3. The Progress of Formation

3.0 The Foundational Year of Formation

I Philosophy Underlying the Foundational Year

A fundamental role of the seminary program of formation is to facilitate seminarians’ development into unity and likeness with the 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.

II Goals

The primary goals of the Foundational Year are:

1. to facilitate seminarians’ deeper orientation and commitment to Jesus Christ;
2. to initiate seminarians to the seminary Way of Life so that they may fruitfully and faithfully engage in it throughout their years of formation;
3. to provide important foundations for the spiritual and intellectual life of seminarians that will support them throughout their years of formation;
4. to motivate seminarians to recognize the critical importance of nurturing their spiritual lives within both seminary formation and their future ministries. (cf. Pastores Dabo Vobis, n. 46: “Spiritual formation ... is applicable to all the faithful. And just as for all the faithful spiritual formation is central and unifies their being and living as Christians ... so too for every priest his spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and his acting as a priest.”);
5. to assist seminarians in maintaining balance among the many dimensions of their seminary and ministerial life (i.e., integrating prayer, study, socializing, exercise, and solitude).

III Major Components of the Foundational Year

The Foundational Year attends to each of the four dimensions of seminary formation outlined in Pastores Dabo Vobis: spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral.
1. **Spiritual Formation**

Spiritual formation animates and underlies all dimensions of seminary formation. It involves the development of a deep and meaningful spiritual life for each seminarian, which encompasses the following: individual prayer and meditation based on reading of Sacred Scripture (*lectio divina*), sharing of faith, daily participation in the celebration of Eucharist, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, regular meetings with one’s spiritual director, daily examination of consciousness, and fostering other personal devotions such as the praying of the rosary. The goal of spiritual formation within the *Foundational Year* (and the entire seminary program) is to facilitate seminarians’ deepening appreciation of and commitment to their baptismal call as well as to a living spirituality of diocesan priesthood.

The goals of the *Foundational Year* with regard to Spiritual Formation are:

i. to equip each seminarian with practical skills for deepening his personal relationship with the Trinity.

ii. to foster among seminarians a hunger for and contemplative receptivity to prayer.

The strategies used to achieve these goals include:

i. daily Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, Marian Devotions and other personal devotions.

ii. daily personal prayer (half-hour to an hour);

iii. various spiritual themes presented at Spiritual Conferences.

iv. formation seminars on Saturdays (two per semester);

v. days of Recollection.

vi. regular meetings with seminarians’ spiritual director (every two weeks);

vii. seminar on the art of Theological Reflection;

viii. review and practice of the Examen of Consciousness;

ix. guided reflections during the Spiritual Conferences, Saturday formation seminars and pastoral Theological Reflections;

x. Monday group formation evenings;

xi. faith-sharing on the Word of God and selected writings during the Spiritual Conferences;

xii. participation in a “Come and See” weekend;

xiii. year-end retreat for seminarians in pre-theology and theology;

xiv. Required *lectio divina* of the following:


xv. optional suggested readings:


2. **Human Formation**

Through the *Foundational Year*, seminarians will be assisted in the growth of their self-concept, in their ability to exercise a healthy degree of self-control, and in their development of an ongoing willingness to give of themselves for the sake of others. This growth will be overseen by seminarians’ Formator through monthly meetings.

The goals of the *Foundational Year* with regard to Human Formation are:

i. to reflect with seminarians about aspects of their lives that may be in need of healing (i.e., family of origin issues, distorted images of God, addictions), and to begin the process of healing and transformation as needed in these areas;

ii. to emphasize among seminarians the interrelationship between human development (particularly one’s sexuality) and Christian spiritual development;

iii. to provide an environment wherein seminarians may develop greater social skills and elements of a virtuous life;

iv. to assist seminarians in their development of personal responsibility and self-confidence appropriate to seminary and priestly life;

v. to provide an environment wherein seminarians may learn means with which to embrace solitude as part of a healthy celibate life.

The strategies used to achieve these goals include:

i. formation seminars once a term on Saturdays;

ii. group formation evenings;

iii. meetings with Formator (2-3 times per semester);

iv. faith-sharing reflections at Spiritual Conferences;

v. Spiritual Conferences on themes specific to human formation;

vi. developing a daily personal horarium with regard to personal prayer, exercise, study, diet, and recreation;

vii. openness to seek the assistance of the Human Formation Counsellor.

3. **Intellectual Formation**

The *Foundational Year* introduces seminarians to skills that will benefit their ongoing study and integration of both philosophical principles and Catholic theology. It also facilitates seminarians’ ability to engage in theological reflection on their academic studies and pastoral experience.

The goals of the *Foundational Year* with regard to Intellectual Formation are:

i. to assist seminarians in developing a contemplative approach to their academic studies (following the model of lectio divina), so that they may affectively integrate their studies and incorporate these within their personal journey of faith;

ii. to assist seminarians’ development of competent time-management skills and habits of study;

iii. to equip seminarians with tools that will enhance their ability to engage in fruitful and efficient methods of academic research.

The strategies used to achieve these goals include:

i. the practice of *lectio divina*;

ii. introduction and practice of the art of Theological Reflection;
iii. modified Spiritual Conferences to include: research methodologies, study techniques, writing skills and time management;
iv. a formation conference – personal witness from the fifth-year theologians with regard to various conversions taught by Bernard Lonergan;
v. openness to seek the assistance of the Academic Counsellor.

4. Pastoral Formation

The Foundational Year facilitates seminarians’ initial development of essential skills involved in meaningful ministry of service. Seminarians will be introduced, to experiences of outreach and to opportunities for personal and group reflection on the significance of these experiences.

The goals of the Foundational Year with regard to Pastoral Formation are:

i. to assist the development of seminarians’ personal sense of pastoral presence, by which they may convey compassion and sensitivity towards others;
ii. to facilitate seminarians’ awareness of meaningful forms of communicating the Catholic faith, and suitable communication methods for various particular circumstances;
iii. to assist seminarians in their development of attentive listening skills.

The strategies used to achieve these goals include:

i. formation conference presentations followed by theological reflection;
ii. experiences of outreach and pastoral service within the seminary followed by theological reflection;
iii. involvement in various projects through the Seminary house committees;
iv. drawing upon the model of the RCIA, the seminarians in the Foundational Year will have regular gatherings for input, reflection, and prayer which will assist their development into a small community within the larger seminary community;
v. accompaniment by members of the Fifth Year Theology class;
vi. ministry of accompaniment to those on the Spring “Come and See” weekend;
vii. Jesus Caritas Fraternity gathering.

3.1 Ongoing Integration of the Elements of Formation

The following are taken from the USCCB Document “Program of Priestly Formation”, 5th edition, 2006

I Human Dimension:

• The human qualities of truthfulness, respect for others, justice, humility, integrity, affability, generosity, kindness, courtesy, integrity, and prudence
• The capacity to relate to others in a positive manner and the ability to get along with others and work with them in the community
• Good self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self-mastery, including emotional self-control
• Good physical and mental health A balanced lifestyle and balance in making judgments
• Affective maturity and healthy psychosexual development; clarity of male sexual identity; an ability to establish and maintain wholesome friendships; the capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships
• Skills for leadership and collaboration with women and men
• Capacity to receive and integrate constructive criticism
• Simplicity of life, stewardship of resources, and responsibility for financial obligations
• Mature respect for and cooperation with Church authority
• Engagement in the community life of the seminary

II  **Spiritual Dimension:**
There should be accountability in the external forum for seminarians’ participation in spiritual exercises of the seminary and their growth as men of faith. Within the parameters of the external forum, habits of prayer and personal piety are also areas of accountability.

• Commitment to a life of prayer and the ability to assist others in their spiritual growth
• Abiding love for the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist and Penance
• A loving knowledge of the Word of God and prayerful familiarity with that Word
• Appreciation of and commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours
• Fidelity to the liturgical and spiritual program of the seminary, including the daily celebration of the Eucharist
• Fidelity to regular spiritual direction and regular celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and a habit of spiritual reading
• A positive embrace of a lifelong commitment to chaste celibacy, obedience, and simplicity of life
• A love for Jesus Christ and the Church, for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints
• A spirit of self-giving charity toward others

III  **Intellectual Dimension:**
• Love for truth as discovered by faith and reason Fidelity to the Word of God and to the Magisterium
• Knowledge of Catholic doctrine and adherence to it
• Interest and diligence in seminary studies
• Successful completion of seminary academic requirements
• Ability to exercise the ministry of the Word: to proclaim, explain, and defend the faith
• Knowledge of languages that will be necessary or suitable for the exercise of their pastoral ministry

IV  **Pastoral Dimension:**
• A missionary spirit, zeal for evangelization, and ecumenical commitment
• A spirit of pastoral charity, a quest for justice, and an openness to serve all people
• A special love for and commitment to the sick and suffering, the poor and outcasts, prisoners, immigrants, and refugees
• Demonstration of appropriate pastoral and administrative skills and competencies for ministry
• Ability to exercise pastoral leadership
• Ability to carry out pastoral work collaboratively with others and an appreciation for the different charisms and vocations within the Church
• The ability to work in a multicultural setting with people of different ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds
• A commitment to the proclamation, celebration, and service of the Gospel of life
Formation in Celibate Chastity for the Priesthood

Celibate chastity is a precious gift given by God to the Church. As a sign of, and for the sake of the Kingdom of God, celibacy serves as a call to the priest for an undivided love of God and of God’s people, as a positive enrichment of the priesthood, and above all as a witness to the Father’s generous love for the world in Jesus Christ through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.\(^\text{114}\)

In the Program of Priestly Formation the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops called for clear formation guidelines in human sexuality and chaste celibate living.\(^\text{115}\)

This document is designed to assist seminarians of St. Peter’s Seminary in both cultivating an appreciation for, and committing themselves to, a life of celibate chastity. It has two parts. In Part One, where celibate chastity as gift is placed before us, there are three sections: first, the theological and spiritual characteristics of celibate chastity; second, the Church’s vision of celibate chastity; third, a description of the principles that guide the program of celibacy formation.

In Part Two, where the practical dimensions of education, formation and expectations in the living out of the celibate commitment are described, there are two sections: first, a description of the program of formation; second, specific behavioural expectations. This document and the program of St. Peter’s Seminary are based on the Church’s teaching on celibacy and on the moral teaching of the Catholic Church about human sexuality. The expectation is that all seminarians embrace this teaching.

I Celibate Chastity: A Holy Exchange of Gifts

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16).

1. Theological and Spiritual Characteristics of Celibate Chastity\(^\text{316}\)

The following five key reasons for the practice of celibacy are reflected throughout the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation programs of St. Peter’s Seminary.

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\(^{115}\) Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Program of Priestly Formation, April 25, 2001 (Proto. N. 1095/98) with modifications approved by CCCB Permanent Council, Ottawa, Ontario, June 19-20, 2001, n. 86.


a) Christology: Celibacy in Following Jesus

Diocesan priestly celibacy is lived as the closest possible imitation of the celibate chastity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In celibacy, the priest lives out a commitment to Jesus Christ through a deep bond of friendship and intimacy with Him. Through ordination, the priest is configured to Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the Church. As such, celibacy demonstrates the spousal love of Christ for his Church and encourages the priest to serve in generosity both Christ and the Church. Every Christian, whether living a married, single or consecrated life, is invited into a single-hearted union with Christ. The ecclesial commitment of celibate chastity taken by some within the Church serves as a public sign of this universal call to live with an “undivided heart” 4 Further, the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ reveals to us the dignity and holiness of the human body and human sexuality since his divinity embraces them in the incarnation of the Word of God 5.

b) Eschatology: Celibacy for the Kingdom

Celibacy is a prophetic sign of eschatological hope, pointing to a future when all, united in Jesus by his Spirit, will live only to glorify the Father. Celibacy anticipates the future life of love with the Risen Christ in a world to come, yet already present through faith and charity. A priest, as an ordained person, witnesses to hope through his life and ministry. This is not necessarily subject to scientific proof, but is manifested through conversion. The celibacy of the diocesan priest is an expression of his own free giving, that testifies to a love for the Kingdom of Heaven. In it is found an offering, an oblation, a real and true sacrifice publicly given, for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven 6. Hope invites the priest, living celibate chastity, to meet the Holy Spirit in his own poverty and in his preferential love for the poor and marginalized. Celibacy raises a question for the world: Why should someone give up that which is very important in human living for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

c) Pneumatology: Celibacy as a Path of Holiness

There are many paths to holiness. The path of celibacy originates as a gift from above, transcending the natural order and involving a total personal commitment. It is a wondrous sharing in ‘self-emptying’ (kenosis) which was the chosen way of Christ in His paschal mystery. Priestly celibacy, as an expression of life in the Spirit, actualizes that consecration to God, conformity to Christ, and dedication to the Church which are characteristics proper to the priesthood. It is an asceticism sustained by God’s love “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5), requiring self-control and discipline. Celibate chastity is built up and protected by simplicity of life and obedience.

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17 Pastores dabo vobis, n. 29. Cf. Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:7 and 1 Cor. 7:32-34. See also John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Vita Consecrata, On the Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and in the World, March 25, 1996, nn. 1 and 88.
19 Ibid. See especially “Virginity for the Sake of the Kingdom”, pp. 262-303.
d) Ecclesiology: Celibacy lived out in Pastoral Charity and Sacramental Fidelity

Celibacy is, in the first place, a spiritual good, not primarily a practical one. It is a special source of spiritual fruitfulness for the world, an evangelical sign which will proclaim Christ to the human race. The required continence must be inspired by apostolic love. Certainly, there are benefits to pastoral charity. As a gift given to the Church, celibacy offers availability for service which is vital for the constant building up of the Church, although this is not the primary purpose of celibacy. In the service of pastoral charity, a priest gives his life for the salvation of others, totally available for the exercise of the priestly ministry. The liberating grace of celibacy offers the freedom to oppose every oppression, and the opportunity to expend the energy required by the marital commitment in apostolic service. Jesus invited the apostles to enter into apostolic communion where they could experience deep and enriching friendships. The presbyterate fully alive can offer the priest similar personal bonds of friendship and encouragement. Never should the pastoral motive for celibacy be reduced to purely economic or pragmatic arguments.

Further, the Church which is “in Christ as a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and the unity of all humanity” provides the celibate priest with many resources for living out this commitment, principal among them are the sacraments of the church, and specifically the Eucharistic sacrifice, penance and ordination.

e) Mariology: Mary, Virgin and Mother

A deep and trusting devotion to Mary reminds us that virginity is most intimately connected to the spiritual and theological foundations of marriage: it does not stand in opposition to marriage, but rather rejoices in its fruitfulness and points to its ultimate fulfilment in the Kingdom. In Mary as Virgin and Mother, we draw close to one who in virginity holds before us the mystery of renunciation and fruitfulness. Further, virginity, together with marriage to which it is intimately related, expresses the special characteristic of God who seeks out and blesses us in both creation and redemption. The celibate chastity of the priest carries the promise of fruitfulness similar to that witnessed in the life of Mary as it is lived out in ministry with and for married and single persons within the Church for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, a wholesome devotion to Mary is a valuable support in living a fruitful celibate life.

This filial relationship is strongly encouraged by the Church: “Every aspect of priestly formation can be referred to Mary, the human being who has responded better than any other to God’s call. [...] With her example and intercession the Blessed Virgin keeps vigilant watch over the growth of vocations and priestly life in the Church. And so we priests are called to have an ever firmer and more tender devotion to the Virgin Mary and to show it by imitating her virtues and praying to her often.”

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22 Pastores dabo vobis, n. 82.
2. **The Church’s Vision of Celibate Chastity for Priests**

The celibate commitment is an expression of Jesus’ call to radical discipleship for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The renunciation for the love of the Kingdom of genital sexual activity, conjugal love, and natural fatherhood anticipates all of creation’s full union with Jesus Christ in the new world of the future resurrection. Celibate chastity, embraced for evangelical, spiritual, and pastoral motives, is a great value in the life of the Church. It is both a sign and a motive of pastoral charity.

In the spirituality of diocesan priesthood, celibate chastity must be understood and experienced in relationship to obedience and simplicity of life. To be lived fruitfully, the value of celibacy must be internalized. A healthy and lasting celibate commitment must be sustained by prayer, solitude, close friendships, and an eager generosity to serve God and the Church.

The Church in the “Rite for the Ordination of a Deacon” invites the candidate to choose freely to embrace a life of celibate chastity as a dynamic state of spiritual fruitfulness in order to “adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart”, expressed to him by these words of the Bishop: “In the presence of God and the Church, are you resolved, as a sign of your interior dedication to Christ, to remain celibate for the sake of the kingdom and in lifelong service to God and mankind?”

The *Code of Canon Law* clearly states: “Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven, and are therefore bound to celibacy. Celibacy is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can more easily remain close to Christ with an undivided heart, and can dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and their neighbour.” Further, the Code says, candidates are to be prepared “by appropriate instruction... to observe celibacy and to learn to hold it in honour as a special gift of God.” At the same time, seminarians “are to be given all the requisite knowledge concerning the duties and burdens which are proper to the sacred ministers of the Church, concealing none of the difficulties of the priestly life.”

3. **Guiding Principles in the Formation of Celibacy**

Celibate chastity is a gift of God, but it is also a habit of living in a healthy and life-giving way that must be learned and fostered. The whole seminary faculty takes seriously its responsibility to teach this life. The priests on the faculty have the additional responsibility of modeling this life for the seminarians.

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26 Canon 247, §1.
27 Canon 247, §2.
Living and learning about celibacy take place within the context of the profound mystery of human sexuality. Sexuality concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. When human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of its genital expression for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven loses its meaning. Thus, the seminary’s celibacy formation program is based on the principle that all persons stand in the same fundamental position with respect to sexuality: human sexuality is a gift of God and must be valued as such. Human sexuality carries with it deep possibilities for both health and hurt, sin and virtue.

Along with a positive appreciation of sexuality, a call to celibate chastity for candidates to the priesthood also requires the achievement of a certain level of basic human development. Pope John Paul II outlines three signs of such development: (1) a sufficient degree of psychosexual maturity, (2) a deep and authentic life of prayer, and (3) a capacity for healthy human relationships. These are indications of a candidate’s readiness for admission to the seminary and the first signs of discernment of the charism of celibacy.

A decisive question for all candidates for the priesthood is whether they can make a lifelong commitment to celibate chastity. This is a challenge for all seminarians, since society frequently does not value celibate chastity, nor does it embrace the Church’s vision of human sexuality.

Further, the call to live the public commitment of celibate chastity is distinct from, but intimately related to, the call to ministerial priesthood. Ordinarily these two calls are fittingly bound together in the Latin Church. Therefore, both celibate chastity and ministerial priesthood need to be discerned and chosen with clarity and conviction by the seminarian.

Formation in celibate chastity for candidates to the priesthood at Saint Peter’s Seminary is shaped by seven guiding principles. These principles are based on the Church’s vision of priestly celibacy as articulated in ecclesial documents, the insights of modern psychology concerning the dynamics of psychosexual development, and the qualities of spirituality in diocesan priesthood.

a) Internalization of Presbyteral Values

Celibacy must be understood and experienced in the whole context of spirituality in diocesan priesthood. The priest is a part of a sacramental order in communion with his brother priests. He willingly embraces prayer, simplicity of life, obedience, pastoral service, and celibate chastity. Underlying these is a generosity of heart and a willingness to reach out to others, especially the poor and forgotten in our society. All of these values must be internalized and appropriated as meaningful and life-giving experiential realities.

b) Pattern of Contemplative Prayer

Priestly celibacy cannot be sustained without a regular pattern of contemplative prayer that is intent upon noticing the transforming and liberating presence of God in the Liturgy, in God’s Word, and in the traces of the Paschal Mystery found in living the Christian life, and indeed in all creation. A commitment to celibate chastity must be made out of a transcendent motivation.

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29 *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 50.
c) Capacity for Solitude

The experience of solitude is necessary in acknowledging, identifying, and bearing feelings of frustration, anxiety, sadness, opposition and pressure. A celibate person must understand and accept that he is giving up the goods of marriage, conjugal love, and natural fatherhood, all of which are renounced for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

d) Age-appropriate Psychosexual Development

Affective maturity entails the conscious and fruitful acceptance of one’s sexual identity, sexual feelings, and sexual tendencies. A seminarian must address unresolved sexual issues which could be manifest in such things as internal conflicts, guilt, shame, or anxiety. This involves, among other things, the overcoming of transitory homosexual tendencies\(^\text{31}\)\(^\text{31}\), the persistent habit of masturbation\(^\text{19}\),\(^\text{32}\) and any other forms of sexual immaturity.

The seminarian must demonstrate the capacity to relate to men and women with complete equality and understanding. In this way the physical, psychological, social and spiritual desires for human sexual intimacy and generativity are placed with increasing freedom at the service of the Kingdom of God. The deep relationship with Jesus Christ both reveals the seminarian’s humanity to himself and empowers the seminarian to live it out generously and joyfully.\(^\text{2033}\)

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\(^{31}\) Congregation for Catholic Education, Instruction, Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders, November 4, 2005, n. 2, states the following:

“[T]his dicastery, in accord with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, believes it necessary to state clearly that the Church, while respecting profoundly the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practise homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture’.

“Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women. One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies. ‘Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a transitory problem, for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate.”

\(^{32}\) Catechism of the Catholic Church, Revised Edition (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Concacan Inc., 1999), n. 2352. See also Persona humana, n. IX and Krenik, Formation for Priestly Celibacy, pp. 29-30.

\(^{33}\) Persona humana, nn. I and III. “According to contemporary scientific research, the human person is so profoundly affected by sexuality that it must be considered as one of the factors which give to each individual’s life the principal traits that distinguish it. In fact it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society (n. I).

“[Further], through His revelation God has made known to us Christians His plan of salvation, and He has held up to us Christ, the Saviour and Sanctifier, in His teaching and example, as the supreme and immutable Law of life: ‘I am the light of the world; anyone who follows Me will not be walking in the dark, he will have the light of life’ (Jn 8:12)” (n. III).
e) Capacity for Intimacy in Human Friendships

A celibate person is a sexual person with real intimacy needs that must be met in appropriate and fulfilling ways. This can happen only when a person has developed the affective and relational side of what it means to be a sexual being within the biological and psychological dimensions of human life. The experience of friendship is essential in sustaining a life of celibate chastity. Further, authentically lived celibacy is a public witness within our society of the great spiritual value of all wholesome human friendships.

The life of Jesus is an excellent example of someone who had a healthy balance of relationships and friends. He had his close family life with Mary and Joseph along with an extended family that typically would have been quite large. The gospels depict someone who interacted with various groups and individuals. In his circle of disciples he had the twelve, among whom Peter, James and John, along with “the beloved disciple”, seemed to have enjoyed a greater intimacy with him. Then there were the seventy-two whom he chose to go out and preach the Word.

The gospels also speak of such friends as Lazarus, Mary and Martha, Mary of Magdala, Salome, Johanna and Mary the mother of James. Throughout his ministry Jesus related with ease to both men and women, to his fellow Jews, to foreigners and strangers who approached him with sincerity. He moved comfortably among the rich and the poor, the marginalized and the powerful, sharing in their meals and celebrations, challenging and comforting them with the Word of the Kingdom. At the core of all Jesus’ relationships lay his deep union with the Father and the Spirit, the relationship which oriented and gave shape to his ministry. All of Jesus’ relationships were nurtured in prayer and occasional solitude. This marvelous reality points to a man who was abundantly inclusive in his relationships. Jesus is a trustworthy model for living healthy celibate friendships.

f) Experience of Community Support

The seminarian’s most immediate inspiration and instruction for celibate chastity comes from the modeling and support of other faithful celibates. He must experience himself as part of the celibate community comprised of professed celibates and fellow seminarians who accompany him on the journey. The seminarian must know, and contribute to, a spirit of reverence and respect for the gift of celibacy in the Church.

g) Accountability to Others

As a public commitment and gift for the entire Church, the practice of celibate chastity by particular persons demands honest appraisal and accountability. Spiritual directors, Formators, pastoral supervisors, and peers provide avenues for accountability. These people should provide a safe place of encouragement where healthy challenges can be faced with compassion and truth. Further, they should create a trusting environment where unhealthy propensities and patterns in friendships and pastoral relationships can be dealt with in a competent, professional, and compassionate manner.

II The Program of Formation in Celibate Chastity: A Way of Life in the Lord

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up into Christ (Eph 4:15).

With these guiding principles in mind, the program of formation for priestly celibacy is comprised of the following components: solitude, private prayer and the sacramental life of the church, community support, a developmental formation program, individualized formation, and academic courses.
1. Solitude, Private Prayer and the Sacramental Life of the Church

The experience of solitude and private prayer is essential in priestly celibacy. Each seminarian’s spiritual director assists him in fostering a pattern of prayer and reflection in his daily life. The weekly Spiritual Conferences explore the rich diversity of prayer in the Christian tradition. Seminarians are expected to work towards spending one hour in private prayer each day. The opening retreat and the monthly days of recollection provide blocks of time for extended periods of prayer, reflection and solitude. The six-day directed retreat at the end of each academic year in Theology is a remarkable school for growth in personal prayer, and an experience of Ignatian meditation and contemplation.

Surrounding, nourishing and underpinning this life of personal prayer are the many celebrations of the liturgical life of the church. This is experienced most profoundly in the sacraments: especially the daily Eucharistic celebration of the community and the frequent reception of the sacrament of penance. This personal encounter with God’s goodness and mercy prepares one to bring these gifts to God’s people after ordination as celebrant and confessor.

2. Community Support

The call to celibacy as a viable and life-giving way of living the Christian journey must be supported and nurtured by the ecclesial community. The daily gatherings for the Liturgy and meals, study and recreation foster a supportive communal environment. Within the seminary community healthy and happy priests, along with other professed celibates, provide witness and encouragement for seminarians. Each seminarian’s formation group is a small formative community that provides opportunities for human interaction and support. The group areas on each floor of the seminary residence offer the seminarians a communal experience for prayer, conversation, and shared living.

The community also encourages a biblical approach to the “Sabbath rest” on Sunday and other free days during the year as well as during vacations and public holidays.

3. Developmental Formation Program

a) Spiritual Conferences

Formation for priestly celibacy follows a progressive development throughout all the years of seminary formation. This is formally supported by the weekly Spiritual Conferences, which follow a developmental approach. Each level, namely Introductory, Human, Christian and Priestly, gives serious attention to formation in celibate chastity.

b) Introductory Spiritual Conferences

These spiritual conferences are given each year to new seminarians. Among the various topics dealt with are the following: joyful celibate living and boundaries, celibacy as a gift related to the call to obedience and simplicity of life, celibate chastity and overcoming masturbation.

c) Human Formation Conferences

These conferences are offered on a two-year cycle. Human development underpins all preparation for celibate living. Topics directly related to celibacy are: the stages and tasks of psychosexual development; healthy relationships in developing friendships, mutuality and respect for boundaries; identifying causes and ways of dealing with unhealthy relationships; sexuality and spirituality; intimacy; relationships in community moving from exclusion to inclusion.
d) Christian Formation Conferences

One full semester each year (thirteen conferences) in each cycle of the Christian formation conferences is dedicated to study, discussion and reflection on celibate chastity. One cycle studies in-depth the seven guiding elements for a life of celibate chastity mentioned above. The other cycle considers related themes such as: self-knowledge and one’s desires, loneliness and aloneness, physical expressions of sexuality and celibate loving, perspectives on fantasy and masturbation, impediments to celibate intimacy, spiritual fatherhood and celibate priestly generativity, early years of ministry: stressors and skills in celibate living, and finally simplicity of life as a correlative to the celibate lifestyle. Consideration is also given to Sacred Scripture, especially the life and words of Jesus; the magisterial documents, and Canon Law on the topic as well as the promise for a life-long commitment to celibate chastity found in the ritual of ordination to the diaconate.

e) Priestly Formation Conferences

The final two years of theology have a series of conferences on priestly formation based on the study and discussion of various articles and other writings more directly related to pastoral ministry. Many of these discussions deal directly or indirectly with issues around the day-to-day living of celibacy in pastoral situations. Since the seminarians have just completed their Pastoral Year in a parish, they are able to draw on this experience in making their reflections more concrete.

f) The Pastoral Year – Theology III

During the Pastoral Year experience in a parish, the pastoral supervisor, parish team and staff, along with a select committee of parishioners meet regularly with the seminarian to encourage and direct his ministry. One of the topics explicitly addressed in the formation program of this year is the life of celibate chastity as lived in parish ministry. Encouragement and challenges, opportunities and cautions are elements of these discussions. The director of the Pastoral Year Program, during his visit to the parish, interviews the candidate and all of those involved in his formation. Celibate chastity is one of the topics addressed in these conversations.

g) Pastoral Counselling and Field Education Courses

Pastoral involvement is an essential part of our formation program, including the pre-practicum in Arts and the courses in field education and pastoral counselling in Theology. In all of these programs and courses, attention is given to a growing awareness of the importance and dynamics of good human relationships and healthy boundaries in the seminarian’s pastoral development. Issues around celibate living in ministry are introduced or addressed so that the seminarians are able to integrate their knowledge with their lived pastoral experience. Some of the topics considered are: self-esteem, dealing with anger, conflict resolution, family systems, addictions, male identity development, male and female relationships in ministry.

h) Physical Fitness Activities

Physical exercise and participation in individual and team activities are an important part of the formation of the whole person. Every seminarian, according to his abilities, is encouraged to enter into the sports organized by the seminary fitness directors. Each seminarian also needs to develop a personal plan of physical exercise in order to care for his health. This should also include times of rest and relaxation along with proper habits of sleep. Respect and care for one’s body are an important dimension of healthy celibate living.

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34 Krenik’s book *Formation for Priestly Celibacy* is one of the resources used in these sessions.
4. Individualized Formation

a) Spiritual Direction

Each seminarian meets every two or three weeks with his spiritual director. This confidential relationship provides him with the opportunity to receive guidance in developing a life of prayer along with a capacity for solitude and intimacy, and in integrating his sexuality with a view to strengthening his ability to internalize a commitment to celibate chastity. “The seminarian’s spiritual director assists him in reaching a mature and free decision regarding celibacy so that the interior acceptance of this gift is integrated into his vocational discernment and his understanding of priesthood.”

b) Formation Advising

Each student meets monthly with his Formator. During these meetings, he is expected to speak about his understanding of celibate chastity and his readiness for the celibate commitment. The seminary document, *Benchmarks of Formation for Seminarians*, provides a template of topics for discussion related to attitudes and behavioral expectations. Among the topics dealt with each year is celibate chastity. “Issues to be explored in the external forum include loneliness and true friendship, public expectations concerning celibacy and its value, the wholesome understanding of sexuality, and the challenges to celibate living. These are also to be explored with the seminarian’s spiritual director in the internal forum.”

c) Counselling

The Human Formation Counsellor is a member of the faculty and provides individual counselling to those requiring assistance in the areas of human formation. As the need arises, the seminary also makes available other counselling resources in the local community, at the university, and in national church-related facilities. These may be sought out by the seminarian or recommended by the formation faculty.

d) The Process of Evaluation for the Seminarian

The yearly evaluation process brings to light some important aspects with regard to the candidate’s awareness of, and decisions around, the gift and choice of a life of celibacy. Celibate chastity is one of the topics considered in the seminarian’s self-evaluation, in the Formator’s report, in the Discernment and Evaluation Committee’s discussion, in the rector’s feed-back to the seminarian, in the rector’s written report given to the candidate and to his bishop, and in the meeting with the seminarian’s bishop or representative. Further, if the seminarian has petitioned for candidacy, ministries or orders, the form and the personal interview for the *Examination for Candidacy, Ministry and Orders* explicitly ask about (1) proper intention, (2) freedom in choosing to proceed, and (3) obligations imposed by the commitment to celibate chastity.

e) Academic Courses

Celibacy and related topics such as sexuality, marriage and friendship are treated in various ways in the following academic courses:

- Historical Theology 5221A and 5222B - History of the Catholic Church
- Liturgical Studies 5544B - Pastoral Liturgy (Ordination Rite)

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35 22 Program of Priestly Formation, n. 85.
36 23 Ibid, n. 86.
5. **Specific Behavioural Expectations**

Prayer is the foundation of a faithful life of celibacy. This life of prayer is nourished and developed by the daily participation in the Eucharist and the frequent reception of penance along with long moments of personal prayer in solitude. This life of union with the God of Jesus Christ, which is the primary behavioural expectation, makes it possible to live joyfully the following directives.

The above guiding principles are specified in the following behavioural expectations of candidates for the priesthood at St. Peter’s Seminary.

a. A capacity for living a balanced lifestyle must include adequate attention to, and time for, physical exercise, reading and study, wholesome friendships, and a deep, loving relationship in prayer and ministry with Jesus Christ whose friend and disciple he is committed to be.

b. In the development of celibate chastity, candidates for the priesthood owe one another respect, care and help. Above all, this requires that seminarians be witnesses of integrity in their own pursuit of celibate chastity.

c. It is an essential sign of readiness to begin priesthood studies that a prospective candidate gives testimony of a sustained habit of celibate chastity by having refrained from sexual acts with another person for a substantial period of time prior to admission to the seminary (i.e at least two years). If it becomes known that a seminarian is engaging in such acts, he will be asked to leave.

d. Certain other behaviours are inconsistent with celibate chastity, for example: engaging in flirtatious or seductive behaviour, dating, visiting pornographic bookstores and websites, watching pornographic movies, and visiting singles or “pick-up” bars. A student who engages in any of the above behaviours, either heterosexual or homosexual, will normally be asked to leave the seminary.

e. A person who practises homosexuality, or has deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or who supports the so-called ‘gay culture’ (e.g. see d above) cannot be admitted to the seminary or holy orders.

f. The persistent habit of masturbation could be a sign that the affective maturity needed to live the gift and call of celibate chastity in the priesthood is not present in the seminarian. This matter should be discussed in humility and candour with one’s spiritual director and confessor.
g. Sexualized conversation is inconsistent with a development of celibate chastity and has no place in the seminary. Examples of such conversation are those that reduce persons to sexual objects, those that interpret the words of others in a sexual manner, and those that even implicitly involve the propositioning of others.

h. A seminarian shares the same responsibility and mission as Jesus who acted as the friend, protector and defender of the little ones, especially children (Mt. 19:13-15). Therefore any violation of this sacred trust, especially by sexual abuse of children and youth, the elderly and the vulnerable, is a grave moral wrong, a violation of criminal law and a clear sign of a lack of suitability for the priesthood.

i. Sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment are properly understood as having psychological and legal implications as well as being specific violations of celibate chastity. Such actions are against explicit Seminary and University directives. They will not be tolerated. The policies of St. Peter’s Seminary and The University of Western Ontario are clearly presented in the student handbooks of each institution.

j. When a seminarian has direct knowledge about the inappropriate sexual behaviour of another seminarian, he has the responsibility to discuss this with the seminarian, with his own Formator, and to report this to the rector. He also has the responsibility not to discuss this with anyone else out of respect for the person’s dignity and good name. In no case shall other people’s real or imagined sexual behaviour or tendencies be the subject matter for gossip. Further, those who have destroyed the good name of another will normally be asked to leave the seminary.

k. An ability to maintain a wide range of social relationships interwoven with the capacity to form good friendships is necessary for a candidate to the priesthood who is called to extend pastoral charity to all people.

6. Conclusion

The Church finds its ultimate theological conviction for celibate chastity in “the link between celibacy and sacred Ordination, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest’s service to the Church in and with the Lord.”24 The formation program at St. Peter’s Seminary prepares a seminarian for a lifelong journey of growth in celibate chastity, by relying on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son who labours to make this wonderful gift of celibate chastity a reality in each priest graduate, for the good of the Church and of the world today.

Selected Readings

Papal and Curial Documents

- Pope Benedict XVI explores the central reality of human life, namely God’s love and our response, by considering the relationship between eros as ascending love and agape as descending love, which have their greatest personal expression in Jesus Christ, the incarnate love of God. This is developed in Part I “The Unity of Love in Creation and In Salvation History”, nn. 2 to 18.

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24 Pastores dabo vobis, n. 29. Italics in the original.
• This document considers sexuality, chastity, marriage and celibacy as expression of our life in Christ under “The Sixth Commandment”, numbers 2331-2400. Other considerations are found in the section on the human and theological virtues, “The Virtues”, nn. 1803-1845.


• Pope John Paul II distinguishes four areas of formation and growth essential for priesthood: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Human formation is listed first as the basis of all priestly formation. Celibacy and sexuality are addressed in nn. 29, 44, and 50.


• Pope John Paul II’s catechesis on the human body from 1979 to 1984 gives a developed presentation on “Virginity for the Sake of the Kingdom” in which he describes the value of, and vocation to, celibate chastity for the sake of the Kingdom and its relationship to married love. See especially pp. 262 to 303.


• Pope Paul VI discusses the Christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological motives for priestly celibacy. He also addresses the important human values required to live celibate chastity and the necessary supportive elements in priestly formation.

• Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy. April 11, 1974: English translation Rome: [Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis], 1974. The guide first considers the meaning of celibacy in contemporary priestly life. Then it provides guidelines for seminary formation in human, Christian and priestly maturity. Finally the seminary is envisioned as a centre of education where celibate chastity is placed in a broader context which provides an environment for growth in the spiritual life, in ecclesial charity and for engagement in an apostolic presence in the world.

• Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. Instruction. Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of the Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders. November 4, 2005. The Instruction situates the question, and develops criteria for evaluation and judgement with regard to persons with homosexual tendencies in seminary formation programs.

• Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Declaration, Persona humana, On Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics. December 29, 1975. The Declaration considers several issues of sexual ethics within the values of human and Christian life, such as sexual union before marriage, homosexual relations, masturbation, grave and mortal sin, the virtue of chastity, the inner conflict of the person in sin, liberation, and living a chaste life.

Other Resources

• The Canadian Bishops discuss celibate chastity in connection with the other essential elements of the spirituality of diocesan priesthood, namely, the communal dimension and individual dimension of life and prayer, apostolic obedience and simplicity of life (nn. 74-93), within the broader context of human, intellectual and pastoral formation for ministry in chapter III “Integral Formation For Ministerial Priesthood” (nn. 62-122).


• The author gives the biblical motivations for virginity and celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven and then sets out important elements for living this charism and call in daily life: mortification, healthy knowledge and acceptance of sexuality, community, and devotion to the Virgin Mary.

• From Pain to Hope: Report from the CCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Child Sexual Abuse. Ottawa: Publication Services of CCCB, June 1992. [Under revision by the CCCB.]

• This is a considered response of the Canadian Bishops to the problem of sexual abuse which draws on the rich resources of the Catholic spiritual, theological and pastoral heritage.


In addition to a number of worksheets and reflection questions, the book has an extensive article describing seven essential guiding elements for celibacy formation.

3.3 Benches for the Stages of Formation

I Propaedeutic Stage

In presenting an overview of the significance of this first phase of the priestly formation program, the Ratio Fundamentalis states:

“The propaedeutic stage is an indispensable phase of formation with its own specific character. Its principle objective is to provide a solid basis for the spiritual life and to nurture a greater self-awareness for personal growth... This time is an ideal opportunity to acquire an initial and overall familiarity with Christian doctrine by studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and by developing the dynamic of self-giving through experiences in the parish setting and charitable works” (#59).

During this first stage, the seminarian is to attend to the attainment of the following Benchmarks:

1. Human Formation:
   1. Relates with others in a manner which is appropriate for his age and stage of development
   2. Is able to relate with others from different backgrounds and/or from different countries than himself
   3. Is open to reflecting on his family of origin and addressing any areas that may need healing
   4. Is receptive to reflecting on the presence of addictive behaviours in his lifestyle
   5. Is open to new ideas and patterns of behaviour which formation personnel suggest to him
2. **Spiritual Formation:**
   1. Demonstrates an awareness of the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as the basis of his spiritual journey
   2. Participates regularly and actively in the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours by celebrating and singing with the assembly
   3. Celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly with his spiritual director
   4. Demonstrates a daily commitment to prayer and an openness to quiet reflection
   5. Is open to learning about various means for prayer and discerns how to integrate these into his personal prayer life
   6. Shows a reverence for the Word of God and an appreciation of the Scripture, especially the Gospels, as a foundation for his spiritual life and as an important source for discerning his call to priesthood

3. **Intellectual Formation:**
   1. Is open to learning and appropriating Instruments for discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit
   2. Demonstrates a love for reading and learning
   3. Shows an interest in drawing wisdom from Classics of the Catholic spiritual tradition
   4. Engages actively in discussions during Propaedeutic teaching modules
   5. Demonstrates an active interest in learning the foundations of the Catholic faith as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church
   6. Actively seeks inspiration from the witness and writings of the Saints

4. **Pastoral Formation:**
   1. Demonstrates eagerness to serve the other members of the community of seminarians
   2. Shows concern for the needs of the poor through his experiences of outreach during the Propaedeutic Stage
   3. Openly and sincerely shares during theological reflection sessions about his experiences, struggles and the feelings evoked within him in his outreach
   4. Shows commitment to contributing his energies to Group and Community duties
   5. Engages genuinely in offering welcome, witness and accompaniment to participants in Come & See Weekends at the Seminary
   6. Demonstrates signs of having zeal for evangelization
II Discipleship Stage

In explaining the role of this foundational phase in the process of priestly formation, the *Ratio Fundamentalis* states:

“The experience and dynamic of discipleship, that lasts, as we have noted, for the whole of life, and includes all priestly formation, pedagogically requires a specific stage in which all possible efforts are expended to root the seminarian in the sequela Christi, listening to His Word, keeping it in his heart and putting it into practice. This specific period is characterized by the formation of the disciple of Jesus who is destined to be a pastor. Special attention is given to the human dimension, in harmony with spiritual growth, so as to help the seminarian mature in his definitive decision to follow the Lord in ministerial priesthood, by embracing the evangelical counsels in a way proper to this stage” (# 62).

During this stage, the seminarian is to give attention to the following Benchmarks:

1. **Human Formation:**
   1. Demonstrates a healthy level of self-awareness and the ability to recognize his personal gifts and areas of needed growth
   2. Is able to integrate new knowledge about himself into his personal means for development
   3. Has a balanced perspective on how the discipline of psychology can contribute to his total formation and is willing to use the psychological helps available to him in the seminary
   4. Is able to share various aspects of his human development with his Formator and is open to receive helpful feedback
   5. Sees human development as an ongoing task which unfolds throughout his lifetime

2. **Spiritual Formation:**
   1. Demonstrates serious and mature engagement in days of recollection and retreats
   2. Gives indication of a growing integration of his learning and emotional life with a life of virtue and openness to the Holy Spirit
   3. Demonstrates that he values community life, is open to formation of friendships, and sees the development of appropriate personal relationships with men and women as being important for his spiritual growth
   4. Has an awareness of the importance and value of the gift of celibate chastity in the priesthood and indicates a willingness to explore openly the presence of this gift in his life
   5. Shows willingness to be formed through spiritual direction and communal living

3. **Intellectual Formation:**
   1. Reflects a broad knowledge of the history of philosophy
   2. Has an understanding and appreciation of elements of the philosophy of Plato, with its benefits and limitations in relation to Christian spirituality
   3. Has a grasp of the four causes as articulated by Aristotle, as well as of the strengths and limitations in classical arguments for the existence of God
   4. Has begun to formulate a natural ethics based on the virtues
   5. Has begun to reflect on the implications of philosophy in the social realm, especially as it relates to the common good
6. Has a thorough understanding of logic, including the ability to identify fallacious reasoning
7. Has a comprehensive understanding and ability to interpret fundamental philosophical writings of St. Thomas Aquinas
8. Has a basic familiarity with the principal currents of twentieth and twenty-first century philosophy, both Continental and Anglo-American
9. Demonstrates a grasp of the interconnection among the various branches of philosophical enquiry
10. Is able to think philosophically: to analyze arguments on the basis of their logical soundness and their cohesiveness with what one already knows to be true; to distinguish what is essential from what is secondary or ephemeral; to integrate newly-discovered truth in a synthesis with a sound, philosophical world-view

4. **Pastoral Formation:**

   1. Demonstrates responsibility in dedicating four hours weekly in pre-practicum outreach and in completing reflection assignments thoughtfully and punctually
   2. Manifests compassion and empathy towards the suffering and needy, thereby revealing his development of a caring pastoral presence
   3. Demonstrates the capacity to consider the needs of those requiring pastoral care and the willingness to serve these needs in preference to personal needs or convenience
   4. Manifests skills of working in collaboration with others, and an appreciation of the important role of the laity in works of service and justice
   5. Manifests openness to receiving and integrating the input and evaluation of superiors in his outreach, and of peers who have engaged in similar forms of service
   6. Demonstrates an appreciation of the many helping agencies which, although are not specifically Church-sponsored, make significant contributions to the well-being of the community
   7. Demonstrates the ability to reflect on his outreach each month, recognizing personal skills developed, insights gained and emotions evoked
III  Configuration Stage

In explaining the role of the Configuration Phase in the process of priestly formation, the Ratio Fundamentalis states:

“The whole life of a priest, from the first moment of his calling, is one of continuous formation. It is the life of a disciple of Jesus, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, for the service of the Church. The pedagogy of initial formation, in the first years of Seminary, was aimed above all at leading the candidate to enter into the sequela Christi. At the conclusion of that stage, the so-called discipleship stage, formation then concentrates on the configuration of the seminarian to Christ, Shepherd, and Servant, so that, united to Him, he can make his life a gift of self to others. This configuration demands that the seminarian enters profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, sent as Shepherd of the People of God. It will make the relationship with Christ more intimate and personal and, at the same time, will lead to an awareness and an assumption of priestly identity” (# 68).

During this stage, the seminarian is to give attention to the following Benchmarks:

1.  **Human Formation:**
   1. Manifests balance in the demands of study, prayer, service, and recreation by meeting his commitments in a timely fashion
   2. Exhibits openness and honesty in one-to-one conversations and in group settings and is able to receive both affirmation and constructive criticism
   3. Participates in group tasks in a collaborative spirit
   4. Evidence of a realistic knowledge of sexuality and expresses sexuality appropriately
   5. Establishes and sustains friendships in which he deals appropriately with issues of intimacy and respects boundaries
   6. Engages positively in the formation program, managing well the various stressors of life
   7. Has an appropriate level of self-knowledge and affective maturity, and clarity of male sexual identity with no abnormal affective tendencies
   8. Demonstrates an appropriate use of leisure, including use of the media and the internet
   9. Relates socially with others by manifesting self-confidence, interest in and concern for others, and ability to put others at ease
   10. Demonstrates an ability to deal with any personal defects of character present, including aggressiveness, ambition, arrogance, avarice, comfort-seeking, difficult character, dishonesty, duplicity, hypocrisy, laziness, personal untidiness, pride or stubbornness
   11. Works effectively with people who are different from him in race, sex, economic class, ethnicity, personality, ideology, role in the Church, demonstrating balanced behaviour in prudence, emotional self-control, language and conversation

2.  **Spiritual Formation**
   1. Demonstrates a daily commitment to prayer and solitude
   2. Participates regularly and actively in the liturgy, demonstrating a love for the Eucharist and daily participation in its celebration
   3. Demonstrates a deepening devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through such practices as recitation of the Rosary
   4. Shows a reverence for the word of God and the teaching of the Catholic Church through habits of prayer, study, and virtuous living
5. Is beginning to relate his daily sufferings and joys to the Paschal Mystery as the basis of his spirituality and living the Christian life, developing a spirit of self-denial along with a spirit of celebration
6. Gives indications of an integration of his learning, emotional life and his life in the Spirit

3. **Intellectual Formation**
1. Exhibits a spirit of openness and docility to growing in knowledge of the ecclesial and theological tradition with a spirit of confidence in the hierarchy of the Church
2. Exhibits a sense of wonder and a desire to probe more deeply into the mysteries of the faith
3. Demonstrates a grasp of the continuity and development within the doctrinal tradition
4. Reflects a clear grasp of the dogmatic content of Church teaching, the data found in the history of doctrine, and the key historical and speculative formulations of those teachings
5. Demonstrates an understanding of how the Magisterium relates to the theological disciplines and the opinions of scholars
6. Balances the quest for certainty with the sometimes ambiguous character of the search for theological understanding
7. Participates in discussions in a way that makes clear his positions, enables him to listen openly to others and maintains respect for them when disagreeing with their ideas
8. Reflects accurately in written assignments, class discussion, and course evaluations the interrelationships of the various theological disciplines
9. Uses historical-critical methods for the interpretation of primary sources in scripture, liturgy, and systematic theology courses

4. **Pastoral Formation**
1. Promotes behaviours that foster Christian community and reflects a Gospel-based commitment to service, a spirit of hospitality, and a willingness to resolve conflict
2. Shows a capacity for collaborative thinking, analyzing and strategizing for effective service of others
3. Is both willing and able to reflect theologically on pastoral experience
4. Is neither obsequious nor adversarial in his relationships towards authority figures in the pastoral context
5. Recognizes the important role of dedicated lay people in the Church and in compassionate service within the community exercising different styles of leadership in a variety of contexts
6. Demonstrates catechetical skills adapted to the development level and needs of learners
7. Demonstrates the capacity for attentive listening to others (especially in their time of need), and an openness to the needs of the poor
8. Has reflected upon his own struggles, and with the light of the Gospel, has grown from them in developing a greater compassion towards others’ sufferings

IV **Pastoral Stage: Vocational Synthesis**

In explaining the role of this phase in the process of priestly formation, the *Ratio Fundamentalis* states:
"The Pastoral Stage or vocational synthesis has a twofold purpose: on the one hand it is about being inducted into the pastoral life, with a gradual assumption of responsibilities in a spirit of service; on the other hand it is about making a suitable preparation, with the help of a specific accompaniment, in view of priesthood. During this stage, the candidate is asked to declare freely, consciously and definitively his intention to be a priest, having received diaconal ordination” (#74).

During this stage, the seminarian is to give attention to the following Benchmarks:

1. **Human Formation:**
   1. Shows leadership ability in the seminary community and in ministry, being appropriately assertive when necessary
   2. Is not given to extremes (e.g. moods, rigidity)
   3. Has learned to manage finances responsibly, and has respect for the goods of the Church
   4. Demonstrates ability to manage time effectively, appropriately balancing his personal life with the duties of ministry, as well as demonstrating the natural virtues of honesty, a spirit of hard work, and constancy
   5. Shows consistency in the prudence and good sense of his judgments and in his concern for the common good
   6. Takes responsibility for his own life and formation while at the same time manifesting freedom from individualism
   7. Has a commitment to social justice; manifests compassion and generously assists others in need, particularly the poor and disadvantaged
   8. Manifests a collaborative approach to ministry by trusting others, being sensitive to their needs and aspirations, using conflict constructively, and developing effective conflict resolution skills
   9. Has integrated the various aspects of his personality in such a way as to be effective in his role as a spiritual leader
   10. Respects his own and others’ humanity as Jesus did in becoming human, and encourages others to develop this gift in healthy ways

2. **Spiritual Formation**
   1. Demonstrates a growing clarity of ideas on the nature of celibate chastity and its positive significance along with a growing acceptance of celibacy as a true good in itself, not simply as an unavoidable condition for receiving Orders
   2. Demonstrates a life of virtue: the natural virtues of honesty, prudence, constancy, firmness of convictions, and a spirit of sacrifice and service; the supernatural virtues of a spirit of faith, love for Jesus and the Church, and hope rooted in God
   3. Gives evidence of an ability to build and support faith communities in the Church
   4. Demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of and an emerging commitment to the spirituality of diocesan priesthood
   5. Demonstrates a missionary and apostolic zeal for the Gospel and willingness to commit his life to the service of the Gospel, the Church and the salvation of the world
   6. Demonstrates an understanding of and a personal appreciation for the psychological, social and legal dimensions of sexual issues in ministerial relationships
   7. Exhibits an underlying spirit of peace and joy, with an appropriate spirit of detachment in his behaviour towards material goods and his own goods
8. Demonstrates a commitment to praying faithfully the full Liturgy of the Hours
9. Has realized the continuing need for and value of spiritual direction in his own life and in that of others
10. Gives evidence of being able to provide basic spiritual direction and possesses sufficient humility to refer a directee to another who could provide more competent accompaniment when necessary
11. Demonstrates an ability to offer instruction on faith and prayer, recognizing the value of different forms of prayer

3. **Intellectual Formation**
   1. Demonstrates the ability to use scriptural and liturgical texts in preaching and catechesis to address the pastoral needs of the community
   2. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the major documents of the Second Vatican Council
   3. Demonstrates a theological understanding of the roles of women and men in the life and ministry of the Church
   4. Demonstrates an understanding of the development and theology of the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, and their place within the life of the Church
   5. Exhibits an integrated understanding of the theological, sacramental, moral, liturgical and spiritual traditions of the Church
   6. Demonstrates the ability to enter theological discussions with persons of various backgrounds and levels of understanding of the faith
   7. Demonstrates a commitment to the Church's ecumenical teaching and the willingness to enter mature and appropriate dialogue with non-Catholics

4. **Pastoral Formation**
   1. Demonstrates an ability to preside at liturgies in a welcoming manner
   2. Has reflected upon his own struggles, and with the light of the Gospel, has grown from them in developing a greater compassion for others’ sufferings
   3. Shows an understanding of Church law as a pastoral instrument in the life of the Church and demonstrates an ability to apply the law appropriately to pastoral situations
   4. Gives evidence of understanding the role of the priest as a public person, demonstrates leadership skills, exercises pastoral roles with insight and confidence, and manifests a grasp of the collaborative nature of ministry
   5. Demonstrates an ability to integrate scriptural and theological studies into the preparation and delivery of homilies
   6. Demonstrates the ability to maintain professional boundaries and confidentially in the exercise of ministry
   7. Demonstrates pastoral zeal through engagement in seminary activities and parish outreach
   8. Demonstrates the ability to reflect and dialogue on the issues and concerns he will encounter in future parish ministry, drawing upon theological studies and previous pastoral involvement to address them
   9. Demonstrates an evangelical zeal for sharing the truth of the faith in an appropriate manner to those within and outside of the Catholic community.