

REDEMPTORIST FORMATION



**CONGREGATION
OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER**

**TOWARDS THE NEW PROFILE
OF REDemptORIST MISSIONARY**

**General Secretariat for Redemptorist Formation
Rome, Italy, 2016**

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1. PRESENTATION

Towards the New Profile of the Redemptorist Missionary

It is a joy to present this third volume in the series on “REDEMPTORIST FORMATION” from the General Secretariat for Formation. During the present Sexennium, the General Secretariat has continued the work of previous Secretariats with the Courses for Formators, and the research and publication of articles on various aspects of Redemptorist missionary formation today.

The present volume focuses on the ***Profile of the Redemptorist confrere shaped by this new vision*** (XXIV General Chapter, *Decisions*, 6.12 – 6.17). It also includes articles on several important questions for contemporary Redemptorist formation. This volume involves the collaboration of experts in various fields, as well as the members of the Secretariat. It will serve as another resource and supplement to the primary sources which shape our missionary formation: the Word of God, the Constitutions and Statutes, and the General *Ratio formationis*.

Called to live together and form one missionary body... [Redemptorists are] sent as helpers, companions and ministers of Jesus Christ in the great work of redemption. (Const. 2). The purpose of formation is to arrive at such a degree of human and Christian maturity that... 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. (Const. 78).

Such missionary formation requires maturity, proper boundaries in ministry, pastoral experience, and conscious decisions about personal growth and responsibility. As Redemptorists, it also involves moral reflection, creative communication, and initiation into an international and intercultural Congregation. Though it is not an exhaustive treatment of all these themes, this volumes offers resources in each of these areas.

We are living in a very exciting and important moment in the history of the Church. Through word and witness, Pope Francis is calling all ‘**missionary disciples**’ to become ‘***Spirit-filled evangelizers***’, communicating the joy of the gospel in every human encounter. (EG 272). “*My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an extra or just another moment in my life... I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world.*” (EG 273). This vocation is at the heart of all missionary formation.

It is my hope and prayer that this volume, and the series of volumes on REDEMPTORIST FORMATION, will be a real service to both Formators and formandi. May Mary, the Mother of Evangelization, accompany you in this life long process of missionary formation as you follow ever more closely her Son, our Redeemer.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General

Memorial of Blessed Gaspar Stanggassinger, C.Ss.R.
Rome, September 26, 2015

2. INTRODUCTION

The General Secretariat for Formation, Sexennium 2009-2015, is pleased to present this new material for Formation *Towards the new profile of Redemptorist missionary*. Here we try to respond to the decisions and orientations of the XXIV General Chapter 2009 on the profile of the Redemptorist confrer formed in the new vision of the Congregation, his life and mission for the future.

Following the initiative taken during last sexennium 2003-2009 *Handbook for Formators*, the Secretariat has decided to proceed with the publication of a series of materials and tools that can be of help and guidance for formators and Formandi in the Congregation.

The decision to continue with these publications opened the possibility of organizing a collection, which is called REDEMPTORIST FORMATION. As part of the collection we have already published the Vol. No. 1 *Handbook for Formators* in the sexennium 2003-2009; Vol. No. 2, *Witnesses and Missionaries of Redemption* in this sexennium from 2009 to 2015, on the occasion of the Year of the Promotion of Redemptorist missionary vocation 2013-2014; and now the Vol. No. 3 ***Towards the new profile of Redemptorist missionary***. All were published in the 3 official languages of the Congregation. These materials are also available in digital format on the Formation website, www.fcontinuacssr.com

In this volume you will find a varied range of articles and documents on some current issues for Formation; the decisions that the current General Government adopted on initial Formation and

published on April 10, 2015; and the Report on Formation in the Congregation presented to the First Phase and Canonical Phase of the XXV General Chapter of 2016.

It would be impossible to personally thank everyone who so generously made possible this new issue of the REDEMPTORIST FORMATION collection. With these few words we recognize the generosity, hard work, dedication and knowledge offered in these articles that we hope will be of help to everyone. But in a special way, in addition to the members of the Secretariat, in this volume, we have to thank the collaboration of Frs. Mark Miller, Michael Kelleher, Raymond Douziech and Martin McKeever, as well as a large group of translators, proofreaders, etc. On behalf of all the Secretariats of Formation of the Units, the Formators and Formandi, we sincerely thank everyone for their important collaboration in this volume.

Do not hesitate to contact us or the Executive Secretary for any information you need.

May Blessed Gaspar Stangassinger, patron of the Redemptorist Formation intercede for each of you and help you to live as authentically as possible the Redemptorist charism.

Fraternal greetings on behalf of the Secretariat for Formation.

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3. DECISIONS ON INITIAL FORMATION

APRIL 2015



DECREE ON FORMATION

Prot. N. 0000 117/2015

DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING INITIAL FORMATION

VOCATION PROMOTION

The General Government establishes the second Sunday of November as an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation.
Effective 2015.

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.

NOVITIATE

1. All Novitiates will be Interprovincial Novitiates. Some of these Interprovincial Novitiates (proposed by the Conference and approved by the General Government) will be Conference Novitiates. Boards will be created among the Units to direct the Interprovincial Novitiate. The Conference Coordinator will ordinarily be a member of the Board.

2. Every Unit must participate in an Interprovincial Novitiate Board even if it does not have novices in an Interprovincial Novitiate.

Effective 2016.

BROTHERS FORMATION

The initial formation of Brothers must include a period of no less than three years after first profession in a formation program in a formation community.

Effective 2016.

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE

The General Government mandates that the Pastoral Experience Stage is part of initial formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and will be one continuous period of no less than six months.

Effective 2016.

PREPARATION FOR FINAL VOWS

The preparation for perpetual profession will last for at least one month (GS. 075), in addition to the canonically required eight day retreat. The program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied

for perpetual profession and have been accepted. In so far as possible, Preparation for Final Vows must take place at a Conference level.

Effective 2016.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPROVINCIAL FORMATION

The General Government recommends that at least one year of formation will be done outside of the Unit of origin and in so far as possible outside of the country.

Effective 2016 for those beginning the formation process.

Given in Rome, on April 10, 2015.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General

Brendan Kelly, C.Ss.R.
Secretary General

Seal of the Congregatio

To the Very Rev. Provincial Superiors,
Vice-Provincial Superiors
and Regional Superiors

LETTER OF FATHER GENERAL

Rome, April 12, 2015

Prot. No. 0000 117/2015

Dear Confreres,
The Lord is risen! Alleluia!

As we celebrate the great feast of Easter, and the promise of life to the full which is the gift of the Risen Lord through the action of the Holy Spirit, we also renew our call to be “signs and witnesses before people of the power of his resurrection, proclaiming the new and eternal life” (c. 51).

With this letter, I am sending you some Decisions of the General Government with regards to Formation. These Decisions are the result of a long and careful process of consultation, dialogue, and prayerful reflection. In 2011, the General Secretariat for Formation began a reflection on the implications of the Decisions of the XXIV General Chapter for initial formation. This reflection took into account:

- y The Process of Restructuring, the Conferences and the Coordinator;
- y The “Profile of the Redemptorist Confrere shaped by this New Vision” (Decisions of the XXIV General Chapter 6.12 – 6.17);
- y The challenges facing initial formation in the Congregation today, and especially the challenges of common, interprovincial formation projects.

As a result of this process of reflection and dialogue, especially with the General Council and the Coordinators, the General Secretariat for Formation recommended certain decisions about common formation especially with regards to the Novitiate, the Pastoral Experience Stage (during temporary profession), and the Preparation for Final Vows. They also recommended some other decisions which touch especially on preparation for novitiate, and the formation of Brothers. These proposed decisions were presented to the General Council, and subsequently to the Coordinators, the Assemblies of the Conferences, and Formators throughout the Congregation. The very helpful feedback from this consultation and dialogue modified the proposed decisions presented to the General Council for voting in September 2014.

With these Decisions, the General Secretariat for Formation has also included a letter to explain some of the reasons and implications of them. I hope that this document will also be helpful. As you will notice, the first decision was already promulgated – that the second Sunday of November will be an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation.

Except for Brothers formation and the Pastoral Experience Stage, the General Secretariat for Formation did not focus at this time on the entire period of initial formation from First Profession to Final Vows, nor on the period of Transition to Ministry, nor on ongoing or Permanent Formation. This does not mean to diminish their importance. These present Decisions should be taken as an initial response to the challenges of initial formation today. Further reflection and consultation will lead to further decisions when the time is right.

However, we are aware that there are (Vice) Provinces and Regions which need to reflect especially on their ability to offer a

good, solid formation program for those in temporary vows, whether clerical students or brothers. Can they prepare and appoint a team of Formators in a healthy formation community? Can they offer accompaniment and formation which addresses all five dimensions in the Ratio Formationis (2003) – human, spiritual, community, academic and pastoral? If they cannot, then it is urgent that they collaborate with other Units in order to provide the best possible initial formation for all our members in temporary vows.

Initial Formation is essential for the mission of the Congregation: “The vitality with which the Congregation pursues its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of the candidates” (c. 79. “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.” (Const. 78)

It is my fervent hope that these Decisions will help us to face the challenges of initial formation today with hope and courage. May God who continues to call apostles to follow Jesus the Redeemer as he proclaims the Gospel to the abandoned, especially the poor, form all of us more and more into the image of his Son. May Mary, the first disciple and our Mother of Perpetual Help, accompany us and teach us to become ‘missionary disciples’.

May the blessings of this Easter Season fill us with the joy of the Gospel, and the courage of the apostles.

Your brother in the Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General

RATIONALE FOR AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING INITIAL FORMATION

All the members share responsibility in the work of formation. They share it not only for those who are beginning life in the Congregation, but for all the confreres. For the whole Congregation is continually in process of formation and development, to be ready to meet the needs of the people to whom its members preach the Gospel. (Const. 82)

XXIV GENERAL CHAPTER (2009) A PROFILE OF THE REDEMPTORIST CONFRERE SHAPED BY THIS NEW VISION

612 The principles of restructuring assure the continuity of our fundamental identity and mission as Redemptorists in the Church and in the world. At the same time, they call for new realities and structures that would give fresh impetus to that mission and identity.

613 This is a possible profile of a confrere in a restructured Congregation.

614 This confrere would participate in a novitiate program of various Units, usually belonging to the same Conference. He would interact with confreres from other countries, cultures, and maybe even languages.

6.15 During his initial formation he would learn about the charism of the Congregation and the special gifts and apostolates of his own Unit. He would understand from our history that constant renewal and restructuring have been vital for the continuity and continuation of our mission.

6.16 When he makes his vows, his commitment will be to the whole Congregation and not simply to a particular Unit. This commitment will be given practical expression in the Unit and the Conference to which he belongs. He will need to have a wider grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion.

6.17 Above all, he will know that he belongs to and willingly participates in the mission of a worldwide Congregation that takes seriously the challenge of being alert to the signs of the times, and making vital apostolic decisions that respond ever anew to our call to mission.

STAGES OF FORMATION

Because of the diversity within the Congregation there is at present no common and precise set of terms to describe the different stages of formation. Different terms are used among the various Units of the Congregation; and again identical terms are used with different meanings in different Units. Moreover the

educational system of each region uses different words to describe the educational process leading from the lower to the higher phases.
(Ratio Formationis n° 10)

Our current reality of formation in the Congregation is one in which we are moving toward common formation, meaning, greater collaboration among Units. It is also the reality that various Units are still able to hold on to their long standing tradition of formation and therefore, have developed different stages to respond to their needs. It may be the case that there needs to be a revision of these formation programs to determine whether they are in fact meeting the needs of formation today.

In order to promote greater solidarity and to advance the work of common formation, we propose the following stages as a way of providing the Congregation with a common vocabulary regarding formation:

1. Vocation Promotion and Accompaniment.
2. Formation Prior to Novitiate. [Candidate]
3. Novitiate. [Novice]
4. Period from First Profession to Final Vows.[Temporarily professed]
5. Pastoral Experience Stage during temporary profession.
6. Preparation for Final Vows.
7. Transition to Ministry.
8. Ongoing Formation: Unit level, at the community level, and Specialization for the mission.

Each Unit is free to have sub stages where necessary within the proposed stages in order to accommodate their reality, while maintaining the fundamental aspects of each stage.

VOCATION PROMOTION

The vitality with which the Congregation pursues its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of the candidates who seek admission to the Redemptorist community. For that reason, all the confreres, out of love and appreciation for their own vocation, should zealously engage in the apostolate of fostering vocations to the Congregation. (Const. 79)

Decision:

The General Government establishes the second Sunday of November as an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation.
Effective 2015.

- y We are aware that Vocation Promotion is the responsibility of each and every confrere, of each community and each Unit as well as those directly responsible for that ministry.
- y In many countries, the Religious Sisters and Lay Missionaries are also deeply committed to promoting vocations to this charism, which belongs to us all.
- y The best way to pass on and to promote vocations to the charism is through living authentically our Constitutions and Statutes, thus becoming authentic Redemptorist Missionaries, “as one missionary body” (Const. 2) together with “the most abandoned especially the poor” (Const. 1).
- y This decision of the General Government is geared toward achieving the goal of keeping confreres and collaborators constantly aware of the need for vocation promotion and accompaniment of candidates interested in becoming Redemptorists.

FORMATION PRIOR TO NOVITIATE

Decision:

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.

- y This stage of formation needs to follow a definite program of formation in the Redemptorist charism, as determined by the *Ratio Formationis 2003*, within a Redemptorist formation community, which will fulfill the requirements for an interprovincial novitiate.
- y In the Congregation there exists different names and various stages prior to Novitiate for example Aspirancy, Propedeutic, Postulancy, Pre Novitiate etc.
- y In consultation with the Conference, Units can determine the duration of this “Prior to Novitiate stage” but it cannot be less than two years.
- y Some topics to be considered in developing programs of formation for this level are: getting to know and appreciate the Redemptorists, spirituality, prayer, ecclesiology from the perspective of Vatican Council II, community life, psycho affective development, etc.
- y Programs for this level of formation should include study of the language skills and cultural sensitivity necessary to prepare candidates to participate in the interprovincial novitiate.
- y Units are encouraged to have this stage of formation locally. Each Unit should take this opportunity to demonstrate its

commitment to forming new members and as a sign of solidarity with the Conference or Interprovincial efforts at formation.

- y If a Unit is unable to develop and sustain an adequate program of formation prior to novitiate, it will be advised by the General Government to collaborate with another Unit or participate in a Conference program of formation.

NOVITIATE

It is the function of the general government to decide on the erection of the novitiate, and designate by a written decree some house of the Congregation where it will be situated; it defines the programme of training for the novitiate and determines other matters in accordance with the common law and the general statutes. (Const. 86. 1°)

This confrere would participate in a novitiate program of various Units, usually belonging to the same Conference. (Profile new Redemptorist n° 6.14)

Decision:

1. All Novitiates will be Interprovincial Novitiates. Some of these Interprovincial Novitiates (proposed by the Conference and approved by the General Government) will be Conference Novitiates. Boards will be created among the Units to direct the Interprovincial Novitiate. The Conference Coordinator will ordinarily be a member of the Board.

2 Every Unit must participate in an Interprovincial Novitiate Board even if it does not have novices in an Interprovincial Novitiate.

Effective 2016.

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- y Renewed structures for mission requires the General Government to direct, with renewed vigor, the establishment of novitiates and to promote the collaboration among the Units in the Conferences. Consulting the Conferences, the General Government will determine the number of novitiates in the worldwide Congregation, what languages they are conducted in and their locations.
 - y Care must be taken in the creation of the Boards in order to make the novitiates true collaborations among the Units. The Coordinator's participation on the novitiate board will be the key to creating a deeper sense of solidarity. To achieve this goal, Interprovincial Novitiates, which already have a Board of directors, should update their Ratio/Directory to include the Coordinator as a member of the Board if he is presently not a member.
 - y Some of the functions of Novitiate Boards are: writing Directories with guidelines for the selection of Novice Directors (formation team), approve Ratios outlining the program of formation, approve Contracts or Memoranda of Understanding to guarantee participation and good faith among the Units.
 - y Novitiate Ratios should include the basic requirements for entrance into the Novitiate, Curriculum, time in pre-novitiate, necessary language skills etc.
 - y Boards should also consider the time of preparation required before the canonical start of the novitiate, taking into consideration the decision regarding the "Prior to Novitiate" stage.
 - y To be a truly collaborative effort, all Units need to participate in Interprovincial Novitiate Boards even if they presently have an independent Novitiate within their Unit.

- y The Ratio/Directory of the Interprovincial Novitiate will make provisions for Units, determining which Units have a vote and which don't. The Directory should also attempt to define the degree of participation of each Unit.
- y Novitiate Boards need to think through financial issues thoroughly. Participating Units, as an expression of solidarity, offer support to the Novitiate, even if a Unit does not have novices in a given year.
- y The General Government took this decision understanding that some Units would require more time to comply. In these cases, the Unit must request an exemption from the Superior General indicating the reasons, which warrant the exemption.

BROTHERS FORMATION

As Redemptorist missionaries the Brothers must receive a proper formation to prepare them to live their apostolic mission and their religious consecration effectively. This time must be of sufficient duration to allow for the full implementation of the proposals in the Ratio for formation..., Until their Perpetual Profession, the Brothers are to be considered in formation which is the primary purpose of this period. During these years the Brothers in temporary vows must remain together, under the guidance of a Prefect and in a formation community which offers them the possibility of living a truly religious life. Their principal service to the Congregation and to the Church during this time is their formation which is preparing them to become missionaries according to their way of life and for such services as the Congregation will require of them after their Perpetual Profession. (Letter Ratio Formationis for Brothers, Fr. Juan M. Lasso de la Vega, 1996)

Decision:

The initial formation of Brothers must include a period of no less than three years after First Profession in a formation program in a formation community.

Effective 2016.

- y It is a common practice in the Congregation for Brothers to be sent to a community immediately after First Profession.
- y With this decision the General Government is asking for a more adequate formation for Brothers up to Final Vows.
- y Vocation promotion in every Unit will focus on recruiting prospective candidates to the Redemptorist life either as Priests or Brothers. Vocation promotion material whether they are pamphlets, videos, IT presentations, talks to groups of youth/young adults, or one-on-one, whatever form this vocation promotion takes, will focus on presenting the Redemptorists first as disciples who respond to a call to follow Christ the Redeemer, to preach the Good News to the poor and most abandoned through living the consecrated life and second, as Priests or Brothers. Vocation promotion therefore will be focused more on becoming a Redemptorist.
- y During the Prior to Novitiate Stage, both Priest and Brother candidates follow the same program of formation in all Dimensions except for the Academic/Professional Dimension whose contents may be different for the Brother candidates. The overriding character which defines this stage is its focus on accompanying men in their initial experience of Redemptorist Apostolic Life.
- y Novitiate will be the same for all Candidates.
- y During the first profession to final profession stage, a definite program of study geared toward qualification for

specialization in a field compatible with Redemptorist apostolate and within the confrere's competence will be the focus of the Academic/Professional Dimension.

- y The Temporary Professed Brother will live in a formation community and be properly accompanied.

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE

The apostolic purpose of the Congregation must inspire and penetrate the whole formation process of its members. (Const. 77)

The pastoral orientation of the whole course of training is a distinctive feature of missionary formation. (G.S. 058)

It is highly recommended that candidates, prior to final profession, have a well planned supervised one year pastoral experience. (Ratio Formationis n° 48)

When he makes his vows, his commitment will be to the whole Congregation and not simply to a particular Unit. This commitment will be given practical expression in the Unit and the Conference to which he belongs. He will need to have a wider grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion. (Profile new Redemptorist n° 6.16)

Decision:

The General Government mandates that the Pastoral Experience Stage is part of initial formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and will be one continuous period of no less than six months.

Effective 2016

- y The need for sound pastoral experience during initial formation is echoed in our Constitutions and Statutes, in the current Ratio Formationis and in the deliberations and decisions of the XXIV General Chapter.
- y In some Units, Pastoral Experience is done throughout the period of initial formation and sometimes immediately after final vows
- y The goal of this decision from the General Government is to establish the appropriate location within the program of initial formation for this stage. This stage is not to be confused with pastoral work during Transition to Ministry or pastoral immersion after ordination.
- y The General Government believes that this stage of formation presents an excellent opportunity for Conference collaboration. It could allow the Temporary Professed the chance to experience new initiatives, which have grown out of the Conference priorities. It might even serve as a way in which the Conferences animate efforts at apostolic collaboration in the Conferences.
- y If the Pastoral Experience Stage becomes a common initiative of the Conference, the Conference Secretariat for Formation will be able to propose the principles governing the fulfilment of that stage, including its duration, which

must not be less than that stipulated in the decision, apostolic experiences and other elements such as clear guidelines on appropriate accompaniment and a process of evaluation.

- y The Pastoral Experience Stage provides an ideal opportunity for confreres in initial formation to be assigned to a mission outside of their Unit or country.
- y This is a special, unique stage of Initial Formation during which the Temporary Professed will not be undertaking any academic studies in order to allow him to be fully involved in pastoral ministry.
- y This stage must not be confused with Transition to Ministry

PREPARATION FOR FINAL VOWS

Religious profession is the definitive act of the whole missionary life of Redemptorists. (Const. 54)

Some form of preparation, after the manner of novitiate, is to be made for perpetual profession; it should last for at least a month. (Gen. Stat. 075)

Decision:

The preparation for Final Vows will last for at least one month (Gen. Stat. 075), in addition to the canonically required eight day retreat. The program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied for perpetual profession and have been accepted. In so far as possible, Preparation for Final Vows must take place at the (Sub)Conference level.

Effective 2016.

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- y It has become common practice in many Units to include the retreat as part of the one-month preparation. This decision allows for adequate preparation and a proper respect for the importance of the canonically mandated retreat.
 - y Because of the seriousness of the commitment which the confreres are preparing to make, the impression must not be given that this is the “*last bridge to cross*” before professing Final Vows.
 - y This is indeed an important stage of the initial formation process and must be approached with the same seriousness of every other stage and given the necessary time allotted so that the goals of the stage may be achieved.
 - y Preparation for Perpetual Profession is one of the most appropriate stages to engage in formation on an Interprovincial/(Sub)Conference level.
 - y The Secretariats of formation of the (Sub)Conferences will have the occasion to work on a program of formation, choose the directors, find an appropriate location, and determine its duration in keeping, of course, with the General Government’s decision.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPROVINCIAL FORMATION

ONE YEAR OF INITIAL FORMATION OUTSIDE OF THE UNIT OF ORIGIN

(See *Profile of Redemptorist Confrere...* XXIV Gen. Chap. n° 6.16)

Recommendation:

The General Government recommends that at least one year of initial formation will be done outside of the Unit of origin and in so far as possible outside of the country.

Effective 2016 for those beginning the formation process.

y Considering that the mission in our Church today is a global one, future Redemptorists must be adequately prepared to respond to this global mission.

Given in Rome, on April 10, 2015

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION

4. REPORT TO THE XXV GENERAL CHAPTER GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION

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Part I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Statistics.

2. Composition of the Secretariat.

3. Principal activities of the Secretariat during the sexennium: a) Meetings of the Secretariat, b) Formation Courses for Formators, c) Evaluation of Unit Ratios, d) The Year of Promoting the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation, e) The Year of Consecrated Life, f) Publications of the Secretariat, g) Web Site, h) Other activities, i) On-going projects.

Part II: KEY ASPECTS OF FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

1. INITIAL FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

Major challenges in Redemptorist formation today.

2. ON-GOING FORMATION

3. POSSIBLE LINES OF WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Part III: MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN INITIAL FORMATION IN THE CONFERENCES

Achievements and aspects to continue working on
by the Conferences.

Part I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. STATISTICS

It is difficult to provide precise statistics for each stage of initial formation for various reasons. However, we wish to offer here an overview of the last six years.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Candidates [*]	927?	995?	507?	561?	581?	734?
Novices	119 (5B)	138 (10B)	134 (8B)	121 (9B)	121 (12B)	116 (7B)
In Temporary Vows	691 (42B)	680 (36B)	679 (39B)	663 (34B)	676 (40B)	668 (38B)
Made Perpetual Profession	79 (4B)	95 (12B)	89 (7B)	81 (8B)	61 (4B)	92 (4B)
Priestly Ordinations	75	73	82	78	67	81

(B) = Brothers. The other numbers refer to those preparing to be priests. The total number is the largest number in bold print.

(?) = This data is difficult to ascertain for a variety of reasons: who is considered a candidate? In some cases, such data is not sent to the General Government....

(*) = In keeping with the recent decree on Formation issued by the General Government in April, 2015, the word Candidate is used to refer to all persons in formation stages Prior to the Novitiate.

Overview of AN AVERAGE YEAR during this sexennium:

- * Total in **Initial Formation** during this sexennium:
an average of **1.675?** a year.
- * **Prior to Novitiate**: an average of **717?**
- * Total number of **Novices**: an average of **124**.
- * In **Temporary Vows**: an average of **676** (Clerics and Brothers).
- * Total number of **Perpetual Professions**: an average of **82**.
- * **Priestly Ordinations**: an average of **76**.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In forming the General Secretariat for Formation the option was taken to appoint a representative of each of the Conferences. As the XXIV General Chapter asked that the Secretariat continue to offer formation courses for formators, especially in other languages such as French, it was decided to add another member, conversant in French.

General Consultants: Fr. Cecilio Alberto Eseverri and Bro. Jeffrey Rolle,
Executive Secretary: Fr. Luis Alberto Roballo, Province of Bogotá,
Fr. Arnaud-Guy Agbossaga, Vice-Province of West Africa
and Coordinator of the Conference of Africa and Madagascar,
Fr. Marlos Aurelio Da Silva, Province of São Paulo,
Fr. Sahaya Arockiasamy, Province of Bangalore,
Fr. John Fahey, Province of Denver,
Fr. Charles Duval, Province of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré,
Fr. Jacek Zdrzalek, Province of Warsaw.
Coordinator of the Conference of Europe.

3. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITES OF THE SEXENNium

a) Meetings of the Secretariat

April 25 to 29, 2011 in Rome,

November 21 to 26, 2011 in Rome,

April 15 to 20, 2012 in Rome.

November 24 to 30, 2012 in Aparecida-Brazil,

April 7 to 12, 2013 in Rome,

September 22 to 27, 2013 in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré,
Canada,

March 23 to 29, 2014 in Rome,

November 16 to 21, 2014,
planned for Ouagadougou but took place in Paris,

March 8 to 14, 2015 in Rome.

b) Courses on Formation for Formators

2010: July 11 to 24, Course in Goiás-Brazil, 34 formators
from URB, in Portuguese, Level I.

2011: July 10 to 23, Course for Formators, URB, Juiz de
Fora-Brazil, Prov. of Rio de Janeiro, in Portuguese,
35 formators, Level II.

2012: June 10 to 30, Course for Formators of Latin America,
in Spanish, Marianella, Paraguay, 21 formators,
Level I.

2013: July 29 to August, Course for Formators of Africa
and Madagascar, in French, in Ouagadougou, 17
formators, Level I.

- 2013:** May 6 to 25, Course for Formators of Asia - Oceania, in English, in Mínburi-Thailand, 29 formators, Level I.
- 2013:** June 17 to July 7, Course for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Spanish, in Cotuí, Dominican Republic, 23 formators, Level II.
- 2013:** July 22 to August 10, Course for Africa and Madagascar, in French, in Antananarivo Madagascar, 13 formators, Level II.
- 2014:** May 11 al 31, Course for Asia – Oceania, in English, in Cebu, Philippines, 16 formators, Level II.
- 2014:** July 7 to 19, Course for Africa and Madagascar, the first in Africa in English, in Ibadan-Nigeria, 12 formators, Level I.
- 2015:** April 8 to 11, Course on Formation for Formators on the occasion of the Year of Consecr. Life, in Rome-Vatican.
- 2015:** April 12 to 19, Seminar for Redemptorist Formators i n the 3 official languages of the Congregation, English Spanish and Italian, in Ciorani, 24 formators from all Conferences.
- 2015:** August 3 to 15, C. for Africa and Madagascar, in English, in Ghana, 22 formators, Level II.

The University of St. Alphonsus, Bogotá (FUSA): In special agreement between the General Secretariat of Formation and the University of St. Alphonsus, Bogotá, academic recognition is given, and a Certificate issued, to those who participate in a program equivalent to two weeks of intensive study. The certificate is a Diploma offered to those undertaking an external course of studies of 120 hours duration. A report is made to the University along with a digital copy of all materials delivered during the course.

c) Evaluation of Unit Ratios of Formation**2011**

- y May 25: Evaluation of the Ratio of the Province of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré.
- y June 28: Evaluation of the Ratio for the Common Novitiate of the Conference of Asia-Oceania, situated in Lipa City-Philippines.

2012

- y April 18: Evaluation of the Ratio of the Province of Vietnam.
- y April 18: Evaluation of the Ratio of the Province of Thailand.
- y April 19: Evaluation of the Ratio of the Vice-Province of Extra-Patriam.

2013

- y November 12: Evaluation of the Ratio of the Region of Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- y November 28: Evaluation of adaptations to Ratio for the interprovincial Novitiate in Lipa, Philippines.

2014

- y December 5: Evaluation of the Ratio for the Novitiate of the sub-Conference URSAL, Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- y December 9: Evaluation of the Ratio Formationis of Madagascar.

d) The Year of Promoting the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation

In response to a proposal from the General Secretariat for Formation to the General Government, Father General decreed that the year, beginning on August 1, 2013 and ending on November 9, 2014, would be a Year of Promoting the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation in the Congregation.

This Year began on the occasion of World Youth Day 2013, in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), more specifically on the “Alphonsian Day” in Aparecida (Brazil), the day prior to WYD, with the sending of the “Triptych-Chapel” which visited every Redemptorist community in the world.

Father General, Michael Brehl, motivated and accompanied this special year with three communications to the entire Congregation. Similarly, four articles, now collected into one publication forming # 2 of the Redemptorist Formation series and entitled “Witnesses and Missionaries of Redemption”, as well as other written and digital publications, were published.

One result of this Year for the Promotion of Redemptorist Missionary Vocation at the level of the whole Congregation was the declaration of the second Sunday in November as the “Day of Promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation”.

The involvement of the various Units and confreres, as well as the impact, both internally and externally, varied. However, we can say that it was a very successful initiative, particularly where young people and the laity associated with our mission played a very significant role.

e) The Year of Consecrated Life

To mark the Year of Consecrated Life (2014-2015) at the level of the Universal Church, various meetings and gatherings were organized by the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The General Secretariat for Formation, undertook the task to motivate and help register those Redemptorists who wished to participate in one of the events organized by the Vatican. For those who attended the Vatican event, the Secretariat organized and hosted a specific Redemptorist formation program from the 8th to the 11th of April; this took place in Ciorani.

In addition, the Secretariat (members present in Rome) also made itself available to facilitate the participation of our confreres at a meeting of young religious from 22 to 26 September, 2015 organized by the Vatican Institute mentioned above.

f) Publications from the Secretariat

- y May 29, 2011: Article for Scala News on the activities and projects of the -Secretariat.
- y October 27, 2013: Secretariat Report, published in *Analecta* 2012-2013 pp. 291-297.
- y June 24, 2014: Article for Scala News about the Formators Course in Cebu, Philippines.
- y April 12, 2015: Official publication of the Decree of the General Government and the Letter of Father General Michael Brehl relating to decisions on Initial Formation in the Congregation.

- y April 14, 2015: As noted above, the Secretariat, during the Year of the Promotion of Redemptorist Missionary Vocation, published different articles and papers. These were collected and published in one booklet entitled *Witnesses and Missionaries of Redemption*, forming the second volume of the series **Redemptorist Formation**. This publication was done in the 3 official languages of the Congregation.
- y April 23, 2015: Article for Scala News on the Seminar held for Redemptorist formators in Ciorani, Italy.
- y December 8, 2015: Publication of the new volume of the *Manual for Redemptorist Formation*, # 3 with the title: *Towards the new profile of Redemptorist Missionary* of the Redemptorist Formation collection, in the 3 official languages the Congregation.

g) Web Site www.fcontinuacssr.com

The website of the General Secretariat for Formation was created as an extension of the work of the Formation Courses and was designed for the use of the Participants of the courses. After completion of Level I of the Course, participants are invited to visit the on-line course and its various contents. Initially the site was organized as an extension of the website of the University of St. Alphonsus, Bogotá. However, since 2008 it has operated autonomously.

Most of the sections on the website are open to everyone. To access the material of the various courses, permission is required. However, this is granted to participants and to those who request it.

Since 2012 the site has undergone renewal, presenting the information in the three official languages of the Congregation and updating various technical aspects. Features include general information on the Congregation, themes specific to formation, an archive service that includes video and audio files as well as documents and communications. This is available to those who require it. Work is currently taking place on organizing a digital library for formators and a database of links to other sites of interest, both Redemptorists and other Institutes.

h) Other Activities

Both General Consultors and the Executive Secretary have collaborated during the past six years in a variety of activities such as: meetings of formators and formands in the various Conferences, meetings of Redemptorist Brothers, retreats, accompanying the different collaborative processes in Interprovincial Formation. Furthermore, they have responded to specific requests for assistance from our Institute of higher learning, the Collegio Maggiore Sant'Alfonso in Rome and the Congresses on Moral Theology ... as well as the propagation and dissemination of material relating to Formation, Safeguarding, etc.

i) On-going Projects of the Secretariat for Formation:

- y Basic Formation Program: The Secretariat, in collaboration with the various houses of formation of the Congregation, has begun a project to develop a core formation program for each stage of initial formation in the Congregation.
- y Comunicanda: Similarly, the Secretariat considers it an appropriate time to publish in the series Redemptorist Formation some Comunicanda and official documents of the Congregation, issued during the terms of Fr. Juan Lasso de la Vega y Miranda (1985-1997) and Fr. Joseph W. Tobin (1997-2009) relating to the areas of theology, spirituality and our charism. We hope to add further material from other previous Superiors General.

Part II: KEY ASPECTS OF FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

Today there are many challenges to be faced in initial and on-going formation. While we spend a lot of time, personnel and energy in initial formation, on-going formation tends to be left to the initiative of each Unit and to each confrere in particular. While on-going formation appears to be manageable by each individual unit, we cannot say the same of Initial Formation.

Every day the need for more Interprovincial collaboration becomes clearer, despite the initial difficulties presented. We must always remember that in the future, the mission of the Congregation will be more global and will require greater collaboration among Redemptorists worldwide.

1. CHALLENGES TO INITIAL FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

There are many great external challenges - social, ecclesial, cultural, family, etc., which confront us and which are difficult to respond to adequately. But there are other internal challenges to which we have to pay attention because the response to these challenges is within our control; it depends on us.

a) Of a structural nature:

- y Units with limited resources: Many Units cannot undertake on their own, the whole process of initial formation of candidates. Therefore, while they make great efforts to do so, we see every day a greater necessity for Interprovincial collaboration in initial and ongoing formation in the Congregation.

- y **Interprovincial Formation:** Interprovincial Formation, while gradually taking shape, is a struggle. Interprovincial novitiates of the different (sub) Conferences have become more and more of a reality in the Congregation. Lately, preparation for Perpetual Profession is also being organized at the level of (Sub) Conferences. Another development in the Congregation is the growth of Interprovincial Theologates. There are also wonderful experiences of Intercongregational collaboration that enable us to provide our formands with the best possible formation. Linguistic, religious, theological differences, as well as the variety of ways in which the Redemptorist charism is lived in different Units of the Congregation, are real challenges that need to be considered when developing Interprovincial Formation.
- y **Economic Solidarity:** It often happens that where there is a wealth of vocations, the necessary funds are not available, or vice versa. Each year the Solidarity Fund of the Congregation receives a greater number of requests for help than what is actually available for distribution. Most of this assistance is directed towards formation. Therefore, greater economic cooperation in the area of formation is necessary.

b) Owning Redemptorist Formation:

- y **Redemptorist Missionary Formation.** It is difficult to offer an authentic Redemptorist missionary formation to our formands, especially during the period of temporary vows, when so many of them are studying in non-Redemptorist centers.
- y **Formators:** Today, throughout the Congregation it is becoming increasingly difficult to find formators with the necessary experience of missionary and consecrated life

and who are willing to give some years to this ministry. We thank all the confreres who generously offer this service and we invite all to actively collaborate in this special ministry, especially where there are Interprovincial Formation projects.

- y Courses on Formation for Formators: While there have been several such courses for formators during this sexennium, there is a need for further development in the future. In particular, we need to renew and adapt these courses to suit the needs of each Conference.
- y The formation of Brothers: While it is true this is a small group in formation, we believe that we must continue to make every effort in offering them adequate formation until they have finished the process of initial formation.
- y Redemptorist Lay Missionaries: Collaboration with lay people, as well as with other religious, is increasing. Adequate formation for the lay, and those religious who live our charism of Plentiful Redemption, is necessary.
- y Official languages: Every day we are more aware of the need for familiarity with our official languages, especially among the younger confreres. We must continue to insist on the learning and practice of the official languages of the Congregation.

c) Lifestyle

- y Vocation Ministry in the Redemptorist charism: The reality is that this ministry is left largely in the hands of the person responsible or designated. However, it is something that each confrere, each community, each place of worship must develop and offer as a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and the world.

- y The witness of many communities of professed confreres: In many cases today, the lifestyle and mission of many communities of professed confreres is not a good example and model of living the evangelical counsels, prayer, fraternal life, community life, ministry, interpersonal relationships, etc., for the formands.
- y Personal accompaniment: One of the great challenges in formation today is how to adequately and personally accompany those in formation in such a way as to facilitate their growth in becoming mature persons on a human and spiritual level and as Redemptorists.

d) Specific Difficulties:

- y Dropout: In some Conferences, for various reasons, many young people in formation, priests or brothers leave the Congregation/Consecrated Life or the priesthood in the early years of their religious life or their priesthood.
- y The Formation Process: There is a noticeably strong clerical mentality that runs through all stages of initial formation relegating our call to the Consecrated Life as Redemptorist missionaries to second place.
- y The **Prevention of and Protecting** against abuse of children and vulnerable people. Each day we are made more and more aware of the need to be very sensitive to this issue and for the need to give attention to the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable people.

2. ON-GOING FORMATION

Ongoing formation or Continuing formation is considered today one of the great challenges of Consecrated Life.

FORMATION THROUGHOUT THE UNIT

In some Units, there exists a well-structured plan for ongoing formation consisting of one-week programs in various forms. There are very few Units with a clear policy or formation plan or a directory for ongoing formation. It is important that the (Vice) Provincial Government in collaboration with the Secretariat for Formation and possibly other experts, prepare a plan for ongoing formation for the Unit.

FORMATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES:

Based on what we have noticed during the Visits to the Units, this is a very weak area. We continue to stress the need to plan at the beginning of the year, the dates for the community retreats, what themes will be treated and who is responsible for each retreat. It becomes very difficult to try to do last minute planning for formation in the community.

SPECIALIZED FORMATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE UNIT AND THE CONGREGATION

Very few confreres make use of opportunities for ongoing formation in areas of ministry, or otherwise, whether they be short courses or more in depth study which will help enrich their experience as persons and the mission of the Unit at large. More and more, we see a decreasing number of confreres making themselves available for pursuing a master's degree or licentiate or doctorate in fields necessary for the mission of the Congregation. The result of this phenomenon is seen clearly through the drastically reduced

number of Redemptorists at the Collegio Maggiore and Alphonsian Academy pursuing studies in Moral Theology or other fields. The number of Redemptorists at these institutions now in 2015 is half what it was in 2010; thus in five years, a 50% decline.

The Redemptorist Spirituality courses, the Moral Theology Congresses and also Moral Theology courses are appreciated by the confreres.

Whether it is for full length or short programs of formation for specialization, it is important to remember that it is the (Vice) Provincial Council in response to the needs of the mission, which proposes confreres to take up these challenges of specializing for the mission.

FORMATION OF EACH CONFRERE ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL

This aspect of formation depends on the individual confrere and as such it is difficult to evaluate, nevertheless it is clear this is not a priority among us, Redemptorists. Formation on the personal level or with the help of others can develop into a program of study or reading, which can orient one's life and mission. Learning of another language, becomes more and more necessary in our globalized world

REDEMPTORIST BROTHERS

They must participate fully in these programs of specialized formation at all levels of the Congregation, Conference and (Vice)Province.

FORMATION OF ELDERLY CONFRERES

This is an area often neglected and in need of adequate time and well thought out programs, particularly in certain Units and Conferences. Many of the elderly confreres also request spiritual, intellectual and Redemptorist formation particular to their lifesituation.

**SOME SUGGESTED AREAS TO WORK
TOWARD THE FUTURE:**

- y **Redemptorist of the future:** We must continue to insist on formation toward the profile of the Redemptorist proposed by the XXIV General Chapter of 2009
- y **Interprovincial Collaboration:** The hospitality of many houses of formation toward accommodating formands from other Units is commendable and worthy of gratitude but it is now the moment for the Congregation to move toward authentic Interprovincial Collaboration in formation as envisioned by the XXIV General Chapter and in light of the decree on formation issued by the General Government in April 2015.
- y **Toward the future:** The General Government, in April 2015 in keeping with the decisions of the XXIV General Chapter of 2009, made decisions pertaining to initial formation in the Congregation. These decisions are intended to facilitate in a particular way, Interprovincial Collaboration.
- y **Redemptorist Missionary Vocation Promotion:** This has to be seen as a sense of duty to which each confrere, community, Unit, all ministry including those in collaboration with the Laity must be committed.
- y **Interprovincial Communities for Mission in a true sense:** At the moment, these are still very few in the Congregation, but where they exist they are a true missionary stimulus for vocations and to our men in initial formation.
- y **Formation for formators:** We are conscious of the need to continue to provide this type of formation and preparation for our formators.

Part III: MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF INITIAL FORMATION BY CONFERENCE

EUROPE (9100)

Achievements:

- y Gatherings of formators and formands of the Conference held during the sexennium were considered very enriching
- y Preparation for profession of Final Vows on the level of the Conference has been positively valued
- y The Secretariat for Formation for the Conference is functioning relatively well
- y Some Interprovincial Novitiates already existed and functioned well and continue to do so.

Some Aspects to Develop:

- y It is proving very difficult to work together in formation; many Units are resisting.
- y It is a challenge to accept the need to learn other languages.
- y It is more and more difficult to find qualified willing and available formators
- y It is difficult to find sites, which can fulfill the requirements for the Pastoral Experience Stage for the temporary professed.

NORTH AMERICA (9200)

Achievements:

- y Annual gathering of formators and formands are seen as very positive on the level of the Conference.
- y The Interprovincial Novitiate of North America, now based in Toronto, Canada is functioning satisfactorily. It is also open to collaboration with Units in other Conferences.
- y Five Units collaborate in an Interprovincial Philosophate.
- y Despite the huge differences in culture among the formands, there exists a strong value of interpersonal relationships among them at all levels of formation.

Some Aspects to Develop:

- y Vocation Promotion is a veritable challenge in the North American culture
- y The goal of an Interprovincial Theologate for the Conference, after many years on the drawing board has not yet been achieved.
- y Proper formation for Brothers is being discussed and ways are being sought for its implementation.
- y How to respond to the phenomenon of adult vocations
- y Difficulty in arriving at and establishing proper financial accords for the running of Interprovincial formation.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (9300)

Achievements:

- y Prior to the establishment of Conference, the Units had been collaborating with each other on the Sub Conference level and continue to do so. There are gatherings of Vocation Promoters, Presidents of the Secretariats for Formation, Formators and formands etc.
- y This collaboration has helped significantly in the elaboration and use of “profiles” for both formands and stages of formation.
- y There are Interprovincial Novitiates functioning very well: two in Brazil (URB) São Paulo and Goiás; one in Cochabamba Bolivia (URSAL) and one in Piedecuesta Colombia (URNALC)
- y Integrating into formation the appropriate use of new means of communication through media and social networking: web pages, Facebook, You tube, internet bulletins etc.

Some Aspects to Develop:

- y Coordination of formation on a Conference level is becoming more necessary now that most Units are experiencing similar problems.
- y There are very good documents which need to be implemented such as those dealing with the formative process and its characteristics, contracts, agreements, convenios among the Units and so on.

- y The high rate of drop out among the professed students, recently finally professed Brothers and newly ordained Priests is a major concern for the Conference. There is need for a solid analysis with a view to confronting the issue.
- y Much more can be done with vocation promotion, in a special way, present our missionary charism to the youth, children, acolytes etc.
- y It is difficult to prepare formators and get them to remain in this ministry so as to provide consistency for the formandi, collaborate on an Interprovincial level, and serve among the diversity of cultures, nationalities, traditions etc..
- y Although there is collaboration on the level of the Theologate, it is important to continue to work toward greater collaboration as is being done at the Novitiate level in the Conference.

ASIA OCEANIA (9400)

Achievements:

- y There is good Interprovincial collaboration among many of the Units
- y The Interprovincial Novitiates in Lipa Philippines and Bangalore India are functioning adequately
- y The Interprovincial Theologate in Davao Philippines is very well appreciated
- y There is a very good understanding throughout the Conference of the course for preparation for Final Vows.

What is needed now is to make one program of the two which currently exist.

Some Aspects to Develop:

- y There is need to continue collaboration and agreements among the Units.
- y Need to appropriate the Pastoral Priorities of the Conference more adequately into the programs of initial formation.
- y There is a need to continue preparing men to take up the role of formators, spiritual directors and professors
- y There is need to clarify the lines of authority in the Interprovincial houses of formation. On this issue, there is need to continue developing the contracts and agreements governing collaboration among the Units.
- y Another issue relating to collaboration is that of finances. Some Units with many candidates cannot afford to send all their formands to participate in an Interprovincial program of formation so this will mean finding creative ways and appropriate times and stages for collaboration.
- y Given that the agreed upon official language for the Conference is English, there is need to offer programs in the Units which will allow the formands to arrive at a satisfactory level of competence in English.

AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR (9500)

Achievements:

- y A great strength of the Conference is that there is a high

interest in becoming Redemptorists; the result of which is a Conference in a state of growth, youthful and with a future.

- y There are some positive Interprovincial experiences but based on very fragile structures.
- y The Conference Assembly agreed there would be two Interprovincial Novitiates: one in English and one in French. It will be some time before this goal can be achieved.
- y The General Secretariat for Formation has presented courses for formators of the Units in the Conference in French as well as in English. For the future, there is need to continue to promote these courses.

Some Aspects to Develop:

- y A major issue for the entire Congregation and one which seriously affects the Conference of Africa and Madagascar is finances.
- y It is difficult to make progress in Interprovincial collaboration because of the fragility of the agreements among the Units, high economic costs, difficulty of travel and scarcity of formators.
- y As in the “mother” Provinces the subject of Interprovincial formation is difficult, we find it even more complicated for the “daughter” Units.
- y Great need to prepare confreres to be formators.

Rome, May 30th , 2015
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION



5. CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING

(Introduction to the Article on Safeguarding)

The authors of the article which follows this introduction give an excellent review on the subject of child abuse, and the protection and safeguarding of children. They define child or minor as well as levels of vulnerability, explain abuse in its various forms, confirm the prevalence of abuse globally and across cultures and socio-economic levels, describe the devastating effects of abuse in the lives of children and young people, and name the main perpetrators of abuse.

They also define protection and safeguarding, make the case on several levels for it being a priority for Redemptorists, illustrate the components of creating safe environments for children, and warn us of the types of organizations in which abuse is more likely to occur. The second half of the article is an appendix, which outlines a code of behavior for Redemptorists, our co-workers and volunteers. I suggest that you thoroughly review the material in the article.

It should be noted that Pope Francis in 2014 approved a new commission to protect children from sex abuse and also to help victims of sex abuse (Annex: Pope Francis Letter, **page 71**). This is an indication of the seriousness with which this issue is viewed at the highest levels of the Church. It stands to reason therefore that every Diocese in the Church, every (Vice)Province, Region and Mission in the Congregation must develop such codes of behavior to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, as well as protocols for dealing with particular cases. Constitution 19 invites Redemptorist missionaries to “develop ... adequate knowledge and practical familiarity with conditions in the world ... [and to] confidently engage in missionary dialogue with the world”. This is so that we can “understand people’s anxious questionings”. The scandal of abuse of children and vulnerable adults has shaped the conditions of the world in which the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel.

An initial step in this formative process is to ask students to study the material and then to facilitate a discussion to measure their level of understanding. This approach has the advantage of bringing the students to a fundamental level of knowledge about the issue of child abuse while making a convincing case that protection and safeguarding become and remain a top priority for Redemptorists. It goes without saying that if formation in this area is going to be effective then the process must take place within a (Vice)Province or region which has established codes of conduct for the protection of children as well as procedures for recognizing abuse, responding to abuse and reporting abuse. The article can be used as a supplement or introduction to the policies and procedures set up by the (Vice)Province or region. If these policies are not in place in your (Vice)Province or region then the formation process can enhance the ministerial training students receive in seminaries and schools of theology for maintaining professional boundaries.

A review of the material will provide students in initial formation with a basic framework that will serve as a foundation for engaging the topic at deeper levels. Hans Schermann, in *Methodological Guidelines for Reading the Constitutions*, points out that the text of the Constitutions makes claims on our “thinking, our imagining, our feeling and our willing” (*Readings in Redemptorist Spirituality* Vol. 1). Formation for the protection of children can become the point from which we rethink our mission as evangelizers, it can facilitate a reimagining of the implications of the Gospel for our lives, it can awaken a deep feeling of compassion for the vulnerable, it can inspire us toward concrete action for their wellbeing and protection. How do formators guide students in initial formation to internalize the attitudes, values and principles of a policy for the protection of children? How do formators help students to pursue the protection of children as a Gospel imperative seeing it as integral to the proclamation of the Gospel? The purpose of this introduction is to suggest an approach that not only shares information with candidates but offers formation to candidates in a Gospel way of living that protects the vulnerable especially children. I will offer several ways of doing this, primarily making use of the Gospel and our Constitutions.

Although, this article, focuses on the individual and community efforts at creating safe environments for children, this process goes hand in hand with our efforts in initial formation to develop the human dimension of each confrere, especially in a healthy integrated sexuality. Therefore, this type of analysis should not be left solely at the level of personal or communal actions. Rather, it needs to be accompanied by an interior process of reflection in each of the members. The path of human development should guide Redemptorists toward a maturity that is both caring and relational. In our missionary presence, we should see in each person, especially the poor and most vulnerable, the very real presence of God acting in their lives.

Likewise, it should be noted at the outset that part of the charism of the Congregation, which finds its roots in our founder St. Alphonsus, is a special dedication to and care for Moral Theology. This dimension of our apostolic life is essential if we are to remain alert to the implications of our Gospel proclamation in the world today.

Redemptorist missionaries are called to cultivate a special sensitivity to the situations and circumstances in which our mission is carried out. Above all, this sensitivity is expressed in the mission and testimony of all the confreres in their specific locations. It is shaped to each diocese or place, so that the mission has a special way of manifesting itself in each society and to every individual that it encounters.

As you go through this chapter and the material that follows I encourage you to draw more connections to the protection of children, the Gospel, and the Redemptorist tradition. Remember, this is not an arbitrary exercise in which we attempt to “fit” the theme of the protection of children with the Gospel or the C&S.

Rather, the concrete reality in which we find ourselves, namely, the abuse scandal and our response, can serve as the catalyst for a deepening understanding of both the Gospel and the Redemptorist tradition. The goal is to bring ourselves and our concrete reality into critical dialogue with Jesus and his Gospel and the Redemptorist missionary charism which calls us to be his companions and helpers (Constitution 2).

Our Brotherly Presence: Constitution 8

I begin with a reflection on Constitution 8, considering first our missionary calling to evangelize the abandoned especially the poor.

According to the situations (concrete reality) in which they find themselves, they will eagerly try to discover what they should do or say: whether to proclaim Christ explicitly, or to confine themselves to the witness of brotherly presence. (Const. 8)

In their commentaries, Raponi and O'Donnell both observe that this constitution reflects a modern missionary mentality, more aware of the "variety of situations and cultures in which Redemptorists find themselves and of the people to be evangelized" (Raponi, 212-213). This can be contrasted to the mentality of the Rule which assumed a more Christian ambiance in which the preferred method of evangelization was explicit proclamation. The power of this particular constitution might be missed if we believe we are not presently in an extraordinary missionary situation. After the scandal of child abuse, our present reality, marks a new situation in which the Gospel is to be proclaimed. I realize that this situation is not "new", some of the allegations going back years.

The fact to be kept foremost in our minds is the enormous harm that has been done to children. The revelation of this fact has consequently effected the church's credibility and ability to proclaim the Good News. In our own Congregation, in several parts of the world, the explicit proclamation of the gospel has been seriously undermined because of the scandal of child abuse. As the authors point out, allegations of abuse, whether founded or unfounded, can destroy an organization's reputation. If our vocation is the explicit proclamation of the Gospel to the abandoned poor then our reputation is intimately linked to the care we demonstrate to the most vulnerable among us to whom Jesus specifically directed the Good News (Constitution 4).

We are in an historical situation in which much more attention needs to be paid to the witness of our brotherly presence as

essential in the explicit proclamation of the Gospel. The Latin word *saltem* used in the Constitution 8 (*an saltem tacito testimonio praesentiae fraternae*) means “at least” which is translated as “confine themselves” in the English. We must not take this to mean that testimony of brotherly presence is somehow less than explicit proclamation or that it limits in some way our true vocation to preach.

Rather, it means that there are some situations in which our witness of brotherly presence will be the only way we can communicate the Gospel. In other words, in *all* situations a careful and constant effort (*assiduo inquirent*) must be directed to the quality of our presence among people and *sometimes* this will be our only way to convey the message of the Gospel. You will notice that the reverse proposition of this Constitution cannot be asserted, namely, that explicit proclamation be the sole characteristic of our missionary vocation.

The authors of the article, citing Mons. Scicluna, remind us that “there is no common good of the church or of the people of God which is different from the protection of children.” Likewise, there is no explicit proclamation of the Gospel by the Redemptorist community which is separate from the community’s witness of protecting and safeguarding children.

To summarize, Constitution 8 calls Redemptorists to a renewed emphasis as to the quality of our presence among the people of God. Children and young people are particular groups toward which our efforts of care and protection are directed because of their vulnerability. As the authors note, “children and young people represent a large portion of the poor and most abandoned” (p. 5). Jesus’ proclamation of the Gospel was accompanied by concrete action in favor of the poor and the oppressed (see Mark 10: 13-16).

Formation works best when it takes place from the inside out not from the outside in. The protection and safeguarding of children cannot remain solely a set of guidelines and policies imposed on members and candidates from without. Redemptorist formation should augment and deepen the learning of policies, principles, and training that candidates receive throughout their formative process. It does this by helping students relate the Redemptorist missionary vocation to the protection and safeguarding of children. It guides them toward a deeper understanding of the unity of the preached word and the witness of brotherly presence shown in the care of children and young people.

The goal is for the formation director to lead the students in a discussion of Constitution 8 helping them to discover how it is related to a lived practice of protecting and safeguarding children. It is not simply a matter of the formation director offering an exegesis of the text and making the connections for the students.

A formation director might ask the students to read Constitutions 8-10 along with the article on safeguarding in preparation for a shared discussion. They might also study one of the commentaries of Raponi or O'Donnell on these constitutions. Questions for reflection can be offered at the same time. For example; how has the reality of child abuse especially in the church changed my thinking about the importance of child protection and safeguarding? How does my life reflect a brotherly presence of care and concern for the protection of children? How does the creation of a safe place for children witness to the Gospel? How is the explicit proclamation of the Gospel united to our lived witness of life, especially in the protection of children? You will notice that these questions are not directed to the theory or the philosophy of child protection. They are directed to our present ideas, attitudes, and practice of child protection and safeguarding. The idea is to bring the student's actual

selves into dialogue with our tradition and the Gospel imperative to protect children. In the session, gently direct the students to reflect on their lives, keeping them from purely theoretic discussion.

After they have had an opportunity to share, you might do a more thorough exegesis of the constitution. I would encourage you to make further connections to the material from the article on safeguarding, the Constitutions and the thoughts that the students have shared in the discussion. As a conclusion you might ask, how will our community live our brotherly presence in the practice of protecting children and young people? The authors of the article call this a Gospel imperative. To live our lives ever more in accord with the Gospel will require a restructuring of our relationships with the poor and vulnerable and especially with children and young people. We now turn to a Gospel reflection.

Restructuring Our Life: Mark 2:1-12

In the story of the healing of the paralytic, Jesus has returned to Capernaum and it becomes known that he is in the house. A large crowd gathers and Jesus begins to preach the word to them. Four men come bringing to him a paralytic on a stretcher and, unable to draw near to Jesus because of the crowd, they open the roof over the place where he was. Jesus assures the paralytic that his sins are forgiven and, in response to the controversy that Jesus introduces, he cures the man of his infirmity.

There are a few things to note as we begin our meditation on the Gospel. First, notice the central role that the house plays in the story. The evangelist highlights it several times, Jesus is in the *house*, that there is no room even around the *door*, the *roof* is opened so that the paralytic can be lowered down, the second half of the story takes place inside the *house*.

Second, the scripture tells us that Jesus preached the word to the gathered crowd. The text does not indicate what he taught. This occurs several times in the Gospel and, I would suggest, that in these instances instead of placing the focus on the teaching of Jesus, the evangelist has chosen to spotlight the effect that the teaching has on its hearers. The text answers the question, what is supposed to happen when the Gospel is preached?

This would be a good question for Redemptorists to reflect upon at any time but for now our attention is directed to the effect of Jesus' Gospel in our own life as a community. The teaching of Jesus has two principle effects, one has to do with the construction of the house and the other is the interior movement which takes place when the paralytic finally encounters Jesus. I will relate these two effects to the two main components of safeguarding from the article prevention of child abuse and appropriate reaction if it occurs.

I would suggest the role the house plays in the story is symbolic. The house in the gospel story is deficient to meet the needs of the person most in need of Jesus' help. It must be opened to allow greater access to poor and vulnerable. The house can be understood has the form or shape that our lives take both as individuals and as a community. Here I want to consider it principally as a metaphor for the concrete expression that our communal life takes at the level of province or local community. We are choosing to consider it as the structure or shape of our community's life. Redemptorists, like any other community, build a life together. Hopefully, this life is based upon the solid principles of the Gospel and the tradition of our apostolic life.

Many times, and often unconsciously, the structure can take on a form which may not be in accord with our apostolic life. Take,

for example, a Redemptorist culture or structure of life which is simply the sum of its individual members. This would indicate a life or culture that was somewhat haphazard in its construction. The structure of our life so constructed would not assure a safe environment for the vulnerable because it was not intended to do so. No one in our community intends to create structures which are unsafe or unresponsive to the needs of children and young people but that is precisely the point. As the article stresses “safeguarding must take a comprehensive approach that pre-empts risky environments and *creates* safe places for children.

Think for a moment about the abuse scandal that has stunned the church. Overtime structures emerged in the church and in religious communities within which the abuse of children became possible. The structures themselves need to be rebuilt on principles of child care and protection. Provinces or communities that believe something like this could never happen need to build up a culture of protection now.

In Redemptorist provinces or communities that have experienced the pain and suffering caused by the abuse of children then the form of our life needs to be deconstructed (they opened the roof) and rebuilt upon the solid rock of Jesus’ care for the weak and vulnerable. In all provinces, an essential phase for the building up of a culture of protection is during initial formation.

Students need to be taught that while personal responsibility is a given it alone will be inadequate for the creation of safe environments for children. The creation of a culture of protection for children is essentially a community endeavor. Without the active participation of all the members our life will remain structurally shaky and unreliable as a safe place for children.

The breakthrough takes place as Jesus preaches the word to them. At this moment everyone is confronted with the full view of sin and its effect in the world as the paralytic is lowered into the room. Jesus responds first to the spiritual sickness that has imprisoned the man. Calling him “son,” (literally, child) he declares his sins forgiven.” Jesus’ use of the term “child” (teknōn in Greek) indicates that though sin is at work it may not be a direct causal result of the paralytic’s personal sin. That he is spiritually sick is certain and Jesus declaration serves as a reassurance that his relationship with God is unbroken.

The scribes fail to recognize the significance of the moment. They are unaware of their own need for forgiveness or their freedom from what holds them captive. They guard within their hearts thoughts and feelings which oppose the work of grace. They are unmoved by the plight of the paralytic or to the source of his affliction. They sit idle unable to join in solidarity with the paralytics’ hope for freedom. Jesus reveals their interior attitudes suggesting to them that the more difficult path is the interior renewal that they too must undergo.

Think for a moment of the debilitating effects of the sin of child abuse in the lives of its victims. Guilt and shame corrode the lives of victims with often fatal consequences. We must look unwaveringly at the reality of sexual abuse within the church and its destructive effects in people’s lives. This is not done out of a morbid fascination but to allow it to change our hearts and move us to an enduring compassion for the victims of abuse.

A change of heart manifests itself in a deep solidarity with the victims of abuse. On the issue of Safeguarding, the authors remind us that protection of children is both a preventative and reactive process. Our solidarity extends also to those who need

our help whenever abuse occurs. Our solidarity is actualized in our willingness to recognize abuse, respond to abuse and by reporting abuse. Since the scandal, the reaction to the abuse scandal among clerics and religious has been a bit defensive and self-serving.

Admittedly, the constant barrage of news about the scandal can be overwhelming in its scope. This is why the most difficult aspect will be the interior renewal required to react to abuse when it occurs. Interior renewal demands a level of courage on the part of confreres to speak honestly about any concerns in our communal life which may put children at risk. Our students will need to be formed for solidarity with victims of abuse and at risk children and young people.

Mutual accountability and a willingness to confront problems within the community have to be instilled in students during initial formation. A constant danger in any program of Redemptorist formation is the creation of any sort of passivity in the lives of students. The goal of formation seeks to create active co-responsible agents for the safeguarding and protection of children.

Again, we are trying to work this theme with the students at the level of beliefs, attitudes, and feelings or the present praxis of individuals and community. The gospel passage might be used in a liturgy of the Word, which would introduce the topic to the students. For the first part of the gospel passage questions that might be asked of the students are; is there anything about the form or expression of our community apostolic life which would put children at risk? How do we, as a community, create safe environments for children and young people?

I would join the second half of the gospel story (the healing of the paralytic) with a few personal stories of abuse and its effect in

the lives of victims. Sadly, these are not hard to find but they can be a powerful way to enter more deeply into the topic.

I thank our confreres for offering us their work on the article. I think it will prove to be an excellent tool for communities of initial formation. I encourage you to try to work the material at deeper levels (thinking, imaging, feeling, and willing) even as you share the information in the article.

The two themes given above are intended to help you do this. I encourage you to think of others. The goal, as was stated earlier, is to help students internalize the attitudes, values and principles of child protection as a concrete way of following Jesus. They must become firmly committed to the creating safe places for children and responding appropriately to abuse if it occurs.

QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE ASKED ARE

- y How do I find myself reacting to these stories of abuse within the church?
- y How do I feel called upon to respond to the child abuse scandal?
- y How will I hold myself and my confreres accountable for child abuse prevention and appropriate reaction if it occurs?
- y A brief exegesis can be given to help them think about the questions before the session. A fuller exegesis of the gospel passage can be given afterward.

ANNEX
By Pope Francis

**TO THE PRESIDENTS OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES
AND SUPERIORS OF INSTITUTES
OF CONSECRATED LIFE
AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE**

Last March I established the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which had first been announced in December 2013, for the purpose of offering proposals and initiatives meant to improve the norms and procedures for protecting children and vulnerable adults. I then appointed to the Commission a number of highly qualified persons well-known for their work in this field.

At my meeting in July with persons who had suffered sexual abuse by priests, I was deeply moved by their witness to the depth of their sufferings and the strength of their faith. This experience reaffirmed my conviction that everything possible must be done to rid the Church of the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors and to open pathways of reconciliation and healing for those who were abused.

For this reason, last December I added new members to the Commission, in order to represent the Particular Churches throughout the world. In just a few days, all the members will meet in Rome for the first time.

In light of the above, I believe that the Commission can be a new, important and effective means for helping me to encourage and

advance the commitment of the Church at every level – Episcopal Conferences, Dioceses, Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and others – to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, and to respond to their needs with fairness and mercy.

Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home. Consequently, priority must not be given to any other kind of concern, whatever its nature, such as the desire to avoid scandal, since there is absolutely no place in ministry for those who abuse minors.

Every effort must also be made to ensure that the provisions of the Circular Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith dated 3 May 2011 are fully implemented. This document was issued to assist Episcopal Conferences in drawing up guidelines for handling cases of sexual abuse of minors by clerics. It is likewise important that Episcopal Conferences establish a practical means for periodically reviewing their norms and verifying that they are being observed.

It is the responsibility of Diocesan Bishops and Major Superiors to ascertain that the safety of minors and vulnerable adults is assured in parishes and other Church institutions. As an expression of the Church's duty to express the compassion of Jesus towards those who have suffered abuse and towards their families, the various Dioceses, Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life are urged to identify programmes for pastoral care which include provisions for psychological assistance and spiritual care. Pastors and those in charge of religious communities should be available to meet with victims and their loved ones; such

meetings are valuable opportunities for listening to those have greatly suffered and for asking their forgiveness.

For all of these reasons, I now ask for your close and complete cooperation with the Commission for the Protection of Minors. The work I have entrusted to them includes providing assistance to you and your Conferences through an exchange of best practices and through programmes of education, training, and developing adequate responses to sexual abuse.

May the Lord Jesus instil in each of us, as ministers of the Church, the same love and affection for the little ones which characterized his own presence among us, and which in turn enjoins on us a particular responsibility for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. May Mary Most Holy, Mother of tenderness and mercy, help us to carry out, generously and thoroughly, our duty to humbly acknowledge and repair past injustices and to remain ever faithful in the work of protecting those closest to the heart of Jesus.

From the Vatican, 2 February 2015
Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

FRANCISCUS

6. SAFEGUARDING

PRACTICES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR RELIGIOUS LIFE

Request:

That we ask (ex-)formators and others about how to handle safeguarding practices within the context of our religious life (celibacy, etc.) and what that might mean for formation. How does/might a formator go about formation of character/virtue?

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INTRODUCTION

Why is there a need for this Handbook? To be written by someone in the Formation area?

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM ‘CHILD’?

A child is defined as: *Every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable the child majority is attained earlier.*¹ In **Canon Law**, a person who has completed the eighteenth year of age has reached majority; below this age, a person is a minor.²

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

According to the World Health Organisation, child abuse or maltreatment includes *all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.*³

There are five widely recognised forms of Child Abuse or maltreatment:

1. Physical abuse can be any kind of hitting, shaking, burning, pinching, biting, choking, throwing, beating, and other actions that cause physical injury, leave marks, or cause pain.

2. Sexual abuse is any type of sexual contact between an adult and anyone younger than 18; between a significantly older child and

1 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 1

2 *Code of Canon Law* 1983, Canon 97, §1

3 Definition of Child Abuse from the *Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention* (WHO 1999)

a younger child; or if one person overpowers another, regardless of age. Viewing or possessing child pornography is also considered child abuse in the criminal codes of many jurisdictions.

3. Emotional abuse happens when yelling and anger go too far or when adults constantly criticize, threaten, or dismiss children until their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are damaged.

4. Neglect occurs when a child is deprived of the basic necessities for living: adequate food, housing, clothes, medical care, love, education and supervision.

5. Bullying: can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs frequently among children in social environments such as schools.

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION OR SAFEGUARDING?

Both terms are used interchangeably to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures intended **to protect children from harm**, particularly intentional harm.

ARE SOME CHILDREN MORE VULNERABLE TO ABUSE THAN OTHERS?

Yes. Such children include infants, those with a physical or mental disability, sick children, children in State care, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. Research has also shown that young people who are emotionally insecure, needy, and unsupported may be more vulnerable to the attentions of offenders. But any child, because of size, maturity, etc., can be vulnerable in the face of others who are larger or in positions of power.

IS CHILD ABUSE EASILY RECOGNISABLE?

Child abuse can be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. Knowledge of the main indicators of neglect and abuse is important, but a key factor is the willingness, of individuals and organisations, to acknowledge the existence of child abuse and its far-reaching prevalence.

Child abuse occurs at every socio-economic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.

HOW PREVALENT IS CHILD ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT?

According to the World Health Organisation,⁴ child maltreatment is a global problem with serious life-long consequences. There are no reliable global estimates for the prevalence of child maltreatment. Nonetheless, international studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25–50% of all children report being physically abused. Additionally, many children are subject to emotional abuse (sometimes referred to as psychological abuse) and to neglect.

WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT?

The perpetrators of child maltreatment are usually well-known to the child. They may be:

- y parents and other family members
- y caregivers
- y friends

4 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs150/en/index.html>

- y acquaintances
- y others in authority – such as teachers, sports coaches, police officers and clergy
- y employers
- y health care workers
- y other children and young people

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE?

Children have different levels of resiliency or hardiness and varying personalities and temperaments. Hence, they may respond differently to similarly abusive situations.

A respected commentator⁵ has noted that in the USA in the 1970's, sexual abuse was viewed with a cavalier attitude. Little was known about the effects of sexual abuse, victims were frequently thought to have “colluded” with offenders and the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse was thought to be very rare, “one in a million.”

It was not until studies and popular media in the 1980's began to address the sexual abuse of girls that the effects of early sexual contact began to be revealed. Mental illness, addiction, suicide, teen runaways, depression, phobias and anxiety disorders began to be linked to childhood sexual abuse. Discovery of the harm of sexual abuse began to influence perspectives on prevention, but it was later still before the effects of sexual abuse on boys would begin to be studied or understood.

5 Dr Monica Applewhite: Address to the Irish Bishops, Maynooth, 10 March 2009

It is now known that children who experience chronic stress – in the form of physical or sexual abuse or ongoing neglect – will focus their resources on survival and responding to threats in the environment. They may learn to live in a persistent state of hyper-arousal or dissociation⁶, anticipating a threat from every direction.

WHY SHOULD SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BE A PRIORITY FOR REDEMPTORISTS?

y **Safeguarding is a Gospel imperative:** Safeguarding children is a practical living out of the baptismal vocation of every member of the Church to ensure the safety and well-being of those ‘little ones’ – whom the Lord sets before us as those to whom the ‘kingdom of God belongs’ (Mt 19:14). As Mark indicates, receiving a child in the name of Jesus is a way to receive Jesus. And receiving Jesus is a way to receive God (Mark 9:34-37). Therefore how we deal with children is a signal of our fellowship with God.

y **Safeguarding is a Redemptorist Imperative:** St Alphonsus and the Redemptorist tradition alert us to the need for prudence, respectful vigilance and preventive measures in ministry.⁷

6 Dissociation is a protective mechanism called up by the nervous system when it reaches its maximum capacity to process stimulation (both internally and externally).

7 Cf *Constitution and Rules of the CSsR 1923*: “They should never touch with the hand the body of another, unless obliged by necessity or charity. They shall never caress boys, for any motive no matter how good; nor shall they take them to their rooms to instruct them, or to hear their confessions; this, where necessary must be done in the Church, or in some other place open to all. About this the Superior ought to be very watchful and rigid” (Of Modesty, Rules 262). “In order, however, that according to the words of the Apostle, no one may have evil to say of us, the Superior shall see that the parlours intended for women shall be in a public place, where, usually, people often pass by; and, also, that the doors of such parlours are in large part of glass, and not covered by a curtain” (Of not bringing outsiders into the House, Rules 335). “it would be a grievous fault:. . .To caress the faces or hands of children . . .To hear the confes-

Children and young people are among the poor and most abandoned in many countries. Throughout the world, “the most abandoned” are often victims of all kinds of abuse.⁸ To engage in *missionary dialogue* with the world of today and *to understand people’s anxious questionings* (Constitution 19), Redemptorists need to deeply appreciate the realities of child maltreatment throughout the world.

Strong in faith, rejoicing in hope, burning with charity, on fire with zeal, in humility of heart and persevering in prayer, Redemptorists as apostolic men and genuine disciples of Saint Alphonsus follow Christ the Redeemer with hearts full of joy; denying themselves and always ready to undertake what is demanding, they share in the mystery of Christ and proclaim it in Gospel simplicity of life and language, that they may bring [to victims and perpetrators of abuse] plentiful redemption. (Constitution 20)

y Safeguarding is a Worldwide Church Imperative:

In a Circular Letter to Bishops issued in May 2011, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith set out to help bishops to produce a set of best practice guidelines to ensure the creation of safe environments for children in the Church.⁹

y Safeguarding is a Pastoral Imperative: “There is no common good of the Church or of the institution or of the People of God which is different from the protection of minors and care taken of any victims.”¹⁰

sion of boys in one’s own room, or in a place not open to the view of all” (Of the Greater or Lesser Gravity of Faults against the Rules, Rules 282).

8 See the website of Childsafe International: <http://childsafe-international.org/index.asp>

9 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: *Circular Letter to Assist Episcopal Conferences in Developing Guidelines for Dealing with Cases of Sexual Abuses of Minors Perpetrated by Clerics*, 3 May 2011

10 Mons. Charles Scicluna of the CDF, commenting on the publication of the Circular Letter of 3 May 2011.

“Just as any caring parent will look out for their child and shield them from danger and provide a wholesome and positive environment for a child’s positive development, so the Church needs to do this for all children with whom it comes in contact.”¹¹

y **Safeguarding and Pope Benedict XVI:** “The Church in Ireland must first acknowledge before the Lord and before others the serious sins committed against defenceless children. Such an acknowledgement, accompanied by sincere sorrow for the damage caused to these victims and their families, must lead to **a concerted effort to ensure the protection of children from similar crimes in the future.**”¹²

y **Safeguarding is a Legal Imperative:** According to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, *States parties* [Those countries that have Ratified a Covenant or a Convention and are thereby bound to conform to its provisions] ... *shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*¹³

11 Ian Elliott: *A Framework for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children*, 2007

12 *Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*, 19 March 2010.

13 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991, Art 19, Sec 1

y **Safeguarding is a Moral Imperative:** According to a UN study, *While legal obligations lie with States, all sectors of society, all individuals, share the responsibility of condemning and preventing violence against children and responding to child victims. None of us can look children in the eye if we continue to condone any form of violence against them.*¹⁴

y **Safeguarding is a Good Stewardship Imperative:** By 2009, U.S. dioceses had paid more than \$ 2.6 billion in abuse-related costs since 1950. In Ireland, the Government is insisting that religious congregations contribute €680 million to a compensation fund for victims. In addition, the time, energy and resources expended in responding to allegations (“opportunity costs”¹⁵ such as time spent by the Provincial and Provincial Council and the resources diverted from mission) are considerable.

WHY DO REDEMPTORISTS NEED CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES?

- y All organisations working with children, whether faith-based or otherwise, have a moral and legal obligation to protect children within their care.
- y Religious Orders and Congregations working or involved with children have been, are and will continue to be vulnerable to inadvertently harbouring abusers until the issues are brought out into the open.

¹⁴ *Report of the Independent Expert for the UN Study on Violence against Children, para. 91 (Report presented by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro of Brazil to the UN General Assembly in October 2006).*

¹⁵ The cost of an alternative that must be forgone in order to pursue a certain action.

- y Child protection policies and procedures help to create ‘child safe’ organisations:
- y That have an ‘aware culture’
 - ⑦ that do everything possible to prevent intentional and unintentional harm to children
 - ⑦ where children feel safe
 - ⑦ where children can speak out
 - ⑦ where children are listened to
 - ⑦ where children and staff are respected and empowered
- y A strong policy will provide guidance in dealing with difficult situations. In a crisis it can be harder to think clearly. An organisation with a reliable policy can react in an informed way and avoid accusations of a biased response in any participant’s favour or disadvantage. A strong policy can provide a just and transparent system of implementing safe practices as well as a just and transparent process for dealing with allegations.
- y Organisations without child protection policies, guidelines and systems are more vulnerable to false or malicious accusations of abuse.
- y Without such policies in place, allegations of abuse, whether founded or unfounded, can destroy an organisation’s reputation.
- y Donors are increasingly requiring organisations to have in place child protection policies as part of their funding criteria.

WHAT ARE THE TWO MAIN COMPONENTS OF SAFEGUARDING?

1. The first component involves a **prospective, preventative and pro-active process** which aims to protect **all children** from abuse or neglect, and not just those most at risk. Safeguarding aims to prevent impairment of all children's health and development, and to ensure they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Instead of concentrating on responding to known victims of abuse, Safeguarding adopts a wider focus on **creating safe environments for all children** and young people. It seeks to take preventative action and not just respond to existing harm. It takes a comprehensive approach that **pre-empts** risky environments and protects children and young people from potential sources of harm.
2. The second component is a predominantly **reactive process** which responds to situations where children are already at risk or are being abused. It focuses on what are known as the Three Rs: **Recognising** abuse; **Responding** to abuse; and **Reporting** abuse to the appropriate authorities. In this sense, safeguarding is **targeted** at those children who are most at risk from specific forms of abuse.

WHAT DOES 'CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN' ENTAIL?

Any Church organization (Diocese or Religious Congregation, for instance) that wants to take its child safeguarding responsibilities seriously, will need to have at least the following in place:¹⁶

16 This section relies heavily on *Safeguarding Children, Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, 2008

1. **A written Policy on keeping children safe:** This policy, which will be widely publicised (using posters in churches and monasteries, for instance), will communicate the principle derived from the gospel that the Church is committed to keeping children safe.
2. **Written Procedures on how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions:** Having clear procedures and guidance, bought into by everyone in the organisation, will help to make sure that people know how to respond promptly to allegations and suspicions about a child's safety or welfare.
3. **Practices that help prevent harm to children:** Church organisations can minimise the risk of children and young people being abused by:
 - a. developing and implementing **safe recruitment and vetting practices**,
 - b. promulgating a **Code of Behavior**, incorporating clear guidelines that set out what is and what is not acceptable behavior by members of an organisation,¹⁷
 - c. operating **safe activities for children**.
4. **Training and education for keeping children safe:** Everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively they need to be aware of child protection issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.
5. **Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:** Policies and procedures put in place by Church organisations to protect children are only effective if Church personnel and parishioners, including children, understand them and know how to use them.

17 See Appendix: **What May/Ought to be Included in a Code of Behaviour?** below.

- 6. Access to advice and support:** Anyone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking professional help.
- 7. Implementing and monitoring standards:** Each Church organisation needs to develop a plan of action to monitor the effectiveness of the steps it is taking to keep children safe.

IN WHAT KIND OF ORGANISATION IS ABUSE MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR?

Experience shows that abuse of children is more likely to happen in organisations that do not build preventative measures into their structures and systems. Lessons learnt have shown that abuse is more likely to happen in organisations where:

- y there is minimal supervision of children
- y there are only informal procedures for dealing with concerns
- y there is an attitude of ‘it can’t happen here’
- y there is very little or no specialist knowledge and awareness about child protection in the local community
- y there are very few or no professional boundaries or codes of conduct
- y there is poor co-ordination, support and supervision
- y there are gaps between policy and practice
- y there is either very poor leadership or very strong charismatic leaders who have absolute power over staff, volunteers and the community.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Safeguarding Children: Standards & Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, 2008, p. 42

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF SAFEGUARDING FOR FORMATORS AND FOR THE WORK OF FORMATION?

1. Formators need to be **proactive voices and advocates for young people** and **models of best practice** in their work with them.
2. Some “**advice**” for the attention of Formators
 - y The importance of well thought-through recruitment, vetting and selection processes cannot be over-estimated.
 - y Child safeguarding training needs to be provided for those in formation as well as for formators themselves.
 - y Where those in formation undertake pastoral work, proper safeguarding arrangements need to be (put) in place at the pastoral work location.
 - y Houses of formation need to have structures in place to prevent access to internet porn.
3. Many safeguarding principles and best practices also hold for **relations between professed Redemptorists and those in formation**; the latter may be understood as ‘vulnerable’ where there are significant ‘power’ differentials.
4. Many of these principles and best practices also hold good for any ‘**professional**’ ministry with adults.

LAST WORD

“[Jesus] is the prophet of God’s mercy, himself **one of the last**. His word does not mean an immediate end to the hunger and misery of these people, but it does mean **unyielding dignity for all the victims of abuse and exploitation**. Everyone needs to know that these people in particular are God’s favourite children, which makes their dignity absolutely real. . . . **The only way to accept God is to build a world whose first priority is the dignity of the last.**” (*emphasis added*)¹⁹

APPENDIX

WHAT MAY / SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR REDEMPTORISTS, REDEMPTORIST CO-WORKERS AND REDEMPTORIST VOLUNTEERS?

A **Code of Behaviour** is a clear and concise guide to what is and what is not acceptable behavior and practice when dealing with children. Such a Code is an essential element of any organisation’s child protection policy. All Redemptorists, their employees and volunteers should be given a copy and required to sign to indicate that they have seen and understood the Code of Behaviour and agree to follow it.

When implemented properly, a Code of Behaviour should reduce the opportunities for child abuse to occur. It should make clear what action you should take if the Code is broken or not followed correctly.

¹⁹ José Antonio p_{Agola}, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, Convivium Press 2011, p. 186

A Code of Behaviour will reflect local circumstances and risk factors. It should be developed on the basis of consultation with all those involved, including children and young people. The following example indicates some of the areas that a Code will address, **but is not meant to be comprehensive.**

GENERAL CONDUCT

Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.

Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children can never be acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child or young person.

Being alone with a child or young person should be avoided where possible. If a situation arises where it is necessary to be alone with a child, another responsible adult should be informed immediately, by telephone if necessary. A diary note that the meeting with the young person took place, including the reasons for it, should be made.

On all occasions involving children and young people, **a register should be kept of all adults** (Redemptorists, co-workers and volunteers) who are present.

Best practice in relation **to travel with children** and young people should be observed. Redemptorists and their co-workers should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child or young person. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two children or young

people present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.

Children and young people should not be permitted **to work or remain in a Redemptorist church**, monastery, retreat house, parish property or school unless there are at least two adults present.

Redemptorists and their co-workers should **not engage in or tolerate any behaviour** – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.

A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children. All children and young people must be treated with equal respect; **favouritism is not acceptable**.

Under no circumstances should Redemptorists or their co-workers give **alcohol, tobacco or drugs** to children or young people. In addition, alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by Redemptorists or their co-workers who are supervising or working with children and young people. Gifts, such as candy, chocolate or toys, should not be given to children, except in groups where no favouritism or enticement is even remotely possible.

Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.

RESPECT FOR PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

The **physical integrity** of children and young people must be respected at all times.

Redemptorists and their co-workers must not engage in **inappropriate physical contact** of any kind – including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling, etc.) – any sexual contact is, of course, completely ruled out. This should not prevent appropriate contact (which may vary from culture to culture) in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (for example, where a child is distressed).

RESPECT FOR PRIVACY

The **right to privacy** of children and young people must be respected at all times. Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets.

Photographs or videos of children or young people can only be taken with their parents' permission and the consent of the young people. Photos or videos must never be taken while the young people are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility)

Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be done for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

MEETINGS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

If the pastoral care of a child or young person necessitates **meeting alone** with them, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability (for example, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open).

Both the **length and number of meetings** should be limited.

Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the child in danger (for example, if a child discloses abuse by a parent).

Visits to the home or private living quarters/bedrooms of Redemptorists and their co-workers should be prohibited, nor should meetings be conducted in such locations. However, this does not include visits to, or meetings in, communal areas of Redemptorist monasteries/centres such as the refectory (dining room) or common room.

When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, **professional boundaries** must be observed at all times. A record of the visit should be kept and the Superior informed that it has taken place.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITY

Children with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so **sensitivity and clear communication** are particularly important.

Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs, this should be done with the **full understanding and consent of parents or guardians**. In particular, the administration of any medication, except in an emergency, should not be undertaken without the express permission of parents or guardians.

In carrying out such personal care tasks, **sensitivity must be shown** to the child and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.

Any care task of a personal nature which a child or young person can do for themselves **should not be undertaken by a Redemptorist or Redemptorist co-worker**.

In an **emergency situation** where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

VULNERABLE CHILDREN

(See paragraph above on more vulnerable children)

Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.

Redemptorists and their co-workers should be aware that vulnerable children may be more **likely than other children to be bullied** or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.

It is particularly important that **vulnerable children should be carefully listened to**, in recognition of the fact that they may

have difficulty in expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

RECOMMENDED SUPERVISION RATIO'S

For all activities involving children, the following recommended ratios of staff to children should be observed:

AGE	STAFF : CHILD RATIO
0 -2 years	1 member of staff to 3 children
2 – 3 years	1 member of staff to 4 children
3 – 7 years	1 member of staff to 8 children (6 children for outdoor activity)
8 years and over	2 members of staff (preferably 1 of each gender) for up to 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity)
	There should be one additional staff member for every 10 extra children.
Children with disabilities	The ratio of staff and volunteers to children with disabilities is dependent on the needs of the individual children.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Should a child or young person display challenging or disruptive behaviour, it should be dealt with by more than one worker.

A record should be made describing what happened, the circumstances of the incident, who was involved, whether any injury was sustained, or property damaged, and how the situation was resolved.

In particular situations, further measures may need to be taken and parents or guardians may need to be involved.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Adequate and appropriate supervision must be provided for all events and activities organised for children and young people (see above for recommended ratios of adults to young people).

Arrangements and procedures for leaving activities or centres should be explicit, so that group leaders are aware at all times of the whereabouts of each young person.

In places such as changing areas, toilets and showers, separate provision should be made for boys and girls. There should be adequate and gender-appropriate supervision of boys and girls in such areas.

A clear policy should be agreed with parents and guardians on the **taking of photographs** and the **making of video recordings** of children or young people involved in Church-related activities or events. This should also cover the **generation of computer images**. In addition, the policy should address the question of where and for what purpose photographs and images may be displayed.

There should be regular health and safety reviews of facilities, procedures and practices.

USE OF COMPUTERS

Where a computer is used by more than one person, each person should be obliged to have a unique username and password, or where this is not possible, to maintain a signed record of the date, time and duration of their use of the computer.

Where a computer in a Redemptorist community can be accessed by children or young people, it should be accessible only through the use of a username and password unique to each child. Where this is not possible, the children or young people should be obliged to provide a signed record of the date, time and duration of their use of the computer.

Computers which can be accessed by children or young people should always have appropriate filtering software (e.g. Cybersitter, N2H2, Netnanny, Surfwatch, Wisechoice).²⁰

All publicly available computers in Redemptorist communities must be monitored regularly to ensure that they are being used in accordance with the stated policy. Where there is any suspicion or doubt, a person with specialist knowledge of computer hardware and software should be asked to assess the purposes for which the computer has been used.

20 Up to date information about internet filtering software can be found at <http://internet-filter.review.toptenreviews.com/> In addition, the BBC Webwise site has an interactive Safety course for young people which can be accessed at www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/course/safety/childsafety/childsafety.shtml

PILGRIMAGES AND OTHER TRIPS AWAY FROM HOME

All trips, including day trips, overnight stays and holidays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to adult supervision, transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.

Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance. A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents and guardians.

There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.

Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away.

It is inappropriate for Redemptorists or their co-workers to consume alcohol or tobacco or take any mood-altering substance while supervising or working with children and young people.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.

The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip. Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.

Where young people are sleeping in communal dormitories or large rooms, the supervising adults should sleep in an adjacent room. Under no circumstances should an adult share a bedroom with a young person.

If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances.

**QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE ASKED ARE
(cfr. p. 71)**

- y How do I find myself reacting to these stories of abuse within the church?
- y How do I feel called upon to respond to the child abuse scandal?
- y How will I hold myself and my confreres accountable for child abuse prevention and appropriate reaction if it occurs?
- y A brief exegesis can be given to help them think about the questions before the session. A fuller exegesis of the gospel passage can be given afterward.

7. MATURITY

WHAT THE CHURCH SEEKS THROUGH ITS CONSECRATED PERSONS

With permission of: Formation Consultation Services, FCS
Maturity: What the Church Seeks ... Reflective Living and Conversation
newsletter #5 2011 June

When examining the Church's formation documents and those of various Institutes of consecrated men and women, the terms maturity and mature prominently appear. From a human formation perspective, human maturity produces and nurtures a fragrant, sweet ripeness. Maturity manifests a vibrant but measured self-potency that emerges through the discipline of reflective self-observation. Joy, fulfillment, and peace are the unfolding characteristics of mature persons irrespective of their life situations and the challenges that life presents.

On April 4, 2011, Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, presented *The Truth Will Make You Free: A Personal Journey* at Marquette University International Dialogue on the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal. In his presentation, he noted the following: "We have to learn that the truth has a power to set free which half-truths do not have. The first condition for restorative justice is that all parties are willing to tell the truth and to take ownership of the truth, even when the truth is unpleasant. As I said at a recent liturgy of lament in Dublin: 'The truth will set us free, but not in a simplistic way. The truth hurts. The truth cleanses not like smooth designer soap but like a fire that burns and hurts and lances.'"

In reference to our article here on maturity, Archbishop Martin reminds consecrated persons of their need and requirement to seek truth, i.e., the world's truth and one's personal truth, even though searching for the truth hurts at times. This parallels *Vita Consecrata*. Its formation exhortation notes the importance of learn[ing] how to discover the signs of God in earthly realities (VC 68). Maturity begins with seeking, uncovering, and disclosing truth and reality. There is a strong connection between the ability to seek one's truth and one's level of maturity. Maturity vitalizes the capacity to search for the truth. Human experience clearly identifies the correlation between the capacity to authentically see, hear, feel, and experience truth and the level of an individual's maturity. Without a significant level of maturity (which has little to do with intelligence level), truth becomes illusive and reality becomes distorted.

Maturity depends on the discipline of reflective self-observation, of being an astute, inquisitive observer of self. This discipline nurtures self-awareness. When curious self-observation focuses on the truth of how we have been shaped and formed and on the reality of how we continue to be impacted by past events and recent situations, we grow in self-awareness. We increase our self-awareness concerning how our body, thoughts, emotions, and heart are swayed and moved by various people, events, and things throughout ordinary, everyday life. The present condition of our body, thoughts, emotions, and heart sets the parameters and directs our behavior. They motivate and animate our behavior. When reflective self-observation is lacking, immaturity lingers. Inadequate self-observation gives way to limited self-awareness, an ignorance of the truth, and a misperception of reality.

Toward the conclusion of Archbishop Martin's presentation, he adds the following: "The question has to be asked as to what was going on in the seminaries.... There is a real need of a formation

regime for future priests which will more effectively foster the development of rounded human beings, not just in the area of human sexuality but in overall mature behaviour and relationships. Being a priest today requires a high level of human and spiritual maturity to be able to face the challenge of truly serving the community.... What we need are future priests who truly understand the call of Jesus as a call to total self giving....”

From FCS’s perspective, Archbishop Martin is calling for potent, comprehensive human formation processes within seminary, within initial formation. When this type of human formation is integrated into initial formation, these processes make a substantive difference in a consecrated person’s life. Comprehensive and systematic human formation processes develop self-observation and self-awareness that unfold in maturational fullness.

One of the basic situations for dioceses and religious institutes has been a combination of fearing human formation and not knowing how to go about integrating comprehensive and systematic human formation processes. Sound human formation processes promote reflective self-observation and self-awareness that grow into maturational fullness. Also, the academic calendar and educational requirements have interfered with human formation. This is the primary reason FCS recommends that the bulk of human formation be accomplished prior to seminary or novitiate. How can a consecrated person be about “total self giving” when the consecrated person lacks disciplined self-observation, self-awareness, and significant human maturity?

Authentic consecrated life relies on and therefore necessitates a crucial level of maturity or human maturational ripeness. The maturational process, however, does not unfold in an accidental, casual manner. Human maturity needs conscious and intentional

cultivation—human formation processes designed to enhance maturity. This is especially needed during the early stages of initial formation (vocational discernment and Postulancy/pre-seminary). When human maturity relies on chance, relegated to a subtext and an afterthought, and when ignorance and fear inhibit the institution and integration of concrete, helpful human formation processes within initial formation, the outcome for the Church will continue to yield many immature consecrated persons working in the ministerial vineyard. Be advised that the same immaturity and life stressors that produced the sexual abuse scandal within the Church will continue to show their ugly face in other ways.

Immaturity promotes poor decision-making and leads to problematic behavior. Selfabsorption, rigidity, dismissiveness, harshness, disrespect, secretiveness, indifference, negativity, overly judgmental and critical assessments, closed-heartedness, addictive behaviors, and lack of self-observation and self-awareness generate difficulties and troubles. Immaturity also shows itself in behaviors such as indecisiveness, intolerance, impatience, low self-esteem, distrust, and procrastination, as well as being unappreciative, guarded, uncharitable, inhospitable, aggressive, defensive, unfocused, impulsive, unrealistic, competitive, insistent, avoidant, controlling, selfdoubting, and blaming. All of these behaviors cause a level of pain and suffering for the individual consecrated person and others. The immature person disrupts and stresses community, adds immeasurable headaches and work for leadership, and leaves the people of God confused and hungry.

On one level, the origin of the problematic behavior and the situations that occurred in a person's past are irrelevant. During the first phases of initial formation (and this is FCS's experience and stance), the cultivation of human maturity needs to be emphasized and prioritized. As candidates progress through vocational discernment

and Postulancy/pre-seminary, candidates need to demonstrate significant growth in self-observation and self-awareness. Candidates need to show the capacity to grow, evolve, ripen, and mature. When candidates do not, this is a flashing red light of warning for formators, communities, dioceses, institutes, and the Church.

When helpful and effective human formation processes are prioritized and integrated within the beginning stages of initial formation, candidates, directors, and communities will clearly see whether candidates have the capacity to grow and mature. When a candidate in initial formation does not have the potential for whatever reason, it is unfair to the person, to the director, to the institute/diocese, and to the Church to encourage continued movement forward. A significant level of openness, reflective self-observation, self-awareness, and maturity needs to be demonstrated prior to the stage of novitiate or seminary.

Consecrated persons can be functionally mature and competent in many skills applicable, necessary, and helpful for ministry. Functional competency, however, does not necessarily evolve into genuine human maturity and should not be mistaken for human maturity. Our achievements have little to do with human maturity. Just look around our local communities and parishes that contain “highly successful” individuals. Though professionally trained and accomplished, many lack authentic human maturity. They lack, for example, self-awareness, warmth, empathy, humility, graciousness, appreciation, gentleness, and/or self-observation.

- y How might we describe human maturity and its characteristics for consecrated persons?
- y How might we go about cultivating human maturity, especially within initial formation?

Describing Human Maturity

Human maturity encompasses many dimensions. From her consecrated persons, the Church calls for more than helpful functionality, more than developing gifts and talents, more than success in ministry and administration, more than the capacity to direct and accomplish, more than doing all the right things, and more than academic success. The Gospels and the Church's interest focus on the humanizing aspects of relational interaction. This is similar to Archbishop Martin's earlier remarks and *Vita Consecrata's* exhortation. The Church desires that consecrated persons attend to matters within the ministerial vineyard in a human heart interactions way, rather than in a functional, mechanical, automatic, robotic, unreflective way. For the Church, human maturity is much more than emotional-psychological-social maturity or the capacity to be concretely helpful in a ministerial way.

Take the example of listening to someone. When we just tolerate and put in the time with a pleasant look and nod, not really wanting to be there and be present to that person, the interaction and experience lack human warmth and humanizing connection. The experience does not open the heart or touch the heart of the other. An opportunity to humanize, touch, open, appreciate, empathize, and be compassionate has been missed. In turn, a shortage of appreciativeness and graciousness limits the human potential of the interaction. The experience may be functionally helpful, but it misses the quality of a warm and open human heart.

Ultimately, from a human formation perspective, the Church desires that consecrated persons attend to their individual heart. Through text and art within the Church and the documents and images of various institutes of consecrated women and men, the use and image of the human heart remains rich and energizing. We often talk about the human heart. The open, sweet ripeness and fragrance

of the human heart makes a significant difference between just being helpful and successful in a functional manner and being genuinely human in an openhearted manner. Openheartedness infuses any movement and interaction such that it results in an experience of being deeply and profoundly touched. It has the capacity to convert and transform the individual self and other(s) in the situation.

Many people care for needs within the ministerial vineyard, for the needs of community members. Motivation, perseverance, and skill may yield a successful harvest, and successful harvests are important. But what is the cost—the wear and tear on the individual laborer and on those around the laborer in the vineyard? When human maturity lacks heart, openheartedness, and cultivating dispositions of awe and appreciation, gentleness and humility, reflective selfawareness, self-observation, consciousness, and presence to the here and now, functional maturity rather than heart maturity is being observed. Being functionally mature (trained and experienced) and being emotionally mature are important and necessary. However, the Church and its people need more than functional and emotional maturity from consecrated persons who attend to the vineyard. We seek heart maturity from our consecrated persons.

Essential Characteristics of Human Heart Maturity

What are some essential characteristics of human heart maturity? These characteristics would include, but also go beyond, emotional-psychological-social maturity.

People with heart maturity possess an overall awareness of and appreciation for who they are with their strengths and gifts, limits and underdeveloped aspects, unique personality, and particular way of making sense of the world. They experience a contentment and peacefulness with who they are and who they are not.

As reflective self-observers, they learn from their mistakes. In this way, they develop and integrate new learning. They are flexible and adaptable, open to new ideas and possibilities as the world and life shift and change around them with the passage of time and evolving events.

They acknowledge their potency and have tamed their ego striving desires and behaviors.

Aware of their emotions and how their emotions activate their thoughts and behaviors, they are capable of expressing their emotions in helpful, constructive ways.

Having appreciation for their importance and place in the world, they reflect on the experiences of the day. They possess active curiosity concerning how the people, events, and things of the day have impacted them and how they are called to adapt and adjust accordingly.

Knowing that they are important to others, they reflect on how they impact others. They are responsive to changing their behaviors and intentions accordingly. They readily seek reconciliation and forgiveness. They note and appreciate their importance and helpfulness to others and have placed their self-importance into perspective, placing everything against the bigger backdrop of life and reality.

Acknowledging, accepting, and satisfied with their place in the world, they have quieted their desires and appetites. They are at peace with themselves and their life situation.

They demonstrate grace within their bodies.

With a mature heart, they delight in relationships. They desire to be involved in healthy, mutually responsible relationships. They communicate well with concreteness, saying yes when they mean yes, and saying no when the mean no. They actively listen to others with empathy, interest, care, and compassion.

They are trustworthy, dependable, and consistent. They take responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. They do not blame others for their mistakes. Consecrated persons with heart maturity exhibit independence and value interdependence. They structure their day, delight in their creativity and productivity, and possess self-confidence that energizes and propels them forward as they assume the tasks of the day. They recognize and celebrate their contributions to community, to the ministerial vineyard, and to the overall Church.

When adversity strikes, they manage the emerging situation and create opportunities from the ashes. They are resilient. They place situations and life into their proper context and perspective.

Consecrated persons with maturity of heart are conscious, self-observant, self-aware, and live in the present moment, the here and now. They experience awe and appreciation for themselves and for others. They are truly capable of hearing the whisperings of the Spirit and discerning the signs of the times.

Cultivating Heart Maturity

With the above briefly outlining and describing the basics of heart maturity, the following summarizes from FCS's perspective some concrete, practical, and effective ways to go about cultivating heart maturity, particularly during the beginning stages of initial formation.

Maturity of heart unfolds through the increasing capacity to be **reflective** and **selfobserving**. This leads to openness and receptivity to changing, growing, evolving, ripening, maturing. It unfolds in the capacity to view, interpret, and understand life and the world through a multidimensional perspective. FCS refers to this human formation process as **Reflective Living**.

(For a brief description of *Reflective Living*, you can check our home page for an introduction. A more comprehensive description and conversation on Reflective Living can be found in our *Articles on Formation* section, #023 *Reflective Living*.)

Daily **journaling** as a process of reflective self-observation is a most valuable tool that cultivates self-awareness and heart maturity. The benefits and growth potential derived from journaling's discipline is immeasurable. Numerous books and workshops have assisted many with making journaling a central focus of their daily reflection on life.

(Again, for more details about journaling, you can review material on our website, such as the article, *Reflecting on Daily Life via Journaling*, from our January, 2011 newsletter in the *Newsletter Articles* section. Also, material can be found in our *Articles on Formation* section, #013 *Journal Writing*. Finally, you can request from us Chapter One from our *Structured Autobiography*, which also contains a section detailing two specific options for going about journaling as a process to enhance heart maturity.)

Recognizing, naming, and articulating feelings in healthy, constructive, responsible ways are essential to cultivating human heart maturity. Developing an accessible feeling vocabulary is essential for anyone interested in and motivated to grow in this area. It requires valuing the power and influence of feelings. It involves focusing on identifying feelings throughout the day. There are many books and articles on increasing one's recognition of feelings.

FCS has a brief “Feeling List” that many participants have found helpful as an aid to increasing their feelings awareness. If you are interested in the list, just email us and request the “Feeling List.” Regardless of whether we are aware of our feelings, they profoundly influence the way we think and thus behave, the way we take up situations with people, events, and things, and the way we interpret and make sense of how the world impacts us today. Immaturity, the inability to identify and articulate feelings, is a significant obstacle to heart maturity

The **influence of our past**, i.e., the significant people, events, and things that have impacted us in helpful and unhelpful ways, has substantially molded our experience along the immaturity–maturity scale. To assist our participants with making sense of and appreciating who they are, how they came to be who they are, and who the significant shapers of their unique selves today are, FCS has crafted and continues to hone its ***Structured Autobiography***. It is a 181-page manual that methodically and comprehensively assists participants with uncovering and discovering important past experiences and their profound helpful and unhelpful impact.

Our *Structured Autobiography* is the foundation for all of FCS’s human formation processes. It is the cornerstone of our *Rediscovering the Sabbath* sabbatical program. We also train formators in the use of our *Structured Autobiography*. They then use it with their persons-in-formation. This is part of our *Human Formation–Formator Formation Process*.

If you are interested in receiving Chapters One and Two of our *Structured Autobiography*, just email us with your request. Chapter One provides an overview of how to take up the *Structured Autobiography*. Chapter Two, *Family’s Impact on the Formation of the Symbolic Human Heart*, explores areas that require attention

in order to appreciate and make sense of our unfolding heart story. The full 181-page manual is available only to FCS participants and to formators who have been trained by FCS to use the *Structured Autobiography* with their persons-in-information.

Another way of viewing, understanding, and cultivating heart maturity is through the **phenomenon of addictions**. We all have addictions. Under the larger umbrella, addictions could be, in part, defined as behaviors that alter one's mood. The more common addictions are alcohol and drugs, cigarettes and nicotine, gambling, overeating and under-eating, and sexual addictions (having sex with self or others to compensate for feeling bored, worn out, overworked, disconnected from others, lonely, inadequate, unfulfilled). There are also work-oriented addictions (working to make one's self feel better, working to cover undesirable feelings).

In addition, there are more subtle addictions. For example, excessive exercising or excessiveness in just about anything, such as cleaning, ordering, and reorganizing, is addictive, mood altering behavior. There are addictions to power, control, influence, and being held in high esteem. There is also an addiction to being abusive and violent in order to feel in control and powerful. Using soft drinks with large amounts of sugar or caffeine or caffeine addiction through coffee alters a person. Behaviors such as voyeurism, living in one's head, excessive preoccupation with Internet viewing and use, and overuse of television to numb the self are addictive behaviors. Overachieving, perfectionism, unhelpful codependent relationships, risky behaviors, and self-mutilation can be addictive and mood altering as well.

The field of addiction talks about the momentary high a person experiences when participating in the addictive behavior. Mood altering experiences are fleeting respites from unpleasant feelings

and experiences. The reflective question to ask ourselves is, “What are my **unique addictions and how do they alter my mood?**” When we want to understand and appreciate who we are and why we engage in certain behaviors, investigating our addictions will lead to increased self-awareness and heart maturity.

Conclusion

Heart maturity unfolds from cultivating a reflective lifestyle that results in a keen capacity to self-observe. People with heart maturity possess a curiosity concerning how people, events, and things of the past (distant past and recent past) have impacted and continue to impact their heart. Furthermore, by cultivating a wide-eyed, open consciousness that sees through the fog, hears the subtle resonance, and feels deeply, this quality of heart maturity unfolds the capacity to experience the whisperings of the Spirit and to discern the signs of the times. With these qualities of human heart maturity, a consecrated person lives out daily life in a peace-filled manner. Joy, fulfillment, and peace are the unfolding characteristics of the mature person.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ON THE TEXT

The best way of reaping some benefit from this text is through Journaling. Following are some aids to keeping a journal.

Becoming a mature person requires exercising the “discipline of reflective self-observation” what do these words mean to you?

Have you started the journey of finding your own personal truth? ie. What makes you angry, what makes you happy, what

makes you sad, what gives you energy, what you spend time on, your desires, your fantasies etc. Spend some quality time, 30 minutes a day reflecting on the above; write down what comes to you during this reflection. Try to name the feelings which come to you during this reflection.

What is the quality of your listening? Do you really hear what the other is saying or are you formulating a defense, response or follow-up question while the person is still speaking?

Whenever you enter into relationship with another person whose needs are being met?

Do you appreciate your strengths and gifts, your limits and underdeveloped aspects?

Are you aware of your worldview, that is, your prejudices, your political position,, religious beliefs as a Catholic, your views on women, cultures other than your own, ethnicities, religions, etc.? Take some time to write out your thoughts on the above mentioned areas. Don't write what you think is the right thing to say. Write what you really feel; the thoughts which come to your mind when you confront any one of these issues.

Take some time to reflect on how your behavior (active and passive) impact others. Do you get pleasure out of exerting your power over others or do you seek to change your behavior so as to be more approachable, hospitable and welcoming to others?

What are your unique addictions and how do they alter your mood? See page 112 in the article for a list of common addictions. Add cell phone use, and social networking to the list.

8. BOUNDARIES IN FORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 It may seem strange to some formators and those in formation to consider boundaries in the context of formation. Boundaries sound like an imposition of restrictions, laws and guidelines which seem contrary to the more fluid relationship one wishes to create in formation; an accompaniment of a person on a journey of discernment and growth. Somehow speaking of boundaries casts this highly personal experience into something too rigid and formal.

1.2 This article will argue the opposite stating that in fact it is the adherence to boundaries that creates the space for the Holy Spirit to work and for true growth in faith and understanding of religious life to take place.

1.3 We believe the Holy Spirit is the first formator and that the call and response to a vocation is a unique journey. Formators are asked to help discern the characteristics of this call and assist this divine call take root in the formandi. The majority of formators in doing their job treat those in formation respectfully, compassionately and responsibly.

They would not, for the most part, knowingly compromise their role. However, we know that even with the best of intentions formators can become overly involved with the formandi, show favouritism, and at times betray the trust that the community has given them. We know that difficult situations between formators and the formandi can arise and the relationship become problematic.

1.4 The same could be said of those in formation and their relationships with one another and with their formators. There are situations where relationships can become unhealthy and guidelines may prove helpful rather than restrictive. In the past there were often grim warnings about “particular friendships” which reflected the concerns that formators had about exclusive relationships and unhealthy dependencies. Today we might not use the same terminology but the caution still remains.

1.5 Maintaining healthy boundaries between formators and the formandi is essential to their growth and development. Maintaining healthy emotional and personal boundaries among those in formation and with their formators is a core value for a house of formation to provide optimum growth humanly, intellectually and spiritually.

1.6 The following attempts to discuss the nature of boundaries in formation. It is hoped that these reflections will encourage formators to reflect on their relationships with the formandi and allow those in formation to look at the ways they relate to one another and their directors.

2. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FORMATORS AND FORMANDI

2.1 Is a formator a professional?

One of the difficulties in formation is to consider the role of the formator as a professional role. Somehow the word “professional” seems to take away from the personal nature of the accompaniment that takes place in formation. Yet, when considered from the superior’s, the community’s or a lay person’s point of view a formator is not in a friendship relationship with those in formation but in a very specialized relationship.

This formal relationship is called professional because it is a specific role of authority that is given by the community to an individual that asks him to make a judgement on another. To accomplish his role he is given power and authority over the formandi. As such there is a certain manner of acting that is expected of him by the community and by the Church. The formator is accountable to the community at large for his actions. As well, most formators are called by the community to take on this role because they have a background and experience that make them suitable for this role within the community or are in the process of acquiring the necessary training.

2.2 What are the main elements of this professional relationship?

A professional relationship is defined as one whose purpose is to meet the needs of another through assistance or service. A personal relationship is one whose purpose is to meet the personal needs of both people involved.

The formator is called to this ministry to serve the needs of the community and the discernment and growth of those in formation. The needs of those in formation are primary. There is a fiduciary responsibility for those in formation, i.e. the community gives those in formation in trust to the formator. It is up to the formator to maintain an appropriate emotional distance from those in his charge. This, however, should not exclude warmth, caring, concern and sensitivity.

There should be, nevertheless, a healthy distance between the formator and those in formation. This is called a boundary. It is the formator's responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries that create an environment of trust and respect suitable for formation. The question a formator must ask is: "Can I work with this person?" not "Do I favour this person?"

A personal relationship, on the other hand, has traits quite different from a professional one. In a personal relationship there is a sense of mutuality, a sense that both people can state their needs and negotiate how these will be met. There is also equality in power. Boundaries are a mutual responsibility and emotional closeness is possible. Self-disclosure is meant to increase the closeness of the relationship and meet their personal needs.

2.3 Boundaries in formation

Boundaries are the framework within which formation occurs. Boundaries make it clear what is expected and set the parameters for a relationship between the formator and those in formation. Boundaries make the house of formation a safe place for those in formation. Professional boundaries typically spell out when and where face-to-face colloquia will take place, the length of time for sessions, the limits of confidentiality, the kinds of self-disclosure

expected, and the general tone of the relationship that conveys respect, trust and safety. Boundaries also determine what kinds of touch, what kind of closeness, self-disclosure or expression of emotion are appropriate.

2.4 Who determines the boundaries in a professional relationship?

In the relationship of a formator with those in formation there is always an imbalance of power. The formator has the duty to act in the best interest of all those in formation. He is ultimately responsible for managing boundary issues and is therefore accountable if an infringement or a breach occurs. There are times when a person in formation may initiate behaviour or make requests that could lead to an infringement or a breach of boundaries. It is always up to the formator to draw the line.

2.5 Boundary crossing and boundary violations

The primary concern is establishing what is in the best interests of those in formation. Except for behaviours of a sexual nature, boundaries are often not clear cut matters of right and wrong. Rather, they are dependent on many factors with the best interests of those in formation as the primary focus.

Boundaries can be crossed when behaviours deviate from what is usually acceptable behaviour. In the formation process, there is a scale or range of involvement on the part of the formator. At one end of the scale there is under-involvement in the process while at the other end there is over-involvement in the lives of those in formation. At each end of the scale or range one can have a crossing of boundaries. A formator who does not have regular colloquia, who accepts too many outside assignments, who keeps

his door closed and rarely interacts with the formandi is creating a boundary that isolates and hinders formation. A formator who shows favouritism, gives gifts, tries to make the formandi into friends is moving towards being over-involved with the particular individual or individuals.

Neither under-involvement nor over-involvement is necessarily a blatant violation of boundaries but highlights how there are grey zones with boundaries. A boundary crossing is often subtle and initially “innocent” while a boundary violation is a more deliberate and inappropriate violation of the relationship of a formator and those in formation.

2.6 Transference and counter transference

I join others in saying that a lack of adequate training (for formators) in dealing with transference and counter transference leads to boundary crossings and violations. Many formators are not conscious of how these two dynamics play a key role in counseling relationships. Transference is the feelings, wishes, hopes, or dreams of the individual in formation which are placed upon authority figures and projected onto the formator. Counter transference is feelings, wishes, dreams within the formator projected onto the person in formation. Some warning signs of counter transference include: excessive preoccupation with a candidate or someone in formation; an overly eager looking forward to seeing the individual; rearranging one’s schedule to see him; being secretive about your feelings; sexual fantasies.

2.7 Unacceptable behaviours

There are behaviours that are always unacceptable because they are harmful to meeting the needs of those in formation. Although sexual abuse is the most obvious, there is also emotional and verbal

abuse; physical abuse; insensitivity to cultural differences and theological views.

There are verbal and non-verbal behaviours that may be perceived to demonstrate disrespect for the person in formation. These may include but are not limited to sarcasm; retaliation; intimidation, manipulation; teasing or taunting; disrespect for a person's family and culture; swearing; inappropriate tone of voice that indicates impatience and intolerance.

As a formator we are pulled into multiple roles. Violations occur when in these various roles – e.g. confrere, mentor, leader, advisor, counselor, spiritual guide, we use those in formation to meet our own needs rather than focusing on the other's needs. A violation is more likely to occur when the formator sees the person in formation as a cushion for his feelings of loneliness or isolation. Those in formation are not friends with whom formators can share their struggles and feelings.

Boundary violations usually involve a process of repeated infractions rather than a single event. These usually move from more subtle infractions to obvious violations.

Key violations from subtle to obvious include: (1) changing the rules for an individual – longer colloquia, informal places for prolonged conversation of an intimate nature, etc.; (2) favouritism where an individual in formation is given special status – becomes the object of small gifts and favours, excessive praise, or an encounter for inappropriate sharing of issues about the community or personal issues; (3) inappropriate jokes or stories, excessive curiosity about the sexual life of the candidates; and (4) sexual innuendo and or sexual contact of any nature.

2.8 Boundary violations and sexual abuse

Sexual contact by a formator is a serious violation of trust and a flagrant abuse of power and can never be minimized or ignored. This cannot be brushed aside as a momentary lapse. It is always a misuse of one's position as a formator with potentially devastating effects on those in formation and the formation program.

Sexual contact can take many different forms. The ad hoc committee on sexual misconduct which met in Rome in 2005 spoke not only of "physical contact or direct abuse, but (also) indirect abuse." This could involve the sharing of pornographic materials, lewd exposure, or harassment about someone's suspect sexual orientation, verbal suggestions or requests. These behaviours are almost always marked by secrecy.

2.9 Warning signs and questions to consider

There may be times when a formator is particularly vulnerable, stressed and lonely. He may feel isolated from his confreres who are peers and begin to lean more and more on those in formation to meet his emotional needs.

Violations of boundaries are usually preceded by a number of warning signs that suggest that the formator is starting to treat an individual in formation differently. These may include sharing personal problems, offering to take a person in formation out to a movie, dinner, etc., activities that are not given to all.

From the stand point of a formator, it is important to consider the following questions:

- y Is this in the best interests of the person in formation?

- y Whose needs are being served by this action?
- y Will it affect the way I relate to him when I need to make a judgement about his continuation in formation?
- y How would my behaviour be viewed by other formators?
- y How do I feel about talking to a colleague about this?
- y Am I treating this person differently?
- y Does this person mean something “special” to me?
- y Am I protecting this person?
- y Am I taking advantage of this person?
- y Am I spending too much time with this person outside of formal, structured settings?
- y Do my actions benefit me rather than the person in formation?
- y Am I comfortable documenting my behaviours?

2.10 Prevention and Avoidance

We are all too aware that we are vulnerable as individuals and subject to temptation and sin. We are much more vulnerable to boundary violations when:

- y There is a lack of intimacy or poor social relationships in one’s life;
- y One is feeling lonely, isolated or experiencing loss;

- y One is lacking in self-awareness, acceptance of one's sexuality and feelings, or lacks integration of sexual feelings;
- y One is having a high degree of stress or burnout;
- y One is using alcohol inappropriately;
- y One too easily dismisses real concerns raised by others about inappropriate behaviours or comments;
- y One has a history of poor boundaries.

If you don't feel comfortable say so. If you have any doubts seek supervision and keep good notes.

2.11 What to do when things go wrong

If a formator has any doubts about boundary crossings he should seek outside advice; write down what is happening and share this with a colleague, supervisor or immediate superior; pray to be honest.

If there has been a serious boundary violation the following policy statement was agreed upon during the Sexual Misconduct Meeting in Rome in 2005: "The provincial authorities must always refer credible allegations to the general government. The general government, together with provincial authorities, share responsibility for the consequent procedure and action.

"Such allegations, if they are credible should be regarded as "reserved matter", that is, they cannot be handled within the ambient of provincial authority on its own. This reservation applies whether the person abused is a minor or above the age of minority.

In the case when the person is a minor, the directives of the Church come into force and the case, if credible, must be referred to the CDF. (This reflects the recent change in Vatican policy). However even in these cases the provincial superior must immediately apply the correct procedures as outlined in the (Vice)Provincial protocol.

3. RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THOSE IN FORMATION

3.1 Emotional and personal boundaries

Healthy relationships among those in formation depend on a clearly defined sense of self. Without a clear understanding of who we are, what makes us unique; it is difficult to engage in building community that is functional and a safe environment, one which enhances personal growth and discernment. When a person has a clear idea of their own identity, they are not threatened by sharing, intimacy or conflict in community. They can appreciate others in formation as unique individuals with their own gifts and weaknesses.

For younger and sometimes not so young people in formation coming to a clear sense of self is itself a goal of the formation process. Coming to a healthy self-worth and self-concept is enhanced by personal boundaries. **Personal boundaries are limits we set in relationships that protect ourselves from being manipulated or enmeshed with emotionally needy others.**

The family of origin has a significant impact on each person. For example, certain families may have more difficulty with setting personal boundaries than others. The modeling from their family of origin could have easily relegated as secondary such basic needs as those for safety, security, respect and comfort. As a result, in

their adult life these individuals in formation have difficulties with relationships. They can swing between feeling overwhelmed in relationships to feeling isolated and unloved. They may easily want to share in order to manipulate others into loving them or because there is no real understanding as to what is appropriate or inappropriate in self-disclosure. On the other hand they may be so withdrawn that no one can enter into their world. They wall themselves off protecting themselves from their emotional selves – e.g. frightened by any signs of closeness or friendship.

3.2 Emotional enmeshment

Some individuals entering formation may have learned co-dependent behaviour patterns. Other individuals look to their peers or authority figures to define themselves. These gain their sense of self-worth from their “friends,” in this case one or two people in formation or virtual friends through social networking. The structure of these relationships is not that of equals but more of master to slave, adult to child. These are unhealthy relationships marked by excessive neediness, what were called “particular friendship”, and dependence on the other for a sense of self-worth, respect and emotional security.

Sometimes both parties in a relationship depend on one another for self-worth. These relationships can become so emotionally entangled that they exclude everyone else in the community from their orbit. They are self-absorbed and completely infatuated with one another.

The discernment that needs to be made is whether these actions are grounds for dismissal or invitations for growth. One approach would be to invite these persons to self-reflection. Can they come to see who they are as unique individuals and realise their value and worth as a person independent of the significant persons in their

life? Can they move into accepting themselves for who they really are, with weaknesses and strengths? If they are honest, open and willing to engage with the formators about their situation there is promise. These experiences can actually become an opportunity for self-discovery and a chance to grow in personal maturity. The first step is to acknowledge to oneself the unhealthy relationship and work with the formator on developing healthy interdependent relationships that have healthy boundaries.

3.3 Personal Boundaries

There are many practical implications when speaking of personal boundaries. I would like to highlight a few:

First of all is the need for privacy and a space to call one's own. It is important that formators and fellow men in formation respect privacy. For example, knocking on the door and not entering another's room without an invitation. One could also argue that a peer in formation should not enter the room or private space of another. Whenever there is occasion for meeting this should be in a public space or a room designated for interviews. This protects both parties from potential boundary violations.

Second, a candidate or junior professed confrere should always feel free to speak about himself, his family of origin, or matters of a personal nature.

Third, there must be clear policies regarding use of the internet and social networking such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. by those in formation; this will help address the problem of inappropriate use of such media. The use of internet for viewing pornography has become the new addiction for many in religious life and for the clergy.

A final suggestion for potential boundary violations is the use of inappropriate crude, street language, the use of “sexual jokes” and sexual innuendo which often reflect a lack of sexual integration.

4. CONCLUSION

In closing, this presentation has attempted to demonstrate that healthy boundaries allow trust and security to develop in relationships because they provide a reliable framework in which we can build community and friendships. These boundaries are important both for formators and those who are in formation to create a safe, secure space of trust and respect where the Holy Spirit can truly direct the process of discernment and the growth of one’s vocation.

QUESTIONS TO HELP REFLECTION ON BOUNDARIES IN FORMATION

1. Presents: Is it OK to give your formandi gifts or to receive gifts from them? What occasions would be appropriate or inappropriate? Does the monetary value make a difference? Is there a difference between giving a present to one student versus giving a present to every student?

2. Lending and Borrowing: is it OK to lend money or things to formandi? What about borrowing money or things from formandi?

3. Socializing: what type of socializing is appropriate? What is off limits? A community reflection on these two questions in the context of the culture would be very helpful.

4. Self-Disclosure: what is appropriate to reveal about yourself, your personal life and circumstances to the formandi as a group or to an individual?

5. Office décor: can some artwork be offensive to some: pictures, sculptures, etc.

6. Use of language: Is it appropriate for a formator to use certain language with some formandi and not with others? In our present context of interprovincial formation, jokes which stereotype a particular culture may be funny for some but insulting to others.

7. Meeting time and place: what are appropriate places to meet formandi? What places are always inappropriate? Is it OK to see formandi on your day-off, during off-hours?



9. PROPER USE OF INTERNET AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN FORMATION AND REDEMPTORIST LIFE

Introduction

The Internet and new communication technologies are wonderful tools that let us communicate more easily, learn, be informed, and even be entertained. Although it has been in use in the general public for almost 25 years now, the Internet is rather a new technology that evolves and changes rapidly. With the arrival of every new technology, comes a time of adaptation for the whole of humanity, and especially for those living religious life. We may react by banning new technologies like it has been done in the past. But they have a way of catching up with us even if we try to ignore them. We can think of the arrival of the printing press in the 15th century and more recently radio and television. There was a time not so long ago when we considered that confreres should not have a computer or a cell phone for their personal use. Now a computer, and for most of us a cellphone, is a necessity for our work.

As Redemptorist formators, it is important to take the time to reflect on our way of using these technologies and prepare tools to help our candidates (in initial formation) and confreres (through ongoing formation) to use them in a healthy manner. The Internet and new communication technologies open new ways for our mission and introduce new tools to help us bring the Gospel to the poor and the abandoned, but they also opens doors to addictions, time-consuming and sometimes dangerous misuse. In this article, we will explore a few ways that we can use in our formation

process to help our young and not so young confreres to use the Internet and communication devices in a way that is in tune with the Gospel. It is by no means a final document: it wishes to be the igniter of discussions about the Internet, social medias and communication devices in our religious life. Some examples might seem inappropriate in your culture. We have tried to stay in the “middle of the road” which means that some formators will find this document too open; in other Units it will seem to lack severity.

As we talk with formation directors in different parts of the Congregation, it becomes obvious that the use of the Internet throughout the different stages of formations is a concern for them. In some places, young men come to us with the habit of using texting very frequently for example. Smartphones can be heard announcing a message during prayer time or meal times, and for some men it is just too difficult not to look and respond immediately. Others will spend countless hours online, chatting or surfing until very late in the night. It is very difficult to ban the Internet altogether for it is now present everywhere and it is a valuable tool for our candidates and students now and for the future. The best way is to try to impart a healthy use of the Internet and communication devices. In initial formation, the example of the formators and how they use the Internet, cellphones and smart portable devices will be itself a way to teach candidates a healthy way to use these medias.

Role of the Secretariat for Formation

It is important that the Secretariat for Formation of each Unit (Region, Vice-Province, Province) reflect on the proper use of the Internet and communication devices for each stage of formation. This article desires to bring suggestions of what can be done, but the context is so different across the Congregation and ways of communications change so rapidly. It is important to keep an

ongoing reflection on this subject. There are many interesting documents and Websites that can help the reflection. A good place to start are two documents from the **Pontifical Council for Social Communications**: “*The Church and the Internet*” and “*Ethics in Internet*” (2002) available on the **Vatican.va Website**.

Also, the Secretariat should research, be aware and communicate what can happen if confreres, candidates and students make ill-use of the Internet during their stay in our houses. In some countries, illegal use of the Internet must be declared to the authorities when it is discovered. Failing to do so could bring serious consequences to the formator and to the Congregation. Certain activities online are legal in some countries, but illegal in others. In recent years we have aimed for more international formation communities. It would be a good idea that the Secretariat discuss ways of sharing this information at the beginning of each formation level.

The emphasis should always be on education and responsibility of each individual to realize what is a good way to use these new technologies, what are their positive aspects, what are the pitfalls and how we can help each other to avoid them.

At some level of formation (like the Novitiate) in some Units, it may be a good idea to restrict in a formative way the use of the Internet and smartphones. For example, during certain periods (Lent, Advent or community night for example) a table could be placed at the entrance of the chapel, of the refectory, and maybe even the common room so people can leave their phones as a way to allow men to realize the important activity that will take place on the other side of the door. The use of computers in a common room could be the suggested practice. The formation community could come together at the beginning of the formation period and agree on a community covenant in regards to Internet use.

Let us not think that we can really restrict the use of the Internet to the younger generations: they find ever new ways of going around the checks and restrictions that we put up to help them. A better way is probably to bring them to realize that being a good religious and a good priest is to have healthy practices in all realms of our lives. The Internet is one of them and can be a good indicator of the seriousness of a candidate. Let us also not forget that after initial formation, there will probably not be any restrictions on the use of communications devices. A student who has always been refrained from using these devices may not be prepared to face the freedom he suddenly encounters as he enters fulltime ministry.

What is acceptable use of the Internet and smart communication devices should also be clearly established by the Secretariat for Formation and explained to candidates and confreres in formation. It is important that from the very beginning of formation candidates are aware of these guidelines and of the consequences arising from failure to comply with the guidelines. Some young people might come to us ignoring for example that consuming pornography is not in line with the Gospel. What happens if we learn that a candidate or a confrere participates in obscure chat-rooms? What about child pornography, communicating with minors, living a second life online, cyber-bullying, grooming, hacking, tagging without permission, flaming, sexting, and impersonation?

These are all situations that may arise for which formators must be prepared, and for which we must educate candidates and students. Improper use of the Internet by a single person can bring legal trouble and disgrace to the formation community, to the Unit and possibly to the whole Congregation. Let us not be paranoid, but also not ignorant of the consequences of not preparing our formators and our formations houses.

What can we do?

If you had the opportunity to search online or elsewhere for suggestions on what can be done to help seminarians and religious in formation in their use of the Internet and portable devices, you probably found that there is not much out there. Here are some suggestions that could be applicable in your formation settings. This is not an exhaustive list. As the Internet evolves, we will encounter new challenges. New technologies will also be developed to help and protect.

Restrictions

This is very often the first thing that comes to mind. It might not be applicable in every culture and setting. It should also not be a definitive solution but a way to educate rather than to protect or control. The real world does not restrict the use of the Internet and smart devices. The young men that are in our formation houses must be prepared to live balanced lives in society that they stay with us or leave at some point of their formation: that will include the use of the Internet and communication devices.

At some stages of formation, it could be a good idea to require that all computers stay in a common computer room and be used only there. If computers are used by many people, each person should have a personal account and password on a specific computer or on the local network. If problems arise (abuse, misuse or illegal use of the Internet) this method will prevent all confreres from being suspects and will protect the network from unwanted users: visitors, employees, passer-by on the street who try to log on to the Wi-Fi network...

Routers communicating to the Internet can be programed to shut down the link at some times of the day or night that it be cable

or wireless (Wi-Fi). Wi-Fi zones can be carefully planned so that Internet is available, but not in critical places like the chapel or the refectory. Why not start prayer or meetings by reminding people to shut down their phones or leave them outside the room? How about inviting candidates to stay with their portable phone plan, but ask their cellphone company to disconnect the Internet plan for a month or even the duration of the Postulate or the Novitiate?

Software can be installed on individual computers or on a server that feeds the Internet to the building restricting access to certain sites or services (web surfing, chatting, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, video feeds, etc.). The limitation can be programmed for certain hours of the day. Certain Christian sites on the Web offer excellent solutions for churches and Christian businesses that can be used in our formation context. Sites that help parents protect their children from harm that can come from the Internet are also good places to look for solutions.

Usage monitoring

Monitoring the use of the Internet can be a very challenging task. You would be surprised of the information that transits through our networks. Good software exists out there to help sort out the information, but it can be a confusing task. It can still be a good way to discourage improper use of the Internet. If they know that someone could see what they have been doing online can discourage some men. But remember that there are many ways of going around network monitoring. Many IT (Information Technology) companies now offer encrypted private links with their servers so that all activity is invisible to a local monitoring service.

Remember also that monitoring Internet use can raise privacy issues in some countries. Make sure that if you decide to use this

kind of tool that people know that it is in place. Having all occupants of the house sign a release form could be a good way to protect against eventual legal consequences.

Establishing an Internet and Communication device usage policy

Many businesses, diocesan services, parishes... establish a Usage Policy. Just type “Church Internet usage policy” in a search engine and you will get good examples. As mentioned above, the Secretariat for formation in its reflection on the subject can write such a policy. Having the participants in the formation house write or modify an existing policy together could be a good way to reflect on the subject. It is amazing what young people come up with when we ask them to reflect on how we can live in the footsteps of Christ in our day and age. They might come up with much more severe “sacrifices” than we, as formators, would have ventured to suggest.

Healthy and fraternal community life

Many online addictions occur in the same way people turn to drugs and alcohol. Healthy relationships are at the center of fighting addictions. Having a challenging, healthy, balanced and fraternal community life can do miracles against temptations. A good communal and personal prayer life is also something that must be put forth as an important tool to lead a balanced life and know what is true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the real world and online. Our formation communities usually are supportive and healthy. Young men come to us with the desire to live in community and to lead prayerful lives, so they are ready to give their all. But as men start working fulltime in ministry, some communities lose that balance. How can we prepare our young confreres and our non-formation communities for this?

Accountability partners

This way can When Jesus sent out his disciples to preach the Gospel, he ordered them two by two (Luke 10:1). The support of an accountability partner is very important in our religious life. That it be a spiritual counselor, a friend, a brother or a confrere, this kind of partnership lived in transparency can be a great support for young or older confreres. Many men in society struggle with all kinds of temptations that they know giving into them will lead far away from the will of God. Many times they are alone and have no one to help them victoriously face these temptations. Why not ask our candidates and young confreres to find someone, a partner (a fellow-religious, lay person – married or single), with whom they feel comfortable, a kind of “soul-friend”, that results in a relationship wherein there is mutual support and accountability?

The partners must be comfortable enough to be able to talk about their temptations and their “falls”, about their sexuality, their relationships with other men and with women, their prayer life, and their struggles in life. In our day and age that person does not have to be close geographically. Rather, what is important is that such a person is easily contactable and available when the need arises. There is no doubt that the promotion of such friendships would enhance the quality of all vocations, whether they be to the religious life or other life-calls.

* * *

We live in a fascinating world. No other generation has had so many tools to help in better living, in healing, in communicating and in bringing the Good News to the world. At the same time, probably no other generation has had to deal with as many temptations and pitfalls in their walk with Christ. With time we will develop new tools and learn to live better with the new technologies that are arising all around us.

Let us pray that the Lord will give us wisdom and strength in our own lives as to be good witnesses to those we minister in formation. Let us pray also that he will give us the wisdom to guide our young candidates and confreres to balanced and healthy lives in the world and in the virtual worlds we create.

The Proper Use of the Internet

Workshop Questions

After reading the included text on the Proper Use of the Internet, here are some questions that could be discussed as a community. The first set of questions is for a general discussion. The second set is designed to challenge each member in their usage of the Internet, related technologies and activities. Often people see us in a very different way than we see ourselves. If everyone is comfortable in letting others reflect back what they see, we can help each other grow.

Set 1 – General discussion

Each confrere is invited to answer these questions personally and share the answers in a general discussion.

1. How do I feel the Internet (browsing, messaging, social medias, etc.) is affecting my life and the life of the local community POSITIVELY with regards to:
 - a. Fraternal life?
 - b. Prayer life?
 - c. The Mission?
 - d. Other aspects of my/our lives?

2. How do I feel the Internet (browsing, messaging, social medias, etc.) is affecting my life and the life of the local community **NEGATIVELY** with regards to:

- a. Fraternal life?
- b. Prayer life?
- c. The Mission?
- d. Other aspects of my/our lives?

3. What are the steps we can take as individuals and as a community to help everyone have healthy habits dealing with communication technologies?

* * * *

Set 2 – Challenge questions for discussion in small group or local community

Each confrere is invited to answer these questions personally and share the answers in a general discussion.

1. What are the challenges I face personally using the Internet and Social Medias?
2. What are the challenges I see my confreres having using the Internet and Social Medias?
3. What are the challenges that arise in our group or local community with regards to the Internet?
4. What solutions would you have to help the community and each member to have healthy habits in the use of the Internet and related technologies?

Other questions

For personal reflection or other group discussions.

- 1- How is the Internet, the use of Communication Technologies and Social Medias **HELPING** my ...
 - Prayer life?
 - Ministry?
 - Relationship with confreres, family and friends?
 - Relationship with people I minister to?

- 2- How is the Internet, the use of Communication Technologies and Social Medias **INDERING** my ...
 - Prayer life?
 - Ministry?
 - Relationship with confreres, family and friends?
 - Relationship with people I minister to?

- 3- How much time do I spend daily ...
 - Browsing?
 - Texting/E-Mailing?
 - On the phone?
 - At the computer?
 - Watching videos/television
 - Praying?
 - Studying?
 - Ministering?
 - Doing sports or exercising?
 - Relating with confreres?
 - Relating with friends and family?
 - Relating with people I minister to?
 - Relaxing or sleeping?

- 4- How do the previous answers compare? Are you satisfied with the results?
- 5- What can you concretely do if one of the domains in question #3 is disappointing to you?
- 6- What can your local community concretely do to support you in healthy habits regarding the Internet and Communication Technologies?
- 7- What can you personally do to help other confreres in your local community to have healthy habits regarding the Internet and Communication Technologies?
- 8- Would you dare ask a confrere or a friend you trust to answer the above question #3 for you and see if his/her perception of you is the same?

10. REDEMPTORIST FORMATION AND MORAL THEOLOGY

The primary objective of this essay is to explore why moral theology should be an important element in the initial and ongoing formation of every Redemptorist. We will begin with a discussion of what precisely is meant by “Redemptorist formation” and by “moral theology”. We will consider how different understandings of moral theology will lead to different ways of understanding its relevance for formation. We will then examine the main reasons why moral theology should be included in the initial formation process and should be a part of ongoing formation. In particular, we will study concrete ways in which this can happen in the lives of candidates, professed members and formators.

What is Redemptorist formation?

Words ending in “-ation” (e.g. crystallization, industrialization, modernization, globalization, liberalization, secularization) are usually used to refer to processes rather than to material objects. They refer to processes in which an element is transformed through contact with one or more other elements. In chemistry, for instance, such processes are often deliberately provoked by substances, so called catalysts, which help bring about the desired effects. When we talk of “form-*ation*”, then, we are thinking of a process in which some kind of change takes place, not in chemical substances but in human beings. It is important to note at the outset that the human person is not normally a passive element to which something is

done by others. The human person is primarily a subject who does something to himself (herself) through living in relationship with others. Both initial and ongoing formation should therefore be primarily understood as self-formation. This said, two important qualifications must be mentioned. Formation does not happen in isolation but in community, and, secondly, it does not happen according to the arbitrary judgment of the candidate but under the guidance and supervision of competent authorities. What we mean by a “formation system”, therefore, is a way of organizing life among candidates which allows them to form themselves, in community with other candidates, under the guidance of formators.

What has been said so far could be said not only of other religious families but also, at least in some sense, of many other educative and formative processes, such as those undergone by teachers, doctors, lawyers etc. An important question arises at this point as to the specific nature of Redemptorist formation. The specific character of Redemptorist formation finds expression in many different ways (history, the Constitutions and Statutes, pastoral practices, interest in moral theology etc.), but none of these is more important than the actual formative interaction with members of the Institute. Redemptorists are formed primarily in and through contact with other Redemptorists, by sharing with them the life of prayer, of community and of mission.

A key idea here is that of identification. The fact that someone enters a formation system means that there has already been some rudimentary form of identification between him and the Congregation. This may well take the simple form of an awareness such as “I think I could be happy living as these people live and doing what they do”. Or it might be a much more clearly articulated aspiration to live a certain kind of life. Whatever about the beginnings, the whole process of formation can be understood

as one in which someone who arrives with his own emerging identity (personal, familial, social, religious) gradually assimilates the Redemptorist identity. To make final profession is to declare before God, before the Congregation and before the world, that I intend to live my life according to a certain pattern or model of Christian life which we call being a Redemptorist. Later we will attempt to examine more closely just what this means in concrete terms.

At this point it is necessary to introduce another major qualification. If a candidate can be formed as a teacher, a doctor or a lawyer without necessarily growing in the practice of prayer, this is not the case with Redemptorists or with other Religious. In this sense the statement made above about human beings forming themselves needs another crucial qualification. In so far as Redemptorist formation is a process which involves faith in God, it must be acknowledged that ultimately the primary agent of formation is God. One of the great mysteries of Christian life in general and of religious life in particular is that the presence and activity of the Spirit of God, most of all in communal and private prayer, does not reduce but rather increases the freedom of the individual who is forming himself, or rather, is allowing himself to be formed by the Spirit of God. This fact helps us understand the importance of “spirituality”, properly understood, in formation.

If this, in synthesis, is what we mean by “Redemptorist Formation”, what precisely do we mean by “Moral Theology”? (The following explanation is taken from the author’s contribution to Sean Wales – Dennis Billy eds., *Lexicon of Redemptorist Spirituality*, Rome 2011). It is useful to notice at the outset that the term “moral theology” is made up of a noun and an adjective, indicating that we are dealing here with a certain *type* of theology. Such a literal understanding of the term does not, however,

correspond to the way in which it is generally used: when people talk about moral theology they often understand a discipline which is primarily about moral problems. To understand why this is so and appreciate the difficulties it entails, we must turn in the first instance to history. (p.185)

It is an accepted historical fact that “moral theology” emerges as a distinct theological discipline after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). This does not of course mean that theologians did not think about morality before Trent, but rather that they did so within disciplines such as canon law, theology and various forms of what we today would call “spirituality”, all of these being closely tied to Sacred Scripture. In particular, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), while he did not think of moral theology as a distinct discipline, did dedicate a whole section of his colossal *Summa Theologiae* explicitly to moral questions of all kinds. All of this has one very important consequence: when we do moral theology today we must take into account both the period since the birth of the new discipline and the much longer period of christian history before this. All of this said, the emergence of moral theology after the Council of Trent is a significant event, an event which helps to understand the historical and ecclesiastical context in which St. Alphonsus emerged as a moral theologian.

The new discipline had a very specific task: to train seminarians for the practice of the sacraments, especially that of penance, as prescribed by Trent. The didactical method most suited to this end was that of the study of specific, illustrative examples of sin and moral dilemma (casuistry). This approach, which had certainly some pragmatic, didactical value, was greatly exposed to the risk of reducing morality to a question of law, commandment and sin at the expense of a whole range of other considerations (creation, redemption, grace, prayer, virtue etc.) which had been present in

theology and spirituality before the emergence of the new discipline. Having been introduced into a rigid form of moral theology dominated by casuistry, which at first sight suited his training as a lawyer, one of the great achievements of St. Alphonsus is to have set moral questions in a broader theological context shaped by the doctrine of the Redemption. Without attempting to recount here the complex and controversial history of the relationship between St. Alphonsus and moral theology, we may attempt to capture some key features of the influence of Alphonsus on this discipline as it is practiced today.

It is vital to remember that St. Alphonsus wrote his *Theologia Moralis* in the first place for students and priests of the Redemptorist Congregation. We must always think of Alphonsus the founder, the confessor, the preacher and the bishop as one and the same person as Alphonsus the moral theologian. This is the best way to appreciate the way in which his theology is “earthed” in pastoral realities and is intended to promote good pastoral practice. It is generally accepted that in terms of explicit, theoretical explanation and speculation, Alphonsus follows the masters of his day, in a very obvious way Busenbaum. His contribution to moral theology is therefore not to be sought in terms of theoretical innovation but rather in the way he conceived of moral theology in the service of compassionate pastoral practice. At the core of this ministry is the proclamation of the Good News of plentiful Redemption, which is of course the very purpose of the Redemptorist Congregation.

To be faithful to the inspiration of our founder, then, we must certainly be fully committed to the proclamation of the Gospel to the poor. We must accompany this, however, with something of the same passion which Alphonsus had for moral theology. Normally this will not take the form of a full-time academic commitment, but it should involve a serious effort to follow the way in which key

moral themes such as justice, sexuality and marriage, bioethics etc. are treated in moral theology today. The moral theology learned in initial and ongoing formation is aimed at enhancing the work of the Redemptorist as he pursues his particular pastoral mission. Any tendency to dismiss moral theology as outdated constitutes a lack of fidelity to our founder. In this sense moral theology is a constitutive part of the mission of the Congregation.

In the centuries since St. Alphonsus and in the Redemptorist world today, there has been in general a reasonable degree of fidelity to this tradition. In Redemptorist seminaries and libraries a certain accent has often been laid on moral theology. A mile-stone in this history occurred in the mid-20th century when the then Fr. General, Buijs, decided to found the Alphonsian Academy in Rome.

Among many illustrious figures associated with the Academy, the best known is certainly Fr. Bernhard Häring who incarnated the best of the Alphonsian spirit: a profound conviction concerning the redemptive presence of Christ; a genuine openness to contemporary culture and other disciplines; prudent and compassionate pastoral practice and, last but not least, an amazing dedication to writing moral theology.

Bernhard Häring died in 1998. His spirit, and with it the spirit of St. Alphonsus, lives on in all those confreres who dedicate themselves to the pastoral care of the poor and abandoned. It takes a particular form in those who dedicate their lives as Redemptorists to teaching and writing moral theology.

Given the complexities of the globalized world and the rapidly changing configuration of Redemptorist presence, it would seem to be a vitally important time for the transmission of this tradition to younger generations and to broader cultural contexts.

Moral Theology in Redemptorist Formation

Having thus examined the terms “Redemptorist Formation” and “Moral Theology”, we may now take up the question as to why moral theology should be an important element in Redemptorist formation. The most obvious and immediate reason why this is so is that moral theology was so important to St. Alphonsus. If one were to take moral theology out of the life of Alphonsus, one would be left with another figure, admirable for many other reasons, but just not recognisable as St. Alphonsus. Given that Alphonsus was not born a moral theologian, how did he become one? The reasons can of course only be found in the story of why he became a Redemptorist, indeed why he created the possibility for all of us to become Redemptorists. Passionate pastoral concern for the most deprived is the reason why Alphonsus founded the Congregation. It is important not to forget, however, that he developed this passion over time and that in the earlier part of his life he studied and practiced civil and canon law as they were taught in Naples of the early 1700s. If the heart of Alphonsus was moved by active compassion at the sight of helpless, sick, poor and unhappy people, his mind had already been formed to think in a juridical way. It is only by keeping both these dimensions in mind that we can understand how he came to be a moral theologian.

We cannot repeat here the long, complicated story of the way in which Alphonsus found himself in the midst of a bitter debate among moral theologians of his time. The key point is that at a certain point, despite or maybe because of his juridical formation, Alphonsus took a position in this debate. This position is characterized by a refusal of two extreme positions, one of which was excessively strict and the other excessively permissive (for the time). A non-technical term which is often used to capture the approach of Alphonsus is that of “pastoral benignity” in the sense

of a kindly, understanding, healing approach to the penitent which avoids harsh, legalistic, judgmental attitudes.

There is another reason why every Redemptorist should take moral theology seriously. It concerns what happened to St. Alphonsus after his death as regards moral theology. The fact is that he was eventually declared Doctor of the Church (1871) and Patron of Moral Theologians and Confessors (1950) (For details, see the English section of Alfonso V. Amarante - Antonio Marazzo, *Santo, Dottore e Patrono*, Naples 2009). Again this is a long and complicated story which we need not go into here, what we must realize is that the position he took came to be very popular and formally recognised by Church authorities. This is a very important fact in the history of the Congregation and should be a source of interest and pride to every member.

If these are the main reasons why moral theology should be of particular interest to Redemptorists in formation (i.e. all Redemptorists!), we may now consider some of the practical consequences of this for initial formation, for ongoing formation and for the task of formators.

Moral Theology in Initial Formation

An important part of any initial Redemptorist formation process is the study of our history. It will be clear from what has been said above about moral theology that it is unrealistic to expect candidates to understand the abstract arguments involved in this discipline at the time of Alphonsus. Something similar may also be said of much moral theology in our own time. It would therefore seem most useful to introduce new members to moral theology as a key part of the missionary response of the Congregation to the pastoral needs of people. This story can be told and appreciated

without presuming a knowledge of the more abstract levels of moral theology.

An interesting and important point in formation is reached when Redemptorist students themselves begin to study moral theology. This is an invaluable moment in formation. Given the complexity of the arguments as formulated at the time, it is probably more prudent to try to get the students interested in the pastoral/moral problems as such, without immediately trying to make the link with the actual thought and works of St. Alphonsus.

The approach of Alphonsus to pastoral practice and to moral theology is a response to a deeply perceived pastoral need. This need takes on many different forms today, but it is essentially the same need of human beings for salvation, for grace and for practical guidance in the conduct of their lives. To put this same point another way, the true follower of St. Alphonsus is not the person who repeats blindly what Alphonsus said in his time, but the person who tries to do in our time what Alphonsus did then.

This brings us a key point: the relationship between pastoral practice and moral theology. Ideally, the person in formation who is studying moral theology should also be involved in pastoral ministry. One has to be realistic here as regards initial formation.

The person in formation cannot have direct, active experience of many sides of pastoral ministry for which moral theology is important, one thinks particularly of the ministry of reconciliation. Each formation system must find ways in which the student is introduced to these ministries before he can actively practice them. In the past “case studies” were used to this end, some variation of this method may well prove useful also today. On this front, collaboration between formators and teachers of moral theology is obviously useful.

If in the past there was a very close, almost functional, link between moral theology and the sacrament of reconciliation, today this link is less central: students study moral theology not only in order to hear confessions but because moral theology, as a reflection in the light of faith on certain dimensions of human experience, can nurture and enlighten many aspects of life and ministry. If moral theology is conceived of more broadly then it also embraces the human experience of the person in formation. Through his personal experience of failure and grace, of sin and liberation, of weakness and growth the person in formation gains understanding and insight into the human condition and the workings of grace. Moral theology should help him to articulate and interpret this experience by providing terminology, explanations, theory, examples etc.

This wider and deeper understanding of moral theology has important consequences for the key theme of preaching. The process by which a candidate in the course of years of formation forms himself/is formed into an effective preacher of the Word of God is a complex, fascinating and ultimately mysterious process. Of many dimensions of this process, the one which interests us here is the role of moral theology in the formation of the preacher. Even within this limited perspective various levels need to be considered.

It is useful to distinguish between general moral theological education (as taught in courses on freedom, conscience, sin etc.) and the moral evaluation of specific moral themes (divorce, in-vitro fertilization, honesty in business etc.), remembering of course that the quality of the second is intimately tied to that of the first. What are the objectives of a general theological formation as regards preaching? This question itself might cause some surprise or reaction. It is to be feared that *de facto* many homilies and sermons reflect only vaguely what the preacher has learned in moral theology. While it is certainly true that the task of the preacher is not to

give lessons in moral theology but to preach, it is also true that he cannot preach effectively as a Redemptorist if he speaks as if moral theology did not exist. This general truth is even more clear when we come to specific moral issues, as they are sometimes taken up in mission preaching. Here the preacher has a serious responsibility to inform himself of ongoing moral theological reflection on that specific moral question.

It may be useful to add a note here on the difference between preaching morality and moralizing. To moralize is to exhort people to good behaviour, or more often to condemn repeatedly bad behaviour, without placing the moral question in context and without offering reasoned grounds why one way of behaving is better than another. To preach morality, on the other hand, is always first of all to locate human living in the context of the good news of salvation, of grace and of forgiveness, drawing out the consequences of these liberating truths for a particular moral issue. In this matter the tone of the preacher is just as important as the content of what he says.

Moral Theology in Ongoing Formation

The idea of “ongoing formation” is one which has emerged gradually in reflection on religious life in the last number of decades. In many minds it may still be understood as a sort of vague obligation to attend seminars and days of study organized in the local community or in a given Province. Such initiatives are important and it is indeed a serious responsibility on the part of confreres to participate. The problem with this view of “ongoing formation” is that it tends to be sporadic, functional (i.e. done for some concrete purpose) and information-oriented. To think and act in this way is to operate with an impoverished concept of formation. A healthier view sees formation as being about an ongoing, open, committed effort at personal and pastoral growth. While moral

theology might fit neatly into the first model of ongoing formation (e.g. study days on specific moral themes) it is often neglected as a resource for ongoing formation in a broader and deeper sense.

It may be that for psychological reasons “formation” is not the best word for this process...it may evoke memories of a period which confreres are happy to have left behind. This is sad but understandable. The very best service initial formation can do to candidates is to leave them with a healthy, motivating sense of their ongoing need to develop as persons and as ministers. Whether or not this is called “ongoing formation”, it must take on different forms than those in use in initial formation.

This will of course include the more obvious and traditional forms of renewal. Those who are in active ministry as missionaries, parish priests and so forth, need to revisit periodically the moral theology they studied as students five, ten or twenty years previously.

There is a real temptation to neglect ongoing formation in the light of the pressure of pastoral work. This is particularly the case when the memory of how moral theology was taught is not inspiring. The temptation is to assume that what one heard then is all that there is to be said about moral theology. It is the duty of the local provincial administration, and indeed that of the administration of the Congregation as a whole, to propose opportunities for this kind of reflection to the confreres.

One model recently used in the Congregation is that of a two week renewal course entitled “Moral Issues in Pastoral Ministry”. The idea of this course, organized by the Alphonsian Academy, is to provide active pastors/missioners with a review of moral theological reflection on key moral issues. Of immense value

here is the exchange between confreres in the presence of moral theologians who serve as “catalysts” in the discussion. For those with a certain number of years of pastoral experience, reflection, reading and informed discussion are just as important as direct input in the form of lectures.

As in the case of initial formation, however, it would be rather short-sighted to think of the contribution of moral theology as being limited to these practical pastoral matters. Life in ministry today exposes the Redemptorist to a whole range of personal, theological and moral questions which do not usually emerge during initial formation.

The large numbers of young priests leaving ministry in the first decade after ordination is a strong message here. Moral theology, understood in the broad sense in which we have been using the term, should be a resource for confreres both individually and collectively in facing the challenges of the contemporary world. There remains often an unfortunate tendency to think of the role of moral theology as having been exhausted when the final examinations in the matter have been completed. What is needed within the Congregation is a different culture of “on-going formation” in which moral theology can play a larger role.

Moral Theology and Formators

The role of moral theology in the work of formators is too often thought of as simply that of encouraging the candidates to develop an interest in this discipline. This is of course an important aspect of the role of the formator. If, however, we think of moral theology in broader terms, then it will emerge that this discipline should be a resource for the formator in many, often unexplored, ways.

One of the most important and responsible roles in the life of a Province or of a Congregation as a whole is that of the formator. Not unlike a parent, the person who assumes this role becomes engaged in a series of relationships which are vital for the future life of the Congregation. What is often not recognised, or only vaguely noticed, is that the process of formation is a profoundly moral matter. Moral good and moral evil are at stake in formation at a very deep level. We saw above how this is the case with the candidate. We shall now consider why it is no less the case with the formator.

Many aspects of the life and role of the formator which at first sight might seem to have little to do with moral theology upon closer reflection can be seen to be closely tied to this discipline (understood in a broad sense as reflection in the light of faith on those aspects and dimensions of human behaviour which we consider good and bad). The most obvious place to begin is with the moral life of the formator, particularly in so far as this impinges on the life of the student community. The formator, like every human being, including the students, is a vulnerable person with his own particular life-story, character, reputation etc. It is therefore to be expected that in his personal life he will be prone to error, weakness, failure and sin. The students (along with other confreres!) will of course be the first to notice and comment on any such defects. At this primary, personal level moral theology can be a very liberating, creative resource for the formator.

Through experience, reflection, prayer, study and guidance, he should be able to live with his human limitations in a serene, mature and realistic manner. This is the best possible example he can give to the students, far more effective than a formator who (ostensibly, or maybe in his own eyes only) has nothing to regret or repent.

If we move from this more personal level (which is always and everywhere inevitably present and important) to the level of the role of the formator, what is the importance of moral theology? Again, it will depend on what one understands by moral theology. One of the most difficult aspects of the formator's role is the discernment, with the help of others, of the suitability of the candidates. It is often neglected the degree to which such a discernment is also a moral decision, a decision which the formator must make in conscience. Just what "in conscience" means here might be the subject of a very long discussion. Moral theology can help all concerned (the candidate, the formator, the Provincial, the confreres) to understand just what this means. It can help them also to understand how morally reprehensible it is on the part of anyone to pass judgement on the decision of conscience of the formator. There must of course be processes by which this decision is assessed and a decision is made by the competent authorities, but this alters nothing in the respect due to the decision of the formator when conscientiously acting in his role.

The precise role of the formator in relation to the candidate will depend to some extent on the specific culture and the degree to which the formator is aware of the moral dilemmas of the candidates. There are fine lines and codes of conduct here between formators and other professional personnel (confessors, spiritual directors, counsellors, psychologists). A key question here concerns what constitutes a moral issue? Too often, on the basis of an inadequate understanding of morality on the part of both formators and candidates, moral questions are concentrated in the area of celibacy to the neglect of other key moral issues: prayer, honesty, justice, generosity, diligence. In moral theological terms there is much to be said for thinking of formation as a training, through regular practice, in virtue. This term may seem outmoded, but in so far as it means forms of behaviour which promote the overall quality

of a human life it is of ongoing value. The virtues concerned are not only those generally thought of as “moral” but embrace such fundamental dispositions as faith, hope and charity.

What the formator must try to communicate to the candidates is not simply the importance of moral theology for formation (for the reasons mentioned above) but the importance of moral theology (properly understood) for his own life, for life in community and for the mission. What is at stake is not the reputation of an academic discipline (often, at times perhaps understandably, denigrated) what is at stake is the quality of the moral and faith life of the student and of the community.

Moral theology is in the service of this just as much as in the service of the penitent on some future parish mission. Indeed the two realities are intimately related: the student will be of service to the future penitent in the degree to which he has lived and assimilated the profoundest truths of moral theology in personal and community life.

If all this is true then the formator should take his role, and the place of moral theology within this role, very seriously. The image which comes to mind is that of generativity. Like all human beings, formators are called to give life and to find the fullness of life in giving life to others. Parents know how true this is, but also how messy, imperfect and painful it can be in day to day reality. It is within the imperfect world of formation, just as it is within the imperfect world of the family, that life is passed on.

Conclusion

The above reflections are based on the conviction that “moral theology” is all too often understood by Redemptorists in excessively narrow terms. Conceived of in this reductive way, the possible contributions of this discipline to our life as a Congregation are often obscured. There is no doubt that moral theologians themselves are in part responsible for this misunderstanding and therefore they must be actively involved in rethinking the nature and contribution of the discipline. They will only be able to do so, however, if all involved, from Father General to the most recent postulant, seriously reconsider the fruitful links between formation and moral theology.

Questions for Group work or workshop

1. Please complete the following sentence in no more than 7 lines:

“For me, Redemptorist formation means.....”

2. How do you perceive the contribution of St. Alphonsus to Moral Theology?

3. Based on your experience, what ideas do you have to contribute to a more effective integration of Moral Theology and Ministry in both Initial and Ongoing Formation.



11. THE PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE IN INITIAL FORMATION

1. Meaning of The Pastoral Experience Stage

Faithful to the Alphonsian tradition, the task of formation is to help those in formation participate in the pastoral priorities of the Congregation, and of the Unit to which they belong, in an atmosphere of discernment, enabling them to be capable of continuing to explore the richness of our charism and of continuing the search for new ways to announce the good news to the poor. The pastoral dimension of our formation is one of the most important elements of preparation for our mission.

Our **General Statutes** n° 58 state that: *The pastoral orientation of the whole course of training is a distinctive feature of missionary formation, and this must be clearly in evidence. Everything relating to formation - both studies and spiritual life - must be combined with practical apostolic exercises and experience, in order that the candidates may be able to renew and increase their own faith in the mystery of salvation and so be prepared to preach the Gospel with confidence to others.*

Our **Ratio Formationis Generalis 2003** n°48 reminds us that during formation we must *provide progressive forms (appropriate to each level) of well structured, guided apostolic experience (i.e. with preparation, actualization and evaluation). The particular ratios of the (vice) Province shall indicate more concrete procedures about this for each level of formation.*

Recently, *The General Government* mandates that **THE PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE** is part of initial formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and **will be one continuous period of no less than six months**. Effective from 2016. (Decree on Initial Formation April 10th 2015).

What is the current situation regarding the Pastoral Experience Stage in the different Units of our Congregation? At this time there is no uniform policy in the Congregation regarding this phase of formation. Some Units have described this phase clearly, but other Units do not have a required or mandatory Pastoral Program in the overall Formation Program. In some units where we don't have "an official" pastoral program, there are various proposals for having pastoral experiences and regular apostolic work incorporated in the formation of the junior professed. For example, during mid-year and end-of-year breaks formandi spend an extended period of time in some form of Redemptorist apostolic work. At the end of this time they are offered the opportunity to reflect on their experience at a personal and professional level, so that they can enter into a dialogue between what they have experienced and what they have studied.

In our present context of restructuring in the Congregation, a well-defined, clear Pastoral Program during formation offers many possibilities in realizing the broader vision of a deeper personal commitment on the part of every Redemptorist to the whole Congregation and not simply to a particular Unit.

The **XXIV General Chapter** reminds us that a confrere who undertakes this Pastoral Program outside his Mother Unit, will possibly have a greater ability to understand and live the decisions of the XXIV General Chapter. For example, the "Epilogue" (n° 6)

to the *Decisions Concerning Restructuring* of the XXIV General Chapter describes the *Profile of the Redemptorist confrere shaped by this new vision*. Accordingly, n° 6.16 states: (...) *He will need to have a wider grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion. Also decision n° 6.17 will be more easily achieved. Above all, he will know that he belongs to and willingly participates in the mission of a world-wide Congregation that takes seriously the challenge of being alert to the signs of the times, and making vital apostolic decisions that respond ever anew to our call to mission.*

2. Various terms for “The Pastoral Experience Stage” used in the Congregation

- a. The Pastoral Year, (common name for most of the Units)
- b. The Pastoral Orientation Year, (Indonesian Province)
- c. The Pastoral Year Internship, The Internship, (Province of Edmonton-Toronto)
- d. The Insertion Year,
- e. The Immersion Year for Junior professed, (Province of Cebu)
- f. The Regency, (Units in India)
- g. The Apostolic Year, (Ipoh – Singapore) and so on.

Sometimes this specific period of pastoral experience is named according to a specific program which is followed during this time, for example, MICE [Missionary Immersion and Community Experience] (in Ireland).

3. Objectives of Pastoral Experience Stage

In relation to the Pastoral Experience Stage, the **Ratio Formationis Generalis** 2003, n° 48 states: *These should be experiences that help candidates broaden their capacity: to assume responsibility, to adapt themselves to the circumstances in which they find themselves, something that requires flexibility and courage in times of difficulty, but also strong convictions and identification with the apostolic project, to maintain good personal relationships with the different people they meet.*

So, the Pastoral Experience Stage is intended to help the formandi concentrate on the development of pastoral skills in an intensive way under the guidance of a trained supervisor. This experience is central to Redemptorist formation and many Units insist that all formandi participate in it. This kind of pastoral experience should help prepare formandi for future pastoral ministry.

The specific purpose of this Program should also aim to accompany the confrere in formation and help him to consolidate his sense of community and co-responsibility in different settings. The basic understanding here is that we are dealing with a person who has reached a level of development at which he is able to assume responsibility for the Mission of the Congregation and has interiorized his own values so as to be self-motivated in the spiritual, psychological and social dimensions of his life.

During this stage of formation, there should be an intensification of pastoral involvement in the ministry that the confrere is being exposed to. The Pastoral Experience Stage should help him to grow in his ability to take on leadership roles, to work as a member of a pastoral team and to a greater awareness of his own talents and limitations. If necessary, the Program should provide any special training that the confrere may need to equip himself with the necessary skills to carry out the Pastoral Priorities of the Unit.

Confreres undergoing this stage of formation should be helped to integrate themselves into the life, work, and ministry of the community to which they assigned. This would include an appreciation of the older confreres and an ability to understand their concerns.

In many cases today, our younger confreres attend academic institutions which are not controlled or influenced by the Congregation. For this reason, it is essential that every Pastoral Program within the overall Formation Program of the Unit(s) should indicate the additional courses to be undertaken when our students are attending non-Redemptorist academic institution. Needless to say, for candidates for the priesthood all academic requirements demanded by the Church must be satisfactorily completed.

Involvement in the life of the Local Church must be part of the experience of our formandi, so that they will be aware of the various pastoral priorities and activities of the dioceses in which they will function. In drawing up a Pastoral Experience Program for our formandi, it is important that this is taken into account. Likewise, the Formation Program of all Units in the Congregation should also incorporate, highlight, and prepare formandi in the importance of collaborating with the laity.

As in any program, it is important to remember that the goals of this program must be achievable, measurable and challenging.

4. Objectives of the Pastoral Experience Stage during Initial Formation

A confrere in formation undertaking a prolonged period of pastoral experience during the course of initial formation should be guided by a number of objectives which will facilitate the following:

- y personal growth in responding to the call of God according to the charism and ideas of the Congregation;
- y coming to know the concrete pastoral works of the Congregation and enabling the confrere see his future tasks and duties;
- y becoming sure of his vocation;
- y knowing the pastoral work of the Congregation in the local Church and its concrete situation;
- y giving the confrere the opportunity to get to know the confreres and vice-versa. This enhances living in community and working as a team in a pastoral context;
- y exposure to active collaboration with our lay partners and associates;
- y spiritual growth that reflects that the confrere undertaking the Pastoral Program is a Religious. The endeavors of the confrere in this area are assisted by a spiritual director.

Areas that suggest themselves as goals include: Personal Growth; Prayer; Leisure; Reading and Study; the use of money, the responsible use of the Internet, Lifestyle; the development of Ministerial Skills; Community Living and so on.

It is also important that regular periods of rest, reflection and prayer should be provided during the course of the Program.

All of the above should result in a healthy integration of the three essential elements/dimensions of Redemptorist life: Mission, Community and Dedication to Christ the Redeemer.

5. When should the Pastoral Experience Stage of formation take place and for how long?

Ratio Formationis Generalis n° 48 suggests that: *It is highly recommended that candidates, prior to final profession, have a well-planned supervised one-year pastoral experience.* This recommendation is for all those in formation, both those preparing for priesthood and those desiring to be brothers.

Currently, the practice is different across the Congregation. However, recently the General Government has mandated that the Pastoral Experience Stage of initial formation should be undertaken prior to the taking of Perpetual Vows: *The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows* (Decree on Initial Formation April 10th 2015). Therefore, it could take place sometime between the second and third year of theology or after the third year of theology; immediately before perpetual vows.

The same mandate states that this stage of formation *will be one continuous period of no less than six months* (Decree on Initial Formation April 10th 2015). It is essential that this period of time offered for pastoral experience takes place within a Congregation setting and is properly supervised. This stage of formation may be prolonged for one reason or another by the Major Superior on the recommendation of the Program Supervisor and/or Formator concerned or on request by the formandi himself. However, care should be taken to avoid the unnecessary prolonging of the period of initial formation.

6. Locations: Where are the best places for the Pastoral Experience Stage?

Normally pastoral experiences should be undertaken in the context of our missions, parishes, special Redemptorist activities in the Unit or abroad. In other words, confreres in formation undertaking pastoral experience for formation purposes are assigned either to the foreign missions or to a missionary situation at home.

The pastoral challenges of our time demand a program for our formandi which facilitates wider missionary discernment and that provides an in-depth experience of these challenges. The Conference – as a new structure in our Congregation - provides us with a locus that facilitates such discernment and offers more opportunities for greater exposure to today's missionary challenges, in the process countering the tendency towards provincialism while still taking local needs seriously. The Conference provides a locus for collaboration in the areas of apostolic priorities, new missionary initiatives and the establishment of interprovincial communities. It is important that initial formation should endeavor to reflect the international character of the Congregation. It should help prompt the formandi to widen their sense of belonging to the whole Redemptorist family. It should stimulate in them an availability for mission which goes beyond their original Unit.

The pastoral experience stage of formation provides an opportunity for greater exposure to the mission of the Congregation. For this reason, preference should be given to the pastoral experience stage of formation being undertaken in a Unit other than the Mother-Unit and in an interprovincial community. The new structure of Conference in the Congregation could facilitate this more easily.

Every opportunity to learn languages that will be useful both in their ministry and also in their life within the Congregation should be encouraged.

7. Accompaniment

The formation director is the person responsible for the formandi and this is true also during the times when the confreres in formation are outside the specified houses of formation for different reasons.

During the pastoral experience stage of formation the formation director guides the confrere in formulating realistic yet challenging goals related to the important areas of that confrere's life. The formation director will write to those concerned (Major Superior of the Unit as well as the Major Superior of the host Unit as well as the Local Superior) setting out the terms of the appointment, providing a profile of the confrere concerned and stipulating clearly the expectations of the Program, in terms of community life, growth in faith, personal development and pastoral/missionary experience. He will also clearly state the dates on which the pastoral experience stage begins and ends.

It is essential that a member of the local community to which the confrere in formation is assigned for this experience, is appointed as mentor/supervisor. Before the period of pastoral experience begins, the formation director will meet with the mentor/supervisor and the junior confrere to work out the concrete expectations, goals and objectives of the program for the person concerned. There will also be a meeting with the local Redemptorist community to discuss the Program, its goals, and the implications for the local community.

The mentor /supervisor will meet more formally at least once a month with the confrere under his supervision. The mentor/supervisor will help him integrate his faith, work, community life, prayer and leisure into the life of the apostolic community to which

he is assigned. He also helps the candidate to evaluate his ministry, his ability to work as a member of a team, and his readiness for perpetual vows. Throughout the time of the pastoral experience the mentor/supervisor and the formation director will be in regular contact. The mentor/supervisor can also call on others to assist in the task of mentoring and supervising

While the Program is the direct responsibility of the formator, others will play important roles in the realization of the Program, including, the parish priest/mission coordinator of the team to which the confrere is assigned, the professors, spiritual director, and the members of the local community. The success of the Program depends very much on their cooperation.

8. Evaluation

Two or three times during the Pastoral Experience Stage there should be a review which offers the confrere concerned the opportunity to reflect on his experience and to receive feedback from those involved with him.

At the end of the Program, the supervisor is expected to provide the formation director with a written evaluation. Guide questions for these evaluations will be provided by the formation director.

Members of the local faith community in which the confrere is ministering should also be called on to participate in evaluating the confrere's readiness for ministry. And also any reports from those among whom and with whom the candidate has ministered.

Where possible and advisable, some form of peer evaluation should also be taken into account. Together with these reports, the written evaluation by the candidate himself (including reflection on his growth in all aspects of his life) will be of great value.

12. PERSONAL PLAN OF LIFE

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS

Gospel

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple. (The New American Bible Luke 14: 28-33)

Ratio Formationis n. 105

To stimulate the creativity and initiative of the confreres and at the same time move them to realize a new personal synthesis (personal project of life).

THE COMMUNITY PROJECT AND PERSONAL PROJECT

The community project and personal project attempt to illuminate (shed light on) two distinct but complementary dimensions of the person-in-relation. We the Redemptorist missionaries, though individuals, belong to a religious congregation. As is clearly stated in Constitution number 2 *“In carrying out its mission in the Church the congregation unites members who live together and form one missionary body. These dedicate themselves to God by profession and so devote themselves to their mission as a living unit, each contributing through the ministry that belongs to him.”* (Const. 2)

The social, cultural and religious reality in which we live today, invites us more and more each day to form solid and mature persons in communion with others. Here we are not speaking of opposing but complementary projects. The more mature the people who form the community, the more enriched will the community project be and the greater the fraternity among the men, the more authentic will the personal project be. As a general rule, it must be emphasized from the beginning that the personal project must be prepared taking into account the obligations of the community project.

The community project as well as the personal project must take into consideration the priorities and obligations outlined in other wider community projects namely the Region, (Vice) Province, Conference, and Church. As Redemptorist missionaries, the best community and personal project is to live authentically our Constitutions and Statutes, our Redemptorist Charism. *Strong in faith, rejoicing in hope, burning with charity, on fire with zeal in humility of heart and persevering in prayer, Redemptorists as apostolic men and genuine disciples of Saint Alphonsus follow*

Christ the Redeemer with hearts full of joy; denying themselves and always ready to undertake what is demanding, they share in the mystery of Christ and proclaim it in Gospel simplicity of life and language, that they may bring to people plentiful redemption. (Const. 20)

WHY A PERSONAL PLAN OF LIFE?

In recent years, one of the challenges which the consecrated life has had to confront has been the reinvention of new processes for the revitalization its life and mission, given that one after another of the more traditional ways has undergone crisis. It is clear that without a concrete process it is not possible to advance a credible life. In the creative search for new methods there have appeared, among others, the personal and communal plans of life. The twenty second Redemptorist General Chapter held in 1997 in decision number 3 decreed that all communities must prepare a Plan for Community Life.

The most important reason for any plan, personal or communal, cannot be other than the aspiration to walk in truth, to take seriously one's own life, and the desire to live according to one's true identity. It must, therefore, be rooted in one's personal liberty or it will amount to nothing. A personal plan of life cannot be imposed from outside. Its motivation must be based in the desire of each individual and each community to walk in Spirit and in truth.

Intentional living like this means that individuals and groups want to take seriously their idea of truth, their most intimate impulses, their most authentic attitudes and choices. The idea of a plan, most especially a personal one, demonstrates a willingness of the person to know themselves, to accept themselves, and to discern the depths of their own heart: Who am I? What are my

strengths and weaknesses? How do I see myself? On what have I based my life? What is it that I truly desire? What is my image of God? What are the traps which, consciously or unconsciously, my self-absorption entrenches itself? Whenever a person puts at stakes his own life, both self-serving egotism and slavish submission to authority are doomed to failure.

For its part, contemporary culture, with its enormous power to manipulate, forces on us an ever widening definition of our identity that is at once scattered, de-centered, and permanently unsettled.

A personal plan of life is a process of discernment in the Spirit, that seeks, ultimately, to place one's personal freedom before the Lord asking, What is it that you want me to do? For this reason a plan for Christian life is lacking if we do not stop once in awhile and ask ourselves, What am I doing with my life? The personal plan of life is an invitation to get at the truth of one's self which comes from a desire to live authentically. *Search me, O God, and know my heart...see if my way is crooked and lead me in the way of old* (NAB Psalm 139: 23-24).

The Personal Plan of Life from a Christian perspective must be a plan based on the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The principal reference must be the path followed by Jesus as presented in the Gospels. (Beatitudes Mt.5:1-12)

The Personal Plan of Life reminds us that Christian maturity is really only achieved when the need for self actualization is transformed into an ardent desire to know and do the will of the Father, when it is transformed into a passion for the Reign of God. This becomes possible when discernment takes place in the Spirit. *"God of my fathers, Lord of mercy...give me Wisdom, the attendant at your throne...who understands what is pleasing in your eyes.*

Send her forth from you holy heavens, and from your glorious throne dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is your pleasure” (NAB Wisdom 9: 1-6, 9-10).

RATIONALE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PPL IN REDEMPTORIST FORMATION

- y The structure of contemporary culture creates in younger generations an openness to the need for a personal plan for life.
- y Contemporary culture has uncovered subjectivity and personal responsibility as the vital center for directing personal growth.
- y The movement from communities of regulated observance, norms, and discipline to communities of responsible independent persons who want to live intentionally.
- y The need to more effectively negotiate the personal and the communal.
- y From more authoritarian and objective pedagogies to pedagogies that work from below to above and from inside to outside.
- y A new awareness that life and vocation are a process in which persons are attentive to the specific circumstances of the present moment, age, life stage, transitions...
- y Now more than ever there is a feeling that vocation must be lived from a well developed sense of identity.

THE HEART OF THE PPL

Discernment leads me to consider the **what is the pressing issue in my life** in the actual lived moment of my personal story. In this I try to be as clear as possible so that I may read my life in the light of this central goal and in order to see how the various dimensions of my life (human, spiritual, communal, academic, and apostolic) interact within it. A few questions:

- y What are the values and positive aspects of my life that give me hope at this moment?
- y What aspects of my life are problematic or are holding me back at this moment?

The answers to these questions indicate **the focal point or priority for me at this moment**. It can refer to themes, values, problems which require a more specific attention because the other dimensions of life depend on it. A lot of effort should be put into clearly identifying this focal point or priority because it is of vital importance to developing a personal plan.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE PPL?

A personal plan of life is, before all else, a desire to be honest: it is to seriously undertake the adventure of life, it is self knowledge and discernment in the Spirit. The personal plan of life does not consist in listing a series of goals and steps, nor is it the achievement, even at great cost, of a morally superior life, nor is it found in a periodic evaluation of ends and means. One may do all of these things without living a personal plan. Likewise, one may fail to do all this and still have a well defined personal plan.

For there to be a true personal plan of life, a person must have certain basic capacities to undertake it.

a) *A self directed personality:* The capacity to take responsibility for our life and to accept its challenges freely.

b) *Authenticity:* The capacity to confidently push ourselves forward in a process of patient self-discovery.

y To know myself, means that I know who I am and what I am in my strengths and in my limitations.

y To acknowledge myself means that I am not defensive nor do I attempt to hide myself from myself, rather I can admit to myself calmly and clearly, “this is who I am.”

y To accept myself means that I can love myself as I am with my limitations and that as I am God love me.

c) *Discernment in the Spirit:* An openness to the Spirit and the Spirit’s unique ability to reveal the depths of our hearts allowing us to break away from our abnormal self-absorption and entrust our lives to God.

These three pillars ensure that the personal plan does not too easily become a trap which imprisons rather than liberates.

CAUTION! PITFALLS OF THE PPL

The great difficulty of the PPL lies in the fact that it calls the person to a clarity within a the quasi-sacred space where life itself takes on meaning: the challenge is to liberate the heart from its

self-absorption with its pitfalls and traps, in order to assume an authentic life of continual discernment.

One can believe, in other words, that he has set out clearly what he wants and what he needs to do, achieving what he believes to be a certain level of perfection. But this ambition itself can become a pitfall disguised as virtue, that unconsciously feeds a neurotic ego. The signs of the neurotic ego are varied: willfulness, perfectionism, compulsive behavior, scrupulosity, psychological instability, and unconscious motivations etc. These types of human tendencies must be avoided lest the *PPL* become a trap at the service of the ego.

A TOOL FOR DISCERNMENT

Discernment presupposes that we have begun to clarify for ourselves some of the most essential aspects of our reality.

1. THE HUMAN DIMENSION

A dynamic spirituality cannot be generated if I ignore my human reality. In this dimension I attempt to know myself as an incarnated spirit, and in my relations with others etc. What are my strengths and weaknesses in these areas of my life. How do I deal with conflict, crisis and problems.

Table 1: The Human dimension

How do I see myself?	How do others see me?
What do I find difficult to accept about myself?	How would I describe my relationship with my family?
What do I like most about myself?	Who do I admire and why?
Is there something about my body I find hard to accept?	Do I have any fears about the future?
Am I self-disciplined?	Am I able to name them?
Do I apply myself to what I propose to do?	How do I fulfill my need for intimacy?
On what do I expend my greatest energy?	How do I relate to women?
How do I spend the majority of my time?	How would I characterize my relationship with men?

2. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

This level is a bit more difficult because it is the deepest part of ourselves with subtleties that can be hard to grasp. Nevertheless, this is where the most essential part of life comes into play.

Faith must not be a trap in which the objective norms of the Christian life lead me to believe that I am in control of my own salvation. This idea presumes that I can seek my own justification through an ordered and controllable set of religious and moral

objectives. Faith always presupposes an openness to the ineffable free will of God and therefore poses a constant and radical challenge to Christian life. We must take care that strict fidelity to law not impede our growth in love.

Table 2: The Spiritual dimension

What is my image of God?	How has the image of God as “divine grandparent” been a part of my spiritual life?
Is my relationship with God characterized by manipulation?	How do I relate to God when I am feeling well and happy?
How would I characterize my basic religious experience?	Have I experienced God as the God of life who loves me unconditionally?
Is it religiously observant or devotional? Is it principally conceptual or intellectual?	What is my experience of God as my Redeemer?
How does my experience confirm my confidence in a God, who loves me freely?	How does that experience interact with my attempts to save myself by my own power?
How have I experienced God’s mercy?	What role do my emotions play in my relationship with God?
Do I experience God as the “lawgiver” who threatens my personal freedom?	How do I express my love for God?
How has this image played a part in my spiritual life?	

Now I try to identify those most basic deep-seated attitudes by which my heart is guided. These constitute the central core of my life within which my life’s meaning is revealed.

Table 3: The Spiritual dimension

Who is in control of my life? How do I allow God to illuminate and direct my decisions? How do I try to control, calculate my life according to my own plan? How have I moved from God as an idea into a personal and intimate relationship with God as person? How would I describe how I live my vocation? Is it legalistic? Is it perfectionist? Is it characterized by continual searching? Is it a following of Jesus? What have been my most concrete experiences of God's presence in my life? How have I experienced this presence in moments of crisis?	What place does prayer have in my life? How much time do I spend in prayer a day? How type of prayer do I practice? What importance do I give to the contemplative dimension of life? What place does the Word of God have in my life? Do I use it for meditation? What place does God occupy in my daily work? Do I integrate various dimensions of life, the historical, the human, the spiritual? Do they operate independently in my life?
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In the course our life certain things come to the surface such as our attachments, our affections, our desires, our experiences of rejection. From time to time these things need to be thoroughly explored. This is especially true when our network of relationships is broken because of some sort of change, or an unfulfilled expectation, or freak occurrence. In these times, we feel particularly vulnerable,

out of place, and off balance. Discernment at these times can help light our way.

The background provides insights into the focal point of what is blocking my spiritual growth or possible movements of grace that can guide me and with which I must fully cooperate.

3. THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION

In this section I try to describe my level of identification with and my enthusiasm for aspects of the Redemptorist charism and my feeling of belonging.

Table 4 : The Community dimension

What attracts me most to the Redemptorist charism?	How do I behave in the community?
How would I like to personally live it?	How do I feel within the community? Do I feel it belong? Am I relaxed? Does it remind me of family?
What problems do I foresee in living the charism?	Do I accept all of my confreres or am I selective in my personal relationships?
How well do I function as a member of a team?	Is there a relationship with a confrere that I need to pay a special attention to at this time?
How does individualism affect my work in groups?	

4. THE ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL DIMENSIONS

Here I try to identify my greatest challenges in the field of ministry? Considering my motivations, my level of commitment, my way of relating, my allocation of time, how will I prepare myself to meet these challenges?

Table 5: The Academic and Pastoral dimensions

Why do I think God has called me to preach the Good News to the poor and most abandoned?	Do I think of myself as creative or innovative or do I tend to follow instructions?
Do I share with my community the joys and the trials that I experience in ministry?	How do I demonstrate care in my pastoral relationships?
Do I feel principally motivated by personal success?	Am I kind to others? Is my presence welcoming?
How does the Reign of God motivate me in ministry and in study?	What do I read?
How do I balance action and contemplation in my life? Am I neglecting one or the other?	How do I spend my free time?
	How do I work in teams?
	What difficulties have I encountered ?

**DEFINING THE FOCAL POINT
OR PRIORITY OF LIFE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT**

Table 6: Defining the Focal Point

AREAS	Analyze the personal situation (+ & -)	Goal What?	Action How?	Time and Place Where? When?	Evaluation With whom? When?
Human Dimension					
Spiritual Dimension					
Community Dimension					
Academic Dimension					
Pastoral Dimension					

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY OF ORGANIZATION

Table 7: Complexive form for **PPL**

IN RELATION- SHIP	BASICS NON NEGOTIA- BLE	GOALS	MEANS	LIFE ATTI- TUDES
WITH GOD	Convictions: 1. 2. 3.	To be attended: 1. 2.	To be used: 1. 2. 3.	A new way of behavior: 1. 2.
WITH YOUR SELF	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3
WITH THE OTHERS	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3
WITH THINGS	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3	1. 2. 3

Table 8 : Complexive form for PPL (to be continued)

WORD OF LIFE	PRAYER
Biblical text that accompanies the Personal Plan of Life:	After preparation of the project, pray, meditate, contemplate and compose a prayer. This will express the hope for, and strength needed, to bring about the desired renewal.

TERM PROJECT REVIEW:.....

Name:

Date:

WHEN TO DO THE PPL

The best time to begin a PPL is in the novitiate.

The basis for the PPL can be posed to students during a period of specific time of formation in which the conditions for completing it are adequately explained.

The PPL should be revised each year and in a special way during important moments of Redemptorist life such as final profession, priesthood ordination, or after an initial period during the transition to ministry.

The PPL help students to take fuller responsibility for their life and vocation before God and the Congregation.

Likewise, the PPL helps formators in their ability to better accompany the student in his process of formation and vocational discernment into Redemptorist apostolic life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

ILARDUIA, J. M.: *El proyecto Personal*, Frontera Heguian nº 6, Gasteiz-Vitoria, 1994.

MARTÍNEZ, M.: *Los proyectos, personal y comunitario*, Publicaciones claretianas, Madrid 1992.

SOVERNIGO, J.: *Proyecto de vida (En busca de mi identidad)*, Atenas, Madrid, 1990.

HOW TO WORK THE PPL

1. The formator or the team of formators should provide some training sessions where the PPV is treated, and discussed. The subject should be accompanied by a bibliography that reflects the various cultures and languages where Redemptorist Missionaries live.
2. Secondly, it is desirable that each candidate writes a personal life story. This does not need to be a thesis, just a few pages highlighting some of the more important and significant events of one's life. Upon completion, the candidate should re-read what he has written, keeping in mind the following:

a) At what moments of my life have I felt and experienced the presence of God? Such moments include both the beautiful and joyful moments as well as difficult situations of pain, crisis, etc.

b) How have I reacted to the explicit presence of God in my life? What kind of feeling has arisen in me?

3. Each candidate, during a time of retreat and reflection, and before God, makes his self-evaluation based on the 5 dimensions specified above: the human, spiritual, community, academic and pastoral.

4. The Project must be accompanied by a formator and, if necessary, by a specialist in the human and spiritual dimensions. It may be helpful to have a workshop during which there is a sharing on the qualities and values of each of the members of the community.

13. THE WEB PAGE FOR REDEMPTORIST FORMATION

Our Web page address: www.fcontinuacssr.com

Related addresses:

www.cssr.com: Our Redemptorist Congregation web page.

www.fusa.edu.co : Our Academic Sponsor web site

What is intended

The General Secretariat for Formation of the C.Ss.R. as a function of the Executive Secretariat organized and has supported this Web page as point of contact between the Redemptorist Formators and as way of communication and diffusion of our work.

The page is provided with an autonomous service that has kept it functioning constantly and can be accessed without difficulty, in real time, including on mobile devices wherever there is access to the Internet. In 2012 the page was updated with the innovation of sections in three languages and the Common Room. At the moment of printing this book (January 2016) the web site is in a very important updating process.

Security level

The safety level of the information is very good. To our advantage we do not include activities of financial type or advertising. We are grateful to our users for paying constant attention to the security “online”.

Coverage of the service

As any Internet service is potentially opened to any visitor. It depends on us promoting its diffusion and the use of the services. Some of the sections need registration for access because of the information gathered in such sections. Those are: Courses and Library. All other sections are of free access.

Multilingual Service

Most of the information is prepared in the three official languages of the Redemptorist Congregation: Italian, English and Spanish. Some of the sections, for example the Common Room, the Courses, the Library and the Blog, are provided with an online of translation service to more than fifty languages. We receive communications and texts in the three official languages and additionally in French, Portuguese and German. The page is becoming a resource for those who are learning languages.

Sections of the Web Page

The page opens with a welcome and several useful sections

What is fcontinua

fcontinua *Formatio Continua* means Ongoing Formation: a very short description of what is intended with the page.

FAQ's, or frequently asked questions. This section is always open to you.

Courses

It is the most developed section and it is provided with courses in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and some special services of the Secretariat for Formation. It needs password for access provided by the administrator. Every Participant to the courses is a normal user.

Common room

Recently organized **FRATRES IN UNUM BROTHERS LIVING TOGETHER IN UNITY** a motto taken from Psalm 133,1. It includes a section of News. Common room has a service of Videos, Audios and Documents. The material is updated periodically.

To access, go to the column of the left side “Comments” there, you can insert short texts. Please, provide some identity, to avoid visits and undesirable messages. In “title” type the topic of your communication. In the space “comment” type the message. You can send some Internet address you want to share. Finally if you decide not to send the message, click “cancel” and “submit”. The common room is provided with translator into more than 50 languages.

Library

Is under construction. It will provide digital documents of interest for Formation in different languages. Work will continue on the Library since it will be an important and useful resource. A password is required for this section. We request the collaboration of everyone by sending to the library documents or suggestions.

Photo Gallery

It is a very visited section. The description of the pictures is written in the language of the event. It is possible to do a presentation of images directly from the Gallery.

Videos

In addition to the service of Videos of the Common Room this section provides some videos that can help our visitors for the specific work of formation. The section is under construction.

Contacts

The goal of this section is to get in touch with pages that can be useful. Simply by clicking the address you can access the linked page.

Blog

It is opened for you participation and can receive texts in the principal languages as provided with a translator.

GETING STARTED WITH THE MOODLE COURSE

This section has been presented in every Seminar and Course for Formators and has more than 500 users.

Courses online offer the work developed by the Secretariat for Formation on the various courses and seminars. They are intended as a means of communication, to share the themes of our work to continue the work of Formation. We upload some files received in each one of the courses in the original language. At the moment we have materials in English, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese as well as Documentation mainly for the members of the Secretariat of Formation

The software we are using is Moodle, a collaborative e-learning program. You can find information about the program on internet. This platform is widely used in Universities which support free software use. The use is very simple and intuitive procedures are the same as using e-mail or internet.

If you are a new user of Moodle, you are welcome and we advise you to take some time to learn some basics. With pleasure we can help you and quite soon you will use the software and the contents of the courses. We thank you for using the courses and for informing other users. We know these courses are useful as Information, for Formation and for Pastoral work.

For logging to the Courses:

1. Type the address of the web page: www.fcontinuuacssr.com Be sure not to type in Capital letters. In the Menu, select Courses/Cursos and enter. Select your course in the section : **English or even other languages.**

2 Click on the title and the window for username, and password will be displayed. In this window you can select in the right upper corner the language you want to use. By default, the language commonly used in your computer will be displayed. You have English as default language but you can select a different language from a long list.

3 In User, type your identity (number and/or letters). Use no Capitals unless forced. If you are not yet a User, please, get in touch with the Administrator, by e-mail

4 In Password type initially the word: virtual (small letters).

5. Click login and you are in the course. You can change the password for privacy. If you forget the new password the administrator (Roballo) can help you reset in order to unlock or to have a new password.

6. Explore all the elements, introductions, forums, news, lessons, by clicking on each one.

7. To open attached files, depending on the configuration of your computer you can be requested to confirm to open a file and then a line will appear at the top of the page asking about downloading files. Click on the line and again on the

option: download file. Then you can open, print or save the file, as you prefer. This is the same as downloading files from internet.

8. To go back to home simply click on the indication of the course, on the top left of the page.

9. Just one lesson or the whole course. On the right side appears one small rectangle. When you click on it, the clicked lesson or activity appears with two rectangles and all the others disappear. If you click on the two rectangles, all the lessons of the course become visible.

10. To exit your course and Moodle, go to the top right of the page and find your name. There you will find the “logout” indication. Click on it and your session is over.

I am always at your disposal and I hope you'll find Moodle and your course useful and easy. Luis

To get in touch with the Administrator, please, send an e-mail to:

luisrobalo@yahoo.com luisrobalo@lozano@gmail.com

REDEMPTORIST FORMATION

Publications

1. Manuale Formatorum C.Ss.R.

(English, French, Spanish, Portuguese) 2009

2. Witnesses and Missionaries of Redemption

(English, Italian, Spanish) 2015

3. Towards the new Profile of Redemptorist Missionary. (English, Italian, Spanish) 2016



[illegible]

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.[illegible]