In 1646 in the city of Užhorod, a formal union was proclaimed between Rome and the Orthodox dioceses of this area. After World War I the Carpathian-Ukraine became part of Czechoslovakia, but after World War II most of it was annexed by the Soviet Union. In 1949 a synod of Ruthenian Catholic priests declared the integration of this church into the Russian Orthodox Church. Since that time the church has only legally existed in the so-called diaspora and in Czechoslovakia. In North America, many Ruthenians left the church. After the collapse of communism, this church was reorganized in Slovakia with the erection of the Metropolitan See, *sui iuris* of Prešov, and in the United States with that of Pittsburgh. This latter archdiocese, generally known as Byzantine Catholic, emphasizes its American character and celebrates liturgy in English. Candidates for holy orders are trained at Saint Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh. In 1999, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches gave its approval to a new law for the Ruthenian Metropolia that allowed for the ordination to the priesthood of married men who had received proper permission.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church

The history of this church is very complicated and was heavily influenced by the successive dominance of Poland and Russia. The Ukrainians are historically of the Byzantine tradition, but gradually developed an Orthodox identity after the schism. By the fourteenth century the area was part of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom, where Catholicism was dominant. Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev (who resided in Moscow) accepted the union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches at the Council of Florence, but this was rejected in Moscow

upon his return. Later, Moscow elected its own metropolitan archbishop, and Isidore remained Metropolitan of Kiev, based in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. With the support of the Polish authorities, a formal union of the Metropolitan Province of Kiev was proclaimed at a synod held at Brest in 1595–1596. By the eighteenth century, two-thirds of the Christians in the western Ukraine were Byzantine Catholics.

In the early nineteenth century the czar formally suppressed this union in areas under Russian control, and all Ukrainian Catholics in the empire officially became Orthodox. However, many Ukrainian Catholics were living within the Austro-Hungarian Empire (and later in Poland), where they flourished until after World War II when the area became part of the Soviet Union. In 1946 a synod of Ukrainian priests at Lvov officially dissolved the union and integrated the Ukrainian Catholic Church into the Russian Orthodox Church. As a result, most Ukrainian bishops died in prison or in exile. The Moscow patriarchate claims that it was a legitimate and free decision of Ukrainian Catholics to return to the Orthodox faith of their ancestors. Ukrainian and other sources in the west claim that this was part of the violent suppression of the Ukrainian Catholic Church by the Soviet government and took place with the cooperation of the Russian Orthodox Church. After the fall of communism, the Ukrainian Catholic Church has been reestablished and elevated to the rank of a Major Archiepiscopal Church, *sui iuris*, with its main See in Kiev-Halych. Ukrainian Catholics also have a significant presence in Poland, as well as a large presence in the United States, Canada, Brazil and Australia. Recent statistics report over five million members worldwide.

Special Issues and Programs

Each priest of the eastern churches celebrates the Eucharistic liturgy in his own rite every Sunday. They encourage their people to attend every week, but attendance varies according to the feast celebrated, primarily because many parishioners live a long distance from the church.

There are sacramental programs available and children are encouraged to take part and learn about their liturgies and traditions. Programs are also offered by the different churches with the hope of maintaining their liturgical languages and the language of their cultural background. Some churches have established primary and secondary schools, which is seen as one way of preserving and maintaining their identity.

All of these churches should seriously review the

All of these churches should seriously review the language used in the liturgy. Most of their young people only speak and understand English while many of the older people speak little English.

language used in the liturgy. Most of their young people only speak and understand English while many of the older people speak little English. Some priests only use their liturgical language, in the hope of preserving their rite intact. Some have the readings in two languages while others have liturgies exclusively in English. Youth programs are given top priority, but success varies from church to church. In some cases, the priests feel very limited because they do not speak English fluently. Most try to organize social functions, choirs and other events to bring people together.

It has not been easy for eastern Catholic priests to work within the local Roman Church.

Obstacles

It has not been easy for eastern Catholic priests to work within the local Roman Church. Although some express that they have had good experiences, many can identify with the following obstacles: the local Roman Church does not seem to be interested in any other tradition; the local church does not give full support to the eastern clergy and their projects; local priests do not know much about the traditions of other churches; most eastern priests are not informed of baptisms or marriages, nor are they referred to by the local clergy; and Roman Catholic schools' lack of understanding has led to difficulties regarding first holy communion in their own rites, as well as confirmation (although all eastern churches confirm at the same time as baptism, some

children are presented again for confirmation with their school classes). Other obstacles include: financial support, difficulties in obtaining centers for worship and social gatherings, and the feeling by some clergy that they are treated as second-class priests.

What Can Be Done?

The previously mentioned letter "Concerning the Studies of the Eastern Churches" offers the following suggestions:

1. Western scholars should be adequately trained in eastern studies.
2. These scholars should be utilized in diocesan and religious institutions, seminaries and teacher-training institutes.
3. Seminaries and theological faculties should offer courses that include basic information concerning eastern churches.
4. Theology faculties should give adequate attention to the disciplines governing Eastern Catholics and the current Orthodox directives.
5. Catholic colleges and universities should give attention to, and include some treatment of, eastern Christianity.
6. Special care should be taken to ensure that, in the various institutions mentioned above, libraries are adequately supplied with periodicals and other useful materials.

The eastern clergy feel that the local Roman Church can help in practical ways by:

1. Encouraging and promoting all the liturgies of the church on a diocesan and parish level.
2. Teaching their members about other traditions, through education and the parish clergy.
3. Encouraging more publications about the universal church and the eastern Catholic churches in North America.
4. Offering financial support where needed, especially in the early stages of establishment.
5. Ensuring that the local hierarchy and clergy are aware of the activities of eastern Catholics.
6. Training Catholic school principals and teachers so that they are aware of—and will respect—other traditions.
7. Establish, where needed, parochial communities of other ritual traditions.
8. Respecting people's wishes with regard to first Holy Communion, marriage and financial support to their own church.

Hopes for the Future

In his 2004 message concerning World Migrants' Day, Pope John Paul II said,

The immigrant members of the Church, while freely exercising their rights and duties and being in full ecclesial communion, must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy, spirituality, and particular traditions are concerned, in order to reach that ecclesial integration which enriches the Church of God.

Ideally, the catholicity of the church is evident in her ethnic and cultural variety. This catholicity implies openness toward others, a readiness to share and live the same ecclesial communion.

Ideally, the catholicity of the church is evident in her ethnic and cultural variety. This catholicity implies openness toward others, a readiness to share and live the same ecclesial communion. On a practical level, however, the eastern Catholic clergy have mixed feelings about the future of their churches in the New World. Some feel the necessity to preserve their tradition intact—language, attitudes and expressions. Others believe that they could be completely assimilated in one or two generations. Many young people do not appreciate their cultural or liturgical backgrounds, nor do they seem interested in the activities of their church. Older clergy feel that once they die, there will be no one to continue their work due to lack of vocations.

The issue of vocations is felt by all of the eastern churches. The older priests feel limited in regard to working in English. It is generally believed that any hope for a dynamic future lies in the ordination of priests and deacons who can speak English well, who are associated with youth and who also respect the ancient traditions and rites.

There is reason to believe that the future is bright, but it will require conscious effort and hard work on

the part of the whole church. When we look at the different eastern churches, it is evident that most, if not all, developed in countries where they were persecuted and oppressed. For many centuries they survived—and even thrived—because of their determination. By migrating to the Americas and Oceania many sought, among other things, freedom to worship and be loyal to their faith. In today's world they do not encounter persecution, but they have had to work harder to preserve their identity. Living side-by-side with Catholics from other churches, they are encountering problems that they have never faced before.

All churches, eastern or western, must learn to live meaningfully with diversity.

As a church, we must be open toward others, respect all traditions, and be ready to share and live with them. All churches, eastern or western, must learn to live meaningfully with diversity. We do not need new structures so much as we need a radical openness of mind and heart that will allow us to adapt the structures that we already have. We must strive to learn more about all of the churches that make up the one church of God and encourage and allow each to enrich and enliven our local community. Once we begin to do this we can finally accept the Pope's challenge and enable the

We must strive to learn more about all of the churches that make up the one church of God, and encourage and allow each to enrich and enliven our local community.

one church to breathe with both its western lung and its eastern lung.



Rev. George Gallaro is Professor of Canon Law and Ecumenism at Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril & Methodius in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Endnotes

1. *Osservatore Romano* (16 April 1987), 6; Erminio Lora and Bruno Testacci (eds), *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, vol. 10, *Documenti ufficiali della Santa Sede (1986-1987)* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2001), 802–818; *Seminarium* 38 (1987), 175–180.
2. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Eastern Churches, *Orientalium ecclesiarum* (21 November 1964), §§2–3.
3. *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, §3.

Sacred Heart Institute

For the ongoing formation of clergy

Www.Cor-jesu.org



Rev. Msgr. Richard G. Henning, S.T.D.

Director

info@cor-jesu.org

440 West Neck Road
Huntington, NY 11743
631-423-2357

Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment: Statistical Overview for 2012-2013

Mary Gautier, Ph.D.

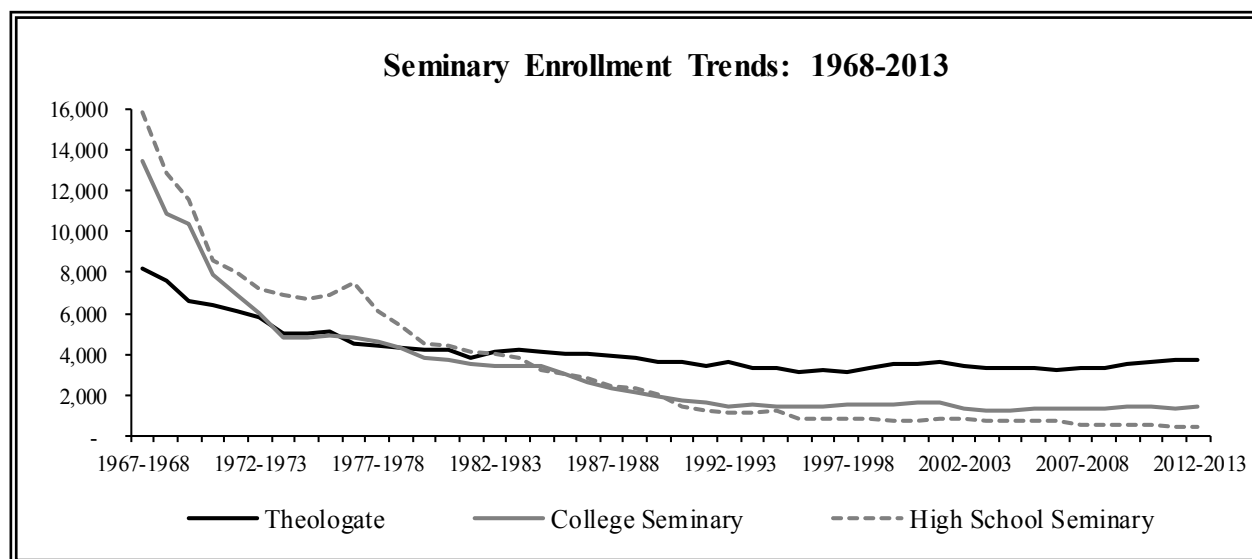
Priestly Formation

During academic year 2012-2013, enrollment in the post-baccalaureate level of priestly formation totaled 3,694, nearly identical to last year's theologate enrollment of 3,723. Of these, 2,798 (76 percent) were candidates for dioceses and 896 (24 percent) were from religious orders. Diocesan enrollment decreased by just seven seminarians from last year's total and religious enrollment decreased by 22 seminarians. 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, although lower by 29 seminarians than last year's total, is still higher than any other year since 1988-1989. The number of seminarians enrolled in pre-theology is lower than in the recent past, with 811 enrolled in pre-theology this year, which make up 22 percent of all theology-level students

This year's college seminary enrollment of 1,425 seminarians reflects an increase of 70 seminarians, up 5 percent from last year. High school seminary enrollment decreased by 44 (10 percent) from last year and is now at 404 seminarians in four high school seminary programs.

Overall Seminary Enrollment Trends, 1968-2013



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
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
2012-2013	2,798	896	3,694	1,425	404

Beginning with the 1967-1968 academic year, CARA has collected enrollment data for priesthood formation programs at the theologate, college and high school levels in the United States. CARA also collects data about U.S. seminarians from the 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.

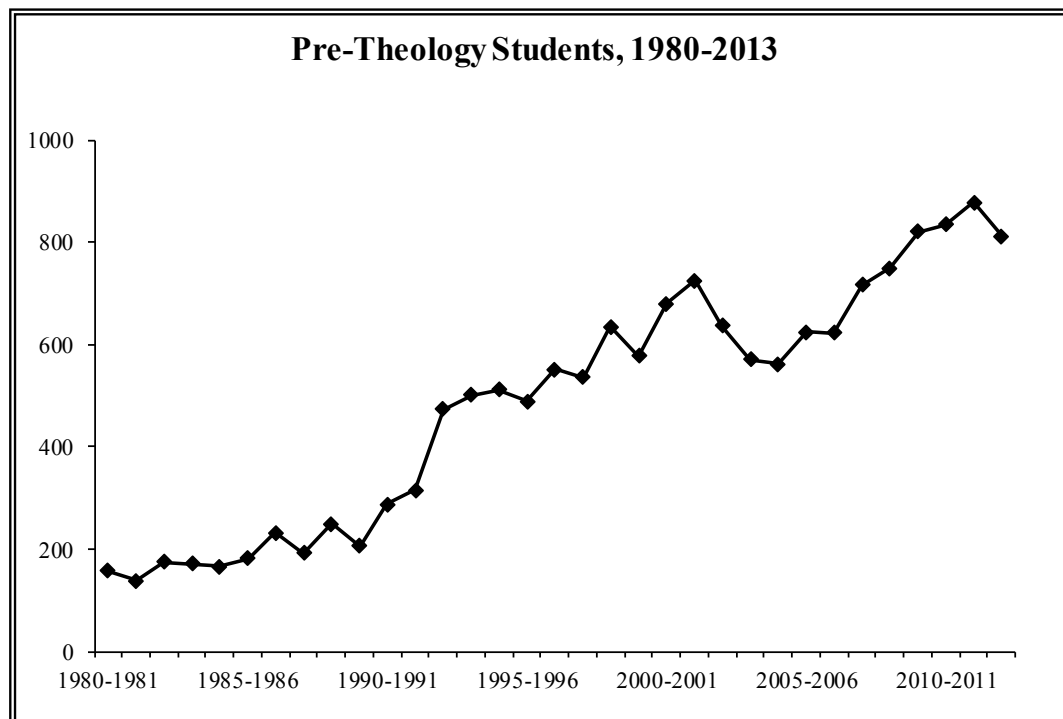
Pre-Theology

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.¹

In academic year 2012-2013, the 811 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology make up just over a fifth (22 percent) of all theology-level seminarians, a decrease of 67 seminarians from last year but approximately the same percentage of overall theology enrollment over the past decade.

The table on the next page 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.

¹ Paragraph 60 of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, fifth edition, (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006) reads: “If a person has no previous preparation in a formation program, then the pre-theology program should extend over a two-year calendar period. Pre-theology programs are designed to address all four pillars of formation, not simply to meet academic requirements.”



Pre-Theology Relative to Total Theologate Enrollment, 1980-2013				
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%
2012-2013	811	2,883	3,694	22%

Theologate Profile

The table on the next page lists the 41 theologates that prepare seminarians for the priesthood in the United States.² 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.³ For 2011-2012, the average tuition was \$16,486, an increase of \$981 from

w2010-2011. 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 since they have a single fee that covers the costs of both tuition and room and board. Seminarians at Oblate School of Theology reside at Assumption Seminary. The other programs that do not report room and board are

for religious priesthood candidates, who usually live in a house sponsored by their order and attend a nearby theologate for academic training.

CARA identified a total of 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.

-
2. The Archdiocese of New York and the Dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre signed a joint operating agreement in 2011 to merge the two graduate-level seminaries into St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY. Undergraduate and pre-theology students study at the Cathedral Residence of the Immaculate Conception in Douglaston, NY. Washington Theological Union closed in fall 2012.
 3. 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 Moreau Seminary, priesthood candidates receive a full scholarship from the University of Notre Dame.

Priesthood Candidates Enrolled at Theologates, 2012-2013					
Theologate	Tuition	Room & Board	Diocesan	Religious	Total
Aquinas Institute of Theology, MO	15,840	—	0	28	28
Athenaeum of Ohio - Mount St. Mary's of the West, OH	20,400	10,200	51	2	53
Blessed John XXIII National Seminary, MA	26,500	—	60	6	66
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	23,814	—	0	64	64
Catholic Theological Union, IL	14,658	10,890	0	127	127
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	17,630	9,870	91	67	158
Christ the King Seminary, NY	19,500	10,500	21	0	21
Dominican House of Studies, DC	15,120	—	0	65	65
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, CA	14,520	—	0	20	20
Franciscan School of Theology, CA	13,400	12,375	0	4	4
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT	12,670	10,200	39	20	59
Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, NJ	15,510	10,544	130	43	173
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	14,710	—	0	46	46
Kenrick School of Theology, MO	21,278	9,671	76	7	83
Moreau Seminary of the University of Notre Dame, IN	44,445	11,934	0	30	30
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	12,963	10,453	85	17	102
Mount St. Mary's Seminary, MD	19,424	11,288	168	5	173
Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology, LA	18,582	12,124	76	12	88
Oblate School of Theology, TX	13,130	—	49	22	71
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	22,403	8,722	92	0	92
Pontifical North American College, Rome	12,500	13,516	236	0	236
Sacred Heart Major Seminary School of Theology, MI	23,765	8,940	53	13	66
Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI	14,850	9,950	83	17	100
Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary, MN	13,500	6,050	2	13	15
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	19,154	12,298	141	13	154
Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, MN	18,454	10,834	102	2	104
Saint Vincent Seminary, PA	22,606	11,176	40	19	59
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, PA	19,845	12,060	62	2	64
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	17,084	10,121	103	2	105
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, CA	15,500	13,500	75	11	86
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, MA	16,750	6,250	77	33	110
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	16,800	13,200	79	21	100
St. Mary's Seminary Graduate School of Theology, OH	9,825	7,260	34	5	39
St. Mary's Seminary, University of St. Thomas, TX	16,840	10,000	76	10	86
St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	16,460	12,990	79	0	79
St. Patrick's Seminary and University, CA	16,150	14,180	112	0	112
St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, FL	20,000	11,000	81	10	91
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary School of Theology, PA	10,500	10,000	8	0	8
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary, MI	15,356	15,234	34	1	35
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe, MX	18,000	—	8	0	8
University of St. Mary of the Lake /Mundelein Seminary, IL	21,750	9,264	173	0	173
Average Costs and Total Enrollment	\$17,858	\$10,806	2,596	757	3,353

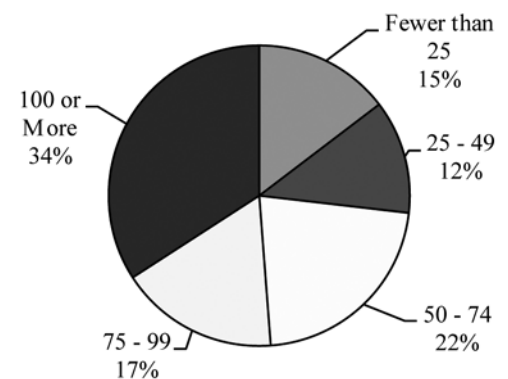
Theologates with the Highest Enrollment

The 14 theologates with enrollment of at least 100 account for 1,927 or 57 percent of the 3,353 seminarians reported by theologates in 2012-2013. The table below lists these institutions in terms of enrollment of diocesan or religious priesthood candidates. New to the list this year are Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, WI, and St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY.

Theologates with Highest Enrollment, 2012-2013				
Theologate	Diocesan Priesthood Candidates	Priesthood Candidates	Total	Change from 2011-2012
Pontifical North American College, Rome	236	0	236	+4
Immaculate Conception Seminary, NJ	130	43	173	-16
Mount St. Mary's Seminary, MD	168	5	173	+2
University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, IL	173	0	173	+7
Catholic University of America School of Theology, DC	91	67	158	+42
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN	141	13	154	+14
Catholic Theological Union, IL	0	127	127	+13
St. Patrick's Seminary and University, CA	112	0	112	+5
St. John's Seminary School of Theology, MA	77	33	110	+9
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	103	2	105	-19
Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, MN	102	2	104	+4
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	85	17	102	-5
Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI	83	17	100	+14
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	79	21	100	+55

Theologates by Size of Enrollment

The figure at right groups the theologates according to their reported enrollment for the 2012-2013 academic year, displaying the consolidation that occurred with the closing of two more theologates. One in three theologates (14 of the 41 theologates) are relatively large, enrolling 100 or more seminarians. Four in ten (16 of the 41 theologates) have between 50 and 99 seminarians enrolled, and another one in four (11 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.”⁴ 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.

Ecclesiastical Faculties of Theology in the United States, 2012-2013			
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	25	5
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	3
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.
- Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, OR, established in 1889, is affiliated to the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome.
- St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY, has been affiliated to the Angelicum in Rome since 1994.
- Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, is aggregated to the Angelicum in Rome since 2004, to grant both the S.T.B. and S.T.L. degrees.
- St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, CA, has been affiliated to the ecclesiastical faculty at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, MD, since 1997. St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, PA, has had a similar affiliation to the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, since 2000.
- St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, CO, has been affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome since 2001.

⁴ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, April 29, 1979, Foreword III.

Seminarians Enrolled in Canonical Degree Programs at Theologates, 2012-2013

Theologate	Seminarians Enrolled		Expected to Earn the Degree in 2013
	S.T.B.	S.T.L.	
Pontifical North American College, Rome	180	47	54
The Catholic University of America, DC	158	0	9
St. Patrick Seminary and University, CA	84	0	17
St. Mary's Seminary and University, MD	79	0	13
Sacred Heart Major Seminary, MI	59	3	15
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, CO	58	0	9
Dominican House of Studies, DC	46	4	13
Mundelein Seminary, IL	41	17	16
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH	16	0	4
St. Joseph's Seminary, NY	5	0	1
St. Vincent Seminary, PA	3	0	2
Mount Angel Seminary, OR	2	0	2
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, CA	0	4	4
Weston Jesuit Department, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, MA	0	4	0

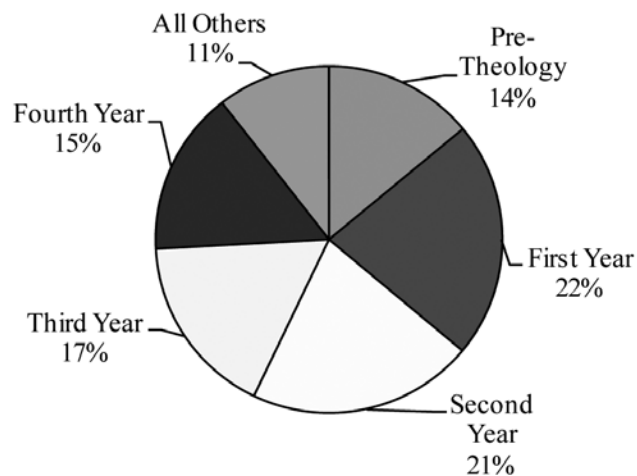
In addition to the seminarian numbers listed above, these institutions report another 139 priests and 38 lay persons or deacons enrolled in their canonical degree programs. They anticipate awarding canonical degrees to 68 priests and 11 lay persons or deacons in 2013.

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.

Students Enrolled in Theologates by Level of Study 2012-2013

Pre-Theology	470
First Year	739
Second Year	706
Third Year	571
Fourth Year	513
Pastoral Year	179
Leave of Absence	27
Other	148
TOTAL	3,353



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 470 seminarians enrolled in pre-theology. Free-standing and collaborative college seminaries report 197 enrolled in pre-theology, while other seminary residences count 145 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, eight Trappists studying theology at the Abbey of New Clairvaux and ten seminarians from religious institutes studying abroad. These 24 seminarians are not included in the total on page three.

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 2012-2013 class of seminarians through their four years in theology, that is, those who began theologate studies in 2009-2010 and who will be completing their theologate studies in 2012-2013. Each class of seminarians in theology can also be compared to its corresponding cohort in the preceding academic year by following the same diagonal.

Theology-Level Enrollment by Type of Program and Institution, 2012-2013

Theologates

Theologate, excluding pre-theology	2,883
Theologate, pre-theology only	470

Pre-theology at College Priesthood

Formation Programs

Free-Standing College Seminaries	142
Collaborative College Seminaries	54
Other Seminary Residences	145

Total Enrollment **3,694**

Other Houses of Formation* 27

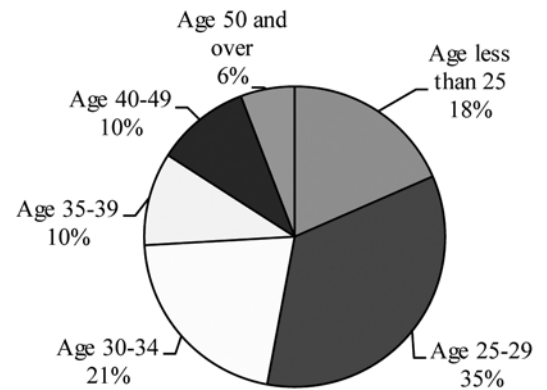
**Not included in the total count on page 3.*

Retention of Seminarians in Theology					
	Year of Study in Theology				Retention Rate
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	
1999-2000	681	687	582	625	
2000-2001	704	606	573	570	
2001-2002	716	670	595	536	
2002-2003	738	625	543	576	85%
2003-2004	727	614	512	509	72%
2004-2005	691	633	542	519	72%
2005-2006	631	617	573	495	67%
2006-2007	656	566	546	555	76%
2007-2008	622	607	541	535	77%
2008-2009	709	546	524	500	79%
2009-2010		600	568	497	76%
2010-2011	725		549	535	86%
2011-2012	768	686		520	73%
2012-2013	739	706	571		79%

Of the 646 seminarians who began theologate study in 2009, 513 are completing their fourth year in 2013. Thus, the retention rate for the Class of 2013 throughout their four years of theologate study is expected to be 79 percent, approximately the same rate as that reported for the Classes of 2008 and 2009 and a little higher than last year's rate of 73 percent. The average retention rate for those who began theology from 1999-2000 to 2009-2010 was 77 percent.

Age Distribution of Theologate Students

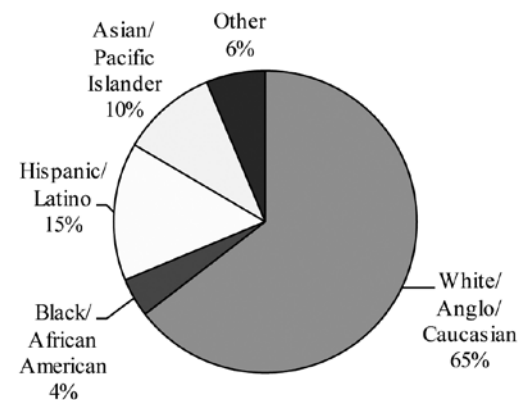
The age distribution for theologate students preparing for the priesthood is shown at left. Just over half of all seminarians enrolled in theologates (53 percent) are under age 30 and another fifth (21 percent) are in their early thirties. One in ten (10 percent), is between 35 and 39. One in six (16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

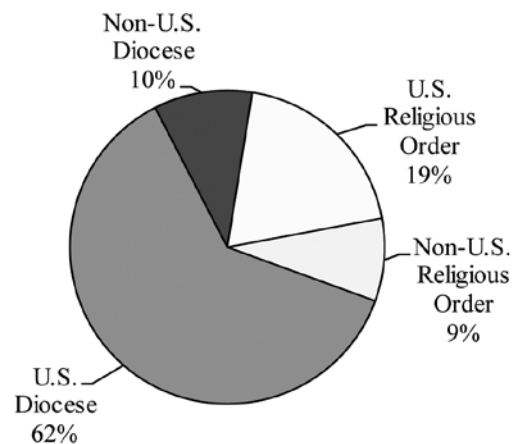


Foreign-born Seminarians in Theologates

In 2012-2013, 26 percent of seminarians in theologates, 879 seminarians, are from countries other than the United States. This is a slight decrease of 13 seminarians from the number reported last year. In 2011-2012, foreign-born seminarians were 27 percent of all seminarians in theology, compared to 28 percent in 2010-2011, 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 (137 seminarians), Vietnam (114), Colombia (101), the Philippines (70), Poland (62) and Nigeria (41).

Most of these seminarians, 59 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, 267 in all, comprise the remaining 30 percent of these foreign-born seminarians. Breaking down that 30 percent, seminarians studying for a U.S.-based religious order account for 21 percent, while another 9 percent are studying for a religious order based outside the United States.



College Seminaries

In 2012-2013, there were 1,425 seminarians enrolled in 29 college-level priesthood formation programs.⁵ This number does not include the 197 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 (670 seminarians), collaborative seminaries (534), and seminary residence programs (221).

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 2012-2013 academic year. The 670 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these institutions is an increase of 18 seminarians (2 percent) from the 652 seminarians reported last year.

Free-Standing College Seminary Enrollment, 2012-2013

Free-Standing College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre-Theology	College Level
Conception Seminary College, MO	102	10	112	9	103
Divine Word College Seminary, IA	2	57	59	1	58
Holy Apostles College and Seminary, CT*	5	5	10	0	10
Mexican American Catholic College, TX	43	2	45	10	35
Mount Angel Seminary, OR*	55	4	59	0	59
Pontifical College Josephinum, OH*	134	0	134	29	105
Sacred Heart Major Seminary College, MI*	47	9	56	25	31
Saint Joseph Seminary College, LA	101	0	101	10	91
Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria, MX*	24	0	24	0	24
St. Basil College, CT	0	0	0	0	0
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary College, PA*	74	0	74	27	47
St. Gregory the Great Seminary, NE	46	0	46	8	38
St. John Vianney College and Seminary, FL	87	5	92	23	69
Total Enrollment	720	92	812	142	670

* Also has a theologate division.

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

⁵ One college seminary (Legionaries of Christ Center for Higher Studies in Cheshire, CT) was reclassified as a House of Formation. The Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio, TX, is a new free-standing college seminary created in 2009 and new to the list this year.

- There are five 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 two free-standing college seminaries sponsored by religious orders are Divine Word College Seminary in Epworth, IA, and Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT.
- The Pontifical College Josephinum, in Columbus, OH, which also has both a free-standing college and a theologate, is not sponsored directly by either a diocese or a religious order but is operated instead by an independent board of trustees.

Collaborative College Seminaries

Collaborative programs usually have a formal relationship with an accredited undergraduate program at a Catholic college or university. They tend to be long-established programs, are typically diocesan-administered and in many cases had originally been separate, stand-alone programs. This directory includes 16 programs in the category of collaborative college seminaries. The 534 seminarians enrolled at the college level in these programs is nearly identical to the 532 seminarians reported 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, 2012-2013

Collaborative College Seminary	Diocesan	Religious	Total	Pre-Theology	College Level
Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, IN	36	0	36	0	36
Bishop White Seminary, WA	11	0	11	1	10
Borromeo Seminary, OH	17	7	24	0	24
Cardinal Glennon College, MO*	27	0	27	0	27
Cathedral Seminary House of Formation, NY	67	0	67	11	56
College Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Andrews Hall, NJ*	30	0	30	0	30
Holy Trinity Seminary, TX	72	0	72	22	50
Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, MN	46	0	46	2	44
Old College Seminary at Notre Dame, IN*	0	12	12	0	12
Seminary of Our Lady of Providence, RI	26	0	26	3	23
St. John Fisher Seminary Residence, CT	16	0	16	2	14
St. John Vianney College Seminary, MN	133	0	133	0	133
St. Joseph College Seminary, IL	36	4	40	0	40
St. Mark Seminary, PA	17	0	17	3	14
St. Paul Seminary, PA	20	0	20	9	11
St. Pius X Seminary, IA	10	1	11	1	10
Total Enrollment	564	24	588	54	534

* Also has a theologate division.

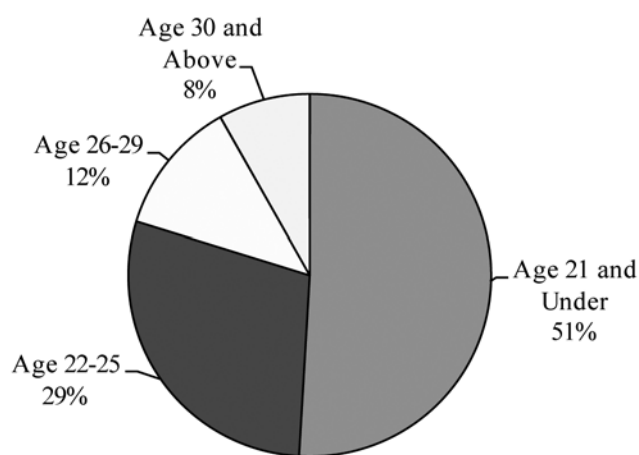
Other College Level Formation Programs

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 53 college-level programs that fit this model. Fifteen of these house only college-level candidates; the other 38 currently function as joint college and theology residences. In 2012–2013, the combined number of priesthood candidates pursuing college-level studies in these residences was 221, excluding pre-theology. Another 145 were enrolled in pre-theology course work. In both cases, these seminarians were not enrolled in programs reported here as theologates, free-standing colleges or collaborative colleges, and therefore are not double-counted when added to the enrollment totals for these institutions.

Age Distribution of College Seminarians

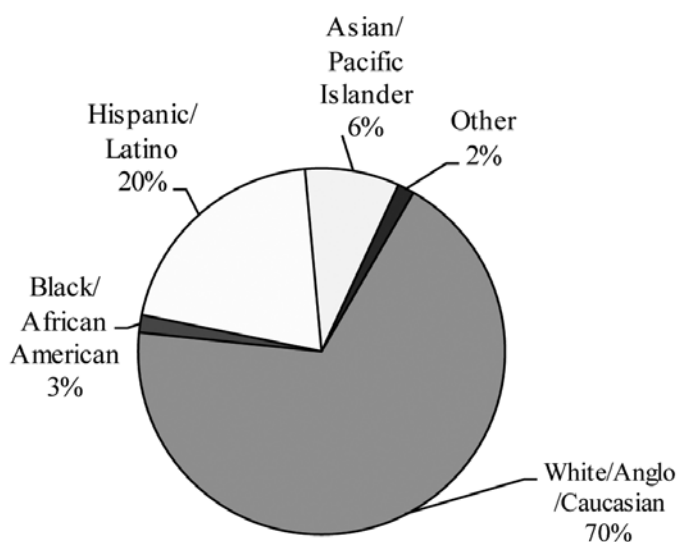
The age distribution of priesthood candidates at college seminaries largely mirrors the traditional ages of college enrollment, although one in five college seminarians are men in their late twenties and above. This is due in part to the pre-theology programs at many of these seminaries that prepare 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 2012–2013 academic year. Half of these seminarians are the typical college age of 21 or below. Another three in ten are between the ages of 22 and 25 and a fifth are older than 25.



Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of College Seminarians

Seven in ten college seminarians are white/Anglo/Caucasian, compared to about six in ten theologate seminarians. Hispanics/Latinos comprise about a fifth of the priesthood candidates at free-standing and collaborative college seminaries during the 2012-2013 academic year. Asians/Pacific Islanders and blacks/African Americans make up about a tenth. Other racial/ethnic categories, including Native Americans and multi-racial seminarians, make up the other 2 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 404 students. 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.

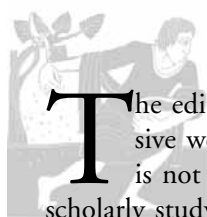
The diocesan high school seminary (Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in Elmhurst, NY) does not have a residential program. The three religious high school seminaries do have residential programs. Room and board at institutions with separate charges for a residential program averages \$6,537 and tuition averages \$7,273. Average tuition increased by \$791, a 12 percent increase over that reported in 2011-2012.

High School Seminary Enrollment, 2012-2013			
Free-standing High School Seminaries	Sponsorship	Tuition	Enrollment
St. Lawrence Seminary, Mount Calvary, WI	Religious	\$6,940	187
Cathedral Preparatory Seminary, Elmhurst, NY	Diocesan	7,400	162
Immaculate Conception Apostolic School, Center Harbor, NH	Religious	7,750	28
Sacred Heart Apostolic School, Rolling Prairie, IN	Religious	7,000	27
Total High School Seminary Enrollment			404

The Sulpicians of Montreal: A History of Power and Discretion, 1657-2007.

Edited by Dominique DesLandres, John A. Dickinson, and Olivier Hubert.
Revised, translated, and updated edition. Trans., Steven Wyatt Wilson and
LeFleur Ltée, Montreal, 2013.

Reviewed by Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette



The editors and contributors of this comprehensive work explain from the outset that their aim is not to be apologetic, but rather to “produce a scholarly study, not one seeking to glorify every aspect of Sulpician existence” (16). Throughout the book they remain true to their aim as they address with honesty and detail the interaction of the Sulpicians with the developing society of Montreal and its environs.

They clearly note how the French Sulpicians sought to bring the vision of their founder, Jean Jacques Olier to the world of French Canada and its “First Nation” inhabitants. Olier and his followers embraced a twofold vision including missionary work and the training of priests, as the authors note (26). Sadly, for those who look to this work for an understanding of how priestly formation developed over the last 350 years in Canada, little attention is given to the actual ministry of forming priests, with a single chapter (13) devoted to priestly training in the context of the overall objective of spreading the Gospel.

On the other hand, the scope of research presented in the missionary efforts of the Sulpicians provides valuable insight into the relationship between this ecclesiastical body of priests and the growing society of Montreal. The authors chronicle the influence of the Sulpicians, known for their wealth, in nearly every aspect of society, including the city landscape and architecture, the development of primary and secondary education, the collaborative relationship with other men’s and women’s reli-

The book tells the story of priests grappling with the issues of the day. We see Sulpicians struggling to maintain a connection to their French roots while at the same time being cognizant of the new and changing context with which they are becoming engaged.

gious communities and the encouragement of works of charity especially in being attentive to the sick and suffering. In later chapters the authors address Sulpician strategies in relation to culture, music, fine arts, singing and literature. The vision of Olier remains a constant thread throughout the examination of these various issues. The authors are frank in dealing with some of the scandals, particularly financial, that arose in the efforts of some to ensure their control over methods of spreading the Gospel.

All in all, the research presented shows how the

faith commitment of Sulpicians impacted not only the training of priests, but most especially the growth of a metropolis with all of its strengths and characteristics. The book tells the story of priests grappling with the issues of the day. We see Sulpicians struggling to maintain a connection to their French roots while at the same time being cognizant of the new and changing context with which they are becoming engaged. In the efforts of control, we find a picture of the conflicts that develop between the ultramontanists and the providentialists. As the subtitle of the book suggests, it is a story of power and control; we witness the discretion of the Sulpicians as they remain committed to Olier's vision amidst attempts to dialogue with diverse groups about the best strategies for spreading the Gospel.

As the authors repeatedly observe, much more study needs to be done about the Sulpicians' role in Canada in the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Only a few events from the twenty-first century and hardly anything about the effects of Vatican II find expression in this book. The subtitle more aptly could have been named «1657-1907» as the period under study. Though the authors are honest about the need for continued research in this time period, one might also wonder if twentieth century events are absent because of the degree to which Sulpicians' power and control waned by the mid-1900s. Such loss of power does not necessarily stand as criticism of the Sulpicians as much as it serves as testimony to the way religious authorities throughout the world faced the growing separation between church and state.

Nevertheless, the coverage of Sulpician life for the 250 years after 1657 is comprehensive and thorough. Astute research has uncovered some of the intricacies of

Only a few events from the twenty-first century and hardly anything about the effects of Vatican II find expression in this book. The subtitle more aptly could have been named «1657-1907» as the period under study.

conflict and growth that have brought the Sulpicians and the city of Montreal to their current positions. In addition, three sets of color folios (48 plates) provide evidence of the Sulpician influence in many aspects of Canadian life. Likewise, more than one hundred black-and-white photographs, illustrations, charts, maps, and written manuscripts offer a picture of the vibrant contributions of Sulpicians, in concert with other religious figures and congregations, to the city of Montreal. Though a tedious story at times, the book more importantly provides eye-opening insights into Sulpician life. Thus, this reviewer remains grateful to the contributors.



Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette, SS, currently serves as a spiritual director and advisor at The Theological College of The Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C., where he served as rector from 2007 to 2011.



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.

VOLUME ONE:

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION & CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS FOR SEMINARY FORMATION

- **Theology and Spirituality of the Priesthood in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the New Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Rev. Lawrence Terrien, SS
- **The Mission of the Seminary**, Rev. Gerald L. Brown, SS
- **Diocesan Priesthood: Emerging Patterns**
Rev. James J. Bacik
- **Culture, Priesthood and Ministry: The Priesthood for the New Millennium**, Msgr. Philip Murnion
- **Transitions into Diocesan Priesthood**
Rev. Raymond J. Webb
- **Just What Do We Want? Ministry in a Multicultural World**, Rev. Robert Schreiter, CPPS
- **The Seminary As a Context for Teaching Theology**
Gustavo Gutierrez, OP
- **A View of the State of the Priesthood in the United States**, Sr. Katarina Schuth, OSF

VOLUME TWO:

HUMAN & SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- **Teach a New Generation**, Victor J. Klimonski, Ph.D.
- **God and Gen-X: Faith and the New Generation**
James R. Zullo, FSC
- **“Selecting Suitable Candidates for the Priesthood,” *Sex, Priestly Ministry and the Church***
Leonard T. Sperry, M.D., Ph.D.
- **Screening Revisited: Issues in the Psychological Assessment of Seminary Applicants**
Stephen A. Buglione, Ph.D.
- **Canonical Issues Associated with Psychological Testing of Seminarians**, Rev. Brian Dunn
- **Human Sexuality and Priestly Formation**
Rev. Gerald D. Coleman, SS
- **Grace Under Pressure: Spirituality of Continuity and Change**, Rev. Howard J. Gray, SJ
- **Bridge Building in the Presbyterate: Spirituality as a Common Ground**, Rev. Paul J. Philibert, OP
- **Implementation of the Growth Plan at Conception Seminary College**
Rev. Xavier Nacke, OSB, and Rev. Samuel Russell, OSB

VOLUME THREE:

INTELLECTUAL & PASTORAL FORMATION

- **Forming Priests for Tomorrow’s Church: An Ecclesiological Approach**,
Rev. Thomas P. Rausch, SJ
- **Theological Education in a Postmodern Era**
Msgr. Jeremiah J. McCarthy
- **The Formation of Priests for a New Century: Theological and Spiritual Challenges**
Rev. Robert F. Leavitt, SS
- **Field Educators Explore New Era of Pastoral Formation**, Donald R. McCrabb, D.Min.
- **Evaluation and Pastoral Internship**
Donna Bradesca, OSU
- **A Pastoral Methodology for the Integration of Priestly Formation**, Rev. James Walsh
- **Pastors: Mastering the Basics of Parish Administration**, Thomas P. Schroeder, CCP
- **Mentoring and Supervision in Ministry**
Rev. Robert Schwartz

VOLUME FOUR: ADDICTIONS & MINISTRY FORMATION

- **The Good News Can Flourish Only in Good Soil**
Daniel A. Kidd
- **Religion, Science and Substance Abuse: Why Priests and Psychiatrists Should Get Their Act Together**, Joseph A. Califano, Jr.
- **Role of Clergy: The Effects of Alcohol and Drugs on the Person and the Family**, C. Roy Woodruff, Ph.D.
- **A Case Study Approach to Teaching Chemical Dependency in Seminary Formation: An Application of the Core Competencies**
Rev. Mark A. Latcovich and Sis Wenger
- **The Dynamics of Addiction: A Wellness Concern for Clergy**, Kevin McClone, Psy.D.
- **Is the Problem Alcohol or Another Addiction?**
Michael Morton, L.M.F.T.
- **In the Shadows of the Net: Understanding Cybersex in the Seminary**, David Delmonico, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Griffin, M.A.
- **A Case for Teaching Sexual Addiction Assessment to Seminarians: Preparation as Confessors and Spiritual Directors**, Rev. Richard Chiola, Ph.D.
- **In a Plain Brown Wrapper: Help for the Sexual Addict**, Stephen Olert, FSC, and Ruthann Williams, OP

PANEL DISCUSSION: Ministry Formation and Additions: Implications for Seminaries

- **Case Studies in Ministry Formation and Additions**, Michael Morton, L.M.F.T.
- **If I knew then....**, Michael Morton, L.M.F.T.
- **Psychological Perspectives, Addiction and Formation Issues**, Kevin P. McClone, Psy.D.
- **Factors that Influence a Seminarian's Understanding of Substance Use and Abuse**
Rev. Thomas F. Nestor
- **Screening and Intervention with Personal Difficulties**, Rev. Stephen J. Rossetti
- **A GUIDE FOR MINISTERS: Addictions and Compulsive Behaviors—Identification and Intervention**
Michael Morton, L.M.F.T.



Seminary Department
National Catholic Educational Association
1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 525
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone (571) 257.0010, Ext. 1993
Fax (703) 243-0025 • Seminary@ncea.org

ORDER FORM



Quantity discounts apply when ordering more than 5 sets or 13 individual copies.

PRICE SCHEDULE PER SET:

1-5 sets = \$27 member/\$39 non-member
6-9 sets = \$24 member/\$36 non-member
10 plus sets = \$23 member/\$35 non-member

SHIPPING & HANDLING:

S&H will be added to international orders; prepaid orders over \$80.00 and orders requiring an invoice.

PRICE SCHEDULE PER COPY:

1-12 copies = \$8 member/\$12 non-member
13-32 copies = \$6 member/\$10 non-member
33 plus copies = \$5 member/\$9 non-member

[] **SETS OF 4 VOLUMES (#CE1 - #CE4) in the Core Elements Series**

[] **CE1 Theological Foundation & Cultural Understandings**
SEM-17-1351

[] **CE2 Human & Spiritual Formation**
SEM-17-1352

[] **CE3 Intellectual & Pastoral Formation**
SEM-17-1353

[] **CE4 Addictions & Ministry Formation**
SEM-17-1354

[] **SEMINARY JOURNAL**
\$20.00 USA; \$32.00 International; 3 issues per year

ORDER TOTAL: \$ _____

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

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

- ☐ Send Invoice (S&H will be added)

Member ID _____

Name _____

Institution _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

E-Mail _____



National Catholic Educational Association

Seminary Department

1005 N. Glebe Road

Suite 525

Arlington, VA 22201

800.711.6232

www.ncea.org