

PROGRAM FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION:

NORMS FOR SEMINARIANS

The discipline of seminary life should be regarded not only as a strong protection for Community life and charity, but as a necessary part of the complete system of training. Its purpose is to inculcate self-control, to promote solid maturity of personality and the formation of those other traits of character, which are most useful for the ordered and fruitful activity of the Church.
Optatam Totius n.11

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlotte
Charlotte, North Carolina

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I.INTRODUCTION

One of the most important tasks of the Church is the formation of her priests. The Diocese of Charlotte recognizes that seminaries are the treasure of the local Church, for in them is the future of Christ the High Priest's presence to the community. So that diocesan seminarians may have clear and consistent guidelines to accompany their priestly formation, the Diocese has undertaken the task of formulating this guide.

Seminarians will abide by the particular rules of their seminary as found in its student handbook.

II.DIOCESAN VOCATIONS BOARD

Because the Diocese of Charlotte does not possess its own seminary, it is necessary to have a stable body of people who work as an advisory body to the Director of Vocations and ultimately to the Bishop for the purpose of:

- A. Overseeing the formation of candidates for the Diocesan Priesthood.
- B. Developing and implementing policies as pertaining to seminarians for the Diocese of Charlotte.
- C. Conducting the scrutinizes prior to, and recommending candidates for:
 - Admission to the seminary
 - Admission to candidacy
 - Ordination to the Diaconate

III. PROGRAM OF STUDIES

All College seminarians will major in Philosophy. Theologians are to earn a Master of Divinity degree. In addition, theologians are expected to pursue a Master of Theology, Master of Arts, or the terminating degree, which the seminary offers. Questions regarding the earning of degrees should be directed to the Director of Vocations.

It is a policy of the Diocese of Charlotte that requirements of the [*Program of Priestly Formation*] be observed prior to being ordained to the Priesthood.

Any preparation for a specialized ministry will take place after ordination to the priesthood.

IV. TUITION POLICY

The candidate shall be advised after acceptance as to how his education will be provided for. Some college seminarians may be eligible for scholarships, grants, or financial aid

V. HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY

Candidates who are eligible for coverage under their parents' policy do so. Otherwise, the Diocese will provide health coverage

VI. SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Every seminarian will have a priest spiritual director and will meet with him at least once a month. Ordinarily, this spiritual director should be a priest on a seminary faculty or one suggested by the seminary. The Director of Vocations must approve any exception to this rule.

VII. DATING

Seminarians will not date. Further, they will live a chaste personal life and be modest in dress, manner and speech.

VIII. ATTIRE

- Seminarians will be neat and well groomed at all times.
- Jewelry such as earrings, rings, etc. is not permitted.
- The formal dress for all college and pre-theology seminarians will be determined by the seminary which they attend. If the seminarian receives a summer pastoral assignment within the Diocese, he may wear the Roman Collar. A cassock, collar, and surplice are to be worn when assisting and participating at Diocesan ceremonies.
- The formal dress for non-ordained theology seminarians will be determined by the seminary which they attend. If the seminarian receives a summer pastoral assignment within the Diocese, he should wear clerics.
- The formal dress for ordained theology students will be the Roman collar, either with Rabat or a clerical shirt.

VI. VACATION

During vacation and holiday periods, seminarians will:

- Attend Mass daily and be faithful to their spiritual exercises, including the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary;
- Report to their pastors and offer them their assistance.

At all times, seminarians will:

- Observe the civil law which restricts the consumption of alcoholic beverages to those who are 21 years of age. Those who may legally consume alcoholic beverages will do so with temperance and prudence;
- Observe the civil law which forbids any use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances.

III.ATTENDANCE AT DIOCESAN EVENTS

Seminarians will attend scheduled meetings of diocesan seminarians as well as Ordinations. Any request for an exception to these obligations must be in writing to the Vocations Director who will render a decision.

Seminarians, when possible, should attend other diocesan events. When they are in the diocese, seminarians should be particularly mindful of attending the funerals of priests.

IV.RESIDENCE OUTSIDE THE SEMINARY

Normally, college, pre-theology and theology seminarians may only reside in rectories during the time of their summer assignment or pastoral internship. Exceptions to this rule must be granted by the Director of Vocations after consulting the Vicar General/Chancellor.

V.SUMMER EMPLOYMENT AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. College Seminarians

- College seminarians will discuss summer employment or ministerial assignment with the Director of Vocations during the spring semester.

B. Theologians

- Seminarians in Theology are required to participate in the Summer Apostolate Program. Each candidate will be assigned to a summer apostolate placement. Each placement will be directed by a supervisor who will orient the seminarians to the parish, structure his work assignments, and provide an evaluation of the summer experience.
- The Office of Vocations will review the evaluations of the summer apostolate. The Director of Vocation will send a copy of the evaluation to the seminary for incorporation into the seminarian's formation file. Ordinarily, the supervisor is to share his evaluation of the seminarian with the seminarian before sending it to the Office of Vocations.
- A summer apostolate placement offers the seminarian room, board, and a living allowance determined by the Diocese.
- Vacations are to be scheduled outside the time of the Summer Program.

VI.PASTORAL INTERNSHIP

A Pastoral Internship is defined as an assignment to a parish outside the usual summer apostolate program for the purpose of an extended period of formation, or other purposes as the Bishop may see fit. A seminarian, for a reasonable cause, may request a pastoral intern assignment. The Director of Vocations must approve such a request.

VII.ADMISSION TO MINISTRIES AND HOLY ORDERS

A. Petitions

Seminarians petitioning for the ministries of Lector and Acolyte or for Admission to Candidacy and Holy Orders are to do so according to the norms of Canon Law, [*The Program of Priestly Formation*] and the requirements of the seminary they are attending. The seminary facilitates the proper documentation required by Canon Law. The seminarian may file petitions only with the recommendation of his Rector. The final approval is made by the diocesan Bishop after consultation with the Diocesan Vocations Board.

B. Scrutinies

The act of discernment of suitability of a candidate is termed a scrutiny (can.1051) and must be carried out at the following times in the process of priestly formation: the admission, the reception of candidacy, and the reception of Diaconate.

The Director of the Vocations Board will interview candidates at these three moments for the purpose of the scrutinizes.

C. The Call to Orders

It is the role of the Diocesan Bishop to call a candidate to Orders. Candidates are never to issue formal invitations to ordinations until they have received the Call to Orders from the Bishop.

XV. RESIGNATION/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- If a seminarian should discern that he should resign from the seminary, he should first have entered into a sufficient period of discernment with his Spiritual Director, the appropriate seminary staff, and the Director of Vocations. The seminarian is expected to write a letter of resignation and arrange an exit interview with the

Director of Vocations. During this interview, the termination of his formal relationship with the priestly formation program and the arrangements for repayment of any financial indebtedness incurred with the Diocese will be discussed.

- A “Leave of Absence” for seminarians in the Diocese of Charlotte is not granted.
- The Bishop may withdraw his sponsorship of a seminarian at any time.