1. **STAGE: PRIOR TO NOVITIATE**

The General Secretariat for Formation is aware that in this period of initial training, various formative stages are integrated. We are also aware that the manner of naming these stages, the time frame for each of them, the communities and the formation programs vary considerably in the Units and Conferences of the Congregation.

**CONSTITUTION 78**

*The aim of formation for both candidates and members is to lead them to such a degree of human and Christian maturity that, with the help of God's grace, they will be able to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and wholeheartedly to the service of the missionary Church in Redemptorist community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor.*

*They should learn progressively what the following of Christ demands of them, required as it is by baptismal consecration and confirmed by religious profession, and thus become true missionaries.* (Const. 78)

**DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING INITIAL**

**FORMATION**

**FORMATION PRIOR TO NOVITIATE**

"The General Government mandates that before beginning Novitiate, the candidate must have lived in a formation community and followed a formation program for at least two years. Effective 2016." (Decree General Government, April 2015)

**RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS, revised 2020**

"GENERAL OBJECTIVE: The finality of these stages previous to Novitiate is to accompany a candidate in his first experience of Redemptorist Apostolic Life. It should be a learning of community life, that facilitates his self-knowledge and self-revelation in order to better discern his vocation before entering the novitiate. Thus each (Vice) Province should make sure that the necessary structures are available to achieve this end.

Some units divide this stage into distinct parts such as the PROPEDEUTIC stage (a time for remedial academic courses and spiritual evaluation), ASPIRANCY, POSTULANCY (time of preparedness for the Novitiate, during which the study of philosophy may also be done), PRE-NOVITIATE, etc.

Given the fact that the Congregation has adapted the norm that all the novitiates be interprovincial, it is an essential requirement that the candidates in these previous stages receive an adequate formation and preparation in forming part of a multicultural group in order to enter the Novitiate." (*Ratio Formationis Generalis,* revised 2020, nn. 100-103) *(Check numbering)*

**ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OFFICIAL INCORPORATION OF THE CANDIDATE INTO THE INITIAL FORMATION STAGES**

* Avoid making of the formand a copy of his formator
* Avoid the clericalization of the formandi to Religious Life which distances him from the missionary reality with the people.
* Struggle against the signs and false paradigms with regards to Religious Life
* To have participated, at least for a year, in vocational and discernment encounters organized by the Unit.
* The person responsible for the Vocation Ministry will officially present the candidate to the Unit.
* A Redemptorist community of the Unit, that knows the candidate, should officially present him.
* If the candidate comes from another Religious Institute or Diocesan Seminary, a report should be petitioned.
* Certificates of basic and required studies.
* Clarify the situation of health insurance.
* Clarify the economic aspects.
* Clarify the possibility of using technical means and other personal objects, Policy of the Formation Center.
* Family documents.
* An official request by the candidate.
* Knowledge will be transmitted of the Policy and Protocol for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons developed by the Unit.
* There should be adequate spaces for formation stages, that is, in the structures where more that one stage share the same space, this can cause unfavorable influence one stage over another.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

It is a very suitable period:

* Educate the young men into accepting the life-long process of formation
* for growing and maturing on the human, affective, psychological, relational and Redemptorist missionary level,
* for continuing with vocation discernment, eliminating doubts and assuring that his vocation is to be a Redemptorist missionary,
* for initial formation that develops the principles of Catholic Christian doctrine especially the doctrine initiated from the Second Vatican Council,
* for a deeper entering into the lifestyle of Redemptorist Apostolic Life in all its dimensions,
* for an elaboration, as best possible, of the human dimension, of human relationships, of social relations and in personal and group community knowledge,
* for an institution-aspirant relationship that permits a double knowledge of the candidate to the Congregation and the Congregation to the candidate,
* for a necessary gradual process, that is, it is not the same during the first year as during the second,
* for a progressive entering into the basic knowledge of the entering Unit, the Conference, the Congregation, etc.,
* for learning of the language of the interprovincial Novitiate, especially, when it is different from his own,
* for learning by heart two basic General Constitutions: Nos. 20 and 78,
* We discover today the situation on having international Novitiates, that not all arrive at the same level in all the formative aspects. For this reason, it is necessary, at least at the level of the Conferences, to elaborate a minimal program of the five formative dimensions before entrance into the Novitiate.

**A.-HUMAN DIMENSION**

* The candidate should undergo a process of minimal self-knowledge that will enable him to make such an important decision in his life. If at any time, there is need of some technical assistance at this level, it is very opportune to have it offered to him.
* For those who will use the necessary technical helps, they will work on all that may be affective, psychological, family and relational obstacles.
* At least once a month, the candidate will have a personal colloquium with the formator.
* A psychological evaluation of the candidate will be carried out.
* A gradual introduction to community and group life will be undertaken.
* It is imperative that the candidate be able to live in community and work as a team.
* The candidate should acquire skills to live with situations of adversity and differences.
* Likewise, from the beginning, the candidate will be open to inter-provincial and intercultural relationships.
* Vacations: The candidates are not yet religious and should be moved progressively into the rhythm of life in the Congregation.
* It is always very positive to have in the formation house, meetings with the families of the candidates and help to heal past wounds and difficulties.
* Knowledge will be transmitted of the Policy and Protocol for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons developed by the Unit and practice as a life style.
* The various cultural activities, sports, etc., form an important part of these stages.
* There should be formation on the adequate use of economic resources.
* There should be formation on the adequate and mature use of technical, social communication such as computers, cell phones, etc.
* Formation in team work, the resolution of conflicts, the difficulty in managing emotions and feelings.
* Accompaniement should also be personalized.
* An pastoral experience of living with a very poor family is fundamental.

**B.-SPIRITUAL DIMENSION**

A gradual introduction into the life of community and personal prayer will be processed, in order to:

* deepen into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ,
* progressively enter into Cristian discipleship,
* impart introductory knowledge of Consecrated Life,
* promote personal and communal prayer: the liturgy of the hours, rosary, meditation, Eucharistic adoration, etc.
* appropriately begin conjoining the personal prayer of the candidate and his group with the celebrations of the Apostolic and Christian community,
* celebrate the Eucharist,
* receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation,
* continue the process of vocation discernment,
* ensure spiritual reading,
* celebrate our Redemptorist feasts.
* ensure formation in Redemptorist Spirituality, history of the Congregation
* separate times for retreats, get-togethers, etc.,
* elaborate a personal history comprehended in the light of faith.
* Formation for ecumenism, interreligious dialogue and respect for differences
* begin a process of stable spiritual accompaniment that will help him, both in vocation discernment and in organizing his prayer life.

**C.-COMMUNITY DIMENSION**

* Collaborate in the life of the Redemptorist Apostolic Community: prayer, meals, celebrations, maintenance of community spaces, etc.,
* Create a generational group with other candidates,
* Maintain a healthy relationship with authority and community members,
* Sustain adequate relationships with the other candidates and formators,
* Appreciate, value and love the Congregation and all that it possesses with the daily or weekly community services help in the appreciation, valuing and love of the Congregation and all that it possesses.
* Value the occasions of recreation, sports, gatherings, etc., with the other formandi in order to strengthen relationships and the mutual knowledge of others.
* Promote, as indicated in the human dimension, the capacity to live in community and to work as a team is essential.
* Prepare for the experience of living in a multicultural group, as will be in the Novitiate.
* Work the sense of belonging
* Promote the struggle against individualism

**D.-ACADEMIC DIMENSION**

* A large part of this dimension will consist of philosophical studies and other Redemptorist content.
* The learning of languages will be essential when the Novitiate is in another language other than their own.
* The candidates should demonstrate a capacity to listen, dialogue, reason and coherently express opinions.
* The candidate should be well motivated for his studies, being able to place the reasons for these studies within his vocational (Religious Missionary Life) life-project.
* The candidates should develop a constructive, critical capacity and thinking in different situations.
* The candidates should elaborate texts with logical content and clear ideas. They should demonstrate the minimum conditions in written communication, comprehension of content and knowledge.
* The candidates should acquire a reasonable degree of comprehension and critical analysis of the sociocultural reality from the context of its origin and lived experience.
* The candidates should achieve a methodological capacity in personal study, reading, etc.
* The formation of the candidates should be one that contemplates differences, diversity and confrontation of ideas
* The candidates should participate in meetings with other candidates of Consecrated Life of other Institutes.
* There should be well-defined structures.
* Oratory and verbal communication (Parrón, see also in Pastoral-Missionary)

**E.-PASTORAL-MISSIONARY DIMENSION**

* There is a double commitment: the initiation of a social pastoral close to the most abandoned and another of explicit evangelization quality
* They should develop commitment with frontier pastoral, for example, with persons without homes, women in prostitution, children pastoral, healthcare and the elderly.
* They should collaborate in the Parish, Shrines, etc., throughout the year.
* Overcome the vision of rural pastoral and confront the challenges of urban communities and of those on the marginaled sections of cities. The should particpate in social work.
* They should struggle agains clericalism.
* They should have the experience of some popular Redemptorist missions.
* They should attain, little by little, a consciousness of what the Redemptorist Mission implies in the Church and the world.
* They should participate in meetings and encounters with other young people.
* They should collaborate with the laity, especially, the lay Redemptorists.
* Their pastoral work should be done in a joint team with other people.
* Courses in oratory and verbal communication (Parrón)
* Knowledge of the Redemptorist Conference Apostolic Plan
* Knowledge of the Church´s guidelines (Episcopal Conference) for evangeization in the particular region in which the formand in inserted (Parrón)
* Teach how to work following the pastoral-missionary methodologies (Parrón).

**FORMATIVE PROGRAM**

**FIRST YEAR**

* Reading and reflection of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* and in a special way all that refers to the stages prior to the novitiate,
* Introduction to the Redemptorist charism,
* Beginning of the readings of the Redemptorist bibliography,
* Introduction of the candidate to the various models of prayer: Liturgy of the Hours, meditation, contemplation, rosary, adoration, etc.,
* A serious effort must be invested on the level of human maturity, affectivity, psychology, relationships, etc.,
* Introduction to Consecrated Life in one’s culture, country, and Church,
* Introduction to the history and actual situation of the Unit and the Conference
* Proper use of social communications media. Prepare the candidates to use social media, responsibility for what they post and the use of this space to evangelize. Not a matter of “limiting the use of social media, rather potencializing the candiades to use this means for evangelization” (Parrón)
* Initiation in solidarity with the most abandoned, especially the poor, confreres, the Congregation, etc. (XXV Gen. Chap., 2016, Dec. 2).
* **SECOND YEAR**
* Read and comment a simple biography of Saint Alfonso,
* Essential elements of Redemptorist Spirituality,
* Introduction to some General Constitutions of the Congregation,
* Introduction to Christology, especially according to the Alphonsian understanding,
* An initial knowledge of our Redemptorists Saints, Blessed and Martyrs,
* An introduction, according to their level and capacity, to the History of the Congregation,
* An introduction to the Redemptorist Mission in the Church,
* Delve into an initial knowledge of the Ecclesiology of the II Vatican Council.
* Deepening and real practice of solidarity at all levels. (XXV Gen. Chap., 2016, Dec. 2)
* Other complementary courses, depending on the possibilities, and in the fields that are considered appropriate at the psychological, affective-emotional, social, intellectual, religious, redemptorist level.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

* Of great value, to the extent of the possibilities of the place where the formation houses are located, is to be able to participate with other young people from other Religious Congregations in the formation for Consecrated Life, etc.

* The Candidates in these initial stages should collaborate in a timely manner with the Vocation ministry team of the Unit in meetings, gatherings, discernment retreats, etc.
* At every stage, appropriate times and ways will be sought to carry out the suitable evaluations of the various formation dimensions.
* The written official request to enter the Redemptorist Novitiate.
* It is very important that the candidates, before reaching the interprovincial novitiate, obtain a minimum level of adequate formation in the forming part of a multicultural yet homogeneous group in order to enter the Novitiate.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY for these pre-novitiate stages**

* *Practice of Love of Jesus Christ*.
* A simple biography of S. Alfonso according to languages and translations.
* Introductions to Redemptorists Saints, Blessed, and Martyrs.
* Constant reading of the Gospels.
* Some Congregational letters or *Communicanda*.
* Bibliography related to Consecrated Life
* Policy and Protocol for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons developed by the Unit.

###### PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Name: .................................................................................................................

Family address: .................................................................................................................

 .................................................................................................................

Date of birth: ................................................................................................................

Place of birth: .................................................................................................................

Date and place of Baptism: .................................................................................................

Date and place of Confirmation: …………........................................................................

Tel.: .........................................

Identity Document No.: ……………………………..........................................................

Date of the personal feast: ………......................................................................................

Parents names: ………........................................................................................................

Tel. of the parents: ...............................................

Names of the Siblings: ………...........................................................................................

.............................................................................................................................................

.............................................................................................................................................

.............................................................................................................................................