

Preparing the Sixth Edition of the Program for Priestly Formation

FIVE OVERRIDING CONCERNS

Faithfulness to Vatican II; Call to Service; A Pastoral Model of Priestly Formation; Psychosexual Development and Celibacy; Discernment Processes and Faculty Formation

I. FAITHFULNESS TO VATICAN II

- A. **As the foundation of priestly formation, the pastoral values of Vatican II need to permeate and be consistently and persistently affirmed in the sixth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. These values should serve as the basis of all phases of priestly formation.** We see that Vatican II's values include: grounding in the Scriptures, conversion of heart in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Church as the People of God, the universal call to holiness, the central role of the laity, vernacular worship, the Church's mission to the world, dialog and consensus building, subsidiarity, and ecumenical-interfaith-interreligious commitment. The Vatican's 2016 *Ratio Fundamentalis* adds the following specifics: pastoral charity, priestly heart, inner freedom and maturity, complete self-bestowal, missionary discipleship and service.
- B. **Our concern: priestly formation in recent decades has not adequately implemented Vatican II's pastoral vision and values in candidates.** According to Cardinal Wuerl, Vatican II in our time is "now making its way ... slowly but surely," fueled by "all that Pentecostal energy that the Council unleashed." Yet, the implementation of the program of priestly formation has resulted in many priests in the last several generations of priests who see Vatican II as little more than an historical footnote rather than the guiding vision for our Church in the modern world. Some recently ordained clergy even see Vatican II as a distortive moment in the Church's pilgrimage through time. As a result, they see themselves as tasked now to undo and correct the "damage done" by priests who have labored before them to receive and live Vatican II's 'New Pentecost.' This perspective has been planted and is being supported by those resisting Pope Francis' initiatives to continue the pastoral implementation of Vatican II. Presbyterates and parish communities in our country are being divided, at least in part, by how priests have been formed by priestly formation programs as implemented in recent years.
- C. **Recommendations:**
1. We hope that the Committee will review carefully how the values and teaching of Vatican II, as emphatically and persistently expressed and updated by Pope Francis, are articulated in and unmistakably permeate this revision of the Program of Priestly Formation.
 2. We recommend that the Committee implement the Vatican II values listed above in Section A in all priestly formation milieus.

II. CALL TO SERVICE

- A. **Above all other qualities priests need to develop, they need to see themselves as servants of God and of God's people.** The specialness of Holy Orders is found in the call to pastoral service to people, to be servant-shepherds of God's sheep. Being grounded in, embracing, and living out the Word of God and being in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ are the foundation of being a Christian and thus of being a priest in the Church. The call to service is embedded in the universal call to holiness, celebrated and enacted in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. All the baptized find their identity as priestly people in Jesus Christ, "declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:10). This is in contrast to the Levitical priesthood which enshrined a "clerical caste" within an established social/tribal structure. The priesthood founded in the life and service of Jesus Christ calls for his disciples to serve as shepherds among the people, being close enough to them to know the smell of the sheep. Priests in Christ must live pastoral service. They must be servants.
- B. **Our concern: Our perception is that the way the current Program of Priestly Formation has been implemented in many seminaries has more often than not resulted in priests who do not see themselves as Christ-like servants of God's people.** They tend to articulate their status using

concepts such as “MY Mass,” “MY priesthood,” “ontological change in their being,” and “*Alter Christus*” in ways contrary to a Vatican II understanding of the call to pastoral service. The repeated emphasis on such notions undergirds a sense of distance, separation, elitism, clericalism, insensitivity and superiority, all of which have been critiqued by Pope Francis. These attitudes undercut the ministry of pastoral service to which a priest is called. Speaking about Christ as “*Servant and Shepherd*” (as Pope Francis frequently does) could complement presenting Christ as “*Head and Shepherd*” (as Saint Pope John Paul II frequently did). Doing so might be more effective in leading candidates to a more pastoral understanding of the role they will be taking up. The distinction between priests and laity that is presented to candidates should reflect the kind and orientation of their pastoral service, rather than their status or privilege. If the dynamism of orientation to the will of God, of nourishment from the Word and of openness to the energy of the Holy Spirit does not powerfully propel a candidate toward Christ-like servanthood on his journey through the stages and dimensions of formation, the candidate risks becoming little more than a functionary, a professional, a cleric.

- C. **Recommendation: Candidates for priesthood need to start their formation by working with other lay Catholics in the service of others, living among God’s people as disciples, as fellow parishioners, as collaborators in God’s work.** This call to service can only be brought forth from candidates if they are actually engaged in an extensive amount of actual service of, and with, God’s people. Without a deep understanding of Christian service, candidates will not be able to understand and appreciate the experience of parishioners as disciples and, more particularly, what kind of service they as priests can and need to offer their parishioners and others. Their formation needs to be realistic, yet positive, about the challenges the Christian community faces in the world today, reflective of Vatican II values, visionary, decidedly non-clerical, servant-oriented and most importantly, pastoral. Their formation should give attention to Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium* and all his talks regarding priesthood and his critiques of clericalism. They need to start from the bottom, not from the top. Our recommendation is that the sixth edition will promote attitudes consonant with those of Pope Francis. Formation programs need to resist and even root out any sense of clericalism. Allowing only those in the priestly formation program who have been ordained deacons to wear clerical garb (whether clergy shirt with Roman collar or a cassock), whether inside or outside the seminary, would be a simple, do-able step towards this goal.

III. A PASTORAL MODEL OF PRIESTLY FORMATION

- A. **The goal of all formation is to prepare candidates for pastoral service. Consequently the pastoral dimension should organize all other goals.** In *Pastores Dabo Vobis* Saint Pope John Paul II proposed that “the whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the good shepherd. **Hence, their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.**” (PDV#57, emphasis added) Although PPF5 cites this teaching in #236 and proposes that “all four pillars of formation are interwoven and go forward concurrently,” #73 states that “human formation is the foundation for the other three pillars” and that “pastoral formation expresses the other three pillars in practice.” Then starting with #74 the document devotes 167 sections to life (human dimension), the pursuit of holiness (spiritual dimension), and intellectual development (intellectual dimension), before it finally devotes just 21 sections to ministry (pastoral dimension).¹
- B. **Our Concerns: In too many instances the current model of preparation for pastoral ministry has proven to be inadequate and ineffective.** The program proposed does not give candidates sufficient opportunity to experience in depth, and to understand the reality of pastoral service. In addition, PPF5 (##10-12) views the “context of the world and church today” in mostly negative terms. This does not appear to us to facilitate a productive engagement with the world. Likewise the document lacks a sense of history. It reflects a classical and fixed worldview rather than an historical and dynamic one. It projects priesthood as a role of authority and power over the people of God, using terms such as king, head, spouse, governance, and leadership. We live in a world transformed by industrial and electronic revolutions, by a century of continuous “world” wars, by modern transportation and communication, by inter-planetary explorations, a deep understanding of time and the dynamics of evolution, by multi-cultural societies, mass migrations, inter-ethnic and inter-racial and inter-faith mixing of people. In such a

world, simply fine-tuning the current Program of Priestly Formation is not enough. We think that the words of Pope Francis call for an in-depth revision. We think that, unless such a serious revision is proposed, the Church in the United States will continue to fail in dealing with these significant issues. A more joyful and hopeful perspective and a major review of our current seminary model are needed so that a truly *pastoral and joyful model of priestly formation* can take hold for the coming decades.²

C. Recommendations:

1. **Candidates for priesthood, throughout their years of formation, need to have extensive concrete experience of the people whom they will serve. Although the Committee’s review is taking place in the context of *Ratio Fundamentalis* (2016), the Committee would, in our eyes, be justified in considering whether the present monastic, academic, apologetic and doctrinally-focused model of priestly formation (established in response to the Reformation) needs to be deeply transformed.** To minister effectively to people living in an increasingly secular age, our Church needs to adopt a more contemporary model for formation that is responsive to the signs of the times and to the contemporary needs of a society that is modern, educated, scientific, democratic, capitalist, multi-cultural, multi-religious and globalizing, as called for by Vatican II.³ A fully pastoral model calls for greater and direct participation with *all* the people of God – women and men, lay and religious—in the formation of candidates for the priesthood, including formulation of policies, practices, spirituality, direction and discernment. The Church needs to provide a pastoral model of priestly formation that is rooted in living and working close to the people whom candidates will eventually serve as priests. Growing numbers of people today present themselves as spiritual, but not religious. The current model of candidates living together like monks, separated from the people they will serve, does not adequately prepare candidates for the work of evangelizing people with that mind-set and orientation.⁴ A pastoral model based on extensive parish-level experience and participation might find candidates living in twos or threes in apartments/houses in local parishes throughout their formation, with local priests and lay people involved in their formation. Such a program would include periodic reviews of both candidates and program by the involved clergy and lay persons.
2. **In keeping with the thought of St John Paul II and of PPF5, the Committee would certainly be justified in changing the order of the four dimensions of formation so as to make pastoral formation the first and permeating foundation as well as the final goal of all dimensions of formation. Priestly formation programs need to demonstrate that they are fundamentally pastoral in all respects.** For example, the current model encourages faculty to find ways to bring out the “pastoral and priestly dimensions of classroom material.” Would it not make more sense, as a first move, to have pastoral experience serve as the ground, followed by reflection and study to draw out the theological dimensions of that experience? Then, as a second move, the traditional courses in scripture, doctrine, and so on, can show how Christian experience can be further elucidated.⁵⁷
3. **The intellectual formation of candidates will best take place in a university milieu where many other disciplines are in play and under discussion, both in classes and in casual encounters with their peers.** Candidates for priesthood should be in classes together with others among the baptized, women and men, preparing for “professional” or “certified” ministry in the church. This is needed to foster respect for well-trained permanent deacons and other pastoral ministers, to encourage and prepare candidates for later collaboration with such individuals in what is truly now a collegial work of God, and to acknowledge the various intellectual, personal and cultural gifts that others bring to ministry, a blessing for the Church.
4. As we see it, the Committee would be more than justified in giving **much more emphasis and attention to the Ongoing Formation of Priests in the next edition of the Program of Priestly Formation.** Such ongoing formation programs provide a much-needed framework for continuing development in response to the actualities of priestly ministry in the particular circumstances of our time and place. The times keep changing, rapidly! Attention needs to be given to what kinds of programs and activities are needed by whether a diocese is rural, small town, large city or in a metropolitan area in determining what topics need to be studied, especially since almost all of our current seminaries are in metropolitan areas. Almost more importantly than the content, such

programs would give priests of different ages and backgrounds the opportunity to share their experience and understanding of ministry as pastoral service in their common context. It is illusory to think that one's formation for pastoral service is complete and sufficient with ordination. One size of priestly formation does not fit the variety of situations of ministry.⁶

IV. PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AND CELIBACY

A. **Psychosexual development and integration are a life-long necessity for all human beings. The task is profoundly personal, but also requires the positive support of many relationships and wise counsel.**

A good formation program would foster a commitment to celibacy within a faith context, but also within a commitment to an individual's authentic human psychosexual development. A commitment to celibacy cannot be undertaken freely without a commitment to an individual's psychosexual development. Formation programs should not assume candidates have achieved an adequate stage of psychosexual development. Likewise an individual's human development negatively reacts to environments that overplay power and force conditions that go against "nature." Candidates cannot be forced to make a commitment to celibacy in order to become priests.

1. **A priestly formation program needs to provide a deeply human environment to develop and integrate a candidate's human sexual realities. Whatever the state of a candidate's psychosexual development or whatever the sexual orientation of the candidate, great care must be taken to avoid repression of human sexuality.** Repression does not result in a healthy acceptance of living in a celibate or married state. The seminary environment should never denigrate the goodness and gift of sexuality and its role in the life of every human being, including priests.
2. **Engaging honestly the challenges of psychosexual development and accepting oneself and being realistic about living a healthy and happy celibate life apply to both heterosexual and homosexual candidates.** Adding to the challenge of creating a priestly formation environment that fosters psychosexual development and discernment about celibacy is the reality of the homosexual orientation of certain individuals in all human communities. Given the expectation of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church that all ordained priests live celibate lives, men who are indeed homosexual in orientation may find the all-male environment of a seminary quite compatible. It is common among many homosexual persons that their orientation is denied, ignored or even repressed. Ordination to the priesthood may be seen as somehow "ordaining" their sexual orientation out of them. But, of course, ordination cannot do this. Candidates need to be led to this insight.

B. **Our Concerns:**

1. **In our estimation the current Program of Priestly Formation offers an inadequate treatment of sexuality and celibacy** (see PPF V, #77ff). The "mystery and the energy of human sexuality" requires more than "education in celibacy," since it is simply not sufficient without an understanding of the dimensions of sexuality in each person. A formation program that is superficial or coercive in this area gives no assistance to the candidates nor to the value of celibacy needed for the ministerial priesthood. The "signs of the times" – clergy sexual abuse, irresponsible sexual expression in the general culture often with tragic and traumatic consequences, and the general culture's growing awareness of psychosexual complexities -- require a Program of Priestly Formation that does more than provide an "education in celibacy." Priestly pastoral ministry requires a program that enables a candidate to have the sexual dimension of his life positively understood, respected and developing in his own life.
2. **Human sexuality is too complex for the priestly formation system alone to assure healthy and mature celibate priests.** The current PPF proposes that preparation for celibacy is one of the primary aims of the human formation program (see, PPF V, #90). We consider this section of the current PPF an Achilles' heel of the Human Formation section and of the entire document. The seminary faculty needs to guard against judging that they have the power by themselves to 'manufacture' psychosexual development. Avoidance, superficiality and coercion do not create an environment for the "discernment of spirits" by either the candidates or the formation faculty.⁷

3. **Priestly formation programs do not adequately engage experienced professionals, both men and women, who can speak comfortably, are aware of realistic and wholesome human sexual expression and can assist candidates in their personal and honest understanding of their sexuality.** The current PPF manifests a reluctance to engage “psychological and counseling services” unless it is absolutely necessary. It suggests that the need for “in-depth therapy” should exclude a candidate from the program and even sees it as a reason for dismissal. This suspicion manifests mistrust of the psychological sciences and skills that can be brought to this area. To make this area of a candidate’s development “taboo,” is dangerous and sets up problems for later on. Living a celibate life requires candidates and priests to have a personal and honest understanding of their own sexuality. As an “incarnational” religion, Christian spiritual growth should comfortably incorporate this dimension of human formation, including for candidates for priesthood. We are not convinced that life in an all-male environment, carefully protected from female presence and relationships (except possibly with those in a service capacity), is the best preparation for committing oneself to living a celibate life of sexuality and living it with shalom of spirit, for life.
1. **We question whether the prolonged (six-year minimum) intensity (24/7) of an all-male environment is the best context for assuring the hoped-for human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral qualities.** While we acknowledge the importance of community, the typical seminary community is significantly buffered, if not largely isolated from the larger world and parish-level of church, including exposure only to intellectual concepts and theories like “the feminine” and the “genius of women.”

C. Recommendations.

1. **We believe that the diocesan presbyterate and parish communities would be better community contexts for forming a candidate for servant priesthood.** There the candidate could socialize normally with men and women of all ages, with children and youth, with priests fully engaged in pastoral ministry and with parish communities. In this context in which most priests live, the candidates could observe servant leadership in action and have pastoral experience on which they can reflect spiritually and theologically while growing humanly.
2. **It is essential that the actual formation of candidates involve women in the process of discernment regarding their suitability for ordination.** The women in the seminary directly involved in priestly formation should have expanded roles and responsibilities. Likewise, women among the parishioners and other recipients of the pastoral services of candidates in the course of their formation should have more opportunities for interaction with and evaluation of seminarians.
3. **We encourage seminaries to develop additional means for candidates to explore their own sexuality and become more aware of sexuality in the lives of parishioners.** Such programs should include frank presentations on human sexuality in a realistic and positive manner as it is experienced in both the sacramental lives of married couples and the celibate commitment of priests. Programs should also encourage candidates to examine and discuss this aspect of their lives in the internal forum of spiritual direction and counseling and in the external forum of formation advising. Furthermore, they should engage in discussion of pastoral cases that illustrate the realities of the laity's sexual lives as expressed in both functional and dysfunctional relationships, including the consequences of these situations.

V. DISCERNMENT PROCESSES AND FACULTY FORMATION

A. Discernment in its multiple dimensions has an essential role to play in the process of preparing and recommending candidates for ordination.

1. In this context, discernment has two different, but related, functions. During the formation process it serves the individual candidate in his efforts to identify and foster characteristics that are necessary for someone seeking ordination to the priesthood. As the candidate progresses towards ordination, discernment enables the seminary rector/faculty to provide a responsible recommendation to the appropriate bishop/superior as to the suitability of the candidate for ordination.
2. Various methods of discernment are available to accomplish these goals: spiritual direction (in the internal forum), professional psychological assessments and counseling, formation integration

(connecting all four dimensions of formation in the external forum), on-site ministry supervision, faculty evaluations in general (both full-time and adjunct), and local lay community reviews. How all of these relate in practice is a fundamental responsibility of the rector/director of formation (or his designee) and depends on local conditions and arrangements.

- External forum discernment provides many areas of input: observable conduct, academics, faithfulness, peer evaluations, and so on.
- Internal forum discernment is of much greater importance. Its success depends upon the integrity of the candidate and the expertise and human development of the spiritual director.

B. Our concerns:

1. **Given the importance of the responsibilities of faculty, especially younger staff, regarding discernment:**
 - a. Should the PPF6 require that those involved in spiritual direction have appropriate formation beyond a seminary course in spiritual direction?
 - b. Should the PPF6 require that spiritual directors have either certification or extensive experience as a director?
 - c. Do directors understand their responsibilities and the limits of their power and their ability to manage these limits?
 - d. Do seminaries provide updating for spiritual directors?
 - e. Are clear and firm policies and practices in place to assure that candidates and faculty are aware of and honor the confidentiality of internal forum transactions?

C. Recommendations

1. All those involved in priestly formation, whether administrators, spiritual directors, “formators,” advisors, or professors need to have either significant pastoral experience or a strong and developed pastoral sense and intuition.
2. Adequate and appropriate discernment regarding the continuation of candidates, especially those advancing to ordination as deacons and priests, should include participation of laity (not just those on staff) who have had experience with candidates in the course of their formation. Laity on support teams who work with candidates throughout the process of their formation should be part of the discernment process.-
3. It is essential that women be involved both in the formation of candidates and in discerning their suitability for ordination. In addition to those who are on the staffs of seminaries, women who serve on parish staffs and other places where candidates receive pastoral formation should also be included. Likewise, women who have been the recipients of the pastoral services of candidates need to be involved in reviewing and recommending candidates.
4. Serious consideration needs to be given to having women serve as spiritual directors for candidates. The assumption that only priests should serve as spiritual directors of candidates (on the assumption that they will need to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance with the candidate) needs to be reconsidered and revised.
5. The spiritual formation program should ensure that candidates are informed of the need to be open to God’s will (typically described by spiritual writers as abandonment, indifference, and surrender) and carefully impressed with the moral imperative of following God’s will and doing so as a positive and active “wanting what God wants.”

CONCLUSION

Our observations, concerns, and recommendations regarding the above five key facets of formation for priesthood in the Catholic Church in the United States persuade us that the next edition of the Program of Priestly Formation requires significant revision of the current model of “seminary” formation. The current seminary model was established nearly 500 years ago. Times have changed, and continue to change at an ever-faster pace. We are convinced that the what, whither, and how of priestly formation need to be reconceived.

Forming missionary disciple priests who can effectively provide the desired “new evangelization” needed to build a “civilization of love” requires priests adequately prepared to serve today’s people in the United States. They are living in a secular culture that offers an abundance of religious and spiritual options. The dramatic rise of “nones” among us, the disaffiliation of huge numbers of our own “baptized and raised Catholic” people, and the continuing paucity of persons drawn to service as priests – all these factors and others argue that the current model for the formation of priests is no longer effectively serving God’s People in our country. We need a formation program that is pastoral in the spirit of Vatican II to meet the needs of our time and place. We pray that our bishops will exercise the charism of their office to achieve these goals.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON HIGH SCHOOL SEMINARIES

We observe that almost all high school seminaries have closed. By the end of the 1970s high school seminary administrators considered a success rate to be 10% of incoming freshmen graduating as seniors four years later and continuing into a college seminary. Eventually they realized that most ordained men had not attended a high school seminary at all.

We think that it is not supportable for a person who has recently attained puberty to start on a formation track aiming toward a celibate profession. Indeed, it may be contradictory to healthy psychosexual development. We recommend that any resources spent on high school seminaries be channeled toward diocesan and other Catholic high school systems in order to present all church ministries as a credible career choice and vocation. We recommend that the new edition of the Program of Priestly Formation not even mention or make reference to high school seminaries.

ENDNOTES

¹ In effect, the pastoral dimension becomes the application to real life of abstract theological statements, biblical texts, and canon law. The current Program of Priestly Formation is overly focused on spiritual, philosophical and theological abstractions rather than on facilitating candidates’ experience of living pastoral service faithfully. The current Program also seems to ignore literature, art, music, and science, which can expand horizons, as they relate to pastoral service. Candidates need to expand their horizon to embrace all of humanity.

² Vatican II was intentional in putting “ministry” in front of “life” in the title of its document on Priestly Ministry and Life (*Presbyterorum ordinis*). Our current edition of the Program of Priestly Formation overly emphasizes intellectual and, even more narrowly, academic formation. The program is filled with class hours and hours connected to study for those classes. The very outline of the year is typically academic, e.g. two semesters (or several quarters), the usual academic year vacations and time off during semesters, a long summer vacation, and so on. The shape is academic, not pastoral as in what goes on in a parish. Likewise, the focus is on getting academic degrees (according to the standards of the Association of Theological Schools and the various regional accrediting agencies), e.g. M.Div., M.A., and now even S.T.B., S.T.L.) These academic accrediting agencies utilize faculty from similar institutions for accrediting review and renewal. In effect, candidates for priesthood are being trained to be theologians rather than “pastors.” Likewise a life in pastoral service bears little or no resemblance to the academic year either in terms of content or rhythm. If a formation program focused on a pastoral orientation it would also call up lay people from ministerial settings to be part of a review of a program.

³ PPF5 notes that various “visitations” of U.S. seminaries in 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1995 “played an important role in shaping the fourth edition . . . and entered into the fifth edition “ of the PPF and are seen as “a basis for future visitations.” Such past visitations make it important that the attitude of this new edition should be different—realistic, but positive and visionary, pastoral, servant-oriented, non-clerical, and most importantly, reflective of Vatican II. More attention needs to be given to how to implement PPF5 #26’s call for greater emphasis on the radicalism of the gospel at work in [the candidates’] lives.” Such witness needs to be pastoral in terms of focus, dispositions, and work. (Cf. *Optatam Totius* ##19-21)

⁴ Many theologates in the United States currently provide a pastoral year midway between a four-year theological program. This is not what is recommended by *Ratio Fundamentalis* (2016). The latter puts a full-year of pastoral formation at the end of (four-to-six years of) theological preparation as the appropriate time to apply what has

been learned. It should also be noted that the *Ratio Fundamentalis (2016)* restricts the time allotted to any pastoral ministry during the previous academic years so that it doesn't interfere with academic and spiritual formation. It is our opinion that, if our next edition of the Program of Priestly Formation follows this approach, it will diminish even more shaping candidates pastorally.

⁵ Both the *Ratio Fundamentalis (2016)* and the *Program of Priestly Formation (5th edition)* seem to misunderstand the relationship between pastoral and theological. We encourage that the new edition would incorporate an understanding of these issues so as to foster a truly pastoral approach to priestly formation. *Pastoral* deals with **being** (a disciple), **living** (the gospel beatitudes), and **doing** (what is right and good, loving and holy). It deals with personal (individual and communal) and concrete experience in the real world. It also deals with the ministries (by whom, how, when, where, and why) that support, foster, and celebrate the mystery of living out of the Divine revealed by Jesus Christ. On the other hand, *theological* refers to a second order discipline that defines, orders and relates/connects the meanings of different personal and concrete experiences of faith by means of various abstractions drawn from appropriate patterns of intelligibility, systematically and/or historically. It functions in an abstract, conceptual and impersonal world. In this sense, the Jesus of the gospels is not a theologian. Likewise one does not need to be a theologian to live the Christian life. Likewise one does not need to be a theologian to engage in pastoral service, to be a priest. To engage in genuine and fruitful pastoral service as a priest one needs to be a person of deep experience of being, living, and doing in the faith of Jesus Christ, to be a person who readily recognizes the legitimate diversity in the ways of being, living, and doing, and to be a person who has learned how to communicate and elicit these gifts with and from others.

⁶ Each diocese needs to prepare an outline of formation opportunities, appropriate to its own situation, that will involve all priests over the long term. There is no end to *ongoing* formation. We recommend that two weeks a year should be required. Likewise priests of different ages need to gather together in these ongoing formational and educational opportunities. Attention needs to be given to utilizing DVDs and internet opportunities (e.g. having a speaker in one city meet with a group of priests in another by utilizing Zoom or other ways).

⁷ In this context the current PPF5 places unrealistic expectations and responsibility on seminary administration to alone adequately assist candidates in discerning the psychosexual maturity and readiness for a life-long celibate life.