

# **A BASIC SCHEME FOR PRIESTLY TRAINING (Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis)**

## **PART TWO**

### **III**

#### **MINOR SEMINARIES<sup>60</sup>**

##### **And Other Institutions Founded for the Same Purpose**

11. The specific purpose of the Minor Seminary is to help boys who seem to show the initial signs of vocation to recognize this vocation more easily and clearly, and to respond to it. In a matter demanding so much prudence and judgment, which can be dealt with only by the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who distributes his gifts as he wills (cf. 1 Cor. 12, 11), candidates should be led by Superiors, parents, the parish community, and others concerned, to respond faith-

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<sup>60</sup> The Second Vatican Council expressed its mind on preparation for the *Major Seminary*, which is the institution immediately designed for the priesthood and held to be necessary, and it was thinking of an institution up to that time common, called a Minor Seminary. The council considered that it should be completely reformed, but still remained valid for our times, and useful for developing the seeds of a vocation. So that the Minor Seminary could better correspond in present conditions with this important purpose, and attain it, a few very useful rules were issued by the Council, to ensure this institution its own proper structure, one agreeing with its nature and purpose, so that it should not just have the features of a lesser Major Seminary in which it would be impossible properly to provide for study and the genuine freedom of vocations.

While recommending the Minor Seminary, the Council does not deny the possibility of trying other ways to foster priestly vocations, which may indeed be opportune, so long as the Minor Seminary as an institution does not suffer in consequence, and the experiments themselves are seriously and prudently directed to their purpose, not just a subterfuge for dodging the issue. For the Church maintains — as is apparent from her doctrine, experience, and practice — that certain signs of a divine vocation can be discerned right from boyhood, which demand careful and specialised attention.

fully to the intentions of Divine Providence; to live up to their baptismal consecration ever more completely, and fulfil it; and to advance in the spirit of the apostolate: thus in the end they may be better prepared to see the sublime gift of their vocation in its real nature, and if lawful authority approves, to embrace it freely and gladly<sup>61</sup>.

A vocation to the priesthood, though a supernatural and entirely gratuitous gift, is necessarily based on natural endowments: if any is lacking, it is to be doubted if a vocation is really there. Hence the young students must be carefully examined as regards their families, their physical, psychological, moral and intellectual qualities, in order that sure factors for a judgement of their fitness may be had in good time<sup>62</sup>.

12. The Minor Seminary should be given due importance in the life of the diocese. It must be prudently open to this life and form part of it. Then it may not only attract the ready cooperation of faithful and clergy, but also -- as the centre of pastoral care for vocations -- exercise a beneficent and effective influence on the young students, promoting their spiritual progress. From this opportune contact with the outside world, they should learn, according to their ability, to grasp the more important problems of the Church and of human life, and to interpret them in a Christian spirit, and in this way they will make steady progress in the spirit of the Church and of her mission<sup>63</sup>.

Due and necessary contact should be maintained also with their own families and contemporaries, as they need these contacts for a

<sup>61</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 3; Pius XII, Apostolic Exhortation, *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 685; Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956) pp. 358 seq.; Address, *C'est une grande joie*, to the students from the Minor Seminaries of France on pilgrimage to Rome, 5 Sept. 1957: A.A.S. 49 (1957), pp. 845-849.

<sup>62</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 6; Pius XII, Apostolic Exhortation, *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950) p. 684; Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), p. 367; Paul VI, Apost. Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), pp. 990 seq. Cf. below notes to nos. 39-40.

<sup>63</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius* no. 9; Pastoral Const. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 25; Dec. *Ad gentes divinitus*, no. 39; Paul VI, Enc. *Ecclesiam suam*, 6 Aug. 1964: A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 627, 638; Address, *L'odierna audienza*, to the faithful in audience, 2 Sept. 1964: *Insegnamenti*, II, pp. 517-519.

sound psychological, and particularly, emotional development. The right sort of spiritual help should be given to their families to enable them to take ever more effective care of vocations, working in union with the Seminary<sup>64</sup>.

13. The young seminarians should lead a life suited to their age and development, in line with the sound rules of psychology and pedagogy. Carefully to be avoided is anything that could lessen in any way their free choice of state; and it must always be borne in mind that among them there are some who see the priesthood clearly as their goal, others who admit it as a possibility; and others who show themselves hesitant and doubtful about their vocation, yet are well gifted and do not cause all hope to disappear of their ability to reach the priesthood<sup>65</sup>.

All these factors demand in the Minor Seminary a lively familiar trust towards Superiors and brotherly friendship among students, so that all may grow into one family, with the possibility of developing their own natural selves in the right way and in accordance with the plans of divine Providence<sup>66</sup>.

14. In his spiritual formation, every student should be helped by suitable theology; and suitable buildings, equipped with a library and the other aids educational facilities; to be inspired also with an increasing sense of justice, of sincerity, and of brotherly friendship; with appreciation of truth, of just freedom, and with a sense of duty. With all the elements of his natural self developed with proper care as well<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3; Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 3; cf. Pius XII, Apostl. Exhort. *Menti nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 685.

<sup>65</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 1, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3; Pius XII, Apost. Exhortation *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 687; Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), p. 357; Paul, VI, Radio message *La quinta Giornata*, on the 5th World Vocations Day, 19 April 1968: *Insegnamenti*, VI, pp. 134-135.

<sup>66</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 1; cf. Pius XII, Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), pp. 359-360.

he may be the more easily disposed to follow Christ our Redeemer with a generous and pure heart, and serve Him in an apostolic life<sup>68</sup>.

The principal and necessary factor in this spiritual formation of the student is the life of the liturgy, in which they should take part with growing appreciation as they grow in age; and likewise other devotional exercises, either of daily practice or to be fixed for specified times in the Seminary Rule. These practices should be designed for Christian youths, and they should carry them out gladly and willingly<sup>69</sup>.

15. The Seminary should have its own rules for the other elements of its life, too, suitably arranging the various duties of the students and their activities throughout the day and the whole year<sup>70</sup>.

16. The students should complete the curriculum of studies which is demanded in their own country as a preliminary to studies of university standard; but so far as the programme of studies allows, they should also cultivate the studies that are necessary or useful for candidates for the priesthood. As a general rule, they should endeavour to acquire a public certificate of studies, so as to be on a par with other young people, and have the possibility of taking up another way of life should they be found not to have a priestly vocation<sup>71</sup>.

17. These studies should be done either in the Seminary's own school, or if the Bishops judge it better, for local conditions, and it can be done prudently, in Catholic schools outside, or even in others.

<sup>68</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 8; Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 13, 14, 17; cf. Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, nos. 2, 4; Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), pp. 671, 689; Paul VI, Address *II Concilio*, to the Bishops of Italy, 6 Dec. 1965: *Insegnamenti*, III, p. 710; S. Cong. for the Sacraments, Instruction *Postquam Pius*, sent to Bishops on Daily Communion in Seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions, 8 Dec. 1938; S. Cong. of Rites, Instruction *Inter Oecumenica*, for the correct carrying out of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 26 Sept. 1964, nos. 14, 15, 17, 18: A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 880-881; Instruction *De cultu mysterii Eucharistici*, 27 May 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967) pp. 539-573.

<sup>70</sup> John XXIII, Address, *Questo incontro*, to Spiritual Directors meeting in Rome, 9 Sept. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962) p. 676.

<sup>71</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3; cf. no. 13; cf. Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 687; Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), pp. 361-362.

18. The same purpose is served by Institutions that have been established in various places, colleges, i.e., schools, etc., in which budding priestly vocations are cared for and developed alongside other students. Similar rules should be laid down for these Institutions, to provide for the solid Christian education of their pupils, and the right training needed for higher studies; to cater also for their interest in apostolic work through various associations and other aids<sup>72</sup>.

19. As the needs of each nation demand, there should be built and developed Institutions destined for the formation of those who are called to the priesthood at a more advanced age. With the help of the Bishops of the region or of the country, these houses for special priestly formation should be planned and equipped to correspond fully with their established purpose<sup>73</sup>.

Such foundations ought to have their own Rule of devotional practice, discipline and studies: its aim, taking into account the previous training of the individual students, is to ensure them through suitable methods of teaching, the spiritual and scientific formation which may appear necessary as a preliminary to ecclesiastical studies.

With reference to local conditions, it will have to be decided whether the students should be set to normal Seminary curricular after completing a suitable period of school work, or placed in special philosophical and theological schools.

#### IV MAJOR SEMINARIES

20. The Major Seminary accepts students who, after finishing Grammar School or High School studies, desire strictly priestly training. The aim of the Seminary is the more explicit and fuller develop-

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<sup>72</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3; cf. no. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Vatican Council II affirms the necessity of the Major Seminary (*Optatam totius*, no. 4), and prescribes many rules for the reform of this institution in its various parts. To satisfy this clear wish, and to meet the new needs arising in priestly formation in the way they demand, it is absolutely necessary to see what belongs to the real nature of this institution according to the mind of the Church and what does not.

ment of a vocation; and, after the example of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Teacher, Priest and Pastor, to form and produce true pastors of souls for the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and ruling the people of God<sup>75</sup>.

21. A Major Seminary cannot be set up and kept in being without the following elements: a suitable number of students; superiors soundly prepared for their office and united in brotherly cooperation; professors sufficient in number and quality, where the institution includes a school of philosophy and theology; and suitable buildings, equipped with a library and the other aids needed for an establishment of its level and kind<sup>76</sup>.

Where these conditions cannot be had in the one diocese, it is necessary to set up an interdiocesan (or Regional, Central National) Seminary. As local circumstances suggest, the brotherly collaboration of diocesan with religious clergy is called for: the rights and duties of both bodies being safeguarded as they should be, by their joint forces suitable places for ecclesiastical studies may be more easily established. The students of both clergies could attend these centres while receiving spiritual and pastoral formation in their own places of residence.

For a Seminary in the true sense to exist, the following features, as can be drawn from the documents and constant mind of the Church, are undoubtedly required: a community inspired by charity, open to modern needs, and organically constructed, i.e. one in which the authority of the lawful superior is effectively exercised with the mind and after the example of Christ; where all help to ensure to the students real development of human and Christian maturity; where there is opportunity to begin experience of the priestly state through relationships both of brotherly fellowship and hierarchic dependence; where the doctrine of the priesthood is clearly expounded by teachers deputed by the Bishop himself, and at the same time there is presented what priestly life means and all that is looked for in a priest: these requisites the students must gradually come to know and accept, whether they concern faith and doctrine, or their way of life; lastly there should be the possibility of testing a priestly vocation, and making certain of it by positive signs and qualities, so that a sure judgment on a candidates' fitness may be offered to the Bishops.

<sup>75</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 4.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 5, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 7; cf. Pius XI, Apost. Letter *Officiorum omnium*, 1 Aug. 1922: A.A.S. 14 (1922); pp. 456-457; Enc. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S. 28 (1935) pp. 38-39.

22. Seminary training and education have as their aim to bring the candidates, once they are made sharers in the one priesthood and ministry of Christ, into hierarchic communion with their own Bishop and the rest of their brethren in the priesthood, forming the one single *Presbyterium* of the diocese. It is therefore very desirable that right from Seminary years close links should bind students to their own Bishop and their diocesan clergy, based on mutual charity, frequent conversation, and cooperation of every kind<sup>78</sup>.

23. To assist the right formation of each student, depending on their numbers, it can be useful to form separate groups, in the same building, or in houses near one another to avoid loss of regular communication. However, an effective unity of regime, spiritual direction, and scientific teaching must be retained<sup>79</sup>.

The individual groups should have their own priest-director, one well prepared for his task. He should maintain close and constant contacts with the Seminary Rector, with the students of his own group, and with the directors of other groups; through this close collaboration the progress may be assured of everything conducive to first class training.

24. The cooperation of students with Superiors should be encouraged, to obtain the best order and efficiency in the life of the Seminary and to foster the students' industry and sense of duty. This cooperation should gradually increase in extent and quality as the students grow in maturity. While they all work together, however, the different responsibility of Superiors and students should be kept clearly defined.

Mutual trust between teachers and students, therefore, is to be fostered in every way, leading to a genuine and effective dialogue, so that decisions, which by right belong to the Superiors, may be made after a fair enquiry into the common good (cf. no. 49).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 8; Dogm. Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 28; Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Merita Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 690.

<sup>79</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 11; Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), p. 684, no. 68; Address

25. In every Seminary there must be a Rule (*disciplinae Ordinatio*) approved by the Bishop (or by the group of Bishops in the case of an interdiocesan Seminary) in which are set out the important points of discipline affecting the students' daily life and the order of the whole institution.<sup>81</sup>

26. All should observe, generously, and willingly, the regulations laid down in the Rule or in other decisions, acting through conviction of how necessary this is for a genuine community life, and for the unfolding and strengthening of each man's own character. So the rules affecting community or private life, which should leave fair room for freedom are not just to be suffered passively, or by coercion, but accepted cheerfully and without hesitation, out of deep conviction and charity. As time goes on and the maturity and sense of duty of the students increases, the rules should gradually be diminished so that the men may learn, as they go along, to be their own guides.<sup>82</sup>

## V SUPERIORS

27. Following local practice, in every Seminary there should be a staff of men responsible for its direction, consisting, for example, of Rector, Vice-Rector, Spiritual Director or Directors, Prefect of Studies, Pastoral Director, Prefect of Discipline, Bursar, Librarian. The functions, rights and duties of each, and their just emoluments, should be clearly defined.

There is no strict need in Seminaries of smaller size and number of students to allot individual men to each individual task.

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*Libenti fraternoque animo*, to the Delegates of the Episcopal Seminary Commissions meeting in Rome to work out the *Ratio Fundamental*, 27 March 1969: A.A.S. 61 (1969), pp. 253-256.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. note 70.

<sup>82</sup> Vat. Coun. II, *Dec. Optatam totius*, no. 11; cf. Pius XII, *Apost. Exhort. Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950) p. 686; John XIII, *Address, Questo incontro*, to Spiritual Directors meeting in Rome, 9 Sept. 1962; A.A.S. 54 (1962), p. 676; Paul VI, *Enc. Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), p. 684, no. 67.



28. The Superiors are nominated by the Bishop — unless the statutes of the Seminary prescribe otherwise — after careful consultation. They should all be genuinely concerned for the progress of the Seminary, welcoming frequent dialogue with the Bishop and the students, the better to discover the common good, and steadily perfect their pedagogical work.<sup>83</sup>

29. The principal and most serious task in the direction of the Seminary is undertaken by the Rector. It is his part to keep the staff together, and he should work, closely with them in brotherly charity, always religiously respecting the forum of conscience, to ensure harmonious progress in the work of training the students. Community life among the Superiors can contribute very much to this end. They should often once a month for example — meet to arrange their communal activity, to assess the Seminary's affairs and problems, and find fitting solutions.<sup>84</sup>

30. Superiors should be chosen with the greatest care and should be men of deep priestly and apostolic spirit, fit to work with one another in their common task of education, in a fraternal collaboration. They should be open and alert to grasp the needs of the Church and of civil society; taught by pastoral experience in parish ministry or elsewhere, and outstanding in their clear understanding of young minds.<sup>85</sup>

The task of Seminary Superiors is the most excellent of all arts, one which cannot tolerate an off-hand or chance mode of action. Of necessity, therefore, besides natural and supernatural rights, they must have,

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 5; Pius XI, Enc. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S. 28 (1936), p. 37; Paul VI, Apost. Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), p. 984.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. John XXIII, Address, *L'incontro odierno*, to the Rectors from all Italy who took part in the Congress on training students by up-to-date method, 29 July 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 562; Address, *Questo incontro*, to Spiritual Directors meeting in Rome, 9 Sept. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962), p. 673.

<sup>85</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 5; cf. Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 18; Pius XI, Enc. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S. 28 (1936), p. 37; cf. John XXIII, Address, *E' grande*, to the members of the Congress held in Rome from All Italy for the fostering of priestly vocations 21 April 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 311.

as each one's duty demands, due spiritual, pedagogical or technical training, which they would best have acquired in special Institutions founded, or to be founded, for this purpose in their own or in other areas.<sup>86</sup>

31. The Superior's preparation should also be completed by being regularly brought up-to-date by attending conferences or courses, such as are held, to review progress in spiritual or pedagogical sciences, or to learn about new methods and recent experience. The various experiments and undertakings through which the Superiors can better know, and in the light of faith solve modern problems, particularly those of youth, should not be neglected.<sup>87</sup>

## VI PROFESSORS

32. A suitable number of Professors should be provided, taking into account, the subjects to be taught, the method of teaching and the number of students; where philosophical and theological teaching is given, there should be a regular list of the Professors who are needed in the various courses and subjects.

33. As a general rule, Professors for the sacred subjects ought to be priests. All should willingly work with the rest in brotherly asso-

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Question no. 4 in the Synod of Bishops put forward by the Cardinal Prefect of the S. Congregation for Catholic Education: "Should it be prescribed that the teachers of future clergy must be given special preparation, through regular attendance at some Institute or School of Higher Studies set up or approved by the Episcopal Conference, or at least by taking part in some Courses arranged for the purpose." The Fathers voted on the question as follows: placet 120, non placet, 8, placet iuxta modum, 51, with 3 abstentions.

Cf. John XXIII, Address, *Questo incontro*, to Spiritual Directors meeting in Rome, 9 Sept. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962), p. 674.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Christus Dominus*, no. 16; John XXIII, Address, *L'incontro odierno*, to Seminary Rectors from all Italy present at the Congress on bringing students' education up-to-date, 29 July 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 560; Address, *La Vostra vibrante*, to Catholic Teachers meeting in Rome, 22, Sept. 1962: A.A.S., 54 (1962), pp. 713-714; Paul VI, Motu proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 6 Aug. 1966: A.A.S. 58 (1966), p. 786; III, no. 3.

ciation; and they should be of the quality to show the students an example of Christian or priestly life, according to their status. Unless it is otherwise provided they are appointed by the Bishop, or in the case of Regional Seminaries, by the Bishops in charge of those Seminaries, after consultation with the Rector and the body of Professors, who can propose suitable candidates.<sup>88</sup>

34. The Professors should be genuinely expert, each in his own subject, and with a reasonable knowledge of kindred subjects.<sup>89</sup> So they must have had proper preparation and attained the requisite academic degrees: to teach sacred sciences and philosophy, they ought to have at least the Licentiate or its equivalent, and for the other subjects fitting academic qualifications.

35. They should possess the art of teaching, so care is to be taken to ensure to them due preparation in this matter also. Training in active teaching methods is required, which will enable them to teach their students through group work and discussions.<sup>90</sup>

36. It must be the Professors' own concern to keep their scientific preparation up-to-date, by reading periodicals and new books, by frequent discussion with men of learning, and by taking part in study conferences.<sup>91</sup>

37. They ought not to undertake duties which will hinder them from carrying out their proper tasks; for this reason they should be given a just remuneration, to enable them to devote themselves entirely to their own important office. However, a moderate amount of pastoral ministry is commendable: by pastoral experience they can be helped to a fuller knowledge of modern problems, those of youth in particular, and can present their own subjects to better advantage for the training of future pastors of souls.

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<sup>88</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 5; Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 18.

<sup>89</sup> Pius XII, Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), p. 362.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. above note 88.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Paul VI, Motu proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 6 Aug. 1966: A.A.S. (58) (1966), p. 786: III, no. 3.

38. As they carry out their work, let them think of themselves as educators in the proper sense of the word; hence they must keep in view the rules about presentation of doctrine and methods of teaching which are mentioned below. They should be concerned for the training and whole priestly formation of each individual student, to ensure his real progress in learning and in the spiritual life. Frequent meetings, once a month for example, should be held to go over scholastic matters in common, to promote the instruction and formation of the students, by serious and united effort.

They should keep up a close collaboration with the Superiors of the Seminary too, in order to make a more effective contribution not only to the scientific but also to the whole priestly formation of the students. Superiors and professors, lastly, should make up a single community of educators, to present together with their students the genuine image of one family, which fulfills the prayer of our Lord "that they may be one" (Jn.17,11).<sup>102</sup>

## VII STUDENTS

38. Right training demands not only prudent selection of students but also serious trial of individuals during their course of studies, to be made with the advice of experts, in order to reach certainty about the will of God regarding their vocation. In this sincere search for the will of God, the candidates on trial themselves should readily be asked to share, the more quickly and surely to obtain their greater spiritual good.

Consideration is to be given to the young men's human and moral qualities (e.g. sincerity, emotional maturity, good manners, keeping their word, steady concern for justice; feeling for friendship, for just freedom and responsibility; industry, the will to work with others, and so on); to their spiritual qualities too (e.g. correct and sound judgement; suf-

<sup>102</sup> Vat. Coun. III, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 5; cf. Pius XII, Apostl. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), pp. 362-363; John XXIII, Address, *E'grande*, to the First Congress from all Italy held in Rome for the fostering of vocations, 21 April 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 311.

ficient ability to complete ecclesiastical studies; a right notion of the priesthood and of what it involves, etc.). Such considerations make it possible to judge whether they are suited for priestly ministry.

Likewise as a general rule their physical and mental health should be examined by expert doctors and others competent in psychological science; possible inherited traits should be given attention.<sup>61</sup>

The first thing is to help the students seriously and sincerely to ponder before God whether they can really believe themselves called to the priesthood, and make them able to sort out the motives of their intention. So, if God wills, they may proceed to the priestly office with a right and free will.<sup>64</sup>

40. Every student's personal position should be examined at certain times, with his own cooperation. In that way the Rector and his advisers may discover the unsuitable, and invite them, in all kindness, and help them to take up a different state of life, for the good of the Church and their own. This definite choice of a state of life should be obtained in good time and as soon as possible, to prevent any harm to the candidate from too long and useless delay.<sup>65</sup>

41. Special importance is to be given to the assessments (scrutinia) prescribed before the taking of Holy Orders. As a duty of conscience

<sup>61</sup> S. Cong. of the Holy Office, Admonition *Cum competum*, on some erroneous opinions about sins against the 6th commandment and on psycho-analysis, 15 July 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 571; S. Cong. for Religious and Secular Institutes, Instr. *Renovationis causam*, on reform of training for the Religious life, 6 Jan. 1969: A.A.S. 61 (1969), p. 113, no. 11.

<sup>64</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 6; Pius XI, Enc. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S. 28 (1936), p. 41; Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950); p. 684; S. Cong. for the Sacraments, Letter *Magna equidem* sent to local Ordinaries, 27 Dec. 1955, no. 10; for religious, cf. *Statuta Generalia* appended to the Apostolic Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956, art. 33; John XXIII, Enc. *Princeps Pastorum*, 28 Nov. 1959; A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 842-843; Address, *Ad vobiscum*, at the second session of the Roman Synod, 26 Jan. 1960: A.A.S. 52 (1960), p. 224 seq.; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), p. 987 seq.; Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. (59) (1967), pp. 682 seq.

<sup>65</sup> S. Cong. for the Sacraments, Letter *Magna quidem*, to local Ordinaries, 27 Dec. 1955, nos. 4 seq.

arising from his office, the Rector should himself, with the help of others who know them well, gather accurate information about each candidate. Parish priests, other priests and selected lay people may help him — the forum of conscience being always religiously respected. The Rector should send this information to the Bishop, so that he can make a safe judgement about the candidate's vocation. Should a doubt persist, the safer opinion is to be followed.<sup>96</sup>

42. To improve the training of the students and give them a more mature preparation for Holy Orders, the Episcopal Conferences should consider the opportuneness of introducing in their own regions special experiments or tests, for all students, or for some individuals, as their Own Ordinary may judge fitting.<sup>97</sup>

The following experiments, among the various possibilities, are suggested by way of example:

a) At the beginning of the philosophy-theology course, a special period can be given for serious thought about the excellence of the priestly vocation, its nature, and the obligations connected with it: this is to initiate the students to mature decision, through very careful consideration and really intense prayer.

This initiation, which can be of varying length, is normally combined aptly with the introduction to the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation which the Council prescribed for the beginning of the philosophy-theology course.

b) During the said course, an interruption of residence in the Seminary is possible, e.g. for a year or six months, during which the student breaks off either studies and life in the Seminary together, or just his life in the Seminary while pursuing his studies (of philosophy-theo-

<sup>96</sup> Cf. The Code of Canon Law: can. 994, 1000; Pius XI, Enc. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S. 28 (1936), pp. 39 seq.

<sup>97</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 12; Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), p. 685, no. 71; cf. S. Cong. for Religious and Secular Institutes, Instruction *Renovationis causam*, on reform of training for the religious life, 6 Jan. 1969: A.A.S. 61 (1969), pp. 109, 115 seq.; nos. 5, 23, 24.

logy) elsewhere. During this interval, under the guidance of a skilled priest, he gives help in the pastoral ministry, learns about men and the problems and difficulties among which he will have to work, and tries out his own fitness for the priestly life and ministry. Trials of secular life in manual work, or in military service, where that is obligatory, are not ruled out.

Or after the first year of the Major Seminary the students may be given permission either to enter the second year, or to take up secular studies in a University, or to pursue study of some special subject outside the Seminary: in this way, the student, after completing his first experiences in the Seminary, will be offered a period of real freedom both interior and exterior to develop his vocation more solidly and with greater effort.

c) Having finished the philosophy-theology course, they will be able to work as Deacons for one or more years. This work, under the direction of a competent priest, should let them acquire a fuller maturity and strengthening of their vocation; they should better assimilate the pastoral teaching which they learned as young men in the Seminary, and so pass on more smoothly and easily to the ministry of a priest.

The experiments described under *b)* and *c)* should have their terms of reference properly defined to ensure a safe and successful result.

43. The Episcopal Conference should also consider whether, with reference to local conditions, the age required by the common law for Holy Orders should be raised.<sup>118</sup>

## VIII SPIRITUAL TRAINING

44. The end of spiritual training is the perfection of charity, and it should lead the student, not just by dint of his ordination, but from

<sup>118</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 12; cf. S. Cong. for Religious and Secular Institutes, Instruction *Renovationis causam*, 6 Jan. 1969: A.A.S. 61 (1969), p. 110, no. 6 (as regards solemn vows).

<sup>119</sup> In this chapter, the priest's spiritual life is outlined: students must acquire these features as they go along. They can be summarised as follows:

the intimate fellowship of his whole life, to become in a special way another Christ; deeply penetrated by his Spirit, he should truly realize what he is doing when celebrating *the mystery of the Lord's death*, should imitate what he is handling, and follow Him *who came not to be ministered to but to minister* (cf. 20, 28).<sup>100</sup>

45. While the pastoral purpose of all priestly formation should constantly be borne in mind, the spiritual life of the student, with the help of the Spiritual Director,<sup>101</sup> should develop in an orderly way in

The spiritual life of the students takes its main pattern from Christ the Priest, with whom future priests have a special fellowship through their vocation. Since they must share "in the one priesthood and ministry of Christ" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* no. 7), they must be conformed to Him not only through sacred Ordination, but with their whole heart, gradually by daily effort taking up the life taught in the gospel. They must dedicate themselves to Christ in a special way and follow Him "who in virginity and poverty (cf. Mt. 8, 20; Lk. 9, 58) by his obedience unto the death of the Cross (cf. Phil. 2, 8) redeemed and sanctified mankind" (*Perfecatae caritatis*, no. 1).

Growing ever more strong in faith, hope, and charity, they should open their minds to the light of the Holy Spirit, and endeavour to acquire the habit of prayer particularly from the Liturgy and from the contemplation of God's word; drawing nourishment from regular use of the sacraments, they should try to develop all virtues harmoniously. Thus they can become worthy "ministers of Christ the Head" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 12) in his Mystical Body. They will in that way be guided to a sense of the Church, prepared for their future apostolic work, and be able to cooperate with the diocesan clergy under the authority of the Bishop, in a spirit of service, humility and fellowship. Pastoral charity should help them to grasp quickly and intelligently how human society is changing, to interpret the signs of the times, and to unite their interior life with their external activity in the light of God's will (cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 14). Through the faithful carrying out of their apostolate they may show that they are not of it (cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 41).

<sup>100</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 4, 8; Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 28; Decr. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nos. 4, 5, 6; Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), pp. 660 seq.; John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 545 seq.; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), pp. 979 seq.

<sup>101</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 8; cf. John XXIII, Apostolic Letter *Pater Misericordiarum*, 22 Aug. 1961: A.A.S. 53 (1961), p. 677; Address, *Questo incontro*, 9 Sept. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962) pp. 673-674.



its various aspects.<sup>102</sup> Together with the virtues most esteemed among men,<sup>103</sup> the young students should endeavour to bring the grace of their baptism to perfection; they should have an ever clearer and more definite appreciation of their special priestly vocation, and so make themselves better able to acquire the virtues and habits of priestly life.

46. The community should also be given its due weight in spiritual formation: here the students, as members should get used to putting aside their own will, and with common purpose and effort seek the greater good of their neighbor. In this way they do their best to perfect both their own lives and the common life of the whole Seminary, like the early Church, in which the whole group of believers was united, heart and soul (cf. Acts, 4, 32). For by charity the community enjoys God's presence, observes the law in its fullness, attains the bond of perfection, and puts into practice great apostolic virtue.<sup>104</sup>

47. Their community life in the Seminary should prepare candidates for the priesthood, so that in the end, raised to Holy Orders, they may be united in a "sacramental brotherhood" with the wider community of the diocesan *Presbyterium*, "by the bond of charity, prayer, and manifold cooperation, in order to build up the Body of Christ, a task demanding, in our days particularly, many duties and up-to-date reforms."<sup>105</sup> So the students should gradually be introduced to the actual conditions of the diocese (cf. above no. 22), in order to be aware of the situation and needs of clergy and faithful, and be able to carry out their future pastoral duties with greater success.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 8.

<sup>103</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 11; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 3; cf. Pius XII, Address *Magis quam*, to Discalced Carmelites, 23 Sept. 1951: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, XIII, p. 256; Apost. Const. *Sedes sapientiae*, 31 May 1956: A.A.S. 48 (1956), pp. 358-360; Paul VI, Address, *Il 12 dicembre*, given at the opening of the new South American College buildings, Rome, 30 Nov. 1963; *Insegnamenti*, I, p. 352; Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 683-684, nos. 65-67.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 8.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), pp. 686-687; cf. also John XXIII, Enc. *Princeps Pastorum*, 28 Nov. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), p. 842.

48. The Church of the Latin Rite has established the rule, which claims respect from long usage, of choosing for the priesthood only those who by the grace of God are willing freely to embrace celibacy for the Kingdom of God's sake.<sup>107</sup> This way of life is rooted in the teaching of the gospel and the authentic tradition of the Church, and in many ways matches the priesthood. The entire mission of the priest is dedicated to the service of the new human race which Christ, Victor over death, raises up in the world by his Spirit; it is a state by which priests "more easily stay close to Christ with undivided heart, more freely dedicate themselves to the service of God and man . . . and so are better fitted to receive their fatherhood in Christ with great generosity. . . ." In this way, then, choosing the state of virginity for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, (Matt. 9,12) "they are made a living sign of that world to come which is present now through faith and charity," "in which the children of the resurrection do not marry." (cf Lk. 20, 35-36).<sup>108</sup>

Therefore those who are preparing for the priesthood should recognise and accept celibacy as a special gift of God; by a life unstintingly devoted to prayer, to union with Christ, to sincere fraternal charity, they should create the necessary conditions in which they can fully and joyfully preserve their celibacy, anxious always for the sincerity of their gift of self.<sup>109</sup>

In order that the choice of celibacy may be really free, a young man must be able to see the evangelical force of this gift by the light of faith, and at the same time rightly esteem the good of the married state.<sup>110</sup> He should enjoy full psychological freedom, both interior and exterior, and have the necessary degree of emotional stability, in order to appreciate and live his celibacy as his personal fulfilment.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 10; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 16; Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 657-697.

<sup>108</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 16.

<sup>109</sup> Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 686-690, nos. 72-82.

<sup>110</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 10.

<sup>111</sup> Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), p. 683, nos. 65-66.

Adequate education in matters of sex is required for this.<sup>112</sup> In *students* of some maturity, this education consists rather of formation leading to a chaste love of people than in an anxiety to avoid sins, a thing at times very disturbing. Such formation must prepare them for the future involvements of the pastoral ministry. Gradually, then, with sound and spiritual discretion, the young men should be asked, and guided to experience and show, in groups and in various areas of the apostolate and of social cooperation, a love that is sincere, human, fraternal, personal, and offered to God after the example of Christ; a love for all men, but above all for the poor and the distressed, and for their fellows. In this way they will overcome any sense of loneliness. They should expose this love openly and with confidence to their Spiritual Directors and Superiors, and learn to judge it in the Lord with their help. They should, however, avoid individual relationships, particularly any of a solitary and protracted nature, with people of the opposite sex. They ought rather to endeavour to practice a love open to all and therefore truly chaste. This they should habitually ask for as a gift from God.

The nature of this gift being clearly of a special order, *from above, coming down from the Father of light* (Jas. 1, 17), candidates for the priesthood must rely on God's help without too much confidence in their own strength, and "should practice mortification and custody of the senses. They should not leave aside the natural means favourable to mental and physical health. Thus they will not be disturbed by false teachings which represent perfect continence as impossible or hurtful to human development; and they should reject, by a kind of spiritual instinct, everything that leads their chastity into danger."<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 1; cf. Pius XII, address *Magis quam* to Discalced Carmelites, 23 Sept. 1951: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, XIII, p. 257; Enc. *Sacra Virginitas*, 25 March 1954: A.A.S. 46 (1954), pp. 183-186.

<sup>113</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 12; cf. John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 554-556; Address *Questo incontro*, to students from some Italian Seminaries, 22 Nov. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 904-905; Paul VI, Enc. *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 684-685, no. 70.

### Close Relationship with Christ

49. The student should aim at a close and friendly relationship with the person and mission of Christ, who completed his task (cf. Jn. 4, 34), in humble submission to the will of the Father. This relationship of necessity demands that a candidate for the priesthood should know how to "dedicate his own will, by obedience, to the service of God and his brethren,"<sup>114</sup> with sincere faith. One who wishes to have a part with Christ crucified in the building up of His Body is under a grave obligation not only to learn to accept the Cross, but also to love it, and to take up in a willing and pastoral spirit all the heavy tasks required to carry on the apostolic mission.

So it lies with the Superiors to train the young men to true and mature obedience in reliance on Christ, who indeed required obedience from his followers, but first showed Himself as the exemplar of this virtue, and by his grace made Himself the principle of obedience in us. The Superiors, then, must exercise authority with prudence and respect for persons. In this matter the young men will surely offer their cooperation, so long as obedience is put forward in its true light, i.e., if it made clear how all must join in pursuing the common good, and how authority is designed for this (cf. no. 24).

The students should show this full and sincere obedience first of all to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, with humble service and filial piety to their own Bishop in the same spirit so that through the priesthood they may become his faithful co-workers, generously and freely giving their help in fellowship with the other priests of the *Presbyterium*.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 15.

<sup>115</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, nos. 9, 11; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nos. 7, 15; Dogm. Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 28; cf. Pius XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 690; John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 556-558; Paul VI, Address *A voi, che siete qua*, to the faithful in audience, 5 Oct. 1966: *Insegnamenti*, VI, pp. 959-963; Address *Libenti fraternoque*, to the delegates from Episcopal Commissions from Seminaries meeting in Rome to work out the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, 27 March 1969: A.A.S. 61 (1969), pp. 253-256.

50. The spirit of poverty, so much demanded from the Church these days, and itself necessary for fulfilling the work of the apostolate, is what the students should learn to foster by deeds and not just by words: relying on the Father's providence, they may thus know both *how to have plenty and to be in want* (Phil. 4, 12) like the Apostle without anxiety. Although not obliged like Religious to renounce material goods completely, still they should as spiritual men strive to acquire the liberty and docility of the children of God, and attain that spiritual restraint which is necessary for finding a right attitude towards the world and worldly goods.<sup>116</sup> Following the example of Christ, *who became poor for our sakes though he was rich* (2 Cor. 8,9), they should consider the poor and the less well-off to be their own special charges:<sup>117</sup> by a simplicity and austerity of life, let them be able to bear witness to poverty, with self-denial of superfluous goods already a habit.<sup>118</sup>

### Formation of the Whole Man

51. Spiritual formation should take in the whole man (cf. nos. 14, 15). Grace does not take away nature, but raises it to a higher level, and no one can be a true Christian unless he has and exercises the virtues befitting a man, and demanded by charity which has to animate and make use of them. The future priest, then, must learn to practise sincerity, a constant concern for justice, good manners in dealing with people; he must keep to his word, be controlled and kind in

<sup>116</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 17.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* no. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 9; cf. John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 551-554; Paul VI, Address *Siamo particolarmente*, to the priests attending the Congress of the association *Federazione Associazioni del Clero Italiano*, 30 June 1965: *Insegnamenti*, III, pp. 385-386; Address, *Benedicamus Domino*, to the South American Prelates about to take part in the second general Assembly at Medellin, 24 Aug. 1968: *Insegnamenti*, VI, pp. 411-412; Address *Se vogliamo*, to the faithful in audience, 2 Oct. 1968: *Insegnamenti*, VI pp. 943 seq.

conversation;<sup>119</sup> must have a spirit of fellowship and service and of readiness to work, and the ability to work with others, etc. With these qualities he may reach that harmony in reconciling human with supernatural good which is needed for the true witness of Christian life in modern society.

A priest must preach the gospel to all men, and therefore the candidate for the priesthood must do his best to develop his ability for forming right relationships with men of different sorts. He should learn in particular the art of speaking to others in the right way, of listening patiently, and of making himself understood. In this respect he must treat all men with great reverence, filled with the spirit of humble charity, so that he may reveal to others the mystery of Christ living in the Church.<sup>120</sup>

52. Daily celebration of the Eucharist, which is completed by sacramental communion received worthily and in full liberty, should be the centre of the whole life of the Seminary, and the students should devoutly take part in it. Sharing in the sacrifice of the Mass, "source and culmination of all Christian life,"<sup>121</sup> they share in the charity of Christ, drawing from this richest of sources supernatural force for their spiritual life and apostolic labour.

Therefore the Eucharistic sacrifice, and indeed the whole Sacred Liturgy, as the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* wishes, should occupy the place in the Seminary which will truly reveal it as the peak

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 19; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 3; Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 1; cf. Pius XII, Address *Sull'esempio*, prepared for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Regional Seminary of Apulia, Oct. 1958: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, XX, pp. 446-447; Paul VI, Apost. Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), p. 991; cf. also note 103.

<sup>120</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 19; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nos 6, 9; Dogm. Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 28; Paul VI, Enc. *Ecclesiam suam*, 6 Aug. 1964: A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 640 seq.; Address *II Concilio*, to the faithful in audience, 9 Oct. 1968: *Insegnamenti*, VI, pp. 959 seq.

<sup>121</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dogm. Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 11.

point towards which the activity of the Church tends, and at the same time the source from which its strength flows."<sup>122</sup>

A sound variety in the manner of participation in the Sacred Liturgy should be provided for, so that the students may not only realise greater spiritual progress, themselves, but also be prepared practically, from their Seminary years, for their future ministry and liturgical apostolate.<sup>123</sup>

5. With formation for Eucharistic worship there should be closely combined formation for the divine Office, by which priests "pray to God in the name of the Church for the entire people entrusted to them, and indeed for the whole world."<sup>124</sup> Students should learn the Church's method of prayer by means of a suitable introduction to Sacred Scripture, the Psalms, and other prayers of scriptural content; also by the frequent recitation in common of part of the Office (e.g. Lauds or Vespers). So they may with more understanding and reverence know the Word of God speaking in the psalms and in all the Liturgy, and be trained at the same time for faithful observance in their priestly life of the obligation of the divine Office.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10; cf. S. Cong. of Rites, Instruction *De cultu mysterii Eucharistici*, 25 May 1967: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 539-573.

<sup>123</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 8; Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 17, 18, 19; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5; Dec. *Ad gentes divinitus*, no. 19; S. Cong. of Rites, Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* to arrange the carrying out of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 26 Sept. 1964: A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 880-881; nos. 14, 15; cf. also Pius XII, Enc. *Mediator Dei*, 20 Nov. 1947: A.A.S. 39 (1947), pp. 547 seq.; Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), pp. 666 seq.; no. 691; John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), pp. 561 seq.; Paul VI, Address, *voi avete* to those attending the Congress "XIII settimana Nazionale di Orientamento Pastorale", Rome, 6 Sept. 1963: *Insegnamenti*, I, pp. 121-122; Enc. *Mysterium Fidei*, 3 Sept. 1965: A.A.S. 57 (1965), pp. 770 seq.

<sup>124</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5.

<sup>125</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 17, 90; S. Cong. of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, loc. cit., nos. 14-17; cf. Pius XII, Enc. *Mediator Dei*, loc. cit., pp. 547 seq., 572 seq.; John XXIII, Apost. Exhort. *Sacrae Laudis*, 6 Jan. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962), p. 69; Address *Flagrantissima voluntas*, to students resident in Rome, 28 Jan. 1960: A.A.S. 52 (1960), pp. 275 seq.

This liturgical instruction will lack completeness unless it reveals to the students the close connection between the Sacred Liturgy and their daily working life, with its needs of apostolate and of sincere witness that reveals a living faith acting through charity.<sup>126</sup>

54. To live the life of a priest uprightly and loyally, the students should gradually attain, corresponding with their own age and maturity, a firm pattern of life, safeguarded by solid virtues, without which they will not be able to persevere in a genuine close attachment to Christ and the Church.

### Features of the Priest's Life

For the following must be features of the priest's life:

- a) he must learn "to live in familiar and constant company with the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit;"<sup>127</sup>
- b) he ought to be able to find Christ habitually in the intimate communion of prayer;
- c) he should have learnt to keep by his side the word of God in Sacred Scripture, with an affection rooted in faith, and to give it to others;
- d) he should be willing and happy to visit and adore Christ sacramentally present in the Eucharist;
- e) he ought, as the Church desires, to have a fervent love for the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, who was in a special way associated with the work of Redemption;
- f) he should readily consult the documents of sacred tradition, the works of the Fathers, and the examples of the saints;
- g) he must know how to examine and judge himself, his conscience and his motives, with honesty and sincerity.

The priest will keep to all these duties only if in his Seminary days he has faithfully practised the devotional exercises that have long proved their worth, and are sanctioned by the Rule of the Seminary; and if he has correctly grasped their importance and force. If it should be neces-

<sup>126</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10.

<sup>127</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 8.



sary to adapt one or other of these practices to modern needs, its inherent and essential purpose should carefully be kept in mind so that it may be attained in some other suitable way.<sup>128</sup>

55. To follow Christ in the spirit of the gospel is an intention certainly to be renewed every day. The virtue of penance, then, should be instilled into future priests. Penitential acts made in common may be used, which serve both for personal formation and for mutual instruction. Students should strive to acquire a real enthusiasm for a life crucified with Christ, through love of Him, and for purity of heart. They should therefore pray fervently for the help of the grace they need; frequent recourse to the sacrament of penance should become a habit: there everyone's efforts are in a sense consecrated; moreover each should have his spiritual director to whom he may humbly and confidently open his conscience, so as to be guided safely in the way of the Lord.<sup>129</sup>

The students are to choose their spiritual director and confessor with full freedom, from among those appointed as fit for the task by the Bishop.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 8; Const. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 12, 13; Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 6.

As regards these preferable means of practicing the spiritual life, cf. John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, 1 Aug. 1959: A.A.S. 51 (1959), p. 560: "There are various practices of priestly piety which bring about and safeguard this constant union with God; the Church has wisely laid down rules prescribing many of the more important: in particular, daily sacred meditation; devotional visit of the Tabernacle; recital of the Rosary of Our Lady; careful examination of conscience (C.I.C. can. 125). As regards the daily office, priests have undertaken a grave obligation towards the Church binding them to its recital (*ibid.* can 135). From neglect of one or other of these rules, we can often perhaps derive the reason why men of the Church are swept away in the whirlpool of exterior realities, gradually cease to give any inspiration of things sacred, and finally, enticed by the attractions of this earthly life, are placed in grave danger, because they are destitute of any spiritual protection."

<sup>129</sup> Pius XII, Enc. *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943: A.A.S. 35 (1943), p. 235; Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S. 42 (1950), p. 674; John XXIII, Enc. *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 574-575; Paul VI, Const. Apost. *Poenitentini*, 17 Nov. 1966: A.A.S. 58 (1966), pp. 177 seq.

<sup>130</sup> C.I.C., can 1358, 1361; Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 18.

56. The only way to the priesthood is by stages: these stages give their meaning to the Minor Orders, which appoint a man to definite functions in the Church, after duly completed training and spiritual preparation. In fact the spiritual training of the students proceeds by degrees, and needs to be adapted to the age, experience, and ability of individuals. Its efficacy is considerably helped by fixed periods of more intensive training, for example when men first enter the Seminary, at the beginning of the theology course, or at the approach of priestly ordination, and so on. Besides the spiritual direction of individuals, the students should also be given, at fixed times as each Seminary's Rule determines, a spiritual instruction or conference suited to the situation and outlook of modern youth: their efforts in the spiritual life receive in this way a regular fresh impulse, and can be directed towards the gaining of a genuine mature priestly spirituality, according to the mind of the Church. Self-examination, regular periods of recollection and other exercises of the kind should also have their place. Every year all should spend some days in retreat.

57. In the midst of his daily labours Christ used readily to seek solitude, in order to pray to his Father without distraction: following his example and counsel (cf. Matt. 6, 6; 14, 13; Mk. 6, 30; 46) students should try to develop "a life hidden with Christ in God (cf. Col. 3,3) from which arises irrepressibly the love of one's neighbor, directed towards the salvation of the world and the building up of the Church".<sup>131</sup> They ought, therefore, to be concerned about the keeping of external silence, without which there is no interior silence of soul, and which is needed for thought and for the work and the repose alike of the whole community.<sup>132</sup>

58. Much good will result from communication with their fellow-men, among whom Christ was sent by the love of the Father (cf. Jn. 4, 9) and there accomplished his work of redemption. This will allow the student to be trained in observing correctly the signs of the times,

<sup>131</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 6.

<sup>132</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatum totius*, no. 11; Paul VI, Address *II grande rito*, for the 4th centenary of the founding of Seminaries by the Council of Trent, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S. 55 (1963), p. 1034.

<sup>133</sup> Vat. Cun. II, Pastoral Const. *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 1-4.

and judging events by the light of the gospel; also to interpret accurately the various circumstances and exigencies of human life which contain the true "seeds of the Word hidden in themselves,"<sup>134</sup> and demand "to be illumined by the light of the gospel; to be set free and brought back under the sway of God our Saviour."<sup>135</sup> As regards this mixing with the world, it should be carefully noted that all experiences of this sort are designed for the pastoral purpose of the Seminary, and for the spiritual preparation of the students, to ensure that their future activity will be not an obstacle but a help towards the development and strengthening of their own spiritual life.<sup>136</sup>

(to be continued)

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<sup>134</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Ad gentes divinitus*, no. 11.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Vat. Coun. II, Dec. *Optatam totius*, no. 11; Dec. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 3; cf. John XXIII, Address *Questo incontro*, to Spiritual Directors meeting in Rome, 9 Sept. 1962: A.A.S. 54 (1962), pp. 675-676; Paul VI, Enc. *Ecclesiam suam*, 6 Aug. 1964: A.A.S. 56 (1964), pp. 627,638.