

MIXED PRIESTLY TRAINING

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY AND THE MAGISTERIUM

An appraisal of certain disastrous reforms in Seminary education which boast of "inventing" today experiences that have failed yesterday.

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VII

Church Magisterium Speaks

We said in the previous chapter that towards the end of the XIX century, the history of *three hundred years* was ready to pronounce at last its final verdict against mixed priestly training in the Seminaries. We could have rather affirmed that, even aside of Trent's decree, it was the history of *twenty centuries* of Christianity that has come to condemn unreservedly such fatal system of clerical formation. The data we have found in the course of this study are ample proof for this.

But the lessons of history are not always within the reach of all. In this matter a clearer, more explicit, more authoritative voice was needed: the voice of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church. This voice was finally heard, solemn and sure, reiterated and unequivocal, in the last half of the XIX century and in the first quarter of our XX century.

Under Pope Gregory XVI, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in a Circular Letter dated 2 October 1842 on LA EDUCAZIONE ECCLESIASTICA said:

"The ecclesiastical and scientific education of the youths who are to join the ranks of the clergy and dedicate themselves to the Lord's

service, has always been promoted with tireless solicitude by the Church. The aim is to form competent and worthy ministers of the sanctuary, so that, equipped with science and virtue, with their doctrine, prudence and holiness of life they may edify and be useful to the Christian people in the exercise of their sacred ministry.

"To achieve this aim THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEMINARIES HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS A SURE AND EFFECTIVE MEANS. In them the youths, SHELTERED AT AN EARLY AGE FROM WORLDLY PLEASURES TO WHICH THEY WOULD EASILY YIELD, are trained in piety, virtue and ecclesiastical discipline.

"For this reason the Fathers of the COUNCIL OF TRENT ORDERED THE ERECTION OF SEMINARIES AND THE DISCIPLINE THAT MUST BE OBSERVED THEREIN. WITHOUT SUCH DISCIPLINE THESE SACRED PLACES, INSTEAD OF BEING SEEDBEDS OF PLANTS CHOSEN FOR THE SANCTUARY, WOULD BE CONVERTED INTO USELESS AND HARMFUL MEETING HALLS (residences, "convictoria" or "internates") OF UNDISCIPLINED YOUTHS."

And the Letter adds: "Let there be admitted in the Seminaries . . . YOUTHS . . . OF SUCH DISPOSITION AND CHARACTER THAT COULD PROBABLY PERSEVERE IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE."² These words, which simply reecho the Tridentine decree, indicate obviously that the Seminaries (even the *Minor*, to which the text evidently refers) should be *exclusively* destined to candidates for the priesthood, and should deny admission to youths who intend to follow civil careers.

Leo XIII spoke more clearly and more forcefully. In his Epistle PATERNAE PROVIDAEQUE of 18 September 1899 he was emphatic in stating:

"In the organization of Seminary discipline, we must begin by putting up a SEPARATE building for the students *who offer hopes to*

¹ Cenacchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

² S. C. de Sem. *op. cit.*, p. 150.

dedicate themselves to the service of God in the priesthood; and this building should be called SEMINARY.

"In ANOTHER building which may be called *residence or Episcopal COLLEGE*, have the youths who prepare themselves for civil careers, reside.

"THE EXPERIENCE, INDEED, OF EVERY DAY TEACHES THAT '*MIXED SEMINARIES*' DO NOT ANSWER THE MIND AND CONCERN OF THE CHURCH. LIVING TOGETHER WITH LAYMEN IS THE REASON WHY SEMINARIANS MOST OFTEN GIVE UP THEIR HOLY RESOLUTION."³

In his Apostolic Constitution QUAE MARI SINICO addressed to the Philippine Hierarchy on 17 September 1902, Leo XIII expressly orders:

"UNDER NO PRETEXT SHOULD BISHOPS ALLOW THAT THE SEMINARY BUILDING OPEN TO OTHERS BUT TO THE YOUTHS WHO OFFER SOME HOPES OF

³ Encycl. ad Archiep. et Episc. Brasiliae. PATERNAE PROVIDAEQUE, die 18 Sept. 1899: "In eorum Seminariorum...disciplina instauranda illud IN PRIMIS CORDI EST...UT SEPARATIS AEDIBUS, SUISQUE SEORSIM INSTITUTIS AC LEGIBUS DEGANT ALUMNI QUI SPEM AFFERANT SESE DEO MANCIPIANDI PER SACROS ORDINES, EORUMQUE DOMUS RETINEANT SEMINARII NOMEN. aliae instituendis ad civilia munia adolescentibus *Convictus vel Collegia* Episcopalia nuncupentur.

"QUOTIDIANO ENIM USU CONSTAT MIXTA SEMINARIA ECCLESIAE CONSILIO AC PROVIDENTIAE MINUS RESPONDERE: EA CONTUBERNIA CUM LAICIS CAUSAM ESSE QUAMOBREM CLERICI PLERUMQUE A SANCTO PROPOSITO DIMOVEANTUR. "HOS DECET VEL A PRIMA AETATE IUGO DOMINI ASSUESCERE, PIETATIS VACARE PLURIMUM, INSERVIRE SACRIS MINISTERIIS, VITAE SACERDOTALI EXEMPLO CONFORMARI. ARCENDI ERGO MATURE A PERICULIS, SEIUNGENDI A PROFANIS. INSTITUENDI IUXTA PROPOSITAS A S. CAROLO BORROMAEO LEGES."

cf. Micheletti, op. cit., p. 73; S. C. de Sem., op. cit., p. 150; L. G. Garcia, op. cit., p. 54.

DEDICATING THEMSELVES TO GOD IN THE PRIESTHOOD. For those who wish to pursue civil professions other buildings should be erected, if so possible, which are to be called "convictus" or Episcopal COLLEGES."⁴ These provisions were just a re-enactment of what the Encyclical PATERNAE PROVIDAEQUE, above mentioned, had prescribed for the dioceses of Brazil.⁵

Lastly, in his Encyclical FIN DA PRINCIPIO addressed on 8 December 1902 to the Bishops of Italy, the same immortal Pontiff Leo XIII declared: "By dint of these considerations (*Note: The Pope has just expressed fear that the spirit of naturalism which was spreading everywhere, would infiltrate the ranks of the clergy.*C.) *We deem it necessary to recommend once more and with much greater earnest that* THE SEMINARIES SHOULD BE CAREFULLY MAINTAINED IN THEIR PROPER SPIRIT. in regard to the training of the mind as well as of the heart. WE SHOULD NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THEIR EXCLUSIVE AIM IS TO FORM YOUTHS, NOT FOR CIVIL PROFESSIONS, however legitimate and honorable these may be, BUT FOR THE SUBLIME MISSION OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST AND DISPENSERS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD." Thereafter the Pope orders that *admission in the Seminary be strictly limited to those youths who offer well-grounded hopes of their willingness to dedicate themselves to the ecclesiastical ministry; and that THEY SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM*

⁴In the Bull DE RE SACRA IN PHILIPPINIS, entitled "QUAE MARI SINICO," Tit. VIII, art. 761: "opportuna providentia statutum est, ut NULLA DE CAUSA IN SEMINARIO RECIPIANTUR II, QUORUM INDOLES ET VOLUNTAS ECCLESIASTICAM VOCATIONEM NON DEMONSTRENT; etiamsi iuvenes praedicti propriis expensis alantur, sive sumptibus, quos pro eorum institutione Seminarium erogaverit, sese integros satisfacturos, ad hoc etiam data cautione, praeferant."

"NULLA INSUPER RATIONE PERMITTANT EPISCOPI UT SEMINARII AEDES ULLI PATEANT, NISI IIS ADOLESCENTIBUS QUI SPIEM AFFERANT SESE DEO PER SACROS ORDINES MANCIPANDI. Qui vero ad civilia munia institui volunt, alias, si res sinunt, obtineant, aedes, quae convictus vel collegia episcopalia nuncupantur."

cf. *Enchiridion Clericorum*, Romae 1938, n. 616; Micheletti, op. cit., p. 73.

⁵cf. Micheletti, op. cit., loc. cit.

FREQUENT CONTACT, AND MUCH SO FROM LIVING TOGETHER WITH ADOLESCENTS WHO DO NOT ASPIRE TO THE PRIESTHOOD.⁶

Why did the Vicar of Christ insist so much on this particular point? It was doubtlessly due to the system of "mixed Seminaries" or College-Seminaries, which was quite in vogue and commonly accepted in those days for the motives already explained in our previous chapter. In view of the difficulties created by the turbulent conditions of those times, mixed priestly training was being tolerated at least in the *Minor Seminaries* until the Theology course. All possible measures were taken to prevent the ill effects of the system; but the results were so damaging for priestly vocations that the Supreme Pastor did not think it useless to insist *three times* in official documents of great importance, addressed to Bishops from all the corners of the world, on the mind of the Church Magisterium about the matter. This took place at the close of the XIX century and the early dawn of our XX century.

But the evil that was afflicting the Seminaries seemed to present the symptoms of a chronic and incurable disease. Everybody was willing to abide by the papal directives; but in actual practice motives were always found for putting off their implementation. Hence the successors of Leo XIII had to proclaim again the urgency of doing away with "mixed Seminaries" in virtue of the Church's unmistakable verdict against them.

St. Pius X in his Encyclical Letter E SUPREMI APOSTOLATUS of 4 October 1903 said again:

"THE SEMINARIES SHOULD DEFINITELY SERVE THEIR OWN PURPOSE. THEY SHOULD NOT EDUCATE YOUTHS FOR A PURPOSE OTHER THAN THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE SERVICE OF GOD."⁷

⁶ cf. *Enchiridion Clericorum*, op. cit., n. 862; L. G. Garcia, op. cit., p. 54; Cenacchi, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

⁷ "Seminaria, suo palam consilio serviant, NEQUE IUVENES AD ALIUD QUAM AD SACERDOTIUM ERUDIANT ET AD MINISTERIUM DEI." Cf. Micheletti, op. cit., p. 73; *Enchiridion Clericorum*, op. cit., n. 714; Cenacchi, op. cit., p. 119; Pii X Acta 1, 8 s.; C.I.C. Fontes, 3, 604 s.

In his Letter LA RISTORAZIONE dated on 5 May 1904 the holy Pontiff declared: "The instauration of all things in Christ which we have resolved to accomplish with God's help in the government of the Church, DEMANDS, as we have oftentimes manifested, THE GOOD TRAINING OF THE CLERGY, the screening of vocations, the test on the candidates' integrity of life, and the cautiousness in not opening to them so easily the doors of the sanctuary."⁸

On 4 April 1906 the Secretary of State and close collaborator of St. Pius X, His Eminence Raphael Cardinal Merry del Val, of saintly memory, in a Brief of the Holy See addressed to the Provincial of the Dominican Order in the Philippines enjoined that in the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas (Manila) the seminarians in the Faculty of Theology and Canon Law IN NO WAY SHOULD MIX WITH THE LAY STUDENTS enrolled in the civil Faculties of the same University: "In order to obtain academic degrees in Theology or Canon Law the students sent by the suffragan Bishops SHALL LIVE COMPLETELY SEPARATED FROM LAY PERSONS, AND RESIDE AS INTERNS IN THE SAME UNIVERSITY, IN THE STYLE AND WITH THE DISCIPLINE OF A TRUE SEMINARY EXCLUSIVE FOR CLERICS."⁹

The same Pontiff in the Encyclical Letter PIENI L'ANIMO of 28 July 1906 definitely states: "THE SEMINARIANS SHALL BE MAINTAINED ZEALOUSLY IN THEIR OWN SPIRIT AND REMAIN EXCLUSIVELY DESTINED TO PREPARE YOUTHS, not for civil careers, but FOR THE SUBLIME MISSION OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST."¹⁰

⁸ "La ristorazione d'ogni cosa in Cristo, che Ci siamo proposti con l'aiuto del Cielo nel governo della Chiesa, esige, come più volte abbiamo già manifestato, la buona istituzione del clero, la prova delle vocazioni, l'esame sull'integrità della vita degli aspiranti e la cautela per non aspir loro con troppa indulgenza le porte del santuario." Cf. Cenacchi, op. cit., pp. 119-120; *Enchiridion Clericorum*, op. cit., n. 722; Pii X Acta 1, 257 s.; C.I.C. Fontes 3, 624 s.

⁹ A.A.S. XL (1907-1908), pp. 467-468.

¹⁰ In this Encyclical St. Pius X remarks that it is spreading among the clergy a certain "spirito d'insubordinazione e d'idipenza", and deplors that the cause of such evil "è la facilità infatti nell' ammettere alle sacre ordinaizioni quella, che apre la via ad un *moltiplicarsi di gente* nel santuario, che poi non

The Exhortation HAERENT ANIMO of St. Pius X, dated 4 August 1908, was the most beautiful legacy of his love for priests. Speaking there of seminaries the Vicar of Christ declared: "The Church strives with assiduous and never interrupted solicitude to foster holiness of life among her priests. With this aim in view she has instituted Seminaries where, if those who are the hope of the Church must be trained in humanities and science, at the same time and still with greater care they must be formed FROM THEIR EARLIEST YEARS in a sincere piety towards the Lord."¹¹

Approving the Rules drafted by the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious for the Seminaries of Italy, St. Pius X in the Letter CON L'INTENTO of 18 January 1908 reiterated the injunction of his predecessor Leo XIII that in the Seminaries none should be received but the youths who offered well-grounded hopes of willingness to dedicate themselves forever to the ecclesiastical ministry.¹²

On 16 July 1912, through the Sacred Consistorial Congregation the Pope published a Circular Letter LE VISITE APOSTOLICHE addressed to the Ordinaries of Italy. Some points therein are relevant to the subject we are treating:

"NEVER ADMIT IN THE SEMINARY, EVEN IN THE FIRST YEARS OF STUDY, young boys who CLEARLY DO NOT

accresce letizia (Is. 9,3). Promuovano dunque i Vescovi non secondo le brame e le pretese di chi aspira, ma, come prescrive il Tridentino, secondo la necessità della diocesi; e nel promuovere di tal guisa, potranno scegliere SOLAMENTE COLORO CHE SONO VERAMENTE IDONEI, RIMANDANDO QUELLI CHE MOSTRASSERO INCLINAZIONI CONTRARIE ALLA VOCAZIONE SACERDOTALE, PRECIPUA FRA ESSE LE INDISCIPLINATEZZA E CIO CHE LA GENERA, L'ORGOGGIO DELLA MENTE...."

"I SEMINARI SIANO GELOSAMENTE MANTENUTI NELLO SPIRITO PROPRIO, E RIMANGONO *EXCLUSIVAMENTE* DESTINATI A PREPARARE I GIOVANI, NON A CIVILI CARRIERE, MA ALL'ALTA MISSIONE DI *MINISTRI DI CRISTO*." Cf. Cenacchi, op. cit., p. 121; Pii X Acta 3, 163 s.; C.I.C. Fontes 3, 676 s.; *Enchiridion Clericorum*, op. cit., n. 783.

¹¹ Cf. Genacchi, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

¹² Cf. L. G. García, op. cit., p. 54; Cenacchi, op. cit., p. 126.

WANT TO BE PRIESTS; for these A COLLEGE may be established, but SEPARATE FROM THE SEMINARY. TO BE ADMITTED IN THE SEMINARY, IT SHOULD BE A REQUIREMENT THAT THE BOYS SHOW AT LEAST AN INITIAL INCLINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

"THOSE POSITIVELY INTENDING TO REMAIN IN THE LAY STATE, WILL NECESSARILY FEEL A DISLIKE FOR THE SEMINARY WHERE EVERYTHING IS ORIENTED, AS IT SHOULD BE, NOT TO MERE TEMPORAL VALUES, BUT TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL FORMATION, TO PIETY AND TO RECOLLECTION.

"MOREOVER, THAT MIXTURE (of seminarians and lay students) IS THE CAUSE OF THE LOSS OF MANY VOCATIONS, AS SHOWN BY EXPERIENCE."¹³

Indeed, the verdict of the Church Magisterium against "mixed Seminaries" and mixed clerical education, could not be clearer.

But the final sentence, the last word, the most solemn pronouncement on the matter was to be issued by Pope Pius XI. Even before him, under Pope Benedict XV, we find in the Code of Canon Law—promulgated on 27 May 1917—the canons 972, 1353 and 1363 which openly confirm the mind of the Church on the matter; and again in the ORDINAMENTO DEI SEMINARI published on 26 April 1920 by the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, the injunctions of Trent, of Leo XIII, of St. Pius X and of the new Code of Canon Law about this matter are re-enacted.¹⁴ But the real death blow was reserved, as we said, to Pius XI, who just a few months after his election to the Chair of Peter, sent to Cardinal Bisleti, Prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries, the momentous Apostolic Letter OFFICIORUM OMNIUM dated on 1 August 1922.¹⁵ In this papal document the Holy Father vigorously expresses himself thus:

¹³ Cf. Cenacchi, pp. 128-129; L. G. García, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Litt. Circ. S.C. Cons., LE VISITE APOSTOLICHE: *ap. Enchiridion Clericorum*, *op. cit.*, n. 862.

¹⁴ Cf. Cenacchi, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁵ A.A.S., 14 (1922), pp. 449-458. Cf. Cenacchi, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

"One thing stands uppermost in Our mind's solicitude. IT IS NECESSARY TO DO BY ALL MEANS what Our predecessors Leo VIII and Pius X have so often commanded: THAT ECCLESIASTICAL SEMINARIES SHOULD SERVE NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN THAT FOR WHICH THEY WERE FOUNDED, namely, TO FORM, AS IT IS FITTING, THE SACRED MINISTERS.

"For this reason, THERE SHOULD BE NO PLACE IN THEM FOR BOYS AND YOUTHS WHO DO NOT FEEL ANY INCLINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD; NOT ONLY BECAUSE COMPANIONSHIP OF THESE WITH THE SEMINARIANS IS VERY HARMFUL, but also because *all the acts of piety (methods of instruction and discipline) have to be oriented exclusively towards the adequate formation of the students' character for the sacred ministry.*

"LET THIS BE THE MOST SACRED LAW OF ALL SEMINARIES, WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTION. HAD THIS BEEN COMPLIED WITH, MORE FAITHFULLY, UP TO THE PRESENT, THERE WOULD NOT BE SUCH A GREAT DEARTH OF PRIESTS, ALMOST EVERYWHERE. It has been noticed as a common tendency that *Seminaries are not being run in accordance to their specific nature. They retain the name of Seminaries. In reality however while they render much good to the civil society, they are of little worth or totally useless for the sacred ministry.*"¹⁰

¹⁰ "Illud enimvero maxime Nobis est curae, MODISQUE OMNIBUS EFFICIENDUM EST, quod decessores Nostri Leo XIII et Pius X *saepius praeceperunt, UT SACRA SEMINARIA, NISI AD EAM REM, CUIUS CAUSA CONDITA SUNT, NE ADHIBENTUR, ID EST, AD SACRORUM ADMINISTROS, UT OPORTET, INSTITUENDOS. QUARE NON MODO IN EIS LOCUS ESSE NON DEBET PUERIS VEL ADOLESCENTULIS, QUI NULLAM AD SACERDOTIUM PRAESEFERANT PROPENSIONEM VOLUNTATIS, — HORUM ENIM CUM PIETATIS EXERCITATIONIBUS GENUS HUC OMNINO SPECTENT OPORTET, UT AD PERFUNCTIONEM DIVINI MUNERIS ACCOMODATE ALUMNORUM ANIMI PRAEPARENTUR.*

"HAEC ESTO SEMINARIORUM OMNIUM, NULLO EXCEPTO, SANCTISSIMA LEX; CUI QUIDEM SI RELIGIOSIUS USQUE AD-

The great Pope made this forceful pronouncement on the ill that plagued for so long clerical formation began his pontificate by announcing in the same aforesaid document that he considered as "the greatest and most urgent duty of his immense apostolic office to procure and provide the Church with sufficient number of good ministers"¹⁷; later, on 21 December 1935 he issued the Magna Charta of the Catholic Priesthood in his masterful Encyclical AD CATHOLICI SACERDOTII; and a few days before his death, in his last posthumous Letter addressed to the Episcopate of the Philippines on 18 January 1939 he affirmed that he regarded that Encyclical as "the most important document" of his entire pontificate. He was the first Pope, and up to the present the only one, who, prompted by his interest in priests and their adequate formation, reserved to himself the office of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries.¹⁸ Pius XI deserves indeed to be reckoned in Church history as one of the greatest champions of priestly formation. And with the words quoted above from OFFICIORUM OMNIUM he put the official and definitive seal to the verdict of the Magisterium that stigmatized *mixed priestly training* as contrary to the nature proper of the authentic Seminary and harmful to the promotion of priestly vocations.

The Church has spoken in such a way that no excuse can be alleged to circumvent the law of seminarians' segregation from lay students. Later on, as we have already said elsewhere, Pope Pius XII tried to rectify certain deviations or misinterpretations of that law, and pointed out the mistake of educating future diocesan priests in *excessive* isolation from the world. In his great Encyclical MENTI NOSTRAE of 23 September 1950 the Supreme Pontiff made clear the disadvantages

HUC OBTEMPERATUM ESSET, TANTA FERE UBIQUE NON ESSET PAUCITAS SACERDOTUM."

"Nam hoc est in proclivi, quae non congruenter suae propriae naturae regantur Seminaria, ea suum quidem retinere nomen, re autem vera societati civili multum prodesse posse, at sacro ordini vix aliquid aut omnino nihil proficere." Cf. Cenacchi, op. cit., pp. 152-153; L.G. García, op. cit., pp. 55-56; *Enchiridion Clericorum*, op. cit., n. 1151.

¹⁷ Cf. Epist. Apost. OFFICIORUM OMNIUM, 1 Aug. 1922: ap. Cenacchi, op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁸ Cf. S.C. de Sem., op. cit., p. 249.

of Seminary training "in an environment *too isolated* from the world"; and so he cautioned "that the students come in *closer contact*, GRADUALLY AND PRUDENTLY, with the judgments and tastes of the people in order that when they begin their ministry they will not feel themselves disorientated".¹⁰ We underlined the words TOO ISOLATED and CLOSER CONTACT because they show the unfair exaggeration incurred by those who accused our Seminaries of yesterday as *absolutely* closed to the world, and their methods of education *identical* to those of a monastic novitiate. The Pope indicates that there was an *excessive* isolation (at least in *some* or *many* Seminaries), and *not enough* contact with the world: that is all. Let us not make him say what he did not. And we stress also the words GRADUALLY AND PRUDENTLY, because these two qualifying adverbs are precisely what modern innovators seem to ignore or forget in advocating an *indiscriminate* and *unreserved* "openness" and "insertion" in the world. From the very words of the Pope we must conclude that a certain separation (more properly called *segregation*) of seminarians from the world OUGHT TO EXIST. Their lofty vocation, and the *special* (not abnormal, but out of the ordinary) way of life they will have to live, demands it. Pius XII does not contradict the doctrine of his predecessors, Leo XIII, Pius X and Pius XI. All he wants is to correct the defects of narrow and rigorous interpretations which confuse diocesan seminaries with religious novitiates, the formation of a clergy called to active life with the training of a clergy called to the contemplative life.

But the mind of Pius XII was certainly alien to the rash and unjustified "openness to or insertion in the world" which is being advocated these days, because such type of mixed priestly training if not completely identical with what prevailed in the past to the great harm of the Church, has so many points of similarity that, to our judgment, it will bring upon the Church the same baneful effects today as it did yesterday.

¹⁰ A.A.S., 42 (1950), pp. 686-687: trans. Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, Indiana, "The Popes and the Priesthood" (*Seven Papal Documents*), Revised 7th edition, 1963, St. Meinrad Archabbey, p. 120.

The reason is simple. In spite of the much vaunted "age of maturity" of our times, human nature, whether we like it or not, is the same. The passions of inexperienced youth and the seductions of the world do not change: or if they do, they do from bad to worse. Our youths would not be *normal* if they did not undergo the risks inherent to the crisis of puberty. It is absurd to treat them as if they have already acquired maturity and self-dominion necessary to overcome that crisis, when actually they are still in the period of growth and in the process of formation. It is by means of a sound Christian education and discipline that they will acquire the real maturity and self-control which, with the help of God's grace, can make them persevere in the conquest of their natural instincts or disorderly appetites, and come up to the sublime demands of a total commitment in the priestly life.

(to be continued in the next issue)