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A guide to formation
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Celibacy



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A GUIDE TO FORMATION IN PRIESTLY CELIBACY

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

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SACRED CONGREGATION FOR
CATHOLIC EDUCATION

A GUIDE TO FORMATION
IN PRIESTLY CELIBACY

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A PRESENTATION

The Holy Father in his Encyclical Letter "Sacerdotalis caelibatus" (n. 16) found an "opportunity for setting forth anew and in a way more suited to the men of our time the fundamental reasons for sacred celibacy". At the same time he was concerned that those who decide to become priests be suitably trained in this matter and, therefore, His Holiness willed that "opposite instructions be drawn up with the help of truly qualified men treating with all necessary detail the theme of chastity. They should be sent out as soon as possible to provide those who, within the Church, have the great responsibility of preparing future priests, with timely and competent assistance" (n. 61).

This present document is to be understood as an answer to this order of the Pope.

The late hour for this publication can be explained above all by the concern that—following the instructions of the Encyclical—many experts be consulted. Furthermore, given the seriousness of this matter, it was necessary to go through several editings of the text so that the observations that were received from many quarters might be taken into account. Also this lateness can be explained by a concern to submit the text to the Episcopal Conferences and then to look at it again in the light of their suggestions.

The up-to-date character and suitability of this document, given the fact that it does not enter into the theoretical discussion of celibacy, was not spoiled by this delay.

The spirit of this "orientation" is sufficiently emphasized in the text itself, in the title, and in the foreward. Education for celibacy is motivated and regulated, before everything else, by the love of Christ which is at the bottom of this commitment. Without a deep love of Christ, sacerdotal celibacy loses all meaning.

Still, the meaning and exercise of celibacy are conditioned by human elements which must absolutely be looked at. Indeed, it would be a serious mistake, today more than ever, not to take them into account.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, which, for reasons of competence, has undertaken the preparation of this document, is happy to offer it to Bishops and to those in charge of the formation of candidates for the priesthood. It is our hope that this contribution to their difficult work — in an area that is extremely delicate yet fundamental — will be favorably received, responsibly studied, and, with the help of God's grace, put to practical use for the good of the Church.

Rome, from the offices of the Sacred Congregation, Holy Thursday, April 11, 1974.

Gabriel Marie Cardinal Garrone, *Prefect*

Archbishop Joseph Schröffer, *Secretary*

FOREWORD

1. *Nature and purposes of these guidelines:*

This document does not present "directives" so much as a general orientation about formation for priestly celibacy, perennially valid no matter what the social conditions might be, but which needs an educator's skill to be put into practice. This is a response to the desire expressed in the Encyclical Letter "On Priestly Celibacy" that appropriate instructions be issued to help those who have the serious responsibility of preparing future priests for a life of sacerdotal celibacy.¹

These guidelines arise from the present-day conditions of the Church and have as their purpose the forming of candidates for the priesthood in sacred celibacy, freely accepted as a gift from the Holy Spirit. This, however, is not intended to derogate in any way from the different situation in the life and educational approach of the Eastern rites of the Church.

Holy celibacy is a "precious gift" which God freely gives to those whom He calls. Those so called, however, have the duty to foster the most favorable conditions so that this gift might bear its fruit.² It is the educator's task, therefore, to cultivate in his students an appreciation for the gift of celibacy, a disposition for its acceptance, a recognition of its presence, and its practice.

2. *The specific reason for these guidelines:*

Sex education, whether as a preparation for marriage or for celibacy, is a difficult and delicate matter, especially in the social and cultural climate of today. This is particularly the case regarding

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: A.A.S., 59 (1967), p. 682, n. 61.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatum totius*, n. 10; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; PAUL VI, Apost. Exhort. *Evangelica testificatio*, 29 June 1971: A.A.S., 63 (1971), p. 505, n. 15; SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, part a., I, n. 4, d.: A.A.S., 63 (1971), p. 917.

complete formation of those who are preparing for a life consecrated to God. As the recent document of the 1971 Synod of Bishops emphasizes, "in today's world celibacy is threatened from all sides by special difficulties, which, nonetheless, priests have experienced in various other times through the centuries". Indeed, "it must be recognized that celibacy, as a gift from God, cannot be kept unless the candidate is properly prepared for it".¹

Training men for a consecrated single life is an inescapable duty which falls upon all educators: the community of the family, of the parish, and of the seminary. In large measure, these bear the responsibility to form candidates for the priestly life.

The problem of formation for a celibate life is considered here mainly from the natural aspect in accordance with the principles of education. It must be constantly borne in mind, however, that such a problem cannot be resolved simply on the natural level, even with the best dispositions on the part of the candidates and the greatest care on the part of educators. Grace is a fundamental and necessary element in this formation — as Sacred Scripture emphatically states. (Ps. 126; Mk. 4, 26-29; 10, 27; Lk. 1, 37; Jn. 15, 5; I Cor. 3, 6; Gal. 5, 22-23; Phil. 4, 13). It is, moreover, equally essential to maintain the faithful observance of "the ascetical norms which have been tested by the experience of the Church and which are by no means less necessary in today's world".²

Young students must be convinced of the necessity of a very special asceticism in their lives, one that is far more demanding than what is required of the ordinary faithful and which is special to those aspiring to the priesthood.³

From their seminary days they must learn to recognize above everything the need to cultivate with all their hearts the grace which binds them to Christ, and seek to deepen their understanding of this mystery of sanctification. They must acquire an ever-increasing sense of the mystery of the Church and realize that otherwise their state of life will almost certainly begin to appear, even to them, inconsistent and absurd.⁴

¹ SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 917.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, p. 684 ff., n. 70.

⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, p. 687, n. 75.

3. *Reasons for up-dating:*

The problem under discussion has always existed. But it has acquired a special urgency and a greater importance in our day on account of a number of factors and causes among which the following deserve special mention:

— in the unfolding of salvation history, priestly celibacy is lived in accordance with new ways of thinking. It must be a witness to salvation offered to men according to their present-day spiritual needs;

— the human sciences — education, psychology and sociology — are in a continual state of development; they are ever searching for new methods, theoretical and practical;¹

— seminarians themselves manifest a new psychological sensitivity, tending to reject the bonds of convention and wanting to walk in the human order like other men. They extol freedom of choice and open-ended commitment to the ideal of the Gospel.

In the face of this, it is the duty of educators to be always up-to-date themselves. They must also read the signs of the times in the secular and Christian world of today.

All human institutions which proclaim lasting values and which are not merely expressions of some relative truth must undergo periodical up-dating. Priestly values, precisely because they are permanent and imperishable, must be considered in the context of a pilgrim Church moving towards the Risen Lord. These values must be expressed in a way that is suited to the present age. Indeed educators must proclaim a love for the eternal meaning of the priesthood, but in a manner adapted to our times.

4. *Adaptation to the situation of the local Churches:*

Formation in celibacy must be adapted not only to differing civilizations and historical periods, but also to the conditions of the local Churches. Since these can differ considerably from one to another, their members' psychological and sociological outlooks will differ accordingly and they will bear witness to the Gospel in different ways. Seminary training must, therefore, reflect the kind of education which is suited to local Church life, always, of course,

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Past. Const. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1; VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 681, n. 61.

in accordance with the norms established by the Bishops' Conferences. Priestly celibacy, like the priesthood itself, is a consecration to God on behalf of the people whom priests are sent to serve.¹

These guidelines, which apply to today, are not intended to usurp the responsibility of the local Church to educate its priests. On the contrary, local Churches have a duty to re-examine their spiritual needs, their ecclesiastical life-style and the efficiency of the local seminaries to provide a solid education and a witness in the world of today. Indeed, each single presbyterate ought to discover God's plan by studying present day problems in the light of God's Word.²

5. *Adaptation to the individual:*

This document presents a number of suggestions for training to a life of celibacy. Although it is divided into sections, it would be a mistake to suppose that they can be taken separately without reference to the development of the single theme of the whole work. It is also important to remember that despite great bio-psychological and socio-cultural differences among individual seminarians, the fact remains that problems about sex are substantially identical for all human beings, regardless of their state of life.

The universal character of this matter indicates that there can be some general guidelines for it. It is necessary, of course, that these guidelines be put into practice and when doing so that effort be made to find the best way to apply them to the needs of the individuals being trained. It is the individual who is to be directed towards and selected for the priesthood, and a constant search needs to be made for the best means of doing so even when one is dealing with a variety of persons with characteristics in the normal range of human behavior, but particularly when one also has the duty to recognize those who are truly atypical or possess deviant personalities.

These guidelines are written with the training of normal men in mind, since candidates for the priesthood ought to be normal. In cases of more or less abnormal persons, a more specialized kind of work has to be undertaken, but, of course, that kind of student must be clearly told that the priestly life is not for him.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatum totius*, n. 1.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

PART I

THE MEANING OF CELIBACY IN CONTEMPORARY PRIESTLY LIFE

6. *States of authentic Christian life:*

Matrimony and celibacy are two states of life which are authentically Christian. Both are ways of following the Christian vocation, a vocation that is expressed in its fulness in the totality of the Church.¹

Celibacy for the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19, 12) is a gift that Jesus Christ gave to His Church. It is not a charism that belongs essentially or exclusively to the priesthood. It is not the unique vocation of a priest. It can be seen in the Church lived in a variety of ways by groups of persons called to the practice of the evangelical counsels.

Celibacy constitutes a sign which completes the total picture of the other evangelical counsels. Insofar as it is chosen for the kingdom of heaven, it implies fundamentally the Gospel virtues of poverty and obedience. In fact, these are intimately connected with one another, and complementary to each other, and they signify a life which is perfectly evangelical in nature.

I. CELIBACY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

7. *Meaning of the sacrament of Holy Orders:*

The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders enable Christians to share, through the paschal mystery of our Lord, in the priesthood of Christ. Holy Orders is a participation in the "capital" function of Christ the Priest. It confers the ministerial priesthood which is different, not only in degree, but *in essence* from the common priesthood bestowed by Baptism.² It makes priests to be "ministers" that is, representatives of Christ as Head of the Church

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, *loc. cit.*, p. 665, n. 20.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 10.

and partakers of the authority by which Christ Himself causes His Body to grow and sanctifies and governs It.¹

Presbyters "by virtue of the unction of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character by which they resemble Christ the Priest".² As other Christs and with the love of Christ, they are sent to save the People of God; they are called to direct men, through the ecclesial community founded on God's Word and the Eucharist, to an ever deeper and larger life in the Spirit of Christ, which brings them progressively closer to living like those who have risen in the Lord, always witnessing to His resurrection.

8. *The priesthood and the evangelical virtues:*

The evangelical virtues are at the same time both imperatives and graces of priestly consecration. A candidate for the priesthood, by his consecration to Christ the Priest, assumes also the Gospel's commitment connected with it, prolonging the very mission of Christ and bearing witness to Him by an evangelical life.

The ministerial priesthood demands a special kind of love, which is called pastoral charity, by which a priest endeavors to give his entire life for the salvation of others. The ministerial priesthood requires this so that love can be offered to others. The evangelical counsels are precisely to be of service in this pastoral charity.

If it is true that every Christian is consecrated to God in Christ and to the service of his brothers, it is no less true that consecration to God in the priesthood demands an even more generous and complete dedication. It is precisely in the practice of the evangelical virtues that one finds an adequate response to the ideal of priestly perfection.

9. *Specific nature of celibacy:*

Celibacy has a clearly positive value in that it makes one totally available for the exercise of the priestly ministry. It means consecration to God with an undivided heart. It is a sign which testifies to an almost paradoxical love for the kingdom of heaven.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2.

² VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2. Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19 ff.

Speaking of celibacy, the Synod cited above states: "priestly celibacy harmonizes fully with the calling to follow Christ and also with the unconditioned response of the called, who assumes the duty of pastoral service". The same document underlines the fact that "if celibacy is lived in the spirit of the Gospel, in prayer, vigilance, poverty, joy, the shunning of honors and in fraternal love, it becomes a sign which cannot long remain hidden; on the contrary, it will effectively proclaim Christ to the human race, even in our time".¹

Celibacy transcends the natural order. It involves a total personal commitment. It cannot be maintained except with God's grace. More than a mere law of the Church, celibacy must be understood as a "qualification" which receives added value because it is publicly offered in the presence of the whole Church. Celibacy is an offering, an oblation, a real and true sacrifice publicly given, not merely the giving up of the sacrament of Marriage, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. "The seminarian must understand this form of life not as something imposed from without, but rather as an expression of his own free giving, which, in turn, is accepted and ratified by the Church in the person of the Bishop".²

10. *Celibacy and the apostolate:*

It is a fact that Jesus Christ placed before all His disciples very strict requirements in order that they might be His followers. But He demanded even more from those whom He called to follow Him as His apostles. Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything to follow Christ (Mk. 1, 16-20). Jesus Himself praised celibacy embraced for the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19, 12). The Apostle Paul, who personally lived this evangelical radicalism, considered celibacy a divine gift through which, with an undivided heart, one could better dedicate oneself to the Lord.

Through celibacy, the availability of the ministers of the Church is reinforced, their power to bear witness is increased, and they preserve the freedom to oppose every oppression. The celibate shares wondrously in the "kenosis", which was the chosen way of Christ in His paschal mystery.

¹ SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali, loc. cit.*, p. 915.

² SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali, loc. cit.*, p. 916.

Implanted in priestly life, even though not absolutely necessary either for the priesthood or the exercise of the priesthood, celibacy is most fitting because it sheds lustre on the nature of the priesthood and it enhances the work of the priesthood itself. It eminently actualizes that consecration to God, conformity to Christ, and dedication to the Church which are the characteristics proper to the priesthood. It expresses the ideal which the priestly character is supposed to convey.

II. *Celibacy viewed eschatologically:*

Celibacy brings into focus and gives impetus to priestly love. It enables a priest to perfect this love and, in a very real way, to anticipate the future life of love with the Risen Christ to which the eyes of a priest must be turned.¹

By celibacy, embraced and lived for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, a priest answers the call to imitate Christ. He anticipates the world to come, already present through faith and charity. Consecrated celibacy constitutes a sign of eschatological hope, a prophetic sign of that future reality when all men, united in Jesus by His Spirit, will live only to glorify the Father.

Every Christian has a duty to be united with the love of Christ and to bear witness to this love. Thus, every Christian life is permeated with an eschatological character, from martyrdom to the religious life, from the priesthood to the married state. Strictly speaking, celibacy does not, therefore, confer an eschatological character on the priesthood. The priest already has this in himself, just as Christians in all other states and vocations possess it in themselves, in their own special way.² But, priestly celibacy harmonizes with the eschatological aspect of the priesthood, and in certain ways, reinforces this aspect and enables the priest to be very fully immersed in the perfect love of the Risen Christ.³

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, *loc. cit.*, p. 663, n. 17.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 670 ff., nn. 33-34.

12. *Problems of priestly celibacy:*

Today the question is asked whether a priest could not remain a good priest without remaining celibate. However one looks at it, — whether from the natural or the Christian point of view — the choice of priestly celibacy seems to imply the sacrifice of something good. For instance, it is possible to suppose that marriage, in certain places, might facilitate an interest in priestly vocations and even, for some priests, might mean a better balanced emotional life. However, such reasoning would not be able to take away the fact that celibacy, in itself, is more appropriate to the mission of the priest and that this sacrifice can be transformed into redemptive love.

There is no state of life or vocation that does not imply the sacrifice of something good. This is not only because vocations are lived by created human beings, but also because they come from an outpouring of the grace of the Easter mystery of our Lord.

Whether it is appropriate to link celibacy with the priestly office or to allow the two to be separated in some limited way is not simply a matter of disciplinary choice. It is a pastoral decision of the Church's government based not solely on reasons of faith, nor on the results of sociological research, but on a mixture of both.¹ In any analysis of the values of the priesthood, these two elements are codetermining factors, that is, a living faith and a studied reflection on the experience of priests.

13. *Reasons for celibacy:*

The Church has deep reasons for demanding celibacy of her priests. They are founded on the priest's imitation of Christ, on his role as representative of Christ, Head and Leader of the community, on his availability for service which is indispensable for the constant building up of the Church.² The Church is not prompted by reasons of "ritualistic purity" nor by the concept that only through celibacy is holiness possible.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 29; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 674, n. 42.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 915.

Among the historical reasons adduced to justify a priest's celibacy there may be some which are no longer valid with the passing of time, but this should not cause the rejection of the connection between celibacy and the priesthood. This connection is a living reality in the Church. It is experience that is linked not so much to this or that argument as to the fundamental fact and reality of Christianity itself, which is the Person of Jesus Christ, at the same time Virgin and Priest.¹

The Church has never set out celibacy as simply an external, impersonal element, but as an integral part of a priest's life and ministry. It always originates as a gift given from above, a gift which pervades a priestly vocation, becoming an essential and qualifying component of it.

14. *Relationship between celibacy and the priesthood:*

The relationship between celibacy and the priesthood appears all the more clear as one considers the christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological aspects of celibacy. This is why the Second Vatican Council speaks of a manifold fitness (*multimodam convenientiam*) when referring to the consecration and mission of the priest within the framework of the mystery of Christ and the Church.² The 1971 Synod of Bishops re-affirmed the existing law of celibacy "by reason of the intimate and manifold fitness between the office of pastor and the celibate life".³

A priest is a representative of the Person of Christ. By his ordination he is deputed to build up the People of God through his ministry of Word and Eucharist and to show forth brotherly love in a unique and sacramental manner. Equally in both these ways he contributes to the cause of the building of the kingdom.

The invitation of Jesus to the apostles to leave everything enabled them to be more available for the coming of the kingdom. But it did more. It also offered them the opportunity of entering the apostolic communion where they could experience deep and enriching interpersonal relationships.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 43, 46.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

³ SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 916.

Priestly celibacy is a communion in the celibacy of Christ. The newness of the Catholic priesthood is an intimate sharing in the very newness of Christ.¹ It is a vision of faith that has consequently governed the development of arguments in favor of sacred celibacy in its christological, ecclesiological and eschatological meaning.²

A priest, who really shares in the one and only priesthood of our Redeemer, finds in Him "an immediate model and a supreme ideal". Such a high ideal is obviously capable of inspiring heroism and even the most difficult undertakings.³ Hence, there arises a desire in those exercising the priesthood to reproduce the same conditions and outlook of life as Christ experienced, in order to effect the closest possible imitation of Him.⁴

15. *Modern difficulties with clerical celibacy:*

Priestly celibacy does not enjoy the esteem of modern society.⁵ Ideas today are in a process of radical revision. Society does not stress the stability of vocation, but rather the opposite. This situation is especially responsible for producing a celibacy crisis. According to one opinion, celibacy interferes to some degree with the priest's mission to the poor and downtrodden. The priest should want to be part of the human struggle, without privileges, exemptions, or limitations. He should want to share in the basic human experiences (work, insecurity, housing, love, culture, recreation, etc.). Most of all he should feel strongly drawn to human love.

Apart from the fact that today it is not easily understood, priestly celibacy is especially difficult for those who feel their autonomy is restricted or their rights are being ignored. In these situations, a person instinctively seeks, as a form of compensation, a supplemental dose of affection, even though it is forbidden.

Indeed, a search for compensatory affection may be made easy by the simple fact that women, with whom a priest establishes a relationship by reason of his ministry, are inclined to confide in

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19.

² Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 663-670, nn. 17-34.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19, p. 666, n. 31.

⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 665, n. 21.

⁵ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 657, n. 1.

him precisely because his celibate state encourages trust. At times women might seek in him masculine support. Furthermore, in today's widely promiscuous environment, the problem is made more acute because of provocative fashions and the widespread use of the means of social communication (press, cinema, radio, television),¹ dangers to which the chastity of candidates for the priesthood is also exposed.

16. *Presuppositions for training for celibacy:*

Looked at from today's point of view, the celibate must obviously be a person who is allowed to develop to human emotional maturity while preserving a life of continence as an expression of apostolic love.² Continence, when it is not inspired interiorly by apostolic love, is not the continence of the Gospel. For the consecrated person who has chosen celibacy in order to live and communicate ecclesial charity in the most heartfelt and unique way possible, continence without apostolic love is a contradiction.

A celibate person who is emotionally and spiritually mature does not feel himself hemmed in by canonical legislation extrinsic to his life. Nor does such a celibate see the necessary precautions, which he must always take, as something imposed on him from outside.

Celibate chastity is not some kind of taxation that has to be paid to the Lord, but rather a gift that one receives from His mercy. A person entering this state of life must not see himself so much taking on a burden as rather receiving a liberating grace.

The purpose of seminary formation is to form a responsible and mature man into a faithful and perfect priest. Modern conditions in the world, socially negative as they are, do not make becoming mature and responsible an easy task. This places an increasing personal burden on the candidates for the priesthood themselves, since the duty of fully bringing their vocations to realization rests basically on them.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 10-11.

PART II

GOALS OF SEMINARY TRAINING

17. *Threefold structure of seminary training:*

An enlightened training for priestly celibacy will take into account all the aims of seminary formation. Woven into this general pattern of formation will be the specific elements necessary for a training in priestly celibacy. It is precisely these elements which are the object of these guidelines.

Seminary training must have as its aim the forming of men into shepherds of souls, after the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Teacher, Priest, and Pastor.¹ Such an educational purpose presupposes and implies that the students will be at the same time formed as men, as Christians, and as priests.² Therefore, plans for priestly formation should have three aims, answering the need to form personalities which are integrally human, Christian, and priestly.

Educational planning must always show a full and balanced regard for the relationships among these three levels of formation, never giving more attention to one than to another, neither separating Christian formation from the human, nor priestly formation from Christian.

Essential distinctions, to be harmonized in unity, must be kept clear in this threefold structure of training — human, Christian, priestly. So too their complementarity and interaction: indeed, if training for manhood is a pre-condition for living a Christian life, grace is the dynamic force for the realization of a full humanity.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 4; Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28.

² PAUL VI, in the Enc. Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: A.A.S., 55 (1963), pp. 984 ff. calls attention to "the necessity of the simultaneous formation of the man, the Christian and the priest" and affirms that "the formation of the man must go hand in hand with that of the Christian and the future priest".

I. FORMATION IN HUMAN MATURITY

18. *Concept of human maturity:*

The specific matter of priestly celibacy is associated with the basic problem of the emotional maturity of the candidate. It is part of the wider and essential problem of psychological and moral maturity. Human maturity, as shown by a mature personality, is a harmony of elements and an integration of tendencies and values.

As modern psychologists correctly observe, maturity is not one single quality; it has many facets, each of which can be developed in various ways, and must be carefully considered when determining the criteria by which maturity is judged. Maturity, then, is a global condition qualified by a typical mode of being, and by a style which, while it escapes objective measurement, manifests itself in its own special way.

Maturity is a complex reality which cannot be easily or fully defined. In general, however, one can judge as mature a man who has brought to reality his vocation as a man; in other words, a person who has acquired a ready and habitual capacity to act freely; a man who has integrated his developed human potential with habits of virtue; a man who has acquired an easy and habitual emotional self-control by integrating his emotional drives and placing them at the service of his reason; a man who enjoys community living because of his willingness to give himself to serve others; one who devotes himself to his profession steadily and calmly; one whose conduct obviously follows his conscience; a man who uses freedom to explore, investigate, and develop; who can mold events and bring them to future fruition; finally, a man who has succeeded in bringing all his specifically human possibilities and potentialities to their due development.

19. *Human maturity in education:*

Educating a man means promoting his "growth" in various primary areas (physical, intellectual, moral, social, religious) and in certain secondary areas (artistic training, vocational training — in the sense of professional education, training for a certain role in human society), but in such a way that the whole complex work

of education be so coordinated as to result in a unified whole of the biopscho-social personality of each person in his own proper and particular individuality.

What makes a man educated is his ability freely, consciously, and responsibly to will "the good" with the fullness of his psychological and spiritual personality. This is the kind of human maturity which the Council presented as the purpose of education. To be educated to this degree is the inalienable right of every man.¹ This is all the more applicable when one is dealing with the formation of students in a seminary. This is because God calls real men and if there are no men, there can be no call.²

Seminary formation must allow the candidates to develop as men in such a way that their religious training will not replace their human formation, but rather will gradually penetrate and purify it.

20. *Human emotional maturity:*

Maturity must be acquired in all its aspects, including, naturally and above all, emotional maturity. Indeed the role of the emotions must be considered a fundamental element in the building of the personality. For this element is one of the major contributory processes in personality-integration, in the unfolding of emotional and sexual relationships, finding responsible fulfilment in work or a profession, and in cultivating friendly social contacts. Precisely because the emotions are looked at as basic to a person, emotional maturity can be held to be an indispensable requirement for the best functioning of a personality.

Considered as a part of psychic life, the emotions are variously understood: either as the complex of internal and external reactions to satisfaction, or as the ability to show feelings, or as the ability to love, or as the potential for a man to form attachments.

A well integrated person knows how to make his reason rule his emotional nature, while the less adjusted a person is, the more his emotions will dominate his rational nature. Therefore, an educational program that aims to form a well-developed personality must above all help the students to acquire the ability to balance their emotions.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 11.

Deeply connected with the emotional factor is the problem of adaptation, which consists in facing one's problems calmly, accepting responsibility for them, and working out solutions for the difficulties encountered. Inability to adapt, on the other hand, carries with it a domination by negative emotions, hostility factors, a feeling of dependence, social inadequacy, and, at the same time, the pressure of unresolved problems.

21. *Man's sexual maturity:*

When referring to emotions, the "sexual dimension" is especially important. The existence of a close link between emotions and sexuality and their interdependence in the wholeness of a personality cannot be denied, even though these two things are diversely understood. In order to talk about a person as mature, his sexual instinct must have overcome two immature tendencies, narcissism and homosexuality, and must have arrived at heterosexuality. This is the first step in sexual development, but a second step is also necessary, namely "love" must be seen as gift and not a form of selfishness.

The consequence of this development is sexual conduct on a level that can be properly called "human", whereby a person gains self-knowledge with self-esteem, and acquires a new concept of himself.

Sexuality must be considered as a determining factor in the maturing of the personality. Sexual maturity represents a vital step in the attainment of psychological adulthood. Hence, it is necessary to give a proper place to sex in the total picture of a personality in the process of formation.

A mature sexuality, with the characteristics here underlined, cannot be attained without conflict or without sacrifice and difficulty. A maturing person must always struggle because at every moment he has to make a choice: what need, that is, should he satisfy along one or other line of his potentialities.

22. *Integrated sexuality:*

To adequately judge what is "well-adjusted sexuality" remains a most difficult problem. Sex should be looked on as one of the human values, not as something negative or frustrating for an individual's development. The intrinsic worth of sex must be seen and accepted as having a proper place in the scale of values, a place that is important as an "element of expression" and as "an integrating factor".

Sexual maturity entails not only accepting sex as part of the totality of human values, but also seeing it as giving a possibility for "offering", that is, a capacity for giving pure love, altruistic love. When such a capacity is sufficiently acquired, an individual becomes capable of spontaneous contacts, emotional self-control and commitment of his free will. This giving-aspect of sex involves a feeling of being "one for another". Therefore, self-giving is not entirely separate from receiving. Sex introduces into life an aspect of relationship and, therefore, the capability of both giving and receiving, a disposition to accept love that is offered in order to let oneself be fully possessed.

23. *Human self-control:*

In order to make full use of his potential, an individual must gain self-control. What he must control are the continuing changes that go on within him, as they go on in everyone, that is, his desires, impulses, thoughts and habits. Self-control really means self-discipline: imposing order on mental activity and external behavior in such a way as to produce joy, happiness, and well-being.

The dynamic structuring of a person is marked by conflicts and tensions. He only reaches his full maturity by a gradual and progressive combination of contrasting forces. There is tension between a person's ideals and his drives, and it is exactly in this area that self-control is required if one wants to attain stability, adaptation, and success.

Self-control does not mean a static quality or a colorless stability in one's social and personal behavior. One can note rather in the human psyche an impulse toward self-improvement. It is a tendency which, through conscious action and personal effort, goes be-

yond merely spontaneous development or simple biological growth. Men do not only grow and develop but, since they think and are free, they also make progress. This interior drive that generates progress is nothing other than the actualization of man's ever-fresh potentialities. The process of making a personality whole is done by repeatedly satisfying some drives and not satisfying others. In other words, it is brought about by channelling both the drives and activated potentialities of an individual. In man's very dynamism there is implicit a practice of asceticism — but one of an eminently positive kind.

II. FORMATION IN CHRISTIAN MATURITY

24. *The Christian dimension in education:*

Christian education — to which a Christian as a child of God through Baptism has a right — ought to help a person become mature not only in a human way, but principally in a Christian sense. Christian maturity comes about by a gradual growth in the faith, by the adoration of God as Father — especially through participation in the Liturgy — by growing more perfect in Christ, and by contributing to the building up of His Mystical Body.

A Christian, even though he is already living in Christ, can never feel adequately transformed in His Spirit. He has continually to complete the work of creation-redemption within himself as well as in other men and in all earthly things. Nevertheless, one can affirm that there does exist something called Christian maturity.

Seminary training, then, must bring maturity to the Christian personality of the students.¹ The education given in seminaries must primarily envisage unity, that is, what is common, and only after that, differentiation.² Following this line, the training in seminaries should not be completely different from the normal education of the Christian. In fact there are not two types of education, but one basic type. This is the education of a Christian man, which at a later stage is differentiated between the distinct vocation of the lay person and that of the priest.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 3, 8, 11; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, Rome 1970, nn. 48-58.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, Chapt. II, III, IV.

25. *Maturity as a requirement of the Christian life:*

Even prior to its requirement for the priestly state, human maturity is an elementary requirement for a Christian life. The history of priests who have defected is often that of men somehow lacking: of personalities without unity or integration where one would look in vain for maturity and balance.

Christianity certainly should be seen in its transcendental dimension, but it can also be viewed in its capacity for human advancement. This is especially true today when there is a particular sensitivity about everything that concerns the development of mankind.

Psychological and emotional maturity is the goal of the many social and personal efforts being made for the complete development of man. It can be viewed as the premise of a rich supernatural development. This is the kind of maturity that Saint Paul exhorted the Ephesians to acquire so that they might arrive at the dimension of "the perfect Man, fully mature with the fulness of Christ Himself" (Eph. 4, 13).

The invitation to develop a fully human personality, although always present in the documents of the Magisterium, has recently taken on a particular urgency because of the progress of human science.¹

26. *Emotional maturity of the Christian:*

Emotional maturity receives enormous help from a Christian education. Indeed, insofar as the conditioning of the emotions is concerned, attention should not only be paid to natural factors, but also to the emotional repercussions resulting from sharing through Baptism in the very life of Jesus Christ, being under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and hearing the Word of the Lord.

A Christian lives in the Catholic Church, which is essentially a "brotherhood and a union of love", "a communion of life, charity,

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, nn. 1-2; Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 10-11; Decr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 29; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Populorum progressio*, 26 March, 1967: A.A.S., 59 (1967), p. 265, n. 16; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., 51.

and truth".¹ So sharing in the extensive social life of the Church, he finds ways wide open to love in his encounter with God and with his brothers.

Living in union with God and his neighbor, a Christian will find the kind of peace and security that endures, despite possible disturbances that come from struggling with his lower nature. The fact is that a Christian life does not eliminate the spontaneous reactions of nature, nor does it destroy neurotic inclinations acquired in childhood or deriving from a mistaken or an incomplete type of religious upbringing.

In this connection, it is good to mention that Christian training can help a great deal towards a man's positive acceptance of himself for what he really is, with his complex make-up, capacities, weaknesses, and lack of talent. Accepting oneself is an essential prerequisite for the personal maturing process at all levels. When, instead of such positive self-acceptance, there is the phenomenon called regression, one frequently sees abnormal behavior with compensatory overtones.

27. The sexual maturity of a Christian:

Christian pedagogy, in accordance with God's revelation, has its own proper perspective and evaluation of sex. Christianity sees sex as part of God's creation, a reality which does not have the body alone as its object, but involves the entire human being, a reality which has a determining role in the way a man matures, both physically and morally and, therefore, in the way a man develops in his resemblance to God. It sees sex as a reality which is actualized in personal encounter. Precisely because of this mutual person to person encounter, human sexual relationships are fundamentally different from animal mating.

In Christian education, love means the ability to open one's self to the needs of one's neighbor. It means conquering every form of selfishness. It means self-giving to others for the sake of others. Finally, it means active participation in the life of the community. Christian education holds that this kind of authentic love, which is

¹ VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 9.

the vocation of all men, can be lived both in matrimony and in celibacy.

Sexual fulfilment achieved in marriage is not necessary for the emotional formation of the human personality; nor will marriage in itself bring about harmonious development of the emotions. On the other hand, man is capable of sublimating his sexuality and finding fulfilment in non-sexual emotional relationships.

The virtue that governs the use of sex is chastity. This is a natural virtue; but in a Christian it acquires a supernatural dimension. Christian chastity leads to sanctity inasmuch as it is part of the supernatural order. The workings of the theological virtues give a new and higher significance to chastity and even change its very nature.¹ It becomes a gift from God with a power that enables the will not so much to suppress sexual desires as to integrate the sex drive into the entirety of the Christian personality.

28. *Christian self-control:*

Dominating control over sensual passion is demanded for a real spiritual life in Christ (I Cor. 1, 23). To suffer together with Jesus means to mortify one's passions for the purpose of being mystically united to Christ crucified. It is impossible to yield to concupiscence and at the same time lead the life of the Spirit (Rom. 8, 13; I Cor. 6, 9; Eph. 5, 5).

The Easter mystery, which, through Baptism, is at the root of Christian life, expresses in the truest and most vital way the basic dynamism of Christian existence. This mystery effectively brings together the basic requirements of a person both as human and as Christian, namely a self-affirmation in the very act of giving oneself to God and to neighbor.

In the present plan of salvation, the paschal mystery offers a theological and psychological basis for the kind of asceticism which alone seems capable of re-establishing the original harmony in man. The way of life revealed to us by the Easter mystery inseparably unites "renunciation" of some kinds of conduct with genuine "offering" of self, just as the death and resurrection of Jesus are theologically inseparable.

¹ Cf. *Summa theologica*, I-II, q. 63 a. 4.

Urged on by love, which grows stronger not weaker with effort, a Christian practices asceticism without even adverting to its existence, and renounces things often without realising it, because he feels the powerful attraction of a higher ideal.

III. FORMATION IN PRIESTLY MATURITY

29. *Formation from a pastoral viewpoint:*

The fundamental feature of a priestly personality, according to the Second Vatican Council, is that of a shepherd of souls, on the model of Jesus Christ, Teacher, Priest, and Pastor.¹ As a pastor, the priest must possess the charism of supporting and guiding the Christian community; he must build up the Catholic Church.

The principal purpose of seminary formation is to train true pastors of souls.² Pastoral formation is not to be only a separate aspect or part of formation; it should characterize priestly formation as such; should inspire and penetrate everything that has to do with the personal formation of candidates for the priesthood.

Everything in seminary formation ought to converge with complete harmony towards the goal of forming priest-pastors.³ This means that all the elements that make up the structure and function of a seminary have to be thought out and effectively geared toward the attainment of this goal. Educators have to keep before their eyes, besides their specialized activity and its aim, the pastoral formation of the seminarians.

30. *Human and Christian maturity in priests:*

A priestly vocation demands human and Christian maturity so that the answer to this divine call may be an answer based on faith, and so that the seminarian may be able to understand the sense of a vocation from God, and realise what it demands.

The specific maturity of the priest must be sought in what differentiates him from the ordinary Christian, that is to say in his

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 4-9.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 4.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 8-20; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 44-49.

unique relationship with the Body of Christ present in the Holy Eucharist as the principle and source of the ecclesial community of salvation and its saving mission. The priest is a "man of God taken from among men". His spirituality oscillates between these two poles, God and mankind. The relation between these two terms of reference is not one of alternatives, either God or men, but rather one of unity, both God and men. To be closely united to mankind a priest has to be deeply united with God first.

During his time of formation, a seminarist must pass from pre-adolescent immaturity to adult maturity, from an ordinary Christian life to a mature Christian life. In other words, he must learn to live, in a profoundly intense way, a life of faith, hope, and charity in Christ. Finally, he must advance to the level of priestly maturity, a more intimate sharing in the teaching, sanctifying, and ruling mission of Christ the Priest. Sacerdotal maturity includes and strengthens human and Christian maturity, but at the same time, it goes beyond these, permeating all the human and Christian elements in him, including, therefore, his emotional, sexual and active life.

31. *Emotional maturity in the priest:*

The choice of priestly celibacy does not interfere with the normal development of a person's emotional life, but, on the contrary, it presupposes it. A celibate is called to express his ability to love in a special way. Having grown up in human and divine love, a priest can responsibly decide the manner in which he will, for his whole life, form his emotional relationships.

Celibacy chosen "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" is the celibacy proper to the priest. It is falling in love. It is possible only for someone who has integrated it into his spiritual life. It is a matter of choosing exclusively, perpetually, and completely the unique and supreme love of Christ for the purpose of more deeply sharing His lot by the resplendent and heroic logic of a singular and unlimited love for Christ the Lord and for His Church.¹

By virtue of his celibacy, a priest becomes more totally a man

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus, loc. cit.*, pp. 666 ff., nn. 24 ff.

of God. He lets himself be more completely taken over by Christ, and lives only for Him. Virginal love invites him to possess God in a fuller way, to reflect Him and give Him to others in His fulness.

The love that a priest has for others must be essentially pastoral in aim. Externally it should be shown by a warm-heartedness which is indispensable in disposing people to accept the spiritual support a priest offers them.

A priest can form true and profound friendships. These are particularly useful to his emotional development when they are fostered within the priestly fraternity.¹

32. *Sexual maturity in the priest:*

Celibacy, as a personal option made for a higher good, even one completely on the natural level, can result in a fully mature and integrated personality. This can be even more true when celibacy is chosen for the kingdom of heaven, as can be seen in the lives of many saints and faithful, who dedicate themselves in a celibate life to the service of God and man, promoting human and Christian progress.²

The exclusive nature of a candidate's choice of priestly celibacy, when he becomes a special possession of God, determines also his duties and particular dedication to the love of God in Christ. One who chooses virginity in virtue of his determination to give himself exclusively to sharing in the priesthood of Christ is obliged to grow in love of God and his neighbor. If he does not progress in this love, he is not following his vocation.

There is something sublime in the qualities roused in a man's heart by natural fatherhood: an altruistic spirit, the assumption of heavy responsibilities, a capacity for love and a dedication enough to make any sacrifice, daily bearing of life's burdens and difficulties, prudent care for the future, etc. However, all this is equally true of spiritual paternity. Moreover, spiritual fatherhood, not being confined to the natural order, is even more responsible and heroic.

For this reason, celibacy is not for everyone. Celibacy requires

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 8, 14; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 688-689, nn. 79-81.

² Cf. SYNOD DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 915.

a special vocation from the Lord. Throughout the whole of life, it is never without risk and danger, since something can always occur to take the heart out of a man's universal and pastoral fatherhood and his exclusive dedication to Christ.

33. *Self-control of the priest:*

Continuous self-control implies constant effort. This is necessary not only to acquire emotional maturity, but also for persevering in it. Ongoing self-control impedes regression from emotional adulthood once this is attained. It is an irreplaceable factor in the practice of human, Christian, and priestly chastity, which should always be able to check any new or unforeseen resurgence of emotional stimulation.¹

In the Christian view of continuous and progressive self-control, priestly celibacy appears as a lifelong offering to our Lord. To be consecrated in holy celibacy is not simply a single action made once at ordination. It is rather something that has to be renewed again and again, in the constant vigilance a priest must exercise when faced with human attraction and the emotions and passion of affection and love.

Just as with natural human love, the fulness of love which is involved in celibacy requires the daily practice of glad self-renunciation. This is the only way to conquer the difficulties that, with the passage of time, can come from boredom or from the weakness of the flesh.

A priest should always find an incentive for self-control in the thought that the personal sacrifice demanded by his celibacy is serving the whole Church. His sacrifice underlines the spiritual dimension that must mark all love worthy of the name and it merits grace for Christian families.²

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 686-688, nn. 73, 77.

² Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 679, n. 57.

PART III

GUIDELINES FOR SEMINARY FORMATION

34. *Difficulties in formation:*

Training for a chaste life touches directly the sensitivity and feelings of the young and could disturb them psychologically. They can be extremely vivid and unruly. This is not unusual, considering the age we are dealing with, and one can expect the most surprising reactions. For example, in trying to forestall future deviation one could easily provoke it; exaggerating the importance of light developmental aberrations could give rise to obsessive complications and thus interfere with the elimination of these aberrations altogether.

What is being dealt with here is the training of an instinct which, more than any other, is subject to difficulty because of the intrusion of many psychological factors. Difficulty also comes simply from the range of differences that exist among individuals of the same sex. If sex education is hard when one is undertaking normal marriage preparation, how much more difficult it is when one undertakes to educate someone for a life of priestly celibacy, which is a supernatural mystery and the fruit of divine grace!

There is really no adequate or definitive solution to a problem of this sort which remains always open-ended. There cannot be a final solution because every solution has to depend upon the psychological and physical development of human life, on the rapid environmental and sociological changes in society, and on frequently unforeseeable circumstances. Among these latter, one would have to include supernatural aid which is not under human control and which depends upon God's generosity, even though He is disposed to grant even more than one might request.

35. *Awareness of the complexity of the problem:*

The educator must be aware of the fact that the psychic, moral, and religious life of the future adult and future priest he is dealing with will greatly depend on his understanding and his manner of dealing with and solving the problems of forming the student in chastity. Hence, he must use the greatest tact in treating sexual and emotional problems in students' formative years.

The educator must thoroughly understand the physiological, psychological, pedagogical, moral, and ascetical complexity of celibacy and chastity. The aim of priestly celibacy is the attainment of a chastity which is valued, loved, guarded, solidly possessed and thoroughly tested, a chastity that not only resists the blows which can ever increase in intensity, but which is an inspiration for the apostolate.

Therefore, the kind of training in chastity that is given in seminaries must be enlightened, that is, based on clear teaching, avoiding any reticence or insincerity. It must be positive, which is to say, it must be directed towards the acquisition of a mature attitude to sex as a correct and happy manner of loving, and not simply as something which is to be avoided as sinful. At the same time, it must also be complete, organic, and personalized, that is, adapted to each individual in his concrete yet different personal development.¹

Candidates for the priesthood will be able to overcome the difficulties that are peculiar to celibacy provided the proper conditions are maintained. This means they must achieve a natural equilibrium through the effect of an ordered network of human relationships. They must grow in the spiritual life through prayer, self-denial, burning love for God and neighbor, and the other normal aids to the spiritual life. They should have warm and brotherly contacts with their Bishop and other priests, and pastoral structures should be adapted to accomplish this. They should, finally, experience a sense of confidence through the spirit of cooperation which permeates the whole ecclesial community.²

¹ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 48.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; SYNOD. DOC., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 917.

36. *Normal and abnormal situations:*

In general, the approach to sex must be based on simplicity, normality, and realism. The general character of a person should be borne in mind and not only his isolated or unusual actions. In this area, as in others, repressive methods often have the effect of reinforcing, rather than lessening, bad habits and sexual mistakes.

The educator should remember that the way to train young men in matters of sex is to appeal to their noblest sentiments, leading them to understand that to reach maturity they have to acquire a strong character, a well-integrated personality, and a knowledge of how to practice self-control. It is even proper to appeal to their pride, showing them that some kinds of sexual misbehavior are an indication of faulty personality development and a residual infantilism. They should be instructed that such activity is inconsistent in a person who intends to live a life marked by high ideals and true human dignity.

An educator, however, cannot remain indifferent to sexual misbehavior in the formative years of a student. He must intervene to solve the problem in a positive way and not simply dismiss the matter as an isolated incident. He must assist the student to raise his whole personality to a higher and more integrated outlook, using the means that naturally arise in the circumstances.

There are many people today who suffer from real forms of sexual neurosis. These neuroses have their basis in natural predispositions, but they raise their troubled heads because of the stimulation given them by conditions in modern life. It is the modern environment, in fact, that provides men with ample opportunities to act out their fantasies. This kind of problem arises especially during puberty. However, it is a well-known fact that enlightened direction can notably facilitate the overcoming of this kind of crisis and securely assure the integral development of the personality of the young.

37. *Human and spiritual direction:*

A young person at the beginning of his life cannot be left alone; he needs direction, stability of judgment, and firmness of will. The problem, however, is that this same young man is often unstable and resists help.

The counsellor must be extremely careful and discreet because any suggestion that is given which does not respond to a real need could be rejected as an intrusion or a violation of personal privacy. He must be like a friend who simply stands by to offer comfort in difficult moments, counsel in times of doubt or indecision, help in moments of moral danger, without ever being too heavy with either words or presence.

A young man wants to know about sex because he considers it part of his life. Reticence on the matter will simply have the effect of further arousing his curiosity. What must be done is to guide him to regard sexual questions as a serious matter and to have a deep respect for the human person and its incomparable value, both in himself and in others.

In dealing with misconduct and with all sexual problems, educators should take the precautions of not frightening him since fear foments anxiety; not employing coercion since this leads to false or abnormal conduct; never showing ridicule when treating of anything that has been confided by a young man or else the embarrassment will cause him to retire permanently into his shell; and never dramatizing the issue in such a way as to discourage.

38. *Testing vocations:*

An important element in training for a life of celibacy is to help the individual himself to evaluate his own inclinations and to judge his own ability to overcome possible difficulties connected with celibate living. If he becomes aware that he is not endowed with the necessary qualities, he should be helped to make a different vocational choice with a good conscience, with courage, and with conviction.¹

Errors in discerning vocations are not rare, and in all too many cases psychological defects, sometimes of a pathological kind, reveal themselves only after ordination to the priesthood. Detecting defects earlier would help avoid many tragic experiences.

Selecting candidates for the priestly life is a very difficult task. All those engaged in training students for the priesthood need to

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 6; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 39-41.

take this office very seriously and prepare themselves accordingly.¹ Selection should be done in accordance with modern, psychological diagnosis without losing sight of supernatural factors and of the complexities of human influences on an individual.

Educators, who themselves are well-prepared for their work, should be able to verify the authenticity of vocations in normal individuals by using the usual criteria for vocational discernment. However, when in doubt or when seminary superiors feel that a student needs particular help to decide his vocation, special remedies may be employed, such as a psychological testing before the candidate begins his theological course. Maybe even a specialized psychotherapeutic examination will be found advisable or he may be advised to interrupt his ecclesiastical studies in order to work for a time in some other profession.

39. *Sex education as a problem for educators:*

The purpose of sex education is to bring a person's knowledge of sexual matters up to a par with his knowledge of other matters, and to integrate it into the whole process of education. However, even when confronted with ignorance or mistaken notions about sex, one has to avoid an over-emphasis in which sex is made to appear the sole, or the most important, element of human motivation.

Sex education needs to follow the line of personal development. It should therefore be adapted to the age, sex, and environment of the subject by means of formation "which is both positive and prudent".²

Among all the areas in the field of education, sex education today seems to be the one fraught with most problems. It is not simply a question of uncertainties and difficulties over method, but the personality of the educator and his own past emotions about the subject enter the picture as well. The educator has to try to understand the inner workings of his own sexual nature, often operating at an unconscious level, without erroneously assuming that this aspect of his life is simply a matter of irrational impulse.

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 683, n. 64; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 6.

² VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1.

Without careful preparation anyone who undertakes this task, one of the most difficult in the educational field, cannot possibly produce any positive results. This preparation entails a knowledge of juvenile development and an awareness of the family conditions and relationships of the students. He must also acquire a vocabulary that is appropriate to the subject, and adhere to a correct standard of values.

Above all, those who are entrusted with sex education have to be themselves persons who are sexually mature and balanced. Even more than a knowledge of method and subject matter, in sex education it is the personality of the educator that really counts. It is the way he practices what he preaches and the style of life he adopts and lives that matter. Knowledge, correct advice, and solicitude for the student are important in the teacher, but even more important is the educator's own personal conduct.

II. GUIDELINES FOR SEX EDUCATION

40. *Sex education as a formative process:*

Teachers should remember that sex education cannot be treated apart from the whole process of moral formation and training. Sex education must be actively directed to the individual, imparted in an environment that is protective and formative and it must be based on mutual trust between student and teacher.

From the standpoint of an educator's responsibility, it is just as wrong to ignore sex as it is to treat it in isolation. Human sexuality is a fact that has to be recognised, and it has to be understood in relation to the needs of the whole person. Similarly the only method of imparting sex education is to integrate it into the general program of education of the whole person. It is part of the continuing process of the development of the total human personality.

Sex education therefore must be integrated into the general formation of the seminarian. A chaste life is a work of art and implies a parallel development of the whole person. Purity cannot be mastered by concentrating on it as a fixed and isolated idea, but only by including it in a wider view of life that includes justice and charity, elements absolutely necessary to give any life meaning and value. Purity, then, must be seen as a part of what a complete human being is.

41. *Personalized sex education:*

The educator should lead candidates for the priesthood to the "discovery" of making a fundamental option in their lives, guiding and helping them to see chastity as something good, to see it as something good *for them*, helping them to transform this option into action, and finally, assisting them to persevere in its practice in such a way that its maintenance becomes second nature and a normal characteristic of their lives.

It is the good more than the evil, the virtue rather than the vice, which should be put before the seminarian in an effort to strengthen his emotions and will. It is the positive strengths and values that will help him in time of disturbance. Besides ethical and religious considerations, it is right to teach that sex provides a reservoir of virile qualities for the body, spirit, and heart.

To accomplish its essential moral purpose, which is so intimately linked to the human personality, sex education should be imparted individually. It should aim to help each individual person resolve his own problems. To carry out such a personalized type of education fruitfully, the educator has to be able to detect the needs and resources of each individual student so that he might apportion, according to the capacity and the necessity of each individual, the required natural and supernatural means of aid.

42. *The environmental factor in sex education:*

A personal relationship between teacher and pupil and individualized direction are not enough. For purposes of formation the whole living environment requires wise organization. This means both the elimination, as far as possible, of harmful influences and training students to react properly to any adverse influences which the environment might provoke.¹

The environment should be lively, full of activity, yet serene, with a high moral tone and full of healthy friendship. It ought to be such as to facilitate the transfer of the seminarians' emotional energies and interests to what is good so as to avoid focusing them on dangerous things.

¹ Cf. PIUS XII, Enc. Letter, *Sacra virginitas*, 25 March 1954: A.A.S., 46 (1954), pp. 183-186.

An important element in the creation of good environment is the community spirit of the students. It is impossible to create the ideal environment for the practice of purity without forming an uplifting community spirit based on mutual respect between students and the cultivation in them of a deep appreciation of virtue.

However, life in a seminary is temporary and intermittent. Therefore, seminarians have to be prepared to live, with fidelity and fulfilment, a life outside the seminary "in a world which tends to exile man from himself and compromise both his spiritual unity and his union with God".¹

43. *Formational dialogue and sex education:*

A young person needs a friend in whom he can confide and trust. Without the help of a wise and friendly guide, normal anxieties will become increasingly complicated, leading to discouragement and failure. Nevertheless, the teacher-friend cannot give guidance unless he knows the student well, which means the student must confide in him with candor. This kind of mutual and confidential relationship can only come about if the educator places himself at the disposal of the students and patiently waits for time, good will, and grace to work.

While respecting the freedom that has to exist in the area of spiritual direction, every seminary educator should exhort and seek to convince the students about the need to have a spiritual guide in whom they can confide with frankness and trust. Above all, the educator should endeavor to make himself the sort of person who deserves their esteem and confidence.

When an educator has created an atmosphere of mutual trust, he will be in a position to conduct a work of discreet, progressive, and personalized instruction which is an important part of training in chastity. Done skillfully, this will also have the effect of consolidating the students' trust and affection for the educator himself.

¹ PAUL VI, Apost. Exhort. *Evangelica testificatio*, 29 June 1971: A.A.S., 63 (1971), p. 515, n. 33.

44. *Personal and progressive sex education:*

Sex education includes not only intellectual instruction but also moral training. As such it is a necessary duty, not only because it provides for the solution of sexual difficulties, but also because it offers defensive tools to those who would otherwise be defenseless in the face of personal failures or harmful experiences which must be avoided.¹

The educator's task is not only to teach, but, above all, to help form consciences. He has to train the students to make decisions that are free yet correct, because these alone are what should govern their affective lives.

Nevertheless, sex-education must be gradual. One has to measure the approach by the age of the person one is dealing with, by the degree of positive intervention required, by the character and state of life of each individual. The first and natural setting for this kind of education is the family. Hence the primary role belongs to parents. The role of the teacher is merely to supplement family deficiency.²

45. *Modesty and sex education:*

An essential concomitant of human sensitiveness — no matter how this is expressed — should be modesty. This may be described as a spontaneous reaction against anything that would unmask our unadorned instincts. When someone acts with conscious modesty, he tries to avoid undesirable circumstances and those thoughts and deeds which demean the spiritual dignity of his personality. It is the means to insure that love is present in a person's sex life and that sex does not upset that balance of character which chastity promotes.

Modesty and a higher moral life go together. From the sexual point of view, modesty is the voice of conscience, an interior recoiling from any unnatural behavior. As such, a sense of modesty

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1; PIUS XII, Alloc. *Magis quam*, to the Carmelite Order, 23 Sept. 1951: Discourses and Radio Broadcasts, XIII, p. 256; Enc. Letter, *Sacra virginitas*, loc. cit., pp. 183-186.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, nn. 3, 8; Past. Const. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 49.

is a protection of one's personality and has a particular pedagogical value. It is impossible to train someone in chastity without at the same time developing in him a sense of modesty.

However, excessively rigid training in this field could multiply problems and increase anxiety in the young. The aim should be to free one from unwarranted and foolish exaggeration which only serves to increase the influence of temptation and distracts one from living a calm and normal life.

Education in modesty should be indirect and yet at the same time positive. Young people tend to be hero-worshippers and particularly attractive models of virtue should be presented to them. Their aesthetic sense must be developed too, an appreciation of beauty in nature, art, and the moral life. In addition they need to be helped to formulate for themselves a code of spiritual values capable of attainment with faith and drive.

46. *Sex education and love:*

Sexual maturity goes hand in hand with emotional maturity. Education for chastity means, in large part, educating the heart. It is a problem of love.

Human love is not perfect from the start. It has to develop and become perfect through a long process of growth and purification. In a child, it is sense-orientated, egoistic, and self-indulgent. In an adult, it should become spiritual, unselfish, altruistic, self-sacrificing, an image of the kind of love God has for us. A seminarian needs help to walk, not run, on this path of development uninteruptedly.

Particular mention needs to be made at this juncture of the necessity to develop the students' own enormous reserves of affection. Ideals ought to be urged upon them — ideals of truth, beauty, justice, goodness, purity, generosity, self-giving and heroism. They also should be helped to form real and uplifting friendships.

They should not only be made aware of any ambiguous elements present in some of their friendships, but also be reminded of their duty to show the love they have for their friends to everyone. The unsubstantial sentimentality of youth has to be sobered down, purified, and regulated. They need to anchor their affections in both

reason and faith so that, in full awareness, they will demonstrate their love with uprightness and set their sights on the true goals, both natural and supernatural, of love.¹

III. GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING IN CELIBACY

47. *Truth and authenticity of celibacy:*

Celibacy, which is a value, a grace, a charism, has to be presented in its true light if it is to be appreciated, chosen, and genuinely lived. Its presentation, therefore, must be calm and serene, confronting the prejudices and objections currently brought against it. This is one of the first tasks of the educator.

In his seminary training a candidate for the priesthood must be helped to realize the role of sex in marriage. Being consecrated in a celibate life presupposes that one knows what conjugal love entails. But also seminary formation must help a student discover the meaning and role that sex plays in a state of celibacy consecrated to God in Christ.² It is not a question of suppressing, but of sublimating, love and sexuality. In this area of formation more than simple instruction is needed. Rather, real training will form the candidates into men who love with charity all human beings "with the tenderness of Christ".³

Priestly celibacy is not simply to be identified with remaining unmarried or with sexual continence. It is a renunciation of three natural tendencies: genital function, conjugal love, and natural fatherhood, made "for the love of the kingdom of heaven". To be a genuine and sincere witness to religious values, it can never be a negation of, or a flight from, sex, but rather it must be the sublimation of sexuality.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; PIUS XII, Apost. Exhort. *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept. 1950: A.A.S., 42 (1950), p. 687.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 48.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 682, n. 63; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, n. 48.

48. *Interior working of the life of celibacy:*

While the motives for choosing celibacy are particularly personal to each candidate, through his developing relationship with God and others these motives are subject to a process of growth. It is here that attention should be paid more than in trying to evaluate the initial motivation.

The importance of growth in the right psychological attitude towards celibacy on the part of the seminary student has to be kept in mind. An ideally balanced life is not reached all at once, neither in marriage nor in celibacy.¹

An inclination towards marriage and family life, which makes their renunciation painful, ought not to be regarded necessarily as a contradiction to a celibate vocation. Even if the pain is lifelong, this does not prejudice the genuineness of the call to virginity, provided one can live exclusively for God with full and free assent of the will. Celibacy is a call from God that can well include the continuing sacrifice of a strong propensity for marriage.

49. *Relationships and solitude:*

Voluntary celibacy makes sense when it is viewed in a context of relationships with others lived in a fraternal community where one can "reach" others without "having" them, that is, when it is an exercise in non-possessiveness. It is a sign of celibacy rightly assumed when one can create and maintain worthwhile inter-personal relationships while experiencing the presence of friends even in their absence, refusing to impose oneself on them, and showing that need of them is limited. Hence, it can be said that celibacy is also an acceptance of "solitude".²

There is a mysterious kind of solitude that forms an essential element of the human condition. It is always in solitude that a person discovers his own identity and potential. It is there that the great decisions of life are made. The solitude of priestly celibacy is charged with such values.

The priest, who is destined to lead men to God through Christ,

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 686, n. 73.

² Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 680, nn. 58-59; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 3.

will accomplish this only if he radiates the goodness and love of God in himself. In harmony, therefore, with his state of life, a priest must always be ready to put his own interests in second place and subordinate the satisfying of his own tendencies, to the love of his neighbor to which he is dedicated by reason of his priesthood.

50. *Training conditions for a celibate life:*

In accordance with the principle already established that sex education must be part of the total formation of the person, it is essential to seminarists to grow in all the natural and supernatural virtues.¹ Students should be shown how all virtues are organically linked together through charity, which is at the root of all virtuous living. They must be convinced of the need to give themselves constantly and totally to the attainment of perfect charity, "the bond of perfection" (Col. 3, 14).

As they gradually deepen their convictions and grow in their sense of responsibility towards their vocation, seminarists must be guided towards the acquisition of an active zeal for the goal of living in perfect chastity without compromise or concession, in the full realization that, even from a human point of view, they are not inferior to others.

Every candidate for the priesthood must know himself thoroughly, his physical, psychological, moral, religious, and emotional dispositions, so that he can answer the call of God with a mature, responsible, and considered decision.² He must give himself completely and continuously to Christ, the Eternal High Priest, and to His Church with full freedom of will.³ Every seminarian must be able and willing to keep the commandments of God and to observe the discipline of the Church.⁴

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 11; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 48, 51, 54.

² Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 67.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 69; p. 686, n. 72.

⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 70.

51. *Training for true love in celibacy:*

Far from implying lack of concern for sexual relationship, a mature acceptance of celibacy demands that students be trained to take cognizance of its importance and place among the rest of the qualities which make for a fully integrated personality. This involves training the heart, affections, and sentiments. It means being open to others. In a word, it means a progressive and controlled development of one's sexual and emotional powers. It is not sufficient to live a material celibacy. One must love others in a priestly fashion. It would be a serious contradiction of an ecclesiastical vocation if a candidate for the priesthood were to be selfish, closed to affection, and worried only about himself and his own well-being. On the other hand, an excessively affectionate nature, an over-sympathetic temperament, and an inclination to emotional attachments are not suitable for a celibate life either.

Celibacy is a vocation to a special kind of love. It must be lived in a climate of friendship and, above all else, in friendship with God in Christ.¹ The priest must live a life of love which can only be found in God as its highest source. He must exercise this life in imitation of Christ, extending it to all without exception and with that sense of responsibility which is an indication of a mature personality.

52. *Relationship between religious fervour and chastity:*

A student's fidelity to his chosen state in life demands day-to-day renewal. Unless he is guided to base himself on well-grounded motives and to will to live a life of genuine chastity, he will inevitably wallow in a sort of no-man's land without either human or God-given joy.

In view of the profound relationship between religious fervour and chastity and because celibacy has a specifically sacred and Christian meaning, it is essential that the devotional formation imparted in the seminary should be improved and deepened.² Students must be in close touch with the sources of a genuine spiritual life, which

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 664-670, nn. 19-34.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 18.

is the only thing capable of giving a solid foundation to the observance of sacred virginity.¹

Celibacy is a life-long offering, in which one makes the sacrifices which changing situations in life demand and enjoys a life enriched by dimensions as wide as the Church. One must always measure the sincerity and generosity of one's first self-offering, becoming slowly and surely more like to Jesus Christ in the depths of one's being. It is a permanent state of abandonment of trust in the help of the Holy Spirit. It symbolizes and witnesses to the "eternal priesthood" of Jesus Christ before all the People of God.

IV. TRAINING IN PRIESTLY ASCETICISM

53. *The need for asceticism:*

Formation for the priesthood, and more precisely a celibate priesthood, requires an asceticism which is superior to that required by the rest of the faithful and which is special to those aspiring to be priests. Although severe, it must not overwhelm, and is actually the considered and assiduous practice of all those special virtues which make a man a priest.² It should be an asceticism which is both "interiorly and exteriorly manly"³ enabling the priest to stay faithful to his priestly commitments⁴ and to have a guarantee of success in his work.⁵

The attainment of Christian sanctity demands an ascesis of self-denial, which is an ascesis of liberation. According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, self-denial is the exercise of a kingly power and is necessary to effect the reign of love.⁶ Love and self-denial complement each other, since self-denial frees man and makes room for love; love, in turn, induces one to self-denial.

A candidate for the priesthood is the recipient of the "grace of vocation" which brings him the precious gift of a chaste life.⁷ As he

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 687, n. 75.

² PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 70.

³ PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 688, n. 78.

⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 691, n. 86.

⁵ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 692, n. 90.

⁶ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 36.

⁷ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

becomes more conscious of this gift, he should be prompted to respond to it with enormous gratitude to God and to correspond to this grace with the utmost freedom and generosity.¹ Asceticism is the decisive answer to this gift, an answer which a seminarist should want to make with the whole of his life.

54. *Characteristics of priestly asceticism:*

Mortification which is a part of every Christian and of every human life is even more relevant to the priestly life. In fact, the priestly activity of Christ, in its full biblical meaning, makes no sense at all unless one remembers that Christ is "Priest and Victim", and that He sacrificed Himself upon the altar of the Cross for the love of mankind, a sacrifice that anticipated the Mass, where He renews this self-immolation in an unbloody manner on our altars.

Since this constitutes the apex of the priestly mission of Jesus, one cannot imagine it could be otherwise in the lives and mission of those called to participate in His priesthood, to assume the very Person of Christ, and to continue His work. The holiness of the priest, and consequently his spirituality, must clearly be centered on the fact that he, too, must be priest and victim, in union with Christ, High Priest and Spotless Victim.

While it underscores the necessity of a strong practice of asceticism and is directed at removing every obstacle to the priestly ministry, this truth is a positive invitation to follow the royal road of the cross. It is an invitation to "bear in our bodies the suffering of Christ, in order that the life of Christ might be made manifest in us". (2 Cor. 4, 10). It is a positive invitation to accept, from the bottom of one's heart, the implications of what it means to be consecrated as a priest.²

This is the meaning of the connection, clearly emphasized by the Council, between the main function of the priest and his obligation to imitate what he handles.³

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

² Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 70; p. 688, n. 78; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 13, 14; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 688, n. 78.

This emphasis given to priestly asceticism should by no means neglect the fact that marriage also is a state of life that is sacrificial and which can involve both mortification and the sacrifice of worldly desires.

55. *Ascetic commitment in seminary life:*

In the light of today's climate of general rejection of mortification, one cannot too strongly insist that seminarians be thoroughly convinced that without a committed asceticism any maturity, be it human, Christian, or priestly is impossible. They must appreciate that it is an indispensable condition for growing in participation in the paschal mystery of Christ.

One who has reached spiritual maturity is faithful to commitments once made. This is also the highest type of freedom. But maturity and freedom can only be attained by means of a long and uninterrupted practice of self-control and self-giving throughout the years of formation. "An aspirant to the priesthood will thus acquire, with the help of divine grace, a balanced, strong, and mature personality which is a synthesis of what is natural and acquired, a harmonious combination of all his faculties illumined by faith and union with Christ Who has chosen him for Himself and for the ministry of the world's salvation."¹

56. *The fundamental option demands faith:*

It is not without reason that the Magisterium of the Church insists on the prophetic function of those who follow the evangelical counsels. A prophet is not only one who predicts the future, but also one who bears witness to the reality and the nearness of God.²

Falling in love with the Invisible God cannot but imply a vision of the supernatural and a knowledge which transcends the senses. Priestly and religious celibacy is an offering made to the Lord. It surpasses all human reckoning in terms of fruitfulness or return. It is a sacrifice that can only be understood by faith.

Deep spirituality is required in one who progresses towards union with God — a searching self-discipline because he, like every

¹ PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, *loc. cit.*, p. 685, n. 70.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 44.

man, must discover and accept the limits revealed in the depths of his being. Nothing is possible without a generous acceptance of these limits. It is something like Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32, 24-32). He too must accept the disappointment of frustrated hopes and dreams.

V. THE PROBLEM OF EMOTIONAL INTEGRITY

57. *A delicate and strongly debated problem:*

A seminary student is no different from any other young person in recognizing a need for emotional integrity; in other words he feels the need to have a balanced and serene attitude with regard to sex in general and with regard to women in particular. It is a question of attaining the right equilibrium, self-control, or, as often expressed, a state of maturity in which the emotions are so well integrated that a young person will conduct himself perfectly normally in whatever situation he might find himself.

It is clear that such maturity can be reached only through contacts with other persons, in friendships, conversation, working together, recreation and sharing similar interests. These things have great importance in the lives of the young. In the give and take that they involve, a man soon learns his own limitations and realizes that he is not self-sufficient. This can be the basis for rich spiritual experience.

However, when persons of the opposite sex are involved, it can become very difficult to live maturing relationships. One needs ability and responsibility to be aware of the ambiguities that can creep into such relationships and the will to order one's desires and emotions accordingly. A prudent "discernment of spirits" which is sensitive to the movements of both nature and grace is also necessary.

With regard to seminarians' relationships with women, there has been a notable change in these past few years. Until a short while ago there prevailed an attitude of caution and reserve — even to the point, in some extreme cases, of an exaggerated isolation of the students. Today on the other hand, a giddy optimism is gaining ground, which is based upon rash overconfidence and which, not content with the usual and ordinary kind of contacts which life provides, is deliberately promoting the cultivation of frequent meetings with girls for the purpose of "more easily gaining emotional maturity".

58. *The theology of chastity:*

Seminarians should be carefully instructed in the theology of chastity. They should be shown how the practice of this virtue is one of the great dogmas of Christianity, and the apostolic fruitfulness of consecrated virginity. Every experience of good and evil affects our inmost being, our personality, and, consequently our apostolic efficiency — for good or ill.

Our religion places a great value on the virtue of purity. It points out the means that must be used to preserve and defend it: jealous care, reserve, interior control over imagination and desires, and external discipline of the senses.

Training in purity would be incomplete if it did not also include instruction concerning the nature of temptations against purity, their sources and causes, their various forms and the spiritual remedies and methods to be used to fight them.

59. *Towards a positive solution of the problem:*

As in all human relationships, so too in the relations between seminarists and women, the correct course to follow is that of truth and sincerity. Genuineness in behavior automatically excludes everything that is fake and artificial. It is obvious that such a course will exclude every relationship that is intended to have an advantage for only one of the parties, the other being “used” to accomplish some goal.

Therefore, all these relationships are obviously excluded for a future priest. There are still the normal and ordinary human contacts that come in the course of life which require that women be treated in accordance with the principles of healthy human behavior: with courtesy, respect, and, most important of all, charity, which is due to everyone.

This level of female relationship will give seminarians sufficient occasions to develop, to acquire self-knowledge, to refine their characters, to test their strengths and weaknesses, and to learn what in them needs strength and encouragement. They should eventually be sufficiently in command of themselves to be able to terminate or suspend any such relationships without feeling upset. This supposes a healthy spiritual life, imbued with a spirit of vigilant mortification and continual self-control.

Since self-control is so necessary, seminarists should be encouraged to face up to their emotions, prudently yet honestly: "They should expose 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 or protracted nature, with people of the opposite sex. They ought rather to endeavor to practise a love open to all and therefore truly chaste. This they should habitually ask for as a gift from God."¹

The importance given to spiritual direction presupposes, naturally, that the spiritual director has all the necessary qualities. Evidently, he will not be able to solve these problems by a one-system-for-all method, but will have to treat them case by case. He will have to take into account the differences between individuals and the character and emotions of each candidate. He will have to help each one individually to face the possible crises that can disturb or destroy his vocation.

60. *Formation demanded by the pastoral life:*

The problem of the relationship between seminarists and women is not simply a question of the student's present personal life, but also of his future pastoral activity. It is precisely because of his future pastoral commitment that "particular attention should be paid to the preparation of students for a correct and healthy relationship with women. This will involve instruction in the character and psychology of women as it is affected by the sort of life they lead and by their age. The purpose of this is to enable them as priests engaged in the pastoral ministry, to undertake a more effective spiritual care of women and behave towards them with the normality and prudence which befit ministers of Christ."²

From this it is clear that a good and healthy relationship towards women cannot be a matter of improvisation. It has to be achieved through a slow and delicate training process. Seminaries have the task of preparing students for contact with women, assisting them in the acquisition of dominion over their emotional reactions in the

¹ S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 48.

² S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 95.

presence of women, and opening them to a realization of woman's place in the spiritual order. Such a preparation will also help seminarians deepen their humanity, delicacy, and tact, which must be a mark of every pastoral relationship.

61. *A word about friendships:*

In these modern days something has to be said about the possibility of friendship between a seminarian (or a priest) and a woman. This is a relation that requires careful attention and a balance which is far from common.

It is an admitted fact that normal human relations can, under certain conditions, contribute to the natural and spiritual maturing of the seminarian. But, at the same time, one must be on one's guard against particular friendships which are dangerous and incompatible with a priestly vocation since they interfere with freedom of heart and universality of love. The nature of the mission for which a seminarian is preparing requires that his spirit remain open to all mankind with a universal 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".¹

This implies that superiors and spiritual directors know how to give positive help to the young men confided to their care. It is often difficult to know at the beginning of relationships what they are or will become. It is easy for someone to think that something is "spiritual" when it is no such thing. Even when intentions are apparently most correct, one has to remember how powerful emotional relationships can be, leading to a blindness towards or an underestimating of, the real dangers that such friendships can entail. In fact, love, when it involves the senses, is ambivalent in nature. It can easily veer towards concupiscence and impede development instead of assuring, as it should do, the full flowering of personal maturity. The result is that the alleged spiritual advantages that a seminarian would like to think he receives from friendships of this nature remain hypothetical and uncertain, while the dangers and difficulties are both significant and real.

¹ S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis, loc. cit.*, n. 48.

One must be realistic and accept the fact that human nature can so easily deceive. It is often easy to believe that certain kinds of relationships are necessary when they are not, and to paint with false supernatural motives something which is merely an inclination of fallen nature.¹

VI. DIFFICULTIES IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION

62. *The task of education during adolescence:*

An educator must be familiar with the personality of the student as he goes through the various phases of growth. Insofar as this concerns adolescents, in particular, it should be noted that this period of life is characterized by a process of physiological maturing, emerging sexual desires, and a great deal of imaginative fantasizing about sexual matters.

An adolescent needs help to form a healthy idea of what sex is all about and to come to realize its place in the order of values. He needs to learn how to react when facing temptations to impurity or when confronting situations involving sex. He must learn to control his instincts, not in fear, but in the serenity which only a knowledge of the truth can bring.

With this in mind, education has to develop within the group situation the emotional potential of the adolescent, assisting him to objectivize his sexual drive and channel it in the direction of total self-giving. This is an arduous task. It should not be a cause of surprise if an adolescent withdraws within himself and feels that he is misunderstood by everyone around him. Moreover, it is understandable in this situation that he might be driven to center his erotic attention upon himself and make the task of sexual integration yet more difficult.

63. *The phenomenon of self-abuse in adolescents:*

One of the causes of masturbation is sexual imbalance. The other causes are generally of an occasional and secondary nature, albeit contributing to its appearance and continuation. In education, efforts should be directed rather towards the causes than to attacking

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 688, n. 77.

the problem directly. Only in this way can one promote the effective development of boyish instincts — which means an interior growing up towards domination of instinct. This is the growth that the causes mentioned above tend to obstruct.

Fear, threats, physical or spiritual intimidation are best avoided. These could encourage the formation of obsessions and compromise the possibility of a balanced sexual attitude, making him turn further in on himself instead of opening himself to others. Success as always will depend on the degree of awareness of the real causes of the problem. This is what formation needs to be particularly concerned with.

Self-abuse upsets the kind of life which is the educator's aim. He cannot remain indifferent to the closed-up attitude which results from this. Nevertheless, he should not over-dramatize the fact of masturbation nor lessen his esteem and goodwill for the individual afflicted. As he comes into deeper contact with the supernatural and self-sacrificing love of the educator, the youth is bound to be aware of his place in the communion of charity and will begin to feel himself drawn out of his isolation.

In trying to meet each difficulty, it is better not to offer a ready-made take-it-or-leave-it solution. Rather, using the occasion for real interior growth, help and encourage the sufferer in such a way that he finds his own remedy. Not only will he then solve this one problem, but will learn the art of resolving all the other problems which eventually he will have to face.

64. *Seminary formation of adolescents:*

Given that seminary training aims to impart an integrated human, Christian, and priestly formation to its students, the most difficult aspect during adolescence is to decide how much of this training should be Christian and how much of it should be priestly formation. Adolescents should only gradually be introduced to a specifically priestly formation. Great wisdom lies behind this.

For the majority of the candidates the motives in their vocation are initially very vague. They want to be of service to mankind, to the Church, to Christ, but their ideas about Christ and the Church are often unclear. Frequently their attitude is simply one of availability in a purely humanitarian sense which bears little reference

to God, Christ, or the Church. In fact, for many adolescents their view of life is still very general. Philanthropy and religion are not very distinct as yet.

This is the reason why there are many adolescents who feel inclined to the priesthood. But as soon as their humanitarian interests begin to take clearer shape, they give up their vocation and leave the seminary unless their attitude has been enriched with religious motivation. One must help these young men to grasp at the right time what a life consecrated to God is all about. It is no use imposing on them right from the start a way of life which is already fully priestly.

65. *The task of education during the post-adolescent years:*

In youth, love tends to express itself in highly varied sexual manifestations, entailing a combination of psycho-sexual and psycho-emotional factors. Despite appearances and often promiscuous attitudes among youth, young men have little knowledge of true feminine psychology. Women fascinate them, but they do not know why and this bothers them. They often surrender to counterfeit love, instead of discovering that chastity and love are actually the same virtue and that both are active, fruitful, and forgetful of self.

An educator should pay close attention to the fact that youth is the time for a decisive and definitive choice of a state of life. They must be given a clear view of all the possibilities open to them to enable them to make a free choice. This is the time when they must be guided to understand the true theology of matrimony and of consecrated celibacy.¹ This is also the time when prejudices and "the false theories that maintain that perfect continence is impossible or harmful to man"² must be definitely eliminated.

66. *Perseverance in vocations:*

The real problem today is not merely that young men have little inclination towards a priestly vocation. It is also the problem of perseverance in their vocation and their adherence to all the demands that a vocation entails. Objective causes for this lack of perseverance

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

² VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12.

derive from the culture and the environment of today in which the young live. But, without a doubt, there is also an important subjective cause which deserves the attention of educators. This is the unwarranted devaluation of a state of consecration to God in the priesthood.

The youth of today are no less generous than those of yesterday, but they need guidance on the path to commitment. Youth need high ideals to challenge them to heroism. It is a bad mistake, therefore, to reduce the priestly vocation to the dimensions of an ordinary life, without sacrifice or commitment. Young people will not respond generously unless the recruiting appeal is based on those qualities which ring true to the spirit of youth: a taste for hardship, the need for dedication, and the joy of sacrifice.

Young people have to be brought to feel deeply "how gratefully this state (of celibacy) deserves to be undertaken, not only as a requisite of Church law, but as a precious gift which should be humbly sought of God and to which they should freely and generously hasten to respond through the energizing and fortifying grace of the Holy Spirit."¹

67. *Particular difficulties of adulthood:*

It is only realistic to suppose that a priest, like any other human being, will be subject to the crises of the human condition and the difficulties that mark a man's development: emotional crises, sex, relationship with authority, finding his true place in the world and the Church, crises of the spiritual order. For this reason, candidates for the priesthood must be prepared to face such problems in a spirit of sacrifice, with courage and constancy.

It is an important stage when a man passes the mid-way point in life. The basic problems will have already been solved between the ages of 20 and 30, problems such as vocation, profession, and life-direction. The chances of going back are slim.

At this age youth is gone with its outlook and its prerogatives: enthusiasm, hopes, dreams of sanctity, and great works done for the Church. Instead a wiser, more calm and balanced life sets in; but also more vulnerable. Perhaps one has already at this age achieved

¹ VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

recognition, a position of responsibility, success. But, maybe the individual has failed both from a human and from an apostolic standpoint. He can simply be resigned to a state of obscurity.

This can bring torment to some priests, an interior restlessness, a crisis "of emptiness," filled only with dissatisfaction and frustration over ideals no longer attainable. In such circumstances a need for human companionship can make itself felt very strongly indeed.

68. *Reason for crises in priestly lives:*

From the point of view of family life, a priest will find himself alone. Usually the family in which he grew up as a boy is gone and he has no family of his own. The apostolic enthusiasm that sustained him in his younger days has waned and he feels himself shunned by the younger generation. So at about the age of 40 interior and exterior loneliness generally awaits him. It is then that he may feel more consciously the loss of what he has renounced and the burden of celibacy.

Add to this a measure of monotony in a ministry that seems always the same and maybe include a feeling of dissatisfaction with one's environment and mistrust of the hierarchy of the Church. When things never change, nor is there hope of change, there often can be dissatisfaction.

He withdraws sadly into himself, is irritable and bad tempered. At this point the danger is that he will begin to rediscover and overestimate the pleasurable things in life from which he separated himself when he consecrated himself to God. He will undergo the spiritual crisis of distaste for his regular work and his prayers coupled with a scepticism over his spiritual progress and a conviction that all his efforts are futile.

69. *Preventing and solving these difficulties:*

A priest who finds himself in this situation must first of all be patient with himself and accept himself for what he is without being upset at the onslaught of desire. These impulses are part of human nature, and a priestly vocation does not take away nature. Impatience in the face of these urgings and a failure to understand them are causes for defections or for tediousness in a vocation.

However, a patient and calm acceptance of what the years are bringing will not suffice, nor be possible, without a living faith and a humble and active union with God. One needs to repeat frequently the words of Saint Paul (2 Tim. 1, 12), "I know Whom I have believed and I am sure." This humble and lively union with God, forged out of a knowledge of self, trust, abandonment to His Will, and prayer will bring constant freshness to a priest's spiritual life and will keep him young as the years speed by. Union with God and the eyes of faith will enable difficulties to be put in their true perspective. Even if difficulties remain, their weight will be lightened, and the experience of emptiness and solitude will be transformed into a precious offering to God.

If the crisis is so deep that a priest asks to be allowed to suspend his ecclesiastical obligations in order to live and think things out as a layman for a while, it is preferable that he be admitted to a community environment in which love and charity prevail and where he can be assisted to recapture an outlook of faith by some spiritual and pastoral activity.

PART IV

THE SEMINARY AS A CENTER OF EDUCATION

70. *Conditions for seminary formation:*

Far from being an isolated component in the spiritual structure of a priest's personality, chastity constitutes the culmination of a balanced life strong in faith and solidly built on an ardent charity.

This is why nothing in the life or climate of a seminary can be indifferent to the building up of this virtue. Indeed, the whole seminary atmosphere must be regarded as a principal and fundamental factor in the work of formation. It is, therefore, necessary to recall the essential features of seminary life which, directly or indirectly, have a bearing on formation in chastity.

Every seminary must be such as to "intensify in each student the joy of his calling."¹ Celibacy lived for the kingdom of God must be shown to be a wonderful grace ever since men first heard the joyful tidings of the resurrection of Christ.

In order to impart this spirit of joy, students should be given a taste for the practice of ecclesial and apostolic charity, which is equally a love of Christ, a communion in friendship with superiors and fellow students, an evangelical spirit, and a desire to be cooperative. This aspect of the program cannot so much be taught as caught — by the example of life as it is lived in the seminary.

There follow some further suggestions aimed at creating an atmosphere in the seminary which will further the formation of the students. These suggestions are based on a wise use of interpersonal relationships, an intense spiritual life, an ardent ecclesial charity, the use of appropriate contacts with the outside world, and an adequate use of the means of social communication.

¹ VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 5.

I. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SEMINARY

71. *The seminary as a fraternal community:*

The climate in which human relationships are exercised in a seminary is an important factor in pastoral formation. Before he takes out of the seminary the riches that are to be found there, a student has first to give something. He has to give to the environment in which he lives a spirit of mutual service which consists in each contributing his share to the creation of conditions of life which favor the development of his companions.

There are certain trends which characterize this seminary atmosphere. First of all, one would hope that in a seminary community, every student will *freely* examine his vocation, and not simply take it for granted merely because he finds himself in a seminary.¹ Due account should be taken of the variety of dispositions with regard to the students' vocations and the changeableness of the minds of the young. Educators should respect each and every student and should not establish degrees of worthiness. At no time should it even be hinted that someone who changes his mind *in the seminary* is a traitor. All the students should be regularly reminded that they have a personal right and obligation to deeply study their vocation and to choose with complete freedom.

A successful seminary community also depends on the establishment of interpersonal relationships characterized by a *family-like trust* and *brotherly-type friendships*.² It should be remembered that trust is not imposed by authority, but has to be won and inspired. And friendship can be encouraged or destroyed. It can be encouraged when the seminary is in itself a school of friendship, where the spirit of brotherhood is promoted even on the purely human level and where the seminary positively believes in it. Nothing destroys it so much as a spirit of malicious insinuation or sourness. True formation for celibacy must be rooted in a spirit of fraternity.³

A life filled with brotherly love and harmony, which is industrious and replete with a human and supernatural warmth, irradiates over all a sense of restful calm, equanimity, and deep satisfaction. In this

¹ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, *loc. cit.*, n. 13.

² Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, *loc. cit.*, nn. 13, 14, 46, 48.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12.

sort of atmosphere students will be, as it were, immunized from the need to seek emotional compensations outside the community. It will be more difficult for them to regret the renunciation which their choice of celibacy has involved.

72. *The seminary as a community which forms:*

In the last analysis, maturity means adherence to and love for reality, one's own, that of others, God's. Hence, the most formative instrument is an atmosphere of *truth*; or, in other words, a spirit of openness and loyalty, affection, respect, and communication. In this climate the discovery of one's vocation will be gradually achieved as the result of a mature choice rather than an effect of external conditioning. The atmosphere of a seminary will contribute to the mature development of the candidates in the measure in which it will be warm with truly human relationships, capable of stimulating personal responsibility and initiative while gradually leading to a convinced and reasonable obedience which is proper to the children of God.

It is hard to imagine how seminary life can fulfil its function without close collaboration between staff and students in which the personality, abilities and competence of each student can be evaluated. Solidarity and social intercourse must be adopted as program and method for the entire seminary. "Under their Rector's lead superiors and professors shall be united in spirit and action, forming one family with the students to fulfil the Lord's prayer 'that they all may be one' (Jn. 17, 11) thus fostering in the students joy in their vocations."¹

73. *The group dynamic in seminary formation:*

To promote personal formation one must place students in an environment which is favorable to the development of all their qualities and potential. To help achieve this, while always protecting the *unity of the seminary*, circumstances may encourage the division of students into smaller groups.² This system is helpful in activating the bonds which bind each to the other, in ensuring a fair division

¹ VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 5.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 7; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 23.

of tasks between members of the group in accordance with each one's abilities and directing them to the common good.

Moreover, one cannot afford to overlook the fact that the way priests frequently have to live and act is pluralistic. It is right that this attitude be imparted in the seminary and made part of seminary life itself.

The group system could serve this purpose, particularly if the groups can be organized in relation to actual diocesan needs, and, therefore, to the future fields of the students' ministry. They could serve a positively dynamic and pastoral purpose. Surrounding them, other circles with an apostolic or purely human interest can help form bonds of friendship and cooperation. This could add to the richness and vitality of the students' formation.

74. *The function of discipline and rule:*

The atmosphere of freedom, respect for the individual, and the value placed on personal initiative should not be interpreted as freedom from every kind of discipline. A seminarian who *freely* chooses to enter a seminary must also *freely* accept and respect its terms. Discipline is part of the spiritual structure of the whole life of a student and priest. When it is "interiorized" it becomes an indispensable component of his spiritual life.¹ This does not mean that discipline is only interior; it is "personal and communitarian,"² and exterior.³

While the discipline set out by the Rule of Life of the seminary retains its vital importance, the heart of seminary formation is to be found in the influence of the human and Christian relationship which exists between seminarist and educator. This implies that the students are not left to themselves and that educators cannot dispense themselves from their duty of being present with, indeed very close to, the students. Iron discipline, a minutely-drawn rulebook, or rigid surveillance are no substitute for the educator himself being present to guide and strengthen the students with friendship, intimate conversation, and watchful care over their way of life.⁴

¹ PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 683, n. 66.

² PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 683, n. 66.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 688, n. 78.

⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 684, n. 68; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 11.

General principles of formation need an individual approach in their application. There is no such things as one kind of formation that is suited to all. Sometimes a superior will allow a particular student of whom he has personal knowledge to follow a course of action involving risks, being convinced that ultimately he will find out for himself what is good and what is not, instead of having a mode of conduct rigidly imposed on him. At other times a responsible superior will intervene decisively to save someone who is presuming too much on himself or who, without sufficient reason, is placing himself in grave danger.

II. THE SEMINARY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

75. *The life of prayer in formation:*

The choice of celibacy must be made with magnanimity. It must be made with the full realization that it is no small thing to dedicate one's entire life to one gigantic love which embraces at the same time God, Christ, and souls. It must be made with the full realization that while celibacy is a great gift of God to be asked for with humility,¹ it is also a gift that a man gives to God. This generosity will open the heart of the seminarist increasingly to prayer, adoration, and contemplation of Him Who is the recipient of this gift and Who will be for him a source of constant joy and youthful spirit.²

A seminary must introduce its students to the practice of habitual and spontaneous meeting and dialogue with God in Christ by the manifold ways of prayer, Liturgy, meditation on the Word of God and study of the Person of Christ, the center of every reflection in faith and theology.

A life centered on God in prayer is absolutely essential for a life of consecration. A seminarian and a priest must have the gift of piety to a high degree; it is nothing less than a tremendous love of God. They are, and must always remain, the privileged witnesses of the beauty and happiness that come from intimacy with the God of revelation.

The man who is celibate by calling and abandons prayer is on the verge of ruin as far as his celibacy is concerned. The whole basis of

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

² Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 54.

his life consists in his relationship with God, and this relationship is kept alive by prayer — the prayer of the Church herself, and the personal prayer of the priest in his daily personal devotions. It is impossible for a priest to be good in giving spiritual direction unless he prays. Without a rich, spiritual relationship with God in his life, no priest can give effective help to anyone.

76. *Criteria for the revision of forms of piety:*

Before one sets about revising forms of piety, it is important to establish what reason lies behind them. Forms correspond to needs. The psychological and pastoral needs of today will suggest what adaptations are necessary in the forms of piety. Today a certain spontaneity is recommended in devotion in which one opens one's heart to the loving friendship of Christ in an encounter with the Heavenly Father.¹ Personal piety based on the mystery of salvation should not be considered an "extra" to one's daily life, but rather as life's constant living inspiration.

Spontaneous prayer has its place. However, it would be an illusion and a fundamental error to believe that praying only when one feels an inclination to do so is more fruitful than praying at the times set down by rule. It is equally erroneous to maintain that praying at set times causes disaffection towards prayer. Promote spontaneous prayer, but, above all, promote the interiorizing of all prayer.

Religious education should endeavor to highlight the value of practices of piety as expressions of the life of the Gospel in which we share in the intimacy of the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit.²

77. *Liturgical formation of seminarists:*

Seminarists must be formed, not simply to assist at sacred functions, but to share in and to live an intensely sacramental and liturgical life. For a man who is not disposed to seek to follow Christ, the Liturgy can appear to be simply a tiresome performance.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 4, 16; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 13.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 8; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 18.

However, every effort must be made to prepare devotional services and liturgical ceremonies in a manner which will appeal to young people and enable them to participate in them gladly and willingly.¹ It is important that they acquire a sense of the Liturgy as a community living of the life of Christ.

The ministry of the priest is primarily not human work, but the work of Christ in Person. The priest, therefore, has to fulfil his ministry according to the Spirit of Christ, High Priest and Eternal Shepherd. How close should be the intimacy between Christ and the priest! Seminary training must be geared to the acquisition of this perfection: to prepare the students to live interiorly the life of Christ and to prepare them to perform their ministerial functions in His Spirit.²

78. *Meditation on the Word of God:*

In the presence of God in Christ, a seminarian should love to meditate, whether alone or in a group, on the words of revelation.³ He should try to apply them to his daily life. He should develop the habit of seeing the whole of Christian life (its traditions, institutions, persons, and doctrines) in the light of the Gospel, in the realization that it is the Word of God which judges and converts the Church. This should inspire his personal and apostolic activity.

Communion with Christ, moreover, is not only communion with His thinking. Above all it is communion with His life of love, of which His Easter mystery is the central act and the most authentic and powerful expression (Rom. 6, 2-11). No baptized Christian, and certainly no priest, can remain a simple spectator to this mystery, but must participate in it, imitating Christ, Who died for sins and rose for the glory of His Father, and thus manifest Christ to the world (Phil. 3, 8-11; 2 Cor. 4, 10; 3, 18).

This baptismal and priestly participation, however, cannot be brought about except through the working of the Holy Spirit, since the paschal mystery becomes ours only because of its Author, the Holy Spirit. Such a spirituality must guide from within the life of anyone called to the ministerial priesthood.

¹ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 14.

² Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 44-45.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 8.

79. *Formation through theological study:*

The modern seminarian has a very special need: what is termed "a living synthesis of faith". This is a faith which has to be discovered for oneself and sheds light on one's daily life, not merely a faith limited to adherence to a number of determined truths, but also the practical exercise of Christian choice and the source of Christian trust in Christ and His Church. A serious emotional crisis in a priest is almost always preceded by a weakening or a dimming of faith.

The study of theology should deepen the spirit of faith in seminarians. The "Introduction to the Mystery of Christ" and the "History of Salvation" are to be taught, not only for the students' spiritual benefit, but also to give them a single organic vision of all their priestly studies.¹

The seminary should give the students a systematic and organic presentation of all theology and, in addition, an introduction to biblical, patristic, historical, and sociological research with a view to assisting them acquire a personal, critical ability to evaluate modern thought. All of this should serve to cultivate in the students a profound faith which is sensitive to the needs of our times, yet always nourished by the love of Christ working in the Catholic Church.²

These exhortations concerning the general spiritual climate of the seminary cannot be considered extrinsic to the main concern of this document, formation in chastity. If a seminary cannot produce this atmosphere and the future priest is consequently uninfluenced by it, there is little hope that chastity, without such nourishment, will survive.

III. THE SEMINARY AND ECCLESIAL CHARITY

80. *Relationship between superiors and seminarians:*

A seminarian needs to be immersed in an atmosphere of apostolic charity. The aim of a seminary is to enable him to experience that to live as a Christian in the spirit of Christ and as a priest in celibacy one thing is needed: to practice and give witness to ecclesial charity

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 14; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 62.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 16-17; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, nn. 76-80.

in the Lord. Living charity, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, is an instrument for the education, conversion, and sanctification of oneself and others.¹

Seminary superiors must appear to the students not simply as those who give orders, directives, warnings, and punishments, but also as those who arouse love among their subjects and witness to this love in their own personal lives. The higher the authority, the more profound the obligation to be the source of unity in charity.² It is precisely by means of the love and charity displayed by a superior that a student is enabled to acquire the same love of God.

When a seminarian has tasted the charity of the Lord through the person of his priest-educator he will know what it means when he comes to express it tomorrow in the context of the presbyterium gathered around the Bishop and to communicate it to his flock.³

The charity he experiences in the seminary and in his diocese will help a priest to live his celibate life in serenity without any nostalgia for a lay life.⁴

81. *Formation in apostolic charity:*

The spiritual formation of candidates for the priesthood must be pastorally orientated and be programmed with a view to their future ministry. Priests are the official builders of the community of the Church. Not only are they given spiritual power for this ministry (2 Cor. 10, 8; 13, 10), but they are expected to “treat all with outstanding humanity in imitation of the Lord.”⁵

Community life in the seminary, animated by sincere charity and radiating apostolic zeal, is a preparation for — even a prelude to — fraternal cooperation among the clergy in apostolic work.⁶ Students should, therefore, feel themselves bound to their diocese and interested in its problems. Thus they should gain a diocesan

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 11; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 11; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 24.

³ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 8.

⁴ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 688-689, nn. 79-80.

⁵ VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 6.

⁶ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 46.

spirituality which has its roots, in other words, in their future sphere of work.¹

Union with God in prayer and the love of silence and spiritual things are no obstacles to, but rather requirements of an apostolic concern for the vicissitudes of man and the "signs of the times". They are a response from the future priest's loving solicitude and his sincere, selfless devotion.²

A seminarist should grasp the meaning of the connection between his celibacy and apostolic concern. Voluntary celibacy is a witness of love, "an answer of love to the love" of Christ. In Him loving in human fashion receives, through grace, a new and incomparable strength.³

Perfect chastity is lived by a priest "not out of contempt for the gift of life, but for a higher love of that new kind of life which flows from the paschal mystery".⁴ For a priest human love is sacrificed for the love of Christ and, therefore, for the love of the Church and of all mankind. For this love a priest gives up other attachments and legitimate affections.⁵

82. *Growing in the imitation of Christ:*

The example of the Supreme Shepherd shows clearly how supernatural is the priest's mission of redemption. The primary and fundamental source of his pastorate and what it means to be a pastor is his living, total consecration to Christ, given to the world by the Father.⁶

The sacrament which deposes a baptized person a pastor makes him an "elect of Christ" for the salvation of his brothers, contracted out to Jesus Christ in fraternal love (Phil. 3, 12; Gal. 1, 10; 5, 13). It is a life of complete submission to the demands of the love of God, of disposability to the action of grace, a living less and less for oneself and more and more for Him Who brings all things to their fruition (2 Cor. 5, 14-15).

¹ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 47.

² Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 47.

³ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 666, n. 24.

⁴ PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 661, n. 13.

⁵ Cf. PAUL VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 661, 667, 668, 669, nn. 13, 20, 26, 30.

⁶ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 14.

Shepherds of souls must continue to be formed in that love which is, of its nature, exclusive. They must realize that the "yes" they once said to the Bishop who ordained them committed them permanently and completely to God's saving love. In the priestly prayer of Jesus it is impossible to separate the "for them" from the "I give myself". So also in the formation of priests, consecration to God cannot be separated from service of the brethren. Rather the one must be completely grounded in the other.

IV. NECESSITY AND MEANS OF CONTACT WITH THE WORLD

83. *New requirements in priestly formation:*

Seminaries have sought rightly to preserve their students from too much worldly influence in order to establish a climate better adapted to the interior life. Alongside this concern, which is still required and valid even today, the need has arisen to establish some contact between the student and the world and with the situation in which the family of man in reality lives. When all is said and done about seminary formation, one has to face the fact that it is not possible to pretend to maintain a kind of segregation from the world which can only be pure fancy today.

It is impossible to abstract oneself from the subtle, often critical, state of the unbelieving contemporary world. Young students cannot afford to be ignorant of the realities of the world in which they are going to be called to work. Nor must they be allowed to be because the presentation of the faith demands that it be presented relevantly to the people addressed. Therefore, the formation of priests today must be undertaken with eyes wide-open, with honesty, courage, and in ways which were not perhaps required in the past.¹

This means that the student should be helped by a formation which is both positive and grounded in theology to face risks and overcome mistakes and ambiguities surrounding the final choice he will make definitively at his ordination. His basic decision to embrace the priesthood must be prompted not by fear or ignorance of the world or a repudiation of the realities of life, but by his clear vision of his true meaning in the world and of his relationship to others.

¹ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 69.

84. *The purpose of interpersonal relationships:*

Complete isolation in a seminary could prevent a seminarist from appreciating the problems of his own generation. He might become inclined to assume conventional and depersonalized forms of relationships with others. It could deprive him of the opportunity to make a responsible decision about his vocation in relation to the world outside. It could make understanding of men and life, where he is going to have to carry out his apostolate, more difficult.¹ Without an appreciation for the trials which beset human beings outside, he could be insensitive as a priest to the problems of others. Finally, there is the danger of creating in seminarians a spirit of privileged caste.

Human relations are not only an instrument in the apostolate; they are, in their theological aspect, a value in their own right. The Christian, as an image of God in Christ, is called to live in the world as a new creature. It is the priest, through his mission of living in charity and friendship, in intimate and fraternal affection and family-like unity, who expresses in himself the true meaning of the new creature in Christ.

It is precisely because of the need for the education of students not to be divorced from contact with modern man that the Magisterium of the Church has called for a formation of students for the priesthood with emphasis on such virtues as friendship, loyalty, reliance on one's word, and the capacity to give to others generously and faithfully.²

85. *Seminarians and their families:*

Home life plays an important role in training a candidate for the priesthood. It is there, for example, that he can discover meaning, value, and difficulties in human love. The family teaches him the importance and value of an affective relationship and the possibility also of appreciating particular aspects of feminine psychology.

The time he spends with his family is very important for the formation of a seminarist, not only during summer vacations but

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 3, 19.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 11; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 51, 69.

also during the academic year. It presents the opportunity for engaging in a number of social contacts in the course of his recreation, employment, or pastoral activity, and can test the usefulness and relevance of the counsels he has received in the seminary. Taken seriously, this aspect of the students' formation can awaken the sense of responsibility and the spiritual lives of the members of the family and the parish clergy.

The family should be the "garden" in which vocations are born and grow. It ought to be the "first seminary" and thereafter the primary cooperator with the seminary.¹ Nevertheless, in view of the numerous serious shortcomings in many families today care has to be taken that the family does not destroy what the seminary is trying to build.

If families are to carry out a complementing and sustaining role in the formation and perseverance of the future priest, a good deal of pastoral formation of the family needs to be undertaken. One of the main objects of the work for vocations consists precisely in eliciting the cooperation of families, bringing parents to a knowledge of what they can and must do in regard to the discovery and growth of sacred vocations.

The tasks of parents with regard to Church vocations are manifold because they are called to prepare, cultivate, and support the vocations God gives to their children. They have to acquire for themselves and their families profound moral and religious values, a deep and convinced spirit of religious practice, exemplary Christian moral conduct, a concern for the Church and its apostolate, a decent education for their children, and a correct concept of what a vocation is.

86. *Relationship with the local parish:*

A Christian lives out his experience of faith and welcomes the invitation to help extend the faith to others in an ecclesial community. Such a community, where the various roles of priests and lay people are correctly lived and where the Lord is the center of every activity, helps each one in the community to understand the ecclesial dimension of his own vocation.

¹ Cf. PIUS XI, Enc. Letter, *Ad catholici sacerdotii*, 20 Dec. 1935: A.A.S., 28 (1936), pp. 5 ff.; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 2.

Therefore, the parish has a necessary part to play in the emergence of priestly vocations, and in the seminarian's perseverance. The parish must do all in its power to involve its Church students in the apostolic activity of the community.¹

This goal can be reached by a parish if it is a genuine community living a life of faith and duly concerned for the realization of the kingdom of God; if the priests of the parish influence the young by the example of their holy lives and their pastoral zeal; if the faithful are interested in promoting vocations, pray for vocations and the sanctification of priests; if the laity collaborate in carrying out the community's pastoral obligations.

87. *Contact with the world:*

A seminary today has to be a community open to the life of today. It has to maintain contacts of all sorts, contacts with the families of the students, contacts with the world of youth, contacts with the life of the Church both on a local and a universal level and contacts with the problems of mankind.²

But when one says that it should be "open" and not "closed", this is far from meaning in some unplanned or mindless fashion. It means rather that it must be designed to produce students who will be capable of a truly human and priestly relationship with others, an openness of spirit to their problems and an ability to engage in dialogue.³

A priest is called to be in the world, to understand the world, and to accept the world, but, at the same time, to undertake a mission which distinguishes him from the world. He can never be in all things "like them". The true priest is a solitary, living in solidarity with the world around him. His work keeps him in simultaneous contact with the community of men and the communion of saints. He lives among men, but keeps in his sight God.⁴

A seminarian must be formed to live in a worldly environment

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 2; S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, n. 11; VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 11; Decr. *Ad gentes divinitus*, n. 19.

² Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., n. 12.

³ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 12, 20, 47, 51, 58, 69, 95.

⁴ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 17.

with the soul of a priest. He must be taught to assume a proper bearing in the company of others and to let his interior, spiritual strength dictate his personal reactions in conversation. Seminary training must form him to be able to stand up spiritually on his own feet in the face of the pressures that will come from his surroundings.

88. *Training to be an apostolic presence in the world:*

Seminary students have to learn to adopt an apostolic outlook in their outside contacts. It was for this reason that the Second Vatican Council expressed the desire that students be introduced to the apostolate — not so much to make a contribution to parochial work-as to create in them a pastoral attitude in their dealings with others, to arouse in them a taste for the apostolate of charity which could inspire their daily round of duty, as well as spurring them on to discover a means of exercising the apostolate in accordance with modern needs.¹

It is of fundamental importance to send seminarists into the apostolate, and to do so not just to help the clergy but to acquire a missionary spirit and apostolic charity and, furthermore, to enable them to learn up-to-date techniques and evaluate the results afterwards.² Their celibacy must also, then, be integrated into their personal apostolic mission.

To accomplish the high ideals of the pastoral formation of future priests requires a highly qualified staff. They must be skilled men, true animators, who are capable of assisting the students and are responsible for the necessary pastoral evaluation of their work and for pastoral supervision. It is a waste of time to talk about the seminary rule or the need for the seminary to be open to the world unless the seminary is under the direction of priests who have the talent and ability to be true educators.³

89. *Instruments of social communication:*

Communications media play an important role in forming men today, and so, too, in forming priests. These media are not unrelated to the problem of forming men in perfect chastity since so often they

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 12, 19.

² Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 19-21.

³ Cf. S. C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 30-31.

have become too involved in sex. They are, for better or worse, problems that touch the personal life of a priest who will be using them and will be subject to their influence. They also touch the pastoral work of the priest because these media both form, inform, and transform his people and shape their social consciousness. He has to help his people use them properly and guard against their harmful effects.¹

It is not, therefore, simply and solely for their personal formation but also to prepare them for the apostolate that aspirants for the priesthood should be introduced to the correct use of these instruments of social communication (press, radio, television, cinema, etc.) and should, in general, be equipped to communicate their thoughts by the spoken and written word to the men of our time in a manner adapted to the mind of today.

Evidently this is a serious problem of enormous proportions, particularly if one takes into account the real situation of the press and the wide use and influence of radio and television. The fact is that the internal and external environment of the seminary community depends greatly on the media which, therefore, have it within their power to form or de-form candidates for the priesthood.

The formational problem presented by the media cannot be reduced merely to a disciplinary regulation of their use. It is above all a question of positive education, of reflection on the social phenomena in which we are immersed. It is the problem of seminary personnel being prepared and specialized enough to look after this aspect of training. It is not only a question of trying to limit the damage that dangerous instruments can do, but of forming future priests who will be capable of living responsibly in the hard world of reality.

¹ Cf. VAT. COUN. II, Decr. *Inter mirifica*, passim; Pont. Comm. for Social Comm., Past. Instr. *Communio et progressio*, 23 May 1971: A.A.S., 63 (1971), pp. 593 ff., passim.

CONCLUSION

90. *Formation as a synthesis of nature and grace:*

It is hoped that the guidelines and suggestions presented here will be of some service to seminary staffs. They have been inspired by a study of the elements of nature and grace which go into seminary and priestly formation. Aware of their high calling and responsibility, educators in seminaries should endeavor at all times to combine the resources offered by nature and grace in their work.

Effective training for priestly celibacy must begin with the individual as he is and help him develop and reach perfection. He has, therefore, to be known and understood in himself. As one finds him so one adapts the means of training to his individual mentality — a mentality formed by his personal background, a conflation of individual and social influences.

The natural conditions which favor the spiritual life can be summed up in the concept of maturity. To use every effort in order to reach maturity in oneself, and to assist others to reach theirs, signifies cooperation with divine grace to construct the spiritual edifice which is a man and, *a fortiori*, which is a priest.

While it is true that the spiritual life depends essentially on grace in its mysteriousness and, as such, transcends the psychic mechanisms of man, it is nonetheless true that these mechanisms affect the action of grace. It is important, therefore, that the personality of the seminarian becomes more richly human in order to serve better as a sign and instrument of the call of the Holy Spirit.

It is the task of formation to enhance the humanity of the individual, to direct him towards, and to bring him if possible to, perfection in such a way as to enable the action of grace to be more effective. The training process will be effective in proportion to the degree of attention paid to the individual conditions, be they normal or otherwise, of the candidate. Only then can one make a human person into a valid instrument for the work of divine grace.

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