

FORMATION in Chaste Celibacy

at Sacred Heart Major Seminary

Ten Key Components

Introduction

Several years ago, the Rector of Sacred Heart Major Seminary formed a committee which was charged with 1.) reviewing our celibacy formation program; and 2.) making suggestions for a renewed program.

The committee, made up of faculty and alumni, consulted other alumni and faculty members and proposed that Sacred Heart reshape its program around key content areas, which would be presented in the various contexts of seminary life. We came to this conclusion after studying other models of formation. For instance, one model which the committee particularly admired focused all of the content material in one class, a class which was well designed and comprehensive. We admired the design and focus of the class but decided we did not want to reserve our formation on one, albeit a very important, semester.

The committee felt that our students would be best served by a program that would cover the basic content areas across the three levels of Sacred Heart's formation: College, Philosophy and Theology. We designed the program so that a student would cover the ten basic components throughout his formation period, taking care that what was presented would be deepened at each level of that formation.

We also wanted to reflect the integrated approach to the *fora* of formation at Sacred Heart. That is, we wanted to make sure that our seminarians hear about these areas in both external and internal *fora*, from professors, administrators, mentors, internship supervisors and spiritual directors. While formation takes place according to the different pillars of formation, the Spiritual Director of the School of Theology has the charge of monitoring our program.

Ten Key Components

of Formation in Chaste Celibacy with Descriptions, Cycles, *Fora*

1. Key documents

Pastores Dabo Vobis, Sacerdotalis Caelibatus, Lumen Gentium, et alia.

A study of the magisterial documents on priestly celibacy. Specific documents to be studied will be the Vatican II documents, documents from the universal Magisterium, documents from the USCCB and documents of local bishops. Students will read the documents and discuss them. What does the wisdom of the Church teach me about living as a celibate?

College: Pertinent sections of *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus, Pastores Dabo Vobis, Program of Priestly Formation* (Formation Sessions for C1 and C2 in 2-year cycle), (one-year focus on *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, 2015)

Philosophy: *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus, Pastores Dabo Vobis, Program of Priestly Formation*; (Formation Sessions), (Rector's conference 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, etc.)

Theology: *Lumen Gentium* (Rector's March 2015 conference); *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (in spiritual direction sessions, Second Theology September Formation Session), (Rector's conference 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, etc.)

2. Scriptural Foundations

A study of the New Testament texts that refer to celibacy and to the priesthood. Study of Jesus' own celibacy. Pertinent Old Testament texts will also be studied. Specific texts will be Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7. What texts give wisdom or edification for celibate living?

College: The celibacy of Jesus. Matthew 19, I Corinthians 7, et alia - (Part of March Formation Session)

Philosophy: Matthew 19, I Corinthians 7, et alia - (Part of March Formation Session)

Theology: The Celibacy of Jesus. Old Testament, New Testament (Second Theology Formation Session - September Second Theology Formation Session)

3. History of the Celibate Priesthood

A presentation and discussion of the differing interpretations of the history of the celibate priesthood in the Church. The exemplary celibate priests in our history. The canonical history and theological development of the discipline will be studied. What does the Holy Spirit teach me about my celibacy through the Church's experience of priestly celibacy? What are the pitfalls I can avoid when I look at history?

College: celibate priest saints from history, e.g., St. John Vianney, St. Bernard (included in March Formation Session)

Philosophy: celibate priest saints from history, e.g., St. John Vianney, St. Bernard (included in March Formation Session)

Theology: study of history (Second Theology September Formation Session), (Holy Orders class)

4. Age Appropriate Psychosexual Development; Counseling Others

A study of the stages of psychosexual development for men and women. The moral dimension of our psychosexual development will be discussed. Discussion of pastoral counseling directed at assisting parishioners to deal with the gift of their sexuality. What desires and behaviors are normal? When should I get special help with my psychosexual development? What are the "bottom lines" regarding psychosexual development and being a seminarian? A priest?

College: (individual spiritual direction)

Philosophy: (P/PT I Formation Session)

Theology: (Second Theology March Formation Session)

5. Prayer, Relationship with the Lord

A practical study of the prayer forms of our Catholic tradition. Discussion of developing a pattern of prayer to sustain one's relationships as a priest. What does it mean to say that the Lord is my "other?" What do I need to be healthy and generous in my celibacy?

College: (spiritual formation sessions); discussion on benchmarks from "Guidelines for Spiritual Directors" (spiritual direction)

Philosophy: (spiritual formation sessions); discussion of benchmarks from "Guidelines for Spiritual Directors" (spiritual direction sessions); (conference/conferences for returning students by Spiritual Director)

Theology: Gen 1-2 intimacy, Generativity/Song of Songs, Conversation with the Lord/Imagination, Contemplative Prayer; (annual Spiritual Director orientation conference); Guidelines for Spiritual Direction in the Theologate (Orientation, individual spiritual directions), Spirituality of the Diocesan Priesthood (Holy Orders, First Theology Formation Sessions)

6. Celibacy and the Evangelical Counsels

Study and discussion of chaste celibacy in the context of a life of simplicity and ecclesial obedience. How does celibacy fit in with the call to radical discipleship? What other dimensions of discipleship can help me be chaste and generous?

College: (part of March Formation Session)

Philosophy: (part of January Formation Session)

Theology: (First Theology Formation Session); Celibacy and the Evangelical Counsels (Holy Orders course)

7. Celibacy and Priesthood

Study and discussion of the life of celibacy in the context of the ordained priesthood. Theological and practical reflection on the life of the celibate priest. What about celibacy fits in with our beliefs about the priesthood and the Eucharist? How does celibacy help a priest in his ministry?

College: (individual spiritual direction), (one Rector's conference), (incorporated into individual seminarian's reflection points for annual Goals and Objectives process), (various experiences of Pastoral Formation Program help seminarians discover and cherish their vocation to celibacy)

Philosophy: (individual spiritual direction), (one Rector's conference), (incorporated into individual seminarian's reflection points for annual Goals and Objectives process), (various experiences of Pastoral Formation Program help seminarians discover and cherish their vocation to celibacy), (Rector's conference, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, etc.)

Theology: (individual spiritual direction), (Holy Orders course), (electives on priestly spirituality), (Second Theology September Formation Session), (one Rector's conference), (elective on Theology of the Body), (incorporated into individual seminarian's reflection points for annual Goals and Objectives process); (Rector's conference 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, etc.)

8. Capacity for Intimacy in Human Friendships

Fraternity study and discussion of the capacity/need for intimacy as a gift. How does one live out this capacity and need as a seminarian or priest? How does friendship figure into the life of a priest? What commitments are involved in being a member of the seminary community or the fraternity of priests? What is the difference between friendship and fraternity? What does one do when one falls in love?

College: (individual spiritual direction); (January Formation Conference by Spiritual Director)

Philosophy: (individual spiritual direction); (formation session); (Rector's conference 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, etc.)

Theology: (First Theology Formation Sessions), (individual spiritual direction), (participation in fraternities by some men), (Rector's conference 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, etc.)

9. Discerning a Call to Celibacy

A study of the discernment of God's will according to St. Ignatius of Loyola. A discussion of celibacy as service and spousal celibacy. What kind of confirmation of a call should I look for? What kind of confirmation is unrealistic?

College: (Individual spiritual direction)

Philosophy: (September PI/PTI formation Conference); (October PII/PTII Formation Conference); (experiences in the Pastoral Formation Program); (individual spiritual direction)

Theology: (First Theology Formation Session); Discernment of Personal Vocational Call (Thirty Day Ignatian Retreat following First Theology); Discernment of Spirits (Workshop during Theology Fall Retreats); (lived experience during Parish Internship); (individual spiritual direction)

10. Strategies for Living Celibacy and Purity; Moral Theology

A study and discussion of practical ways of living a healthy celibate lifestyle. A discussion of the temptations to unchaste behaviors such as masturbation, use of pornography, sexual activity with others. What are the long-term strategies for chaste living? What do I do with sexual desire? What should be done if one falls in chastity as a seminarian? As a priest?

College: *Use of the Internet, sexual addictions* (spiritual formation module at beginning of the second semester for new students); (individual spiritual direction), (Rector's conference), (option of Friends of St. Joseph)

Philosophy: *Use of the Internet, sexual addictions* (spiritual formation modules at the beginning of the second semester for new students), (individual spiritual direction); option of Friends of St. Joseph

Theology: (First Theology formation session), (option of Friends of St. Joseph)