

ecclesial life, but also that grace of discernment and responsibility in ecclesial decisions which was assured by Jesus to his apostles and their successors for the sake of faithfully safeguarding the mystery of the Church and serving the structure of the Christian community along its common path toward salvation."¹⁴⁶

300. Therefore, candidates for orders should approach the practice of obedience in a spirit of trust. This basic trust should be present even in the face of the human limitations that will always be present in persons who exercise authority. Candidates need to learn that obedience strives to serve the unity of the Church and the needs of all its members. A spirit of service to others is finally an imitation of Christ himself who came not to do his own will but the will of the Father who sent him.

301. Seminary formation should give instruction in the meaning of authentic obedience. Advisers and spiritual directors should help seminarians appreciate this value and practice it in their lives. They should also teach seminarians that the way they respond to authority often mirrors the way they will exercise it.

Justice and Pastoral Service

302. Seminarians must be knowledgeable about issues of social justice, peace, and respect for life. During formation, seminarians not only should study such issues on a formal basis, they should also engage in works of justice and peace and issues of life insofar as the program of the seminary permits. Spiritual formation also should treat these topics and their intrinsic connection to Christian piety and priestly living.

303. Seminarians should reflect on the intimate connection between their credible witness as priests and the quality of their personal lives. They also need to see that prayer, celibacy, simplicity of life, and a commitment to the poor add credibility to their capacity to teach and preach effectively as priests.

C. COMMUNITY LIFE OF THE SEMINARY

304. The seminary community plays a significant role in the growth of seminarians toward the priesthood. The give-and-take between those who share the same vocational goal provides mutual support and promotes increased tolerance while allowing fraternal correction to take place. Community life affords the opportunity for the development of leadership

skills and individual talents. It can also motivate seminarians to develop a sense of self-sacrifice and a spirit of collaboration. The seminarians and the faculty form the center of the seminary community. This center needs careful cultivation so that the distinctive aims of seminary formation can be achieved.

305. Seminarians and the seminary community interact with many other individuals and communities as well. Men and women, some engaged in theological education and others in pastoral work, mingle with seminarians in a variety of settings. Some of these contacts are pastoral and ecumenical in nature. Some are personal. Seminarians' continuing contact with their own family and home community should continue to form a significant dimension of their life. All contribute to the overall development of seminarians.

306. The presence of seminarians from African American, Hispanic, Pacific Asian, Native American, and other ethnic or racial groups provides a mutually enriching dimension to a seminary community and reflects the realities of pastoral life that await seminarians. The same is true of those seminarians who have come from a renewal movement. These dimensions should be taken into consideration in every phase of seminary life. The challenge for the seminary community and individual seminarians is to profit from this diversity while preserving the specific and distinctive focus of seminary life, which is priestly formation.

307. It is important to keep a balance between freedom and responsibility, between respect for the individual and concern for the community. Because theological education demands mental and psychic energy, seminarians need opportunities to restore their body and spirit. Sufficient time for physical exercise and for leisure should be built into the schedule.

308. Therefore, each seminary and formational community should have a written rule of life, which sets forth guidelines to govern the balance and rhythm of community life. Such a rule of life should be approved by the appropriate ordinary and regularly updated. Student handbooks also should be periodically reviewed and updated.

D. EVALUATION AND GROWTH

309. The purpose of accountability in seminary formation is never simply obedience to the letter of the law but a deeper conversion of mind and heart.

310. While programs of evaluation take place in the external forum, it is important to relate this experience to seminarians' spiritual development. The experience of evaluation should be generally positive in nature and should foster growth. Hence, evaluations can be viewed as significant moments in the spiritual growth of seminarians.

311. The distinction between internal and external fora must clearly be maintained. Evaluation programs function in the external forum. At the same time, the process of external assessment has as an essential goal the internal appropriation of priestly values by the seminarians. (Further details on the evaluation of seminarians are contained in Chapter Five, paragraphs 529-541.)

II. NORMS

PRAYER

312. There should be a daily celebration of the Eucharist in which every member of the community ordinarily participates.

313. The seminary community should celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning and Evening Prayer, on a daily basis.

314. The careful preparation and execution of liturgical celebrations should be supervised by the seminary director of liturgy. Because the liturgical life of the seminary shapes the sensitivities and attitudes of seminarians for future ministry, a sense of mystery should be carefully preserved in all liturgical celebrations. The laws and prescriptions of approved liturgical books are normative.

315. Catechesis should be given concerning the meaning and proper celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours and their benefits for spiritual growth in the seminary and for the communities which seminarians later will serve.

316. Catechesis should be given concerning the sacrament of penance and its importance for priestly life and ministry. Communal celebration of the sacrament of penance should be scheduled regularly. Frequent opportunities for individual celebration of sacramental reconciliation should also be provided and encouraged. The seminary should ensure that other ministers of the sacrament of penance (external confessors) are available on a regular basis.¹⁴⁷