

PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PPF

The Program of Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition



THE HARVEST IS PLENTY

Scripture Reflection: Luke 10:1-9

The whole Church receives and accompanies the gift of vocations from God and is responsible for promoting and discerning vocations. It is integral to the mission of the Church “to care for the birth, discernment and fostering of vocations, particularly those to the priesthood” (*Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 34). Within that ecclesial context, **the vocation director** serves on behalf of the diocesan bishop or competent authority of an institute or society to promote vocations and direct those discerning a call to the priesthood.

The vocation director supports, inspires, and equips pastors, parishes, and diocesan personnel to create a culture of vocations in which men can be better equipped to answer God’s prompting. Pastors and other members of the community are invaluable in assisting the vocation director in accompanying discerners along the path of discipleship and mission. Once a discerner has been identified, the vocation director works in conjunction with the parish or another community of the faithful to assist in nourishing the seeds of a vocation with divine grace, for example by helping the man to find a spiritual director, maintain an active prayer life, develop a network of relationships with others who bring forth fruits of authentic discernment in one another, and actively seek out a solid participation in the mission of the parish or other community of the faithful. It is important that the vocation director actively develop relationships by his presence, such as regular visits to parishes, youth groups, young adult gatherings, and university campus ministry events. In cooperating with the formation process, a diocesan vocation director may manage the diocesan **admissions process**,

KEY WORDS

The Vocation Director

Admissions Process

Seminary Collaboration

Ease Transitions to Ministry

serve as a liaison between the diocesan bishop and the seminary, and link the seminarian to the diocese and presbyterate, for example, through pastoral placements. He collaborates with the bishop, with the presbyterate, with a diocesan vocation commission if one is in place, and with the seminary.

In all cases, the relationship with the seminary merits special attention. Mutual respect and **collaboration** should mark the relations between vocation and seminary personnel. Each possesses different responsibilities; yet cooperation, mutual knowledge, and trust are vital for the good of the seminarians and the benefit of the Church. Such collaboration is especially important concerning applicants' ongoing evaluation and their recommendation for admission. The vocation director accompanies others along their journey but should not attempt to develop a process of formation that competes with or parallels that of the seminary. It is vital that all those responsible for the formation of priests collaborate fully in this work. Regardless of the length of the relationship, the vocation director has a lasting influence on the lives of those he encounters.

The vocation director's collaboration with the seminary should have a special focus during the Propaedeutic and Vocational Synthesis Stages. During the Propaedeutic Stage, the seminarian has already been accepted into the formation program but may reside in a specific community with a team of priest formators that is separate from the seminary. In a similar way, during the Vocational Synthesis Stage, a newly ordained deacon has completed the Configuration Stage and returns to his ecclesiastical entity to enter into the life of a cleric and to adjust to the life of ministry. Both stages will require assistance from the vocation director to **ease transition** for the seminarian and deacon, and to offer guidance and direction to those responsible for his formation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How is particular attention being given to the support of US-born Hispanic vocations within your ecclesiastical entity?
2. How is the presbyterate invited to witness and build a culture of vocations in their parishes and ministries?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are vocational directors supported in their ministry?

Peer organizations such as the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD) and the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) seek to promote vocations to priesthood in various ecclesiastical entities, as well the other

expressions of consecrated life. The exchange of ideas, sharing of resources, and development of best practices in promotion, discernment, and formation help those involved in vocational accompaniment, and provide a forum for best-practice resources, fraternity, and support.