

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



MINISTRY FORMATION HANDBOOK 2022-2024

Welcome,

St. Mary and Saint Joseph cared for Jesus, the incarnation of the Word of God, in a loving home. He was born and lived in Creation, and was provided by Sts. Mary and Joseph with guidance and wisdom in human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation as he readied himself to assume his ministry vocation. The seminary community is truly a home where the Word of God nourishes, sustains, and grows your faith as a believer and disciple of Jesus Christ.

The Church envisions the seminary as a real, constitutive community after that of the apostolic community which was comprised by those first apostles chosen by Jesus Christ as they learned and witnessed the events of our salvation. Whether you are inclusive catholic, a member of a Christian denomination that is not catholic, or a member of a diocesan Church or religious community, it is here at Grace Theological Seminary where your connection to Christ and the Universal Church is made possible while you discern a ministry vocation. Thus, Grace Theological Seminary is not incidental to your status as a seminarian but rather is a vital element in support of your call to ministry. Indeed, this community is an apostolic community intended by our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As a visible community and society of believers, we must observe structure, common discipline, and a way of life that enables you to facilitate and integrate a healthy prayer life, a well-formed intellectual formation, personal human growth, with the heart of a shepherd, the courage of an evangelist, and the commitment to active service of an ordained Deacon, Minister, Priest. We as servants in God's vineyard walk in the footsteps of Jesus, the apostles, St. Grace of Saragossa and closer to our time, St. Oscar Romero, Saint Dorothy Day, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, and countless saints who answered their calls in service to God.

This handbook represents Grace Theological Seminary's commitment of service to God's creation as envisioned by the governing documents of ministry formation including the U.S. Confederation of Catholic Bishops (USCCB's) Program of Ministry Formation- PPF, the Congregation for the Clergy's Ratio Fundamentalis, and Pastores Dabo Vobis-the apostolic exhortation of Saint Pope John Paul II. The Sojourners, The Red Letter Christians, The Interfaith Alliance, The Old Catholic Apostolic Church, and The Liberal Catholic Church, among others.

Since every community is holistically organic by nature, this handbook does not capture every aspect of seminary-community life. Please ponder it carefully and review its content with your Dean of Formations and Spiritual Directors. If you need clarification, please contact either the Dean of Ministry Formation, or me. Your fidelity to the norms of seminary community life signifies your own commitment to ministry formation. I wish you all the best. May the Lord continue to gift you with blessings and graces throughout your seminary years and to the completion of your earthly ministries.

Peace and grace,

Bishop Sophia Linda Jarvis OSL, S.T.L., Ph.D. A Servant of God
Presiding Bishop St. Grace Church
President and Rector: Grace Theological Seminary-GTSSDV

‘We are servants in God’s vineyard.

We serve

God

through service to God’s creation.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Mission of Grace Theological Seminary

Grace Theological Seminary offers a three-year theology program for seminarians who possess an undergraduate or graduate degree and seek to discern if they are called to ministry. During the first year which is the Pre-Theology level, the seminarians are expected to fulfill the core philosophical, and theological requirements necessary to begin a formal study of theology in the second year.

The immediate aim of the second year, which is the Theology level is to assist seminarians in their preparation for ordained ministry to the diaconate. Seminarians admitted in the theology level of ministry formation have already participated in a seminary program discerning a ministry vocation and therefore bring to the theology stage of formation a maturing experience of formation.

While the initial discernment of a ministry vocation does not formally conclude until ordination to the diaconate, a seminarian who has completed college or pre-theology formation elsewhere enters the Theology level of formation with a commitment to prepare for ordination.

The seminarian therefore embraces the expectations of the seminary program. Seminarians who enter the Pre-Theology program (the discipleship phase) have sufficiently demonstrated their readiness to embrace ministry formation, academic rigor, and seminary-communal living. Seminarians who enter into Theology level (the configurative phase) have demonstrated academic proficiency and psycho-spiritual maturation in ministry formation and are understood as candidates who are preparing to answer their call.

The seminary program consists of an integrated array of formation experiences centered on the human, spiritual, intellectual, liturgical, pastoral, and personal aspects of the seminarian's life. Grace Theological Seminary supports seminarians in the discipleship (1st year), configurative (2nd year), and pastoral synthesis (3rd year) aspects of ministry formation.

Every human community exists for a purpose, and each community strives to articulate the principles by which it lives.

Clergy are expected to serve God's creation wholeheartedly. This loving, unselfish response to the needs of both humankind and nature may at times conflict with personal needs or desires. The world in which we live may view unselfish love and service as foolish or unfulfilling. The pursuit of a vocation to ordained ministry therefore, should be understood as a decision that may not be appreciated by everyone. It is, in that sense, a radical decision against prevailing cultural visions for some.

The role of the ministry formation program is to assist seminarians to understand the human dimension of life while also challenging them to direct their lives toward the loving service of God's creation. In order to accomplish this ideal, the seminary formation program places emphasis upon a seminarian's ability to show initiative and progress within the formation program in a personal yet verifiable manner. Each seminarian must assume her/his personal accountability in meeting the demands of seminary formation.

The policies that order the lived experience of any community are essential in articulating the purpose for which the community exists. While they must not obscure the purpose, they are nonetheless essential to its achievement. Seminarians and scholars are expected to follow closely and purposefully the horarium established by the ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary as well as their personal Rule of Life.

This handbook contains policies and procedures for the purpose of allowing seminarians to discern and pursue their formation with a deliberate intent to accomplish what the triune God is asking of them. The Formation Handbook does not contain all the directives of ministry formation. Rather, it highlights for seminarians how Grace Theological Seminary implements the expectations and governing documents of its ministry formation.

The Board of Advisors will review and approve the following mission statement on an annual basis.

Mission Statement

From its establishment as an independent seminary in the jurisdiction of the St. Grace Church, Grace Theological Seminary has as its primary mission, the preparation of men and women for ministerial service to God's creation. The seminary, through an integrated and balanced program of ministry formation, seeks to prepare ordained co-vocational clergy for leadership roles in Sacred Activism and Social Justice.

As a private religious ecumenical college of theology, the seminary offers seminarians preparing for protestant clergy or interfaith service a rigorous program of studies in preparation for ministries in both Christian (non-denominational), and Interfaith paradigms, as ordained Permanent Deacons and Professional Ministers. As an autonomous Liberal Catholic jurisdiction, Permanent Deacons, and Priests who complete Holy Orders will be ordained in apostolic succession.

Grace Theological Seminary participates in global social justice-sacred activism activities by promoting a spirit of mission for ministry, and by supporting and assisting Christian and Interfaith missions, and Humanistic organizations throughout the world.

A Brief History of Grace Theological Seminary

The establishment of the Grace Theological Seminary occurred in response to the desire by members of the St. Grace Church Community to establish a global seminary that met the requirements for successful online study in the 21st century.

As a college and a seminary, Grace Theological Seminary is an ecumenical community of faith forming future Pastors, Permanent Deacons, and Priests, as well as acting as a center of theological studies preparing the laity for ministry and leadership positions such as the graduates of our Christian Cantor program.

Location

St. Grace Church is incorporated in Fort Lee, New Jersey just across the George Washington Bridge from New York City. St. Grace Church normally offers the celebration of the Liturgy every second Saturday of the month at 1950 Bedford Avenue Brooklyn, New York.

The Jurisdiction of St. Grace Church

The jurisdiction of St. Grace Church was created in 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic in response to a Call received from the Holy Spirit by the Right Rev. Linda Jarvis to establish a jurisdiction and seminary that was progressive, inclusive, independent, diverse, welcoming, and affirming. She is the first Bishop in the jurisdiction.

The City of New York

The New York metropolitan area offers many multicultural events. Seminarians are encouraged to visit the city's museums and galleries, and attend the ballet, the philharmonic, the public gardens, plays, operas, and films, etc. when they are on field trips to New York City.

The Purpose of a Ministry Formation Program

The formation of men and women for ministry service is Grace Theological Seminary's most sacred duty. Saint Pope John Paul the Great wrote the following in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (PDV 1): *Without priests the Church would not be able to live that fundamental obedience which is at the very heart of her existence and her mission in history, an obedience in response to the command of Christ. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) and "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19).*

The fundamental connection between ministry formation and the pastoral ministry of the Church is so intimate that any variance of this relationship becomes a disservice both to the nature of pastoral ministry and the purpose of ministry formation. Yet, any ministry must be exercised in collaboration with all ministry. Therefore, Grace Theological Seminary emphasizes the collaborative nature of pastoral ministry which requires both ordained and non-ordained cooperation.

'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.' (John 15:16). These words spoken by Jesus Christ to his apostles remind us that He is the one who calls everyone to the universal vocation to holiness. Our vocation to discipleship is rooted in the sacrament of baptism. The Lord also gives each person a specific vocation to holiness, according to the mystery of His divine will. The ministry formation program therefore assists the seminarian with his/her discernment of a vocation by challenging him/her to consider first the call to holiness.

A call to service in ministry demands that the recipient freely respond to it, and that the call be answered. In order to answer the call, the seminarian must place his /her "total trust in God's unconditional faithfulness to His promise" (PDV 2). The seminarian must also express trust in God by entering into Spiritual Direction, Life Coaching, and Seminary- Faculty administration teaching, and oversight, all of whom must in response verify with the seminarian the authenticity of his/her Call to a ministerial co-vocation.

Governing Documents on Ministry Formation

Grace Theological Seminary is a progressive, inclusive, welcoming, affirming, seminary that respects and honors the best formation history and current practices. As such, Grace Theological Seminary strives to implement the ideals of the governing documents on ministry formation that exist both nationally and universally. For example, the vision of ministry formation expressed so beautifully by Saint Pope John Paul in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is an instrument that provides the vision for the faculty and administration of Grace Theological Seminary.

The theological and ecclesial understanding of priesthood is treated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council particularly in *Lumen Gentium*, *Christus Dominus*, and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. The specific direction of ministry formation is addressed in the Council's document *Optatum Totius*. The Holy See's guidelines for establishing national directives for ministry formation are contained in the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (1970, revised in 1985, revised again 2016).

The Holy See has given further direction in many cases regarding specific elements of ministry formation since the Council. Additionally, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Code of Canon Law (CIC) provide a clear understanding of the theological nature of priesthood with the rights and duties accorded to priests. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has also given direction to the formation of priests in various documents specifically in the Program of Ministry Formation (PPF, 5th edition, 2005).

The Unique Mission of Grace Theological Seminary

The brief history of Grace Theological Seminary outlined earlier reflects the active service dimension of seminary formation. The seminary is inspired by the pastoral realities of Church and the needs of the faithful. Hence, the language and vision of seminary formation considers the practicalities of pastoral ministry while always preserving the universal theological ideals of ministry formation. Grace Theological Seminary has identified broad and overall goals and thresholds for seminarians in each cohort of the four dimensions of formation.

The *Ratio Fundamentalis* provides the general norms for ministry, while the USCCB's Program of Ministry Formation provides the roadmap towards those norms into the thresholds that Grace Theological Seminary identifies below as goals for the seminarians to work towards in their journey of discernment and formation.

- Grace Theological Seminary seeks to present the study of theology in a style characterized by pastoral ministry and the seminarian's cultivation of the spiritual life that draws him/her into the heart of service.

- Theology is truly to be *fides quaerens intellectum*. This direction is not the same as the approach of religious studies or the history of religions. The seminary study of theology begins in faith and ends in faith, as should all theological inquiry and study.
- In the seminary, the study of theology is oriented to one's own faith and also to the faith of others. The study of theology is apostolically motivated.
- The study of theology enriches and expands the personal faith of the seminarian studying it.
- When theology is studied in the context of ministry formation, it cannot be detached from other human knowledge. In fact, it is to be integrated with other elements of human understanding, especially philosophy and the human sciences.
- The seminary study of theology, because it begins in faith and ends in faith, must flow from prayer and lead to prayer.
- The theology studied in preparation for ministry must find integration and focus in the sacred liturgy.
- Because theology studied in light of ministry must be directed to a practical wisdom, it must offer a complete and unified vision of faith as discerned by the seminarian.

Vatican II and the pontificate of Pope Francis continue to frame the vision of ministry formation at Grace Theological Seminary. *We are servants in God's vineyard rendering service to God through service to God's creation.* This is the integrating force that unifies the dimensions of formation at Grace Theological Seminary.

Livestream lectures, vocational conferences, course syllabi, seminars, homilies, and in person workshops regularly use the language of service, thus providing the seminarians a consistent direction to their discernment and formation.

The formational theme that captures the direction of the formation program is: 'We are servants in God's vineyard; serving God, through service to God's creation. A description of the formational theme is on the seminary's website and is reviewed annually with the seminarians and faculty by the Rector during the start of each academic year.

Discernment of a ministry vocation involves formation. This requires from the seminarian a deliberate readiness to cooperate with the work of God. The seminarian therefore is the chief protagonist of her/his own formation, taking accountability for how s/he will use the resources made available to him/her.

To be successful the seminarian will learn that s/he must be an agent of an authentic life, a promoter of good and positive culture, and a life-long committed Learner of all that is good in the human condition lived in society.

The seminarian therefore discerns her/his own faith formation, the transformation needed to put aside the "old self" and put on Christ, and his /her cultivation of the human virtues. Grace Theological Seminary provides a ministry formation that will create in the seminarian a true Servant of God.

As such, the formation program emphasizes the need for an integrated formation that considers the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation of a seminarian with an outlook of Sacred Activism and Social Justice within the particular culture of humankind. Following the incarnational paradigm of God's Word becoming human within a particular culture and in a particular family, so too the Church seeks to incarnate herself in the family of humankind. Ministry serves to communicate the grace of God through the life of the Church into each culture.

Grace Theological Seminary places before the seminarian the mission of Sacred Activism and Social Justice through service to God, as articulated and defined through the Gospels. Through conferences, homilies, formation and spiritual direction, classroom instruction, and discussions with faculty and peers, the seminarian discerns her/his call as a Servant of God.

Seminarians who are tenacious and committed in receiving a ministry formation will be prepared to shoulder the joys and burdens of pastoral ministry. They will be motivated for the mission of service, prepared to engage culture, be spiritual leaders for the People of God, and celebrate the sacred mysteries of faith with joy, wisdom, and apostolic vigor.

Formation in the Present Context

The human character of service in ministry is affirmed as necessary in the exercise of co-vocational ministry. God verifies this throughout the sacred scriptures. Moreover, the call of the apostles to service presumed the human qualities of each person. Ministry formation in the seminary is attentive to the realities of the candidates who come with societal influences that demand a formational response that supports those characteristics consistent with ministry vocations and purifies the elements which would be contrary. The influence of faith brings the seminarian to a certain appreciation of the role that the Church exercises in his /her formation.

God always calls ministers from specific human and ecclesial contexts, which inevitably influence them; and to these same contexts the minister is sent for the service of Christ's Gospel (PDV 5).

The human and ecclesial contexts influencing the seminarian are the very arena for preaching the Gospel of Christ. Formation presumes that after ordination the former seminarian returns as Clergy to similar human and ecclesial contexts. This particular dynamic of formation is service. Formation prepares the seminarian for pastoral ministry to the community of seekers, believers, and nonbelievers alike.

All ministry formation takes place within the context of the Church as the Body of Christ and in relationship to its promise of service. Thus, it is essential that the formation of the Candidate be integrated within the wider ecclesial dimension so that the Candidate understands his /her role to be the representative and servant of the Church (PPF 69).

Notwithstanding the necessary considerations of present circumstances, the objectivity of ministry formation is clearly defined in the related governing documents. The Priesthood of Christ is not redefined with every age or generation. Ministry formation of the present day considers both the unchanging nature of priesthood and the circumstances of life which influence the faithful.

Nevertheless, each seminary must provide a vision of ministry formation considering its particular charism. The previous section introduced the character of Grace Theological Seminary as it serves the seminarians in this discernment and formation.

Hopes and Obstacles of Today

Pastores Dabo Vobis succinctly identifies the hopes and obstacles of the present day which undoubtedly offer a challenge not only for preaching the Gospel but also for ministry formation since seminarians enter the seminary as products of their culture (see PDV 6-9).

The obstacles to conversion that bring unique challenge for the believer include rationalism, subjectivity, individualism, practical and existential atheism, breakdown of the family, non-acceptance of one's gender, non-acceptance of one's human sexuality, the material lures of a consumer society, and catechetical deficiencies.

All of these obstacles can influence the seminarian's approach to faith.

Ministry formation in the present day also has some unique opportunities for forming seminarians because faculty at Grace Theological Seminary, are very open to values inherent in the Gospel and to attitudes which foster life in Christ. These include a renewed desire for justice and peace, care for creation, search for the truth, peaceful efforts to support human life and dignity, international solidarity, the contribution of science and technology for human advancement, an increased love for sacred scripture, a desire to share faith, and a renewed appreciation and commitment for nature.

A dialogue between faith and culture is present in ministry formation. Vatican II provides a framework in which this conversation can take place and, at the same time, encourages the development of a true, authentic humanity to which culture aspires.

Ministry Formation and the Call to Holiness

Ongoing conversion is the vocation of any disciple of Christ. The seminarian pursues ongoing conversion in the ministry formation program in a particular way by considering how s/he might be serving God's creation. The call to holiness is the vocation of all believers in Christ. Yet each lives their discipleship according to their state in life. The particular vocation to holiness must be proper and specific to the clergy who is configured at ordination to Christ as Head of the Church.

The pursuit of holiness is a call to perfection in the ways of the Lord. The seminarian grows in his/her understanding of faith, hope and love and come to understand how the deacon and the minister who are formally configured to Christ during ordination, is called to be an evangelist to, and shepherd and protector of, God's creations.

Permanent Deacons and Priests in apostolic succession, are bound in a special way to strive for this perfection, since they are consecrated to God in a new way by their ordination. They have become living instruments of Christ the eternal priest (PDV 20). Following the ways of the Lord constitutes the path to perfection. The seminarian must learn that the exercise of pastoral ministry in the Church is conducted in the name of Christ himself. "In this way the exercise of his/her ministry deeply involves the priest as a conscious, free, and responsible person." Ministry formation enables the seminarian to understand the ontological bond existing between the ministry performed and the holiness of the priest, thereby emanating a truly authentic representation of Christ, the Good Shepherd. "The bond tends by its very nature to become as extensive and profound as possible, affecting one's way of thinking, feeling and life itself: in other words, creating a series of moral and spiritual dispositions" (PDV 25).

Life of Virtue

1. Seminarians will demonstrate a style of life that conforms to the values of the evangelical councils of simplicity, chasteness, and obedience (PPF 90-102). The seminarians will understand and manifest the cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice in their life in the community.
2. Seminarians will show an ability to set aside the clutter and “high-energy” of an “entertainment lifestyle” and reach a level where they have found time for thought and contemplation that makes life richer by its being freed from the drive to have and do more (PPF 97-99).
3. Seminarians will show that they understand that they can develop healthy ways of avoiding behaviors or substances that can compromise their ability to live well with their commitment to chasteness (PPF 90-95).
4. Seminarians will manifest that they can live well with authority, especially formational, and educational, with a level of integrity enhanced by a well-formed conscience (PPF 100-102, and 280a.10).
5. In order to enter candidacy, the seminarian must attain self-mastery and integration as manifested in the virtuous life. The external forum will confirm that before a seminarian completes pre-theology, the following virtues and benchmarks must be achieved.
 - Temperance
 - Simplicity of Life
 - Wise use of Material Goods, Technology, and Alcohol
 - Humility
 - Gratitude
 - Fortitude
 - Maintain physical health by exercise. Develop an orderly work ethic Ability to receive criticism
 - Emotional maturity when dealing with personal struggles
 - Justice
 - Honesty
 - Respect for the authority of faculty
 - Establish and maintain mature relationships
 - Fraternal relations with seminarian Peers, and positive engagement with the community
 - Prudence
 - Time management skills (punctuality, deadlines) Reasonable and salubrious use of Leisure time. Flexibility
 - Self-knowledge

A Person of Communion

1. Both individually and in groups, seminarians will relate to people, in ways that manifest their ability to be bridges rather than obstacles to God and the Church (PPF 76, 92, 260, 261, and 280a.11).
2. Seminarians will manifest the ability to form friendships which are close yet with healthy boundaries, helpful but not controlling, and able to receive help without being needy (PPF 280a-2).
3. All seminarians will show the ability to deal effectively with silence and solitude. From this essential foundation, some will need to show an increased ability to relate to more people, while others will need to learn to relate more deeply with a few (PPF 280a dash 11).
4. Within the limits afforded by life within a human educational community, collegians will show by their interactions with all sexes in the faculty, staff, and peers in the seminary, that they can relate well both professionally and pastorally (PPF 280a dash 7).
5. Seminarians will show that they can see the potential goods and the potential harms of the multicultural milieu in which we live, so that they can find ways to guide and improve it without forcing it into unnecessary confrontation (PPF 99).

Spiritual Parenthood

1. Seminarians will manifest a high level of understanding of what it means to be a spiritual father /mother and pastoral leader (PPF5-280a-7).
2. Seminarians will by thorough and candid reflection on their own lives and the insights of others show a deep appreciation for the mystery of father/motherhood and what it is likely to demand of them as they continue to grow into the role of spiritual parents (PPF 80:2).
3. Seminarians will begin to manifest behaviors and actions one should expect of a good father /mother (PPF 76).
4. Seminarians will continually increase their understanding of the dynamics of leadership, by observation, discussion, but most importantly by responding effectively to leadership opportunities within the community or apostolic placements as they arise. (PPF 280d:4-6).
5. Seminarians will begin to manifest the behaviors and actions that one should expect of a pastoral leader (PPF 280a-7 and 280d:4-6).
6. They will learn fatherhood/motherhood by practicing the virtue of obedience, first to God, then to those who represent God in their lives.

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS
(INTERNAL FORUM)**

And

**DEAN OF
FORMATION,
CERTIFIED LIFE
COACH, FACULTY,
(EXTERNAL FORUM)**

The Dynamism of Internal and External Forum

The Internal Forum

There is a distinction between matter spoken within the sacrament of penance and matter spoken between Spiritual Director and seminarian outside of the seal.

Matters spoken between seminarian and Spiritual Director are considered private.

Directees are not bound by this seal and may speak with others about the advice they have received, however they should do so only prudently and constructively.

Matters spoken between the Spiritual Director and the seminarian are ordinarily considered part of the internal forum and therefore confidential (PPF 134). While the Spiritual Director is bound to confidentiality concerning matters in the internal forum, the directee is not bound beyond the dictates of charity and justice. The Spiritual Director, of course, exercises prudence in order to protect matters within the internal forum.

Spiritual Direction

The Rector appoints a Director of Spiritual Formation to coordinate the various efforts related to spiritual direction and spiritual formation.

The Director of Spiritual Formation serves in the internal forum assisting with spiritual direction.

The Director of Spiritual Formation is responsible for offering recommendations to the Rector of who can serve as adjunct Spiritual Directors at the seminary. The bishop will approve all Spiritual Directors.

The Spiritual Director periodically reviews the standards of spiritual formation and to assure all appointments between seminarians and the director are maintained.

The Spiritual Director will confirm the assignment of a Spiritual Director to each seminarian.

Each seminarian is expected to spend quality time with his/her Spiritual Director. A seminarian meets with his Spiritual Director once per month. Seminarians are responsible for contacting their directors and arranging for spiritual direction meetings.

The Spiritual Director and the seminarian relate to one another within what is termed the “internal forum.” This forum clearly demands absolute confidentiality. Thus, a Spiritual Director will never be asked for an evaluation, much less any information regarding what a seminarian may confide.

The content of spiritual direction is mutually agreed upon by the seminarian and Spiritual Director. It is assumed this content will be directed toward the spiritual and formational issues at the heart of a seminary program. The formation for regular meetings should include the seminarian’s own agenda that discusses matters related to spiritual development, spiritual reading, faithfulness to prayer, his personal journey, progress with the four dimensions of formation, relationships with members of the community and personal friends, vocation discernment, ministry lifestyle, chasteness, obedience, and preparation for upcoming academic evaluations.

The Spiritual Director may also serve as a confessor to the seminarian since this relationship is in the internal forum.

A seminarian may only have one Spiritual Director at a given time during his/her formation experience in the seminary. Outside relationships with other ministers or people are obviously important support systems for a seminarian however those relationships must never jeopardize or be in conflict with the ideals of the ministry formation program.

The Rector of the seminary may never serve as a Spiritual Director or confessor to a seminarian. If such matters occurred with a seminarian prior to his/her entrance into the seminary program, the faculty member must recuse him/herself from both the application process and formation aspects regarding this seminarian.

Seminarians who wish to change Spiritual Directors must discuss this with his current Spiritual Director as well as with the Rector. Any seminarian asking for a new director after the second year must grant permission for his/her outgoing director and incoming directors to speak to one another. These conversations remain in the internal forum.

Likewise, a Spiritual Director may announce the need to terminate his/her relationship with the seminarian because of irreconcilable aspects of the arrangement however s/he may not disclose any information that is associated with the internal forum.

Communication of Internal Forum Matter to the External Forum

As the sacramental seal remains inviolable, a priest may never reveal matters learned through Confession to anyone, even if this involves criminal conduct. Priests are bound never to reveal such matter, directly or indirectly. In addition, priests are bound never to act upon the matter s/he hears within Confession (C. 984.2). Penalties up to excommunication can be imposed upon a priest who violates the seal of the confessional (C. 1388.1).

However, a Spiritual Director must communicate internal forum matters (outside of the seal)

to appropriate formation personnel in the following cases involving real or potential harm to self or others regarding criminal misconduct concerning minors.

If a Spiritual Director learns (outside of the seal) that a directee has been involved with sexual misconduct with minors, s/he is obligated to report such conduct to law enforcement officials. Such conduct includes sexual activity with a minor and the accessing of child pornography.

In addition, if a Spiritual Director discovers (outside of the seal) that a directee has been or is currently being molested by a priest, deacon, or Church employee/volunteer, s/he is obligated to report such conduct. The manner in which such a report is made must be in conformity with the laws of the State in which the directee resides and the Decree Establishing Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests, Ministers, Rabbis, Imans, Deacons or other Church Personnel unless protected by the Seal of Confession.

A Spiritual Director must communicate internal forum matters (outside of the seal) to appropriate formation personnel in the following cases involving real or potential harm to self or others regarding attempted suicide and homicide:

If a Spiritual Director learns (outside of the seal) that a directee has attempted suicide or is planning to commit suicide, then s/he should inform formation personnel and seek appropriate medical assistance.

Similarly, if a Spiritual Director learns (outside of the seal) that a directee has committed homicide or is actively planning a homicide, then s/he should speak to formation personnel and inform law enforcement officials.

A Spiritual Director must communicate internal forum matters (outside of the seal) to the Rector in cases involving real or potential harm to self or others regarding use of illegal drugs.

Communication between Spiritual Directors and Faculty

In order to assist with the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral development of the seminarian, Spiritual Directors and formation personnel should be of one mind concerning the seminarian's goals and objectives for each year.

Spiritual Directors do not attend Dean of Formation/Certified Life Coach meetings in order to avoid any appearance that internal forum is being violated.

The External Forum

In the external forum the seminarian is appropriately self-revelatory to his/her faculty, especially his/her Dean of Formation/Certified Life Coach. This is an expression of the accountability s/he owes to the Church for his /her progress towards ministry service.

The knowledge about the seminarian gained in the formation program is privileged and personal, given in trust, used in charity and reserved in justice. It is confidential but not in the sense of the seal of the sacrament of penance or never-to-be-used knowledge. This confidentiality in the external forum means that the information regarding the seminarian is shared only with those who have been given the responsibility by Grace Theological Seminary to assist him/her in being formed as a minister /deacon / priest and ultimately to make a recommendation regarding his/her readiness for ordination.

The external forum refers to matter discussed between a seminarian and faculty (other than his /her Spiritual Director). It may also refer to the external observations of faculty concerning the seminarian's human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral development. External forum matter that is discussed among faculty is considered "confidential" in the sense that it is not disseminated beyond this group of personnel.

Information concerning the seminarian's progress in his/her human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral growth should be freely communicated with faculty.

It must also be clear that in the context of his/her formational relationships, both internal and external, the seminarian learns to become a person of the Ministry, who learns how to handle issues appropriately within the ministry.

Serious issues that arise which impact the seminarian from outside the seminary should be taken to the Rector by the Dean of Formation/Certified Life Coach for action.

During the first four weeks of admission to Grace Theological seminary, the seminarian and the Dean of Formation are to sign and complete a Learning agreement form and submit it to the Rector. The Dean of Formation files a form at the end of each trimester regarding the faithfulness of each seminarian to her/his vocational goals.

Pre-Theology Formation: (First Year Level)

Discernment of Discipleship and Configuration Levels

The purpose of the Discipleship Stage of formation is provide the seminarian with the knowledge and discipline to offer him/herself freely and completely to Christ (RF 61). For this reason, special attention is given in this stage to the human dimension of formation (RF 62).

In order to form a ministry identity, the Discipleship Stage aims to cultivate the virtues of intellect and will which will enable the seminarian to critically examine him/herself and discern his/her vocation. "This process of formation is intended to educate the person in the truth of her/his being, in freedom and self-control. It is meant to foster the sincere gift of self, opening him/her to generous dedication to others" (RF 63).

In his/her developing his relationship with Christ, the seminarian at the Discipleship Stage should fully realize his/her capacity for self-knowledge, self-possession, and self-gift. This perfection of the human person in virtue can be attained only by integrating all four dimensions of formation.

Each dimension simultaneously relies on and provides a foundation for the other three dimensions: grounded in self-possession that is the fruit of human formation; perfected by the grace that is the gift of spiritual formation; sharpened by the critical inquiry of intellectual formation; and practically manifested in acts of pastoral formation. These work together to inculcate an interior harmony of mind and will which embrace the nature of reality as true, good, and beautiful: this sapiential appreciation of creation, in turn, is the intellectual and spiritual foundation for appreciating the revealed truth to be studied in the Configuration Stage that follows.

In order for seminarians to understand adequately how they are called to serve as a pastoral minister, they will focus their initial pastoral ministry on integrating into the seminary community at Grace Theological Seminary. This will help the seminarian recognize s/he is called to be a member of the seminary- community. During the trimesters of Pre-Theology, the seminarian will continue his/her pastoral ministry development by participating in a supervised introduction to pastoral ministry. The goal of this pastoral ministry experience is to help the seminarian to realize how s/he is called to serve.

Pre-Theologians will consciously and with integrity adapt to an ecclesial expression of spirituality as opposed to an individualized one which they may have had before they entered formation (PPF 108, 109, 116-119). An important element in spiritual formation in the Human Formation Stage is the completion of the academic classes that provide the intellectual groundwork for personal appropriation of the spiritual life.

- Pre-Theologians will become aware of the differences between their prior structures of spiritual life and those required by the seminary community (PPF 109, 110).
- Pre-Theologians will make progress in active and appropriate participation in regular Communion, Morning, Evening, and Night Prayers, to a level that befits a person about to advance to the first Theology year (PPF 280b dashes 4, 5, 6).

- Pre-Theologians will experience several methods of prayer or spiritual experience that are quite new to them (PPF 121, 125 280b.8).
- Pre-Theologians will be able to reflect accurately and realistically on their personal experience of prayer and spirituality (PPF 128, 129).
- Pre-Theologians will experience several new devotions or forms of spiritual experience they have not encountered before (PPF 110.8, 125, 280b.8).
- Pre-Theologians will begin to develop the skills of faith-sharing in a group setting by participating actively and appropriately in regular Lectio Divina or faith sharing gatherings, including Formation Conferences (PPF 108).

Before completing pre-theology, the seminarian must have developed a truly intimate and active relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ through many of the following pathways.

- Intimacy with Jesus Christ
- Public Prayer
- Commitment to Daily Worship, or Commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours
- Understanding the Sacristy and Liturgy
- Private Prayer
- Conviction of Faith
- Familiarity with the Spiritual Traditions of the Church
- Lectio Divina
- Personal Meditation/Reflection
- Observance of Daily Devotions
- Devotion to the Holy Eucharist
- Devotion to the Feminine Aspect of God
- Devotion to the Saints
- Discipline for Continued Growth

- Cultivation of Ministry Spirituality/Consecrated Life
- Commitment to Sacrament of Penance
- Commitment to Spiritual Direction Personal Discipline/Rule of Life
- Intellectual Formation Thresholds

Pre-Theology Field Chaplaincy Service

The Pre-Theology level will end with supervised, volunteer visitations to various sites for seminarians to interact with others in need. By interacting with others and reflecting on these experiences, the seminarian will come to see the role and responsibilities of pastoral ministry in the life of a priest. The purpose of the supervised ministry is to provide the seminarian with the opportunity to continue her/his vocational discernment while working in an external setting. Forty-hours of authorized and supervised chaplaincy externship are required. These may include serving in local church ministries and meetings such as participating in Vacation Bible School, mass, worship services, feeding the hungry, participating in religious education programs, meetings at the parish including the pastoral council, finance council, school board, and liturgy planning meetings. The purpose is to help the seminarian further her/his formation especially focusing on her/his spiritual formation.

Theology Year (Year 2)

Admission to Candidacy, Ordination to the Diaconate

For seminarians already enrolled at Grace Theological Seminary and advancing from pre-theology to theology, the Rector will arrange all administrative processes for the seminarian to receive candidacy. Confirmation regarding the seminarian's readiness for admission to Candidacy will be determined after an interview with the seminarian by the Rector with the input of the Dean of Formation, Spiritual Director Certified Life Coach and in consultation with the faculty.

In compliance with Ratio Fundamentalis (2016), newly enrolled and admitted seminarians entering first year of theology are to be admitted to candidacy by the Rector with the input of the Dean of Formation, Spiritual Director and Certified Life Coach.

Admission into Candidacy marks a significant step in one's progress towards ordained ministry. Accordingly, before a seminarian can petition to be instituted into candidacy, s/he must discern with his/her Spiritual Director, Dean of Formation, and Certified Life Coach his /her readiness to advance. [Seminarians who are preparing for the conferral of ministries and admission to candidacy petition their bishop/religious superior according to the prescriptions of canon law (CIC 1052.1, PPF 286).]

The conferral of ministries and admission to candidacy is publicly announced and celebrated at by St. Grace Church.

For Seminarians and Scholars from jurisdictions/denominations other than St. Grace Church, the Rector will provide the candidates with the information necessary to petition their religious elder- superior and explain the process.

The Rector will meet with each seminarian to assess the seminarian's readiness to advance. The Rector is to determine any impediments and irregularities.

The faculty will conduct a review of each seminarian to ascertain the seminarian's readiness to advance into these ministries and candidacy usually in conjunction with the annual evaluation.

The seminary community will be alerted about the seminarian's petition for ministries and candidacy asking that if anyone has doubt, they are to inform the Rector. A notice will be posted regarding this process.

Theology Level Formation Stage: (Ordained Diaconate, Professional Ministry, the Permanent Diaconate, and Priest)

Theology level seminarians have been exposed to seminary life and have advanced into this stage of ministry formation. Therefore, it is expected that theology level seminarians bring with them a maturity and eagerness to embrace ministry formation.

Moreover, a shift of emphasis occurs from “discernment” to “preparation.” While discernment is always an underlying activity in a ministry formation program, theology level seminarians direct their formation towards the real possibility they will be ordained to ministry. Their attitude, disposition, and focus in formation takes on a sense of preparation whereby the seminarian seeks to cultivate the charisms, virtues, and skills necessary for competent, effective ministry.

No doubt the intensity of formation may result in the seminarian needing to discern if, in fact, the Lord is calling him/her to service. S/he therefore approaches formation in a spirit of humility and obedience.

The seminarian places his/her trust in Grace Theological Seminary-GTSSDV, and follows the prescriptions of the formation program. What must be avoided is any inclination to subvert the formation process and choosing one’s own sense of how to be prepared for ordained ministry.

Parallel formation results when a seminarian chooses other people or resources apart from the ministry formation program that s/he believes will better prepare him/her for service. This tendency can injure one’s relationship with Grace Theological Seminary-GTSSDV.

Submarine formation results when the seminarian chooses to follow the external dimensions of the formation program without interiorizing the meaning or impact of ministry formation. Conversion and transformation do not authentically or completely occur resulting in a candidate for ministry who is not truly prepared for a bi-vocational ministry of Sacred Activism and Social Justice.

The theology level seminarian is a humble, obedient and energetic person choosing to embrace the formation program aggressively and without condition allowing the grace of God to prevail. Both levels of ministry formation (post-deaconate ordination Year 2, and Residency Year 3), consider the integrative theme – Servants of God, through Service to God’s Creation. This description of ministry formation especially captures the ministry visions of St. Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, Archbishop Oscar Romero, Saint Dorothy Day, Mother Pauli Murray, and of our Patron Saint, Grace of Saragossa who was a Christian, a working woman, and a sister in Christ who died for her faith.

The Rector will delineate this theme of ministry formation-Service in Social Activism and Social Justice through service in God’s Vineyard, throughout formation. The faculty will reflect on this theme in their courses and will emphasize this theme as it relates to the interrelated and integrated formation of seminarians.

In order for the faculty to give an informed recommendation to the seminarian’s religious elder/superior, governing documents require that the seminarian complete at least one year of formation at Grace Theological Seminary before petitioning for ordination to the Professional Ministry, the Permanent Diaconate, and the Priesthood.

The Identity and Life of the Deacon, Licensed Minister, and the Priest

The call to holiness and the disciplines of conversion moves the seminarian from the internal dispositions of spirituality to the external realities of ministry.

And so it is that they are grounded in the life of the Spirit while they exercise the ministry of the Spirit and of justice, as they are servants to Christ. Spirit gives them life and guidance. For by their everyday sacred actions, as by the entire ministry which they exercise in union with their clergy-peers they are being directed towards perfection of life (Presbyterorum Ordinis [PO] 12).

The ministry formation program teaches the seminarian the relationship between the spiritual life and the exercise of pastoral ministry.

Spiritual formation also involves seeking Christ in people. Especially in a seminary context, seminarians are to learn how prayer is to be lived out in service of others, particularly the poor, the sick, sinners, unbelievers, and the stranger, but extended to all in the outreach of charity and mercy, and in the quest for justice. Whatever growth in formation and prayer take place, it is not simply meant for the personal enhancement of the seminarian but as a gift to be given in the course of his/her ministry mission and ministry for the benefit of the Church—for s/he is also a servant of this body (PPF 110).

Spirituality involves attention to the spiritual life and the exercise of pastoral ministry. It requires that the seminarian have a clear and unequivocal understanding of her/his path to service.

“Knowledge of the nature and mission of the ministry is an essential presupposition, and at the same time the surest guide and incentive towards [...] training those called to the ordained ministry [...] A correct and in-depth awareness of the nature and mission of the ministry is the path which must be taken” (PDV 11).

The goal of ministry formation is to form in the seminarian the proper identity of a servant of God. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* exclaims that “the priest’s identity like every other Christian identity has its source in the Blessed Trinity.” And, it is the Church who possesses the character of this Trinitarian mystery since she has been endowed with all of the gifts of God necessary for leading humankind to the Kingdom (cf. PPF 26).

The ministry formation program of the seminary must, therefore, delineate the relational dimensions of Sacred Activism and Social Justice which are ultimately sustained in and through his/her service. The seminarian must be careful to not search for his/her identity apart from the mystery, *communio*, and mission of his/her call from the Holy Spirit to this service.

The nature and mission of this service cannot be defined except through this multiple and rich interconnection of relationships which arise from the relationship with God, and are prolonged in the communion with God’s creation. In this context the ecclesiology of communion becomes decisive for understanding the identity of the minister, his/her essential dignity, and her/his vocation and mission among God and God’s creation (PDV 12).

THE DIMENSIONS OF MINISTRY FORMATION

The governing documents of ministry formation speak about the areas of formation a seminarian must address in her/his discernment and preparation for priesthood. Grace Theological Seminary emphasizes an integrated formation that considers the following dimensions: *human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation*.

While all of these dimensions are certainly related, for the sake of clarity, distinctions have been made among the various elements of the program. The functioning of a ministry formation program depends upon the interrelationship of those elements. No one part of the formation process works independently of any other.

Each dimension of formation cooperates with the others to prepare the seminarian for an integrated approach to ordained ministry. **Ministry formation at Grace Theological Seminary is structured on two distinct levels: pre-theology formation and Theology formation.**

A Solid Theological Training

As a foundation for lifelong education, theologians will acquire a sound understanding of the basic elements of the Church's Tradition including Scripture, patristics, dogmatics, Biblical Languages, sacraments, morals, spirituality, Church history, doctrine, practica, pastoral theology, etc. (PPF 197-218).

Mining the Soul of Theology

The theologians will engage in the disciplined exploration of Divine Revelation, as they study Sacred Scripture, the study of which is the soul of Sacred Theology, by utilizing a broad range of ancient and contemporary exegetical and hermeneutical methods. In service to the fuller sense of Scripture, s/he will also explore the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the works of some of the greatest theologians, and be aware of Vatican II's teaching relevant to biblical interpretation. (PPF 198- 200).

Learning to Think with the Church

The theologian will be engaged in a sustained exposure to the rich sources of doctrinal, moral, and spiritual thought in service to an integrated personal conversion and pastoral excellence. S/he will be challenged to cultivate a habit of thinking by internalizing a distinctively ecumenical method of doing theology, and by becoming familiar with the sources and content of Vatican II's teaching. S/he will be made aware that thinking with the Church requires a broad knowledge of the historical evolution and contemporary teachings, as well as develop a flair for rightly interpreting ecclesial texts and applying them in various contexts with pastoral wisdom -- especially in preaching and teaching.

An Integrated Theological Vision

The theologian will be formed in the various disciplines of theology in an integrated fashion that allows the analogy of faith to reveal itself. In particular, the foundational theology course will enable him /her to see the manner in which these disciplines interrelate and form a coherent unity. In addition, the entire theological curriculum will be informed by pastoral considerations that enable the theologian to appreciate the relevance of theological study to pastoral practice.

Development of Doctrine in the Modern Context

Theologians will demonstrate a respect for ecumenism, orthodox, reform, evangelical, and Vatican II's doctrines, while also reflecting an understanding of the difference between revealed truths and their mode of expression (PPF 201-203, 220-222, 225).

Authentic Doctrinal Development

The theologian will develop a theologically nuanced understanding of the manner by which doctrine develops within sacred traditions, and criteria by which to distinguish authentic and inauthentic development.

The Contexts of Doctrinal Development

The theologian will examine the ways historical context (e.g., language, philosophy, culture) has given distinctive shape to the Church's expression of the Deposit of Faith in any given age, coming to appreciate each era's strengths and weaknesses. S/he will learn to distinguish between revealed truth and the mode of expression, and the importance of inculturation of the faith as part of the Church's mission to all nations.

The Role of Vatican II in Doctrinal Development

The theologian will explore the role of Vatican II in guiding and discerning the authentic development of doctrine, looking at specific examples in various disciplines of theology, with special attention given to the importance of historical continuity in authentic development.

Evangelization and the Moral Life

Theologians will demonstrate knowledge of and respect for teachings in moral theology absolute moral norms including Sacred Activism and Social Justice (PPF 204- 208, 218).

Grasping Methods and Principles

The theologian will demonstrate a robust understanding of the methods and principles that govern moral theology, with special consideration given to the role of sacred scripture as the animating principle of moral teaching.

Persuasive Moral Reasoning

The theologian will learn the ground and nature of absolute moral norms and learn how to explain, defend and apply them in various moral cases. Special attention will be given to the moral questions surrounding respect for Social Activism, Social Justice, responses to common cultural objections to teaching, and presenting the beauty and splendor of creation.

Theological Anthropology and Morality

The theologian will be empowered to grasp and persuasively articulate a sound theological anthropology that forms the basis of all moral theological reflection and teaching, especially in relation to questions regarding sexuality and gender.

The Sacramental Life of the Church

Theologians will demonstrate reverence by celebrating the sacraments and how the theology, history, and development of the sacraments and the sacred liturgy contribute to intercultural and interspiritual respect (PPF 214).

Celebrating Sacred Rites

The theologian will learn to respectfully celebrate sacred rites and rituals in accordance with multi-faith, multicultural accord, rites, and rituals.

History, Theology, Spirituality of the Liturgy and Sacraments

The theologian will be formed in a robust theological, historical and spiritual vision of liturgy and sacraments that grounds correct practices in a broad and pastorally rich context.

Liturgical Training

The theologian in Holy Orders for ordination in apostolic succession, will be trained in liturgical practica for the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments, with particular attention given to the practicum for the Sacrament of Penance. S/he will be introduced to the official liturgical books and to the Church's directives for music, art, and architecture (PPF 213-214).

Dialogue with Culture: The Art of Encounter

Theologians will demonstrate the ability to communicate (explain and defend) what they have learned (PPF 215, 280) and to dialogue with the broader society (PPF 216).

Dialogue and Mission

The theologian will be able to articulate rightly, clearly, respectfully, and intelligibly, and will actively seek to correctly understand interreligious dialogue so as to engage in a common quest for truth. S/he will experience this dialogue through respectful ecumenical activity that belongs side by side with answering the call to become a Servant of God.

Reasoned Defense of Faith

The theologian will demonstrate the ability to respectfully and persuasively respond, drawing on faith and reason, to objections posed to teaching, and to empower the Faithful to do the same. Special consideration will be given to the "dialogue of cultures," such as the dignity of life, sexual ethics, green-activism, and social doctrine.

Ecumenism, Inter-Religious Dialogue and Mission

The theologian will explore the "catholic"-meaning "universal" principles of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, and learn ways to engage in dialogue locally in service to the mission of serving in God's vineyard.

S/he will reflect on how living in the tension between dialogue and mission can bear great fruit in service as a universal sacrament of the unity of all of creation.

Ongoing Formation of the Intellectual Life

Theologians will cultivate a love for truth (PPF 280) and demonstrate a commitment to make study a lifelong endeavor (PPF 227) for effective ministry in a multi-age, multi-race, multi-ethnic, multi-gender, and multicultural society (PPF 228).

Pastoral Formation (Third Year/Residency)

Proper and Mature Attitude for Service

The seminary is intended to prepare seminarians to be shepherds. Therefore, the Candidate must be permeated by a pastoral spirit at this stage of formation. S/he should demonstrate zeal for God compassion, generosity, love for the poor and marginalized, and a desire for service in public ministry (RF 119).

Motivation for Ministry

The candidate for residency must demonstrate an honest desire to serve others free of any form clericalism including self-seeking ministry, lack of initiative, and lack of zeal.

Ministry to the Gospel

The candidate will be evaluated in how s/he prioritizes a desire for ministry and service with a viewpoint of how s/he expresses love for the poor, interacts with those on the margins, and demonstrates pastoral discernment capabilities to minister in accordance with the Gospel.

Pastoral Preaching

Theologians will develop and demonstrate their communication skills to effectively fulfill a teaching and preaching ministry at the service of the universal call to holiness. (PPF 280).

Homiletic Training

Candidates will demonstrate their capability for a preaching influenced by call be a Servant of God, in which s/he integrates his/her theological formation with the art of preaching.

Faithful and Competent

Candidates will demonstrate that their preaching is faithful to Sacred Scripture, and Tradition. Preaching therefore must demonstrate a competence in both skill and content.

Ministry in a Diverse Flock

Theologians will develop and demonstrate the ability to effectively minister to the needs of a today's diverse congregations, and strive to make God present as the true Creator.

Pastoral Aptitude within the Flock

While ordained deacons, Professional Ministers, and Priests are not experts in the social sciences or the array of the social conditions people live, candidates for residency will demonstrate a fluency and aptitude to minister faithfully and generously in the midst of a diverse flock that includes ministry to those in healthcare institutes, prison and detention centers, racial-cultural-ethnic communities, youth and aged ministry, etc.

Pastoral Aptitude within Wider Community

Deacons and priests will be expected to have a pastoral aptitude to engage people of no faith, those who lack faith, ecumenical and interfaith communities, ministry to married, divorced, single, in loving unions, ministry to those struggling with sexual orientation, ministry to those assured of their sexual orientation, ministry to migrants, refugees, and immigrants, etc.

From Seminary Community to Parish Community

Theologians will demonstrate sufficient level of awareness of the realities of parish life (and the potential variety) that render it quite different from life within the seminary and the role of the deacons and priests in both Pastoral Ministry and Chaplaincy, such that they can enter effectively into their individualized ministries.

Readiness to Serve as Permanent Ordained Deacons

Candidates in Holy Orders who are preparing for diaconate ordination and ministry will demonstrate their readiness to minister in a co-vocational setting which will no doubt differ from the seminary community with a self-sufficiency to engage, cooperate, collaborate, and possess a spirit of learning, humility, and generosity. S/he therefore will demonstrate these qualities in seminary placements prior to completion of residency.

Interior Freedom/External Self-Possession

Candidates will have cultivated a spiritual, liturgical rule of life that has given her/ him the freedom to engage diverse communities whereby his/her self-possession enables him/her enter into the uneven and imprecise aspects of pastoral activity with maturity and respect. This will require seminarians to display these thresholds prior to completion of residency.

An Integrated Formation

Grace Theological Seminary has tailored the ministry formation program to integrate and unify the four dimensions of formation in conformity with the Program of Ministry Formation, Ratio Fundamentalis, and Pastores Dabo Vobis.

The specific aim of formation is to prepare the seminarian for ministry life and ministry. S/he must be ready to embrace the final years of formation with a sound theological training, a love for service in Sacred Activism and Social Justice, and a commitment to form the charisms of prayer, chasteness, and obedience.

“The seminary and its entire life, in all its different expressions, is committed to formation, the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation of future ministers. Although this formation has many aspects in common with the human formation of all humankind, it has, nevertheless, contents, modalities, and characteristics which relate specifically to the aim of preparation for the Ministry” (PDV 61).

The Goal of Integrative Formation for All Seminarians at Grace Theological Seminary A Healthy Integration of all Ministry Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of ministry formation that reflects an appropriate integration between human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation toward the end of configuring the seminarian for a ministry of service in God’s vineyard as Sacred Activists focused upon Social Justice (PPF 16-7, 22- 26, 74ff, 139, 164).

HUMAN FORMATION

The Goal of Integrative Formation for All Seminarians at Grace Theological Seminary is a Healthy Integration of Ministry Formation

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A. HUMAN FORMATION

Expected Developmental Milestones: From Adm. to month # 12

Every seminary must have a program of human formation appropriate to the stage of the candidates' preparation, which seeks to prepare persons to be bridges, not obstacles to growth (PPF, §83).

The qualities to be fostered in a human formation program are freedom, openness, honesty and flexibility, joy and inner peace, generosity and justice, personal maturity, interpersonal skills, common sense, aptitude for ministry, and growth "in moral sensibility and character" (PPF, §85).

As cited in Section 280 of the PPF, 8 the elements of human formation include:

- 1) The human qualities of truthfulness, respect for others, justice, humility, integrity, affability, generosity, kindness, courtesy, integrity and prudence.
- 2) The capacity to relate to others in a positive manner, and the ability to get along with others and work with them in the seminary-community.
- 3) Good self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self- mastery, including emotional self-control.
- 4) Attention to wellness and sound mental health.
- 5) A balanced lifestyle and balance in making judgments.
- 6) Affective maturity and healthy psychosexual development; clarity sexual identity; an ability to establish and maintain wholesome friendships; and the capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships.
- 7) Skills for leadership and collaboration with women and men.
- 8) Capacity to receive and integrate constructive criticism.
- 9) Mature respect for and cooperation with Faculty-Elders.
- 10) Engagement in the community life of the seminary
- 11) Simplicity of Life.
- 12) Stewardship of materials and resources.
- 13) Responsibility for financial obligations.

An Overview of Human Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of human formation, as “the foundation for the other three” (PPF 72), which will be conducted in a way that reflects its interdependence with both intellectual formation (since character formation involves conformity to truth) and spiritual formation (because of the primacy of the grace gifted to creation by God), and its orientation toward pastoral ministry (the ultimate goal of seminary formation).

Human Formation

“Future ministers should...cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry” (PDV 43). Human formation is neither psychotherapy nor intensive psychiatric assistance but rather an interactive process entered into with a responsible other who facilitates personal growth through listening and speaking. It also involves the collaborative formulation of realistic goals and establishing the means by which these goals may be measured. The goal of human formation is the achievement of mutually recognized goals.

Human Formation - Purpose

The purpose of human formation is to develop the personal and interpersonal qualities that will allow each seminarian’s personality to develop after that of the Good Shepherd. The Minister leads by serving in God’s vineyard. Therefore, his/her personality, attitude, and disposition are to serve as “a bridge and not an obstacle for others caring for the gifts of God’s creation (PDV 43).

St. Pope John Paul II reminded those engaged in the work of ministry formation that human formation is foundational for the life of grace but also for the other dimensions of formation. *“The whole work of ministry formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human foundation [...] Future Ministers should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry”* (PDV 43).

Human Formation – Criteria

- The criteria for human formation, summarized by the Program of Ministry Formation challenges seminarians to consider cultivating the following qualities:
- The human qualities of truthfulness, respect for others, justice, humility, integrity, affability, generosity, kindness, courtesy, integrity, and prudence, flexibility, joy, inner peace, common sense, and zeal;
- The capacity to relate to others in a positive manner and the ability to get along with others and work with them in the community;
- Good self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self-mastery, including emotional self- control;

- Attention to wellness and sound mental health;
- A balanced lifestyle and balance in making judgments;
- Affective maturity and healthy psychosexual development; clarity of sexual identity; an ability to establish and maintain wholesome friendships; the capacity to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships;
- Skills for leadership and collaboration with women and men;
- Capacity to receive and integrate constructive criticism;
- Simplicity of life, stewardship of resources, and responsibility for financial obligations;
- Temperance with material goods; awareness of manifestations of consumerism/materialism;
- Mature respect for and cooperation with church authority;
- Engagement in the community life of the seminary.

Human Formation Goals

- The goals of human formation are summarized in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (43-44) and confirmed in the Program of Ministry Formation (2005).
- Seminarians will possess the human qualities that are signs of personal maturity and that are needed for pastoral service. These include the capacity “to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be women and men of integrity and, especially to be balanced in judgment and behavior” (cf. PDV 43).
- Seminarians will manifest the skills required to relate well to all the people they will encounter in their ministry in a variety of cultural contents. Among the qualities the seminary looks for are affability, generosity, kindness, hospitality, courtesy, civility, and respect (PDV 43).
- Seminarians will have an affective maturity that is manifested in the capacity for friendship and for living their lives in a healthy, joyful manner (PDV 44).
- Seminarians will demonstrate a well-formed moral conscience through their actions that indicate a responsible freedom (PDV 44).

Human Formation Goal 1:

Formation Resulting in Personal and Pastoral Prudence

Seminarians will demonstrate in their particular stage of formation the virtues of personal and pastoral prudence (PPF 76, 92, 280) in the form of sound judgment (PPF 76, 82, 86, 280), responsibility (PPF 76, 101, 156, 239, 266, 280), stewardship (PPF 76), discernment (PPF 76),

common sense (PPF 85), reasonable stewardship of resources (PPF 280), and practical wisdom (PPF 136, 163). The accomplishment of these goals will be evidenced in how the seminarian manages her/ his time and responsibilities, how s/he demonstrates self-possession during the multi-faceted experience of seminary formation, and how self-knowledge is expressed in the decision-making process of discernment.

Human Formation Goal 2:

Formation to be Ministers of Charity and Justice

Seminarians will demonstrate, in their particular formation program, the virtue of justice in its various forms (PPF 76, 280): respect for others (PPF 76), integrity (PPF 76, 260, 262, 280), truthfulness (PPF 76, 100, 280), keeping one's word (PPF 76), and respect for, cooperation with, and obedience to faculty, their elders/supervisors (PPF 76, 100-102, 280). Seminarians will demonstrate a basic understanding of the virtue of justice (in its various forms) through the completion of their academic requirements and by a successful participation in ministry formation. This goal will result in the seminarian as a person of responsibility.

Human Formation Goal 3:

Formation to be Persons of Fortitude/Courage

Seminarians will demonstrate, in their stage of formation, the virtue of fortitude or courage (PPF 76, 86) in its various forms, especially through taking initiatives (PPF 80, 86, 238, 239), and in exercising perseverance and patience in the face of difficulties. Seminarians will demonstrate a basic understanding of the virtue of fortitude through the completion of their academic requirements and completion of all ministry formation requirements. Seminarians will demonstrate the development of a devotion scripture through spiritual reading, participation in various devotions, and through the development of their prayer life.

Seminarians will demonstrate, through their participation in the formation program, the ability to take initiative and to persevere in the midst of difficulties. The seminarian will be prepared to shoulder the joys and burdens of pastoral ministry.

Human Formation Goal 4:

Formation for a Simplicity of Life: Temperance/Moderation

Seminarians will demonstrate the virtue of temperance (i.e., moderation according to right reason) in its various forms (PPF 76): that is moderation regarding various goods including, food, drink, possessions, entertainment, honors, etc. Seminarians will demonstrate a basic understanding of the virtue of temperance in the management of their lifestyle as a public person of Seminarians will ponder the meaning and purpose of whole lives, including the need

to achieve self-possession in order to be able to make a gift of themselves in loving service (PPF 78-79, 90-92, 280).

Seminarians will cultivate the virtues, habits or skills required to live chastely including the following: appropriate self-disclosure, a capacity for self-reflection, the practice of holding all persons in the mystery of God, the development of friendship, the ability to set appropriate relational boundaries, and the determination to overcome all untoward sexual temptations (PPF 93-94, 280).

Human Formation Goal 5:

Formation for Authentic Friendship/Communion

Seminarians will demonstrate, in their particular formation program, the virtue of friendship and the ability to foster interpersonal communion (PPF 76). Seminarians will receive a basic understanding of the virtue of friendship (and thus charity). Seminarians will develop the traits required to cultivate friendship and interpersonal relations (PPF 280), including good manners (PPF 76), courtesy (PPF 280), affability, cheerfulness, the ability to make conversation, and to cooperate in the life of the seminary community. The seminarian will therefore complete the seminary formation program as a human prepared to live for others, to live in the world but not of the world, to be a spiritual father /mother, loving the faithful as a true shepherd.

Human Formation - Relationships

- An essential part of a seminarian's human formation concerns the types of relationships s/he establishes. The presence of healthy friendships is an important indicator of personal conference. The capacity to establish such relationships with men and women is one of the elements to be considered in discerning the presence of a vocation to ordained ministry.
- Discerning a vocation to ministry however, also includes discerning a call to a chaste life. An essential component of the personal development of the seminarian, therefore, is the development of a capacity to establish authentic friendships and love in the context of true commitment. This development is both complex and absolutely necessary.
- In an effort to support and foster that development, the following guidelines are followed at Grace Theological Seminary:
 - Seminarians should learn how to transform "the experience of loneliness into a holy solitude based on a 'strong, lively, and personal love for creation (PPF 79).
 - Strive to avoid codependent personal relationships.
 - Seminarians should foster the ability to develop friendships with individuals while remaining open, cordial and approachable to all the members of the seminary-community.

- Since honesty, openness, and trust are the basis of good friendship, any friendship or relationship that tends towards a devious or secretive nature must be looked upon with concern.
- Seminarians in committed relationships are expected to live a chaste life.
- A pattern of inappropriate sexual behavior indicates that the seminarian is not yet ready to pursue advancement to Candidacy for ordination.

HUMAN FORMATION – INSTRUMENTS of SUPPORT

The formation program unifies and integrates the goals of human formation in the programming of the seminary. Grace Theological Seminary uses a number of instruments to assist the seminarian in his/her discernment and formation.

1. Instruction from the faculty through seminars, and courses.
2. The personal reflection of the seminarian who examines with regularity his /her behavior, motivations, inclinations, respect of boundaries, and appropriation of life experience.
3. A seminary-community life that develops in the seminarian a generosity of spirit and that fosters discipline, self-mastery, and faithful perseverance in commitments.
4. Living the rhythm of seminary life that enables the seminarian to accept authority, develop the habit of using freedom with discretion, learn to act with initiative, and work harmoniously with other members of the seminary-community.
5. The Dean of Formation and the Certified Life Coach who serve in the external forum to observe and assist the seminarians to grow humanly by offering feedback about their general demeanor, their relational capacities and styles, their maturity, their capacity to become a public person and leader in a community, and their appropriation of the human virtues that can make them men and women in ministry.
6. Spiritual Directors who serve in the internal forum and contribute to the human formation of the seminarians with open and frank discussions addressing topics including sexuality, chastity, celibacy-if this path is chosen by the seminarian, affective maturity, intimacy, friendships, freedom, moderation, etc. The Spiritual Director assists in cultivating the virtues of self-reflection and self-discipline, which are foundational for human development.

7. Counseling and psychological services, offered in -house or through referrals to outside professionals are intended to help the seminarian work through particular emotional or psychological issues that are stunting growth in affective maturity. The specific goals of counseling are varied depending on the presenting issue of the seminarian. Confidentiality is upheld with certain limitations, unless a seminarian is specifically referred for counseling services by the Spiritual Director, Dean of Formation, and/or Certified Life Coach, where an agreement is signed to disclose information pertinent to the reason for referral.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Goal of Integrative Formation for All Seminarians at Grace Theological Seminary is a Healthy Integration of Ministry Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of ministry formation that reflects an appropriate integration among human, **spiritual**, intellectual and pastoral formation towards the goal of configuring the seminarian for a ministry of service in God's vineyard as Sacred Activists focused upon Social Justice (PPF 16-7, 22- 26, 74ff, 139, 164).

B. SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Expected Developmental Milestones: Month # 12 to month # 18

For every Minister, spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to being a Minister and acting as a Minister. (Pastores dabо vobis, §45).

Spiritual Formation Developmental Milestones

Elements of Spiritual Formation include the following:

- 1) Commitment to a life of prayer and the ability to assist others in their spiritual growth.
- 2) Abiding love for the sacramental life of the church, especially the Rites and Rituals of worship.
- 3) A loving knowledge of the Word of God and prayerful familiarity with scriptures.
- 4) An appreciation of, and commitment to a dedicated daily spiritual practice.
- 5) Fidelity to the liturgical and spiritual program of the seminary.
- 6) Fidelity to regular spiritual direction and developing a habit of spiritual reading.
- 7) Positively embracing a lifelong commitment to chasteness, obedience, and simplicity of life.
- 8) A love for God and God's Creation.
- 9) A spirit of self-giving charity toward others.

An Overview of Spiritual Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of spiritual formation (which is the completion of human formation PPF 106) that reflects its interdependence with intellectual formation and its orientation toward pastoral ministry.

Formation bears its fullest fruit in the Spiritual Dimension, wherein the seminarian's relationship with God becomes the prism through which his/her personal identity is expressed. "This intimate relationship forms the heart of the seminarian in that generous and sacrificial love that marks the beginning of pastoral charity" (RF 101). "The heart of spiritual formation is personal union with God which is born of and nourished in a particular way by prolonged and silent prayer" (RF 102). This prayer must be grounded in a living faith in the Word of God as the source and summit of worship (RF 103-104).

One of the most challenging questions of the New Testament is that which Jesus addressed to the disciples when he said: "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus asks: "Can you drink of the cup I am to drink of?" (Matthew 20:22). Jesus also told his disciples to "be made perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

These questions and statements required a lifetime for the disciples to understand and answer. Yet these questions are essential ones for anyone who is called ordained ministry. They form the foundation of what has traditionally been called "conversion,". The seminarian is being converted by God from laity to a Servant in formation learning to serve in God's vineyard. Conversion is the goal of spiritual formation.

The seminary community is a real ecclesial community. Each seminarian, while a member of his/her church, practices his /her faith in the context of the seminary community. Moreover, the ministry formation program challenges each seminarian to cultivate a ministry spirituality. In one sense, this goal is a lifelong process yet there are certain measurable achievements, both internally and externally, that demonstrate a true ministry spirituality (cf. PPF 109-110).

Founded upon a personal faith, Christ urged his disciples to "...go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). This command binds each disciple to a commitment of evangelization; of teaching and modeling Sacred Activism and Social Justice however it may manifest. This commitment forms the indispensable context of one's ongoing conversion. As one shares faith, one experiences anew its depth and richness.

Discernment is a lifelong process that has many dimensions. The role of the Spiritual Director is to facilitate one's ever more intense spiritual questions. The Spiritual Director enables a person to formulate and examine the questions and to answer them honestly in the light of experience. The Spiritual Director assists a person to integrate the spiritual, human, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation.

At the conclusion of this stage or during the following stage (Intellectual Formation), the seminarian can petition to receive diaconal ordination. With diaconal ordination s/he will enter the clerical state, with its associated rights and duties, and will enter into in a particular Church

or personal prelature, or in an institute of consecrated life or society" or in an Association or Ordinariate. (RF 73).

The Purpose of Spiritual Formation

The spiritual formation program strives to establish a foundation within the seminarian for a lifetime of ministry. This foundation is an intimate relationship with the triune God, the source of all love and truth, a relationship nourished by scripture and tradition, celebrated in the sacraments, and marked by a sincere devotion. To this end, the spiritual formation program challenges the seminarian to grow in loyalty to God and to God's creation.

The spiritual formation program at Grace Theological Seminary proposes basic expectations that each seminarian must strive for:

- To live in intimate communion with God through a life of prayer.
- To faithfully meditate on the scriptures, and actively participate in the sacred mysteries during the rites and rituals of worship.
- To love and revere the feminine in God while seeking her protection and counsel.

Spiritual Formation – Criteria

1. Seminarians are to be persons of prayer. They must form a habit of daily personal and liturgical prayer, with prayerful devotion and meditation of the Scriptures.
2. Seminarians will incorporate the frequent reception of the fruits of Spiritual Direction and Certified Life Coaching into their lives.
3. Seminarians will discern their call to ministry chasteness by manifesting an ability to live in mature relationships with other people. They are to cultivate an affective maturity and an understanding of the gift of chasteness as a stimulus to pastoral charity and love of others in ministry through their spiritual formation.
4. Seminarians will learn and be challenged to develop a ministry spirituality with a prayer life consistent with the demands of community living and pastoral expectations. Spiritual formation is to form in the seminarian a personality of humility and obedience so they will be persons in service to God who view the needs of God's creations as greater than their own.
5. Seminarians will cultivate a spirituality of service of imitating Christ, who came "to serve and not to be served," by living a life of simplicity and virtue.
6. Are forming the divine and apostolic quality of obedience to the Call by the Holy Spirit.
7. Are beginning the integration of human, intellectual, and pastoral formation in their spiritual lives.

The criteria for spiritual formation, summarized by the Program of Ministry Formation challenges Seminarians to cultivate the following goals:

Spiritual Formation – Seminarian Goals

- A commitment to a life of prayer and the ability to assist others in their spiritual growth; There is an expectation that the seminarian will have a daily holy hour alone with God.
- An abiding love for the sacramental life no matter how it may manifest for the seminarian.
- A loving knowledge of the Word of God and a prayerful familiarity with scripture.
- An appreciation of and commitment to frequent daily prayer.
- A fidelity to the liturgical and spiritual program of the seminary, including participation in days of reflection and retreats;
- A fidelity to regular spiritual direction, to meditative prayer, and to a habit of spiritual reading;
- A positive embrace of a lifelong commitment to chasteness, obedience, and simplicity of life.
- A love for God and the saints; an active practice of the devotional life (group prayers, meditative nature walks, rosary, sacred dance, music, painting, etc.)
- A spirit of self-giving charity toward others.
- Embarks on a path of simplicity, poverty, and virtue
- Grows in love for God's creation within the grace of service.

Spiritual Formation Goal 1:

Formation for a Rich, Developed Spiritual Life

Seminarians will participate in an organized and coherent program of spiritual formation (PPF 122). Seminarians will receive formation in a multifaceted, rich heritage of spirituality including various aspects: Trinitarian, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesial, communal, ministry, Eucharistic, liturgical, Biblical, devotional, apostolic, ascetical, obediential, contemplative, marked by simplicity of life, effective solidarity with those who are poor, time for solitude with God, and ongoing spiritual formation (PPF 280). Seminarians will become familiar with the rich treasury of devotions.

Spiritual Formation Goal 2:

Formation to Live a Disciplined Personal Horarium

Seminarians will develop the habit of participation in their daily liturgical lives (PPF 116-117). Seminarians will demonstrate habitual participation in liturgy by attending required community celebrations (PPF 116). Seminarians will learn to celebrate liturgies according to approved books and learning materials (PPF 118). Seminarians will demonstrate a deepening incorporation of frequent daily prayer into their lives, beginning with morning and evening prayers as a regular practice (PPF 119).

Spiritual Formation Goal 3:

****Holy Orders - Formation to be a Person of Reconciliation**

- Seminarians in Holy Orders in Apostolic Succession will develop the habit of regular participation in the Sacrament of Penance (PPF 120). Seminarians will have the opportunity to participate in regularly scheduled celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance (PPF 120). Seminarians will have the opportunity to participate in communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance during Advent and Lent (PPF 120). Seminarians will develop the practice of daily personal prayer, including traditional elements such as meditation, contemplation, lectio divina, and the daily examen (PPF 123). The regular and frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Penance is an expectation of ministry formation and a requirement. The sacrament is scheduled for the community on a regular basis by the Dean of Formation.

Spiritual Formation Goal 4:

Formation for Transparency and Accountability – Spiritual Direction

Seminarians will participate in a comprehensive and effective program of spiritual direction (PPF 120-121, 127). Seminarians will be encouraged by their Spiritual Directors to freely share significant aspects of their interior life, including -- but not limited to -- their personal history, cultivation of virtues, prayer experiences, and temptations (PPF 128).

They will also be guided in spiritual direction about sharing human formation issues which clearly need to be discussed outside the internal forum so they can be better addressed (PPF 131). Seminarians will be encouraged and assisted by their Spiritual Directors toward the ongoing, practical integration of the four dimensions of their formation (PPF 129-30).

Seminarians will gain a clear understanding of the inviolability of the internal forum by their participation in spiritual direction which respects the forum of conscience as understood in the context of moral theology (PPF 134).

Spiritual Formation Goal 5:

Formation for Transparency and Accountability – Certified Life Coaching

Seminarians will meet regularly with their Certified Life Coach (PPF 127) with sufficient duration to allow discussion of the seminarian's vocational discernment, of her/his preparation for ministry (PPF 133).

Spiritual Formation: Components

- Spiritual formation in the seminary seeks to lay the foundation for persons who will be ordained to Ministry. S/he and will be given an assignment by the Rector to carry out the pastoral mission of Grace Theological Seminary (Service).
- Grace Theological Seminary includes opportunities for spiritual formation and development in its regular programming and scheduling. The personal accountability of the seminarian is presumed and so s/he is to avail him/herself of all the opportunities at his/her disposal for discernment and formation.
- Communion is the source and summit of Christian life and the wellspring of ministry formation. Regular participation in communion is expected of all seminarians. Seminarians participate in the seminary by carrying out liturgical ministries with full use of the many options and expressions that reveal the richness of the Communion.
- Seminarians who have declared for Candidacy for ordination will participate in the daily rhythm of prayer for the seminary on a Rota basis. Seminarians pray morning prayer and evening prayer each day in Leadership. Seminarians are encouraged to gather frequently to pray night prayer with their brothers and sisters via the Big Blue Button in the Student Community Room (PPF 117, 119).
- The Spiritual Director serves in the internal forum at all times. Communal worship will be celebrated during the year, even during school breaks. (PPF 110, 120).
- Spiritual Direction is a special opportunity for ongoing discernment, formation in prayer, and integration of personal, moral, and spiritual growth. Seminarians are required to meet with their Spiritual Directors once a month. The Spiritual Director serves in the internal forum and therefore does not participate in any external forum gatherings, i.e., Dean of Formation meetings. At the pre-theology stage of formation, spiritual direction is critically important in

the discernment process; therefore, seminarians are to approach this relationship in trust (PPF 110, 127-135).

- Retreats and Days and Evenings of Reflection provide the time and place for sustained prayer, silence, and solitude necessary for seminarians who are discerning a ministry vocation. The intimate and loving relationship a disciple of the Lord has with God requires a serious approach and time for prayer. The formation program includes an annual retreat, which is usually scheduled at the end of the final trimester before ordination. Days or evenings of reflection take place on a per-term basis (PPF 110, 122). The Rector coordinates all retreats and days and evenings of recollection.
- Candidates-elect for ordination to the Order of Deacon, Licensed Ministry, Priesthood will have a class retreat after completion of all requirements for ordination have been successfully concluded.
- Walking the Talk seminars guide the seminarians in learning the value, practice, and cultivation of liberation theology, simplicity of life, obedience, and pastoral service. (PPF 110, 122).
- The use of Sacred Scripture is a most important component in sustaining a healthy spiritual life. Seminarians who seek to draw closer to God and live in intimate communion with scripture must draw daily nourishment from the scriptures. Prayerful meditation is encouraged as a daily practice (PPF 110, 123).
- In order to foster growth in personal devotion and love for the worship, seminarians are encouraged to spend personal time in the Sanctuary each day to develop the discipline of prayer and reflection (PPF 110, 116, 124).
- Devotions are a most important aspect of ministry spirituality. Through spiritual direction, worship-music, liturgical devotion, and seminars, seminarians are advised to develop a special love and devotion to the feminine aspect of God.
- Instruction regarding the history and theology of liturgy is provided through a series of courses The Grace Theological Seminary faculty provides suitable instruction to the seminary community.

Spiritual Formation – Instruments of Support

- The ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary unifies and integrates the goals of spiritual formation in its programming. The seminary uses a number of instruments to assist the seminarian in his/her discernment and spiritual formation.

- Instruction from the Dean and faculty through conferences, courses, and occasional workshops on various topics related to ministry chasteness, obedience, prayer, and simplicity.
- The personal reflection of the seminarian, who regularly examines the disciplines of his/her prayer life and how s/he is scheduling the proper and appropriate time for prayer and reflection each day.
- Community life that develops in the seminarian a sense of ministry spirituality in light of a regular daily schedule of prayer.
- The Certified Life Coach who serves in the external forum to observe and assist the seminarian as s/he grows spiritually in a lifestyle of service, simplicity, and virtue. The Coach offers feedback about general perceptions shared by both the faculty and seminarians while also challenging the seminarian to develop a spirituality consonant with the public expectations of pastoral ministry.

C. INTELLECTUAL FORMATION: (Ordained Diaconate)

Expected Developmental Milestones – Month # 18 to Month # 26

Theology Year 1

There is a reciprocal relationship between spiritual and intellectual formation. The intellectual life nourishes the spiritual life, but the spiritual life also opens vistas of understanding ... Intellectual formation is integral to what it means to be human (PPF, §136).

In the seminary program, Intellectual Formation culminates in a deepened understanding of the mysteries of faith that is pastorally oriented toward effective ministry especially preaching (PPF, §138).

“If we expect every Christian to be prepared to make a defense of the faith and to account for the hope that is in us, then all the more should candidates for the ordained Clergy have diligent care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their education and pastoral activity. For the salvation of their brothers and sisters they should seek an ever-deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries” (PDV 51).

As cited in Section 280 of the PPF, elements of Intellectual Formation include:

- 1) Love for truth as discovered by faith and reason
- 2) Fidelity to the Word of God and to the Magisterium
- 3) Knowledge of Catholic doctrine and adherence to it
- 4) Interest and diligence in seminary studies
- 5) Successful completion of seminary academic requirements
- 6) Ability to exercise the ministry of the Word: to proclaim, explain and defend the faith
- 7) Knowledge of languages that will be necessary or suitable for the exercise of their pastoral ministry.

An Overview of Intellectual Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of intellectual formation, understood as *fides quaerens intellectum*, which will be conducted in a way that reflects its interdependence with human and spiritual formation and its orientation toward pastoral ministry, and in a way that recognizes this pastoral ministry as taking place in a particular cultural context (PPF 136-139, 63-64).

One of the overall goals of a seminary formation program is to prepare a seminarian who is widely knowledgeable in humanity and the human condition, deeply engaged in a process of understanding Divine Revelation, and fully committed and adequately skilled to communicate his /her knowledge to as many people as possible.

The newly ordained Clergy will have cultivated in his/her seminary formation those habits, attitudes, practices, and disciplines which will enable him/her to shoulder the burdens and celebrate the joys of ministry. The seminary is intended to prepare seminarians to be Shepherds-Leaders, therefore the Clergy/Seminarian/Scholar must be permeated by a pastoral spirit at this stage of formation.

Grace Theological Seminary has integrated the requirements of intellectual formation into the ministry formation program as stipulated by Pastores Dabo Vobis (51-56) and the Program of Ministry Formation (PPF 136-140, 146-190).

Intellectual Formation - Purpose

The purpose of intellectual formation is for the clergy/seminarian/scholar to grasp the intellectual and liturgical traditions, to be able to proclaim and teach the Gospel, to communicate effectively the mystery of God to people of today, and to be equipped for the continuing pursuit of truth.

The commitment to study, which takes up no small part of the time of those preparing for ordained ministry is not in fact an external and secondary dimension of their human, Christian, spiritual, and vocational growth. In reality, through study, especially the study of theology, the Clergy assents to the Word of God, grows in his /her spiritual life, and prepares him/her self to fulfill his/her ministry (PDV 51).

Intellectual Formation – Criteria

“Intellectual formation in the seminary program centers on theology as a search for ‘an ever-deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries’ (PDV 51). This kind of theological study which far exceeds a purely technical approach to ‘religious phenomena’ unfolds” in a particular, deliberate way (PPF 163).

They should be Clergy/Seminarians and Scholars who are:

- 1) good communicators
- 2) prudent and discerning persons of affective maturity
- 3) persons who respect, care for, and exercise vigilance over their bodies
- 4) persons who can take on the role of a public person
- 5) persons who are free to be at the service of the Gospel
- 6) persons of solid moral character with finely developed moral consciences
- 7) persons who are good stewards of material possessions

Intellectual Formation: Seminarian Goals

- Demonstrate compassion, generosity, love for the poor and marginalized, zeal for the Kingdom, and a desire for public ministry (RF 119).
- Acquire a sound understanding of the basic elements of the Church's Tradition including Scripture, patristics, dogmatics, sacraments, morals, spirituality, Church history, canon law, practica, pastoral theology, etc. (PPF 197-218).
- Demonstrate reverence by celebrating the sacraments in accordance with the mind of the Church and how the theology, history, and development of the sacraments and the sacred liturgy contribute to service to God's Creation (PPF 214).
- *** (Professional Ministers) celebrate worship *** (Holy Orders) celebrate the Eucharist and the other sacraments, with particular attention given to the practicum for the Sacrament of Penance.
- Continue in the studies of music, art, and ecclesiastical architecture (PPF 213-214)
- Understand and apply St. Thomas Aquinas' and the Oxford Movement approaches to faith and reason as an exemplary model for engaging in charitable, reasoned and persuasive dialogue that is open to insights from all dialogue partners.
- Articulate the Church's teaching to multi-Faith persons rightly, clearly, respectfully, and intelligibly, and actively seek to correctly understand the position of persons so as to engage in a common quest for truth.
- Explore the common principles of ecumenical and inter- religious dialogue, and learn ways to engage in dialogue locally.
- Live in the tension between dialogue and mission that can bear great fruit in service as a universal gift for the unity of God's creation.
- Cultivate a love for truth (PPF 280) and demonstrate a commitment to make study a lifelong endeavor (PPF 227) for effective ministry in multi-racial, multi-gender, multi- ethnic, multi-age, and multicultural societies (PPF 228).

Intellectual Formation Intellectual Formation Goal 1:

Effectively/Pastorally Communicating the Truth

Seminarians will complete a formation program that builds the foundation as the basis for ongoing learning (PPF 227, 233) and effective communication of what has been learned, with due attention to the need to communicate effectively in the contemporary cultural context (PPF 12, 49, 140, 147-157, 161-163).

Intellectual Formation Goal 2:

Sentire Cum Ecclesia

Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars will complete an intellectual formation that helps them to think and live-in communion with God, intellectual tradition (PPF 181, 188, 198, 201, 219, 222), and in thoughtful dialogue with the broader contemporary society (PPF 75-76, 139, 210, 228-229).

Intellectual Formation Goal 3:

The Learned Clergy

Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars will develop a basic understanding of the culture in which they minister, and the importance of being attentive to the interaction between faith and culture (PPF 12, 38, 49, 76, 77, 79, 110, 153, 155).

Intellectual Formation Goal 4:

A Lover of Theology

The theologian will be taught theology in a manner that serves to ignite passionate commitment to study, precisely because s/he will “taste and see” how theology leads to a deepened communion with God and excellence in the care of God’s people (PPF 280)

Intellectual Formation Goal 5:

Forming Independent Researchers

The theologian will be empowered to carry out independent research on topics related to each course of study, equipping him/her with the skills required for a lifelong commitment to theological and ministry education (PPF 280).

Intellectual Formation Goal 6:

Learning to Meet Diverse Pastoral Needs

The theologian will be exposed to the many needs of God’s people in our diverse and rapidly changing society, and will be encouraged and equipped to engage in ongoing professional development in service of an effective ministry (PPF 228).

Intellectual Formation – Instruments of Support

- The Rector provides oversight of the intellectual formation program to support the faculty with resources and to assure that Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars are receiving the best education possible. S/he reports particular concerns and needs to the faculty.
- The Dean of Formation works closely in course selection and other matters related to the academics. S/he assists in making decisions about degrees, adding/dropping classes, and developing a plan to complete all the course work.
- The Certified Life Coach assists in selecting courses that meet the obligations of the particular program although Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars are ultimately responsible for tracking which courses are needed for completion of their respective programs.
- The Dean of Formation is a resource for a Clergy/Seminarian/Scholar who may need to discuss his /her challenges in completing academic assignments, understanding the historical/current position or teaching in areas being discussed during classes, addressing matters related to time management, and the forming of strong study habits.
- The Dean of Formation will assist in making decisions about fulfilling degree requirements and electives, will direct the Clergy/ Seminarian /Scholar to various offices that provide academic assistance and will also discuss with professors any difficulties that are causing her/him not to meet certain expectations of a course.
- Self-Directed Studies: Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars are encouraged to make good use of their time for study and research. The seminary 's online campus includes a library, a writing resources room, a student community room for livestream discussions, a Sanctuary for reflection and private prayer, 24/7 access to review lectures...etc.

PASTORAL FORMATION (Residents)

The Pastoral Synthesis of Human, Spiritual, and Intellectual Formation

Expected Developmental Milestones for Months # 26 - # 36

'To be a true "shepherd of souls" means standing with and for Christ in the community, the Christ who teaches and sanctifies and guides or leads the community (PPF, §238).'

The aim of pastoral formation ... implies that formation must include a number of essential elements.... [PPF, §239 lists the major attributes, including]: Proclamation of the Word; The sacramental dimension; The missionary dimension; The community dimension; Skills for effective public ministry; A personal synthesis for practical use; An invitation to various practical ministry experiences, Cultural sensitivity; Religious pluralism; Formation for a particular presbyterate, the local community; The poor; Leadership development; and the cultivation of personal qualities.

As cited in Section 280 of the PPF, elements of pastoral formation include:

- 1) A missionary spirit, zeal for evangelization and ecumenical commitment.
- 2) A spirit of pastoral charity, a quest for justice and an openness to serve all people.
- 3) A special love for and commitment to the sick and suffering, the poor and outcast, prisoners, immigrants and refugees.
- 4) Demonstration of appropriate pastoral, chaplaincy, and administrative skills and competencies for ministry.
- 5) Ability to exercise leadership.
- 6) Ability to collaboratively carry out pastoral work and an appreciation for the different charisms and vocations within ministry.
- 7) The ability to work comfortably in a multicultural setting with people of different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.
- 8) A commitment to the proclamation, celebration and service of the Gospel of life.
- 9) Energy and zeal for ministry.

An Overview of Pastoral Formation

Clergy/Seminarians will complete a program of pastoral formation, which is "the culmination of the entire formation process" (PPF 236), and which will be conducted in a way that builds upon its foundations in human, intellectual and spiritual formation. S/he will strive to grow into a shepherd -Leader. To that end s/he will attempt to achieve these goals (RF 119-124).

Many enter a ministry formation program with an already formed idea of how to carry out ministry. Some have a particular interest, skill, characteristic, or quality that somehow confirms or motivates her/his desire for ministry. The formation program helps to cultivate the skills that

are necessary for ordained ministry, while simultaneously manifesting as external and practical expressions of Christian discipleship.

‘The whole formation imparted aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. They should be trained to undertake the ministry of the Shepherd, that they may know how to represent Christ to humanity” (PDV 57).’

The ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary introduces formation in a number of ways but most particularly through the apostolic works/placement program. The seminarians are exposed to an array of ministry opportunities.

Pastoral Formation - Purpose

The purpose of formation is to learn and understand how to be a shepherd imbued with the charity of Christ, filled with a missionary spirit, and possessing pastoral competence. Skills are developed through formative, supervised experiences in ministry and reflection upon those experiences.

Pastoral Formation - Criteria

The goals and criteria for pastoral formation are outlined in Pastores Dabo Vobis (57-59) and in the Program of Ministry Formation (235-256). The ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary has implemented these goals into its pastoral formation program. The delineation of these principles seeks to achieve an objective formation of the Clergy/Seminarian/Clergy who is to cultivate certain qualifications (cf. PPF 239). Therefore, the goals of pastoral formation are:

- To promote growth as mature persons by having authentic experiences emphasizing service in Sacred Activism and Social Justice as basic preparation for ministry.
- To expose Himself/Herself, to the challenges of everyday, ordinary life, considering the varied situations in society especially the condition of minorities, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, and the homeless.
- To acquaint Herself/Himself with the rich diversity of ethnic and racial life considering the social and geographic situations of the local Church.
- To imbue in the discernment and formation the ecclesial dimension of pastoral service so as to demonstrate the integration of social service to the wider pastoral mission of ministry, and thus avoid a reductionist view of ministry to simply social service.

Pastoral Formation – Seminarian Goals

The ministry formation program seeks to prepare Clergy/Seminarians /Scholars for ordained ministry and ongoing formation after ordination, hence, completing their formation ought to be persons who:

- 1) Develop basic skills often related to human formation for effective ministry to people;
- 2) Have an initiation into and understanding of practical, pastoral experiences.
- 3) Understand the ecclesial nature and purpose of apostolic service/placement and its relationship to the overall good of the Church;
- 4) Cultivate a preferential love for the poor;
- 5) Are able to emphasize the Word of God in ministry as it is contained in the sacred scriptures and Tradition of the Church as authentically interpreted by the teaching faculty within the structure of Vatican II.
- 6) Possess a missionary motivation or quality for ministry;
- 7) Understand the communal and collaborative nature of ministry;
- 8) Are beginning to cultivate mature leadership skills in dealing with people in the proper and appropriate way as one who represents Christ and the Church.
- 9) Appreciate how all ministry relates to the vision of the bishop, the chief shepherd of the local Church.

Pastoral Formation Goal 1:

Servant-Leadership in the Model of Jesus Christ

Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars will have demonstrated in their apostolates and field assignments the ability to carry out ministry with a generous spirit, serving the needs of the faithful selflessly, and the ability to lead others. Being a “servant” presumes serving unconditionally and without reservation. Being a “leader”, s/he recognizes that Jesus Christ is the High Priest to whom all people are called to serve.’

Pastoral Formation Goal 2:

Responsible as Public Person in the Church

Clergy/Seminarians/Scholars are expected to have cultivated their human formation in such a way that they can represent the Church in the public square in a mature, balanced, and joyful manner. This precludes the development of social skills, the ability to discern how the Gospel can be preached in public settings, and how to proclaim the teachings of the Church appropriately, boldly, and with compassion that is rooted in the servant-Leader.

Pastoral Formation Goal 3:

Ministry Pastoral Charity

Clergy/Seminarians will have demonstrated an authentic zeal for the salvation of souls rooted in love and justice. This presumes that seminarians are free from any hindrances or obstacles that would prevent them from bi-vocational ministry. Clergy, seminarians, will have developed a true ministry spirituality (or one that reflects their religious community) in which, as shepherds, they are able to live and love among the faithful without prejudice, conditions, or personal expectations.

Pastoral Formation Goal 4:

Skill-Set for Interfaith/multi-Faith/ Multi-Cultural Ministry

To the best of his/her ability, the Clergy/Seminarian will have developed the appropriate skills necessary to serve the faithful and will therefore have pursued courses and placement that have exposed him/her to the array of ministry settings that include the diversity of peoples, the various cultural settings, and who comprises the People of God in the local Church.

Pastoral Formation Goal 5:

Skills for Collaborative Ministry

Ministry at Grace is exercised in the name of Sacred Activism and Social Justice; therefore Clergy/Seminarians will have developed the necessary skills to work with the laity, both men and women, with professionally trained staff, with volunteers, with people of all ages who are involved with ministry. They will be required to have demonstrated a collaborative attitude and a collaborative ministry with the non-ordained prior to ordination to Professional Ministry / Permanent Deacon/Priest.

Pastoral Formation Goal 6:

Thorough Grasp of Safe-Environment Practices

In order to provide a safe environment for all in life, s/he will not only be in conformity with all safe environment policies and practices, but also be thoroughly fluent in the implementation of all safe environment policies so that s/he is prepared immediately to exercise ministry in an environment in which all the faithful, particularly children and vulnerable adults, are able to be ministered to without any concern for their safety.

Pastoral Formation Goal 7:

Skill-Set for Leadership and Administration

In addition to the teaching and celebrating the rites and rituals of the ordained ministry, the Clergy/Seminarian will exercise the munus regendi of pastoral ministry having developed a skill set appropriate to his/her status of ministry formation. S/he should therefore have a basic understanding of parish temporalities in order that s/he can assist the pastor and the leadership of the ministry if requested.

Pastoral Formation - Components

- “Every seminary is required to offer a coordinated program of formation that forms candidates for the ministry who are able to support men and women in answering the universal call to holiness” (PPF 242).
- Apostolic placements should progress “from simpler experience with limited objectives for beginners to more complex involvements for experienced students” (PPF 184).
- “Pastoral Formation cannot be reduced to a mere apprenticeship, aiming to make the candidate familiar with some pastoral techniques. The seminary which educates must seek, really and truly, to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his/her responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities, and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work” (PPF 397).

SEMINARIANS IN HOLY ORDERS **FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE / PRIESTLY FORMATION IN APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION**

During the Pastoral Synthesis stage of formation, the Permanent Deacon will progressively hone, exercise, and expand his/her gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Theological Reflection for Pastoral Discernment

The permanent deacon will demonstrate his/her ability to bring a theological reflection in all pastoral experiences so that his/her ministry will be exercised in fidelity to the Gospel with a true pastoral charity thus avoiding relativism, syncretism, and poor pastoral practices that do not reflect the teachings of the Church.

To Love Unconditionally - Agape

The permanent deacon will have appropriated the maturity, boundaries, and motivation to love unconditionally, as a chaste minister, the faithful with generosity.

Ongoing Spiritual Direction

The permanent deacon, will have designed an initial plan for ongoing spiritual formation including the preliminary selection of a spiritual director/confessor and identification of resources for spiritual development.

Teacher

The permanent deacon will have developed the capacity to teach, preach and minister in fidelity to the richness of Divine Revelation.

Speaker

The permanent deacon will have developed the capacity to speak persuasively, with clarity, and with charity as a pastoral theologian and pastoral minister.

Listener

The permanent deacon will have developed the skills of pastoral listening, pastoral discernment, ability to hear others as they speak of their pastoral concern, and to guide others in their life conversion, teaching at a level that others can understand.

Homiletics

The permanent deacon will have developed the capacity for ongoing intellectual formation having identified the primary resources s/he will practically use for his/her homiletic preparations, for theological consultation, and frequent reference responding to foundational, non-complex, pastoral situations.

Faithful in Prayer

The permanent deacon will have developed fidelity to the rubrics, rites, and rituals of the Church that enable his/her commitment to public and private prayer. S/he will have demonstrated initial styles appropriate to leading the faithful in prayer.

Proven Virtuous Living

A permanent deacon will understand and manifest the theological and cardinal virtues of hope, faith, love, temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice in the parish assignment and then back in the seminary. S/he will be a model for other seminarians of how integrated formation results in virtuous living (RF 93).

Personal Health for Ministerial Living

A permanent deacon maintains a balanced life with time for prayer, rest, study, exercise, and faithful stewardship of the Church's goods. Caring for oneself disposes the deacon for a ministry life and ministry that offers the People of God a joyful, healthy minister.

A Bridge for Safe Passage

A permanent deacon will demonstrate that s/he can relate to others as a bridge rather than obstacles in their relationship with Christ and that his leadership will serve the People of God and the greater good (PPF 76, 92, 260, 261, and 280).

Accepting the New Role

A permanent deacon will manifest a high level of understanding of what it means to be a spiritual parent and pastoral leader while respecting the rights and roles of the lay faithful, embracing a collaborative style of ministry, and exercising pastoral authority appropriate to his/her role as a priest (PPF-280).

Offering of the Self as a Gift

Completing seminary formation, the permanent deacon will have developed self-mastery, personal virtue, self-knowledge, and the ability to offer his/her life as self-gift in ordained ministry.

Ministry on the Peripheries / Margins

The permanent deacon will integrate his/her ministry and service with expressions of agape and caritas for the poor, interacts with those on the margins, and demonstrates pastoral discernment capabilities to minister in the peripheries.

Theology

Pastoral Synthesis

The Transitional Diaconate in Apostolic Succession

During the Pastoral Synthesis stage of formation, the transitional deacon will focus his/her human development on learning to accompany those s/he serves in ministry as an ordained minister. S/he will strive for appropriate transparency, strengthening her/his self-knowledge, self-possession, and understanding of her/his life as self-gift. Such a perspective will bring the transitional deacon to a balanced sense of self-respect for her/himself and others, leading her/him to greater awareness of each person's talents and ability to coordinate these gifts at the service of the Church and mission or the Father (RF 94).

In her/his human development, the transitional deacon will focus on strengthening his/her personal rule of life to ensure s/he maintains a balanced life with time for prayer, rest, study, exercise, and faithful stewardship. The transitional deacon will focus on strengthening her/his missionary zeal by exercising humility and pastoral authority in her/his pastoral responsibilities so that s/he can fulfill her/his call to fruitful ministry and spiritual parenthood (RF 33).

Additionally, the transitional deacon will strive to develop and maintain the virtues that are necessary for fulltime ministry including the virtues of hope, faith, charity, prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude (RF 93). Thus, during the Pastoral Synthesis stage, the transitional deacon will strengthen his /her ability to live as a person for others in his/her vocation as an ordained minister. In this way, the transitional deacon will strive to develop wholesome, healthy, professional, and appropriate relationships with all those s/he will encounter (RF 100).

The Transitional Deacon Spiritual Formation

During the Pastoral Synthesis stage of formation, the transitional deacon will focus his/her spiritual development on strengthening his/her personal relationship with Christ and strengthen his /her ability to help others to do the same (RF 102). In this way, the transitional deacon will strive to live out his/her commitment to lifelong daily prayer and ongoing conversion. S/he will ensure his /her prayers includes participation in public and private prayer, in actions such as praying the Divine Office, adoration, Lectio Divina, and the rosary (RF 105). Moreover, the transitional deacon will ensure his/her prayer is grounded in the Word of God and expressed in the participation in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist - the source and summit of our worship (RF 103-104).

During this stage of formation, the transitional deacon will reflect on the gifts and responsibilities s/he received at diaconate ordination and those to be given at ministry ordination. The transitional deacon will also reflect on the liturgical actions of the ordained deacon and work to better fulfill this role as a liturgical leader. The transitional deacon will also demonstrate /her his obedient heart and capacity for happily living out this promise. S/he will strengthen her/his commitment to the virtue of chastity and a commitment to chasteness by guarding against unhealthy relationship and strengthening his /her capacity for fruitful solitude. During this stage of formation, the transitional deacon will strengthen his/her commitment to the theological and cardinal virtues and strive for simplicity of life and to become more like the Good Shepherd who leads the flock home.

Transitional Diaconate - Intellectual Formation

During the Pastoral Synthesis stage, intellectual formation moves towards synthesis. Thus, intellectual formation moves from a silo approach to a more integrated approach; from mastering segmented areas of pre-theology to a more integrated, applied, and articulated approach directed towards pastoral ministry. Wherein the prior stages of formation emphasized a developing solid competency in the individual areas of formation, the focus here is on a synthesis of intellectual formation towards ministry.

The goal of intellectual synthesis is that the transitional deacon strengthens his/her ability to make use of the fullness of Divine Revelation formed in Scripture and Tradition that impacts his/her preaching, teaching, and ministry. Thus, intellectual formation at this stage guides the transitional deacon to become more proficient as a pastoral theologian and pastoral minister. The curriculum during this stage includes pastoral ministry, theological course work, sacramental practicum classes, pastoral seminars, and theological reflection.

The methodology of theological reflection guides the transitional deacon to improve pastoral listening skills, pastoral discernment, and improve his/her ability to proclaim the appropriate aspects of revelation and tradition to those s/he serves at a level they can understand. His/her pastoral experiences along with theological reflection will help the transitional deacon to teach, preach, and minister persuasively; with clarity and charity.

**During the Pastoral Synthesis Stage of Formation,
the Transitional Deacon will progressively hone, exercise,
and expand his/her gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

Alter Christus

A transitional deacon will manifest fundamental characteristics of one who identifies him/herself with Christ as a loving shepherd who brings life to others as a proclaimer of the Word, celebrant of the sacraments, and pastoral leader among the People of God.

Living an Integrated Rule of Life

A transitional deacon will demonstrate that s/he has taken responsibility for her/his formation, with accurate self-awareness, and a disciplined plan to live out the gifts and responsibilities of ordained ministry. S/he has lived the demands of both seminary formation and ministry with a balanced human formation synthesis (PPF 85, 87, 275).

Proven Virtuous Living

A transitional deacon will understand and manifest the theological and cardinal virtues of hope, faith, love, temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice in the parish assignment and then back in the seminary. S/he will be a model for other seminarians of how integrated formation results in virtuous living (RF 93).

Personal Health for Ministerial Living

A transitional deacon maintains a balanced life with time for prayer, rest, study, exercise, and faithful stewardship of the Church's goods. Caring for oneself disposes the deacon for a ministry life and ministry that offers the People of God a joyful, healthy minister.

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A transitional deacon will demonstrate that s/he can relate to others as a bridge rather than obstacles in their relationship with Christ and that his leadership will serve the People of God and the greater good (PPF 76, 92, 260, 261, and 280).

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A transitional deacon will manifest a high level of understanding of what it means to be a spiritual parent and pastoral leader while respecting the rights and roles of the lay faithful, embracing a collaborative style of ministry, and exercising pastoral authority appropriate to his/her role as a priest (PPF-280).

Ministry on the Peripheries / Margins

A transitional deacon will integrate his/her ministry and service with expressions of agape and caritas for the poor, interacts with those on the margins, and demonstrates pastoral discernment capabilities to minister in the peripheries.

Helping Others in the Spiritual Life

A transitional deacon will focus his/her spiritual development on strengthening his /her personal relationship with Christ and strengthening his /her ability to help others to grow in their relationship with Christ. S/he should be able to assist newer seminarians at the seminary as well as discern how as a priest s/he will assist the lay faithful in their spiritual development (RF 102).

A Public Person of Prayer

A transitional deacon will strengthen his/her leadership for public and private prayer, and s/he will ensure his/her personal prayer is grounded in the Word of God and expressed in the participation in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. His/her spirituality will have developed so that his /her prayer is oriented to and on behalf of the People of God. (RF 103-104).

An Integrated Life of Obedience

A transitional deacon will demonstrate the capacity for happily living out the promise or obedience both in the seminary community and his/her readiness for ministry (PPF 90-102).

A Lifestyle of Freedom for Ministry

A transitional deacon will demonstrate the capacity for living out the promise of simplicity of life in the management of his/her person affairs, detachment from material goods, and a general disposition of cheerful readiness to serve the People of God without the hindrances of unnecessary, superficial, “things” (PPF 90-102).

Love of God and Neighbor

A transitional deacon will strengthen his/her commitment to the virtue of chastity and his /her commitment to chasteness having cultivated a deep spiritual life of charity thirsting for the love of God in his/her ministry to the Church living out faithfully and generously the theological and cardinal virtues (PPF 90-102).

Faithful in Prayer

The transitional deacon will have developed fidelity to the rubrics, rites, and rituals of the Church that enable his/her commitment to public and private prayer. S/he will have demonstrated initial styles appropriate to leading the faithful in prayer.

A Cultivated Spiritual Identity

The transitional deacon will have cultivated a diocesan or religious life spirituality that enables him/her to have an appropriate spiritual identity supporting his/her ministry to serve the People of God. The transitional deacon will have developed the ability to live out his /her personal relationship Jesus and the capacity to lead others to Christ evident in the way s/he interacts with seminarians, the leadership s/he provides in the seminary, and the zeal of his/her preaching. S/he will have been faithful to the promise of the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Theology Year
MINISTRY FORMATION
Ordained Priesthood-Apostolic Succession
An overview of Ministry Formation

AGENTS OF THE MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

The Holy Spirit and the Seminarian

The Holy Spirit

“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of formation allowing and providing all the graces needed to be formed after that of Christ, the Good Shepherd. A spirit of humility in a seminarian is a clear sign of how that seminarian has embraced the Cross and has gained a true freedom to follow the formation program.

To this end, everyone engaged in the work of ministry formation discerns the ways in which the Holy Spirit is teaching and guiding us to becoming Servants of God.

The Seminarian

“All formation, ministry formation included, is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons” (PDV 69).

The seminarian demonstrates “his/her own convinced and heartfelt cooperation in this work of formation” (PDV 69) by active participation in all areas of the seminary program.

Ministry formation recognizes that a seminarian is a “mystery to the self” in which s/he possesses talents and gifts that have been molded by the grace of God while also one who is marked by limitations and frailty.

The goal of ministry formation is to integrate the aspects of a seminarian’s formation in a journey of faith and of gradual and harmonious maturity, avoiding fragmentation, polarization, excesses, superficiality or partiality. The art of integration therefore includes a period of testing, maturing, and discernment by both the seminarian and the Church (cf. Ratio 28)

Ministry Formation – Criteria

The ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary seeks to prepare seminarians for ordained ministry and ongoing formation after ordination.

Seminarians completing their formation at Grace Theological Seminary ought to be persons who:

- Evidence an ability to learn and value knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of ministry;
- Possess the readiness and capacity to become learned individuals;
- Participate in class and coursework to their full potential and have the ability to meet the minimum standards for all courses;
- Appreciate intellectual pursuits marked by motivation, application, thoroughness, consistency, and soundness of judgment;
- Have the ability to engage in intelligent discussion, discern issues, grasp details, and master concepts;
- Possess the capacity to think and use ideas and concepts in the disciplines of liberal studies;
- Can integrate knowledge both conceptually and practically;
- Have the ability to reflect critically on their own experience and make reasoned, prudential judgments.

Ministry Formation – Seminarian Goals

Appreciate and love the sacred liturgy of the Church

Cultivate a Eucharistic spirituality

Foster a regular practice of the sacrament of penance

Are faithful in their prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours

Can hear and receive the Word of God (lectio divina)

Revere and love the feminine divine of God

Have formed a habit of daily, personal meditation

Assimilate the mystery of Christ with devotional prayer

Understands the dimensions of an ecclesial ministry spirituality

Ministry Formation Goal:

A Healthy Integration of all Ministry Formation

Seminarians will complete a program of ministry formation that reflects an appropriate integration between human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation toward the end of configuring the seminarian to Jesus Christ for ministry in the Church (PPF 16- 7, 22-26, 74ff, 139, 164).

The life of the priest radiates the identity of being a priest in the image of Jesus Christ. The fundamental relationship that the seminarian comes to cultivate with Christ is that of recognizing the Lord as being Head and Shepherd of his Church (cf. PPF 30-32). The tria munera charge of the priest, the munus docendi, munus sanctificandi, and munus regendi is the life and ministry of the priest. It is for this reason that the seminarian begins to live a life of Gospel radicalism in order that the faithful can see in the priest a true representation of Christ, as Head and Shepherd of the Church.

The ministry formation program must challenge the seminarian to embrace the radicalism of the Gospel in living the evangelical counsels of obedience, chasteness, and poverty (cf. PPF 90-102). Each of these counsels has an apostolic, communal and pastoral character that challenges the seminarian to orient her/his life to service of the People of God.

The ministry formation program keeps the seminarian focused on the person of Jesus Christ in the way he lived his earthly life. The disciplines of the spiritual life connect directly to how Jesus conducted himself particularly in his relationship with the Father and those whom he encountered.

To live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit is far more than a personal or individual relationship with the Lord; it is also a communion with the Church, which is his body (PPF 108).

During the Pastoral Synthesis Stage of Formation, the Transitional Deacon will progressively hone, exercise, and expand his/her gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Offering of the Self as a Gift

Completing seminary formation, the candidate for priesthood will have developed self-mastery, personal virtue, self-knowledge, and the ability to offer his/her life as self-gift in ordained ministry.

A Rule of Life

Completing seminary formation, the candidate for priesthood will have developed a personal rule of life suited for ordained ministry.

Spiritual Parenthood

Completing seminary formation, the candidate for priesthood will have cultivated her/his human development to embrace the identity of spiritual parenthood.

Pastoral Leadership Skills

Completing seminary formation, the candidate for priesthood will have developed pastoral leadership skills appropriate for a newly ordained priest to exercise in order that s/he is a bridge to Jesus Christ and not an obstacle.

Ars Celebrandi

Completing seminary formation, the candidate for priesthood will have developed competent liturgical leadership skills (ars celebrandi)

Ministry Consciousness of the Church

“Reference to the Church is therefore necessary, even if it is not primary, in defining the identity of the priest” (PDV 12). Ministry formation attempts to form in the seminarian a healthy sense of ecclesial communio, the multitude of relationships that a priest is necessarily involved in. “The Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesiological foundations give us a sense of the nature, mission, and ministry of priests. It is important, however, to add that these foundations only become real and operative in a presbyterate in communion with its bishop” (PPF 18).

Because of the strong emphasis on individualism that is so dominant in the culture of the United States and because a diminished Catholic culture, the seminarian who lives in the circumstances of the present day can nurture a false understanding of spirituality which places oneself in a relationship with the Lord apart from the Church herself who is the Body of Christ (cf. PPF 108). In developing relationships, it must be noted that special caution in observing “boundaries” is necessary in mature relationships.

“Like every authentically Christian spiritual life, the spiritual life of the priest has an essential and undeniable ecclesial dimension which is a sharing in the holiness of the Church herself” (PDV 31). Ministry formation is to foster the seminarian’s appreciation of and dedication to the particular church of which s/he is a part. This involves his/her relationship to his/her bishop and the local presbyterate.

“The priest’s relationship with his/her bishop in the one presbyterate, his/her sharing in the bishop’s ecclesial concern, and his/her devotion to the evangelical care of the People of God in the specific historical and contextual conditions of a particular Church are elements which must be taken into account in sketching the proper configuration of the priest and his /her spiritual life” (PDV 31).

These ecclesial foundations of priesthood must be incorporated into the ministry formation program in order that the seminarian be properly disposed to exercising pastoral ministry with the mind of the Church. The ministry of the priest is exercised entirely in the name of the Church and in collaboration with the bishop who charges the priest with a particular assignment (cf. PPF 18).

The seminarian comes to understand that participation in the priesthood of Christ cannot be separated from his/her relationship to the bishop. “Through the priesthood of the bishop, the priesthood of the second order is incorporated into the apostolic structure of the Church. In this way priests, like the apostles, act as ambassadors of Christ” (PDV 16).

In a certain sense, therefore, ministry formation will always have an ecclesial orientation and will take the interests of a particular church to heart since it is to and for that church that a seminarian is preparing for ordination. Ecclesial orientation also includes a pursuit of skills necessary for ministry in the world and society.

FORMATION

Each Seminarian is Responsible for His / Her Own Formation

1. Seminarians will demonstrate that they have taken responsibility for their formation, with accurate self-awareness, and a disciplined plan of living (PPF 85, 87, 275).
2. Seminarians will show from their formation plans and the focus of their sessions with formation advisers that they have taken responsibility to do the work of formation with humility and openness (PPF 80:4-6).
3. Seminarians will take deliberate steps toward reaching a high level of accurate self- knowledge regarding their physical, mental, and emotional health, with a readiness to seek appropriate help in any area of need that comes to light (PPF 80, 86, 88, 93 280a-3, 4, 6).
4. Seminarians will work out a personal weekly plan that shows how their use of time and energy is effectively directed toward their formation goals and areas physical, mental, and emotional health most in need of growth (PPF 89, 280a-5).

Formation Plan

The formation plan is distributed by the Rector at the beginning of each academic year.

It serves as an essential structure that supports the dialogue between the seminarian and his /her Dean of Formation.

The plan affords the seminarian with the ability to identify personal goals and specific measurable objectives, directed toward growth in the four areas of ministry formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral). To each of these goals and accompanying objectives, the seminarian relates his/ her specific strengths and gifts that s/he perceives s/he may use to achieve her/his goals and objectives.

How does the Seminarian develop the Formation Plan?

Because the seminarian is ultimately responsible for her/his own formation, s/he should prayerfully consider her/his priorities. S/he works personally for her/his own formation in dialogue with others:

- Discerning with the Holy Spirit;
- Considering her/his relationship with the bishop/religious superior as well as with the director of vocations;
- Considering the relationships at the seminary with the Rector, Dean of Formation, Spiritual Director, Certified Life Coach Faculty, Lecturers, peers,
- Considering the relationships with family, friends, pastor, other priests

Using the formation plan the seminarian sets realistic personal priorities and identifies the concrete means to achieve them. In this way the seminarian establishes a clear reference point for self-evaluation as s/he monitors her/his integral formation moving towards full human maturity and maturity of faith. With her/his Dean of Formation and Certified Life Coach in the external forum and with her/his Spiritual Director in the internal forum, the seminarian revisits her/his formation plan throughout the year.

In drawing up her/his formation plan, the seminarian reviews her/his previous plan, as well as the end-of-year self-evaluation and Dean of Formation and Certified Life Coach report. The seminarian takes into account comments from the faculty, along with assessments of her/his apostolic work assignment and pastoral placements.

In consultation with her/his Spiritual Director, the seminarian proposes appropriate goals and objectives for her/his level of formation to her/his Dean of Formation and Certified Life Coach. The seminarian will consider her/his readiness to receive the minor orders and be admitted to candidacy, and ordination to the diaconate and priesthood. Her/his goals and objectives therefore ought to be practical, discernible, measurable and achievable.

Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluations are valuable instruments for both the seminarian who reflects on her/his own growth and for the faculty who has the opportunity to hear from the seminarian where s/he is at in the discernment process.

Seminarians are to approach such evaluations with a candid examination of their concrete behaviors, demonstrate their professional and academic competence, discuss strengths and weaknesses, and identify areas of needed growth in spiritual and moral practice. It is the responsibility of the seminarian to demonstrate positive qualities that recommend her/his continuance in the program.

The completion of the self-evaluation tool should involve both the Spiritual Director and Dean of Formation.

The Rector will provide each seminarian the instrument they are to use in completing the self-evaluation. After consultation with the Dean of Formation and Spiritual Director the self-evaluation is submitted to the Rector Office for distribution to the Certified Life Coach.

Faculty Evaluation

“Each seminary must provide a procedure for the evaluation of the seminarians. As part of this procedure, each seminary should ensure that as many faculty as possible are engaged in this process; that the seminarians are apprised of their progress as early as possible in their formation, particularly if there are concerns; that the Dean of Formation regularly communicates with the seminarian; that the seminarians have a procedure for responding to matters raised in the evaluation process; that confidentiality, as articulated by the seminary, is observed; and that all doubts are resolved in favor of the Church. The process of evaluation should be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. It should promote the continued growth of the seminarian in the four dimensions of formation” (PPF 274).

Because formation and growth are gradual processes, the continuing evaluation of

seminarians is necessary. Seminarian's profit most from a system of periodic evaluation in which they receive clear and accurate information about their behavior and attitudes so they can change and correct what is inappropriate and develop those areas of weakness.

The evaluation of seminarians is the primary responsibility of the faculty under the direction of the Rector. The Rector will explain before each evaluation period the process used by the faculty in determining how the evaluation process unfolds.

At Grace Theological Seminary, the seminarians participate in the periodic review at the conclusion of the academic year or shortly before Christmas. The periodic review includes both the self-evaluation of the seminarian and observations made by the faculty.

The evaluation process should be approached by both seminarians and faculty members in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence. Since information is regularly exchanged between the Dean of Formation and seminarian, the evaluation is an opportunity for the faculty to offer its unified support and share common concerns.

Evaluation Conference

The Rector will convene a meeting of the Dean of Formations to discuss the self-evaluations already submitted and then prepare a general review of each seminarian. S/he will schedule appropriate times for the advisor-seminarian conference.

Prior to the conference the Dean of Formation will share with the seminarian the general thoughts of the faculty so that the seminarian can be prepared to offer insights regarding his/her formation and discernment.

During the advisor-seminarian conference each advisor shares their evaluation of the seminarian in the context of commendations, observations and recommendations. The seminarian is given opportunity to briefly respond to this evaluation or make any comments s/he feels necessary.

The Dean of Formation compiles a written summary of the faculty evaluation for each seminarian. These written summaries are shared with the seminarian by his Dean of Formation. The evaluation becomes part of the seminarian's personnel file.

Any seminarian can meet with the Rector to receive clarification about any concerns the faculty may have with a seminarian's progress in the ministry formation program.

Faculty Vote

The faculty conducts an annual voting session on each seminarian, and they are obliged to work toward a consensus judgment about the seminarians they are asked to evaluate. The faculty vote assists the seminarian's bishop or religious superior, who must make the final judgment on a seminarian's readiness to advance to the next level of formation, receive the minor orders, be admitted to candidacy, and eventually to be called to Holy Orders.

Since there is a process of growth or a "gradualism" as candidates mature, the votes of the faculty are based on where seminarians ought to be at their particular stage of formation. Seminarians who consistently meet the benchmarks of a particular stage of formation are to be promoted to the next level. Sometimes seminarians develop difficulties or actually regress in the formation process, and this will naturally be reflected in future faculty votes.

The possible votes for advancement in formation, or promotion to Holy Orders are: "yes," "yes, with reservation," "no" or "abstain." When voting on candidates one must vote either yes or no. Reasons for the no vote must be clear, objective, and substantive.

A "yes" vote means that a seminarian has fulfilled the basic expectations of her/his level of formation, and is ready to advance to the next stage of formation. There may well be areas where improvement is needed, but they do not pertain to a fundamental quality needed for ordination. In their written observations about a seminarian, such areas for growth are to be pointed out by the faculty.

There is also the option for the faculty to record a formal reservation with their “yes” votes. A formal reservation is an acknowledgment by one or more faculty members that there is a serious deficiency in the seminarian’s formation that could call into question suitability for ordination. It is an affirmative vote in the sense that the faculty believes that a candidate has the basic qualities to advance to the next level of formation. However, the seminarian needs to address and overcome the stated deficiencies to receive a positive vote for advancement in the future.

Because the distinction between an area for improvement for growth and a reservation is not always clear, faculty are to raise their concerns in the discussion with seminarians and then in writing describe the nature of their reservation(s).

Faculty members cannot register a “yes with reservation” vote for seminarians being presented as candidates for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood. The vote must be a “yes” or a “no.”

A “no” vote means that at this time a seminarian should not advance to the next level of formation because there are serious deficiencies in one or more areas of formation, and it is doubtful that these problems can be remedied within the seminary formation context.

Keeping in mind the levels of formation, a “no” vote signifies that a seminarian has not achieved the most basic expectations and should not advance.

If there is a majority negative vote by the faculty, the Rector reports this to the Dean of Formation. The bishop may want to discuss with faculty any further course of action, such as the recommendation of a pastoral year, counseling, or leaving the seminary all together.

Faculty must state in writing the reasons for their negative vote.

“Abstain” means that a faculty member has a serious reason for not voting affirmatively or negatively; such as, a lack of knowledge of the seminarian, or the fact that s/he has been the seminarian’s Spiritual Director. This vote would be rare since faculty are to

know the seminarians and it is the responsibility of the faculty to know the seminarian or at least rely on the information/judgement of the seminarian's Dean of Formation.

The vote is to be recorded and documented in the seminarian's formation report by the Dean of Formation writing the evaluation report.

Dean of Formation's Report

According to the timetable established by the Rector each formation advisor composes a written end-of-year evaluation of each of his/her faculty. The evaluation is prepared using the template provided by the Rector.

In drawing up this evaluation, the Dean of Formation takes the following into account:

Individual formation meetings with the advisee

Formation plan

Peer evaluations (informal)

Reports from the Dean of Formation

Self-evaluation by the seminarian

Formation reviews by other formators

Feedback from professors and teachers

Faculty interviews (when applicable)

The Dean of Formation incorporates into the conclusion of the evaluation the faculty vote and a summary of the comments of the faculty. Once the final draft of the evaluation is completed, the Dean of Formation meets with the seminarian to discuss the contents of the evaluation. The seminarian signs the evaluation signifying that s/he has in fact read the evaluation, not that s/he necessarily agrees with it.

The Dean of Formation provides three original and signed copies of the seminarian's evaluation to the Rector's office. One set of originals is kept on file in the Rector office, the other two are sent to the seminarian, and the seminarian's Bishop, religious superior, or vocation director as per authorized.

The Dean of Formation makes photocopies for his /her own file and for distribution to the Rector and the seminarian in an envelope.

Formational Probation

In addition to the academic probation that is outlined earlier in this resource, the faculty reserves the right to declare a seminarian on formational probation.

Such probation arises when the conduct of a seminarian causes sufficient concern to the faculty that a declaration of this seriousness is warranted. This states that while the deportment or activity is not of itself sufficient to warrant dismissal from the ministry formation program, its continuance may result in such dismissal.

In all cases of formational probation, the seminarian will be given the specific reasons for this action and the specific changes that are required. The Dean of Formation will also be notified.

Normally, seminarians are given one term to correct the condition out of which formational probation has arisen. If after the course of one term the condition has not been corrected, the seminarian is liable for dismissal from ministry formation.

Withdrawal from the Program

A seminarian who decides to withdraw from ministry formation is expected to have thoroughly discussed this decision with his /her Spiritual Director, Certified Life Coach, Dean of Formation, and the Rector.

When a final decision has been reached, the seminarian is expected to state this fact in writing and offer appropriate reasons for the decision. This written notice of withdrawal is to be given personally to the Rector and will be placed in the seminarian's personnel file.

The process of discernment may also include a mutual decision between the seminarian and faculty concluding the seminarian is not called to the priesthood or at least is not prepared to continue in the GTS formation program. The seminarian will still be asked to state in writing his/her decision to withdraw from the program.

The Rector will discuss with the seminarian the best way to communicate this decision to the rest of the seminary community. In such cases, the Rector as the final decision regarding the process of communication so as not to disrupt the community.

Dismissal from the Program

The faculty may determine after thorough discussion the dismissal of a seminarian from the ministry formation program.

The decision for dismissal will be conveyed to the seminarian by the Rector with at least one additional faculty member present. At that meeting the seminarian will be given the specific reasons why this action is taking place.

The seminarian will also be given a written statement of the decision, a copy of which will also be placed in the seminarian's personnel file.

The Dean of Formation will be notified immediately when a seminarian is being terminated from the program.

Advancement in the Program

At the conclusion of each academic year, in the self-evaluation process, the seminarian will be asked to describe his/her discernment and indicate to the faculty his willingness to continue in the formation program. The Dean of Formation will already have prepared the seminarian to respond accordingly.

The faculty will offer a vote recommending if the seminarian should advance to the next year of formation. The vote is to be recorded. The vote is a recommendation since the Rector makes the final determination.

If the faculty determines the seminarian should be dismissed, the above procedures will be followed. Otherwise, the Dean of Formation will confirm the faculty's decision to advance the seminarian to the next stage of the formation program when reviewing the report of the evaluation with the seminarian.

Seminarian Appeals Process

If the seminarian disagrees with a matter of fact or judgment within the written evaluation or any other aspect of the evaluation process s/he will first seek resolution with her/his Dean of Formation.

If a resolution is not possible between the Dean of Formation and the seminarian, the seminarian may then appeal to the Rector. The Rector will handle all appeals of this nature and who makes the final decision on the matter.

The final evaluation of the Dean of Formation will then be revised to incorporate the fact and description of the appeal, and the Rector's decision.

Records and Files

All application materials related to the ministry formation program at Grace Theological Seminary is the property of the seminary.

If a seminarian is dismissed from the program the Rector has discretion in determining what materials, if any, can be returned to the seminarian. No information, however, can be released to any party outside the seminary without the consent of the Rector.

All psychological documents and transcripts of seminarians cannot be released without the permission of the seminarian or former seminarian and the Rector.

All official personnel files are maintained in the Office of the Rector. Only the Rector along with support staff, have access to personnel files. The Registrar's office maintains the academic files of all seminarians.

Access to Files

For those applying for acceptance to Grace Theological Seminary, access to one's file may be obtained by appointment with the Rector.

For those currently enrolled as a seminarian access to one's file may be obtained by appointment with the Rector.

For those who have discontinued as seminarians at Grace Theological Seminary, access to one's file may be obtained by appointment with the Rector.

In all cases, a seminarian or former seminarian may not remove anything from their file or photocopy any of the materials. The seminarian or former seminarian has the right to attach to any document contained in one's file any explanation or clarification deemed necessary or desirable. Excluded from review are documents (particularly recommendations submitted) given by the faculty with the specific understanding they remain confidential.

Protection of Information Policy

Grace Theological Seminary has the responsibility for supervising access to and/or release of official data/information about seminarians. Certain items of information about individual seminarians are fundamental to the education process and must be recorded. This recorded information concerning seminarians must be used only for clearly defined purposes, must be safeguarded and controlled to avoid violations of personal privacy, and must be appropriately disposed of when justification for its collection and retention no longer exists.

In this regard, Grace Theological Seminary is committed to protecting to the maximum extent possible the right of privacy of all the individuals about whom it holds information, records, and files. Access to and release of such records is restricted to the seminarian concerned, to others with the seminarian's written consent, to officials within the school, to a court of competent jurisdiction, and otherwise pursuant to law.

Privacy of Information

Grace Theological Seminary complies fully with the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 as amended. The act protects the confidentiality of academic files and establishes the right of seminarians to review their educational records. Confidential documents received as part of the admissions process as well as materials related to the seminarian's formation during attendance at Grace Theological Seminary are not available for review by the seminarian nor may they be released to a third party without the permission of the seminarian. All academic records and related documents remain the property of Grace Theological Seminary.

Directory Information

Grace Theological Seminary, in accordance with the FERPA Act, has designated the following information about seminarians as public (directory) information:

Name

Address (local and

home) E-mail address

Program of study, class level

Enrollment status (e.g., acceptance, full-time, part-time, withdrawn)

Major program of study

Dates of attendance

Degree(s) and awards received

Previous educational agencies / institutions attended

Diocese/Religious or Worshiping Community

Deceased status

Record hold(s)

Directory information may be disclosed by Grace Theological Seminary for any purpose at its discretion without the consent of the seminarian. The seminary restricts such disclosures to those with legitimate ecclesiastical, educational, or legal interest.

Directory information is not released to outside parties for commercial use. A seminarian, however, has the right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information by filing a written notice to this effect with the Rectors office.

Respect for Equality/Nondiscrimination Policy

Grace Theological Seminary adheres to the principle of equal educational and employment opportunities without regard to race, sex, color, creed, age, disability, or national origin. This policy extends to all programs and activities supported by the seminary including hiring, training, promoting, salaries, transfers, and working conditions. In addition, Grace Theological Seminary conscientiously seeks to comply with all applicable legislation concerning nondiscrimination in employment practices and in development of personnel. This pertains to the protection of faculty and student rights of privacy and access of information concerning accommodations for the handicapped.

Bearing in mind that language reflects, reinforces and creates social reality, the seminary expects class conversation and written work to employ language that respects the equal dignity and worth of all human beings. Grace Theological Seminary believes in the equality of all people and respects the dignity of people from all races, cultures, religions and ideological preferences.

Transcripts

No transcript will be issued until all outstanding financial obligations have been reconciled. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, transcripts are issued only at the written and signed request of the seminarian. A transcript request form can be acquired from the Rector's office. All requests for transcripts are made to the Rector's office and should include the following information:

full current name and any previous names used;

dates of attendance at GTS

date of birth

social security number

complete address

telephone number

the number of copies needed

detailed mailing instructions (name and address of the person or institution to receive the transcript) including any special handling;

full signature;

a fee of \$5.00 per transcript.

ACCREDITATION

We are committed to the belief of separation of church and state. As per requirements we have received a jurisdictional religious exemption status from the State of Florida. Please note that although we have not applied for accreditation with the United States Department of Education nor any federal agency, we are applying for candidacy status with an accreditor of private colleges.

Thus, our curriculum does not qualify the holder for a state teaching certification, nor do they qualify him or her to participate in professional licensing examinations. Any person interested in obtaining a state teaching certificate or practicing a regulated profession should contact the appropriate regulatory agency in the field of his/her interest. Transferability of credits earned at Grace Theological Seminary are transferred to another institution at the discretion of the receiving institution.



GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MINISTRY FORMATION HANDBOOK 2022-2024

