

PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PPF

The Program of Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition, *pre-Confirmatio*



PRAYER, TRUST, AND FRATERNITY

Scripture Reflection: Proverbs 3:5-6

One of the first questions that bishops and seminary communities ask about the 6th edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*, often regards the implementation of the **Propaedeutic Stage**. Using a gradual approach, it is fitting to begin institutional changes with a focus on this mandatory stage, as it is always the first stage of formation and the first time a man is considered a seminarian.

The Propaedeutic Stage must always be lived in community with a team of priest formators. This stage can be housed in the same building as other stages of seminary formation, provided it is a distinct community with its own living area, formators, *horarium*, scope and sequence.

As the name implies, the Propaedeutic Stage is introductory in nature, but also intensive through its focus on significant times of growth in prayer, trust, and fraternity. This stage should last at least **twelve consecutive months** but could be extended for a longer period if circumstances require it. These months should maintain their own specific character and allow the seminarian to lay a foundation for a new way of life centered in Christ and in communion with his Bishop, presbyterate, and his local Church or ecclesiastical entity through involvement in parish settings and in charitable works.

While **all four dimensions** are present in every stage, the focus should be on the foundation of the **human and spiritual dimensions**. During this stage, general education credits are

KEY WORDS

Propaedeutic Stage

Twelve Consecutive Months

Human & Spiritual Focus

All Dimensions are Present

permitted but should not be full time. Classes proper to this stage, such as an introduction to scripture, catechesis, and spirituality, can be taken for credit, in addition to a maximum of nine (9) general education credits per semester. This allows the seminarian to remain a full-time student for purposes of student loans and immigration status. It is not necessary to take courses for credit, but the PPF offers this option. The study of philosophy must be avoided at this stage, and care must be taken that the academic work does not interfere with the overall tenor of this stage's objectives, which is intensive vocational discernment, growth in relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, and growth in self-knowledge.

Three flexible models have been presented for this stage:

- **Model #1**, for men entering seminary *with* an undergraduate degree:
 - Propaedeutic Stage: one year
 - Discipleship Stage: two years
- **Model #2**, for men entering seminary *without* an undergraduate degree:
 - Propaedeutic Stage: one to two years
 - Discipleship Stage: two to four years
- **Model #3**, for men entering seminary *without* an undergraduate degree, two years of full-time academic studies of a general nature, followed by one year focused on the human, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions of formation (these three years, taken together, constitute a complete Propaedeutic Stage which would then lead into a two-year Discipleship Stage).

Regardless of the model, the foundations established during this stage will allow for a more integrated seminarian and greater depth of formation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is necessary to maintain a distinct community for the Propaedeutic Stage within your formation program?
2. How can you more frequently utilize retreats, pilgrimages, days of reflection, and fraternal outings during the Propaedeutic Stage?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about seminarians with an F-1 Visa?

A student visa is required to enter seminary studies in the United States. After the student is accepted, they must be enrolled full-time in the seminary, and be proficient in English or be taking courses leading to English proficiency.

The maximum credit allowance for the Propaedeutic Stage permits a seminarian to be considered a full-time student (i.e., nine general education credits plus three or more credits for courses such as an introduction to scripture, spirituality, and the Catechism).