

RULE OF LIFE

FOR

THE MEMBERS OF THE

ST. PATRICK'S SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY



ST. PATRICK'S
SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY

BOOK ONE

**Formation In:
Living an Integrated Spiritual,
Human and Celibate Lifestyle**

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA
MAY 2010

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Mentoring and Advising of Seminararians

The following modified guidelines for self-evaluation are taken from **Chapter 8, Book One, Rule of Life**, page 68, and pages 79-88

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

(new seminarian is to submit an electronic version of his autobiography to his advisor)

Guidelines for Autobiographical Statement (2-4 pages, single spaced)

a) Family Background

- When and where were you born?
- What were your parent's occupations? Are they still living?
- How many siblings do you have?
- What is your present relationship with your parents and siblings?
- Is your family supportive of your vocation?
- What strengths do you derive from your family?
- What areas of your family life do you need to resolve? How do you propose to do so?

b) Life Management

- What was your educational experience? What is the highest degree you earned?
- What jobs or careers have you had? What was your last job responsibility?
- What use do you make of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco?
- What is your present state of health?

c) Ecclesial Experience

- What attracted you to consider ordained ministry as a possibility for yourself?
- What ministries have you performed in parish communities? What reaction to your ministry did you receive?
- How committed are you to being ordained for your sponsoring diocese? How well do you know its people? (Please list experiences.)

GUIDELINES FOR SELF-EVALUATION

The future leadership of the Catholic Church is present in and passes through the seminaries. There can be no doubt that the competent, holy, dedicated priests are needed, and that the Church must seriously plan and carry out its various programs of formation.

While bishops and seminary can put forth the best of programs, ultimately formation must look to the heart, mind, and initiative of the individual being formed. In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis (PDV)*, Saint Pope John Paul II makes this very clear in speaking about candidates for the priesthood:

We must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons. (n. 69).

In light of this, to encourage seminarians to be active and pro-active in their years of formation, the seminary invites seminarians to take the full and final responsibility for their own growth – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral growths during their years of priestly formation.

Human Formation: The Basis of All Priestly Formation
(*PDV*, 43-44)

Spiritual Formation: In Communion with God and in Search for Christ
(*PDV*, 45-50)

Intellectual Formation: Understanding the Faith
(*PDV*, 51-56)

Pastoral Formation: Communion with the Charity of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd
(*PDV*, 57-59)

Using the *PDV*'s four specified pillars of formation, the following guidelines with questions that can be used in the self-evaluation of the seminarian. The self-evaluation can be done privately, prayerfully as part of an examination of conscience. It should be done with the formation advisor and with the spiritual director.

A. PRE-THEOLOGY I AND II

- **Be concrete** – write about behaviors, use examples, avoid generalities and platitudes.
- **Be real** – discuss not only your strengths, but also areas in which you desire to grow or improve.
- **Be selective** – write about areas of particular importance this year.
- **Be neat** – this report goes to your Bishop and Vocation Director. It needs to be presentable and typed.
- **Be concise** – your self-evaluation should be about 3-4 pages long (single spaced).

a) Introduction

- What goals did you set for yourself this year?
- What has been the major challenge of this year?
- What do you consider your most significant accomplishment of the year?
- If this is your first year in the seminary, how has the transition gone for you?

b) Vocational Discernment

- Do you reflect about and discuss your experiences as a seminarian?
- What do you do in your daily life which prepares you for possible priestly ministry?
- How has your apostolic ministry (if assigned) impacted your seminary journey?
- Have those factors which caused you to enter the seminary changed or remained the same (explain)?
- How does the quality of your spiritual life, studies, and attitude toward services in the Church influence your decision to continue your journey in the seminary?

c) Human Formation

- Do you meet with your advisor regularly? Are you able to self-disclose and/or to be open in your formation sessions? Have you taken initiative for your own formation?
- Are you open to compliments, suggestions, correction, and guidance?
- Do you consistently exhibit a pleasant, welcoming, and friendly disposition?
- How do you evaluate your social skills, etiquettes, and manners?
- Are you clean, neat, and dressed appropriately as a public person?
- Do you eat properly, sleep enough, exercise, and attend to your health needs?
- Do you relate to a diverse spectrum within the seminary community?

d) Spiritual Formation

- Are your meetings with your spiritual director regular and profitable?
- Have you been faithful to daily Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours? Do you regularly benefit from the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Is daily examination of conscience a key part of your spiritual armor?
- What forms of prayer and devotional life sustain you?
- In what ways have you grown spiritually this year?
- What goal(s) do you have for further spiritual growth?
- What do you do in order to grow in your understanding of the Catholic Faith?
- How do you understand celibacy? Have you lived a life of authentic celibacy?
- Do you live simply? Do you have a solidarity with the poor and a concern for justice?

e) Intellectual Formation

- Do you come prepared for class, attend faithfully, and hand in assignments?
- Do you study to learn for life, or just to satisfy requirements?
- How do you evaluate your academic potential?
- Do you request academic help when you need it?
- Do you contribute to the learning atmosphere of the classroom?
- Do you discuss academic topics outside of the classroom?
- Are you eager to learn, to grow in knowledge and understanding of the faith?
- Are you developing a habit of reading – reading both religious and high quality secular literature?

f) Pastoral Formation

- Do you exhibit a joyful spirit of serving others, especially in the seminary community?
- Are you able to relate to persons of varied ethnic and religious traditions, and not show favoritism to a particular group?
- Do you listen to the people, feel with them, so as to empathize with their joys and sorrows?
- Can you cooperate in common projects and collaborate as a member of a team or are you overly individualistic or even hostile to some groups or individuals?
- Do you see what needs to be done around the seminary, parish, diocese, and do it?

g) Conclusion

- What is your general evaluation of how the year has gone for you?
- Include any significant people: heroes, mentors, friends, teachers, others, and how they have impacted your life/attitudes/actions.
- Include any significant events/changes which have had a major impact on you this year: health issues, family issues, major setbacks, or significant advances.

B. THEOLOGY I AND II

- **Be concrete** – write about behaviors, use examples, avoid generalities and platitudes.
- **Be real** – discuss not only your strengths, but also areas in which you desire to grow or improve.
- **Be selective** – write about areas of particular importance this year.
- **Be neat** – this report goes to your Bishop and Vocation Director. It needs to be presentable and typed.
- **Be concise** – your self-evaluation should be about 3-4 pages long (single spaced).

a) Introduction

- What goals did you set for yourself this year?
- What has been the major challenge of this year?
- What do you consider your most significant accomplishment of the year?
- If this is your first year in the seminary, how has the transition gone for you?

b) Vocational Discernment

- Do you reflect about and discuss your understanding of ministry and service?
- What do you do in your daily life which prepares you for possible priestly ministry?
- Have those factors which caused you to enter the seminary changed or remained the same (explain)?
- How does the quality of your spiritual life, studies, and attitude toward services in the Church influence your decision to continue your journey in the seminary?
- What qualities of leadership (listening skills, vision, collaboration, insight, courage, etc.) do you already possess? What qualities of leadership do you desire to further develop?
- What steps do you take to build bonds with your diocese, bishop, and priests?
- What steps do you take to prepare for the upcoming pastoral year internship? (if applicable)

c) Human Formation

- What do you do to increase the effectiveness of meetings with your advisor?
- Have you developed a sense of responsibility to take on seriously the work, study, play, and social life in your everyday life?
- Do you relate well to brother seminarians, and encourage but also challenge them in their vocations?
- How do you support and challenge others?
- How have you grown in self-reflection, assertiveness, and the ability to empathize with others?
- Do I consistently exhibit a pleasant, welcoming, and friendly disposition?
- How do you evaluate your social skills, etiquettes, and manners?
- Are you clean, neat, and dressed appropriately as a public person?
- Do you eat properly, sleep enough, exercise, and attend to your health needs?
- What life-long healthy living habits have you developed?
- What areas of health or self-care do you need to further develop?

d) Spiritual Formation

- Are your meetings with your spiritual director regular and profitable?
- How has your participation in the prayer and Sacramental life of the Church developed? Daily Eucharist? The Liturgy of the Hours? *Lectio Divina*?
- What forms of prayer and devotional life sustain you?
- In what ways have you grown spiritually this year? What goal(s) do you have for further spiritual growth?
- How realistic is your present image of sexuality and celibacy?
- Do you discuss matters of celibacy, sexuality, and priestly lifestyle with your peers?
- What have you done to increase your understanding and appreciation of celibacy?
- How do you relate celibacy to issues of exercise, prayer, simplicity of life, friendship, and obedience?
- Do you recognize the need for healthy boundaries in relationships with others?
- Do you live simply? Do you have a solidarity with the poor and a concern for justice?

e) Intellectual Formation

- Are you eager to learn, to grow in knowledge and understanding of the faith?
- Are you able to express theology and teaching of the Church in ways that ordinary folk can comprehend?
- Is your vision of Church and priesthood shaped and formed by the scripture, the apostolic traditions, and the Magisterium?
- Do you have a growing familiarity and friendship with the Scriptures, as well as growing in an up-to-date critical understanding and study of the Scriptures?
- Do you see your seminary education as only the beginning and thus see the need for ongoing study and reading?

f) Pastoral Formation

- Do you demonstrate flexibility, putting pastoral care or obedient compliance before personal priorities?
- Do you take advantage of pastoral opportunities, and workshops, lectures on pastoral issues?
- Do you appreciate the distinctive role and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world?
- Do you see, exercise and grow in the practice or ministry of conversation, engaging in constructive dialogue both within the seminary and beyond? Are you able to enter into mature dialogue with staff as well as brother seminarians?
- Do you see yourself as a leader who is capable to proclaim the Word of God and to preside at the liturgical celebration?

g) Conclusion

- What is your general evaluation of how the year has gone for you?
- Include any significant events/changes which have had a major impact on you this year: health issues, family issues, major setbacks, or significant advances.

C. THEOLOGY III

- **Be concrete** – write about behaviors, use examples, avoid generalities and platitudes.
- **Be real** – discuss not only your strengths, but also areas in which you desire to grow or improve.
- **Be selective** – write about areas of particular importance this year.
- **Be neat** – this report goes to your Bishop and Vocation Director. It needs to be presentable and typed.
- **Be concise** – your self-evaluation should be about 3-4 pages long (single spaced).

a) Introduction

- What goals did you set for yourself this year?
- What has been the major challenge of this year?
- What do you consider your most significant accomplishment of the year?

b) Human Formation

- What do you do to increase the effectiveness of meetings with your advisor?
- How have you grown in self-reflection, assertiveness, and the ability to empathize with others?
- Do you consistently exhibit a pleasant, welcoming, and friendly disposition?
- Do you respond to the presence and needs of others with affective maturity and alacrity? Do you exhibit a joyful spirit of serving others?
- Do you relate well to brother seminarians, and encourage but also challenge them in their vocations?
- How do you support and challenge others?
- Do you demonstrate courtesy and manners appropriate to the culture and occasion?
- Give examples of exercising prudential decision-making and decisive leadership?
- What life-long healthy living habits have you developed?
- What areas of health or self-care do you need to further develop?

c) Spiritual Formation

- Are your meetings with your spiritual director regular and profitable?
- Have you been faithful to daily Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours? Do you regularly benefit from the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Is daily examination of conscience a key part of your spiritual armor?
- What forms of prayer and devotional life sustain you? Do you set aside time for daily *lectio divina*?
- In what ways have you grown spiritually this year? What goal(s) do you have for further spiritual growth?
- How realistic is your present image of sexuality and celibacy?
- Do you discuss matters of celibacy, sexuality, and priestly lifestyle with your peers?
- What have you done to increase your understanding and appreciation of celibacy?
- How do you relate celibacy to issues of exercise, prayer, simplicity of life, friendship, and obedience?
- Do you recognize the need for healthy boundaries in relationships with others?
- Do you live simply? Do you have a solidarity with the poor and a concern for justice?

d) Intellectual Formation

- What do you do in order to grow in your understanding of the Catholic Faith?
- Are you developing a habit of reading – reading both religious and high quality secular literature?
- Do you have a growing familiarity and friendship with the Scriptures, as well as growing in an up-to-date critical understanding and study of the Scriptures?
- Do you see your seminary education as only the beginning and thus see the need for ongoing study and reading?
- Are you capable to express theology and the Magisterium in ways that ordinary folk can comprehend?
- Is your vision of Church and priesthood shaped and formed by the scripture, the apostolic traditions, and the Magisterium?

e) Pastoral Formation

- Where within the seminary and your field education assignment have you demonstrated initiative and leadership?
- Do you appreciate the distinctive role and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world? Do you see the need to collaborate with other priests, seminarians, and increasingly with the laity in carrying out the mission of the Church?
- Do you demonstrate the ability to relate with men, women, and children in a warm and pastoral way without showing favoritism?
- Do you demonstrate flexibility, putting pastoral care or obedient compliance before personal priorities?
- Do you enter into difficult situations with poise, sensitivity, and maturity?
- Are you aware of your role as a public person?

f) Call to Orders (if you are to be ordained as deacon at the end of third theology)

- Describe your personal relationship to Christ and to the Church
- What observable signs in your life indicate that you are called to Holy Orders? How do you understand your vocation as genuinely “ecclesial”? What does “diaconal ministry” mean to you?
- How do you understand and appropriate the teachings of the Magisterium? What strategies do you use for educating yourself about these teachings?
- How do you witness to a commitment to a life of personal prayer? In what particular areas of your own prayer life do you most wish to grow? How do you practice fidelity to the Word of God? Describe your practice of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Are you developing a sense of the ecumenical dimension of the Church’s mission?
- What steps do you take to build bonds with your diocese, bishop, and priests?

g) Conclusion

- What is your general evaluation of how the year has gone for you?
- Include any significant events/changes which have had a major impact on you this year: health issues, family issues, major setbacks, or significant advances.

D. THEOLOGY IV

- **Be concrete** – write about behaviors, use examples, avoid generalities and platitudes.
- **Be real** – discuss not only your strengths, but also areas in which you desire to grow or improve.
- **Be selective** – write about areas of particular importance this year.
- **Be neat** – this report goes to your Bishop and Vocation Director. It needs to be presentable and typed.
- **Be concise** – your self-evaluation should be about 3-5 pages long (single spaced).

a) Introduction

- What goals did you set for yourself this year in the areas of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation? How have you been progressing toward those goals?

b) Call to Orders

- Describe your personal relationship to Christ and to the Church
- What observable signs in your life indicate that you are called to Holy Orders? How do you understand your vocation as genuinely “ecclesial”? What does “priestly ministry” mean to you?
- Are you a person of solid moral character with a finely developed moral conscience? Are you capable to relate well with others, free of overt prejudice and willing to work with people of diverse cultural backgrounds?
- Do you see yourself as a man of communion? Can you take on the role of a public person?
- How do you understand and appropriate the teachings of the Magisterium? What strategies do you use for educating yourself about these teachings?
- How do you witness to a commitment to a life of personal prayer? In what particular areas of your own prayer life do you most wish to grow? How do you practice fidelity to the Word of God? Do you set aside time for daily *lectio divina*? Describe your practice of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Describe your commitment to your Diocese – do you know your diocese?

c) Lifelong Celibacy/Simplicity of Life/Justice

- How do you meet your needs for friendship and for intimacy?
- Describe the positive values celibacy has had and will have in your life.
- How do you understand the lifelong commitment you will make to obedience?
- How do you understand the lifelong commitment you will make to simplicity of life? What are your goals for living a Gospel-simplicity?
- How are you already living aspects of obedience and simplicity of life? In what specific ways do you intend to progress in both areas?
- What strategies do you have for continuing to grow in a realistic knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses? What strategies are you putting in place for your priestly ministry?
- What are your goals for maintaining a sense of solidarity and concern for the poor and victims of injustice?

d) Apostolic Heart and Zeal

- What specifically do you do to further the Church's commitment to peace, justice, and protection of human life? What do you find particularly challenging in this area?
- In accord with Catholic teaching, are you strongly pro-life, beginning with life in the womb, with those on the fringes of society, and reaching out to the aged at the end of their lives?
- What skills and what attitudes have you developed to enable you to serve in multi-cultural parish settings? What challenges for multi-cultural ministries in your Diocese are you preparing for? What improvements would you like to address in this area? How will you do that? Discuss your ability to proclaim Scripture in the liturgical assembly and your ability to preach
- What will help you to improve in each of these areas? How have you grown this year in your pastoral skills and sensitivity in leading others in prayer? What attitudes and awareness have you developed in relation to the ecumenical dimension of the Church's mission?
- How has the study of theology contributed to your life pastorally and personally?
- What strategies do you have in place and will you have in place to continue your theological education after ordination?
- What areas of pastoral ministry are especially appealing to you? Which do you find challenging?
- What particular pastoral skills are well developed for you? What sorts of skills need further development?

e) Internalization of Seminary Formation

- Discuss specific ways in which you demonstrate leadership in the various aspects of your life. How does your present exercise of leadership relate to pastoral leadership in a parish?
- Describe those personal characteristics which you bring to enhance positive relationships and those which might be a hindrance to personal relationships and to communal life.

f) Transition to Priestly Ministry

- **Looking Back:** What have been your main formational challenges in each of these four areas (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral)? Which challenges have been met and which are ongoing? *The objective of this component is an accurate description of self in light of the challenges of priestly ministry.*
- **Planning Ahead:** What will be your main formational challenges during transition and beyond? What will be your plans for ongoing formation? *The objective of this component is to create a useful outline of ongoing formation objectives and practical means for achieving them.*
- **Knowing Your Diocese:** What diocesan expectations and practical considerations must be planned for during transition? What resources are available for your assistance and how can they be utilized? *The objective of this component is to help draw attention to the practical demands of transition as well as to outline a thoughtful plan for utilization of community and diocesan resources.*

- **Building Fraternity:** Becoming part of a specific presbyterate under a bishop – what have you done in the past years for getting to know your bishop and brother priests?
The objective of this component is to help focus attention on the spiritual and practical implications of being part of a presbyterate and possible ways for the newly ordained to foster authentic fraternity.

g) Conclusion

In striving to give as clear a picture of yourself as possible to assist your bishop in making the best use of your gifts for priesthood, what else would it be important to say?