



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

**SEMINARIANS' ADHERENCE TO INTEGRAL PRIESTLY
FORMATION AT ST. MARY'S NATIONAL SEMINARY GGABA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned Ssali Anthony hereby declare that this work has been produced with my personal effort: I declare that it has never been submitted to any university or institution for any academic award whatsoever. The authors whose work I consulted as I was doing this work have been genuinely acknowledged.

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APPROVAL I

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APPROVAL II

This is to certify that this work was defended on 30th September 2025 and the corrections which the researcher was told to make were successfully made and approved by the assigned moderator.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Christ the Redeemer of all and to His Ever-Glorious Mother Mary our great queen. I also dedicate it to all involved in the great work of forming future priests.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Deep thanks to all who have rendered a great hand in this work. I thank God who began this work in me and has brought it to completion. Great thanks to my moderator who at the same time doubles as my Spiritual father, Fr. J.B. Ssonko, who did the great work of painstakingly reading my work and promptly returning it to me. I also appreciate my second moderator Fr. Vincent Kigozi Ssekabira for his timely and most wonderful assistance, and the entire staff of St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba. Special mention is made here of Fr. Dr. Luyinda Lazarus and Fr. Dr. Kimbowa Emmanuel whose two books gave me the impetus to delve deeper into the question of integral priestly formation. I thank Fr. Cosmas Enyasu for sparing time to discuss this work at length and for helping me with references for use in this research. I also thank Fr. Stephen Ssenkubuge who aided me a while ago during my diploma research, help which has been handy in this master's research. I also thank Mr. and Mrs. Obbo for the great help and support they have always accorded to me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PDV:	Pastores Dabo Vobis
CCC:	Catechism of the Catholic Church
OP:	Optatam Totius
Ratio/16.	Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis 2016
UEC:	Uganda Episcopal Conference
CIC:	Codex Iurici Canonici

ABSTRACT

The prevalent decadence of religion in the pastoral field raises the big question. What went wrong? The researcher in a bid to understand this, zeroed down on the formation of pastors. There is an important role that pastors play in the faith of society. Where they do not recognise and carry out this profound role faith dwindles. In order to carry out this they require an integral formation. Therefore, the research explores the question of integral priestly formation and how it affects the pastor's work. Integral priestly formation is the comprehensive development of a seminarian in preparation for the Catholic priesthood, encompassing human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. This research explores how a seminarian can best adhere to this holistic process, drawing insights from key magisterial documents such as *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, and other ecclesiastical sources. The study identifies the foundational principles of priestly formation and emphasizes the centrality of docility to the Holy Spirit, fidelity to the Church's teachings, and personal commitment to ongoing conversion. Through a synthesis of theological reflection and practical application, the research examines each of the four pillars of formation in detail. In human formation, it highlights the importance of affective maturity, relational integrity, and personal discipline. In spiritual formation, it underscores the need for a strong interior life nourished by prayer, the sacraments, and spiritual direction. Intellectual formation is treated as the disciplined engagement with Sacred Scripture, Church Tradition, and theology, cultivating a mind conformed to Christ. Pastoral formation is explored as the seminarian's preparation to shepherd souls with compassion, discernment, and missionary zeal. It also addresses common challenges seminarians face, such as cultural distractions, personal inconsistencies, and spiritual dryness, and offers practical strategies for perseverance. Central to the seminarian's fidelity is the cultivation of a deep relationship with Christ, lived in the context of a supportive formation community and guided by obedience to ecclesiastical authority. Ultimately, the study concludes that integral priestly formation is not merely a curriculum to complete, but a lifelong configuration to Christ the Good Shepherd, requiring continual openness, humility, and grace-filled effort.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The priesthood is absolutely vital for Christian life and especially for its growth and preservation. There is no substitute for it. Priests carry the burden of ministry through their day - to - day service of the faithful. They are ministers of the Eucharist and ministers of God's mercy in the sacrament of penance. It is they that bring comfort to people and guide them in difficult moments in their lives. With this in mind it is absolutely imperative that those who aim at this particular ministry be thoroughly grounded in all necessary discipline pertinent to this very noble duty. It is this which the researcher seeks to look into; specifically, how ready those that aspire to the priesthood embrace the formation given to prepare them for priestly ministry. The researcher aims at exploring the vicissitudes of this adherence to formation.

This particular chapter, is intended by the researcher to thoroughly expound on the background of the research; that is on how the researcher was inspired to begin research on seminarian's adherence to integral priestly formation in Ggaba National Seminary, looking at formation from the universal perspective especially basing this on the Dicastery for the Clergy, then from a continental perspective with particular focus on formation as seen by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar. The researcher will then explore formation from the outlook of the Ugandan Episcopal Conference and lastly in Ggaba National Major Seminary. It is still in the background that we hope to establish the development of the researcher's desire to carry out this research. The problem at hand which is at the basis of this research will be stated; that is to say, the particular factors or factor which prompted inquiry into the adherence of Seminarians to the integral formation that is given at the seminary. The researcher will then place questions which are the guiding posts for this research, in otherwards, called objective questions by which the researcher will be able to come to meaningful findings. Still, it is in this chapter that the researcher will relay definitions of operational terms that will run through the research.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

From a global point of view the renewal of the whole Church as desired and even stressed by the Second Vatican Council depends in great part upon a priestly ministry animated by the spirit

of Christ, and for this, it is critically important for priests to have received wholesome training. (*Optatam Totius*; Second Vatican Council, 1965, no.1) There are many “pastors” but few effective ones. The situation is deplorable. There is need to have the truths of faith taught to men, there is need to sanctify the souls of men through the sacraments; there is need to provide an example of an authentic Christian life, there is need to bring Christ and His message closer to the people. The scourge of incompetent Pastors of souls is widespread and dire and its effects are diverse and deep. Subsequently the situation of the faithful is very disreputable and sad. Many are found ignorant of the truths of faith; many have fallen away from the faith, multitudes are overwhelmed in the face of tribulations, others are overcome by vice and have fallen into crass despair, many are dishonest at work and others have failed at the commitments of matrimony. In so many and diverse ways do we find the faithful plunged in deplorable situations which they would have been able to overcome with the help of an efficient pastor. The presence of such a sorrowful state of events points to a foul disease that is present in the ministers. That is an inability to cope with the needs of the people they are meant to serve.

At the depth of this bewailing state of affairs is the fact that there are many pastors who are incompetent. And to what do we owe this sad situation? Most probably the formation of these particular pastors did not benefit them for a transformation. The duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life. The principal contributors to this are the families which, animated by the spirit of faith and love and by the sense of duty, become a kind of initial seminary, and the parishes in whose rich life the young people take part. Teachers and all those who are in any way in charge of the training of boys and young men, especially Catholic associations, should carefully guide the young people entrusted to them so that these will recognize and freely accept a divine vocation (*Optatam Totius*; Second Vatican Council, 1965, no. 2).

The Synod Fathers of the African Church without neglecting theological and spiritual formation, which are obviously primary, on this particular point emphasized the importance of the psychological and human growth of candidates to the Priesthood. Future priests must develop a correct understanding of their own culture while not being locked within their own ethnic and cultural limits. The Fathers emphasised too that Seminarians in order to be relevant pastors, must become ever more deeply rooted in Gospel values so as to strengthen their commitment in faithfulness and devotion to Christ. The fruitfulness of their future mission will greatly depend on their profound union with Christ, on the quality of their life of prayer and

their interior life, and on the human, spiritual and moral values assimilated during their time of formation (Benedict XVI, 2011, no. 121).

The Uganda Episcopal Conference as far as the formation of priests is concerned laid down that the Candidate should be very conscious of the facets of formation and should endeavour to cultivate them into his life. The charter on formation expounds on how it is the responsibility not of the candidate alone but of all those around him. The candidate aware of the profound role of the Holy Spirit in Formation is called to dispose himself readily for the moulding of the Holy Spirit. The Bishops of the Ugandan Episcopal Conference emphasise that in order to have a wholly grounded minister it is necessary that seminarians learn to put on Christ inspired by His ministry and incarnated in all areas of their formation (Uganda Episcopal Conference, 2009, pg. 5).

It is upon such a background as well as basing on observations made by the researcher for the many years spent in the formation house especially at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, that the researcher found it necessary to examine the effects that a sincere and effective adherence to integral priestly formation on a successful priestly ministry. In the formation houses many are admitted so as to be formed for priestly functions, and many programs are put forth in order to tap the potential in these particular individuals with an aim of forming them into effective and efficient pastors of souls. As such programs like the daily celebration of the holy Eucharist, daily prayers, lectures on diverse topics in theology, sporting programs, moments of interaction with others, as well as pastoral programs are put in place. There is a difference between an active participation in these programs and simply being present at these activities and the effects of this are vivid in the way individuals handle the priestly ministry.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The efficiency with which pastoral activities are done is on a steady decline. This is manifested in the lukewarmness found among the faithful in regards to all that pertains to their faith and morals. We discern this in the pernicious ignorance of things divine found among many of the faithful, in the irreverence now widespread in all the places of worship. It is seen as well in the increasing numbers of those that abandon the catholic faith and eventually faith itself and, in the reduced numbers of those that subscribe to the reception of different sacraments. In many instances we see that virtue is scarce and vice at large.

To what then, do we owe this very unbecoming state of affairs in the Church if not in inefficient pastors of souls. And why is it that the pastors of souls are found to be ineffective if not that they did not assimilate into their lives the wonderful training they received in the Seminary. Those candidates to the priesthood who do not find it necessary to ground themselves in the formation they receive, always end up unfaithful stewards of the flock of Christ. They are the biggest reason behind the decline of faith among the faithful. They end up being inefficient in their duty. Certainly, those that are diligent and dedicated to a transformation of their lives in Spiritual, Intellectual, Human and Pastoral fields always become faithful stewards of Christ's flock. However few they may be, they are the reason behind a growth of faith among the faithful. It is this that has prompted the researcher to select this area for research, in a bid to find out how a seminarian's adherence to integral priestly formation makes him a good and efficient pastor.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

In this particular segment we seek to look at the purpose for which the researcher has taken on this research and what he seeks to arrive at.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general purpose of this research work has been to examine whether it is possible to have a faithful adherence to integral priestly formation and how this would lead to efficiency of pastors of souls.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To come to a better understanding of an integral priestly formation as held at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba.
2. To examine the factors that influence adherence to integral priestly formation.
3. To examine whether the quality of priests affects the quality of the faith of the Christians.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) Is integral priestly formation able to improve on the efficiency of pastors of souls?

- 2) What are the factors that influence a seminarian's adherence to integral priestly formation?
- 3) Is integral priestly formation viable and possible in the New World Culture?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

First and foremost, this research may help the Formation team of St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba to come to a better appreciation of the modal of formation that is in use today. It may also help provide answers to questions like why some candidates to the priesthood fail to submit to the formation under which they are formed.

Secondly the study may also be helpful not only for Ggaba Seminary but also other Seminaries in Uganda to understand the factors that hinder an effective formation, the reasons why some candidates to the priesthood simply glide through formation without going through a fundamental change. It may also help seminaries to examine their faithfulness to an authentic integral formation without compromising one aspect over the other.

Thirdly, this research may help the Uganda Episcopal Conference but especially the Commission for the Seminary formation; to re-evaluate the approach it has employed towards formation. It may also assist the Priestly formation commission to gauge her efforts against the expectations of the universal Church as the research will base itself on the magisterial teachings on the formation of Priests especially *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and *Optatam Totius*.

Since St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba is national in character uniting seminarians from all over Uganda, this research could be of help to all the dioceses in Uganda.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

These are definitions that specify a concrete, replicable procedure designed to represent a construct. (*Stevens, 1935*)

1.7.1 Integral Priestly Formation

Priestly formation is a journey of transformation in Spiritual, intellectual, Human and Pastoral-Liturgical fields, that renews the heart and mind of a seminarian, so that he can discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. From the first moment of his calling,

this person is to lead the life of a disciple of Jesus, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, for the service of the Church. (*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 2016)

1.7.2 Seminarian

The seminarian is one who is called to go out of himself, to make his way, in Christ, towards the Father and towards others, embracing the call to priesthood, dedicating himself to work with the Holy Spirit, to achieve a serene and creative interior synthesis between strength and weakness. (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, 2016).

1.7.3 Pastor of Souls

A pastor of souls is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful (*Code of Canon Law* 1983, c. 519).

1.8 SCOPE

Scope refers to the boundaries and extent within which the research project will be performed (Uttkarsha Bhosale, 2002). This helps the researcher to focus and provide a clear understanding of what will be dealt with.

1.8.1 Content Scope

This research delves into the effects of a faithful or unfaithful adherence to integral priestly formation by the Seminarian in order to foster an efficient output of work in regards to Pastoral care. The researcher therefore will base himself on three major documents for a foundation: *Pastore Dabo Vobis*, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, and *Optatam Totius*. The researcher seeks through interaction with those in formation in St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba to examine factors that hinder a faithful adherence to an integral Priestly formation.

In this work, the researcher has employed methods including survey, correlation, sampling and case study. These methods are applied theologically through the historical theology, biblical theology, systematic theology and practical theology.

1.8.2 Geographical scope

This research has been done at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba. It is a house of formation for the last stage of those candidates to the Priesthood. It belongs to the Uganda Episcopal Conference and her aim is the integral formation of Priests with the general goal of giving the Church good shepherds ready to do every good work according to the heart of Jesus Christ the Lord.

1.8.3 Disciplinary Scope

The researcher intended to pursue this research from the perspective of Spiritual Theology reason being that spiritual theology is a discipline that veers into all other disciplines guiding them as helm. The researcher will not however fail to base himself on other disciplines since the work under research requires that an integral outlook be put in application.

1.8.4 Time Scope

By the time this research has been carried out St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba has just celebrated 50 years. It is therefore wonderful to note that the institution has been forming Priests for 50 years now and it boasts of close to 2000 priests having passed through priestly formation there among whom are several Bishops. For this reason, the researcher found this Institution very opportune and necessary for the research. The research itself lasted two years.

1.9 CONCLUSION.

This Chapter has given us an opening to the entire research. In it the researcher bases to proceed to other chapters. In it the basis for the research has been elaborated and this with a foundation in ecclesiastical notions on priestly formation. The documents and ideals on formation as given by the dicastery for the Clergy as well as those given by the continental ecclesiastical body have provided the researcher with a better background for the research. In it the researcher has also reflected the mind of the national ecclesiastical conference on formation. Now, certainly these particular notions have been explored in detail basing on specifically selected documents for a broader and deeper understanding of the Church's idea of integral priestly formation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher focuses on the works of literature that speak on the subject matter of this research. Basically, the researcher looked at documents that treat priestly formation especially those that highlight the importance of integral priestly formation, laying in clear and distinct terms what each arm of integral priestly formation is all about. In short, the works of pontiffs are to be highlighted as the foremost teachers in the Church as well as the documents of Episcopal conferences especially that of Uganda where the research is carried out. The researcher also looked at the work of Priests who have written about formation and finally the handbook on the foundation of Ggaba National Seminary has also been consulted. Thereafter, the researcher explored the different facets of integral priestly formation; Human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral, relaying what different teachers and authors have said on each.

2.1.1 Historical exploration of Magisterial Documents on Priestly Formation 1965 to 2019.

This section proposes only to identify those documents of magisterial teaching that are fundamental to an appreciation of both the novelty and continuity of reform of priestly formation first begun by the Council of Trent, returned to by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and continuing at present in the *Ratio/16*. The third session of the Second Vatican Council approved a decree on priestly formation, *Optatam Totius* in October 1965 with the self-professed recognition that the conciliar *aggiornamento* and renewal of ecclesial life and structures “depends to a great extent on the ministry of priests.” (Second Vatican Council, 1965) Gathered from throughout the world, and conscious of the diversity of the Churches, circumstances, and cultures, *Optatam Totius* established general, universal norms that the Council Fathers envisioned would be concretized by particular formation programs proper to the nations and Oriental Rites. (Second Vatican Council, 1965 No.1) *Optatam Totius* applied the principle of renewal and reform delineated in other conciliar teaching to priestly formation but left the development of precise norms governing initial priestly formation to episcopal conferences according to the conciliar principle of subsidiarity. From the aforesaid, the promulgation of the 1970 *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, a universal formation program, emerged only in response to the 1967 first ordinary general assembly of the Synod of

Bishops (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016) *The Ratio Fundamentalis* of 1970 professed not to supplant the rights of episcopal conferences to develop national programs, but to establish the “solid foundations or carrying out or completing this serious task and also to supply sure standards to the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in its examination and approval of individual national programs in accordance with the Decree *Optatam Totius*, (Second Vatican Council, 1965 §1). Five years after the promulgation of *Optatam Totius*, *Ratio Fundamentalis* clarified questions arising from *Optatam Totius*, while also creating universal obligatory laws for bishops, priestly formators, spiritual directors, and seminarians. After treating of the essential importance of forming integral men, *the Ratio* identified the known dimensions of priestly life (Seminary formation Under Mary’s Mantle, 2019).

In 1985, fifteen years following the publication of *the Ratio/70*, the Congregation for Catholic Education promulgated a new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, largely retaining verbatim the earlier norms from *the Ratio/70* with the necessary adaptations required for conformity with the *Code of Canon Law* (Seminary Formation Under Mary’s Mantle, 2019). The eighth ordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops of 1990 on the theme of the formation of priests in the contemporary milieu recognized the need for present-day application of *Optatam Totius*, in part attributable to the previously unanticipated “crisis of priestly vocations.” By means of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II not only confessed difficulties confronting initial priestly formation at the close of the twentieth century but also offered a theological reflection on ministerial priesthood and addressed the essential task of all the members of the Christian faithful to cultivate vocations in the particular Churches. The novelty of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* consisted in the introduction of holistic priestly formation under the four pillars of the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, casting light upon formation of the whole man, body and soul, in pastoral charity, not solely of mind or heart.

The Ratio Fundamentalis of 2016, the latest document to be promulgated with universal general norms on initial priestly formation, concludes an extensive period of collaboration and preparation begun in early 2014 by the Congregation of Clergy. After internal preparation, the draft document was studied at the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation of Clergy in October 2014, before being subsequently submitted for broad consultation to the various Roman dicasteries, episcopal conferences, papal legates, and an International Conference in November 2015 on the occasion of *Optatam Totius* and *PO’s quinquagenary*. After still more extensive

consultation and review, a draft was presented for Pope Francis's approval prior to the Congregation for the Clergy's promulgation of *the Ratio Fundamental* of 2016 as a General Executory Decree on December 8, 2016. The self-described foundational principles of the new *Ratio/16* are "one, integral, grounded in community, and missionary in spirit." Consequently, *the Ratio/16* locates integral initial priestly formation within the broader "'journey of discipleship,' which begins at Baptism, is perfected through the other sacraments of Christian Initiation, comes to be appreciated as the centre of one's life at the beginning of seminary formation, and continues throughout the whole of life." Still later in the same introduction, the *Ratio/16* seeks to synthesize the whole of its overarching purpose, namely to "form missionary disciples who are 'in love' with the Master, shepherds 'with the smell of the sheep,' who live in their midst to bring the mercy of God to them. Hence every priest should always feel that he is a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ." The themes of discipleship, configuration, and mission occur repeatedly throughout the *Ratio/16*.

2.2 INTEGRAL PRIESTLY FORMATION

The concept of integral formation is of the greatest importance, since it is the whole person, with all that he is and all that he possesses, who will be at the Lord's service in the Christian community. The one called is an 'integral subject', namely someone who has been previously chosen to attain a sound interior life, without divisions or contradictions. It is necessary to adopt an integrated pedagogical model in order to reach this objective: a journey that allows the formative community to cooperate with the action of the Holy Spirit, ensuring a proper balance between the different dimensions of formation (*Ratio Fundamental*, 2016: 92).

According to the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, there are four dimensions that interact simultaneously in the process of formation and in the life of ordained ministers: the human dimension, which represents the 'necessary and dynamic foundation' of all priestly life; the spiritual dimension, which helps to shape the quality of priestly ministry; the intellectual dimension, which provides the rational tools needed in order to understand the values that belong to being a pastor, to make them incarnate in daily life, and to transmit the content of the faith appropriately; the pastoral dimension, which makes possible a responsible and fruitful ecclesial service (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992: 43-59).

Integral priestly formation necessarily surpasses seminary life, beginning long before in the family home, being nurtured in the parish community and continuing throughout the whole of priestly life (Second Vatican Council, 1965).

2.2.1 Biblical Foundation for Integral Priestly Formation

We cannot find explicit mention of integral priestly formation in Scripture, but we can beyond a doubt find it implicated in a number of texts. Too many indeed beyond our capacity to reiterate in detail here. The researcher has nevertheless given below those that have formed the basis for many magisterial teachings throughout the writings of distinguished Pontiffs and of Church authors on priestly formation.

The History of Divine revelation clearly shows that God has always called, chosen and entrusted various individuals with a mission for his purposes. For some this call is evident and for others it requires a process of discernment. A divine call is not the fruit of research, learning or copied (Lazarus, 2024). It's about God coming into one's life and engaging him/her and guiding them to a specific mission or responsibility. In order to examine the scriptural basis of formation we shall speak at length about just a few individuals, for they were called to carry on a certain mission. We shall then turn our gaze to the New Testament and there observe how Jesus called Apostles and Disciples, formed them and then sent them for ministry.

2.2.1.1 Old Testament

Sacred scripture opens with the creator who gives a perfect and conducive world for human formation. The five days of creation express the formation of a safe matrix for human existence completely in relationship with the created world (Gen 1 and 2). All things are placed in order to enable man carry on his duty well. It is in this perfect environment that man is able to serve his creator well and to live in constant communion with Him. This is typical of the Seminary environment which is organized in such a way that the candidate is able to orient himself towards his maker and to heed His call. In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and make known to us the hidden purpose of His will. (Eph 1:9). It is precisely because of this that the way God created the world is the way the formation house should be ordered. So that the will of God as regards the Candidate to the priesthood is realised and acted upon appropriately. The researcher rather than focus on whole books within the Old Testament will focus on individuals, after all what is being examined is the adherence of the one called to the formation provided by Him who calls.

2.2.1.1.1 Abraham

Abram as he was known before God changed his name, lived in Ur of the Chaldeans where generations of his ancestors had lived for years. (Gen. 11:27-28) It was from Ur that the Lord called him and began to get him through a process of formation preparing him to be not simply His beloved servant but the father of all believers. (Gen. 12:1) Abram is told not only to leave his country, but to leave all his kindred and his father's house and later his name. As a consequence, he would become the father of a great nation. In him all men were to be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

Abram responds immediately to God's call and thus begins the process of his formation. He is thus taught detachment and self-abnegation which are elements of human formation; he continues to learn how to worship the One true God, which is spiritual formation. The system through which he learns these is not as vivid and outright as it is today but it is certain and can be traced in the events of his life, for example his journey out of Ur, his journey to Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20), his separation with Lot (Gen 13), his encounter with Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-24) and in his challenges of a barren wife. In these events we find him learning about God for example at Mamre as we find in Gen. 18:1-15 (intellectual formation), we find him lending a helping hand to others and making God known (Pastoral Formation). At the end of it all we see Abraham who has learned to adhere to God's formation of him so that he is able to fulfil his duty to God.

2.2.1.1.2 Moses

Moses was born apparently at the beginning of the 13th century B.C., (*Thompson/Gale*, 2003, 126) the son of Hebrew parents Amram and Jochabed (Ex 6:20; 2:1-4; 7:7; Nm 26:59), with an older sister Miriam and a younger brother Aaron. As a ward of the Pharaoh's daughter, Moses doubtless pursued the academic program of an Egyptian scribe (cf. Acts 7:22). The Biblical narrative, a composite of oral and perhaps even written traditions, portrays Moses as fleeing to Midian after killing an Egyptian in defense of a countryman (Ex 2:11-15). There he again exercised his role of champion in the cause of the seven daughters of the Kenite Jethro, a Midian priest, in whose household he then resided (Ex 2:16-21). Moses married Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro, who bore him two children, Gershom (Ex 2:22) and Eliezer (Ex 18:4). (*Thompson/Gale*, 2003, pg. 678)

Moses the shepherd experienced a theophany in the event of the burning bush. Commissioning Moses to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt, Yahweh entrusted him with the credentials of the revelation of His identity as Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3.6), together with the power to perform miraculous signs (Ex 4:1–9). In a scene somewhat inconsistent with his personality and education, Moses pleaded his ineptness for the task. Yahweh assigned a coadjutor role to Aaron (Ex 4:14–16). Before Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron presented in vain the case for the Hebrews, so that Yahweh punished Pharaoh with the ten Plagues of Egypt (Ex. 7:14–12:30). Finally, Moses led the Hebrews from Egypt after the ceremony of a Passover meal. The journey to freedom became a flight from captors as Pharaoh's army attempted to recover his laborers. Moses was forced to lead the people through the only avenue of escape, the Red Sea, into the desert. Arriving at Mt. Sinai, the people through Moses, entered formally into the covenant relationship with Yahweh (Ex 19 and 24; Dt 5), the terms of which are codified in the Decalogue (Ex 20:1–17; Dt 5:6–21) and the Book of the Covenant (Ex 21–23). At Cades Moses guided the Israelite tribes through the difficult period of development. His mission accomplished; he died at Mt. Nebo without entering the promised land of Canaan (Nm 20). (*Thompson/Gale, 2003, Pg 798*)

Moses the great patriarch of the Israelite people, furnishes us too with great insight into the wonderful topic of integral formation. The usual pattern the Lord uses is calling forming and sending. In Exodus chapter three, we see not only the call of Moses but also his formation. He is taught how to behave in the presence of God, who God is and why he is called by God, for what purpose and how he is to go about the work of redeeming Israel from slavery. Moses in raising a number of impediments that could hinder his work in Egypt, the Lord forms him on how to overcome these impediments, once promising to be with him (Ex 4:11-12) and at another moment to give him people to rely on, in this case Aaron (Ex 4:14-15). The formation of Moses did not end at the scene of the burning bush but went on through his life till the day of his death. The life of this great Patriarch can be considered a paradigm for current priestly formation. It can indeed be a great tool for the candidate under formation to make a thorough examination into how formation should go.

2.2.1.1.3 Samuel

Samuel is an Old Testament figure whose story is recounted essentially in 1 Sm 1-16. His birth and early life are covered in 1 Sm 1-7; his connection with Saul is told in 1 Sm 8-12 (Saul's anointing as king) and 1 Sm 13-1 (Saul's rejection); his connection to David is limited to

David's anointing (1 Sm 16) and a brief story of David, in flight from Saul and taking refuge with Samuel (19:18-24). Subsequent mentions recount his death (25:1), and Saul's desperate attempt to seek counsel from Samuel's ghost (28:3-25). Samuel is an important personage, but transitional: he represents the best of the old order of judgeship, which proved itself incapable of adequately governing of Yahweh's people, and points forward to the new order of monarchy by anointing Saul and David, the first kings of Israel.

There is not much to speak about Samuel but of all that is said of him the episode of his call in the night as he slept in the Sanctuary at Shilo can be very crucial in understanding formation of God's servants. The narrative of Samuel's call is found in 1 Samuel 3. At this time, "the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions" (1 Samuel 3:1). This scarcity of divine revelation underscores the significance of Samuel's call. One night, while Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, the Lord called to him. Initially, Samuel did not recognize the voice of the Lord and assumed that it was Eli calling him. After the third call, Eli realized that it was the Lord speaking to Samuel and instructed him to respond, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9).

This scene is so crucial because it reveals that in the process of formation, there are those that help the candidate to interpret the voice of the Lord. Samuel therefore, is seen as a model Seminarian and Eli could be considered the formator. Unlike in other cases here we see God employing the assistance of men in the process of forming his prophet.

2.2.1.1.4 David

David (1000 B.C) was the second ruler of the United Kingdom of ancient Israel and Judah. He founded the Judaeon dynasty and united all the tribes of Israel under a single monarch. His son Solomon expanded the empire that David built. King David's life in the bible spans from the first book of Samuel to the beginnings of the first book of Kings. In the sixteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel David is anointed by the prophet Samuel, it is at that moment that his formation begins. Consideration is not given to stature, neither is it given to the appearances nor to personal greatness, but the Lord who calls one makes that person able to carry out the mission for which he is called. According to 1 Samuel, David was the youngest son of Jesse, a man of Bethlehem, and served as a shepherd for his father before beginning his career as an aide at the court of Saul, Israel's first king (*Smith, 2023, 245*).

When Israel came into conflict with the Philistines, a people from a neighbouring region, David's brothers went to fight for King Saul. Young David would travel back and forth to the camp to bring his brothers food and supplies. According to 1 Samuel 17, Goliath, a heavily armed Philistine giant, challenged Saul for 40 days to send out a man to fight him. No one would face this warrior until David, armed only with a sling and stones, volunteered. David hit the giant in the forehead with a stone and killed him. He continued to distinguish himself as a warrior in the ongoing battles against the Philistines, and his resultant popularity aroused Saul's jealousy. Fearing that the people would make David king, Saul plotted to kill him. With the help of his loyal friend Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, David fled into southern Judah and Philistia, on the coastal plain of Palestine, where, with great sagacity and foresight, he began to lay the foundations of his career. These experiences are what God used to form David into the kind of King he became. Shaped by these, God is able to say that David was a King after His own Heart.

In the life of David, we can still trace the difference between one who faithfully adheres to the exhortations of God and one who does not. For the sacred book gives us David's life in contradistinction to the life of Saul. Saul who was chosen King before David failed to be faithful to the words of Samuel and ended up losing the right to Kingship, David was faithful and indeed had a long reign. We still can contrast David's life to that of his son Solomon and we can see the effects of faithful adherence.

2.2.1.2 New Testament

The wonderful message of the Kingdom of God is the preoccupation of the text of the New Testament. Christ the Lord of the Kingdom is timeless, however, in His eternal plan did not intent to go about the spreading of the message of the Kingdom alone but via the great doctrine of the communication of idioms, he desired that this message be passed on to all through the ministry of men. In order to conscript some for this wonderful duty he thus called men and formed them for the work.

Beginning therefore, with the Gospels, we see the call of the apostles and their formation. The calling and commissioning of the Twelve Apostles is a pivotal event in the New Testament, marking the formal establishment of Jesus Christ's closest group of disciples who would play a foundational role in the early Church. This event is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels; Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and is alluded to in the Gospel of John. (Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 5:1-11)

The selection of the Twelve Apostles is a deliberate and prayerful act by Jesus. According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before choosing the Twelve from among His disciples: “In those days, Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the night in prayer to God. When daylight came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated as apostles” (Luke 6:12-13). This underscores the significance of their calling, as it was made with divine guidance and purpose. These were transformed from poor fishermen to eloquent preachers of the Gospel. Indeed, the book of the Acts of the Apostles reveals the result of faithful adherence to formation.

However, we can look as well at the different individual apostles:-

2.2.1.2.1 Peter

Simon Peter’s name is mentioned one hundred and fifty-four times in scripture, second only to Jesus in the New Testament, and he was arguably one of the most interesting disciples. He was a man of action and principle, and rarely do you ever wonder where he stood on any issue (*Thompson/Gale*, 2003, pg. 199). These direct, authoritative, and unwavering traits allowed him to become a great leader, but they also provided many opportunities for him to fall short. Failure would become one of Peter’s greatest teachers, while also providing a wellspring of grace for the mission that lay ahead. When Jesus first met Peter, he was but a simple fisherman, but over the coming years, he would become an apostle and a fisher of men. Eventually, Peter would even go on to play a crucial role in the early Church and the advancement of the Great Commission.

Peter was originally known as Simon the son of John (John 1:42) and the brother of Andrew (John 1:40). He was a fisherman from Bethsaida, a small community just north of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44) and was married (Matt 8:14). He also had a residence in Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29). Jesus called Simon to be a disciple at the beginning of his ministry. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Simon receives the summons to follow Christ while he is fishing (Matt 4:13–20; Mark 1:16–18; Luke 5:1–11). In John, we learn of another encounter arranged by Simon’s brother Andrew (John 1:40–42). On this occasion we discover that Jesus had intentions to change Simon’s name to Peter: “So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas” (John 1:42). “Cephas” is an Aramaic term that means “rock” and is rendered in Greek as Petros or Peter. The formal change of his name comes later in the ministry when Simon confesses the divine sonship of Jesus (Matt 16:16). In response, Jesus makes Simon the foundation of the future Christian community: “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church”

(Matt 16:18). Hereafter, the apostle is known mostly as Peter or Simon Peter, although Paul also refers to him by the Aramaic designation Cephas (1 Cor 1:12; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 2:9, 11, 14).

The change of Simon's name signals a change in Simon's mission. He was not to be one apostle among others, but the one who ranked "first" among the Twelve (Matt 10:2). He thus enjoyed an especially close relationship with Jesus (Matt 17:24–27) and was privileged, along with James and John, to witness such marvels as the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:37) and the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1–8). Peter likewise acted as the spokesman for the twelve apostles (Matt 15:15; Mark 9:5, 10:28; Luke 12:41; John 6:67–69).

The prominence of Peter in the Gospels is much more than honorary. Jesus conferred great responsibilities on him. As the "rock" and foundation of the Church, he was entrusted with the "keys of the Kingdom" and given the authority of heaven itself to "bind" and "loose" as the chief steward and teacher of Christ's disciples on earth (Matt 16:19). Confirmation of Peter's role is given after the Resurrection, when Christ commissions Peter to "Feed my lambs ... Tend my sheep ... Feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17). He is thus to represent and act on behalf of Jesus "the Good Shepherd" (John 10:14). No other apostle is singled out by Jesus for such an exalted mission. Yet Peter struggled to remain faithful to Christ as the events of the Passion began to unfold. When authorities came to arrest Jesus in Gethsemane, Peter reacted with violence and cut off the ear of a man named Malchus (John 18:10–11). When questioned about his ties with Jesus as he lingered in the high priest's courtyard, Peter three times denied even knowing Christ (Matt 26:69–75). Jesus had foreseen this bout with cowardice (Mark 14:29–30) and had encouraged Peter to "strengthen" the brethren once Peter had turned back again after his fall (Luke 22:31–32). Finally, Peter was the first apostle to inspect the empty tomb (Luke 24:12; John 20:37) and the first of the Twelve to see Jesus risen again (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5) (CCC 442, 55253, 765, 880–81,1429).

In the life of this great Apostle Peter, we can clearly trace the beginnings of integral priestly formation. In otherwards Jesus' little band of Galileans can be considered as the first Seminary. Often times a contrast is made between Peter and Judas. In this case we can say that of the two Peter faithfully adhered to the formation that Christ offered whereas Judas did not and indeed the results and fruits of both are proof of the difference between faithful adherence to priestly formation and not doing so.

2.2.1.2.2 Paul

The book of Acts and his own writings give us little information about the early life of Paul. Born Saul in the town of Tarsus, in the Roman province of Cilicia, he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5), but he also possessed Roman citizenship, a useful privilege that entitled him to important legal rights (Acts 22:25–29). He was sent at some time to Jerusalem, where he studied “at the feet of Gamaliel,” the famous rabbi (Acts 22:3), and became a zealous member of the Pharisees (Acts 26:5). Paul thus received an excellent education and was one of the most erudite and learned figures in the early Church (*Thompson/Gale*, 2003, pg. 293).

He first encountered the Christian faith in Jerusalem, where the Church had taken root. Saul was an inveterate enemy of the Church and was present at the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, “consenting to his death” (Acts 7:58 8:1). He was still a young man when he assumed a leading role in the persecution of the Christians (Acts 7:58, 26:10; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13). He was “still breathing threats and murder against the disciples” when he set out for Damascus to arrest Christians (Acts 9:1–2). On his way he was stopped by a vision of the risen and glorified Christ, an event that is recounted three times in the book of Acts (Acts 9:1–19; 22:5–16; 26:12–18). With overwhelming clarity, he understood that the Jesus who was worshipped by the Christians and whom he had persecuted was the divine Messiah. This extraordinary event forever changed his life and mission. Left blind by the light, Saul was taken to Damascus where he sat in darkness for three days. After he was baptized by Ananias (Acts 9:17–18), Saul accepted the challenge offered to him by God, and his sight was restored. Leaving Damascus (an event described in Gal 1:17 but not mentioned in Acts), Saul withdrew into Arabia, presumably for prayer and meditation. He then returned to Damascus and began preaching the faith.

Paul’s formation begins on the road to Damascus and goes on through his life. He goes on to recount his formation in his letters on numerous occasions tracing the hand of God in it. This Apostle is also an expression of what formation truly is.

2.2.2 Magisterial Documents on Integral Priestly Formation

This section aims to identify those documents of magisterial teaching that are fundamental to understanding clearly integral priestly formation especially from the time of the Council of Trent, to the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and continuing at present in the *Ratio fundamentalis-16.9*.

2.2.2.1 *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*

Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis, or *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, is a document by the Dicastery of the Clergy, issued on 8th December 2016, providing guidelines on the proper formation of seminarians, which are to be followed by seminaries throughout the world. The document incorporates insights from St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis, and includes guidance from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Speaking of formation, the document highlights that during the process of formation for the ministerial priesthood, the seminarian is a ‘mystery to himself’, in which two aspects of his humanity, that need to be integrated, are intertwined and exist side by side. On the one hand the Seminarian is characterized by talents and gifts that have been moulded by grace; on the other hand, he is marked by his limits and frailty. The document highlights that the task of formation is to help the person to integrate these aspects, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a journey of faith and of gradual and harmonious maturity, avoiding fragmentation, polarisation, excesses, superficiality or partiality. The time of formation for priestly ministry is a period of testing, maturing and discernment by both the seminarian and the house of formation (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016).

Ratio Fundamentalis emphasises that the seminarian is called to go out of himself, to make his way, in Christ, towards the Father and towards others, embracing the call to priesthood, dedicating himself to work with the Holy Spirit, to achieve a serene and creative interior synthesis between strength and weakness. The educational endeavour helps seminarians to bring all aspects of their personality to Christ; in this way, making them consciously free for God and for others (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016).

The pastoral care of the faithful demands that the priest has a solid formation and interior maturity. He cannot limit himself simply to demonstrating a ‘veneer of virtuous habits’, a merely external and formalistic obedience to abstract principles. Rather, he is called to act with great interior freedom. Indeed, it is expected of him that, day after day, he will internalize the spirit of the Gospel, thanks to a constant and personal friendship with Christ, leading him to share His sentiments and His attitudes. Thus, by growing in charity, the future priest must seek to develop a balanced and mature capacity to enter into relationship with his neighbour. Indeed, he is called above all to a basic human and spiritual serenity that, by overcoming every form of self-promotion or emotional dependency, allows him to be a man of communion, of mission

and of dialogue. In contemplating the Lord, who offered His life for others, he will be able to give himself generously and with self-sacrifice for the People of God (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016).

Priestly formation is a journey of transformation that renews the heart and mind of the person, so that he can “discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2). Indeed, the gradual inner growth along the journey of formation should principally be aimed at making the future priest a ‘man of discernment’, able to read the reality of human life in the light of the Spirit. In this way he will be able to choose, decide and act according to the will of God (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, No. 43).

The first area of discernment is the personal life. It is necessary to integrate one’s own personal situation and history into the spiritual life. This will ensure that the vocation to the priesthood does not become imprisoned in an abstract ideal, nor run the risk of reducing itself to a merely practical and organisational activism, removed from the conscience of the person. Discerning one’s life according to the Gospel means cultivating every day a deep spiritual life, so as to receive it and interpret it with full responsibility, and a growing trust in God, directing the heart towards Him each day (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, No. 43).

Integral Priestly Formation is dealt with in Chapter five which begins by highlighting *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and then elaborates on the need for integral priestly formation. The document highlights how each of the dimensions of formation is aimed at ‘transforming’ or ‘assimilating’ the heart in the image of the heart of Christ, who was sent by the Father to fulfil his loving plan. He was moved when faced with human suffering (Mt 9:35-36), he went to seek out the lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14), even to offering his life for them (Jn 10:11). He came not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:24-28) (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, no. 89).

With these four facets of formation; (Intellectual, Human, Pastoral and spiritual) the future priest opens himself honestly to the truths of life and to the real demands of ministry. He learns to listen to the conscience that judges his movements and the interior dispositions that motivate his actions. In this way, the future priest learns to govern himself using the spiritual and mental powers of mind and body. He grasps the sense of what can be done and what it would be better not to do, or what should not be done. He begins to organize his energies, his plans and his duties with a balanced self-discipline and an honest awareness of his own limits and abilities. This work cannot be undertaken satisfactorily by relying only on his own human resources. On

the contrary, it relies principally on welcoming the gift of divine grace, that enables him to transcend himself, go beyond his own needs and external conditioning and live in the freedom of the children of God. It is a way of looking within' and a holistic spiritual outlook, which directs the whole of his life and ministry (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, No. 43).

2.2.2.2 *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

In this exhortation, Pope John Paul II looks at the different areas of formation, that is; the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral areas, as well as the settings and the persons responsible for the formation of candidates for the priesthood (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 42). Pope John Paul goes on to say that, in her care for priestly vocations the Church in every age draws her inspiration from Christ's example. There have been, and to some extents there still are, many different practical forms according to which the Church has been involved in the pastoral care of vocations. Her task is not only to discern but also to accompany priestly vocations. But the spirit which must inspire and sustain her remains the same: that of bringing to the priesthood only those who have been called, and to bring them adequately trained in an integral way, namely, with a conscious and free response of adherence and involvement of their whole person with Jesus Christ, who calls them to intimacy of life with him and to share in his mission of salvation. In this sense, the seminary in its different forms and analogously the house of formation for religious priests - more than a place, a material space, should be a spiritual place, a way of life, an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of formation, so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become, with the sacrament of orders, a living image of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church (John Paul II, 1992).

The Pope says that, in their final message the synod fathers have grasped in a direct and deep way the original and specific meaning of the formation of candidates for the priesthood, when they say that "To live in the seminary, which is a school of the Gospel, means to follow Christ as the apostles did. One is led by Christ into the service of God the Father and of all people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, he becomes more like Christ the Good Shepherd in order to serve better the Church and the world as a priest. In preparing for the priesthood, we learn how to respond from the heart to Christ's basic question: 'Do you love me?' (Jn. 21:15). For the future priest the answer can only mean total self-giving." (John Paul II, 1992).

Pope John Paul II develops the Spiritual formation from the concept of a successful Human formation saying that, Human formation, when it is carried out in the context of an

anthropology which is open to the full truth regarding the human person, leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 45). He adds on that, the educational process of a spiritual life, seen as a relationship and communion with God, derives and develops from this fundamental and irrepressible religious need. In the light of revelation and Christian experience, spiritual formation possesses the unmistakable originality which derives from evangelical newness. Indeed, it is the work of the Holy Spirit and engages a person in his totality. It introduces him to a deep communion with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, and leads to the total submission of one's life to the Spirit, in a filial attitude toward the Father and a trustful attachment to the Church. Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the paschal mystery (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 45).

In regards to the Intellectual formation which Pope John Paul II equates to understanding the faith, he says that, the Intellectual formation has its own characteristics, but it is also deeply connected with, and indeed can be seen as a necessary expression of, both human and spiritual formation: It is a fundamental demand of the human intelligence by which one “participates in the light of God's mind” and seeks to acquire a wisdom which in turn opens to and is directed toward knowing and adhering to God (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 51).

Pope John Paul II speaks thus of Pastoral formation, The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 57). The Pope elaborates more saying that, like all other branches of formation, pastoral formation develops by means of mature reflection and practical application, and it is rooted in a spirit, which is the hinge of all and the force which stimulates it and makes it develop. It needs to be studied therefore as the true and genuine theological discipline that it is, pastoral or practical theology. It is a scientific reflection on the Church as she is built up daily, by the power of the Spirit, in history; on the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, is a living sign and instrument of the salvation wrought by Christ through the word, the sacraments and the service of charity. Pastoral Theology is not just an art. Nor is it a set of exhortations, experiences and methods. It is theological in its own right, because it receives from the faith the principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history, a Church that each day “begets” the Church herself (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 57).

2.2.2.3 *Optatam Totius*

This is a Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the training of Priests. Now although it does not explicitly elaborate on the distinct facets of formation, it highlights in a special way the spiritual formation of future priests. First the Council highlights the necessity and role of formation, saying that: - The entire training of the students should be oriented to the formation of true shepherds of souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, Teacher, Priest and Shepherd. They are therefore to be prepared for the ministry of the word: that they might understand ever more perfectly the revealed word of God; that, meditating on it they might possess it more firmly, and that they might express it in words and in example; for the ministry of worship and of sanctification: that through their prayers and their carrying out of the sacred liturgical celebrations they might perfect the work of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments; for the ministry of the Parish: that they might know how to make Christ present to men (*Optatam Totius*, no. 4).

The Decree goes on to elaborate that; all the forms of training, spiritual, intellectual, disciplinary, are to be ordered with concerted effort towards this pastoral end, and to attain it all the administrators and teachers are to work zealously and harmoniously together, faithfully obedient to the authority of the bishop (*Optatam Totius*, no. 4).

2.2.2.4 *Ubi Primum*

Ubi Primum was an encyclical issued by the learned pontiff Benedict XIV in 1740 on the 3rd of December, on the duty of bishops regarding the selection of clerics and their education. He emphasised that because the matter of selecting those for Sacred Orders is of paramount importance, bishops should take care to educate young men to piety, integrity of life, and to the canonical discipline from an early age. In this regard this Holy Pontiff emphasised the spiritual, human and intellectual aspects of formation (Benedict XIV, 1740 no. 3). Benedict XIV advised that where there are still no seminaries, they should be established as soon as possible and that where seminaries exist already, they should be enlarged if it is necessary due to the increased number of students.

He advised the bishops to cherish these colleges with special concern by visiting them often, by studying the life, talent, and progress in studies of each of the young men, and by appointing suitable teachers and men endowed with an ecclesiastical spirit. That honor be given to the literary exercises and the ecclesiastical functions within the seminary with the occasional

presence of the bishops (Benedict XIV, 1740). In order to encourage a well-rounded formation, Benedict XIV advised the bishops to confer some benefice on those who are outstanding examples of virtue, of academic excellence or who distinguish themselves in the different aspects of their formation (Benedict XIV, 1740). In stressing the great importance of this integral formation, the Holy Pontiff emphasised that it is of the utmost importance that the care of souls be entrusted to exemplary men who are conspicuous for their doctrine (Intellectual distinction), piety (spiritual uprightness), purity, and good works (Pastoral diligence). They should truly be and should be considered the light and the salt of the people (Benedict XIV, 1740 no. 4).

2.2.2.5 Depuis Le Juor

Depuis Le Juor was a letter by the Pontiff Leo XIII to the French Clergy on the education of the Clergy aimed at undoing the decadence that flowed from the French Revolution. Basing himself on the words of the Apostle Paul to Titus he advances his message from four points:- “In all things give good example by your works, your doctrine, the integrity of your life, by the gravity of your conduct.” (Titus 2:7) We can look at these in the terms of the four facets of integral priestly formation: the example of good works implying the Pastoral dimension, Doctrine referencing to intellectual formation, integrity of life referring to human formation and gravity of conduct referring to the Spiritual dimension (Leo XIII, 1899 no. 46). Leo XIII advises that in all things those called to the care of souls should give an example of good works; that is, of active and exemplary life, animated by a true spirit of charity and guided by the maxims of evangelical prudence, of a life of sacrifice and toil, consecrated to the welfare of their neighbours, not with earthly views or for a perishable reward, but with a supernatural object (Leo XIII, 1899).

In reference to intellectual formation Leo XIII advises that in the face of the combined efforts of incredulity and heresy to consummate the ruin of Catholic faith, it would be a real crime for the clergy to remain in a state of hesitancy and inactivity. In such an outpouring of error and conflict of opinion he must not prove faithless to his mission, which is to defend dogma assaulted, morality travestied and justice frequently outraged. It is for him to pose himself as a barrier to the attacks of error and the deceits of heresy; to watch the tactics of the wicked who wage war on the faith and honor of this Catholic country; to unmask their plots and reveal their ambushes; to warn the confiding, strengthen the timid and open the eyes of the blinded. Superficial erudition or merely common knowledge will not suffice for all this – there is need

of study, solid, profound and continuous, in a word of a mass of doctrinal knowledge sufficient to cope with the subtlety and remarkable cunning of our modern opponents. It is therefore incumbent upon the future pastor to be formed intellectually to face such challenges (Leo XIII, 1899).

Speaking of Human Formation, the pontiff begins by lamenting that the lax life of some ecclesiastics which brings discredit and contempt on their ministry and proves the occasion of scandals. He says that if men, endowed with minds as brilliant as they are remarkable, now and then desert the ranks of the sacred soldiery and rise in revolt against the Church – that mother who, in her tenderness and affection had advanced them to the direction and for the salvation of souls, their defection and wanderings have most frequently had their origin in want of discipline and evilness of life among the Clergy. In this regard he highlights how necessary it is for those under formation to be grounded in human formation (Leo XIII, 1899).

In the Pastoral Dimension he speaks of that serious, judicious, tactful conduct which should be characteristic of every faithful and prudent minister chosen by God for the government of His family. While thanking God for having vouchsafed to raise him to this honor, he must show himself faithful to all his obligations, and at the same time balanced and prudent in all his actions; he must not allow himself to be dominated by base passions, nor carried away by violent and exaggerated language; he must lovingly sympathize with the misfortunes and weaknesses of others; do all the good he can to everyone, disinterestedly, unostentatiously, and maintaining ever intact the honor of his character and sublime dignity (Leo XIII, 1899).

2.2.2.6 Code of Canon Law

According to the Church's law a person must possess due freedom in order to be ordained. It is absolutely forbidden to force anyone in any way or for any reason to receive orders or to deter one who is canonically suitable from receiving them. Be that as it is those aspiring to the diaconate and presbyterate are to be formed by careful preparation, according to the norm of law. The diocesan bishop or the competent superior is to take care that before candidates are promoted to any order, they are instructed properly about those things which belong to the order and its obligations. Only those are to be promoted to orders who, in the prudent judgment of their own bishop or of the competent major superior, all things considered, have integral faith, are moved by the right intention, have the requisite knowledge, possess a good reputation, and are endowed with integral morals and proven virtues and the other physical and psychic

qualities in keeping with the order to be received (*Code of Canon Law*, 1983. Cann. 1026-1029).

2.2.2.7 *Fin Dal Principio*

This was a letter by Pope Leo XIII to the Bishops of Italy regarding the formation of the Clergy. Though written for the Church in Italy, the researcher has found so much that would be very adequate to elaborate on the point of inquiry for Ggaba and Uganda. To elaborate the great duty that falls on the priest he says: - To work the eternal salvation of souls will always be the great commandment of which the priest must never fall short, as to faithfully fulfil, he must never cease to have recourse to those supernatural aids and those divine rules of thought and of action which Jesus Christ gave His Apostles when He sent them throughout the whole world to convert the nations to the Gospel (Leo XIII, 1902).

The Pope then basing himself on the doctrine of the letter to the Hebrews explains that the priest can never be anything but the legate, the minister of Christ, the dispenser of His mysteries, and he represents him to us as dwelling in a high place as a mediator between heaven and earth, to treat with God, about the supreme interests of the human race, which are those of everlasting life. He goes on to say that the idea that holy books give us of the Christian priesthood, is that it is a supernatural institution superior to all those of earth, and as far separated from them as the divine is from the human.

The Holy Father then pointed out the necessity of having a well-formed clergy; he says that all designs to bring about a restoration of Christian life among people, would be in vain if in the ecclesiastical state the sacerdotal spirit was not preserved intact and vigorous. He adds on that, The Catholic priesthood-divine in its origin, supernatural in its essence, immutable in its character, is not an institution that can accommodate itself with ease to human systems and opinions. A participation of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, must perpetuate even to the consummation of ages the same mission that the Eternal Father confided to His Incarnate Word. This requires that those who take on such a ministry be formed to stand against the tide of false doctrine, perverse morals, lethargic charity and spiritual coldness (Leo XIII, 1902).

2.2.2.8 Transformation or Conformism?

This book was written by Lazarus Luyinda, Rector of St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba examining the approach Seminarians and Formators have towards formation. He takes into consideration the universal guidelines of the Church on priestly formation as well as those of

the Ugandan Episcopal Conference especially as emphasised in the 2009 Seminary Charter of the Conference. In this Charter it is affirmed that the vision of Seminary Formation is “*to form holy, convinced, committed, well-equipped and Pastoral-oriented catholic Priests.*” It is thus from this vision that the Rector puts forth what formation really is and what it ought to produce in the candidate to the priesthood (Lazarus, 2024).

He says that formation is a spiritual Journey of personal holiness, based on one’s personal relationship with God. Candidates to the priesthood therefore must be those who seek to enter into a personal relationship with Christ who calls them. They thus ought to seek God and His holy Will. He adds on that Seminary formation consequently is to orient the candidate to appreciate the spiritual nature of their call and ministry (Lazarus, 2024).

Furthermore, he says that the formation of candidates to the priesthood far from being solely spiritual should also lead to a solid and well-grounded theological and pastoral Maturity. In regards to Pastoral orientation he says that the candidate should know that the priesthood for self is out of place. The Rector recalls how Jesus called the apostles and sent them out (Mk 3:14). Thus, the seminarian is called and formed for proclaiming the Good News to others, bringing them salvation, taking care of them, and leading them to God. The Church thus aims to form her pastors in all these facets and to have them well grounded (Lazarus, 2024).

2.5 CONCLUSION

The priest’s fundamental relationship is to Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd, but intimately linked to this relationship, is the priest’s relationship with the Church. The priest’s relation to the Church is inscribed in the very relation which the priest has to Christ, such that the “sacramental representation” to Christ serves as the basis and inspiration for the relation of the priest to the Church. In this regard the seminarian has to hold steadfastly to his formation so as to be engrafted onto Christ if he is to be effective in the Lord’s vineyard. This Chapter explores the relationship between the two variables as related by the magisterial documents.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the researcher presents the research methods that were employed as well as the reasons for applying them in this research. In it the researcher elaborates on the manner in which the research has been done. It focuses on a systematic, coherent and consistent methodology in gathering information to ensure that the research outcomes are accurate. It is about how a researcher systematically designed a study to ensure valid and reliable results that addressed the research aims, objectives and research questions. Generally, it is about how the researcher went on with deciding: What type of data to collect, who to collect it from, how to collect it and how to analyse it.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Leedy defines research design as a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data (*Practical Research, Planning and Design*, 1997, pg.195). MacMillan and Schumacher define it as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research questions” (*Research in Education*, 2001, pg. 166). Willis Yuko Oso and David Onen (2005) describe a research design as the plan or strategy for conducting the research (*A General Guide to Writing Research Proposal and Report*, pg. 31). The research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for a study. A very significant decision in research design process is the choice to be made regarding research approach since it determines how relevant information for a study will be obtained; however, the research design process involves many inter-related decisions.

The researcher employed a correlational research design technique. It has helped the researcher to establish a relationship between two closely connected variables, in this case the seminarians under formation and the pastors who form them. There has been assumption while evaluating a relationship between two other variables, and statistical analysis techniques to calculate the relationship between them. This type of research design requires two different groups. The researcher has also partially used a descriptive survey design in order to be able to obtain primary data from the seminarians and staff of St. Mary’s National Seminary Ggaba. The

descriptive survey design is chosen because it is suitable for extensive research and provides sufficient qualitative and quantitative data necessary for this particular research.

3.3 GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND POPULATION

The geographical area of the research has been St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, one of the four National Major Seminaries in Uganda. It is located at Ggaba Hill, in the Arch-diocese of Kampala in Ggaba Parish. As of the academic year 2023/2024 St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba has 205 students 15 Priests teaching the Seminarians and close to 40 support Staff. What is done in Ggaba National Major Seminary is basically the formation of Catholic Priests from all over Uganda and beyond. It has distinguished itself for the past fifty years in the field of Priestly formation. By 2021 it had formed close to 2000 priests among whom are Bishops.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sampling procedure is the selection of a small group obtained from the accessible population. Each member or case in the sample is referred to as a subject. Sometimes, the terms "respondent" or "interviewees" are used (Mugenda, 2019).

3.4.1 Sample Size

In this research the researcher has based himself on one sampling technique, that is, purposive sampling technique. A selected sample of respondents has been selected from each of the four classes that constitute the entire student's body of St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba. From each of the first three classes at least 10 seminarians were selected as interviewees. And from the fourth-year class at least fifteen members were selected on account of their longer duration within the Seminary formation. Certainly at least five staff members have been selected to provide the possibility of a correlational research type design. In total the research involved 50 individuals both Priests and Seminarians.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

After deciding on the sample size, the researcher here formulates a procedure of selecting the subjects or cases to be included in the sample. To select a representative sample, a researcher must first have a sampling frame (Mugenda, 2019). The sampling frame for this research is the students' register and the staff's register which is always available in the house parlors and in the Dean of Studies' office. Since the object of our research has been to establish an aspect on

which not majority of the population at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba may not have keenly looked into, we have avoided random techniques of sampling and employed a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his or her study. Cases of subjects are therefore handpicked because they are informative or they possess the required characteristics (Mugenda, 2019). The implication here is that the respondents were selected purposively and not randomly. Hence the researcher considered those who have been observed to interest themselves fully in the four facets of priestly formation (Human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral-Liturgical).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Below is how the researcher has collected data.

3.5.1 Observations

While using the observation method of collecting data, the current status of a phenomenon is determined not by asking but by observing. The intention here is to collect objective information. Given the nature of the sampling technique the researcher employed the observation skill of Data collection extensively especially at the outset of the research procedure. Observation enabled the researcher to ascertain the particular respondents to be placed on the sample frame. It required the researcher to ascertain the observable variables. These include attendance of activities and an observable growth in the different aspects which these particular activities foster.

3.5.2 Interviews

An interview is a conversation for gathering information. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. The internet is also emerging as a tool for interviewing. (*Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, 2001, pg.1). Interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews are useful when the topic of inquiry relates to issues that require complex questioning and considerable probing. It is for these reasons that the researcher has chosen the

interview method. The mode of interview followed a structured type but also semi-structured and unstructured type of interview.

3.6 DATA QUALITY CONTROL

Since this research was to ascertain non quantifiable features it has been more qualitative in approach. The researcher therefore chose purposive sampling in order to ensure accuracy of data. This would not be possible where probability sampling has been used since it would give chance to cases that may not adequately elaborate on the issue at hand. This research is sensitive too since it deals with people's performance, it was necessary therefore to choose prudent respondents who would not bias the data with their personal grudges.

3.6.1 Validity

In this regard the researcher is to safeguard the validity of data collected, it is precisely because of this, that purposive sampling has been chosen by the researcher for this particular work. According to Kisoga, validity has to do with truthfulness which is the extent to which an instrument can actually measure what it purports to measure (Kisoga, 2012: pg.70).

3.6.2 Reliability

A reliable data collection method is to be selected so as to ensure reception of reliable information. Kisoga calls reliability a means consistence in delivering results (Kisoga, 2012). The researcher has worked hand in hand with the supervisor to ensure reliable results in data collection as well as outcomes.

3.7 DATA PROCESSING AND MANAGEMENT

The implication here is the collection and translation of data into usable and examinable information. After the collecting of data, the researcher has used this data to gain insights to solve the problem and generate better results. The intention here is to understand how the integral formation of Priests can bare results of efficient priestly ministry.

The researcher has made a strict follow-up of the data, and its safety will be ensured. The data has been filtered to hinder the publication of false or straw data. This has been done in light of the magisterial sources employed.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

In data analysis the researcher has organised, interpreted and presented collected data. In this the researcher has presented the descriptive results of the analysis first. Descriptive statistics describe the sample in summary form, which may include frequencies and percentages, means, medians, modes, standard deviations, correlations and others.

The researcher should then present the results of the hypotheses tests, if any. Hypotheses tests should inform the reader whether findings can be generalized to the target population. It may not be possible to present every result of the analyses. The researcher therefore selects the most important findings for reporting

It is extremely important for the researcher to point out whether findings are supported by other studies discussed in the literature review section. When findings contradict other studies, it is also important for the researcher to point this out giving possible reasons for such an outcome.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are made towards the respondents especially in regards to how the researcher deals with them. Therefore, the respondents are left to present their data voluntarily and an informed consent is the emphasis of the researcher. In view of ethical considerations, the researcher selected the methodology stated in order first to preserve confidentiality of respondents, secondly to regulate malicious responses and to preserve the dignity of all involved in the research. The researcher also made it possible to preserve the anonymity of the respondents. In otherwards the usual provision for a list of respondents at the end of the research has not been put in place. The researcher also aimed at observing the great ethical issue of respecting the respondents. The researcher ensured that the permission of the respondents is got in order to publish their responses.

In this Ethical consideration the researcher has also made sure to maintain academic integrity. As such, he acknowledges all sources used in this research especially those used in the second chapter, where a lot of the information has been got from magisterial documents by the researcher.

Given that the point in question may involve comments about highly respected persons, the researcher felt the need to use observation and interviews alone which will regulate the access

any research assistants will have to the data collected. Consent certainly has been sought from the respondents/interviewees before the interviews were conducted. The outcome of the research is to be made available to the respondents.

3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research has been concerning with a very sensitive topic; therefore, the researcher has experienced a lot of recoiling from the respondents regarding the release of information. This research has been done in the formation house (Ggaba Seminary), where suspicion especially in a bid to protect ones standing in the society is a common reaction to questions that arise especially when questions such as how one feels about the system of formation are asked.

The research has also been slowed down by unforeseen methodological hinderances; that is to say, the methods of data collection anticipated in the proposal of the research were not as effective as the researcher had expected. As such interviews could not enable the researcher to collect the expected quantity of the data. Similarly, the sample size could not enable the researcher to obtain a generalized view of formation especially to help realise the impact that was expected from the research. This is because the research was limited to St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, whereas it has become apparent that the systems of different Seminaries produce different formation results.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the foregoing Chapter we looked at the formation in the Seminaries as it is defined and planned by the Church's magisterium and we have also traced the origins of formation in Scripture. We have placed emphasis too on the different facets of formation. Our motive in doing this was to emphasize that integral Priestly formation was what would produce an effective evangelisation and an effective priestly ministry. In otherwards, the Church has determined on the basis of her long experience and rich tradition that a good priest today, would have gone through the integral priestly formation offered in the Seminaries and he should have adequately adhered to it.

Speaking in a public Lecture at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, Dr. Fr. Buchana Kisoga said; the high numbers of vocations to the Priesthood as attested to by the increasing number of Seminarians in the Seminaries is surely promising and reassuring. But he went on to ask whether it is possible to manage that number and whether it was possible to boast of a qualitative high quantity of Seminarians. The researcher in this Chapter has interviewed a number of Seminarians as well as priests on the formation staff in order to explore whether the system of integral formation can truly lead to effective priestly ministry. Secondly to ascertain whether it is possible for a Seminarian to faithfully adhere to the integral Priestly Formation. Then the interviews help to determine the factors that hinder faithful adherence to integral priestly formation by the Seminarians. In this regard this Chapter is to be done looking at what the Seminarians and formators understand as integral priestly formation. Secondly to look into the factors that hinder faithful adherence to this integral priestly formation and lastly to explore the effects of a faithful adherence of this integral priestly formation on the ministry of an individual who has gone through the formation.

4.1 Research Demographic

The researcher carried out the research in St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, interviewing the Seminarians and the Formators because they are the foremost stakeholders in regards to the integral priestly formation. The Seminary currently has 215 Seminarians and 16 formators. From among these the researcher made sure to interview mostly the year four students who have spent a fairly long time in formation. As such from the 100% respondents the fourth-year

seminarians constitute 38.89% which is 14 seminarians and Deacons out of the total of 36 which was altogether interviewed. From the third-year class, the researcher interviewed 11.11% which is 4 students out of the total of 36 seminarians that were interviewed. In the first-year the researcher interviewed 5 students which makes up 13.88% of the number of respondents, that same number is what was interviewed from the second year. The researcher then interviewed 5 formators on staff and 3 priests already carrying out their ministry in the parishes making up the remaining 22.24% of respondents.

4.2 What is Integral Priestly Formation?

It is possible to go through the Seminary without grasping the essential elements of Seminary formation. The routine sometimes pushes the crowds through the System and many come to the evening of their Seminary formation without a clear understanding of what integral Priestly formation is. In this regard the researcher went about inquiring what many perceived of integral priestly formation. Therefore, the researcher has explored this research question by looking at the different arms of formation as per the understanding of the respondents.

Regarding integral priestly formation one respondent said that it is the four arms of formation as given by the Seminary Charter. Another respondent looks at integral formation as a practical part of what is taught in the lectures in the Seminary. One respondent regards integral priestly formation as the extract of the life of Christ our Master as applied to those who are to carry on His Priestly role. Another respondent speaking of integral priestly formation said that it is the formation of priests revolving around the four pillars of intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, human formation, but he says it is never complete until it involves what he called a fifth pillar which is cultural formation. This respondent emphasised that it is imperative to introduce cultural formation here in St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, if adherence is to be achieved in the candidate to the priesthood. For him because seminarians come from different corners of the country it is important to consider their cultural background. Therefore, he considered cultural formation or what he called a widening of cultural perspective as an indispensable facet of integral formation.

One respondent in speaking of integral priestly formation said that it was first and foremost the cooperation of the priestly candidate with the Grace of God in the different aspects of growth. He said when the candidate cooperates with the Grace of God in order to foster proper human behaviour and civility such a one is undergoing Human formation. He elaborated that when one pays heed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to improve upon his prayer life, such a

candidate is undergoing spiritual formation. In understanding what is taught in class as a way to grow in the faith, such a person is considered to be undergoing intellectual formation. Lastly, the respondent elaborated that when at the urgings of Charity, one is driven to go out of his way to extend God's teaching and love to others, that seminarian is undergoing pastoral formation. In understanding integral formation this respondent emphasised that the Trinity is to play a central role and the candidate is to follow closely by. The role of God in formation is indispensable says the respondent.

One respondent stated that integral priestly formation can only be discerned and understood in no other way than in the way the Church defines it. He departed especially from *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and from the document on Priestly Formation issued by the United States Bishop's conference, and went on to say that integral priestly formation can only take place within the context of the Church as the mystical body of Christ and in relationship to the mission of the Church. For him, the candidate to the priesthood can only be said to undergo human formation when he seeks to achieve human virtues as the Church defines and understands them. In speaking of intellectual formation, he said that the seminarian should attain a deeper understanding of the vast heritage of the Church's intellectual deposit and should be able to put it in the present context of the Church's self-definition and mission. Speaking of spiritual formation, the respondent emphasised that the candidate to the Priesthood should be enabled to advance along the path of Christian Spiritual perfection just as many of her Sons and Daughters have been able to, and are now saints in heaven. He emphasised that the Spiritual formation of the Seminarian is very crucial and important, and that it is what seasons the other pillars of formation. He looks at the pastoral formation as the candidate's access to the knowledge of the Church's mission and his possession of all the necessary tools to be able to execute the said Mission.

One respondent said that integral priestly formation is fundamentally composed of the four pillars of formation; Human, intellectual, Pastoral and Spiritual formation. But he emphasises that these four pillars though fundamentally distinct are actually closely joined by natural cords to each other. The result of this connection is the production of a well-rounded person not simply prayerful but kind, pastorally oriented, well behaved and able to conduct himself with dignity but also fully aware of the Church's practice and tradition and able to defend and define it. However, this respondent emphasised that the foundation upon which the other three pillars are built is the Human pillar. According to him, integral priestly formation can only take place

in an individual who has a fully developed human Character, capable of proper social interaction, imbued with mature human virtue and courtesy and ability to be moved by the plight of others.

4.3 Factors That Affect a Seminarian's Adherence to Integral Priestly Formation.

The researcher after coming to understand how the respondents perceived integral priestly formation went on to interview the respondents regarding some of the factors, they supposed could be hinderances to seminarians' adhering to the integral priestly formation.

4.3.1 The Influence of the Modern World.

One respondent emphasised that the modern age and its constantly changing paradigms affects adherence to integral priestly formation. He emphasised that society is revolving and changing especially due to the influence of technology and science. These changes affect also the candidate to priesthood. For, if society is changing, the approach of the priest is to change and ultimately the formation of that priest has to also change. The respondent then went on to elaborate that because of the changing times, the adherence of the seminarian to integral priestly formation also changes or is affected. Being a human being in the world but expected to rise above the world and lead others to God, requires a certain fortitude against the tide of the rapidly changing world. The respondent as an example spoke of the presence of social media and the influx of information it provides to the candidate. He said, this could be an incentive for proper adherence to integral priestly formation or a hinderance thereof. The respondent said, social media could provide an opportunity for better intellectual and pastoral formation as it gives the candidate adequate information about church teaching and at the same time grants the candidate access to a number of people among whom he can do pastoral work. However, the respondent warned against the danger social media has caused and could cause if misused for example time wastage, challenging the virtue of chastity as well as being a source of false information about Church teaching.

4.3.2 Ratio of Formators to that of the Seminarian

Another respondent said that the number of formators also affects the adherence of the Seminarian to integral priestly formation. He states that because of the increasing number of candidates to the priesthood as opposed to the low number of those who qualify to become formators in the Seminary, adherence to integral priestly formation becomes problematic. He

gave St. Mary's as an example where we have over 200 students with less than 20 formators. This respondent emphasised the great importance of closeness between the formator and the seminarian as a way of improving the adherence of the Seminarian to integral priestly formation. He says that, when a formator is closer to the Seminarian, it becomes easier to monitor and help the seminarian's growth.

4.3.3 Influence of Cultural Background

One respondent emphasised the effect of the candidate's cultural background on his adherence to integral priestly formation. Accordingly, he looked at how different cultures perceive different conduct and behaviour. This he said can be seen in his culture where everyman is supposed to marry and so even the priests are expected to marry. Subsequently he says priests face social ostracism, because of the discipline of celibacy. This forces some of them to abandon the virtue of Chastity. The seminarian then already with such a background may not give attention to chastity. The effect of culture may be explored not in the line of marriage alone, but it goes on to moral conduct, authority, financial discipline and many more areas.

4.3.4 Uncertainties in the Formation Systems

A respondent said that, the adherence to integral priestly formation may also be affected by the presence of uncertainties in the formation process. Upon inquiry into what he meant by uncertainties, the respondent elaborated that he meant the fact that it is not always a sure deal that a seminarian will at the end of the formation period be ordained a priest. The researcher remarked that this does not seem to be a common phenomenon. The respondent retorted that although it happens seldom it still bears a huge bearing on how the majority live their lives in the Seminary. He said that, many go on in formation without having fully resolved to take on the priestly ministry. This they do because their efforts are divided and distributed between the pursuit of the priestly calling and some other profession which they entertain as a back-up plan. In turn the formation to priesthood which requires the candidate to fully commit suffers and, in the end, when one comes to the eve of ordination, he realises that he has missed many opportunities to better himself.

4.3.5 Family Background

Another respondent emphasised that the parents and upbringing of the seminarian dictates how this Seminarian will respond to integral priestly formation. Seminarians do come from different families and the care and attention of their parents either augments a positive adherence to

integral priestly formation or on the other hand retracts it and damages it. Seminarians who come from homes with caring and serious parents seem to be very open to formation. For these on top of the good code of conduct that was taught at home easily adopt the formation they receive at the Seminary. The respondent considered these similar to the good soil Christ speaks of in the Parable of the Sower. The formation yields good results in such seminarians.

4.3.6 Superficial Spirituality and Ritualism.

Integral priestly formation, as emphasized in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, aims to shape a man into a true disciple of Christ and a shepherd after His heart. It involves the harmonious development of four key dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. However, this formation can be compromised when seminarians fall into superficial spirituality and ritualism. These phenomena reflect a disconnection between external religious practice and interior conversion, and they significantly hinder authentic growth in holiness and priestly identity.

One respondent said he understood superficial spirituality as a shallow, exterior form of religiosity that lacks true interior commitment. A seminarian may participate in prayers, attend Mass, or engage in pious acts, but without a genuine relationship with God. The danger here lies in; Performance over transformation whereby formation becomes about conforming to external expectations rather than undergoing interior conversion. It also leads to emotionalism or formalism where Seminarians may pursue spiritual highs or routine duties, while avoiding the deeper work of repentance, detachment from sin, or discernment of God's will. This superficial spirituality according to the respondent also leads to resistance to spiritual direction: Without humility and openness, seminarians may hide behind pious façades and avoid authentic guidance that challenges their deeper attitudes or behaviours. This hinders the formation of a priest who is meant to be a man of prayer, grounded in daily communion with God, capable of shepherding others from a place of authentic spiritual maturity.

4.3.7 Fear

Another respondent laid emphasis on fear as one of the key factors that influence faithful adherence to integral priestly formation. He stated that the fear in some candidates pushes them to masking and to a lack of transparency. This particular point was highlighted still in the public lecture by Fr. Kisoga Buchana Josef. Fr. Josef emphasised that because of the evaluation system in the seminaries, the Seminarians are sometimes fond of presenting a self-image that

is absolutely different from their true self. This lack of transparency often frustrates any possibility for an integral growth in the Seminarian. For, instead of working upon self-improvement, the seminarian works to please the formators or to simply preserve a false image. This, the researcher calls a pharisaic approach to formation. As such we find that there are seminarians who spend long hours in prayer, excel at their academic work, are diligent in manual work and proficient sportsmen but at the end of formation are found to possess none of those qualities anymore. The respondent gave the example of some Deacons who upon ordination return to the seminary and are seen to abandon all they used to do before ordination and are then found lazy, un-prayerful, averted to academic work. This particular factor is so common says the respondent, since in almost every year it can be discerned among the candidates to the priesthood.

4.3.8 Contrast Between What is Taught in the Seminary and What is Done in the Ministry.

There is sometimes a contrast between what is taught in the Seminary and what the seminarian encounters when he goes for holidays, or for Pastoral Spiritual year. This is very common especially in the pastoral arena and in the Liturgical sector. One respondent emphasised that there are even slogans that are formulated to discourage any form of application of what the Seminarian learns at the Seminary; Slogans such as; *“forget all you have learned.”*, *“put all theologies at the back of your head.”* *“This is the field, do not bring your theories here.”*, *“You will do that when you return to the Seminary.”* With this the candidate to the priesthood is often discouraged in his adherence to integral priestly formation. And so he finds no meaning in the lectures neither in the practice of the Sacraments or in any of the productive things taught simply because these have been discouraged by those already in the field of mission.

4.3.9 The Example of Priests Already in the Ministry.

It is absolutely discouraging for the candidate to the priesthood to experience scandal from those he seeks to join in the mission. One respondent spoke of the poor example given by some priests already in the ministry as a major factor that leads to a poor adherence to integral priestly formation. He explained that there seems to be a great number of priests who do not possess the qualities of one who underwent an integral formation. He gave the example of a priest who cared nothing for the Divine office and even discouraged him from saying it. *“You will also soon give up as we have, those things have no meaning.”* The respondent says that such words will produce either a positive or negative impact; positive in the sense that this Seminarian will

strive not to end up as such, or, which is most probable, the Seminarian will be discouraged and lose a sense of meaning in the formation.

4.3.10 The Place of Jesus in the Formation of the Seminarian.

One respondent emphasised that where the formators and the formed have a deep regard for Jesus Christ and the place they render Him in the process of formation determines its fruitfulness or aridity. He said that in Seminaries where the precedence is not given to Christ in the life of the Seminarian the candidate ends up unable to trace any plausible progress. The respondent basing himself on *Pastore Dabo Vobis* of Pope St. John Paul II emphasised that the formed is called first and foremost to configure his life to the life of Christ. Christ is the master of Mission, and He is the true eternal High-priest as the letter to the Hebrews stated.

Therefore, the respondent said that he who seeks to serve in this Mission Field and to embrace this one eternal priesthood ought to model his life to that of the Master to whom the Mission and the Priesthood belong. The respondent therefore, said that formation becomes easier for the formators when the candidate to the priesthood understands this. The seminarian will thus push himself to growth and to cultivation of virtues and values that would benefit his vocation.

4.3.11 Secularism and Moral Relativism

Secularism, when understood as a worldview that seeks to exclude religious influence from public and personal life, poses a significant hindrance to integral priestly formation. Integral priestly formation, as outlined in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, aims to form the whole man humanly, spiritually, intellectually, and pastorally in conformity with Christ the Good Shepherd. One respondent speaking of secularism said that, secularism challenges this holistic vision on multiple levels. He emphasised that first secularism promotes a purely immanent worldview that denies or marginalizes the transcendent. This directly contradicts the foundation of priestly formation, which is rooted in a deep, personal relationship with God and oriented toward eternal truths. A secularized mindset fosters scepticism toward prayer, sacramental life, and the supernatural dimension of the priesthood, eroding the seminarian's interior life and weakening his vocational clarity.

Another respondent emphasised that integral formation rests on a Christian anthropology-man as created in the image of God, called to communion with Him. Secularism, however, tends to reduce the human person to material, psychological, or utilitarian terms. This affects how

seminarians view themselves and others, potentially leading to confusion about human dignity, sexuality, and vocation. It may result in embracing ideologies contrary to Church teaching (e.g., gender ideology, radical autonomy), thus fracturing the unity between formation and doctrine.

Another respondent said that secular outlook often promotes individualism and relativism, discouraging commitment to the Church's teachings and communal life. Seminarians influenced by secular culture may struggle with obedience, chastity, and the countercultural nature of priestly life. They may be tempted to see priesthood as a career rather than a sacred calling, weakening the pastoral and ecclesial dimensions of formation.

One formator said that secularism fosters relativism, where objective truth is denied or seen as unattainable. This undercuts the very heart of intellectual formation, which is meant to root seminarians in the truth of Christ and the deposit of faith. Without a strong foundation in metaphysical and theological truth, seminarians may lack the intellectual tools to engage the modern world critically and evangelically.

He also emphasised that secular culture often promotes permissiveness and detachment from traditional moral norms. This can negatively influence seminarians' moral judgment and community life, as they become desensitized to sin or adopt a consumerist, comfort-seeking attitude. The ascetic and disciplined demands of formation such as celibacy, fraternity, and prayer, may be resisted or superficially embraced.

One Deacon emphasised that a priest who has been poorly formed due to secular influences will struggle to be an authentic witness and shepherd. If a seminarian internalizes secularism, he may lack the boldness and clarity needed to proclaim the Gospel in its fullness. His pastoral ministry may become more about social work or popularity than leading souls to Christ.

4.3.12 Formation Fatigue or Burnout

Formation fatigue is a real and pressing challenge in priestly formation. It affects not just the personal journey of the seminarian but also the future vitality of his ministry. Recognizing, understanding, and addressing this fatigue is essential to ensuring that priestly formation remains truly integral, forming joyful, resilient, and holy shepherds who can serve the people of God with love and endurance. One respondent said that, the prolonged journey of formation leads to psychological, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion that impairs the seminarian's

enthusiasm, motivation, and openness to ongoing formation. Left unaddressed, formation fatigue can severely hinder the effectiveness of priestly formation.

The respondent said that formation fatigue is the gradual weariness or burnout that a seminarian may experience as a result of the prolonged and often intense demands of seminary life. It can stem from; Repetitiveness of formation routines, Perceived lack of progress or fruit, Emotional or spiritual dryness, Unrealistic expectations placed on seminarians, Personal struggles, crises, or unresolved wounds, isolation or a lack of genuine community support to mention but a few. These wear out the seminarian and thus hinder his growth in the dimensions of priestly formation.

4.4 Effects of Faithful Adherence to Integral Priestly formation.

The Directory for the Ministry and life of priests is introduced with the words; “Today, in particular, the pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization calls for the involvement of the entire People of God and requires new fervour, new methods and a new expression for the proclaiming and witnessing of the Gospel. This task demands priests who are deeply and fully immersed in the mystery of Christ and capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life.” This sentiment is what the researcher found prevalent among the respondents as regards their view on what the effects of a faithful adherence to integral priestly formation are. Certainly, in the section on the factors that influence adherence to Integral priestly formation some of the effects which the researcher is to explore as having been given by the respondents, have already been hinted upon.

Ultimately, these effects may not be clearly discernible in the Seminarian but they can concretely be ascertained when the Seminarian becomes a priest. They range from a prayerful priest, conscious of his duty, caring for the faithful, knowledgeable, hardworking, reverent and devout at liturgy, welcoming and understanding. These are just a few of the fruits of a faithful adherence to the integral priestly formation.

4.4.1 Prayerfulness

One of the respondents reported that what has sustained him as a prayerful priest was his faithfulness to the spiritual formation given in the seminary. He emphasised that he utilised the forum of Spiritual Direction and was committed to the communal aspect of prayer and being always present for the spiritual exercises. He says that before he left the Seminary, he had already developed a profound love for the praying of the Breviary. This is opposed to those

seminarians who presume that with ordination comes a deep love for prayer. He says they forget that it is through this formation that this love comes not from the oils of Ordination. He certainly does not undermine the profound influx of Grace that is poured forth into the ordained minister but he says this grace utilises the good already cultivated. When grace is poured forth into an arid soul often times there may not be seen much of a difference.

4.4.2 Consciousness of Ones Duty.

One respondent, a priest, emphasised that it depends on how serious you take formation that you perform the duties of the priestly calling. He explained that it is those who were conscious seminarians that are now conscious priests. Aware of their noble duty and it's bearing not only on their salvation but especially on that of the Christians as well. He draws from the directory for the ministry and life of priests, saying that in order to realize their mission, priests, need to nourish in themselves a life which is a pure reflection of their identity, and to live a union of love with Jesus Christ Eternal High Priest, Head, Master and Pastor of his Church (Directory for Life and Ministry of Priests, 1994, no. 8). This he says is not a fruit of one day's work but a result of painstaking effort made in the seminary when they are still seminarians.

4.4.3 Caring for Those One Serves

One respondent explained that those Seminarians who do not cultivate a thorough Human formation end up becoming bitter and difficult priests. He emphasised that in order for mission to go well the priest should have learnt in the Seminary to deal meekly and humbly with others and should have cultivated the great virtue of Charity which was so profound in the life of Jesus Christ. The respondent decried the widespread coldness and lethargy prevalent among pastors of souls who do not have any regard for their flock. This abominable state of affairs he attributes to the cold attitude found among certain seminarians in the formation house. The priest ought to be like Christ; he must make Christ "visible in the midst of the flock" (Pope Francis called it smelling like the flock) entrusted to his care, having a positive and encouraging rapport with the lay faithful. Recognising in them the dignity of sons of God, he develops his own role in the Church, and in their service; he offers all his priestly ministry and pastoral charity. The respondent said that, the seminarian you are is the priest you become.

4.4.4 Knowledgeable

The Directory on the Ministry and life of Priests says that there is an enormous influence which humanistic and philosophical trends have on modern culture, it is necessary that priests have a

more relevant humanistic and philosophical understanding as well as a mastery of the sacred sciences, particularly insofar as they benefit the exercise of the pastoral ministry. Bearing in mind that these matters should not be simply problematic, informative and theoretical but must lead to an authentic formation: towards prayer, communion and pastoral action (Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 77). One respondent said that in order to achieve such a lofty goal the intellectual formation of Seminarians has to be emphasised. He said that given the wide range of courses covered in the seminary, one who faithfully assimilates them into his life will certainly be a knowledgeable and effective pastor of souls.

4.4.5 Reverent and Devout at Liturgy

The Directory says that, if the service of the Word is the foundational element of the priestly ministry, the heart and vital centre of it, is constituted, without a doubt, in the Eucharist, which is, above all, the real presence in time of the unique and eternal sacrifice of Christ (Directory, no. 46). It is necessary to recall the irreplaceable value that the daily celebration of the Holy Mass has for the priest, be it in the presence of other faithful or not. He must live it as the central moment of his day and of his daily ministry, fruit of a sincere desire and an occasion for a deep and effective encounter with Christ, and he must take the greatest care to celebrate it with intimate participation of the mind and heart (Directory for Ministry and life of Priests, no. 49).

In a society ever more sensitive to communication through signs and images, the priest must pay adequate attention to all of that which can enhance the decorum and sacredness of the Eucharistic celebration. It is important that, in such ceremonies, proper attention is given to the appropriateness and cleanliness of the place, the structure of the altar and tabernacle, the dignity of the sacred vessels, the vestments, the hymns, the music and the necessary silence. These are all elements which can contribute to a better participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In fact, a lack of attention to the symbolic aspects of the liturgy and, even more, carelessness and coldness, superficiality and disorder, empty the meaning and weaken the process of strengthening the faith (Directory, no.49).

One respondent commenting on this, said that, it is no doubt that the proper formation given to one, that determines how such a one will celebrate the liturgy. Those seminarians who do not take the practice of sacraments seriously, will eventually find no meaning in it when they are ordained priests.

4.4.6 Virtue and the Evangelical Counsels

Celibacy, then, is a gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the service of the priest to the Church in and with the Lord while obedience is a priestly value of primary importance. The very sacrifice of Christ on the Cross acquired salvific value and significance through his obedience and his fidelity to the will of the Father. The poverty of Christ has a salvific scope. Christ, being rich, became poor for us, that by his poverty we might become rich (Directory for Ministry and life of Priests, nos. 57-67). The understanding of these wonderful counsels which are made as promises in the rite of ordination develops steadily and gradually while the seminarian undergoes formation. One respondent emphasised that these counsels have taken a lot of injury and we observe many breaches in their regard among priests because they are explored little in formation or that they are understated or downplayed in respect to the prevalent pleasure culture that is trending.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The life and ministry of priests always develop within a particular historical context, at times replete with new problems and unforeseen changes, in which the pilgrim Church lives. The priesthood is not born of history, but of the immutable will of God. However, it corresponds with historical circumstances and, to remain always faithful to its nature, is configured, in specific choices, through a critical relation and a demand of evangelical harmony with the sign of the times. Therefore, priests have the duty to interpret these signs in the light of faith and subject them to prudent judgement. In any case, they cannot ignore them, especially if they wish to effectively orient their own lives in a way that will make their service and testimony more fruitful for the kingdom of God. This notion derived from the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests shapes what the researcher has found out from the respondents. For indeed as the researcher began, the priest now is shaped by the formation he received in the Seminary. Therefore, a look has been made into what kind of formation is there in the Seminary and how those going through it or those who underwent it understand it. Subsequently a look was made into factors that influence the adherence to this formation and lastly into the fruits of a faithful adherence to this integral priestly formation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Pastores Dabo Vobis introduces the segment on the formation of Priests with the words that God always calls his priests from specific human and ecclesial contexts, which inevitably influence them; and to these same contexts, the priest is sent for the service of Christ's Gospel. Certainly, there is an essential aspect of the priest that does not change: the priest of tomorrow, no less than the priest of today, must resemble Christ. When Jesus lived on this earth, he manifested in himself the definitive role of the priestly office establishing a ministerial priesthood with which the apostles were the first to be invested. This priesthood is destined to last in endless succession throughout history. In this sense the priest of the third millennium will continue the work of the priests who, in the preceding millennia, have animated the life of the Church. In the third millennium, the priestly vocation will continue to be the call to live the unique and permanent priesthood of Christ.

In the foregoing chapter the researcher explored the understanding of the formation of priests as understood by the Seminarians and formation-staff of St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba. The sentiment of *Pastore Dabo Vobis* stated above, can be traced through that work. The changing times of the third millennium require a deeper understanding of the current integral priestly formation offered in the seminaries. This would go a long way in enabling the formation of dedicated, prayerful, intellectually sound, holy, charitable and competent priests. This chapter is intended to explore the information gathered from the respondents and to analyse it in reference to the magisterial understanding of integral priestly formation.

5.1 A Brief Excursion of the Findings.

In exploring the prevalent understanding of integral priestly formation among the formed and their formators, the researcher observed that for many it is simply the four facets of formation offered in the seminary, that is; the Human, the intellectual, the pastoral and the spiritual formation offered to the candidates. However, some respondents understood integral priestly formation as that which revolves around the human formation. To these, the four arms of formation can only produce result in the candidate to the priesthood if the person formed has a matured human formation. Others emphasised that the Candidate to the priesthood on top of

undergoing spiritual, humanistic, intellectual and pastoral formation, should also undergo cultural formation.

The respondents also spoke of the factors that influence a seminarian's adherence to the integral priestly formation. They emphasised that among the many factors, the changing times, influence of the modern world, the ratio of formators to that of the seminarians, the influence of the cultural background, uncertainties in the formation process, family background, fear, contrast between what is taught and that which is done in the ministry, the example of the priests in the ministry, the place of Jesus in formation are the major factors that influence the seminarian's adherence to integral priestly formation.

Lastly, the researcher explored the effects of integral priestly formation on the candidate to the priesthood. It was reported by the respondents that those who are faithful in adhering to this formation, become prayerful, conscious of their calling, caring for the flock they shepherd, knowledgeable and reverent at the liturgy. This is to mention but a few of the effects. On the other hand, the respondents reported that those who simply glide through formation end up being lethargic, lazy, irreverent, bitter, disrespectful, disobedient, unchaste and unproductive.

It is these findings that the researcher seeks to explore widely in this chapter making reference to the documents given in the second chapter. That is to say; *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis, Pastores Dabo Vobis, Optatam Totius, Ubi Primum, Depuis Le Juor, the Code of Canon law, Fin Dal Principio* as well as the book authored by the Rector of St. Mary's national Seminary Ggaba; *Transformation or Conformism?* The researcher will also utilize the book entitled *St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba: A Landmark in Indigenous Priestly Training*. This was edited by Fr. Dr. Kimbowa Emmanuel a formator at St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba.

5.2 Understanding Integral Priestly Formation

Pope John Paul II of happy memory in speaking of seminary formation draws inspiration from the relationship of Christ with the Apostles. He says that in her care for priestly vocations the Church in every age draws her inspiration from Christ's example. There have been, and to some extents there still are, many different practical forms according to which the Church has been involved in the pastoral care of vocations. Her task is not only to discern but also to accompany priestly vocations. The Pope continues that, the spirit which must inspire and sustain the Church in this noble duty remains the same: that of bringing to the priesthood only those who have been called, and to bring them adequately trained, namely, with a conscious

and free response of adherence and involvement of their whole person with Jesus Christ, who calls them to intimacy of life with him and to share in his mission of salvation. In this sense, the “seminary” more than a place, a material space, should be a spiritual place (Spiritual formation), a way of life (Human formation), an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of intellectual growth (intellectual formation), so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become, with the sacrament of orders, a living image of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church (Pastoral formation). In otherwards, the seminary should be integral in approach and atmosphere (John Paul II, 1992).

As the researcher introduced this section in chapter four, he still emphasises that it is possible to go through the Seminary without grasping the essential elements of Seminary formation. The routine sometimes pushes the crowds through the System and many come to the evening of their Seminary formation without a clear understanding of what integral Priestly formation is. This understanding of Pope John Paul II should be understood especially by the stakeholders in formation and shall subsequently lead to a positive outcome of the formation in the seminarians.

5.2.1 Christ and Integral Priestly Formation.

One respondent regards integral priestly formation as the extract of the life of Christ our Master as applied to those who are to carry on His Priestly role. This concern or understanding of integral priestly formation is what *Pastores Dabo Vobis* emphasises; for in it, the Holy Father John Paul II says that the original and specific meaning of the formation of candidates for the priesthood, is to live in the seminary, which is a school of the Gospel, it means to follow Christ as the apostles did. The candidate is led by Christ into the service of God the Father and of all people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Seminarian becomes more like Christ the Good Shepherd in order to serve the Church and the world better as a priest (John Paul II, 1992, no. 42). In preparing for the priesthood, the seminarian is to learn how to respond from the heart to Christ’s basic question: “Do you love me?” (Jn. 21:15). For the future priest the answer can only mean total self-giving. A similar sentiment was expressed by Fr. John Fortunate Baluku in a spiritual seminar when he said that Christ bestows a calling on one depending on the person’s love for Him.

The *Ratio Fundamentalis 16*, quoting *Presbyterorum Ordinis* numbers 55 and 56, emphasised that priests, who are configured to Christ, Head and Shepherd, Servant and Spouse, participate in his one priesthood and saving mission as co-workers with the bishops. In this way there are

visible signs of the merciful love of the Father in the Church and in the world. These characteristics of the person of Christ help us to understand better the ministerial priesthood in the Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they inspire and guide the formation of seminarians, so that they can be conformed to Christ by their immersion in the mystery of the Trinity (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016, no. 35). Still in this regard we observe that the understanding of that respondent in regards to integral priestly formation is in line with the understanding of the Church's magisterium.

5.2.2 Cultural Formation as a Fifth Pillar of Integral Priestly Formation

Another respondent speaking of integral priestly formation said that it is the formation of priests which revolves around the four pillars of intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, human formation, but he says it is never complete until it involves what he called a fifth pillar which is cultural formation. This respondent emphasised that it is imperative to introduce cultural formation here in St. Mary's National Seminary Ggaba, if adherence is to be achieved in the candidate to the priesthood. For him, because seminarians come from different corners of the country it is important to consider their cultural background. Therefore, he considered cultural formation or what he called a widening of cultural perspective as an indispensable facet of integral formation.

Pope John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* had already decried the baneful effect of the current world culture on the candidate to the priesthood. He said that the many contradictions and potentialities marking our societies and cultures are perceived, lived and experienced by our young people with a particular intensity and have immediate and very acute repercussions on their personal growth. Thus, the emergence and development of priestly vocations among boys, adolescents and young men are continually under pressure and facing obstacles (John Paul II, 1992, no. 8).

He mentioned among the many characteristics of the prevalent world culture, the lure of "consumer society" which is so strong among young people that they become totally dominated and imprisoned by an individualistic, materialistic and hedonistic interpretation of human existence. He also spoke of material "well - being," which is so intensely sought after, and which becomes the one ideal to be striven for in life, a well - being which is to be attained in any way and at any price. There is a refusal of anything that speaks of sacrifice and a rejection of any effort to look for and to practice spiritual and religious values (John Paul II, 1992, no. 8).

This is particularly reflected in that outlook on human sexuality according to which sexuality's dignity in service to communion and to the reciprocal donation between persons becomes degraded and thereby reduced to nothing more than a consumer good. In this case, many young people undergo an affective experience which, instead of contributing to a harmonious and joyous growth in personality which opens them outward in an act of self-giving, becomes a serious psychological and ethical process of turning inward toward self, a situation which cannot fail to have grave consequences on them in the future (John Paul II, 1992, no. 8).

In the case of some young people, a distorted sense of freedom lies at the root of these tendencies. Instead of being understood as obedience to objective and universal truth, freedom is lived out as a blind acquiescence to instinctive forces and to an individual's will to power. In this analysis we see that the concern about the cultural background of the Seminarian has to be considered in the formation system.

5.2.3 The Grace to Adhere to Formation

One respondent in speaking of integral priestly formation said that it was first and foremost the cooperation of the priestly candidate with the Grace of God in the different aspects of growth. He said when the candidate cooperates with the Grace of God in order to foster proper human behaviour and civility such a one is undergoing Human formation. He elaborated that when one pays heed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to improve upon his prayer life, such a candidate is undergoing spiritual formation. In understanding what is taught in class as a way to grow in the faith, such a person is considered to be undergoing intellectual formation. Lastly, the respondent elaborated that when at the urgings of Charity, one is driven to go out of his way to extend God's teaching and love to others, that seminarian is undergoing pastoral formation. In understanding integral formation, this respondent emphasised that the Trinity is to play a central role and the candidate is to follow closely by. The role of God in formation is indispensable says the respondent.

Pope John Paul II says that the history of every priestly vocation, as indeed of every Christian vocation, is the history of an inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him. These two indivisible aspects of vocation, God's gratuitous gift and the responsible freedom of human beings, are reflected in a splendid and very effective way in the brief words with which the evangelist Mark presents the calling of the Twelve: Jesus "went up into the hills, and called to Himself those whom he desired; and they came to him" (Mk. 3:13). On the one hand, we have

the completely free decision of Jesus; on the other, the ‘coming’ of the Twelve, their ‘following’ Jesus (John Paul II, 1992, no. 36). God is the one who calls and He is the one who sustains those that are called by forming them. The response of the seminarian follows the gratuitous gift of vocation which is a Divine initiative.

5.3.4 Formed According to the Mind of the Church

The future priest is not formed into his own personal ideas of formation, rather he is formed according to the mind of the Church. One respondent stated that integral priestly formation can only be discerned and understood in no other way than in the way the Church defines it. He departed especially from *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and from the document on Priestly Formation issued by the United States Bishop’s conference, and went on to say that integral priestly formation can only take place within the context of the Church as the mystical body of Christ and in relationship to the mission of the Church. For him the candidate to the priesthood can only be said to undergo human formation when he seeks to achieve human virtue as the Church defines and understands it. In speaking of intellectual formation, he said that the seminarian should attain a deeper understanding of the vast heritage of the Church’s intellectual deposit and should be able to put it in the present context of the Church’s self-definition and mission. Speaking of spiritual formation, the respondent emphasised that the candidate to the Priesthood should be enabled to advance along the path of Christian Spiritual perfection just as many of her Sons and Daughters have been able to, and are now saints in heaven. He emphasised that the Spiritual formation of the Seminarian is very crucial and important, and that it is what seasons the other pillars of formation. He looks at the pastoral formation as the candidate’s access to the knowledge of the Church’s mission and his possession of all the necessary tools to be able to execute the said Mission.

The priest’s relation to the Church is inscribed in the very relation which the priest has to Christ, such that the “sacramental representation” to Christ serves as the basis and inspiration for the relation of the priest to the Church (John Paul II, 1992, no.16). Subsequently, this relationship shapes the way the candidate to the priesthood is formed.

5.3.5 Human Formation the foundation for Successful Integral Priestly Formation

The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation. The priest, who is called to be a “living image” of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human

perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitudes toward others as we see narrated in the Gospels. (John Paul II, 1992, no. 43).

One respondent said that integral priestly formation is fundamentally composed of the four pillars of formation; Human, intellectual, Pastoral and Spiritual formation, but he emphasised that these four pillars though fundamentally distinct are actually closely joined by natural cords to each other. The result of this connection is the production of a well-rounded person not simply prayerful but kind, pastorally oriented, well behaved and able to conduct himself with dignity but also fully aware of the Church's practice and tradition and able to defend and define it. However, this respondent emphasised that the foundation upon which the other three pillars are built is the Human pillar. According to him, integral priestly formation can only take place in an individual who has a fully developed human Character, capable of proper social interaction, imbued with mature human virtue and courtesy and ability to be moved by the plight of others. In this regard we see that his understanding of integral priestly formation rhymes well with the Church's understanding.

5.4 Analysing the Factors That Affect a Seminarian's Adherence to Integral Priestly Formation.

According to *Pastores Dabo Vobis no. 36*, the Church today feels called to relive with a renewed commitment all that the Master did with his apostles - urged on as she is by the deep and rapid transformations in the societies and culture of our age; by the multiplicity and diversity of contexts in which she announces the Gospel and witnesses to it; by the promising number of priestly vocations being seen in some dioceses around the world; by the urgency of a new look at the contents and methods of priestly formation; by the concern of bishops and their communities about a persisting scarcity of clergy; and by the absolute necessity that the "new evangelization" have priests as its initial "new evangelizers." The researcher therefore after analysing how integral priestly formation is perceived by the Church and by the stakeholders now explores some of the factors, that affect integral priestly formation.

5.4.1 The Modern World.

One respondent had emphasised that the modern age and its constantly changing paradigms affects adherence to integral priestly formation. He emphasised that society is revolving and changing especially due to the influence of technology and science. These changes affect also

the candidate to priesthood. For if society is changing the approach of the priest is to change and ultimately the formation of that priest has to also change. The Holy Father John Paul II recognised the influence of changing times on the life and ministry of priests and definitely on the formation of future priests. He stated that, it is equally certain that the life and ministry of the priest must also adapt to every era and circumstance of life.... For our part, we must therefore seek to be as open as possible to light from on high from the Holy Spirit, in order to discover the tendencies of contemporary society, recognize the deepest spiritual needs, determine the most important concrete tasks and the pastoral methods to adopt, and thus respond adequately to human expectations. This calls for vigilance in forming future priests thus enabling them to encounter the new world challenges (John Paul II, 1992, no. 5).

5.4.2 Ratio of Formators to that of the Seminarian

According to the Code of Canon Law (*Can. 239*), the minimum community of formators for every Seminary must be comprised of a Rector and a Spiritual Director. However, the number of formators must necessarily be sufficient for, and proportionate to, the number of seminarians, which can comprise more than one Spiritual Director, a Vice-Rector, a Financial Administrator, and other formators, who coordinate the different dimensions of formation when circumstances require it (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016, no.133).

This was the sentiment expressed by one respondent who emphasised that the number of formators also affects the adherence of the candidate to priesthood to integral priestly formation. He states that because of the increasing number of candidates to the priesthood as opposed to the low number of those who qualify to become formators in the Seminary, adherence to integral priestly formation becomes problematic. This respondent emphasised the great importance of closeness between the formator and the seminarian as a way of improving the adherence of the Seminarian to integral priestly formation.

5.4.3 Family Background

Pope Francis speaking on the families and vocations in the Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* said that Seminarians should receive a more extensive interdisciplinary, and not merely doctrinal, formation in the areas of engagement and marriage. He said that their training does not always allow them to explore their own psychological and affective background and experiences. Some come from troubled families, with absent parents and a lack of emotional stability. There is a need to ensure that the formation process can enable them to attain the maturity and

psychological balance needed for their future ministry. Family bonds are essential for reinforcing healthy self-esteem. It is important for families to be part of the seminary process and priestly life, since they help to reaffirm these and to keep them well grounded in reality (Francis, 2015, no. 203).

One respondent emphasised that the parents and upbringing of the seminarian dictates how this Seminarian will respond to integral priestly formation. Seminarians do come from different families and the care and attention of their parents either augments a positive adherence to integral priestly formation or on the other hand retracts it and damages it. The *Ratio Fundamentalis* of 2016 states that vocation usually grows within the context of a community, in which the seminarian has had a significant experience of faith. For this reason, initial priestly formation must keep this influence in mind. Both the family and the parish of origin, or the parish to which he belongs, as well as other ecclesial communities, contribute significantly to sustaining and nourishing the vocation of those called to the priesthood. This is as true during the period of formation as it is during the life of the priest (Dicastery for the Clergy, 2016, no.148).

5.4.4 Contrast Between What is Taught in the Seminary and What is Done in the Ministry.

Paul writing to Timothy said “I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (2 Tm. 1:6). This Pauline statement is used to emphasise the need for ongoing formation. There is sometimes observed a contrast between what is taught in the Seminary and what the seminarian encounters when he goes for holidays, or for Pastoral Spiritual year. This is very common especially in the pastoral arena and in the Liturgical sector. Slogans such as; “*forget all you have learned.*”, “*put all theologies at the back of your head.*” “*This is the field, do not bring your theories here.*”, “*You will do that when you return to the Seminary.*” Often discourage the candidate to the priesthood is in his adherence to integral priestly formation. And so, he finds no meaning in the lectures neither in the practice of the Sacraments or in any of the productive things taught simply because these have been discouraged by those already in the field of mission. In *Pastores Dabo Vobis* Pope John Paul II emphasised the need for ongoing formation in order to not only equip the Pastors of Souls already in ministry with adequate tools for Mission but also to sharpen them as clear examples for the Seminarians who look up to them.

5.4.5 The Place of Jesus in the Formation of the Seminarian.

We possess the unanimous voice of the magisterium in attesting to the need of the formed to adhere to the life of Christ. This emphasis on the centrality of Christ in formation should be emphasised in the seminary. One respondent emphasised that how the formators and the formed regarded Jesus Christ and the place they render Him in the process of formation determines its fruitfulness or aridity. He said that in Seminaries where the precedence is not given to Christ in the life of the Seminarian, the candidate ends up unable to trace any plausible progress. The respondent basing himself on *Pastores Dabo Vobis* of Pope St. John Paul II affirmed that, the formed is called first and foremost to configure his life to the life of Christ. Christ is the master of Mission, and He is the true eternal High-priest as the letter to the Hebrews stated. Therefore, the respondent said that he who seeks to serve in this Mission Field and to embrace this one eternal priesthood ought to model his life to that of the Master to whom the Mission and the Priesthood belong. The respondent therefore, said that, formation becomes easier for the formators when the candidate to the priesthood understands this. The seminarian will thus push himself to growth and to cultivation of virtues and values that would benefit his vocation.

5.5 Effects of a Faithful Adherence to Integral Priestly Formation.

Addressing Himself to the Bishops of the Universal Church in 1740 the learned Pope Benedict XIV in an encyclical *Ubi Primum* spoke of the benefits of a well-formed clergy. He said that, in giving good formation to seminarians the bishops were seeing to it that their Clergy excel in character and in zeal for divine worship and that ecclesiastical discipline and that this discipline would in turn be kept in good condition or restored where it has suffered. He stressed that the example of dedicated clerics is the best inspiration for the faithful. Therefore, he requested the bishops who are the key formators to be keen so that only those men are chosen for the clergy, who can reasonably be expected that their lives will command respect. That they should be men who walk in the law of the Lord and who go from virtue to virtue. He accentuated that their work will bring spiritual benefit to the churches (Benedict XIV, 1740, no.1).

Benedict elaborated that it would be better to have a few ministers who are upright and effective, than many who labour in vain to build up the Church. He underlined that bishops should diligently investigate whether the way of life of those in lower orders and their progress in sacred learning are such that it may be said to them: “Rise to a higher place.” It is more expedient for some to remain in an inferior position, rather than be promoted to a higher one, which would bring danger to them and scandal to others (Benedict XIV, 1740, no.1). These

words of the learned Bishop of Rome sum up what the magisterium understands as the fruit of a faithful adherence to integral Priestly formation.

Leo XIII too spoke of the duty of the priest, laying emphasis on what is expected of those who have come to the end of seminary formation. He underscored that the priest is to work for the eternal salvation of souls. This duty will always be the great commandment of which the priest must never fall short, as to faithfully fulfil, he must never cease to have recourse to those supernatural aids and those divine rules of thought and of action which Jesus Christ gave His Apostles when He sent them throughout the whole world to convert the nations to the Gospel (Leo XIII, 1902).

The Holy Father then pointed out the necessity of having a well-formed clergy; he says that all designs to bring about a restoration of Christian life among people, would be in vain if in the ecclesiastical state the sacerdotal spirit was not preserved intact and vigorous. He adds on that, The Catholic priesthood-divine in its origin, supernatural in its essence, immutable in its character, is not an institution that can accommodate itself with ease to human systems and opinions. A participation of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, must perpetuate even to the consummation of ages the same mission that the Eternal Father confided to His Incarnate Word. This requires that those who take on such a ministry be formed to stand against the tide of false doctrine, perverse morals, lethargic charity and spiritual coldness (Leo XIII, 1902).

These two documents from ages past are very relevant to this particular part of our research. First, they portray the expectations in the priestly ministry but they also highlight certain characteristics fostered by integral priestly formation. These are precisely those raised by the respondents that is to say; prayerfulness, consciousness of one's duty, care for the flock, knowledge, reverence and devotion at liturgy and virtue.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In Concluding his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* Pope John Paul II uses the words of Jeremiah as given by God; "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jer. 3:15). Today, this promise of God is still living and at work in the Church. At all times, she knows she is the fortunate receiver of these prophetic words. She sees them put into practice daily in so many parts of the world, or rather, in so many human hearts, young hearts in particular. On the threshold of the third millennium, and in the face of the serious and urgent needs which confront the Church and the world, she yearns to see this promise fulfilled in a

new and richer way, more intensely and effectively: She hopes for an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost. This great expectation will only be fulfilled if those who seek to work as lieutenants of God (in the Priesthood) strive to conform their lives to Christ who calls them and to grow everyday not only Spiritually but Humanly, Intellectually and Pastorally.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Catholic priesthood is a unique and sacred vocation that demands rigorous preparation and ongoing formation. The Church has a vision and structure for what she terms “integral priestly formation.” This chapter is above all to provide an in-depth analysis of the foregoing chapters and to offer practical recommendations for seminarians striving to live out their vocation faithfully. Modern seminarians face unique challenges, which stand as hinderances to integral priestly formation, these include Secularism and moral relativism, Emotional immaturity or unresolved psychological issues, isolation or lack of strong community life, misunderstanding of celibacy and clerical identity, intellectual disengagement or ideological rigidity among others as we explored them in the foregoing chapters and it is these that the researcher seeks to make recommendations for. Integral priestly formation, as envisioned in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the *Ratio Fundamentalis* and by other magisterial Documents which we expounded upon in the second chapter, is a lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ, the Good Shepherd. A seminarian who wholeheartedly embraces human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation under the guidance of the Church, prepares not only for ordination but for a fruitful and holy priestly life. This chapter is dedicated to a careful understanding of the findings, and thereby seeking to extract recommendations and conclusions which can be employed by the seminarian in order to come to a fruitful formation.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the clear structure laid out in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, seminarians often encounter profound challenges that can hinder their growth. These difficulties arise not only from within the Church but also from wider cultural, psychological, and societal factors. In order for the seminarians to advance to a better exercise of the Priestly ministry after ordinations, it is imperative that they find remedies to these difficulties. Below are some recommendations adduced by the researcher in order to enable the seminarian overcome the challenges he faces in the formation.

6.2.1 Strengthen theological and philosophical foundations

Among the many difficulties that the Seminarian encounters is the bane of secularism and moral relativism. The contemporary world is deeply influenced by secularism, which often

promotes a worldview devoid of God or objective truth. Seminarians may struggle to reconcile the faith with a culture that dismisses religion as outdated or irrelevant. The seminarian, to combat this evil is to strengthen theological and philosophical foundations to effectively be firm against the tide of secular opinions but also to be able to engage in apologetics to defend his faith. This he does by cultivating a routine of serious academic engagement in theological and philosophical studies, regular devotion to scriptural reading and discussions with his professors, and with competent peers on theological topics that are targeted by secular propaganda. The seminarian may as well attend conferences or courses on evangelization in secular contexts. He should also practice “pastoral apologetics” sharing the truth with clarity and charity.

6.2.2 Regular Psychological Evaluation and Counselling.

In Chapter four Family background was cited as one of the factors that influence integral priestly formation. This is the pandoras box that contains unresolved emotional issues or trauma. When these are present in the life of the candidate, they can impede growth in all four pillars of formation. Without adequate self-awareness, a seminarian may struggle in community life or in dealing with stress, authority, or intimacy. A seminarian, raised in a dysfunctional family, finds it hard to trust his formators and tends to isolate himself emotionally. This undermines his ability to form pastoral relationships or engage fully in fraternity. Regular psychological evaluation and counselling is recommended as a remedy for this challenge.

The Seminary is to employ the expertise of trained psychiatrists or counsellors as well as psychology experts. The formators should not rely solely on their meagre psychological training to deal with grave traumatic issues among the candidates, unless these formators have gone for further psychological training. It is advised to foster a culture where seeking mental health support is normalized. The stigma that classifies mental health support as an indication of insanity is deplorable and should be guarded against in the process of formation. Help should be forthcoming, prompt and free from unnecessary negative repercussions on the vocation of the candidate.

The seminarian on his part is encouraged to do journaling: that is; to keep a written record of the interior movements of his thoughts and emotions. He should carry out regular self-reflection especially done in the context of Christian meditation. In this regard the researcher

recommends an adaptation of the method of self-examination suggested by the great spiritual master St. Ignatius of Loyola in his spiritual exercises. The seminarian should also learn to mentor relationships.

6.2.3 Deep Personal Prayer

Among the challenges was also the grave problem of superficiality in spiritual matters. The demands of academic and pastoral life can lead some seminarians to reduce spiritual practices to obligations rather than personal encounters with Christ. A seminarian may attend all required prayers and liturgies but feel spiritually dry and disconnected, leading to interior restlessness or hidden scrupulosity. In order to counter this plague, it is important to encourage personal prayer outside the seminary schedule for example: daily holy hour, daily meditation, daily devotions, the praying of the rosary as well as daily scriptural readings.

6.2.3.1 Holy Hour

Fulton J. Sheen the American prelate attributes his success as a pastor to the daily Holy Hour, wherefore a seminarian may cultivate the practice of daily sitting before the blessed sacrament for at least an hour, in order to be closer to the Lord who calls him. In this way the Seminarian will find the formation process easy and impactful on his life leading to integral growth and development. As one who is to be oriented to Christ his master and who ought to stand in the breaches for him (*in persona Christi*), the seminarian must learn to be a perfect human being as Christ was; that is being compassionate, prudent, meek and humble. This he will only learn if he takes time to sit before Christ in the Eucharist.

The Seminarian who seeks to advance in the spiritual life will also find that perfect example in Christ who always spared time to pray to the father. The example of the Apostles too who sought to be closer to Christ and to be taught by Him is to be emulated. This the seminarian will gain only if he spares time in conversation with Jesus in the Eucharist.

The Pastoral Charity of Christ will also be learned by one who frequents the Church from where he draws strength to act like Christ in his pastoral ministry. But also, the seminarian will draw strength from the Eucharist to go out of himself so as to reach out to others in Charity and in faith.

6.2.3.2 Meditation

Francis De Sales the great Bishop of Geneva places meditation at the centre of a truly devout life and advises that spirituality cannot grow save through mental prayer. It is imperative in the life of a seminarian that there be moments of meditation. Without mental prayer we cannot speak of a spiritual life. All is meaningless if not seen through the light of interior reflection. Many things seem meaningless to the Seminarian if he does not spare time to reflect about them in the presence of God. Meditation attaches value to vocal prayers and to all other spiritual activities. It is a lens that illumines the spiritual works and devotions. Meditation can also be a very powerful tool as regards intellectual formation. For to internalise the great truths he learns in class, a deeper reflection on them is necessary. St. Thomas Aquinas told Fr. Reginald his stenographer that he learnt more from one hour before the Blessed Sacrament in meditation than from hours of dedicated academic study (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1953). The seminarian ought to take time and do meditation.

6.2.3.3 Marian Devotion

The role of our Blessed Mother Mary on spirituality of candidates to priesthood was emphasised by the Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, St. Alphonsus Marie De Ligouri. He says that Priests are by virtue of their office sons of Mary and they ought by that dignity to be foremost in Devotion to her (Liguori, 2000). Through the prayer of the rosary the Seminarian cultivates a deep love for the Mother of God, by her he learns to live as a worthy son of God. The Mysteries of the Rosary are to be meditated upon and the particular virtues they stress are to be sought through serious personal effort in God's Grace.

6.2.3.4 Spiritual Reading

The great Oratorian Priest Fr. William Faber wrote in his book entitled the *Spiritual Conferences* a topic on a taste for reading in which he elucidated on the great help spiritual reading renders to one. He emphasised that it is imperative especially for those aspiring to priestly roles (William, 2001). Upon reflection one realises the limitations seminarians find in themselves regarding the cultivation and practice of virtue. There is therefore great need for assistance from men who have walked along the narrow path of holiness. It is in this context that Spiritual reading becomes a very crucial exercise in the formation of Priests. The seminarian through spiritual reading aspires towards the practice of virtues and towards perfection as he discerns it in the writings of holy men. Say for example one wishes to cultivate

humility, he reads it on the face of Christ and in His holy life, but practices it as he learns it from the Saints. Christ thus becomes the model of Humility while spiritual books become the manual to attain Humility. This particular fact is true for all other virtues; say, one desires to be Chaste, he may read the works and life of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Thomas of Aquin and the life of St. Anthony of Egypt. On gentleness he may read the writings and homilies of St. Francis De Sales, on Diligence he can and should read the life of St. John Mary Vianney and so on and so forth. Through the spiritual books he discovers new ways of living out his spiritual life, he delves into diverse ways of living an authentic Human life, he realises the vast possibilities of practicing pastoral Charity (for who is not taught at least in one way or another how a pastor should live when he reads the Life of St. John Mary Vianney). Study is also enlightened not simply because the spiritual books may contain a lot of material for intellectual work but also regarding the way these holy men practiced and benefited from intellectual formation.

6.2.4 Scripture Time

The famous quote of St. Jerome (Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ) gives a clear scale of the importance of Scriptural study especially in the life of one who seeks to become a priest. It would be an irony of the Century for a priest to know nothing about Christ. A servant who knows not his master, an ambassador who does not know one he represents, a subject who does not know his King, a trader who does not know his trade or a craftsman who is a novice at his craft. The seminarian who seeks to become a priest, ought to know Christ, for he aims at becoming another Christ. It is precisely because of this, that time be dedicated by the seminarian to Scripture. Not in a scholarly way, or in the pride of vain curiosity, but with humility and a desire to understand Christ. By this the Seminarian is able to grow closer to Christ by emulating what he reads about Him in Scripture. In the long run he finds himself well-formed and matured.

6.2.5 Promote retreats and days of recollection.

Retreats play a crucial role in integral priestly formation by fostering the spiritual, human, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of a seminarian's life. They provide a structured, grace-filled space for deeper communion with God, self-reflection, discernment, and interior transformation.

Spiritually they help the Seminarian realise that at the heart of priestly identity is an intimate relationship with Christ. Retreats cultivate this relationship by offering time away from the noise and activity of daily life, allowing seminarians to focus on prayer, silence, and sacramental encounters. Thus, they deepen prayer life through: guided meditations, Eucharistic adoration, and liturgical celebrations, retreats nurture a habit of contemplative prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit. Retreats also foster interior conversion since they offer the opportunity for sincere examination of conscience, confession, and renewal of one's vocational commitment. They also help the Seminarian to Listen to God's voice. In the silence and solitude of retreat, seminarians better discern God's will and gain clarity about their vocational path.

As regards the Human Dimension they are also crucial. Integral formation includes the cultivation of affective maturity, self-awareness, and personal integrity. Retreats support this human development by offering: Self-Knowledge and Healing: Guided reflections and spiritual direction during retreats often surface unresolved wounds, fears, or disordered attachments, opening the way for healing and growth. They also foster interior freedom: Retreats invite seminarians to let go of distractions, attachments, and interior noise, fostering freedom of heart necessary for pastoral charity and obedience. Retreats also as far as human formation is concerned produce a balanced identity in the Seminarian: In encountering God's unconditional love, the seminarian grows in personal confidence and humility which are foundational traits for stable priestly identity.

While not primarily academic, retreats can complement intellectual formation by integrating theological knowledge into lived experience. They produce theological integration: Retreat meditations often draw from Scripture, the writings of the saints, Church documents, and spiritual classics thus helping seminarians internalize and personalize theological truths. They also possess reflective depth: Retreats help bridge the gap between learning and living, allowing seminarians to reflect on how their studies inform their personal holiness and pastoral mission.

Retreats also shape the pastoral heart by deepening empathy, patience, and sacrificial love, which are crucial for pastoral ministry. They form the seminarian in compassion: As seminarians receive God's mercy and love in retreats, they are formed to be compassionate pastors who can mediate that same mercy to others. Retreats also train servant leaders: Retreats often emphasize Christ the Good Shepherd, inspiring seminarians to imitate His humble, self-

giving service to the flock. Retreats also rekindle apostolic zeal: Time spent in prayer during retreats reignites a passion for evangelization and pastoral care, anchoring ministry in the love of Christ.

Retreats are not mere breaks from formation; they are formative experiences themselves. In harmony with *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, retreats foster the holistic development of future priests. They cultivate a heart that listens, a mind that discerns, a will that conforms to Christ, and a soul that thirsts for holiness. As such, they are indispensable in preparing seminarians to live out their vocation with integrity, joy, and pastoral fruitfulness.

6.2.6 Foster Small-Group Sharing Sessions.

Small group sharing sessions are an essential component of integral priestly formation, offering seminarians a context for communal reflection, emotional growth, and pastoral sensitivity. Rooted in the principle of *formation in community* emphasized in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, these sessions impact all four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, by fostering mutual support, authentic relationships, and shared discernment.

In the Human Dimension, Small group sharing cultivates emotional maturity, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills; core aspects of human formation. They foster authentic relationships, sharing personal experiences in a trusted setting helps seminarians form genuine bonds rooted in mutual respect and fraternity. The vulnerability and trust which happens in these sharing groups is important. The act of expressing struggles, hopes, and growth challenges builds emotional openness and resilience. Also, the conflict resolution and listening that takes place in the sharing is important. Through active listening and dialogue, seminarians learn to navigate differences with charity and patience, crucial for future ministry.

In the Spiritual Dimension group sharing often involves reflection on God's action in one's life, fostering a deeper spiritual awareness and sense of vocation. It enables communal discernment: Listening to others' spiritual journeys can clarify one's own path and reveal God's presence in new ways. It encourages the faith: Witnessing others' faith encourages perseverance, combats isolation, and strengthens commitment to Christ. It also fosters accountability: Sharing spiritual goals or struggles can foster a gentle accountability that supports ongoing conversion.

The intellectual dimension it can also be affected by these group sharing. Though not primarily academic, small group sessions can enhance intellectual formation through reflection and synthesis. It also fosters contextual learning: Applying theological concepts to lived experiences helps internalize and personalize what is learned in the classroom. The small groups also improve on critical thinking: Dialoguing with peers fosters deeper questioning and engagement with theological and pastoral issues. It also enables articulation of faith: Expressing one's beliefs or experiences in words reinforces clarity and confidence in communicating the Gospel.

In the Pastoral Dimension, small group sharing sessions prepare seminarians for ministry by forming habits of empathy, accompaniment, and collaboration. This is manifested through pastoral listening: Learning to listen attentively and respond compassionately mirrors the pastoral role of the priest as a spiritual father and guide. Shared Mission: Working together through shared experiences fosters a sense of co-responsibility and collaboration vital for parish and team ministry. Cultural Sensitivity and Dialogue: Exposure to diverse perspectives within the group sharpens sensitivity to the diversity of people they will serve.

Let administrators of seminaries try to establish these groups either by modifying the existing house community system or the clubs and movements or even the diocesan groups and the ecclesiastical regions. Small group sharing sessions are not merely supportive tools, they are formative spaces where seminarians grow together in Christ. These sessions help integrate all dimensions of priestly formation by grounding personal growth in community life. As Pope John Paul II notes in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, formation must take place “in the context of community” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* §60), and small group sharing is one of the most practical ways to embody this vision.

6.2.7 Encouraging Recreational Activities Such as Sports.

Recreational activities such as sports, music, and shared meals are often overlooked but vitally important components of integral priestly formation. These experiences contribute significantly to the human and community aspects of formation, while also supporting spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral development in indirect but meaningful ways. Rooted in the Church's emphasis on forming well-rounded, relational, and joyful priests (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* §43–44; *Ratio Fundamentalis* §33–43), such activities help seminarians grow in fraternity, emotional balance, and pastoral readiness.

6.2.7.1 Sports and Physical Activity

Sports promote not just physical well-being, but also virtues essential for priestly life. Human Formation: Sports develop discipline, perseverance, humility in defeat, and grace in victory, qualities that mirror the interior demands of priesthood. Fraternal Bonding is one of these qualities. Team sports foster unity, collaboration, and camaraderie, helping seminarians form authentic friendships across personality types and cultural backgrounds. Another quality is the emotional regulation: Physical activity is a healthy outlet for stress and emotional tension, contributing to psychological balance and overall wellness. Lastly, Sports leads to pastoral readiness: The values learned on the field such as: teamwork, patience, fair play are transferable to parish life and community leadership.

6.2.7.2 Music and the Arts

Musical collaboration (choirs, instrument ensembles, or even informal jam sessions) enriches formation by nurturing beauty, creativity, and shared joy. It brings about spiritual enrichment: Sacred music deepens appreciation for the liturgy and can serve as a gateway to prayer and contemplation. It also leads to human development: Making music together demands listening, attentiveness, and emotional expression—skills vital for authentic pastoral presence. Music also promotes community building: Music breaks down barriers and connects seminarians across language and cultural lines, fostering unity in diversity. It is crucial for liturgical preparation: Musical participation prepares seminarians to lead or coordinate music ministry in parishes, enriching the worship experience of the faithful.

6.2.7.3 Shared Meals and Table Fellowship

Eating together, especially in a relaxed, familial setting, fosters communion and nurtures fraternity in a way that reflects the Eucharistic life of the Church. Human Formation is enriched: Meals are natural contexts for conversation, storytelling, and laughter, where seminarians learn to relate with simplicity and sincerity. Meals are medium for cultural exchange: Sharing food from different regions or countries allows for mutual appreciation and respect, promoting intercultural sensitivity. Meals also help in shaping the priestly identity: The priest as *father* and *host* is shaped in part by experiences of hospitality and table fellowship; shared meals model this role informally. Meals also possess a spiritual significance: Meals often mirror Christ's own style of ministry—teaching, healing, and forming community around the table.

6.2.8 Teaching the Theology of Celibacy as a Means of Boosting Integral Priestly Formation

The theology of priestly celibacy, when grounded in its Christocentric foundation, plays a crucial role in integral priestly formation. It is not merely a juridical discipline or a renunciation of marriage, but a positive, spiritually generative configuration to the person and mission of Jesus Christ. This conformity shapes the seminarian's development across all four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral integrating his life into the mystery of Christ and making him a transparent witness to the Kingdom of God.

Celibacy is Christocentric. At the core of priestly celibacy is the imitation of Christ, who lived a celibate life for the sake of His mission and the Kingdom. As *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (John Paul II, 1992) explains, celibacy is “a gift of the Spirit” that “expresses the priest's total and exclusive dedication to Christ” and becomes “a sign of pastoral charity and an incentive to it” (John Paul II, 1992, §29). This gift is not simply a renunciation, but a radical availability and self-offering in love to the Church, mirroring Christ the Bridegroom who gave Himself for His Bride (Eph. 5:25).

Moreover, celibacy has a profound eschatological meaning, pointing to the fullness of life in the Kingdom of Heaven, where marriage gives way to the perfect union with God (Matthew 22:30). The celibate priest, therefore, becomes “a sign of the future world” and lives in a way that reflects this anticipated reality (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §88).

The Theology of Celibacy has impacts on Integral Priestly Formation. On the Human Formation, Celibacy fosters emotional maturity, self-mastery, and affective integration. As the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* states, celibacy requires that the seminarian “be capable of living in chaste celibacy with serenity, joy, and freedom” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §88). This involves cultivating healthy friendships, psychological balance, and the freedom to love universally.

On spiritually, celibacy calls for deep union with Christ in prayer, sacramental life, and interior freedom. As John Paul II notes, celibacy is a means “to live out in one's own flesh the mystery of the love of Christ the Bridegroom for the Church” (John Paul II, 1992, §29). It is sustained not by willpower alone, but by a grace-filled relationship with God.

On intellectual formation, a sound theological and anthropological understanding of celibacy is essential. Seminarians should study the biblical, patristic, and magisterial foundations of

celibacy, helping them internalize and defend its value in a secular context. The Church emphasizes that intellectual formation must address “the anthropological, theological, and spiritual dimensions of celibacy” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §89).

Pastorally, celibacy fosters universal charity and radical availability. It allows the priest to be wholly dedicated to the people of God. As *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* puts it, celibacy enables the priest to offer “a witness of total self-giving to the service of souls” (Paul VI, 1967, §21).

Celibacy, rooted in Christ and oriented toward the Kingdom, is a powerful instrument for forming priests who are spiritually mature, affectively free, and pastorally fruitful. When understood as a grace and configured to the example of Christ Himself, celibacy becomes not a burden but a source of joy and holiness, enhancing every aspect of a seminarian’s integral formation.

6.2.9 Encouraging Transparency with spiritual directors

This is a cornerstone of authentic and effective integral priestly formation. It allows seminarians to grow in self-knowledge, spiritual maturity, and vocational clarity. Honest communication with one’s spiritual director ensures that formation is not merely external or behavioural but touches the inner depths of the seminarian’s soul. The Church documents repeatedly emphasize that such transparency is not optional but vital for formation in each of the four dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.

According to the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016), the seminarian must “freely, willingly and trustingly entrust himself to spiritual direction, opening his soul with transparency and sincerity” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §103). This openness creates a sacred space for discernment, conversion, and accompaniment, grounded in truth and trust.

The *Pastores Dabo Vobis* also underscores that “the seminarian must be helped to see spiritual direction not as an obligation, but as a grace” (John Paul II, 1992, §66). Without honesty, the spiritual director cannot effectively accompany the seminarian, nor can the seminarian truly confront the challenges and graces of his vocation.

On human formation, transparency fosters self-knowledge and emotional maturity, essential for healthy relationships and pastoral availability. As the *Ratio* puts it, “one who is not honest with himself or his director will struggle with authentic human maturity” (Congregation for the

Clergy, 2016, §94). Issues like affective struggles, personal wounds, or unresolved attachments cannot be properly addressed without openness.

In spiritual formation, sincerity allows grace to work effectively. It helps the seminarian identify God's presence in his life, confront spiritual desolation, and grow in docility to the Holy Spirit. A lack of transparency can lead to a double life, which is spiritually harmful and incompatible with the priestly vocation.

Transparent dialogue may help the seminarian integrate theological knowledge with his personal journey, as the spiritual director can guide reflection on how truths of the faith relate to lived experience. This process avoids intellectualism and fosters deep internalization.

By modelling openness and humility, the seminarian becomes more capable of offering authentic pastoral care. If he experiences the healing and clarifying power of truth-telling in formation, he is more likely to accompany others with compassion and discernment in ministry. A closed or self-protective posture hinders authentic formation. As Pope Francis warned: "If a seminarian hides behind rigidity or dissimulation, he is not free, and he cannot be ordained. Freedom is necessary for following Christ" (Francis, 2019, *Address to the Congregation for the Clergy*).

Transparency with one's spiritual director is a vital act of trust and humility. It allows the seminarian to be truly formed in the image of Christ and supports the integrative process of priestly growth across all dimensions. Without it, formation becomes superficial; with it, formation becomes transformative.

6.2.10 Facilitating Exposure to Diverse Theological Schools

Some seminarians may resist deep theological study, while others become rigidly attached to ideological camps, undermining pastoral flexibility and ecclesial communion. Facilitating exposure to diverse theological schools within the Church's tradition significantly enhances integral priestly formation by deepening seminarians' intellectual maturity, fostering ecclesial openness, and preparing them for pastoral service in a theologically diverse and culturally pluralistic world. The Church encourages such engagement not as relativism, but as a means of deepening understanding of the mystery of Christ through the rich variety of theological expressions developed in fidelity to the Magisterium.

The *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016) emphasizes the need for an intellectual formation that is "solid, comprehensive and faithful to the Magisterium, yet open

to dialogue with various theological approaches and schools” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §116). The Church, in her universality, does not limit theological expression to a single school, but recognizes that the unity of faith can be expressed through multiple, faithful theological articulations.

Similarly, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* insists that the study of theology “should be carried out in such a way as to provide a sure foundation for faith... but also open to the problems of the time and to the different currents of theological thought” (John Paul II, 1992, §55).

In Intellectual Formation exposure to various theological traditions—such as Thomism, Augustinianism, Franciscan theology, Eastern Christian thought, and contemporary contextual theologies, encourages seminarians to: Develop critical thinking rooted in fidelity to the Church, to recognise that theology is a living discipline, shaped by saints, councils, and cultures and to avoid ideological rigidity by understanding how different theological expressions enrich one another. This fosters humility and respect for the plurality of orthodox thought, preventing seminarians from reducing theology to a narrow or defensive system.

As regards spiritual formation, encountering diverse theological insights deepens spiritual life by offering multiple pathways to understand and relate to God. For example, the apophatic mysticism of the East or even the famous Hesychia Spirituality of the eastern desert fathers, the Christocentric affectivity of St. Bernard, or the Ignatian discernment of spirits all can shape a seminarian’s relationship with God in distinctive ways.

In Human Formation, by engaging different theological cultures and worldviews, seminarians cultivate openness, intellectual empathy, and a listening heart-qualities essential for mature, relational ministry.

As for Pastoral Formation, in a global Church, priests often serve communities influenced by different theological movements or cultural expressions of the faith. Familiarity with diverse theological schools equips priests to pastor people of various backgrounds effectively and respectfully.

It important therefore that in order to implement such a vision, seminaries should: Include a balanced curriculum with readings from multiple theological traditions, invite guest lecturers or theologians from different schools of thought, encourage research papers that compare or synthesize theological perspectives and promote ecumenical and intercultural exposure, especially to the Eastern Catholic Churches.

6.2.11 Celebrating Milestones Meaningfully

The long duration and intense scrutiny of seminary life can wear down a seminarian, leading to discouragement or disillusionment. After six years in formation, a seminarian feels stuck and wonders whether he has made progress. Evaluations begin to feel like judgments rather than aids to growth.

Celebrating milestones, such as the conferral of the ministries of Lector and Acolyte, plays an essential formative role in integral priestly formation for it can help prevent this formation burnout and fatigue. These liturgical and community events are not mere formalities but are deeply theological and pedagogical in nature. When celebrated with intentionality and spiritual depth, they foster growth across all four dimensions of formation human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral as outlined in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*.

Liturgical milestones are markers of interior growth. The Church recognizes that the ministries of Lector and Acolyte are not only preparatory steps toward ordination but also moments of grace and public affirmation of vocational identity. According to the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, these rites should be “celebrated in a meaningful way, so that the seminarian can interiorize and live them fully” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §77). When these ministries are celebrated meaningfully through prayer, catechesis, and community engagement: they become occasions of reflection, vocational deepening, and communal encouragement.

As far as spiritual formation is concerned, receiving the ministries in a prayerful, liturgical setting deepens the seminarian’s awareness of his growing participation in Christ’s priestly mission. For example, the ministry of Lector fosters a love for Scripture and a deeper sense of responsibility in proclaiming the Word of God, while the ministry of Acolyte cultivates Eucharistic reverence and service at the altar.

As John Paul II emphasized, “the stages of formation should be seen and lived as parts of a journey marked by the sacraments and ministries which express and build up the inner identity of the seminarian” (John Paul II, 1992, §61).

In human formation, celebrating milestones affirms the personal maturity, stability, and public accountability of the seminarian. It allows the community and formators to acknowledge growth while reinforcing the virtue of perseverance and personal responsibility. These

milestones serve as healthy psychological markers that reduce vocational anxiety and promote commitment.

In intellectual formation, each milestone is an opportunity for theological reflection and liturgical catechesis. Seminarians can be guided to study the historical and doctrinal foundations of these ministries, helping them integrate theology with their ongoing experience of formation.

As for pastoral formation, through these ministries, seminarians begin to exercise concrete pastoral functions, such as proclaiming the Word and assisting at the altar, which prepares them for future service as deacons and priests. These experiences help seminarians learn the importance of liturgical leadership and servant-ministry within the community.

In order to foster meaningful celebration and to promote integral formation, the celebration of these ministries should involve: Pre-liturgical catechesis on the meaning and history of each ministry, community participation, including family, peers, and formators, spiritual preparation such as a day of recollection or retreat, post-celebration reflection or journal entries to integrate the experience.

When celebrated with meaning and intention, milestones like the ministries of Lector and Acolyte become powerful tools in the seminarian's journey toward priesthood. They offer a rhythm of growth, discernment, and grace, strengthening the seminarian's identity and mission. Such celebrations, when integrated with reflection and formation, contribute significantly to holistic and integral development.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

As the researcher formulates conclusions it is imperative that he says something about the roles of different parties in the formation of the Seminarian. Integral priestly formation is a communal and collaborative task, rooted in the mystery of vocation and the mission of the Church. As emphasized in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, the formation of future priests must involve all key agents of the ecclesial community, each contributing according to their unique responsibilities. These include the seminarians themselves, formators, parents and families, communities and bishops, who together create an environment where vocational identity is fostered and matured in harmony with the person of Christ the Good Shepherd.

6.3.1 Seminarians: Personal Responsibility and Openness

The primary agent of formation is the seminarian himself. Integral formation is not imposed from outside but is embraced and internalized through freedom, responsibility, and openness to grace (John Paul II, 1992, §69). Seminarians are called to actively engage in their own formation, cultivating self-awareness, emotional maturity, spiritual discipline, and pastoral zeal.

The *Ratio Fundamentalis* states, “Each seminarian is the protagonist of his own formation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in dialogue with the formators” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §119). Transparency with spiritual directors, active participation in liturgical and academic life, and commitment to community life are expected. Milestones such as receiving the ministries of lector and acolyte are moments for deeper integration and self-offering.

6.3.2. Formators: Witnesses, Guides, and Collaborators

Formators including spiritual directors, rectors, academic staff, and pastoral supervisors, have the task of accompanying, discerning, and shaping seminarians in the image of Christ. They must serve not merely as instructors, but as authentic witnesses of priestly life, living examples of what they teach (John Paul II, 1992, §66).

The *Ratio Fundamentalis* highlights the importance of “a community of formators who work in unity of intent and method” and who help seminarians to “discern their vocation with clarity and freedom” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §§132–134). Formators provide theological formation, model mature relationships, challenge superficiality, and foster a culture of prayer, integrity, and service.

Their role is also evaluative and dialogical. They must be capable of recognizing the signs of authentic vocation and providing truthful feedback, both affirming and corrective, in a way that respects the dignity and freedom of the seminarian.

6.3.3. Parents and Families: Foundations of Vocation

Although not present in the seminary, parents and families have a foundational role in vocational formation, especially in the human and spiritual dimensions. The family is the “first seminary,” where seeds of faith, moral conscience, and relational maturity are first planted (John Paul II, 1992, §41).

The *Ratio* notes that “the family remains a privileged place where vocations are born and nurtured,” and stresses the importance of maintaining appropriate relationships with parents during formation (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §31). Parental support, prayers, and spiritual maturity can provide invaluable encouragement and stability for seminarians, especially during times of doubt or transition.

Parents are also called to **support rather than pressure**, respecting the autonomy of their sons while walking with them in faith and humility.

6.3.4. Bishops: Primary Shepherds and Discerning Authorities

Bishops are the first and principal agents of priestly formation in their dioceses. As successors of the apostles, they are entrusted with the oversight of seminaries, the selection and appointment of formators, and ultimately, the discernment of those to be admitted to sacred orders (John Paul II, 1992, §65).

According to the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, “the Bishop has the grave responsibility of ensuring that priestly formation in his diocese corresponds to the requirements of the Church and the needs of his people” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §125). He must be personally involved in the life of the seminarians, through visits, conferences, pastoral assignments, and interviews.

The bishop ensures that formation is faithful to the Magisterium, responsive to pastoral realities, and grounded in the Church’s tradition. He is ultimately the guardian of both orthodoxy and holiness in the formation process.

6.3.5 Is Faithful Adherence to Integral Priestly Formation Possible?

YES. It certainly is possible and the responsibility falls first and foremost upon the Seminarian before any other factors can be thought of. Adhering to integral priestly formation means engaging fully and freely in the total development of one’s person, humanly, spiritually, intellectually, and pastorally in response to God’s call and in preparation for configuration to Christ the Good Shepherd. A seminarian best adheres to this process by living it with intentionality, humility, discipline, and openness to grace.

The seminarian must embrace formation as a vocation within a vocation. A seminarian should understand that formation is not a passive phase but a personal response to God’s ongoing invitation. As *Pastores Dabo Vobis* notes, the seminarian “is not simply receiving a formation,

but is actively forming himself” (John Paul II, 1992, §69). This means owning one’s formation through prayer, effort, and personal accountability.

Secondly the Seminarian should cultivate transparency and trust. Integral formation cannot happen without honest self-disclosure, especially in spiritual direction and evaluation. The *Ratio Fundamentalis* insists that seminarians must be “sincere, transparent and docile” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §103). By being truthful with spiritual directors, formators, and oneself, a seminarian opens space for grace to heal, form, and guide.

He must also grow in human maturity and relationships. Human formation is the foundation of all other dimensions. A seminarian should therefore: develop emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and stability, foster chaste and mature relationships with peers and others and seek growth through community life, spiritual accompaniment, and pastoral encounters. As John Paul II wrote, the seminarian must become “a bridge and not an obstacle” for others to encounter Christ (John Paul II, 1992, §43).

He should also deepen spiritual life. Daily prayer, the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, personal meditation, spiritual reading, and devotion to Mary are essential. The seminarian must aim not only for “religious observance” but for a heart configured to Christ, embracing the evangelical counsels in spirit.

The Seminarian should in order to faithfully adhere to integral priestly formation be able to engage theologically with the mind of the Church. Intellectual formation is not just academic it is formation in truth, ordered toward holiness and pastoral readiness. A seminarian should thus: Study diligently, seeking both depth and fidelity, engage diverse theological voices while rooted in the Magisterium and integrate theology with prayer and pastoral experience.

The Seminarian should live and serve pastorally, even now. Pastoral formation isn’t future-oriented only. A seminarian must already live with a shepherd’s heart, learning to listen, serve, and evangelize. Through supervised ministries, he should integrate what he learns in the classroom and chapel with the real needs of people.

He should also value the community of formation. Formation is not a private endeavour. A seminarian grows by living in community through fraternity, shared meals, small groups, recreation, and liturgy. Community challenges selfishness and cultivates empathy, collaboration, and humility, all vital to the priesthood.

Lastly, he should remain open to ongoing conversion. The journey of formation is not linear or perfect. A seminarian must welcome correction, admit weakness, and persevere in trials. The *Ratio* reminds us that “formation continues beyond the seminary” (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016, §3). Cultivating a spirit of lifelong formation prepares one not just for ordination, but for holy priesthood.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Background Information

1. Name (Optional): _____
2. Age: _____
3. Role/Position (Seminarian, Formator, Spiritual Director, etc.): _____
4. Number of years in formation or priesthood: _____

Section B: General Perspectives

5. How would you define “integral priestly formation” in your own words?
6. Why do you think integral formation is essential for future priests?
7. In your view, what are the most significant obstacles seminarians face in adhering to this formation today?

Section C: Human Formation

8. What practical steps do you take (or advise) to grow in human maturity during formation?
9. How important is emotional intelligence, discipline, and self-awareness in priestly life?
10. How does the seminary community contribute to a seminarian’s human formation?

Section D: Spiritual Formation

11. How central is personal prayer in your daily routine? What helps you remain faithful to it?
12. How do spiritual direction and confession contribute to your formation?
13. What practices help you cultivate a deep interior life and relationship with Christ?

Section E: Intellectual Formation

14. How do you approach the academic demands of seminary life?
15. What methods help you integrate theological knowledge with pastoral and spiritual realities?
16. How can intellectual formation be made more relevant to today’s pastoral challenges?

Section F: Pastoral Formation

17. Describe your experiences in pastoral ministry during formation (parish work, hospitals, schools, etc.).
18. How have these experiences shaped your understanding of the priesthood?

19. What personal qualities or skills do you believe are most important for pastoral effectiveness?

Section G: Final Reflections

20. What advice would you give to a new seminarian who wants to be faithful to the integral formation process?

21. In your opinion, how can seminaries improve in helping seminarians adhere more fully to integral formation?

22. Is there anything else you would like to share about your formation experience or insights?

APPENDIX II: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

ST. MARY'S NATIONAL MAJOR SEMINARY GGABA

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KAMPALA
Uganda



Emails: deannationalsemggaba@yahoo.com
Or academicng2@gmail.com
Date: 10th December 2024

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDIES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD RESEARCH

This is to certify SSALI Anthony is carrying out academic research on the topic: “*A seminarian’s adherence to Integral Priestly Formation in St. Mary’s National Seminary Ggaba*”, in partial fulfilment for the award of a Master of Arts in Religious and Theological Studies of Makerere University to which we are affiliated.

This work is purely academic and will be held with utmost professional confidentiality it deserves unless otherwise indicated.

Please do accord him the necessary assistance and any queries in this regard can be addressed to our office provided above.

Thank you for your assistance,

Sincerely yours in services

Fr. Comas Enyasu
Assistant Dean of Studies

