

SEMINARY JOURNAL

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NUMBER 3

WINTER 1998

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

Rev. James J. Walsh, *Executive Editor*

Agnes McDonnell, *Editor*

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SPECIAL EDITION

International Consultation on Priestly Formation For Rectors of Major Seminaries

*American College
Leuven, Belgium*

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An International Consultation on Priestly Formation For Rectors of Major Seminaries

*August 25-28, 1998
The American College of Louvain
Leuven, Belgium*

Introduction

Two years ago a conference was held at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio to honor Cardinal Suenens for his work at the Second Vatican Council and for his advocacy of ecumenism, lay spirituality, and the collaboration of priests and laity. It was through the generosity of Mrs. Margaret Grace of New York and the coordination of Dr. Doris Donnelly that the conference was such a wonderful success.

Comments from the participants were videotaped as part of the record of the event. Upon reviewing that videotape, Mrs. Grace and Professor Donnelly were struck by the comments of one priest who said: "When I first became a priest, I was proficient in second order religious language, the language of the intellect. When I met Cardinal Suenens, he introduced me to the first order of religious language, the language of the affect, but the Cardinal told me that I must keep them both in balance. I am greatly indebted to Cardinal Suenens."

Mrs. Grace and Professor Donnelly were also mindful of the fact that Cardinal Suenens was very much interested in the integration of the various components of formation for ministry. In 1964 he founded a seminary associated with the University in Leuven, and quite prophetically built it on four pillars: 1. rigorous intellectual formation and theological reflection; 2. human and social formation; 3. apostolic formation, i.e., everyone was involved with a ministry outside the walls of the seminary, with a special emphasis on social justice ministry; 4. spiritual for-

mation, which included not only the essentials of liturgy, prayer, and retreats, but also the interiorization of one's life with Jesus Christ. It was important to Cardinal Suenens that priestly formation integrate these four aspects.

In that spirit and noting the comments of the priest from the videotape, Mrs. Grace suggested that it would be wonderful to convene seminary rectors from all over the world to discuss the challenges of priestly formation on the cusp of the new millennium. Once again due to the generosity of Mrs. Margaret Grace and the coordination of Dr. Doris Donnelly, that suggestion became a reality.

I know I speak for the participants of the consultation, when I offer our deep gratitude to Mrs. Margaret Grace and Dr. Doris Donnelly for this wonderful opportunity for global dialogue about priestly formation. Thank you for your enormous investment in the Church and the priests of the future.

Those of us who were privileged to attend the consultation were truly blessed with a global awareness of the mystery of the human and divine collaboration in the formation of priests. This special edition of *Seminary Journal* is an attempt to share some of the blessings of the consultation with the wider seminary communities. ✚

*Rev. James J. Walsh
Executive Director
Seminary Department*

AN INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION FOR RECTORS OF MAJOR SEMINARIES ON PRIESTLY FORMATION

LEUVEN BELGIUM

Program & Schedule

Tuesday, August 25, 1998

Morning Session:
***"The Global Church
and the Seminary Scene Worldwide"***

Presenters:

Africa: Rev. Peter J. Schineller, S.J. [Nigeria]
Asia: Rev. Asandas Balchand, S.J. [Philippines]
Eastern Europe: Rev. Stanislaw Obirek, S.J. [Kraków]
Latin America: Rev. Carlos Rodriguez [Caracas]
Oceania: Reverend Paul Cashen [Australia]
United States: Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F. [Minnesota]
Western Europe: Most Rev. Dr. Walter Kasper [Germany]

15:00/3:00 pm Arrivals at The American College
of Louvain

16:30/4:30pm Opening Eucharistic Liturgy
His Eminence Godfried Cardinal Danneels
presiding
Reverend Jan Van derVeken
preaching

18:00/6pm Dinner

19:30/7:30pm

Keynote Address:

*His Eminence Godfried Cardinal Danneels
Cardinal-Archbishop of Belgium
"The Reform of Seminary Education in Europe
Since Vatican II:
Achievements and Challenges"*

Presentation

*The Cardinal Suenens Award - 1998
by Rev. Edward Glynn, S.J.
Acting President, John Carroll University
University Heights, Cleveland, Ohio, USA*

Reception

Welcome

The Very Reverend David E. Windsor
Rector, The American College of Louvain

With these themes to be surveyed briefly by each panelist: What are the significant issues and trends influencing the Churches of various continents represented at the IC? What are the challenges in preparing candidates for priesthood today? What is the profile of people who are coming to seminary?

11:00am

Morning Session continues

12:30pm

Lunch

14:30/2:30pm

Table sessions in language groups
for theological reflection

15:30/3:30pm

Plenary session with morning
survey speakers

17:00/5pm

Eucharistic Liturgy

18:00/6pm

Reception

18:30/6:30pm

Dinner

19:30/7:30pm

Evening session

Wednesday, August 26, 1998

"Faith Development of Seminarians"
Rev. Michael Paul Gallagher, S.J.
[Rome & Ireland]

8:00am Morning Prayer

8:30am Breakfast

9:15-10:30 Reverend Michael Himes, Moderator
Boston (USA)

Plenary session / Q & A with Michael Himes

21:00/9pm

Closure

Thursday, August 27, 1998

8:00am Morning Prayer

8:30am Breakfast

9:15am Morning Session

"The Seminary as a Context for Teaching Theology"
Reverend Gustavo Gutiérrez, Speaker
Lima, Peru

Q & A with Gustavo Gutiérrez

11:00am Table sessions in language groups
for theological reflection

11:45am Plenary session with Michael Himes

12:30 Eucharistic Liturgy

13:30/1:30pm Lunch

14:30/2:30pm Leave for tour of the City of Bruges
with a visit to the Slabbinck Studios

Dinner in Bruges
compliments of Art Slabbinck Studios

Return to Leuven

Friday, August 28, 1998

8:30am Morning Prayer

9:00am Breakfast



9:30am Morning Session

*"The Seminary as a Context
for Modeling an Integrated Life"*
Reverend John F. Canary, Speaker
Chicago (USA)

11:00am Table sessions in language groups
for theological reflection

11:45am Plenary session with Michael Himes

12:30 Lunch

15:00/3pm Afternoon Session

*"Gifts Needed for the Priest to Address the Church in
the Modern World"*

Small working groups will be convened to frame
questions and responses to the Consultation.

16:30/4:30pm Reports from table groups

17:30/5:30pm Closing Eucharistic Liturgy

18:30/6:30pm Banquet

Saturday, August 29, 1998

Departures

Consultation Planning Committee:

Doris Donnelly [Chairperson], Canon Wilfried
Brievens, John Dick, Toon Osaer [Liaisons in Belgium]
Staff in Belgium: Joske Dick, Kris von Maluski,
Patrick J. Van Durme, Luc de Voldek
*Special gratitude to the Slabbinck Family for
vestments provided at all liturgies and for their
gracious hospitality in Bruges.*

*And deep appreciation to Rev. David Windsor, Rector
of The American College of Louvain*

US Program Committee: Rev. John Canary, Rev. John
O'Donnell, SJ, Rev. Gary Riebe-Estrella, Sister
Katarina Schuth, OSF, Rev. James Walsh.



Front row from left to right:

Dr. Doris Donnelly, Director of The Cardinal Suenens Program for Theology and Church Life and Coordinator of the Consultation, Monsignor Giovanni Moretti, Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium, Godfried Cardinal Danneels, Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels; Bishop Walter Kasper, Bishop of Tottenburg-Stuttgart, Rev. Edward Glynn, S.J., President of John Carrol University, Dr. John Dick, Director of Academic Formation at American College of Louvain

Delegate Guests of the International Consultation

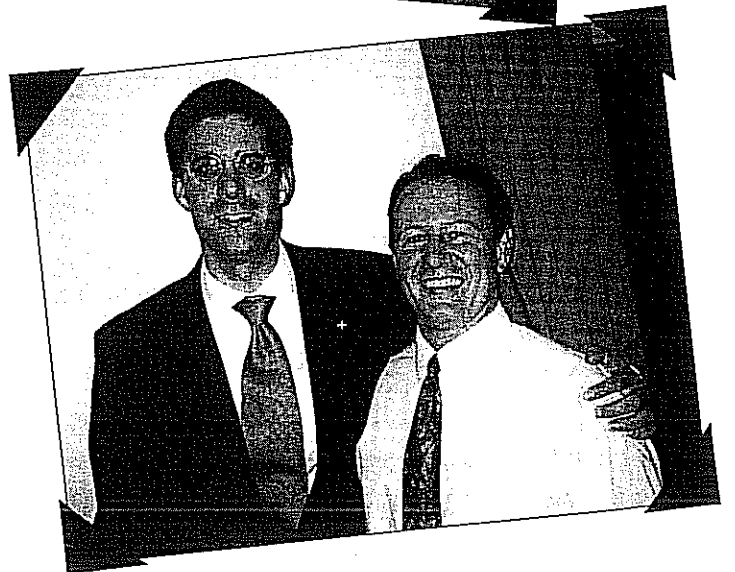
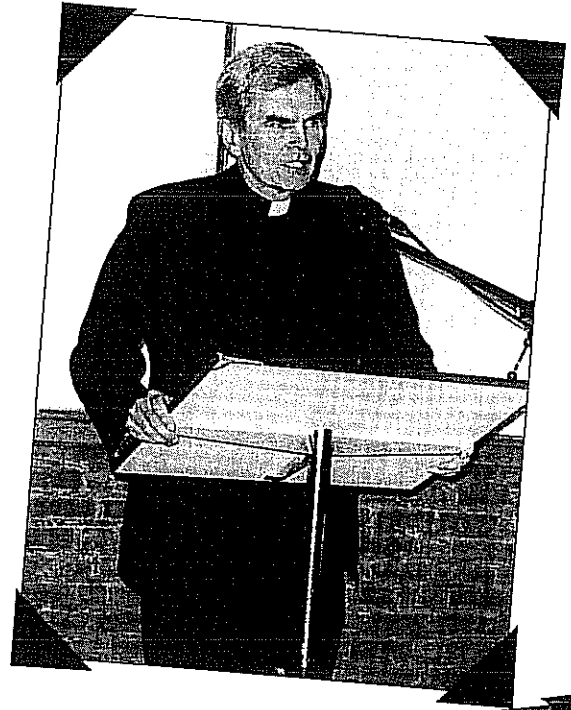
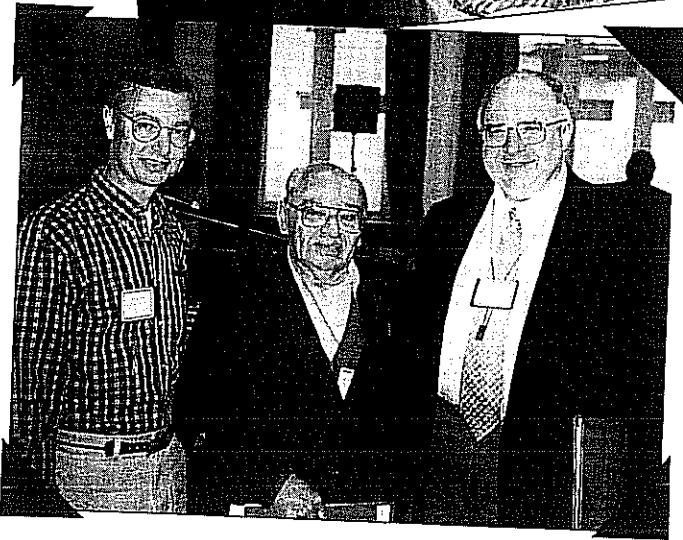
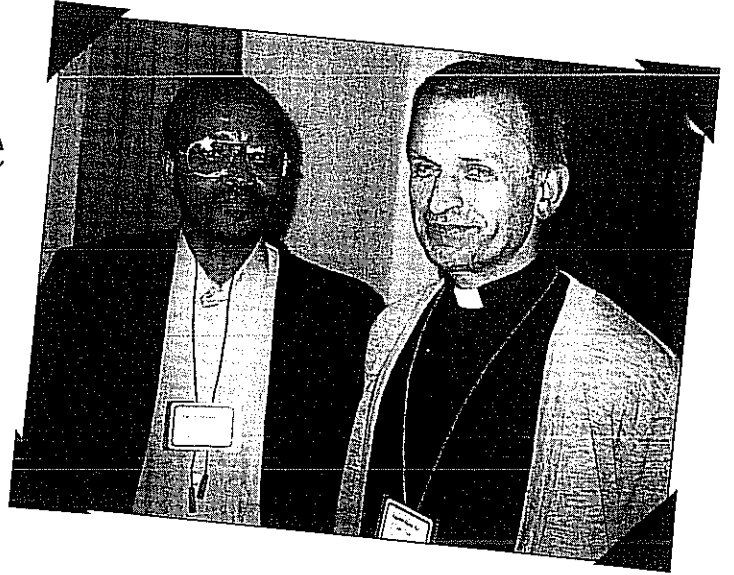
- Rev. Lode Aerts, Grootseminairie Bisdom-Gent, Belgium
- Rev. Joseph Alaerts, S.J., Diocesaan Seminarie, Mechelen, Belgium
- Rev. Michael Alosanai, S.J., Papal Seminary, Ramwadi, Pune, India
- Rev. John B. Ambe, St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary, Bambui, Camaroon
- Rev. Charles Bouchard, O.P., Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, Missouri, USA
- Rev. Patrick Brennan, Mount Angel Seminary, Oregon, USA
- Rev. Joan Rovira Canyelles, S.J., Seminario Mayor Diocesano San Basilio Magno, Cuba
- Rev. Paul Decock, O.M.I., St. Joseph's Theological
- Gertler, S.J., Priesterseminar "Sankt Georgen," Frankfort, Germany
- Don Lorenzo Ghizzoni, Seminario Vescovile, Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Rev. Domingo Escueder Giner, Seminario Diocesano, Tortosa, Spain
- Rev. Manuel Ginete, C.M., Seminario Mayor de San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines
- Rev. Kevin Haggerty, St. John's Seminary, Guildford-Surrey, Great Britain
- Rev. Emil Krapka, S.J., Theological Institute Aloisianum, Bratislava, Slovakia
- Rev. Francisco Lopez Rivera, S.J., Collegio Maximo de Cristo Rey, Loyoacan, Mexico
- Rev. Msgr. George J. Lucas, Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, USA
- Rev. Msgr. Francis J. McAree, St. Joseph's Seminary, New York, USA
- Rev. Msgr. Jeremiah J. McCarthy, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California, USA
- Rev. Constantinus Mahloane, St. Augustine Major Seminary, Roma Lesotho, South Africa
- Rev. J. William Morell, O.M.I., Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas
- Rev. Ismael Moreno Coto, Teologado y Filosofado Jesuita, San Salvador, El Salvador
- Rev. Jean-Roger Ndombi, S.J., Hekima College, Nairobi, Kenya
- Rev. Abbe Albert Mundele Ngengi, Grand Seminaire Regional, Kinshasa, Rep. Dem. du Congo
- Rev. Msgr. Pablo Navarro, St. Vincent DePaul Seminary, Florida, USA
- Very Rev. John J. O'Donnell, S.J., Weston School of Theology, Massachusetts, USA
- Rev. Mark O'Keefe, O.S.B., St. Meinrad Seminary, Indiana, USA
- Rev. Yvew-Marie Pean, Grand Seminaire Notre Dame, Port-au-Prince, W.I., Haiti
- Rev. Manuel Alberto Pereira de Matos, Seminario Maior de Guarda, Portugal
- Rev. Alvaro Luiz Pinzetta, Organizacao dos Seminarios e Institutos Filosofico-Teologicos, Brazil
- Rev. Constantino Pitya Lugor, St. Paul's National Seminary, Khartoum, Sudan
- Rev. Valentin Pozaic, S.J., Kolegij Druzbe Isusova, Zagreb, Croatia
- Rev. Amirtha Raj, St. Charles Major Seminary, Naharashta State, India
- Rev. Fidele Rakotoarisoa, Seminaire Saint Pierre, Antananrivo, Madagascar
- Rev. Gary Riebe Estrella, The Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois, USA

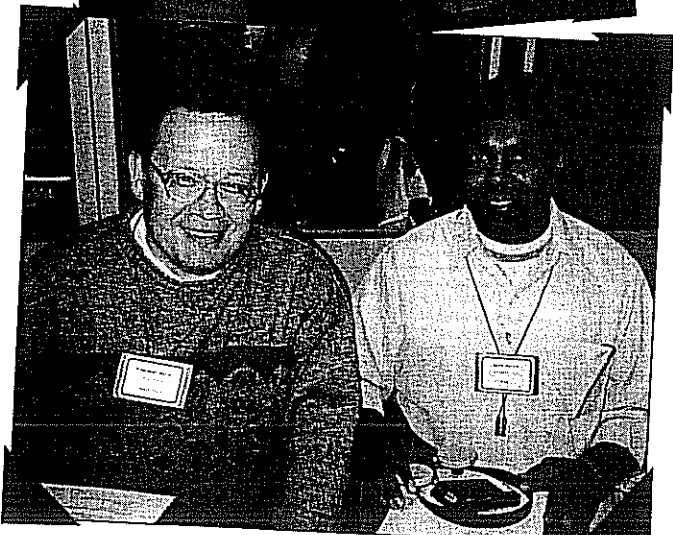
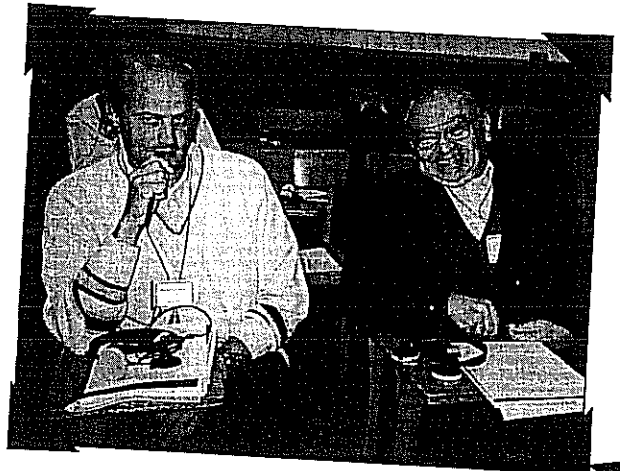
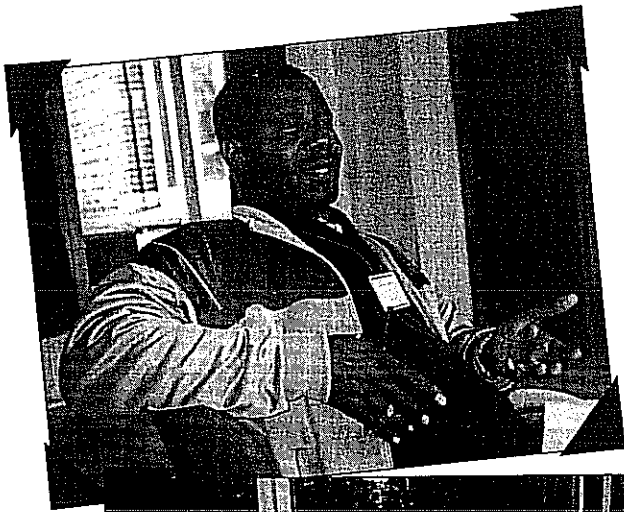
Rev. Mark Sang Ho Han, Suwon Catholic University, Hwasong-gun-Kyonggindo, Korea
Very Rev. Valerian Shirima, Arrupe College, Harare, Zimbabwe
Rev. Gonzalo Silva Merino, Colegio Maximo San Miguel-Jesuitas, Santiago, Chile
Rev. Wlodzimierz Skoczny, Sosnowiec Seminary, Krakow, Poland
Rev. Paulus Suparno, S.J., Kolese Ignatius, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Rev. Luc A. Tardif, O.M.I., Seminaire Universitaire St. Paul, Ottawa, Canada
Rev. Etienne Van Billoen, Seminaire Diocesain, Bruxelles, Belgium
Rev. Eric Vandem Berghe, Seminaire Diocesain a Bruges, Belgium
Rev. James Walsh, NCEA Seminary Department, Washington, DC, USA
Very Rev. David Windsor, The American College, Leuven, Belgium

SPEAKERS AND INVITED GUESTS

His Eminence Godfried Cardinal Danneels, Aartsbisdom Mechelen-Brussel, Belgium
Very Rev. Alsandas Balchand, S.J., Loyola House of Studies, Quezon City, Philippines
Rev. John F. Canary, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, Illinois, USA
Rev. Paul Cashen, St. Paul's National Seminary, Australia
Dr. John A. Dick, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium (Consultation Liaison)
Professor Doris Donnelly, Director, The Cardinal Suenens Program (Consultation Coordinator)
Rev. Michael Paul Gallagher, Collegio Internazionale Del Gesu, Rome, Italy
Rev. Edward Glynn, S.J., John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Rev. Gustavo Gutierrez, Catholic University of Lima, Peru
Rev. Michael Himes, Theology Department, Boston College, Massachusetts, USA
Mr. Fred Hofheinz, The Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
Most Rev. Walter Kasper, Bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Germany
Rev. Robert Marrone, St. Peter Church, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Msgr. Giovanni Moretti, Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium
Rev. Stanislaw Obirek, S.J., Collegio Maximo, Krakow, Poland
Rev. Carlos Rodriguez Souquet, Seminario Santa Rosa de Lima, Caracas, Venezuela
Rev. Peter Schineller, S.J., The Society of Jesus, Nigeria-Ghana Region, Lagos, Nigeria
Sister Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, Minnesota, USA
Rev. Jan Van der Veken, Hoger Instituut Voor Wusbegeerte, Leuven, Belgium

Scenes from the Consultation





Training Candidates for the Priesthood

Godfried Cardinal Danneels

Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels

Note: This presentation first appeared in Origins, Vol. 28, No. 15, September 24, 1998.



You are all very welcome in my Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels. I am very glad that you are here and I am happy to meet you. I hope that you will have a good conference in this fine city of Leuven, which for more than 550 years has been home to a Catholic university serving the Church and society.

I have been asked as an introduction to this consultation for rectors of major seminaries to present an overview of the situation of priestly formation following the Second Vatican Council. I'm going to tell you about the main factors, the situation, things which we have already accomplished and things which still remain to be done. Let me just give you a few ideas, some food for thought, because you will have many speakers over the next few days who will deal with more specific questions and issues.

My intervention will be inspired by the very important post-synod exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which appeared in 1992 and which gives us an outline of the general situation of seminary education and formation for priests throughout the Church. Since I am a bishop in western Europe, as you know, I would like to limit my remarks to the situation in western Europe and the United States and Canada. I will not, therefore, be speaking about Africa or Asia or Latin America. I apologize for these limitations which I imposed upon myself, and leave it to other speakers to inform you about the situation in other parts of the world.

Let me also tell you that I shall be giving you some personal opinions, which are, of course, open for discussion. I am going to be very frank and open with you, but I do not want to monopolize the truth or have you think that I would try to do that. My comments are based on the fruit of about 20 years, serving as a bishop in western Europe, in a very secular world.

From my vantage point, the real challenge for seminaries involves the education and formation of priests for the future—priests, according to the Gos-

pel, that Jesus would have wanted. We want to train seminarians for the future destined for specific tasks and destined for specific cultures and specific places. Here is a major problem for seminaries. We have to take priests as Christ would want them and not change their inner natures, their inner identities, but at the same time we need to form them so they are able to adapt at any moment to any culture or any country which might have need of them. This task, of course, is not easy, but it is the challenge and also the marvelous opportunity in seminary formation at this time.

So now let me turn to the challenges in northern Europe, western Europe above and below the Alps, and in North America—Canada and the United States.

Challenges in Formation

What are the great challenges for priestly formation in these areas? First of all, we are seeing a real scarcity of vocations. We have very, very few priests, particularly in Europe. If you look at Belgium, for example, there are very, very few vocations to the priesthood throughout the country. In Flanders, the north of the country, there are nine new candidates for a population of about five million Catholics in the country. The fact that there are so few seminarians in formation is, of course, a determining factor in many of the seminaries and gives rise to many problems. Because there are not many vocations, seminaries are turning into very small groups of people indeed. Training, therefore, concerns specific small units, which from a human point of view is often a disadvantage.

The education and formation of four or five candidates is not the same as training 50 or 100. There are many more difficulties, sometimes interpersonal, which become more intensified than they would be if the numbers were larger. Every day the faculties, formation personnel and the rectors face the difficulty of being confronted with small units and not with the whole, the many.

Second, the seminarians, too, have problems because they feel themselves a rare, perhaps endangered breed. Some feel they are alone in the world. Among some of the few who are in seminaries there exists, predictably, a specialized and exceptional psychology at work that gives rise to a lot of discouragement, doubts and hesitations. This would not be the case if you were in seminary with 100 or 200 others. When so many were preparing for the priesthood as was the case when I was in seminary, we shared a corporate identity. We were happy to be there. We were not exceptions to the rule. Today's situation is quite different.

Third, results of recruitment are often haphazard. When I was preparing for the priesthood, we were all roughly the same age. Nowadays, candidates are coming in at 18, 20, 30 and 40 years of age, and sometimes older. There exists no classic profile for those who enter seminary. Candidates for priestly formation are different, with different backgrounds. These factors, of course, add to their perception of themselves as exceptional, which does not make the rector's job any easier because each seminarian is like a completely different planet and for each one the rector and staff have to deal with a unique situation.

So you can see that these small groups made up of people from all different kinds of backgrounds, all sorts of personal histories, are very difficult to unify. To say the least, it is very difficult to draw up any kind of comprehensive program for each one. There is no standard formula anymore. There is no longer just one menu; everybody is eating a la carte, if you like.

Why So Few Candidates?

If we tried to determine the cause of there being so few people coming forward to prepare for the priesthood, we would find many reasons. In Belgium where we have so few candidates, we puzzle why this is so. After all, we have a very good tradition of priestly formation. People are very generous and very

much involved in the Church, and so are the young people. So what could the cause be? I don't want to go on too much about this, but let me just tell you a few of the reasons I've identified.

First of all, becoming a priest is no longer a social promotion. It is actually, perhaps, an instance of downward mobility, and the question is, who would choose to do such a thing? Who would choose as their profession to go down one step on the social ladder? In the past, of course, this was not the case. Priests were regarded highly and were respected persons in the world, in society and, of course, in the Church. Nowadays priests often come under a lot of criticism, and people feel sorry for them. Society does not accord them the prestige they once enjoyed.

A second reason for the scarcity is that families are getting smaller and smaller. What this means is that when parents have two children in a family they do not necessarily want to see one of them in the priesthood. Things were different when families had seven or ten or twelve children and were honored to have a priest in the family. In addition, many seminarians come from broken homes where the stability and warmth of family life were missing. This sometimes affects the transition into seminary life.

A third reason why so few candidates for the priesthood exist is that our society is almost entirely secular, a society where God has disappeared due to the influence of public life and the tabloids. Religion is no longer talked about on the radio or television except if there is some scandal. We seem to have moved out of the public eye. We are no longer taken seriously by the media. So this means that priests are

actually public people for private interests, because actually religion has become a private issue. Religion is something done in private and not talked about in public.

A fourth reason, then, for the scarcity of candidates for seminaries is that many people and many young seminarians grapple with a negative image of the Church and of the priesthood. This may be especially true with regard to diocesan priests. The diocesan priest is a generalist, i.e., he is a general practitioner who is on call to do everything, while monks and priests in religious orders at least can become specialists. A diocesan priest does not have the support of a community. He is on his own, and he is on the firing line every day for problems from individuals. He doesn't have the backup of many colleagues nor does he really have much backup even if some backup exists.

All of these elements go toward promoting a negative image of priests that is difficult to deal with when you want to become a priest. You would have to overcome this negative

image at each stage of your journey.

What is more difficult and tougher for young seminarians and young priests than what I have already mentioned is a fifth point, namely, that we are no longer looking toward the invisible in our society. The world no longer sees God. God has become invisible. For secularists, God has become a cosmic vital energy. God is no longer a person. God has been reduced.

Christ, too, has been reduced in our society. Some regard Him as just a man like any other because there is Buddha and Mohammed, and Christ is configured

Religion is no longer talked about on the radio or television unless there is some scandal. We seem to have moved out of the public eye. We are no longer taken seriously by the media.

along with all sorts of other prophets. Christ is not seen as particularly exceptional. He might be interesting but he's not unique. And the church? The church is perceived by many in society as a kind of philanthropic UNESCO, dealing with people generally in a spiritual manner but without reference to Christ.

There's nothing mysterious about the Church and the words, the words of the priest, are no longer heard as the words of Christ. People don't believe priests when they speak. The word of God is judged according to human criteria. So whether you communicate well determines whether or not people respect what you say. The public is not necessarily concerned with the direct message of Christ. They are concerned now with the messengers and whether they communicate the message properly.

This almost total disappearance of the sacramental principle of our Faith is a most important thing. The Church as a sacrament of salvation, the Word as sacrament of divine communication, the Eucharist as sacrament, not just a kind of noble symbolism, the Mass at the heart of worship and not as a theatrical event — all of these are crucial parts of our identity. The depth behind the symbols is no longer being perceived. Romano Guardini already complained about this at the end of his life. He said it is as if we had a blind patch on our retina. We can no longer see the invisible, and that is absolutely true.

Of course, this poses great problems for young priests. It is difficult for them to accept and to believe that in them, in their words, in their actions, and in their behavior, there is a sacramental aspect that is very deep and that can only be accessed by faith. The reason for the difficulty is that they are constantly

competing with better speakers than they are, more proficient orators, with people who are better communicators, with people who are better at organizing family and community life, and with a world that gives deference to these superficial things. All of this is exacerbated by the fact that the lay community no longer seems aware of the special sacramental nature of the message of Jesus mediated through the priests. So it is no wonder that vocations are becoming rarer and rarer.

Furthermore, it is becoming difficult and almost impossible for young people today to bear any kind of suffering, and this attitude has affected young priests and seminarians as well. What people are saying is that suffering should be avoided at all costs. People seem incapable of giving any deep meaning at all to suffering, and so many people have not suffered at all. There are children who have never been soaked by the rain. If it's raining, they are taken to their destinations by car. (Yet children

would be happy to go out and stand in the rain and be drenched!)

At the synod on the formation of priests, the cardinal from Sydney said that he was astonished that a priest who had been ordained for only two years left the priesthood, not because he could not be celibate, not because he had a crisis of faith, but because he was unable to bear failure of any kind. Priests like this never learned to integrate the cross into their lives. They may still be preaching the Gospel of the cross, but they do not see any importance or meaning in suffering and they do not know how to manage failure — or apparent failure.

Fifty years ago priests were preaching the cross on Easter Sunday, but now the opposite pertains in many areas. Even on Good Friday some are already

*The church is perceived
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kind of philanthropic
UNESCO...*

talking about the resurrection or wondering actually why Christ bothered to rise from the dead when he never really suffered that much, according to the way some theology is taught these days. So I think it was a very profound comment that the cardinal of Sydney made a few years ago regarding the difficulty of integrating the suffering represented by the cross.

Because there are a few, only a few priests, and because some of them have two or three or four different parishes, they cannot actually see what they've accomplished at the end of the year. Yet young people today are interested very much in results, in knowing precisely what they have achieved. At the end of the pastoral year, of course, you often cannot see what you've directly achieved. The principle of profitability, economic or otherwise, transposed into the realm of the spiritual simply does not work. It cannot be done. A priest may look at his ministry and think he probably has not accomplished anything at all, but that's not true. A different set of criteria measures what has been done in pastoral settings, and these criteria cannot be written down in figures on ledger sheets.

The last reason why I think there are very few vocations generally, particularly in Belgium but also in the United States and Canada, is that we have very generous, charitable youth involved in all sorts of charity and voluntary work, for example, in the Lenten campaign working with the Red Cross, with the disabled and the handicapped. I'd like to describe the work these young people do — and it is commendable — as having a very horizontal vision. It is horizontal generosity. Vertical generosity, doing something for God, is not something with which many are familiar. I think increasingly, and this is not a good thing, that we are defining and determining the specifics of Christianity in a horizontal manner.

What is a Christian? Someone who loves the poor, who is in solidarity with the poor, who sets the

prisoners free, who helps the downtrodden, who commits himself or herself entirely; and we no longer say that Christians are people who love God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their mind. The specificity of Christianity is not solidarity with those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Our specificity is that we love God, and when young people question that specificity — “Love God? What is that all about? We can't see God after all,” — the attitude has a ripple effect which is becoming a big problem. How can we attract and form people who come out of this kind of background with this kind of attitude?

All of these points, I think, suggest why vocations to the priesthood have become rarer and rarer.

Forming Priests for the Future

The issue before us now for those candidates who come to seminary is how we are to train priests for the future. I will make four points commenting on human formation, intellectual formation, theological formation, and spiritual formation.

Human Formation

First of all, there is the human side of formation and education. When young candidates come to seminary at 18, 20, 25 years of age, they are often not mature in the same way as people who were their age two or three decades ago. Thus, their development as human beings is not complete; it is ongoing. These are people who are very generous, but they are not stable; they are not solid. This does not apply only to seminarians, because I think many young people are like that. Adolescence is going on forever nowadays, it seems to me. You can be an adolescent until you are 20, 25, 30. A few years ago people were leaving home as quickly as possible; now they no longer want to leave home. They ask themselves, “Why would I leave home?” Occasionally, after a while parents say to themselves, “When are they going to leave?” So, we have eternal adolescence appar-

ently, which sometimes goes on until 40 or 50 years of age.

What we once called “shaking of the foundations” no longer applies, since many people no longer have any foundations. They are not rooted. They do not know where their affinity should lie, where they should be connected, because all their fixed points are moving. They can’t find poles to guide them; they are lost. There is no longer any philosophy to assist them.

All kinds of philosophy have been thrown out the window. The philosophical training they may have received in the past has been eliminated in favor of positivism. There seems to be no other system.

Along with the lack of intellectual grounding, there is also an absence of an emotional and affective foundation. People are having sexual experiences at an earlier age, and this is very frequent. There is, however, no emotional or affective stability accompanying these experiences.

Because family life is no longer what it was, young people live without a moral reference point. Moral subjectivity reigns: What’s good? Well, whatever gives me a good feeling. What’s bad? Well, it’s what harms me.

There is also no longer within our society a clear, fundamental ethical consensus on issues which one would expect to be obvious; for example, respect for life, which should be something automatic but even this is something that now needs to be codified into laws. Our society is becoming a society of judges and lawyers. If there is a problem, legislate. When laws and decrees are the basis of our moral code, there will always be loopholes, and this cannot be where we find the moral compass for our lives and world.

The absence of a moral reference point is, perhaps, connected with the absence of a parent, the father, in the lives of young people. The priest was always to some extent a “father” — a father in the best sense of the word, of course, not in a paternalistic way. Young people now are often missing a father figure both at home and in the church.

So what can we do in training candidates for the priesthood? I think we need to give weight to the human process of maturing. We need to try to find a

balance between law and liberty since many seminarians have a problem in this area. Sometimes they abuse liberty. They feel free to do what they want; they do not understand what this freedom could lead to in a positive sense.

An experience of freedom or liberty within seminary training is absolutely essential, but we also need to know about the law. When I was trained here at the interdiocesan Leo XIII seminary in Leuven in the 1950s with about 100 seminarians who studied at

the university, we learned how to be free, and at the same time we knew what was to be done, what the law was. There was no control exerted on us. It was more like an elastic cord. The rector met with us every lunchtime and made decisions that were needed, but it was also very important for us to know the laws, which we freely accepted and through which we compromised our own personal freedom. It was an important balance. Seminary formation involves learning how to exert our liberty in conjunction with the limits we need to set, respecting certain taboos.

One of the biggest difficulties for young seminarians is accepting and learning how to live with authority, and since seminarians have to transfer their understanding of authority to living with the Church,

The lay community no longer seems aware of the special sacramental nature of the message of Jesus mediated through priests.

with the Magisterium of the Church, this is a rather important issue. Often enough, if you ask young seminarians where they stand with regard to authority, they don't know what you are talking about. They are confused and when one hasn't learned in the seminary how to situate oneself with regard to authority, the relationship which priests later have with Rome becomes a serious issue. Thus, the question of authority remains one of the major problems in today's Church for priests. I won't say much about sexual or affective formation, but I think the level of training in this area is often very poor. Seminarians need to understand that celibacy in the priesthood is not understood by public opinion, so it becomes critical to educate them to withstand criticism because within their groups of friends and acquaintances not many are going to understand the importance of celibacy. Of course, the media does not understand it at all.

I think we need to purify the motivation for celibacy within the priesthood. We are celibate not to be able to work more, to put in more hours of work. There are many doctors who work longer hours than priests and who are married. The only real motivation for celibacy is being faithful to the total imitation of Jesus Christ. All other arguments for celibacy fall before this one, and if you don't want to do this, then don't come to seminary. Celibacy is an issue of love, and love cannot be explained or reasoned. Why am I celibate? Young people ask me all the time why I don't marry. The answer is, I don't know. Does that mean I'm not free? Not at all. I say to those young people who question me, "If you fell in love with a certain person and I asked you why, you would probably not have an answer either." Love is simply love. It cannot be explained. That's all there is to say.

Angelus Silesius, an author who lived centuries ago, said that the why and wherefore of the rose is the rose, and I would say the why and wherefore of celibate love for Christ is celibate love for Christ. It cannot be explained further than that. I would main-

tain that this motive for celibacy is an important part of the formation of seminarians and that we need to take advantage of the collective wisdom of psychologists and psychoanalysts as well in dealing with this subject.

I would say, however, that if you were to measure whether someone were living healthily as a celibate, you would need to look at the presence of joy. A celibate needs to be joyful. If you have a sad candidate in formation, my advice to you is to send him away. If he is joyful, keep him. In a famous story, a novice mistress once sought the advice of St. Vincent de Paul. She had two candidates for the order. One was melancholy, but she kept the rules faithfully. The other was extremely joyful, but disobedient. What should she do? St. Vincent de Paul replied unequivocally, "Send the melancholy one away and keep the joyful one." I agree with his judgment.

We also need to teach our seminarians and young priests how to live in a way consistent with celibate life. I think some do not know how to behave, so they do things that married people would never do; for example, they go on holiday where promiscuity prevails and they don't seem to realize what they are doing. I sometimes think they were all born on the 28th of December — I mean by that that they are all "innocents," all naive.

Seminarians need to know the rules of the friendship they have entered with Christ. After all, all friendships have rules — ways a person should behave. There are rules for how a seminarian or priest should behave with women and young girls. The rules that apply to celibates are in many ways similar to those married men have when they associate with women who are not their wives.

How often, in reflecting on celibacy, do I ask myself why more priests do not choose to live in community. If you look at St. Norbert, who founded a diocesan order during medieval times, he grouped

his priests for parish ministry together in his priories. I think perhaps today the time has come to do the same. Indeed, we may need to do that if we are to survive.

Most priests, of course, do not do that, and many priests do not like the idea at all. When it is proposed, priests often object. They have their own houses, apartments, freedom. They say, no thank you. I don't know what to do in response to that. Theoretically, I'm absolutely convinced nowadays that we need to see more community life, although in practice I do not see this happening.

Intellectual Formation

I am concerned about the intellectual formation in seminaries, especially since as recently as ten years ago training was essentially pastoral. We were against almost any kind of theory or serious theology in seminary. My good friend, Gustavo Gutierrez, with whom I studied in Leuven, said there is nothing more practical than theory, and that's true. A major problem for priests, as Cardinal Danielou said before he died, would be their intellectual qualities. I agree with that.

So many of our priests are afraid to talk with university professors. They go out of their way to avoid discussion groups, public meetings, forums and seminars, which I think is a shame. I don't think that helps us. It is important to have a good intellectual training and not to think that generosity and simplicity suffice. We need intelligent, generous, and prayerful priests, but never should one quality exist to the exclusion of the other.

Intellectual people, as we know, are not always appreciated, although this attitude is changing, especially here. There was a trend in the Church not many years ago when people questioned why seminarians should study two years of philosophy when they should be learning only about Christ. We fell into this trap of simplifying the intellectual formation of priests. I am absolutely convinced that philosophical background is essential — and I am talking about philosophy as a discipline in its own right.

Why is philosophy so important? Why should it be cultivated for its own sake? Because subjectivism is omnipresent. Simply look at people's tactile sensitivities to know that they believe what hurts them is bad and what gives them pleasure is good, although everyone knows that the truth sometimes hurts.

It is important that seminarians be shown that the truth is not something we invent solely with regard to ourselves. It is something which already does exist. Truth is a pre-existent structure, but we can move the furniture around within it even though we can't change the structure of the building. The individual is part

of the process, but he is not the master of all he surveys. He is, perhaps, the shepherd. He can lead the flock but he cannot create the flock.

What we want to do is to create a dialogue that will hold water. We are trying to create comparisons that will be valid. We need to learn to think, learn to judge, to be correct. We need to have rules for thought. We cannot simply say that it feels good so it's probably true. Philosophy and logic are important, and within this philosophical training, a spirit of

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synthesis is necessary or we will be lost with endless analysis.

I am also not convinced myself that we need to declare ourselves in favor of one true philosophy, even though I have a great deal of admiration for St. Thomas Aquinas. The Greek ideas as adapted by him for Christianity are a huge and excellent achievement, but we must bear in mind that there are good points in other philosophies. We need a system of thought, and we need a dorsal fin, as it were, on our backs to be able to discern the value of one system from another.

The synod on the formation of priests was very emphatic about all of this. Because of that, I found it important to organize an initiation year for seminary candidates. We did this ten years ago for the French-speaking part of our country and a few years ago for the Dutch, and it is working very well. Now anyone who comes into the seminaries, whatever their background, has a year of initiation and catching up in three major areas: first, in the content of our Faith they need to be given a catechism; second, they need to learn dogma; and third, they need to learn liturgy, the psalms and the Bible.

Some of our pre-candidates don't know what Advent is or what Lent is. Some think the feast of the Ascension is the anniversary of when we sent the first cosmonaut into space. It's incredible, this lack of knowledge! Thus, it is necessary to have at least a year to catch up as well as a year to discern whether they truly have a vocation to the priesthood. Sometimes candidates have not had a conversation in depth with a priest or spiritual guide. They come in broadminded and well-intentioned, but sometimes with not too much content on board. A Russian Orthodox bishop once told me his candidates for priesthood had generous spirits but did not know much about the Christian faith. *Fides qua* yes, but *fides quae* - all of that is nonexistent.

After this initiation year, the candidates are al-

ways happy to have gone through it. We also find the number of young people who leave seminary after the preliminary year is few. Since we have so few seminarians, our statistics may not be scientifically valid, but not many seem to leave after their initiation year.

Now to the theological formation.

Theological Formation

We need to explain theological methods and to teach the relationship between revelation and human thought, between science and faith, and between philosophy and faith. There is a theological genius or essence, if you will, so that if you read authors, you can tell whether they have this or not; whether they are just philosophers or humanists; whether they have been slightly influenced by theology; or whether they are truly inspired by theology. Theology is a specificity. You can tell whether it's there or not, and we need to teach seminarians how to discern this.

My definition of theological formation — and I may be mistaken about this — is that it is based on two things: the Bible and liturgy. If you look at *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the fathers of the council said that the aim of all theological training was to move everything toward the liturgy. I myself thought that was a bit exaggerated, but in any case I see that their counsel has not been applied at all.

The Bible and the tradition and liturgy are the pillars for training a theologian. I want to be very subtle in the way I express myself here. They are always more important than any systematization of our Faith. Dogmatics is kind of systematizing after the event with the help of a philosophy of that which one may take from revelation and translate into a system. Thus, I feel dogmatics must continually be recentered in biblical reference and liturgy in order to be renewed and refreshed.

What is not acceptable is to think that everything is written in canon law. There is a trend in some circles of the Church to simplify things. Some say,

“Don’t bother reading the Bible. Find the information in canon law.” Fortunately, canon law is more theological now than it was, but even so, if you focus only on canon law you are missing a great deal.

Often when we ask someone about baptism, they quote the applicable canons. Of course, everything about baptism is not in canon law. Canon law is the necessary legal prescription for entering and remaining in the Church. It is absolutely indispensable, but it is not theology. There are some who say everything can be found in canon law, and I say that those people are just lazy. I have nothing against canon law. Indeed, I am fond of it because legal texts are important and deserve to be read, but not everything is in there. Please do not let us fall into the situation we had before Vatican II.

Let’s now turn to the Magisterium in its precise position. I believe that the Magisterium is indispensable. Besides, it was wholeheartedly desired by Jesus. I think in the Anglican church you can notice the absence of a Magisterium. They have the Archbishop of Canterbury, their primate, but what they seem to be looking for is a higher referee. I have esteem for the Magisterium; certainly it is absolutely essential, but it can never replace the Bible. So, the Magisterium is from the order of serving.

There are two other important points that I believe are necessary in theological formation: ecclesiology and sacramentology. These are, perhaps, two halves of the same issue. In order to believe in the law of the Incarnation in the Church, there must be a visible and invisible part. The visible always points toward the invisible, which is the most important. In sacraments the visible gestures point the way toward invisible grace, and invisible grace is always

the most important issue. Formation in these areas is crucial and teaching seminarians how to contemplate, how to look closely, is indispensable for Catholic priestly training. This is the core of Catholicism: sacrament and sacramentality.

In morality it is absolutely essential to insist on the objective aspects of good and evil. Good and evil are not concepts that can be manipulated. Good goes before us and evil goes before us; they are already there before we become involved. Moral subjectivism, which allows the individual to be the arbiter of

what is good and what is evil, is disastrous for life in society. While some objected, sometimes seriously, to *Veritatis Splendor*, it is the value of *Veritatis Splendor* that evil and good are objectified.

While some Catholics expressed opposition to *Veritatis Splendor*, many unbelievers were in favor of it. American maga-

zines did not believe what they were reading! They said it was a marvelous text against the skepticism, indifference and chaos that surrounded us. One can argue about many things but the fundamental objectification of good and evil is something absolutely indispensable.

We need also to teach seminarians how to interpret the “signs of the times.” Everyone talks about signs of the times, but we must teach how to apply evangelical discernment to determine the correct signs of the times and to give seminarians the sense of the genius or essence of what is Catholic and what is theology. There does exist an essence or genius that is essentially Catholic and an essence or genius that is essentially theological, and it is very important to pass on the ability to sniff out, to know instinctively, what is essentially Catholic. To be able to pick up the scent of what is Catholic — and to train seminarians

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Christ.*

in these instincts — is all part of seminary formation.

When I was writing for a newspaper 30 years ago, my mother used to tell me that she read what I wrote and often did not understand it, although given the source, she felt it must be true. It seemed to me that if she didn't understand what I wrote, then it probably was not true, and often that was the case. She had an instinct, a nose, if you will, for the truth of Catholicism. She never studied theology, but it was her training in the Faith which was with her all her life that enabled her to have that instinct.

With this in mind, I began the reform of the curricula in our seminary in the French-speaking side and the Dutch-speaking side. We were at the time being asked to teach everything in the seminary: media, music, diction, homiletics, listening skills, pastoral care, ecumenism, Latin — everything! So, when seminarians left at the end of the day, they did so with a random assortment of knowledge. Every year, of course, the situation became more complicated as we were asked to add even more to the curriculum. One day I had had enough. I said that we could discuss the plan I was proposing but that I was absolutely against subjects being divided up and diluted and that we simply could not keep up with the demands to add more and more trends to the program of study. The time had come to set limits for ourselves, and I proposed that for three years we focus on serious theology. I was quite draconian in the measures I took. A few major areas would need to be covered: eight hours for the Sacred Scriptures, four hours for dogma, four hours for moral theology, two to three hours for Church history and two to three hours of sacramentology and liturgy. That is all. It's hard, it's tough, but it gives students a kind of weaponry; and I think they are well-trained because of that. As for diction, music, the pastoral care of the sick, these areas could be managed in separate modules, perhaps two-day courses, for which seminarians could gather every fortnight or so.

The pastoral side is also important, but sending a first-year seminarian who has not studied theology to do pastoral work usually means he doesn't know what to do. He listens but he doesn't have the tools; he lacks the necessary background. It's like sewing a tapestry onto nothing. Thus, the fourth year of study is devoted absolutely and totally to pastoral issues. At that point they will have three years of theology behind them, and in the fourth year they will go to parishes and return for two-day seminars to think about pastoral theory, tell us what's happening, and return to their pastoral settings. As deacons they are able to be active in their parishes. I prefer this system of three years of rigorous intellectual training, which is limited in nature, and then one full year of pastoral theory and practice. That is, of course, something to be discussed and it doesn't happen in all seminaries in Belgium by any means.

Something else which seems indispensable and not often talked about is the cultural background or training given to our seminarians. Are seminarians familiar with the arts? With literature? With films that they could discuss afterwards? Are they conversant with the technological and scientific world in which they live? Do seminarians actually ever read anything? Sometimes it seems they don't even read the newspapers! Seminarians need to be taught how to enter the world of culture, which is immense, beautiful and interesting. They are often immature, I know, but they could at least be introduced to those things.

As a professor of liturgy in Bruges, I taught a class on confession and reconciliation, and in the first three months from September to December I read with the seminarians the major works on sin, repentance, expiation, crime and punishment. We read Dostoyevsky, Graham Greene, Julien Green, Francois Mauriac, and Franz Kafka right up until Christmas. My colleagues commented that this was not theology but literature, and they were right. Yet, if you read

the Greek tragedies, *Oedipus* and *Antigone*, you see sin, faults, pardon, redemption, repentance, remorse, expiation and vengeance in authors who deal deeply with themes central to Christianity. I sense culture as an extremely important aspect of the formation of our seminarians, and I oppose the training in the pastoral and theological areas and nothing else.

Spiritual Formation

When it comes to spiritual formation, in my opinion only one thing is important: to teach seminarians about Christ and to nurture in them the love of Christ. At the end of seminary what we want are priests who love Christ.

Spirituality is neither a method, a "trick," nor a textbook. It is a person about whom we are talking and a relationship with the person of Christ. The basis of spiritual training, I believe, is the Bible, liturgy, and the liturgical feasts and seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost. This is all extremely important. Any other spiritual issue will be lost at some stage, but this is something the seminarians will have for the rest of their lives. It will accompany them to death. The spiritual formation we give must be founded on the liturgy and the Bible. Seminarians need to be familiar with the word of God, which they seldom read. There is an absence of *lecho divina*, the monastic tradition par excellence, which we do not see very often in our seminaries either.

As for what is to be read in addition to the Bible, it is probably well to begin with the doctors of the Church, not with the 20th century, and to read texts along with the students. It is pointless to go through

a survey of the history of spirituality because they will forget that. Some texts come to mind: The Confessions of St. Augustine, the *Memorialia* of St. Gregory, the sermons and homilies of St. Bernard, the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the writings of St. Vincent de Paul, of St. Therese of Lisieux, of St. John of the Cross, and of St. Teresa of Avila. We were often told in the past in liturgy classes to read Hippolytus, to read the eucharistic prayers, to read the sermons of the fathers. It is just like working with the Bible: You need to read and then study to analyze the

texts. We should not be teaching spirituality one step removed. It is all well and good to talk about Augustine, but there is no substitute for reading Augustine along with your students.

For prayer, the foundation is the psalms. I suffer from the fact that there are so many priests, and we ought not to be under any illusions here, who have been ordained 50 and 60 years and who merely read the psalms. The psalms have never actually entered into their hearts nor had any emotional impact on them. For many years now I have not heard a sermon where a priest

actually quoted a verse from the psalms.

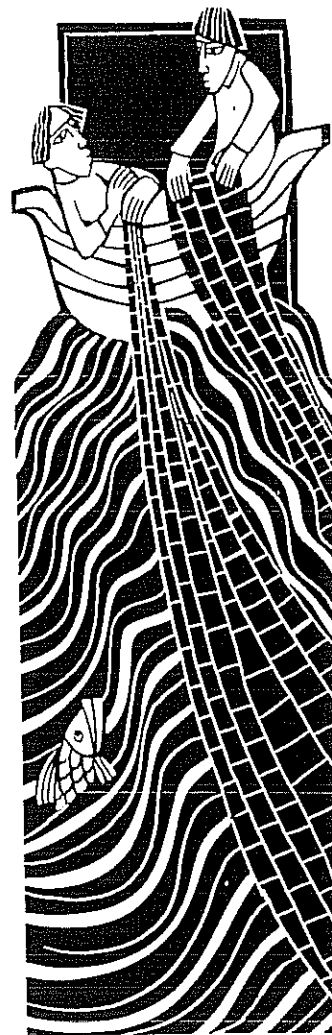
The spiritual training of priests involves training their hearts to be a good pastor. Link them to Christ, the Good Shepherd. Christ was the only Good Shepherd. We need to educate seminarians in spirituality, teaching them how to give their lives to Christ, how to sacrifice themselves for the Cross, to train them in Eucharist theology and spirituality. All of this is absolutely essential.

A most essential issue for me is that we will have succeeded in training seminarians when we have suc-

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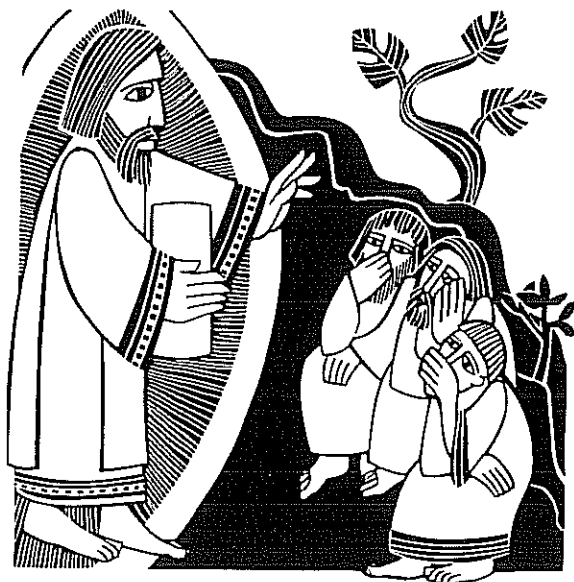
ceeded in having them love the Church. If you ask me about priestly spirituality, I would suggest that it be a spirituality of the Good Shepherd who loves the Church passionately, who is sick when the Church is sick, who rejoices when the Church rejoices, who loves the Church. This is extremely important. A priest who is happy with the Church, but who is not spiritually and psychologically attached to the Church and who does not think of the Church as part of his own flesh is a risk. The Church needs to become part of their very beings. If they are not prepared to accept this, they are distancing themselves internally, and it will divide them. It will, if you like, make them schizophrenic.

In summary, what this means is that at the end of training a young priest coming out of seminary should feel completely at ease with his identity as a priest. He is a priest. He is special. He is original. He should be completely at ease among the laity, and he needs to find his place serenely, joyfully, happily, without feeling superior to be people, without feeling inferior to people, without any complexes at all. Surrounded by the laity, the best we can hope for is that he does not feel isolated or overcome. Coming out of seminary as a priest who is happy, who is secure in his identity as a priest, who is intellectually alive, in love with Christ and committed to the Church is what we hope for. It is a miracle when that happens, and it is what can happen in your seminaries with God's help. ✚



Faith Development of Seminarians

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“What does grace do to a person?”, I was once asked during an oral theology examination by a wise and wily professor. I offered many complex answers from Scripture and the history of theology but he wanted me to “go for the jugular.” The simple core that he tried to extract from me was that grace **changes** a person! It was his way of translating Bernard Lonergan’s insistence that a prolonged process of “conversion is basic to Christian living.”¹

Such an intensely personal opening to God cannot be programmed but it can be prepared, just as putting up scaffolding allows construction work to go ahead. In this sense a seminary is a place of scaffolding to foster the faith development of future priests, which means their “movement into deeper and more comprehensive love.”² Psychological and spiritual reflection simply helps to identify key moments in a long journey from self-absorption to self-giving. How can seminary formation foster faith maturity in the sense of freedom for Christian discipleship? That is the biggest question and one towards which this paper can only make some suggestions from psychology, theology, spirituality, and from my own experience.

In the first part of the presentation I will try to gather important findings from the field of developmental thinking concerning faith. In a later section I hope to push these insights towards more specifically Christian and vocational horizons. In all this exploration we have the encouragement of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* which from the beginning stresses “the ‘human character’ of God’s minister”.³ Indeed on the many occasions throughout the text when it speaks of different aspects of priestly formation, it always puts them in the following order: human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral. Here, too, I will be concentrating first on the human ground of faith in the person and then on its frontier with spiritual development.

Psychology of Religious Development

The last two decades have witnessed an ava-

lanche of writing on the psychology of religious development. To prepare myself for this presentation I revisited several of these books by such authors as William Perry, Sharon Parks, James Fowler, Scott Peck, Joanne Conn, William Bridges, Carol Gilligan, Robert Kegan, and Timothy O'Connell. Although these various authors do not deal explicitly with seminary formation, practically all are agreed that it is now possible to name certain predictable stages in faith development and to link these stages with various age-groups. Obviously they are not offering a fixed formula that is always followed in the life of a person but rather a map of hopes, a series of predictable transitions in faith language. Notice that I say "faith language": certainly there can be a deepening in one's grasp of the rich content of faith but the main focus of faith development theories has to do with "fides qua" rather than "fides quae". It deals with how faith is felt, lived, received, experienced, prayed rather than with a deepening of appreciation of the credal richness of faith.

I would like to introduce this summary of faith development insights by going back to someone who wrote half a century before most of the contemporary authors, to Friedrich von Hügel and his masterpiece, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, published in 1927. There he spoke of three elements of religion that can be linked with childhood, youth, and adulthood. In his view all three dimensions are necessary for maturity of faith but they arrive gradually as capacities at definite periods of life. The child lives imaginatively and unselfconsciously within an institutional kind of faith, marked by a certain obedient belonging to an external tradition. The youth, however, runs into questions and needs a more critical and intellectual strand in faith: it is an interpretation of life that needs to give reasons for itself. For von HÜgel the adult stage of faith goes beyond the institutional and the rational dimensions to what he calls "self-determination" in a more "experimental and mystical" phase.

By this he means that religion is experienced in depth, in his own words that it "is rather felt than seen or reasoned about, is loved and lived rather than analyzed, is action and power, rather than either external fact or intellectual verification".⁴

We might translate his three phases into other words and say that as life unfolds, faith can and should discover new frontiers of growth: it moves from childhood belonging through youthful questioning and discerning to a more adult rootedness in commitment and in contemplation. Yet, von HÜgel goes further in his argument and suggests that these three dimensions - of community and head and heart - remain in tension in the mature believer and in theology itself. If the "institutional element" dominates, there is a danger that religion will become "a thing fixed in itself" and may forget that "full trust" is "in a person towards a Person".⁵ If intellectual reflection dominates, the danger is logical system at the expense of community and feeling. If the so-called "mystical" element becomes too exclusive, it can be impatient with the limitations of a human Church and the slowness of human understanding.

Hence, for von HÜgel these three elements are not only successive stages but more importantly essential components within a converging maturity of faith. It is like a chord with three notes, the note of Church fidelity, the note of facing questions and searching out answers, and the note of spiritual surrender in personal depth. He is refreshingly honest about the pain of transition from one phase to another. The contemporary relevance of his ideas to seminary situations seems clear. Seminarians need a sense of Church fidelity that does not narrow itself into rigid loyalism. They need a speculative openness to exploring new questions of today but one that does not collapse into crippling intellectualism. They need a spiritual and contemplative capacity that does not reduce faith to pious or narcissistic intimism. I will add that I have come across all three of these different

imbalances in seminarians. So the challenge of faith maturity as envisaged by von HÜgel remains actual: it spurs us to aim at a difficult integration of three aspects of faith life - belonging within a church tradition, alertness to the sensibility of the culture, and a fruitful spirituality of personal depth.

As early as 1970 William Perry studied patterns of ethical development in university students, seeking to pinpoint how they arrived at the maturity to make adult commitments. He analyzed as typical the transition from the self-certainty of absolutistic structures of the younger student through a period of self-doubt induced by the shock of a relativistic world of multiple interpretations to the capacity to enter into stable commitments without denying the existence of many valid alternatives. When he came to ask what was the key factor enabling young people to cross this threshold from resenting the complexity of the world to being able to choose their road within such multiplicity, his conclusion was expressed as follows: "the most important support seemed to derive from a special realization of community. This was the realization that in the very risks, separateness, and individuality of working out their commitments, they were in the same boat not only with each other but with their instructors as well". Although he was examining a non-religious world, what Perry adds concerning the faculty of a university translates perfectly into the world of a seminary: to offer this experience of community as fostering growth, the faculty needs "a certain openness - a visibility in their own thinking, groping, doubts, and styles of commitment".⁶ In other words, the creation of the fostering

of faith development will ask the faculty to model a certain honest presence as faith companions with the seminarians and not just as administrators of a house of priestly training.

In this connection Sharon Parks in *The Critical Years*, her study of the search for faith commitment in the young adult phase of life, comments at one point that "a mentoring environment" is essential if people are to come through the various growth challenges fruitfully.⁷ A seminary is surely a "mentoring environment" through its structures and programs but

more so if its formation staff embodies a journey of Christian commitment and offers supportive space for students to move forward towards maturity.

What is faith in this context of psychological research? Parks insists on seeing faith as an "activity" as distinct from the more static notions of religion or belief. It is, she argues, a "primal force" in human beings which in the light of revelation comes to be "an active dialogue with promise." As such, and this is surely in harmony with the intuitions of Cardinal Suenens, "faith is affective as well as cognitive in character."⁸

Parks' picture of the young adult period highlights a typical movement from authority-bound attitudes to church and God through a dangerous and relativist moment of "shipwreck", where trust in external obedience can collapse, to a more integrated capacity to live out one's faith commitment, allowing both for one's own complexity and for the complexity of the world. I think we will have no difficulty in recognizing the authority-bound tendency in some seminarians. It often interprets vocation in terms of loyalty to a tradition, even to the externals of a tra-

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dition. As Parks says, it also tends to be "dualistic" in the sense of forging one's identity "over against" those who do not belong to this mentality, and she adds, accurately I think, that in this phase, "there is little or no tolerance for ambiguity."⁹

James Fowler has become the best-known authority in this field of faith development and he, too, outlines a typical movement from "ideological" conformity to the group towards ownership and responsibility for one's commitments. I find him, however, especially useful in his description of the "vulnerability" born from "sacrament" of self-defeat.¹⁰ This comes, perhaps, only later in adulthood, when a person's own fragility and experience of the pain of the world gives a more gentle tone to faith and to ministry. As Michael Buckley has argued, we should be asking "Is this man weak enough to be a priest?", in the sense of having experienced the fruitful failure that allows him to share the sympathy of Christ (as described in Hebrews 4: 15).¹¹ One of the criteria for ordination should certainly be some compassionate gentleness and generosity towards the wounded of the world.

Turning to another major theorist in this field, the psychological insights of Robert Kegan have been widely recognised as relevant to spiritual formation. Like other constructive-developmental thinkers, such as Fowler or Kohlberg, Kegan lists a series of stages on the road towards maturity stressing, however, that each stage is part of an "on-going process" of "meaning-making".¹² In his view, growth always involves an "emergence from embeddedness",¹³ in the sense that we are being challenged to leave behind comfortable places of passive belonging and move into real relationship to ourselves, to God and to our world. One can immediately see the pertinence of this insight for the seminary situation. There is a danger that the seminary itself can become a form of "embeddedness" that could be unhealthy on at least two fronts: as tempting a seminarian to "nest" within a safe world

of conformity to roles and rules (which would be a form of non-growth on the personal level), and, secondly, as not offering challenging exposure to the realities of ministry (which would be non-growth on a vocational level).

Another light from Kegan is his thesis that mature self-surrender comes after one has developed two previous and crucial capacities in order to evolve beyond them: these are the capacity for mutual friendship and for institutional loyalty. These are, of course, not abandoned as a person moves on to greater depth and self-transcending freedom but they are no longer at the center of the stage. Their limitations diminish while their strengths remain: friendships continue but become less dependent in an adolescent sense; institutional roots continue but the "ideological" agenda of approval and achievement gives way to standing more on one's own feet. If a person becomes stuck at this stage on being a "loyalist", in Kegan's words "the maintenance of the institution" and its various languages can "become the end in itself". The "performance" of a "role" can block the further state of "self-surrender" and of "adult love relationship".¹⁴

Translated into our concerns, the danger is a familiar one: a seminarian can remain so caught up in the agenda of Church externals that his development becomes paralysed at what the French theologian Marcel Légaut would call "ideological faith" and fails to reach a genuinely "personal faith" in Christ.¹⁵ In Kegan's interesting expression there is a tendency to "over-defend" the stage that one is being invited to leave behind; indeed every growth involved in the long "motion of life" will provoke resistance.¹⁶ Those emerging from excessive embeddedness in institutional loyalty may experience panic that the contract of fidelity they have lived seems no longer a trustworthy anchor. It can, in fact, continue as an anchor for them but not as the one and only embodiment of their mature commitment. As against self-definition mainly in terms of function or system, there remains the more

personal adventure of intimacy and self-giving. It is here, and perhaps only here, that a genuinely religious conversion is located.

Application to Seminary Situations

Some such map of movements - from convention through confusion to commitment and later on towards compassion - is a pattern identified, in different words, by practically all these explorers of development. The threshold of young adulthood comes about when an adolescent version of tight security is challenged and often collapses under the pressure of new experience. This is where a Biblical-style desert wandering can take place. Clarity gives way to drifting. Smooth progress can be surprised by darkness and something of the unbelief unavoidable in today's culture. The old structures no longer offer credible support to confront the challenges of complexity. A seminarian in touch with the "weakness" of contemporary culture may easily experience bouts of doubt and uncertainty about faith. On this point my questions to you are these: does this necessary transition from security to a confronting of complexity happen during the seminary period or afterwards?

Is it not dangerous to have this collapse into relativism happen after ordination? In what ways can this struggle be encouraged to emerge within the mentoring environment of the seminary? How can the key growth towards mature commitment and compassion be fos-

tered?

Any answer to these questions must recognize the essential interdependence between "cognitive development" and "the affective, emotional life of the person."¹⁷ A merely intellectual exposure to psychological maps can serve some purpose in clarifying a possible journey. Actually travelling from one destination to another is usually a slow and demanding adventure, and at the centre of seminary formation is the question of how to accompany this adventure fruitfully, keeping in mind not simply personal growth patterns but the goal of freedom for ministry in a complex culture. The hope is to guide the seminarian's pilgrimage from unhelpful rigidity through potentially perilous drifting to mature personal rootedness in spirituality and service. Rigidity in seminarians often takes the form of self-definition through the roles and functions of priesthood, and although this can seem like vocational suitability on the level of external behaviour, it is dangerous if it means a lack of mature personal identity and even a fear of real relationships with people and with Christ. Even some of the normal traditions of the seminary, including clerical dress, can provide a facile and ready-made identity that blocks personal development. For years now, through the ministry of directed retreat with seminarians, I have noted again and again that how a man relates with himself and with close friends is exactly how he relates with Christ - or fails to do so.

Rigidity in seminarians often takes the form of self-definition through the roles and functions of priesthood, and although this can seem like vocational suitability on the level of external behavior, it is dangerous if it means a lack of mature personal identity and even a fear of real relationships with people and with Christ.

In fact, in recent times I have met with more than one young priest in some degree of post-seminary vocation crisis. In practically all cases the level of faith development had remained stuck at the loyalty-cum-generosity stage, without arriving at a language of genuinely personal faith and hence without arriving at the further stage of being able to live serenely with ambiguity. In one instance, it was a case of having clung to a black-and-white version of faith, of being condemnatory of the pagan culture around, and of having been trained - in family and minor seminary - to see priesthood as the only worthwhile path in life. When this man ran into the surprise of an emotional relationship, it put all these previous certainties into question. His faith was so ideologically church-centered that when a powerful experience of affectivity presented itself, the personal dimension of faith was not deep enough to cope with it.

In my experience over-identification with clerical roles or with ecclesial externals can be a warning signal about lack of both psychological and spiritual development. At least five important growth areas can suffer from malnutrition behind the facade of correctness and obedience: a grateful sense of one's own self, including a gentle understanding of one's struggles and shadows; a capacity for trust and intimacy in the zone of human friendship; the spiritual ability to reach a level of personal prayer as distinct from performing exercises of devotion or self-sermonizing; a certain serenity with the complexity of culture and diversity of church life; a happy expectation that priestly life will bring many changes, outer and inner. Those five areas do not exhaust the fields of faith development

but they do indicate five crucial relationships: to oneself, to others, to God, to one's different contexts, and to time as always unfolding in unknown ways.

Developmental Characteristics

More positively (and echoing indirectly Sharon Parks' work) we are now in a position to recognize certain characteristics of a development from fragile to more confident self-dependence, which is typical of young adult growth:

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personally, it will mean overcoming the temptation to cling to islands of self-security and instead learning to live with one's own fragility;

communally, this multi-faceted transition will not be possible without a lived experience of trust and companionship with others who are making similar journeys.

spiritually, it often involves a discovery of the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit and levels of deeper personal prayer;

culturally, it will include a new openness to the diverse and paradoxical aspects of human experience and an ability to discern the culture without merely scapegoating it;

pastorally, it will be able to face more serenely the always changing complexity of the mission fields around.

Specifically Christian Horizons of Growth

This convergence of insights to be gathered from the field of developmental psychology is impressive but could be accused of not really facing some crucial and specific issues of Catholic seminaries. There is, for instance, the tendency to focus so exclusively on the individual as to neglect the crucial role of the

Christian community. There is again a danger of buying into the assumptions of secularist psychology whose underlying philosophy promotes an uncostly version of self-fulfillment and which falls far short of the radical conversion that is at the heart of Gospel discipleship. Indeed at the mathematical half-way point of Mark's gospel comes the climactic moment of Peter's recognition of Jesus as Messiah, followed at once by two further developments: the revelation that the Messiah is on a road to the Cross and the quasi-automatic resistance on the part of Peter to this image of a suffering Messiah. From that point onwards the second part of Mark's gospel is largely devoted to formation for discipleship as entailing a surrender of common-sense assumptions about power and possessions and pride in order to enter a fuller sharing of the heart-options of Jesus. We were talking about moving from embeddedness to relationship in various ways as signs of maturity: here the call is to let go not only of a cultural embeddedness, but of being more profoundly and personally imprisoned in assumptions about one's self and its security.

In that light a whole other dimension of faith development presents itself, and one which has not been adequately explored in the psychologists summarized here already. To move into this area is like the major leap of wavelength found in the series of questions posed to the candidate during the ceremony of priestly ordination. The first three concern a willingness for generous service - of the Word, of Sacrament, of community - but the fourth question is about uniting oneself daily with the Lord, and the answer symbolically and eloquently changes to "I am, with the help of God".

A seminary is concerned not only with professional training but with this deeper agenda of offering scaffolding for radical Christian conversion. If that scaffolding is to be fruitful within today's context, excessively private versions of spiritual direction may not be enough. Formation needs to confront how the

surrounding culture can undermine the Gospel and block the faith development of seminarians in subtle ways. They will need skills of cultural discernment to wean them from the potentially sub-Christian curriculum of their upbringing in order to prepare them to experience the transforming life-call Christ as counter-cultural. There is, indeed, a danger of being too innocent about the power of the culture and of reducing faith development to a narrowly spiritual and psychological realm. In the strong words of George Ashenbrenner, the seminary must administer a sort of blood transfusion:

"Having breathed in the smog and fumes of the radically secular and often un-Christian values of contemporary culture for many years, the candidate, good and sincere in many ways, has coursing through his bloodstream - usually quite beyond awareness of his own - a spirit diametrically opposed to authentic Christian ministry. A spirit of autonomy, individualism, and therapeutic comfort, as just a few examples, must be purged from the bloodstream . . . The radical reorientation described here must push beyond the mind to the heart, where another set of habits needs to underlie and fuse with those of the mind".¹⁸

Where can this conversion be fostered in seminary formation? Must it be left to the realm of spiritual direction and to times of retreat? To get a realist perspective on these questions I draw on the work of an Irish religious sister and psychologist. Some years ago Brenda Dolphin did a research project to investigate a possible link between psychological maturity and internalization of Gospel values. Her method, to summarize with drastic brevity, was as follows. She developed a narrative test and asked her candidates, who included a good proportion of seminarians, to compose a Gospel summary that would do justice to

key values in the New Testament account of Jesus. She also did a series of personality assessments with the same group to establish their level of maturity. Then she correlated the two sets of tests and discovered a clear connection between psychological immaturity and an avoidance of any cost-of discipleship themes in the Gospel summary.

Those who showed up as less integrated in terms of personal growth were those who tended to reduce the Gospel to a nice cozy story of love. Their prayer tended to be "dilettante," their levels of self-discipline were low, and they also shielded themselves from the tougher challenges of faith development that dominate the second half of Mark's gospel. Brenda Dolphin's conclusions went even further: she found that "even the more obviously consoling parts of the message of Christ find only a weak echo in their hearts".¹⁹ They were largely unable for depth or for steady self-transcendence. They were blocked over joy just as much as over self-renunciation. Moreover, since this inability to internalize values was on the existential and psychological level of their humanity, it could not be helped by theories of spirituality. This superficiality on the level of motivation does not simply disappear with time, or with theological studies. A person may learn to proclaim certain ideals verbally and notionally but, nevertheless, may remain unable to appropriate them and live them. In Sister Brenda's words it is a situation of "yes but", where the "yes" is the official answer and the "but" represents a certain paralysis over faith development or real conversion. In her view help can best be found through "vocational growth sessions" which would aim at "a gradual growth in internalizing the values of Christ".²⁰

If the spiritual damage of such immaturity is serious, and points, in fact, to probable unhappiness as future priests, what kind of assistance can a seminary offer? Some form of psychological therapy could clearly meet these deeper and hidden needs.

At this point I can, perhaps, offer a few tentative asides on the possible role of liturgy in faith formation. There is a danger of idealizing language in this particular area. We have to ask what does liturgy really mean within the sub-culture that is the seminary and within the psychological and spiritual horizons of the seminarian? Everything depends on how worship is lived and how animated, and more so on the dispositions brought to liturgy. External care in ritual can come to seem the fullness of liturgical wisdom. Yet, ceremonies in themselves can be regressive blocks to growth. If they are performed in routine fashion, they could offer de-formation, an image of a church as a safe spiritual comfort zone without challenge and without links to lived realities. Besides, the question about liturgy can never be answered within its own context: it needs to be connected with the existential adventure of the seminarian's growth.

On this last point I asked a priest only a few years ordained about his faith development in the seminary and his answer was eloquent and pointed:

"All through seminary I was trained in various skills - preaching, sacramental ministry, plus the study of theology. That was the main agenda, a professional one. In addition, there was the daily outline of acceptable behavior, keeping the various rules. That, too, was an external agenda. Then there was the so-called internal forum of spiritual direction or retreats, which trained me in various ways of personal prayer. But only after ordination did I discover my own humanity in the realities of life and ministry. In the seminary they had certainly told me that my human qualities were important but it remained an abstract notion. Only from experiences, some painful, some joyful, have I learned that the core of priesthood lies in a quality of human presence to people. Not

even prayer can open this door: it needs a slow human journey of growth. But my seminary believed in talk about experience rather than actual experience. I would have welcomed more concrete guidance for my development, some opportunity to see how the strands in formation could come together. As it was, the outer and inner remained separate, and human growth was left to chance”.

In something of this spirit, *Making Disciples*, by Timothy O’Connell offers the honest self-questioning of a professor of theology. He comes to see that his classes in moral theology had not made contact with “those levels where the students really lived”.²¹ How could he form them in intentional discipleship? Not only by talking about the reordering of life’s priorities. Formation for conversion requires reaching people’s affectivity, and this can best be done, argues O’Connell, through a relationship with the teacher that can have an impact on the imagination of the students: “We can change our experiences by changing our images”.²² And, perhaps, vice versa.

Proposed Formation Structures

How might one find some formation structure to meet these hopes? An Irish colleague, Eugene Duffy, has proposed that seminaries could adapt the wisdom of the RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults] and create a deliberate series of stages through which the faith maturity of seminarians can be nourished and challenged in a community setting. The RCIA program lends itself easily to a new situation where candidates for priesthood come to seminary with a

much greater variety of religious or non-religious backgrounds than before, and where some are in need of basic faith development before they could be ready for a definitive vocation decision. The program usually falls into four periods. Dr. Duffy sees the phase of enquiry as being pre-seminary, where initial deepening of faith and of prayer is needed. Then, the second or catechumenate phase would coincide with the seminary’s classical fields of spiritual and theological formation, seeking to link them more than is usually the case. The third period of “enlightenment and purification” would entail a more intense focus on conversion and on decision, and it could involve

a long retreat with the purpose of opting for or against ordination. Finally, the period called “mystagogia” would come after ordination and provide “after-care service for the newly ordained priest.” Here, too, the seminary would be well placed to offer support in the areas of continuing spiritual direction and pastoral supervision.²³

One practical suggestion of my own, in response to that seminarian’s plea, is that the seminary could evolve a middle ground support structure between

the privacy of spiritual direction or psychological counselling and the more public authority process of those who decide on the candidate’s suitability for ordination. It is an attempt to fill a gap between seminary responsibilities, where I fear that sometimes serious issues can be neglected because they “fall between stools”. I am thinking of a group of three or four people who could meet with the seminarian at various intervals to reflect with him on precisely his human and faith development and on his needs in this whole area of growth-for-ministry. This group could

Moreover, since this inability to internalize values was on the existential and psychological level of their humanity, it could not be helped by theories of spirituality.

include his spiritual director, if the candidate so desired. This whole process would, indeed, need to be positively chosen by the seminarian concerned. Granted this condition, the mini-group should include a seminarian of his own choice in the role of a trusted companion and a priest or lay person from outside the seminary, as someone who knew him in a context of ministry. It should also include someone from the teaching faculty of the seminary. By opening out the discussion to something wider than what in Italian is called “four eyes” or one-to-one, there are considerable advantages. Different perspectives can come together. Goals can be clarified. Potentially challenging experiences can be suggested. Above all, the seminarian receives both support and stimulus from people who know him on various levels. I have seen something of this process in action in one Province of the Jesuits, where the group met three times a year and was much appreciated by all concerned. What I am outlining here would serve the function of what Brenda Dolphin calls “vocational growth sessions” and could also follow the wisdom of the RCIA stages of faith development as mentioned by Eugene Duffy.

Converging Strands of Growth: Imagination, Culture, Experience

Pastores Dabo Vobis tells those of us who work with seminarians that we are to be “cooperators of the Spirit in enlightening and guiding those who have been called” (# 40) and more concretely that discovery of Christ becomes possible “if proposed to others as a living experience” (# 46). In this light what else needs to come into the picture that has not been touched on so far? I find myself drawn to a convergence of three areas as key zones of formation for today: imagination, culture, experience. Let me ex-

plain briefly what I mean.

Imagination is one thread that can hold all this complex field of faith development together. In the last century it was prophetically highlighted as a central human strand of faith by Cardinal Newman and it is coming excitingly to the fore again in some contemporary theology. As Newman put it, seeking to indicate a crucial location of struggle between belief and unbelief, “it is not reason that is against us, but imagination”.²⁴ Or, more positively he wrote in *The Grammar of Assent* that “the heart is commonly

reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination”.²⁵ Indeed, liturgy at its best can be a rich and daily source of Christian sensibility. The core of seminary formation, in this light, is to lay the ground of life-long “faith imagination” to be lived in the service of the Word and of people.

We have seen some of the damage to faith development caused by psychological immaturity. Yet, there is another and less individual danger, already touched upon, the danger of excessive innocence about cultural unfreedom in seminarians. Where potentially sub-Christian or anti-Christian cultural assumptions can have hidden impact is precisely in the realm of imagination. Culture is always a battleground of false and true imagining. Hence, if we are talking of faith development, we need to go beyond the merely psychological and to confront the potential obstacles to Christian conversion within the seminarian’s cultural assumptions. It is notable that *Pastores Dabo Vobis* devoted a lengthy section to what it called “gospel discernment” of the surrounding cultural situation (# 10), but it does not provide concrete skills for such discernment. I have been suggesting that this will best be done through deliberately structured opportunities to recognize the struggles, to discern the

“*it is not reason that
is against us, but
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idols of the culture, and in this way of purification to prepare the way of the Lord.

In another place I wrote that

“Discernment is a specifically Christian way of reading reality. It seeks to recognize the presence of the Spirit within the human. . . Towards what are our hearts moving? That is the key question for spiritual discernment. It asks about the directional flow of our imagination: are the images of the culture leading us towards what is profoundly humanizing and creative of love, or pushing us towards what is imprisoning and closed to compassion?

. . . . Discernment of culture starts from a double expectation: there will be conflict, ambiguity, anti-values lurking in any culture, but there will also be signs of hope and fruits of the Spirit”.²⁶

Conclusion

I liked what a seminarian said to me recently on his return from some months on a tough ministry assignment: “I think development happens when we are tested through really challenging experiences; in my case meeting the massive suffering of people broke my shell and changed me I hope for good”. In this way we return to the theme of change with which we began and to the fact that experiences rather than theories or programs or courses are the human springboard for all faith development.

In this light I want to end with two other quotations, one short and snappy, the other somewhat longer. The first is from an old song of Simon and Garfunkel called “*The Boxer*” and says: “A man hears what he want to hear - and disregards the rest”. Yes, there is humbling realism there: faith development is a question of what a person is ready for and really desires. They cannot hear us when we talk languages far or

foreign from their current experience. Finally, and on the centrality of experience, I offer an unusual quotation from the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who is not best known for his contributions to faith development or to seminary formation, but here he is pondering what it would be to guide someone into deeper faith:

“Christianity is not a theory about what has happened...but a description of something that actually takes place in human life... Here you have a narrative, don't take the same attitude to it as you take to other historical narratives. Make a quite different place in your life for it...It is *love* that believes the Resurrection.

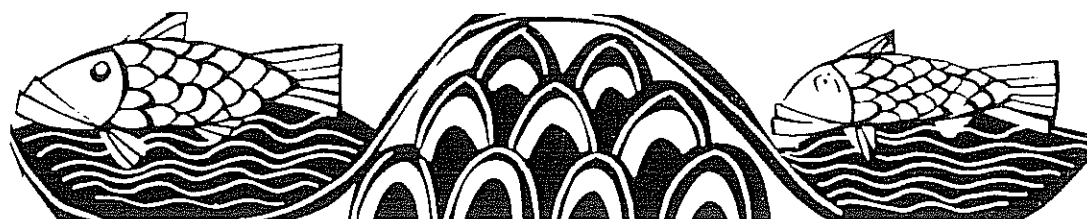
A religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment...it's really a way of living. Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal...It would be as though someone were first to let me see the hopelessness of my situation and then show me the means of rescue until, of my own accord or not led to it by my instructor, I ran to it and grasped it.

Practice gives the words their sense. Life can educate one to a belief in God. And *experiences* are what bring this about”.²⁷ ✚

Notes

1. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1972, p. 130.
2. Joanne Wolski Conn and Walter Conn, “Christian Spiritual Growth and Developmental Psychology”, *The Way Supplement*, No 69, Autumn 1990, p. 4.
3. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis* (Apostolic exhortation on the formation of priests), CTS, London, 1992, # 5. Ba
4. Baron Friedrich von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her friends*, J. M. Dent, London, 1927, p. 53.

- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
6. William G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, Harvard Counselling Bureau, New York, 1970, p. 213.
7. Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: Young Adults and the Search for Meaning, Faith and Commitment*, Harper, San Francisco, 1991, p. 191.
8. Parks, p. 26.
- 9 Parks, p. 45.
10. James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1981, pp. 172-3, 198.
11. Michael J. Buckley, "Because Beset with Weakness", in *To Be a Priest*, ed. Robert Terwilliger and Urban T. Holmes, Seabury Press, New York, 1975, p. 125.
12. Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 1982, p. 264.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-104, 271.
15. Marcel L gaut, *L'Homme   la recherche de son humanit *, Aubier-Montaigne, Paris, 1971, Ch. 7.
16. Kegan, *Evolving Self*, pp. 271, 265.
17. Parks, p. 57.
18. George Aschenbrenner SJ, "Diocesan Seminary Formation", *Human Development* (18), Winter 1997, pp. 35-36. In a more psychological context, another book of Robert Kegan speaks of the need "to educate adults to the order of consciousness" that allows them skills to master the "hidden curriculum" of their culture (*In Over Our Heads: the mental demands of modern life*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1994, p. 287).
19. Brenda Mary Dolphin, *The Values of the Gospel: personal maturity and thematic perception*, Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1991, p. 69.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
21. Timothy E. O'Connell, *Making Disciples: a handbook of Christian moral formation*, Crossroad, New York, 1998, p. 2.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
23. Eugene Duffy, "Seminary Formation", *The Furrow* (40), 1989, 451-460. Quotation from p. 459.
24. John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, Vol. XXX, ed. C. S Dessain & T. Gornall, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, p. 159.
25. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1909, p. 92.
26. Michael Paul Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: an introduction to faith-and-culture*, Paulist Press, New York, 1998 pp. 122 ff. . I have adapted some of the wording for this occasion.
27. *he Wittgenstein Reader*, ed. Anthony Kenny, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, pp. 296-304. I have joined some quotations together without always indicating the gaps.



The Seminary As a Context for Teaching Theology

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Note: We offer a special thank you to Rev. Pablo Navarro, for his translation of this presentation.



First of all I would like to thank the organizers of this consultation for their invitation to come here to make this presentation. I must admit that I had some difficulty in making the decision to be here with you since I do not have the vast experience that you have in dealing with the daily life and formation of seminarians. Coming from a diocese in Peru, I have had frequent conversations with theology students and dealings with seminarians, so I thought I would share with you from that experience.

Having heard Cardinal Danneels' opening talk, and how wonderfully he formulated the three phases of formation, that of human, spiritual, and pastoral formation, I wish to follow in that same general direction and see how these phases of formation are affected by theology.

At the beginning I would like to concentrate on what in the old days we called the "formal object." This will allow us to understand the limitations of this presentation. Cardinal Danneels spoke of the three phases of formation; human, spiritual, and pastoral. Since the theme assigned to me was the seminary as the place for teaching theology, it seemed to me that I could assist with the continuity of this presentation by addressing the seminary as the primary formator of human qualities, spirituality, and pastoral zeal, and within this area of formation to ask what is the role of theology, or the teaching of theology in seminary formation.

I will treat these three phases of formation in the following way: 1. "To become a disciple" will address the area of spiritual formation. 2. "Theology as ecclesial function" will deal directly with intellectual formation. 3. "Discerning the spirit of the times" will treat human formation.

Every time I make an outline for a presentation I always have three points. I don't know whether this has to do with my trinitarian devotion, my Hegelian training in philosophy, or simply because when I was in seminary I learned how to meditate on three points.

At any rate these are the three phases that I will journey with you during this presentation. All I want to do is suggest to you what may be said theologically about each of those three areas. My theme will not be theology in itself, but theology in reference to the seminary, and it will not be a talk about seminary formation per se, but seminary formation as it is related to theology.

To Become A Disciple

What characterizes each Christian is what the Scriptures and the first communities of faith describe as the following of Jesus. This is the “sequela Christi.” To follow Christ is proper to the Christian. Therefore, the most discernable mark of the Christian and of the Christian life is to follow the Way. The Scriptures and the spiritual writers use the image of the Way often. Those who follow Christ on the Way are called disciples. Numerous passages in the Scriptures speak to us of this following. In fact, one of the most well-known passages from Scripture that speaks about this following is in Mark, chapter 8. This is what we traditionally call “Peter’s confession.” When Peter refuses to pay the price of discipleship, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer would say, Jesus says to him, “Go Behind me, Satan.” “Vade retro me.” Sometimes, our Scripture translations translate the “Vade retro me,” or the Greek word as “Get out of my sight.” But of course if we tell someone to go behind me, he is no longer in my sight. The more correct translation would be to say, “Go behind me,” rather than “out of my sight.” Jesus is telling Peter to get in line behind him and there is already a word of forgiveness implied in this reprimand. Jesus is telling Peter to not be like Satan. “Do not be an obstacle in my way. Take your position again as follower.” This statement of Jesus to Peter is very difficult, however, it is not a rejection of Peter. It is an admonition and a word of forgiveness. For Jesus knows that Peter is capable of again taking his place as a disciple. Following Christ then in a place

of spiritual formation such as a seminary or any place of formation for clergy and lay ministers involves the formation of followers of Jesus.

All of theology is language about God. Theology is speaking about God. A point of departure for theology is the self revelation of God. Theology speaks about God. There is no other subject or theme to theology than God. Everything that theology treats is valid as long as it relates to God. Therefore, theology is always a way or manner of speaking about God.

Moreover, we in the Christian world are particularly aware that God is mystery. Thus, the following question is a logical one: “How do we speak about mystery?” It is very clear in Scripture and we are also reminded by the French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, that mystery in the Bible does not mean an enigma or problem, but a reality that is so awesome and overpowering that it is difficult to fully understand it. Mystery envelops us and we are within it. St. Thomas Aquinas has a well-known expression: “Our ignorance of God is greater than our knowledge.” For this reason, theology presupposes from the beginning a great respect for mystery. More than respect, I would call it humility. We often meet philosophers and theologians who seem to know everything about everything, almost as if they have breakfast with God every day. It is amazing to have that much science with such little foundation. The theologian that speaks about God needs to speak with great humility and respect, since we are constantly speaking about a mystery that we never fully grasp. One of the primary questions of all theology is “How do we speak about God?”

In speaking about God, it is important to realize that the only language we have is human language. Therefore, before speaking about God we need to have a personal experience of God. I do not wish to go into detail about what that experience should be. We need to have a general idea of the experience so

that we do not get lost in details. This personal encounter is also a communal encounter with God, much like the encounters with God by the prophets and the people of God in the First Testament and the Testament of Jesus Christ. I bring in the communal aspect because I believe as followers of Christ and as people who theologize and speak about God, we need to have not only a personal experience of the holy but also a collective or communal experience. I think it is rather strange that often in Catholic circles the sense of collective experience is looked upon with some suspicion as if the word "collective" was almost a bad word. That seems very strange to me since we have no difficulty in taking up collections in churches. Both of these words have the same root.

In this personal encounter there are two basic dimensions of Christian life: contemplation/prayer and putting into practice God's will, i.e., accepting God's will or that which St. Paul often calls "obedience." It seems that our evangelical brothers and sisters are more comfortable speaking about obedience than we are. To paraphrase the passage in Matthew's Gospel: It is not only those who call out 'Lord, Lord,' but those who do the will of the Father who will enter the kingdom of heaven. These two dimensions are basic. For without prayer there is no Christian life, and without putting God's will into practice, there is no following of Christ. One does not have primacy over the other. It is important to keep these two in a balance. To ask which one of these is more important would be to ask a bad question, and every time we ask a bad question, we will get a bad answer. Just like the person who asks, "What is more important, to sleep or to eat?" If you do not eat, be assured that you

will sleep, permanently. Therefore, to ask which of these two aspects is more important would be to set one aspect of following Christ against the other. It would make no sense.

What is the relationship between theology and this personal encounter with God? Theology is a second moment. First one must be a Christian, a follower of Christ. Then the second moment is to reflect on this encounter with God and to speak of it. For how can we speak about God if there is no life of faith in us? We recall the expression of St. Anselm: "I believe in order to understand." To believe is a fundamental step and the foundation of all understanding of the Faith. If this is so, this will allow us to say a word about the relationship between spiritual formation (being a disciple) and theology. Sometimes, we ask the question: What is the theology that is behind a certain spirituality? We look for the ideas that carry with it a certain spirituality. This

is not a correct question. What we should be asking is: What is the spirituality that is behind and inspires a certain theology?

Different theologies are distinct one from the other because the understandings of following Jesus are different. Someone has written that if we wanted to see and understand the differences and the similarities between St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, we would have to go back to St. Dominic and St. Francis. The way of following Christ or the spirituality of the theologian inspires the theology. That is why we need to present spirituality as connected to theological reflection. This connection has not always flourished in the history of the Church. A classical instance would be the work by Thomas a Kempis that was very anti-intellectual for reasons that

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we can very well understand in its own time. Nevertheless, we must realize that the great fiascos in the Christian tradition have been the times when we have separated spirituality from theological reflection. In fact, spirituality is often taught as a separate academic discipline. While I can understand that sometimes for academic reasons we must add a course that deals with general spirituality, it is a great loss to divorce spiritual theology from the general reflection of systematic and moral theology. Spirituality (praying and doing the will of God) is the first act of theologizing. Without spirituality, theology runs a risk of turning into an exercise that is merely intellectual. It would be like linking one thought to another without having the inspiration and the conviction of being a follower of Christ.

That having been said, we also need to be careful of the other extreme. We need to be careful of a “feel good,” narcissistic spirituality which focuses on the great strides we have made in our relationship with God, while at the same time ignoring totally the communal aspect of spirituality and the process of theological reflection. It is as senseless to have a theology that is not founded and rooted in the experience of discipleship and the following of Christ as it is to have a spirituality that is devoid of the experience of being brothers and sisters in the community of the Church. Jesus Christ came to be obedient to the will of the Father and to give His life for all the sisters and brothers. It is for this reason that I feel compelled to address this most difficult aspect of spiritual formation. It is most important that at all costs we avoid this spiritual narcissism and realize that in the spiritual life God is first, and because God is first, the

sisters and brothers are also first.

God’s invitation to us and to this relationship is a gratuitous one. God summons us to love in the very act of God loving us first, not because we deserve it, and not because we are good, but simply because he loves us ...even when we are not lovable... when we are sinners. The problem with gratuity runs through the Scriptures from beginning to end. One of the most famous of these passages is found in the book of Job. Traditionally, we call him “patient Job,” but we really know that there was not much patience to Job. In fact, Job was extremely impatient and downright obstinate.

He complained to God constantly, because he saw himself as good and just and he could not understand why he now was poor and sick. Job refused to deal with any middle person and always wanted to talk directly to God. When he was finally able to tell God the litany of his woes and his lack of understanding of all these things since he was a just man, God responds to him by saying, “Were you with me when I created the world? Were you with me when I separated the light from

the darkness? When I made all that exists?” God wanted to point out to Job that nothing was earned and that everything was a pure gift of his love and concern for creation.

We also find this in the New Testament in the Gospel of Mark in the story of the anointing at Bethany. (Mark 14:3-9) This anointing is also found in the Gospels of Luke and John, but I would like to address particularly the anointing at Bethany in the Gospel of Mark for its own particularity. If you recall, in the passage the woman came in and poured the whole jar of perfume on the Lord. She poured it not just on His feet, as recounted in the other Gospel accounts, but

What is the theology behind a certain spirituality? Or is the correct question: What is the spirituality that is behind and inspires a certain theology?

from His head to His toes. The disciples who knew Jesus and knew his teachings about the poor took this up with Him and complained that she should have sold that very expensive perfume and given the money to the poor. Jesus responds to them in a very curious way by saying that what she did was good. In fact, the Greek word that he uses also means "beautiful." What she has done is not only good but also beautiful. Jesus realizes and teaches his disciples that the poor are not only there to receive the things that they need like food and shelter and clothing. The poor also have other needs that may not be as utilitarian as food and shelter and clothing, but they are equally important, such as a smile, love, warmth, welcome, gentleness, understanding.

Permit me an example. Recently we were making preparations in my parish for Christmas. My parish is a very poor parish. As we were making the preparations for Christmas, this very poor old lady came to me and explained to me that every Christmas from the time she was a very little girl she and her family would come to church to receive a bag of food for their Christmas dinner. One year the priest gave them the bag of food and turned to the little girl and gave her a doll. She was about nine years old and had never had a doll before. "As I look back on my life," the old woman said, "I don't remember who gave us the food and clothing, even though we were very needy. But I will never forget the face of the priest who handed me my first and only doll. It was a gratuitous gift from this priest. We had more need of food, clothing and shelter. But yet, the one thing that truly fed me and fulfilled my need was a beautiful doll that the priest gave me. I remember it to this moment."

I would like to give you another example. There

was a man who, because of circumstances in the country and the city at the time, was in and out of jobs. Often he was without a job. He was always very worried about his family. Nevertheless, whenever he received the first check of a new job, or whenever he received a bonus, he would always come home with a bag full of candies, chocolate, and ice cream. His three children, needless to say were always excited when dad would come home with these sweets. There were many needs in that family, and there were many more practical things that could have been purchased

with the money, such as food or vitamins. The children would not have remembered those purchases now in their old age. This father did not squander all the money in candy and sweets. However, he created the atmosphere of expectation for a poor family. I knew that man very well. He was my father. Of course, as a child I was not doing theology. So it was not until much later that I realized that it

was a gratuitous gift from him to show his love, and it paralleled, in a sense, the gratuitous love of God for God's children.

That is the teaching of the anointing at Bethany. It is simply to say that the poor need a great deal more than utilitarian gifts to take care of their base needs.

I am always a little leary when I hear people say that they have made a commitment to the poor. In my estimation we make commitments to people...to Peter or Mary or Margaret. We run the risk of depersonalizing our commitment when it is done for the great masses who have no faces.

This gratuitousness is the field for spirituality...for prayer and contemplation. It is not a time for reading or for writing or for doing things that may be utilitarian, but it is a time to "waste", if you will, with our

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God. It is this time that affords us and allows us to have a relationship with this God who gratuitously has loved us first. If this gratuitousness which opens us to a relationship with our God is not present in our theology, then our theology can be removed from the reality of our God, who for no reason whatsoever has loved us, and in spite of our lack of response to his love, continues to love us, nonetheless.

Intellectual Formation

We have been discussing the importance of the intellectual formation of future priests. As Cardinal Danneels said, this is not theologizing as an intellectual exercise for the sake of theology. We cannot lose our direction. The important question to be asked at this point is: How do we responsibly reflect on the reality of the world, society, and culture around us? How does that affect what we say about God and how we say it? How is it that intellectual formation in the seminary leads the candidate to priesthood, and reinforces in him a sense of belonging to the Church? This sense of church is very clear in theology. Theology is not an individual labor. It is not a person with his own library and his own desk. Theology is done for the function of evangelization in the Church. By this I am in no way diminishing the need for exegesis and other scriptural and theological sciences that support the work of the Church.

At the end of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the final command of the Lord to his disciples is to go and make disciples of all. I have not read in any Gospel where it said go forth and do theology or go forth and theologize. Does this mean that theology is not important? Of course not. Theology is faith that looks to understand. Therefore, theology is necessary, however, first comes the lived Christian life...and then the reflection, which is theology. The seminary becomes then that very privileged place, where the candidate to the priesthood, living as part of the Church, can do theological reflection and study

the theology that has been written as a reflection of the life of this Church. The best of Catholic theology has been done by theologians who have lived and have suffered in the Church and by the Church. We ourselves have profited from many of these men in our own century... theologians such as Lagrange, De Lubac, Rahner, and many others.

The theologian is not the intellectual who goes around theologizing outside of a context. The theologian is the one who places his knowledge and skill at the service of the community, the Church. At the same time he is aware of the classic distinction between faith and theology. We need to be very careful in this regard. Often when a theologian dissents, he or she may give the impression that he or she is dissenting from the Faith, and not just dissenting theologically. Unfortunately, there are some theologians who feel so strongly about their own theology, that they have made their theology their faith. Some even think that their own theologizing is Christian faith. Our knowledge is never to be equated with our Faith.

Theology is a permanent task. The formation years in the seminary, therefore, are the beginning of what should continue after ordination. It is during this seminary formation that the candidate intellectually begins the task of learning the basics that will give him the tools to continue doing serious work in theology after ordination. It is very sad when I see priests who think that they learned everything in the seminary and, once they get ordained, never bother to read another article or deepen their own formulations of the Faith. Theology is never finished because God is a mystery, and since we can only approach God with our own human language, we are never able to contain God within that language.

I meet, sometimes, young and middle aged priests who tell me that theology was not connected with their daily living and had little to tell them. When seminary professors hear this, they usually say: "Well,

this particular person may have been a bad student.” While this may be true, the professor should also question himself: “Was I a good teacher?” If theology is taught as a discipline in itself, without having a connection to the daily living as a follower of Jesus Christ, then theology will be seen as a merely intellectual exercise that has no connection to real life. The time of intellectual formation in the seminary is a privileged time both for the seminarian as well as for the professor who is forming this budding theologian and inviting him to new ways of thinking and reflecting the reality of God in his own life as well as the life of the community of faith of which he is a part. The seminary professors of theology, in keeping with the teaching mission of the seminary, need to constantly question themselves as to how they are teaching, how they are entering into the mystery of God, and how they are leading others to enter into this mystery and reflect upon it.

We also need to realize that theology leads to diversity. I believe that it is healthy for a seminary to have diverse theologies that reflect the awesome mystery of God and that are inspired by diverse spiritualities. In the last twenty years we have been faced with something the Church has not seen since the time of Augustine, i.e., the doing of theology outside the realm of “classical theology.” We are seeing theologies coming forth from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We are also seeing that within large and diverse countries, we are getting different theologies such as “black theology,” “feminist theology,” and other minority theologies. A classical theologian will

sometimes say that these theologies are contextual theologies. Well, my friends, I do not know any theology, even classical theology, that is not contextualized. Do you know of any theology that is not contextual? If you do, please let me know. I would like to know about it. If theology is not contextual...if it is not in a context, then it must have been done directly by the Holy Spirit. Every theology is contextual.

Unfortunately there are some theologians who feel so strongly about their own theology, that they have made their theology their faith. Our knowledge is never to be equated with our faith.

When we think of Pentecost, we often think of the simplistic understanding that everyone spoke the one language, as opposed to the tower of Babel, where there was confusion of languages. (I do not think that is the meaning of Babel, but I will not address that now.) In the three different accounts of Pentecost it is very clear that they did not all speak one language, but that they all understood in their own language. That is quite different. Therefore, the message of Pentecost is very clear. There is a unity of the message of salvation and a diversity of the understanding of the message. Each one in his/her own language means each one understanding in his/her own culture,

mentality, and language. It is to this very diversity that we are called today, particularly in the post Vatican II climate. To paraphrase Karl Rahner: We are called to become a church which is in action and communication, truly universal. This is not to say that theology that is done in Africa, Asia, or Latin America is good theology. There is equally bad theology in Europe as there can be in Latin America, Africa, or Asia, but there is also good theology done throughout the different parts of the world. This good theology

is an effort to enter into the mystery of God and to walk with the Church in the discipleship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of my favorite passages in this regard is the very rich story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). As the disciples journey to Emmaus, Jesus walks with them. I wish to highlight the fact that Jesus walks with them. (Allow me a slight digression. All of you who are familiar with the Scriptures realize that there are two things that everybody does throughout the Scriptures. They walk and they eat. Both have great meaning. Food means fraternity and eucharist. Walking means journeying to the Father.

While He is walking with them, and after correcting them (that is one of the functions of theology, to be corrective), Jesus explains the Scriptures to them from the beginning. This is a theological reflection done by Jesus while journeying. I find it interesting that in the narrative, Jesus does not stop them, sit them down, and speak to them. Jesus walks with them. Jesus reveals the Scriptures and reveals himself to them within their own context of walking. There is that beautiful ending of the passage as they confess that their hearts were burning as he explained to them the Scriptures. Would that we could also announce the Gospel in the same way that Jesus was able to reveal the Gospel to these disciples while walking on the way.

Human Formation

I wish now to go to my third point, that of human formation. This is an old theme that was revitalized by Pope John XXIII at the time of the Second Vatican Council. I wish particularly to address human formation within the perspective of the work of theology. As we address human formation within the perspective of the work of theology, it would be important to dwell again on that last passage of Matthew's Gospel. Go to the ends of the earth to preach the Good News!

When we think of going to the ends of the earth, we should not only think of distance. When we go any distance, sometimes within our own continent, we will encounter many different cultures, ethnic groups and peoples. As the Gospel moved from the Middle East and Europe, into Asia, Africa, and America, the Gospel was just not traveling a distance that could be measured in miles. It was also traveling across the many different and well-established cultures, ethnic groups of peoples, as well as languages. Thus, when we speak of human formation within this context, we are talking about the human capacity to take in and to understand all these different cultural worlds, all these different historical worlds, in order to effectively announce the Gospel.

We are now in a world that is called "the global village," and yet, although the world is global in that communications have brought us closer, we are also able to see that the closer the world gets in some ways, the more fragmented it is in other ways. There are cultural differences. There is extreme individualism. It is in this world, one and yet divided, that we are called to do theology and to be present as God is present. We have become a global village, but a divided global village. We feel that we are a global village because we have a false sense that everyone is communicating. However, not everyone communicates. In fact, the very media that allows us to communicate with other parts of the world, also excludes some parts of the world. In this global village of communication, the "haves" are the ones who communicate. The poor, the marginalized, the disenfranchized, who cannot afford the means of communication, are not part of this global village. They are discriminated against and set aside by this global village. A great part of humanity is considered unnecessary for the functioning of the financial structures of nations and of the world. These are the "throwaway" people. If they were lost it would not matter a bit to the global village. Madame Albright,

the United States Secretary of State, who is not a theologian, recently divided the global village into four different types of countries. She described the fourth class of countries as the ones that are not worth spending a penny on. Money spent on them would be lost. The deduction from that is that these people are expendable and are not needed in the world. Needless to say, most of these countries are in Africa, some in Asia, and some in Latin America.

The global village then has a dark side. We need to form some criteria for this world village of communications. We need to ask ourselves: Where are the poor going to sleep tonight? The world of the future will be both fascinating and cruel...fascinating for those who have the means to afford communications, and very cruel for those who do not.

We seem to make a great deal of the word "inculturation" today. The word "inculturation" is a relatively new word. The reality of inculturation is older than walking. It is because the Church inculturated from early on that we have Christmas. If the Church had not been inculturated into the culture of the time, there would have been no need to celebrate Christmas, certainly not in December, and we would not have had the celebration of the Resurrection in the European Spring. When nature is born anew in Northern Europe we celebrate Easter, although it is the reverse season in the southern hemisphere. The Church has always inculturated itself. The Church needs to be enfleshed in the human and cultural experience.

As we deal with the human formation of candidates for the priesthood, we need to particularly challenge the candidates to the task that is ahead of them. A central part of that task is the evangelization of the

poor, who are always at the center of the Gospel and who are always at the heart of the Church, but so often other preoccupations preempt the needs of the poor. How do we proclaim the kingdom of God to a people who have been and who most probably will continue to be disenfranchised? Poverty is more than a social, economic problem. We cannot just create another commission that will treat it as just another social, economic problem. Ministering to the poor and proclaiming the Good News to the poor is a global challenge that can only be met when individuals who are committed to the following of Christ are not afraid to go where Christ goes, and to care for those poor under their care and to look for the poor who are often concealed or ignored.

I will make one more quick reference before going to the conclusions since I am running out of time. I love that beautiful text about the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44). Our Lord said that the alms of the poor woman was worth more than the monies from the rich, but that is not the point that I wish to emphasize. I wish

to emphasize the first part of that narration. There we find that Jesus takes a place in front of the treasury door. What I find most interesting is that Jesus places himself in front of the treasury door. Why? The temple was extremely expansive. Why would Jesus choose the treasury door? From that door he was able to observe how the rich gave alms and how the poor gave alms. I will call what Jesus did "Knowing how to see." We need to know how to see and what to look for. That is what human formation is about. Human formation will teach us where to look from, how to see. We will preach many times in a passage like this that the widow's mite was worth more than the rich man's alms, but we will miss the point that Jesus was

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able to make that statement only because he found the right place from which to look out, from which to see. That is how Jesus came to that conclusion. It is important to realize that where we look from is critical for what and who we see.

Today, we often speak about the preferential option for the poor. To that I would like to say that the preferential option for the poor is to opt for the God of Jesus Christ. What is the reason for the preference? Why prefer the poor? Because the poor are good and generous? Not all poor people are generous and good. Whenever I hear a newly-ordained priest or seminarian telling me that they have learned all that they know from the poor and that the

poor have taught them all the good things and that all the poor are wonderful and how they knew nothing until they met the poor, all I have to say about that is that they probably only have been working with the poor for six months, because obviously they know very little about the poor. The poor are human beings and as St. Augustine says "the good and the evil goes through every human's heart." So, there are good and bad in the poor as in the rest

of the human population. We do not opt for the poor, we do not have preferential option for the poor because the poor are good. We have preferential option for the poor because God is good, and that is the only reason to opt for the poor. The beatitudes are first and foremost a revelation of God, not of the poor. The poor are blessed not because they are blessed in themselves but because God is holy and God is good. When I speak about the poor in this manner, people often say to me: "I know why you speak of the poor in such a way, because you are Latin American." I am very quick to say to them: "Please friend, don't

presume to understand and know my motivation. We have a preferential option for the poor because we are followers of Christ."

I have often been asked if, after so many years, I had to write the book on liberation theology again, would I do it in the same way? This is a very awkward question to ask. Because there is really no good answer. If I were to say I would not write it in the same way, people would draw the conclusion that I am recanting what I stated in that book. If I were to say I would write it in the same way, then people would draw the conclusion that in all these years he has not learned anything else. This is how I now respond to that question.

We do not opt for the poor because they are good. We have a preferential option for the poor because God is good.

A newspaperman once asked me in an interview if I were to write my book again, would I write it in the same way? I answered by asking him a question. I asked him if he was married. He seemed to be a little perplexed since he didn't know what his marriage had to do with theology and the theological question he was posing to me, but he answered nevertheless, "Yes." I asked him how long he was married. He said

twenty years. So I asked him, "Do You love your wife?" He answered, "Yes, of course I love my wife." So I asked further: "I am sure that today you would not write to your wife the same love letter that you would have written when you were going together twenty years ago. I am sure your love is the same but the phrases you would use would be different. The newspaperman agreed. I feel the same way about the book on liberation theology. For me, to do theology is to write a letter of love to the God in whom I believe, to the Church where I belong, and to the people from whom I come. The letter that I would

write today would not be the same, but the love would be the same. Like St. Paul, more important than the book I have written are the “living letters” embodied in the Christians who have been influenced by the writing and the preaching. They have become living letters of Christ’s love... of God’s love to the world.

If we relate this to the work of theology in spiritual formation, pastoral formation, and human formation of the candidates to the priesthood we greatly enrich that formation experience and also allow for theology to find its true place. †



The Seminary as a Context for Modeling the Integrated Life

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I am grateful for the invitation to offer some reflections on the topic of the Seminary as a Context for Modeling the Integrated Life. I was happy to respond to this invitation because I believe the topic is an important one.

From 1992-1995, I had the good fortune to work with the priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago as the Vicar for Priests. There are 850 diocesan priests actively working in Chicago. There are an additional 260 priests who are officially retired. In my term as Vicar, I worked with approximately 200 of these priests in some capacity.

I found these priests to be talented, dedicated, and hard working men. They were well-intentioned in their efforts to serve the Church. All of them were men of Faith. But not all of them were close to the Fire.

Some of these priests were confused about who they were and what really mattered in their lives. Some of them felt alone, cut off from their brother priests, even isolated from the God they wanted to serve. Some were tired. They were low in their energy. They were empty in their spirit. Some of them were stuck in their routines. They were simply going through the motions, no longer thinking or praying or acting with much vitality. Some were angry and disillusioned. They were moving along without much hope. So often it seemed to me that these men had wandered far from the Fire. They were hardly living the integrated life.

In 1995, when I was appointed rector of Mundelein Seminary, I returned to the seminary with a genuine enthusiasm for the mission of priesthood and with a strong conviction that the preparation for priestly ministry was a critical task. I understood in new ways that the opportunity to teach men how to stay close to the Fire is a great challenge and a great privilege.

The Process of Integration

Let me begin my reflections by saying something

about the integrated life. From a faith perspective, I believe the integrated life has everything to do with "the One important thing." Certainly the process of integration can be viewed from many different perspectives. From the perspective of the human person, we can acknowledge the importance of integrating the rational and the affective components of the human personality. From the perspective of a training program for priesthood candidates, we can describe the importance of addressing human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation of the seminarians. From the perspective of the mission of the Church, we can speak about the challenge of blending the ecclesial and prophetic dimensions of the Gospel message. All these perspectives are significant. They highlight important components of our lives that seek connection and balance, but they do not seem to uncover the source of integration.

To uncover the source of integration, we must recognize the fact that the process of integration is not something we achieve on our own. It seems to be more of a discovery of something beyond ourselves which then enables integration to occur.

Integration seems to occur when a person or a group of people discovers a gathering point. They organize themselves around this gathering point, and their lives are integrated by what they have found to be worthy of their commitment. For some, this discovery might be a job, and they become dedicated workers. For others, it may be their family and they become loving spouses and parents.

For people of Faith, we believe we have discovered the "One important thing." We have encountered a mystery beyond ourselves. We have come to

know and see what really matters, in the person and the revelation of Jesus Christ. He reveals to us the very source of life that integrates all creation, the one He called Abba. Out of this discovery, we have become disciples, holy men and women, people with a mission to the world.

When we speak of modeling the integrated life from the perspective of faith, I think we are talking about an integration that arises from being in love. The challenge is to identify the ways of staying centered in this mystery. We need to speak concretely about ways of sustaining our love, of staying close to the Fire.

My own experience of seminary work has taken place in a free standing seminary which prepares men for the diocesan priesthood. For twenty years I have worked as a faculty member, spiritual director, dean of formation, and now rector at Mundelein Seminary, and I am sure my remarks are colored by these experiences. Many of the

examples I will describe today are drawn from this context. I ask you to kindly translate anything I say into the context that is most appropriate for your own important work

For our purposes today, I would like to do three things: first, I want to identify five key elements of our Catholic heritage that I believe can help us stay close to the Fire; secondly, I would like to suggest ways that we can model these elements of our heritage in the context of seminary; and thirdly, I want to offer some signs that might indicate if our modeling is fruitful.

The Five Elements of Our Catholic Heritage

The five elements of our Catholic heritage are these: 1) sacramentality, 2) community, 3) tradition,

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4) authority, 5) mission. I believe these elements have a way of keeping us close to the Fire.

SACRAMENTALITY

How do we help the candidate grow into a deep sense of the Holiness of life?

The element of sacramentality in our Catholic faith has everything to do with the way we look at life and what we understand about our relationship with God. It is not quite the same as the Sacraments themselves but encompasses the seven Sacraments. It also points to the foundational belief that is expressed and celebrated in these very Sacraments.

The seven Sacraments are the enshrined sacred signs of our Faith. They are sacred signs that both reveal and intensify God's presence and love in our lives. What is especially true of the Sacraments is potentially true of all of human life, namely, that we can come to know and experience God's loving presence as we travel along the road of life.

You and I believe that life is always more than it seems. You and I believe that our personal stories and our collective journey are part of a deeper story of life. From a faith perspective, you and I believe we are forever participating in the ancient story of God's redeeming love at work in our world today. We also believe that at any moment, we might come to recognize this saving love at work in our world.

A few years ago I took a trip to Ireland to see the places from where both sides of my family had come. It began as an exciting adventure. I often had wondered why my people had left their homeland to come to America.

We traveled around for seventeen days and for seventeen days it rained. I was beginning to understand why my family might have wanted to leave this small island. Finally, on the seventeenth day, as we entered Gallway Bay, the sun reappeared. We were able to appreciate the beauty of the surrounding hills and the goodness and warmth of the people in a

special way on that day.

In some ways this was a sacramental moment. We were able to see what was always there, but what had remained hidden by the elements those earlier days. I believe this is the ways it works. At any moment we can come to recognize the way life really is.

There are several theological perspectives bound together in the sacramental element of our Faith. First, this element views our relationship with God as history bound. From the Judeo-Christian faith perspective, God is understood as having committed himself to history. From the opening story of Genesis to the culminating scene in Revelation, God is pictured as involved and active in human life. Secondly, the sacramental element understands that our relationship with God matters substantially for the full realization of the human person.

From this perspective the human person is seen as forever reaching for something beyond himself or herself while forever struggling with the wound and threat of sin. In the human situation, the person is unable to move toward greater realization simply on his or her own resources. Such movement occurs only in cooperation with grace.

The growth of the human person in this context is viewed as coextensive with the movements of grace in life. The deepest human movements are never simply natural movements. God is always involved with the human person in saving ways. As one theologian has observed, the saving movements of human life, the movements "from fear to trust, from hostility to love, from ignorance to self-knowledge, from passivity to creativity, from self-centeredness to concern for others...are always co-determined by divine grace...they are always supernatural."

Modeling

I believe there are two important implications of the sacramental character of our Faith for modeling

the integrated life in the context of a seminary. The first implication may seem curious to you, but I believe that the diocesan priest needs to be a contemplative of sorts, a contemplative of life. I realize that the vocation of the diocesan priest is an apostolic one, yet because of the sacramental character of life, I also believe that a diocesan priest needs to cultivate a deeply contemplative spirit, one that gives him access to the deeper realities of life. We all know the priest must be a man of prayer, but the prayer life of a diocesan priest must be related to his vocation. The priest needs to develop an ability to pray over the lives of his people, and begin to see not only the circumstances at hand, but the deeper mysteries of God's love at work.

If, in the spirit of I John, we are sent to proclaim all that we have seen and heard, then in the seminary, we need to help seminarians begin to cultivate a sense of contemplation that will allow them to see deeply, and enable them to have something to proclaim. At Mundelein Seminary we have asked the faculty to model this contemplative spirit in one very concrete way. We have asked the eleven faculty members who work with the students in their formation to spend one hour a day in chapel praying for our students and reflecting on the life of the community. The hope is that the faculty will remain attentive to the deeper things that are at play in our life together. The seminarians are encouraged to emulate the faculty in this practice with the hope they will develop a habit of contemplation that will serve them in their ministry as priests.

The second implication is more personal. I believe that the seminary must reaffirm the close link between a person's continued development and his growth in holiness. Surely, we all believe that holi-

ness has more to do with God than it does with ourselves. God's mysterious and transforming love is the source of all holiness. Yet, we also believe that the locus of God's transforming grace is to be found in the workings of human life. If a person wants to grow in holiness, he/she must engage in the challenging task of growing humanly and in the complex task of taking part in the lives of others.

In his wonderful document, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, John Paul II speaks about the humanity of the priest being the bridge for communicating Christ. In the richness and fullness of the priest's life, people should encounter the deep love of Christ.

The seminary can model this close link between human growth and holiness of life by teaching the seminarians to attend to the deeper side of life and to notice the movements of God in those depths. God can be found in all

of our life experiences and so the student should not hesitate to explore all aspects of life, both positive and negative, so the religious faith dimension might emerge with greater clarity and objectivity. This is one way he might come to know the many dimensions of God's saving love.

Signs

Two signs for which I would look in someone who is living an incarnational spirituality are humor and joy.

Humor always springs from an appreciation of the incongruity of things. To believe that the sacred is hidden and discovered in the present moment of life is a real act of Faith. The full force of this belief may seem ludicrous to some. A real appreciation of the incongruity of God's desire to engage all creation, to achieve his plan of salvation in and through limited,

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even sinful human beings, should bring a lightness of spirit to all who take this belief to heart. A seminarian who cultivates a contemplative spirit should be able to appreciate not only God's presence and saving love at the heart of all life, but also the deep incongruity of pure love embracing fragile and resistive creatures in order to reveal a glorious plan of salvation.

Joy is an essential part of the Christian revelation. In the Gospel of John, Jesus reminds us that He has loved us just as the Father has loved Him, "that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete." (Jn. 15:11) Jesus reveals to us God's great love, and our joy is found in the experience of this love.

The joy of our faith is not some surface emotion or some perpetual state of happiness. We all know that our emotions continue to rise and fall with the ups and downs of life, and there will be times of trial and failure, sickness and suffering, violence and even death. Still, we can be joyful. People of faith know that sorrow and joy can exist together. Our joy comes from the belief that God's love has been given to us in Christ Jesus, and in this love, we find strength, healing, and hope. The gift of this love, which is the Spirit, is with us always. Nothing separates us from the love we know in Christ Jesus.

When seminarians lack good humor or when seminarians are full of judgment and righteousness, then something is amiss in our modeling.

COMMUNITY

Can we help our candidates attach themselves to the common good, the good beyond themselves?

In the Council document, *Lumen Gentium*, the

Church is described as a Community of Believers. At the beginning of Chapter 2, we are gently reminded that as people of faith we go together to God. The Council Fathers say this: "God has...willed to make men (and women) holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge and serve him in holiness."

This strong faith conviction reinforces the close link between the two great commandments, our love of God and our love of neighbor. There is a deep union brought about in love and this union matters substantially. This communion is not the bond of friendship. It embraces even those we do not like. It is the unity brought about through shared faith, a communion of vision, a shared intentional commitment. We are believers who are bound together through the compelling desire that we may be one with our loving God and with one another.

To grow in a deep sense of community is very difficult for people of the United States. So much of the culture in the United States promotes a rugged individualism. This tendency exists, perhaps, everywhere. Certainly, in our contemporary world we all struggle to find the way to live together beyond the tendencies toward provincialism, tribalism, nationalism, and egotism that seem to haunt our times.

Our Catholic faith chides us to move beyond these limits to our love. The love that is at the center of our Faith is so wide and so deep that it extends to everyone and everything. The starting point for our Catholic identity is the **common** bond we share in faith and revelation. It is a love that makes of us a

...we need to help seminarians begin to cultivate a sense of contemplation that will allow them to see deeply, and enable them to have something to proclaim.

communion of saints, a community of believers, a people concerned with the common good, filled with a spirit of willing sacrifice for the good which is greater than ourselves. This is the love revealed in the person of Jesus. It is the love shared in His relationship with His Father. It is the love extended to the world in the outpouring of the Spirit.

The question here is whether there is a way a person can grow toward a point of being deeply attached to the good beyond oneself. Growth in this type of love paradoxically is a matter of learning the ways of detachment. When it happens, when we are able to move through the limits of our own attachments, when the Spirit of Love frees us to live for the common good, it is powerful and inspiring.

Modeling

Let me suggest two important implications of this element of our Catholic heritage for modeling the integrated life. Both of these implications deal with the matter of attachment to the good beyond oneself. First, can we foster a genuine spirit of fraternity among those who will be future priests? Can we promote real bonds of attachment among our candidates? These bonds are not quite the same thing as the bonds of friendship. Secondly, can we deepen the attachments of our candidates to the local Churches they hope to serve as priests?

Let me say something about the spirit of fraternity. At Mundelein, we have tried to emphasize the importance of establishing a spirit of fraternity at the seminary. We want to encourage a sense of genuine concern for one another among the seminarians. None

of these men belong to religious communities. They are all preparing to be diocesan priests, but we want them to recognize that they are preparing together to undertake a common mission. The priesthood is not an individual undertaking even when a person finds himself to be the only priest in a parish.

These men are all preparing to join presbyterates throughout the world. At Ordination, they will join with their fellow priests and their Ordinaries to care for the local Church. They need to learn to support one another for the sake of their common mission.

The bonds of fraternal love that spring from a common vocation can reshape a person's understanding of vocation into something more than a personal call. It can be seen as a shared mission, a shared vocation in service to the life of the Church.

The second implication relates to the commitment to the local Church. I believe we also need to encourage a deep attachment to the local Church. What I mean here involves more than simply acquiring pastoral experience. What I am speaking about

here occurs at the level of a person's heart. It adds the residential component to his ministry.

Diocesan priesthood is rooted in particular place with a particular people. The Church in Chicago is different from the Church in Mexico City, which is different from the Church in Brussels. Each local Church has its own history and character. We need to assist our candidates in cultivating a greater knowledge of and identification with the people who are the local Church.

At Mundelein Seminary we have encouraged

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candidates from regions of the country to meet on a weekly basis to pray together and to talk about their dioceses and the concerns of their people as one way of strengthening ties to their local Churches. The Seminary administration also has requested mission statements from all of the home dioceses that send men to Mundelein. These vision statements are then distributed to faculty and students as a way of keeping the concerns of the local Church in the forefront of a person's program of preparation for priesthood.

Both of these concerns and attachments, the attachment to a fraternity of presbyters and the attachment to the local Church, will challenge our candidates to realign their sense of personal call within a larger context, to confront the spirit of individualism with the Catholic sense of the human community.

Signs

The two signs for which I would look in the development of a commitment to the good beyond oneself are sacrifice and generosity. I believe the person who cares about the common good keeps his focus off himself. The love in his heart inspires him to be vigilant about the larger concerns of life. He works carefully and deliberately with all that has been given. He has the capacity to bracket, to postpone, even to sacrifice his own concerns for the good of the whole. His energies of love are disciplined to respond to the good that benefits all.

The generous person freely gives of all he has been given. We all are called to be players in the story of life. We all have something to contribute to the ongoing story of redemption. The generous person gives because love inspires him to contribute regardless of the cost.

In our Catholic tradition, two primary symbols that guide the activity of people of Faith are the banquet table and the cross. The ability to live out the meaning of these symbols has everything to do with a person's capacity for sacrifice and generosity.

TRADITION

Can our candidates connect with the living history of our Faith?

One of the distinguishing elements of our Catholic heritage is our understanding and respect for tradition. We are a people who prize tradition. Sacred Scripture and tradition are the two lifelines for Catholics that keep us linked to God's message and His saving deeds, especially as they are revealed in the person and the life of Jesus. Our tradition encompasses all that keeps us close to the love that God has revealed. It lays before us the content and the vitality of our Faith. It includes our core beliefs, our sacred rituals, and our Catholic principles. Our tradition functions for us as both memory and inspiration.

As memory, it stands before us like a huge warehouse of accumulated wisdom. There is so much in our Catholic history and teaching that has been carefully explored and preserved for us over the centuries. Our tradition is a storehouse of truth and insight and understanding. It recalls the real treasures of our Faith, and it offers us endless opportunities to remain closely connected with the sources of our Faith.

As inspiration, our tradition gives us a perspective on the concerns of the day. It prods us to a deeper understanding of what is taking place. It offers us the strength and the comfort from our long history with a faithful and loving God as we seek the graces and the blessings in the present moment.

Modeling

The implications of this element of our Catholic heritage are important. There is the horizontal dimension to our tradition which links us to all that has gone before us. There is also the vertical dimension to the tradition which keeps us connected to the Spirit that enlivened all those who lived in earlier times and continues to enliven the Church in our day. Our tradition must function in both ways for our Catholic

community. Without both dimensions held in tandem, we end up either clinging rigidly to an imagined past or floating freely toward an uncertain future.

The challenge for seminaries today is to continue to help our candidates connect their own experience with a fuller understanding of the Faith tradition, both horizontally and vertically. We must work theologically and spiritually with people from where they are, but we must also help them appreciate the larger context of our Faith in all its history and richness.

In some ways this modeling happens naturally in the interchange of faculty and students. The faculty, in their training and expertise, represent the memory of our long history as a Catholic people. The students represent the hope of the future in their idealism and desire to contribute. The interchange of the faculty and students creates a certain dynamism in the mix of the wisdom from the past in dialogue with the adventure for the future.

Signs

Two signs I would look for in a person who is connecting his experience with the living history of our Faith are an ongoing fascination with the person and message of Jesus and a growing excitement about living a life which expresses a commitment to the Lord. I would call these signs of curiosity and enthusiasm.

Part of the aim of discipleship is to come to know what the teacher knows. The early followers wanted to know who He was and where He lived. They came to see for themselves and He taught them all they needed to know. True disciples of Jesus, like all people in love, want to know everything they can about the beloved. They hunger and thirst for words of life.

Down through the ages, people of faith have

continued to answer His question, "Who do you say that I am?" Our tradition carries the long memory of all that we have come to know and understand about Him. Who He is and what He means for the world continues to be exciting to His followers. Curiosity and enthusiasm keep us attached to the vitality of our inherited faith.

AUTHORITY

Can our candidates give themselves to a life of service without regard for personal acclaim?

Another significant element of our Catholic heritage is our understanding of the nature of authority in the Church. All of us are familiar with the functions of authority in the Catholic Church. These functions are sometimes described in terms of legislative, juridical or administrative responsibilities. They are also viewed sometimes from the pastoral perspective of preaching, teaching, sanctifying, and governing.

For Catholics these functions of authority in the Church are embodied in the Office of the local Bishop. Most often the Bishop exercises his authority in a manner that binds us together in faith and keeps us moving on the journey. Yet, from a faith perspective, authority in the Church is more than its functions. It provides a critical link to the sources of our Faith. It forever relates God's people to the Spirit given to us by Jesus, which is the foundation of our life together. It also enables the life that we share in the Spirit to increase and multiply and influence the world around us. Put simply, for Catholics, authority keeps us close to our foundations and inspires us toward mission.

We also can acknowledge that the question of authority frequently involves the use of power, but for religious people, the purpose of this power is impor-

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tant. A common use of power is for the sake of control and containment. We might describe this use of power as a military approach, an organizational approach, or a secular approach to power. The desire here is for compliance, productivity, or usefulness.

For all kinds of reasons, the use of power in a religious context is different. It may involve compliance and productivity and usefulness, but only for the sake of something greater, out of fidelity to our foundations and for the sake of the mission of the Church. The purpose of authority in the Church is to order our energies toward greater love, to realize more fully the experience of love revealed in Jesus Christ, to keep us alive in the Spirit of God's love and moving forward under its influence.

Modeling

The implication of this element of our Faith for modeling the integrated life is to be found not only in our relationship to the Office of the Bishop but also in how the seminarian experiences those who have authority over him. Seminarians must understand the authority to which they say "yes." It is also the authority that they will exercise. Seminarians must become more than good soldiers and obedient officers, and even productive ministers. We want them to be strong spiritual leaders as well.

The branch will not fall far from the tree. If we desire priests who have a deeply biblical and pastoral understanding of authority within the Church, we must exercise authority in a way that inspires faithfulness to the Gospel and that fosters a commitment to the mission of the Church.

At Mundelein we have tried to model the nature and exercise of Church authority by inviting the seminarians to participate fully in the responsibilities en-

trusted to the Seminary. To accomplish this goal, seminarians participate in the legislative aspect of seminary life through their elected representatives who sit on the academic and formation boards which determine all policy for the seminary. The seminarians also participate in the administration of the seminary through representatives who sit on the faculty appointments committee, the seminary budget committee, and the Rector's weekly council with the peer ministers. The seminarians participate in the juridical

aspects of the seminary through the annual review process that evaluates a person's readiness to continue to the next level of theological education. The feedback from the seminarians supplements the vote of the entire faculty on each candidate.

The purpose of all this participation is to initiate the seminarian into the responsibilities that are entrusted to those who hold positions of authority in the Church.

The aim of this formation is to shape attitudes and behaviors that truly reflect the biblical understanding of authority as a way of service.

Signs

Two things I would look for in someone who is called to exercise authority in the Church are the ability to invest time and energy in the life of a community, and then the ability to work well with others who are committed to service in the Church. I would designate these abilities as signs of service and collaboration.

The demands of seminary life can be very real and time consuming. The study, spiritual formation, and the pastoral preparation that are necessary for priesthood can occupy much of the life of a seminarian. Yet, all of this activity is for a purpose, namely,

To develop a strong sense of mission, there must be a stirring mixture of vision and conviction.

to offer one's life in service of the Gospel and the growth in holiness of God's people. If a person is preparing well for priesthood, we should see increasing signs of his investment in the community of faith and his contribution to people's lives.

We understand that the seminarian, the priest, and the Bishop are not the only ministers serving God's people. In baptism we are all called to lives of service. On a parish level, there are many men and women who are living out this call through their dedication to the Church and their service to the Catholic community. The person who will be entrusted with a position of authority in the Church must be able to work with a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds.

If the seminary is unable to say how a candidate is making a difference in the life of a community or if a person can not work well with fellow colleagues in serving the Church, there may be trouble ahead for him as a priest. Entrusting him with a position of authority in the Church might short-circuit the very purpose of his vocation.

MISSION

Do they believe that their life is not simply their own?

As we have noted above, we are a people who believe that our lives are not simply our own. We believe that our personal stories and our collective journey are irrevocably linked to the ancient story of faith. God is with us. God's hand is upon us. God sends us forth to continue his saving work.

Dr. Robert Coles in his book, *The Call of Service*, revisits a case study from 1963 when he had been interviewing young children who had been part of the process of integrating the public schools in the

southern portion of the United States. Dr. Coles tells about a young girl by the name of Tessie who lived with her Grandma, Martha, a very strong and wise woman. Tessie's Grandma would deliver young Tessie each day to the Federal Marshals who would escort Tessie into the school through a mob of white people from the area who had gathered outside the school to shout obscenities and racial slurs at the young child.

One morning Tessie mentioned to her Grandma that she wanted to stay home. Her Grandma told her that that was fine if she was not feeling well, but if

Tessie was getting discouraged, that was a different matter. Martha reminded Tessie she had work to do. The good Lord had selected her to help him with his work. Martha told Tessie she belonged in that school and some day those people outside would know that as well.

Tessie went off to school. She had a living sense that her life was not her own. The hand of God was upon her. She understood that the world was God's world. She knew she had her part to play. She was assisting God in making the world a better place. She was willing to risk her life so the world would understand that she belonged in that classroom. She was filled with a strong sense of mission.

This is the way the story of faith has always worked. If we look to the biblical stories of journey, they all begin with a lively sense of God's presence and a call to go forth. Whether it is the story of Abraham's journey toward the promised land, Israel's journey from the slavery in Egypt to the land of milk and honey, or the story of Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem, they all begin with the hand of God touching his people.

We are no different. Like Tessie, and all those who have gone before us, the hand of the Lord has

The challenge for all believers is to stay close to the Fire.

come upon us. It is true or none of us would be here. The challenge for us to keep in mind that our lives are not simply our own. We are on a journey. God is with us. We are moving forward under the influence of God's mysterious presence and love.

Modeling

The implications for this element of our heritage are significant. To develop a strong sense of mission, there must be a stirring mixture of vision and conviction. Those first disciples came to see all that Jesus knew and understood. In what they saw, their hearts were burning and they raced to tell others their good news.

Two things which seminaries can encourage in candidates that might strengthen their sense of mission are the development of the ability to see things differently and a regular pattern of reaching out to others, especially those in need. I would call these abilities as habits of imagination and compassion.

The sense of mission inspired by our faith rises out of the intense reality of God's love. This love stimulates the person to see life differently. It enables a person to look deeply at one's self, other people, and the world and to see new possibilities to be in conformity with the reign of God.

This same love also frees a person to behave in new ways. The direction of Jesus behavior was always toward others, even toward those who rejected him, and especially toward those who were in need. Our love for the Lord moves us along this same path.

Signs

If a seminarian is developing a habit of imagination, then I think it is reasonable to look for signs of creativity in his thinking and feeling and responding. Love should bring deeper insight into oneself and others and all the things of life, and new insight should open up new possibilities.

Compassion arises whenever we can recognize

ourselves in the workings of the human heart, both in its glory and in its shadows. This is true whether these workings take place in our own heart or the heart of another. The compassionate person reaches out to help. The person full of judgment will not recognize himself in the actions of the heart and will not see any compelling reason to reach out to another, even to the person in need.

Creativity and care for others are clear signs of imagination and compassion.

Conclusion

For the people of old, the ancient symbol of God's presence and love in life was Fire. There was fire in the bush when the voice spoke to Moses. The people of the Exodus were guided toward the Promised Land by a pillar of fire. Jesus said He came to start a fire blazing across the earth. Tongues of fire came to rest on the heads of the early disciples.

The mystics believed it was the fire of God's love that gave light to our souls. There is a famous painting of the Holy Ones of God in which the figures are depicted with fire coming forth from their eyes so intense and all-consuming was the love of God in their lives.

The challenge for all believers is to stay close to the Fire. For us as Catholics, we believe it is the sacramental character of life, our experience of community, our link with tradition, our deep trust of authority, and our strong sense of mission that enables us to stay close to the Fire.

Can we teach our candidates to stay close to the Fire?

Can we help our Candidates to grow into a deep sense of the holiness of life?

Can we encourage them to attach themselves to the common good beyond themselves?

Can we help them connect their experience with the living tradition of our Faith?

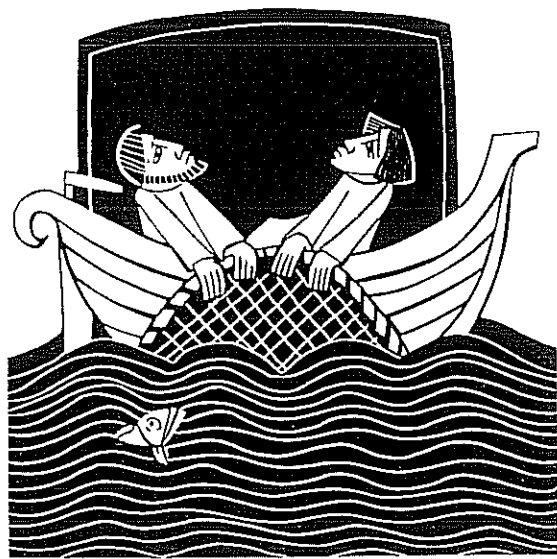
Can we encourage them to give themselves to a life of selfless service?

Can they understand that their lives are not simply their own?

I believe the answer to all these questions is yes. I believe we can teach our students to stay close to the Fire. I believe they can learn how to live the integrated life. Teaching them to do this is the challenge and privilege of our ministry. ✚

The Seminary as a Context for Modeling the Integrated Life The Challenge of Staying Close to the Fire <i>Rev. John Canary</i>		
Elements	Modeling	Signs
Sacramentality	1. Contemplative Spirit 2. Link between Human Growth and Holiness	Humor Joy
Community	1. Spirit of Fraternity 2. Attachment to the Local Church	Sacrifice Generosity
Tradition	1. Accumulated Wisdom 2. A Source of Inspiration	Curiosity Enthusiasm
Authority	1. Authority of Office 2. Authority of Experience	Service Collaboration
Mission	1. Vision 2. Action	Creativity Compassion

Observations by John Canary in Response to Questions and Comments Following His Presentation



A. Comments about Models

When we talk about models we need to distinguish between models **of** our systems of training priests and models **within** our systems. They are different.

At Mundeleine we had to stand back and draw some theological pictures and name our theological assumptions. These will vary from place to place and culture to culture. These assumptions are very important. We who have been entrusted with the preparation of priests, do not have to come up with the definitive theological statement about priesthood and the Church, simply some description of what we believe is important. So we talk about our theology of the development of the spiritual life of the person. And we talk about our theology of priesthood which is related to our theology of the Church. Our ecclesiology is always related to our Christology, which is complemented by our pneumatology, which is always grounded in our theology. That can sound very theoretical, but it can work if you move from area to area and ask people: What is really important about your understanding of the Church? What is really important about your understanding of Jesus Christ? People are able to say something about that. The faculty is able to identify the deep convictions that they have, and that will be an important reference and guidepost for whatever model you develop. It will give you a way of evaluating the effectiveness of your model.

If, as in Latin America, a country or a group of nations has taken on a project like evangelization, that should influence the training of the people who will serve the Church in that culture. We should have some conversation about the culture in which we are living and how the Church is responding in the midst of that culture. Social and cultural pictures and assumptions will also guide us in the development of our system.

Whatever the system looks like, I think there are four components: preparation time, training time,

practice time, and commitment time. Commitment time bridges ordination. Education and the systems of education should not end at ordination.

So your model of the system will have those four components and they will be influenced by your theology and by your cultural social analysis. That is different from the model **within** the system.

Once you have some vision of where you want the system to go, then you have to figure out how to operate the system. The number of seminarians and their readiness will make a difference on what you are doing within the system. I want to talk about three components that I think are very important.

Within the system the faith environment is critical. Year after year I say to the faculty and the students that it is not enough that we are all genuine people of faith. That is not enough. We must as people of faith create an environment of faith. That is different. An environment of faith doesn't simply happen because believers come together. We all know that. You have to work at creating an environment of faith year after year.

Secondly, how we relate to one another is terribly important. It makes a difference how we relate one on one and to one another, but also within the community of faith. Whether or not we attend to one another, whether or not we support each other in faith, whether or not we really challenge one another honestly, whether or not we help each other for the mission that brought us together, are important. So the relational activities are terribly important.

Finally the personal interiorization or appropriation of priestly formation is terribly important. What effect is our being together having on the individual and his preparation?

Whatever model you are using, these questions are important within the system: How are we creating the faith environment? How does the community relate in faith-filled and mission-related ways? What is happening to the individual in terms of his own

growth and readiness for the priesthood?

Models of the system, models within the system.

B. Comments about Criteria

There are criteria for discernment that include entrance into a seminary and beyond and criteria for advancement. A number of the groups picked up on the importance of desire as a criterion for advancement. In the writings of St. John of the Cross, desire is a key reflection experience. St. John says that desire, the desire for God and the deep desires of life, are actually God's grace, God's preparation for more. If the desire is not there, more will not happen, whatever the more is. Our surface desires are mixed, but our deep desires are important because they are the places of sanctification. In the deep desires of life we learn that what we desire the most we cannot achieve on our own. The desires dispose us to receive the deep gifts of life from the only source that can give us those gifts. It is not enough for someone to say they have desire. You have to see the desire. If you can't see it, then it's not very deep. The faculty and the people who are part of the seminary and God's people should be able to see the deep desires in a person's heart. They are very important for discernment.

C. Answer to the Question about Students Voting on the Advancement of Their Peers to the Next Year.

Let me explain how we got to that decision and what it looks like. In any seminary there is not only the task of preparing people for priesthood, there is also the task of evaluation. The Church asks us to evaluate whether this is a good candidate and whether the candidate is ready to be a priest. This is part of our commission by the Church. At Mundelein for a long while that task was also mixed together with the task of trying to help people grow. It was all done in one process and the students were not too sure

whether you were helping them grow or whether you were evaluating whether they were going ahead. Consequently, they were a little bit leery about how much they were going to tell you and what you were going to say to them. Were you trying to help them or were you, in effect, preparing them to leave?

We decided that there are actually three distinct aims in the responsibility for evaluation. One is the personal aim that you are trying to help the individual grow. To do that the person needs to know how they are doing. They need some response from their peers, from the faculty, and from the people that they are serving as to how they are seen and experienced. We call that aim: FEEDBACK. It is for the person. So, we designed a system that simply would yield feedback. The students in first year and third year each select 6 faculty and 6 students and request honest feedback from them and that feedback for the student goes only to the student. It does not come to the administration or to any faculty member. The amazing thing is the students are very honest and they keep that feedback not only through their first year into third year but also into their priesthood for reflection. We have priests ordained two years and five years coming back to the seminary telling us that they now understand what their feedback was getting at.

That is different from a second aim of evaluation. There is not only a personal aim but also an institutional aim in evaluation. We call that process: ENDORSEMENT. The Church asks us to continue to endorse people, i.e., to assert that indeed they are ready to continue to the next phase of their preparation. That is an institutional responsibility. Every seminary must evaluate whether or not this person is

ready to continue to the next year. That is the system that I described previously where all of the seminarian's classmates and all of the faculty vote on whether or not a person should continue to the next year. It is a very simple question: "Do you have confidence that this person is ready to continue to the next level of preparation?" It is a yes or no vote. The student needs 80% of their classmates and 80% of the faculty voting yes to move forward. The students voting must sign their names. The faculty must sign their names. The student never sees this endorsement unless there is a problem. If they do not get 80% of their classmates or 80% of the faculty, they have to review the non-endorsements with me. It doesn't mean that they do not go forward. It means there is a question. The only time they see those endorsements are when there is a sufficient number who have a question, and usually the questions are the same. There is a convergence. For 90% of those I meet with, the low endorsement opens them to hear the feedback and they advance to the next level.

The third aim of evaluation is an ecclesial responsibility. The Church asks us to let the Church know when this person is ready to be ordained a priest. We call that CERTIFICATION. That is a whole different system. It occurs in the last year. The entire community participates in that. They send in letters of reflection to me as to why they think this man is ready to be ordained or not ready. Those letters are read to the individual student by me. It is an amazing experience when the student in fourth year hears from many faculty and many students why the community feels he is ready to be ordained a priest. Those are three different systems of evaluation. †

Summary Statements on Seminary Life and Formation for Priesthood

*(A synthesis of the feedback from the groups
on the last day of the consultation)*

Rev. James J. Walsh



A. Important Components Cited:

- Each seminarian must take responsibility for his own formation and the formation of his brothers.
- The cultural and ecclesial links between the life of the seminary and the lives of the people of God are important.
- It is important that there be modeling in the seminary by the rector, faculty, and staff in the areas of authority, joy, listening, vulnerability, a healthy life style, commitment, and faith.
- The importance of the liturgy as the source and summit of seminary life especially in the sacrificial dimension of the priest's life and his acting "in persona Christi" should be realized.
- The importance of human growth and maturity in the seminarian and an appreciation of friendship in the context of celibacy should be noted.
- Variety and diversity can be enriching within priestly formation.
- The vision and mission of the Church and priesthood as coming from God should not be lost.
- The concern for the poor, the insignificant, and the marginalized must be integrated into the formation process.
- There are marked cultural and ecclesial differences in the various countries in which we are working.
- There is also a wonderful convergence of blessings and challenges in our various seminaries.

- It is a good and important work that we have been called to do in and for the Church.
 - Our daily work as rectors enables us to deepen our own priestly service in a way that would not be possible if we were involved in other work. As we are challenged to be models of growth, we are able to grow ourselves.
 - We have learned important values like love for the Church, the use of imagination for the integration of all the components of formation, and moving beyond the practical issues and concerns that can preoccupy us.
 - Formators are essentially catalysts in a conversion experience providing persons with the opportunity and stimulus to deepen their faith.
 - The seminary's involvement in the local church is facilitated by the seminarian's personal experience and relationships, like living among the poor and being involved with laity in the formation process.
 - The call and recommendation for ordained priesthood should involve the laity in some way.
 - The spirituality demanded is one that leads us and the seminarians to the generosity of God's love which provides the enthusiasm and desire for mission.
 - It is important that the formation process be integrated and personalized.
 - The apostolic mission and how it is inculturated in a local church has implications for priestly formation and ministry, for example, the evangelical project of the Latin American church is key for the formation of priests in that region.
 - Ongoing preparation for celibacy is vital, but it is also important to continue discussion of the issue of celibacy in light of the needs of the Church and in light of the needs of the personal development of individuals within formation programs.
 - Discipleship can be the integrating image for intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, and human formation.
- B. Major Needs Discerned:**
- Promotion of a sense of belonging and participation within the seminary needs to take place.
 - We need to maintain the standards, have clear criteria, and emphasize quality in the acceptance and promotion of the candidates. There needs to be better coordination of the persons responsible for this.
 - There needs to be training of formation staff and spiritual directors.
 - We need to involve more lay people in the formation of priests.
 - There needs to be a proper discernment of what seminary formation should be today, and what structural and ideological changes need to be made in relation to developments in ecclesiology and the theology of ministry.
 - An exchange of information and theological discussion among the faculty needs to take place. Students need to witness the faculty in dialogue as Christian colleagues.
 - We need to avoid sentimentality in admissions.

- We need to initiate dialogue with faculty, bishops, students, and the wider Church to help clarify the vision, mission, and needs of the Church and the seminary. The dialogue can reinforce the relational model of formation and can help us discern where we are being called by the Holy Spirit.
- There needs to be a spirit of dialogue especially in the area of ecclesiology, the theology of priesthood, and the theology of ministry.
- The consultation and collaboration that goes on within the evaluative and assessment processes needs to be transparent. We need to remove the perceived mysteriousness of the process.
- There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of the large free standing model of seminary. We need, perhaps, to look at the apprenticeship model of placing a seminarian with a priest who can be a role model.
- Structures and processes for post-ordination formation need to be connected with seminary formation.



Reports on Priestly Formation From the Various Regions of the World

Africa

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Introduction

About 12% of the world's population reside in Africa, second only to Asia. In Africa we are witnessing the fastest growth ever in the 2000 year history of Christianity. Here are a few statistics to illustrate this point:

	Population (millions)	Catholics (millions)	Seminarians
1900	118	2.3	?
1970	320	32	3,470
1997	720	95	19,000

Africa is large, containing 22% of the land of this good earth. Europe, the USA, India, China, and Argentina all fit within Africa. Africa is complex, with over 2000 languages and ethnic groups. For the purpose of this presentation, I am focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, and thus not speaking of North Africa or Egypt.

What are the significant issues and trends influencing the Church of Africa?

Political: Africa continues to suffer from poor leadership. In many countries there are entrenched leaders, military dictators, or the dangers of military coups. While the desire for democracy suited for Africa is great, the reality is not so present.

Economic: Most of the world's poorest nations are in Africa. Decline rather than growth is characteristic. International debt robs the children of Africa of their future.

Demographic: The birth rate remains very high, the highest in the world, and at the same time, the epidemic of AIDS ravages the population and leaves homes and villages without parents. In Zambia over the past ten years, life expectancy dropped from 52 to 42 years of age.

Transitions: Modern technology and communications deeply influence Africa. TV presents the western world and its progress and problems to African households, but much of what is seen, such as the material progress, is beyond the reach of most Africans.

Ethnicity: We witness the move and desire to be part of modern, technological culture, yet at the same time, is the increased desire to return to and retain one's cultural roots, one's racial identity. Ethnic rivalry, tension, and conflict remain present. As one bishop expressed it at the Assembly of African bishops, "blood is thicker than water" (the water of Baptism).

Religion: Africans are deeply religious. This finds expression in a growing number of indigenous, independent African churches. As Christianity grows, this is matched by the growth of Islam. In many nations there are tensions and conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

Education: The desire for good education is very high, but the quality of education may be decreasing because of population growth, and because of poor political leadership that often resents and fears quality education. When people are

converted, they simply add the new faith to what they already believe.

Women: While more women have been receiving education, equal opportunities for women remain distant, in light of the male domination that is present in many of the African traditional cultures.

Urbanization: The move to the cities, the search of the better life, continues, but it all too often results in crowded living, slums, unemployment, increased crime, as well as in weakening of families ties.

What are the challenges in Africa in preparing candidates for priesthood today?

The basic challenge is to prepare young men to meet the immense challenges facing the Church and people of Africa. Under this heading of challenges, I will list "lights and shadows," positive and negative factors, that present challenges to formation of priests in Africa. In general, each of the positive factors has a negative side to it, as we will see.

Numbers: There are approximately 180 major seminaries in Africa. In Nigeria there are 11 major seminaries with an average of 400 students in each. This presents an opportunity, but also the challenge to assure quality in view of the quantity. Vocations for the most part are booming. The challenge is discerning the genuine vocations.

Image of the Priest: Catholics in Africa hold their priests in high regard. Vocations to priesthood are encouraged and supported. On the other hand, the priest can be put on a pedestal and remain above criticism when criticism is due.

Traditional Large Seminaries: The model of seminary for the most part is the large, independent, often rather isolated institutional structure. In general, diocesan seminaries are larger than those for religious. Students may not receive the personal care, guidance, and attention needed. They are not being formed in community living - or in the image of the Church as family, as the Assembly of African Bish-

ops emphasized.

Intellectual Formation: While the academic background of the students may be growing weaker, due to the downturn in the quality of education, the intellectual formation at seminaries remains strong and the students respond well to the challenge of the academic life. A criticism oft repeated is that the seminaries are better at training the head rather than the heart.

Spiritual formation. I believe this is the most serious concern facing seminaries in Africa. While academics may be solid, spiritual formation does not receive the priority it demands. Seminarians have courses in spiritual theology, attend Mass, pray the Rosary, and have common prayer. I have heard that young priests have not developed a prayer life. They are not well prepared to make the transition from the more serene life in the seminary to the active, interrupted life in the parish. Their spirituality has been more monastic than active, apostolic. To improve spiritual formation, many more trained spiritual directors must be present, and this aspect of formation must be seen as a higher priority. There is a great need for trained spiritual directors.

Pastoral Formation: In view of large numbers and the relative isolation of many seminaries, pastoral formation remains inadequate, although it is more and more seen as a serious concern and challenge. Pastoral involvement by the seminarians, such as over the vacation periods, is seen more as a test rather than a supervised apprenticeship.

Interpersonal Relationships: Many comment that seminarians act out of fear rather than love, that is, fear of being dismissed. Their bishops remain distant. In the intensely authoritarian ways of interacting, even faculty and administration can be distant and feared. There is insufficient modeling or training in a more collegial or collaborative model of education or ministry and, thus, after ordination the young priests themselves take on the authoritarian model in exercising

leadership. This affects all relationships, especially relationships with women.

Pedagogy: In view of large classes, the lecture method is the norm rather than more creative, involved, library research-oriented pedagogy. Team teaching and interaction among students is minimal.

Clerical Culture: Most of the professors and formation staff are priests. Seminarians rarely are taught and challenged by lay men, and more importantly, by religious or lay women. In a distinction that might be insightful, one person said that in the African seminaries, we are training clerics rather than priests. The cleric is one who falls back upon his privileged position and office. The priest is one who gives his life in service to God's people.

African or Western Philosophy/Theology: It is questioned whether African seminaries should review, retrieve the history of Western thought and the Western Church or instead launch into the depths of their own culture and tradition and correlate Scripture and tradition with African culture, roots, sources, and riches. For the most part, inculturation remains an ideal, and Western theology and philosophy dominate.

Psycho-sexual Development: Seminarians are young, growing, and maturing. This takes place in the rather isolated milieu of the seminary. More healthy interaction with their peers, including women, would be helpful as well as specific courses or workshops that treat of psycho-sexual development. Celibacy surely will always remain a challenge, in Africa and elsewhere, but ways and means to help face and live it should be available.

Justice and Peace: In the strongly religious culture of Africa, the Christian, hence the priest and the seminarian, most continually strive to see the links between religion and social/political issues, between faith and justice. The social teaching of the Church must not only be studied and known, but also applications to the myriad problems facing Africa must be

formulated and tried.

Ecumenism: Seminarians must be given not only theoretical or classroom knowledge of other Christian denominations, African indigenous religions, and Islam, but also the ecumenical attitude and the desire and ability to engage in conversation in order to understand and relate practically to these powerful religious forces in Africa.

Summary Challenge: The existing large, institutional, and often isolated seminary structures must be strongly modified to enable more integrated, personalized, responsible, family-style education and formation. Efforts are being made in this direction, but the structures in place resist radical change. Some would argue that more radical structural changes (rather than program changes, changes within the structure) are needed - new ways, places, and means of forming priests to serve in Africa.

What is the profile of people who are coming to seminary?

Age: For the most part those who enter the major seminaries are aged between 19 and 22. Their experience, especially their experience of work, of earning a living, may be quite limited. They will change and mature greatly during their years of study.

Family Background: Family in Africa refers to the extended, rather than the nuclear family. Most vocations arise from solid Catholic families - perhaps their father was a catechist and the mother is a faithful parish member and member of at least one parish society. Yet some come from polygamous families, or families where one or both of their parents are non-Catholic and adherents to African religion. In general, there is strong family support for vocations to priesthood. On the other hand, the priest is expected to help his extended family in their needs due to his elevated social and economic position.

Religious Background: Many of the major seminarians would have attended minor seminaries which

remain prominent in many parts of Africa. Even if they did not attend minor seminary, the spiritual life of most, simple and pious in the good sense, consists of daily Mass/Communion and daily Rosary, sometimes the family Rosary. Many would have been altar servers and a smaller number would have been helpers to their local parish priest, working, and perhaps living in the parish house. They love the Church and being involved in the life of the Church. They have a love of song, dance, and celebration.

Educational Background: All would have completed secondary school. For many, this would have been a minor seminary. In general, they would have the qualifications needed to attend the University in their own country. Education has declined overall rather than improved in many parts of Africa, and, thus too, the educational level of the seminarians, especially those who come from rural areas. Excellent in learning languages, they would know at least

one African language and one foreign language.

Motivation: Most candidates are drawn by religious motivation, the desire to serve as priests. At the same time, it is clear that priesthood and even the life of the seminarian results in upward mobility. The priest normally has a car, educational opportunities, ability to travel, including overseas travel and room and board to an extent that the vast majority of Africans do not have.

This brief survey does not do justice to the diversity, the complexity, the riches of formation for priesthood in Africa. My hope is that setting forth these points under general categories may enable us to focus on more salient points, lead to clarification and, indeed, to action proposals that will begin to address the challenges facing the formation of priests in Africa and elsewhere. †



Asia

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For my presentation I will give a brief introduction on Asia and then some remarks under each of the themes given to us. I will base my remarks on material related to the Bishops' Synod on Asia last April 19-May 14, 1998, on documents of the FABC, articles in journals, and interviews with some experts on the topics.

Asia is that vast area which extends from Israel and Lebanon in the west to Japan in the East, Mongolia in the north and Indonesia and Papua New Guinea in the south. Seventy-five percent of the world's population lives in Asia, a large number of whom are young people. Asia is a land of vast multiplicity and conflicts: multiplicity of races, religions, languages and cultures, contrasts in political organizations, social life, the economy and standards of living. There is much plurality of life even within the same urban neighborhood or village.

In general, there is tremendous growth and transformation in Asia. There is an increasing desire for greater freedom on the political, social, economic levels, and advancing industrialization and modernization of life. Education, science and technology are making significant impacts in many places, giving rise to levels of literacy, to specialists, researchers, inventors, skilled workers. There is a growing awareness of human rights, respect for the individual, communal and regional cooperation.

The Church has been planted and is making steady progress in Asia. There is a rise in vocations over the

past twenty-five years. New local religious congregations have been organized. The Church has been known for many notable projects, such as improving literacy rates and skills through education and vocational training.

I. The Significant Issues and Trends in Asia

The key issues and challenges I see facing the Church in Asia with all the religious, socio-political and cultural ferment are the following:

- 1) greater effort at inculturation;
- 2) inter-religious dialogue and more attention to contemplation and prayer;
- 3) greater involvement in action for justice, alleviation of poverty and suffering;
- 4) greater attention to the role and the formation of the laity, the family, women, and the youth;
- 5) better use of the mass media for evangelization;
- 6) globalization and the free market; and
- 7) the Fundamentalism coming from Hinduism and Islam

Let me briefly explain each.

Over the past twenty-five years the Church in Asia has been engaged in a triple dialogue with the Asian cultures, with the poor, and with the other religions. While there has been considerable progress since the 1970s, all the literature I have consulted indicates that much more needs to be done. The first challenge to the Church is that of inculturation of greater interaction between the faith and the local culture. Many writers and documents say that the Gospel must take on an Asian character, that the Church must be incarnated in Asian cultures. There is need to understand the Asian mentality, to appreciate Asian religions with their strength and values, and their influence on the people. There were efforts by Beschi and de Nobili in India, Xavier and Valignano

in Japan, Ricci in China in the past but these did not receive continued encouragement. Today many in Asia feel that the Church is still too western, as seen from her theology, architecture, art, association with colonialism, etc.

It is important especially to have inculturation in Christian theology and spirituality. Theologians can use theological expressions from the local culture, and use aspects of the Asian philosophical systems to explain the message of Christ. Christian spirituality can also draw from the vast riches of Asian spiritual traditions to make the mystery of Christ understood. The challenge to inculturate the Faith remains the key issue in Asia today.

A second challenge, intimately related to inculturation, is interreligious dialogue. Asia is the cradle of the main religions of the world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism. One can add to these a good number of popular religious movements and primal religions. The Spirit of God is present in these religious cultures and they have a salvific role to play in God's plan. With Vatican II the Church has strongly encouraged respect for and dialogue with these religions. The Church is asked to see and appreciate the signs of God's presence in them and to understand herself better in the light of these religions. The impact of the religions on the life, history and culture of the people has to be appreciated. The religions have given meaning to the lives of Asians for centuries and continue to permeate the individual and communal lives of Asians.

Dialogue with the adherents of these religions must be genuine and open, humble and frank, seeking to learn and share. There is much to learn from the deep religiosity of the people and from their Scriptures, their teachings, their religious and ascetical practices, their philosophies. At the same time there is much to share, such as the values of reconciliation

and peace, service of the neighbor, the dignity of persons, the value of suffering, etc. Authors also stress that this dialogue must go beyond discussions on doctrines and belief systems, to being in touch with the persons of other faiths out of a spirit of love and service. The exercise of spiritual and corporal works of mercy is very helpful for dialogue because this creates a sense of community, peace, harmony - values very important in Asia.

An important aspect of interreligious dialogue is the need for the Church to give more attention to the life of the spirit, to prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Many Asians value religious experience more than doctrine. Christians in Asia are expected to witness to a deep union with Christ, to be contemplatives in action. Many times this silent witness to a deep God experience will be more convincing than verbal, theoretical explanations about the mysteries of Christianity.

The third part of the triple dialogue needed in Asia is dialogue with the poor. This means preferential option for and solidarity with the poor, recognizing their human dignity, working for social justice for the victims of exploitation and oppression - tribals, children, migrant workers, refugees, women. It means caring for those who are suffering from physical, mental or spiritual ills. Many hold that effective social service and concern by the Church, following the example of Jesus, is the most important contribution of the Church in Asia. The highly positive regard for the work of Mother Teresa is proof of this.

If the life of Jesus was marked by deeds of love and service, the Church can do no better than to imitate this by specific activities of love and service for the poor, the marginalized and suffering, the many victims of injustice and discrimination based on race, religion, culture, gender.

In its efforts towards social justice and preferential love for the poor, the Church can very effectively cooperate with the followers of other religions, a good

number of whom are also very concerned about building better and more just societies in Asia, and fighting abuses and injustices.

A fourth important issue in the Church in Asia is the role of the laity in the Church and the Church's concern for the laity. The Church in Asia is perceived as being too clerical in its administration, liturgy, and needs to involve the laity, especially the youth, much more in its life and activities. The young especially are eager to participate in the mission of the Church. The interest and enthusiasm of the laity is seen in the growth of Basic Ecclesial Communities and charismatic movements. Lay institutes have been established in Japan and the Philippines. Formation for the laity in theology and spirituality is present in many places in Asia.

Special attention needs to be given to the youth, the family, and women. The youth make up a very large number of Asians. While they are idealistic and generous, they are also caught up in tensions arising from rapid changes and modernization in Asia. In several countries, they are effective evangelizers bringing the Gospel message to their peers and families. The apostolate of the family is very important for the future of the Church because the family is the center of Asian culture and society. Family values are highly prized in Asia but are now being threatened by mass migration, working parents, forced resettlement, etc. Good family lives contribute much to vocations in Asia. The Church's work towards the emancipation of women through education and legislation needs to be commended and continued. The increase in vocation among women has led to noteworthy social change and care for the poor.

A fifth issue that affects the Church in Asia is the mass media. While it brings many benefits, it also has disturbing effects. The individualism, materialism, and violence portrayed in the media is seriously affecting traditional familial and communal religious values. The Church needs to educate people in the

use and effects of the media. The Church needs to address the culture that is being formed by the media and other means of social communication. Finally, the Church needs to better use the media and other forms of social communication such as the Internet to proclaim the Gospel message today.

A sixth issue that affects the Church in Asia is the need to respond to globalization and the free market.

Finally, the Church in Asia needs to address the Fundamentalism coming from Hinduism and Islam.

II. Challenges in Asia in Preparing Candidates for the Priesthood Today

Many of the challenges to formation in Asia today flow from the issues and challenges facing the Church in Asia. There is need to train the seminarians to understand these trends, participate in them, and respond to the challenges they present as effectively as they can. Let me briefly indicate a few key challenges presented by formators and Asian bishops in the recent past.

The first challenge is to make the formation inculturated and to train the young men to be inculturated in their life and service as priests. It will mean that the young seminarian is trained to be open to different cultures from his own and to try to adopt himself to these, making himself one with the people. The young seminarian must go beyond knowledge of the local language, history and traditions of the people and get into "the inner genius of a community". For this it is important that there be considerable exposure and apprenticeship during formation. When the young priest exercises his ministry, it must be contextual because the priest is called to be a man of the people, especially the poor and suffering.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Bishops' Synod on Asia last April 19-May 14, 1998, stresses the need for inculturation in theology and theological research, that the formators and seminaries should use elements

from the different philosophical systems in Asia to make the message of Christ meaningful for Asians. Seminarians also need to know the spiritual traditions in Asia to incarnate Christian spirituality.

An important part of inculturation involves the liturgy. There is need for liturgical renewal in Asia to make it more suitable to the culture of the people of a particular region so that the people there can really experience the mystery of Christ in their lives.

The second challenge is that the formation process train the seminarians for dialogue with religions and cultures. Rectors of Asian seminaries who met outside Manila in 1988 stressed that interfaith dialogue should have an important part in the formation and spirituality of the priest. At their meeting outside Manila in 1991 the Asian formators pointed out that formators must develop in seminary communities "respect for the genius and genuine spiritual values enshrined in the religio-cultural traditions of the people." (*Hundredfold Harvest*, p.28) and that the priest must be a man who can dialogue "with the faiths and cultures of all the people, without any distinction of caste, creed or race." (*Hundredfold Harvest*, p. 17)

The Asian Bishops and formators stress that formation in Asia must have a strong missionary and pastoral dimension to it, including formation in missionary spirituality. Seminaries need to provide courses in missiology and in other religions and cultures. Seminarians are to have concrete missionary and apostolic experiences and engage in activities such as teaching, preaching, organizing people for a sharing of their faith. Seminary formation must have a strong pastoral dimension that breaks down divisions of race, social class, and religion.

The third challenge for candidates to the priesthood in Asia is formation in social justice and for a preferential option for the poor. Meetings of the Asian Bishops and of the seminary formators have stressed this. They point out that "seminarians should be helped progressively to de-

velop this love for the poor," without any condescension. Seminarians must have experience in working with the poor and reflect on that experience. The 1991 Statement of Asian seminary formators says that the priest must be a prophetic leader for human rights, human dignity, peace and justice, and that the seminarians must be made aware of the socio-political and economic situation of the people. As early as 1974, the FABC meeting in Taipei asked that the social teaching of the Church, especially of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, be part of theological and pastoral formation of priests.

A fourth challenge in the formation of seminarians is formation in social communication. The two meetings of Asian seminary formators in 1988 and 1991 outside Manila mention the need to train seminarians to use the media positively, but to use it critically, too. Seminary formators are asked to give the seminarians information and experience so that they can use the media to proclaim God's message and they can evangelize the media. Since very few people are reached from the pulpit, media education is essential for the seminarians.

A fifth challenge in seminary formation in Asia today is having truly human formation that will produce a priest who is emotionally mature, psychologically well-balanced, well-integrated in personality. This is especially important because a number enter the seminary wounded and in need of healing. An essential part of this integrated formation is formation in celibacy and sexuality. After careful screening of candidates, they must be challenged to grow in celibacy. Researches indicate a significant degree of immaturity among priests and religious. The immaturity is often linked with sexual difficulties.

A sixth challenge to priestly formation in Asia today is spiritual formation. The Asian Bishops and formators insist on the centrality of the God-experience and the primacy of the spiritual formation of seminarians, especially since Asia is so deeply reli-

gious. Formation in the spirit and the ability to lead others to God is often neglected at the expense of intellectual, social and psychological formation.

A final need in Asia is good formation and ongoing formation of the formators themselves. If the seminarians are to be well-trained to meet the challenges of the 21st century, intensive and extensive training must be given to formators, especially the spiritual directors. Faculty development programs have to be sought. Teachers have to get specialized training in such areas as missiology, interfaith dialogue, inculturation, the social sciences. The skilled formation of spiritual directors deserves top priority.

III. The Profile of People Coming to Seminary

It is difficult to make general statements regarding those coming to seminary in the different Asian countries beyond these:

- 1) They tend to come from the middle class or poorer, rural places.
- 2) They tend to be highly motivated to and are strongly desirous of serving God and Christ.
- 3) Intellectually many are above average but not brilliant.

Beyond these I notice considerable variety and diversity.

In *Indonesia and Malaysia* they tend to come from deeply religious Catholic families that send their children to Catholic schools for a good education. Many come from minor seminaries. Among religious, a good number are brighter intellectually. They also tend to be professionals with work experience before they enter, attracted by vocation promoters and desirous of doing something about the social issues of the country.

In *Sri Lanka* too they tend to come from poorer and middle class families, some of whom send their boys to the minor seminary to learn English. Some

join the seminary to avoid the military conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese only to find tension between the two groups in the seminary. Many have difficulty in communicating in English.

Seminarians tend to be older in *Korea and Singapore*. Many enter with a professional background and two years of military service. While vocations are doing well in *Korea and Myanmar*, they are low in *Thailand* (where Buddhism is very strong), *Taiwan and Hongkong*, perhaps because of the increasing secularization in the last two places.

The only information I have about *China* indicates that they come from traditional Catholic families. Most are recommended by their pastors who expect them to return after four to six years of theological education. The seminarians themselves feel that the training is insufficient and outmoded for their work, that their teachers are too old and strict, and that their textbooks are pre Vatican II, published in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the *Philippines* many seminarians come from rural areas and lower income families. Their academic background is weak and they tend to be slightly above average intellectually. They have poor knowledge of the faith, but they are highly motivated, eager to learn more. They are also very generous, sociable and closely attached to the family. Interestingly, although there is an increase in the number of priests, it has not kept up with the growth in population. There is one priest for over ten thousand people.

In *India* economically, the seminarians tend to come from lower middle class families; academically, they are average to above average; spiritually, many come from devout, traditionally-oriented families; culturally, they come from very diverse backgrounds and very different languages. At the Papal Seminary in Pune, the students come from 15 different states, 51 dioceses, and three rites - Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara. †

Eastern Europe

Rev. Stanislaw Obirek, S.J.

Krakow, Poland

The Significant Issues and Trends Influencing the Church in Eastern Europe

1. One of the most important issues of the Church in Eastern Europe is the rediscovery and return to the tradition over many centuries of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with different confessions and religions. It was Eastern Europe which accepted the Jews expelled from Spain and other Western countries in the 15th century. It was here that different groups of Protestants expelled from the West found a home in the 16th century. In this part of Europe Christians and Muslims lived in harmony in the Middle Ages.
2. The totalitarianism of communism in Soviet Russia since 1918 and in other parts of Eastern Europe since 1945 destroyed a cultural heritage and fought against religion and the spiritual.

Hitler's ideology also darkens the past and present of our history. It not only destroyed the rich Jewish heritage but also contributed to the hostility which still exists between neighboring countries.

3. The decrease in the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland after 1989 is proportional to the decrease of direct commitment of priests and bishops to politics. This is an important indication that a certain epoch in the history and significance of the Church in social life is finished.
4. The new challenge for the Church in society is the increase of impoverished social groups, unemployment, and increased social tension.

Trends in the Seminaries:

1. In 1987 there were 9038 seminarians. In 1994 there were 7180 seminarians.
2. The greatest need for seminaries is the formation of professors to do the spiritual, human, and intellectual formation of the seminarians.
3. There is a new type of seminarian entering the seminary after 1989, the convert from atheism to Catholicism. Prior to 1989 the seminarians came from the rural areas and there was a significant political motivation to be a priest.
4. The intellectual preparation for seminary is weak.
5. Entering the seminary in Poland is still a social step upwards.

Latin America

Rev. Carlos Rodriguez
Caracas, Venezuela

Negative Influences on the Church in Latin America:

1. Globalization of the economy has had some negative influence on patterns of behaviour. There is racism and nationalism growing in some countries which seek to exclude certain social groups.
2. There is a gradual increase in secularism and individualism.
3. Urbanization is leading to a loss of traditional values and the breakdown of the family. This can make for difficulties in the human formation of the seminarians and challenges the priest to have the maturity to stand up for the traditional values in the face the culture.
4. Corruption in social and political areas is creating a mentality for easy and fast money in drugs from transport to consumption sales.
5. The South American continent is, moreover, no longer an exclusively Catholic continent. There are different religious movements reaching the poor people that the Catholic Church used to reach. Current trends are leading to a polarized world, a polarized Church, and the exclusion of people.

The Seminary Situation

1. We have a lot of young formators. In some cases we see a lack of stability in the educational teams as often the seminary formators do not work full-time in the seminary.
2. Our bishops are often not sufficiently present in our formation programs and seminaries.
3. There has been a drop in the educational level in many countries which has affected the intellectual capacity of the seminarians. We are trying to strategize how to meet this problem.
4. There are movements that have developed their own seminaries and they are not following the standards for priestly formation. This is breaking up the communion of priestly formation around the classical model.
5. Most of the vocations are coming from the rural areas and from the middle and lower middle classes. There has been an increase in the number of seminarians from broken families.
6. In general we see an increase in the number of seminarians and the number that gets ordained is a greater percentage than it was.
7. Most of the seminarians come with a sincere desire to allow themselves to be guided and to accept the challenge of formation.
8. In the seminaries there is dialogue and many seminarians are taking personal responsibility for their formation.

Australasia and Oceania: The Present Situation and Future Prospects

Rev. Paul Cashen

I. Consequences for Seminary Formation

- a) Increase in seminarians, but lack of qualified formators, particularly nationals.
- b) Changes in seminary structures.
 - Change from large central seminary to smaller regional ones.
 - Smaller regional seminaries provide better personal and spiritual assistance, and more in keeping with local customs.
 - Cost in some seminaries are a problem.
- c) Changes to seminary programs
 - Each diocese has their own screening and selection policies. Common guidelines are being established.
 - Academic standards not as good as before, reflecting the National Education System.
 - French speaking seminarians find it difficult in Fiji and PNG - lack of lecturers.
 - Tension between the academic and the spiritual and personal formation is a common problem.

II. Consequences for Pastoral Leadership

- a) The increase in the number of vocations reflects the faith of the people, accepting their responsibility to take charge of the Church as the number of overseas missionaries declines.
- b) For seminarians and priests:
 - Considerable personal and social adjust-

ment is required of seminarians who mostly come from villages without a wide experience of the world around them.

- The cultural diversity among seminarians is enriching and creates tension.
- c) For seminarians:
 - Pressure from families and relatives
 - Constant doubts concerning their vocation
 - Difficulties and failure with celibacy obligations
 - d) For young priests:
 - serious problems with alcohol and celibacy
 - serious sense of insecurity
 - overwork because of many vacant parishes
 - expectation to be like overseas missionaries
 - e) One of the major contributing factors to these personal difficulties is a deficient formation system.

III. Conclusion

There is a great need for suitable and adequate formators and theology lecturers. Steps have been taken. Nationals are now going through training to become well-qualified in these areas in the seminaries of Oceania.

The Australasian Seminaries

I. Pressures and Consequences of Fewer Seminaries:

- a) Significant adjustment to the life-style and structures of seminaries, e.g., the movement towards formation houses separate from the Theology College.
- b) The fewer applicants situation has brought pressure to lower or change entrance stan-

dards.

- c) At the same time concern for appropriate professional standards for priests require more personnel and programs to assess and assist the personal integration of all areas of formation.
- d) The document, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, gives new directions and standards for the formation and training of seminarians, but fewer priests are available to be prepared as formators.
- e) The pressure on Formation and Professional staff to be of service to the wider church:
 - To staff both the houses of formation and theology colleges.
 - To be involved in the vocaton programs of dioceses.
 - To accept responsibility for the ongoing formation of the clergy, especially in early years.
 - To be involved in the formation of lay people for leadership in the Church.

II. Consequences of More Yet Smaller Seminaries

- a) Costs increase per seminarian and also with the trend towards localization meaning, more, newer and smaller structures.
- b) Smaller seminaries mean less specialisation and more generalisation for staff.
- c) Replacing the older monastic structures specialized formation houses can replace the separate and controlled environment of the former with a protected and safe house that is as removed and ministry.
- d) The lack of national policies and planning for seminary formation.

III. Consequences for Ordained Leadership

Consequences of Fewer Seminarians and Priests

- a) As priests are not being replaced by younger

men:

- There is a lowering of morale causing some to leave the ministry or in others to withdraw into themselves and become impossible to work with in any parish context.
 - Some respond by taking on more work - often replacing the opportunity for personal growth and reflection and cause the possibility of alienation from other priests and the people themselves.
 - Few young people are attracted to the life portrayed to them.
- b) Unless the future generations are attracted, the Church will lose the enthusiasm and generosity that youth brings to the community.
 - c) The ability of older men to resolve the shortage is tempered by the need to spend more time and assets to discern their appropriateness and suitability to serve the Church with creativity and commitment. This pool is also shrinking.
 - d) The shortage puts pressure on the traditional appreciation and understanding of the Sacrament of Ordination as the expression of the pastoral leadership of Christ.
 - e) The pressure to educate the local church in the pastoral role of the priest, to supplement for the absence of priests and provide the needed pastoral skills.
 - f) The personal lapses and immoral conduct of a few priests in their exercise of pastoral care has affected the selection, discernment, and preparation of candidates.
 - g) The widening gap between priests and people:
 - the numbers of persons per priest,
 - the aging of priests
 - the difficulties of the priest to respond to change

Theology-Level Seminaries in the United States

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St. Paul, MN

I. Ownership and Operation of Seminaries and Theologates

42 theology-level seminaries: 4 or 5 years of study

- 18 owned by (Arch)dioceses
- 6 owned and conducted by bishops or corporations
- 9 owned by (Arch)dioceses and conducted by religious orders mainly for diocesan seminarians
- 9 owned and conducted by religious orders for religious order seminarians

(Also, 25 of the 42 have two-year pre-theology programs.)

II. Governance

Some 885 board members including cardinals, bishops, priests, sisters, and laymen and laywomen participate in the governance of the schools.

III. Formation Programs - Integration of Four Components

A. Human Formation - focuses on psychological and emotional development and well-being: vocational discernment and commitment, personal and relational growth, and formation for celibacy.

B. Spiritual Formation - focuses on development of prayer life centered on Jesus Christ and related to the sacramental life of the Church and the community of believers; involves spiritual direction, conferences, and courses.

C. Intellectual Formation - focuses on a thorough understanding of the Faith according to the tradition and the Magisterium; attentive to the relationship between faith and reason and to the requirements of the social and cultural situation today.

D. Pastoral Formation - focuses on both the theoretical understanding of pastoral theology and the practical application of pastoral principles in supervised internships in parishes and other ministry settings.

IV. Faculty Degrees and Vocational Status

A. 741 faculty members:

- 66% priests
 - 13% women religious
 - 21% laymen and laywomen
- There has been a 10% decline in the number of priest faculty over the past ten years.)

B. Sources of academic degrees:

- 33% in Europe
- 46% in American Catholic Universities
- 21% in American Non-Catholic Universities

C. Level of academic degrees:

- 75% doctoral or S.S.L.
- 25% masters or licentiate

V. Student Enrollment and Profiles

A. Enrollment:

3,085 seminarians; 3,100 lay students

31% of seminarians are enrolled in programs for seminarians only.

69% of seminarians are enrolled in programs for both seminarians and lay students.

B. Profiles:

1. Religious profiles:

a. Those deeply rooted in their faith

- raised in families where they practiced their faith consistently in a local parish;
- studying for the diocese or religious congregation that was part of their earlier faith experience;
- highly motivated and have done the discernment necessary to make an informed choice about priesthood;
- moderately good grasp of the Catholic tradition, some sense of the Church as universal, an adequate religious education, and a long-standing commitment to their Faith.

b. Those recently converted or reconverted

- may be converts from a different Christian denomination, but more typically the phenomenon is one of reconversion; of those baptized Catholics at birth, many have been away from the Church for a number of years; vocational call often came from a significant prayer experience or pilgrimage or relationship with a charismatic person.

c. Those with a minimal connection to the Church

- may have been formally identified

as Catholic for a long time but have not practiced their faith consistently; many did not attend Catholic schools, so seminary may represent first formal religious education; lack of regular practice of faith means they may have little sense of liturgy or experience in prayer.

d. Those with a rigid understanding of their Faith

- many came of age after Vatican II concluded and have no lived memory of the Church before 1970; most have had the experience of living to date during one single pontificate, so they have unswerving devotion to the Pope; they have been greatly affected by American cultural forms, especially the media technology, and communications, and they now want to withdraw and condemn this world; enormous fear is involved, fear of change and fear of the world; they regard seminaries as the last bastions of security; often unhappy in appearance, downcast eyes, tight body, and no sense of humor; dissatisfied with the seminary because of lack of devotion/orthodoxy.

2. Intellectual profiles:

- #### **a. Those highly qualified:** have benefitted from a first-rate classical education during which they studied philosophy along with some Scripture and theology over at least three or four years; determined to keep growing intellectually, they understand the re-

lationship between learning and the capacity to minister with integrity.

- b. **Those relatively qualified:** typical of most students, they have reasonably good college degrees and adequate intellectual abilities; they want to learn what the Church teaches, and they are also looking for insights into the tradition; yet these students have some deficits in their backgrounds—many come with degrees in business, science, or technology, so they have had less exposure to the humanities. Even the brighter ones tend not to be readers, and they lack the broad cultural foundation afforded by study of the classics.
- c. **Those insufficiently qualified:** due to weak educational backgrounds, learning disabilities, lack of English language proficiency, or because of being far-removed from formal study, these students need special tutoring if they are to succeed.

VI. Conclusion

- A. **Accomplishments:** Those shared by most schools
 - 1. improved management, including the presence of more effective board members, more stable and qualified administrators, and more knowledgeable partners in theological associations;

- 2. programmatic developments, including human formation for seminarians, multicultural programs, and pastoral field education, as well as new programs, in particular in pre-theology;
- 3. improvements in campus facilities and technological resources.

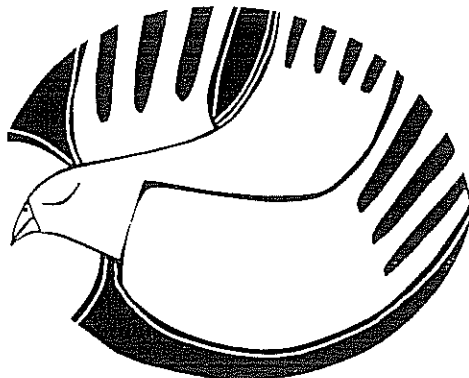
B. *Critical consensus:* Those shared by most schools

- 1. curricular issues, especially those relating to multicultural studies, ecumenism, and collaboration;
- 2. students: need for recruitment of more students with an aptitude for ministry, scholarships to attract lay students, and human and spiritual formation programs for lay students;
- 3. faculty development that is designed to help faculty improve their teaching methods and course content on the one hand and to build and maintain faculty unity on the other;
- 4. planning and evaluation across all aspects of institutional life are critical, especially as these processes relate to personnel and students, and to technology and finances.
- 5. Seminaries should not enhance polarization, but should ease it.

Significant Issues and Trends Influencing the Church in the United States

1. Continuing increase in the number of Catholics: from 49 million in 1975 to 61 million in 1998; recent growth of 700,000 per year
2. Heterogeneity of the Catholic population — cultural, racial, and ethnic, as well as economic, educational, and attitudinal; variations due in large part to recent immigration and also to influences of the secular society
3. Extreme ideological diversity and an attitude of intolerance among many Church members, based mainly on differing views of how the teachings of the Second Vatican Council should be implemented and on how the Church should regard the culture — to engage with it or to withdraw from it
4. Acute ministerial needs, especially for evangelization, adult formation, religious education of youth, enhancement of family life, support for the poor, and spiritual development
5. Evolving Church structures brought on by increased involvement of laity and permanent deacons in Church ministry and by fewer priests and religious, resulting in the need for close collaboration

Numbers	1975	1997
Priests	59,000	48,000
Sisters	135,000	88,000
Brothers	12,000	6,000
Permanent Deacons	900	12,000
Full-time Lay Ministers	10,000	100,000
	(estimated)	



Western Europe

Most Rev. Walter Kasper
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Europe is characterized by a great cultural variety and great cultural richness, but Europe is not just a varied entity. It is also a cultural unity that is growing closer together. The intellectual situation of this new Europe is still unclear. The present intellectual and spiritual situation "can be compared to a pendulum swinging between Babylon and Pentecost." (quote from Cardinal Martini of Milan)

This comparison can also be applicable to the situation of the training of priests in seminaries, although it is very difficult to make general statements about the overall situation.

1. In almost all Western European countries the numbers of people coming forward to be ordained as priests are very low, and they decreased dramatically in the recent past. Between 1978 and 1994 in Germany, the number went down 27%. Great Britain was down 16%. Ireland, a Catholic country, was down 41%. In France the figures remained stable during this time period, and the same for the Netherlands and Belgium, but the figures are still very low even in these countries. The situation is quite different in Italy. There is an increase there of 15%. Spain increased 16% and Portugal was up 39% during those years. But if you look at how our clergy are increasing in age, you can see that the situation in many dioceses is critical.

2. Seminarians have very individual paths to the seminary. It sometimes takes them a long time to get there. There is no longer a normal path. Everyone has his own vocation path and system of beliefs. In our dioceses many still come from very Christian-oriented families, but in many other situations the

seminarians come from families that are not intensely religious. Quite often the seminarians' families do not understand why anyone would want to enter a seminary or they try to prevent their children from entering a seminary. Many people come into our seminaries with very little church experience. They have little religious knowledge.

In some countries where new church movements are very strong, candidates for the priesthood are very modern in their orientation and quite often they come out of an experience of spiritual community or the religious experience of youth groups.

3. The number of late vocations is increasing. Many have been in other studies or have been in other careers. Many people have to learn the language of the Church before they can start to study theology. This leads to an older average age for ordination.

4. The profile of candidates for priesthood has changed considerably. They are children of their own time. The present generation has little to do with the generation of the '60s. Fewer are committed to social issues. There is a great emphasis on the individual. They are very concerned with their own feelings and fulfillment. They are fearful of making any final decisions about their lives. This is also the case with the decision to marry. They do not have much of a problem with their faith. They are, sometimes, rather fundamentalist in their belief. They have a problem with obedience and Church authority. They are frightened of being overburdened or taken for granted in the future. They have less psychological capacity for taking risks. The trend toward individual self determination and self fulfillment is often in conflict with their wish for community. This is a generation that has a lot of opportunities and this leads them to be very demanding about what they want out of life. Yet, we should not generalize. It would be wrong to write off today's young people and conclude that we have no good candidates for priesthood. In many cases we are dealing with extremely promising can-

didates. They know what they want, are self assured, are ready to get involved and commit themselves to the Church, and their sense of piety is very healthy and joyous.

5. The background to this change in the quantity and quality of candidates can be looked at from many points of view.

There is dramatic change happening in western society and, therefore, a sense of insecurity. There is a postmodern pluralism, relativism and a general trend toward individualism. There is a general decline in the quality of institutions and an increasing secularization of public life. There is a public loss of respect for the Church and a negative demographic development. There are fewer children. Priests in the past came from families where there were many children. Now families only have one or two children. There is also some in-church conflict. Many communities are no longer practicing church traditions properly. There is a lack of joy. There is fundamentalism. People are unsure what the priests should be doing. People are questioning the nature of celibacy and the reason for it. Priests get little support from their environment. Yet, in the midst of all this there is still an interest in religious and spiritual issues.

6. Formation within seminaries has tried to keep up with these new developments. The importance of the seminary setting for priestly formation is increasingly recognized. The Tridentine model of seminary exists only in a few cases. There is a new post-Vatican II seminary which gives seminarians room for individual determination within the seminary.

There are three elements within the seminary which have become important: human maturity, spiritual life, and theological study toward the goal of working practically and pastorally.

Human maturity, given the profiles of the candidates, necessitates an individual growth path with accompaniment by formators. This takes a lot of time and dialogue.

The need for priests to be practical and pastoral has led to the introduction of a pastoral year before ordination.

One of the dangers in this new way of training priests is an overemphasis on the professionalism of the priesthood. We cannot forget that we are forming people to be spiritual persons, that is, someone working and living in intimate union with Jesus Christ and the Church. We need to pay particular attention to this.

7. Normally the course of study of theology takes five years. In addition to these five years of studying theology there is one or two years of "pastoral seminars." In most cases the theological teaching is very solid and church-based. The time of great theological arguments and conflict seems to be past. Most candidates for the priesthood today are interested in being very practical and pastoral. In very few cases are they specifically concerned with theological and intellectual issues. The significance of theology for the priesthood has been reduced. Unfortunately, theology today seems to be learned haphazardly and it is very difficult for candidates to acquire a systematic synthesis of their Faith. Thus, we need to make sure that theology and spirituality are more closely linked and coherent.

8. In view of the present situation, the issue of vocation is becoming more and more urgent. Many dioceses are making great efforts. There are opportunities for individual dialogue about vocation. There are vocation weekends and special days. There are sermons and catechetical aids. We are trying to reach the young people and help them discover whether they have a vocation. We have a vocational year with vocational centers. We have information campaigns in youth groups and schools and we have prayer groups for priestly vocations. Christians need to pass on their Christianity as a gift to others and witness to their own personal vocations. We are trying to provide an atmosphere for our young people that is open

to vocations.

The crisis that we are facing with vocations reflects a crisis in the Church and in European society. The problem can not be dealt with in isolation. We need to pray, to be more evangelical, and to renew the life of our Church. Renewal is extremely important. We should not be afraid of the freedom of our modern age. We should use this to our advantage. I am convinced that our many efforts will bear fruit someday. We will see the pendulum swinging more toward Pentecost than toward Babylon. †

