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Theme: International Symposium on Priestly Formation

Re-imagining a New Support Structure for US Catholic Seminaries
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The Challenge That Lies in Training Priests Today
Most Rev. Marc Pelchat

Historical Overview of the Evolution of the Formation of Candidates to the Priesthood
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The Formation of Priests Today: Cultural and Social Challenges of Priestly Formation in Europe
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Priestly Formation in the Context of Asia Today: Strengths, Challenges and Questions
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Training Priests Today: Strengths and Challenges in the Context of Catholic Life in the United States
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Beyond Schooling: Seminaries, Integral Formation and the Role of Academics
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Pope Francis and the Challenge of the "Francis Effect" for Seminaries
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In the Beginning Were the Bells: The Development of Human Formation for Priests
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BOOK REVIEWS

The Unforgettable Sermon: How to Write and Deliver Homilies That Change People's Lives
By Ed Reynolds
Reviewed by Katherine Schmitt

The Path of Spiritual Happiness
By Dr. Heather M. Erb
Reviewed by Steven J. Brust



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

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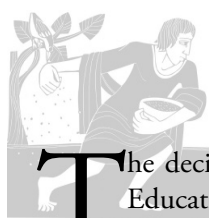
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**The individuals listed on this page occupied the positions indicated at the time of the Seminary Department's effective closure in the spring of 2014. They remain listed here as part of the historical record.*

Re-imagining a New Support Structure for US Catholic Seminaries

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, Ph.D.



The decision by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) to eliminate its traditional departmental structure, in favor of an exclusive focus on the parochial school system, includes the elimination of the NCEA's founding member in 1904, the Seminary Department. Historically, the Seminary Department has provided a highly valued resource to support the network of Catholic seminaries in the United States, charged with responsibility for the formation of priests, and, increasingly, the formation of deacons and lay leadership for the service of the Church. According to its historical mandate, NCEA maintained its connection with seminaries because of the critical importance of ordained leadership to sustaining the jewel of the American Catholic experience, its elementary and secondary school system.

While NCEA has chosen to forego this long-standing partnership, in my view, it is still a vital need of the American Catholic community to ensure that Catholic seminaries benefit from the important services that have been the traditional mission of the Seminary Department. In this overview, I propose to address two issues: (1) the historic mission and purpose of the Seminary Department; and (2) maintaining the values of the Seminary Department in a new institutional structure;

I. The Historic Mission of the Seminary Department

The mission of the Seminary Department was to provide support, leadership, and direction for the flourishing of Catholic seminaries. It pursued this mission, not unilaterally, but collaboratively. Three core objectives have governed the exercise of this mission:

(1) convening and networking of seminary leaders; (2) publishing ideas, research, and best practices in the premier forum, *Seminary Journal*; and (3) conducting research and developing important resources to support seminary education.

(1) **Convening and networking.** By providing opportunities for seminary leaders to meet, to share ideas, and to identify critical needs and priorities, the Seminary Department was positioned to secure grants and funding for important research and to develop resources for seminaries. Let me cite two examples.

By listening to seminary leaders share concerns about the issues of psychological testing and screening, the challenge of diversity and responding to the multicultural gifts of international students, and concerns about strengthening human formation, the Seminary Department, in collaboration with the CCLV, produced the first-ever national study of psychological testing instruments and identified important strategies for standardizing the use of psychometric tools and best practices in the admissions process.

With respect to providing resources for addressing the needs of international students, the Seminary Department, in collaboration with the St. John Vianney Center, hosted two national conversations with experts that resulted in two critically acclaimed issues of *Seminary Journal* on the topic, and of the establishment, of a web-based resource, The Parresia Project, to foster ongoing sharing of ideas and best practices for the support of international seminarians and priests.

(2) **Seminary Journal.** *Seminary Journal* is an acclaimed and highly valued resource. When I surveyed

the membership of the Seminary Department about how the department could better serve them, the support of rectors for the journal was virtually unanimous. The journal provides a forum for rector/presidents, deans, key administrators, and faculty members to contribute thoughtful essays on a range of topics that arise from the four-fold objectives of seminary education, as highlighted in the blueprint for seminary formation in the US, *The Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*. Seminary administrators and educators have relied upon the collegial wisdom captured in the journal to inform, shape, and guide strategic planning and programmatic initiatives. When I became executive director of the Seminary Department in August 2010, the position had been vacant for almost 20 months, resulting in a significant backlog in the issues. I worked diligently to repair this gap, and, currently, the backlog has been eliminated. Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, vice-president at Holy Apostles Seminary, Cromwell CT, is serving as editor in collaboration with Kathy Schmitt, formerly administrative assistant for the Seminary Department. The journal would benefit from an institutional sponsor to assure its regular publication and distribution.

(3) **Conducting research.** Grants from a variety of donors have provided resources for significant research and development of resources. Among these activities have been studies on recently ordained priests that have informed further research conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and the Catholic University of America, a study on psychological testing and assessment, development of web-based resources to support international seminarians and priests, and, most recently, an Assessment Workbook (in the final phase of completion) to assist seminaries in fulfilling accreditation expectations. The structure

provided by an executive director with administrative support and an operating budget is vital to ensuring that these historic, mission-driven objectives of the Seminary Department continue to be realized.

II. Maintaining the values of the Seminary Department in a new institutional structure

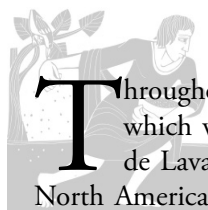
The NCEA traditionally valued the Seminary Department as a critical resource to support seminaries, who were among the founding members of the organization in 1904. Given the small number of seminaries and size of faculty/administrators/students, NCEA intentionally and strategically subsidized the seminary department's operations, realizing that membership dues would not provide sufficient revenues to support and sustain the mission-driven objectives specified in my previous remarks. NCEA, in other words, saw its support of the seminary system as an investment in providing the Church with well-trained pastors who would invariably assume leadership positions as pastors of parishes with parochial schools.

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, PhD, is moderator of the curia in the Diocese of Tucson, Arizona. Ordained a priest in 1972 for the Diocese of Tucson, AZ, Msgr. McCarthy earned an MA in religion at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, CA (1972) and PhD in Ethics at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA (1985).



The Challenge That Lies In Training Priests Today

Most Rev. Marc Pelchat, D. Th.



Throughout 2013, the Séminaire de Québec, which was founded in 1663 by Blessed François de Laval, the first Roman Catholic bishop in North America, celebrated its 350th anniversary. The Séminaire's training work, which affected several areas of sociocultural and ecclesial life, also included the priestly formation for the country, first for the parishes and the missions of New France, and then, for the churches of Canada and Québec as well as for other churches beyond these boundaries.

To emphasize this commitment to priestly formation in order to meet new challenges, the Chair of Theology Monseigneur-de-Laval organized an International Symposium on Priestly Formation, which took place at Université Laval (Québec, Canada) from June 2-5, 2013. The Chair of Theology Monseigneur-de-Laval was created June 2, 2000, at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of Université Laval thanks to a major financial contribution of the Oeuvre du Grand Séminaire de Québec, which thus wanted to strengthen the theological training of the aspiring priests. In preparation for the 350th anniversary of the Grand Séminaire de Québec, the Chair's scientific committee joined the Association des responsables de la formation au presbytérat from the Francophone sector of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in partnership with the International Federation of Catholic Universities and the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of Université Laval, to organize this meeting on the theme "Training Priests Today".

The symposium brought together 104 participants from Africa (Burkina Faso), South America (Colombia, Brazil), Asia (India, Sri Lanka), Canada (Québec, New Brunswick), the United States (Massachusetts, Florida, Virginia, Washington D.C.) and Europe (France, Italy). Twenty contributors or so made presentations on the history of training institutions for priests and

the challenges raised by this training in the various sociocultural contexts. For this issue of the *Seminary Journal*, we have brought together a certain number of these contributions to provide food for thought on priestly formation in today's world.

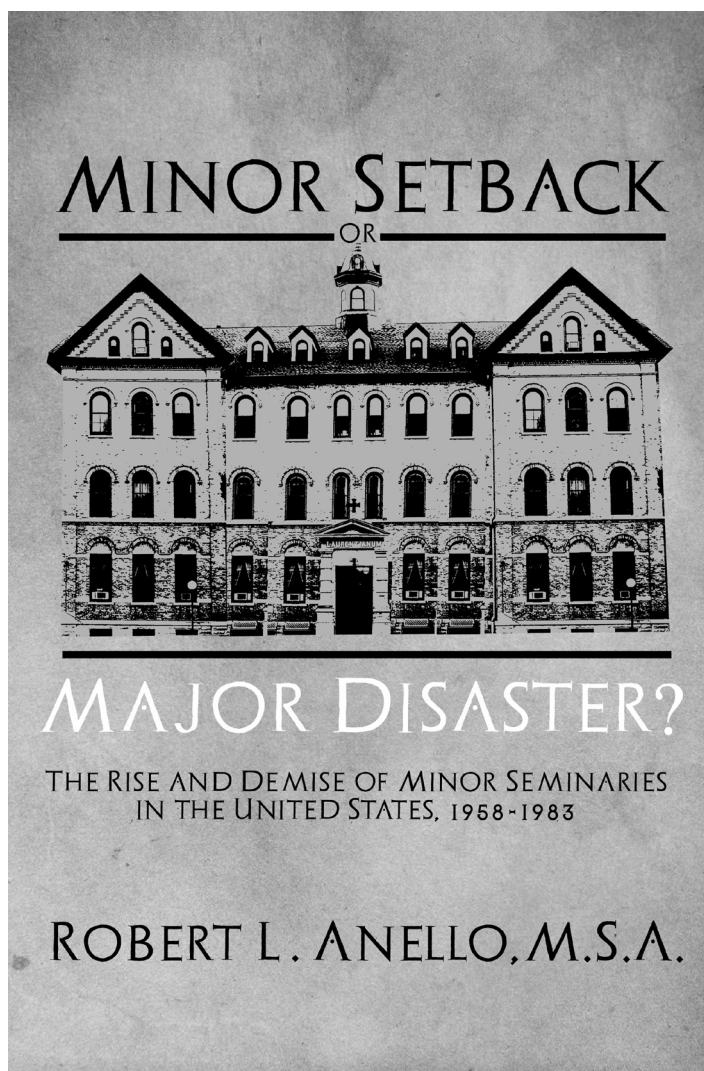
A first text, well-documented from Father Philippe Molac, relates the historical development of the training of aspiring priests and shows the great diversity of the models as well as the social, cultural and ecclesial circumstances that have created them. As a result of this more historical examination, a certain number of texts review the situation of the formation around the world. Thus, Father Robert Scholtus offers a thought on the varied ecclesial, cultural and social contexts where challenging issues concerning priestly formation presently arise in Europe. For his part, Father Vimal Tirimanna presents the main themes, the challenges and the issues raised by the priestly formation in Asia's context today. Finally, Father Jeremiah McCarthy sets out the strengths and challenges of the priestly formation in the context of current Catholic life in the United States.

Two studies go deeper into various aspects of priestly formation. Training for priestly spirituality is the subject of the study of Father David Touns, who elaborates on its features, while Father Stephen Rossetti offers a thought to renew human formation to help new priests promote a new evangelization.

These different points of view will contribute to our ongoing reflection on the priestly formation in the present circumstances. While doing so, we must keep our attention focused on the necessity of proclaiming salvation in Jesus Christ – an announcement to renew, for today – and on the expectations of our contemporaries regarding a message that meets their existential needs and their vital issues. We hope that the symposium on priestly formation, held in Québec,

has enriched the view of the formation of new pastors according to the Heart of Christ, and that it will, through this publication, continue to foster new thinking.

Most Reverend Marc Pelchat was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Québec on June 19, 1976. He then studied at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, obtaining a doctorate in theology in 1986. He is the author of numerous publications on ecclesiology, the theology of ministry, and pastoral theology.



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Historical Overview of the Evolution of the Formation of Candidates to the Priesthood

Rev. Philippe Molac

I remember when I was a seminarian overhearing my classmates purposely change the meaning of Psalms 135:7, “He who made the major seminaries, how everlasting is his humor!”¹ Was it the humor of God, though, which led the fathers of the Council of Trent to propose each diocese erect a school for the youth – seminarium – to train the future ministerial priesthood? Perhaps; in any case, most historians agree that the birth and development of the seminary dates back to that time.

Did we wait too long in the history of the Church to address the formation of priests? If so, then it suggests

Did we wait too long in the history of the Church to address the formation of priests?

that prior to the Tridentine Decree, there was an extreme deficiency of priestly formation, which triggered the crisis of the priestly identity in the sixteenth century and fueled the criticism of “reformers.” All this should be put into the context of the humanistic crisis of the Renaissance, which caused a wide, transforming movement that gave birth to a new world-view of reality in Europe. From the Renaissance onward, the ministry of priests – and bishops – was profoundly changed.

I have been asked to address the formation of priests from a large, historical perspective, which risks over-generalization. We need to focus, nevertheless, on key historical moments and interpret them in light of the recent apostolic post-synodal exhortation, *Pastores*

dabo vobis.² This exhortation contains the four pillars of priestly formation: human, spiritual, pastoral and intellectual. In light of *Pastores dabo vobis*, we will focus on key moments in history to learn of the careful formation of priests carried on by our ecclesiastical institutions.

First, we will examine the Church Father St. John Chrysostom’s presentation of the ministerial priesthood from his treatise, *On the Priesthood*. Next, we will discuss the unifying vision of the clerical formation in the schools of the Middle Ages. We will then expand a little more on the development of training models of priestly formation after the Council of Trent. Finally, we will discuss contemporary efforts in the wake of the ecclesiological shifts of the Second Vatican Council and their implications on the formation of priests, which is still under review. Certainly, we cannot cover all topics within this subject, but we will try to show some fundamental points, which we hope will open lines of thought and debate that will be constructive.

Section I. At the End of the Fourth Century: The Union between a Priestly Lifestyle and the Monastic Way of Life.

Few documents provide specifics about the lifestyle of priests and their formation before the fourth century. In this period, we find a great enthusiasm for the monastic life. The reason for this enthusiasm lies in the mandate of imitating Christ in his spiritual combat. Some monks were not ashamed to make people understand about the worldly lives of certain bishops and priests, who, free from the danger of persecution, became saturated by the stain of worldly pursuits in politics and finance.

It is important to stress the role that spiritual mentoring plays, which recurs throughout history in priestly formation: The elder used to counsel the younger to progress in the truth of the cathartic way.³ Toward the end of the fourth century, the union between the priestly life and the monastic grew more significant under the influence of monk-bishops like St. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. John Chrysostom.

After living a monastic and priestly existence at Antioch, St. John Chrysostom was appointed director of the troubled community of Constantinople in 397. Spontaneously, upon taking office, he decided to follow the radical and austere manner of Gregory of Nazianzen, who had imprinted it upon the same city fifteen years before (379-381).

St. John Chrysostom's foundational treatise *On the Priesthood* is the principle source of information of priestly formation,⁴ which we will examine according to three stages:

1. How does St. John reclaim the word *iereus* (priest) and, therefore, re-appropriate the proper priestly dimension at the heart of priestly ministry?

2. In what certain ways do we discover the beginning of the *trio munera* without their explicit reference?

3. How did St. John bring his priestly and monastic life experiences to orient the spiritual life of his priests? Significantly, even after many centuries, St. John's integration is still recognizable in the *Decree Presbyterorum Ordinis*,⁵ which underscores its relevancy as the foundation for building the life of a priest.

1. Reclaiming a Priestly Vocabulary

St. John Chrysostom's treatise notes that the priest exercises his authority as the leader of a community. He is vested with "command" (archè) and chairs its assemblies. His priestly dignity propels him into a separate status in relation to the faithful. Evidence of this fact is physically found in the placement of the priest's chair in the choir of the church or basilica (bêma).

This dignity encourages the priest to live a more demanding life in conformity to Christ than that of the lay faithful: to be configured to the person of the Good Shepherd, the Doctor of Souls and the mediation of the High Priest. The priest, if he leads souls, must let himself be deeply informed by Christ under the inspiration of the Spirit and unify his life in the inner combat, wherein he is purified from the irascible

and concupiscible passions that afflict us. The priest's identification with the person of Christ to reflect His image is a constant theme throughout the history of the Church.

Words like *presbyteros* and *episcopos* are extremely rare in Chrysostom's treatise; it is difficult to find a formal distinction between them. For John, the priestly dignity is shared by both degrees: he uses the word *iereus* 39 times. The introduction of this word in the priestly vocabulary cannot be a pure reliance upon the Old Testament. The inflection proposed by the Patriarch of Constantinople points out, we dare to say, the ontological participation of the priest, *sacerdos*, which shares in the priestly mission of Christ. Chrysostom, though, is fully aware of the need of the priest to progress in this ontological participation in Christ in order to progress along a cathartic way of life.

2. Watermark of an Inchoate Theology of the *Trio Munera*

The service of the Word is highly regarded and at the heart of St. John's treatise, the fifth part. Preaching, the homiletic art, is a priest's contract with the truth

The priest, if he leads souls, must let himself be deeply informed by Christ under the inspiration of the Spirit and unify his life in the inner combat wherein he is purified from the irascible and concupiscible passions that afflict us.

he serves. The fundamental rules of a good homily are expounded in eight points: The first principle is the preacher should always seek to place his personal logos at the service of the Incarnate Logos, and the pitfalls of vainglory should be rigorously guarded against. In all Church reforms, the quality of oratory and of service to the divine Logos by means of excellent human logos is recurrent.

The service of sanctification is highlighted. The Eucharistic liturgy manifests the heavenly Jerusalem. Christian baptism plunges the Christian into the Eternal City and, consequently, he should keep pure the grace received in the Sacrament. The Eucharistic synaxis (assembly) is the eminent place where our eternal

afterlife is glimpsed. Says Chrysostom: “When you see the Lord lying, immolated, and the priest leaning over the victim and praying, while covered by His precious blood, do you think you still live among men and on Earth, have you not emigrated into the kingdom of heaven?” (III, 4, 18-23).

The priest’s public service is stressed with the portrait of a community leader, described in Chrysostom’s part III, 11, 121-153, which recalls the extreme sufferings of his predecessor Gregory of Nazianzen with those of his own. We know that St. John stood against the “courtiers” and bishops and dared to oppose the vices of the court. He was thus exiled from it, despite the fervent support of the faithful who sustained him on that black day in April, 404. For those little ones, he embodied the figure of the Good Shepherd. Certainly, this is another point to highlight: the priest’s dual dimension, that is, the reflexive, sacrificial and pastoral aspects of every *sacerdos* in imitation of Christ.

3. The Confluence of Priesthood and Monastic Life

To understand the heart of the priestly ministry, St. John Chrysostom draws upon his memory of monastic formation against the contemporary examples he sees developing around him. He challenges the cathedral chapter in Vercelli (or Hippo) – to adopt the spiritual combat of the monk’s life. He identifies its main battle lines: Meditation on the Word and the Psalms, and mortification of the flesh by sleeping on hard surfaces, frequent fasting, night vigils, etc.

The unification of the priest’s life with Christ in meditation and implementation and specifically in the recognition of Christ in service to the poor, reflected in the first part of the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians, is a very personal touch sent with excellence in Chrysostom’s treatise on the priesthood. But did he realize that he was writing a prescription for it? He wrote in what we might almost call the grammar of mystery. The fact that St. John Chrysostom was the most read father of the East in scriptoria and seminars is due in part to this treatise.

In this first section, we attempted to show how Chrysostom is the patriarchal figure of the monk-bishop and how deeply his watermark is printed in the stationary of Church history.

Section II. Participation of the Monastic or Cathedral Schools in Priestly Formation

The gradual penetration of the Frankish and Germanic peoples from Western Europe into the Roman Empire caused an upheaval of classic civilization, which featured a tension of its two major components, Greek and Latin, but was safeguarded by the ecclesial institutions of the Church that played the critically important role as repository of classical knowledge and literacy in general, without which our common western heritage would have been lost. Of particular benefit was the simple genius of the Codex, or “Book,” in which individual pages, easily entered at any point and progressed through, supplanted the ancient scroll. Books now preserved the intellectual heritage of the West and were preserved by the monastic charism of St. Benedict in libraries wherever a monastery was set up.

Seeking God requires intrinsically a culture of speech, or as Dom Jean Leclercq said: “Eschatology and grammar are inseparable from each other in Western monasticism.”⁶ Dom Leclercq held that the formation of Western religious culture was based on two mystical experiences: those of St. Benedict and St. Gregory the Great, respectively. After Gregory, the masters of the Carolingian Renaissance disclosed new elements and spiritual lines, largely shaped by the pontiff of the late ancient times. Art reflected the desire to see the sky with the significant subject being first and foremost the Ascension and Transfiguration mysteries. Feudal political organization and the “medieval monastic town;” an archetype inspired by the heavenly Jerusalem; the flourishing of biblical readings accompanied by lectio and the meditation; an abundance of patristic references and the influence of the texts of classical antiquity; and the preservation of classical education according to the Greek models of the Tridium and Quadrivium, which included Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic as integrated methods of verbal communication – when the subject allowed – all combined to convey the wisdom and intelligence of the ages, to the present.

It is particularly interesting to note that in his address to the College of Bernardines, Pope Benedict XVI mentions the work of Dom Leclercq and emphasized four points:⁷ The relationship between grammar and eschatology, the theology of the Word of God, the establishment of *lectio divina*, which requires the use of the entire human person: body and mind, and liturgical chant, the most perfect expression of the heart of man, which fully engages human powers. The

human heart is designed by God so that we might explore the mystery of God by our God-given faculties - as if He wanted to be known! Clerical training was intense, wherein the path of holiness was of such importance as revealed by the reference book, published in the late thirteenth century: the *Golden Legend of Jacques de Voragine*.

The places of priestly formation were diverse.⁸ After the shock of the Norman invasions subsided, educational reforms of the Carolingian reform resumed. *Studia* and *lectio divina* were becoming the hub of the integrated life of religious monks or nuns. Centers of priestly study developed in cathedrals controlled by their bishops. The foundation of these schools is confirmed by a decree of the third Lateran Council: "The Church of God, being obliged as a good and loving mother to provide for the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor, wants to provide resources for her children deprived of the ability to learn, to read, and progress in study; she directs therefore that every cathedral school has a master and a teacher to instruct free of charge the clerks and poor students."⁹

From the eleventh century onward, the quality of education improved, and famous schools run by renowned masters emerged, such as, Chartres, Reims or Lavon (France). A clerk was a general title corresponding to a student, including those moving toward the priesthood. How many students, exactly, is difficult to determine.

From the early thirteenth century onward, changes in the plans of universities and colleges led to a revival in the training of clerks. The theological focus upon the *Sacra pagina* gradually developed into *Sacra doctrina*, wherein reason, *ratio*, illumined faith, *fide*. St. Anselm's scholastic motto: *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) substituted in part the previous reliance upon the monk's personal *contemplatio* to understand the mysteries of God.

That said, even though cathedrals and collegiate schools existed in most cities, and parochial schools educated a sizable number of people to read, write or cypher in the villages, the academic capacities of the average priests were not up to the ministry they needed to perform. The vast majority of synodal statutes of the thirteenth century required every priest be subjected to examination and be capable of reading and speaking in Latin and singing the Office. But again, it is wise to be wary of generalizations because in many dioceses it was not rare to find educated priests who had attained a solid theological background and were able to preach well.

We must remember the facts of history contravene the common misconception that the medieval period experienced a complete lack of trained clergy until the decrees of the Council of Trent and the Catholic counter-reformation addressed it; this is far from accurate.

Section III. The Creation of the Formal Training: from the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries

Let us move forward now to the "humanistic crisis" that emerged during the Renaissance. The Church's endeavor to pursue a more structured and comprehensive formation for Catholic priests is a

The momentum for reform was desired by both those who remained faithful to the Catholic hierarchy – starting with Erasmus – and those who took advantage of schism and ecclesial rupture.

reaction to the so-called reforms by Protestant challenges in the sixteenth century. But the momentum for reform was desired by both those who remained faithful to the Catholic hierarchy – starting with Erasmus – and those who took advantage of schism and ecclesial rupture. The crisis derives in part from the issue of the lack of trained priests and the weakening of the confidence of the faithful in the leadership of the Catholic Church. And the crisis is, in our opinion, also from a pastoral lack – as historians perceive every 500 years or so: the crisis of the fourth century, the millennium crisis and the crisis of the advent of modern times. The nodal point of the crisis of the "Renaissance" is a shift from a communitarian society to one that sees the emergence of the individual as an autonomous subject with his own thinking and destiny. In this sense, the heart of Christianity was born during the fourteenth century; the spirituality of the *moderna devotio* actually paves the way for this type of report very much personified to God, which initially unconsciously or consciously puts a distance between the institutions.

The question of the formation of priests was then rooted in the need to find the chrysostomian line of souls. Gradually, the position assigned to the direction of consciousness grows; it is to train men, certainly

ordered in the grace of the Holy Spirit and called by the Church, but capable of discernment and government. Over there, we have put the keys to what the fathers of Trent offer and whose inspiration seems to be the model of all new Jesuit colleges that tended to be the measurement of excellence at that time.

1. The Model of the Jesuit Colleges

Since the founding of his order, St. Ignatius had, at heart, the desire to link spirituality and pedagogy training. Was it so innovative? The brothers of the Common Life were preoccupied by this concern since the late fourteenth century, especially in what Jan Standonk, a Dutch from Gouda, had established in the Collège de Montaigu in 1499, and became the *modus parisiensis*. In the heart of this training lies the desire to study the Bible at the center of the whole educational process. After fumbling to find the best model for training, St. Ignatius himself turns to this *modus parisiensis* that develops “a highly active learning, in which all the capabilities of the student are brought into play, and there is a study plan established and organized.”¹⁰ The fundamental goal was scheduling disciplines, supported by exercises, to unify the person forming him in Christ by visiting Scripture as the main reference. St. Ignatius discovered that this model was close to the pedagogy he experienced personally in the Spiritual Exercises. After the founding of the Roman College in 1551, he wished to establish a quality center for teachers’ training. Quickly following the petition of the Council of Trent, the bishops were inspired to create the seminaries.

What are the strengths of this pedagogy implemented in the Tridentine teaching seminaries? We can note six: 1) the importance of ‘exercises,’ 2) a wide variety of these ‘exercises’ with a required brevity in the explanation, 3) a well-structured organization: *studiorum ratio*, 4) a clear spiritual program serving the unification of students, 5) stimulation not only for the intellect but for the blossoming of the senses of the whole person, and 6) the ultimate goal is a real assimilation of the “Word Gospel,” a kind of evangelical inhabitation. We see, in this list, many points that shape the lives of seminarians in view of the decisions of the Council of Trent.

2. The Emergence of a Different Type of Seminary: Saint-Sulpice

The delay of the implementation of the decrees of the Council in the Kingdom of France partly

explains the creation of a different model for the training of priests. The early seventeenth century saw the development of a revival of Catholicism under the leadership of several great “spirituals” of first rank, among whom it is worth mentioning, Pierre de Berulle. The maturation of a program based on the contemplation of the mysteries of the Lord allowed him to refine his proposed reform of the clergy. The influences that helped Berulle implement his model allow us to say that his model was not radically new when compared to the previous one; it was rather a modified model. The goal – a kind of an integral formation of the priest in Christ – was already very well embedded in St. Ignatius’s model. The major inflection of Berulle, lies in its theological approach of “states” of the Lord Jesus. The state of the priesthood, which helps prepare candidates by contemplating Christ as Supreme Priest, moves towards a configuration that makes sense in a missionary vision. The priest receives the priesthood by the grace in the Holy Spirit’s breath, the power of communion between the persons of the Trinity, and is sent to the faithful to assist in the sacramental grace to unite more to the mysteries of the divine life.

In that vein, Jean-Jacques Olier decided after much discernment to try a new experience. With two other companions, on the 29th of December, 1641, in Vaugirard, he founded a community of scholars (clerks) whose purpose was to train priests and future ordinands in “piety, religion, the priestly virtues, and practical knowledge of ecclesiastical sciences.” Transferred to the parish of Saint Sulpice, due to the appointment of Olier as pastor in June, 1642, the experience was very successful, prompting the founder to frequently revise its initial proposal. It is on the document that he presents to the Assembly of the Clergy of the Kingdom of France in 1651 that we see written, for the first time, the major features of his work. First, it is spiritually rooted in prayer, for which it is important to acquire a provision where the Christian heart surrenders to the Holy Spirit to be united with what he calls, after Berulle, the interior Jesus.¹¹ This undying love for Christ must be accompanied by an indefectible love for the Church. The reference figure is that of the Cenacle, during the time in which the Apostles matured in their missionary project in the fervent expectation of the Spirit.

The project gradually takes shape. The figure of the Cenacle inspired Olier to look for a college government of the Saint Sulpice seminary. Over time, spiritual direction gained a privileged position in formation, and

the board of directors, led by the director, regulated the life of the seminary. The seminary is intended basically as an educational community where the positive emulation of seminarians remains the crucible of this configuration to Christ the High Priest.

It is nevertheless important to note that until the French Revolution, the model of St. Sulpice remained a choice among others in France.¹² On the other hand, it is also important to note that a seminary back in that time was a place rather reserved for spiritual and human formation while most of the intellectual formation was provided in the faculties of theology, or some other colleges.

3. French Developments in the Nineteenth Century

Far from the questioning regarding the influence of the progressive model of St. Sulpice¹³ throughout the nineteenth century, it is interesting to underline the three points that characterize the training during this century and a little later.

The first point is on the intellectual dimension of the formation. After the French Revolution, we must recognize that there was a real spiritual desert to bridge. If life in the seminaries recovered, it was often with poor means: fewer and older teachers and textbooks with outdated content from the last century. Until around 1875, the theological formation was rather repetitive, sort of dogmatic parroting. The course considered the most important was that of morality. Some reports of General Superiors recalled the need of an experienced director to teach it while the teaching of the Sacred Scripture, on the other hand, was led by a young teacher. Today, the “reliability” in terms of the exegetical science seems more than doubtful most of the time.

The second point is on the disappearance of the figure of the founders.¹⁴ For example, in Saint Sulpice, lines driven by Jean-Jacques Olier are somewhat forgotten to make room for exercises of piety, often formal, and which still search in vain for traces of the power of the indwelling Christ, or the priest’s configuration to the state of the High Priest. In the wake of the French Revolution, the time seems rather a sort of an underground revenge, and the spirituality of healing, asceticism and mortification outweigh any other form of meditation. It is not uncommon to find noted in the journals of senior seminarians that what was essential for any seminarian or director was to model himself according to the interior rules.

The third feature is the time of great missionary commitment. Many missionary congregations of men and women were created throughout the nineteenth century, not only outside missions, but also inside missions. Many priests are concerned about the education of children and youth, assisting patients, and with the help of dedicated women or girls, they founded a multitude of small congregations whose aim was mainly to educate the poor or nursing. This openness also marked formation in seminaries. And this trait is somewhat paradoxical. The openness toward the concerns of the missionaries is very real in the clergy formation houses, especially in the mid-nineteenth century. We also see, however, in supporting documents that most of the decisions and the political leadership transformed the seminaries into what we might call a “bubble.” The image of the Cenacle, dear to the heart of Jean-Jacques Olier, becomes less that of the Apostles, feverishly awaiting the Spirit of Pentecost, than that of the Apostles who locked the doors of the place where they were.

Having said that, formation was the fruit, and the quality of life of the priests at that time was – the strong supporting the weak – more remarkable than the previous two centuries, in both the moral, intellectual and spiritual senses.

Section 5. Influence of the Documents of the Second Vatican Council: Changes?

For some years, we observed a kind of paradox in the subject of life and ministry of priests. A fairly radical turning point for theology departments occurred

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during the Second Vatican Council: the central point of the hierarchical structure of the Church is no longer dominated by the figure of the priest as a channel of grace for the faithful, according to my somewhat quick summary of the Tridentine theology. The centrality will

then be relocated in the heart of the Episcopal ministry. This theological change is the distant result of some research, including that of Johann Adam Moehler, with the publication of his thesis in 1825: *The Unity of the Church in the First Three Centuries of Christianity*. We refer here to a paradox because for fifty years, we must recognize that this implementation is far from being delivered. For some it is even a set-back since the Tridentine forms of priestly ministry seem to reappear more or less, for reasons that are not exclusively of theological or spiritual order. Some attempts to clarify this paradox make us embrace a period of nearly a century: from 1930 until today.

1. "Preparations" at the Second Vatican Council

Immediately after the Great War, but even more from 1930, we saw some questioning of the priestly formation models. The first aspect, which is often overlooked, is the coming back like a boomerang of formation in mission countries. The subject of acculturation begins to emerge, led especially by the seminaries' members of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris and in their trail, for example, we see the first Sulpician experiences in the Far East and Japan – where Cardinal Leger is distinguished – or Vietnam. Many of these trainers spend some time immersed in those countries to provide important elements of reflection, and, therefore, a somewhat different priestly formation develops in such countries.

The second element is that of the intellectual and even spiritual crisis. Reissuing textbooks (e.g. Tanqueray) was the panacea for most provincial seminaries of France and elsewhere. A saturation phenomenon widely agitated seminarians, and what has come with the historical recoil, "New Theology," enjoying a sizeable audience. This "New Theology" was the development, however, of research that some pioneers conducted in the nineteenth century, among them were Moehler whom we already quoted, Newman and others.

The third element is the crisis of recruitment of trainers. It is widespread in Europe, a direct consequence of the victims of the First World War. After the bleeding, there were fewer priests from the class of the years 30-45. The "old" tarried because their replacements took a long time to arrive. We observed a deep crisis from 1935 in France with the resurgence of some kind of hidden mutinies in Bordeaux, Nîmes or Nantes. The Second World War only delayed the "bomb," no pun intended, which soon broke out

in 1950. To say that the decisions of the Council caused the loss of priests is a mistake. It should have taken place due to the accumulation of many offsets. Some decades ago, in the U.S., we saw the crisis of Americanism, or more broadly, that of modernism. Had they not already shown the need for change?

2. Proposals for Different Formations after the Second Vatican Council¹⁵

If Fr. Maurice Vidal recalls the acts of the Assembly of the Province of France of Saint-Sulpice in 1965, which declared that the seminary is a profoundly ecclesial institution,¹⁶ we should note yet another paradox: at this precise moment, different programs were offered. Actually, they already started with a little controversial and original figure of seminary, that of the Mission of France.¹⁷

We must observe, however, the reforms:

First, an overhaul of what is called the cycle of philosophy, which became the first cycle with a marked insistence on the time of discernment. In France, this step was possible from the year 1968 in the form of Groups of University Education or Groups of Priestly Formation in the working world.¹⁸ Seminarians, while pursuing their academic or vocational training in a working environment, followed a real undergraduate formation, with six years of training on weekends and three weeks of training during the holidays. The fundamental pedagogical basis was the discernment in teams, teams accompanied by trainers duly chosen by the bishops.

Another important change was also made in that time. Hitherto, seminarians left the seminaries on few occasions. Limited to the weekly outing to the country house of the nineteenth century, it became gradually accepted that the students might help with parish catechism and with the necessary authorizations, with youth camps, scout camps and sponsorships. Now, since the years of the Second Vatican Council, pastoral training has been requested as an integral part of a seminarian's training, with the seminarian being entrusted to an experienced parish priest. In connection with one of the team members of the seminary, the latter must provide an account of the pastoral work of his fellow seminarian to his brothers.

It is at the same time, though in a somewhat different educational and spiritual line, that the "propaedeutic" vision of Paray-le-Monial opened, the aim of which was to give young people, before they

entered the first-year of seminary, a spiritual framework. It must be recognized that there was, at this time, a real debate about whether – beyond the parodied model – the propaedeutic should apply only spiritual formation or if it should also provide elements that are specific to the first cycle. It must be acknowledged, however, that with the longer maturation process of the young and their lower level of religious knowledge, the propaedeutic year has become increasingly necessary in recent years.

Starting from the 1980s, a new initiative has been conducted in Paris under the leadership of Cardinal John-Marie Lustiger. First, in a propaedeutic year – Maison Saint-Augustin – followed by the first cycle. Then, in the early 1990s, the Cardinal decided to extend the entire training cycle with the opening of the second cycle. The training was mainly based on two major elements: team training in a rectory of Paris, led by a priest named by the director of the household. The second element is that of intellectual training at the Cathedral School, with the backbone of training being the Holy Scripture; the pedagogy is more interactive than magisterial.¹⁹ We could almost recognize the experience *mutatis mutandis* of *modus parisiensis* of the Collège de Montaigu.

The conclusion to which we are inclined to arrive today would be that the seminary is certainly an ecclesial institution, but in the light of the course we have just finished drawing, we see that its contours seem less precise and defined than from those in the nineteenth century or from the first half of the twentieth century. This “overview” has allowed us to identify some invariants: the importance of a spiritual direction for formation in personal and ecclesial faith, the requirement of a life of prayer rooted in Christ in the breath of ‘Holy Spirit,’ the prominent and central place of the Word of God with its inner expression of *lectio divina* or in communal liturgy, configuration to Christ the Priest and Good Shepherd, experience of formation within a training community, preparation for the collegial dimension of the exercise of the priestly ministry, and others.

Does the scarcity of vocations to the priesthood come from the mode of individualistic operation existing among young people entering seminaries? How many of them could completely escape? Without a contemporary communitarian sense, the Catholic Church remains a membership community, according to Canon 1 of the *Code of Canon Law*. This very contemporary anthropology of individualism has crashed

the community structure of the Church that is desired by Christ. It does not seem surprising to learn that collegiality has become more difficult for the seminarians and the young generations of priests.

Of all the comments – again too general for us to develop – it appears that the most critical point of formation today is that of training the “ecclesial.” The integration of the “shift” of the Second Vatican Council on refocusing ecclesiology in the figure of the Episcopal ministry requires extra attention in this area, both on the side of the bishops and of the priests. Work lies ahead for the continuation of the peaceful implementation of this fundamental articulation of the hierarchical structure of the Church, which is the ministerial priesthood with a healthy cohesion of these two roles: Bishop-Priest. As this articulation will be peacefully integrated, with the conviction that the educational community of the seminary is close to priestly collegiality, the formation of priests will realize, in a way, the expectations of the twentieth century, and beyond.

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Translated from the French by Rev. Jeffrey “Skip” Thompson, MSA, and Rev. Michel Legault, MSA, of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, CT.

Endnotes

- 1 Translations differ in their arrangement of the Psalms. The following is from the *RSV-Catholic Edition*, Psalm 136:7, which is probably the text referred to by the author, who quotes Ps. 135:7. “...to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures for ever,” as the basis for his seminarians’ shenanigans.
2. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, “Pastores Dabo Vobis”, March 25 1992. See especially No. 43-59.
3. J. Getcha, *Confession and Spiritual Direction in the Orthodox Church*, *Irenikon*, 2010/1, p. 5-24.
4. St. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, *Christian Sources* No. 272, Cerf, Paris, 1980.

5. See the recall of three monastic vows as sources of spiritual life of the priest, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, No. 12-14.
6. Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Cerf, Paris, 1958.
7. Benedict XVI, Meeting with the world of culture in the College of the Bernardines, September 12, 2008.
8. See Jacques Orchard, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, Collection "Initiations in the Middle Ages," Cerf, Paris, 1996. The rich bibliography, p. 125-141, allows more specific studies, some directly related to our subject.
9. Canon 18 of the third Lateran Council, March 1179. See J. Farmhouse (ed.), *The Third Lateran Council (1179)*. His place in history, papers presented at the Round Table of CNRS on April 26 1980, Paris, Augustinian Studies, 1982.
10. G. Codina, *The Sources of the Jesuit Pedagogy, The 'modus parisiensis'*, Institutum Historicum, SJ, Rome, 1968.
11. Gilles Chaillot, *Discerning the Spirit. The Mystical Experience of Jean-Jacques Olier*, Bellarmine, Paris, 2001.
12. The seminars or training places are driven by the Oratorians, the Vincentians, the Lazarists, the Eudists, the Jesuits, and doctrinaire people...
13. After the French Revolution, the scholars from St. Sulpice are virtually the only ones to resume the management of seminars. The reasons for this are too long to cover in this context. See Marcel Launay, *The French Seminars of the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century*, Cerf, Paris, 2003.
14. Gilles Chaillot, "the ebb and flow of the memory" of J.J. Olier on the sulpician tradition," in Philippe Molac, *History of an Apostolic Dynamism, The company of the Priests of St. Sulpice*, Cerf, Paris, 2008, p. 297-306.
15. The magnitude of the issue requires confining its evolution in French.
16. Mr. Vidal, after recalling that in the variations of history, it is necessary to always keep in the spirit the eternal pastoral hierarchy entrusted by Christ and with the power of the Spirit, which gives three fundamental axes as for how the institution of the seminary serves and affirms the theology and practice of hierarchical priesthood: 1. The seminary will educate future priests in a very personal faith, in which the liturgy is the source and the word that the Spirit prefers, that they receive in testimony of Christ and to enter into communion of love with Jesus the Savior of men by the Glory of God the Father. 2. The seminary should help train the pastors that the Church needs: With a flexible and realistic intelligence, professional competence, a strong personality, a fairly deep faith, lucid and generous enough to discern the signs of the times. 3. The collegial nature of the priesthood justifies profoundly the existence of the seminary as an institution of the Church insofar as it is an "educational community to train clergy." *Bulletin of the Studies Committee*, No. 49/50, p. 54-56.
17. Jean Vinatier, "Saint-Sulpice and the Mission of France", in *Bulletin de Saint-Sulpice*, No. 17, Paris, 1989, p. 159-166.
18. Groups of University Education, Groups of priestly formation in the working world.
19. See lecture by Father Antoine Guggenheim, then president of the faculty of Notre Dame, at the meeting of teachers of the Faculty of Theology of Toulouse, March 26, 2009.



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About the Author:

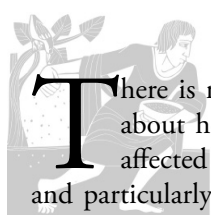


Fr. Larry Tucker, SOLT, was born on May 28th, 1955, in Manhattan, New York City. He is a bilingual missionary priest in The Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity and has served in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, England, Texas, and New York.

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The Formation of Priests Today: Cultural and Social Challenges of Priestly Formation in Europe

Rev. Robert Scholtus



There is no point in continuing the discussion about how the priestly vocation crisis has affected the churches in Europe as a whole, and particularly in France, since the 1970s, or about the significant drop in the number of candidates and the demographic erosion of the clergy that it involves. On the other hand, it would be risky to try to sketch a portrait of future priests and the recently ordained priests, given their small number, their diverse backgrounds and their quick evolution. My purpose is mainly to try to understand what we admire in them, which often puzzles their elders, and paradoxically makes them act as the bearers of today's culture, even when they hope to embody a Catholic counter-culture.

Allow me then to schematize what distinguishes and sometimes confronts the young "Hussars" with the old "veterans" of the Church, applying Napoleonic army terminology.

The vocation and trajectory of their elders in the ministry were situated in the dynamism of the Second Vatican Council. They had grown up in the Catholic ghetto and wanted to "go out and see the world." It was time for the institution of the Church to open up its windows, according to the image John XXIII had used before calling up the Council.

Those whom I call the "Hussars" and who want to be priests today are from that world. "Go out and see the world" has no meaning for these young men who were shaped by that world. Most of them come from large, underprivileged Christian families; they were not nursed like our dear seminarians of the past. They are older; they have studied and traveled abroad. They have had time to achieve a professional life, learn about independence and develop emotional relationships,

sometimes even live as a couple. They share with their generation the same imagination, the same music and images. As opposed to their predecessors, who were heirs, they conceive themselves as "converts," whose

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parents were incapable or unwilling to communicate what the young men have received by the grace of an event or a decisive encounter.

The Hussars have little regard for their elders whose conciliar euphorias do not hold up against

the secularization wave. They accuse them of being disenchanted and outdated if not tired and depressed. In view of an old clergy who still want to make amends for centuries of clerical domination, they want to live their ministry with enthusiasm, even with a deliberately provocative ostentation. Unlike their elders who wanted to cultivate a mystical incarnation and an Evangelical confinement in society, they do not want their career to have a low profile, as if apologizing for being there. They want to live in society as Christians and as priests and assure visibility to the Church by showing its uniqueness and openly proclaiming the Gospel. Being aware of the great urgency for a new evangelization, they intend to operate in an attestation mode rather than in an inculturation mode, in a mode of differences rather than in a mode of proximity.

We can say they are the heirs of the generation identified with high media coverage, which launched the Pontificate of John Paul II, a charismatic figure of the Catholicism of attestation and of what is known as the “Catholic pride” that continues to be carried out with the WYD (World Youth Days).

Where their elders have worked in the promotion of laity, as we used to say, helped by the shortage of priestly vocations, they are seeking to regain the authority lost to the promoters of co-responsibility.

If the Catholicism claiming seminarians and young priests today leads them to overvalue the priest figure, this is done less for theological reasons – which operate as arguments to post here – than for resisting being erased from the social scene and being “relativized” even within Christian communities. Here again, the new priests do not want to have to apologize for being in the community or leading church services in which laity have learned to do without priests. Where their elders have worked in the promotion of laity, as we used to say, helped by the shortage of priestly vocations, they are seeking to regain the authority lost to the promoters of co-responsibility.

In the name of legitimate claims, the new clergy

generations sometimes practice what I call “clumsy radicalism” by adopting ambiguous identity postures while adding contemporary individualism elements, breeding fundamentalist distrust.

In this regard, I used to compare the seminarians under my supervision to children who are excited about having discovered ancient toys and costumes inside an old trunk in a forgotten attic. Now, being a bit more serious, we are dealing with the absence of Church memory; the new generation, a victim not its perpetrator, has already denounced this disrupted transmission. Priesthood candidates are often self-taught in spiritual and ecclesiastic matters which result in a fragile internal structure and a lack of essential criteria for discerning what falls within a vital tradition. In the absence of a spine, like lobsters, they are likely to make a shell for themselves.

We shall also remember that they belong to the Y generation, as it is called. Their proficiency in computers and their use of social networks has led them to consider ministry as a role playing game and a communications exercise that focuses on stunts, language elements and staging a liturgical scene, in detriment to depth and internalization. Their *forma mentis* is determined by the digital culture in which they bathe – especially since most of the candidates come from scientific or technical

Their proficiency in computers and their use of social networks has led them to consider ministry as a role playing game and a communications exercise that focuses on stunts, language elements and staging a liturgical scene, in detriment to depth and internalization.

fields – and, as a result, their studies lean toward a certain theological positivism. The asceticism of the personal work is crucial for moving from a certain fundamentalism to the acquisition of a real intellectual life and consent to the quietness of thought and critical distance.

That being said, and to act as their lawyer, I will add that the new candidates for priestly ministry

instinctively understand the need for re-theorizing our practices and discourses, and for re-thinking the new “illustrative” value of the Christian faith. It is clear, pointed out Henri Jerome Gagey, a theologian, that “theology’s responsibility cannot be limited to regaining the ground lost in modern culture which developed outside of the Church. It is not enough to establish the ‘affinity’ between the words of faith and contemporary culture... We should go beyond in order to come up with the resources that give us faith to live in the shifting sands of modern life.”

The continuous training along with the spiritual guidance and accompaniment that comes along with it, as well as the assessment and reflection it involves, could help take the inevitable reality test that candidates might face when leaving the seminary, as they tend to believe that the Church begins with them, as She has taught them that they would be the heralds of the “new evangelization”.

This work of re-theologization goes through a renewed trust in the liturgy and the rites, by a desire to articulate the announcement of the faith and its celebration, by an emphasis on the sacramental life of the Church and by stressing the Christian character of resisting its “values” dilution. The new generation concurs with this perspective, but on a somewhat basic level, as if they were to return to a pre-critical stage of thought, as if it were enough to preach the kerygma and make beautiful liturgies, as if it were possible to transform Catholicism from counter-culture.

The family portrait I have just outlined indicates the formation needs that the teachers of seminarians would try to address today. Before we proceed, though, it is important to point out how unrealistic it would

be to expect everything to come out of formation’s initial stages. Formation should be incorporated in an organic way into the dynamics of continuous training, as insisted in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, to keep in mind the fundamental goal: we are trying to form the secular priests, the diocesan priests, the pastors of God’s people. The continuous training along with the spiritual guidance and accompaniment that comes along with it, as well as the assessment and reflection it involves, could help take the inevitable reality test that candidates might face when leaving the seminary, as they tend to believe that the Church begins with them, as She has taught them that they would be the heralds of the “new evangelization”.

On the other hand, the decisive role that the spiritual guidance plays in the formation of priests attests that the seminary is not a simple theological school or a center of professional training; instead, it aims to “go into the priesthood using the vocation door,” according to the beautiful expression of M. Olier. This forms in each candidate the “inner man” capable of responding to the call of the Spirit and to conforming his life wisely and freely.

To address the formation from a purely functional perspective, in terms of needs, would have a devastating

For reasons of critical mass and economy of means, but also to go away from the narrow conception of incardination, it is necessary, in my opinion, that in an area of globalization and social mobility, formation needs to be pursued within an inter-diocesan and international context.

effect to the point that it would be reduced to a list of qualifications required for priesthood within the complexity of a secularized society and a disseminated Church.

All Church documents insistently remind us of the four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. It is in these four dimensions that we honor, of course, autonomy and specificity,

but mostly, in my opinion, these dimensions should be seen as the breeding sites of a religious and a spiritual experience in which the future priest is formed and unified with his “inside man.” Beyond adjusting the curriculum and pastoral learning, the main position of this education is the inner unification, the spiritual integration. This position is much more demanding than today’s strong temptation to fall for a compensatory spirituality, a spirituality of refuge that minimizes the severity of a priest’s ministry. This is an issue particularly difficult to address in the context of cultural ubiquity and knowledge fragmentation suitable for all psychological divisions.

I have remarked that most seminarians today are proficient in the “know-how” (*savoir-faire*) and “communicate effectively” (*faire-savoir*). The question, though, we the educators should ask ourselves is in terms of their “know-becoming” (*savoir-devenir*). In other words, what pedagogy should we apply to help them move from their generous commitment to essential loyalty, from their personal conviction to the objectivity of the ecclesial service to which they are destined?

I do not know for certain whether we need to reinvent the major seminaries, but I believe they must be “big.” Today, we welcome the diversity of the formation houses, the pedagogies and the spiritualities that are put out there, but we do not realize that it contributes to a sort of “Balkanization” of the education and, consequently, a diocesan decline and a break in the presbytery chapels and networks.

For reasons of critical mass and economy of means, but also to go away from the narrow conception of incardination, it is necessary, in my opinion, that in an area of globalization and social mobility, formation needs to be pursued within an inter-diocesan and international context.

Finally, if priestly formation’s main purpose is fundamentally spiritual, as I have understood, it needs to be executed within the context of an open and broad community of life and faith, an ecclesial community which is enthusiastic about the dynamism of the apostolic mission; in short, an institution capable of ensuring candidates’ freedom and of supplying them with the conditions and means

- to base their future on a real sharing of the faith
- to cultivate an understanding of the faith and a theological formation that enables a man to face the questions of our time
- to develop judgment and the personal maturation needed for their pastoral personality
- to get a hands-on learning of Church-shared responsibility

I also think that a seminary is “big” when its teachers, rather than infantilizing the candidates, recognize their self-taught abilities and maturity. Without the trust and confidence put in them, how will the seminarians harmonize this with what their educators expect from them, a solid warranty facing the risks they take?

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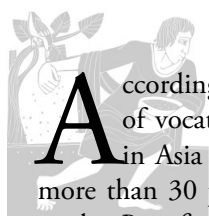


Translated by Jim Sapielak, Alumnus of Holy Apostles College & Seminary.



Priestly Formation in the Context of Asia Today: Strengths, Challenges and Questions

Rev. Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR



According to official Vatican statistics, the number of vocations to priesthood is growing, especially in Asia and Africa; in 2009, the growth rate was more than 30 percent in both continents.¹ According to the *Pontifical Year Book 2012*, the growth trend in the number of priests in the world that began in 2000 continued in 2010, for a total of 412,236 priests (277,009 diocesan clergy and 135,227 religious clergy); however, in 2009 there were 410,593 priests (275,542 diocesan and 135,051 religious). Overall, the number of priests has increased from 2009 to 2010 by a total of 1,643. The increases are recorded in Asia (+1,695 priests), Africa (+761), Oceania (+52) and the Americas (+40) while the decline has affected Europe (-905). According to the *Pontifical Year Book 2013* presented to Pope Francis on May 13, 2013, the same trend continues with growth in the number of worldwide priests being seen only in Africa and Asia, while in the Americas, the situation is stationary, and Europe has seen a decrease of more than 9 percent.²

Speaking about those in formation for priesthood and religious life, the *Pontifical Year Book 2012* pointed out that the number of students of philosophy and theology in diocesan and religious seminaries increased consistently from 2005 (111,99) to 2010 (114,439), indicating a growth rate of 4 percent. While the numbers of major seminarians did fall by 10.4 percent in Europe and by 1.1 percent in the Americas, the numbers increased in Africa (14.2 percent), Asia (13 percent) and Oceania (12.3 percent). According to the *Pontifical Year Book 2013*, the most evident increase of seminarians was again in Africa (+30.9 percent) and

Asia (+29.4 percent), while Europe and the Americas registered a decrease in their numbers of 21.7 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively.

My personal experience in Asia over the past fifteen years and my own unofficial statistics reveal that developing Asian countries such as India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam do still attract huge numbers of vocations to priesthood, while developed Asian countries such as Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan do not have such vast numbers, though they still do get some vocations. Are the vocations to priesthood, then, directly proportionate to the socioeconomic development of a given context? How many of those who enter in economically poorer countries are entering seminaries for a better lifestyle?³ My experiences in Italy and Poland tend to lean in the affirmative, while my experiences in Cambodia and South Korea respond in the negative.⁴

All signs indicate that the number of vocations to both priesthood and religious life will continue to increase in Asia in the coming years, which is a very reassuring fact for the Asian churches. However, while rejoicing that the harvest is plentiful in Asia, one should never avoid the other questions: Are vocations to priesthood equal to the number of those who enter seminaries? What is the quality of the priests ordained in recent decades? In the last analysis, what matters is quality and not quantity. In this article, I intend to probe how much Asian formation programs contribute to the quality of would-be priests by considering some of the salient characteristics of formation to priesthood in Asia, in general.

The Asian episcopal call to enter into dialogue with the living Asian realities of interreligious dialogue, inculturation and option for the poor has very often remained only an ideal or a beautiful dream.

Religious and Cultural Contexts of Asia

Asia is so vast and so diverse that to speak about a single Asian cultural context would be simplistic. As Pope John Paul II said in *Ecclesia in Asia*: “The most striking feature of the continent is the variety of its peoples who are heirs to ancient cultures, religions and traditions.”⁵ However, as Asian theologians insist, in spite of its vastness and diversity, there is a certain unity-in-diversity in the lived Asian realities.⁶ Anyone who enters Asia from outside is normally taken aback by the harmonious day-to-day living, especially with regard to the daily lived reality of religion and culture.⁷ It is precisely within the rich, but peculiarly Asian, concept of harmony with regard to the lived Asian reality that the bishops—at the very first meeting of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC)—dared to propose a triple dialogue with the three main Asian realities of life as the concrete manifestation of the church’s evangelizing mission in Asia; namely, dialogues with the vibrant religious traditions (interreligious dialogue), its ancient cultures (inculturation) and its teeming millions of Asian poor (option for the poor).⁸ This Asian episcopal call for a triple dialogue with the living Asian realities was explicitly reemphasized at the nine subsequent Plenary Assemblies of the FABC.⁹

Although almost all Asian formation programs have shown great enthusiasm about introducing courses and pastoral practice that reflect this triple dialogue in their seminary curriculum (in the speculative level), very few have succeeded at really putting it into practice. Many seminaries have been quite satisfied with blindly following European (especially Roman) seminary curricula as their unchanging models, and some even compete to be more “Roman” than the ones in Rome! As a result, the Asian episcopal call to enter into

dialogue with the living Asian realities of interreligious dialogue, inculturation and option for the poor has very often remained only an ideal or a beautiful dream. Consequently, most of the clergy thus formed continue to be isolated from the living Asian realities, and at times, they even portray themselves as “alien” to Asia! This has many repercussions on Asian Christianity.

Seminary Formation Designed to Be One With Asian Realities

To Be One With Asia’s Ancient Cultures

In Asia, a religious or spiritual person is also an ascetic (someone who has renounced worldly pleasures), as is so manifest in the cases of Hindu sadhus and Buddhist monks. Therefore, traditional Catholic priestly celibacy (renouncing even married and family life) fits in well in the Asian context. How much of seminary formation is responsible for enabling the seminarian to see value in celibacy and, thus, in integrating—in a

Seminarians need to be convinced that they are giving up sexual intimacy, marriage and family not because they are bad, but because Jesus and his message makes them say: “God is better.”

healthy way—the renouncement of marriage and family life as a sign of the kingdom to which he is supposed to preach and give witness? In many seminaries, the topic of sexual life is mostly concerned with taboos or is treated in a negative way, only warning against dangers and abuses. Mere rules and regulations that only highlight the “don’ts” or that erroneously create a sex-phobia (which are predominant in Asian seminaries), do not help a seminarian see his God-given sexuality as a gift of God. In such situations, seminarians question: “How far can I go as the rule or law is concerned?” Or still worse: “How far can I go, without getting caught?” This sort of *puer aeternus* mentality¹⁰ is common among a good number of Asian seminarians even after their ordination. Thus, as future priests, seminarians need to be convinced that they are giving up sexual intimacy,

marriage and family not because they are bad, but because Jesus and his message makes them say: “God is better.” Where a mature, healthy integration of sexual identity into ministry is missing, one sees quite a number of Asian priests leading double lives (thus, scandalizing many), instead of being a witness.

Just as in any other seminary in the world, the spiritual formation of seminarians in Asia is given top priority. The traditional Catholic formation practices of praying the Divine Office together, morning and evening meditation and prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist, spiritual direction, conferences, monthly recollection days, annual retreats, spiritual direction, spiritual reading and so forth are part of almost all spiritual formation programs. Accompanying such spiritual formation are the other aspects, such as intellectual formation, personal (psychological) and social formation and pastoral formation. However, Asian formation also stresses the importance of inculturation.

Unfortunately, in many countries such inculturated liturgical and prayer practices are limited to the externals of seminary formation; the expected germination of such “seeds” of inculturation, and their further growing and flourishing in priestly ministries, are rarely seen.

Although there is historical evidence demonstrating the existence of traces of Christianity in Asia much before the advent of the European colonizers on the continent, the roots of most of the Asian churches in their present form do not go beyond the Colonial period. Most of the Asian countries received the message of the Gospel through the European missionaries who were often hand-in-glove with European colonizers. Consequently, until the late 1960s many Asian churches were mere replicas of the European churches to which their respective missionaries belonged. One of the lasting negative effects of this is that many Asian churches were looked down upon by the rest of Asia as foreign

or alien to the Asian ethos.¹¹ This more than apparent “alienness” of Asian Christianity may also be perceived as one of the main reasons that the vast majority of Asians are not convinced by the message preached by churches in Asia, although the founder of Christianity himself was born in Asia.¹² Although Asia accounts for nearly two-thirds of the entire world population, Asian followers of Christ today still comprise an almost negligible island in the vast ocean of adherents to other great Asian religions—and this is in spite of nearly five centuries of zealous missionary efforts to evangelize Asia. This situation makes it all the more important for seminaries to imbue their seminarians with meaningful inculturation practices, not only in spiritual formation but in other aspects of formation, too.

Asian seminaries generally tend to accord a topmost priority to inculturation, especially in liturgical celebrations and community prayer meetings, as if liturgy is cut off from daily life. Moreover, the seminary environment itself is often inculturated (chapel construction, seating arrangements inside the chapel, decorations with rich local symbols, hymns and prayers using the local idiom and so forth), enabling a sense of inculturation in the seminarians with regard to liturgy. Adapting Asian methods of prayer, such as yoga meditation, adopting Asian postures of prayer (such as squatting on the floor), a deep reverential bow before the Blessed Sacrament (instead of the customary genuflection) and removing footwear as one enters into a sacred place are further illustrations of this. Unfortunately, in many countries such inculturated liturgical and prayer practices are limited to the externals of seminary formation; the expected germination of such “seeds” of inculturation, and their further growing and flourishing in priestly ministries, are rarely seen. In the rare cases where priests thus formed integrate such inculturated practices into their daily lives, they have invariably been very close to the people, and they have been appreciated not only by their flocks but also by nonbelievers.

To Be One With Asia’s Multitudes of Poor

Asia is also a continent teeming with millions of poor people, where the vast majority of the world’s poor live. Just as its master, the church also has no alternative than to be with these poor. In this endeavour, the priests need to take the lead, not only through their deeds but also through their very lives. Pope John Paul II rightly said in section 43 of *Ecclesia in Asia*:

People in Asia need to see the clergy not just as charity workers and institutional administrators but as men whose minds and hearts are set on the deep things of the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:5). The reverence which Asian peoples have for those in authority needs to be matched by a clear moral uprightness on the part of those with ministerial responsibilities in the Church. By their life of prayer, zealous service and exemplary conduct, the clergy witness powerfully to the Gospel in the communities which they shepherd in the name of Christ.¹³

The well-known Asian Jesuit theologian Aloysius Pieris makes an important distinction between imposed or forced poverty and voluntary poverty in Asia: multitudes of Asians live in imposed or forced poverty due to the unjust socioeconomic structures into which they are born, while an authentically religious person in Asia lives in voluntary poverty.¹⁴ The latter is not only in solidarity with those in forced poverty, but is also a credible religious person in their eyes. The immense popularity, credibility and acceptance of Mother Teresa of Calcutta among the masses in predominantly Hindu India is a fine illustration of this.

That is why it is important for Asian seminarians to be trained to embrace a detached, ascetical and simple lifestyle. An Asian religious leader who is not detached from material comforts is not credible in the eyes of many Asians. This is also because most of the leaders of other great Asian religions are people who live

The intrinsic links between Catholic priestly simplicity of life and priestly service (*diakonia*) are not only clear Asian characteristics of a person who is religious and holy, but are sure signs of his credibility.

very simple, detached lives. Using the distinction Pieris makes above, Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle of Manila goes on to say:

Aloysius Pieris rightly observes that the Church, by stripping itself of privileges, becomes poor

voluntarily in order to expose and free itself from the forces that keep people involuntarily poor—greed, acquisitiveness, and thirst for power. Cleansing itself of what dehumanizes others, the Church lives by a code of sharing in community, respect towards nature, and freedom from addiction. As the Church promotes the full humanity of those forced to be poor, it tries to achieve full humanity by voluntarily being poor. Compassion humanizes the poor.¹⁵

Do Asian seminarians enter the seminary with this goal in mind; namely, to be voluntarily poor and lead simple lifestyles? It is precisely here that many of the Asian priestly vocations face a serious, daunting challenge. Survey after survey has clearly demonstrated that most of the vocations to priesthood and religious life draw from very poor rungs of Asian societies and that most of these seminarians are attracted to a better life, both economically and socially.¹⁶ In many Asian countries, priesthood also confers a status quo, because from the time of your ordination, you become somebody, often having been a nobody (from the socioeconomic point of view).¹⁷ In fact, in quite a number of Asian countries, future priests become very clerical because they see themselves as members of something like “the clerical caste,” which is entitled to special privileges and often has difficulty with meeting lay people as equals.¹⁸ As such, many Asian churches today face the challenge of discerning and inculcating the correct motivation in seminarians entering into priesthood. Closely aligned with this is another twofold challenge: the spiritual life of the would-be individual priest and the credibility of the church as a whole, both of which depend heavily on a simple, ascetical priestly life.

As already mentioned, the intrinsic links between Catholic priestly simplicity of life and priestly service (*diakonia*) are not only clear Asian characteristics of a person who is religious and holy, but are sure signs of his credibility. As such, any model of Asian Catholic priesthood cannot afford to ignore them.¹⁹ Moreover, an equally important link exists between a priest's relationship with wealth and his priestly service. As already mentioned, a holy person in Asia is necessarily a person detached from material goods. Asian religiosity, thus, is in perfect harmony with Matthew 6:24: no one can ever serve two masters—God and Mammon—at the same time. In an increasingly globalized Asia where more and more people are marginalized, today's

priest is increasingly challenged to be prophetic in discerning the difference between “being” and “having.” Simplicity of life is also an Asian religious value, and it is surely another characteristic of an Asian religious person’s credibility. A priest is thus offered the option of choosing material wealth (Mammon) or people (and through them, God). He simply cannot choose both, particularly in Asia, which is teeming with millions of poor and destitute people in whose disfigured faces he is to recognize and minister to the Asian face of Christ. This is precisely what Pope John Paul II’s *Pastores dabo vobis* also said: “The priest is a living and transparent image of Christ the Priest.”²⁰

To Be One With Asia’s Great Religious Traditions

In addition to the usual philosophical and theological courses in intellectual formation, many Asian seminaries also have a few courses on contextual theology and Catholic Social Doctrine, aimed at acclimating seminarians to their lived realities. Generally,

Although interreligious dialogue is among the top priorities for priestly ministry according to Asian bishops (FABC), courses on such dialogue are not common.

weekly pastoral work in parishes, slums, prisons, hospitals and among all sorts of exploited people are, of course, geared toward immersing seminarians in their contexts. In many Asian seminaries there is also an immersion or regency year that is often compulsory, during which seminarians go out of the seminary for a year to do a job or be immersed in a life situation with the people outside the seminary. This is an effort to enable seminarians to integrate what they study with real life situations in Asia and to be in dialogue with realities that surround them.

Unfortunately, the Asian churches are yet to develop a typically Asian way of academically training their future priests. Theological formation is done by insisting that seminarians are intellectually formed in the

philosophical and theological Western tradition. Asia, with her own great philosophical systems, which have ancient roots, seems to have been ignored in preference for a European philosophical tradition, with the possible exception of many Indian seminaries where, in addition to Western philosophy, a course or two in Indian philosophy is also included in the curriculum.

In a good number of cases, seminarians who are about to be ordained lack even basic catechetical knowledge, let alone theological knowledge.

Many Asian seminaries have special courses on other religions in their study programs. This is an effort to familiarize seminarians with their brothers and sisters in other great Asian faiths. Although interreligious dialogue is among the top priorities for priestly ministry according to Asian bishops (FABC), courses on such dialogue are not common. Neither are they encouraged in the seminaries by a good number of bishops and seminary rectors. A relatively small number of seminarians are exposed to interreligious contexts in their pastoral work while in seminary. A sound theological analysis of what it means for a Christian to get involved in interreligious dialogue (according to the church’s official teaching) is often lacking in the majority of Asian seminaries, although India may be a unique exception to this. First of all, one who enters into an interreligious dialogue needs an intact Catholic identity. This demands a sound foundation in faith and Tradition, and both of these would surely demand good theological knowledge.

In Asia, overall theological formation is often of decent quality,²¹ but how much theology gets into the average seminarian is a question we need to ask. In a good number of cases, seminarians who are about to be ordained lack even basic catechetical knowledge, let alone theological knowledge. One serious reason could be the present-day lack of basic catechetical formation in homes (at the feet of parents and grandparents, as it used to be in the past), in schools (lack of religion in the curriculum) and in parishes. Another important reason could be the seminarian’s desire to be ordained

at any cost and, as a result, theological studies become only a means to achieve an end—to get ordained. Last but not least, the medium of instruction in seminaries (language) could also be a reason for the rather poor dissemination of theological knowledge among Asian

The excessive control of theological seminaries in Asia by Roman authorities constitutes a great hindrance for the development of genuine inculturated and contextualized Asian theologies.

seminarians. On the one hand, quite a number of seminaries in countries like the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong have seminary studies in English,²² but most primary and secondary schools use the “swabhasha” (local language). Seminarians’ knowledge of English is often weak, negatively affecting their grasp of finer theological points. In countries like Cambodia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Taiwan, Myanmar and Vietnam, seminary studies are done in local languages. The disadvantage to this is that they often lack quality theological material in those languages, and their lack of an international language makes it hard for those seminarians to access theological literature written in international languages.

Lack of interest on the part of many seminarians to acquire knowledge for future ministry through extra reading, research and reflection is also a hindrance for an authentic, credible interreligious dialogue. Moreover, their superficial knowledge of theology does not, at times, even match the basics of catechesis. As the official church has so often rightly insisted, a person who does not have a proper understanding of his or her religion is not qualified to enter into dialogue with other religions. Besides engaging in such dialogue, a priest who is ignorant of the basics of theology (and even of basic catechesis) could be quite dangerous in the pastoral field.²³ After all, a priest is supposed to be an “educator in the faith.”²⁴

The excessive control of theological seminaries in Asia by Roman authorities constitutes a great hindrance for the development of genuine inculturated and contextualized Asian theologies. The overinsistence on curricula and content as prescribed and approved by Rome stifles an authentic Asian sense of theological development and stops both seminary theology professors and their students from asking vital questions or making comments that are taboo in the eyes of Rome, for fear of reprisals, even though these questions and comments may have much relevance for the probing mind of a young Asian seminarian. Thus, a genuine Asian pastoral theology that serves Asians in their contexts is often stifled.

Motivation Toward Being One With Asian Realities

Although the majority of Asian seminaries are sincerely trying their best to achieve the above goal by properly motivating their students, the end result unfortunately seems to be quite disappointing with regard to a majority of alumni. Could one attribute this to some defect in seminary formation programs or could it be that it has something to do with the formation they receive prior to entering the seminary? How else is one to explain how the same seminary program produces a few committed priests who at least sincerely try to achieve the above goals, while a majority of them forget all such goals the moment they are ordained? From my first-hand experiences in Asia, I reckon that it is the fundamental or preliminary formation (in every sense of the word, not only religious) that candidates receive at home, and also perhaps at school, that lay the foundation for later seminary formation. If the foundation is solid, later seminary formation will also be built on solid ground. If the foundation is not solid, then later seminary formation will be negatively affected, with very rare exceptions. Commenting on today’s formation programs, Mannath expresses similar views:

There is no evidence that we are turning out better priests today. An experienced formator once told me a reason for this. He said: “In my opinion, formation depends 70 percent on the candidate, 20 percent on the staff, and 10 percent on the programme.” Two priests who go through the same seminary training can (and do) turn out to be remarkably different. There is no way we can “produce” good priests, or make sure that a candidate grows into a sincere, dedicated, God-centred, compassionate

and effective pastor. Revised curricula and an updated syllabus are important, but no programme, however cleverly thought out can ensure the quality of the final “product.”²⁵



With all of his long years of formation experience, Mannath is convinced (along with many others) that “the main formation house” is our family, because most of our formation is over by the time we join the seminary.²⁶ I too, am very convinced of this.

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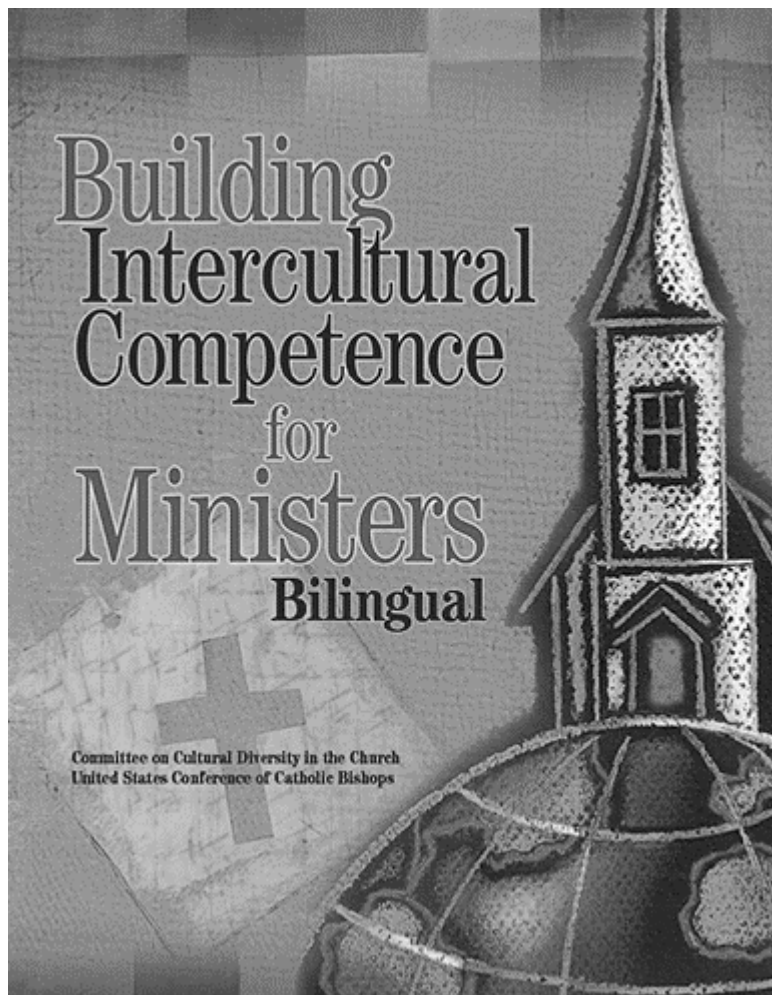
Endnotes

1. These figures are according to a report in the *L'Osservatore Romano* of 11 February 2009 quoted from the *Official Vatican Almanac*.
2. As cited in *Catholic News Update Asia*, 14 May 2013.
3. See Rev. Joe Mannath, SDB, “Priestly Formation Today: The Rhetoric and the Reality,” a talk given at the Association of Major Seminaries of India, Kengeri, Bangalore, India on 20 September 2002, 2. Fr. Mannath is a Professor at the University of Madras, India, and also at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He has twenty years experience in formation ministry and teaching in different countries and giving seminars for formators.
4. When it was still economically developing, especially after World War II, Italy attracted many priestly vocations. In my visits to Poland in the early 1990s, I saw that the seminaries were full. However, with Italian economic growth in the few decades after World War II, along with the collapse of the communist regime in Poland, the vocation rate is decreasing in both of these countries today. During a 2013 visit to Cambodia (one of the

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">MONKS</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Monks pray first and foremost simply because God is worthy of being praised.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~Pope Benedict XVI</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">~The Rule of St. Benedict</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ST. MARY'S MONASTERY Benedictine Contemplative Monks www.stmarysmonastery.org monks@stmarysmonastery.org 271 N. MAIN ST PETERSHAM, MA 01366</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Twin Community with St. Scholastica Priory</p>	

- poorest Asian economies), I found that there were only four major seminarians for the whole country, while my experience with economically developed South Korea indicated that they have a good numbers of vocations.
5. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (6 November 1999), §6.
 6. See for example, Michael Amaladoss, "Is There an Asian Way of Doing Theology?" *East Asian Pastoral Review* 45:1 (2008), 11–13.
 7. Note that what is meant by "harmony" here is that Asian religious cultures are primarily cultures of harmony, though of course, there are some contemporary situations of life in Asian countries that are characterized by several tragic experiences of acute disharmony.
 8. See "The Statement and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences," nos. 12 and 19 in Gaudencio Rosales and C. G. Arevalo (eds.), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970–1991*, vol. 1 (Manila: Claretian Publications, 1997), 14–15.
 9. See "The Final Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC," in Gaudencio Rosales and C. G. Arevalo (eds.), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970–1991*, vol. 1 (Manila: Claretian Publications, 1997), 280; the "Final Statement of the Sixth Plenary Assembly" in Franz-Josef Eilers (ed.), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1992–1996* (Manila: Claretian, 1997), 2.
 10. This phrase is borrowed from Donald Cozzens who holds that a good number of priests today are of what he calls *puer aeternus* archetype (the archetype of "the eternal boy," "the eternal youth"). See Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 75–80.
 11. John Paul II acknowledges this fact in *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), §9. This suspected "alienness" is further aggravated by the fact that Roman Catholics are heavily centralized and dependent on Rome.
 12. Unfortunately, Christianity returned to Asia with European Colonial garments and that has made the problem even more acute.
 13. Interestingly, in one of his first discourses to the priests of Rome, the newly elected Pope Francis forthrightly mentioned that there are priests who are administrators and there are priests who are pastors, and he exhorted the priests gathered in Rome to strive to be the latter type.
 14. See Aloysius Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula* (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Tulana Research Centre, 1998).
 15. Antonio Luis Tagle, "The Mission of the Church in Asia: Living the Incarnation in Poverty and Plurality," in Vimal Tirimanna (ed.), *Reaping a Harvest From the Asian Soil: Towards an Asian Theology* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2011), 130.
 16. The craze to go out to foreign countries as missionaries—but only to Western or first world countries—by many Asian priests is a clear sign of this. The open-armed welcome given to Asian priests by such countries (due to the serious lack of vocations in their own countries) further encourages vocations to priesthood in Asia.
 17. In no way does the author intend to convey that those who come from socioeconomically lower rungs of society come with insincere religious motives. As a matter of fact, all the first Apostles of Jesus are portrayed by the Gospels as belonging to such levels of society. Moreover, the long history of the church shows that there were many saintly priests who came from such backgrounds, including the founder of the Salesians, Don Bosco.
 18. Georg Evers highlights such tendencies in countries such as South Korea and Pakistan in his book: *The Churches in Asia* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2005), 78, 530–531.
 19. The earlier quote by John Paul II from section 43 of *Ecclesia in Asia* is in place here.
 20. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *I Will Give You Shepherds Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §12. It is also important to note here that the Second Vatican Council, when referring to priesthood, did replace the pre-Vatican-II cultic term *sacerdos* with the biblical, non-cultic term *presbyter* or "elder." In other words, being "an image of Christ the Priest," would imply that today's priests cannot exclusively limit themselves to cultic or liturgical aspects of priesthood, but rather that they also need to be immersed within their flocks, just as Christ himself was.
 21. In a few seminaries, like those in the People's Republic of China, the quality of academic formation is said to be quite poor. Even in some other Asian seminaries, the quality of such formation often suffers due to mediocre seminary professors who are competent neither in their teaching skills nor in content.
 22. In the recently independent East Timor, seminary formation is done in Portuguese.
 23. Here, one can compare such a priest with a medical doctor who does not know the basics of medicine.
 24. Paul VI, *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests Presbyterorum ordinis* (7 December 1965), §6.
 25. Mannath, "Priestly Formation Today: The Rhetoric and the Reality," 3.
 26. Mannath, "Priestly Formation Today: The Rhetoric and the Reality," 6.

Intercultural Competencies Workshop – 2017-2018



Holy Apostles has over the past decade increasingly provided educational opportunities for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but it has not at the same time kept up with training the board, administration, faculty, staff or student communities in the art of intercultural competencies to assist in their understanding of how to appropriately engage persons from different cultures.

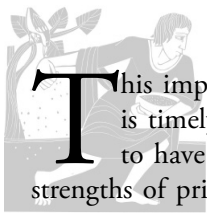
Thanks to an Innovations Grant provided by the Association of Theological Schools, in 2017-2018, the Holy Apostles community has brought together its institutional constituencies on a common training platform in intercultural competencies using materials developed by the USCCB's Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

In the fall of 2017, all institutional stakeholders were provided the opportunity to receive training from a platform developed by Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, a BICM certified trainer, based on the workbook entitled Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers (Bilingual) and the BICM website at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/intercultural-competencies/>. What was learned in fall 2017 will be used to generate a spring 2018 webinar series, an intercultural competencies template and a community specific workbook that will be made freely available as a model for all other seminaries.

For more on these outputs, see the Intercultural Competencies website <http://www.holyapostles.edu/interculturalcompetencies>

Training Priests Today: Strengths and Challenges in the Context of Catholic Life in the United States

Msgr. Jeremiah McCarthy, PhD



This important symposium on priestly formation is timely and necessary. I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to reflect on the strengths of priestly formation in the United States and the challenges it faces in preparing future priests for pastoral leadership today.

I would like to frame my brief remarks in three sections. At the outset, I will comment on some statistical data and the present status of the normative document for priestly training in the United States, the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*.¹ Secondly, I will situate the issues facing Catholic seminary educators within the larger currents of change confronting theological education within the ecumenical community of schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS). Finally, I will offer some suggestions for addressing the needs of Catholic seminaries going forward. In particular, I will highlight the following: international seminarians, recruitment of formators who are priests, psychological screening of candidates, human formation in the seminary curriculum and leadership training.

Statistical Data and the Status of the PPF

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) provides an annual statistical report on trends in the US Catholic Church, including seminaries and priestly formation programs. The data for 2012 contain the following information:

- Graduate level seminary enrollment is holding steady with 3,694 seminarians. This number has been consistent for the past five years. For comparative purposes, the highest enrollment at the graduate level was in 1967–1968 with 8,159 seminarians.
- College level enrollment currently includes 1,425 seminarians and has similar stability. The highest level of college enrollment was also in 1967–1968 with 13,401 students.
- There is an increased need for pre-theology programs that provide propaedeutic education in philosophy and theology for the growing numbers of candidates who already possess a baccalaureate or advanced degree. In 1980 (the first year CARA tracked this pool of students), these students comprised 4 percent of all theologate students. At present, they represent 22 percent.
- There are currently 41 theologates preparing seminarians for priesthood in the United States. The fourteen with enrollments of at least 100 account for 1,927, or 57 percent of theologate enrollment.
- In 2013, 26 percent of seminarians (879) in theologates were from countries other than the United States. This number represents a slight decrease from 2011 (-13 seminarians). Eighty-one foreign countries are represented. The distribution is as follows: Mexico (137), Vietnam (114), Colombia (101), Philippines (70), Poland (62), Nigeria (41) and others. Fifty-nine percent of foreign-born

seminarians are being prepared to serve in US dioceses, while 10 percent are studying for a diocese outside of the United States. Of the 267 religious order seminarians comprising 30 percent of the foreign-born seminarians. Of this 30 percent, 21 percent are studying for a US-based religious order and 9 percent for an order outside the United States.

All seminaries in the United States comply with the requirements stipulated in the normative document for priestly training, the *Program of Priestly Formation*, currently in its fifth edition. The community of US seminaries, at both the graduate and college levels, is engaged in a review process, guided by the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), to suggest revisions for a sixth edition of the PPF. This process is expected to conclude in early 2015 with a final text submitted to the US bishops for a vote in November of 2015. This text will then be submitted to the Holy See for its formal *recognitio*.

The emphasis on human formation as the foundation for all aspects of priestly training, as found in Pope John Paul II's landmark encyclical, *Pastores dabo vobis*, has been given particular prominence in the PPF.

The distinguishing hallmark of the PPF is its holistic, integrated vision of priestly training. The PPF contains specific norms for the four dimensions that anchor this vision: intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and human. The emphasis on human formation as the foundation for all aspects of priestly training, as found in Pope John Paul II's landmark encyclical, *Pastores dabo vobis*,² has been given particular prominence in the PPF. The PPF gives special attention to the notion of "affective maturity" as a necessary quality for a priest. This term can be understood as "emotional intelligence," which refers to the interpersonal capacity

to build relationships with people. In the words of Pope John Paul II, the humanity of the priest must serve as a "bridge and not an obstacle" to the proclamation of the Gospel (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 43). I will refer to the importance of this notion in my concluding remarks on challenges facing seminaries in the United States.

The Ecology of Theological Education in the United States: Implications for Catholic Seminaries

All of the freestanding, graduate-level seminaries in the United States are accredited by the ATS. This consortium of 260 member institutions, including Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Protestant traditions, is an outstanding example of ecumenical cooperation. The standards of accreditation that relate to benchmarks of quality in degree programs and essential resources do not impinge on any confessional commitments represented by the members. The standards provide room for diversity and creativity. No seminary or theological school is immune to trends in the larger culture. Most seminaries are small institutions struggling for financial stability, and the cost of providing the church with a well-educated clergy is increasing.

Dr. Dan Aleshire, Executive Director of ATS, has noted several significant strengths of Catholic seminaries. In particular, Catholic seminaries are blessed to have the PPF as a standard for organizing the curriculum. No other denomination has such a common framework for preparing and equipping students for ministerial leadership. However, Catholic seminaries do face distinctive challenges. Let me highlight these challenges.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities for Priestly Formation in the United States

- The increasing percentage of lay members on seminary faculties requires schools to be attentive to their distinctive professional needs and development (tenure, salaries, benefits).
- Many seminaries provide programs for permanent deacon candidates and lay ministers. Their personal and spiritual formation requires focused attention so that they are as well prepared as priestly ordination candidates. The shortage of priests in the United States will not soon abate. Training lay professionals with comprehensive, integrated learning that is modeled in the PPF (and reflected in the USCCB document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*³) is essential.

- Maintaining strong and stable enrollments is crucial for quality formation. The creative partnership of The Diocese of Rockville Centre (Huntington, NY), the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York to locate graduate-level seminarians for the ATS-accredited Master of Divinity degree program at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, New York, is an example of good strategic planning for the future.
- The role of seminary boards in these kinds of long-range issues is crucial and requires the investment of time and training of trustees to exercise fiduciary care for priestly and ministerial formation. Strategic planning and cultivating stable financial resources for the well-being of the seminary system are critical skills for seminary rectors.
- Over the last two years, twenty-two new rectors have assumed their posts. At a recent annual meeting of seminary rectors, a need surfaced for their regular, professional development. The role of the seminary rector is becoming more complex. Rectors have seen their responsibilities increase from the traditional canonical role of spiritual leader and pastor to more presidential functions such as development of trustees, fundraising, public relations and outreach to a variety of constituencies (bishops, vocation directors, religious superiors and ecumenical and higher education partners).
- According to ATS data, Catholic seminaries have the highest percentage of visa (international) students among ATS schools. Educating leadership for the multicultural church in the United States is crucial. In this regard, Reverend Allen Deck has written about the critical importance of

Reverend Allen Deck has written about the critical importance of equipping seminarians and priests with intercultural competency. This skill recognizes the power of culture in all aspects of ecclesial life and ministry.

In the case of Catholic seminaries, how do schools demonstrate that their graduates have achieved the fourfold objectives of the PPF?

equipping seminarians and priests with intercultural competency. This skill recognizes the power of culture in all aspects of ecclesial life and ministry. The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Seminary Department has developed its Parresia Project (from the New Testament Greek word for boldness), which is designed to provide web-based resources to enhance the reception process for international seminarians and priests. US seminaries recognize that the distinctive teaching and learning needs of international seminarians are not a problem to be solved, but rather a gift to be welcomed.

- A critical challenge named recently by rectors is the recruitment of formators who are priests. I want to be clear that this concern by no means suggests a departure from the invaluable and essential presence of laywomen and laymen on seminary faculties. Rather, it is a recognition that the current cohort of formators and educators is aging and that the important role-modeling that they provide for seminarians must be sustained in collaboration with the gifts of the lay faithful for quality training of priests.
- Psychological screening and testing practices have been surveyed by the NCEA Seminary Department.⁴ Currently, the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations and the Seminary Department are collaborating on a set of guidelines to accompany the new revision of the PPF. Among the items being developed are criteria for certifying psychologists; identifying a standard battery of culturally sensitive psychometric instruments; guidelines for the written report and interpretation of testing results; confidentiality; record retention policies and other legal matters.
- Accreditation of Catholic seminaries by the ATS is supported by the PPF and has yielded great benefits

for the schools. Accreditation standards provide benchmarks for quality assurance regarding degree programs and resources (faculty, personnel, library, finances, facilities, technology and so forth), as well as best practices in areas such as governance and strategic planning. Of particular importance is the emphasis in US higher education on assessment of student learning outcomes. That is, the quality of an educational institution is an issue not only, or exclusively, of adequate or superior resources, but rather of how these resources are deployed to ensure that students achieve the stated degree program goals. In the case of Catholic seminaries, how do schools demonstrate that their graduates have achieved the fourfold objectives of the PPF? To assist seminaries with this task, the NCEA Seminary Department is currently partnering with ATS and Lilly Endowment to develop specific assessment instruments for the goals of the PPF. These performance indicators will be piloted in several seminaries in 2014 and will be published by ATS for wider distribution in early 2015.

- A recent survey of priests in the United States notes that there are contrasting styles of leadership and understanding of priestly ministry among the different age cohorts of US priests.⁵ The image of the priest as a “servant-leader” views priestly identity as a collaboration with the gifts of the baptized faithful. The more traditional leadership role focused on sacramental ministry is typical of the millennial cohort of priests, and is captured by the image of the priest as a “cultic-leader.” These generational differences pose interesting challenges for building presbyteral solidarity and effective ministry among priests and bishops. These differences notwithstanding, the emphasis on human formation by Pope John Paul II and the PPF is of special importance. For all priests, the skill of affective maturity is essential, not only for a holy and healthy embrace of the gift of celibacy, but for the effectiveness of the unique and irreplaceable leadership of the ordained priest. Efforts to strengthen human formation in the seminary curriculum have been underway since 1992 and have had positive effects on seminary formation programs.
- An indication of the success of these human formation efforts is the following observation from the John Jay College study, *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the*

United States, 1950–2010:

Over the past twenty-five years, a remarkable intensification of human formation and deeper understanding of the importance of its role are evident in almost every seminary. Over the same period, the total number of accusations of sexual abuse of a minor by a Catholic priest has fallen from 975 for the period of 1985 through 1989 to 253 for the period of 1995 through 1999, and then 73 for the period of 2004 through 2008. An awareness of the problem of sexual abuse surely informed the development of the curriculum, but the benefits to seminaries may be seen in the continuing very low levels of sexual abuse of minors.⁶

Conclusion

Catholic seminaries in the United States are working effectively to prepare candidates for a dynamic and complex ecclesial context. The demographic shift to a more multicultural church is well underway. While seminary enrollment numbers have stabilized over the last five years, the shortage of priests continues. The average age of diocesan priests in the United States is 64—a sobering statistic. Population declines in older, northeastern and midwestern urban settings are matched by prolific increases in the Catholic population in the southern and western regions of the country. The older patterns of an extended apprenticeship as an associate pastor are no longer in place. Newly ordained priests are quickly charged with senior leadership responsibilities and most become pastors within a few years of ordained service. The increased importance of continuing education and formation programs for priests is imperative for the health of the church and her priestly leadership.

As I mentioned earlier, the human formation of priests as the foundation for intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation is crucial. Irrespective of whether priests find themselves more attuned to cultic-leader or servant-leader models, the panoply of interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence (affective maturity) that is emphasized in the PPF is essential for effective ministry. Msgr. Philip Murnion, who ran the National Pastoral Life Center in New York until shortly before he died, wisely observed that priesthood is not a license for private practice. Msgr. Murnion gave voice to the enduring insight of the Second Vatican Council, reaffirming the church’s understanding that the ordained

priesthood and the priesthood of the baptized faithful, while differing in essence and not just degree, are interrelated according to *Lumen gentium*:

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ.⁷

Ensuring that priestly formation programs equip future priests according to the holistic vision of the PPF with a repertoire of skills—collaborative leadership,

Ensuring that priestly formation programs equip future priests according to the holistic vision of the PPF with a repertoire of skills ... is the enduring task of seminary leadership today.

intercultural sensitivity, intellectual depth and critical thinking ability, solid and sustainable practices of personal prayer and spirituality, pastoral zeal, personal self-care and health maintenance (by no means an exhaustive list)—is the enduring task of seminary leadership today. I look forward to further conversation about these challenges.

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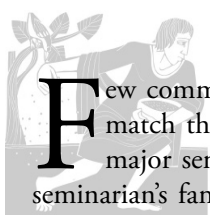


Endnotes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006).
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3. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005).
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5. Mary L. Gautier, Paul M. Perl and Stephen L. Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood Since Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012).
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Beyond Schooling: Seminaries, Integral Formation, and the Role of Academics

Rev. Mr. James Keating, Ph.D.



Few communities of formation and education match the ambition of the Catholic minor and major seminary. Building upon the fruit of the seminarian's family life and over eight years of living in community, praying, studying, and exercising ministry, the church hopes to produce men who are intellectually, emotionally, morally, and spiritually mature. By way of the seminary's fidelity to the processes of integration, a man becomes capacitated for ecclesial service.

In its essence, the seminary is a set of relationships mediating the truth and love of Christ the priest. This mediation is ordered by way of discreet areas of formation identified as human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Within these areas of formation, the seminarian is invited to be vulnerable before the love of Christ, a love that carries him to the truth about doctrine, service, academics, and his own self. This encounter with love-borne truth is known within the human and transcendent relationships that establish the seminary as a formational community. The seminarian welcomes this love-bearing-truth into his mind, will, and affect and in time becomes configured to Christ.

A seminarian becoming configured to Christ the Priest is the hope of the seminary staff. The location for both this becoming and this integration is the seminarian's very self—his very person. Such a process can be excruciating because of the constitutive condition of man, prone to resist truth and love. Formation is a suffering. In other words, leaving fantasy and entering reality is a suffering.

The genius¹ of the seminary is found in its commitment to be a community that both *mediates integral formation* (conversion) and *supports the seminarian who suffers such integration*. Without committing to integrate human maturation, spiritual

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development, intellectual acuity, and pastoral charity within the man himself, a seminary risks simply being a school. When the entire seminary community dedicates itself to the mission of integration, when it persists as a set of relationships configuring a man to Christ the Priest, then it can gift a mature man to the church. In turn, this new priest leads others through their own integrative conversions in the sacramental and communal life known as the parish.

The new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, prepared by the Congregation for the Clergy in 2016, prominently advocates the mission of integration at the forefront of a seminary's nature.² However, it is difficult for seminaries to persevere in becoming creative and vibrant cultures of integration. Formators need to be vigilant in resisting one or another component of formation from becoming dominate. The triumph of any one area of formation dominating the others threatens the possibility that true integration can occur within the seminarian. It can be seen, however, that different areas of formation have taken the ascendancy throughout seminary history.³ In more recent history (1970s) it was the pastoral area, but today the new *Ratio* singles out the academic area.

"Successful completion of the requirements of study cannot be the only criterion for determining the length of the formative *iter* of the candidate . . . because study . . . is but one aspect of integral formation."⁴ It goes on to state, "Formators shall ensure the cooperation of the professors . . . and shall meet regularly with them, in order to address teaching related matters, so as to promote *more effectively the integral formation* of the seminarians" [Author emphasis].⁵

It is natural for seminaries to emphasize studies because the bulk of the day is spent "in class." An obvious result of completing seminary is the awarding

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of an academic degree. Also, the academic staff is usually one of the largest in number and hence its influence is weighty. Further, the faculty is accountable to state and private accrediting agencies whose oversight places disproportionate emphasis upon this one area of formation. Finally, academics loom large in the imaginations of seminarians today because so much of youthful identity is measured by achieving "good grades."

Historically, seminaries did not have an overemphasis on academics: in the not so distant past degrees were not earned. Even after degrees began to

be granted, many seminaries eschewed commencement ceremonies, choosing instead to only highlight ordination.

In a commentary on the new *Ratio*, Archbishop Patron Wong more universally contextualizes the caution about academics, perhaps anticipating future cultural shifts that might bring about the dominance of other areas of formation. In universalizing the concern, the archbishop *identifies integral formation as the norm* for a healthy, functioning seminary life.

. . . because the seminary does not intend to form only intellectuals [intellectualism], despite taking the intellectual preparation of the seminarians very seriously. It also does not intend to achieve a monastic type of formation [spiritualism], although it certainly grants a central place to prayer and the sacramental life. It does not intend to form good organizers ["pastoralism"], although it is concerned with offering seminarians the best preparation for pastoral activities. Lastly, it is not concerned with forming only ministers of cult ["liturgism"], although it offers seminarians the best possible liturgical formation. These types of imbalances, often part of the tradition of our seminaries, tend to deform priestly identity.⁶

To remind all that one aspect of formation should not dominate is only fair. However, it would be rare for formation mentors to be the dominating power or for spiritual directors or field education supervisors to hold such a place in U.S. seminaries. These voices are more muted in relation to the voices of academics.

What then, would a more integrated academic program look like as it cooperates with the other three areas of formation in a unified effort not to "deform priestly identity"? Archbishop Patron Wong proposes one organizing principle for such a formation here:

Priestly formation implies a process of configuration to Christ the Head, Shepherd, Servant, and Spouse (Cfr. RFIS, 35), which consists in a mystical identification with the person of Jesus, just as it is presented in the Gospels. This mystical process is a gift from God that will reach fulfillment through priestly ordination. . . . Every mystical gift demands the counterpart of ascetical practice, which is the human effort that follows the gifts of grace. To affirm the centrality of the formation of the interior man (see *Ratio* 41) means that the soul of . . . the entirety of formation is

pastoral charity. It is about forming the heart so that it will internalize the sentiments and ways of acting of the Son, continuously finding itself consoled by the Holy Spirit. This strong interiority, which not only includes his activity, but also his life and his moral conscience, sustains him in the midst of difficulties and is the profound reason for his fidelity.⁷

This description of the seminary is quite remarkable in that it highlights the role of the mystical for the formation of men. Of course, “mystical” is not a reference to extraordinary phenomenon, but is what the Church has always taught it to be: a life proceeding from sacramental worship.

Hence in itself, such mysticism integrates all around Him who is truth and love.

This theme of the mystic, along with some others mentioned by Patron Wong, can help us imagine a more integrated academic life in seminary. The Archbishop emphasizes configuration to Christ as Head,

Along with asceticism, interiority, and the mystical identities of Christ, interior silence helps seminarians suffer the integration that are the FOUR areas of formation.

Shepherd, Servant, and Spouse. He calls these realities “mystical identifications” with their roots in Scripture. Wong further delineates that a seminarian’s process of configuration to Christ the Priest is a “gift.” If this is true, then one of the guiding missions of the seminary is to teach men how to receive such a gift. It is the ascetical way, the way of self-denial, the way of ego deflation in the face of Christ’s humility, which creates a man who is better able to receive “gifts.” He explains that seminaries should see the *formation of the interior man as its central work*. In this, I recall an earlier—and much ignored—document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, which promoted a similarly radical idea. It noted that the *seminary’s main task* was to form men *in interior silence*.⁸ Along with asceticism, interiority, and the mystical identities of Christ, interior silence helps seminarians suffer the integration that are the four areas of formation.

The seminary, then, facilitates in men an established life that is more about receiving than accomplishing. It is a life hospitable to the indwelling Spirit, a life saturated in the ways of loving and being loved by Christ. This way of life is deeply mystical and sacramental, and because the self-donation of Christ is at its core, it is a life *marked by gratitude*. Becoming configured to Christ in His mystical identities is indeed Christ’s own gift. Christ changes the seminarian, Christ draws him up into His own mysteries, and the seminarian consents, obeys, surrenders, and renounces sin (through asceticism) to facilitate Christ’s reach toward him.

Of course, the academic aspect of seminary formation is also at the service of these mystical identifications. It serves these movements of Christ toward the seminarian by showing hospitality to silence and prayer in the classroom,⁹ by allowing pastoral concerns to integrate with doctrinal and theological reflections, and by noting where the beauty of Catholic anthropological insights more deeply secure theological truths in the imagination. For academics to reach the authentic zenith of service *in a seminary*, it needs to promote the ever-deepening participation of a seminarian in a mystic configuration to Christ. Academics does this most consistently by facilitating reason’s wonder over the depths of Divine Love as revealed by the One who is the way, the truth, and the life.

“It is a fundamental theological conviction that reality itself is grounded in God, whose basic meaning is love. . . . [We] are convinced that rather than a commitment to the truth excluding love, only the presence of real love could be the basis of seeing the truth at all. Love and rationality, therefore . . . must be all of a piece. Reasoning . . . is only reliable when it is grounded in love.”¹⁰

This is what the new *Ratio* is driving home as well: “Love and rationality are all of a piece.” We are limited in our ability to create a perfectly integrated system of priestly formation. We can, however, do better than simply demarcate areas of expertise and affirm each professor as he or she orders study to its proper ends and purposes. To affirm this is to simply affirm the modern university. The new *Ratio* is trying to underscore such a view as minimalist when it invites formators to “ensure the cooperation of the professors . . . and . . . meet regularly with them in order to address teaching related matters *so as to promote more effectively*

*the integral formation of the seminarians*¹¹ [Author emphasis]. No area of expertise takes the ascendancy

For academics to reach the authentic zenith of service in a seminary, it needs to promote the ever-deepening participation of a seminarian in a mystic configuration to Christ.

and no area of expertise is unrelated to the forming of the whole man into a priest.

It is not uncommon for some seminary faculty to distance themselves from interest in the spiritual, human, and pastoral formation of the seminarian. This allows professors to stay “focused” on their unique skill and contribution. This professorial model lives on the fumes of university theology where the whole person in the form of the student is not the purview of the professors.

Many others on the university campus are interested in the student as a person; the professor is interested in the person *as a student*.

In the new *Ratio*’s vision, the seminary professor is also concerned with the seminarian as person/priest. This view of the professor does not undermine the nature of the academic mission, but accomplishes it by inviting professors to think about their task within their love of the priesthood, the Eucharist, and the pastoral mission of the parish. The reasoning executed in seminary classrooms must be grounded in the love of Holy Orders. It is not a generic theology, one serving its own purposes. Seminary theology is tasked to enter a dialogue with the very vocation it seeks to serve. Seminary theology delves into the truth about God from within the mission of the Church as she forms men into priests.

In seminary, of course, theology and philosophy have the freedom to achieve their own intrinsic purposes. This must be so; otherwise, questions raised in the pursuit of truth would remain unanswered. But in a seminary, the structures promoting integration take the ascendancy, not the curriculum. Unlike in universities,

the academic portion of a seminary is not its sole glory. In seminary, the converted, educated, and virtuous man lying on the cathedral floor is the community’s glory. He becomes that kind of man if all areas of formation cooperate to see him become *interiorly configured to Christ*—the necessary component for a man to be called “Father.” “The concept of integral formation is of the greatest importance, since it is the whole person, with all that he is and all that he possesses, who will be at the Lords service. . . .”¹²

The seminarian enters the ministry of the Lord if he internalizes formation through his appropriation of love and truth. With this internalization, he becomes a free man, no longer mimicking religious practice and moral virtue like a veneer,¹³ but possessing and being possessed by Christ *from within*. The new *Ratio* summarizes this in saying, “day after day he will internalize the spirit of the Gospel, thanks to a constant and personal friendship with Christ.”¹⁴ Again, because *Pastores dabō vobis* described it so well – the seminarian’s imagination is ignited in the service of pastoral charity first and foremost by being with Christ (Mk 3:13). If the seminarian sustains this friendship with Christ *as He labors to integrate His own mysteries within the man*, future parishioners will come to recognize the seminarian as a man who *was called*, who was *with Christ* (Acts 4:13) and who *was sent*.

Frenetic Scheduling

Beyond relativizing academics in favor of the integrating power of all areas of formation, there remains another challenge undermining both academics and the mission of integration: the frantic pace of seminary life. A varied yet continual moan comes from seminary staff and students about the pacing of the *horarium*. This pacing needs to be abated in order to honor and promote contemplation in both its spiritual and academic manifestations. Integration will never be suffered deeply within the seminarian if the daily pace remains rapid. Failing to develop a more measured pace assures that future priests will fail to become the “interior” men envisioned by the new *Ratio*.

One move academics can make in service to slowing the pace is to replace the often-weighty number of book requirements for each class with fewer, more substantial, titles. Fewer books of greater depth can be delved into repeatedly over four years, allowing the content to penetrate. All theologians know and love these kinds of books already. They are opened often,

even just for the pleasure of reading their truth-bearing prose. Theologians would want the same for the parish priest as well: dependable sources of wisdom guiding homilies and pastoral counseling. A contemplative seminary produces substantive priests, molded by theology and prayer and equipped to creatively apply such to pastoral ministry. Over twenty years ago, in the first volume of *Seminary Journal*, Msgr. Liddy decried all the “. . . frenetic activity crammed into an academic year. The result of this attempt to develop all skills at once is that none are developed very well, not even the academic skills around which the rest of contemporary seminary training is ordinarily structured.”¹⁵

What if contemplation guided the pace of integration called for by the new *Ratio*? “Contemplation” here is not understood as the grace-filled passive possession of a person by the Spirit, a possession taking one to a place of communion by way of “sleeping” senses. Rather, seminary contemplation is the *prayerful commitment to behold truth* in all its forms and allow it to become *a wound of influence*. Here, contemplation is the mirror that reflects back to the seminarian all that has come to him by way of experience.¹⁶ In academics, such contemplation would be promoted around the beauty of truth; in human formation, around the truth about oneself; in pastoral ministry, compassionately beholding human need; and in spiritual formation, the beauty of Christ, Head, Shepherd, Servant, and Spouse. Such contemplation would need to be practiced in a community where frantic pacing is banished. True mentoring unto priesthood is given in the leisure necessary to facilitate such contemplation settling into the soul of the seminarian.¹⁷ This revolution against busy-ness will be the greatest hurdle for seminaries to ever overcome, even as we marvel at the possibilities in its demise.

As Msgr. Liddy’s meditations imply, it is necessary to imagine a twelve-month seminary and not an academic year. Is this the hope of the new *Ratio* as it promotes a propaedeutic year, a pastoral year, the opening of seminary to families, parish events, and so forth? Under the constraints of the academic year, all such speculations appear as threats, carrying little promise. The universal protective cry from professors is “I have so much to teach, time is my enemy.” The new *Ratio* promotes ordination as the goal of a completed spiritual journey, not a completed academic degree. “This configuration demands that the seminarian enter profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ . . . [This] stage of *theological studies*, or

of configuration, is aimed above all at the spiritual formation proper to the priest”¹⁸ [Author emphasis].

In none of this speculation is there any desire to promote seminaries as pious enclaves of murmuring fountains and prayer. It must be honestly questioned if the busy-ness serves academics’ deepest meaning, the retention of truth unto a man’s intellectual conversion. The jokes all bear some truth. How do you tell what year a priest graduated from seminary? Look at his bookshelf. The real test of a successful academic program is not the transfer of massive quantities of data from professor to seminarian, but the transmission of a love for theology and philosophy from professor to student. How many priests discovered a “favorite” theologian during seminary, read throughout their formation and beyond? If we can *go deep* into fundamental, substantive texts and end the demand for seminarians to conquer huge bibliographies, then perhaps a few more priests will catch the love that professors have for theology. Until the quantity of work is managed, seminarians will feel trapped to do the academic minimum. “Intellectual formation is part of *the integral formation* of the priest. Moreover, it serves his *pastoral ministry* and has an impact upon his *human and spiritual formation*, which draw rich nourishment *from it*. . . . Far from being . . . a means of acquiring more information . . . intellectual formation helps priests to *listen profoundly to the Word*, and also to the ecclesial community . . . to read the signs of the times” [Author emphasis].¹⁹

Having a keen sense of human nature, formators may be concerned that seminarians will become lazy from a “contemplative” schedule. This could happen if the *horarium* is left intact and new calendars are not creatively explored and experimented with. In the name of integration, more opportunities should be afforded for the seminarian to discuss, marvel, and retain theology as he notices its effects upon his prayer life, emotional life, and pastoral life. This means conversations with spiritual directors, mentors, and pastoral theologians will secure the contents of his study even more steadily over four to eight years. “The professors, in sharing and taking upon themselves the Plan of Formation of the Seminary . . . ought to spur on the seminarians, and help them to make progress both in the area of [academics] and in that of the spiritual life.”²⁰

The End of the M.Div.?

The most dramatic experiment to enter in the pursuit of integration and contemplation in the

seminary would be to replace the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree with a Master of Arts (M.A.) or some equivalent degree.²¹ Of course, the new *Ratio* does not argue for this at all, but such a possibility must be considered. Nothing in canon law prescribes an M.Div. degree for Catholic priests. The *Program for Priestly Formation* notes this degree is the “recognized standard” for ordained ministry, but only seems to note it, not advance it as optimum.²² Pontifical degrees are “encouraged” in the *PPF*, and the M.A. is noted as providing “a deeper understanding.” If the M.Div. degree is not required, could an M.A. degree simply be offered within a four-year period of formation? Noting that such degrees carry around 36 credit hours, the possibilities for constructing formation with “integration” as its true center becomes an attractive and creative reality. Of course, laying the M.Div. degree aside does not mean dispensing with the pastoral components and practicums attached to such. Having no credit hours attached, however, and uncoupling the pastoral, liturgical, and practicums from the same, frees seminaries from accreditation oversight for these areas. The 100 credit hours demanded by an M.Div. degree then become available to seminary administration and staff for planning new ways of being with the Lord and one another.

“The educational endeavor helps seminarians to bring all aspects of their personality to Christ, in this way making them consciously free for God and others. In fact it is only in the crucified and risen Christ that this path of integration finds meaning and completion; all things are *united in him* (Eph 1:10) [29]” [Author emphasis]. Instead of our seeking seminary unity in the pursuit of a 100-credit-hour degree, we can seek seminary unity by integrating studies, human formation, pastoral training, and prayer “*in him*.” Perhaps by envisioning a new way of being together—even year-round—all areas of maturing in Christ can be given their due as the integrative keys to formation. The goal of priestly formation is not tied to time or degrees, but rather to “readiness.” Therefore, formation staff can order seminarians toward nascent expertise in discernment (43), men able to “see” what God is doing.

Conclusion

New kinds of relationships among formators and how they are arranged between one another and the seminarians *in the daily horarium* will not only yield academic degrees, but the completion of a *genuine*

spiritual journey for the seminarian as an integrated man. As our culture moves rapidly to unmoor itself from God, from reason, and from any community built around both of these, it is calling out for such a man. The priest needed today is committed to depth of study (not breadth), silence and contemplation, proclamation of the Gospel to those in need, acceptance of the truth about himself, and a dynamic prayer life intimate enough to not just support a celibate life, but to enflame desire *for it*. Such a man, the integrated man, offers the Western world a figure for contemplation as it races to its demise by its own choice to remain isolated from truth and God. *If* our culture notices such a man, it may have an opportunity to awaken to a new way of being, an invitation to interior peace and happiness. What a gift such a man would be to the Church and culture. The new *Ratio* seems to want to begin a conversation around forming such a man.

“The entire journey of formation must never be reduced to a single aspect to the detriment of others, but it must always be an integrated journey of the disciple called to priesthood.”²³

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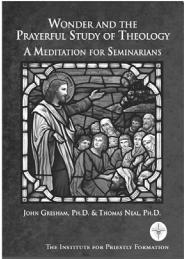


Endnotes

- 1 See James Keating. “The Seminary and Western Culture.” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 14, no. 4 (2016): 1099–1111.
- 2 Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (8 December 2016).
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- 6 Jorge Carlos Patrón Wong, “Foundations of Priestly Formation,” Congregation for the Clergy, Accessed March

- 24, 2017, from <http://www.clerus.va/content/clerus/en/notizie/new4.html>.
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- 9 For an earlier articulation of these ideas see James Keating, *Resting on the Heart of Christ: The Vocation and Spirituality of the Seminary Theologian* (Omaha: IPF Publications, 2009).
- 10 Roberta Bondi. *To Pray and To Love*. (MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 36.
- 11 *Ratio*, 141.
- 12 *Ratio*, 92.
- 13 *Ratio*, 41.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Richard Liddy. "Formation: Developing Habits of Mind and Heart." *Seminary Journal*, 1, no. 3 (1995): 21.
- 16 St. Bonaventure. *Works of St. Bonaventure: Itinerarium Mentis Deum*. P. Boehner. (ed.). (New York: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 26.
- 17 *Ratio*, 46.
- 18 *Ratio*, 68-69.
- 19 *Ratio*, 117.
- 20 *Ratio*, 142.
- 21 Another option would be to retain the M.Div degree but reduce its credit requirement to about 70 credit hours, which the Association of Theological Schools will accept.
- 22 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., sec. 231 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006).
- 23 *Ratio*, Intro. 3.


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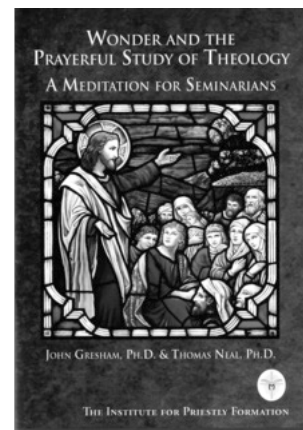
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Pope Francis and the Challenge of the “Francis Effect” for Seminaries

Rev. Scott Jones

One of the blessings of teaching in a seminary is the occasional opportunity to experience “living history” with the future priests and lay ministers of the Church. One such opportunity arose on March 13, 2013, when the students, faculty, and staff of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology were gathered together in the lobby watching the results of the papal conclave on television. Vatican officials had announced that Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina had been elected and immediately students began googling his name on their smartphones. But then the doors opened on the balcony of Saint Peter’s and the googling stopped. Pope Francis came out, looking dazed and a little frail. He was silent for what felt like a long time, as he and the crowd gazed at each other. Beginning to speak, he said, “Bona Serra,” and introduced himself as the new bishop of Rome. He then stated that before he gave the people his blessing, he would first like for them to pray for him. It felt, from that moment on, that something new was happening in the Church... the Francis Effect was off and running. Analysts tried to explain it then, and they are still trying to explain it two years later.

If one googles “Francis Effect,” hundreds of articles appear that focus on the phenomenon of Pope Francis and his effect on the Church and the world. It was tempting then—and even now—to describe the “Francis Effect” as a honeymoon time: that brief period early in a pontificate when everyone is giving the new pope the benefit of the doubt, painting every word and gesture in the most positive light. And yet, as time passes, it is clear that this is more than just a “honeymoon” moment: the “Francis Effect” is something real. Experts are already trying to measure the “Francis Effect.” Pew studies are being done: Are more people going to Mass? Are people returning to the sacraments? Is there an increase of people going to confession? From a numbers perspective, the results are mixed. In some places (e.g. England and parts of Latin America) the answer is yes.¹ In other places, such as the United States, there is less of an increase, despite the pope’s popularity. But the “Francis Effect” involves more than numbers, as

Daniel Burke pointed out in an insightful article on CNN.com. Burke focused on the “Francis Effect” as it is experienced in the Archdiocese of Boston. As is frequently pointed out, Boston was the epicenter of the sex abuse crisis when the scandal broke in 2002. During the first four months of the crisis, the Boston Globe published three hundred articles on clerical sexual abuse. The anger of the people rose as they read articles that described the cover-ups, the lies, and the shuffling of abusive priests from parish to parish. Burke quoted one priest as stating that whenever he began Mass, the anger seemed to radiate from the people.² It led, ultimately, to the resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law after a vote of no-confidence from his priests. Burke’s description of the “Francis Effect” as it has impacted the local Church of Boston captures its essence:

In some ways, the Francis Effect doesn’t seem very effective at all. Despite the immense popularity the aged Argentine has won since his election last year, not a lot of doctrine has changed, nor has the Catholic Church swelled with American converts. But there’s more than one way to measure a pontiff’s influence on his far-flung flock. Start asking around—here in Boston and beyond, Catholics and atheists alike—and it’s easy to find people eager to share how one man, in just one year, has changed their lives. There’s the gay man who finally feels welcome in his church. The woman who weeps when headlines deliver good news at last. The former priest who no longer clenches his fists during Mass. The Latinos who waited forever for a Pope who speaks their language. Says the Reverend John Unni, a Boston pastor, ‘I’m telling you, brother, if you focus on the numbers, you’re missing the story...there’s an energy, a feeling, a spirit here. It’s like a healing balm.’³

And so, an important question for those involved in seminary formation is: why is this Pope so significant in the eyes of the world? Why has he garnered such enthusiasm? As Burke pointed out, he hasn’t changed

doctrine. In fact, much of what he says reinforces traditional teachings. In the daily homilies that are emailed around the world, he frequently speaks on the influence of the devil, on the need for regular confession, on the Rosary, and on his personal devotion to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots. He is doctrinally conservative and spiritually traditional. What's more, all of his statements are thoroughly grounded in Catholic teaching, even if, on the surface, they appear new.⁴ But clearly there is a new approach in how Pope Francis leads the Church and in the way he challenges the faithful. This article will focus on the "Francis Effect" and its impact on four major areas: 1) Francis and the "culture of encounter"; 2) Francis and his emphasis on mercy; 3) Francis' unique emphasis on the Church's preferential option for the poor; and, finally, 4) Francis and his approach to Church reform. Within each of these areas, Francis is having an effect. It is an effect that brings joy, it is an effect that challenges, and, very significantly, it is an effect that heals. The "Francis Effect" is something very real, and for those involved in seminary formation, it raises questions of profound importance.

Francis and the Culture of Encounter

In many of his talks, as well as in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis has spoken of a "culture of encounter." As John Allen pointed out in a December 20, 2013 article for *National Catholic Reporter*, "culture of encounter" can feel very elastic. Allen quoted Cardinal Francis George of Chicago as defining the "culture of encounter" as simply, "Encountering Christ, and therefore encountering those whom Christ loves."⁵ It may very well be that the cardinals who elected Francis recognized this quality in him. During the conclave, Bergoglio gave a three minute speech in which he said that the Church, in order to survive, must stop living "within herself, of herself, for herself."⁶ She must be open to the world. And if we as a Church are to be open to a "culture of encounter," then, according to Francis, it is necessary to go out and be with the people—all the people, not just those in the pews—and to acknowledge that things might get messy in the process. In his book *On Heaven and Earth*, Bergoglio reflected with co-author Rabbi Abraham Skorka on the type of dialogue that is necessary in a "culture of encounter":

Dialogue is born from a respectful attitude toward the other person, from a conviction

that the other person has something good to say. It supposes that we can make room in our heart for their point of view, their opinion, and their proposals. Dialogue entails a warm reception and not a presumptive condemnation. To dialogue, one must know how to lower the defenses, to open the doors of one's home and to offer warmth.⁷

Francis' cultivation of a "culture of encounter" has a long history that predates his pontificate. As archbishop of Buenos Aires and as head of the Argentinian bishops' conference, he presided over a Church in a very multicultural country. Argentina, along with Brazil, are the two countries in Latin America with the most diverse populations. Bergoglio himself was part of this diversity. His parents migrated to Argentina from Italy due to the rise of Mussolini. He grew up speaking both Spanish and Italian. There is a saying in Argentina: "Argentina is a nation of Italians who speak Spanish and think they are British living in Paris."⁸ The multicultural flavor of Argentina includes persons of many ethnicities, religions, and customs. Bergoglio made it a point to get to know all of them. For example, as archbishop he was invited to attend a Protestant Evangelical conference in which a Catholic priest was a guest speaker. While there, they offered to pray for him, and so he knelt down in the stadium and received the blessing of thousands of evangelicals. The next day, he was attacked in the Catholic press as an apostate, with one newspaper claiming that the archdiocese was now *sede vacante*.⁹ For Bergoglio, however, it was a simple gesture of solidarity and encounter.

Despite the fact that Argentina is 93 percent Catholic, there are many cultural and political viewpoints that are at odds with Church teaching. Bergoglio learned early in life not to run from this diversity, but rather to embrace it. His openness dates back to a very significant friendship he had as a young man. Before entering the Jesuits, Bergoglio worked in a food chemistry lab (his original goal was to be a chemist). While there, he became friends with a co-worker, Esther Ballestrino de Careaga. Esther was an ardent Communist, whereas Bergoglio, like so many of his fellow countryman, supported Juan Peron and the Workers Movement. But the two frequently discussed politics and economics, and Esther gave him Communist books and periodicals to read. Bergoglio studied them and then the two discussed their differing viewpoints. He credited her with having a profound impact on his ability to be open to the views of

others.¹⁰ Esther later became one of Argentina's 30,000 "disappeared" citizens during the "Dirty War" that raged in Argentina from 1976-83. She was one of the founding members of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group of women who were searching for their missing children. She was kidnapped along with other women from her group, drugged, and thrown out of an airplane into the ocean in the notorious "death flights." Years later, her remains were identified and Bergoglio, now archbishop, arranged to have her body laid to rest in the Santa Cruz Church.¹¹

This early friendship marked Bergoglio for life. As Jesuit provincial, and later as archbishop of Buenos Aires, he lived out the "culture of encounter." Following his election as Pope, the media reported on how he refused to live in the archbishop's mansion, preferring instead to live downtown in simpler quarters. He dressed as an ordinary priest and took public transportation, mixing with people on their way to work. He visited with people from all different backgrounds, and ate in their homes and listened to their viewpoints with respect. And he was never afraid of the risk attached to associating with those viewed as "other." For example, in 2010, Argentina approved same-sex marriage. Bergoglio frequently spoke out against the issue, calling it a social evil, and working behind the scenes for alternative compromises that respected the rights of all. But no matter how adamantly opposed Bergoglio was to same-sex marriage, when it came to the gay community, he was pastoral and engaged in the "culture of encounter." In an interview with the *New York Times*, Marcelo Marquez, a gay rights activist in Buenos Aires, described his own encounter with Bergoglio. He stated that after one of Bergoglio's speeches against same-sex marriage, he delivered an angry letter to the chancery. Within the hour, Bergoglio personally phoned him. Marquez stated, "He listened to my views with a great deal of respect." After the phone call, the two met together twice, and during the second meeting, Marquez informed Bergoglio that he intended to marry his same-sex partner. The two continued to talk and at the end of their discussion, Bergoglio gave Marquez a copy of his own biography.¹² What is so significant about this encounter is that while Bergoglio did not change Church teaching or compromise his own integrity, he met with the "other," he listened to him, respected him, and loved him, and for that man on that particular day, something inside of him healed. For him, the "Francis Effect" was very real.

As Pope, Francis continues to promote the "culture

of encounter." As the media frequently reports, he throws himself into every crowd (to the consternation of Vatican security). Shortly after his election, his Holy Thursday rite of foot-washing included teenagers of both sexes, some of them Muslim. He makes private phone calls to members of the faithful on a regular basis, giving pastoral advice that warms hearts and generates anxiety among the doctrinally conservative. Pope Francis is not naïve. He knows that when Catholics engage in the "culture of encounter," the Church itself will be challenged and transformed. He gave an interview with *Vatican Insider* the year prior to his election in which he acknowledged both the risks and the vibrant possibilities of the "culture of encounter" (these words later found their way into *Evangelii Gaudium*):

We need to avoid the spiritual sickness of a Church that is wrapped up in its own world: when a Church becomes like this, it grows sick. It is true that going out onto the street implies the risk of accidents happening, as they would to any ordinary man or woman. But if the Church stays wrapped up in itself, it will age. And if I had to choose between a wounded Church that goes out onto the streets and a sick, withdrawn Church, I would definitely choose the wounded Church.¹³

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis acknowledges that there are many people in difficult situations where there is no easy way of reconciling their lives to every aspect of Church teaching. In such cases, he invites ministers to focus on the essentials, on what is most important and beautiful in our theology, remembering that everyone is welcome in the Church, with no exclusions.¹⁴

For those who are involved in seminary formation, who have been steeped in the documents of Vatican II, Pope Francis' words may not seem like anything new. But for so many people this feels like something new. For many people, this is not a Church they have encountered. For seminarians as well, this feels new, and perhaps even intimidating. There are in our seminaries students who are deeply suspicious of the suggestion that they should dialogue with (rather than correct) people who hold radically different viewpoints. And so, an important question for consideration is, how can seminaries create on a local level a "culture of encounter?" How can we encourage students, faculty, and staff to meet and dialogue with the "other," with those who disagree with us, who might even shake us in our own convictions? And, both during and after such

encounters, how do we process the experience in a way that allows for further dialogue?

Francis, the Pope of Mercy

Closely tied to the “culture of encounter” is Francis’ emphasis on the mercy of God. It is a current theme in his talks. Like the “culture of encounter,” there is nothing new about a Church that highlights God’s mercy. The Gospel itself is a proclamation of God’s mercy, and mercy has been preached for two thousand years. Pope John Paul II was such a strong proponent of God’s mercy, he established the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. And yet, with Pope Francis, many people are seeing the emphasis on mercy as something new. In his first major interview after his election, Pope Francis spoke at length about the Church as a field hospital for the wounded who long for God’s mercy:

I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a severely injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds...And you have to start from the ground up.¹⁵

How God’s mercy transforms the individual is something Francis experienced very personally as a young man. At the age of seventeen, he went to Confession and had an overpowering sense of God’s mercy: “It was the astonishment of an encounter... encountering someone who was waiting for you...the God who seeks us first.”¹⁶ Following that encounter, he made the decision to become a priest and to witness God’s mercy to others.

A frequent theme of Pope Francis’ homilies is the importance of regular confession as a means of conversion because he recognizes the reality of personal sin. We are a Church of sinners, and we sin on a regular basis. Francis places himself in this category as well. In that same interview after becoming Pope, when the interviewer asked him, “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?” Francis replied, “I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech or a literary genre. I am a sinner. I am one who is looked upon by the Lord.”¹⁷ When Francis speaks of regular confession, he acknowledges that it is easy for one to grow frustrated, especially when the same sins are committed over and over again. In one of his homilies, he underscored the importance of never giving up: “After a month, we are

in the same situation...Return to the Lord! The Lord never wearies of forgiving, never! We are the ones who grow weary of asking for forgiveness.”¹⁸

According to Francis, it is especially important for priests to know their brokenness and to seek healing. Priests should confess on a regular basis, and always be available as confessors. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he reminded priests that the confessional should never be a “torture chamber” that the faithful learn to dread.¹⁹ Rather, they should always represent the mercy of God. At an assembly of the priests of Rome he told how, when he was vicar general of Buenos Aires, an elderly priest died who had been a popular confessor. He went to the funeral and saw that there were no flowers. He thought to himself, “This priest has forgiven the sins of thousands of people, including my own, and no flowers!” and so he went out and purchased some. While he was arranging them around the casket, he began to focus on the rosary the priest was holding in his hands, and how the crucifix was a beautiful symbol of God’s mercy. Looking over his shoulder, he saw that no one was watching, so he said to his friend, “Give me half of your mercy,” and broke the crucifix off the rosary and placed it in his pocket. He has carried the crucifix with him to this day as a reminder to be merciful.²⁰

And so, when the Church has preached mercy for centuries, why is Francis’ emphasis on mercy seen as something new? Why is it part of the “Francis Effect?” It may well be that while many in the Church have spoken on the forgiveness of sin, few have emphasized the healing of shame, one of the greatest maladies of the modern age. Pope Francis urges the faithful not to be afraid to acknowledge their brokenness to our God who will no longer remember our sins, who possesses “a special capacity to forget.”²¹ He goes on to state that if God forgets our sins, we need to do a better job of forgetting the sins of others.²² And so, for those who have felt shame, or who have caused others to feel ashamed, when they hear such sentiments, something inside of them heals. For them, the “Francis Effect” is very real.

Seminaries have a duty to ensure that the priests and lay ministers who graduate from their institutions have learned to receive and to pass on God’s mercy to all those in need of healing. And so for those involved in seminary formation, an important question for reflection will be, how can seminary communities become a reflection of God’s mercy? How can administrators, faculty, and staff create an environment that fosters mercy and reconciliation? In a seminary

culture that so often generates fear and suspicion, how can trust be restored in the community?

Francis and the Church's Preferential Option for the Poor

A third theme that is frequently associated with the "Francis Effect" is Francis' emphasis on the poor. This, too, is nothing new. Since the days of Saint Francis, poverty has been a popular topic of homilies, and in the past century, justice for the poor has been a frequent theme. And yet, with Francis, once again, it feels new, as if something has shifted within the Church. What's more, it is producing a ripple effect among the episcopacy. In an article in *The Week* that focused on a recent USCCB meeting, the author stated that "some culture warrior bishops who have focused exclusively on gay marriage and abortion have moderated their language and shifted their emphasis to issues such as immigration. On the other side, bishops who have struggled for years to highlight the Church's social justice teachings are getting a new hearing."²³ This ripple effect is also leading many bishops to choose simpler residences and quietly trade in their cars. The result is an emerging image of Church leadership that is more intent upon modeling Gospel simplicity.

A frequent aspect of Francis' teaching on poverty is that if the Church is to have a preferential option for the poor, then its ministers and laity must have direct contact with the poor and become part of their communities. This, too, goes all the way back to Francis' early days. After his novitiate, Bergoglio was assigned to Chile, where for the first time, he was immersed in poverty and came to know intimately what life is like for the poor. It left a permanent mark on him, which led to painful moments in his own ministry. During Bergoglio's tenure both as Jesuit provincial and later as archbishop, the problem of poverty became a very complicated issue in the politics of Latin America. As provincial of the Jesuits, Bergoglio faced a very difficult challenge. Liberation theology was prominent throughout Latin America and some priests, including some Jesuits, were advocating a violent response, even to the point of joining in the fighting themselves. Bergoglio struggled with this. He had no problem with the parts of liberation theology that intersect with the Gospel. But for priests to engage in violent conflict or to encourage others to a violent response, this was unacceptable. Bergoglio worked hard to keep the Jesuits from going in the direction of violence,

and he reminded them frequently that in any violent conflict, the poor pay the heaviest price.²⁴ For this, he was criticized by some of his own Jesuits and viewed as siding with the elite, causing him deep personal grief. As archbishop of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio maintained a strong sense of solidarity with the poor. At the time he became archbishop, there were priests working in the barrios who were known as "slum priests." Bergoglio organized them into a vicariate and raised money for the cause. He also volunteered there on a regular basis, visiting drug addicts and AIDS patients and hearing the confessions of prostitutes.²⁵

As pope, Bergoglio continues to challenge the faithful to be in close contact with the poor and then to work to change the systems that perpetuate poverty. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he harshly criticized the trickle down system of economics and the throwaway culture it perpetuates. In a general audience in June 2013, he expanded his thoughts on the matter:

When homeless people should freeze to death on the street—this doesn't make news. On the contrary, when the stock market drops ten points in some cities, it constitutes a tragedy! In this way people are thrown aside as if they were trash...and even food! There was a time when our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any leftover food...Let us remember well, that whenever food is thrown out, it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor!²⁶

It is perhaps because of his passion that Francis' love for the poor is seen as something new. Moreover, we cannot overestimate the effect Francis has on the global Church, especially in developing nations. Francis is the first pope from the Southern and Western hemispheres. He comes from a part of the world known for its extreme poverty. It was there, among the poor, that he encountered Christ in a very personal way, and that is where he invites us to seek Christ, too, if we really want to find him. And for those who are poor, who are oppressed by crippling poverty, when they hear Francis' words, they know that they are not forgotten, and something inside of them heals. For them, the "Francis Effect" is very real.

Regarding seminary formation, it is crucial for seminary administrators and faculty members to engage, along with students, directly with those who are affected by poverty. Programs need to be developed that bring students into direct contact with the poor, not simply as day volunteers or distributors of charity, but as members of the community of the poor. And, finally, no matter

how politically divided the seminary community may be (and those divides sometimes run quite deep), it is crucial for there to be honest discussions on how the Church's ministers can work to change systems that are especially harsh for the poor. In such discussions, *Evangelii Gaudium* can prove to be an excellent roadmap.

Francis and the Reform of the Church

A final theme associated with the "Francis Effect" is that of Francis and the issue of Church reform. When the cardinals met prior to the start of the conclave in March 2013, it was clear that they would have to address both the global sex abuse crisis and the perceived mismanagement in the Vatican curia. Both before and after Francis' election, many articles have appeared on Vatileaks, the Vatican Bank, competition between various curial officials, and the ongoing issue of sex abuse. In each case, Francis' goals in Church reform appear to many as something new, despite *ecclesia semper reformanda* "the Church is always to be reformed." It may be unavoidable that Francis will be perceived as the one who will "clean up" the Church, with unjust assessments made against both his predecessors and, perhaps, his successors. But Francis is clearly committed to Church reform, and he speaks with a transparency that gives hope to many that the problems that have dogged the Church for years may finally be successfully addressed.

Part of this aspect of the "Francis Effect" can also be traced back to Francis' years in Argentina, where Church reform was an issue. In the year 2000, Bergoglio and the rest of the Argentinian bishops formally apologized to the people of Argentina for the Church's collaboration with totalitarian regimes:

We ask your forgiveness, O God, for the silent responsibility and the effective participation of the Church's children in pushing aside human rights, in tortures and rapes, in intransigent ideologies, and in foolish deaths that bloodied our country.²⁷

And so, when Francis became Pope, he was acutely aware of how much people have suffered at the hands of the Church's ministers and how deep is the need for reform. He has said that every level of Church life needs reforming, including the papacy itself. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he stated:

Since I am called to put into practice what I ask of others, I too must think about a conversion

of the papacy. It is my duty, as the Bishop of Rome, to be open to suggestions which can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization. ...The papacy and the central structures of the universal Church also need to hear the call to pastoral conversion.²⁸

For Francis, the reform of the Church is a necessity that is both global and local. From his own perspective on corruption within the Church he does not mince words. Francis has made it clear that the clergy must have integrity. He has condemned clerical careerism and clerical narcissism. In an interview with *La Repubblica* immediately before his election, he stated that the "heads of the Church have often been narcissists, flattered and thrilled by their courtiers. The court is the leprosy of the papacy."²⁹ (He later acknowledged the many good people who work in the curia.) But throughout his ministry, both before and after his election, Francis has condemned clericalism repeatedly. One of his most stinging remarks as archbishop of Buenos Aires was for those priests in his own country who refused to baptize babies that were born out of wedlock:

In our ecclesiastical region there are priests who don't baptize the children of single mothers because they weren't conceived in the sanctity of marriage. These are today's hypocrites—those who clericalize the Church; those who separate the people of God from salvation.³⁰

For seminary formators, Francis' warning comes as a welcome endorsement of human and spiritual formation. In a November 29, 2013, address to the heads of religious superiors, Francis warned that seminary faculty must mold not just the minds, but also the hearts of seminarians, lest they become "little monsters."³¹ It may well be that whatever happens regarding a reform of the curia, the "Francis Effect" will produce a generation of priests and lay ministers who have a deeper sense of their own humanity, who are not afraid to admit brokenness and to seek healing. And so, a final question for seminary formators can be, how can seminaries actively participate in the reform of the Church? How can seminaries foster a culture of reform in a Church that is always in need of reform?

Conclusion

There has been a great deal of excitement generated by Pope Francis and his "effect." He seems

to bring out the best in others, both in the Church and in the larger global community. On the seminary level, there is joy, there is excitement, and there is—sometimes—fear when the ramifications of Pope Francis’ challenge to the Church are seriously considered. But if seminaries actively engage in the work of renewal called for by Pope Francis, both students and faculty members will find themselves better equipped to dialogue with a world that is growing increasingly cynical toward the message of Christianity. Whatever the “Francis Effect” is, it seems to be working against that cynicism. People who are not excited about a pope are talking, and, what’s more, they are listening. People who don’t normally quote a pope are quoting him. And, finally, people who have carried deep spiritual wounds are finding that slowly, something within them is healing. The “Francis Effect” is real, and it seems to be issuing a call for a renewed global community that is badly needed in today’s world. May seminaries respond to this call with the zeal and courage it merits.

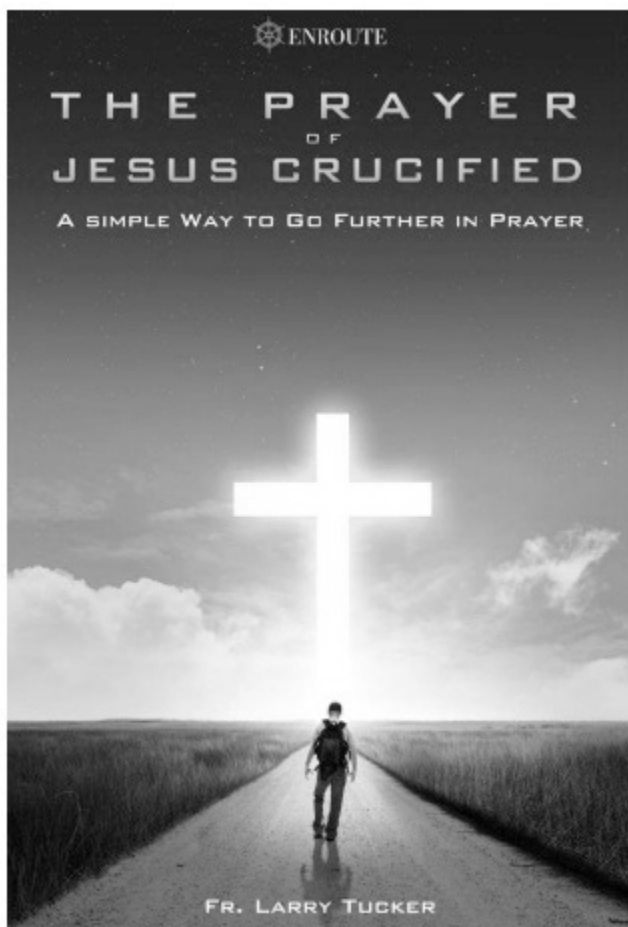
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In the Beginning Were the Bells: The Development of Human Formation for Priests

Rev. Robert L. Anello, MSA



Along with its spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral counterparts, human formation is now an established pillar of priestly formation. Yet, in an institution such as the Catholic Church, which views development in terms of centuries and millennia, human formation is in its infancy. In 2015, Catholicism celebrated not only the fiftieth anniversary of *Optatam totius* (OT), the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Priestly Training, but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the VIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which occasioned the Holy See's first-ever official mention of human formation. While it was discussed to some degree at the Synod, the concept of human formation was extensively developed in Pope John-Paul II's 1992 post-synodal exhortation, "On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day," *Pastores dabo vobis* (I will give you shepherds). Yet "human formation," in the strict sense of the two-word descriptor itself, dates back to the many efforts of Church leaders and seminary formation personnel during the decades prior to *Pastores dabo vobis* (PDV) to form a well-integrated priest through disciplinary formation. For many older priests, disciplinary formation is associated with an emphasis on obedience and docility, manifested through a seminarian's adherence to the seminary's rule of life, including the horarium, the seminary community's daily schedule, and the bells that governed the seminarian's daily movements.

Following a brief summary of disciplinary formation, this study describes attempts by seminary formation personnel and organizations to develop a viable alternative to that formation method, culminating in the 1990 Synod's identification of human formation

as integral to priestly formation. Announcing a new formation pillar and preparing for it are two different activities. The final section tracks the initial development of viable human formation programs and training for human formation personnel, and the study concludes with several rhetorical questions to address the future of human formation.

Pre-History: Disciplinary Formation and the Seminary "Rule"

"The Rule" included the code of conduct and daily horarium, governing every hour and aspect of seminary formation. A classic quote regarding obedience to the rule was, "if you keep the rule, it will keep you."¹ Another, classic quote took it a step further: "The seminary rule IS the expression of God's signified will for the seminarian."² Because of the rule, comparisons between seminaries and military academies abounded: one seminary faculty member proudly observed that seminary discipline was "something like West Point."³ A 1931 canon law study justified the rule because it imposed a balanced structure of "work and prayer, recreation and study," and taught seminarians "the necessity for self-discipline – the toughening of their moral, intellectual and spiritual muscles, if you will."⁴ Obedience to the rule also prepared the seminarian for his eventual vows of obedience to his religious superior – both personally and through his vicars – in a manner not unlike a disciple following the guidance of an apostle.⁵ Included among those vicars was the seminary rector, spiritual director, and other members of the formation staff. Thus, obedience and docility to seminary authority through the rule were considered predictors of a seminarian's suitability for priestly

ordination.

The rule regulated the seminarians' conduct, both prescribing and proscribing activities. Based on Pius X's 1910 *motu proprio*, *Sacrorum antistitum*, seminarians were forbidden to read most secular publications, a prohibition which some authorities lauded as promoting better focus on studies by not wasting time reading non-essential materials. As a preparation for celibate, sexual continence, the rule regulated cigarette smoking, identifying who may smoke, and where and when it was allowed. To prepare a seminarian for the detachment from family and friends in preparation for ordained life, the rule limited visiting hours and imposed the "grand silence," prohibiting conversation usually from the conclusion of night prayers until after breakfast. Though seminarians were allowed to form friendships, intimate relationships – often called "particular friendships" – were highly discouraged.⁶ The rule even governed activities during a seminarian's summer vacation. Prescribed activities included attending daily Mass, preferably as an acolyte, and engaging in private devotional acts. Proscribed activities included going to movies, swimming in public pools, and any socializing in the company of girls such as attending parties and dances.⁷

The most common interaction with the rule was adherence to the daily *horarium*, usually announced by bells that rang throughout the campus. They started the day, calling the seminarians to morning chapel and Mass. After breakfast, the bells tolled the progress of the class day, with class periods interspersed with study times, lunch, and some personal time. They announced evening prayers, supper, and recreational and study periods, finally calling the seminarians back to the chapel for night prayers. In 1950, Rev. Aidan Carr, O.F.M. Conv., summed up the efficacy of the rule and the bells: the "general moral complexion of a candidate will regularly become apparent in the searching light of the seminary routine, where daily contact with the seminary staff and fellow seminarians serves to reveal a student's character."⁸

The first development: Optatam Totius and Graduated Self-Discipline

Pope Pius XII's 1950 apostolic exhortation, *Menti nostrae* (On the Development of Holiness in Priestly Life), urged seminary educators to match the institution's disciplinary environment to the responsibility expected of a growing and developing

youth. A decade-and-a-half later, OT reiterated Pius XII's advice. It called for methods of discipline which would "develop in the students," based on their age and maturity, "an internal attitude by which the authority of superiors will be accepted through an act of personal conviction" so that seminarians "gradually learn to govern themselves" and "make wise use of their freedom."⁹

At the Second Vatican Council, Cardinal Albert Meyer, Archbishop of Chicago, showed himself to be several decades ahead of his time when he advocated what would later be referred to as human formation. He did this by simply paraphrasing Pius XII: "You need in a sense to be a perfect man before you can be a perfect priest."¹⁰ Even before the council fathers approved OT in 1965, articles on formation began offering alternatives to the uniform discipline of the rule. Rev. Joseph L. Hart, S.S.E., evaluated the effectiveness of non-academic and non-spiritual activities toward providing a true social formation program for boarding school minor seminarians. Hart's concept of social formation in minor seminaries may be considered the grandfather of human formation.¹¹ Psychologist Rev. Eugene C. Kennedy, M.M., collaborating at the time with Dr. Paul F. D'Arcy in writing the influential commentary on seminaries, *The Genius of the Apostolate*, touted the concept of "differentiated discipline," noting that the adjective "differentiated" connoted a system that encouraged a seminarian to progressively accept the "demands of responsibility" necessary for him to grow into a "strong and mature" priest.¹² D'Arcy, in a related publication, while acknowledging the convenience of a uniform rule, noted that it did not recognize the need for an older, more mature seminarian to take more personal responsibility for his actions. In the 1965 critique, *Seminary Education in a Time of Change*, author James Lee charged that the "Jansenistic atmosphere" in a seminary created "psychological tensions and anxieties in the sincere, idealistic young seminarian who wishes to prepare for the priesthood in the best possible manner, yet who simultaneously loves the world."¹³

Not all educators supported such disciplinary changes. Archbishop Lawrence J. Shehan of Baltimore in 1965 chastised critics of seminary discipline, "self-appointed prophets of change," countering that seminaries only seemed harsh to boys accustomed to lax discipline, and he defended obedience to the rule because, absent it, a seminary community would descend into "confusion and ultimately... chaos."¹⁴ That same year, a rector lamented, "We don't have the lid on

since Pope John [XXIII].”¹⁵ Rev. Stafford Poole, C.M., in 1971 noted that, since a priest vowed obedience at his ordination, the seminary needed to prepare him for adult obedience “lest the newly ordained should encounter some rude shocks” in his later life as a priest.¹⁶

Post-Vatican II Development of Human Formation

The U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (NCCB) May 1968 *Interim Guidelines for Seminary Renewal* redefined disciplinary formation as fostering obedience based on freedom: “In the past the formation of the student was often rigidly controlled by rules which sometimes stifled initiative and a sense of responsibility.... An atmosphere of freedom in a context of well-defined personal responsibility is an important medium of formation.”¹⁷ The U.S. bishops further defined obedience in the November 1968 addition to the *Interim Guidelines*. Formation needed to diminish a seminarian’s “individualistic and selfish pre-occupation with his own will,” instead infusing him with “a sense of his basic human and Christian equality with authority figures [which] will purify him from the fear-inspired subservience which masquerades as genuine obedience.”¹⁸

In 1972, Rev. Kevin D. O’Rourke, O.P., called for the “human development of the future priest,” replacing the negative focus on discipline, docility, and “conformity” with promotion of “initiative, creativity, and responsibility,” virtues he considered necessary “for the mature priest, imbued [sic] with Christian freedom.”¹⁹ Focusing on the seminarian’s human development, Our Lady of Angels Franciscan Seminary (Quincy, Ill.) in 1973 developed “A Program of Assessment and Goal Directed Growth” through which seminarians would assess their own growth as well as their peers based on 28 established formation goals.²⁰ Two years later, Kenrick Seminary (St. Louis) developed the Ministerial Growth Inventory, “implementing it through peer and faculty reviews” to be discussed “in a dialogic relationship with each student and his individual advisor.”²¹ Because of the focus on observable behavior, the advisor would be operating in the external forum, not the internal forum of spiritual direction.

Following release of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)* second edition in 1976, Rev. David M. Murphy, former NCEA Seminary Department Executive Director and then Director of the Washington Theological Consortium, noted that the PPF’s emphasis on formation in maturity based on “freedom and self-

determination” still existed in “a certain tension” with traditional disciplinary formation.²² He defended the latter’s emphasis on obedience because the seminarian was being formed for obedience to his religious superior. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education reinforced this traditional view in their 1980 *Circular Letter Concerning Some of the More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual Formation in Seminaries*, observing, “[The] will of God is made explicit in the ‘common good’ of the seminary. It is the Rector’s job to clearly define this ‘common good’.... [and it] is the duty of a future priest to listen to and understand the Rector whom the Lord has given the mission of governing in His name.”²³ Describing obedience as an external manifestation of internal formation, the *Letter* observed that “One certainly cannot claim to be obedient to God when he refuses to obey those to whom God has confided His mission.”²⁴ Most Rev. James H. Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, D.C. and a former seminary rector, seconded the emphasis on obedience to religious superiors, noting that, “despite a reasonable expectation for consideration of [the priest’s] preferences, in the ultimate analysis priests are men sent on a mission by the Church through the local bishop.”²⁵ Midwestern Roman Catholic seminary rectors chose instead to focus on obedience in the context of love rather than organizational effectiveness or subservience to superiors, suggesting that “it is *agape* – universal, selfless love – and not efficiency which is the *raison d’être* of authority and obedience. Unless authority and obedience are consciously placed at the service of love they are bound to be questioned and even dismissed as dehumanizing forces in a community.”²⁶

Indirect Post-Vatican II Influences on Human Formation

The first major, indirect post-conciliar influence on the development of human formation was the emphasis by *Optatam totius* on pastoral formation. Theology professor Rev. Thomas O’Meara, O.P., referred to Vatican II as “a council intent upon pastoral improvement.”²⁷ Rev. Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P.S., lauded “the introduction of a greater practical or pastoral element” into seminary formation.²⁸ Pastoral formation, which included diaconal internships at parishes, may be considered one of OT’s most significant influences on priestly formation, but it had unintended consequences which enhanced the development of human formation. Putting seminarians, especially transitional deacons, in

parish situations required extended interaction with parish personnel and parishioners, sometimes with detrimental outcomes such as abandoned vocations. As one pastoral formation advisor put it in 1981, the transitional diaconate “is not supposed to be a ‘trial marriage’ situation. It is supposed to be a permanent life-long commitment.”²⁹ The problem was that a transitional deacon, prior to his pastoral assignment, often had not previously dealt with the challenges of parish life or even life in a parish rectory. The situation called for some type of in-depth evaluation of the seminarian’s fitness and suitability for priestly life before diaconate ordination. The Midwestern U.S. seminary rectors responded to the evaluation issue by calling for supervised internships earlier in formation, emphasizing that it “seems inappropriate” to place untested transitional deacons in an internship “with the possible result that they may discover priesthood is not for them.”³⁰ Seminary rector Msgr. Robert E. Bacher in 1983 criticized the contemporary internship programs. While he viewed internships as integral with the overall formation process, including human formation, Bacher believed that, rather than dropping an uninitiated transitional deacon into a parish, the seminary, the diocese, and the parish’s pastor needed to better define the internship’s goals and objectives. O’Meara critiqued seminaries for a lack of focus on the seminarian’s behavioral aspects: “The greatest pastoral problem for the seminaries is not dogmatic but psychological and pastoral-theological.... Behavior must be allowed to speak its message. Zeal for others forecasts a future life of service.”³¹

A second indirect influence on the development of human formation came from the call for better formation in celibacy, which primarily resulted from the conclusions of the 1971 Synod of Bishops.³² The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1974 promulgated *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy*. It acknowledged human development as part of a seminarian’s formation, noting the complementarity and distinctiveness of the “three levels of formation [human, Christian, priestly]” and advocated “a full and balanced regard for the relationships among these never giving more attention to one than to another....”³³ In 1983, Midwestern Seminary rectors, discussing the importance of a seminarian’s formation in celibacy through presentations and conversations with his advisors in the external forum, emphasized that seminarians needed to have a better understanding of how to manifest their sexuality: “They should know their own emotions and

the appropriate ways of expressing and controlling these emotions.”³⁴ As if answering the above concerns, former Weston School of Theology dean Rev. Howard J. Gray, S.J., proposed that formation in celibacy is not merely promoting the avoidance of genital relations, but an active acceptance of a healthy, celibate lifestyle which can be best observed, addressed, and evaluated in conversations occurring in the external form. In 1985, Msgr. Colin A. MacDonald, Executive Director of the NCCB Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, stated that even a college seminarian’s formation in celibacy needed to address, as priesthood demands “a celibate life-style” lived “day-in, day-out” for “service solely for the Kingdom.”³⁵

The third indirect influence concerning a seminarian’s human development came from the NCCB’s 1972 publication of the psychological and sociological studies of priests.³⁶ While the results indicated that priests were comparable to other professionals in psychological maturity, one seminary rector commented that this was not an accomplishment to be proud of because “these [other professional groups] do not have the benefit of four to eight years of intensive preparation and community living.”³⁷ He proposed development of seminary programs to improve the future priest’s maturity. In 1973, seminary psychologist Dr. Philip D. Cristantiello stated that a seminarian, abetted by his formators, needed to take responsibility for his own psychological development and that he was similarly responsible for evaluating his formation progress. Thus, evaluation by the seminarian or his formators should be based on a seminarian’s attainment of his own “behavioral objectives” so seminary personnel “will stop judging men in Third Theology the same way they judge men in First Theology.”³⁸ He criticized seminaries becoming overly dependent on psychological services, noting that, while valuable in formation, they should not be used to treat seminarians with psychopathologies, but “for improving the quality of seminary training.”³⁹ He further advocated having specialized formation personnel evaluate a seminarian’s behaviors. The following year, he related a most telling question one seminarian posed to him: “Why can’t our faculty do more than teach?”⁴⁰ For Cristantiello, the question implied that, while seminarians placed value in counseling, they were looking for priest-advisers that could address issues specific to the environment in which they, as future priests, would be ministering.

At a 1976 NCEA Seminary Department workshop,

participants emphasized the dual responsibility of formation faculty for advising a seminarian and evaluating his suitability and fitness for ordination. At the 1977 workshop, participants proposed guidelines for using psychological counseling in seminaries. They acknowledged the need for formators trained in counseling and assessment and suggested that formators be state or board certified. While recognizing that adhering to codes of ethics and confidentiality standards might prevent a formation advisor from publicly passing judgment on a seminarian's fitness, workshop participants still affirmed the need for the seminary and sponsoring institutions to receive evaluations of the seminarian's fitness for ministry.⁴¹

Rev. Howard P. Bleichner, S.S., in a 1983 critique of formation methods, expressed dissatisfaction with seminaries' counseling services, which he derided as "smaller Mom-and-Pop operations" lacking a "level of consistent professionalization."⁴² Two years later, Msgr. Henry F. Fawcett expressed a concern regarding the lack of progress in promoting individual personal development, noting, "our seminarians may not be challenged to move toward the stages of human/spiritual maturity... where they take ownership of their own lives and life decisions."⁴³

Throughout the 1980s, all U.S.-sponsored theological and college seminaries received teams of bishops and seminary experts for their "Vatican Visitation." These reviews, mandated by Pope John Paul II, evaluated a seminary's formation program according to the guidelines of OT and the 1981 PPF. Cardinal William Baum, Prefect of the Congregation of Catholic Education, highlighted a formation problem the evaluators found in several seminaries: "Confusion of internal and external forums" in the absence of an official role for a person evaluating the seminarian's behavior.⁴⁴ Baum feared a seminarian could conveniently dodge issues regarding his lack of personal maturity development behind the screen of confidentiality with his spiritual director. To mitigate this apparent concealment, "some theologates have attempted to reduce the scope of individual spiritual direction to the more explicitly spiritual concerns, leaving every other area of the seminarians' experience open to scrutiny in the external forum."⁴⁵ Baum wanted to ensure that seminary personnel both properly assessed a seminarian's behaviors while respecting the seminarian's confidential discussions with his spiritual director, a situation the above modified formation program structure did not allow for.⁴⁶ Baum also sought to eliminate

"encouragement bias" in assessments, through which a seminary formator highlights the seminarian's strengths "while his weaknesses, if mentioned, are muted."⁴⁷ He instead called for more objective assessment methods, including the seminarian's self-assessment. These goals, while laudable, would require greater effort and time from the persons dedicated to preparing seminarians' annual assessments. In an address to a 1987 seminar, Most Rev. John A. Marshall, who helped coordinate the Vatican Visitations, reiterated Baum's concerns about role confusion and encouragement bias, admonishing seminary personnel that an advisor needed to both assist a seminarian in growth and inform the rest of the seminary faculty of any behavioral challenges the seminarian was facing.⁴⁸

Around the time that Baum's letter was released, a report by Midwestern seminary rectors proposed that external behavior manifested a seminarian's internal beliefs, stating, "the most suitable candidates.... manifest their faith openly by the way they live and participate in the faith life of the seminary community."⁴⁹ The following year, the same group proposed qualifications for priestly formation faculty. Although still within the existing three formation pillars, they identified one action that only a priest as counselor or psychologist could perform: that of being a role model for the future priest. The implication of the priest's witness for the seminarian required "priests training future priests" to be suitably fit for ministry.⁵⁰ Despite these developments, human development remained mostly within spiritual formation. For example, a presenter at the 1988 Midwest Association of Theological Schools counseled spiritual directors to help the seminarian both in his internal thoughts and beliefs, and through the manifestation of them in his external behaviors.⁵¹

By the late 1980s, many U.S. seminary rectors and formators were beginning to believe that, while psychological counseling had a place in formation, something additional was needed. This possibly motivated a 1988 workshop focusing on the theme of "The Role of Human Relations Development in Priestly Formation," ironically with a psychologist, Msgr. Andrew T. Cusack, as the keynote speaker.⁵²

The 1990 Synod of Bishops and *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: Human Formation Comes into Its Own

By 1981, the term "human formation" had entered into the lexicon of seminary formation. Cusack, in a paper on psychology and vocation development, had

stated “human formation is contingent upon human intimacy.”⁵³ However, the most significant event in the development of human formation came from the 1987 VII Ordinary Synod of Bishops, which addressed the topic, “The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World.” The bishops participating in that Synod’s discussion of the priesthood of the faithful recommended that a subsequent synod balance that topic by addressing the ministerial priesthood. In June 1988, the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod determined to follow the Synod’s recommendation. Discussions in 1989 with the pope resulted in a working title for the next synod: “The Formation of Priests in the present circumstances.”⁵⁴

Preparations for a synod follow a two-step process. The General Secretariat distributes to all Catholic bishops, with an invitation for comments, a *Lineamenta*, an outline of the topics within the synod’s scope. The collected responses are organized by the Secretariat and published in an *Instrumentum laboris*, a final agenda of the synod’s topics.

The topic “human formation” did not appear in the 1990 Synod’s *Lineamenta*. Instead, there was a section on the seminary rule, obedience, and self-discipline. Yet the *Lineamenta* noted that a seminarian’s “commitment to the priesthood and celibacy require a solid balance of human qualities.... The complexity and the burden of both the priestly ministry and of the conditions in which that ministry is lived demand of the priest a more confirmed maturity today than in the past.”⁵⁵ In the *Instrumentum laboris*, the rule, obedience, and self-discipline were moved to another section and replaced with “Human Formation.” The Secretariat based its recognition of this new formation pillar on the humanity of Christ incarnate and the priest as *alter Christus*: “Because the priest is a minister of Christ and continues His mission in the world of humanity... he ought to be *profoundly human*,” meaning a mature person, capable of recognizing his responsibilities to God, his ecclesial superiors, and the people of God for whom he is being called to ministry.⁵⁶ A seminarian needed to inculcate the emotional maturity necessary for embracing celibacy as a positive manifestation of love rather than an obligation to be endured. Obedience to a rule of life was “not simply a means for maintaining order” but “a necessary factor for proper growth in personality.”⁵⁷

The Synod’s membership consisted of 228 diocesan ordinaries, auxiliary bishops, or members of the Roman curia, plus 10 superiors of men’s religious orders. There

were also present 44 lay and clerical observers and 18 specialists. Two hundred fifteen members and guests offered 8-minute interventions (i.e., oral presentations).⁵⁸

The *Relatio ante disceptationem* (Report before the discussion) section dealing with human formation described the seminarian as in a state of development to perfection and not fully formed in human maturity. The purpose of formation is to help him fill in what is lacking, offer correction for errors, and facilitate his growth to help lead him to “a fullness of human maturity, overcoming youthful habits [and] immaturity.”⁵⁹ While acknowledging the difficult responsibilities facing a priest ministering in the late twentieth century, the *Relatio* concluded with a warning: “Nothing is more dangerous, nothing is more harmful, than the priest who has little or minimal maturity – ‘Woe to the nation whose prince is a little child,’ we read in the Book of Ben Sirach (10:17) – on account of his [the priest’s] youthful spirit, he is able to corrupt human consciences and lives.”⁶⁰

Following the presentation of the *Relatio*, the synod members and guests began their interventions. That very few of them addressed human formation may be due to the concept’s novelty or because the intervener did not consider human formation a major issue in his particular realm. Most references to human formation were in the context of formation for a celibate life. Others considered human maturity as within the context of spiritual formation, such as one bishop who proposed, “The work of maturation... should be carried forward with the necessary help of the spiritual director....”⁶¹ His opinion was not altogether incorrect because an interior component underlies many behaviors appropriate for discussion in human formation, but it demonstrated the challenge that Cardinal Baum and Bishop Marshall previously observed: behavior was being arrogated within the spiritual realm thus making it not available for use in evaluating a seminarian’s fitness or suitability. Most Rev. Juan Torres Fremiot Oliver, Bishop of Ponce (Puerto Rico), addressing that issue, advising that a formation “too spiritualized may neglect the ‘practical’ details, which mostly are precisely the object of human virtues.”⁶²

Bishops from Western Europe, Canada, and the U.S. often commented on the psychological challenges newly arrived seminarians faced from being brought up in broken families or increasingly secular and hedonistic cultural environments. Many bishops from areas outside the three mentioned above spoke of the importance of the family in forming the human qualities desired

in a priest, but these interventions often focused more on how such qualities opened a man's heart to a priestly vocation. However, even non-Western bishops observed the effect of contemporary influences – what one bishop referred to as the “inhuman humanism” of “post-modern” society – on the men they were receiving into their seminaries.⁶³ Another bishop stated, “While trusting in the power of grace, it is also a good use of the current development in the sciences, resorting to experts in human behavior. And this is increasingly needed by the formators.”⁶⁴ Non-Western bishops additionally expressed concerns regarding the formation of missionary priests. As one bishop described it, the behavior of some of the latter, resulting from the secularism prevalent in their country of origin, alcoholism, or “lack of loyalty to celibacy,” tarnish “the beautiful image” of missionaries and “bewilder the faithful.”⁶⁵

Another topic on the synod's agenda, ongoing formation after ordination, further stimulated interest in human formation. While much of the discussion regarding ongoing formation concerned spiritual and pastoral formation, other interventions noted the importance of a priest being able to openly discuss his behaviors, a habit which would be abetted by experiencing the benefits of open discussion with a human formation advisor while in the seminary.⁶⁶

Most Rev. Frederick Bernard Henry, Auxiliary Bishop of London, Ontario (Canada) offered one of the more significant interventions concerning human formation. Motivated by recent allegations of sexual abuse of minors by diocesan priests and members of the Congregation of Christian Brothers in Newfoundland, Canada, Henry saw the challenge as forming behaviors resulting from a positive perspective on celibacy, not merely avoidance of genital relations but as a “symbol of love, of deep human relationships.”⁶⁷ He emphasized that celibacy “demands a high level of psychosexual maturity,” giving seminarians “the opportunity to experience what it means to be male, especially focusing on the humanity of Christ as their model.”⁶⁸ Because he believed accepting into formation a person with psychosexual problems and anticipating to address these problems through counseling during formation was an erroneous approach, he advocated better psychological screening of candidates. He promoted better evaluation of a seminarian's behaviors while in formation, because if the seminarian could not extinguish “destructive behaviors, such as greed, alcohol or drugs” while in formation, he likely would not be able to manage them

during active ministry.⁶⁹

Psychologist Rev. Timothy Costello, S.M., drawing on the observations of Rev. Luigi Rulla, S.J., regarding a seminarian's fidelity to his anticipated priestly vows, proposed that some seminarians exhibit what he called “vocational inconsistency,” in which a seminarian, “Like a revolving door, may utter an outward ‘yes’ and a concealed ‘no’ at the same moment.”⁷⁰ Costello suggested that this conflict “significantly restricts” a seminarian's ability “to personalize and internalize the vocational call and the Gospel values on which it is based.”⁷¹ For Costello, the solution was preparation of formators to “help the seminarians to identify and to overcome the hidden blocks opposing the action of grace of God in their lives,” concluding that, “Any approach to the formation of priests which is not seriously responsible for the humanity of the seminarian will certainly not produce an authentic holiness and spirituality.”⁷² Similarly, Cardinal Marco Cé, Patriarch of Venice (Italy), advised training human formators to focus on how a seminarian relates to the situations he faces, “going deep, and touching the actual mechanisms – anthropological and spiritual – of the person; and to coordinate and articulate this between the various members of the group of formators.”⁷³ He commended the use of psychology in formation as long as it was “in dialogue with theology and spirituality... mutually respectful of the life of grace,” and used to help “the believer who actively wants to grow in Christian discipleship.”⁷⁴ Psychology, however, was not to be a substitute for spiritual direction and should be limited to helping a seminarian overcome less serious issues, not for correcting significant problems.

Following the interventions, Synod members received the *Relatio post disceptationem* (Report after the discussion), which summarized the key points developed in those presentations. Similar to the earlier *Relatio*, it did not extensively develop the concept of human formation. After referring to St. Thomas Aquinas' dictum that grace builds on nature, the human formation section focused on the affective maturity necessary for a celibate lifestyle.⁷⁵ Synod members then reorganized themselves into language groups to discuss and propose summary recommendations to be incorporated into the *Propositiones* (Proposals) offered to the pope at the Synod's conclusion. A Spanish language group declared their dissatisfaction that “an insufficient amount is said about the human formation” in the *Relatio*; an Italian language group, viewing “human formation as equally important for a person to persevere

in a vocation in the face of pressures of society,” called for more development of the concept.⁷⁶ Synod members subsequently approved 41 *Propositiones* (Proposals), two of which directly addressed human formation. The official summary of the proposals had a brief yet forceful comment on human formation: “Despite the shortage of priests in some regions, the Synod insists on the need for a deeper and more comprehensive formation – human, Christian, spiritual and intellectual – that will be all-encompassing.”⁷⁷

Before, during, and afterwards, commentators weighed in on the effectiveness and relevancy of the Synod’s topics and the projected outcomes. Rev. Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., called the *Lineamenta* “disappointing” because “its analysis of the contemporary situation” was “weak,” not addressing “the most significant issues that tomorrow’s priests will have to face.”⁷⁸ He believed the document’s “clerical” view of the priesthood was excessively influenced by members of the Roman curia, imbued with a “theology of vocation” that was “deficient” and not “more in tune with the expectations of Catholic people today.”⁷⁹ Canonist Rev. William Dalton advised that a program of “personal growth and development” will “necessitate individual guidance and counselling... quite distinct and separate from spiritual formation.”⁸⁰ Most Rev. Daniel E. Pilarczyk juxtaposed the image of a priest receiving proper “formation in humanity” with that of “the psychic basket case.”⁸¹

In January 1991, the Secretariat for the Synod began assisting the pope in composing his post-synodal exhortation, *Pastores dabo vobis*, which was released on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1992. Human formation is described in section 43. The pope makes his case swiftly and emphatically in the section’s opening statement: “The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation.”⁸² The priest, as *alter Christus*, needs to be the bridge to Jesus Christ – the perfection of humanness – and therefore must endeavor to eliminate imperfections in the priest’s human nature that might impede the relationship he mediates between the faithful and Christ. Human formation needs to inform pastoral formation, developing the seminarian’s “capacity to relate to others,” and describes the well-formed priest as a “man of communion,” not “arrogant, or quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere..., prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve,” and open to “clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others.”⁸³ Emphasizing the importance of affective maturity, the

exhortation counsels that it fosters in “relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ.”⁸⁴ The pope speaks of the “freedom” to overcome the imperfections of human nature, including “selfishness and individualism,” and observing that “human formation cannot be attended to in a vacuum,” recommends the seminary community’s support.⁸⁵ The pope also called for concerted interaction between human and spiritual formation while still respecting the confidentiality of spiritual formation.

Outcomes for Priestly Formation from the 1990 Synod and *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

The concept of human formation was slow in gaining acceptance. For example, the Midwest Association of Theological Schools at their June 1991 meeting made reference to the importance of “a healthy and balanced male identity” as “essential for those seeking ordination to the Roman Catholic priesthood today” but did not mention human formation *per se*.⁸⁶ The NCCB, in the 1992 fourth edition of the PPF, relegated human development to a subset of spiritual formation. It did encourage a “periodic,” 360-degree type of evaluation, including seminary faculty, pastoral supervisors, and the seminarian himself in which seminarians receive “clear and accurate information about their behavior and attitudes so that they can change and correct what is inappropriate and develop in those areas in which they may be weak.”⁸⁷ The Sulpicians, with Lilly Endowment support, conducted in 1993 a workshop on priestly formation; that workshop continues to this day. A year later, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin noted that, even with the imprimatur given to human formation in *PDV*, skepticism still existed on the part of vocation directors, formators, and even bishops regarding the efficacy of human formation. He in part attributed the skepticism to the appearance of “an excessive personalism which could easily encourage a subjective approach to priestly ministry” and the possible acceptance of “what some authors have described as the ‘psychological society’ so prevalent, especially in the West.”⁸⁸ He expressed concern that seminaries would expend scarce resources on addressing the more severe psychological ailments of some seminarians rather than bolstering the more viable priestly ministry candidates.

By 1994, human formation had become normative in theory if not in practice. Rev. Paul D. Theroux, Executive Director of the NCCB Vocations & Priestly Formation Secretariat, identified as a challenge for

implementing human formation the lack of “formal training for the [human formation] position.”⁸⁹ He recommended holding more workshops to help form formators, and proposed that priests in seminaries could adapt their existing skills into those useful for human formation. In January, *Seminary News* reported on the Sulpicians’ inaugural formation workshop. Clinical psychologist Rev. Melvin C. Blanchette, S.S., stressed the need for integrating the formation pillars as key in helping a seminarian form himself as fully human, tapping into his essential humanness despite contemporary society’s cultural challenges: “The self is the meeting point of theology and psychology, the theological and the therapeutic being two sides of the same coin.”⁹⁰ Psychologist Rev. James Tucker, S.S., addressed the challenge between nature and nurture, proposing that human formation builds on the nurturing process while integrating human and pastoral formation. He contrasted “personality development and maturity” and “intellectual and pastoral formation,” noting that personality development, unlike intellectual formation, is “a developmental process of complex learning and interaction with others rather than... a mere static communication of facts.”⁹¹ He offered six specific areas of focus for developing personal maturity and a series of questions for the human formation advisor to use in assessing the seminarian’s personality development.⁹² Rev. Gerald Coleman, S.S., identified challenges likely to be experienced in formation for celibacy. Sociologist Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., discussed the challenges a seminarian faced from late-twentieth-century U.S. culture, proposing “eight characteristics, virtues, dispositions” a seminarian may foster to mitigate influences of culture inconsistent with a pastoral ministry reflective of Christ.⁹³ Rev. Howard Bleichner, S.S., offered techniques for preparing effective, “behaviorally oriented,” evaluations for the seminarian’s religious superiors and their authorized representatives based on assessments by the seminarian, his peers, and faculty members.⁹⁴ To support the evaluations, Bleichner recommended conducting periodic meetings with individual seminarians. Later that year, *Seminary News* published the results of the Midwest Association of Theological Seminaries annual meeting. The participants offered advice for external formation personnel to “help the seminarian take ownership” of his growth and development issues as identified through “admission testing and interviews” while keeping the religious superior and vocation director aware of the seminarian’s progress regarding those issues.⁹⁵

In spring 1995, the NCEA Seminary Department dedicated its annual convention to human development in priestly formation. The keynote speaker, Rev. Louis J. Cameli, supported formal human formation programs – possibly including psychological counseling – as an integral part of priestly formation. He believed establishing the validity of human formation rested in “simply and clearly” demonstrating to bishops and vocation directors that it could be related to and integrated with the other three formation pillars.⁹⁶ Drawing on references to the qualities of a healthy human personality going back to St. Paul’s First Letter to Timothy, Cameli proposed that by identifying personality issues during initial formation, human formation ensured that they did not fester unresolved, only to manifest themselves following ordination. Fellow Mundelein faculty member, Bro. James R. Zullo, FSC, stressed that part of the impetus for developing human formation was to assist the seminarian in developing a healthy sexuality open to celibacy. He counseled that most formation advisors, themselves having minimal formation in sexuality while in seminary, generally relied on personal repression and stoicism as preferred methods for addressing their own sexual identity. For Zullo, to help a seminarian develop a healthy, celibate life, the advisor must – similar to the self-evaluation that counselors and psychologists engage in – also confront his own possible sexual identity issues.⁹⁷ He concurred with Christian ethicist James Nelson that sexuality helps a person engage in relationships with “the world as gendered persons, with self-understandings as male or female, body feelings and attitudes, affectional orientations, capacities for sensuousness, and with the drive toward intimacy and communion.”⁹⁸

By 1997, many articles on priestly formation assumed the legitimacy of human formation. The National Association of College Seminaries, in an open letter to Most Rev. John C. Favalora, Chairman of the Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Formation, encouraged including human formation in the next PPF edition.⁹⁹ The NCEA Seminary Department published *Ripe for the Harvest, A Resource for Formation Advisors*, which reprised many valuable articles on priestly formation, including several cited in this study.¹⁰⁰

Implications of this Study for Twenty-First Century Human Formation Advisors

Development of human formation continued through the late-1990s and early 2000s. In the 2006,

fifth PPF edition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (formerly the NCCB) officially designated human formation as a formation pillar. It is now normative in both theory and practice. Opportunities exist for formation of human formators. In February 2015, the Institute for Priestly Formation and Saint John Vianney Theological Seminary (Denver, Colo.) co-sponsored “A Symposium on the Integration of Human and Spiritual Formation.” The Sulpicians hosted their “Twelfth Institute for Seminary Formators” in summer 2015.¹⁰¹

Understanding the background and development of human formation may help human formation advisors better understand their responsibilities to the stakeholders of a seminarian’s formation: the Church in general, the diocese or religious institute sponsoring the seminarian, the institution forming the seminarian, and the seminarian himself. This study shows that human formation – from its pre-history as disciplinary formation up through the present – has focused on how behavior manifests a seminarian’s interior strengths and weaknesses vis à vis the demands of priestly ministry. Section 80 of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, Fifth Edition, provides a summary description of the human formation advisor’s role:

They observe seminarians and assist them to grow humanly by offering them feedback about their general demeanor, their relational capacities and styles, their maturity, their capacity to assume the role of a public person and leader in a community, and their appropriation of the human virtues that make them ‘men of communion.’ These same formators may, on occasion, teach the ways of human development and even offer some personal mentoring or, at times, coaching. More generally, they offer encouragement, support, and challenge along the formational path.¹⁰²

The formation advisor needs to balance all the stakeholders’ needs while evaluating the seminarian in consideration of his suitability as a Catholic priest. The human formation advisor is a counselor, a disciplinarian, a gatekeeper to the priesthood – and more. How does a person prepare to perform all these roles simultaneously? True, the workshops described above are very helpful in preparation, but does the advisor need more? Does he need a background in counseling? Does he need (more?) education in clinical psychology? Should there be accrediting of the formation advisors similar to the need for certain degree levels on the part of those

working in intellectual formation? Better guidelines from the Holy See and the USCCB would help, but items similar to the “Theological Formation of Future Priests,” “Liturgical Formation in Seminaries,” “Spiritual Formation in Seminaries,” “The Study of Philosophy,” the recent “Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in Seminary Admissions,” and most notably, “Directives Concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators” do not exist for human formation advisors.

The reason for that lacuna might be found in the 2008 letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions) concerning the most recent round of Apostolic Visitations of Seminaries in the United States. First, the letter nowhere refers to human formation advisors per se in description of formation faculty (“...and so on”).¹⁰³ The letter’s brief section on human formation gives the impression that what we in the U.S. would consider “normative” human formation is an anomaly to the rest of the priestly formation world. It reads almost like a tour guide describing a ritual foreign to the tour group. Below are examples in the report of that phenomenon:

To facilitate the candidates’ human formation, U.S. seminaries have typically introduced the figure of the “formation advisor”, who acts somewhat like a spiritual director but in the external forum. The advisor follows the candidate, including by means of frequent dialogues, helping him integrate the four dimensions (human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral) of priestly formation. The dialogues are not secret; what is said can be brought to the attention of the rector and other superiors....¹⁰⁴

Americans involved in diocesan priestly formation have praised the formation-advisor system as the royal road to ensuring that seminarians interiorize their formation and are held accountable....¹⁰⁵

Statements such as above lead this writer to believe that we in the U.S. are on the “leading edge” of methods for human formation vis-à-vis the rest of the seminary world. That may be the reason that guidelines from the Congregation for Seminaries or the USCCB on the expertise sought in a human formation advisor are not forthcoming.

The history of human formation gives us the background. Now we as formators need to develop the future of human formation.

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Endnotes

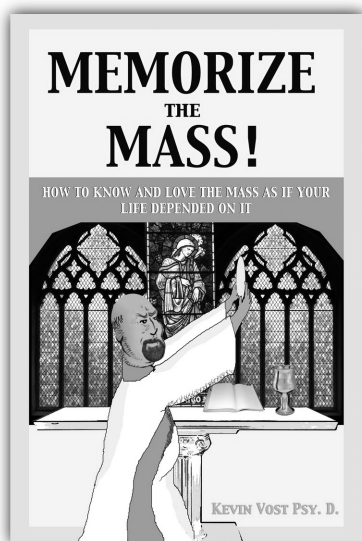
- * The author acknowledges the assistance of James Anello, Fathers Scott Jones, and Steven Avella, and the editors and reviewers of *Seminary Journal* for their contributions to improving this study.
- 1 Rawley Myers, *This Is the Seminary* (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1953), 70.
- 2 Thomas Dubay, *The Seminary Rule: An Explanation of the Purposes Behind It and How Best to Carry It Out* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1954), 19–20, emphasis in original.
- 3 Myers, *This Is the Seminary*, 43. In further affinity with military academies, seminarians often wore a uniform – usually a black cassock – when participating in chapel, and often also for classes, meetings, and meals. Rev. Melvin L. Farrell, S.S., used *Optatum totius* to call for the dismissal of what he characterized as the dehumanizing and militaristic seminary atmosphere – especially at high school and college seminaries – which subordinated the individual to the quest for overall institutional uniformity. Melvin L. Farrell, “The Objectives of the Minor Seminary in the Light of Vatican II,” N.C.E.A. Bulletin 65, no. 1 (August 1968): 55.
- 4 Joseph Cox, *The Administration of Seminaries; Historical Synopsis and Commentary*, CUA Canon Law Studies, No. 67 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1931), 68.
- 5 While this history relates primarily to diocesan priestly formation, the priestly formation of a member of a religious institute – outside of his formation in the spirituality, charism and apostolate of the particular institute – is quite similar. Beginning with the first edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* in 1971, the NCCB (now the USCCB) has coordinated diocesan formation guidelines with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men to incorporate the formation of priests from religious institutes. See “The Religious Priest’s Formation” in National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Program of Priestly Formation* of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops [of The] United States of America, Jan. 18, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1971).
- 6 Seminary officials feared that a particular friendship could develop into a homosexual relationship but generally avoided written discussion of it. Dubay broached the subject as openly as possible. After characterizing particular friendships as “destructive of community life and, therefore, of fraternal charity,” he further warned that, while they “can begin on the highest spiritual plane, [they] can also easily and imperceptibly descend to the natural and even to the sinful.” Dubay, *The Seminary Rule*, 88. For other references to particular friendships, see Paul F. D’Arcy and Eugene C. Kennedy, *The Genius of the Apostolate; Personal Growth in the Candidate, the Seminarian, and the Priest* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 190–191; Andrew M. Greeley, *The Hesitant Pilgrim; American Catholicism After the Council* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1966), 240–241.
- 7 John McHenry, *Survey of Minor Seminary Programs for Specific Aspects of the Adolescent Period* (Perrysburg, Ohio: n.p., 1962), 8–9, 12–15, NCEA Collection, Box 78, “Minor Seminarians” folder, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, The Catholic University of America.
- 8 Aidan M. Carr, *Vocation to the Priesthood: Its Canonical Aspect*, CUA Canon Law Studies, No. 293 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1950), 76. Carr was later editor of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*.
- 9 Vatican Council II, *Optatum Totius*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, trans. ed. Joseph Gallagher (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 448, no. 11.
- 10 Norman Tanner, “The Church in the World (Ecclesia Ad Extra),” in *History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, vol. IV of V (Maryknoll, N.Y.; Leuven, Belgium: Orbis; Peeters, 1997), 361, 359, 360; see Pius PP. XII, “Apostolic Exhortation, Menti Nostrae, to the Clergy of the Entire World, 23 September 1950, No. 83,” in *The Catholic Priesthood According to the Teaching of the Church: Papal Documents from Pius X to Pius XII*, ed. Pierre Veuillot, trans. John A. O’Flynn, P. Birch, and G. Canon Mitchell, vol. 2 (Dublin, Ireland: Gill and Son; Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1962), nn. 12, 14, 26, 59. Some thirty years later, Pope John Paul II would incorporate a concept similar to this into an apostolic exhortation on the subject of priestly formation.
- 11 Joseph L. Hart, “A Critical Analysis of the Social Formation Program of Minor Seminaries in the United States” (Ph.D. Thesis – Education, The Catholic University of America, 1965), 5; Joseph L. Hart, “A Survey of the Organization and Content of the Curriculum of Minor Seminaries in the United States” (Ph.D. Thesis – Education, The Catholic University of America, 1963), 27–30, 35, 71–72.
- 12 Eugene C. Kennedy, “Differentiated Discipline in the Seminary,” N.C.E.A. Bulletin LX [sic, 61], no. 1 (August 1964): 81, 84. Kennedy in 1977 left the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers.
- 13 James M. Lee, Louis J. Putz, and John Tracy Ellis, *Seminary Education in a Time of Change* ([Notre Dame, Ind.]: Fides Publishers, 1965), 304, 106, 109, 111; Paul F. D’Arcy, “Differentiated Seminary Discipline,” N.C.E.A. Bulletin LX [sic, 61], no. 1 (August 1964): 85.
- 14 Lawrence J. Shehan, “The Seminary Today and Today’s Seminarian,” *The Priest* 20, no. 9 (September 1964):

- 745, 744, 747. To which one was, reading the copy of Shehan's article in The Catholic University of America's library, replied in pen: "Why?"
- 15 Hart, "A Critical Analysis of the Social Formation Program of Minor Seminaries in the United States," 63.
 - 16 Stafford Poole, "Tomorrow's Seminaries," *America* 110, no. 3 (January 18, 1964): 90.
 - 17 Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, *Interim Guidelines for Seminary Renewal* [Part One] (Chicago: NCCB, Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, 1968), 19.
 - 18 Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, *Interim Guidelines for Seminary Renewal* [Part Two] (Chicago: Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, 1968), #23, p. 32.
 - 19 Kevin D. O'Rourke, "The Seminary in the 70's," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 166, no. 2 (February 1972): 119.
 - 20 "Goal Directed Assessment and Growth," *Seminary Newsletter Supplement*, February 1973, 6.
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- 55 General Secretariat of the Synod, Synod of Bishops, Rome 1989; *Lineamenta: The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1989), n. 10, p. 14, my emphasis.
- 56 General Secretariat of the Synod, Synod of Bishops, Rome 1989; *Instrumentum Laboris: The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1990), n. 37, p. 36, emphasis in original. The first public statement acknowledging human formation appeared in July 1990: "Human formation should foster and develop mature and well-rounded persons, men of character, with a heart of compassion and sound judgment, all of which serve as the basis for a sound, self-possessed priestly personality and one totally generous in the priestly ministry." "A Summary of the Instrumentum Laboris of Synod," *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 16, 1990, English Weekly edition, 2.
- 57 General Secretariat of the Synod, *Instrumentum Laboris*, n. 37, p. 36. The *Instrumentum laboris* confirmed that psychological counseling was part of the internal forum, but would abet, not replace, spiritual direction. Regarding psychological counseling, some respondents called for prudence or reticence in its use, citing "the possibility of abuse and the limitations of psychology in the integral formation for the priesthood." Caprile, *Il Sinodo dei vescovi*, 16, all quotations in English from this book are my translations.
- 58 Kenneth Baker, "Synod 1990: Formation of Priests," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 91, no. 6 (March 1991): 11, 14; Sylvester D. Ryan, "Experts in Humanity," *Seminary News* 31, no. 1 (September 1992): 11. Because of the time limit for the interventions, some presenters additionally offered written reports from which their intervention had been extracted.
- 59 Caprile, *Il Sinodo dei vescovi*, Appendix III, p. 652 [20].
- 60 Ibid., Appendix III, pp. 652 [2] – 653 [21]. There is not space available in this study to cite each relevant intervention, so the study specifically comments on the most significant ones.
- 61 Card. Raul Francisco Primatesta, Archbishop, Córdoba (Argentina), cited in *ibid.*, 227.
- 62 Ibid., 372. Many synod members commented on the role of grace in a priest's formation. For example, Most Rev. Frederick Bernard Henry, Auxiliary Bishop of London, Ontario (Canada): "Typically grace builds on nature, not replacing it," cited in *ibid.*, 131; Most Rev. Albert K. Obiefuna, Bishop, Awka (Nigeria), "They must also learn how to develop a healthy sense of what they can do with the grace of God, transforming the lives of others, building up the Church," cited in *ibid.*, 192.
- 63 Most Rev. Dario Castrillon Hoyos, Bishop of Pereira (Colombia), cited in Caprile, *Il Sinodo dei vescovi*, 169.
- 64 Most Rev. Roberto Joaquin Ramos Umana, Military Ordinariate (El Salvador), cite in *ibid.*, 265.
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- 66 For example, Cardinal Raul Francisco Primatesta, Archbishop, Córdoba (Argentina), "The consultation on the *Lineamenta* indicates the importance of human

- formation in the course of education to the priesthood and its influence on ongoing formation", cited in *ibid.*, 226.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 130.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 130, 132; St. John's (Archdiocese), *The Report of the Archdiocesan Commission of Enquiry into the Sexual Abuse of Children by Members of the Clergy*, ed. Gordon A. Winter, vol. 1 (St. John's, Nfld: Archdiocese of St. John's, 1990), vii, 1, 10–25; By *The New York Times*, "Archbishop Quits in Wake of Sex Scandal," *The Register-Guard*, July 21, 1990, 11D. Around the same time, bishops in the U.S. were grappling with their own priest sexual abuse scandals. See Daniel E. Pilarczyk, "Painful Pastoral Question: Sexual Abuse of Minors," *Origins* 22, no. 10 (August 6, 1992): 177–178; letter of Pope John Paul II in John Paul PP. II, "Vatican-U.S. Bishops' Committee to Study Applying Canonical Norms," *Origins* 23, no. 7 (July 1, 1993): 102–103; John Kinney, "NCCB Establishes Committee on Sexual Abuse," *Origins* 23, no. 7 (July 1, 1993): 104–105.
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- 79 *Ibid.*, 169.
- 80 William Dalton, "The 1990 Synod of Bishops: Priestly Formation," *The Furrow* 41, no. 2 (February 1990): 95.
- 81 Daniel E. Pilarczyk, "The 1990 Synod of Bishops and Reflections on Seminary Life," *Seminary News* 30, no. 1 (September 1991): 9–10; Baker, "Synod 1990: Formation of Priests," 10–24. Baker's otherwise excellent synopsis of the Synod makes no mention of human formation.
- 82 John Paul PP. II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, I Will Give You Shepherds, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, trans. Vatican translation (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, 1992), n. 43, p. 84.
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- 92 *Ibid.*, 36. Dependence to self-direction; Pleasure to self-control; Ignorance to knowledge; Incompetence to competence; Psychosexual confusion to psychosexual integration; Amoral to moral.
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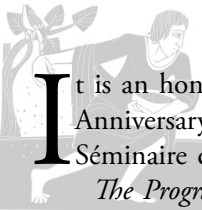
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Training in Priestly Spirituality

Msgr. David L. Toups, STD



It is an honor for me to be present for the 350th Anniversary of the foundation of the Grand Séminaire de Québec.

The Program of Priestly Formation for the United States, currently in its fifth edition, states: “Since spiritual formation is the core that unifies the life of a priest, it stands at the heart of seminary life and is at the center around which all other aspects are integrated.”¹ Thus spirituality is the integrating principle or dimension in the life of a seminarian and priest. In order for spiritual formation to occur in our seminarians, the following three themes must emerge and come to maturation in their hearts: conversion, personal commitment and ecclesial assistance.

Conversion

Conversion is the most basic and yet most profound call of Christ in the Gospel. Through baptism, Christians enter into a covenantal relationship with God, and God in turn offers his own life and

For the man entering priestly formation, personal conversion and an awakening of faith are essential in order that he may truly discern God’s will for his life.

grace. As one enters into adulthood, the realization of God’s love should lead one to a deeper conversion, or what might be called an awakened heart. For the man entering priestly formation, personal conversion and an awakening of faith are essential in order that he may truly discern God’s will for his life. God is to be understood not merely as a concept, but in a personal way; we are not simply to love God, but to be in love with him. Pope Benedict XVI began his very first encyclical letter by reflecting on the necessity of encountering the person of Christ: “We have come to believe in God’s love: in these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his life. Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”² It is the passion flowing from conversion that allows a person to live discipleship. This awakening is not a singular event, but rather a lifelong journey of being open to the mystery of faith. The “Year of Faith” serves as a reminder that we cannot take for granted the faith life of seminarians, and thus we must continuously strive to lead them to an encounter with the living God.

One way we can help seminarians grow in their journey of deeper conversion and faith awakening is to draw them into the profound realization that they are *filii in Filio*—loved in the way the Father loves the Son. This truth will change the way they live. Our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, reminds the church that the spiritual life is grounded in this understanding of divine adoption:

Priestly formation should teach seminarians the importance of making a commitment to spending time in intimacy with God on a daily basis.

Yet this filial relationship with God is not like a treasure that we keep in a corner of our life but must be increased. It must be nourished every day by listening to the word of God, with prayer, with participation in the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and with love. We can live as children! And this is our dignity—we have the dignity of children. We should behave as true children! This means that every day we must let Christ transform us and conform us to Him; it means striving to live as Christians, endeavoring to follow Him in spite of seeing our limitations and weaknesses.³

In the *Decree on Priestly Training*, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught that seminarians are “to learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.”⁴

Personal Commitment

Because spirituality is the integrating principle for the priestly life, it is critical to instill in seminarians the importance of making time for God. The faculty teach by word and example that God is the primary relationship in their lives. The old adage, “you cannot give what you do not have,” rings true for all called to ministerial service and must be modeled for men in the seminary. Time spent in intimacy with the Lord draws one into a deeper, more personal, intimate and loving relationship with the Father. For seminarians and priests, time spent in prayer is the *sine qua non* of their day and a “pastoral priority par excellence,” as our Pope Emeritus has stated.⁵

Priestly formation should teach seminarians the importance of making a commitment to spending time in intimacy with God on a daily basis. We must

help them see the need to set time aside and stick to it, giving themselves at least thirty minutes of silent meditative and contemplative prayer. I am so edified by the many seminarians and priests who are committed to a daily Holy Hour. Having time for prayer is one of the luxuries that seminarians, priests and religious possess; we need to be good stewards of this treasure of the gift of time with God.

Ecclesial Guidance

The *Code of Canon Law* enunciates and specifies the spiritual grounding that is to be the basis of priestly formation: daily Mass, recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary including the rosary, mental prayer, frequent confession, regular spiritual direction and an annual retreat.⁶ These spiritual practices are also the foundation of the priestly life. The church offers the necessary guidance and assistance to ensure that spirituality remains at the core. Seminary formation is intended to help men interiorize their formation and help them develop sustainable habits for living an integrated life of prayer and service.

As we reflect on the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council this year, the council documents point the way for our task of priestly formation: *Optatam totius* reminds formators that seminarians should “be taught to seek Christ ... especially [in] the Eucharist and the Divine Office.”⁷ Indeed the two great liturgies of the church, the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, are the foundation of the spiritual life of seminarians and priests, the “source and summit” of their daily life.⁸

I would like to speak first about the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the daily spirituality of the seminary. The world needs priests to offer this gift of the Mass for its transformation and sanctification on a daily basis.⁹ In their courses on the Liturgy and in the ensuing practica, the seminarian is to learn the *ars celebrandi*—

Contrary to what some might say, the expectation for daily Mass and recitation of the Hours is not unrealistic for the busy parish priest.

the art of celebrating this divine gift. Formation helps them understand that they are stewards of this gift, the lifeblood of the church. Preaching the Word and receiving the Eucharist will sustain, encourage and challenge the faithful more than anything they will hear all week, and the Communion they receive will feed them more deeply than any of us will ever realize. Seminarians must be spiritually and mentally prepared, as much as possible, to mount the altar with the joy and seriousness, enthusiasm and solemnity for which this unique moment calls. At the same time, future priests will understand that it is not ultimately about the subjective state or personality of the celebrant, but the objective truth of the office of the priesthood through which Christ will “show up” despite us. This is the beauty of the church’s teaching on sacramental efficacy *ex opere operato*; it is not about the individual, but about Jesus Christ, the savior of the world.

The second liturgy that we should celebrate on a daily basis, and in a very real way, is intimately connected to the “source and summit:” the Liturgy of the Hours. This prayer does not come naturally to seminarians, because it is completely new for many. Seminarians are given many years to grow in their appreciation and mastery of this gift and discipline. The seminary does not expect the full recitation of the Hours as a collegian. However, as the seminarian proceeds closer to Holy Orders, his recitation should grow in depth and frequency so that on the day of diaconate ordination the newly ordained can affirm the habit of reciting the full sequence of Hours,¹⁰ integrating it as a part of his life whether at the seminary or not. The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours states that priests “are themselves representative in a special way of Christ the Priest, and so share the same responsibility of praying to God for the people entrusted to them, and indeed for the whole world.”¹¹ A priest or transitional deacon who understands who he is will not fail in his promise to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in *persona Christi et Ecclesiae*—as an ambassador of the people before the throne of God.¹²

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, makes the claim, “I contend that the renewal in the priesthood for which we all long will not occur until we return to a fidelity to the promise we made as deacons to pray daily with and for the Church in the Divine Office.”¹³ Pope Benedict XVI called praying the Office a “free space” in which to enter and present ourselves before the Lord and to intercede for the souls entrusted to us: “As people of prayer, we

represent others when we pray and in so doing, we fulfill a pastoral ministry of the first order. This is not to withdraw into the private sphere, it is a pastoral priority, it is a pastoral activity in which our own priesthood is renewed, and we are once again filled by Christ.”¹⁴ The promise made at ordination to pray the Liturgy of the Hours is about relationship—relationship with God and with the people of God. It is not uncommon, nor is it surprising, that when a man leaves the active ministry he inevitably admits to not praying the Office for quite some time. The obligation of the priest to recite the Office is meant to serve as a constant reminder of God’s presence, the needs of the people and as a way to sanctify the whole day. Five times a day the priest is called to enter into this “free space” offering moments to recollect himself (even if ever so brief), to “taste” the Lord’s presence and to recognize him in the midst of life, death and struggle. Very often a word or phrase will speak to the heart and needs of the day: it is a listening to God through his holy Word. At times this sacred duty may seem burdensome; however, it is always a moment of grace when one is called to go beyond oneself and pick up the Breviary, which bears more fruit than will ever be known.

Contrary to what some might say, the expectation for daily Mass and recitation of the Hours is not unrealistic for the busy parish priest. God doesn’t ask us to do that which he doesn’t give us the grace to do. I know many busy parish priests who heroically and faithfully fulfill their spiritual duties and see them as the *sine qua non* of their day, which at times takes planning and sacrifice. Seminary formation helps teach seminarians to arrange every day around the “source and summit.”

At the end of six or more years of priestly formation, we want men of integration, virtue, zeal and love. Spiritual formation unifies and complements the other three dimensions of formation (human, intellectual and pastoral) and directs the men into intimate communion with Christ experienced through ongoing conversion.¹⁵ The formation team and the spiritual directors know the Thomistic truth: that “grace builds on nature.” We do not want seminarians to become something that they are not, but to be the best person they are capable of becoming. *The Program of Priestly Formation* states it well:

A person of solid moral character with a finely developed moral conscience, a man open to and capable of conversion: a man who demonstrates the human virtues of prudence, fortitude,

**The virtue of humility
conquers pride, a critical
spirit and the pompous
attitude that can, at times,
creep into clerical circles.**

temperance, justice, humility, constancy, sincerity, patience, good manners, truthfulness, and keeping his word, and who also manifests growth in the practice of these virtues.¹⁶

Formation, indeed, leads to transformation.

I would like to recommend eight helpful suggestions to offer to our men so that they might grow in their spiritual lives during their formative years in the seminary:

1) Teach them how to pray with the scriptures. *Lectio divina* is a beautiful path of encountering the person of Christ in prayer and will also help them form a “homiletic spirituality.” They will learn to not simply talk about Jesus, but to share with others their encounter with him. Time spent in intimate prayer will

be a meeting place with the living God and help them to continue on the path of ongoing conversion.

2) Teach various forms of popular piety in the seminary as a way of connecting seminarians to the traditions of their local churches (for example, devotions such as adoration, processions, novenas, consecrations, litanies, the rosary and stations of the cross). This will feed them and prepare them to minister to the needs of their parishioners. We need to equip them for the future. The time of being afraid of devotions has passed. In fact, Vatican II taught that “these exercises of piety ... should be strongly encouraged.”¹⁷

3) Give the seminarians confidence that the church’s expectations for them are not unrealistic, especially daily Mass and faithful recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. As they form healthy habits in the seminary, the spiritual life will become second nature.

4) Help them realize that they enter into a spiritual battle every day. In his book, *On Heaven and Earth* (originally published in Spanish in 2010), then-Cardinal Bergoglio wrote, “I believe that the Devil exists” and “his greatest achievement in these times has been to make us believe he does not exist.”¹⁸ This is a topic that the Holy Father has taken up on numerous occasions since his election. We need to remind seminarians that

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not only are they to help protect their own people from the “enemy of our human nature” (as St. Ignatius of Loyola refers to the devil), but also that they must be vigilant in their own spiritual lives in order to avoid the pitfalls and insidious traps that too many priests have fallen prey to over the years. We should not be afraid to talk about these spiritual realities, and we should pray for the protection of our men and seminaries.

5) In order for a future priest to be a humble servant, he must realize that God is the source of all wisdom and strength: “without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). This realization keeps a man grounded in his reliance on God and liberates him from the pressure of relying solely upon his own strength and wisdom; thus, in his weakness, he turns to God every day. This embodies the humility and simplicity to which Pope Francis is calling the church: “Humility and meekness: These are the weapons that the prince of the world, the spirit of the world does not tolerate, because he makes proposals for worldly power, proposals of vanity, proposals for riches.”¹⁹ The virtue of humility conquers pride, a critical spirit and the pompous attitude that can, at times, creep into clerical circles.

6) Spiritual and human formators need to be attentive to the reality that many of our men come from wounded backgrounds. Their history, fears, baggage and traumas ought to be brought into the light and healing of the internal and external forums. Tendencies of entitlement must also be identified and addressed in order that the future priest can truly empathize with the people to whom he is called to minister. Otherwise, the wounded priest will not minister to the needs of the faithful, but rather to his own twisted needs, leading to the self-referential and sick church that turns in on itself in theological narcissism that the new Pope spoke of only days before his election.²⁰

7) While I have spoken a great deal about formal prayer as a foundation for the daily structure in the life of priests and seminarians, it is important for us to communicate that spirituality is a way of life. If the traditional definition of prayer is “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God,” then our mission is to help the men entrusted to our care learn how to do this throughout the day—while driving, walking across campus, visiting the sick, making phone calls, when at rest and at play. Spirituality thus truly becomes the “core that unifies the life of the priest.”²¹ In the words of St. Paul: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes 5:17). Priests formed in this way know that they are never alone: “I am with you always” (Mt 28:20). *Optatam totius* states

that seminarians “should form the habit of drawing close to Him as friends in every detail of their lives.”²²

8) Ultimately, we need to communicate that prayer and spirituality, like faith, are not about feelings and emotions. So often people give up on spiritual development because they do not feel anything. Daily fidelity, even in periods of spiritual aridity, is the path of priestly perseverance. The fruit of the

Ongoing conversion, personal commitment and trust in the structures that the church places before her priests are the path to a future full of hope for our next generation of priests.

spiritual life is measured by the way we live, not by what we feel. Prayer always leads to greater service. The New Evangelization demands such men of prayer to lead the church of the future. Spirituality is all about “intensifying their zeal for winning all people to Christ.”²³

Ongoing conversion, personal commitment and trust in the structures that the church places before her priests are the path to a future full of hope for our next generation of priests. Such priests will draw others to Christ as they embrace the nucleus of the Gospel message: life in Christ (cf. Phil 1:21). Priestly formation, simply put, is about greater configuration to Christ in order that priests may be loving servants to those entrusted to their care. May our future priests be bridges and not obstacles for the world.²⁴

I would like to close with the words of Pope Francis as he addressed his first ordination class:

Remember then that you are taken from among men and appointed on their behalf for those things that pertain to God. Therefore, carry out the ministry of Christ the Priest with constant joy and genuine love, attending not to your own concerns but to those of Jesus Christ. You are pastors, not functionaries. Be mediators, not intermediaries.... Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and who came to seek out and save what was lost.²⁵

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Endnotes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., §115 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), (hereafter PPF). I would like to emphasize the importance of the work of The Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska, for implementing and integrating PPF §115 into the heart of seminary formation.
2. Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter on Christian Love Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), §1.
3. Pope Francis, *General Audience* (10 April 2013). On another occasion he reflected on the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ: “All this is possible only if we recognize Jesus Christ, because it is He who has called us, He who has invited us to travel His path, He who has chosen us. Proclamation and witness are only possible if we are close to him ... And this is important for us: living an intense relationship with Jesus, an intimacy of dialogue and of life, in such a way as to recognize Him as ‘the Lord,’” (Pope Francis, *Homily of Eucharistic Celebration* [14 April 2013]).
4. Paul VI, *Decree on Priestly Training Optatum totius* (28 October 1965), §8.
5. Benedict XVI, *Meeting with the Priests and Permanent Deacons of Bavaria* (14 September 2006). Pope Benedict XVI also said that the priest is to be an “expert in the spiritual life,” (*Address to the Clergy* [25 May 2006]).
6. See *Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1999), c. 246.
7. *Optatum totius*, §8.
8. See Paul VI, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen gentium* (21 November 1964), §11.
9. Vatican II recommends the “daily celebration (of the Eucharist), which is an act of Christ and the Church even if it is impossible for the faithful to be present,” (Paul VI, *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests Presbyterorum ordinis* [7 December 1965], §13); see also *Code of Canon Law*, c. 904 and c. 276, §2.2.
10. The *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* states that priests are obligated to “recite the full sequence of the Hours each day, as far as possible at the appropriate times,” (§29). It continues by explaining each of the five Hours of the Divine Office that the priest is bound to pray. See also *Code of Canon Law*, c.276, §2.3. In 2002, the Congregation for the Clergy reiterated the priest’s serious obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily, “an obligation he freely undertook sub grave.... The priest has received the privilege ‘of speaking to God in the name of all,’ indeed of becoming almost ‘the mouth of the Church.’ In the Divine Office he supplies what was lacking in the praise of Christ and, as an accredited ambassador, his intercession for the salvation of the world is numbered among the most effective,” (Congregation for the Clergy, *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community* [4 August 2002], §14).
11. *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, §28.
12. The danger that I hear at times is when men say that “it is not my cup of tea” and that the Breviary is not really “my spirituality.” We do not do it as our own private devotional—we offer it, like the Eucharist, for the needs of the world. Integration of spirituality helps the seminarian pray the Office, not as a drudgery, but as a privilege.
13. Timothy M. Dolan, *The Priest* (December 2006), 29.
14. Benedict XVI, *Meeting with the Priests and Permanent Deacons of Bavaria* (14 September 2006).
15. According to the *Code of Canon Law*, the faithful have a right to priests who aspire to sanctity. See c. 276, §1.
16. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §76. See also the Appendix for the rubric used at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in order to assist seminarians in their growth in human and spiritual formation.
17. *Optatum totius*, §8.
18. Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abraham Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth: Pope Francis on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Image Books, 2013), 8.
19. Pope Francis, *Homily at Holy Mass on the Occasion of the Day of Confraternities and of Popular Piety* (5 May 2013).
20. Pope Francis, “Bergoglio’s Intervention: A diagnosis of the problems in the Church” (given on 7 March 2013) as found on <http://en.radiovaticana.va> (27 March 2013).
21. *Program of Priestly Formation*, §115.
22. *Optatum totius*, §8.
23. *Optatum totius*, §8.
24. See John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), §43.
25. Pope Francis, *Homily on Priestly Ordinations* (21 April 2013).

Student Learning Outcome 1 (MDiv SLO-1): The student must demonstrate the emotional, moral, and psychological maturity for Christian living and priestly service. (Human Formation)

Student Learning Outcome 2 (MDiv SLO-2): The student is to demonstrate a developing priestly spirituality that embraces prayer, simplicity of life, obedience, pastoral service, a commitment to spiritual direction, a regular practice of the use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a valuing of community and chaste celibacy. (Spiritual Formation)

HUMAN & SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Name of Seminarian Being Assessed: _____ Year of Formation: _____ Assessor: _____

Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Emotional and Psychological Maturity MDIV SLO-1 PPF 76f,g; 85; 86; 89; 92; 101	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates appropriate attention to physical well-being (e.g., diet, sleep, exercise, sobriety) and self-awareness and self-discipline to have strength and energy to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him	<input type="checkbox"/> Is appropriately attentive to his physical well-being (e.g., diet, sleep, exercise, sobriety) so that he is fit to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally attentive to physical well-being (e.g., diet, sleep, exercise, sobriety) although susceptible to lapses, particularly under stress; impact on physical well-being occasionally or minimally impacts fitness to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with self-discipline in one or more areas of physical well-being (e.g., diet, sleep, exercise, sobriety) such that his health occasionally, or more frequently, affects his fitness to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dextrously and smoothly balances physical, spiritual, academic, social, and professional areas of life, even in challenging moments	<input type="checkbox"/> Balances physical, spiritual, academic, social, and professional areas of life with relative ease	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally balances physical, spiritual, academic and professional areas of life, although at times may fail to meet obligations in one or the other; stress in one area may lead to inability to maintain other areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Has challenges in balancing one or more aspects of physical, spiritual, social, or professional areas of life; struggles in one area lead to decompensation in multiple areas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Has adopted a range of reliable options for self care (e.g., prayer, relaxation, exercise, conversation), is aware of signs of stress or burnout, and is able to turn to these options to maintain balance and stay refreshed in his work	<input type="checkbox"/> Has practiced approaches for self care (e.g., prayer, relaxation, exercise, conversation) and learned to value these resources to stay refreshed in his work; self-identifies or is attentive to feedback from others about stress or potential burnout	<input type="checkbox"/> Is working to identify effective approaches for self care; may need guidance to avail himself of these resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with awareness of need for self care; needs guidance to identify need and suggestions for strategies for self care
	<input type="checkbox"/> Clearly aware of areas of strength and weakness; is able to self-identify and set realistic goals for personal growth	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to acknowledge areas of strength and weakness and name areas for growth	<input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of some areas of strength and weakness, though lacks awareness in some critical areas; needs guidance in naming areas for personal growth	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits limited self-awareness and unable to self-identify areas for personal growth; struggles to integrate feedback from others


Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Seeks out and readily incorporates feedback from others; consistently works toward self-improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes good use of outside guidance and constructive feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> At times seems uncomfortable with constructive feedback; sensitive, with low self-esteem or self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to integrate suggestion for improvement; uncomfortable with constructive criticism, sometimes taking it as a personal affront
	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidences ability to regulate emotions even in stressful or unfamiliar situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Typically demonstrates emotional self-control	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally regulates emotions, but under stress responses can be unpredictable or extreme	<input type="checkbox"/> Reacts emotionally intensely in many situations, not able to self-regulate easily
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows creativity, innovation, leadership, flexibility, & openness in the face of change; able to maintain and use an appropriate sense of humor in challenging moments and keep others in good humor as well	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows flexibility and openness in the face of change; maintains and uses an appropriate sense of humor in challenging moments	<input type="checkbox"/> Becomes stressed in situations of change and is working to learn to adapt; can lose an appropriate sense of humor in challenging situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates rigidity or difficulty adapting to challenging situations or change; struggles to have an appropriate sense of humor or lightheartedness
Moral Maturity MDIV SLO-1 PPF 76b, c; 85; 86	<input type="checkbox"/> Is recognized by others for consistency, honesty, and integrity even in circumstances where it may be personally costly	<input type="checkbox"/> Is recognized by others for consistency, honesty and integrity	<input type="checkbox"/> Typically honest and forthright, though occasional lapses in honesty and integrity	<input type="checkbox"/> Is recognized by others for being often inconsistent; does not keep his word; too self-preoccupied
	<input type="checkbox"/> Has a strong sense of personal responsibility and models responsibility to the community (e.g., generously devotes himself to his house job and takes initiative beyond the expectations of the job; communicates any need for absence from required activities in advance or promptly)	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates solid sense of personal responsibility (e.g., completes house job readily; almost always communicates any need for absence from required activities in advance or promptly)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent ownership of personal responsibility; tendency to place blame more on others (e.g., completes house job perfunctorily; inconsistently communicates any need for absence from required activities in advance or promptly)	<input type="checkbox"/> Often unreliable or blames others for difficulties (e.g., many excuses for why house job is not completed; fails to ask permission ahead of time or communicate explanation for absences from required activities)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to consider multiple nuances of complex ethical issues efficiently and makes balanced decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the capacity to adequately evaluate complex ethical questions and makes balanced decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Working to develop framework to make complex ethical decisions; decisions may not always reflect consideration of nuances	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to analyze complex ethical issues and decisions can appear arbitrary
	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes consistently prudent judgments and is sought out by others for moral direction	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates sound prudent judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing framework for consistent moral decision making, though prudent judgment is at times lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Growth needed in ability to make prudent judgments
	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to manage personal finances responsibly and demonstrates to others good stewardship of resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Financially responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks responsibility in some financial decisions; working to learn how to allocate and budget personal resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty managing personal finances; overextends himself financially or late in payments

Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Social and Christian Maturity MDIV SLO-1 PPF 76a,d,e,f, h, j; 80c, d; 85; 86; 89; 92; 93; 94; 101	<input type="checkbox"/> Is outgoing, hospitable, affable, kind, respected, and is able to build relationships with many different types of people in the community	<input type="checkbox"/> Is outgoing, affable, kind and gets along well with most members of the community	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing relationships and social skills, though has difficulty in some relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Has some general difficulties in relationship with others; struggles with sociability
	<input type="checkbox"/> Habitually practices appropriate etiquette and courtesy; good table manners, and respectful language; a model for others	<input type="checkbox"/> Practices appropriate etiquette and courtesy, good table manners, and respectful language	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally aware of appropriate etiquette and courtesy, table manners, and respectful language, though some occasional lapses in public	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs further instruction in appropriate etiquette and/or table manners; or needs to be more mindful of using respectful language
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought out by peers as a sounding board because is a good listener	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages others well, knows how to listen	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages others well, but at times he likes to be the center of the conversation	<input type="checkbox"/> Likes to be the center of the conversation and does not listen well to others
	<input type="checkbox"/> Seeks out opportunities to be of service to those in need; consistently and leads others toward serving <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastically and graciously takes on challenging leadership roles; effectively communicates to motivate others	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally seeks opportunities to serve others <input type="checkbox"/> Takes on leadership roles and communicates effectively to motivate others	<input type="checkbox"/> Sees the needs of others, but not always aware of how to serve their needs or be responsive <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally stretches to take on positions of leadership; learning to motivate others	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-occupied with own needs <input type="checkbox"/> Is uncomfortable taking leadership positions; others are confused when communicating information
	<input type="checkbox"/> In groups, demonstrates superb ability to work collaboratively with others including men and women; demonstrates profound appreciation for the diverse gifts of those present in a team	<input type="checkbox"/> In groups, typically relates well and collaboratively with others including both men and women and people of diverse backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to work in groups either withdrawing or taking on most of the responsibility; free of overt prejudice though at times uncomfortable when working with women and people of different backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to work with others in groups and does not relate well to people of different backgrounds and/or to women; attitudes may be interpreted as prejudicial
	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages enthusiastically and consistently in the community life of the seminary; notably contributes to building up community life	<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastically participates of the community life of the seminary	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally engages in the community life of the seminary, though does not always take advantage of opportunities and optional events which foster fraternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Disengaged from the community life of the seminary (e.g., frequent absences, does not engage in optional activities)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains deep, enriching and nourishing relationships with friends, family, teachers, and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages well with friends, family, teachers and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Circle of friends is limited; has a hard time engaging teachers and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not have close friends; is distant from family members, teachers and peers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Is able to set appropriate boundaries in relationships even with individuals with personalities that challenge boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Sets appropriate boundaries in relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries in relationships are at times blurred	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient capacity for establishing relationships of friendship; searches for compensatory affection; weak or absent boundaries

Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Maturity for Priestly Service MDIV SLO-1 PPF 76d, f, j; 79; 85; 86; 90; 92-94; 97	<input type="checkbox"/> Is prompt and consistent in meeting appointments and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Typically on time for appointments and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with arriving promptly to appointments and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Often tardy or does not show up consistently to appointments
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates humility in balance with competency and self assertion <input type="checkbox"/> Has an altruistic spirit which allows the assumption of heavy responsibilities; has a capacity for love and dedication enough to make any sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates humility in balance with competency and self-assertion with some effort <input type="checkbox"/> Unselfish and capable of assuming responsibilities; has a capacity for love and sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/> At times is perceived as arrogant conceited, or bossy, or as hesitant or insecure <input type="checkbox"/> Generally unselfish and sacrificial, particularly when given some guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a sense of entitlement or significant insecurity <input type="checkbox"/> Unduly attached to comfort, consumption and materialism; favors ostentatious displays of possessions; not motivated toward sacrifice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflects inner peace and joy and confers that sense on others with whom comes in contact <input type="checkbox"/> Lives in openness to transcendent values and grace; sees others in this light as well	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflects a consistent inner peace and joy <input type="checkbox"/> Typically sees reality through the lens of transcendental values and grace	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiences an interior peacefulness and joy at times, but difficult to maintain given emotional tensions <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences openness to God's grace, but at times only sees reality through the level of the ordinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Often appears anxious, agitated, frustrated, or depressed <input type="checkbox"/> Often complains about the external factors of seminary life, failing to see God's grace at work in himself and in others
	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable living as public person representing the Church, and others express the positive impression of the Church made by this person <input type="checkbox"/> Habitually attentive to detail in self-presentation appropriate to and respectful of the occasion (e.g., always well-groomed, neatly dressed) <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses a deep appreciation for and commitment to the importance of celebrating the sacraments as an inherent role of the priest; steadfast commitment to participating in and assisting with the sacraments demonstrates a capacity and calling for everyday, life-long commitment to this ministry	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable living as a public person representing the Church <input type="checkbox"/> Mindful of self-presentation appropriate to the occasion (e.g., well-groomed, neatly dressed) <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses a deep appreciation for and commitment to the importance of celebrating the sacraments as an inherent role of the priest	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows some concerns and insecurities living as a public person representing the Church <input type="checkbox"/> Meets minimum seminary expectations for seminary dress code and personal appearance <input type="checkbox"/> Readily acknowledges God's calling to celebrate the sacraments; struggles with idea of lifelong dedication to the praxis of priestly ministry	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable living as a public person representing the Church <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking in attention to personal appearance and personal hygiene <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of passion and enthusiasm for celebrating the sacraments; hesitates in acknowledging if God is truly calling him to celebrate the sacraments; many doubts about God's personal calling

Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Integrated Spiritual Attitude MDiv SL-O-2 PPF 85, 107	<input type="checkbox"/> Embraces celibacy not as an imposition but as a gift which allows him to express self-gift and life-giving love for Christ and for His Church; recognizes the sacrifice that celibacy entails but is willing to appropriate it in freedom	<input type="checkbox"/> Sees celibacy as a gift; recognizes the sacrifice that it entails and is willing to embrace it in freedom with some effort	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with the idea of celibacy; uncertain whether God is calling him to live this lifestyle; willing to work with formators on discerning this gift	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with celibacy; sees celibacy as a burden; lack of sexual integration; struggles with loneliness
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a relationship with the Triune God that is open to constructive criticism and courage in matters of justice and altruistic service; spirituality is Trinitarian and evidenced in the seminarian's communion with the Church, homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a deep personal relationship with the Triune God and communion with the Church as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a developing personal relationship with God and a growing awareness of God's personal initiative in his life and prayer; is working to integrate a Trinitarian and ecclesial spirituality; evidenced in time spent in personal meditation, homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses a desire for a personal relationship with God and communion with the Church, though practices and consistency have not been sufficiently developed to realize significant progress; evidenced in time spent in personal meditation, homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a generous desire and initiative for continuing spiritual growth and deeper conversion as evidenced in in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates that his spiritual life is based upon openness and humility as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a growing relationship with God although he struggles with focus, consistency, and resistance as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluation, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses an awareness of his need for growth in his spiritual life, though has just begun to take concrete steps to move forward in his spiritual journey as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations etc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrates Scripture and Church teachings into his prayer life and reflection at an advanced level including an ability to articulate these connections and their implications for his life and ministry and a wellcoming disposition for further personal conversion as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a consistent ability to integrate Scripture, Church teachings and his personal prayer life and pastoral experiences which includes an ability to articulate these connections and their implications for his life and ministry as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a growing ability to integrate Scripture, Church teachings and his personal prayer life and pastoral experiences; more consistency and practice in these areas is needed as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Realizes that Scripture and Church teaching are important for developing his spiritual life even though he may tend to compartmentalize these areas as evidenced in homilies, class assignments, conversations, self evaluations, etc.

Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Obedience MDiv SL-O-2 PPF 80d, 89, 100-102, 110k	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates not only a willing cooperation and respect for seminary policies and programs but shows mature leadership in helping others to grow in this area as well for the common good	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates respect, cooperation and wholehearted compliance with seminary policies and programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a growing respect, cooperation, and compliance with seminary policies and programs although he experiences some lapses and continuing misunderstandings	<input type="checkbox"/> Realizes that obedience is a necessary and freely given promise for priestly life although his understanding of what this entails is idealistic and somewhat naïve and its implications are often unrealized
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ability to surrender freely his own will in a spirit of peace, joy, and trust in God's providence	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an ability to surrender his own will for the sake of the larger mission	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates developing ability to surrender his own will for the larger mission but at times lapses into more of a self-centered focus	<input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling with the necessity of obedience and its role in the larger mission, demonstrates at times an overly docile disposition or argumentative manner in matters of obedience
	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates internalization of the Church's teaching and ecclesial authority such that he preaches these truths with conviction and in a way that strengthens the unity of the Church	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates solidarity with Church teaching and ecclesial authority in matters of faith and morals; is open, flexible, honest, and humble in conversing with church authority about matters of obedience	<input type="checkbox"/> Desires to be in solidarity with Church teaching and authority though struggles with accepting some areas of teaching or authority; is open and reflective in discussing teachings or authority even though his cooperation may not always be wholehearted	<input type="checkbox"/> Desires to be in solidarity with Church teaching and authority although knowledge of what this entails is still mostly unrealized
Outward Manifestation of Spiritual Simplicity and Solidarity MDiv SL-O-2 PPF 110i, m, n, o	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits a spirit of generosity, simplicity of lifestyle, a reasonable detachment from material things, and a balanced appreciation for and stewardship of earthly goods <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits an ardent effort to serve and be in solidarity with others, especially the poor, seeks justice and peace	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable with simplicity of lifestyle; reasonable detachment from material things; good stewardship of and balanced appreciation for earthly goods <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits a spirit of service, charity, and generosity towards others, especially the poor; a commitment to justice and peace	<input type="checkbox"/> Lives simply; learning to appreciate the benefits of a less material and consumerist lifestyle while deepening appreciation for the value of earthly goods <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a growing generosity to others, including the poor, and is increasing in his compassion for others	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with detachment from material things or with sense of entitlement <input type="checkbox"/> Connection between prayer life and outward manifestations in service and solidarity beginning to develop
Maturity in Spiritual Practice MDiv SL-O-2 PPF 76i, 97-99, 108, 110, 114g, 116-119	<input type="checkbox"/> Comes early to daily Mass for remote preparation; attends with full attention to the Word of God; participates fully in song and prayers; takes time afterwards for thanksgiving; celebrates the full Liturgy of the Hours each day, as well as making time for personal meditative prayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Offers his full participation in daily Mass and celebrates the full Liturgy of the Hours each day, as well making time for personal meditative prayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently attends daily Mass and celebrates morning and evening prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours even when not celebrated communally	<input type="checkbox"/> Realizes the value of daily Mass attendance and Liturgy of the Hours even though his practice is not always consistent



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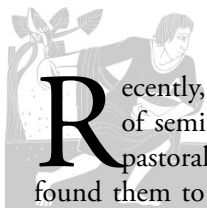
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Criteria	Exemplary (4)	Well-Developed (3)	Developing (2)	Foundational (1)
Maturity in Spiritual Practice (cont'd)	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an ability to be a leader of prayer with integrity of mind and heart; is at ease, genuine and welcoming to the community <input type="checkbox"/> Is devoted to scheduled days of recollection and retreats and takes initiative for other personal times of recollection as possible or when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Meets spiritual goals set at the beginning of the year	<input type="checkbox"/> Is at ease with leading others in communal prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Is attentive and devoted to days of recollection and retreats <input type="checkbox"/> Diligently works toward meeting spiritual goals set at the beginning of the year	<input type="checkbox"/> Readily accepts opportunities to lead communal prayer; is open to advice and counsel on how to improve in leading communal prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Is on time and consistently attends days of recollection and retreats though attention may not be fully devoted to the event <input type="checkbox"/> Struggles with working consistently toward fulfillment of spiritual goals set at the beginning of the year	<input type="checkbox"/> Realizes that the priest is called to be the prayer leader of the faith community, but has some trepidation and sometimes resists opportunities to lead communal prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Realizes that days of recollection and retreat are meant to be beneficial to his spiritual life, though can find silence and solitude awkward or difficult <input type="checkbox"/> Assents limited effort toward fulfillment of spiritual goals set at the beginning of the year

New Priests for the New Evangelization

Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti, PhD, DMin



Recently, I had the grace of supervising a group of seminarians ministering in parishes for their pastoral year. In working with them, I have found them to be much like we older priests were when we were seminarians, years ago. They, too, are learning how to get along with their pastors; they, too, are learning how to lead parish functions and relate to the parishioners; and they, too, are trying to balance the many demands of ministry with their own personal needs and prayer life. When I listen to their struggles, they remind me of my own life as a newly-ordained priest.

However, there is also something different about these young men. While, in many respects, they are like we were at their age, they are also different. If my generation went into the public forum (perhaps with hesitation at times), speaking the truths of the faith with some temerity, these young men are much bolder. They see their goal as preaching and teaching the faith firmly, openly and fully. Their spirit reminds me of the

If we are doing business as usual, if our formation programs are not adjusting to the massive cultural changes, then they are seriously inadequate.

boldness of the Apostles at Pentecost.

These young seminarians are not shy in witnessing to their own faith. During the past year, several of them openly and publicly shared their own experiences of God, witnessing to the people how the Lord had powerfully worked in their lives. They are

proud to proclaim that they are Catholics and they do not shy away from wearing their clerical garb and religious habits in public as a sign of that commitment. Their express goal is bringing others to the faith.

Of course, as their pastoral year progressed, they told me about their occasional disappointments: people either ridiculing them or simply rejecting them. They were also exhilarated by their successes. One of them told the story of a man who was just released from prison and happened to come by and hear the witnessing of this seminarian. The man was moved by what he heard and afterwards told the seminarian that he believed the Lord had released him from prison that day so he could hear the Gospel and change his life. Some people do listen and respond to such bold proclamations of the faith.

Pope Francis, early in his pontificate, spoke to us of the need to go out to the fringes. We are to go out of the sacristies and into the streets. We need, in his words, to get the “smell of the sheep” on us. I see in our young seminarians just such a spirit-filled desire.

If one asks what priestly formation should look like today, the response might include two considerations. First, in what context is ministry being done today; that is, what are the specific needs of today? The context of ministry must strongly influence what a formation program should look like. Second, what kinds of candidates are presenting themselves today? We ought to tailor the formation process to the specific needs of those who enter our programs.

The context into which we are sending new priests is very different today. I do not think we can overemphasize this point. If we are doing business as usual, if our formation programs are not adjusting to the massive cultural changes, then they are seriously inadequate. The world into which the newly ordained are entering and ministering is unrecognizable compared

to that of only a few decades ago.

Washington's Cardinal Donald Wuerl recently spoke of a "tsunami of secularism" sweeping the globe. This is a powerful word—tsunami—a huge and powerful wave of water that completely overwhelms everything in its path. It is an apt metaphor. Secularism is sweeping the western nations and making inroads in many other countries as well. It will, I think, eventually become a powerful force in every country in the world. This process of secularization is not over. We are not at the end of this process. We are at the beginning. The greatest changes have yet to come.

The public persona of priesthood and church in our increasingly secular society has also changed dramatically. As one newspaper reported: "In the wake of one scandal after another, the image of the genial, saintly cleric has given way to that of a lonely, dispirited figure living an unhealthy life that breeds sexual deviation."¹ The Catholic Church is often portrayed in secular media as an anachronistic organization that teaches manmade dogmas that constrict human freedom, bind the intellect, are contrary to the liberating truth of science and stunt human freedom and growth. People are told they need to throw off the yoke of dogmatic hierarchy and religion. It is into this increasingly hostile environment that we are sending our enthusiastic young priests. Are they really prepared?

In response, our new priests need a formation process that is uniquely tailored to living and thriving in this environment. Let me suggest three things that are needed to respond to this secular tsunami.

Faith Responding to Today's Secular Challenges

Seminarians today need a strong, integrated faith that responds directly to the secular challenges of our times. When surrounded by secularity, these men must have an especially strong faith. They will be subjected to many kinds of assaults on their faith and they must be ready. In seminary formation, we teach much

about faith in an academic sense and we provide many spiritual exercises, but a seminarian's actual faith life is mostly left to a private conversation with his spiritual director. One's faith is often considered a very personal thing, and is not subject to review or direct discussion in the external forum. I suggest we consider bringing the subject and its discussion into the mainstream of formation (of course, with sensitivity and respect for what is truly of the internal forum).

Faith cannot simply be something these men have read in a book yet not internalized; rather, it must be a relationship with God and Jesus, made very personal (as Pope Benedict XVI called it). Of course, in a formation program, it is hard to measure and review one's relationship to God. Nevertheless, much of a priest's success or failure, especially today, will depend upon his faith relationship to God.

In my 2009 study, I was surprised by the strong statistical connection between priestly happiness and a priest's relationship to God. The correlation was very strong ($r = .53$, $p < .001$).² In fact, one of the strongest predictors in the study of a man's happiness as a priest was whether he had a personal relationship to God in his life. Simply put, one cannot be a happy priest without it. I would add that, in this secular age, one cannot even survive as a priest without a strong internalized faith. As Karl Rahner said, "In the days ahead, you will either be a mystic (one who has experienced God for real) or nothing at all."³ It was a prophetic utterance.

When it comes to priestly wellness and happiness, psychologists and theologians do not often speak the same language. They have different tools and different perspectives, tending to operate in different orbits of knowledge. In the realm of a priest's life, these two fields must begin to inform each other more directly. As a psychologist and also as a professor of theology, I have seen these fields come together to provide a more holistic picture of a priest's life. We cannot separate the man of faith from the psychologically healthy man in ministry. A priest who is happy and healthy is necessarily a man of faith.

One of the challenges during my ten year study of priestly happiness was to explain why Catholic priests in the United States consistently measured as some of the happiest people in the country. Contrary to the popular myth, study after study has consistently shown that priestly happiness levels are very high—about 90 percent—and much higher than the general population.⁴ The fact is that priests, as a group, are

Seminarians today need a strong, integrated faith that responds directly to the secular challenges of our times.

surprisingly happy. How can one account for this fact? After gathering and analyzing the data, the inescapable conclusion was that one of the most powerful influences on priestly happiness was his spiritual life. As a priest reported a stronger relationship to God, he was much less likely to be depressed ($r = -.29, p < .001$); he was happier as a priest ($r = .53, p < .001$); and he scored as significantly less burned out ($r = -.21, p < .001$). Faith and one's relationship to God needs to be front and center in priestly formation today. The health and happiness, not to mention the basic survival, of our priests depends upon it.

I would put formation of faith in the context of today's secular tsunami; that is, seminarians must believe while living in a secular era. They need the tools to respond directly to the challenges of secularism. Their faith needs to be grounded in a personal and dynamic relationship with the Lord, but they must also be able to think about and articulate their faith in a way that responds to the challenges of today. When assaulted with the sometimes-facile challenges of secularism, young priests need to know how to think about these challenges and respond to them in a way that comes from their internalized faith and is based upon the truths of the Gospel.

For example, in my pastoral theology class, I show presentations by well-known atheists such as Richard Dawkins at the 2012 Reason Rally in Washington, DC and a similar lecture by David Eagleman, Professor of Neuroscience and an advocate of what he calls "possibilianism." Both perspectives clearly spring from a modern secular mentality and their ideas are attractive and hold much sway for many people. While Dawkins' strident atheism is less attractive to many, neuroscientists like Eagleman, who espouse that one should only believe what science can prove, are especially tempting to the modern mind. If seminarians are not prepared, if they cannot translate their inner faith into a convincing dialogue with the modern secular mind, they can easily flounder.

This convincing dialogue must first convince them. None of them will likely stand on the podium debating the faith with the likes of Richard Dawkins or David Eagleman, but they will, almost daily, encounter people who espouse the same arguments, some of them even in their own pews. Do our newly-ordained priests know what is flawed with such excessively materialistic thinking? Do they recognize the lack of reason in secular reasoning? Can they synthesize their own faith in a cogent response? They must believe in their own

Faith and one's relationship to God needs to be front and center in priestly formation today. The health and happiness, not to mention the basic survival, of our priests depends upon it.

hearts what they are saying.

To be truly prepared for the secular world they are entering requires a firm relationship with the Lord, years of theological formation in which the truths of our faith have been firmly and personally integrated, and a practiced ability to respond in a coherent and convincing way in the language of our time. In short, priests today must be men trained directly for the New Evangelization.

Masculine Christianity

The second formation need that arises from living and ministering in a secular environment is a masculine Christianity. I am not speaking of something exclusively reserved for males; rather, I am speaking of a spirituality of the great missionaries and martyrs, of heroic women and men. Aggressive proclaimers of the faith, they were not afraid to go into the marketplaces and to the fringes to proclaim the Good News of Christ. I am thinking of the likes of St. Paul, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, St. Stephen the Martyr, Francis Xavier and Catherine of Siena. It is not surprising that more than a few of their stripes were martyred.

One of the seminarians in my class recently gave me a book that he liked entitled, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*.⁵ The book's thesis is a simple one: men do not like going to church because we have downplayed stereotypically masculine characteristics. We have made men feel unwelcome and uncomfortable in our churches. Indeed, today's Christian spirituality often prizes characteristics such as helping, nurturing, sharing feelings and relating in a loving community. These stereotypically feminine qualities are all good, of course, but they also ought to be complemented by masculine traits such as assertiveness, healthy competitiveness,

The New Evangelization requires attractive feminine qualities such as compassion and caring, but it also demands an assertive, masculine spirituality that has been underemphasized in our modern formation programs and churches.

independence, boldness in sharing one's beliefs, decisive leadership abilities, self-reliance and achievement. The book was written from a Protestant perspective but I think it is no less true in the Catholic Church. Should we, as Christians and Catholics, be competitive today? Should we have such masculine characteristics? You bet we should. We are in competition with atheism, secularism and a variety of other "isms" that compete for the souls of millions of Catholics and those beyond. In his talk on the tsunami of secularism, Cardinal Wuerl said that one of the main requirements of the New Evangelization is boldness. We must be bold in the Spirit.

Several years ago, I gave a group of 115 priests Sandra Bem's *Sex Role Inventory*. She is a psychologist who researched gender roles. Bem hypothesized that males and females alike should integrate a healthy balance of both masculine and feminine traits. Bem believed that we all ought to be both strongly masculine and compassionately feminine.

Bem's inventory includes twenty feminine traits (such as being compassionate, warm, sensitive and tender) and twenty masculine traits (such as being independent, assertive, forceful and defends one's own beliefs). The priest subjects in my study were given Bem's forty descriptive phrases and asked how desirable it was to have these traits. The results were statistically very significant in favor of feminine traits. In fact, nine of the top ten desirable traits chosen were feminine, with the only masculine trait, "have leadership abilities," coming in as number ten. Our priests strongly endorsed the importance of Bem's feminine traits, while masculine

traits were decidedly second best.

The New Evangelization requires attractive feminine qualities such as compassion and caring, but it also demands an assertive, masculine spirituality that has been underemphasized in our modern formation programs and churches. In response to today's culture, I do not think it is an accident that the young men in our formation programs are increasingly attracted to masculine traits. I have found today's seminarians more likely to speak about the importance of spiritual fatherhood and taking on a masculine spirituality. When we older priests were seminarians, our generation was learning how to be kind and compassionate. The men of today are trying to figure out how to spread the faith as the pews are becoming emptier. I think there is an instinctive recognition that this is what is needed today. Perhaps their desire for a masculine spirituality is the wind of the Spirit blowing in today's church. I believe it is.

Strong Personal Support Networks

Thirdly, let me suggest that a strong personal support network is required more than ever when ministering in a secular environment. In *Pastores dabo vobis*, Pope John Paul II called the priest a "man of communion." Thus, the fullness of priesthood can never be lived without a network of strong personal relationships. In these times, the need for such a network is especially acute. Today's priest, this very human man, is surrounded by a culture that is unsupportive at best and, at times, downright hostile. The priest of the New Evangelization must have a solid network of friends and personal support; otherwise, he simply will not last.

Dean Hoge, professor emeritus from The Catholic University of America, conducted extensive research on priestly life and concluded that those priests who left the priesthood almost universally felt lonely, isolated and disconnected. My own data have confirmed his findings. In my 2009 survey, the good news is that only 3.1 percent of priests were even thinking of leaving.⁶ Like Hoge's results, my data showed that those priests who lacked the support of a solid spiritual life, did not have a good network of friends and who felt lonely and isolated were much more likely to consider leaving. Priesthood is a communal life and we are men of communion.

Similarly, the data indicated that those without close friends or suffering from loneliness were much

more likely to engage in troubling behaviors on the Internet (the correlation of loneliness and Internet problems: $r = .21$, $p < .001$). In working with seminarians and young priests in a confidential setting, it is clear that one of the great modern cancers on the priesthood (and young people in our society in general) is abusing the Internet, particularly through Internet addictions and viewing pornography. Sadly, it is rampant in our society and thus is also a serious problem among our seminarians and young priests. Typically, the addicted seminarian is one who suffers from a poor self-image and occasional problems with depressive affect and anxiety, and has difficulties developing close friends. In times of stress, these men revert to Internet pornography as a way to self-medicate their inner distress. Sad to say, these compulsive dysfunctional behaviors are rife in our society and all too frequent among the church's ranks as well.

This ability to make solid nurturing friendships is not only particularly important because of the rise of secularism, it is also more pressing due to the rising social isolation in America and the breakdown of the nuclear family. McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Brashears found that Americans are becoming more personally isolated.⁷ Americans have fewer and fewer people with whom to share their intimate, personal lives. In 1985, the modal number of confidants for the average

The priest of the New Evangelization must have a solid network of friends and personal support; otherwise, he simply will not last.

American was only three people. In 2004, the modal number plunged to zero.⁸ While Americans are sharing more data than ever, they are increasingly alone in a crowd. One quarter of Americans are completely emotionally alone—they have no one.

Our seminarians come from the same society and isolating context. Thus, we need to train them directly on how to foster intentional, nourishing, celibate relationships. Upon entering the seminary, we cannot presume that they ever have had or know how to go about making real friends. Like their peers, they may have many acquaintances but may not have anyone with whom to share their personal selves. The

seminary environment is a good place to learn to build relationships. One could argue that the seminary is uniquely suited for such a task. Many a priest has said that some of his closest lifelong friendships began in the seminary. This is a good thing and, I think, a traditional benefit of our seminary system.

As the nuclear family in our society continues to break down, it becomes increasingly obsessed and addicted to sex, pleasure and a self-focused narcissism. Our seminarians are not immune to such societal pathologies. They, too, experience increasing challenges in childhood, bringing these backgrounds with them to seminary formation and ultimately to priesthood. In my 2009 study, the data show that our younger priests are coming from significantly more distressed personal backgrounds. For example, 20.5 percent of priests ordained ten years or less said they came from dysfunctional families compared to only 6.9 percent of priests ordained over fifty years. Similarly,

Formation programs will have to deal with more candidates who bring psychological “baggage” into the seminary, are more prone to episodes of depression and anxiety, and are thus more prone to Internet addictions.

9.8 percent of priests ordained ten years or less had divorced parents compared to only 0.6 percent of priests over fifty years ordained. Moreover, the younger priests had higher rates of anxiety and depression on a standardized inventory (Brief Symptom Inventory-18) than the older priests.⁹ These are statistically significant changes and mean that formation programs will have to deal with more candidates who bring psychological “baggage” into the seminary, are more prone to episodes of depression and anxiety, and are thus more prone to Internet addictions. Those who work directly with seminarians know of what I am speaking. Despite our increasingly rigorous screening programs, we are well aware of the childhood deficits and traumas some of these young men bring to formation. They are

children of a broken society.

The good news is that my research data indicate that these younger priests may actually have less sexual pathology than their predecessors. For example, 20.5 percent of priests ordained less than ten years admitted to growing up having sexual difficulties compared to 37.7 percent of those ordained 31–40 years. This is a large decrease. Additionally, in the wake of the scandals, priestly screening within the last two decades has included more direct assessment of a candidate's psychosexual health to identify and screen out candidates with sexual problems. In the past, we were more reticent to ask such sex-related questions during candidate screening, but this has changed and it appears to be having a salutary effect. Today, including a direct inquiry and assessment of the psychosexual health of candidates for the priesthood is essential.

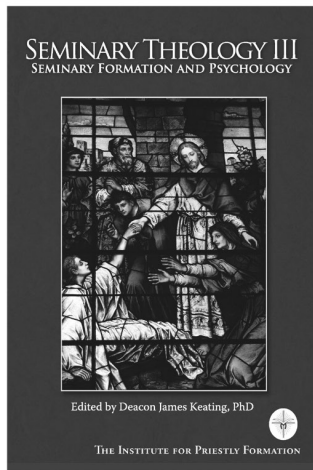
The New Evangelization requires strong men who can endure rejection, criticism and a surrounding secular environment, yet who can maintain and even prosper in living a healthy and holy life. At the same time, there is a concomitant breakdown of the nuclear family and significant levels of family dysfunction

throughout our society. These can lead to increasing psychological challenges for our candidates who are not immune from societal fault lines. Similarly, in the midst of a sex-addicted culture that promotes licentiousness (with soft pornography being ubiquitous), these men must live an increasingly countercultural, celibate life with a personal and positive commitment. Concurrently, the tolerance for priests with sexual problems and potentially scandalous behavior has plummeted to zero, both inside and outside the church. During a time when society is immersed in hook-ups and casual sex, when its sexual behavior in general appears to be without boundaries, our priests must live the fullness of the Christian call to celibate chastity.

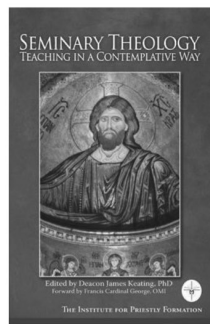
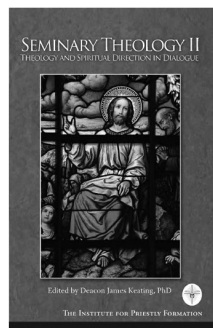
This sounds like an impossible task. How can we take young men out of an increasingly secular, dysfunctional, sex-addicted society and form them into chaste, healthy, celibate Catholic priests? How can we form young men to be on fire with the Good News and willing to go out into the marketplace and spread a message that is often unwanted, sometimes ridiculed and frequently rejected? We are asking them to be everything our society is not. We are asking them to be signs of



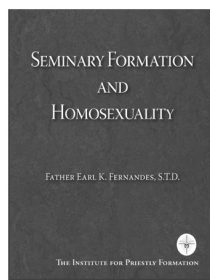
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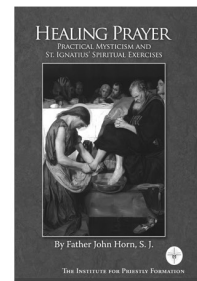


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contradiction.

Despite the human absurdity of such a task, the results of my research and my own experience working with today's seminarians indicate that this is precisely what is happening. As the Scriptures tell us, "For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

First, seminarians and young priests enthusiastically support mandatory celibacy at a much higher rate than their immediate predecessors. In my 2009 research study, only 37.9 percent of priests ordained 30–39 years support mandatory celibacy compared to a large 81.4 percent of priests ordained less than ten years. This is a huge increase in support for celibacy among the younger priests. These young priests tend to be more optimistic about the future of priesthood. In my 2004 study, 83.4 percent of priests ordained less than ten years see a positive future for the priesthood compared to 67.8 percent of priests ordained 20–29 years. Similarly, when

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will be smaller, more faithful
to celibate chastity, more
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asked if they encourage young men to become priests, 84.3 percent of priests ordained less than ten years agreed or strongly agreed compared to only 62 percent of priests ordained 30–39 years. When asked if they are proud to be a priest today, 41.5 percent of priests ordained less than ten years strongly agreed compared to only 29.4 percent of priests ordained 30–39 years.¹⁰

John Allen, Jr. wrote about a new breed of Catholics among the young today, which has been called "evangelical Catholics" by him and others. Allen says they are characterized by three major factors:

1. "A clear embrace of traditional Catholic thought, speech, and practice,"
2. "Eagerness to proclaim one's Catholic identity to the world," and
3. "Faith as seen as a matter of personal choice rather than cultural inheritance."¹¹

The data show that the young priests and seminarians of today fit John Allen's description. They are the right choice as instruments for the New

Evangelization.

Moreover, despite the rising percentage of dysfunctional families from which our seminarians come and their concomitant challenges with depression and anxiety, this new group of young men appear to have fewer sexual problems than in the recent past. The John Jay College study, *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010*, noted a marked decline in cases of child sexual abuse in the priesthood in the United States from the 1980s until today. The rate peaked at about 4 percent and has plummeted to less than 1 percent.¹² This is certainly due to the church's aggressive child protection program including mandatory background checks, compulsory child-safe education programs, and a much more aggressive response to allegations. In addition, the inclusion of psychosexual formation programs in the seminary and direct screening for sexual pathology among prospective candidates has likely been part of this substantial improvement.

The Catholic Church in the United States is perhaps one of the safest, if not the safest place, for a child today. There is support for this improvement in my data. As noted previously, younger priests today are more directly screened and formed in living a healthy, chaste psychosexual life. As a result, it appears that we are recently ordaining fewer men with sexual problems than a few decades ago. I believe similar salutary steps in child protection, including better psychosexual screening and formation, ought to be normative throughout the world.

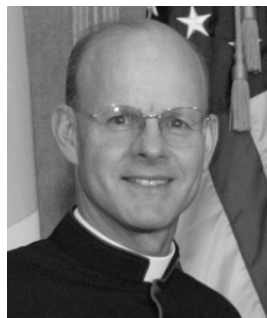
In summary, I believe today's seminarians are uniquely suited to be priests for the New Evangelization. The data show that they are bolder in manifesting and witnessing to the faith. They are proud to be Catholics and to be priests. They see a bright future for the church and they are committed to celibate chastity. They have been screened more carefully in the area of psychosexual health and receive stronger human formation programs. I would like to think that our improved formation programs are causing these good changes. I think we can take some pride in this. The quality and thoroughness of the priestly screening and formation programs, particularly in the area of human formation, are stronger today than ever, thanks to the church's increasing commitment to this foundational pillar of priestly formation.

However, I think we must admit that there is something else at work over which we have no control and can take no credit. From whence comes this "evangelical" kind of boldness in our seminarians? From whence comes their commitment to traditional

Catholic values, which they proudly teach and proclaim? I think we must conclude that the Holy Spirit, the first formator and teacher of future priests, is active today in a dynamic way. We are obliged to form men in our time to serve as priests. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is most assuredly directly at work as well.


The priesthood of tomorrow will be smaller, more faithful to celibate chastity, more ardently Catholic and, I think, holier. They will be purified in the crucible of society's secularism and they will emerge stronger and more sanctified. We already see signs of this today. We see it in the faces and hearts of our young priests and seminarians. I join with them in having a great hope for the church of tomorrow. We can take a little credit for many of these developments. The major credit goes to the Holy Spirit who is already forming these men to be the right instruments for God's new initiative, which we humans call the New Evangelization. As Psalm 118 tells us, "By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes" (v. 23).

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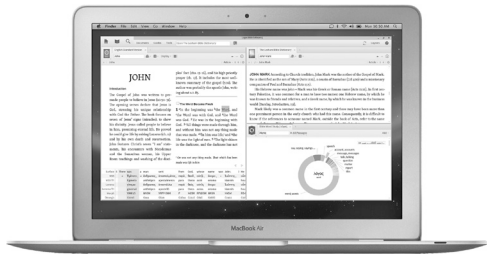
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This small gem of a book is engaging, encouraging, practical and plainly written. Beginning preachers will appreciate its clarity and humor, and experienced preachers will appreciate its call to recommit to learning more about the glorious and grace-filled task of announcing the Gospel.

There are twelve chapters, six appendices, an index and endnotes in the 156-page book. Each chapter has useful additions including pithy quotes that reinforce or illustrate the main point, helpful hints, and practice recommendations (for example, practice writing your homily's main idea as a simple, declarative sentence). The twelve chapters are divided into four parts: building the sermon, creating the unforgettable sermon, growing as a preacher, and conducting retreats and days of recollection.

The book's primary point is that in order to preach well, preachers need to learn the techniques and skills of writing and delivering a sermon. The book does an excellent job of reviewing key elements of grammar, rhetoric and public speaking so that the reader quickly acquires the building blocks needed to write a good homily. It also describes techniques to deliver a good sermon, and calls for mastery of body language and phonology (the study of sounds). "You deliver your sermon in two languages," Reynolds states, "and you need to be fluent in both" (p. 169).

Chapter three is particularly instructive. It names three essentials that are foundational to a successful

sermon: identify its primary purpose, develop one main idea, and include a call to action. In chapters six through nine, Reynolds discusses four catalysts that help make a sermon unforgettable. Those catalysts are stories, rhetorical figures, passion and delivery. The chapter on rhetorical figures is particularly helpful in defining figures of speech and illustrating them, including isocolon, often referred to as parallelism; anaphora, the repetition of the same words at the beginning of sentences; and epistrophe, the repetition of the same words at the end of sentences. Reynolds includes several examples of each figure of speech, drawing from scripture and well-known speeches, allowing the reader to study how others have employed these rhetorical figures.

The appendices are practical resources. The first is an outline of steps in writing a sermon, and the second is a revision and edit checklist. For teachers of homiletics and students learning to preach, the third appendix, feedback suggestions, includes tips for giving constructive, honest feedback to a preacher, and questions to answer when one is reviewing a homily.

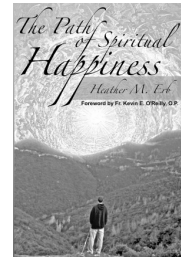
This book is highly recommended for homiletic teachers and for all those who desire to deliver unforgettable sermons.

Katherine Schmitt is director of evangelization for St. Nicholas Parish in Laurel, Maryland.

The Path of Spiritual Happiness

By Dr. Heather M. Erb
En Route Books and Media, 2016

Reviewed by Steven J. Brust



One of the most famous political documents, *The Declaration of Independence*, claims that our Creator has created everyone with the right to the pursuit of happiness. When asked about what they think the happiness actually is that one has a right to pursue, many students respond in a relativist manner, claiming that it is different for everyone, or rather, it is what each determines it to be. It can be difficult to get students to entertain the possibility that there might be an objective understanding of happiness that everyone is called to achieve. That is why I am glad Professor Heather Erb has written this excellent book. In the introduction we discover that her motivation for this book is the unfortunate state of affairs where there appears to be an emphasis on the pursuit of ephemeral desires and too little desire for truth and wonderment about reality. One is reminded of the infamous Rolling Stones, who tell us we can't get our satisfaction no matter how hard we try. The author makes the case that only in the two sources of reason and revelation, as transmitted by Christian philosophy and theology, is a reflective and authentic spiritual happiness to be found.

This harmonic relationship of reason and faith (nature and grace) unfolds in three sections titled: "Aristotle's Theory of Happiness," "St. Thomas Aquinas's Ethics of Beatitude," and "Pieper on Wisdom and Contemplation." In each section, the author presents a clear and concise distillation of each philosopher's thought and its relation to each of the others. They are

also augmented with the thought of St. John Paul II as found in his encyclicals, *Fides et Ratio*, and *Veritatis Splendor*, and Pope Benedict XVI, as found in *Deus Caritas Est*. For Erb, the importance of Aristotle can't be understated because he affirmed human nature with a *telos*—the end of happiness—for which humans strive. As she states, a most essential point is the "simple yet crucial lesson: if the human quest for happiness is to be realized in any way at all in this life then it must respect the structure of reality in general and of human nature in particular." Indeed, this may be the most important lesson that this book teaches—that there is a reality, including a human reality, that human persons can and must come to know and live in accordance with, as opposed to assuming that human persons can themselves construct both reality and human nature based on their fluctuating, subjective desires.

Erb refers to John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio*, where he makes not only a defense of faith, but a "defense of reason against unreason." This is a problem today, when reason is rejected for pleasure, feeling, and will, but in the name of reason and rationality. Basic truths about the purposes of human capacities and functions as given to us are denied from the perspective of some of the human and natural sciences and in the name of political and legal ideologies.

However much a defense of reason is needed, Erb also argues for the importance and necessity of the Christian faith which assists one's reason and corrects

and completes Aristotle's conception of human nature and happiness. She does this by calling to our attention how Aquinas, John Paul II, and Pieper build upon natural knowledge in light of what God has revealed. This allows the Christian philosopher to have a more profound understanding of human dignity, the moral life, and to acquire the recognition that it is by God's own initiative that one *participates* in his Divine life. By grace, one grows more fully in the virtues since one's happiness is ultimately grounded in Christ, the object of one's happiness. In him, the very loving *beatitude* of eternal life, the person both fulfills and transcends the limits of Greek *eudaimonism*.

What is somewhat novel in a philosophical book about happiness is the wise inclusion of the Thomist Josef Pieper's book *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. Pieper offers a wonderful vision of life's purpose, in stark contrast to the dull utilitarian spirit of the contemporary world. As Erb notes, Pieper "links the notions of *culture, leisure, philosophy, and worship: leisure, the basis of culture, is guaranteed only by the authentic practice of transcendent activities such as philosophy, which in turn are grounded in divine worship. Any reflective person can see the ways in which an aberrant notion of leisure, taken from the view that reduces humans to mere work units, ruins culture.*"

This contrast with contemporary culture is one example of what is helpful about this book – the contrast of the Aristotelian and Christian views of the world and human nature with the errant notions based on bad modern philosophies and actions including eclecticism, historicism, scientism, pragmatism, relativism, nihilism, and the "will to power."

The author helpfully includes the suggested readings of the texts of the authors under consideration, as well as a separate glossary of terms for each of the three sections. Not only is this a great little book of substance, but it is written in a very eloquent style

combining rigorous logical and coherent reasoning with charming language, for instance: "It is only by being struck with wonder at the depth of being that our reason learns to bow its crest before the wilderness of contemplation, and find there the mountain of divine truth and power whose streams alone can renew and refresh a weary civilization." It is worth noting that some of the questions provided at the end of each chapter presuppose that one has some familiarity with the original texts, and some of the questions presuppose a Christian understanding of some topics. I found myself desiring further elaboration on some points, but this could be achieved easily by the teacher or professor in the fruitful exercise of having students engage more fully with the primary sources.

Since the enterprise of "critical thinking" is a ubiquitous goal of the modern university, it is refreshing to discover a book that helps to restore the true purpose of critical thinking—an alert, honest search for the nature of reality that is born of the love of wisdom. Erb argues that in the absence of Thomist realism and the goods it affords, the vague search for happiness can no longer sustain our spiritual and intellectual commitments. On the contrary, without it, both individuals and societies will languish and are imperiled.

There is a cliché that attributes an honor to someone who has "written the book on happiness." Yet it is to Erb's credit that by faithfully observing the intersection of metaphysics, ethics, and faith, she keeps to the path trodden by the best of Christian philosophers and reminds us of the goodness of the created intellect. In so doing, she follows St. Thomas in affirming the possibility of the fulfillment of our deepest aspiration for happiness.

Steven J. Brust is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Eastern New Mexico University.



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.

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