

## 4. Dimensions of Formation

### 4.0 Human Formation

#### I Introduction to Human Formation

Human formation is the basis of all priestly formation. To bring about this movement in the life of priestly candidates, to help them deal with their basic physical, psychological and social development, the Seminary maintains a strong communal life while emphasizing personal development.

First among the elements of a strong communal life is the fact that members of the faculty, who are priests, live with the seminarians, celebrate the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours in common, enter into retreats, days of recollection and spiritual conferences together, share meals, and undertake various projects within the community.

Seminarians have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to be involved in the work of several outreach activities including committees within the Seminary: liturgical planning, community life, academic, vocations, outreach for social justice and the missions, and the Seminary Community Council under the direction of the Rector. These have been treated in the section of the Handbook entitled "Community Life."

Now, more than ever, emphasis is put on exercise and diet as part of the human formation program in order to promote a healthy lifestyle for those called to serve the Church as priests. The Seminary has an abundance of sports facilities including a small gymnasium with exercise and other equipment, tennis and handball courts, and fields on the property for playing football or baseball. In addition, some students and faculty members rent ice-time at a nearby arena for weekly hockey games throughout the year.

This section of the Handbook deals with the basic program for human formation, the formation groups that exist in the Seminary, along with the role of the Human Formation Counsellor. Finally, this section contains the Seminary's policy on psychological testing.

#### II The Program of Human Formation

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

Pastores Dabo Vobis isolates four elements of priestly formation: human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral. Although these elements are interconnected and, in fact, cannot be separated, it is helpful in terms of formation to focus at different times and to different degrees on one or other of these elements.

The work of human development which in this context refers to the physical, psychological and social development of the person is promoted within the total program of formation at St. Peter's Seminary in the many ways outlined below. This is in recognition of the fact that, "The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation" (POV 43). The context of this human formation implies "a clear view of the theological identity of the priest and a global (holistic) view of the human person which integrates all the dimensions of human identity" (CCCB, From Pain to Hope, June 1992, 30).

## 2. THE GOAL OF HUMAN FORMATION

The goal of human formation is to help the seminarian to actualize his human potential in such a way that his future ministry as a priest may be as humanly credible and acceptable as possible and that his human personality may become a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting Jesus Christ (see POV 43).

This requires of the seminarian, not only appropriate growth in self-awareness but also the intentional cultivation of those relational skills and moral virtues necessary to carry out in a Christ-like manner the responsibilities of his call to priesthood. Qualities such as honesty, loyalty, love of truth, respect for all persons, sense of justice, compassion and balance in judgment and behavior are recommended by the Synod fathers (POV 43).

With respect to relational skills, Pastores Dabo Vobis places strong emphasis on affective maturity as a significant factor in priestly formation. "Affective maturity presupposes an awareness that love has a central role in human life" (POV 44). The document further adds: "A love for Christ, which overflows into a dedication to everyone, is of the greatest importance in developing affective maturity. Thus the candidate who is called to celibacy, will find affective maturity a firm support to live chastity in faithfulness and joy" (POV 44).

In its approach to the development in seminarians of these and other necessary human qualities, the Seminary tries to respect the many differences in background, age and experience of those in formation. It endeavours to build on the unique gifts which each seminarian brings to the Church and to provide age-appropriate helps to encourage continuing growth in human maturity. This is done through the various components of the human formation program as outlined below.

## 3. COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM OF HUMAN FORMATION

### a) Pre-Admission Components

Before being admitted to the Seminary, each candidate is required to take a number of psychological tests to determine both his strengths and possible areas of difficulty. These tests are administered by the Seminary psychologist who interprets them for the candidate and then, with the written permission of the applicant, makes them available to the rector and to the appropriate formation personnel. See section 2.5 of this part of the Handbook for further information.

The other components of the admissions process—letters of reference, life history, faculty interviews, etc. (see CCCB, Ratio Formationis Sacerdotalis Nationalis, Draft - October 1999, 59 - 74 for a complete outline of the components of the admissions process.)—provide basic information to the Seminary. This information may be used by the formation faculty to help the seminarian in his continuing growth in maturity.)

### b) Communal Components

Human beings by their very nature are social beings. We cannot develop humanly in isolation. This was evident in the life of Jesus who gathered a community of followers around himself and within that community formed his disciples. The importance of community as the context for priestly formation is highlighted by the Synod fathers in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. The document states:

It is essential for the formation of candidates for the priesthood and the pastoral ministry, which by its very nature is ecclesial, that the Seminary should be experienced not as something external and superficial, or simply a place in which to live and study, but in an interior and profound way. It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community, a community that relives the experience of the group of Twelve who were united to Jesus (POV 60).

Following this model, the Seminary provides a milieu in which a number of different, interdependent communities (e.g., formation faculty, support staff, lay students, seminarians,) interact to form a Seminary community which both supports and challenges the seminarian in his continuing growth in human goodness. Within this larger community and under the direction of the rector and formation faculty, the seminarian is encouraged to use his initiative and leadership skills by sharing his individual gifts with the larger community. This can be done in many ways such as through membership on Seminary committees, duties of service to the house, involvement in Seminary projects, carrying out of community appointments and collaboration with staff and lay students. This involvement promotes the development of human skills such as collaboration, prudent decision-making, creativity, sense of responsibility and accountability and in general, concern for the common good. As well, relating conscientiously with others at his level helps the seminarian to learn how to balance individual needs with communal responsibilities, which will be required of him in ministry.

Other elements of the human formation program which are offered at the communal level, that is to all seminarians, are:

- a) an initial input session on human formation at orientation time to reinforce for new seminarians the importance of this area of growth;
- b) as a part of the weekly "Spiritual Conferences" two years are devoted to various aspects of human development (each seminarian is expected to spend at least one year in this part of the program);
- c) many of the classes offered at the Seminary deal directly or indirectly with matters of human

development ( e.g., courses in moral philosophy and moral theology, hospital course, pastoral counseling courses);

d) a good part of preparation for, and follow-up to, the Pastoral Year is focused on issues of human formation;

e) the Seminary's system of Discernment provides a means for the seminarians to assess and be accountable for their contributions to the larger Seminary community and to the outside commitments associated with their formation (see section 6 of this Handbook).

**c) Group Components**

To better promote human development, seminarians are arranged in smaller, living groups under the direction of a Formator. This arrangement creates a more focused milieu in which to foster human development. It provides an opportunity for seminarians to relate to other men of different ages and backgrounds. This calls forth in them the development of relational skills necessary for ministry. It also provides a group of peers engaged in the pursuit of similar goals by which they can measure their own progress in, and aptitude for, such a life. Along with the day-to-day development promoted within the group by both the members and the Formator certain formative activities are built into the schedule of each group.

An important component of these activities regarding human formation is the monthly group meeting. Ideally, this meeting tries to bring together, enhance and integrate the various facets of the formation program in a setting of honesty, trust and love. The planning and facilitation of such meetings is, in itself, an opportunity for both group members and leaders to grow in group facilitation skills which will later be very helpful to them in ministry.

In addition to providing help with individual meetings, the Formator provides information and resources on group dynamics and group facilitation to the seminarians in the groups.

**d) Aids to Individual Development**

The formative elements inherent in the larger Seminary community and in the smaller living groups cannot be fully utilized if the seminarian does not take seriously his own growth in human goodness and maturity. To aid him in this process, each seminarian is assigned a spiritual director and a Formator with whom he meets regularly to reflect on all aspects of his Seminary formation.

With regard to the area of human growth (in the specific context in which it is used here), the seminarian should

prayerfully reflect in a continuing way on those areas of growth appropriate to his age and stage of formation. (See "Benchmarks for Formation", section 6 of this Handbook.) These reflections could form part of the agenda for his monthly meeting with his Formator. In this way, he can gradually discover the strengths he brings to ministry and the areas in which he may need to grow.

To aid the seminarian in this gradual process of growth in self-awareness, the Seminary provides access to deeper psychological help through the Seminary psychologist and the human formation counsellor. This access can be initiated by the seminarian himself, by the recommendation of his spiritual director or by referral from the rector and/or the formation faculty.

Seminarians are encouraged to deal with any unresolved personal issues, such as those which arise from family of origin or from traumatic life experiences, so that these things will not impede their growth in human development. It must be realized that attending to one's psychological well-being is as important as attending to one's physical and spiritual well-being (see section 2.5). Occasionally, a seminarian may be referred to a person or agency outside of the Seminary for help with a particular difficulty. All of these matters are handled with the greatest respect and confidentiality. If a psychological difficulty requires long-term, intensive psychotherapy, it is usually best attended to outside the Seminary in a setting which is more conducive to the time commitments and energy required to address such a difficulty.

Seminarians are also encouraged to avail themselves of the numerous resources on human development which are available through the Seminary library and through the human formation counsellor.

A final word of advice put forward in Pastores Dabo Vobis is relevant to all of the above:

*Lastly, we must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual person ... the actions of the different teachers become truly and fully effective only if the future priest offers his own convinced and heartfelt cooperation to this work of formation (PDV 69).*

## 4.1 Spiritual Formation

### I Introduction

The liturgy is the focal point of Seminary life and spiritual formation. The community Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours are celebrated in

St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel. The principle of progressive solemnity guides the planning of the liturgy and the celebration of the Church's liturgical seasons. Once each week the whole community meets for liturgical formation. This might occur as a liturgical music practice or as pastoral formation in liturgy. In view of the bilingual character of our country, the Eucharist is celebrated in French once or twice a month.

## II Community Life

To promote personal spiritual development of the candidates, each seminarian has a spiritual director who, with the Formator, helps the seminarian to see the areas where he is called to grow personally to be the best possible priest. Seminarians meet their spiritual director every two or three weeks and their Formator once per month to discuss issues of personal human development. In addition, the seminarians attend weekly conferences for spiritual formation, organized according to developmental themes and subject-matter, under the overall guidance of the spiritual director of the Seminary. These conferences focus on foundational topics for new men, followed in the subsequent years by conferences which deal with the themes of human, Christian and priestly goodness.

The rector speaks to the seminarians on a monthly basis, addressing the common goals and needs of the formation program and keeping priestly ideals of discernment and formation before the entire community. In the course of the year, an opening preached retreat and five days of recollection are offered, along with communal penance services at appropriate times. All seminarians in the theology program are expected to make an eight-day directed retreat at the end of the academic year. Arts students are encouraged to participate in this eight-day retreat, subject to their examination schedules.

This section of the Handbook gives the outline of the program for spiritual formation, along with information about spiritual direction, the role of a spiritual director, the weekly conferences, guidelines for the year-end retreat and the Seminary's document on formation in celibate chastity.

## III Spiritual Direction and the Spiritual Director

### 1. Spiritual Direction

The spiritual life begins, remains in and concludes in Jesus Christ, God Incarnate. In the Holy Spirit we are urged to fix our gaze on Jesus Christ (*Heb 12:4*) and to invite others to do the same both by our life and our word of encouragement. Once God's love has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (*Rom 5:5*), we are called to continue our growth in this life by actions. This life in the Holy Spirit of the Risen Lord reveals the deep longing in our heart to be with the Father. The Spirit then draws us into the heart of the Trinity, our home.

The Christian life is at once personal and social, lived out in authentic relationships with other persons, as well as within our hearts, through and out of a community. Spiritual direction needs to be placed within a healthy network of gifts, supports and relationships that make a joyful living of a good life possible. It

never excuses one from personal choices and responsibility. Ultimately we are free and responsible for making ourselves with the generous gift of God's grace.

Hence in this context it is crucial that both the spiritual director and the directee make explicitly clear at the beginning of their relationship that they accept the Holy Spirit as the first and principal director, and that their mutual effort in prayer, conversation and action is to uncover this deep movement of God which is at the heart of every dimension of every human life, in fact of all life.

Spiritual direction can then be described as an interpersonal situation in which one person accompanies and assists another person to grow in the Spirit: in the life of faith and prayer, of hope in the midst of difficulties, sufferings and trials, and of love for God and neighbour while engaged in personal relationships within the family, the Christian community and the broader society.

Spiritual direction is not primarily informative, although it may be the occasion for imparting knowledge. It is not primarily therapeutic, although it may at times involve therapeutic counselling or referral. It is not primarily advisory, although it is a place to give helpful suggestions from time to time. Spiritual direction is primarily clarification and discernment of the movement of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

## 2. The Spiritual Director

### a) Role of the Spiritual Director

The Holy Spirit is the primary spiritual director.

Spiritual direction is an effort on the part of the seminarian and the seminary spiritual director to discern and follow the Spirit of Jesus in his life.

Spiritual direction for seminarians is an integral part of the program of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation in the Seminary, and is an essential means in assisting each student to live a fuller human and Christian life.

In the Seminary, spiritual direction has the added specific purpose of assisting the seminarians discernment of a vocation to the diocesan priesthood through clarification of thought and formation. The candidate will receive guidance in preparing both for priestly ministry and for a life of celibate chastity. Spiritual direction takes place in the internal forum, that is, in that sacred space which is protected by confidentiality. Hence, a spiritual director is not free to speak of what he has heard in the internal non-sacramental forum, except for situations where the seminarian has explicitly given permission to do so, and in the rare cases where it is required by civil law.

5. The spiritual director is usually the ordinary celebrant of the Sacrament of Penance and the inviolable

confidentiality of this sacrament is protected in the internal forum by the sacramental seal.

**b) Responsibilities and Qualities of a Spiritual Director**

The spiritual director is, first of all, a person of faith who has a listening and praying heart. He is open to the action of the Holy Spirit in his own life and in others. He is steeped in Scripture, versed in the spiritual tradition of the Church, and connected with the movements present in contemporary culture. He helps to discern the action of God in the life of the directee. He is a source of support who is prepared to console and challenge, question and encourage. The director is available to meet with the directee whenever this is reasonably needed.

**III Content and Focus of Spiritual Direction**

The seminarian will meet with his spiritual director every two or three weeks. In these meetings the seminarian's human, Christian and priestly journey will be explored in an atmosphere of prayer and mutual trust. Some of the topics considered might overlap with those treated elsewhere, for example, in meetings with the Formator. However, the focus here is principally on the seminarian's inner call from Jesus to follow him in the ordained priesthood, and on achieving sufficient clarity and freedom to discern, choose and prepare for this lifelong commitment.

The content of spiritual direction, like the Formator's sessions, explores the crucial areas of human, Christian and priestly goodness. However now the focus is the deeper appropriation of these values in the persons consciousness and freedom. The realm of self-knowledge and conscience is primary.

Spiritual direction in this Seminary involves clarification and discernment around the call to diocesan priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church in Canada today. This call to diocesan priesthood is one call with two dimensions: first, the call to ministerial, diocesan service in obedience to his bishop, and, secondly, the call to a life of celibacy; i.e., to a discernment of the gift of celibacy which is to be lived out as a public promise with a public promise or commitment within the Catholic community.

The basic attitude of the spiritual director is always to promote the vocation of the directee to the priesthood until it is clear that the person's vocation lies elsewhere. Fundamentally this is the relationship of adult to adult. Here an effort is made to objectify and articulate the movement of the Spirit so that the candidate is able to make a free and responsible decision in response to the mysterious call of God to the priesthood.

**IV Procedure for Changing a Spiritual Director**



1. The seminarian should first speak to his present spiritual director about the issue of changing spiritual directors.
2. 2.If for some reason this is not possible, the seminarian should then speak with the house spiritual director.
3. 3.If, after following steps #1 and #2, the seminarian has decided to change spiritual directors, he should present to the house spiritual director his choice of three possible directors, in order of preference, chosen from the spiritual directors approved by the bishop for the Seminary.
4. 4.The house spiritual director will ascertain which one of these spiritual directors is able to accept the seminarian as his directee.
5. 5.The house spiritual director will let the seminarian know who his new director will be.
6. 6.The house spiritual director will then inform the seminarian's former spiritual director of the change.
7. 7.The house spiritual director will inform the rector, in writing, that a change of spiritual directors has taken place.
8. 8.The seminarian will be encouraged by the house spiritual director and his new spiritual director to bring closure to his relationship with his former spiritual director.

## V Conferences for Spiritual Formation

### 1. Introduction

“You must be all goodness, just as your heavenly Father is all goodness” (*Mt 5:48*). This call to goodness, to holiness, is addressed by Jesus to all who believe in Him. It is most certainly addressed to those who are called to be priests in His Church. The Seminary exists to provide a community in which those called to priesthood or those attempting to discern God's call, may begin to achieve the kind of goodness which will make them truly whole, developing their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual capabilities.

In a sense, the goodness aimed at can be viewed as having a three-fold aspect: the priest, like all who are human, must strive for goodness which is the goal of human nature in general; like all Christians, he must strive to grow in Christian faith, hope and charity; finally, he must develop the kind of holiness which flows from the nature of priestly ministry. Our consideration of the preparation offered in the Seminary will be made according to this three-fold division. In the real life of a priest, such areas do not exist in separation from one another, but in outlining the path towards priestly holiness, such a division can provide at least a convenient framework.

For those who are new to Seminary formation, the Seminary provides a foundational year of formation which facilitates the seminarian's deeper orientation and commitment to Jesus Christ, initiates him to the Seminary *Way of Life*, provides foundations for his spiritual and intellectual life, and helps them reach a balance among the many dimensions of their seminary and ministerial life.

Seminarians then normally participate in the other sessions

(human, Christian and priestly) for two years each in the following order:

- Arts II & III- human goodness;
- Theology I & II- Christian goodness;
- Theology III- no sessions (out for the Pastoral Year);
- Theology IV & V- priestly goodness.

Depending on when each student is enrolled and what formation he has had prior to entering our seminary, the program is designed to ensure that each seminarian will have the experience of at least one year in each of the four areas. A chart showing an overview of the various areas is included with this document.

## 2. Foundational Year

A fundamental role of the seminary program of formation is to facilitate seminarians' development into unity and likeness with heart of Christ. Therefore, beginning with the first year of formation, the seminary program assists seminarians in nurturing hearts that yearn for greater intimacy with God. The *Foundational Year* accentuates and expands upon teachings regarding spirituality and discernment presented in the initial two-week Propaedeutic Program, and seeks to deepen seminarians' spiritual development and ability to discern their vocational call. Within the *Foundational Year*, seminarians in the first year of formation will gather at regular intervals to focus specifically on aspects of spiritual formation and discernment, thus highlighting the central aspect of the spiritual life within the priestly vocation. The intentional focus and discussion devoted to spirituality and discernment throughout this initial year of formation may serve to reduce seminarians' anxieties in discerning their personal vocation as they continue to engage in their program of formation.

The *Foundational Year* attends to each of the four pillars of seminary formation outlined in the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral. These will be developed more extensively in the following stages of the conferences for spiritual formation. (For further information, see section 1.3 of this *Handbook*.)

## 3. Human Goodness

Each and every one of us wishes to fulfill the ambition which God has installed in us to fashion our own selves, to develop to the full the powers and talents we have received. The Seminary program attempts to balance individual and community responsibilities in order to provide opportunities for such growth. Much is left to the personal initiative of the seminarian, but he is also subject to the formative influences of living, first of all, in a small group and also of participating in the life of a larger community united by a common goal. He is also provided with the guidance of a spiritual director, and must meet the requirements of the Way of Life which is to be followed by all the seminarians in the community.

The Seminary aims to be a community in which the words of St.

Paul are heeded: “And now my friends, all that is true, all that is noble, all that is just and pure, all that is loveable and gracious, whatever is excellent and admirable, fill all your thoughts with these things” (*Phil* 4.8). It was in this context that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council urged priests to develop “those virtues which are deservedly esteemed in human affairs, such as goodness of heart, sincerity, strength of character, zealous pursuit of justice and civility ....” (*P.O.*, 3). These so-called “natural” virtues are perhaps too often neglected.

Such a respect for all that is truly human demands a constant effort of self-discipline, so that a person may reject a life of sheer enjoyment, one that would take the line of least resistance.

Worthwhile things and ideas are not to be possessed without effort. True personal relationships also call for forgetfulness of self.

The Seminary community can prosper only in a climate of trust, where the students and faculty are united in view of a goal that transcends individual differences. One of the aims of the group arrangement in the Seminary is to build up this spirit of trust which has always been the tradition of St. Peter’s, and was formerly known as the *honour system*.

Conferences in “human goodness” focus on the psychological growth of the individual, with reference to a healthy understanding of the self, the self in relation to others, healthy relationships, boundaries, and practical applications of these principles.

#### 4. Christian Goodness

The Christian accepts by faith “realities which we do not see” (*Heb* 11.1). Faith directs a person towards a kind of life which transcends a purely human notion of what it means to be a good person. Christian holiness is not the result simply of personal effort but is accomplished in us by the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, who brings Jesus to each member of His Church. Jesus Christ is the Way to be followed, and the Christian ought to be able to say with St. Paul: “The life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me; and my present bodily life is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and sacrificed himself for me” (*Gal* 2:20).

The Seminary, then, aims to provide an atmosphere in which Jesus may be better known and better loved. Thus, there is great emphasis on liturgical celebration, “the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (*S.C.*, 14). At the daily Eucharist, God instructs us by His Word and renews our faith at the table of the Lord’s body. We in turn give thanks to God; Christ the Victim is offered to the Father, and we learn to offer ourselves. Through the Eucharist the community is built up and divisions are overcome.

Celebrations of the sacrament of penance, both communal and private, keep alive the acknowledgement of our need for

continuing conversion in the Christian life, and bring effective help for overcoming sin. Spiritual directors will deal with each person individually in this matter, so that the reception of this sacrament will truly be an aid to growth. The daily prayer in common of Morning or Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours is intended to build up the community and to lead us out of ourselves to pray in union with the whole church.

The loving knowledge of Jesus Christ is not fostered in us solely by participation in the public, liturgical prayer of the Church. Jesus has said: "When you pray, go into a room by yourself, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is there in the secret place" (*Mt* 6.6). The development of a personal prayer-life must be given top priority in the life of any man preparing for the priesthood. Prayer will be dealt with in the spiritual lectures, and will be one of the main concerns of spiritual directors in their dealings with the men in their charge. One of the purposes of the rules of quiet and silence in the Seminary from time to time is to encourage growth in the ability to engage in prayer and reflection.

One of the greatest aids to prayer is the habit of reading Sacred Scripture and other writings of a spiritual nature. This should find a place daily in the life of a seminarian. One of the devotions which is of special importance to priestly spirituality is that of Our Blessed Mother, and so each seminarian should try to develop this devotion and to find some concrete expression of it. The morning Angelus and the evening hymn to Mary in chapel are intended to be a forceful reminder of Mary's place in the Christian life. The rosary, of course, remains one of the most acceptable forms of devotion to Mary.

Jesus has told us quite clearly that he is to be found in our brothers and sisters: "Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these my brothers of mine, you did it for me" (*Mt* 25.40). Faith in this teaching will be the motivating force of a charity which should unite all the members of the community, where each will strive to "love in all sincerity, loathing evil and clinging to the good. Let love for our brotherhood breed warmth of mutual affection" (*Rom* 12.13). It will also inspire a passion for justice in our world, since "Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated." (Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971).

Following Jesus necessarily involves a spirit of poverty, humility and obedience. "The divine nature was his from the first, yet he did not prize his equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave" (*Phil* 2.5-7). His whole life was spent in doing the will of the Father, and this must be the pattern for those who would be his followers. Jesus' preferential love for the poor should motivate the seminarian to adopt a simple lifestyle in keeping with the demands of the Gospel. This is especially imperative today when so many people throughout the world are suffering from the direst poverty. "Our faith demands of us a certain sparingness in use, and the Church is obliged to

live and administer its own goods in such a way that the gospel is proclaimed to the poor... In countries enjoying a higher level of consumer spending, it must be asked whether our lifestyle exemplifies that sparingness with regard to consumption which we preach to others as necessary in order that so many millions of hungry people throughout the world may be fed.” (*Justice in the World*, 47 - 48.)

In the Seminary, great stress is laid upon the relationship between a student and his spiritual director. Only if this relationship is perfectly open, honest and frank can it truly be an aid towards the student’s growth in Christian goodness as it is intended to be. If for any good reason a student should wish to take a director other than the one originally assigned to him, he should consult the spiritual director of the Seminary who will advise him concerning the procedures to be followed. The spiritual director of the Seminary is available to all for consultation.

The Seminary, then, is intended to be a school of Christian formation where the seminarian will come to seek and to know the hidden purpose of God, “that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, may be brought into a unity in Christ” (*Eph* 1.10).

Conferences in “Christian goodness” focus on the virtues and the gift of celibate chastity. Much time is spent on the aspects of the celibate life, with a view to preparing candidates for the priesthood to make this promise at their ordination to the transitional diaconate and live it for their entire lives.

## 5. Priestly Goodness

Although there is really one basic Christian holiness and one Christian spirituality, the expression of spirituality is very closely related to one’s state in life, and so it is legitimate to speak of a type of holiness that is related to those engaged in priestly ministry. The priest’s holiness is determined and developed in relation to his involvement in the various ministries of the priesthood, and so the seminarian’s holiness will best be developed through his efforts to prepare for these ministries: the ministry of the Word, the ministry of worship, and the ministry of shepherd-leader.

### a) The Ministry of the Word

Priests have as their primary duty the proclamation of the gospel of God to all: “Go forth to every part of the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation” (*Mk* 16.15). Every priest is associated with his Bishop in this ministry of evangelization (cf. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 68).

In the seminarian’s pre-theological studies, the emphasis is on learning of some of the great achievements of human reason and imagination. At the same time, the student comes to see the inevitable limitations of our unaided efforts to know the truth. It is hoped that the student will come to have a great love for truth and an

awareness of the effort required for the scholarly pursuit of knowledge.

Such studies prepare one for dialogue with people of other walks of life and will enable the student for the priesthood to become acquainted with the world of the educated lay persons with whom he will be labouring in the work of evangelization. Philosophical studies have, of course, a very important role as a necessary preliminary to the study of theology.

Theological studies have a much more direct bearing in the student's preparation for the ministry of the Word. Efforts must be made to grasp God's revelation and to convey it effectively to others, always keeping in mind that it is God's message that is to be preached, not the priest's own wisdom. Moreover "for the Church, evangelizing means bringing the good news into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18). Hence "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel..." (*Justice in the World*, 6). For this reason, the seminarian must maintain a lively interest in current affairs, and strive to become more aware of the needs of contemporary society, as well as of the Church's teaching on present-day social and moral issues.

The homiletics course and practice preaching should be pursued with seriousness, and every effort be made to develop effectiveness in reading and speaking in public. Even more important, however, will be the student's ability to reflect prayerfully on the Sacred Scriptures. One is truly prepared to preach God's Word only after one has experienced its effects within oneself, and for this a deep, reflective spirit is required. "Away then," says St. James, "with all that is sordid, and the malice that hurries to excess, and quietly accept the message planted in your hearts, which can bring you salvation" (1.21).

#### b) The Ministry of Worship

In presiding at the Eucharist, the priest acts as minister of Christ, who through the liturgy continually acts as priest on our behalf, by the action of his Holy Spirit. The seminarian, while participating in the liturgy, is also preparing for the day when he will preside over God's people at worship. If he is to lead others to worship in spirit and in truth, he himself must have learned to rise to true prayer during the celebration of the Eucharist.

To prepare for the ministry of worship, the seminarian will have courses in liturgy and in sacramental theology.

Equally important for his future ministry of worship will be the spirit of prayer which animates his own life. A daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament will help deepen his inner union with Christ, and better fit him to celebrate the memorial of the Lord.

c) **The Ministry of Shepherd-Leader**

“The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, shepherding them rightly” (*Ez* 34, 16). In these words, the prophet foretold the coming of the Good Shepherd to Israel. When Jesus did come, he found the People of God in need: “The sight of the people moved him to pity they were like sheep without a shepherd, harassed and helpless” (*Mt* 9:36). There were questions but no answers, tears but no consolation, sin but no forgiveness. So the Lord took the People of God under his care as a shepherd his sheep, healing the wounded, setting upright the fallen, leading all gently to pasture.

The priest is above all to be such a shepherd. As such he acts in collaboration with all those other holy men and women who together make up the Body of Christ, the Church. His call to be leader is at the same time a call to be servant, to enter into the suffering and joys of God’s people and to work along with them to transform the earth. He should put on the mind and heart of Jesus who “did not come to be served but to serve and to surrender his life as a ransom for many” (*Mt* 20:28). He is not called to honours but to service. Pastoral concern then, must underlie the whole of the seminarian’s preparation for priesthood. St. Paul exercised such a ministry, and he could say “I am a free man and own no master; but I have made myself everyone’s servant to win over as many as possible” (*I Cor* 9:19). This ministry requires the priest “to work simultaneously for the conversion of hearts and for the improvement of (social) structures”. (*Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 1986, 75).

Students of the Latin Rite of the Church, which follows the revered tradition of priestly celibacy must, from the beginning, prepare for such a life of perfect continence. They should try first of all to gain personal conviction concerning the suitability of this way of life for the priestly ministry. They must constantly strive towards a mature mastery of self, so that the renunciation of marriage may truly liberate them for a more total service of God’s People. Finally, they should understand that this state is to be undertaken not solely as a requisite of Church law, but much more importantly as response to a gift from God. Prayer will thus be seen as an absolutely essential part of their preparation for a life of priestly

celibacy.

To become a true servant, more is required than good intentions. So a seminarian must take advantage of the opportunities he finds for living and working with others, in his own group, in the larger Seminary community and especially in those programs known as the ministerial pre-practicum and Field Education. He should also welcome as prospective co-workers those lay persons who are studying full- or part-time at the Seminary. Summer vacations, too, can provide many opportunities for growing in awareness of the needs of others.

Once again, even more important than knowledge and techniques will be the spirit of union with Christ developed through prayer and self-sacrifice; this alone can inspire the zeal and perseverance necessary for a life-long commitment to the pastoral ministry. Jesus has stated it clearly: “He who dwells in me, as I dwell in him, bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing” (*Jn 15:5*).

Conferences in “priestly goodness” focus directly on the spirituality of the diocesan priest. Through a careful study of contemporary articles on the subject, seminarians are invited to enter into dialogue on the subject, thus formulating in their own lives how this spirituality will be lived out.

## 6. Conclusion

The Christian life begins with faith, and certainly those who are called to the ministerial priesthood must walk by faith. This means facing duties and responsibilities with courage; it means not being anxious about the outcome of our efforts. “Cast your bread upon the waters: after a long time you may find it again” (*Eccl 11:1*). The process of growth in faith, like all growth, is silent and mysterious. “The kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed on the land; he goes to bed at night and gets up in the morning and the seed sprouts and grows – how, he does not know” (*Mk 6*).

The author of *The Letter to the Hebrews* encourages us by recalling the stories of many great women and men of the Old Testament who live by faith (ch. 11). To their stories we may add those of all the Christian saints, and of all those whose life of faith we have personally witnessed: parents, friends, teachers, religious and priests. Then, “with all these witnesses to faith around us like a cloud, we must throw off every encumbrance, every sin to which we cling, and run with resolution the race for which we are entered, our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish” (12:1).

## VI Guidelines for the Year-end Seminary Retreat

### 1. Purpose

1. To deepen the seminarian's life of prayer.



2. To provide a guided school of spiritual formation in prayer and discernment.
3. To provide a time in silence, prayer and spiritual guidance to review the year, to make necessary vocational discernments and decisions, and to prepare for the coming summer.
4. To learn to live with silence in a life-giving way.
5. To realize that the retreat, as an essential part of the seminary program of formation, is ultimately the responsibility of the seminary formation faculty.

## 2. Policy

1. The general policy is that the theologians in first, second, and fourth theology make the directed retreat at Holy Family Retreat House, Oxley.
2. Deacons, those in the pastoral year, and arts students will also be invited to join the Oxley Retreat if there is sufficient space, but other possible places and types of retreat might also be encouraged.

## 3. Elements Necessary for a Retreat Elsewhere

1. The retreat should be a minimum of six days.
2. The name, address and phone number of the director or person responsible for the retreat must be provided.
3. The dates of the retreat along with the name and address of the retreat centre must be given.
4. The retreat should be tied to scripture (Ignatian or some other type).
5. There should be a formal regimen for the retreat and a fixed residence during the time of retreat (e.g. the retreatant should not be going off to local restaurants).

## 4. Retreat Centres

In light of the above considerations certain centres or types of retreats would not fulfil the seminary requirement for the year end retreat, even though they might well be a valuable experience for a seminarian at another time in his formation. The Spiritual Director of the Seminary should be consulted in choosing the centre or type of retreat.

## VII Sacrament of Penance

Baptism introduces us into a deep union with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit for the Glory of the Father. This sacrament makes us children of God and brothers and sisters of one another in Christ Jesus our Lord. This life in God has been damaged by sin which distorts our relationship with God, with one another, with our very self, and indeed with the whole of creation. Jesus Christ by his life, death and resurrection has reconciled us with God and made us messengers of reconciliation and ambassadors for Christ [see 2 Cor 5: 16-21]

As men preparing for the Roman Catholic priesthood, seminarians are called not only to be instruments in the reconciliations of others, but to be reconciled themselves with God and with others. This personal reconciliation takes place in many ways as we live and celebrate our life

together.

### 1. Sacrament of Penance:

The Sacrament of Penance, often called Confession, is a privileged way of celebrating reconciliation in the Church. In the seminary, opportunities to receive this sacrament are made available in several ways.

1. The ordinary confessor and celebrant of the Sacrament of Penance for each seminarian is his spiritual director.
2. The seminary spiritual director, who is on the internal forum with all seminarians, is another person available for the celebration of the sacrament.
3. Often during our retreats and monthly days of prayer the presenter is a priest who makes himself available for the sacrament and can be seen as an extraordinary confessor invited into our community.
4. Seminarians can also avail themselves of other priests in local parishes and communities.
5. If the seminarian's spiritual director, or the Seminary Spiritual Director are not available to the seminarian who feels in conscience he needs to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, on these presumed infrequent situations, the seminarian may approach another willing priest in the house to receive the sacrament. The exceptions would be the rector who is completely in the external forum with all seminarians and his Formator who is in the external forum with everyone in his formation group.

This sacrament is a great means to grow in one's spiritual life and aids in acquiring a conscience sensitive to the movements of the Holy Spirit in our quest to know and follow the will of God. Further it is important also to keep one's spiritual director apprised of any issues confessed to another confessor that would affect one's preparation for the priesthood and the discernment of one's vocation.

### 2. Other Means for Reconciliation and the Forgiveness of Sins:

1. The devout participation in the Eucharist has the power to forgive sin and to heal its effects.
2. A perfect act of contrition has been held by the tradition of the Church to be a means for the forgiveness of both venial and mortal sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in #1452 states:
  3. "When it [contrition] arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect' (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible. [Council of Trent (1551): DS 1677]" (See also St. Thomas Aquinas, ST, III, q. 84, 5)
4. Sin can also be forgiven, and reconciliation facilitated by prayer, fasting and almsgiving to the poor.

### 3. Conclusion:

The Sacrament of Penance is a marvelous gift God has given the Church for the reconciliation of sinners to a fuller and deeper life in God. Those who are preparing to be celebrants of this sacrament with God's people when they become priests need to grow in appreciation of this sacrament in their own spiritual life by receiving it often. It is one of many means at our disposal to assist us in our growth in the spiritual life.

## 4.2 Intellectual Formation

### I Introduction to Intellectual Formation

The academic curriculum combines a strong philosophical preparation, and a theological course of studies which is contemporary and pastoral in nature.

In the Bachelor of Arts module in Philosophy, candidates for ordination work toward a Bachelor of Arts degree. They are enrolled in philosophy courses that will prepare them for the study of theology. In addition to these, they take other courses which are determined by the BA requirements of the University. A core of courses required for the BA degree are offered at the Seminary, while the remainder are taken at King's University College, at another affiliated college, or at the main campus of the University. Further information on the Philosophy program is found in the *Academic Calendar*, published online.

In the Program of Theology, the courses are offered with a view to the needs of ministry in the Church today, so that students may be both well-educated and disposed to pastoral charity. The courses include biblical, systematic, historical, moral, sacramental, liturgical, canonical and spiritual studies, along with homiletics, and professionally directed pastoral theology and field education. After completing two years of theological studies, candidates for ordination spend a full year working in a parish under the supervision of a specifically chosen priest-supervisor. Following this pastoral year, the seminarians return for two more years of theological studies. The Pastoral Year, coming in the midst of their theological studies, allows the seminarians the opportunity to integrate more easily their pastoral life and their intellectual studies throughout the remaining years of their formation.

This section of the *Handbook* contains the graduation requirements for seminarians enrolled in the three-year BA degree in Philosophy, academic policies for the Faculty of Theology, information about academic services, library resources and timetables for Arts and Theology, along with the list of current faculty members.

### II Three-year BA Degree in Philosophy

According to the University of Western Ontario, the requirement for graduation is the completion of a program of fifteen courses, subject to general university conditions and to the conditions set by each Faculty, department or program.

In order to graduate with a three-year BA in philosophy, our seminarians must meet four major requirements: (1) General University Requirements; (2) Three-Year BA Requirements; (3) Philosophy Department Requirements; (4) Seminary Program Requirements.

#### 1. General University Requirements

(cf. *UWO Academic Calendar*)

To be determined by UWO  
Not available at time of printing

**2. Three-year BA Requirements (cf. *UWO Academic Calendar*)**

To be determined by UWO  
Not available at time of printing

**3. Philosophy Department Requirements (cf. *UWO Academic Calendar*)**

To be determined by UWO  
Not available at time of printing

**4. Seminary Program Requirements**

All seminarian arts students are required by the Seminary to take specific courses as part of their three-year BA degree in philosophy.

These include a concentration in Philosophy and some courses in Religious Studies, among others. The Dean of Studies works with the King's liaison to establish this list from time to time.

**III Academic Policies for the Faculty of Theology**

**1. Policy Regarding Submission of Assignments**

It is the responsibility of the student to organize her or his work so that the presentation is ready for the class. For a serious reason, a student may approach the professor in advance of the due date for an extension on the paper. Such an extension may be granted at the discretion of the professor. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission. Students must obtain a form from the Dean of Studies to record each extension.

**2. Policy Regarding Plagiarism**

The Senate of the University of Western Ontario requires that students be informed of the policy regarding plagiarism, accordingly:

**Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or in footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see "Scholastic Offence Policy" in the *UWO Academic Calendar*).

**Plagiarism Checking:** The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

**3. Policy Regarding Inclusive Language**

St. Peter's Seminary has developed a policy for the use of inclusive language on every level of communication – oral and written – in community life, ministerial projects, scholarly writing and reporting, committee work, relations among faculty, students and staff, and in the celebration of the Liturgy where it is dictated by the policies of the Church.

This policy is guided by the expectations of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, which calls

for the careful examination of a school's "... published documents, structures of governance, and ethos, in an effort to guard against sexual bias and discrimination" (ATS Policy Statements, Bulletin 39, Part 5, 1990).

The adoption and publication of this policy also represents our effort to implement the message of the Pastoral Team on Inclusive Language of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "To Speak as a Christian Community" (Protocol No. 614, 28 July 1989).

#### IV The Academic Counselling

##### The Write Place

The Write Place is a hub for writers and writing at King's and part of the Department of English, French, and Writing. Our tutors, writing consultants, and writing specialists empower writers working on academic and creative projects, helping build the confidence that comes with improved reading, thinking, and communication skills. Our specialists also serve as resources on writing pedagogy for professors from all disciplines. We are committed to a vibrant, inclusive, and creative workplace culture that reflects the diversity at King's.

Location: Darryl J. King Student Life Centre, Room 113, near the café.

Phone: 519-433-3491 ext. 4475

Email: [thewriteplace@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:thewriteplace@kings.uwo.ca)

#### 4.3 Pastoral Formation

##### I The Program of Pastoral Formation

As an integral part of formation, students for the priesthood and lay ministry are introduced to various aspects of pastoral work. This gradual introduction to ministry is designed to allow the students to experience ministry in a variety of settings and with varying levels of responsibility. Those registered in the Arts fall into two categories. New seminarians participate in the Foundational Year activities for pastoral formation as outlined in that document (found at 1.3 in this Handbook). All other seminarians in Arts are required to be involved in a "ministerial pre-practicum" placement. The candidates engage in the beginnings of pastoral ministry, through volunteer work in a supervised setting, under the aegis of the director of Field Education. This allows them to experience the wide scope of ministry in the broader community, happening through activities not directly related to the Church. This may include such things as outreach to the elderly in nursing homes, work with the homeless at the mission / hostel, visiting those in prison, and assistance to those who are mentally and physically challenged. Reflection on this ministry takes place twice each semester with peers and is directed toward a broad understanding of ministry and the gradual discovery of the seminarians' own gifts and weaknesses.

As part of pastoral formation, Field Education courses give theology students the opportunity to put into practice that which they learn in the classroom. This weekly experience involves them in a supervised learning situation which is usually carried out in a school, parochial or hospital setting. It allows the student the opportunity to learn and use pastoral skills that will help in future ministry, and it is supported by

theological reflection groups under the supervision of the director of Field Education. Candidates for ordination also spend a full year working in a parish under the supervision of a priest-supervisor. The Pastoral Year is an integral part of the Field Education program and comes in the midst of the seminarians' theological studies. It provides an opportunity to integrate their future pastoral life within their continuing formation for priesthood. More information about the Pastoral Year is provided in a separate handbook, *The Pastoral Year - Formation in a Parochial Setting - Policies, Guidelines and Appendices*.

A global, missionary outlook in the training for priestly ministry has resulted in the establishment and growth of a third-world awareness program at the Seminary in the form of a "Mission Awareness Trip". This trip, offered every other year, allows seminarians and faculty members to spend up to three weeks in an environment which helps the participants to become more aware of the poverty in which many people in our world live today. The experience introduces the participants to effective pastoral and developmental approaches. Since 1987, the Seminary has sponsored trips to the Canadian Northwest Territories, Nicaragua, Mexico, India and Brazil.

This section of the Handbook presents information on the whole program of pastoral formation, the role of the director of Field Education, as well as information on the Mission Awareness experience.

## II Introduction to Pastoral Formation

### 1. I Introduction

Pastores Dabo Vobis states:

*The Council text (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) insists upon the coordination of the different aspects of human, spiritual, and intellectual formation. At the same time it stresses that they are all directed to a specific pastoral end. This pastoral aim insures that the human, spiritual, and intellectual formation has certain precise content and characteristics; it also signifies and gives specificity to the whole formation of future priests. Like all other branches of formation, pastoral formation develops by means of mature reflection and practical application, and it is rooted in a spirit, which is the hinge of all and the force which stimulates it and makes it develop. It needs to be studied therefore as the true and genuine theological discipline that it is; pastoral or practical theology. (57)*

The work of pastoral formation is to give constant impetus towards the goal of pastoral ministry, in the midst of the students' philosophical and theological studies. It develops skills of working in collaboration with others in ministry (helping them to acknowledge the important role of the laity), compassion and empathy towards the suffering and needy, and a development of the students; own personal pastoral presence.

### 2. Goals of Pastoral Formation Program

The Decree on Priestly Formation of Vatican II states:

*Since it is necessary for the students to learn the art of exercising the apostolate not only theoretically but also practically, and to be able to act both on their own responsibility and in harmonious*

*conjunction with others, they should be initiated into pastoral work, both during their course of studies and also during the time of vacations, by opportune practical projects. These should be carried out in accordance with the age of the students and local conditions, and with the prudent judgement of the bishops, methodically and under the leadership of men skilled in pastoral work, the surpassing power of supernatural means being always remembered. (27)*

Field Education exists primarily for the mission of the Church. Direct participation in the mission of the Church is essential for the student to learn, grow, and discern a call to pastoral ministry and priesthood. Pastoral field education gives the student an opportunity to integrate the knowledge gained in their studies with pastoral service. It is a reality test of what working within the Church will require. To become an integrated pastoral care giver a student must be given the opportunity to discover their personal strengths and weaknesses. By acknowledging their strengths and attempting to grow stronger in their weak places, the student can grow in the development of their pastoral identity.

The experience of service will give evidence of the students' capacity and willingness to consider the needs of the people requiring pastoral care in preference to their own needs. This experience will develop their ability to work collaboratively, to manifest respect for the opinions and talents of others in ministry, and enable them to develop their own gifts which complement the gifts of those with whom they minister. The pastoral field education experience provides them with the opportunity to develop the necessary sensitivity, knowledge, and humility required to be a loving presence and living witness to the Gospel of Jesus today.

In order to facilitate the development of an integrated pastoral identity that is open to the living presence of God, their pastoral education must teach them the importance of theological reflection. Theological reflection refers to that process by which the student attempts to perceive how theology and the tradition of the Church shed light on various pastoral situations they have experienced, how God has been present in the midst of these situations, and what this means for their own life in Christ.

Through pastoral field education, the student is to be given a concrete opportunity to conform themselves more fully to the image of Christ, the high priest:

The internal principle, the force which animates and guides the spiritual life of the priest inasmuch as he is configured to Christ the head and shepherd, is pastoral charity, as a participation in Jesus Christ's own pastoral charity, a gift freely bestowed by the Holy Spirit and likewise a task and a call which demand a free and committed response on the part of the priest (PDV 23).

3. Components of Pastoral Formation Program
  - a) Preparations for Ministry

Before a student is placed in their pastoral assignment, they are to submit three letters of reference, speaking of the students' reliability and trustworthiness. It is recommended that these letters be written by teachers from the students' secondary school program, employers from previous work experiences, and supervisors of their volunteer work in the past. Students are also asked to go through the process of a police check (which is required by several of the agencies where students are placed for their prepracticum).

**b) Ministerial Prepracticum**

In the arts program, students are involved in one of many good works that are possible within the community at large. The ministerial prepracticum introduces seminarians to the many unfortunate social situations which will undoubtedly touch their lives later on as priests, and of which they should have knowledge. The prepracticum connects students with many helping agencies, which are not specifically Church-sponsored, but who make a very significant contribution to the well-being of the community. The seminarians also become acquainted with many lay people who are involved in Christian service within the community, reminding them that they are not alone in this work. According to the seminarians' interests and abilities (and also their areas of needed growth), they may be involved in working with the sick, the aged, the unemployed, children, the developmentally challenged, or victims of abuse. A key goal of this program is to help seminarians heighten their compassion, generosity, and commitment towards those in need: qualities exemplified by Jesus, and which are so important in the life of a priest. Seminarians' involvement in these outreach activities help them recognize Christ in the faces of those in needs, and also to recognize that it is Christ who works through them in their outreach.(cf. PDV 40).

During the years that a student is involved in the ministerial prepracticum, they take part in monthly "reflection on ministry" group meetings. In these meetings, the student gains input on ways of pastorally ministering in different circumstances which they may be involved in through their present placement or future parish ministry. The students reflect on their previous month in ministry, highlighting insights they have gained, anxieties they encountered, and ways they have been challenged to grow. These monthly reflection group meetings are also times when the student can reflect on how he is achieving the goals he had set for himself at the beginning of the school year.

**c) Field Education for Theology Students**



*i) Year One: School Ministry*

Having completed their studies in philosophy, and now beginning their theological studies, students are placed in local schools. Drawing from their own faith-life, the teaching they have received from Religious Studies in the Arts program, homilies, and personal spiritual reading, students are able to share their faith with young people in the school setting. Under the supervision of dedicated Catholic teachers, the seminarians are asked to give short teaching sessions, answer questions students have about their faith, and be available for preparing and participating in various school celebrations. When placed in their pastoral year parish, and later in full-time ministry, seminarians will be greatly involved in visitation and the celebration of sacraments with young people. This year of involvement in a school setting gives the theology student a good foundation for their later ministry.

During this first year of theology, students are also involved in a component of public speaking. A course of studies led by those experienced in public speaking, will give the students opportunities to develop and practice their skills, and gain feedback from the instructors and their peers in ways they can improve. This public speaking component also lays a firm foundation for the seminarians' later parish ministry.

*ii) Year Two: Parish Ministry*

In their second year of theology, students enter into the next level of field education outreach. Having had a year of theological studies, they are now better prepared to minister in the parish setting. This experience serves as somewhat of a reality test of what working within a parochial setting will require. It also allows the student the opportunity to grow in the identification and development of their pastoral identity. This component of field education is very important in the discernment of a vocational call to ministry as a diocesan priest. The students are placed in one of the parishes within the London Deanery, under the supervision of the pastor. In this component of field education, many students experience a ratification of their call. In both the school and parish ministry components of the field education program (i.e., years one and two of theology), a key element of

the students' experience, is involvement in "theological reflection" groups twice each semester. These group sessions include opportunities for common prayer, reflection on the students' experiences of ministry and the sharing of how they have encountered the Lord through their outreach. Through this aspect of the program, students not only learn and grow from their own experience of outreach in the community, but they can learn from others' experience, and can help each other in growing towards meeting their personal goals.

*iii) Year Three: The Pastoral Year*

Seminarians continue their discernment, and application of their studies, in the Pastoral Year. Under the supervision of pastors, who are good leaders by example as well as by instruction, the seminarian spends an entire year immersed in a parochial setting. In this pastoral year, the seminarian takes on a stance of learning by observing: being involved in the life of the committees and ministries of the parish, and keeping a watchful eye on the work involved in the parish priest's life. The pastoral year is not meant to be a time when the seminarian is given complete responsibility for parish programs or sacramental preparation. Rather, it is meant to be a time of cooperation: the student using his gifts in cooperation with other pastoral team members, and with those of the many lay people involved in the parish. This is a time to enhance the understanding of team ministry, and the importance of enabling the ministries of all the faithful. In this setting of collaboration, the seminarian can further test and discern his vocation. Further information can be found in the handbook for the Pastoral Year.

*iv) Year Four: The Hospital Course*

After the completion of the Pastoral Year, in which they have had some experience in visiting the sick in hospitals, the students enter into the next phase of Field Education: a full year course in hospital ministry. The seminarians do their *hands on* hospital visitation at St. Joseph Health Centre. Much in-depth teaching is given on the role of the pastoral care-giver, by hospital pastoral care coordinators (who facilitate the course). In addition, verbatim reports of patient visits, role plays of potential situations, and much group review and interaction, all take

place in this course. The goal of the course is to give them experiential learning in spiritual care as a team member within a hospital setting. Each student is accountable to develop and strive to attain their personal, professional, theological, and group goals. Students are therefore challenged to identify their objectives for growth, not only personally, but as members of a pastoral care team.

v) ***Year Five: Preaching***

The final component of field education in the Seminary's program of formation, involves the students in immediate preparation for ordination to the priesthood. In the midst of their final year of studies, the deacons are encouraged to continue the missionary spirit that has been part of their entire Seminary education. The deacons reach out to parishes in the area, through weekend preaching. Especially in parishes or clusters where there is one priest, the deacon's homily can bring a different perspective to the gospel message. His involvement in parishes periodically throughout the year, helps to keep him focused on why he is in the Seminary, namely to serve the people of God. To accentuate the role of all the faithful in nurturing vocations and evaluating those approaching ordination, each pastor is asked to obtain the evaluation of five parishioners regarding the deacon's homilies. In addition to evaluations being given for weekend outreach, evaluations are also given in house by the professor of Homiletics, regarding each of the homilies preached by the deacon. The Homiletics professor meets the deacons individually to review all the input from priests and laity.

#### 4. Conclusion

Pastores Dabo Vobis states:

*Precisely because within the Church's life the priest is a man of communion, in his relations with all people he must be a man of communion, in his relations with all people he must be a man of mission and dialogue. Deeply rooted in the truth and charity of Christ, and impelled by the desire and imperative to proclaim Christ's salvation to all, the priest is called to witness in all his relationships to fraternity, service, and a common quest for the truth, as well as a concern for the promotion of justice and peace (PDV 18).*

Through the many components of field education within the wider formation program of the Seminary, students are challenged to grow personally and pastorally. Through their

involvement with many generous, compassionate people involved in outreach, they see the broader spectrum of both the need for justice and service, and the presence of many people working together with them towards a common goal. By regularly reflecting upon their growth and their need for further skills, our students attempt to develop the heart of sensitivity, compassion, and generosity of Jesus. Through the input and support of many people throughout the years of their studies, including their peers, the students can understand more fully the challenge before them in parish ministry, and the resources which will help them make a difference.

### III The Role of the Director of Field Education

#### 1. Introduction

St. Peter Seminary's Director of Field Education is responsible for the supervision of the Field Education program for students in both philosophical and theological studies. The director is responsible for the organization of the program, communication with and direction of the placement supervisors, and the evaluation of the overall program. The Director is accountable to the Dean of Studies and the Rector for the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

#### 2. Qualifications

The one selected for this position should be a woman or man of sound character, who has demonstrated their faith in action through pastoral outreach in their own faith community. The person should hold a Master of Divinity degree. They must come with experience in the supervision of students, good organizational and administrative skills, and a demonstrated ability to work well with others in a team. The person should have a good knowledge of the volunteer agencies in the local community.

#### 3. Responsibilities

##### a) Collaboration with the wider community

It is particularly important to prepare future priests for cooperation with the laity. The Council says: They should be willing to listen to lay people, give brotherly consideration to their wishes and recognize their experience and competence in the different fields of human activity. In this way they will be able to recognize with them the signs of the times. (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* 9; PDV 59).

The director of Field Education consults with members of the community who act as supervisors for the students' placements. He or she is to organize a meeting each year, for students to meet representatives of the placement agencies, parishes and schools, to facilitate the students' discernment as to which placement will help them grow in ministerial skills. The Director of Field Education keeps in regular communication with these placement supervisors, and gains their written

evaluation of the students at the end of each semester.

**b) Selection of Placements**

*i) Ministerial Prepracticum:*

Thanks to an initial and gradual experience of ministry, future priests will be able to be inserted into the living pastoral tradition of their particular church. They will learn to open the horizon of their mind and heart to the missionary dimension of the Church's life. They will get practice in some initial forms of cooperation with one another and with those alongside whom they will be sent to work (PDV 58).

The director of Field Education meets with each student to reflect on their past experiences in the work force, in volunteer ministry, and in previous prepracticum placements. In light of these, and in consideration of the need for growth within the seminarian, a placement is selected at one of the many helping agencies in the city of London (Downtown Mission, London Food Bank, L'Arche London, nursing homes, etc.) Once the placement has been selected, and the student has met with his placement supervisor, each student is to identify their goals for the year's experience (using the Student Learning Contract). The Field Education Director reviews these goals with each student as they begin their ministry, and reviews their growth towards these goals at various times throughout the year.

*ii) Field Education:*

When it comes to choosing places and services in which candidates can obtain their pastoral experience, the parish should be given particular importance for it is a living cell of local and specialized pastoral work in which they will find themselves faced with the kind of problems they will meet in their future ministry (PDV 58).

As in the prepracticum, the director of Field Education meets with each student in Field Education at the beginning of each year, to discern their placement in ministry. Students in first theology are placed in area schools, under the supervision of faith-filled Catholic teachers. Students in second theology are placed in local parishes, under the supervision of pastors. Students in these years of Field Education also use the Student Learning Contract to identify their goals, and review them with the director of Field Education. In fourth theology, students are

enrolled in the Hospital Course, which is supervised by directors of pastoral care services in London Health Care Centres. In fifth theology, students engage in preaching in the Seminary and at various parishes on weekends. The professor of Homiletics receives feedback from Seminary Formators regarding the seminarians' preaching, and also communicates with pastors of parishes where the seminarians preach on weekends.

*iii) Theological Reflection*

Pastoral formation certainly cannot be reduced to a mere apprenticeship, aiming to make the candidate familiar with some pastoral techniques. The Seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith ... (PDV 57).

The director of Field Education and other members of the faculty meet the seminarians in small groups for theological reflection twice each semester. In these small reflection groups, the Field faculty members facilitate the sharing on insights the seminarians received in their ministries, and problems or anxieties they faced, and ways they have seen an integration between their studies with their pastoral experiences.

*iv) Continuing support and encouragement*

Awareness of the Church as 'communion' will prepare the candidate for the priesthood to carry out his pastoral work with a community spirit, in heartfelt cooperation with the different members of the Church. Such a cooperation presupposes a knowledge and appreciation of the different gifts and charisms, of the diverse vocations and responsibilities which the Spirit offers and entrusts to the members of Christ's body. It demands a living and precise consciousness of one's own identity in the Church and of the identity of others. It demands mutual trust, patience, gentleness and the capacity for understanding and expectation (PDV 59).

To model the kind of patience, gentleness, and understanding that the priest will be asked to give to parishioners and co-workers in ministry, the Field Education director supports,

challenges, and gives guidance to seminarians in their pastoral field work.

*v) Evaluation in Consultation with Placement Supervisors*

These and other pastoral activities will teach the future priests to live out as a 'service' his own mission of 'authority' in the community, setting aside all attitudes of superiority or of exercising a power if it is not simply that which is justified by pastoral charity (PDV 58).

The director of Field Education regularly communicates with the placement supervisors to evaluate the attitudes and actions which demonstrate a pastoral zeal to minister as Christ did. The Director reviews the written evaluations that each supervisor submits, presenting challenges, concerns, and affirmations to both the students and to the formation faculty.

Through reflection with each student on their growth towards achieving their personal goals, the director of Field Education discerns the level of commitment to, and zeal involved, in becoming a minister in the image of Christ. The director also meets regularly with the instructors of the Hospital Course, to discern the progress of the students in developing competence and compassion in ministering in the hospital setting.

*vi) Organization and Accountability*

The director of Field Education maintains files for each student involved in any component of Field Education. The Field Education file collects data from their ministerial prepracticum service in their first year of Arts till their ordination, enabling a visible account of their experience, growth, and evaluation. The director of Field Education provides copies of the Student Learning Contract, and the supervisors' evaluations, to students' spiritual directors, Formators, and places copies of these in their main file in the rector's office.

#### **IV Mission Awareness Trip**

##### **1. Introduction**

The Mission Awareness Trip began at St. Peter's Seminary in 1987. The number of students varies on the trips from three to ten with an average of seven or eight for each trip. The program takes place every two years at the end of the academic year after the year-end retreat. Each trip has a duration of two to three weeks from the end of April to the first three weeks in May. Since 2005, students and faculty joined in trips organized by

other mission groups rather than one set up exclusively for Seminary students and faculty as in the past. This approach allows us to be more flexible with regard to mission destinations and timing. It also simplifies the organizing effort on the part of the Seminary and enables us to engage the expertise and planning of an established group of people.

## **2. Purpose of the Mission Awareness Trip**

1. That all the participants have a personal acquaintance with the poor, other cultures, languages, Church communities, and faith traditions;
2. That an experience of world Church and the global dimensions of our Christian Mission be experienced in northern Canada or developing countries;
3. That one has a lived experience of being a foreigner in a foreign land, thus acquiring an empathy for immigrants to Canada;
4. That the trip provides an occasion for a theological reflection on, and a continuing interest in, the theology of mission;
5. That the participants learn to reflect more critically from a gospel perspective on our own society and Church life;
6. That the mission awareness experience opens each person and the seminary community as a whole to discovering a greater depth in the Gospel as we are evangelized by the poor;
7. That we become more committed to the Church's preferential option for the poor both in Canada and beyond.
8. That we discover or become more convinced that as members of the Catholic Church in Canada we are missionaries in a mission land.

## **3. Policy for the Mission Awareness Trip**

The following policy is now in effect:

1. The Mission Awareness Trip will give a preference to joining in with already existing mission programs of established organizations. However, a seminary sponsored trip is still a possibility if the circumstances warrant it.
2. The Mission Awareness Trip will be offered every two years. In that year there will be a concerted effort to engage the seminary community in heightening our awareness of the mission of the church and in raising funds to support our mission trips. The year should preferably not coincide with the World Youth Days.
3. There is a possibility for students to make a Mission Awareness Trip in the alternate year if there are good reasons and sufficient funds available for it.
4. The principal activities for awareness building and fund raising will take place on the year of the trips. However in the off-year one activity is encouraged each semester in order to keep awareness alive in the community, to encourage those who have made trips to remain active and to continue to gather funds.
5. The funding for the trips continues to be approximately



one third (1/3) from the Seminary, one third (1/3) from the participant, and one third (1/3) from fund-raising activities.

6. Those who have made the trips are encouraged on their return to make presentations to the seminary community, and to other interested and supportive groups.