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Handbook for Formators

of the Congregation

of the Most Holy Redeemer

General Secretariat for Formation C.Ss.R. Rome 2009

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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce this collection of articles that have been prepared by the members of the General Secretariat for Formation. During the present sexennium (2003-2009), the confreres of this Secretariat have produced a wealth of very useful resources for the Congregation, including a course to prepare directors of formation as well as research in various aspects of Redemptorist formation, the life-long process of solidifying one’s commitment to Christ in the charism and mission of our Institute.

The members of the Secretariat now offer the fruit of their investigations in the contents of this *Handbook*. This handbook is to be considered as a supplement to the primary sources that shape Redemptorist formation: principally the Word of God and the Consti- tutions and Statutes as well as the General *Ratio Formationis* and the approved (vice-) provincial plan (cf. General Statutes 067, 081).

The reader will be impressed by the range of topics treated in this *Handbook*. Such breadth is necessary, since formation should involve the whole person, in every aspect of his personality, behavior and in- tentions, aiming to guide an individual to the fullness of “human and Christian maturity” (Con. 77) that permits the total gift of himself. Precisely because it aims at the transformation of the whole person, the commitment to formation never ends: “indeed, at every stage of

life, consecrated persons must be offered opportunities to grow in their commitment to the charism and mission of their Institute” (*Vita Consecrata*, 65). In fact, it has been the experience of Redemptorists and other religious that the program of initial formation is imper- iled when the (vice-) province neglects the ongoing formation of the older members. Hence, the scope of this book reflects the value Redemptorists should place on a holistic formation that begins with vocation promotion and continues for the rest of one’s life.

The articles of this *Handbook* should be understood with the purpose of the Congregation always in mind, since “the apostolic purpose of the Congregation must inspire and penetrate the whole formation process of its members” (Con. 77). Thus, the final aim of this book is to contribute to the process that will help all confreres “to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and whole-heartedly to the service of the missionary Church in Redemptorist community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor” (Con. 78).

Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

Superior General

Rome

15 March 2009

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# PREFACE

For the past five years the Secretariat for Formation has been working on a variety of documents relating mainly to specific areas of initial Redemptorist formation. A few of these have reached the hands of individual formators, while others have accessed them through the web site. However, in recent years there have been requests from various parts of the Congregation for something more comprehensive. In fact it has been the desire of this Secretariat to compile a *Handbook for Formators* which might serve as a practical help in several areas of the formation process.

It might be asked why we are offering a Handbook when we already have the General *Ratio Formationis* of the Congregation, as well as local *Ratios* for most Units. The answer is twofold. First of all, this Handbook comes in response to requests for such a manual. Secondly, we are conscious that having a variety of papers and articles on diverse areas of initial formation can be somewhat confusing. Hence, we decided to include these articles in a systematic way in one Handbook. Thus, this Handbook can be used in conjunction with the *Ratios.*

We are also very conscious that the task of a formator is a difficult and delicate one. Often formation personnel feel somewhat isolated. At times there can be criticism of the work from the larger community, and at the same time a sense of struggle among the candidates in formation. The formators need as many tools and props as possible.

Of course, we are not claiming that this Handbook will solve all problems. Indeed, we are very clear in our minds that in the formation

process of any human being, growth comes from within. However, we are also conscious that creating a healthy and appropriate atmosphere for such human and spiritual growth is of the essence of a good formation program. This Handbook seeks to empower formators at all stages of initial formation to put this into practise.

We stress that we do not see the Handbook as a guide for formation. The path of formation in each Unit, and for each individual, is unique and to be respected. However, we offer the various articles as aids and resources for each stage of formation. What is offered is the result of many hours of research and work carried out by specialists, who have themselves been formators. We hope and pray that this work may prove a useful help to our confreres who share in this privileged and difficult task of guiding our new members into vows and on to full time ministry.

Yours sincerely,

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The Handbook is set out systematically in order to assist those who wish to deal with a particular topic at any given stage in the formation process. Basically, the outline is as follows:

# Section 1

### Specific Redemptorist Formation

In this chapter, the heart of our spirituality and charism are dealt with. Outlines are offered which can be developed in the individual formation programs. Specifically, the reflections are on the following topics:

1. Redemptorist Spirituality
2. Redemptorist Spirituality in Practice: Lifestyle
3. History of the Congregation
4. Moral Theology in the Redemptorist Tradition
5. Preaching in the Redemptorist Tradition
6. The Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Redemptorist

Tradition

1. Spiritual Direction and Discernment in the Redemptorist

Tradition

1. Partnership in Mission and Lay Collaboration
2. Formation for Apostolic Work in Community

# Section 2

### Vocation Promotion

In this section, some ideas are offered on vocation promotion. By the very nature of our international character this has to be fluid enough to adapt to the variety of cultures in which we work. Also, some criteria are suggested for the acceptance of possible candidates or aspirants.

* 1. Vocation Promotion

The first contact with the Congregation involves vocational promotion and accompaniment. The Secretariat has communicated with RYVM to see areas of common interest and networking. As indicated, suggestions in this section are general, by nature of the individual culture and geographical situation of each Unit.

* 1. Criteria for acceptance of Candidates

It has long been the practice in the Congregation, when discerning vocations, to investigate spiritual background, physical health, mental health and educational standards. With the development of a more holistic sense of the person, this has extended to areas such as motivation, family background, emotional health and inter-personal issues.

# Section 3

### Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment and testing are often sources of anxi- ety and even division in some Units. At times formators feel unable

to enter into this particular dimension of discernment. Information is offered here about the nature of testing, the kind of questions which might be used, and how to interpret psychological data.

# Section 4

### Accompaniment and Evaluation

Accompaniment, in general, is a difficult task and one which needs more than simply the formal monthly colloquium. Suggestions are offered for a more ‘professional’ style of accompaniment. Similarly, some ideas for the ongoing evaluation of candidates at each stage of their formation process are offered. As will be noted at each stage, some professional assistance may be required, as also stated in the article on psychological assessment

1. Accompaniment

Styles of accompaniment vary greatly throughout the Congregation. In initial formation aregular and ordered method of accompaniment is necessary. Spiritual directors, confessors and formators all make up part of the support network of persons who journey with those in these formative stages.

1. Evaluation Tools

This document outlines the aim and manner of evaluation at the different stages from vocational accompaniment, postulancy, novitiate, from the time of first profession to the end of initial formation, and includes indicators for human, spiritual, community, professional/academic, and pastoral evaluation. This would include evaluation of a pastoral year where such a program takes place.

# Section 5

### Formation for Celibacy

This section deals with the delicate task of ‘investigating’ the heart for living a celibate lifestyle in the Congregation and for the ongoing evaluation of candidates at each stage of their celibate development. Areas of intimacy, sexuality, sexual orientation and above all sexual difficulties and disorders are outlined. Psychosexual development, professional and personal boundaries are also discussed in relation to consecrated chastity.

# Section 6

### Transition to Ministry

Transition to ministry is a most important stage of formation. It is a time of conflicting emotions of power and vulnerability, of separation from the closer fraternity of the formation community to the wider community of the Unit. Accompaniment and encouragement are essential during this period.

# Section 7

### Ongoing Formation

All our formation documents stress that formation does not cease at the end of formal studies. We are beginning to do more work on transition to ministry programs in all Units of the Congregation. Some Units have criteria for sabbaticals and for ongoing formation in ministry. However, we also need to do some more work on formation for the ‘Third Age’. Here we deal with:

* 1. The agents of ongoing formation and continuing education
  2. The dimensions of this process
  3. The tools and opportunities available
  4. Specific areas of attention.

# Section 8

### The Formation of Brother Candidates

All Redemptorists are equal and have the right to a quality formation. At times Brother Candidates follow the same formation course as those studying for the priesthood. At other times, it differs at various stages. While not wishing to create any form of separation, the vocation of the Brother appears to require different specialization in some dimensions of the program. These dimensions are discussed, and some possibilities are suggested.

# SPECiFiC REdEMPTORiST FORMATiOn

Many Redemptorist formation candidates – including clerical students and brothers – receive their academic and intellectual formation in Institutes or Theological Unions which are no longer Redemptorist institutions. This poses a challenge for the Congregation in general, and for formators in particular. Conscious and deliberate attention must be paid to the specific Redemptorist formation of both clerical and brother candidates.

This specific Redemptorist formation must permeate the entire formation process. It begins with an introduction to the Congregation, St. Alphonsus, and prayer during the period of postulancy. It deepens during the novitiate.

It takes root and is integrated into the spiritual and pastoral life of the young Redemptorist during the period of temporary profession

– not only through his daily prayer and practices of spirituality, but also through his study of moral theology, preaching, and pastoral theology. It begins to bear fruit during the period of transition to ministry.

The Apostolic Life of Redemptorists is shaped by the call of the most abandoned, and the option for the poor. It is distinguished more by its missionary dynamism than by any particular structures and works. In other words, it is marked by evangelization in the true sense, and by service of persons and groups who are poor and more neglected within the Church and society (cf. Constitution 14).

The nine elements outlined below are not developed in great detail. However, they provide some indications of areas which must be integrated into the whole process of formation by the formators in collaboration with the (V) Provincial Formation Secretariat. Redemptorist spirituality, lifestyle and history should be part of each

stage of formation – and not only the Novitiate. Moral Theology, Preaching, Reconciliation, and Spiritual Direction should be integrated throughout the period of theological study for all those engaged in the process of formation. Resources and course outlines will also be developed and presented by the General Secretariat for Formation. Mutual sharing of these resources will benefit the formation of our new members throughout the Congregation.

# Redemptorist Spirituality

Redemptorist Spirituality includes but is broader than Alphonsian Spirituality. The 1997 General Chapter spoke of spirituality as that particular Redemptorist Spirit which animates and forms our way of life. It becomes the contemplative lens through which we perceive the world and respond to the cry of the abandoned. Redemptorist spirituality is both the fruit and source of mission.

The spirituality of St. Alphonsus, including his sense of the *Vita divota*, his approach to prayer and especially mental prayer, the ‘mysteries of redemption’ (crib, cross, Eucharist and Mary), and the Word of God have shaped Redemptorist spirituality from the beginning. Redemptorist spirituality is a missionary spirituality as Redemptorists continue the Mission of Jesus to preach Good News to the poor.

This spirituality also took shape in the lives of the early Redemptorists, and was shaped by them as well (Sarnelli, Gerard, Clement). It is a lived spirituality, expressed in the Constitutions and Statutes, the documents from General Chapters, and Communicanda from Superiors General.

* 1. Formation in Redemptorist Spirituality must include formation in the spiritual and ascetical works of St. Alphonsus. All Redemptorists should develop a familiarity with certain of his works: *Practice of the love of Jesus Christ, The Way to Converse with God as a Friend, Incarnation, Meditations on the Passion, The Holy Eucharist, The Glories of Mary.* The recent edition from the Classics of Western Spirituality series, *Alphonsus Liguori: Selected Writings* from Paulist Press is easily accessible to English-speaking Redemptorists. Redemptorist students ought to read St. Alphonsus’ works directly. It is important not only to receive instruction in the spirituality of our founder, but also to read Alphonsus’ o w n words.
  2. This formation will be assisted by the reflective study of the lives of Redemptorists, especially the Saints and Beati.
  3. It must also include reflection on the spirit of the Congregation as lived in the Community. This will be assisted by:
* Study, reflection, and discussion of the Constitutions and Statutes
* Study, reflection, and discussion of the documents of the General Chapters (especially 1991, 1997, 2003) and the Communicanda of the General Government (especially Spirituality, our Most Important Challenge)
* The Charism 2000 series
* Readings in Redemptorist Spirituality is a helpful resource, which is being expanded in English to reflect the greater development in Spanish and French.

# Redemptorist Spirituality in Practice: Lifestyle

The spirituality of Redemptorists is a particular way of life which becomes a ‘lifestyle’ for Redemptorists (cf. Message of the 1997 General Chapter). It is not enough to know the writings of St. Alphonsus, the spirituality and lives of the early Redemptorists, and the Constitutions and Statutes. This way of life is integrated through the faithful practice of mental prayer, the distinct form of community life lived by Redemptorists in the Units, the understanding of the vows in light of our charism, and the option for the abandoned and the poor.

Gradually, Redemptorists in formation must be introduced to the practice of *daily* prayer as envisioned by our Constitutions. This involves the practice of community prayer as it is actually lived in the local communities of the Unit. *Mental prayer in common* offers a powerful assistance to developing the habit of mental prayer so important to Alphonsus and to the life of the Redemptorist. Developing this practice and habit of prayer requires a gradual process of instruction, practice and spiritual direction. Regular workshops and retreats can be helpful aids.

As well, the *traditional Redemptorist practices* of devotion fostered in the formation community, especially the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the Way of the Cross, the Rosary and devotion to Mary (especially to Our Mother of Perpetual Help) begin to forge a Redemptorist identity which supports and integrates what the new Redemptorist is learning in conferences, reading, workshops and courses on Redemptorist spirituality.

Redemptorists in initial formation are also introduced to the vows as a lived reality in the formation community. Presenting the vows as an expression of our missionary identity involves

integrating them into the way in which the community lives poverty, chastity and obedience (cf. Constitutions, chapter III). This integration is helped by community discussion and conversation about the actual ways in which these vows are practiced – and their implications in the culture in which the new Redemptorists are living. Preparation for the vow and oath of perseverance must also take into account the challenges experienced today with permanent commitment.

As a community of confreres, it is important to reflect on the ways in which our Apostolic Life is enriched in many Units by the presence and ministry of Brothers. Although the Constitutions refer to us as a clerical Congregation in the Church, Brothers have been and continue to be an important dimension of the Redemptorist Apostolic Life.

Sent to the most abandoned, and especially the poor, (cf. Constitutions 3 – 5), Redemptorist candidates must be gradually and progressively introduced to a lifestyle which is close to the ordinary men and women they are called to serve. This introduction must be integrated into the prayer, community life and pastoral dimensions of the formation community. It will also be reflected in the choices they make about the use of material goods. Simplicity of life will be expressed in choices concerning clothing, transportation, food and drink, houses and furnishings, and regular contact with ordinary men and women.

# History of the Congregation

The history of the Congregation not only tells the story of our foundation and expansion. It also situates the Congregation within an historical context which helps us better understand

our Mission and reason for being. The Historical Institute has published the first volume of a series on the Congregation’s history. The Historical Institute has also produced other volumes which supplement this history.

The lives of our founder, in particular the works by Telleria, Rey-Mermet and Jones, also tell the story of our foundation. The lives of our Saints continue that story. It is helpful to study and present the context of the particular period when reading the life of Gerard or Clement or John Neumann or the Ukrainian martyrs – or any of these men.

Many units have studied and published works on their history. Others have the possibility of presenting the oral history of their foundation – especially among the more recent foundations.

It is often possible to offer a course on the history of the Congregation which is accredited by theological faculties, even where our students study in a theological union. The resources for such a course have become more readily available in recent years, and sometimes a Confrere can receive the necessary accreditation to offer such a course to our students.

# Moral Theology in the Redemptorist Tradition

Moral Theology has always been an area of particular concern for Redemptorists. St. Alphonsus was a giant in this field in his own day. More recently, Redemptorists such as Haring, Capone, Vidal, and many others have made enormous contributions. The Alphonsian Academy in Rome continues to make this discipline a special concern of the Congregation.

If possible, this should be an area of particular research and study for each Redemptorist. This will involve exploration of

the following areas:

* The moral theology of St. Alphonsus
* The historical context of Jansenism, rigorism, probabilism,

etc.

* The theology of conscience
* Contemporary moral theology and bioethics as required for pastoral ministry

# Preaching in the Redemptorist Tradition

Redemptorist preaching must be marked as a proclamation of the Word of God. It is a hallmark of our ministry. As such, it requires more than the minimal requirements of most theologi- cal faculties.

Areas for Redemptorist focus in preaching include:

* The teaching of St. Alphonsus on ‘Apostolic Preaching’
* Effective communication: oratorical skills, story-telling, adult learning
* Extraordinary preaching and the ‘parish mission’: its purpose, its method, its history, its evaluation as a tool for our mission
* Preaching and the ministry of retreats
* ‘Ordinary’ preaching and pastoral ministry: the liturgical year, the lectionary, the message of Redemption

# Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Redemptorist Tradition

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has also been a hallmark of Redemptorist pastoral ministry – at home, on parish missions, at our Shrines. This Sacrament is in great need of renewal in the

Church today. What is the specific Redemptorist contribution we can make to this renewal?

Formation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will take into account the theological and practical training required by any faculty of theology for those who will exercise this ministry. This training can be enriched by study in areas with the follow- ing Redemptorist concerns:

* + The teaching of St. Alphonsus on the Sacrament and the role of the confessor, especially as found in the Praxis Confessarii
  + Reflection and study on fundamental conversion, from both a spiritual and psychological perspective
  + The effective preparation for and practice of the Sacrament on parish missions and at Shrine Churches
  + Participation in Communal Celebrations of the Sacrament in the context of extraordinary preaching
  + Case studies and discussions

# Spiritual direction and discernment in the Redemptorist Tradition

Spiritual Direction and Discernment have played a large role in the story of our Congregation. St. Alphonsus was one of the great spiritual directors of his age. His expertise in this area is evident in his correspondence with scores of directees. It is also evident in his writing and thinking – for example, in the Praxis Confessarii, and his works on mental prayer. This has also been the subject of some recent study and publications.

St. Alphonsus was introduced to the devout life and made the ‘spiritual exercises’ with the Vincentians, the Oratorians, and

the Jesuits. However, he makes a significant shift in his own understanding of the spiritual life from discursive to affective mental prayer and meditation. This shift is reflected in the spiritual direction he offers to others, as is evident from his correspondence and writings.

There is a difference between pastoral counselling and spiritual direction. Professional skills in both are available from any number of institutions and programs, workshops and courses. Familiarity with the writings, spirituality, and prayer of Alphon- sus will help the student to integrate these professional skills with the Redemptorist charism and identity.

# Partnership in Mission and Lay Collaboration

Collaboration with lay men and women has always played a highly significant role in the Apostolic Life of Redemptorists. From the beginning, Alphonsus collaborated with others in the development of the Evening Chapels in Naples, the preaching of missions, and the publication of his spiritual works. Clement developed and formed a group of Oblates to assist with the work of evangelization, particularly though not exclusively through publishing, media, and the universities.

At the XXI General Chapter (1991 – Itaici), the Congregation approved the official designation of Lay Missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer. During the subsequent Sexennium, the General Government promulgated Communicanda 4, which developed guidelines and norms for lay collaboration with Redemptorists.

The Secretariat for Partnership in Mission has reminded us that just as Lay Missionaries and other partners need formation in ministry, Redemptorist spirituality and evangelization, so do

Redemptorists need formation for partnership in mission. The Initial Formation of our candidates must address this ques- tion in the context of the guidelines, norms and practice of the particular Unit, and the whole Congregation.

# Formation for Apostolic Work in Community

The specific Redemptorist Formation program for each Unit must prepare our candidates for formation as part of an apos- tolic community. This will involve developing the skills for collaboration, community-building, and co-responsibility.

The pastoral priorities and plan for each Unit must be reflected in the formation program, and especially in experiences in ministry during the course of initial formation.

# VOCATiOn PROMOTiOn And ACCOMPAniMEnT

**introduction:**

Every Redemptorist Unit must have a program for the promo- tion of vocations and the accompaniment of possible candidates. There are many documents about vocation work in our Congrega- tion and many styles of vocation work in different Units.

The General Secretariat for Formation has tried to collate ex- periences in this area from Units throughout the world. There are many excellent initiatives, new ideas and new methods of work with candidates in different Units. But there are also other Units which are awaiting help and suggestions in these activities.

The main purpose of this document is to offer an exchange of experiences of vocation work. We are aware that Redemptorists face totally different challenges and situations in different parts of the world. Here we share our experiences of success and failure in order to help others in their future work.

This document is not an official document of the General Government, nor an official policy statement. We are aware that such documents should be – and we hope will be – elaborated in a dialogue with the General Secretariat for Redemptorist Youth and Vocation Ministry (RYVM). For the time being we share with you information and experiences about vocation work in different units in our Congregation. Many interesting suggestions for vocation work can also be found in the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*. The *Guidelines for Redemptorist Youth and Vocation Ministry* also pro- vides suggestions and information about vocation work and youth

ministry (General Secretariat for Redemptorist Youth and Vocation Ministry (RYVM); Rome, February 2000). This document offers useful and practical help, especially for those Redemptorists and lay people involved directly in vocation work.

The General Secretariat for Formation has sent more then one hundred e-mails to our Units with requests to share their vocation experiences. We thank all who have participated in this document by responding.

# dimensions of vocation work:

1. **Structures for Vocation Promotion and Accompaniment**

In the Congregation there are many different structures for Vo- cation Promotion and Accompaniment. Although the structures may vary, some common elements are universal. The details through which these elements are exercised need to be deter- mined in each Unit. Whether or not a Unit is actively engaged in RYVM will affect the ways in which these elements are implemented.

### Coordinator of Vocation Ministry

The *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R.* requires that **at least one con- frere is appointed as coordinator of the vocation ministry in each Unit**. In many Units, this confrere is assisted by a ‘Vocation Team’. In others, he works with RYVM. What is essential is the appointment of at least one confrere who has direct responsibility for Vocation Ministry. Ideally, this should be the principal ministry of this confrere.

Different Units use different names for this appointment: Voca-

tion Director(s), Coordinator(s) of Vocation Ministry, Vocation Promoter(s), Vocational Minister(s), etc. In some Units, there is a Vocation Promoter in each local community. In others, there is a Vocation Commission or Vocation Team where only the coordinator has full-time responsibility with others assisting on an occasional basis.

### Office for Vocation Ministry

The experience of the Congregation demonstrates the impor- tance of establishing an office for Vocation Ministry, with the essential resources necessary for the effective carrying out of the ministry. It is especially helpful to have a stable address, telephone number and email to facilitate initial contacts with interested persons.

### Accountability and Support within the Unit

The Coordinator of Vocation Ministry is appointed by the (V) Provincial Superior and accountable to and supported by the

(V) Provincial Council. In some Units, this accountability and support is effective through the Formation Secretariat; in others, there is a commission for RYVM which serves in this capacity; in still others, there is a special Vocations Commis- sion. It is important that the Coordinator of Vocation Ministry is supported and assisted by other confreres and structures in the Unit for the effective fulfillment of his appointment.

# Vocation Promotion

It is essential for the Apostolic Life of the Congregation that every member becomes responsible for the fostering of voca- tions. We believe that God continues to call men to give their lives for plentiful redemption as Redemptorists – and Vocation

Promotion announces this call in a public and clear manner. The Church calls all Christians – and especially priests and religious men and women – to collaborate in establishing and promoting a ‘culture of vocation’ in the contemporary world.

### Vocation Promotion with the Confreres of the Unit

In order for each confrere to assume responsibility for fostering vocations, the coordinator of vocation ministry must work with the members of his Unit to help them realize effective ways in which they can do this. Vocation promotion must engage all the members in practical ways.

* 1. Publication of a bulletin or newsletter for Redemptorist com- munities and for all confreres offers important information about the actual vocation work of the Unit, in particular about vocation retreats, meetings, gatherings, etc.
  2. Preparation and distribution of catechetical and homiletic ma- terials for vocation work in our parishes, missions, and com- munities.
  3. Special proposals such as prayers for vocations, religious serv- ices and days of prayer for new vocations, ideas for special Masses for Vocations which can be celebrated each month. In some Units these days of prayer or special Masses are celebrated on the First Thursday.
  4. Visits to Redemptorist Communities and Parishes to preach and promote vocations and to meet local contacts. Special sermons and services, meetings with youth (Day for Consecrated Life, Redemptorist Feast Days, National Vocations Week or Good Shepherd Sunday (Vocation Sunday). Members of the Voca- tion Team, formators, lecturers and seminarians are in charge of these Vocation Sundays in some Units, preaching special

sermons about vocation, Redemptorist life and our formation. Our seminarians share their experiences with youth (they can have special meetings with altar boys, and other parish youth groups).

* 1. The members of the Vocation Team could take part in the meet- ings for Redemptorist missionaries (if this kind of meeting is held). They can encourage our missionaries to preach about vocation and Redemptorist life, and they can distribute special information, folders, and booklets for youth during missions, retreats, etc.
  2. Members of the Vocation Team can be involved in some cat- echetical lessons in our parishes in order to have direct contact with youth.
  3. Regular prayer for Vocations (daily prayers, Masses, adoration). Prayer groups could be established in parishes and in seminaries to support vocation ministry. In some Units, there is a special day of prayer for vocations in every Redemptorist community.
  4. Some Units have a special Welcome Home as a way of discern- ing vocation for candidates. This is a special community house where young people can live with Redemptorists.

### Promotion of Vocation to the Redemptorist Apostolic Life

Vocation promotion requires a clear and public announcement that we believe God continues to call men to our Apostolic Life. There are many concrete ways of promoting our vocation.

1. Publication of Redemptorist newsletters, booklets, brochures, magazines and books (articles about Redemptorists, Redemp- torist spirituality, especially with historical information about Alphonsus and his writings, and the spirituality of our Saints

and Blessed, articles and essays by various Redemptorists on themes of mission and spirituality). These may be sent to people interested in vocation subjects. (Although the written brochures and information leaflets are sometimes useful, these can become outdated very quickly, and information constantly needs chang- ing, which can become quite expensive.)

1. Preparation and distribution of promotional items: Redemptorist crosses, book-marks, prayer cards, calendars, wristbands and lanyards – that direct the recipient to our websites with further information about vocation, history, spirituality, ministry and mission.
2. Where possible we may use our Redemptorist mass-media in vocation ministry. The Vocation Team could prepare special programs and broadcasts.
3. Where we have no access to our own mass-media we may advertise through Catholic Papers, University Papers, School Papers.
4. The Vocation Team could have a webpage <www> about voca- tion work, where young people could find presentations about different vocations, calendar of activities, contacts etc. Usually this page is connected with web-page of the Unit. Some experi- ences tell us that most people, particularly the young, utilize the internet as a first point of contact. It is critical then, that a website be attractive, up-to-date and interactive. In many coun- tries religious congregations have a common vocation webpage with information about different charisms and spiritualities.
5. Special vocation bulletin boards and announcements could be in every Redemptorist church (with all necessary information, addresses, etc.). Some parishes have Vocation Booths or Voca- tion Corners for promoting our way of life throughout the year,

along with promoting local discernment events.

1. Where possible, invitations to speak in schools during Easter retreats, National Vocations Week, etc. should be sought.
2. Attending University Programs and Conferences, maintaining good relations and connections with University Campus Min- isters is important.
3. Maintaining lists of potential contacts received through inquiries and vocation mailings. (In some Units the Vocation Ministers are changed often and it is useful to have a special database with necessary information about potential candidates.)
4. The Vocation Ministers could provide opportunities for ongoing discernment and Inquiry Programs.
5. Our Redemptorist presence at novenas and missions is the best witness for candidates (of course it is not only the job for the Vocation Team).
6. Spiritual direction and the ministry of the sacrament of recon- ciliation for our candidates are an integral part of this.
7. Collaboration with many different Catholic Youth Groups is also vital.

### Collaboration with the local Church and other Religious Com- munities in the Promotion of Vocations

The Church calls all of us to collaborate in establishing and promoting a ‘culture of vocations’ in an increasingly secular con- temporary world. The Redemptorist Coordinator of Vocation Min- istry is not in competition with such efforts, but will benefit from collaborating with other priests and religious men and women in this ministry.

* 1. Collaboration with “The Provincial Youth Secretary” especially about the organization and activity of pastoral work with youth in the Unit. The Vocation Team could have a special role in organizing such events e.g. prayer and cultural meetings, sports competitions.
  2. Promotion of our work through initiatives undertaken by Na- tional Conferences of Bishops, such as their websites and Voca- tion Congresses and Youth Days.
  3. Maintaining memberships with inter-congregational Vocation Teams in regions.
  4. Participation in gatherings and conferences hosted by the Na- tional Church and its National Vocations Committee.

# 3. Vocation Accompaniment

### initial Contact with Possible Candidates

Possible candidates for Redemptorist Apostolic Life will make contact in a variety of ways. Each Unit must develop a concrete approach.

1. Many of our contacts come through enquiries made via the internet, including contacts from all parts of the world. These enquiries we can refer to Redemptorists in their own country.
2. Some contact is made with young people through our ministries and apostolate.
3. Presence and connection to University Campus Ministry Con-

ferences for Students is very fruitful.

1. Parish Visits – Advertise Retreats and Vocation Discernment Evenings, and activities with youth groups or school groups.
2. There are many good opportunities to start contact with young people interested in religious life during Catechetical classes.
3. There are many opportunities to meet young people in our shrines and sanctuaries. They are privileged places for vocation work.

### discernment with Serious Candidates

1. Experience teaches that a gentle and sustained contact works best. We could try to meet candidates in ordinary everyday life. We can invite them to attend Redemptorist activities, to visit our communities, and to read something about our life and charism. But at first it is better to visit with candidates, one-on-one, in a semi-social manner (conversation, meal, coffee).
2. The candidate should have a Spiritual Director. It is often better that this Director is a Redemptorist, but this is not a require- ment.
3. Encourage participation in youth ministry activities and observe

the candidate.

1. Through meetings and conversations, we can assist the candidate to discern the direction in which God is calling him.
2. We can utilize other confreres (not only from the Vocation Team) to be a point of contact and wisdom.
3. Different kinds of retreats suggested:
   1. Spiritual retreats (4-5 days) during winter and summer breaks for boys and young men who are discerning their vocations.
   2. SERVE: Summer Endeavour in a Redemptorist Volunteer Experience which is a two to six week program that ocuses on teaching young adults about Redemptorist Spirituality and service to the poor and abandoned.
   3. Year End Retreats: emphasis on Eastern and Redemptorist spirituality.
      1. Redemptorists can invite candidates to spend time in the community nearest their place of residence (especially where it is a problem with long distances for travel in Unit to go to the Formation Houses).
      2. Vocation Campa two or three day meeting in the style of camping: going outside and staying in a natural environ- ment, preparing their own meals, praying, singing, leading celebrations, etc. The subjects include vocation work and personal advice. The program is only for boys**.**
4. Days of recollection about vocation in different Redemptorist Centers during the school year.
5. For our candidates - meetings with our seminarians or com- munities (so-called: ‘Open Doors’, ‘Come and See Weekends and Evenings’). These can help to provide an introduction to Redemptorist life, spirituality and mission, along with the For- mation Program.
6. Regular correspondence with those who are thinking about religious life (letters, e-mails, phone calls, etc.).
7. Regular and frequent visits to homes of our candidates. It helps discernment to meet the social and religious environment of the candidate.
8. Encourage participation in a local Redemptorist Parish or in Redemptorist Community Events, or Redemptorist youth and young adult ministry.
9. Candidates could be offered an opportunity to live in community for a week, a month, or a year.
10. Encourage reading of recommended books.
11. Ask candidates to write about their sense of vocation, to write about their reading material etc.
12. Possibly permit them to sit in on Philosophy and Theology classes.
13. Spend a day with contemplative sisters, especially the Redemp- toristines.
14. Days of Redemptorist Youth or ‘Summer Gatherings’ during vacation time. We could invite youth from our parishes for common prayer, reflection, sports, and times of recreation.
15. Encourage and participate in movements where young aspir- ants are advised, and can find a program of activities in order to discern their vocation. These movements often meet during the whole year for a couple of hours every week.

### Process of Preparation for Admission to Formation

1. Test the candidates’ aptitude to work with and respect lay peo- ple by assigning them to work under the responsibility of a lay person.
2. Live-In Inquiry Program – 1 to 8 month opportunity for Con- tacts and Inquirers to live in a Redemptorist Community, while they continue to work, go to school etc. This is a supervised discernment experience where they share in our life from the ‘inside’, and have the opportunity to grow and challenge their understanding of what Redemptorist life is about and how they themselves can participate in that life in the future.
3. As a more intense approach to the application process emerges, the Inquirer undergoes a more comprehensive Assessment of his whole lifestyle which will serve as part of the recommen- dation process to the Acceptance Committee for Formation. This Assessment is facilitated by the Coordinator of Vocation Ministry.

# inculturation and Local Context

### Knowledge of the local situation

Many of the opportunities, strategies, etc, listed above have been beneficial in different Units. We have different experiences in different Units of our Congregation. However, a few points should be highlighted.

We should remember *“that the best and most successful ways of promoting vocations are our own apostolic zeal, the example of our life and constant prayer” (CC. 79-80).*

1. Personal contact with candidates remains the best way to com- municate.
2. Once initial contact is made, we can invite them to local events, for extended visits and dialogues.
3. The opportunities that seem most fruitful in the discernment process are also the ones where young men come to meet more Redemptorists – to learn, listen, share, and understand their personal calling through the experience of other Confreres. The same is true when we are able to bring together candidates from across the country or the Unit for retreats, meetings or other programs to have them learn from each other.
4. Weekend Retreats are good opportunities as well, because most retreats take place in the Rectory or Community Residence of the Redemptorists, thereby exposing them to a broader and local sense of the Redemptorists, apart from just that of the Coordinator of Vocation Ministry.

### Target Groups and Effective Promotion

In some Units, the Vocation Teams have good knowledge from which group of young people they have the biggest number of candidates e.g. altar-boys groups; mission preaching; parishes; RYVM; new immigrants especially in the first world. This knowledge is necessary to work more effectively.

# Conclusion

We must remember that these examples are just suggestions and an exchange of experiences about vocation work. We have different challenges and situations in different parts of the world.

It will also assist newly appointed Vocation Directors and other staff that general principles apply in every Unit

* + We need structures and personnel for Vocation Ministry
  + Vocation promotion must be a priority in every Unit
  + Vocation Accompaniment is essential
  + Vocation ministry must be adapted to the local situation

# CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE OF CANDIDATES

**TO RELiGiOUS LiFE**

**introduction - Opering remarks**

There is no magic template that can give a vocation promoter, formator or formation personnel the infallible litmus test for ac- cepting or rejecting a candidate. We are human beings who make judgments, most we hope are good and right, but there are others that we see over time were mistakes. Second, all vocations are a “work of the Lord” it is His invitation and His grace that allows the formation process to be effective. We attempt to cooperate with this grace with our own strengths and limitations as well as our sense of responsibility to the candidate and to the Congregation.

This being said, there are some criteria that can be helpful and give guidance for discernment. The following attempts to list some of these criteria for acceptance. This does not pretend to be an ex- haustive listing and will never replace experience, intuition, and common sense.

Experience comes with time from working with candidates, hearing many life stories, and learning from errors. Intuition is that gut feeling, that sixth sense that gives us insight into a personality. Although not infallible, intuition is an important source of infor- mation in making a decision and should not be discarded as “un- scientific.” Common sense is the ability to bring our experience and intuition together as part of a prayerful discernment. Finally, accepting or rejecting a candidate is not something done in isola- tion but should be a conversation with the Lord and with another or others.

# The selection process

The selection process is usually carried out at several points in time during the formation process. The first is usually before admission to postulancy, the second before first profession, the third before final vows and for those who are becoming priests before ordination. This paper will focus on the admissions proc- ess to postulancy.

#### *Norms for admission*

Each Unit of the Congregation should have within their Ratio Formationis clear written norms for the admission of candidates to postulancy. These norms should be based on behavioral criteria that are easily recorded by the vocation promoter and/ or formation team. If there are doubts about a candidate, the candidate should not be accepted. The guiding principle should always be the potential impact a candidate might have on the community. A second principle is that formation is not a place for long term therapy. Any serious issues should be dealt with prior to admission.

# initial contact and inquiry phase

Initial contacts come from many places. Some are referred by confreres, other religious men or women, or friends of the Re- demptorists. Some come because of a web search, some from their experience with individual Redemptorists, others from their involvement in works sponsored by the Congregation, or through the ministry of confreres.

This initial enquiry is usually followed by contact with a voca- tion promoter. General information is given about the Congrega-

tion but information is also gleaned about the candidate – name, age, email address, education history, work history, and what about the Redemptorists makes him think he might be interested in joining.

If at first glance the individual has the basic qualities of a po- tential candidate and the enquirer indicates an ongoing interest a discernment process can begin. This can lead to a variety of meetings, retreats or live in experiences. The purpose at this stage is to develop a relationship with the candidate and for the candidate to know more about religious life and Redemptorist living. Most Units of the Congregation agree that this stage of initial contact should last at least one year.

Generally speaking, applicants must give evidence of healthy emotional balance, physical health, good moral character, solid conviction of faith, and proper motivation. The applicant should also have a mastery of the language in which formation will take place. It is important that candidates coming from other cultures receive adequate help to enter into the cultural context and language where initial formation will occur.

### Psychological assessment

Apsychological assessment is usually given prior to acceptance into a formation program. This assessment should be given by a competent professional and take into account the language and cultural background of the candidate. For a more comprehensive discussion on psychological assessment see the section on “Psy- chological Assessments of Candidates for Religious Life.”

### Admissions’ Process

Applicants for postulancy must go through a careful and thor- ough admissions process. This would include a frank discussion

of life experiences. What is their ability for self-disclosure? What is their level of insight and self-knowledge? How do they deal with authority?

Areas covered in the interviews should include: family history, academic and work experiences, spiritual experiences, a sexual history, a relationship history, who are his best friends and what does he do with them, how frequently does he keep contact with them, is his present lifestyle consistent with someone seeking to enter religious life? The applicant should give evidence of having lived celibately for at least two years before entering the formation program. If the candidate was sexually abused as a minor or young adolescent, this should be investigated by a professional to see if adequate resolution has taken place.

### Assessing motivation

Assessing motivation is an essential requirement. Some can- didates come seeking an education and will shrewdly play the game. Others are convinced they have a vocation and will resist anyone telling them otherwise. Still others will see religious life as a protection against unemployment, confronting homosexu- ality, and avoiding difficulties of sexual relationships or see religious life as a social promotion. Another group will seem much less certain than other candidates. Often such candidates seem more in touch with their inner self and are aware of am- biguity and complexity in making life choices. As a result this group is often more open to discernment and the help of others in discovering the will of God.

### References and Records

Other information needed prior to admission into postulancy is an up to date and thorough medical examination, letters of

recommendation (at least one from the priest where he attends mass), academic and sacramental records, and the results of a psychological assessment (see the section on Psychological As- sessments of Candidates for Religious Life). If the candidate has been married there must be proof of freedom to enter religious life. Many Units of the Congregation also require a criminal background check.

# Specific issues

There are a number of specific issues that arise in the acceptance of candidates. The following may provide some suggestions in dealing with these.

### Age range for admission

As a rule the optimum age range for candidates is 18 to 35. Younger than 18 would generally mean the candidate has not completed his secondary school. Unless the Unit has a minor seminary a candidate would have to have matriculated from secondary school before beginning philosophical studies. In some Units where secondary schooling is very inadequate, a propaedeutic year(s) may be needed to strengthen foundational skills for higher studies. In many Units of the Congregation candidates have to have completed a first level university or post secondary degree before applying.

Older candidates often bring a formed spirituality and signifi- cant life experiences but may be less susceptible to a formation process. Usually after 35 a candidate’s personality is less likely to change. It would be especially important to examine these candidates for flexibility, openness to direction and readiness to receive correction or counsel from authority figures.

### Family of the Candidate

It is also important during this time for the vocation promoter to visit the family of the candidate to get a sense of the candidate’s relationship with his parents and siblings, a sense of the health of the family, and the family’s attitudes towards religious life and priesthood. Since many candidates today come from frag- mented families it is important to know the relationship of the candidate to his natural father and his biological mother. A hos- tile relationship towards the father or an enmeshed relationship with the mother may need further exploration by a professional. The important question to answer with a family visit is whose vocation is it? Are the parents encouraging a free choice? Are they resisting their son’s choice or overly eager for the young man to enter?

### Financial issues

During the interview process an evaluation should be made of the candidate’s indebtedness, his ability to handle money, his spending patterns, and his use of credit cards. What is his and his family’s financial background and how might this influence his decisions? What expectations does his family have on him for financial support? Does he show an aptitude for good stew- ardship, living a simple lifestyle and the absence of attitudes of entitlement?

### Medical Report (including HiV testing and any health issues)

The medical examination should include a test for HIV and drug use. Any evidence of being HIV positive or the presence of illegal substances disqualifies the applicant from admission. As well, any serious physical health issues that would impair

adequate performance of ministry or entail unreasonable health costs should be factors excluding acceptance.

### Alcohol, drug dependency and Other Addictions

What if a candidate is alcohol or drug dependent? Some studies indicate that about one out of every twelve adults abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. Other studies indicate that problem drinking is most prevalent in young adults between 18 and 25. Since this is the age range of most of our candidates, questioning drink- ing patterns, drunkenness, party going and amount of alcohol consumed during a month’s time is important data.

Alcoholism is a serious disease and cannot be ignored. If a can- didate admits to having had a drinking problem he must show signs that he has been sober and stable for at least two years.

Experimenting with so-called “recreational” drugs (marijuana or hashish) does not automatically eliminate a candidate. Careful investigation of the circumstances and frequency are important to determine if this is a pattern of social rebellion or part of adolescent curiosity. Usually the use of “hard” drugs (any drug other than those mentioned above) would eliminate a candidate from admission.

Today other addictions are surfacing that become part of the world of young people. This is particularly true of internet ad- dictions where the impersonal world of computers distances a person from the real world.

Questioning a candidate’s use of the internet, the time spent online, the kind of websites he frequents are important pieces of information. Other addictions to be aware of are pornography and gambling.

### Sexuality and Celibacy (including orientation issues)

Candidates entering religious life and priesthood must have a healthy understanding of sexuality and celibacy. Care needs to be taken to have a thorough sexual history of the candidate. Are there any indications of being sexually abused? Have they been too sexually active or totally indifferent to sex? All of these need further investigation especially with regard to living celibacy in a healthy integration of sexuality. If one has been abused it is important to know the impact this has had on the person. If one has been too active or indifferent and asexual both can be problematic for a faithful living out of sexuality for celibacy.

Care must also be taken to investigate the candidate’s pattern of sexual attraction and how he has come to terms with his attrac- tions. What indications does he have that he can live celibacy? Has he made attempts at living celibately, if so for how long? Generally speaking a candidate should be living a celibate lifestyle of at least two years before entering postulancy.

Who are his friends and what does he do with his friends? Who is his best friend and what does he share with him or her? What are his attitudes towards women?

It is important to open the door to discuss sex role models, sexual stereotyping and expectations about sexuality. Which member of the family is he closest to? From whom did he learn about the facts of life and about sex? What did he learn about sexuality from his family?

Has the candidate been sexually intimate with other males? How often and what does this mean about his sexual identity? How does the candidate define his pattern of sexual attraction? For candidates who see themselves as homosexual or gay – how

do they see themselves living in a male community and living celibately?

For further discussion on the topic of developing norms for ac- cepting homosexual candidates the appendix may offer some help.

### Recent converts, recent conversion experiences, recent returnees to the faith

Especially careful screening should be given to applicants who are recent converts to Catholicism. Some would suggest that at least two years should pass before acceptance into the forma- tion program. Equally true is the case of a candidate who has experienced a sudden conversion that seems to precipitate a vocation, or has had unusual mystical experiences. One should be extremely careful of candidates who speak of unusual reli- gious experiences as these may be soft signs of schizophrenia or schizoid personality. Finally, those who have been away from the regular practice of their faith should not enter a program before their faith has been integrated with suitable spiritual direction and regular attendance at Eucharist.

### Applicants from other programs

If an applicant has previously been in a seminary or formation program, care must be taken to get information from these institutions. If these records indicate problems, there must be assurance that the problems have been resolved. In general these candidates are not a good risk. This is especially true if the candidate has been dismissed from another institute. It is important to proceed with caution and have enough time given to carefully evaluate and check into the background.

### Other legal and canonical concerns

In many jurisdictions a criminal background check must be completed on each applicant. Any evidence of criminal sexual activity with a minor automatically excludes someone from admission. Other canonical issues that Canon Law states must be addressed before admission include: the candidate does not hold a position forbidden to clerics; that he has not committed apostasy, heresy, or schism; that he has not committed homi- cide, cooperated in an abortion, mutilated himself or another, attempted suicide or simulated an act reserved to priests or bishops.

# APPENDIX

**dEVELOPinG nORMS FOR THE AdMiSSiOn OF PERSOnS WiTH HOMOSEXUAL**

**TENDENCIES**

It is important that every Province develop a clear policy on the admission of persons with homosexual tendencies. This policy will be a great help to Vocation Directors, Formators at every level, and to individual candidates to our Apostolic Life. This policy should be developed by the Formation Secretariat of the (V) Province, in consultation with experts, and it should be approved by the EPC.

During the last twenty years there has been unprecedented de- bate in the political, legal and theological arenas about the phe- nomenon of homosexuality. It is important for formation secretari- ats and formation personnel not to reach premature conclusions. Sexual orientation issues often carry cultural biases and fears. Such discussions are best talked over in an ambience of compassion, re- spect, integrity and fairness.

Vocation directors and those who accompany prospective candidates need to be clear what a homosexual orientation is and whether a prospective candidate is truly homosexual. Some young candidates may have doubts about their sexual identity; others may have been sexually abused by a male or seduced into homosexual behaviours; others may be fearful of intimacies with women; still others may have had some homosexual experiences because of cu- riosity, all male environments, the influence of alcohol or drugs; and others may have had occasional fantasies of a homosexual na- ture, have been curious and sexually excited by homosexual inter- net sites or felt a response to other sources of homosexual erotic arousals. None of these necessarily mean that an individual is ho-

mosexual. Often the help of a professional will be needed to assess the nature of the homosexual concerns or assist a prospective can- didate to own his true sexual orientation.

Contrary to many popular assumptions, research would indicate that the actual prevalence in the general population of exclusive ho- mosexual orientation (exclusive attraction to same-sex individuals) is around 2 to 3 percent; while 7 to 8 percent have a predominant homosexual orientation. There is another group that think they are homosexual but this is a false identity that has been influenced by social context, personal self-doubt and developmental issues. This latter group probably needs professional assistance to unblock any arrested development and to grow into a secure sexual identity.

Hormonal levels of testosterone are associated with sexual de- sire and sexual response. People with high levels of testosterone are easily aroused and desire sex often. People with medium and low levels have less sexual fantasy, desire or arousal. There are those who have no sexual thoughts, fantasies and desires and are called “asexual.” High level individuals are less likely to be able to live a healthy celibate life without a great deal of tension and frustra- tion. Asexual people are also problematic because of their inability to achieve any level of intimacy with men or women. People with medium and lower levels are more likely, with good spiritual and psychological accompaniment, the grace of God and a lively life of prayer, to achieve a chaste and celibate lifestyle for the Kingdom. This is true of both heterosexual and homosexual candidates.

An exclusive or predominant homosexual orientation as such need not automatically exclude an individual from admission to our formation programs and Apostolic Life. This position is sup- ported in the document: “New Vocations for a New Europe” pub- lished after a congress on vocations to the priesthood and religious life held in Rome in 1997 and confirmed by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Congregation for Oriental Churches and

the Congregation for Institutes for Consecrated Life and for Socie- ties of Apostolic Life. The document was published in 1998 by the Pontifical Work for Ecclesiastical Vocations. The document says that three conditions must be present before acceptance: 1. There should be an awareness of the dynamics of his sexual orientation,

2. that he is willing to struggle against these tendencies, and 3. he has achieved control over these tendencies.

In an earlier Vatican document, “*Potissimum Institutioni*” (February 02, 1990) (Directives on formation for those in Religious Institutes), when referring to acceptance of homosexual candidates states: “it is not those who have such tendencies but those who have not succeeded in dominating such tendencies” (#39) that should be excluded.

In November, 2005, the Vatican published a document entitled: “Concerning the Criteria of Vocational Discernment Regarding Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of their Admission to Seminaries and Holy Orders”. The key paragraph of the docu- ment states: “This Dicastry deems it necessary to clearly affirm that the Church, even while deeply respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to Seminary or Holy Orders those who are actively homosexual, have deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or support the so-called gay culture.”

It is clear that the policy to be developed by each Unit must deny admission to a formation program to any applicants who are actively homosexual. The same is true for any applicants who are heterosexually active. Before admission to a formation program, an applicant must demonstrate that he is able to seriously undertake a celibate life and lifestyle. This usually means living a celibate life for at least two years prior to acceptance.

The same is true for those who support the ‘so-called gay cul- ture’. This means those men who cannot feel at ease anywhere else

but with other gay men, and who have a driven need to frequent gay environments in order to socialize with other gay men. This behaviour could indicate an un-integrated sexuality and a lack of affective maturity. Supporting the ‘so-called gay culture’ does not mean those who minister to men involved in this ‘so-called gay culture’ or those who speak out against sexual discrimination. Both of these activities nevertheless need careful scrutiny by those who accept candidates to our formation programs. The same careful dis- cernment is needed for heterosexual candidates who are involved in an unhealthy heterosexual culture, which might be indicated by an excessive preoccupation with women and socialization in bars, clubs or similar venues.

It is less clear what is meant by ‘deep-seated homosexual ten- dencies’. Some understand this to mean simply ‘homosexual orien- tation’, while others understand this to refer to the centrality of the homosexual orientation in the life of the person in question, and the inability to exercise appropriate control over one’s sexual feelings and actions. The Vatican document itself is highly nuanced. It is significant that the document does not use the commonly accepted term ‘homosexual orientation’.

Timothy Radcliffe, OP, the former General of the Domini- cans states: “Perhaps (deep-seated tendencies) is best understood as meaning that someone whose sexual orientation is so central to his self-perception as to be obsessive, dominating his imagina- tion.” William Barry, SJ, (priest-psychiatrist) agrees: “I interpret the words of the paragraph about ‘deep-seated tendencies’ to refer to people whose life seems to be focused on sexuality, who seem obsessed with it, who are on the lookout for every sexual innuendo in conversations, and not to men and women who are comfortable with their sexuality, and able to love unselfishly and to work effec- tively alone and with others.”

A person who is so obsessed with sexuality (whether homo- sexual or heterosexual) that he cannot control his desires, arrive at integration, and come to affective maturity should not be admitted to priesthood or religious life. Such ‘deep-seated tendencies’ ex- clude an individual from admission to our formation programs.

The key issues expressed in the 2005 document are the level of affective, moral and spiritual maturity, the ability to relate to men and women, a sense of personal integration, and the ability to live a healthy celibate life and lifestyle. If one has these qualities there should be no reason to refuse such a candidate admission to a formation program.

In the development of a clear policy on the admission of per- sons with homosexual tendencies, the Units are encouraged to take seriously the Vatican declarations, the interpretations of experts, and the experience of our Apostolic Life.

# PSYCHOLOGiCAL ASSESSMEnTS OF CAndidATES FOR RELiGiOUS LiFE

More and more Units throughout the Congregation are making use of psychologists and psychological testing to help in the screen- ing of candidates. Since most formators are not psychologists, en- tering into the world of testing and psychological reports may be overwhelming and confusing. It may be helpful, therefore, to offer some guidelines on the use of psychological testing in the forma- tion program. The following document attempts to answer some questions often asked regarding psychological testing.

The document is divided into two parts: the first part offers some questions and answers useful for a formation secretariat and formators or formation teams when considering testing. The second part offers an outline of expectations formators can share with a psychologist.

# Part One – Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Formators, Formation Teams and Formation Sec- retariats

1. **First, what is a psychological assessment?**

The formal name for psychological tests is psychological as- sessment. The reason is that assessment is a broader term reflecting the fact that results from tests always need to be interpreted. As well, assessment indicates that tests are not the only criterion for a psychological profile of a candidate.

Psychological tests fall into several categories:

* + **Achievement and aptitude tests:** Achievement tests attempt to measure how much you know about a certain topic (i.e., your achieved knowledge), such as mathematics or spelling. Aptitude tests attempt to measure how much of a capacity you have (i.e., your aptitude) to master material in a particular area, such as mechanical relationships.
  + **intelligence tests** attempt to measure your intelligence, or your basic ability to understand the world around you, as- similate its functioning, and apply this knowledge to enhance the quality of your life.
  + **Occupational or vocational tests** attempt to match your

interests with the interests of persons in known careers.

* + **Personality tests** attempt to measure your basic personality style. Two of the most well-known personality tests are the MMPI made up of several hundred “yes or no” questions and the Rorschach – the inkblot test – composed of several cards of inkblots to which you give a description of the pictures you see when looking at the blots.
  + **Specific clinical tests** attempt to measure specific clinical matters, such as your current level of anxiety or depres- sion.
  + **in depth clinical interviews** attempt to discover to a greater extent the experiences and history of an individual.

For the purposes of screening candidates for religious life, only **personality tests**, **intelligence tests**, **occupational tests** and **in-depth clinical interviews** are used. At times, because of specific concerns of formators, achievement and aptitude tests are request- ed, for example for brother candidates. At other times, because of learning or reading disabilities, specific testing will be required.

It is important to mention that psychological tests are often **culturally biased**. This is especially true of personality and intel- ligence tests. When using tests for candidates it is important to keep in mind the need for culture fair tests. Psychological testing should always be in the first language of the candidate, whenever possible. If this is not possible, there are tests that claim to be culture fair or try to take into account cross cultural bias. These should always be preferred over tests where the candidate is placed at a disadvantage because of language skills or cultural difference.

Some formators mistakenly think that the Myers Briggs In- ventory or the Enneagram are psychological tests. While these in- struments may be helpful in gaining self-knowledge they are not suitable tools in a psychological assessment. The Myers Briggs is called an “ipsative” test. It is based on one’s perception of self and not based on norms. In other words, it is not based on research done with groups of people but rather on Jungian theory. The Enneagram comes from a philosophical base and is not a scientific instrument. This does not mean these do not have value in other contexts, how- ever, within a psychological assessment they lack the rigors of sci- entific research.

# What is the Purpose of a Psychological Assessment?

The primary purpose of psychological assessment is to indi- cate the level of adjustment, maturity and motivation of a candi- date. It endeavors to answer the question: is the candidate intelli- gent enough, mature enough, sufficiently adjusted and motivated to undertake religious life? Accepting the principle that “grace builds on nature,” psychological assessment can measure the suitability of this particular “nature” for growth in “grace.” (Paraphrase of a comment by Dr. J. Gill, S.J.)

Psychological assessment can also provide formators with the strengths, underdeveloped strengths and weaknesses of a candi- date’s personality. This may be of particular use in developing a growth plan during the initial period of formation.

Some ask too much of psychological assessment while others see it as nothing more than a requirement. The value of assess- ments probably lies between the two extremes. There are a number of factors that enter into the acceptance of a candidate into a reli- gious community. One means of assisting in this discernment is the data from a psychological assessment. If an assessment is done properly it can provide information which may not otherwise be acquired. Personal observations can be clarified and motivations can be evaluated.

An assessment can help clarify levels of development, matu- rity, adjustment, influences of the family on one’s personal or so- cial development, sexual integration, sense of personal identity as well as some idea of the individual’s self-image. An assessment can never stand alone and must always be tempered by reports from people who know or have lived with the applicant, as well as per- sonal documents, personal interviews, the person’s spiritual life, his religious practices and his understanding of vocation.

# At what stage of formation do you ask for a psy- chological assessment?

Some Units of the Congregation see the advantage of more than one assessment during the time of initial formation. Some for- mation secretariats and formators see the advantage of a less inten- sive assessment prior to acceptance into postulancy. This would be an interview to assess motivation and basic psychological health. There would then be a more comprehensive assessment prior to en-

tering novitiate or prior to first vows. Some Units see an advantage in having a further assessment during the theologate to see patterns of growth and areas for further development. What is important is to keep in mind that a psychological assessment done on a 19 or 20 year old may not be an accurate indication of the personality struc- ture when that individual is 24 or 25. People change dramatically in young adulthood and one would hope that formation also influ- ences changes. A second assessment can help see these changes and recommend new goals for further personal growth, as well as highlight strengths, gifts and any problematic areas.

# What should a thorough psychological assessment include?

A thorough psychological assessment should include the following

aspects:

* + A look at the family of origin (its health and the patterns of relationships) especially the individual’s relationship with his family and his parents;
  + A thorough sexual history and analysis of one’s capacity for healthy interpersonal relationships
  + A survey of religious experiences, practice and religious vocational development
  + An effort to understand the individual’s motivation
  + An investigation of emotional stability, intellectual abilities and personal maturity
  + A look at the strengths and gifts of the personality
  + A summary of areas for growth and problematic areas

# What does a typical psychological assessment look like?

A typical psychological assessment has the following three ele- ments:

1. In depth interviews
   * On one’s family of origin
     + What was/is the health of the family?
     + How did the parents relate to their parents? How did the parents meet? Was the candidate born out of wedlock?
     + Were there any problems in the family – alcoholism, divorce, separations, deaths of siblings, death of par- ents, mental illness?
     + Parental style of communication and discipline in the home?
     + Practice of religion and religious practices in the home?
     + How does/did the candidate relate to his mother? His father?
     + What role did the candidate play in his family?
     + Has the individual separated from his family, taken charge of his life?
   * Psychosexual development
     + A thorough sexual history
     + Are there any elements in the history that are out of the norm – such as abuse, too sexually active or asexual attitudes?
     + Does he know his pattern of sexual attractions?
     + Quality of relationships with girlfriends, male peers?

* Attitudes towards women?
* What does it mean for him to be celibate?
* Religious experiences and practices
  + What is the history of religious practice? – life of prayer, sacramental life, stability in his faith prac- tices
  + Any mystical experiences? (beware of unusual reli- gious experiences or immature mysticism)
  + What is his sense of vocation?
  + What are his views of authority?
* Motivation
  + Why does he want to be a religious?
  + How does he see religious life? What is his vision of Church?
  + Why does he want religious life now?
  + Has he tried to enter another community or diocesan seminary? Why did he leave?
  + Is there a desire to help people, a concern about social justice?
  + Work history – debts?
  + If he was rejected by the community how would he feel? What would you do?
  + Has he ever worked with a team?
* Health history

1. Administration of psychological tests
   * At least two standardized personality tests – with norms based on the culture of the person.
   * An assessment of intellectual ability (a culture-fair test),

and

* + If possible, one projective test (e.g. Rorschach)

1. Follow up interview
   * Review report with candidate
   * Sign release of information
   * Give the report to designated formator or formation teams and meet with the formator or formation teams, if neces- sary

# 6. What Psychological issues prevent acceptance or raise doubts?

The following issues would, in most cases, prevent acceptance:

1. Clinical disorders – Epilepsy generally needs a psychiatric evaluation to determine severity and manageability. One would not accept a candidate if there has been a previous psychotic episode, manic-depressive states, schizophrenia or pre-psychotic states. (Pre-psychotic states might be evident in overly pious activities and withdrawn, eccentric behaviors).
2. Personality disorders – Severe personality disorders should be cause for refusal, especially anti-social disorders, obsessive-compul- sive disorders, and scrupulosity. Eating disorders are problematic.
3. Alcoholism, drug dependency, gambling addiction, shopping or

credit card addictions.

1. Sexual problems – active homosexual or heterosexual behaviors, any abnormal sexual acting out – for example use of internet por- nography, transvestite behaviors or fetishes.

The following might raise serious doubts:

1. Other phenomena – for example, interpersonal relationships marked by hostility or anxiety; passive aggressive behavior; lack of impulse control; problems with anger; hyper-sensitivity and suspicious personality; problems with stability at work; consistent unemployment.

# What questions need to be asked of a psychologist beforehand?

Religious formators or formation teams should have some clar- ity about what they want from a psychologist. There are questions the formator must ask the psychologist before hiring him or her to do an assessment of a candidate. Clarity about what is wanted and what a formator or formation team is looking for in the follow up report are essential to a good psychological assessment. The forma- tor determines the scope and the depth of the assessment **NOT** the psychologist. Be certain you know what you want and seek out the person who can respond to your needs.

When looking for a psychologist the following questions might help:

* Does the psychologist have any difficulty assessing candidates for religious life?
* Does he/she have any prejudices about religious life?
* How does he/she do psychological assessments?
* Does the psychologist include in-depth interviews as well as standardized testing?
* Will there be a written report at the end of the process?
  + Is the psychologist willing to do a family of origin interview, a psycho-sexual inventory, a look at motivation for religious life and the psychological health of religious experiences? (Details are generally not for the report but for the psychologist to make a clinical judgment)
  + Is the psychologist willing to do an intelligence and personality assessment?
  + Can the psychologist in his report outline the emotional stability, psychological maturity, motivation, capacity for interpersonal relationships, and relationship with authority figures, flexibility and adaptability of the candidate?
  + Is the psychologist also prepared to point out the strengths of the personality, underdeveloped strengths and areas for growth?
  + At the end of the process is the psychologist willing to sit and go over the test results with the candidate and with you?

# What should you look for in a Psychological Report?

First of all do not be intimidated by a psychological report or any technical jargon. Remember that any raw scores given for a test are within a range. Insist that a psychologist write a report that covers YOUR concerns and questions.

* Does the report respect confidentiality by avoiding too much information about family history, sexual history, or religious experiences? It should be enough to highlight areas of concern and state only what is necessary to assist in making an informed judgment.
* Does the report fit with your knowledge of the candidate?
* Does the report clearly outline what YOU are looking for?
* Does the report answer YOUR questions about the suitability of the candidate for religious life?
* Does the report help you in arriving at or confirm your decision to accept a candidate for religious life?
* Does the report include recommendations for areas of growth or underdeveloped strengths that could be included as personal goals for formation?

**in closing**, it is important to keep in mind that psychological assessments are meant as an aid for formators. They do not speak with absolute accuracy about a person but only give hypotheses that may be more or less accurate. Input from many sources is needed when making a decision about acceptance of a candidate for re- ligious life. Like any diagnostic tool, whether in medicine or in psychology, there may be more than one conclusion from the same data. It is the responsibility of the formation team to use psycho- logical assessments wisely, prudently and with common sense.

# Part Two

**information for a formation secretariat or formator to share with the psychologist doing the assessment.**

1. **Elements you might like the psychological assessment to include:**
   * A look at the family of origin (its health and the patterns of relationships) especially the individual’s relationship with his family and his parents;
   * A thorough sexual history and analysis of one’s capacity for healthy interpersonal relationships
   * A survey of religious experiences, practice and religious vocational development
   * An effort to understand the individual’s motivation
   * An investigation of emotional stability, intellectual abilities and personal maturity
   * A look at the strengths and gifts of the personality
   * A summary of areas for growth and problematic areas
   * To achieve these elements it is necessary to have in-depth, structured interviews; the administration of at least two stand- ardized personality tests with norms based on the culture of the candidate; and, an assessment of the intellectual abilities of the candidate. At the end of the process a written report is expected. Review the report with the candidate, have a signed release of information taken and give the report to the designated authority. If necessary or desirable, arrange a meeting with the authority and the candidate.

# Elements you might want the psychologist to look for in a candidate:

Emotional stability – ability to withstand the stresses of life, balance, at ease with self, not habitually troubled, distressed or disturbed; good control of feelings and desires; cheerful and opti- mistic; good sense of humor; self-accepting; knows what needs to change and what needs to be accepted; healthy attitudes towards life and sexuality.

Psychological maturity – functioning at an adult level; has a capacity for work; able to make decisions; willing to accept respon- sibility for one’s decisions, has initiative; has leadership abilities suitable for religious life; is flexible and willing to listen or change; a certain degree of independence; a sense of who he is; a sense of purpose and direction in life; adaptable to circumstances; capable of facing change with ease; non-defensive. How transparent and open is he? How flexible is he?

Motivation – a healthy living spirituality; generosity; the abil- ity to give of himself, his time, his work; honesty; openness; a healthy understanding and acceptance of authority; a willingness to work; ability to follow through; transparency.

Capacity for affective interpersonal relationships – genuine interest in people and their problems; sensitivity and concern for others; exhibits human warmth, acceptance; is approachable and amiable; able to communicate thoughts and feelings; is able to maintain confidence.

Intelligence – a certain minimum of intellectual ability; com- mon sense; prudence; ability to think; be creative; broad interests; culturally literate

Good Judgment – ability to make a balanced assessment of

a human situation; ability to apply general principles; not carried away by emotional pressures; practical and tactful

Physical Integrity and Health – adequate health to perform the work

# Elements you might find helpful in a psychological report

Highlight of findings on the above personality traits.

Avoid too much information and detail about family history, sexual history, or religious experiences. It is sufficient to highlight areas of concern and state only what is necessary to assist in mak- ing an informed judgment.

Give the results and scores of intelligence testing

Give the results and interpretations of all personality tests and

structured interviews.

In your opinion is the candidate suitable for religious life? Include recommendations for areas of growth or underdevel-

oped strengths that could be included as personal goals for forma- tion.

# Closing comments

The formation secretariat and the formation personnel may want to establish who has access to the psychological reports of a candidate and how long the report is kept on file. In some countries access is determined by laws of rights to privacy and only those specifically named in a signed release can read or have a copy of

the report. This is also true for the length of time a report can stay in an individual’s file. Clear policies can prevent misuse of psycho- logical reports and protect the good name of a candidate. Generally speaking a psychological report on a candidate is for the forma- tion team and not for the provincial and his council. However, the provincial has the right to know that a psychological assessment has been done and whether or not major issues were uncovered. A record of this communication from the formation director can and in some cases should be kept on file.

Formation personnel have several choices of what to do after a report has been received on a candidate. To take full advantage of an assessment, the candidate with the formation director should use the report to establish growth goals and consider how to build on one’s strengths. The formation director can also decide what would be the best approach to accompany the individual in his weakness- es. The scope of this paper does not allow for a full development of these themes. However, reference to other sections in this manual on accompaniment, colloquia, spiritual direction and development

of personal growth plans may be of help.

# ACCOMPAniMEnT

**introduction**: Accompaniment is the secret of good forma- tion. The work of the formator is to mirror the on-going process of self development and growth which should be part of the whole life of the Congregation. Indeed, the exercise of authority and obedi- ence is always more relational than directive.

So right from the start, men (or even youth) presenting them- selves as candidates for Redemptorist life need some form of ac- companiment. Walking with another is a task which need not be limited to a designated formator. At times the accompanier can be an older Redemptorist, at times a non-Redemptorist, or at times a lay person, depending on the situation and the type of accompani- ment required. However, it is important to stress that the Forma- tion Director is always the primary accompanier whose approval is required where any form of ‘outside’ accompaniment does take place.

Let us look at the various stages of formation and see what might be appropriate for each stage.

# Vocational Accompaniment

Obviously it would be impossible for the Directors of Voca- tions to personally accompany each young person who shows an interest in joining us. However, even at this stage some accompani- ment is required as well as some discernment. It is the task of the Vocation Director to invite the aspirant to one of our houses for periodic visits (this is a part of accompaniment), but also to help the young person find a priest, sister, brother or lay person who can,

from time to time, assist the aspirant with some form of roadmap for the future. A monthly meeting with such a person could be en- couraged. Fidelity to such meetings would be a good yardstick with which to measure the seriousness of the aspirants’ wishes.

What needs to be thought through is:

1. Is any report required from the accompanier?
2. If payment is required, who is responsible?

# Postulancy

During this time the candidates move into a closer form of ac- companiment. This takes the form of both spiritual direction and vocational discernment. It will be on a more regular basis, and it will be more focused. During this period it is not recommended that the candidates seek outside spiritual direction, but rather that they dialogue with the formator.

# novitiate

Here, spiritual direction is delicate and is both connected with life discernment choices and also the ability to sustain and develop a living relationship with Jesus. During the novitiate accompani- ment is at its most intense. While openness is a pre-requisite of any accompaniment, the Novice Master is not to confuse this openness with ‘spiritual nudity’. Some privacy of the heart also has to be afforded the Novice. Of course, this is given in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. However, freedom and space are prerequisites of healthy growth. So the Novice Director has to have some training in the art of accompaniment – which at this stage is, par excellence, a spiritual accompaniment. At the end of the Novitiate, the Novice is to surrender his heart to God through the vows. So the Novice

Director has to at least be aware of the direction of the heart. This is achieved through regular and focused meetings which we have traditionally called colloquia.

# Temporary Profession

These are often the years of growth and development. They are also the years of comparative freedom after the Novitiate. Each temporary professed confrere should be encouraged to find a spir- itual director either from the Redemptorist family or outside. It is important that the approval of the Prefect is obtained. Often, pro- viding a list of approved directors can help. These meetings should complement the regular colloquia which must still take place. Here the accompaniment is to enable the confreres to deepen his commit- ment to the Lord, to the Congregation and to the people, especially the abandoned and poor. Obviously accompaniment should include both the vowed life and the apostolic outreach - with attention to relationships within the community also being kept in mind. Here a balance is sought – to give as much freedom as possible and to see how it is handled, and yet to see how much personal responsibility is assumed.

Our Ratio foresees a special month of preparation for Perpetual Profession which is a separate issue also requiring accompaniment by a formator.

# Early years of Ministry

This is the most difficult time to provide accompaniment. It is difficult because, first of all, the newly-professed or ordained per- son in ministry wants to be free to experience the power of the Word and the ministry. It is also difficult because it is not easy to

schedule regular times of meetings and to find people willing and able to accompany these men. However, all our statistics tell us that this is the time when most confreres experiences serious problems. Therefore a program of accompaniment should be laid down in the local ratio. Again, accompaniment at this stage should not have any flavour of ‘Big Brother’ watching – but rather that of a friend trav- elling with the new person, and guiding them when they get lost or move into difficult or dangerous areas. It is a most difficult time for superiors – the balance is delicate between showing interest and not being perceived as invasive. An open talk with the new confreres at the beginning of this experience will help. Above all, a regular schedule of the meetings with the accompanier should be set out.

# Special Forms of Accompaniment

1. **Colloquium**

A constant feature of Redemptorist formation has been the Colloquium – that familiar talk with the person responsible for the pastoral care of an individual at any one stage of his life. It is nei- ther spiritual direction nor a complete manifestation of conscience. Colloquium is an opportunity for a relationship of trust and open- ness to develop, especially with reference to the ongoing growth of the Redemptorist spirit.

Styles of colloquium will vary according to the individuals in- volved. However, it is vital that this meeting be regular, confiden- tial and fraternal, conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and affirmation.

Colloquium is an opportunity to ‘let off steam’, to talk about

fears and frustrations, to look into community relationships, to talk about the individual’s relations with the Lord, and indeed to cover the whole field of Redemptorist living. *It is in fact the primary sup- port tool in initial formation*. Among areas that should be covered in colloquia are:

* 1. presence to self,
  2. presence to God,
  3. presence to others.

This means that areas such as health, relationships, prayer life, recreational outlets, sexuality, study and pastoral ministry will all be features of good colloquia carried out over the months and years.

# Support Counselling.

It is important to recognise that formators on the whole are ‘general practitioners’ in their fields. They are not, and cannot be, specialists in psychology, spirituality, counselling, mentoring and all the other fields involved in formation. Thus a back-up system for referrals should be in place. Normally, the years of formation, while they are years of growth, are not the years for in-depth coun- selling or therapy. However, it may be that from time to time we en- counter a confrere in formation who has special needs. Often these have emerged through Religious living, or may not have been ad- equately dealt with at a previous stage. It would be vital to state that the Formator is not the psychological counsellor of the confrere in formation. Where the confrere is receiving temporary counselling from an outside agent, the relationship between the Director and the counsellor must respect professional boundaries. The relationship between the Director and the counsellor should, from the begin- ning, be clear to all three involved.

# Supervision in Pastoral Ministry

During formation there will always be ongoing pastoral work. There will even be in many Units extended periods of pastoral placement. With the latter, the choice of place must be made with due respect for sufficient support of the young confrere. Also a su- pervisor of pastoral work must appreciate that his role is not spir- itual director, nor counsellor, but director of pastoral approaches and styles. He is to observe the work done in the placement, evalu- ate the confrere’s involvement, encourage, mentor and advise – all with specific reference to the pastoral initiatives being undertaken. He is then to submit a report to the Director. As with all stages of formation, when speaking of accompaniment, cross-reference must be made to the particular stage of formation as highlighted in the Handbook.

# Models of Accompaniment

There is no perfect model of accompaniment. Models differ according to culture, tradition and time. The Eastern tradition of Master/disciple is one that for centuries found favour in our Con- gregation, especially at the level of Novitiate. In recent years differ- ent models have been tried at the various levels of formation. The models of director and directee, of mentor and soul friend, of su- pervisor and trainee, of elder and neophyte, of leader and follower have all been in place with varying degrees of success. What is im- portant in the accompaniment, is that at least the Formator knows out of which model he is operating, and communicates this to the candidate in formation. So, for example, it may be appropriate at the stage of postulancy to enter into a type of non-directive relation- ship with a young man exploring his vocation, whereas in preparing for Vows, a more direct style might be favoured. Formators are to

find the model of accompaniment suitable for the society in which they live and in which they feel comfortable to work.

# Outside Support Systems

From time to time young people will come to us from a back- ground of having a strong support system. It might be a prayer group or a religious movement; it could be a therapy group, a twelve step group or a peer supervision group. It is unrealistic to expect them to exit immediately from these. Yet during the postulancy (and even before that if possible), there should be an invitation to begin the process of weaning away, and investing the energy put into that specific group, into the Redemptorist formation system. This can be a difficult time for the formator, where the candidate is receiving conflicting advice and even instructions, one from within and one from without. Ultimately, the optimum solution is to find support, especially in the early years of formation, within our own struc- tures. This really is possible where we have well trained formation personnel.

# Transition out of Religious Life

People often leave us either feeling listened to and focused for the future, or angry and directionless. During the years of discern- ment in initial formation, it may become clear to both the formator and the candidate that the choice of Redemptorist life is not a suit- able one for this individual. At times this may be clear to the forma- tion staff, but not so clear to the individual. What is important is that there be on-going dialogue and support. When a person leaves our formation system there should also be some form of ‘care pack- age’. This means possibilities of on-going support are offered, per-

haps some education direction can be given or career advice can be investigated. The family of the person should also be kept in the picture as far as the boundaries of confidentiality allow.

# Spiritual direction

Spiritual direction is a vital part of the process of growth and development in our Redemptorist life. It has always been a fea- ture of our way of living in fidelity to Christ. As indicated above, increasingly, the spiritual directors of those in formation are fre- quently non-Redemptorists. This can have value. However, it is important to stress that vigilance over the time spent with spiritual directors, dependency on them and the suitability of such directors be overseen by the Formation Director. Vigilance is also necessary where members of the ‘formed’ community appear to be over-in- volved with those in formation. Again, healthy boundaries are to be observed here.

This does not claim to be an exhaustive section on accompani- ment. What is vital is that the link between the candidate in initial formation and the formator is kept alive at all times through regular and structured meetings.

# EVALUATiOn OF CAndidATES

**GEnERAL inTROdUCTiOn:**

Most of the Units in the Congregation have revised their for- mation plan (*Ratios*) based on the latest edition of the *Ratio For- mationis* 2003 (RF 2003). The approved ratios are already being implemented in many Units. The RF 2003 no. 71 invites that each Unit should work out precise forms of evaluation which every can- didate in formation would undergo. In order to conform to the new standards that *Ratio Formationis* 2003 sets down, each Unit needs to update the method of evaluating their candidates.

Therefore this document (evaluation form) based on the RF 2003 is only a **tool**, which facilitates the creation of your own form of evaluation based on the Ratio of your Unit, covering all five (Hu- man, Spiritual, Community, Academic and Pastoral) dimensions of life.

### AiM OF EVALUATiOn:

In each stage the candidate **deepens the initial call and grows into maturity.** The annual evaluation is primarily meant to assist the student to seek guidance to overcome his limitations and to further strengthen the positive qualities he already possesses in order to grow as a mature person.

The evaluation **enables the candidate to see his growth, to look into other areas of further growth and above all provides an opportunity to make changes in life.** The evaluation of candidates should include all aspects of life following a holistic approach.

### HOLiSTiC APPROACH:

The whole formation of candidates is aimed at the holistic integration of a person. (Cf: Constitution No.78 and RF2003 No. 24.) It does not glorify one aspect of human personality and neglect other aspects. The formation should be comprehensive and dynamic covering all aspects of the human person. There- fore, the evaluation of candidates is carried out in the follow- ing manner by including the all the dimensions of life for the development of the whole person.

* 1. **Human dimension:** (examines the candidate’s growth in physical, emotional, and psycho-sexual aspects of life).
  2. **Spiritual dimension:** (evaluates the candidate’s ability to consecrate himself to Christ the Redeemer through matura- tion in prayer, personal faith, and moral response to one’s call to be a Redemptorist).
  3. **Community dimension:** (examines the interperson- al skills needed to live and work in our apostolic communi- ties).
  4. **Academic dimension:** (examines the candidate’s growth in all human and sacred sciences necessary for Redemp- torist missionary life and work).
  5. **Pastoral dimension:** (reviews the candidate’s grow- ing ability to work in the apostolate, especially among the most abandoned and the poor).

### Each Unit’s form of evaluation of Candidates must cover all the above five dimensions of formation. At the same time these five dimensions are not seen as separate parts but rather as interconnected aspects of the process as a whole. (cf. C. 78, VC 65, 71)

1. **THE MAnnER OF EVALUATiOn:**
   1. RF2003 No.71 recommends that the evaluations of the candi- dates by their respective formators should be made on a regular basis. Positive and negative aspects should be discussed with them **in non-threatening meetings** and in such a way as to allow them the opportunity to understand those areas in which they need growth.
   2. The precise form of evaluation which a student should undergo prior to both first and final profession, as well as ordination, must be determined by the Ratio of each Unit. It should allow for input not only from the principal formator who is mainly responsible for his formation but also from others who have been involved with his formation, e.g., the formation commu- nity, professors, fellow candidates in formation and laypersons with whom or for whom they have worked. While evaluating the students the formator should include the impression of the candidate himself and others.
      1. Self-evaluation by the candidate himself.
      2. Peer-group evaluation.
      3. Principal formators.
      4. Lectors.
      5. Community members.
      6. Lay persons who are connected with the students and

formation community.

### EVALUATiOn AT diFFEREnT STAGES:

* 1. The parameters or indicators shown under each dimension at different stages of formation are the minimum expectation of the Universal Church and other documents on Priestly Formation.

The indicators for the different dimensions (Human, Spiritual, Community, Academic and Pastoral) are neither an exhaustive nor prioritized listing of desirable qualities for a candidate, but rather an indication of qualities that must be present in all candidates together with openness to growth and development during the formation process.

* 1. A Province might have more than the following four divisions

- vocational accompaniment, postulancy, Novitiate and Vowed life till the time of ordination. Various formation stages in a Unit can be put into one of the above four categories. Even if a particular stage formation has more than a year, evaluation has to be carried out every year using the same format. For example the postulancy period may be two years or three years. The same Evaluation is to be made at the end of each academic year.

* 1. The most important thing is that the whole evaluation exercise should be conducted in a fraternal manner in order to prepare our candidates for the Mission of the Church and of the Con- gregation.

### UniQUEnESS OF REdEMPTORiSTS:

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 commu- nity life,** in order **to preach the Gospel to the poor**” (C.78). The entire formation process should prepare them to fulfil the apostolic purpose of the Congregation. (C.77) The **purpose of evaluation** is to examine whether the candidate is ready to live as a Redemptorist in a religious community. Our Constitutions &

Statutes and *Ratio Formationis* (2003) emphasize the following qualities in the candidates. They are:

1. Prayer.
2. Co-responsibility.
3. Identity as redemptorist and sense of belonging.
4. Simplicity of lifestyle.
5. The ability to live and work in apostolic community.
6. Option for the poor.
7. Involvement in the work of the congregation.
8. Joyous practice of the vows.
9. Special gifts.
10. Involvement in the life of the local church.
11. Collaboration with the laity.
12. Flexibility and adaptability.
13. Trust in god.
14. Solitude.
15. Compassion (cf: rf 2003 nos. 28-42).

What is presented above are some of the basic qualities that should be nurtured during the process of formation. A word of caution should be mentioned that this is neither an exhaus- tive nor prioritised listing of desirable qualities for a candidate but rather an indication of qualities that must be present in all candidates together with openness to growth and development during the formation process. The above qualities enable all Redemptorist candidates to active participation in the call of holiness and mission.

# VOCATiOnAL ACCOMPAniMEnT

**(Evaluation prior to Postulancy)**

**introduction**

To promote Christian vocations to the Redemptorist way of life and to accompany individual candidates in their vocation dis- cernment, and lead them into making a mature decision. Vocation promotion is the first part of the formation program. Through the help of the Vocation Promoters, applicants are led through a proc- ess of initial discernment to find out if the religious life is for them or not. At the end of this discernment a more personalized voca- tional accompaniment can lead the candidate to the next stage in his formation.

The following indicators help to assess whether the candidate has signs of being called and promote the call of God. They are tools to find out whether the candidate shows a basic capacity and willingness to grow in his personal vocational process. Formators should remember that the indicators shown in different stages of formation are neither an exhaustive nor prioritized list of indica- tors. They are only a guide for assessing the candidates and offer assistance.

# Human dimension indicators

1. Candidate’s balanced personality that integrates all the di- mensions of life which is appropriate for his age group.
2. Initial evaluation of the candidate by personal observation

of the Vocation Promoter.

1. Report or Information from persons who know the candidate well.
2. Family History.
3. Professional Vocational Assessment (Psychological, Medical, Capacity for Celibacy).
4. His knowledge of various vocations (priesthood, religious life, single and married life).
5. Candidate’s self-knowledge.
6. Candidate’s acceptance of strengths and shortcomings.
7. Candidate’s acceptance of others.
8. Basic capacity and willingness to grow in his personal vo- cational process.
9. Has he been in another seminary if yes, has his previous formator/superior given his opinion about the suitability of the candidate?
10. Integration of his sexuality.

## Spiritual dimension indicators

1. Candidate’s understanding of religion (God, church and sacraments).
2. Candidate’s initial religious experience.
3. Candidate’s level of involvement in parish / local church.
4. Recommendation of pastor / spiritual adviser.
5. His motivation to priesthood or brotherhood.
6. Candidate’s regular practice of prayer.

## Community dimension indicators

1. Candidate’s aptitude for community life.
2. A capacity for dialogue.
3. A capacity to work with others in a team.
4. Openness to life in a community.
5. A readiness to forgive and accept others and himself.
6. Attitude towards authority.

# Academic / professional dimension indicators

* 1. Candidate’s performance in previous studies, including tran- scripts, if applicable.
  2. Candidate’s ability to undertake academic studies.
  3. Extracurricular activities, involvement.

# Pastoral dimension indicators

1. Basic aptitude for the pastoral work of the Congregation and of the particular Unit.
2. His opinion and experience about pastoral experience in his parish, school, pious association or youth group.
3. His attitude towards the most abandoned and the poor. Any previous experience?
4. His desire to serve the poor and the abandoned through min- istry in the Congregation.

# POSTULAnCY

### (Evaluation prior to novitiate)

**introduction:**

Postulancy may be for one year or more depending on Unit’s Programme. This is the period during which a candidate, although not yet professed, lives in community in the spirit of evangelical counsels (cf. C. 85) striving to integrate himself ever more pro- gressively into the congregation. During this time the candidate is evaluated each year under the following aspects. We should keep in mind the purpose of the postulancy period and examine whether the candidate has fulfilled these objectives.

1. The purpose of Postulancy is to discern the candidate’s vocation prior to entering the novitiate. Novitiate is not a place where a person receives a vocation – but a place where he nurtures a growing vocation. Therefore before entering the novitiate, they should possess a minimum human and spiritual maturity. (Mini- mum of human and spiritual preparation should be verified and completed)
   * Candidates need basic knowledge of the Catholic faith.
   * Prayer.
   * Comfort with affectivity.
   * Candidates must show personal independence.
   * Candidates must acquire social comfort.
   * Candidates must have intellectual curiosity.
   * Candidates must show generosity.
   * There must be a genuine desire and a free decision on the

part of the candidate to enter the novitiate.

1. It is aimed to accompany the candidate in his first experience of Redemptorist Apostolic Life.
2. The Postulancy period helps the candidate to know himself bet- ter and to be known by others in order to discern his vocation before entering the novitiate.

# Human dimension indicators:

1. Self-Knowledge (awareness and ability to grow).
2. Family history (awareness and acceptance).
3. Understanding of his own Culture.
4. Postulant’s physical and psychological Health.
5. Psychosexual self-knowledge.
6. Integration of sexuality and capacity for celibacy as lived in Postulancy.
7. Appropriate use of Media, like Internet, telephones, ipods, lap-tops, etc.
8. Strengths and weaknesses (awareness of one’s abilities and areas for growth).

# Spiritual dimension indicators:

1. Development and intensification of initial experience of God.
2. His interest and growth in meditating on God’s word.
3. Knowledge and Understanding of Sacred Scriptures,

sacraments.

1. Progress in spiritual life and prayer.
2. Spiritual Direction.
3. Spiritual Life and its relation to other aspects of life.
4. Postulant’s knowledge of Congregation’s history, charism and spirituality.
5. His knowledge of St. Alphonsus and other saints of the Congregation.
6. Consecration to Christ the Redeemer (maturation in prayer, personal faith, moral response to one’s call to be a Redemptorist).
7. Integration of the spiritual dimension of poverty.
8. Growth in obedience as a response to God’s will for him.

# Community dimension indicators:

1. Attitude towards community living – what do his formators experience as his lived attitude towards community?
2. Community living skills.
3. A Sense of belonging.
4. Ability to build trust among the community members.
5. Capacity in admitting legitimate differences and appreciation of each other’s uniqueness.
6. Sense of others in community about postulant.

# Academic / professional dimension indicators:

1. Aptitude to become professional in the mission of the church.
2. Language (English / Spanish / Italian / French) Is he learning one other language?
3. Ability to undertake academic studies and languages /

transcripts.

1. Growth in academic matters. Sound methodology. Ability for critical analysis.
2. Sacraments, Church and Catechetical knowledge that is appropriate for this level.
3. Does the Candidate have sufficient knowledge about the Congregation, Founder, and apostolate of the Province to make an informed decision about Novitiate?

# Pastoral dimension indicators:

* 1. Ability and interest in undertaking Pastoral activities.
  2. What has been his experience of pastoral work during the Postulancy?
  3. Awareness of his role in the activities of the church.
  4. Ability to work in the apostolate especially among the

poor.

* 1. His involvement in the local church.

**NOVITIATE**

### (Evaluation before First Profession)

**introduction:**

The novitiate builds upon what is already underway in a per- son’s life – initial calling of God.” The purpose of the novitiate is “to have the candidates consider more thoroughly whether they are really called by God to follow Christ by making religious profes- sion in the apostolic life of the Congregation” (C. 86.2).RF2003: No.11. Towards this end the candidates are evaluated whether they are ready to embrace our way of life.

**Human dimension indicators**

* + 1. His motivation (intention) for becoming religious (Redemptorist).
    2. Knowledge and acceptance of himself.
    3. Acceptance of his family, culture.
    4. Awareness and integration of his sexuality.
    5. Ability to lead a chaste, celibate life.
    6. Freedom of his life choices.
    7. Maturity in conflict situations.
    8. Appropriate use of Media, like Internet, telephones, ipods, laptops, etc.

## Spiritual dimension indicators

1. Process of discernment.
2. Progress of his spiritual journey from Postulancy to the Novitiate.
3. Conviction of his Redemptorist Vocation.
4. Significance of personal and community prayer.
5. Knowledge and appreciation of Redemptorist spirituality

and history.

1. Attitude towards constant conversion.
2. God’s will in his life.

# Community dimension indicators

1. Ability to live his calling through community living.
2. Acceptance of others.
3. His commitment towards the church at large.
4. His contribution to the life of the community.
5. Community’s sense of his presence.
6. What is his attitude towards authority? How does he make decisions which affect the community?
7. What is his attitude towards and use of community goods?
8. Does he faithfully complete his community assignments?

# The academic/professional dimension indicators

1. Understanding of Vocation.
2. Knowledge of Religious Life.
3. Knowledge of the implications of the three vows and the ability to live them.
4. Understanding of Constitutions and Statutes.
5. Knowledge of the statements of recent General Chapters.
6. Knowledge of the history of the Congregation and of his

Unit.

1. Knowledge of the apostolic priorities of his Unit.
2. Awareness and meeting the requirements of Canon Law regarding religious life.
3. Knowledge of Redemptorist Saints.

# Pastoral dimension indicators

* 1. Integration of his pastoral experience into spiritual reflections.
  2. Ability to interiorise his apostolic experience.
  3. His experience with the most abandoned and the poor.
  4. His commitment to the most abandoned and the poor. His willingness to serve the poor.
  5. His willingness to collaborate with others in pastoral ministry. His experience as member of a team.

# FROM THE TiME OF FiRST PROFESSiOn

### TO THE End OF iniTiAL FORMATiOn

#### (*Annual Evaluation during Vowed Life and Evaluation before* Final Profession and Holy Orders)

**introduction:**

During vowed life (from the time of first profession to the end of initial formation) there are three key moments viz., admission to perpetual vows, ordination to the diaconate, and ordination to priesthood. The form of evaluation for vowed life given below is quite different, detailed and more rigorous than from the previous stages of formation because of its nature of consecrated life and remote preparation for Congregation’s Mission.

During this intense period of preparation the candidate must clearly show:

* + - “A demonstrated ability to live according to the evangelical counsels and the vows;
* A strong desire to live and work in the Congregation for life;
* An ability to integrate himself into the priorities of the Unit

and to do his pastoral work through the community;

* Moral certitude and identification with one’s vocation as brother, permanent deacon, or priest.” (RF2003 No: 102)

Please note that what is given are basic indicators under five main divisions. For example under human dimension various indi- cators are shown to assess the candidate’s human maturity. These indicators help the formators and the candidates to identify the pre- dominating factors present both positive and negative in the candi- dates and thus equip themselves for the mission of the Church and the Congregation.

The formator should take care not to apply all the indicators on the candidates. Some of the indicators need to be applied accord- ing to a Unit’s particular situation and culture. What is more im- portant in the evaluation is to identify some of the most important consistent factors both positive and negative and to encourage the candidates to deepen their positive qualities and to seek remedies to overcome weakness in the five aspects of life.

# Human dimension indicators

1. **SELF ACCEPTANCE**
2. **ACCEPTANCE OF OTHERS**
3. **EMOTiOnAL STABiLiTYAnd GROWinG MATURiTY** (mood swings, mature /immature behaviour, genuine friendship with both sexes, sense of humour, acceptance of personal criticism, and fraternal correction)
4. **RESPONSIBLE LIFE CHOICES & RESPONSIBILITY** (Use of freedom, inner motivation, self-discipline, personal responsibility, account- ability, commitments i.e. reliability, Readiness to assume responsibility: Shuns responsibility, ready to assume any work, always keeps in mind the good of the community. Openness to accept any task/position assigned: willing/un- willing to accept any assignment, Able/unable to plan and execute the given responsibility. Dependability in carrying out assignments: Able/unable to

prioritize his work, Tries to carry out in the best way, is he a perfectionist?

1. **HiS GEnERAL CAPACiTY FORAnd PRACTiCE OF** (initiative, flexibility /adaptability, consistency, good judgment and common sense, ac-

countability)

1. **LiFE STYLE & TiME MAnAGEMEnT**(simple lifestyle, sophis- ticated, conventional, radical, utilization of time, laziness, creativity and punctuality)
2. **GEnERAL PHYSiCAL And PSYCHOLOGiCAL HEALTH** (Health, stress management, emotional stability or any major emotional dysfunctionality)
3. **CELiBACY/SEXUALiTY** (Does he manifest healthy integration and have positive attitude and understanding of sexuality)
4. **CHARACTER MAniFESTiOn (SPiRiT)** (prone to anger or frustra- tion, peaceful personality, argumentative, always grumbling, critical)
5. **DEPENDENCY & INDEPENDENCY**
6. **POSSESSION OF THE FOLLOWING DESIRABLE QUALI- TIES:** CORDIALITY: (Is cordial, not cordial, rough, harsh?) DISCRETION: Is discreet and prudent, not discreet, imprudent, STRAIGHTFORWARD- NESS: Yes open and straight forward, very closed up and cunning, EVEN- NESS OF DISPOSITION: Short tempered, becomes too moody)
7. **APPROPRiATE USE OF MEdiA:** Internet, cell phones, ipods, laptops,

etc.

# Spiritual dimension indicators

1. **PERSONAL PRAYER (**Does he show strong, committed, and consistent effort to be faithful to his personal prayer, sacrament of reconciliation, and liturgical prayers)
2. **iMPORTAnCE OF LiTURGY And COMMUniTY PRAYER**

(preparation of liturgy, his participation, appreciation and love for sacraments, private prayer and recollection)

1. **COMMUniTY PRAYER** (Does he show genuine, active participation and commitment to community prayer, common liturgies, group prayer, com- munity meetings, parish liturgies, spiritual direction, group sharing)
2. **SPiRiTUAL GROWTH** (Process of growth and maturity in his com- mitment to Christ in the apostolic life of the Congregation. His sharing in colloquia, spiritual direction, participation in recollection, retreats, and faith sharing sessions. Has theological studies and pastoral ministry helped his

spiritual growth)

1. **GROWTH in REdEMPTORiST SPiRiTUALiTY**(Knowledge &

Fidelity to Alphonsian tradition)

1. **THE COnSECRATEd LiFE:**
   * **Manifestation of Christian attachment**: Does he s h o w signs of detachment from unwanted elements/ is he enthusiastic in

serving and helping others?

* + **Understanding of the spirit of dependence**: Does he ask for help and guidance?
  + **Ability to share:** Does he share his time and talents with others, is he interested in others’ welfare?
  + **Ability to be alone in a healthy way:** Does he prefer to be in the company of others?
  + **Ability to endure by himself loneliness and difficulties:** Is he able to face loneliness and problems or afraid of being alone – suffers from phobia?
    - **Ability to love humanly, yet without being exclusive in relationships:** Gets entangled with a few / not able to maintain a healthy relationships
    - **Spirit of Self-sacrifice:** Has he a self-sacrificing spirit?
    - **Spirit of Availability:** Readily available – serves others/ willing to help anyone.
    - **Readiness to ask advice:** willing / unwilling.
    - **Readiness to accept criticism:** accepts corrections / defensive / broods over.
    - **Readiness to acknowledge mistakes:** Afraid to make mistakes / accepts / willing to improve
    - **is he faithful to recommendations:** Yes / No.

### Attitude of wholeheartedness to task assigned: shows

good will to accept any work, tries his best to carry out the given task

/ lazy/ slow / shuns responsibility.

* + - **Growth in his apostolic experiences** into the life of the religious

community,

1. **RELATiOnSHiP WiTH FORMATORS** (Is he respectful to au- thority, is he teachable, is he able to receive direction, suggestions, and

constructive criticism, has he got any hang-ups or serious authority issues)

1. **HiS SPiRiTUAL STRUGGLES** (Efforts made (in the past) to work through his struggles and successes marked in his spiritual diary)

# Community dimension indicators

1. **COMMUniTY – inTERPERSOnAL RELATiOnSHiPS** (sensi- tive and respectful of others, congenial (i.e. easy to get along with), lives in harmony with others around him, ease of conversation with others (i.e. reflecting self-confidence), ability to form personal friendships and sustain them, is he willing and able to work at resolving interpersonal conflicts and difficulties, overall charity and willingness to serve)
2. **ABILITY TO RELATE TO:** a. FORMATORS: (Is he open, relates freely, timid, finds it hard to relate with authority, avoids facing authority?) B. COMMUNITY MEMBERS: (Relates freely, relates with only a few, selective, does not make an effort to mix with other confreres), C. CO- WORKERS: (deals with them well, harsh and cruel, gets attached to them, able to guide them, does not have a balanced behaviour), D. OTHERS: Happy to mix with and work with others, students, does not show the signs of anxiety, shows signs of anxiety, fear, not able to work with the (pastoral apostolate) people involved in his mission. E. Peers
3. **HiS LiFE in THE COMMUniTY** (His participation in running of the house, prayer, work, recreation and performance in his office/portfolio, use of the goods of the community)
4. **PEER-GROUP REFLECTiOn** (Class/Peer-group’s image (lived experience) of the candidate)
5. **SKiLLS OF TEAM WORK**
6. **COMMUniTY / CHARiSM And ViSiOn** (Is he able to embrace and integrate all aspects of the Redemptorist charism including: a personal relationship to Jesus Christ as Lord, lived out in the power of the Holy Spirit; authentic fraternal (shared) life in community; the primacy of evangelization in ministry and the recognized need for ongoing renewal in the Church; the “wisdom and power” of God; the charisms and ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit; the importance and centrality of Eucharistic worship and devotion; genuine filial devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help; spontaneous love to proclaim God’s word, and willingness to embrace the Cross)

# Academic dimension indicators

1. **OVERALL PERFORMAnCE in ACAdEMiCS/ Transcripts**
2. **ABiLiTY TO COnTEXTUALiSE** (His capacity for, and appreciation of academic studies. Is he disciplined and responsible with course work and

assignments? Does he show authentic interest and desire to learn?)

1. **ABiLiTY TO THEOLOGiSE And ASSiMiLATE HiS APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCES INTO CONSECRATION OF HiMSELF TO CHRiST THE REdEEMER.**
2. **HiS ViEW OF CHURCH TEACHinGS On dOGMATiC THEOLOGY, TRAdiTiOn And SACRAMEnTS**
3. **HiS ViEW OF CHURCH TEACHinGS On MORALiTY**
4. **inTEGRATiOn OF HiS SYSTEMATiC STUdiES inTO HiS**

**LIFE**

1. **PREACHinGTECHniQUESAnd USE OFCOMMUniCATiOn**

**SKILLS**

1. **is he taking the initiative to develop the skills necessary to meet the challenges of today?** (Does he keep up with advances in technology? Does he read the newspaper? Does he read any professional or theological periodicals? Is he aware of current events? Does he see Formation as a life- long process and commitment?)

# Pastoral dimension indicators

1. **CAPACITY FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP** (Self confidence, sensitive to the needs of others, ability to communicate clearly and effectively, genuine serving attitude(not arrogant, lazy, overly passive), ability to work comfortably and effectively with others including the laity)
2. **PASTORAL ORIENTATION** (Genuine motivation, the place of church, congregation and the people)
3. **OPTiOn (LOVE) FOR THE POOR**
4. **INDICATIONS OF ANY SPECIALISED APOSTOLATE** (His love for missions, retreats, social apostolate, youth work, involvements with various movements. Does he have aptitude for special counselling or higher studies?)
5. **indiCATiOn OFA HEALTHY ECCLESiOLOGY** (Is he open and respectful to minorities? Is not prone to clericalism, his concern for Peace and Social Justice, his respect for lay ministry and lay collaboration, openness to

inter-religious dialogue)

1. **COLLABORATiOn:** (Does he have an aptitude for collaboration and team work – with lay people, with members of other Units?)
2. **PASTORAL MiniSTRY (**Student’s personal evaluation and the Person- in-charge)

### Would you recommend him for Final Profession?

* + **YES**  **NO**

### (deaconate, Ordination)

**do you have any reservations?**

* + **YES**  **NO**

### (if any) Reasons:

# EVALUATiOn MOdEL

**EVALUATiOn OF ………..................................................................................................................................…**

**(name) ...........................................................................................................................................................................................**

1. **HUMAn diMEnSiOn:** STRENGTHS WEAKNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER GROWTH TOWARDS HUMAN MATURITY

### SPiRiTUAL diMEnSiOn:

STRENGTHS WEAKNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER GROWTH IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

### COMMUniTY diMEnSiOn:

STRENGTHS WEAKNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER GROWTH IN COMMUNITY LIFE

### ACAdEMiC diMEnSiOn:

STRENGTHS WEAKNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER GROWTH IN ACADEMIC FIELD

### PASTORAL diMEnSiOn:

STRENGTHS WEAKNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER GROWTH TO BE EFFECTIVE IN PASTORAL FIELD

### AnY PRE-dOMinATinG/ COnSiSTEnT FACTORS:

[Both positive and negative (consistent undesirable) traits]

**RECOMMEndATiOn:** Having accompanied the candidate I

recommend him to

**.....................................................................................................................................................................................................................**

**.....................................................................................................................................................................................................................**

**.....................................................................................................................................................................................................................**

**.....................................................................................................................................................................................................................**

Signature of the Candidate Signature of the Formator

Date:

Place:

# FORMATiOn FOR CELiBACY: dEVELOPinG A PROGRAM

**introduction**

During recent years, formation for celibacy has become a much greater concern in the formation of men for the religious life and for priestly ministry. The Vatican has recommended that this be an integral part of every formation program. It has also become an important part of the Vatican visitations of seminaries.

The Ratio Formationis Generalis offers guidelines for various elements of formation for our Redemptorist Apostolic Life includ- ing formation for celibacy. However, a specific program on how to develop such a program is not provided, but must be prepared by the Formation Secretariat of every Unit as they develop their own Ratio Formationis.

This is one of the daunting challenges facing both formators and those in formation throughout the Congregation. We recognize that the whole topic of sexuality varies from culture to culture. In some societies, sexuality is highly eroticized and everyone seems to be sexually aware from an early age. In other societies, sexuality is a private reality shared with only a few. In still others, celibacy does not have a cultural value, and the cultural push is to sexual intimacy.

Where to begin? What does one include in a formation pro- gram? What is appropriate and what is not appropriate? What be- longs to a spiritual director or confessor? Does a program of For- mation for Celibacy primarily give information or bring candidates to integration? These are just a few questions that are often raised when discussing the issue with formators.

The General Secretariat cannot develop a program that is suit- able to all candidates in the many cultures where the Congregation is located. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that a comprehensive program for formation for celibacy must include:

* 1. A healthy understanding and appreciation for human sexuality (some suggestions are offered in Section I)
  2. Celibacy and Chastity as understood in Church teaching, religious life, and the Redemptorist Constitutions, with focus on teaching, spirituality and practice (some suggestions of what this might look like are offered in Section II)
  3. A healthy understanding and appreciation for human intimacy appropriate to Celibacy (some suggestions are offered in Section III)
     + in community
     + with men and women
     + in ministry
  4. Practical and professional understandings of boundaries in community, friendships, and ministry – including professional skills (what this means and how to approach the topic are offered in Section IV)
  5. Lived experience of celibacy and chastity in the Congregation in both community and ministry (suggestions on how this could be developed are offered in Section V)

It is the overall responsibility of the formators at different stages to see how this formation for celibacy takes place. However, one formator cannot be responsible for the whole program. In fact, many aspects of this formation would be better dealt with by out- side professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, psychologists or clinical social workers. We strongly suggest that professionally

trained experts be engaged where appropriate, but always under the

supervision of formators.

It seems advisable that a professional present the material on a healthy understanding and appreciation of sexuality (Section I A). It would also be helpful to engage the participation of professionals in Sections I B and I C – though some of this material is best presented by the formators themselves. Many units have found it helpful to present the material suggested in this outline through a combination of professionals and the formation team, as well as through ‘in-house’ sessions and inter-religious workshops.

The following Syllabus as it has been developed below is divided into the above five sections. These are meant as a help in developing a program and curriculum. They may assist a Secretariat of formation to determine what, when, how and by whom these elements could be included in the formation program of the Unit.

This is not a program for one stage of formation, but a progressive program that should permeate the whole of formation. Different stages ought to emphasize different elements of the program. In this way, a gradual and progressive formation for celibacy begins in postulancy, is deepened during the novitiate, and becomes more integrated into the years of temporary profession and preparation for ministry.

It is hoped that the progression of this program, from general to specific, will build trust and comfort for candidates to speak and share more freely this dimension of our religious lives. It may also assist them in developing the vocabulary and tools to express themselves appropriately. The objective is not only to have knowledgeable candidates, but candidates who have integrated this knowledge into their lives as celibate and chaste Redemptorists.

# A PROPOSEd SYLLABUS

**Section i:**

**A healthy understanding and appreciation for human sexuality**

This section could include:

1. Basic biology and physiology – this could be presented by a medical professional
2. Knowledge of terms – this could be presented by a profes- sional
   * **SEX And SEXUALiTY** – What’s the difference?
   * **SEXUALAnd GEndER dEVELOPMEnT** - How do we grow sexually? Do men and women develop differently?
   * **inTiMACY And SEXUALiTY** – What is intimacy? Can you be intimate without being sexual?
   * **SEXUAL ORiEnTATiOn** – What is sexual orientation?
   * **SEXUALdiFFiCULTiES And diSORdERS** – What are some of the sexual difficulties and disorders people have with sexuality?
3. Psychosexual Development – this could be presented by a profes- sional in human development with the formation team.
4. Psychosexual development and prenatal life Family attitudes

towards sex

Parental attitudes

Pregnancy, labor and delivery

1. Psychosexual development during childhood
2. Psychosexual development during adolescence Awakening – sexual information

Sexual fantasies and body reactions Masturbation

Physical changes and personal appearance Relational experiences – falling in love Sexual trauma or abuse

Sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS

1. Psychosexual development during adulthood Psychosexual Maturity

Integration

Genital expressiveness

Intimacy

1. Sexual Orientation

Asexuality – people who have little or no sexual response Heterosexuality

Homosexuality Bisexuality

e) Psychosexual Issues

Sexual Abuse by clergy

Escaping our sexuality – (internet, pornography, etc)

1. Sexuality and celibacy in the social-cultural context of the candidates – this section could be dealt with by an anthropologist, sociologist or social worker plus the formation team.

Society’s views of sexuality

-the influence of culture and family traditions

-the influence of peers

-the influence of media, pornography, internet How do these affect our views of sexuality?

How do these affect our means of living celibately?

# Section ii:

**Celibacy and Chastity**

### Church teaching, religious life, and the Redemptorist Constitutions, with focus on teaching, spirituality and practice

Suggestions for this Section are not limited to the following:

1. Celibacy in the non-Christian world
   * experience of celibacy in different religious contexts (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism)
2. Celibacy in the Bible
   * Jewish experience of sexuality and celibacy
   * Sexuality and celibacy in the Gospels (Matt 19)
   * Celibacy in view of the parousia – in the writings of St. Paul
3. Celibacy in Church practice and teaching
   * early development of celibate practice
   * celibacy in the Western and Eastern Churches
   * celibacy and ordination
4. Celibacy, Chastity and Virginity in Religious Life and

Priesthood

1. The deep meaning of Celibacy Celibacy for the Kingdom

The cross and happiness in Celibacy Celibacy as a witness to the Resurrection

1. Celibate Chastity in the Redemptorist Constitutions
2. Community and gospel friendship as aids to celibacy

# Section iii:

**intimacy and Celibacy**

### A healthy understanding and appreciation for human intimacy appropriate to Celibacy – in community, with men and women, and in ministry

1. Sexuality, Intimacy and Celibacy What intimacy is and is not Mature and immature intimacy Sex and Intimacy

Trust and self-disclosure

Friendship

Sexual tensions between individuals when working closely together

Issues of control and dependence Pornography and false intimacy Conflict and intimacy

1. Loving as a celibate

Loneliness and solitude

1. Intimacy and Redemptorist Community

Constitutions and Statutes 21, 22 and 34

1. Intimacy and spirituality Religious images of intimacy Intimacy with God

Developing a celibate spirituality of chastity

# Section iV:

**Professional and Personal Boundaries**

### Practical and professional understandings of boundaries in community, friendships, and ministry – including professional skills

1. Professional and personal boundaries

Priesthood and religious life as a profession and lifestyle Professional relationships and boundaries

Personal relationships and boundaries

1. Priestly Sexual Misconduct with Children and Adolescents
2. Sexual Abuse in the Church The Horror of Sex Crimes

Pedophilia (sexual attraction and involvement with

children)

Ephebophilia (sexual attraction and involvement with teen- agers)

1. Read and study local or Redemptorist Protocols for sexual

misconduct

Treatment and re-entry into ministry

1. The impact of child sexual abuse
2. Professional Boundaries – misconduct with Adults Touching, Hugging – good touch, bad touch Sexualized Behavior – imbalance of power Professional Relationships and Friendships – the

relationship continuum

Dual Relationships Crossing the Boundary

Characteristics that create the potential for boundary violations

Prevention

# Section V:

**Experience of Celibacy**

### Lived experience of celibacy and chastity in the Congregation in both community and ministry

1. The first five years of ministry –

The honeymoon period – the importance of mentoring

Disillusionment – loneliness, feelings of being unappreciated, misunderstandings with superiors, difficulties in community, burnout and overwork

Satisfaction in ministry – a rich prayer life, Eucharist, Preach- ing, collaborating with clergy and laity, spiritual direction, support from confreres and gatherings to share experiences, living a balanced lifestyle, mental hygiene (awareness of how the mind and emotions work and the things to do to keep yourself emotionally healthy).

1. Conflicts regarding chastity

Sexual difficulties – compulsive sexual fantasies and mas- turbation anxieties, and questionable behaviours

Falling in Love Sexual involvement

1. Developing mature and sound principles
2. Celebrating the virtue of chastity and personal values
3. Ministry as collaborative

Working as a team – attitudes and behaviours

What are the benefits? – What are the tensions and prob- lems? What are the aids to foster healthy interactions?

Sexual tensions within teamwork Developing one’s relational skills

Importance of Gospel friendships and Intimacy

# TRAnSiTiOn TO MiniSTRY

**introduction:**

Studies from the Union of Superiors General in Rome have shown that a very high proportion of those men who make the deci- sion to leave religious life, do so in the first five years after initial formation. This shows how critical is the importance of a transition to ministry program for those in the first five years.

On the other hand, the experience of General Visitations is that the stage of Transition to Ministry is most often neglected in the Units of the Congregation, or it receives too little direct attention.

The *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R. 2003* identifies Transition to Ministry as the first stage of ongoing formation. “The purpose of this program… is to accompany the confrere and help him to con- solidate his sense of community and co-responsibility in a new set- ting. It should be a formal structured program, which includes all the dimensions of our apostolic life, and is under the direction of a well-balanced confrere as mentor…It may be advisable for certain Units to develop as least some parts of this program in inter-region- al collaboration.” (*RF 104)*

Because of the critical importance of this stage of formation in the lives of our younger confreres, it is essential that each Unit carefully plan and carry out the requirements of a healthy Transi- tion to Ministry program.

# The Transition to Ministry Program:

The program for Transition to Ministry must be designed on five different levels:

* 1. The individual confrere in his transition from an initial formation community and program to an active apostolic community and ministry;
  2. The Mentor – his role and responsibilities;
  3. The local community which receives the confrere;
  4. The (V) Provincial Community;
  5. Inter-Provincial Collaboration;

Each of these five levels must be addressed in distinct but com- plementary ways.

# The individual Confrere:

Transition from the end of initial formation, and the structured environment of a formation community and program, to a differ- ently structured active apostolic community and ministry can be very difficult for the individual confrere.

This very real move can be experienced as an ‘uprooting’ of the younger confrere. His environment will often be very different. His daily structure will need to be more flexible and adapted to lo- cal circumstances. Often, he will leave peers and friendships which have been very supportive – along with formators whom he has come to know and trust.

This transition will affect him at each of the five dimensions identified in our Ratio: human, spiritual, community, academic/ professional, pastoral. While it is the primary responsibility of the confrere himself to continue his process of human and spiritual growth, to deepen his experience of apostolic community and his commitment to it, to continue his academic, professional and pas- toral learning, he cannot be left alone in this pursuit.

Accompaniment in this process is essential. For this reason, the appointment of a well-balanced confrere as Mentor is presumed by the *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R. 2003.*

# The Mentor:

The role and responsibility of the mentor needs to be care- fully described in the Transition to Ministry program for each Unit. However, it must include at least the following points.

* It is suggested that the Mentor be chosen by the Superior of

the Unit.

* His role must be clearly specified both to him and to the local superior. (In some cases, this might be the same person.)
* The role of the Mentor is to offer personal encouragement,

caution, and support.

* He is to observe if there is a balance in the life of the confrere making the transition into ministry. He must be vigilant for signs of overwork, isolation, over-involvement with emotional situations, and other areas which might render the confrere vulnerable in these early years of ministry.
* He is also to ensure that the confrere has sufficient physical and emotional ‘space’, as well as healthy escape routes.
* Regular meetings between the Mentor and the confrere are to be scheduled.
* Regular reports are to be sent to the Superior of the Unit.

# The Local Community:

The local Community which receives a confrere during the first five years of his ministry has a serious responsibility to ensure that

it provides an opportunity for healthy transition as he moves more fully into the active apostolic and community life of the Unit.

It is important that every community to which a confrere in

this stage of formation is appointed ensures:

* 1. that it has a Plan for Community Life, as mandated by the XXII General Chapter 1997;
  2. that it provides the essential structures which support and encour- age growth in each of the five dimensions of healthy formation: human, spiritual, community, academic/professional, pastoral;
  3. that it is prepared to integrate a younger confrere as an active participant in its life and ministry as part of a team.

It is the responsibility of every member of the local community to support and encourage the ongoing formation of the confrere in the Transition to Ministry stage. However, it is the responsibility of the local superior to ensure that the necessary community life and structures actually exist.

# The (V) Provincial Community:

The healthy integration of confreres into the active apostolic life of the (V) Province or Region at the end of Initial Formation is vital to the life of the whole Unit.

It is the responsibility of the Superior of the Unit, with his Council, to ensure that the local Communities to which these con- freres are appointed can provide the essential conditions for their ongoing integration and formation.

More than this, it is the experience of many Units that the

Transition to Ministry Program must also structure regular events

which bring together all the confreres of the Unit in the first five years after the end of Initial Formation. These events can include: workshops, study days, retreats, opportunities for personal sharing, etc. Under the direction of the Formation Secretariat, a designated confrere should coordinate these events. These events should take place at least once a year.

The Transition to Ministry program must outline the expecta- tions and responsibilities involved in this level of formation.

# inter-Provincial Collaboration:

As the *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R 2003* points out, many of the programs and events suggested above might be better served by collaboration between Units in a particular Region.

As the Congregation moves towards restructuring and great- er inter-provincial collaboration, this is one area in which much progress can be made. Such collaboration will strengthen and de- velop:

* bonds which have been initiated at previous stages of formation;
* possibilities for inter-provincial collaboration in mission and formation;
* greater collaboration on all levels between Units.

## Conclusion:

The Transition to Ministry program for each Unit ought to

address:

* the needs of the individual confrere, especially for accompaniment in his process of transition;
  + the role and responsibility of the Mentor appointed to accompany the confrere in this transition stage;
  + the local community to which the confrere is appointed;
  + the (V) Provincial responsibility to develop and organize events and programs to assist in the first five years;
  + opportunities for Inter-Provincial Collaboration in this critical area of Redemptorist formation.

# OnGOinG FORMATiOn COnTinUinG EdUCATiOn

1. **introduction – The Purpose, Scope and Objective of Formation as a Lifelong Process**

In order to preach the Gospel to the poor more effectively, the apostolic purpose of the Congregation must inspire and penetrate the whole formation process (Constitution 77 and 78). This is a life- long process, which can be divided into two principal stages: initial formation, and ongoing formation (*Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R.* #4). This ongoing formation must be continual and progressive, and in- volve all the members.

The **purpose** of ongoing formation is to equip Redemptorists to more effectively live out the Mission of the Congregation in the contemporary world.

The **scope** of ongoing formation involves every member and the whole of life in a continual and progressive manner.

The **objective** of ongoing formation is:

* + continual self-renewal in human, spiritual, scientific and pastoral matters (Constitution 90)
  + development and adaptation of specific skills needed for the apostolate (Constitution 90)
  + personal and community growth in Redemptorist Apostolic Life (*Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R.,* #110)

The term ‘Ongoing Formation’ encompasses the whole forma- tive process of life and ministry in the Congregation. ‘Continuing

Education’ is often used to refer more specifically to the profes- sional and academic training which enhances that life and ministry. Normally, Ongoing Formation includes the aspect of Continuing Education – but Ongoing Formation also includes spiritual, human and community growth and formation. Both terms are used in our official documents to emphasize the lifelong process of formation for all Redemptorists.

# The Agents of Ongoing Formation and Continuing Education

Our Constitutions (82, 90), Statutes (084, 140c) and the *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R.* (#110) insist that Ongoing Formation is the responsibility of each individual member of the Congregation, but that responsibility is shared with the local community, under the leadership and oversight of the (V) Provincial Superior.

**Every member** must take primary responsibility for his on- going formation. He must keep alive the awareness that this is a lifelong process which involves his personal, communal and min- isterial/professional life. If he is convinced of the importance self- renewal, he will take advantage of the opportunities which are available – in his community, in his (V) Province or Region, and in the Congregation, as well as in the local Church and academic settings.

**The Local Community** must also assume responsibility for assisting in the ongoing formation and continuing education of its members. This continual and progressive formation does not take place in a vacuum, but in and through the day-to-day life, ministry and study of all the members. Community meetings, Review of Life, Monthly Retreat Days, and other opportunities must be ex- plored by the local community.

**The (V) Provincial Superior** has the principal responsibility to provide for the formation of all the members. He is assisted in this task by the **Secretariats for Formation** and **Apostolic Life.** The **(V) Provincial Chapter** must also examine and promote the ongoing formation of the members.

# dimensions of Ongoing Formation and Continuing Education

The *Ratio Formationis C.Ss.R.*, issued by the General Govern- ment in 2003, outlines the five important dimensions of the forma- tion process which must be addressed at each stage – including ongoing formation and continuing education. This outline is a very important resource to all Redemptorists as they take personal re- sponsibility for their personal growth and Redemptorist Apostolic Life. It is especially important to local superiors, Secretariats for Formation (especially those in charge of coordinating Ongoing Formation in the unit) and major superiors who have the oversight of the whole formation process.

These five dimensions form an integral whole. When planning for events, conferences, retreats, and other occasions for ongoing formation in the (V) Province, the accent may be put on one or more dimension. However, in some way, all five dimensions will most often be addressed.

### The Human dimension

The Constitutions remind us that whoever follows Christ, the perfect human being, becomes more human (Constitution 19). The Gospel of Salvation which we preach proclaims Christ the Redeem- er and Lord as the model of the new humanity. Redemption affects

the entire person and all human values (Constitution 6). We cannot ignore nor take for granted the importance of the human dimension of our vocation and our formative process. The formation process and personal growth of the members will take into account (*Ratio Formationis* #111):

* + Passages from initial formation to active ministry to the ‘third age’
  + The stages of growth as we age
  + Psychological- affective maturation
  + Physical health and health-related issues
  + Sexuality and Celibacy
  + Other areas for human growth and development, especially

in response to contemporary needs and concerns

### The Spiritual dimension

Our Constitutions and Statutes remind us often that we are called to ‘continual progress through constant interior renewal’ (Constitution 40, see also 23, 41, 55). Ongoing formation will pro- vide opportunities for us as individuals, local communities, and the

1. Provincial Community to engage seriously in this process of spiritual growth. Such opportunities will take into account (*Ratio Formationis* #112):
   * An Incarnational spirituality
   * Intimate union of our proclamation and the witness of our lives
   * Personal and communal prayer, especially in the Redemptor- ist tradition
   * Daily conversion and distacco
   * Monthly and annual retreats

* Profession, the meaning of our dedication to Christ and ‘consecrated life’, and our missionary identity

### The Community dimension

An essential law of life for the Redemptorist is that we live in community and carry out our apostolic work through commu- nity. Community does not truly exist when the members merely live together; it requires genuine sharing on the human spiritual level (Constitution 21). Ongoing Formation will foster (*Ratio For- mationis* #113):

* A spirit of belonging in a real way to the Congregation and the local community
* The integration of differences in the community
* Affective maturity and gospel friendship
* Capacity for adaptability
* Skills for addressing living with conflict
* Co-responsibility
* Hospitality and welcome
* Skills for community meetings, leadership, planning and appropriate sharing of faith, life and ministry.

### The Academic/Professional dimension

The world in which we live and to which we are sent with the Good News of Plentiful Redemption calls us to continual renewal of our knowledge and skills for ministry. Every member must seek to give new life to his ministry, and the ministry of the community. This will involve ‘constant study of the sacred and human sciences’ (Constitution 90). This will include, but not be limited to, doctri-

nal and professional updating in the following areas (*Ratio Forma- tionis* #114):

* + Biblical study
  + Systematic Theology, especially moral theology
  + Liturgy and the Sacrament of Reconciliation
  + Documents of the Church and ecclesiology
  + Cultural studies and ‘secularity’
  + Language studies
  + Professional and technical updating, including psychology and spiritual direction
  + Skills for collaboration/partnership with lay men and wom-

en

* + Skills for inculturated evangelization
  + Media

### The Pastoral dimension

The pastoral orientation of the whole course of training is a distinctive feature of missionary formation (Statute 058). This is as true of Ongoing Formation as it is of Initial Formation. The pastoral dimension presumes the other four dimensions already mentioned, and will take into account (*Ratio Formationis* #115):

* + - Personal charisms in the service of the Mission of the Community and the culture and pastoral reality of the confrere
    - Creativity and adaptability, as well as fostering the ‘dis- tacco’ necessary for missionary mobility
    - Social and ecclesial analysis which assists us to ‘hear the cry of the poor’
  + Preaching and public speaking
  + Animating and facilitating groups
  + Working in partnership with others, including lay

women and men

# Tools and Opportunities for Ongoing Formation and Continuing Education

The Constitutions and Statutes offer a number of suggestions about the tools available for the Ongoing Formation and Continu- ing Education of the members. Other opportunities will certainly be discovered in different situations. Different tools or opportuni- ties will place the accent on different dimensions of the formation process. It is the task of the confrere, his community and the Unit to which he belongs to integrate the five dimensions in a continual and progressive manner.

### At the Level of the Congregation:

The General Government of the Congregation offers opportu- nities and resources for the Ongoing Formation and the Continuing Education of Redemptorists in a variety of ways: through Secretari- ats and Institutes, Courses and Programs, Publications, *Communi- canda* and other communications.

### Secretariats and institutes:

General Secretariat for Formation

* + Permanent Secretary for Formation
  + Course for Formation of Formators
  + Website

General Secretariat for Spirituality

* + - Institute for Spirituality
    - Spirituality Course
    - Charism Series
    - Other publications and resources

Higher College of St. Alphonsus Accademia Alfonsiana

* + - Studia Moralia

Historical Institute

* + - Spicilegium Historicum

Commission for Moral Theology

* + - Moral Theology Congresses
    - Promotion of Moral Theology

Other Redemptorist Institutes of Moral Theology

* + - Sponsored by individual Provinces, but open to many confreres from across the Congregation.

### At the Level of the Region and the Units:

It is important that Ongoing Formation and Continuing Educa- tion are taken seriously by the Regions and all the Units. Initiatives can be promoted and realized through:

* + - Secretariats and Commissions;
    - Workshops, Conferences and Institutes;
    - Assemblies and Retreats;
    - Publications, websites, and other resources.

The Constitutions and Statutes suggest many possibilities – and the application and implementation of these suggestions varies across the Congregation. Many Regions and individual Units are now collaborating with one another on these initiatives, taking into account geography, culture, language, and other contextual con- cerns.

The following is a list of opportunities and possibilities. Secretariats and Commissions on a Regional or (V) Provincial

Level:

* The Secretariat for Formation might include Ongoing Formation. Sometimes Ongoing Formation is a separate secretariat or commission. It must work together with the Secretariat for Formation to be effective.
* Secretariat for Apostolic Life can provide critical assistance and input on ongoing formation

Statute 084 specifically mentions Secretariats for Formation and Apostolic Life. In some places, these are assisted by a secretar- iat or commission for spirituality and/or community life. In many situations, the Secretariat or Commission for Ongoing Formation coordinates specific programs, events, institutes, workshops or re- treats. However, the (V) Provincial Chapter, EPC and other bodies in the Unit can offer great assistance.

### Workshops, Conferences and institutes:

Workshops, Conferences and Institutes are generally devoted to developing skills for ministry, discussing contemporary cultural or ecclesial issues or updating academic training. They most often engage areas of concern such as:

* + Preaching and Evangelization
  + Aging and Health Concerns
  + Moral Theology
  + Liturgy and Reconciliation
  + Redemptorist History and Spirituality
  + Cultural and Ecclesial issues
  + Skills for Ministry (e.g. counseling, spiritual direction, conflict, etc.)

### Assemblies and Retreats:

Many Units have found Assemblies (sometimes called ‘Con- vocations’) and Retreats to be especially effective means of com- munity and spiritual formation for all the members. Depending on geography, size and other issues, many Units engage in these op- portunities on an annual or ‘every other year’ timetable. These are especially effective for fostering:

* Personal and communal prayer
* ‘Gospel friendship’
* Plan of Community Life
* Vision and direction for the Region and/or (V) Province

### Sabbaticals and Renewal

Many Units have policies for sabbaticals, and the periodic re- newal and updating of the confreres. Some institutes sponsored by individual Units offer programs and accommodations to assist in this important ministry. These institutes encourage interprovincial and international collaboration, which is a value for the whole Con- gregation.

### Higher Studies and Academic/Professional Formation:

As a Unit develops its pastoral plan and priorities, as well as preparing formators for its formation program, it is important to consider higher studies as a strategic part of its life. Statutes 023 and 083 encourage Redemptorists to support the Higher College of Saint Alphonsus and the Alphonsian Academy in Rome. In plan- ning for higher studies, the (V) Provinces should consider our own institutes. This is not to exclude other options when they are more appropriate to the needs of the unit.

It is important for the overall health of a Unit and the Con- gregation that confreres are sent for higher studies on a regular ba- sis. The choice of areas of study, as well as the academic institute and program, must be the result of a fruitful dialogue between the

1. Provincial leadership and the confrere. In many (V) Provinces, guidelines prepared by the Formation Secretariat or Ongoing For- mation Committee can assist this dialogue.

### At the Level of the Local Community:

The XXIII General Chapter (1997) directed every community in the Congregation to develop a *Plan of Community Life (PCL).* Part of such a plan will promote the ongoing formation of the mem- bers of the community. The Pastoral Guide for Superiors invites every local superior to take this challenge very seriously. Such on- going formation can involve all five of the dimensions mentioned above in an integrated manner. There are tools and resources avail- able to help in this process. Some suggestions are listed below:

* + Monthly retreat days in common
  + Regular community meetings
  + Review of Life
    - The ‘Charism 2000’ series
    - Fraternal sharing
    - Integration of apostolic experience and community life
    - ‘Case studies’ and reflection on contemporary situation together
    - Participation in study days in the local Church
    - Formation of partnership with lay men and women (Redemptorist Associates, Lay Missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer, etc.)

### The Responsibility of the individual Confrere

The Constitutions and Statutes, as well as our *Ratio Forma- tionis* make clear that it is the responsibility of the individual con- frere to assure his ongoing formation and continuing education. Of course, creative initiatives must be explored with the local com- munity and the Provincial leadership. However, there are many initiatives in which a confrere can engage at the local level on an integrated and regular basis:

* + - Commitment to personal and communal prayer, and the PCL of the community
    - Regular reading and study
    - Spiritual Direction
    - Workshops and conferences
    - Participation in the life and conversation of the local community and the (V) Province/Region

It is also the responsibility of the confrere who has had the op- portunity to participate in a workshop, conference, sabbatical pro- gram or course of higher studies to find creative ways to share this experience with his Unit.

# Specific Areas for Special Attention

There are several areas which require specific attention for the Ongoing Formation and Continuing Education of Redemptorists. These should be areas of particular concern to the whole Unit, and most especially, to the (V) Provincial Superior, the Chapter, and the Council.

### Formation of Formators

The Formation of Formators is a specialized area of great con- cern in the Congregation. The Constitutions and Statutes give some general guidelines, including the careful selection of formators, the adequate training they require for their ministry, and the importance of training all those involved in teaching or pastoral preparation of the candidates in Initial Formation.

The Formation of Formators will be more readily achieved in those Units which give the necessary attention to the ongoing for- mation of all the members. However, there are specific specialized areas in which formators need to be trained.

Programs are available in many regions of the Congregation for the general formation of formators, usually through academic institutions. The General Secretariat for Formation is sponsoring a program for the specific Redemptorist formation necessary for formators. The preparation of able formators to oversee Initial For- mation of candidates to Redemptorist Apostolic Life requires care- ful planning on the part of major superiors and their Councils, with the advice of the Formation Secretariat.

The same guidelines apply to those who will teach in semi- naries or supervise the pastoral preparation of Redemptorist can- didates. It is important to the life of the Congregation that the (V)

Provinces send confreres to engage in higher studies on a regular basis.

### Formation for Leadership in the Congregation

We live and minister in an increasingly complex world, amid diverse cultures and societies. The ministry of leadership at the Congregational, (V) Provincial and Local level has also grown more complex and difficult. Many confreres are expressing a need for more adequate formation for leadership.

The General Government has worked hard to provide resourc- es to help with this need. These include:

* + *The Pastoral Guide for Superiors* and *The Directory for Superiors*
  + The Course and Program for New Major Superiors at the

beginning of each Triennium

* + The focus on leadership in the Spirituality Course offered by the Institute for Spirituality.

Some Regions and (V) Provinces have also developed resourc- es to help with this formation, including:

* + Workshops for new Superiors
  + Conferences on Leadership sponsored by Conferences of Religious or other institutes
  + (V) Provincial workshops on leadership issues for the

members

* + Collaboration with Dioceses, other religious, etc. on workshops on particular areas of leadership formation, such as facilitating meetings, dealing with conflict, partnership with laity, co-responsibility, financial administration

There is an increasing need for greater collaboration and shar- ing of resources across the Congregation. Recent Visitations by the General Government have stressed the importance of this area of ongoing formation.

### Constitutions and Statutes: Appropriation and integration

Redemptorists live Apostolic Life according the spirit and norms of the Constitutions and Statutes. Much effort has been made to help each confrere and community appropriate and integrate the Constitutions in a personal way. There is still much work to be done. This is an area of ongoing formation which we cannot neglect, and resources are available to help each confrere, community and Unit in this important dimension of our life. These resources include, but are not limited to:

* The new edition of the Constitutions and Statutes, with topi-

cal index

* The ‘Charism 2000’ series (Three volumes, based on the first three chapters of the Constitutions)
* *The Charism of the Redemptorists in the Church: A Com-*

*mentary on the Constitutions* by Santino Raponi, C.Ss.R.

In addition to these resources, many (V) Provinces have spon- sored workshops on the Constitutions for their members, as has the General Government.

It is important to note that personal appropriation and integra- tion of the Constitutions by each confrere, each community and Unit is also a lifelong process. It requires reflective reading, dia- logue with the experience of ministry and community, and conver- sation with other Redemptorists.

### Formation for international Collaboration

There is a growing international collaboration in the Congre- gation. This is strongly encouraged by the General Government, with the support of recent General Chapters, and by the Commis- sion for Restructuring.

International Collaboration requires a conversion of attitudes and a high degree of adaptability, as well as particular skills. For- mation for such collaboration must include:

* + Formation for international communities. Experience teaches that such communities require careful preparation and planning. This will usually require a period of preparation together before embarking on the project itself.
  + Learning new languages. Language study and immersion experiences in another culture and country not only assist in developing one’s linguistic ability, but will also expand one’s cultural horizons.
  + Study and experience of different cultures, as well as deeper study of one’s own culture.

by:

This formation for international collaboration can be assisted

* Collaboration in pastoral ministry, even for a short period of

time.

* Sabbaticals and renewals in an international setting.
* Immersion in cross-cultural experiences.
* Colloquiums, conferences and workshops on particular

themes.

* Exchange of personnel between units.
* Participation on the different Secretariats and Commissions

of the General Government.

# FORMATiOn OF BROTHERS

The formation of all Redemptorists is based on ‘the follow- ing of Jesus as proposed in the gospels’, and this is carried out in accordance with our particular charism and our Constitutions and Statutes.

However, we are aware that formation is for a purpose – to live a particular vocation within the Congregation. We also recognize that the vocation to Brotherhood is a special way of living Redemp- torist life. Accordingly, there must be a corresponding special re- sponse in terms of a formation program. The ideal is not to separate or isolate the Brother candidate, nor to totally immerse him in the exact same program as that of those studying for the priesthood. With this in mind, the following should be observed.

# Vocation discernment

For those called to follow the Redeemer in the Congregation as Brothers, an enquiry should be undertaken to elicit motivation for making such a choice. Questions about attitude to priests, self worth, idea of apostolate, and the ability to have a real sense of self, need to be examined. It is surely true that those applying for Broth- erhood need to have a particular sense of who they are, in making this choice. Other areas that need to be examined are avoidance, escapism and a false understanding of who a Brother really is.

The accompaniment at this stage should ideally be shared with the Vocations Director, and, if the Director is a priest, a Brother from the Unit. It should also be stressed that when a candidate comes into the Congregation as an aspirant for either priesthood or Brotherhood, this choice is not irrevocable in the early stages.

# Postulancy

Generally speaking what applies to Postulants in the Unit’s *Ratio*, will apply across the board to both Brother and priest can- didates.

However, in Units where the postulancy is spread over three or four years, and involves the study of philosophy for clerical candi- dates, the suitability of this has to be weighed very carefully. What needs to be considered is the advisability of separation at an early stage from peers which can lead to isolation on the one hand, or ‘preferential’ treatment on the other. Indeed this observation ap- plies to the whole for formation. It is often the case that in a Unit there may only be one person presenting himself as a candidate for the Brother’s life. Both a policy for the formation of Brothers and a flexible and individual approach are necessary.

# novitiate

The same Novitiate should be followed by all candidates. Ob- viously the Novice Director will tailor his colloquia with Brother candidates to deal with their particular call.

# Post-novitiate Formation

Here there is often a divergence of ways for the Brother in the formation program, beginning after First Profession. It is important to note that the time of temporary profession is a special period of formation for all Redemptorists, Brothers as well as clerics. Some Units may decide that a candidate should study theology, while oth- ers may offer a shortened theological course. Others may not offer a theology course. Post-novitiate for the Brother is usually the time for professional training. Again, the areas of possible future apos- tolate should have been discussed at the Postulancy stage, so that

specialized courses may be sought, and qualifications previously obtained, so that entry into any particular vocational calling will be possible.

Where residential courses are the best option for the particu- lar apostolate, special accompaniment together with frequent visits back to the community are essential. Integration into the commu- nity is especially important at this stage.

# Entry into Ministry

As with young priests, this is a delicate and difficult time, a stage in which the Congregation loses members. Again, it is es- sential that focused accompaniment takes place. It is also impor- tant that when the Brother takes up an apostolate, his work has as many links to the mainstream life of the Unit as possible. It may be advisable to encourage a Brother to participate from time to time in meetings with Brothers from neighboring Units – or even at the international level.

# distinct Formation Programs

It is important to be aware that in some Units of the Congre- gation there is a separate program of formation for Brothers, and this may actually involve a completely separate formation house for Brothers. The General Secretariat is aware of some units of the Congregation where this takes place. What is vital is that whatever programs are arranged, the distinct and unique character of the vo- cation to be a Brother is respected, while never isolating him from his peers and fellow Redemptorists.

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