

PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PPF

The Program of Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition



CULTURAL PREPARATION FOR FORMATION

Scripture Reflection: Galatians 3:26-29

The seminary should create a climate of **mutual respect**, communication and collaboration. This climate contributes to the overall development of the seminarians as they interact with many other individuals and communities. Men and women mingle with seminarians in a variety of settings: personal, academic, pastoral, and ecumenical. The interaction of seminarians with staff and service personnel in the seminary community often reveals attitudes toward others in general. The ongoing contact of seminarians with their own family and ecclesiastical entities should continue to form a significant dimension of their life. “The community forms the seedbed of a priestly vocation, since the seminarian emerges from it, to be sent back to serve it after ordination. The seminarian to begin with, and later the priest, must have a living bond with the community” (*Ratio*, no. 90). Seminarians should participate in parish activities and volunteer for service on a regular basis.

The seminary community and individual seminarians should appreciate the presence of a multicultural, multiethnic, and international community within the seminary. This environment provides a **mutually enriching** dimension to a seminary community and reflects the realities of pastoral life awaiting seminarians. This diversity should also help seminarians develop a quality of adaptability to varied pastoral settings in their future priestly ministry.

Applicants from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds should be given every encouragement. An effort must be made by vocation directors and seminaries to honor every vocational stirring.

KEY WORDS

Cultural Preparation

Mutual Respect

Mutually Enriching

Adaptability

Propaedeutic Stage programs and seminaries are responsible for ensuring the possession of adequate resources to serve the formative needs of such applicants. Formation requirements should not be lessened, but necessary adaptations may be made to enable admission into the regular course of study.

International seminarians should receive American cultural education and receive adequate instruction in the English language (if English is not their primary language), often in an ESL (English as a second language) program of study, prior to beginning the Propaedeutic Stage. Regional accrediting agencies require adequate proficiency in the English language as demonstrated by a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). In addition to the study of US history and culture and of the English language, these programs may also supplement the seminarians' academic and pastoral background as a preparation for the study of philosophy and theology.

Seminarians from the mainstream culture of the United States whose native language is English continue the intercultural competency training received during the Propaedeutic Stage into future stages, including the continued study of another language to meet the pastoral needs of the ecclesiastical entity.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What opportunities are provided in seminary formation for ministry to people of diverse cultural backgrounds?
2. How does the seminary community respect and accommodate all of the cultural families represented in the formational community?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can seminary professors assist with cultural preparation?

It is important to recruit well-trained and experienced professors from diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. This is especially important in those sections of the United States in which the Church and seminary community reflect such diversity. If the seminary has a multicultural community, the professors should be

encouraged to participate in programs and workshops that acquaint them with the specific situation and formational needs of their seminarians. To inculcate in seminarians a sensitivity for issues of social justice, the seminary professors first must possess an awareness of the significance of questions of peace, justice, and respect for life.