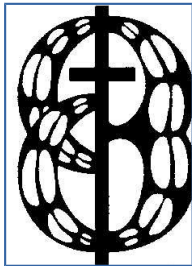


RATIO NATIONALIS FORMATIONIS

**POLICY**  
**FOR FORMATION**  
**IN THE SEMINARIES**

OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA & SOLOMON ISLANDS



Approved by the Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference  
of Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands  
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With recognition from the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples  
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## **Abbreviations:**

CCC	- Catechism of the Catholic Church
CIC	- Code of Canon Law
Dir	- Directory of the Life & Ministry of Priests
EG	- Evangelii Gaudium
GS	- Gaudium et Spes
LG	- Lumen Gentium
PDV	- Pastores Dabo Vobis
OT	- Optatum Totius
PO	- Presbyterum Ordinis
RH	- Redemptor Hominis
RM	- Redemptoris Missio
VD	- Verbum Domini

## **Introduction**

### **THE CALL TO EVANGELIZE**

1. Today, the Church feels called to re-live with a renewed commitment all that the Master did with his Apostles, urged on as she is by the deep and rapid transformations in the societies and cultures of our age, by the multiplicity and diversity of contexts in which she announces the Gospel and witnesses to it ... and by the absolute necessity that the “new evangelization” have priests as its initial “new evangelizers.” (PDV 2)

### **THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND THE TASK OF EVANGELIZATION**

2. The Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands is an integral part of the universal church which has been called into being and has been assembled as one community in Christ. Gathered together in the Holy Spirit, she has been sent into the world to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all peoples.

### **FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS**

3. The formation of future priests, both diocesan and religious, and the life-long assiduous care of their personal sanctification in the ministry and the constant updating of their pastoral commitment are considered by the Church to be one of the most demanding and important tasks for the future of the evangelization of humanity. (PDV 2)
4. The Church's work of formation is a continuation in time of Christ's own work, which the evangelist Mark illustrates in these words: “And he went up on to the mountain and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons” (Mk 3:13-15). It can be said that through her work of forming candidates to the priesthood, and through the priests themselves, the Church throughout her history has continued to live this passage of the Gospel in various ways and with varying intensity. (PDV 2)
5. So that they may effectively carry out this pastoral mission, priests need to be adequately prepared to be able to judge wisely the situations and needs around them. In this way they will be enabled to exercise a creative yet servant leadership. They should also be prepared to promote and encourage the inculturation of the message of the Lord amongst their own peoples, societies, and cultures, and enable their own people to recognize and live out their own charisma in the Church (cf. PDV 18).
6. For these reasons it is necessary that the meaning of the ministerial priesthood should be clearly understood by, and explained to, those who are being called to carry out this mission of Christ the Good Shepherd in this local Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

## **THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE TASK OF EVANGELIZATION**

7. The local Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands has been established among the various and many cultures within our society. It is within these diverse cultures that the Holy Spirit calls us to be a community of the Disciples of Christ. At the heart of this community, the ministerial priesthood exists at the service of the life and mission of this community to continue Christ's ministry of leadership, teaching, and worshipping the Father.
8. The authentic and suitable formation of priests for this fundamental ministry in the Body of Christ is an essential task for the building up of the Church in our countries. Priests need to be formed to continue the saving work of Christ, to carry out their mission truthfully, generously, and courageously, faithful and open to the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ.

## **CHOSEN FROM AMONG THEIR OWN PEOPLE**

9. The priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are called to continue, within this period of history, and within their own particular cultural environment, Christ's mission as Shepherd and Leader of his People (cf. PDV 13). If priests are truly to carry out this vocation, they will need to be clear about their own identity.
10. Likewise their formation will need to promote and encourage their integral human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation and development. The program of formation should be designed in a manner that is relevant to the needs, experiences, and challenges of a changing Melanesian society and culture and within the context of both the local and the universal Church's experience of itself. The emergence of a truly localized and self-responsible Church, and the challenges and opportunities which this creates, demand true authenticity, generosity, and commitment from those called and formed to be pastoral leaders among the People of God.

## **THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN MELANESIA TODAY**

11. These demands are rendered even more complex and difficult on account of the dramatic and rapid social and cultural changes being experienced today in these two developing, independent nations. This is the environment in which the local Church is being called to meet the challenge of the "new evangelization."<sup>1</sup>
12. The Church in Melanesia is growing away from being a Church dependent on the ministry and generosity of foreign missionaries for its leadership. It is quickly growing into the local Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, under the leadership of its own local pastors and with its own particular missionary responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Rapid and widespread transformations and a secularized social fabric typical of the contemporary world are what make unavoidable the priest's duty of being adequately prepared, so that he might respond to the demands of the new evangelization. To this grave duty corresponds the specific right of the faithful, who feel the effects of priests' solid formation and sanctity in a definite way (Dir. 69).

## **NEED FOR ON-GOING FORMATION**

13. The Basic Scheme of Priestly Formation for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands must also address the need for the continuing or on-going formation of the priest. The formation of the priest does not cease with his ordination: both the priest himself and the Church need to ensure that the necessary means are available to enable the priest to continue to deepen his formation throughout the years of his ministry. Such on-going formation will not only be concerned with his continuing professional development but also with the priest's human and spiritual growth.<sup>2</sup>

## **PART A**

### **Section1**

## **THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY**

### **THE DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY OF THE PRIEST AND HIS MINISTRY**

14. *It is within the Church's mystery, as a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension, that every Christian identity is revealed, and likewise the specific identity of the priest and his ministry. Indeed, the priest, by virtue of the consecration which he receives in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, is sent forth by the Father through the mediation of Jesus Christ, to whom he is configured in a special way as Head and Shepherd of his people, in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in service of the Church and for the salvation of the world (PDV 12).*

## **SACRAMENTAL SIGN OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE AS PRIEST AND PASTOR**

15. As a community of priestly people, continuing the mission of Christ, and sharing in his one priesthood (LG 10-11), the Local Church manifests Christ to the surrounding society by word and example. Within this Church, the ministerial, or ordained, priest, while he also participates in this same function of showing forth the presence of Christ, by virtue of the 'sacred power he has', has the mandated task of forming, guiding, leading and caring for the priestly people. In 'the person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people' (LG 10). Through his pastoral and sacramental ministry and through his preaching and wise counselling, the priest reminds the people that they share in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord, through their participation in the Paschal

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<sup>2</sup> Ongoing formation is a need which begins and develops from the moment of receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders: with it the priest is not only 'consecrated' by the Father and 'sent' by the Son, but also 'animated' by the Holy Spirit. Hence permanent formation springs from a grace which produces a supernatural force destined to assimilate continually, in ever broader and deeper terms, the entire life and activity of the priest in fidelity to the gift received. This necessity is intrinsic to the divine gift itself, which is continually 'vivified' so that the priest may adequately respond to his vocation. As a man situated in history he needs to perfect himself in all the aspects of his human and spiritual existence in order to attain that conformity with Christ, the unifying principle of all things. (ibid)

Mystery. Through his ministry he enables them to respond to their own vocation as followers of Christ.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS**

16. Through the Sacrament of Orders, priests, through the 'anointing of the Holy Spirit are marked with a special character and conformed to Christ the Priest' (PO2). In this way the ordained minister becomes the sacrament of Christ the Priest and Shepherd of His Church. The priest's relationship with Jesus Christ is fundamental to his identity and mission as a priest of the New Law. Consecrated by his ordination, the priest continues amongst his people Christ's saving work of loving service in prayer, word, and sacrifice, building up the living, missionary Community of the Church, after the pattern of the way of Jesus Christ himself, in *persona Christi*, in the person of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

## **AT THE SERVICE OF CHRIST'S BODY**

17. All priests are called and ordained to serve the Church, the Body of Christ. They are called to build up the life and communion of God's People, through their willing service as shepherds. The nature and mission of the priest needs to be seen within the context of the Church as a 'sign and instrument of Christ, of communion with God and of the unity of all humanity' (PDV 12).

## **TO FOSTER THE VOCATIONS AND CHARISMS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL**

18. Equally members themselves of the community of the Church, priests are called upon to foster the vocation and charisms of their brothers and sisters, so that the Church may truly accomplish its mission among mankind.<sup>4</sup> Not only should they encourage the faithful to fulfil their particular vocations, they should also set an example of response to vocation through their own life of prayerful encounter with Christ the Shepherd and their commitment to the mission they have received.

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<sup>3</sup> The relation of the priest to Jesus Christ, and in him to his Church, is found in the very being of the priest, by virtue of his sacramental consecration/anointing, and in his activity, that is in his mission or ministry. In particular, 'the priest minister is the servant of Christ present in the Church as mystery, communion and mission. In virtue of his participation in the 'anointing' and 'mission' of Christ, the priest can continue Christ's prayer, word, sacrifice and salvific action in the Church. In this way the priest is a servant of the Church as mystery because he actualizes the Church's sacramental signs of the presence of the Risen Christ. He is a servant of the Church as communion because - in union with the Bishop and closely related to the presbyterate - he builds up the unity of the Church community in the harmony of diverse vocations, charisms and services. Finally, the priest is a servant of the Church as mission because he makes the Community a herald and witness of the Gospel. (PDV 16).

<sup>4</sup> Like Christ he must make Christ 'visible in the midst of the flock' entrusted to his care, having a positive and encouraging rapport with the lay faithful. Recognizing in these their dignity as sons [and daughters] of God, he develops his own role in the Church, and in their service he offers all his priestly ministry and pastoral charity. In the awareness of the profound communion that binds him to the lay faithful and to the religious, the priest will make every effort 'to awaken and deepen co-responsibility in the one common mission of salvation, with a prompt and heartfelt esteem for all the charisms and tasks which the Spirit gives believers for the building up of the Church'. (Dir. 30; cf. also RH 21 and PDV 18).

## **THE PRIEST'S ROLE AS SERVANT**

19. By the very nature of his vocation as the sacramental representative of Christ (PDV 15) acting *in persona Christi*, the priest should generously devote himself, his talents, and energies to the service of his people and their needs. His vocation is not for his own personal satisfaction but for the service of God's People who have been entrusted to his pastoral care. The priest should not 'lord it over others', or play the part of the 'big man' but, rather, model to his people the character of Jesus who thoroughly identified himself with the people, who came to serve rather than to be served.

The ideal of servant leadership that we see revealed and modelled in Jesus confronts the Melanesian priest with a truly personal as well as, at times, a cultural challenge. He is challenged to be both a man of God, in the likeness of Jesus, as well as a man of his own people and culture.<sup>5</sup>

## **CO-WORKERS WITH THEIR BISHOPS AND FELLOW PRIESTS**

20. First among the college of priests in the Local Church are the Bishops, who, united with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, are the successors of the Apostles as the Pastors of the Church. The bishops are charged with the ministry of building up the Body of Christ both within the Local Church entrusted to their care, and within the whole universal Church. Priests share in this responsibility as the trusted co-workers with the Bishops, forming with their Bishop one Presbyterium with its diverse functions (cf. Dir. 22). The priest will need to be able and willing to share and work together with his bishop and with his fellow priests, as well as to collaborate with the lay faithful, especially those with particular talents that can serve the Church. The priest, today, needs to be a 'team worker', a man who is both with and of the community. The spirit of such 'collaborative ministry' needs to be fostered during the period of formation.

## **AWARENESS OF THE ECCLESIAL NATURE AND DEMANDS OF MINISTRY**

21. Priestly ministry takes place in an ecclesial context. It is essential that the candidate be aware of the ecclesial nature and demands of the ministry for which he is preparing himself. As a priest he will be at the service of his bishop and the local community in the work of transmitting the Word of God and the faith, in administering the sacraments, in building up the members of the Church in communion and mission. The program of formation should be designed in such a way that it will help them develop this conscious sense of commitment to their mission and help them to live in the spirit of brotherly and collaborative priestly ministry. Above all, the candidates will need to be open to being formed by the Spirit of God, who is 'the Agent par excellence of his formation, who, by the gift of a new heart, configures and conforms him to Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd' (PDV 69).

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<sup>5</sup> The priest will guide the man [and woman] of today; in his/her search for the meaning of existence, to a personal encounter with Christ. In such a way the priest, placed in the service of the People of God, will present himself as an expert in humanity, a man of truth and communion, a witness to the solicitude of the Only Shepherd for each and every member of his flock. The community will be able to count on his dedication, availability, untiring work of evangelization and, above all, his devoted and unconditional love. (Dir. 30)

## **THE PRIEST AS A MAN OF COMMUNION**

22. By the character of his ordination, the priest must live at the heart of the Church; the character of his ordination specifies his whole life formed around his relationship with the Church and with Christ as its Head and Shepherd (PDV 16). The context in which the priest carries out his ministry is one of communion: communion with his bishop and fellow priests, communion with the faithful, and above all, communion with Christ. 'The ordained ministry has a radical communitarian form and can only be carried out as a collective work' (PDV 17). Thus the priest will need to be a man of communion.<sup>6</sup>

## **COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY**

23. His ministry also has a social context. Though increasingly under challenge from individualist philosophies, the sense of community is undoubtedly one of the major ideals of Melanesian culture. Further enriched by the teaching of Christ, this traditional quality needs to be deeply fostered and developed in the formation of the priest's understanding of his own ministry and identity. A strongly developed spirit of communion can become the foundation of a profound and active sense of mission in the priest's life, and the antidote to cultural pressures to adopt a chiefly or Big Man role.

## **HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND THE MINISTRY OF THE PRIEST**

24. To be a mature priest, he must be humanly mature. The priest's good human relationships with fellow priests, other Church workers, friends, women, family and relatives, should all be real life images and reflections of his relationship with Christ. The priest represents Jesus Christ, the one who became human like us. The development of good human relationships in his life will generate good ministerial relationships. The personal, human life of the priest and his ministerial life are indispensably inter-connected. Especially, priests should communicate well with those who share their ministry, their fellow priests, whether local or expatriate, as well as with those entrusted to their pastoral care, the men and women of their parish. Unfortunately, sometimes, priests can too easily tend to isolate themselves, or only communicate with a small, select, group of companions. They can be reluctant to share their successes and burdens with fellow priests and their bishop.
25. Their fellow priests and the bishop have a special responsibility to encourage other priests to share their experiences, and to communicate with them. The priest should view his own particular work as an integral part of that of the whole local Church. In this way the meaning of the Church as a communion will find practical expression in the way in which priests work together and help and support each other in their mission. In this way, also, the priests

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<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, precisely because within the Church's life the priest is a man of communion, in his relations with all the people he must be a man of mission and dialogue. Deeply rooted in the truth and charity of Christ, and impelled by the desire and imperative to proclaim Christ's salvation to all, the priest is called to witness in all his relationships to fraternity, service and a common quest for truth, as well as concern for the promotion of justice and peace. [The] pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization demands priests who are deeply and fully immersed in the mystery of Christ and capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life, marked by a profound communion with the Pope, the Bishops and other priests, and a fruitful cooperation with the lay faithful, always respecting and fostering the different roles, charisms and ministries present within the ecclesial community. (PDV 18).



will help make one of the great values of their traditional culture and society strength of the Church and its mission as well.

### **THE PRIEST: A MAN OF FAITH**

26. The priest, above all, needs to be a man of faith. The formation of a priest integrally involves a deepening of his own personal faith, for he is called to be the witness and servant of the faith. The witness and the servant of the faith must himself live in and by the faith he preaches. The priest is called to be a herald of faith and hope. He is called to practice what he preaches (Ordination Liturgy).

### **PERSONAL FAITH IN CHRIST AND HIS MISSION**

27. Christian faith is based on a deeply personal attachment to the person of Jesus Christ. Faith is a response to the initiative of His love, which calls us to share his life and mission. True faith will be founded on a lively response to the Word of God pondered not only in the intellect but also in the heart, for it is the Word that nourishes faith. Faith expresses itself in the lived acceptance and the living proclamation of the truth which has been received and which is lived and celebrated in the Church. Faith engages the whole person and involves every aspect of that person's existence. Faith integrates the various dimensions of our life. Priestly integration implies a willing and responsible participation in the mission of Jesus and of his Church.

### **IN THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE**

28. Faith also involves the fostering of the true spirit of obedience. Like the Master, Jesus, the priest should know how to 'dedicate his own will, by obedience, to the service of God and his brethren' (PO 15). It is his faith and his personal relationship with Christ that will enable the obedience of the priest to be both mature and generous in his response to the will of God. A priest cannot be a 'man of faith' if he is not, above all, also a 'man of prayer'. Faith is nourished by our communion with God.

### **THE LIVING CONTEXT IN WHICH FAITH IS NOURISHED**

29. For the priest, his faith must be the determining factor of his pastoral vocation and the source of his apostolic fruitfulness. Special emphasis should be placed – in the formation process - on the development and strengthening of faith in all its richness. This development does not happen in isolation; it will be shaped and nourished by the historical experience and the particular cultural, social, and religious environment of the priest's life. Faith is not an abstraction; attention needs to be given to the lived context in which the faith is nourished. The faith of the priest will be enriched and nourished by private prayer, by exchange, and by shared listening. It is faith that will help the priest judge and interpret the 'signs of the times', in an obedient seeking after the will of God for his people.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [The priesthood] corresponds with historical circumstances and, to remain always faithful to its nature, is configured, in specific choices, through a critical relation and a demand of evangelical harmony, with the 'signs of the times'. Therefore, priests have the duty to interpret these 'signs' in the light of faith and subject them to prudent judgment. In

## **NEED FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE**

30. The life of faith also involves self-discipline. A person, especially a priest and servant of the Gospel, cannot live a well-ordered and faithful life, in obedience to the Lord and the needs of the Church, if his external life is disorganized and lacking in plan and order. An unplanned and wasteful distribution of one's time can contribute to this disorder. The priest's spiritual life, his prayer and worship, his pastoral ministry and use of leisure time should be so organized as to avoid negligence, omission of what should be done, and the habit of doing things mechanically or simply at random without any plan or clear purpose. The prudent allocation of his time will allow the priest to accommodate all the various aspects of his life in a holistic and fruitful way. Self-discipline in the productive use of time, and fidelity to one's responsibilities is a sure sign of growth and maturity in faith and pastoral commitment.

## **THE PROPER USE OF TEMPORAL GOODS**

31. The life of faith also involves the ways in which the priest makes use of the temporal goods available to him. In contemporary Melanesian society the priest can often appear to be a person of some wealth, materially better off than many of his parishioners. He should accustom himself to moderation and prudent responsibility in the use of the material resources (including money and vehicles) that are available to him because of his position. The priest needs to develop a true spirit of detachment in order to acquire that liberty of spirit and heart which will enable him to put aside all inordinate anxiety and to be trustingly open to the divine call in his life (cf. PO 17). Such a spirit will help the priest avoid the appearance of leading a life of affluence and greed. Such a way of life suggests - especially in today's society - a destructive worldliness and a real lack of concern for the marginalized and disadvantaged in our society. Because of the prevailing attitudes and corruption in society, there is a danger that a priest may become too preoccupied with material and economic security, at the expense of his devotion to the pastoral ministry. An emphasis on 'self-reliance' also needs to be encouraged, rather than the tendency to rely too much on others to meet our material needs.

## **HOLISTIC INTEGRATION OF ONE'S LIFE-STYLE**

32. In most Melanesian societies the view of life is an integrated one. No distinction is made between the realm of the spiritual and the secular life of the community. This traditional sense of integration needs to be stressed in the living of the Christian life as well. Often there appears to be a separation between the spiritual and secular social life of the Christian, as if the life of faith remains, as it were, hidden in the ordinary social life of the believer. The integrated Melanesian view of life should provide a model for the holistic formation of the priest, so that he can more fully integrate his faith – life and his social - life, his spirituality and his humanity, in a total living out of his vocation as *alter Christus*, another Christ, the man of faith and the shepherd of the flock.

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any case, they cannot ignore them, especially if they wish to orient their own lives effectively in a way that will make their service and testimony more fruitful for the kingdom of God. (Dir. 34).

## Section 2

### **THE HUMAN, CULTURAL, AND ECCLESIAL ENVIRONMENT OF PRIESTLY FORMATION**

33. Together with the whole Church, priests are sent in to the world to preach the Gospel and to help build up the Kingdom of God. Thus the context of their ministry is the world: this is a concrete and real world, the world of their time, of their society, and of their culture (cf. GS.1 and PO 3).
34. Candidates for the priestly ministry are people who find themselves situated in a real context, the world of their society and culture. As people of that world, they have their own history, possibilities, and limitations, their own sensibilities and experiences. They must pay due attention to their own physical wellbeing and good health. As priests, aided by reflection on their own experience, they will have to arouse and build up the faith and mission of the faithful within concrete, and often diverse, social and cultural situations.

### **IN THE MIDST OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

35. Indeed, today, they will need to do this in the midst of radical cultural changes and social developments. In view of the rapid and often destructive changes taking place in Melanesian society and the massive social dislocation that results from such changes, priests need to develop a true concern for the poor, the oppressed, and the outcasts. They need to acquire the sensitivity and ability to recognize and combat the new forms of poverty, exploitation, and marginalization emerging in contemporary society. If they are to exercise effective leadership in these areas, priests need to be helped, through the skills of social anthropology, to develop the aptitude for critical and informed analysis of the complex situations in modern Melanesian society.
36. The priestly ministry is not an idealized task; its concrete and specific dimensions and context are the social, political and intellectual environment and problems of the times. The following principles need to be taken into account in the planning of the program of formation:
  - a. In his formation the seminarian should not be cut off from direct contact with the marginalized and those who are being adversely affected by social change and economic structures.
  - b. The candidate needs to acquire a preferential concern for the poor and the oppressed. He will not develop such sensitivity without direct experience of their condition. It is important that the institutional structure and strength of the Church should not separate the priest from direct involvement with the sufferings of his people.
  - c. He needs to be alive to those conditions of economic and political injustice and oppression that impair the integral human development of his fellow citizens.

- d. He should be aware, through the study of the sociology of religion, of the ways in which contemporary Melanesian society and culture needs to be viewed in the context of a society that is being increasingly influenced by multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-denominational, as well as multi-racial, social forces.
- e. He should also be helped to recognize how contemporary society is also being profoundly affected by a growing secularism that leaves people insecure and indifferent regarding their traditional, and indeed, Christian, values.
- f. The seminarian (as well as the priest) needs to study carefully the contemporary trends and issues affecting the socio-economic as well as the religious life of his people. This will better prepare and equip him to confront these issues and the challenges that affect his pastoral ministry today.

### **MEANS OF FORMATION TO A CRITICAL CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AWARENESS**

37. It is vitally important, then, that the seminary programs in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands should ensure that the seminarians are fully and critically informed about the changing cultural, socio-political, and spiritual environment of contemporary Melanesia. To achieve this end, the seminary should promote the following means:
- a. The seminary should investigate various ways through which it may provide the seminarians with opportunities to stimulate and deepen this awareness and practically reflect on it, through programs of instruction and information, and through the promotion of critical reflection on events and values.
  - b. The seminary will encourage the contextualization of theological studies through creative expression in liturgy, prayer, and group sharing, and through direct exposure of the seminarians to the problems of human development in their areas. The seminary will encourage such programs (e.g. through the use of visiting lecturers) which will assist the solid formation of the students' knowledge of and reflection on the changing experiences of their society, its opportunities, possibilities, and its problems. This will serve to encourage their sense of bonding with, and obligation towards, contemporary Melanesian society with all of its complex problems and challenges, especially in the area of human and spiritual development.
  - c. The seminary should also encourage the students to acquire a better knowledge and appreciation of the diverse and rich cultures present among their fellow students. A creative awareness of, and sensitivity to, the variety of cultural, socio-political and religious values and experiences that are present within the seminary, will help them integrate, in a more discerning way, differing experiences, into their preparation for ministry.
  - d. Seminarians also need to be helped to become more aware of the different Christian experiences and human concerns of the laity, not only in the towns, but also in the villages.

- e. Likewise, the seminary will seek to develop in the candidates the necessary skills and mentality that will enable them to share the life of people and to take seriously the efforts of those seeking to build a truly Christian world and society.
  - f. The seminary also needs to help the students become more aware of the efforts of other Christian churches and introduce the seminarians to a better appreciation of regional ecumenical endeavours and cooperation.
  - g. Students also need to learn to appreciate the multi-church environment of Christianity in this part of the world, and the need to encourage sensitive and constructive relationships between the different denominations.
38. One very important element in this process of the 'contextualization' or 'inculturation' of the understanding of priestly ministry, will be the deepening of the communal basis of ministry, building on the sense of community identity that is already deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness of the candidate, and oriented toward a church of *communio*, as envisaged by the Conference Pastoral Plan.

### **POSITIVE VALUES IN THE CULTURE: CO-RESPONSIBILITY**

39. The fulfilment of the familial or tribal obligations and responsibilities by a Melanesian demands the generous, even selfless, use of one's talents. The call to fulfil these obligations is a conscientious one for any Melanesian, and perhaps more so for a priest, for whom service of the community is fundamental to his personal sense of 'initiation,' identity, and mission. Originally based on the needs of survival, the Melanesian concept of community, and of familial and tribal responsibilities (or 'service'), is experienced as a vocation, a way of life at the service of the community, to fulfil the needs of the community. The diverse Church ministries, when viewed in this cultural 'light', within the context of the Melanesian concept of relationship and collaborative responsibility, will not be regarded simply as 'jobs to be done', but as integral to one's sense of identity with, and belonging within community. Like all Melanesian Christians, priests should see the responsibilities of their vocation as integral to their communitarian way of life, which is further strengthened by their commitment as ministers of Christ's Gospel of charity and service. Their Christian obligation demands from them the responsible use of their every effort and talent at the service of the Church community just as much as is required by their immediate families and tribes. Families and tribes have divisions and factions also. Jesus teaches that family obligations are secondary to those of discipleship. The Church must be the ideal inclusive tribe.

### **THE SENSE OF FAMILY AND TRIBE AND MINISTERIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

40. There is here also a question of the way in which Melanesian priests are able to 'conceptualize' the Church as their family and tribe, within the wider universal 'tribe' of the whole Church. From this church family/tribe perspective, the collaborative and contextualized nature of Christian ministry and the work of evangelization can be better

appreciated. Priestly ministry will always be carried out within a context of relationships.<sup>8</sup> Their own Melanesian cultural experience provides the candidates with a strong basis on which to build this ministerial sense of relationships of love, service, and leadership, of which the model is Christ, the Good Shepherd (cf. PDV 13ff).

### **THE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE**

41. No one is a priest for himself alone, nor by his own making. The priest's vocation is not for his own self-satisfaction or advantage. The priest exists at the service of the Church, and it is the community that calls him to serve it. The priest needs to develop within himself a spirit of true self-sacrifice and dedicated commitment, putting the needs and desires of the community before his own. At the heart of his life and work will be the Eucharist which nourishes and confirms in the priest Christ's own spirit of self-giving charity and pastoral service for the salvation of others.<sup>9</sup>
42. Candidates for the priesthood need to be helped to acquire a spirit of penance, a 'sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the Cross' so that they will be able to 'put into practice the radical self-giving proper to the priest following the example of Christ the Good Shepherd' (PDV 48).

### **CALLED FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND BY THE COMMUNITY**

43. Since a priest is not a priest for himself, nor simply by his own doing or choosing, but by the election of God and the mandate of the community of the Church, there is no question of simply discerning the call to ministry on one's own. Both the discerning of one's call, and the preparation for ministry itself, take place within the context of the local community of the Church. Thus the actual practice of the candidate's formation demands some sort of insertion into the life of the Church, and sensitivity to its challenges and obligations. The period of formation should, as far as is practicable, be integrated with the life of the local Church the candidate has been called to serve. There should be, where possible, some form of continuous sharing in the life of one's own ecclesial community or, at least, in the life of another ecclesial community. The community that was originally involved in the selection of the candidate should, as far as this is possible, continue to be involved in the development and discernment of his vocation. The candidates should also be helped - through contact with the wider church community - to discover and come to a deeper appreciation of the diverse forms of ecclesial life. This should include encouragement of collaboration with the laity and religious.

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<sup>8</sup> Of special importance is the capacity to relate to others. This is truly fundamental for a person who is called to be responsible for a community and to be a 'man of community'. In this context affective maturity, which is the education in true and responsible love, is a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood. (PDV 43).

<sup>9</sup> [Candidates] to the priesthood will be trained to share in the intimate dispositions which the Eucharist fosters: gratitude for heavenly benefits received, because the Eucharist is thanksgiving; an attitude of self-offering which will impel them to unite the offering of themselves to the Eucharistic offering of Christ; charity nourished by a sacrament which is a sign of unity and sharing. (PDV 48)

## **THE COMMUNITY OF THE PRESBYTERIUM**

44. The lives and works of the candidates need to be progressively integrated into that of the Presbyterium of their own diocese; or in the case of candidates belonging to religious congregations, into the ministerial activities of their respective apostolic communities. It is important that a sense of identity, both with the Church they are to serve and with their fellow ministers in that Church, should be fostered in the candidates during their years of formation. The candidates should also become aware of their specific responsibility to the bishop of their diocese and their relationship with him. For this purpose, the bishops and local priest should be strongly encouraged to visit the seminary and spend time with their candidates. In these ways the candidates will be helped and encouraged to develop within themselves a sense of being ecclesial persons, and a spirit of bonding with their local Church and its mission.

## **A EUCHARISTICALLY BASED SPIRITUALITY**

45. In this context it is also important that candidates for the priesthood be encouraged to develop a lively and solid Eucharistic spirituality, centred around the daily participation in the mystery of the Eucharist, the central action of the community, and on a fervent devotion to Christ's presence among us in the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist is at the very heart of the Christian community; if the priest is to be indeed a 'man of communion' and a man of the Church, then the Eucharist must be at the heart of his life.

## **AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL FREEDOM**

46. The priestly ministry, of its nature, engages the whole person; it is not simply a 'job' or a function. It engages the whole person of the priest in the free and responsible 'journey' of consecrating himself to the service of Jesus Christ, working with him in the on-going mission of forming his Church. The priestly ministry is a gift of God which calls forth from those who receive it a generous response in freedom and a willing openness to conversion; a freedom and conversion which are the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the period of formation for priestly ministry, and the conditions under which this is undertaken, should provide the necessary opportunity and environment for suitably testing, encouraging, and verifying the human qualities and the authentic spiritual freedom of the candidates, and their ability to make a mature choice regarding their future commitment. What is required is a true sense of freedom to dedicate oneself to this mission. Such dedication will also involve a genuine spirit of obedience and openness to the will of the Lord, a spirit of fidelity to the requirements of priestly ministry, and a spirit of loyalty and respect for the hierarchy in the Church. Candidates need to be able to witness, in their lives, to the 'primacy of being over having' and to recognize that 'the significance of life consists in a free and responsible giving of oneself to others, a willingness to place oneself entirely at the service of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God as a priest' (PDV 8).

## **PRIESTLY LIFE AND THE RADICALISM OF THE GOSPEL**

47. If the call of the Gospel takes a man, just as he is, from among his people and his culture, and - at times - from the practice of a profession already chosen by him, the process of

formation will further challenge him to make certain ‘breaks’ with otherwise appropriate aspects of his life style so as to make himself more completely ready to serve the Gospel, just as Jesus asked of his first apostles who ‘left all and followed him’ (Lk. 5, 11). These ‘breaks’ also involve some greater detachment from material possessions and the renunciation of different manifestations of the will to power. This also supposes a real independence with regard to social constraints that the culture may otherwise impose on the candidate. These detachments need to be understood in ways that also respect the obligations inherent in Melanesian culture. For the priest should be, and be seen to be, in his attitudes and actions, a man dedicated to God, and a man of the Church. To balance the call to the radicalness of the Gospel with one's traditional social obligations, and the opportunities for the use of power, is by no means an easy task. The encouragement of such a ‘balanced’ attitude of heart and spirit should be integral to the spiritual and human formation of the candidate.<sup>10</sup>

### **A MINISTRY LIVED IN THE CELIBATE STATE**

48. By the tradition and law of the Latin Church of the West, only those men are called to the priestly ministry who, through a certain charism received from the Lord, freely choose to exercise their ministry as celibates, in a life of consecrated chastity for the sake of the Kingdom. By this free choice they publicly signify the total gift of themselves and their lives and energies for the ministry of the Gospel and the service of God and of his people after the likeness of Christ the Good Shepherd. Such a radical choice, made very consciously and deliberately, requires a level of human maturity and a spirit of love that is based on and nourished by the priest's intimate relationship with Christ. This way of life is very much in accord with the nature of the mission to which the priest is called, since it frees him completely for the service of the new humanity, and of the new community which Christ is creating in the world. Celibacy lived for the sake of the Kingdom allows the priest to attach himself more easily and completely to Christ and his people with undivided heart, setting him free to be at the service of God and mankind.

### **MEANS TO THE FORMATION FOR A LIFE OF CELIBACY**

49. In a socio-cultural environment where celibacy is not readily seen as a value and is difficult to live, the choice is of a very special and unique nature. It demands a true maturity and a

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<sup>10</sup> For all Christians without exception, the radicalism of the Gospel represents a fundamental, undeniable demand flowing from the call of Christ to follow and imitate Him by virtue of the intimate communion of life with him brought about by the Spirit (cf. Mt 8, 19ff; Mk 8, 34-38; 10, 17-21; Lk. 9, 57ff). This same demand is made anew to priests, not only because they are in the Church. But because they are ‘in the forefront’ of the Church, in as much as they are configured to Christ, the Head and Shepherd, equipped for and committed to the ordained ministry, and inspired by pastoral charity. Within and as a manifestation of the radicalism of the Gospel one can find a blossoming of many virtues and ethical demands which are decisive for the pastoral and spiritual life of the priest, such as faith, humility in relation to the mystery of God, mercy and prudence. A particularly significant expression of the radicalism of the Gospel is seen in the different ‘evangelical counsels’ which Jesus proposes in the Sermon of the Mount (cf. Mt 5-7), and among them the intimately related counsels of obedience, chastity and poverty. The priest is called to live these counsels in accordance with those ways and, more specifically, those goals and that basic meaning which derive from and express his own priestly identity. (PDV 27)



most profound discernment so that the individual feels himself strongly affirmed and peaceful in the choice he has made.

50. The seminary will need to take care to provide the seminarians with the professional, human, and spiritual helps needed to enable them to freely discern their choice in this regard and to clearly understand the demands and effects of what they are undertaking, as well as the theological and pastoral reasons for it.<sup>11</sup>
51. Consecrated celibacy is of itself a positive reality. It is a life-style that is of itself a way of loving that has intrinsic value for the priest. But it is not without its difficulties. The counter-cultural practice of celibate chastity presents challenges and difficulties for all Christians because it touches so intimately and directly on the core of our emotions. Though not alien to Melanesian culture, this is also true within the context of Melanesian culture and society.
52. The goals of priestly formation must include ways of helping the seminarian understand and appreciate the value of the ministerial life of consecrated celibacy as he prepares himself to live the celibate lifestyle within the circumstances and environment of modern Papua New Guinean and Solomon Island's society.
53. It needs to be clearly recognized that education for a life of consecrated celibacy and chastity is an increasingly difficult task in our Melanesian society today. This problem arises not only on account of the traditional perspective on manhood and womanhood, and on the importance of the family line, but also - and especially- because of the influence of modern social values and technology, which easily accept pornography and sexual permissiveness as normal behaviour, and which are undermining traditional taboos and values in this important area of human relationships.
54. It is therefore necessary to ascertain whether the candidates effectively possess the charism of consecrated celibacy. This discernment will require suitable and precise doctrinal formation, including an appreciation of the prophetic testimony and witness of others to the value of celibacy.
55. Furthermore, it is necessary to help young candidates understand that the successful practice of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God will not be based on some sort of voluntaristic conquest of one's emotions, but rather on the gift or charism of the Lord and the grace of the Spirit. Education for a life of chastity in the celibate state will involve, then, the integration and convergence of a number of means: instruction, counselling, prayer, devotion to Mary, asceticism, self-knowledge, and self-control, along with the strengthening

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<sup>11</sup> It is especially important that the priest understand the theological motivation of the Church's law on celibacy. In as much as it is a law, it expresses the Church's will, even before the will of the subject expressed by his readiness. But the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the link between celibacy and sacred Ordination, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. For an adequate priestly spiritual life, celibacy ought not to be considered and lived as an isolated or purely negative element, but as one aspect of a positive, specific and characteristic approach to being a priest. Leaving father and mother, the priest follows Jesus the Good Shepherd, in an apostolic communion, in the service of the people of God. Celibacy, then, is to be welcomed and continually renewed with a free and loving decision as a priceless gift from God, as an 'incentive to pastoral charity', as a singular sharing in God's fatherhood and in the fruitfulness of the Church, and as a witness to the world of the eschatological Kingdom. (PDV 29)

environment of a supportive community, the testimony of older priests and married couples, mature friendships and travel.

## **THE PRIEST AND WOMEN**

56. One important aspect of formation for a life of consecrated celibacy involves the quality of the candidate's relationships with, and attitude toward, women, especially religious women. As a minister of the Gospel in which 'all of you are one in Christ,' and in which there is 'no longer a distinction made between male and female, slave and free' (Gal 3, 28; cf. Col 13, 11), the priest is called upon to relate to both men and women as equals, respecting the dignity and rights of every person. During his years of formation, the candidate will need to deepen his understanding and acceptance of his own sexuality, in order for him to be able to relate to all people, but especially women, in a mature and balanced way, to regard them, and act towards them, as Christ did, rather than as the traditions of inherited culture may sometimes suggest. In the early stages it would be helpful to be advised by a mature woman concerning correct attitudes and behaviour towards women, and also to enable the young men to overcome incorrect cultural prejudices about women.

## **Part B**

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY FORMATION**

56. The objectives proposed in this document are closely connected with each other. They can only be pursued in stages and the different stages of this development of the objectives of the program need to be integrated. The fundamental purpose or vision that unites all the elements is the principle expressed in the conciliar decree on Priestly Formation, that the pastoral task of the priestly minister must 'inform' all aspects of the program of formation' (cf. OT 1). Nor should this development be presumed to cease at ordination: it should be seen as a lifelong task for the priest and for the Church, for the priest's continuing or on-going formation will have to be pursued in other ways during the whole of his life. The philosophy of formation underlying these objectives is a holistic one, embracing the whole ministerial life of the priest - not only the initial formation period.

### **CONTINUING PASTORAL INTEGRATION OF ALL THE STAGES OF FORMATION**

57. The on-going formation of the priest will depend, for its effectiveness, on the soundness and maturity of the foundations laid down in the period of initial formation. It is, therefore, highly desirable that there be a continuous and close collaboration between those responsible for the initial formation and those responsible for the continuing formation of the priest throughout the course of his pastoral life and ministry. Today, more than ever before, the Church authorities have recognized the importance of such an integrated and holistic approach to the formation and development of the priestly minister. The

encouragement of the continuing process of integration of experience and learning is especially important in the case of those who are recently ordained. Their ecclesiastical superiors need to attend carefully to this. It is highly desirable that some older priest be appointed as ‘moderator’ for priests in their early years of ministry.

58. The principle of the need for continuing or on-going formation of the priest is underlined by Paul's strong advice to Timothy: 'Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands on you' (1 Tim 4, 14). There are not only professional or theological reasons for the need for continuing formation and education, there are also significant human reasons. It is as a human person that the priest exercises his ministry. As in the case of Jesus himself, it is the humanity of the priest that is the vehicle of his service. This on-going attention to his personal formation ‘is demanded by his own continuing personal growth. Every life is a constant path towards maturity, a maturity that cannot be attained except by constant formation. It is also demanded by the priestly ministry seen in a general way and taken in common with other professions, that is, as a service directed towards others.’ (PDV 70)

## **THE ROLE OF THE CANDIDATE IN HIS OWN PERSONAL FORMATION**

60. It should be acknowledged as a basic principle that ‘the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation; all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately self-formation’ (PDV 69). Hence, particular attention needs to be given to the human and personal formation of the candidates, so that knowing themselves more fully they may the better be able to consciously dedicate themselves to the life to which they have been called. This will involve especially their personal growth in affective maturity.

### **Section 1**

## **SERVANT OF THE CHURCH. TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE PEOPLES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND SOLOMON ISLANDS PREACHERS OF THE WORD IN THEIR OWN CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

61. Together with all other Christians, and in a particular way as the chosen collaborators of the Bishops and the chief shepherds of the local churches, the priests of Melanesia have as their first task the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to their own people. If they are to build up the community of the disciples of Christ effectively, they will need to preach the Gospel in ways and words that the people can truly understand and integrate with their own living experience. They must therefore pay special attention to homily preparation (VD 59; EG 135-144).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The People of God is formed into one in the first place by the Word of the Living God, which is quite rightly sought from the mouth of priests. For since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all. Moreover, the priest's preaching, often very difficult in present-day conditions, if it is to become more effective in moving the minds of his hearers, must expound the Word of

## **AUTHENTICITY IN THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL**

62. In their proclamation of the Word, priests will need to take care to maintain the apostolic authenticity of the faith while expressing it in the language and idiom of their own culture. While interpreting the Gospel in the light of their own cultural values, they will, where necessary, also challenge existing cultures with the light and truth of the Gospel. The ability to proclaim the Good News in this way demands personal commitment and intellectual competence; this presupposes sound and relevant formation. For the role of the local priest is a critical one in interpreting the Gospel to the changing cultural environment, and the culture to the Gospel and the Christian tradition. Thus the priest will need to have a sound foundation in his critical and respectful appreciation of the traditions of the faith as well as a critical and informed appreciation of the values of his own cultural inheritance and of the contemporary cultural environment. His own personal and contemplative relationship with Jesus will be the sure foundation of his endeavours to bring the knowledge and love of Jesus to the people of his own culture (cf. PDV 46), as it was for the first apostles of the Word.

## **A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST**

63. The message that priests are mandated to proclaim is not their own, but that of the Jesus who became one with our humanity, sharing our culture and our history. It is this message which has been preserved and preached within the Church since the time of the apostles. The priest needs to receive this message within the Church and carefully and ceaselessly pursue the conversion of his own heart and understanding through his prayerful reflection and pondering on the Word of God. By the very fact that he is called to preach the Word, the priest always needs to be a student of the Word and a disciple of the Church's teaching.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THOROUGH STUDIES IN SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY**

64. It is on account of the central importance of his office as Minister of the Word that a thorough and systematic course in theological and scriptural studies is required as an integral part of a priest's formation. The systematic study of Scripture and theology should not finish with ordination, but should be consciously and conscientiously made an integral part of the whole of the priest's life and ministry. At the heart of such studies must lie an ever deeper knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose minister the priest is called to be. The mystery and the person of Christ are the foundation of all priestly studies. The reflection on the meaning of these 'mysteries' should be not only intellectually rigorous but also profoundly assimilated through personal and prayerful contemplation. The precise details regarding the programs of courses are outlined in the statutes of the respective seminaries. The systematic study of these mysteries of the Christian faith is especially the responsibility of the program of theological studies at the Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana.

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God not merely in a general and abstract way but by an application of the eternal truth of the Gospel to the concrete circumstances of life. (PO 4)

## **SPIRIT OF PASTORAL CHARITY**

65. The Scriptures clearly show us that a lively pastoral charity towards the people of his times, especially those who were the poorest and the most marginalized by society and religion, was at the very heart of Jesus' work and mission. If today's priest is to truly carry on the pastoral ministry in the same way as Jesus did, then he, too, must be sensitive to the social conditions and human aspirations of the people to whom he is sent. He needs to be informed about questions of justice and development, to understand the problems, and even be willing to share the sufferings of his people. His perspective towards these problems should remain predominantly pastoral rather than political or economic. However, this does not mean that he should not be actively concerned with and involved in the struggles of his people for dignity, truth, and justice. One of the tasks of the authentic preaching of the Gospel is that of conscientisation, deepening peoples' sense of their own dignity, making them aware of their right to freedom and personal development.

## **IMPORTANCE OF PASTORAL REFLECTION**

66. The competence – both intellectual and spiritual - acquired through a generous application of himself to the required studies will provide a solid basis for the priest's pastoral ministry. At the same time, his studies will also need to be supplemented by reflection on his own pastoral experience of the living Church and contemporary society. A solid intellectual and spiritual foundation will equip the priest with the skills he needs to evaluate his own experiences and those of the people more critically. Such skills will help him judge what pastoral practice truly demands and involves, and, through a sound process of discernment of the demands of the situation, to put into practice the Word of God and the teachings of the Church in concrete situations. A program in Clinical Pastoral Education would help with this.

## **KNOWLEDGE IN LOVE**

67. The discernment of the meaning of the person and message of Christ for today's world, as well as the critical understanding of one's own people and society, are not solely matters of intellectual knowledge. For the minister of the Gospel they also imply and demand a heartfelt and faithful knowledge in love, according to the criteria of charity of which Paul speaks (1 Cor 13). It is to the service of such 'knowledge in love' that all efforts at clarity and soundness of understanding and analysis of information need to be directed. Thus they will contribute to an authentic pastoral charity. Careful attention to the demands of study and discernment will help the priest overcome the 'temptation to reduce his ministry to an activism which becomes an end in itself, to the provision of impersonal services, even if these are spiritual or sacred, or to a business-like function which he carries out for the Church' (PDV 72).
68. Sound, informed, and self-critical intellectual (and personal) formation is the necessary and essential foundation for a ministry exercised in a spirit of pastoral charity. This will enable the candidate, and later the priest, to more harmoniously integrate the various aspects of his life and experience, and to deepen the different elements of his formation in a mature

fashion. The candidate needs to acquire the habit of sound reflection and discernment during the period of his initial formation.<sup>13</sup>

## **THE INCULTURATION OF THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL**

69. Priests in Melanesia are especially challenged to interpret the message of the Gospel and the traditions of the Church to their own people in ways and words that can speak to the hearts and lives of their people caught up in a rapidly changing culture and society. In order to carry out such a difficult and demanding task, priests need not only to acquire a profound personal understanding of the message of the Word of God, but also to reflect on what is happening in their own culture and society today, as well as on what has been passed down to their people from within their own cultural and social traditions. This task demands, on the part of the priest or seminarian, a quite profound sympathy for both the Christian tradition and the traditions of his people.
70. Such sympathy can only be the fruit of a genuinely reflective and contemplative approach to both traditions. The priest in Melanesia is called to be a sympathetic 'bridge' between his own people and the Good News that has been handed on to them through Christ's Church. In earlier days, it was missionaries from other cultures who brought the news of the saving work of Jesus to the people of these islands. This has always been the pattern of the way in which the Word of God has been transmitted from one culture to another since the time of the New Testament Church. Today, an authentic 'localization' of the Church requires that the local priests, and others, work to bring together in a way that will build up the Body of Christ, bringing the richness of their inherited Christian faith together with that of their inherited Melanesian spiritual traditions. This is an immense challenge and will require both wisdom and skill; it is not a task that can be quickly or superficially achieved.

## **NEED TO ACQUIRE SOUND KNOWLEDGE**

71. During their studies the candidates should be helped to acquire not only a sound understanding of the Christian mysteries. They also need to acquire the necessary scientific, anthropological, spiritual and sociological skills to interpret their own culture to their people in such a way as to both nourish and incarnate their faith in the Melanesian cultural context. They need to develop the mentality, or attitude, that will enable them to authentically apply the truths of the Catholic theological tradition within the context of their own cultural tradition, with its contemporary social challenges, in such a way as to enrich both traditions. The very pastoral nature of theology requires that the priest learn the skill of integrating and

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<sup>13</sup> The intellectual dimension of formation likewise needs to be continually fostered through the priest's entire life, especially by a commitment to study and a serious and disciplined familiarity with modern culture. As one who shares in the prophetic mission of Jesus and is part of the mystery of the Church, the Teacher of truth, the priest is called to reveal to others, in Jesus Christ, the true face of God, and as a result, the true face of man. This demands that the priest himself seek God's face and contemplate it with loving veneration (cf. Ps 26, 7; 41, 2). Only thus will he be able to make others know him. In particular, continuing theological study is necessary if the priest is to faithfully carry out the ministry of the word, proclaiming it clearly and without ambiguity, distinguishing it from mere human opinions, no matter how renowned and widespread these might be. (PDV 72).

discerning traditions and experiences. A more contextualized and enculturated approach to the study of theology will not limit but rather broaden the universal scope of Christian theology. It will enrich traditional theological understanding with the Melanesian perspective, fostering a positive regard for the local Church as part of the universal Church.<sup>14</sup>

## **THEO-CENTRIC AND CHRISTO-CENTRIC UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE**

72. Seminarians should be encouraged to study and reflect on their own cultures in the light of the Gospel. They need to be helped to explore the means by which the message of the faith may be more richly enculturated and the culture more profoundly evangelized, in ways that respects both the rich spiritual tradition of the Melanesian peoples and the profound spiritual tradition of the Christian faith. The fruitful carrying out of the task of enculturation - which should be encouraged within the seminary – requires that the candidates set their goals on a Theo-centric and Christo-centric understanding of Melanesian life and spirituality. The rich body of traditional Church teaching will serve to illuminate this, and indicate the principles to be followed in the work of discerning the Melanesian method of missionary activity and proclamation of the Good News.

## **MELANESIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY**

73. The development of an authentic Melanesian Christian theology (and spirituality) has to be one of the main aims of theological education in the seminaries: i.e. the way of looking at God, the work of Christ and the mission of the Church within a Melanesian perspective. The method followed needs to respect the value both of imported and Melanesian elements in the formation of the local Church and its faith. The tendency to become defensive about one's own culture and negative about the introduced, 'foreign' culture of Christianity needs to be avoided if a fruitful and profound inculturation of the Gospel is to take place. At the same time the foreign, introduced, tradition should not be regarded as simply the 'superior' one, in such a way that the Melanesian tradition is virtually ignored or despised as primitive. The best means of avoiding such a defensive and negative approach will be the facilitation of a deeper study of both traditions: the Christian theological and cultural tradition, and the Melanesian spiritual and cultural tradition. It is essential that future ministers of the Gospel in Melanesia should appreciate the values of both traditions. In this way the priest will become both servant and enabler of his people on their journey to a deeper enculturation of the message of Jesus in their daily lives.

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<sup>14</sup> This raises the issue of the pastoral nature of theology. It is a question really, of two characteristics of theology and how it is to be taught which are not only not opposed to each other, but which work together, from different angles, in favour of a more complete 'understanding of the faith'. In fact the pastoral nature of theology does not mean that it should not be less doctrinal or that it should be completely stripped of its scientific nature. It means rather, that it enables future priests to proclaim the Gospel message through the cultural modes of their age and to direct pastoral action according to an authentic theological vision. (PDV 55).

## **NEED FOR THE TRAINING OF LOCAL PROFESSIONALS**

74. Obviously, if the task of enculturation is to be carried out well and fruitfully within the formation program, it will be absolutely necessary that, as soon as possible, a vigorous group of well-trained and professional local theologians and other experts be prepared for work in the seminaries. The task of inculturation is primarily a task for the local Church, not for the expatriate theologian or missionary, no matter how expert he or she may be. It is essential that practical and realistic efforts be undertaken to ensure that the means are available for the necessary incarnation of the Word of God in Melanesian society (cf. PDV 55).<sup>15</sup>

## **KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIETY AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE**

75. The people of God in Melanesia have the right to expect that their priests will be truly human, warm, compassionate, and approachable people; Men who are faithful to the traditions of their culture as well as to the Christian faith; Men who, in their behaviour are without favouritism, sectarianism or prejudice, sincere and confident with themselves and with others, actively involved with questions concerning the development and the sufferings of their people, and willing to listen and to give back what they have heard in their teaching and their celebrations. It is important that the words of a priest translate the experience of the encounter with God into the socio-cultural realities of contemporary Melanesian life and society.

## **SPIRIT OF OPENNESS AND SENSITIVITY**

76. The capacity for genuine communication and pastoral dialogue presupposes sensitivity to human experience, encounter with people and with groups, the exercise of responsibility and openness to discover and explore various forms of solidarity and collaboration with the people. The seminary will endeavour to help develop these skills within its students, so that future priests may be characterized by openness to differing viewpoints, a spirit of interior freedom, a capacity to adapt and to renew themselves, and skill in relating with others. Above all, the priest should be marked by a generous human dedication to the work of the ministry of service for the Word of God and the people of God.<sup>16</sup>
77. The priest should be careful not to isolate himself from the wider issues that are being debated in the society around him. He should not limit his concern and interest only to the issues and questions of his parish. He should take an interest in, keep himself informed

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<sup>15</sup> In the present circumstances in which, in a number of regions of the world, the Christian religion is considered as something foreign to cultures (be they ancient or modern), it is very important in the whole intellectual and human formation, the dimension of inculturation be seen as necessary and essential. (RM 67)

<sup>16</sup> Fuller development is required in the human aspect of priestly formation. Through his daily conduct with people, his sharing in their daily lives, the priest needs to develop and sharpen his human sensitivity so as to understand more clearly their needs, respond to their demands, perceive their unvoiced questions, and share the hopes and expectations, the joys and burdens which are part of life; thus he will be able to meet and enter into dialogue with people. The People of God should be able to say about the priest, who has increasingly matured in human sensitivity, something similar to what we read about Jesus in the Letter to the Hebrews: 'For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning'. (PDV 72)



about, and enter into dialogue with, the problems of the national and regional society and indeed of the wider world of the universal human community. The local Christian community can never exist in isolation from the wider human society and the Universal Church, and it is part of the ministry of the priest to foster these wider concerns and interests among the people of his parish. Of its nature the Church is 'catholic'; the concerns and interests of the priest should, likewise, be 'catholic'. Such a concern for more catholic questions should be fostered in the seminary, e.g. through reading of newspapers, debates, the contributions of guest lecturers etc.

## **UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

78. Finally, it is also appropriate to raise here the question of the desirability of the further academic formation of some priests or seminarians “within the University environment”. Here it is a question of those candidates who indicate an ability to undertake studies within a secular university and who have the necessary qualifications and skills to meet the entry requirements of the university. It is highly desirable that some of the future priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands should be given the opportunity to acquire professional skills. Such skills will enable them to be leaders of their people and true servants of the Church in relation to some of the complex social, economic, and environmental issues facing the two nations.
79. Fields in which such skills could be acquired include studies in sociology, anthropology, economics, and other human and social sciences. Such studies will enable suitable candidates to prepare themselves to take a more effective and informed role in meeting the Church's social, educational, and cultural responsibilities within our changing society. It will also be a means of advancing the intellectual quality and rigorism of the Catholic community's public witness to the social implications of the faith. For this reason too, solid and detailed study of the social doctrine of the Church needs to be undertaken within the seminary program. In this way, future priests will have the necessary information to interpret and apply these important teachings within the Melanesian social environment and thus contribute an informed Christian vision to the social debate. Likewise, the study of philosophy can play an important role in the formation of the critical judgment of the priest, and in helping him acquire the necessary aptitude for rational analysis and interpretation of situations and theories.

## **Section 2**

### **CALLED TO WORK TOWARDS THE UNIFICATION OF HUMANITY IN JESUS CHRIST**

80. By the very nature of their calling, priests are at the service of the whole Church, for the life of the priest has an 'essential and undeniable ecclesial dimension'. For the diocesan priest this 'dimension' is normally lived out within the particular Church in which he is incardinated, within its 'specific historical and contextual conditions' (PDV 31). In a certain respect this is also true of the religious priest who finds himself, for a time, a member of the

presbyterium of a specific Local Church. But every priest is also, by virtue of his sharing in the priesthood of Christ, a priestly minister for the whole Church. It is essential, then, that in the course of their formation candidates for the priestly ministry acquire this ecclesial sense of identity, the sense of ecclesial communion that should be characteristic of their life-style (cf. Dir. 21ff.).

## **THE SENSE OF THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF MINISTRY**

81. To ensure the development of this 'sense' in the candidates, the seminary will need to ensure that:
  - a. Candidates are exposed, during the information, to the experience and understanding of the different groups that exist within the Church, both at the local level and at the wider level of the Universal Church. Examples of such are local Parishes, Basic Christian Communities Movements, Women's' Groups, Renewal Movements such as the Charismatic Movement, Devotional groups such as the Legion of Mary or Divine Mercy, as well as differing styles of community life.
  - b. Candidates are familiar with the diversity of vocations and ministries existing within the Church, such as the religious life of both women and men.
  - c. Candidates are open to the cultivation and support of special liturgical and social ministries among the laity, especially the ministry of the catechist, and the role of parish councils, and the ministries of women. Seminarians need to see their ministry as a work of collaboration as well as of leadership.
82. Likewise the seminary should help the candidates integrate themselves more fully into the contemporary context of society and the Church. Thus:
  - a. It is important that the formation of the seminarians should not be unduly isolated from the experiences of their contemporaries.
  - b. The candidates should be encouraged to reflect on what they are learning in the classroom in the light of the experience of the Church and society around them, if what they are learning is to be of service to their fellow Christians.
  - c. The candidates should be formed in openness towards, and willingness to promote and encourage, lay participation and pastoral responsibilities within the Church and in the wider society.
  - d. They should learn during the years of formation to cooperate and collaborate with the diversity of ministries and services present within the Church: with the ministries of the laity, of their fellow priests, of the bishops, and with the papal ministry of the Bishop of Rome. In this way they can progressively arrive at a better understanding of the specific role and ministry of the priest within the body of all of Christ's faithful.

- e. Seminarians need to be helped to develop a deep appreciation of the communal character of the Church. They should learn to appreciate the need to foster genuine Christian community through such means as the formation of basic Christian communities that encourage the more direct participation of the faithful in the life of the local Church.
- f. During their years of formation, seminarians should acquire an understanding of the methodologies of building the local Christian community (such as the Project for the renewal of the Diocese). They should reflect on how such methods may be suitably utilized within the Melanesian context in order to promote the more lively participation of the faithful in the life and activity of the Christian community. It is of vital importance today that the pastoral ministry of the priest should be informed by an appreciation for the communitarian character of the Church NMI. The priest's mission is that of building a truly participative and collaborative Christian community, not that of playing out of the role of an ecclesiastical 'bigman'. The priest should always be aware that, although he may be called to lead the community, he always remains a member of the community as well.
- g. The seminarians should also be helped to reach a deeper sense of ecclesial communion through their interaction with one another, and through sensitivity to cultural and social differences among their own numbers. Thus the common life of the seminary will itself come to play an integral part in the formation of this sense of ecclesial communion. In this way too the candidates should be led to a more mature knowledge of themselves and a genuine openness to those whose viewpoint or experience is different because of social, cultural background, or gender. Seminarians should be encouraged to share together in action and work, in prayer and faith.

### **AT THE MISSIONARY SERVICE OF CATHOLICITY**

- 83. The mission of the priest is indeed a 'mission of universal extent, even to the ends of the earth: any priestly ministry effectively shares in the universal dimension of the mission entrusted by Christ to the Apostles' (PO 10). Candidates need to acquire the spirit of missionary availability. They should have a true concern for the universal propagation of the message of the Gospel which will leave them open to the missionary possibility of 'going beyond the limits of their own dioceses, nation and rite, so as to meet the needs of the entire Church' (OT 20; FD). Every priest needs to be a missionary in spirit, with a lively sense of the universal nature of the Church and its mission.
- 84. To foster such a spirit of catholicity among the candidates, the program of formation should:
  - a. Awaken a sense of catholicity within the candidates by encouraging an active zeal for the life of the Church and for its universal mission throughout the whole world.
  - b. Develop and encourage among the students a pastoral concern for the unity of Christians, and ensure that they are familiar with the work of the Ecumenical

Movement (especially in their own region) and are prepared – through common prayer and reflection – to participate in ecumenical relations.

- c. Gain a greater openness to, and better understanding of, non-Christian religions and inter-faith dialogue.
- d. Are well informed about international affairs, not only those involving their own region.
- e. Are tolerantly open to different cultures and to the wider issues and concerns of the contemporary world.

## **PRIESTLY RESPONSIBILITY**

85. At their ordination priests are called to become the 'co-workers of the bishops in bringing the message of the Gospel to the whole of humanity so that all the nations called together again in Christ may be transformed into the one People of God.' This service of ecclesial communion and catholicity takes on such importance that acquisition of the necessary skill and the willingness to assure it must be seen as a major objective in the priest's formation and as an indispensable criterion for ordination. The future priest must be a man of ecclesial communion.

## **Section 3**

### **AT THE SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENTAL CHURCH**

86. The life of the priest is of itself a sacrament, centred on the Eucharist. There can be no Church without the Eucharist, which is both the source and summit of the life of the community and of the work of evangelization. What the priest celebrates in the Eucharist is symbolic of his role in the Church.

### **THE PRIEST AS THE SACRAMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST**

87. He should not see himself simply as one with a 'function' within the community of the Church. He is the sacramental representative in and to his community of Christ the Good Shepherd (cf. PDV 13-15). The priest is called upon to continue the saving presence and work of service of Christ in his Church, especially through the sacraments, above all in the community's celebration of the Eucharist: it is the Eucharist which makes the Church, as the Church makes the Eucharist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In the Church, and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ, the Head and Shepherd, authoritatively proclaiming his Word, repeating his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation, particularly in Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist, showing his loving concern to the point of total gift of self for the flock, which they gather into unity and lead to the Father through Christ and the Spirit. (PDV 15).

## **THE PRIEST AND THE EUCHARIST**

88. What the priest celebrates with the community of the faithful in the Eucharist is symbolic of the nature of his role at the 'forefront' of the Church (cf. PDV 16). Indeed, all of the priest's ministerial actions find their source and their fulfilment in the Eucharist. During their years of formation, seminarians should be encouraged to make the Eucharist the heart of their lives. The identification of the priest with Christ gives a spiritual, liturgical, and sacramental dimension to the work of evangelization to which he consecrates himself. This sacramental and liturgical role of the priest requires specific and careful preparation so that he may better appreciate and carry out his responsibilities in the Church. This ministry involves a number of aspects that should form integral parts of the program of priestly formation.

## **MINISTRY OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

89. The personal and communitarian prayer of the priest has two complementary aspects. It is an expression of fidelity to the injunctions of the Gospel, which lies at the heart of the life of the priest, of attachment to the person of Christ, and of the praise which the Church owes to the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit. Likewise, the prayer of the priest is an act of intercession for the People of God and in their name; this is especially the case in the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Liturgy of the Hours. The prayer of the priest should be informed by the spirit of pastoral charity (cf. PDV 23).<sup>18</sup>
90. In order to foster in the candidates an essential prayerful and liturgical spirit, the program of formation should address certain fundamental issues:
- a. It should assist candidates to learn to pray and to organize their prayer and their spiritual life in a personal way, so that it helps deepen their understanding of, and relationship with Christ Jesus, and unifies the whole direction of their lives.
  - b. It should lead the candidates to discover their pastoral responsibility as leaders and facilitators of prayer.
  - c. It should initiate the candidates into a practice of prayer that is both contemplative and apostolic, bringing before God the life of their people, while nourishing their prayer from the experience of their ministry and mission.
  - d. It should encourage the candidates to make the Eucharist and the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours the heart of their priestly lives and of their personal relationship with God and with his Church. They should learn how to preside at the prayers and

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<sup>18</sup> The high point of Christian prayer is the Eucharist, which in its turn is to be seen as the 'summit and source' of the sacraments and of the Liturgy of the Hours. A totally necessary aspect of the formation of every Christian, and in particular of every priest, is liturgical formation, in the full sense of becoming inserted in a living way in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ who died and rose again, and is present and active in the Church's sacraments. Communion with God, which is the hinge on which the whole of the spiritual life turns, is the gift and fruit of the sacraments. In the same way, the 'new law' which should guide and govern the life of the Christian is written by the sacraments in the 'new heart'. And it is a law of charity towards God and the brethren, as a response and prolonging of the charity of God toward man signified and communicated by the sacraments. It is thus possible to understand straightaway the value of a 'full, conscious and active participation' in sacramental celebrations for the gift and task of that 'pastoral charity' which is the soul of priestly ministry. (PDV 48)

liturgies of the Church according to the norms and in such a way as to encourage the prayer and spirit of the faithful, enabling and permitting each of the faithful to take their active part in the liturgy.

- e. It should also help and encourage the candidates to explore possible ways of better enculturating prayer and liturgy within the experiences of their people.

## **MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS**

- 91. The sacraments are at the heart of the life of the Church and they form a central and integral part of the pastoral ministry of a priest, especially the Eucharist. They are also basic to the liturgical life of the community. It is a fundamental part of the ministry of the priest to make present the full truth of the sacramental mysteries, the source of the life and of the mission of Christians in the world. To prepare candidates for this aspect of their pastoral ministry, and to more deeply develop a liturgical spirituality within them, the seminary program will:
  - a. Help the seminarians to develop within themselves and in their ministry a strong liturgical – especially Eucharistic – foundation to their spirituality and to their pastoral charity.
  - b. Enable them to appreciate the profoundly ecclesial nature of the sacraments: they are not meant simply for personal or private use.
  - c. Help the seminarians to immerse themselves ever more deeply in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, of which the Eucharist is the centre, and in their relationship with Christ the Priest, the source of this life.
  - d. Encourage the seminarians to regularly participate in the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to prepare themselves to become its ministers.
  - e. Enable them to acquire a profound understanding of their responsibilities as ministers of the sacraments, in which their ministry will witness to the nearness among us of the transcendent God.
  - f. Educate them – through instruction and practice – to become teachers of the liturgical and sacramental mysteries which are Christ's gift to the Church and which call for, on the part of the Church, a personal and communitarian response.
  - g. Enable them to accept responsibility for, and to assist their bishops in, the work of enculturating the liturgical ritual and symbols within their Melanesian culture.

## **A SUMMARY CONCLUSION**

- 92. The Formation Program should be so designed that it will help and challenge the candidates to become aware that, as priests, they are no longer laymen. As priests they have accepted a ministry of servant leadership in the Church. It is to such a ministry that the Church will ordain them. Thus they must be willing to assume the responsibilities and accept the sacrifices that go with such a ministry of leadership and service after the model of Christ the

Servant Leader and Good Shepherd. If, indeed, they are called to be priests, and are willing to accept the Church's call to this ministry, they must clearly understand that their response to this vocation will demand ongoing conversion and a generosity of spirit that will shape their whole lives.

93. Once ordained, it will be their responsibility to carry out the mission entrusted to them in obedience to their bishop (or their religious superior) and in collaboration with him and with the whole Church. Theirs is not an individualistic vocation or ministry, simply given to them for their personal satisfaction. They are to work in fraternal cooperation and community with their bishops and with their fellow priests as men of communion (cf. PDV 23). Hence the period of formation should be one in which the candidate is helped to integrate himself more progressively into the community of the Church and the fraternity of the presbyterate of his own particular Church. Belonging to a formation community is the first step of this process, and so the communal character and spirit of the formation community is of great importance in promoting this sense of community. A seminary in which candidates from many dioceses, cultures, or religious congregations live and study together provides a most suitable community environment for the formation of a wider vision of the catholicity of the Church.
94. It is indispensable that the three objectives outlined above, be unified and integrated in the program and methodology of formation: the work of proclaiming the Gospel, the work of building up the ecclesial community, and the service of prayer and celebration. In this way all aspects of the program will have a direct pastoral orientation. At the same time, the method of formation should be of such flexibility that it also allows each candidate to follow his own more personalized path within the general approach to understanding and living the priestly ministry.

## **Part C**

### **PRINCIPLES AND MEANS OF FORMATION**

95. The priest of today needs to be formed in such a way that he has the ability and the aptitude for critical discernment that will enable him to respond in a creative and evangelical way to the complex situation of modern society in Melanesia. Thus, candidates will need to be formed so that they may be 'truly able to respond to the demands of our times and capable of evangelizing the world of today, capable of distinguishing good from evil, or signs of hope from threats' (PDV 10).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In the formation of priests it is not sufficient simply to welcome the positive factors and to counteract the negative ones. The positive factors themselves need to be subjected to a careful work of discernment, so that they do not become isolated and contradict one another, becoming absolutes and at odds with one another. The same is true for the negative factors, which are not to be rejected en bloc and without distinction, because in each there may lie in hidden some value that awaits liberation and restoration to its full truth. (PDV 10).

96. Throughout the various stages of the candidate's formation, care should be taken to develop not only the necessary knowledge, but also the skills needed to judge wisely and interpret his and his people's experiences in the light of the Gospel. The candidate, in this way, will be helped more truly to discern his own vocation not only, but also the shape and challenges of his future ministry in the local Church.

## **STAGES OR LEVELS OF FORMATION**

97. We can distinguish two principle 'stages' in the formation of the future priest, which correspond to the two 'levels' or 'cycles' of the overall formation program in PNG/SI for both diocesan and religious candidates.

## **THE INITIAL YEARS OF FORMATION (FIRST CYCLE)**

98. The First Cycle embraces the initial years of formation: the year(s) of spiritual formation (the Spiritual Year for most diocesan candidates, or the Novitiate for religious), and the first three years of academic studies in the seminary prior to the Pastoral Year. This program should already be oriented towards the better understanding of the demands of the presbyteral ministry and the pastoral service of the Church. During these years special emphasis will be placed on the deepening of ministerial spirituality and the laying down of solid, basic foundations for an adequate philosophical and theological understanding and pastoral sensitivity.
99. The three year (academic) program, (e.g. leading to the awarding of the Diploma or Advanced Diploma in Religious Studies at CTI and Good Shepherd Seminary) will include the following:
- a. Introduction to the Mystery of Christ and to the basic attitudes of the Christian life and the spirituality of ministry.
  - b. Introduction to philosophical and theological reflection, particularly on the questions of truth and revelation, and on the nature of the human understanding and the critical analysis of questions.
  - c. Introduction to the life and nature of the Church and its ministries.
  - d. Introduction to the study of the Sacred Scriptures.
  - e. Development of the thorough understanding of Liturgical Theology and practice, and the acquiring of a sound liturgical spirituality.
  - f. Preparation for the responsibilities and challenges of the Pastoral Year.
  - g. Ongoing improvement of English language and expression skills accompanied by ongoing human development through exposure to literature and the arts.
100. The clearer discernment of their vocation and the laying down of solid and enduring foundations for their future life as ministers of the Word and sacraments is one of the major objectives of this first cycle.



101. During their second and third years of studies, the seminarians will be instituted into the Ministry of Lector and prepared for the Ministry of Acolyte.

### **THE PASTORAL YEAR**

102. During the Fourth Year of the seminary program, the candidates will normally be assigned to pastoral placements in their home dioceses (or in one of the apostolic communities of their religious congregations). Here, under the supervision of an experienced pastor, they will be assisted to put into practice what they have learned. This will be a time in which to assess the candidate's ability to minister as a pastor to his people and to acquire a true spirit of 'pastoral charity' (cf. PDV 23). This period of direct pastoral experience will also enable the candidate to 'test' his own vocation and to come to a better and more intimate understanding of the situation of the local Church and an appreciation of his future role within it. The period should include written assignments.

### **PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGICAL FORMATION (SECOND CYCLE)**

103. The Second Cycle is to be a time of more thorough professional preparation of the future priest. It will include the following studies, designed to help the candidate achieve a firmer and more personally committed orientation of his life towards the priestly ministry. The program of studies, (e.g. leading to the Diploma in Theology or the degree of Bachelor of Theology at CTI,) should be based on the following principles:
- a. The profound and systematic formation in the knowledge of all aspects of Theology and Scripture, with a special emphasis on the ability to 'apply' or 'actualize' this knowledge within the cultural and social context of contemporary Melanesia (cf. # 43 above).
  - b. Students will also be encouraged to undertake an in-depth research project and reflection on a topic of their own choice, especially in relation to the enculturation of the Good News within Melanesian society.
  - c. The program will also seek to promote the further and more spiritual deepening of the candidate's understanding of the priestly ministry.
  - d. This will be accompanied by a progressive deepening of involvement in pastoral activities and of reflection on these experiences.

### **ORDINATION**

104. The liturgical admission to Candidacy for the Ministry of Priesthood in the Church should normally take place in their home dioceses at the end of their fourth year of studies (cf. CIC 1034 # 1). Ordination to the Diaconate will normally be celebrated in the candidate's home diocese at the completion of their seminary studies and after a suitable period of pastoral work. If considered desirable by their respective ordinaries, the Ordination to the Diaconate of the candidates may be celebrated in the Seminary towards the end of their final year of studies. Ordination to the Priesthood will normally be celebrated in the candidate's own

diocese after at least six months pastoral exercise of the ministry of Deacon (cf. CIC 1031 # 1).

## **DISCERNMENT OF VOCATION**

105. Spiritual discernment lies at the heart of the formation process. During their years of formation candidates need to be helped, through their studies, as well as through their experience of pastoral activities and spiritual direction, to discern the authenticity of their call to the priestly ministry and to accept this call willingly. Becoming a priest is not simply a matter of acquiring the requisite professional skills and knowledge.
106. In order to minister effectively as a priest, the candidate needs to work hard to acquire these necessary pastoral and theological skills, but these skills also need to be acquired with the right intention and a truly ministerial and spiritual motivation.
107. The candidate also needs to discern that he is 'called' to priesthood in the Church. He needs to be reasonably sure about his identity as a priest. 'This identity is built upon the type of formation which must be provided for priesthood, and then endure throughout the priest's whole life' (PDV 11).
108. Such a lively awareness of his own priestly identity presupposes the interplay of complex human and spiritual, as well as pastoral, ecclesial, and theological elements in the process of spiritual discernment. It presupposes a process, established and facilitated by the formation team and by the program of theological studies and pastoral experience, to help the candidate ascertain the will of God for him.

## **ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND THE CANDIDATE IN THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS**

109. The process of discernment also requires the willing cooperation of the candidate. He should make sincere use of the traditional means provided by the Church to discover the will of God, especially the offer of grace through the sacraments and the normal pastoral ministry of the Church. Thus the formation process should place due emphasis on the following principles:
  - a. The importance of regular spiritual direction.
  - b. The regular use of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation.
  - c. Reflection on personal and pastoral experience.
  - d. Growth in affective maturity, self-knowledge, and personal freedom.

- e. The authentic living out of the communitarian dimension of the priestly ministry.<sup>20</sup>
110. The process of discernment of vocation, then, is twofold: on the part of the candidate himself, and on the part of the Church. The candidate presents himself to be called to priestly ministry by the Church, and it is the Church that welcomes and ratifies this offer of himself. Thus the seminary authorities, together with the bishop and the priests and faithful of the Local Church, have an integral role to play in the process of discernment. It is a question of recognizing both the action of the Spirit in the candidate and the orientation in the life of the candidate that is leading him towards priestly ministry.

### **PROCESS OF CONSULTATION**

111. At that stage when the candidate is to be called to ordination, the formation team and the seminary authorities need to consult the various assessments of the candidate made by those who have had some part in his journey towards ordination. In particular, they should consult those priests and lay people who have accompanied him during his specific pastoral experiences. Other student companions of the candidate may also be consulted. The views of those directly involved in the candidate's personal as well as his academic formation should be thoroughly considered. Such a process of ecclesial discernment clearly requires that those immediately responsible for the formation of candidates for the priesthood should have a continuous, real, and deeply personal knowledge of the candidates that will permit them to have confidence in the future development of the candidate in his priestly ministry. Those responsible for the discernment of the suitability of candidates should have an adequate, concrete, and practical awareness and appreciation of the needs, concerns, and situation of the local Churches in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and of the role of the priest in the local Churches. The date of ordination must be published 4-6 weeks prior to the ordination, with invitations for those with information to come forward.
112. On the part of the candidate himself, while making conscientious and generous use of the aids to the discernment of his vocation, he should also be able to make his own discernment of his readiness for ordination to priestly ministry. He should evaluate his skills, test his motivation, and verify God's call of him to priesthood. Thus it is necessary that there exist within the seminary such appropriate institutional conditions of life as will not only permit, but which will genuinely foster, an authentic and regular dialogue between the candidates and those responsible for their formation (academic as well as personal). There should also be a true spirit of maturity and community in friendship present among the students themselves, and between them and their formators.

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<sup>20</sup> If the priestly vocation bears unequivocal witness to the primacy of grace, God's free and sovereign decision to call man calls for total respect. It cannot be forced in the slightest by any human ambition, and it cannot be replaced by any human decision. Vocation is a gift of God's grace and never a human right, such that 'one can never consider priestly life as simply a human affair, nor the mission of the minister as a simply personal project'. Every claim or presumption on the part of those called is thus radically excluded (cf. Heb. 5, 4ff). Their entire heart and spirit should be filled with an amazed and deeply felt gratitude, an unshakable trust and hope, because those who have been called know that they are rooted not in their own strength but in the unconditional faithfulness of God who calls. (PDV 36; cf. also 43-44).

113. Suitability for ministry in the Church is evidenced by the presence in the candidate of:
- a. The necessary personal and social maturity and skills of a 'man of community,'
  - b. Evidence of the presence of evangelical virtues and an ecclesial spirituality,
  - c. Theological proficiency and sufficient pastoral skills to be able to function effectively in the conditions of the local Church.
114. These skills and aptitudes need to be intentionally developed and refined during the process of formation both by the candidates themselves and by those responsible for their formation.

### **THE SEMINARY COMMUNITY AS THE PLACE FOR INTEGRATING FORMATION**

115. Today, more than ever, as has been already stated, the priest needs to be a 'man of communion' (PDV 18). The priest is called upon to be builder and animator of the community of the faithful, to serve the community of his people, and to encourage their active participation in the Christian community (cf. Dir. 30). This communal dimension of the priestly ministry is of special significance within the cultural and social context of traditional and emerging Melanesian society.
116. The seminary should be, in truth, an ecclesial community of believers gathered together in their common faith, and sharing their preparation for the work of priestly ministry in the local Church. Community life, a community of brotherhood in preparation for mission, should be an essential dimension of the formation community, above all within the Melanesian context.<sup>21</sup>
117. The communal life of the seminary should be firmly encouraged if the whole of the formation program is to be characterized by a coherent and integrated approach to ministry. The atmosphere should promote not only a rich sharing and encounter among the candidates themselves, but also between the seminarians, their teachers, and the formation team. It should be an environment characterized by the sharing of multiple experiences, personal, pastoral, spiritual, social, and theological.

### **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY**

118. The candidates should be encouraged to assume responsibilities for the various aspects of the life of the community, and to become involved in the life of the community at its various levels. Such participation obviously implies, on the part of candidates, as well as their formators, a generous willingness to freely accept the demands of communal life and to trust one another, accepting one another's differences and limitations.

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<sup>21</sup> The Seminary is, therefore, an educational ecclesiastical community, indeed a particular educating community. And it is the specific goal which determines its physiognomy: the vocational accompanying of future priests, and therefore discernment of vocation, the help to respond to it and the preparation to receive the Sacrament of Orders with its own graces and responsibilities, by which the priest is configured to Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd and is enabled and committed to share the mission of salvation in the Church and in the world. (PDV 61).

119. This spirit of shared responsibility will offer, by the opportunities it presents, decisive occasions for growth in maturity of vocation and the spirit of pastoral charity, and for decisions and choices in line with one's accepted vocation. The program should be of such a nature that it will allow and encourage the acquisition and understanding of the priesthood by communal reflection, prayer, and work together.
120. Community is, without any doubt, a key value within Melanesian culture. The experience of community is central to Melanesian spirituality, which is a holistic spirituality. Melanesian culture is based on the recognition of the primacy of the place of relationships in human and social life. Given that the spirit of community is so basic to a Melanesian's personal identity, it should be also, and above all, basic to the identity and sense of responsibility of a Melanesian priest. In the seminary, this fundamental element of Melanesian spirituality needs to be further deepened – in practical ways – by living the primary value of the relationship of love which is so radically central to the teaching of Jesus and the spirituality of the community of his disciples. This relationship of love will help them transcend the more restricted wantok network of relationships and open their hearts to the whole community of the faithful.

### **A MULTI-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

121. Since the community environment of the seminary in Melanesia will always be a characteristically multi-cultural one, care should be taken to avoid the over politicizing of seminary relationships. Students from differing cultures, dioceses, or religious congregations should strive to work together and encourage one another without rivalry or suspicion. Although it is desirable that different diocesan or regional groups form associations among themselves, these should not be allowed to develop in such a way that they become sources of friction or political antagonism and manipulation within the total seminary community. Students need always to keep in mind that they are being formed for a mission to the whole Church, not simply for ministry to their own tribe or ethnic group.
122. Traditional beliefs and customs are the ways in which all peoples, either as individuals or as communities, try to explain and to express their understanding of themselves. In these ways also, religious knowledge is traditionally imparted to the members of the community (e.g. through story, ritual, dance, symbol, taboo etc.). Such 'structures' or customs are also important in the formation of those who are to be leaders and servants in the Christian community. The communal life of the community of formation will, above all, be structured around the regular program of the communal, liturgical Prayer of the Church, and especially the celebration of the Eucharist, the central action of the Christian community. Also, without compromising the unity of the seminary community, smaller groups – such as 'Moderator Groups' – could be established in which the seminarians may share their life and faith and so encourage and support one another in their reflection on, and preparation for, their pastoral ministry. Such groups will also help develop the habit of sharing in their ministry.

## **FORMATION FOR THE REALITIES OF PRIESTLY LIFE IN PNG/SI**

123. Formators should also keep in mind that the very nature of the apostolate in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands will mean that the structures of the priest's life will not always allow him the opportunity to share very often with his brothers in the presbyterate. Thus part of the formation to community must also involve the development of the candidate's confidence in himself, the forming of strengthening bonds of friendship, and the deepening of his personal communication and sharing with Christ. In the latter years of their formation, candidates should be helped to assess personally the quality of their own prayer life and to prepare themselves realistically for a pastoral life suited to the situation in their home diocese.

## **ROLE OF THE RECTOR**

124. It will be the responsibility of the Rector, in particular, to exercise such leadership in the community as to encourage the enrichment of the spirit of communion. In this endeavour he should be aided by the willing support of both the other members of the formation and academic staff and the students, so that the seminary community may function as a true community marked by a spirit of shared responsibility, generous charity, and willing service. Moreover those entrusted with the responsibilities of formation should bear witness, by their own style of life together, to the value of communion in the work of ministry.<sup>22</sup>
125. Respecting the various levels of responsibility, and taking into account the degree of maturity and the level of experience of the seminarians, the seminary authorities should enable seminarians not only to receive a communal formation, but to be responsible for it themselves, as far as possible.

## **Part D**

### **Section 1**

## **THE FOUR AREAS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION**

### **HUMAN FORMATION AS THE BASIS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION**

126. 'The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation' (PDV 43). The priest is called to exercise his ministry in a human fashion, and in this way to represent Christ, the Head and Shepherd of the Church, who revealed, in the perfection of his humanity, the reality of God's saving love for us. His own humanity is the instrument through which and with which the priest ministers the message of the Word of God and the charity of Christ to the people. God works through the

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<sup>22</sup> As an educational community, [the Seminary] should follow a clearly defined program which will have as a characteristic, a unity of leadership expressed in the figure of the Rector and his co-operators, a consistency in the ordering of life, formational activity and the fundamental demands of community life, which involves the essential aspects of the task of formation. (PDV 61)

individual personalities of ordinary human beings. Hence it is of the greatest importance that, in his ministry, in his word and action, the priest should be humanly credible and acceptable. 'It is important that the priest should mould his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle to others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of humanity' (PDV 43).

## **CULTIVATION OF HUMAN QUALITIES**

127. The very nature of the priestly ministry demands that the candidates should be encouraged and helped to cultivate those human qualities, and that authentic emotional maturity, which will better equip them to be effective and compassionate ministers of Jesus Christ. They should be helped to grow in an appropriate human maturity and sense of self-realization and comfortable self-acceptance, with a view to the future effectiveness of their ministry. Special stress should be placed within the formation process on the balanced development of each one's unique human qualities. Attention, especially, should be given to the mature self-development of the candidates and their informed awareness of their own personalities.<sup>23</sup>

## **IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING AND FORMATION OF CANDIDATES**

128. Both in the selection and testing of candidates for the seminary and in the work of personality development within the seminary program, careful use should be made of experts in the field of psychological development where these are available. Wherever possible, supervised group activities designed to promote the development of the human person and skills in human relationships should be an integral part of the overall formation program. Especially, attention needs to be given to the testing of the candidate's capacity to relate in a constructive and non-defensive way with others, whether they are his equals, inferiors or superiors, male or female. If the priest is to be truly a 'man of communion' and a 'man for others' then he must, first of all, be psychologically mature and content within himself; otherwise he will run the risk of using others to satisfy his own human needs rather than serving them. In the human formation of the candidates, particular attention should be given to the Melanesian cultural and social context of their human development.
129. Particular courses and workshops should be introduced into the academic program that will assist in the process of the human formation of the candidates, and in the development of their human relationship skills. Such courses include those on: exposure to literature, music, and the arts, effective communication, response to feedback, conflict resolution and management, the facilitating of group discussions and meetings, and the methodology of decision-making and pastoral planning.

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<sup>23</sup> These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and especially, to be balanced in judgment and behaviour. (PDV 43)

## **DEVELOPMENT OF AFFECTIVE MATURITY**

130. If the priest is to relate in a mature and helpful way with others, as his ministry demands, he will need to have acquired a degree of affective maturity. The development of such maturity will be assisted by 'an education in true and responsible love' and should be 'a significant and decisive factor in his formation' (PDV 43).
131. As Pope John Paul II wrote in the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (# 10): "Man cannot live without love." He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is meaningless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it'. Love is something that involves and embraces the whole person in all his aspects, emotional and spiritual, physical, and psychological. Of particular importance in this formation to love, is a solid and realistic education for sexuality.

## **EDUCATION IN SEXUALITY AND CHASTITY**

132. The seminary should ensure that during the years of their formation the students are helped to deepen their understanding of, and commitment to, the life of consecrated celibacy and chastity. The seminary will endeavour to arrange suitable programs – such as workshops – that will introduce seminarians to the Right Relationships Protocol, help in the development of a positive attitude towards sexuality, and, where possible, make sure that appropriate personal guidance and suitable counselling is available to the candidates to help their growth in affective maturity. Anyone indicating tendencies to pedophilia, ephebophilia (or other sexual pathologies) must be helped but not proceed to priesthood.<sup>24</sup>

## **MATURITY IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN**

133. Within the Melanesian cultural context, the seminarian needs, especially, to acquire a sensitive and affective maturity in his relationships with women, especially religious women. Sometimes priests and seminarians reveal immature and negative attitudes in their relationships with women, because of problems within their own emotional and personal development. The seminary in its formation program will need to find ways to help the seminarians acquire a confident, mature, and responsible attitude in their relationships with women. This attitude will be shaped not only by the principles of the Gospel, but also – and perhaps more importantly – by their own sexual and affective maturity.

## **GROWTH IN PERSONAL FREEDOM**

134. Growth in affective maturity likewise implies growth in a mature sense of freedom. Such freedom requires that the candidate be master of himself, sensible about his own emotions

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<sup>24</sup> It should be truly and fully personal and therefore should present chastity in a manner that shows appreciation and love for it as a 'virtue that develops a person's authentic maturity and makes him capable of respecting and fostering the nuptial meaning of the human body'. Education for responsible love and affective maturity of the person are totally necessary for those who, like the priest, are called to celibacy, that is, to offer with the grace of the Spirit and the free response of one's own will, the whole of one's love and care to Jesus Christ and his Church. In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity should bring to human relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ. (PDV 44)



and needs, confident in the gift of himself to Christ and his people, and able to fight against tendencies to individualism and selfishness which threaten his gift of himself to the ministry. Candidates need to be helped to develop within themselves not only a true spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice, but also a sensitive moral conscience and delicate sense of the reality of evil.<sup>25</sup>

### **FORMATION TO SELF DISCIPLINE**

135. The priest, if he is effectively to serve his people in a generous and available way, needs to have acquired a strongly developed spirit of personal self-discipline in his own life. This will be evidenced in the way in which he uses his time, in his relations with others, in his use of such things as alcohol and other potentially addictive substances. The abuse of alcohol is a serious problem in contemporary Melanesian society, and the priest needs to have acquired within himself a sensible and disciplined attitude to its use. The People of God have a right to find in their priests disciplined and appropriate standards of behaviour. The question of the dangers of substance abuse needs to be carefully addressed during the time of formation, and where a candidate is found to have a problem, appropriate and professional help should be made available to help the seminarian recognize and address the roots of his problem.

### **HUMAN FORMATION AND CULTURE**

136. The human formation of the candidates for the priestly ministry will always remain sensitive to the qualities and characteristics of the cultural environment in which the priest lives and works. Central to the Melanesian understanding and experience of the person is the practice of community. The program of human formation should be oriented to a communal, rather than individualistic, ideal: a truly Christian humanism of communion in charity, a holistic spirituality of the human person. Christianity challenges Melanesians to open their hearts to other people who are not their wantoks: this openness to more catholic relationships of charity, service, and friendship needs to be explicitly fostered and encouraged in the program of formation. This will also help deepen among the seminarians a Christian spirit of putting the needs of the community before their own, a spirit which has ideally already been fostered within them by their cultural formation. Many aspects of the rapid cultural changes occurring in Melanesian society today tend to foster non-cultural values of individualism and materialism. The program of human formation within the seminary needs to counteract such tendencies and seek to build on the communal values already present within the seminarians' experience of their own cultural formation.

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<sup>25</sup> The human maturity of the priest – the Synod Fathers write – should include especially the formation of his conscience. In order that the candidate may faithfully meet his obligations with regard to God and the Church and wisely guide the consciences of the faithful, he should become accustomed to listening to the voice of God, who speaks to him in his heart, and to adhere with love and constancy to his will. (PDV 44).

## Section 2

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION: THE COMPLETION OF HUMAN FORMATION**

137. The spiritual formation of the candidates for the priestly ministry will build on and enrich their human formation, focusing on the essentially religious and spiritual dimension of the human person. The human person cannot be correctly or fully understood and developed without reference to and openness to the transcendent, to God, the author and end of all being. The priest is a minister of the transcendent; the basis of his ministry, therefore, will always be his relationship with God and with Jesus Christ, the Word and Son of God. Thus the spiritual formation of the seminarians is of integral and vital importance to their formation for a life of ministry based on the person and mission of Jesus Christ and lived out in a deeply personal relationship with the mystery of the divine presence and action in our lives.
138. One of the fundamental aims of the process of formation must be the formation of believers whose very being is permeated by the Word of God and eagerly attentive to the inspiration of the Spirit who shapes the Church as the Body of Christ today. Their relationship with the person of Jesus and with his mission, and their fidelity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will be the cornerstone of their life and work as priests.
139. Spirituality is concerned with a person's style of living, his way of experiencing and searching for God so that he may be brought into a new wholeness of being. In this sense spirituality integrates our human experience with the transcendent on which it depends. It is the expression of the person's deepest religious beliefs, convictions, emotions, and understanding.

### **TRADITIONAL MELANESIAN HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY**

140. Traditional Melanesian society is a deeply spiritual one, alive to the sense of mystery. Traditionally the whole of people's lives was understood in relationship to the world of the spirits or the supernatural. This spirituality of Melanesians is so deeply imbedded in their self-understanding, such an integral part of their lives, that it cannot be separated from their identity as persons and as community. The world of the spiritual is not a separate world; it is at the very core of life, what gives meaning to their way of life and makes them who they are. Traditional Melanesian spirituality is, then, a holistic spirituality focused on the network of relationships that are integral to life. Christian spiritual formation needs to respect this fundamental religious inheritance of the culture and seek to build on it, enriching and deepening, through the candidate's relationship with Christ and his Spirit, this powerful sense of the supernatural and the transcendent in the priest's life.
141. Moreover, because of the integrally spiritual character of Melanesian society, it is important that the priest be seen as a man of God, a 'spiritual man', for whom the things of the Spirit form the foundation and integrating principle of his life. Within the context of Melanesian culture - and especially in view of the negative pressures being exerted on this culture by

Western individualism and materialism the witness of the evident 'spiritual' character of the priest's identity and work is more necessary than ever. This serves to underline the great importance of the candidates' formation as men of the Spirit, men of God, obviously men of prayer.

### **INTIMATE AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS**

142. Through prayer, study and spiritual direction, the candidates should be helped to search for Jesus in their lives. In this way they will come to know him better and to form a profound and personal relationship and friendship with him. For Christianity is essentially an incarnational faith, whose spirituality is based on a personal and intimate relationship with the Word made flesh. The seminarians should be helped to discover and develop within themselves a true spirit of prayer and a respect for its importance in their lives, which will deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ as the source and inspiration of their life and ministry. In this way they will gradually form the custom of 'living intimately united to Jesus Christ'. (PDV 46)<sup>26</sup>

### **MEANS TOWARDS FORMATION OF AN ECCLESIAL AND PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY**

143. There are four fundamental means through which the spirituality of the seminarians will be deepened and formed. They should be encouraged to integrate these means, or practices, into their lives. The ability to attain a harmonious integration in one's vocational life is a sign of self-knowledge, acceptance of oneself and one's priestly vocation, and of maturity.

### **MEDITATION ON THE WORD OF GOD**

144. Seminarians should be encouraged to reflect on the Word of God prayerfully and quietly, not simply study it. In this way the Word can become an integral part of their lives and ministry and their preaching will flow out from the heart of their own faith and experience of God. Such a reflective practice, traditionally known as *lectio divina*, will not only nourish their own faith, but that of those to whom they minister. Such meditation on the Word is also important for the priest's mission of prophetic evangelism. The seminarian should acquire this habit of prayerful and meditative reflection on the Scriptures during his years of formation: this will help him deepen the spirit of prayer as an integral part of his life.
145. Today many groups of Christians meet together to pray on the Word of God and to actualize its presence and message in their lives. Above all, such a practice is necessary for the priest, not only for his personal, spiritual, and pastoral enrichment, but also so that he may be able

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<sup>26</sup> Spiritual formation should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing closer to him as friends in every detail of their lives. They should also live the Paschal Mystery in such a way that they will know how to initiate into it the people committed to their charge. They should be taught to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the Word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office, to seek him in the Bishop by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they are sent, especially the poor, little children, the weak, sinners and unbelievers. (OP 8; cf. PDV 46 - 49)

to help others share the same practice. The practice of such reflective reading is also essential to the process of inculturation of the Word of God. (As we read in the 1993 Statement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on 'The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church' (# IV); VD 86-87, 114)

146. The Church, indeed, does not regard the Bible simply as a collection of historical documents dealing with its own origins; it receives the Bible as the Word of God, addressed both to itself and to the entire world at the present time. This conviction, stemming from the faith, leads in turn to the work of actualizing and enculturating the Biblical message, as well as to various uses of the inspired text in liturgy, in '*Lectio divina*', in pastoral ministry, and in the ecumenical movement.

### **THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER**

147. Formation in the spirit of prayer, and the acquiring of the solid habit of prayer, is, undoubtedly, fundamental to the formation of the future priest. He is to be – and should be seen to be – a man of prayer. If he is to be a teacher of prayer, then his own life needs to be shaped and influenced by the regular practice of personal prayer. The practice of prayer will also bring him closer to the Cross, the source of his ministry. Students also need to be encouraged to develop within themselves a profound respect for the spirit of silence, which will nourish the spirit of prayer and reflection.<sup>27</sup>

### **THE EUCHARIST AND THE LITURGY**

148. The thorough liturgical formation of the seminarians, together with their regular active participation in the celebration of the Christian mysteries and in the Prayer of the Church, will also help deepen their priestly spirituality. As minister of the Eucharist, the priest is called on to participate deeply in the Paschal Mystery. The high point of all Christian prayer is the Eucharist, which should have a central place in the candidate's life and devotion, and become the source of his pastoral charity. Participation in the Eucharist will help nourish in the candidate a 'eucharistic' mentality: the spirit of self-offering which is essential to the spirituality of a priest.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> One aspect of the priest's mission, and certainly by no means a secondary aspect, is that he is to be a 'teacher of prayer'. However, the priest will only be able to train others in this school of Jesus at prayer, if he himself has been trained in it and continues to receive its formation. This is what people ask of the priest: 'The priest is the man of God, the one who belongs to God and makes people think about God. Christians expect to find in the priest not only a man who welcomes them gladly and shows a real interest in them, but also and above all a man who will help them to turn to God, to rise up to him. And so the priest needs to be trained to have a deep intimacy with God. Those who are preparing for the priesthood should realize that their whole priestly life will have value in as much as they are able to give themselves to Christ and, through Christ, to the Father. (PDV 47).

<sup>28</sup> It is fitting that seminarians take part every day in the Eucharistic celebration, in such a way that afterwards they will take up as a rule of their priestly life this daily celebration. They should moreover be trained to consider the Eucharistic celebration as the essential moment of their day, in which they will take an active part and at which they will never be satisfied with merely habitual attendance. Finally, candidates to the priesthood will be trained to share in the intimate dispositions which the Eucharist fosters: gratitude for heavenly benefits received, because the Eucharist is thanksgiving; an attitude of self-offering which will help them to unite the offering of themselves to the Eucharistic offering of Christ; charity nourished by a sacrament which is a sign of unity and sharing; yearning to contemplate and bow in adoration before Christ who is really present under the Eucharistic species. (cf. PDV 48).

149. Likewise seminarians are to be encouraged to make regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which will help deepen within them the true spirit of, and openness to, radical and on-going conversion of heart, and generous self-discipline, which are so essential to their ministry.
150. From it flow the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the Cross. These are elements of the spiritual life which often prove to be particularly arduous for many candidates. For this reason, but above all in order to put into practice the 'radical self-giving' proper to the priest following the example of Christ the Good Shepherd, the Synod Fathers wrote: 'It is necessary to inculcate the meaning of the Cross, which is at the heart of the Paschal Mystery. Through this identification with Christ crucified, as a slave, the world can rediscover the value of austerity, of suffering, and also of martyrdom, within the present culture which is imbued with secularism, greed, and hedonism' (PDV 48).

### **SEEKING CHRIST IN PEOPLE**

151. The priest is called to be a man of charity, one who not only helps others, but also listens to their needs and longings. This requires that he have a truly contemplative and prayerful attitude towards the exercise of his pastoral ministry. The spiritual life is, certainly, an interior life, but in the priest it is expressed in his external ministry to others in imitation of Christ, who gave his life out of love for people.<sup>29</sup>

### **THE SPIRIT OF PASTORAL CHARITY**

152. Formation in the spirit of pastoral charity, then, should be integral to the program of spiritual formation. During their studies the students should be involved in pastoral activities that will encourage and develop them as 'men of charity'. Through their interaction with people, they will come to a more profound consciousness of that spirit of charity towards others, which is an integral part of their identity as shepherds and teachers of their people. Thus it is necessary that the seminarians constantly seek to form themselves in the charity of Christ, especially in the preferential love for the poor and the marginalized, and for sinners. They are not called to lord it over others, but to devote themselves completely to the service of God and the Gospel and to the ministry of charity (cf. OT 9).

### **FORMATION TO CELIBACY**

153. Integral to the spiritual formation of the future priest, is formation to live, with freedom and openness, the charism of celibacy. The program of spiritual formation 'should pay particular attention to preparing the future priest so that he may know, appreciate, love, and live celibacy according to its true nature and according to its real purposes, that is for

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<sup>29</sup> From this point of view, spiritual formation has and should develop its own inherent pastoral and charitable dimension, and it can profitably make use of a proper devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, one that is both strong and tender. This is the point made by the Synod Fathers: 'When we speak of forming future priests in the spirituality of the Heart of the Lord, we mean they should lead lives that are a response to the love and affection of Christ, the Priest and Good Shepherd: to his love for the Father in the Holy Spirit, and to his love towards men that was so great as to lead him to give his life in sacrifice for many. (PDV 49)

evangelical, spiritual and pastoral motives. The virtue of chastity is a premise for this preparation and its content. It colours all human relations and leads to experiencing and showing a sincere, human, fraternal, and personal love, one that is capable of sacrifice, following Christ's example, a love for all and each person' (PDV 50).

154. Thus, as part of the spiritual formation program, those responsible for the program of formation, especially the rector and spiritual directors, should offer guidance, and establish criteria and principles that will assist the candidate in the spiritual discernment of his vocation to celibacy. Celibacy is a charism offered by God to the ministers of his Church and, as such, it cannot be lived fully and peacefully without the foundation of a solid spiritual life and of a personal and intimate friendship with the Lord. The fruitful living of the ministerial celibate life requires not only a sufficient degree of psycho-sexual maturity but also a committed and authentic life of prayer. It is especially the responsibility of the spiritual directors to help the seminarian arrive at such a mature and free decision and commitment in his life. This will be assisted also by growth in a spirit of silence and solitude in his life which will not only help deepen his relationship with God, but also make him more open and responsive to the needs of people.

### **THE INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION WITHIN THE WHOLE PROGRAM**

155. The spiritual formation of the candidates will be achieved not simply by teaching but, especially, by the 'apprenticeship' of daily living of the program of the seminary community, its integrated rhythms of prayer, reflection, study, common life, work, and recreation. Formators must carefully watch over all these aspects of the life of the seminary, promoting a philosophy of education that fosters not only a sense of mission among the seminarians, but also a deeper understanding of the incarnational character of their calling. While encouraging the spirit of questioning and sharing, the seminary will also foster a profound respect for times of interior silence and intimate solitude with the Lord. The house of formation should have its times of quiet as well as its times for common sharing.
156. In the formation of the seminarians to a true spirituality based on their relationship with Christ and their missionary service of his people, the program of studies plays an integral part. In their approach to teaching the various disciplines, the lecturers should also keep in mind the spiritual dimension of their subjects, and where possible, make concrete application to this. Their program of studies will also serve to open the students to a deeper awareness of the Holy Scriptures and the inherited traditions of the faith that are expressed in the life of the Church. Liturgical formation is of especial value in fostering a true spirituality in the student. Likewise, students need to be helped to reflect on the significant contribution to, and the important role of women in modern society and in the Christian community, and especially on the place of Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church, in the plan of salvation and in Christian spirituality.
157. Both in the study of theology and in their pastoral involvement, students should be encouraged to develop within themselves a spirit of authentic pastoral charity and to reflect on this and deepen it in prayerful and quiet reflection on their experiences. In these ways the

candidates will be helped to spiritually integrate the various dimensions of their learning experiences. The aim of spiritual formation is the development of an authentic attitude of spiritual freedom and dedication in the candidate. Such a mentality or spiritual attitude will permit a genuine openness to the promptings of the Spirit, to the teachings of the Church, as well as a critical understanding of, and a true commitment to, pastoral realities, and an interior willingness and, ability to comprehend situations and persons.

## **STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUAL AND ASCETICAL TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH**

158. In the program of studies, attention should be given to instruction in the theories of the spiritual life, and particularly, as far as possible, in the great traditions of Christian asceticism and spirituality. The candidates should be introduced, through their studies – either in specific courses or in relation to other courses – to the writings of the Spiritual Masters of the Christian faith. In this way in the teaching of theology, the traditional more spiritual aspect of this discipline will be acknowledged.

## **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, RECOLLECTION, RETREATS**

159. Spiritual formation presupposes the adequate instruction provided by the team of formators, a sharing of thoughts and experiences among the students, based on their pastoral and academic experiences. For its nourishment it also requires the creation of an environment of reflection whose aim is to instil in the candidates an ecclesial sense and the true spiritual mentality and attitude which is proper to a pastor and leader in the Church. To assist this process of spiritual formation, as well as regular spiritual direction, and conferences on spiritual and apostolic subjects, days of recollection and times of retreat will be organized for the students as part of the overall seminary program. Such practices will help foster the true spirit of prayer, silence, and reflection, so that the seminarians may draw closer to Christ and to the heart of their vocation. Such practices will also provide appropriate occasions and opportunities for spiritual growth and discernment of vocation.
160. Spiritual direction provides the special opportunity for growth in the life of the Spirit. Seminarians will be encouraged to choose a suitable spiritual director (under the advice of the formation authorities) and to meet regularly with this person. Both regular conversation and the assurance of confidentiality can help deepen the spirit of openness to the Lord and authentic discernment in the candidate. One of the primary tasks of those responsible for the formation of the seminarians shall be to ensure the availability of good and experienced spiritual directors. Normally the spiritual directors should be chosen from among members of the seminary staff or staff of the associated colleges. Unwillingness to develop openness to a spiritual director is a sign of a lack of vocation.
161. The responsibility for the spiritual formation of the seminarians lies with the Rector and his formation team. However, the Dean of Studies, especially at CTI, should also ensure that there is adequate treatment of subjects related to spirituality and personal development within the curriculum of the seminary.

## Section 3

### **INTELLECTUAL FORMATION. THE PRIEST AS THEOLOGIAN AND PROPHETIC TEACHER**

162. The priest in Melanesia is called upon, especially today, to be a theologian as well as a prophet, to interpret the Word of God and the inherited traditions of the Church to His own people and culture in this time of radical social change and ethical challenge. If he is to carry out the mission competently and for the benefit of the local Church, he will need to acquire the skills and knowledge that will truly equip him for his task as teacher and prophet. Thus the intellectual formation of priests - especially their competent theological education – is of vital importance for their future ministry and for their own personal development and pastoral confidence. Intellectual formation needs always to take into account the intellectual challenges of a changing culture and the question of enculturation.

### **ADAPTATION TO CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

163. Although the seminary curriculum is based on the traditional program of priestly studies, it will always need to be adapted in ways that respect and address the cultural environment in which the priest will carry out his ministry and by which he has been shaped. Both the academic program and the approach to the theological education of the seminarians should be influenced by the guiding aim of encouraging the development of a truly Melanesian theological reflection within the Catholic tradition. Students should be encouraged to appreciate the value of, and work towards, the development of an authentic Melanesian Theology, and the building up of a Church that is truly rooted in the culture of their people.
164. Thus, the approach to scriptural exegesis, systematic theology, moral and pastoral theology, as well as to the study of philosophy and the other human sciences, needs to be connected with the living cultural and social environment and treated in a holistic way that is appropriate to the cultural tradition. Even the studies in canon law and church history should be directly related to the social environment and, as far as possible, take the Melanesian context as their starting point for reflection and application of principles and past experiences.

### **METHOD OF ACTUALIZATION**

165. Especially with regard to the approach taken to the study of Scripture, the method of what is called ‘actualization’ should be encouraged (cf. 1993 Statement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission). The principle of actualization can also be appropriately applied to other areas of theological studies. The richness contained in the biblical texts - and indeed in the texts of tradition – gives these texts a value for all times and cultures. 'The biblical message can at the same time both relativize and enrich the value systems and norms of behaviour of each generation'.<sup>30</sup>

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30 It is the living tradition of the community of faith that stimulates the task of actualization. This community places itself in explicit continuity with the communities which gave rise to Scripture and which preserved and handed it on. In the process of actualization, tradition plays a double role: on the one hand it provides protection against deviant



166. Students should be encouraged to relate what they are studying to their own social and cultural experiences and traditions and not simply approach their biblical and theological studies in an abstract and theoretical way. In this way they, and their lecturers, will try to build a bridge between the mainly European cultural inheritance of the Christian tradition and the challenges and possibilities provided both by the Melanesian cultural tradition and the questions posed by a period of rapid cultural and social change. Inevitably Christianity has been introduced into Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands as a 'foreign' culture; it is the task of the seminary, especially, to explicitly assist in the process of the enculturation of the message that has already been received and planted among the people by the expatriate missionaries. In this way the seminary will accept the task of assisting in the development of an authentically Melanesian priestly ministry and local Church. For this purpose, it is vital that the further education of indigenous theologians and academics be strongly promoted by the faculty of the seminary.<sup>31</sup>

### **CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

167. In order to promote the authentic development of a truly Melanesian Christian theological reflection on the mysteries of the faith it is also important that the studies in the seminary not be isolated from the life and experience of the Wider Church. While seminary studies should be sensitive to the questions and experiences of the local church, they should also take into account the experiences and concerns of the whole Catholic Church throughout the world. Students need to be directly involved - in so far as this can be done - with the life of the local Church, so that their theological reflection will be enriched by their wider ecclesial experiences, and so that they can seek to apply what they are learning in concrete situations. In other words, the study of theology in the seminary should be contextualized within the local ecclesial environment and experience. In these ways, also, the seminarians will become more practically aware of the problems facing their Church and the religious aspirations and experience of their people. Seminary programs should therefore pay attention to ecclesial events such as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

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interpretations; on the other hand, it ensures the transmission of the original dynamism. (The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church # IV)

31 A further problem that is strongly felt these days is the demand for the evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the message of the faith. An eminently pastoral problem, this should enter more broadly and carefully in to the formation of the candidates to the priesthood: 'In the present circumstances in which, in a number of regions of the world, the Christian religion is considered as something foreign to cultures (be they ancient or modern), it is very important that in the whole intellectual and human formation the dimension of inculturation be seen as necessary and essential'. But this means we need a genuine theology, inspired by the Catholic principles on inculturation. These principles are linked with the mystery of the incarnation of the Word of God and with Christian anthropology and thus illumine the authentic meaning of inculturation. The problem of inculturation can have a particularly great interest when the candidates to the priesthood are themselves coming from indigenous cultures. In that case they will need to find suitable ways of formation, both to overcome the danger of being less demanding and to (encourage) the proper use of the good and genuine elements of their own cultures and traditions. (PDV 56).

## **NEED FOR THOROUGHNESS AND DEPTH IN ACADEMIC STUDIES**

168. At the same time, while the seminary needs to contextualize the study of theology, it must also clearly emphasize a rigorously disciplined and professional approach to its study. In the context of today's Church, the priest as shepherd and prophet needs to be a soundly educated and theologically equipped preacher of the Gospel. It is not enough simply to take a more 'devotional' or 'pastoral' approach to his ministry of the Gospel; today's priest needs to have acquired a thorough intellectual grasp of the meaning of the truths of faith, as well as an ability to analyse questions and situations critically. The seminary will stress the vital importance of the serious and critical study of theology for the ministry and, indeed, the identity of the priest. This is an essential requirement if he is to interpret the Word to the people and to counteract the attacks on the faith of the Church by the various fundamentalist and evangelical sects that we find today.<sup>32</sup>

## **THE PROGRAM OF THEOLOGICAL FORMATION**

169. The actual details of the program properly belong to the Statutes of the Seminary. The academic program will include the following principle disciplines that should be treated systematically and in depth and with an appropriate sensitivity to the cultural and social context.
- a. Critical to the study of theology is the foundational study of philosophy, which can lead to a deeper understanding of the human person and of the person's relationship with the world, the community, and God. Particular attention should be given to the study of the Melanesian tradition on man and society, and on relationship with the supernatural. The study of philosophy will also help the seminarian better grasp the central issue of the nature of truth, and give him a respect for the pursuit of the truth in the situations and problems that he will confront. It will equip him with the critical skills and perception he needs to judge contemporary events and influences.
  - b. The advantages of the study of philosophy will be further enhanced by studies of the arts and of the human or social sciences, particularly anthropology, sociology, and psychology. A basic understanding of these sciences will equip the priest with the needed 'tools' for interpreting the social and human situation in which he is called to proclaim the Gospel and to read the 'signs of the times.'
  - c. The core area of the seminarian's intellectual formation will be the systematic study of the Church's theological traditions and the doctrine of the faith. Theology not only proceeds from faith, but also leads to the deepening of that faith. The theologian must be first of all a believer, a person of faith, before he can communicate that faith to others. Special emphasis should be given to the Christological and ecclesial

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<sup>32</sup> The intellectual formation of candidates for the priesthood finds its specific justification in the very nature of the ordained ministry, and the challenges of the 'new evangelization' to which Our Lord is calling the Church on the threshold of the third millennium shows just how important this [intellectual] formation is. 'If we expect every Christian - the Synod Fathers write - to be prepared to make a defence of the faith and to account for the hope that is in us (cf. Peter 3:15), then all the more should candidates for the priesthood and priests have diligent care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their education and pastoral activity. For the salvation of their brothers and sisters they should seek an ever deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries'.(PDV 51)

dimensions of theological studies as well as to the foundations of belief and principles of theological reflection. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a major resource.

- d. Central to the seminarian's theological formation must be the sound and detailed study and exegesis of the Scriptures. The Word of God is the basis of Christian belief and life. The seminarians need to acquire a sound grasp of the principles for the interpretation of the Scriptures, so that they may be able to both communicate the meaning of the Word of God in ways that respond to the situation of their people, as well as interpret the Word to their culture and their culture to the Word. In the course of their studies the students should be encouraged to actualize the meaning of God's Word for themselves and for their time and culture.
- e. Associated with the study of the Scriptures must be the informed study of the history of the Church. Through this study the students should be enabled to develop a critical and reverent attitude to the importance of development and change in the life of the Church, and to learn to apply the lessons of the past to the questions of the present. Special attention should be given, not only to the study of the history of the Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, but also to the relationship between the events and movements of the past and the life of the Church today, both here in Melanesia and throughout the world. Seminarians should also be introduced to the history of the development of the other churches and ecclesial communities in Melanesia.
- f. The thorough study of Scripture and of Church History will also serve to better equip the Melanesian priest of today to answer the accusations of those who question the truth and claims of the Catholic Church (apologetics). Attention should also be devoted to contemporary theological concerns, especially the principles of ecumenism and evangelization. Students should become familiar not only with the principles of ecumenism but also with the history and the development of the ecumenical movement and of the character of ecumenical relations, especially in their own region. Wherever this can be done, lecturers from other Christian traditions should be invited to address the students. Likewise the students should be encouraged to dialogue with the members of other Christian communions and seminarians from other traditions.
- g. Special emphasis should also be given to the detailed and systematic study of Moral Theology. These studies should give particular attention to those moral issues and principles that are relevant to the contemporary circumstances of the local Church. Associated with the study of Moral Theology is the suitable introduction to an understanding of the principles of the Canon Law.
- h. Liturgical formation, the systematic study of the theology of the liturgy and of the principles of liturgical practice, should form an essential and integral part of the intellectual as well as the spiritual and pastoral formation of the priest. Students should be helped to acquire not only a thorough appreciation of the principles of

liturgical theology, but also learn the skills and prudence they will need to be able to apply these principles to the work of liturgical adaptation and enculturation.

- i. The students also need to acquire a sound and informed appreciation of the social doctrine of the Church, in such a way as to be helped to apply it to the concrete circumstances and problems of their own societies.
  - j. The students should also be well informed about the challenges and opportunities posed to the faith and the Church by the various modern religious sects and movements, especially Islam, fundamentalism, and the charismatic-evangelical movements that are active in their two nations.
170. Throughout the program of theological studies a strong emphasis needs to be placed on the necessary 'relationship between high scientific standards in theology and its pastoral aim' (PDV 55).<sup>33</sup>

### **IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

171. The theological education of the priest does not cease with the completion of his seminary training. It is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, the CBC, and the CBC Seminary Senate and Board, as well as of the Seminary Faculties, to arrange programs or workshops for the purpose of updating the professional and pastoral competence of the graduates of the Seminary and the local priests of PNG/SI. Special attention should be given to assisting the priests who have graduated from the Seminary, with annual, specialized, educational, and pastoral workshops and programs during their first years of ministry. Such programs of continuing education ought, ideally, to combine the intellectual and spiritual elements of priestly formation as well as provide the opportunity for reflection on pastoral experience.<sup>34</sup>

### **THE SEMINARY LIBRARY**

172. In this regard, also, careful attention should be given to the continuing development of the library facilities of the seminaries. The Seminary Library exists not only to meet the immediate scholastic needs of the seminarians but also as a basic resource for the whole of the local Church. The library collection should contain adequate and up to date material that will enable the priests to keep up with theological and pastoral developments and help them to continue reading and researching in their areas of interest. Seminaries must also be up to date with information technology.

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<sup>33</sup> In fact the pastoral nature of theology does not mean that it should be less doctrinal or that it should be completely stripped of its scientific nature. It means, rather, that it enables the future priests to proclaim the Gospel message through the cultural modes of their age and to direct pastoral action according to an authentic theological vision. Hence, on the one hand, a respectful study of the genuine scientific quality of the individual disciplines of theology will help provide a more complete and deeper training of the pastor of souls as a teacher of faith. And, on the other hand, an appropriate awareness that there is a pastoral goal in view will help the serious and scientific study of theology be more formative for future priests. (PDV 55).

<sup>34</sup> [It] is necessary to organize, in the first years of priesthood, annual meetings in which appropriate themes in theology, law, spirituality and culture are studied and dealt with in greater depth, as well as those special sessions dedicated to problems in morality, pastoral care and liturgy. (Dir. 93).

## Section4

### **PASTORAL FORMATION: THE PRIEST AS PASTOR**

173. The aim of all formation is to equip the candidate for the fruitful and competent exercise of pastoral ministry in the Church, to form him to be the representative to his people of Jesus Christ, the Leader and Shepherd of the flock. Apostolic and pastoral formation, then, is the ultimate aim of all formation, and each element in the formation program should contribute to the achievement of this goal. Pastoral formation involves both theory and practice, for the priest is charged with the responsibility of incarnating in the pastoral context what he has learned in his more theoretical studies. Thus an integral aspect of pastoral formation must be the development of the candidate's skill in pastoral judgment and discerning wisdom. The basis of the student's pastoral formation must be his own personal communion with the charity of Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sake of his people.<sup>35</sup>

### **THE PROGRAM OF PASTORAL FORMATION**

174. It will be the responsibility of the Director of Pastoral Formation in particular to ensure that the other aspects of their formation are integrated with the pastoral formation of the candidates. However, all the lecturers and formators should keep in mind the pastoral dimensions of their responsibilities and their courses.
175. The scientific study of pastoral or practical theology should be an integral part of the seminary academic program. Such study will provide a theological 'support' and basis for reflection on the direct involvement of the seminarians in some forms of pastoral activity during their years of formation. The Director of Pastoral Formation will have direct responsibility for organizing and supervising the pastoral activities of the seminarians and will also be responsible for coordinating the program of the Pastoral Year.

### **NECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS**

176. In the final year of their formation, workshops should be organized, either by the seminary or dioceses to help the students develop the necessary skills in management and administration that they will need in their work as parish priests. These should include: household and financial management and accounting, principles of just and equitable relations with workers and employees, responsible use and administration of Church property and resources, familiarity with the laws of the State as they are relevant to Church concerns, and the problem of sexual abuse.

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35 The whole training of the students should have as its object to make them true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd. Hence, they should be trained for the ministry of the Word so that they may gain an ever increasing understanding of the revealed Word of God, making it their own by meditation, and giving it expression in their speech and in their lives. They should be trained for the ministry of worship and sanctification, so that by prayer and the celebration of the sacred liturgical functions they may carry on the work of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.(1 Cor 9:19). (OT 4).

## **THE COMPASSIONATE SHEPHERD**

177. All those involved in the formation of the candidates should have a particular care for the growth in the candidates of the sensitivity and qualities of the compassionate shepherd, helping the students insert themselves more fully into the pastoral tradition of their local Church (cf. PDV 58). Particular care should be taken to ensure that the students are placed in those pastoral placements that will assist their overall growth as pastors in the Church.

## **SENSE OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH**

178. Of fundamental importance to the pastoral formation of the seminarians is their awareness of the mystery of the Church: the work of the Church is above all the work of the Spirit of Christ; the true builder of the ecclesial community. If this awareness is not encouraged and developed in the seminarians, they will run the danger of regarding not only the Church but also their own ministry as an essentially human activity and so neglect the fundamentally divine and spiritual dimension of their work. Likewise, it is important that in their pastoral formation the seminarians are helped to grow in the sense of the Church as a communion, and of their role in this communion. Their priesthood is not something that is their own personal possession; it exists for, and only has meaning in, the service of the community of the faithful. Future priests need to be formed and educated to work in close collaboration with the laity and other ministers in the Church. They should acquire a profound sense of respect for the various charisms given by the Spirit to the People of God in Melanesia, the laity as well as the clergy, the married, the educated, the women and the young people.<sup>36</sup>

## **BUILDING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

179. Seminarians need, in particular, to be introduced to an understanding and appreciation of the various methods of building the local community of the Church. They should be familiar with the various movements and programs that can assist this work, such as the techniques and principles of the Basic Christian Community movements, and the movements for the evangelization and education of the Christian faithful (such as the RCIA). Seminarians especially need to be acquiring an appreciation of, and concern for, the promotion of a collaborative model of ministry in their pastoral work.

## **NECESSARY QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP**

180. Seminarians need also to be formed in the necessary qualities of leadership that they will require to effectively carry out their ministry. They should be well tested in this regard, for a priest who lacks strength of leadership and a spirit of cooperation with his fellow workers (both clerical and lay), will be an ineffective and counter-productive minister of the Gospel. The model of leadership should be the pattern of the Lord himself, who was not afraid to confront the ambiguities and falsehoods of his own day and to challenge people in order to

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<sup>36</sup> The student should become capable of proposing and introducing the lay faithful, the young especially, to the different vocations (marriage, social services, apostolate, ministries and other responsibilities in pastoral activity, the consecrated life, involvement in political and social leadership, scientific research, and teaching). Above all it is necessary that he be able to teach and support the laity in their vocation to be present in and transform the world with the light of the Gospel, by recognizing this task of theirs and showing respect for it. (PDV 59).

draw out their best potentialities. Jesus was a shepherd who was able to acknowledge and encourage the charisms and pastoral abilities of others.

### **A PASTOR - NOT A POLITICIAN OR BUSINESSMAN**

181. The approach of the priest to the needs and concerns of his people should be above all a pastoral one; he is not called upon to be a politician, to take sides in disputes, but to be a true preacher of the Gospel to all. However, this does not mean that he should be indifferent to his people's struggles against exploitation or injustice. He needs to stand together with them, to use his own abilities on their behalf – but as a pastor, not as a politician. The pursuit of public political office is incompatible with the role of the priest as representative of Christ and pastor of the Church (cf. CIC 287 # 2). The same applies to the priest as businessman.

### **INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH DURING FORMATION**

182. Careful consideration should be given to establishing means whereby the seminarians will remain in contact with the life of the local Church during their seminary training. This contact needs to be supervised and reflected on so that it retains an authentic pastoral quality and does not become reduced to 'socializing'. The actual involvement of the seminarians in pastoral work should be 'graduated' according to their level in the formation program. As they approach ordination, the active involvement of the seminarians in the life of the surrounding Church should be progressively increased. Whenever possible they should work with experienced pastors and other ministers in the surrounding parishes. The Director of Pastoral Formation will keep in contact with the various pastors and other Church workers and regularly assess the student's pastoral involvement. Careful attention should be given to any directions of the diocesan Ordinary regarding pastoral work.
183. Care should be taken that the pastoral activities of the seminarians do not compromise their communal and spiritual life and their academic responsibilities. In fact, involvement in outside pastoral activities, when this is well supervised and coordinated, can provide the opportunity for the seminarian to learn how to coordinate and integrate the various elements of his life-style and responsibilities.
184. During their annual holidays, it is most desirable that the students spend some time in direct pastoral involvement in their home dioceses, within their own cultural environment. The diocesan authorities should readily collaborate in this matter, arranging placements for the seminarians during part of their vacation period. The nature of the placement should take into account the stage of the student's formation and his experience. When the seminarians return after their vacation, the formators should arrange for them to be able to share and reflect on their pastoral experiences, both with one another and with members of the formation team. Pastoral supervisors should prepare a report on the seminarians' overall behaviour and performance.

## **THE PASTORAL YEAR**

185. The Pastoral Year – normally undertaken about midway through the time of studies – forms an essential and integral part of the seminary formation program. The arrangements for the pastoral placement of the seminarians should be made in such a way as to better facilitate the purpose of the year. Thus some form of consultation regarding the placement of the student should take place between the Pastoral Director of the Seminary and the Diocesan Pastoral Director.
186. The Pastoral Director (Seminary) is to make sure that the students have a defined program for the year, including specific assignments. As far as possible the Pastoral Director (Seminary) should keep in contact with the students during this year. It is also most desirable that he should visit them in their pastoral situation at least once during the course of the year.
187. On their return to the seminary after the completion of the year, provision will be made for the students to undertake a supervised reflection and sharing on their experience.

## **Part E**

### **STRUCTURES OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PROGRAM OF FORMATION**

#### **THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE**

188. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands has overall responsibility for the formation of the priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. This responsibility is ordinarily exercised through the CBC Senate for Priestly Formation, which will establish the general principles governing the formation program and the structure of the relationship between the seminaries and the bishops. Each seminary will also have its own governing council, whose composition and responsibilities will be defined by the constitutions of the individual seminaries. The Seminary Governing Council is more directly concerned with matters affecting the organization and operation of each particular seminary. The rectors and staffs of the seminaries will be directly responsible to these governing councils.
189. The CBC Senate will meet regularly with the Rectors of each seminary by means of the CBC Seminaries Board to discuss matters pertaining to the institutions. They will refer more important matters and decisions concerning overall seminary formation to the judgment of the PNG/SI Bishops' Conference.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL DIOCESAN BISHOP**

190. It is the diocesan bishop who calls, ordains, and sends the priest on mission. Hence he has a personal and inalienable responsibility for the seminary, whether it is a diocesan or an inter-diocesan institution (cf. CIC 257). It is desirable, then, that each bishop should meet regularly with his own seminarians and with those involved in their education and



formation. Since the future of the local Church depends on the welfare of the seminary, it is singularly important that the bishops show a lively interest in what is happening in the seminary and in its future, and when possible visit the seminary.

191. Since most of the seminaries in the conference are, at present, inter-diocesan seminaries, coordination and cooperation between the various dioceses will be a significant factor in the successful operation of the formation program.

### **THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE**

192. All priests, as members of the presbyterium of the local Church, should see it as one of their main responsibilities to promote vocations and encourage those who are in training for the priestly ministry. Hence, it is highly desirable that they endeavour to keep in touch with the seminarians (especially those of their own parish or diocese) and, whenever possible, visit the seminary and contact the students.

### **THE ROLE OF THE FAITHFUL**

193. The seminarians are called to work for and with the lay faithful in the exercise of their pastoral ministry. It is desirable, then, that the laity be encouraged to take an interest in the training of future priests, both while they are in the seminary and when they are home in their respective dioceses during vacations or on pastoral placements. The faithful of the local church should be involved in the initial discernment of the selection of local candidates for priestly formation. This contact with the seminarian should continue throughout his years of formation.
194. The rector and staff should explore ways in which they can involve the laity in the process of the formation of future priests, so that the seminarians may benefit from the experience of the lay disciples of Jesus. In order to strengthen the Christian life of the local church, it is important that the bishops and the seminary authorities should also investigate ways in which the laity may participate actively in the academic program of the seminary and so enrich their own faith and Christian life.

### **THE ROLE OF THE SEMINARY FACULTY AND THE FORMATION TEAM**

195. The formation of candidates for the priesthood calls for a generous collaborative effort on the part of all those directly involved in this process. The members of the staff of the seminary, and especially those whose responsibility directly involves them in the personal formation of the seminarians, have been entrusted by the bishops with immediate and final responsibility for the student's formation, for the discernment of their vocations, and for presenting the candidates to the bishop for ordination. Such a ministry demands competence and a spirit of discernment, a willing commitment to the welfare of the seminarians above all other concerns, a true pastoral and pedagogical sensitivity, and a personal commitment to one's own vocation.

196. Those who exercise this most important ministry on behalf of the local church should also be open to the needs and experiences of the church and be readily prepared to cooperate with the bishops and the rectors for the well-being of the seminarians. When a person is appointed to this important task of formation, he or she must consider this as their primary task and be prepared to subordinate other personal or pastoral interests to this end. Thus, only those should be appointed to this ministry who have the requisite abilities (intellectual, spiritual and personal) and who indicate a capacity to relate well to the students and to work cooperatively as members of a team.

### **LOCALISATION OF SEMINARY STAFF: AN URGENT PRIORITY**

197. It is of the greatest importance that, as soon as possible, the majority of the staff of the seminary should be localized. It is most desirable that the seminarians should be able to find 'role models' among priests from their own culture who are entrusted with the care for their formation. Both the bishops and the seminary faculty should be always on the lookout to encourage and challenge those seminarians and young priests who indicate an aptitude for formational or academic work. These in turn should not see the vocation to seminary work as necessarily temporary.

### **ROLE OF THE SEMINARY RECTOR**

198. It is the responsibility of the rector to animate the spirit of cooperation among staff and students and to promote the coherence and unity of the seminary program and community carefully. The responsibilities of the rector or president are set out in the constitutions and by-laws of the various institutions. In the case of CTI, the president has a formative role in cooperation with the rectors of the various colleges, and a leading role in the provision of intellectual formation.

### **CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION**

199. This document contains the basic principles and general guidelines for the government and direction of the programs of priestly formation in the local Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The practical implementation of these principles and guidelines is the task of the bishops and those directly entrusted with the responsibility for the formation and academic programs in the various seminaries. It is therefore necessary that those directly responsible for its implementation should draw up practical directives suitable to their particular situations.

Holy Spirit Seminary, Bomana PNG, 29 September, 1997  
Revised 29 September, 2013

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