

259. In the **collaborative** model, several specific groups, such as religious institutes, societies, or dioceses, choose to unite their resources. They may join administrative and academic structures with houses of formation clustered around a central study center. In such collaborative models, individual institutions may retain varying degrees of autonomy.

260. When seminaries, universities, and houses of formation are interrelated, care should be taken that the various components of the program are integrated in a careful and comprehensive manner so that each institution has a clear understanding of its specific responsibilities. It is essential that all parties in such collaborative efforts understand the specialized and pastoral nature of priestly formation.

261. In the development or revision of the governing documents of university-related or collaborative models, care should be taken to maintain the legitimate rights of diocesan bishops and religious ordinaries, who have the responsibility of ecclesiastical supervision. The statutes of all seminaries should be in accord with canon law and all particular legislation governing seminary training.

262. Houses of formation that have too few students or which lack the necessary resources and personnel to conduct a systematic formation program in accord with the *Program of Priestly Formation* should be discontinued.

263. Seminaries or study centers sponsoring courses of priestly formation that abbreviate the requirements of canon 250 need the explicit permission of the Congregation for Catholic Education to offer such programs.<sup>134</sup>

## ARTICLE TWO

### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

#### I. PROGRAM OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

264. Every seminary must provide a milieu of human and spiritual formation in which seminarians are encouraged to grow continuously and progressively in their personal relationship with Christ and in their commitment to the Church and to their vocation.<sup>135</sup> A well-rounded and effective program of spiritual formation presumes and builds upon continuing theological and personal growth and character development consistent with a priestly vocation.

265. The seminary and the local church represent the matrix for the formation of diocesan candidates. Religious candidates for orders will find the locus of their spiritual formation in the religious institute's or society's house of formation. What follows, then, must be interpreted in accord with the constitutions, statutes, and other ecclesiastical laws governing houses of study and houses of formation of religious institutes or societies.

266. The final goal of spiritual formation in the seminary is the establishment of attitudes, habits, and practices in the spiritual life that will continue after ordination. Spiritual formation in the seminary is meant to set the foundation for a lifetime of priestly ministry.

267. Wholesome priestly spirituality embraces prayer, simplicity of life, obedience, pastoral service, and celibate chastity. Its most eloquent guide and teacher is the witness of mature and dedicated priests. It is important therefore for seminaries to have a sufficient number of exemplary priest faculty members to serve as models for seminarians, helping them establish a strong and balanced priestly identity.

268. The seminary is a formational community responding to a call to continuing conversion of mind and heart. Its life must center on the paschal mystery, reflected in the liturgy, tradition, and life of the Church. This mystery must shape the nature and rhythm of the seminary community. Consequently, the seminary community must be a community of prayer. "The high point of Christian prayer is the Eucharist, which in turn is to be seen as the 'summit and source' of the sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours."<sup>136</sup> The Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, the sacrament of penance, and other prayer opportunities form the seminary community into a concrete instance of the Church at prayer. As such, it becomes the proper setting for conversion and priestly formation.

269. Within this community of prayer, the essential work of the seminary takes place. Personal growth and character development should progress together harmoniously within a deepening spiritual life. The seminary is a school of human virtue, of growth in honesty, integrity, intellectual rigor, hard work, tolerance, and discipline, leavened by humor and healthy enjoyment. The seminary must also be a school of spiritual growth in which seminarians are formed into men of prayer, imbued with those virtues that only grace can bring: faith, hope, and charity.

270. The seminary is also the locus of a long and complex program of academic and pastoral formation, which is essential to the seminarians'

progress toward ordained ministry. A strong spiritual life and a realistic commitment to serve people in community express the overall goal of priestly formation. They also establish most clearly that point at which all efforts converge: the conversion of mind and heart of seminarians and future priests.

271. To achieve this goal, the program of spiritual formation must form a unified and coherent whole with the academic and pastoral programs. Unity and coordination are essential to effectiveness.

#### A. COMMUNAL AND PERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

272. While daily Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours establish the fundamental rhythm of seminary life, seminary programs of spiritual formation have two focal points: the seminary community and its public life as a matrix for growth and development (involving relationships with many different groups and persons) and individual seminarians as they strive to interiorize the values of the spiritual life and integrate the lessons of intellectual and pastoral formation. The interplay between individual and community lies at the heart of spiritual formation.

##### Communal Dimension

273. Daily celebration of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and frequent celebration of the sacrament of penance represent essential moments in the Church's life of prayer and conversion. They themselves require catechesis before they can effectively become central moments of the seminary's life. Accordingly, liturgical celebrations of the seminary should be planned and conducted with the greatest of care. Instruction should be given to the seminary community about the role of the Eucharist as it nourishes the life of all Christian communities. Instruction on the history and nature of the Liturgy of the Hours is also essential.

274. Regular opportunities for eucharistic devotion should be provided. Seminaries should assist students to develop lifelong habits of daily meditation on the Scriptures. "An essential element of spiritual formation is the prayerful and meditated reading of the Word of God (*lectio divina*)."<sup>137</sup>

275. Opportunities for devotional prayer, for example the rosary and the stations of the cross, should be provided. The practices of various ethnic traditions should be taken into careful account in the prayer life of the community when the seminary itself or the dioceses or religious institutes

or societies being served possess a multicultural dimension. Catechesis should be given on the proper role of devotion to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and the saints. Opportunities should also be provided for faith sharing in an atmosphere of trust and openness among seminarians and faculty.

276. Particular attention should be given to the meaning and practice of the sacrament of penance as a means of conversion. Public celebrations of the sacrament are important moments in the seminary's life. Individual celebration of the sacrament should be available and always encouraged. Seminarians will not be formed into effective ministers of the sacrament unless they themselves have discovered its value in their own spiritual life.

277. The essential rhythm of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and sacramental reconciliation finds its proper continuation in other elements of the program of spiritual formation. Rector's conferences, conferences of the spiritual director, days of recollection, retreats, special workshops on topic of spiritual growth and human development make important contributions to the spiritual formation of seminarians. All these elements together and in coordination build up the life of the seminary community, contributing to the personal development of seminarians.

### **Personal Dimension**

278. The seminary community, the rhythm of its prayer life, and its programs of formation set the context for the continuing conversion of individual seminarians. Seminarians should be challenged to a life of integral human growth and development, as well as a life of supernatural virtue. The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity and the moral virtues are viewed as concrete gifts of grace, which the Holy Spirit bestows on those who sincerely strive for them. As always, grace builds upon nature and on the basis of wholesome human development.

279. Candidates for the priesthood should be taught the importance and the necessity of sustained personal prayer. A necessary precondition in our society "is an education in the deep human meaning and religious value of silence as the spiritual atmosphere vital for perceiving God's presence."<sup>138</sup> By discovering in quiet the Lord who sustains their lives and their commitment to serve, members of the seminary community also discover in a special way their own deepest source of unity.

280. Because every spiritual journey is personal and individual, it requires personal guidance. Accordingly, every seminarian should have a priest

spiritual director whose task is to guide him in his path of personal conversion and his growth to the priesthood.

281. Spiritual direction represents a relationship in the internal forum which enjoys confidentiality. Seminarians should avail themselves of this unique opportunity for growth by being as honest and transparent as possible with their spiritual directors. Seminarians should share their life history as well as their journey of faith with their spiritual directors and should be trustful and responsive to their counsel.

282. A first task of spiritual direction is to help seminarians establish sound habits of personal prayer. Through courses and instruction on prayer and spiritual direction, seminarians should become aware of the different forms of prayer that nurture the life of faith.

283. Although individual spiritual formation cannot embody the same unified approach as the public programs of spiritual formation, it possesses its own coherence and needs coordination as well. Consequently, spiritual directors should meet on a regular basis to speak about their methods, which ought to be complementary. Advice given in the internal forum and the public policies of the seminary should complement each other, thereby fostering more effectively the personal and spiritual growth of seminarians.

284. The training of spiritual directors for the work of seminary formation, especially in the theologate, is a critical component for seminary spiritual renewal. The goal of every theologate is that all priests engaged in spiritual direction should have advanced training in spirituality.

285. Priesthood candidates should be introduced formally to the skills of spiritual direction in order to act in that capacity later as priests.

## **B. FORMATION FOR A PRIESTLY WAY OF LIFE**

286. The identity of the priesthood is rooted in the life of faith. Celibacy, obedience, pastoral service, and simplicity of life are qualities that comprise a priestly way of life in imitation of Jesus Christ.<sup>139</sup> As such, instruction in their value, practice, and cultivation is a special goal of seminary formation. Through a course in the curriculum, as well as through workshops and rector's conferences, the seminary should make explicit the Church's doctrinal understanding of the ministerial priesthood on which a priestly way of life is based.

## Celibacy

287. "The spiritual formation of one who is called to live celibacy should pay particular attention to preparing the future priest so that he may **know, appreciate, love, and live celibacy according to its true nature** and according to its real purpose, that is for evangelical, spiritual, and pastoral motives."<sup>140</sup> Nothing less than a coordinated and multifaceted program of instruction, dialogue, and encouragement will aid seminarians to understand the nature and purpose of celibate chastity and to embrace it wholeheartedly in their lives. Sexuality finds its authentic meaning in relation to mature love. Seminarians should understand the connection between mature love and celibacy. In doing so, the insights of modern psychology can be a considerable aid. The goal of psychosexual, social, and spiritual development should be to form seminarians into chaste celibate men who are loving pastors of the people they serve.<sup>141</sup>

### The Value of Celibacy

288. Seminarians should understand clearly and realistically the **value** of celibate chastity and its connection to priestly ministry. A cogent, "positive and specific" presentation of the celibate way of life as gift and challenge should appeal to seminarians' highest motivation.<sup>142</sup> To be lived fruitfully, the value of celibacy must be interiorized. A careful, thoughtful presentation of the Church's teaching on this topic is essential in helping seminarians to appropriate this value. "Therefore, seminarians should have a good knowledge of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, of the encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* and the 'Instruction for Formation in Priestly Celibacy,' published by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1974."<sup>143</sup> In this way a lifelong commitment can be initiated and sustained. A life of prayer and a commitment to serve others are equally indispensable for a healthy and lasting celibate commitment. Priestly support groups also can contribute to celibate living.

289. Such a presentation of the value of celibacy in the priesthood should be undertaken through rector's conferences, workshops, special programs, and courses.

### The Practice of Celibacy

290. The rector should hold periodic conferences on this topic, at least on a yearly basis, in which basic behavioral expectations about the practice of celibacy for priests and candidates for the priesthood are detailed. He should

clearly delineate the kinds of behavior that are acceptable and praiseworthy and the kinds that are not. He should address the responsibilities of individual seminarians, now and later, for themselves and for the common reputation of the community and the priesthood. Unless there is clarity in concrete terms about the actual meaning of the celibate commitment in the seminary community, and later in priestly ministry, presentations about the value of celibacy will not be persuasive or taken seriously.

### **Celibacy and Spiritual Direction**

291. Personal relationships, sexuality, celibate chastity, commitment, and interiorization are essential topics for spiritual direction. In this setting, seminarians should be encouraged to speak in detail about their own personal struggles and review their success and failure in living a chaste, celibate life.

292. Seminarians must judge if they themselves have the gift of celibacy and before ordination give assurance to the Church that they can live the permanent commitment to celibacy with authenticity and integrity. Chaste celibacy is only for "those to whom it is given."<sup>144</sup> The celibate's personal relationship with Christ through prayer and the sacraments will provide the strength to meet the challenges of celibate living.

293. It is especially important that all spiritual directors share the same understanding of an integral celibate commitment and the kinds of behaviors that are counterindicators of growth. It is also essential that advice given in spiritual direction accord with the public presentation of this value, its importance for the priesthood and the common understanding of its practice in the seminary community and the Church.

### **Celibacy and Admission and Evaluation**

294. Seminaries should only admit candidates who give testimony of a sustained habit of celibate chastity prior to admission. Candidates should also give evidence of mature psychological and psychosexual development. These considerations must be thoroughly treated in the admission process and in the continuing evaluation of seminarians. The rector, faculty, or those charged with formation must be able to testify to seminarians' positive capacity to live a celibate life relating with others in a mature fashion or to testify to counterindicators as the case may be. In this matter, as in other important areas of evaluation, the benefit of the doubt must be given to the Church.

295. The seminary must have written guidelines for admission, evaluation, and community life that spell out its expectations in regard to those attitudes, behaviors, and levels of psychosexual maturity which indicate a right mentality, proper motivation, and a commitment to celibate chastity. These guidelines should also specify unacceptable attitudes and behaviors that militate against such a commitment.

### **Other Elements of a Priestly Way of Life**

296. Celibacy cannot be understood or discussed, much less lived, in isolation. Together with simplicity of life, a spirit of obedience, and pastoral service, celibacy is an integral element in a priestly way of life.

### **Simplicity of Life**

297. Simplicity of life is incumbent upon all Christians but especially those who follow Jesus in the ministerial priesthood. "In reality, only the person who contemplates and lives the mystery of God as the one and supreme good, as the true and definitive treasure, can understand and practice poverty, which is certainly not a matter of despising or rejecting material goods but of a loving and responsible use of these goods and at the same time an ability to renounce them with great interior freedom, that is, with reference to God and his plan."<sup>145</sup>

298. Through the program of spiritual formation in both the internal and external fora, seminarians should see the value of simplicity of life and come to appreciate its essential connection to an authentic understanding of and witness to the Gospel. The seminarian should be encouraged to develop the virtue of penance, which includes mortification, self-sacrifice, and generosity toward others. Spiritual directors and advisers must be sensitive to seminarians' stewardship of their own, the seminary's, and the Church's material resources.

### **Obedience**

299. Spiritual formation helps seminarians realize that they are entering a tradition of service in the Church, and they will not be free to follow a path of their own choosing without heeding the Gospel, Church tradition, and those in authority. They are called to a mature relationship with those in authority, which includes trust, dialogue, participation in decision making, and obedience. Obedience itself flows "from the responsible freedom of the priest who accepts not only the demands of an organized and organic



ecclesial life, but also that grace of discernment and responsibility in ecclesial decisions which was assured by Jesus to his apostles and their successors for the sake of faithfully safeguarding the mystery of the Church and serving the structure of the Christian community along its common path toward salvation."<sup>146</sup>

300. Therefore, candidates for orders should approach the practice of obedience in a spirit of trust. This basic trust should be present even in the face of the human limitations that will always be present in persons who exercise authority. Candidates need to learn that obedience strives to serve the unity of the Church and the needs of all its members. A spirit of service to others is finally an imitation of Christ himself who came not to do his own will but the will of the Father who sent him.

301. Seminary formation should give instruction in the meaning of authentic obedience. Advisers and spiritual directors should help seminarians appreciate this value and practice it in their lives. They should also teach seminarians that the way they respond to authority often mirrors the way they will exercise it.

#### **Justice and Pastoral Service**

302. Seminarians must be knowledgeable about issues of social justice, peace, and respect for life. During formation, seminarians not only should study such issues on a formal basis, they should also engage in works of justice and peace and issues of life insofar as the program of the seminary permits. Spiritual formation also should treat these topics and their intrinsic connection to Christian piety and priestly living.

303. Seminarians should reflect on the intimate connection between their credible witness as priests and the quality of their personal lives. They also need to see that prayer, celibacy, simplicity of life, and a commitment to the poor add credibility to their capacity to teach and preach effectively as priests.

#### **C. COMMUNITY LIFE OF THE SEMINARY**

304. The seminary community plays a significant role in the growth of seminarians toward the priesthood. The give-and-take between those who share the same vocational goal provides mutual support and promotes increased tolerance while allowing fraternal correction to take place. Community life affords the opportunity for the development of leadership