

## Priestly Formation According to *Pastores Dabo Vobis*<sup>\*</sup>

Fr. Thomas Cheruparambil  
[St. Joseph Pontifical Seminary, India]

### Introduction

1. Historical Antecedents of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*
2. The 1990 Synod of Bishops: Some Particulars
3. Highlights on the Priestly Formation in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*
4. Biblical Foundation of Priesthood
5. Priestly Vocation and the Challenges of Priestly Formation
6. Human Formation
7. Spiritual Formation
8. Intellectual Formation
9. Pastoral Formation
10. Agents of Priestly Formation
11. Ongoing Formation of Priests

### Conclusion

## Introduction

Jesus the high priest began his public ministry with the following proclamation: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed

---

\* 이 글은 2015년 ‘재단법인 신학과사상’의 연구비 지원을 받아 연구·작성된 논문임.

me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18, 19). Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit before his public ministry.

All Christian faithful, irrespective of their state of vocation are called to attain perfection and sanctity. As there are different kinds of vocations, the way to Christian perfection also differs. Every vocation and ministry is specific in its nature. Accordingly, one may speak about the specificity of priestly ministry and formation. In this connection, one may ask: what is the specific nature of priestly formation keeping in mind the specific nature of priestly ministry? There may be different views and opinions about priestly formation. However, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* emphasises pastoral charity as the underlying principle of priestly spirituality and formation.

## 1. Historical Antecedents of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (*PDV*), is the fruit of the deliberations of the 8<sup>th</sup> ordinary general assembly of the bishops' synod, which was convened during September 30-October 27, 1990.<sup>1</sup> The document, *PDV*, was published at a press conference given by

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, "Pastores Dabo Vobis: Programme for Renewal", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 (1992) pp. 1. 4; Schotte comments that various Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations show how the Church examines the most important aspect of her mission. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations are: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975; *Catechesi Tradendae*, 16 October 1979; *Familiaris Consortio*, 22 November 1980; *Redemptionis Donum*, 25 November 1984; *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 2 December 1983; *Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988; *Redemptoris Custos*, 15 August 1989; *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 25 March 1992; *Ecclesia in Africa*, 14 September 1995; *Vita Consecrata*, 22 January 1996; *Ecclesia in America*, 22 January 1999; *Ecclesia in Asia*, 6 November 1999; *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 22 November 2001, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 22 February 2007, *Verbum Domini*, 30 September 2010, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*,

Archbishop J. P. Schotte, the Secretary General of the synod of bishops, on Tuesday 7, April 1992. At this press conference, Archbishop Schotte referred to the synod of bishops as one of the first and most direct fruits of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2</sup> According to him, every synod is an event of great importance, which contributes continuously to that process of implementing and deepening the Council's intention to ensure the Church's continuous updating.<sup>3</sup>

Pope John Paul II, through *Pastores Dabo Vobis* presents a pastoral and spiritual approach to priesthood with a special emphasis on the priestly formation. It is based on the previous Church documents and the propositions drawn out by the synod of bishops in 1990. Consequently, the Apostolic Exhortation should be considered as a synthesis of the magisterial teachings on priesthood and priestly formation.<sup>4</sup> *PDV* is

14 September 2012, *Evangelii Gaudium* 24 November 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, "Pastores Dabo Vobis: Programme for Renewal", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 (1992) p. 1, 4. The Synod of Bishops is a permanent institution established by Pope Paul VI on 15 September 1965. His Eminence Silvio Cardinal Oddi, then an Archbishop and Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in the United Arab Republic, made a proposal to establish a central governing body of the Church. The desire of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council was accepted by Pope Paul VI and on 15 September 1965, the General Secretary of the Council, Bishop Pericle Felici, promulgated the motu proprio *Apostolica Sollicitudo* with which the Synod of Bishops was officially instituted.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, "Pastores Dabo Vobis: Programme for Renewal", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 (1992) p. 1, 4. Pope Paul VI made his intention known to establish the Synod of Bishops for the consultation, collaboration and the wellbeing of the Church.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the important Magisterial teachings: Vatican II Documents such as, the Decree on the Training of Priests, *Optatam Totius*, the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the Decree on the Pastoral Office of the Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Paul VI's Encyclical Letter on Priestly Celibacy, *Sacerdotalis Celibatus* (1967), the Documents Published by Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Basic Plan for Priestly Formation* (1970), *The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries* (1972), *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy* (1974), *The Teaching of Canon Law to Those Preparing to be Priests* (1975), *Theological Formation of Future Priests* (1976), *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* (1979), *Norms of Application of Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education for the correct Implementation of the Apostolic Constitution Sapientia Christiana* (1979), *Circular Letter Concerning Some*

addressed to both diocesan and religious priests. The document makes specific reference to religious priests only on a few occasions;<sup>5</sup> the major part speaks about diocesan priests.<sup>6</sup> *PDV* makes it explicit when it refers to the expression, ‘membership in and dedication to the particular Church’,<sup>7</sup> as directed towards diocesan priests.

The theme of the synod of bishops in 1990 was proposed by the synod of bishops in 1987. Pope John Paul II in his closing address to the Synod of Bishops in 1990 acknowledged that the topic of the synod, ‘priestly formation’, was a response to a concern expressed at the 1987 synod.<sup>8</sup> “The more the lay apostolate develops, the more strongly is felt the need to have priests — and priests who are formed well.”<sup>9</sup> The Holy Father also acknowledged the influence of the 1987 synod on *PDV*: This same synod also sought to answer a request which was made at the previous synod on the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the

*More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual formation in seminaries* (1980), *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (1985) Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties *Sapientia Christiana* (1979), Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (1981).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 4. 7. 31. 42. 60. 71. 74. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. V. Gambino, *Dimensioni della formazione presbiterale, prospettive dopo il sinodo del '90 e la "Pastores Dabo Vobis"*, Leuman, Elle Di Ci, 1993, p. 201; E. Viganò, “Single Presbyterate includes Priests Belonging to Religious Congregations”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 36 (1992), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 31. 32. The Second Vatican Council documents use the term ‘particular Church’ to signify various ecclesial realities. For example *LG*, 23, *CD*, 11, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 833, refer to the diocese. On the other hand, *OE*, 2, uses the term in the sense of ‘*Ecclesia sui iuris*’. However the term, as it is used in the canonical codification of Church (*CIC*, 368; *CCEO*, 177 § 1; *PB*, 75, 76), refers to a diocese. Cf. J. P. Beal / J. Coriden / T. J. Green (eds.), *The New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, New York, Canon Law Society of America, 2000, pp. 501-511.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. John Paul II, “Closing Address to the Synod”, *Origins*, 20 (1990), p. 378.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, “Closing Address to the Synod”, p. 378; cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful and in the World, *Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, *AAS*, 81 (1989), pp. 393-521, ET John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 1999, p. 61; The synodal Fathers invite priests and candidates for orders to make a good preparation so that they can foster vocations and the mission of the lay faithful.

world. Lay people themselves had asked that priests be given sufficient training in their formation so that they, the laity, could be suitably helped to fulfil their role in the ecclesial mission which is shared by all.<sup>10</sup>

After the synod of 1987 the Pope consulted with the general secretariat of the Council and set the topic for the 1990 synod as “The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day.”<sup>11</sup> Then, the *Lineamenta*,<sup>12</sup> *The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*,<sup>13</sup> was prepared and sent to the Oriental Churches, the national Episcopal Conferences, the Union of Superiors General and the heads of various dicasteries of the Roman Curia.<sup>14</sup> They were asked to present the theme for discussion, study and to collect the suggestions and observations regarding the various aspects of the topic. The various responses to the *Lineamenta* were then collected together for the preparation of the working document *Instrumentum Laboris: The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*.<sup>15</sup> From the

---

<sup>10</sup> *PDV*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, “Perché un sinodo sulla formazione sacerdotale?”, *Seminarium*, 30 (1990), pp. 47-68; Synodus Episcoporum, *De sacerdotibus formandis in hodiernis adiunctis, instrumentum Laboris*, Civitate Vaticana, 1990, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> The *Lineamenta* is a broad outline about the theme for the synodal discussions. It is sent to the Conferences of bishops, Oriental Churches, Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, and the Union of Superiors General, for a wider consultation in order to produce a comprehensive *Instrumentum Laboris*, for the use of the synod.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Synod of Bishops, *The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day, Lineamenta*, Vatican City, 1989. The *Lineamenta* is composed of five parts with an introduction, conclusion and questions: I. Certain Elements in an Analysis of the Present Situation; II. Some Fundamental Presuppositions; III. Those Engaged in the Work of Formation and the Places of Formation; IV. The Major Aspects in the Formation for the Priesthood; V. Fidelity and Renewal: Ongoing Formation. cf. J. P. Schotte, “Statement by General Secretary on instrumentum Laboris”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 30 (1990), pp. 8-10; cf. J. P. Schotte, “Perché un sinodo sulla formazione sacerdotale?”, *Seminarium*, 30 (1990), pp. 64-66.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Synod of Bishops, *The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day, Lineamenta*, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Synodus Episcoporum, *De sacerdotibus formandis in hodiernis adiunctis, Instrumentum Laboris*, p. 7. It is designed to help and guide the synodal fathers. *Instrumentum Laboris* is composed of four chapters with an introduction and conclusion: Chapter I.

first Sunday of Advent, 3 December 1989, the Holy Father devoted many of his weekly Angelus-catechesis to the theme of the synod.<sup>16</sup> Thus, he presented his reflection on priesthood and provided guidelines for the consultation and the final preparation for the synod.

## 2. The 1990 Synod of Bishops: Some Particulars

For a better comprehension of the document, a discussion on the synod and its special features may be useful. Archbishop Schotte noted that the synod was composed of 238 members, of whom the Holy Father directly appointed 39. The other members included Cardinal Prefects of the Roman Curia, Patriarchs from Eastern Churches, elected representatives of National Conferences of Bishops, and regional and international groups of bishops. In addition, there were 17 experts assigned to assist the special secretary of the synod, Bishop Henryk Muzynski. There were 43 observers, who attended the general sessions and small group discussions of the synod.<sup>17</sup> It is worth mentioning that among the synodal members, 13 were participants in all the sessions of the Second Vatican Council; 9

---

Circumstance of the present day; Chapter II. Identity and mission of the Priest in the Church; Chapter III. Formation for priesthood; Chapter IV. The Ongoing Formation of Priests. cf. J. P. Schotte, "Perché un sinodo sulla formazione sacerdotale?", pp. 64-66.

<sup>16</sup> Some of the themes are: John Paul II, "tutti siamo responsabili delle grazie che scenderanno sulla prossima assemblea del sinodo dei Vescovi", *Insegnamenti*, 12, 2 (1989), p. 141; "Maria ha contribuito a preparare il Figlio alla sua missione sacerdotale", *Insegnamenti*, 12, 2 (1989), p. 1495; "Il presbitero è l'uomo della speranza", *Insegnamenti*, 12, 2 (1989), p. 1613; "Il ruolo della famiglia cristiana nello sviluppo delle vocazioni sacerdotali", *Insegnamenti*, 12, 2 (1989), p. 1642; "Il sacerdote del terzo millennio non meno di quello di oggi dovrà avere il volto di Cristo", *Insegnamenti*, 13, 1 (1990), p. 84; "Il Sacerdote è l'uomo della carità", *Insegnamenti*, 13, 1 (1990), p. 478. "Il Sacerdote è l'uomo di Dio: appartiene a Dio e fa pensare a Dio", *Insegnamenti*, 13, 1 (1990), p. 594.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Editorial, "25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Synod: VIII Synod Opens on Formation Topics", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 40 (1990), p. 1.

participated in one or more of them; 131 were attending their first synod as members; 170 had served in different seminaries as staff members; and 74 had been serving on committees related to priestly formation in their respective bishops' conferences.<sup>18</sup> Cardinal P. Laghi points out that, "the Synod on priestly formation probably had a higher proportion of experts than any other synod because Episcopal Conferences throughout the world tended to elect as their representatives bishops who themselves had been seminary rectors, spiritual directors, professors or vocation directors."<sup>19</sup>

The work of the synod took place in three stages. Stage one, from September 30 to October 13 1990, was a listening stage during which the synodal fathers addressed the theme in plenary meeting.<sup>20</sup> The second stage, from October 15 to 20, was a period of deeper study of the topic. The third stage, from October 22 to 27, was devoted to the final drafting of the propositions to be given to the Holy Father. A final list of 41 propositions was produced and presented before the synodal Fathers for voting.<sup>21</sup> These propositions were approved wholeheartedly by the then synodal Fathers and presented to the Pope for preparing the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation.<sup>22</sup>

Bishop Muszynski, the special secretary of the synod, released an overview of the synod-prepared proposals on October 27, 1990, at a press

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, "Major Themes Emerge from the Synod Discussions", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 42 (1990), p. 2; P. Laghi, "The Identity and Ministry of Priest", in *The Formation Journey of the Priest, Exploring "Pastores Dabo Vobis"*, B. Gregore / T. Norris (eds.), Dublin, The Columba Press, 1994, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> P. Laghi, "The Identity and Ministry of Priest", p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. G. Caprile, *Il sinodo dei vescovi 1990, ottava assemblea generale ordinaria (30 Settembre-27 Ottobre 1990)*, Roma, Edizioni "La Civiltà Cattolica", 1991, pp. 78-324.

<sup>21</sup> The propositions sum up the mind of the Fathers as expressed in their discussions. They are not officially made public. In *PDI*, Pope John Paul cited 66 explicit references to the propositions.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. H. Muszynski, "Overview of Synod Proposals", *Origins*, 20 (1990), pp. 353-355.

conference. This overview gives three points which emerged from the 41 propositions: 1) The ambiguity of the modern world, with its positive and negative orientations, which form the context of the Church and the priestly vocation; 2) The necessity of keeping a theological concept of priesthood which affirms the divine origin of the priestly vocation, its christological foundation, and specific destination for service to the Church and to the world. This understanding is the source of authentic priestly ministry and spirituality; 3) Having taken account of the present day circumstances of the world and the theological nature of priestly identity and mission, the overview speaks about priestly formation with its various environments, contents, and agents.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Highlights on the Priestly Formation in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

The document *PDV* is the result of long reflection and discussion among the bishops, theologians, and pastors in the light of the teachings of the Church. In addition to its indebtedness to the synod of 1990, *PDV* makes many references to the documents of the Second Vatican Council (sixty-four citations), to the synod of 1967 on the renewal of seminaries, to the synod of 1971 on the priesthood and to various other documents of the Roman Curia.<sup>24</sup> The document is regarded as a faithful companion for all priests entailing a rich theology, as a synthesis of the spiritual and

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. H. Muszynski, "Overview of Synod Proposals", pp. 353-355; cf. G. Caprile, *Il Sinodo dei vescovi 1990, ottava assemblea generale ordinaria (30 Settembre-27 Ottobre 1990)*, pp. 485-487.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. G. Caprile, "Un dono del papa ai sacerdoti, l'esortazione apostolica post sinodale *Pastores Dabo Vobis*", in *Civiltà cattolica*, 143/2 (1992), p. 285.



pastoral aspects of the Christian priesthood.<sup>25</sup> It reveals an abiding concern for the doctrinal foundations of priestly identity, formation and spirituality.

*PDV* is the longest document<sup>26</sup> of John Paul II and consists of six chapters with a long introduction (nn. 1-4). The first three chapters discuss the challenges, nature, mission and spirituality of the ministerial priesthood, while the other three treat the theme of priestly formation and the ongoing formation of priests. The conclusion consists of a prayer to Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ and the Mother of all priests. In fact, the exhortation is an inspiration for priestly formation with an ample illumination by way of a formative itinerary on the quality of the spiritual life of priests.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Biblical Foundation of Priesthood

One of the special characteristics of the exhortation is that all the chapters begin with a scriptural reference. This emphasises that all problems, situations, formation and the spirituality of priesthood must be examined within the biblical context. Referring to this point, Archbishop Schotte wrote: the Holy Father once more welcomed the desire of the synodal fathers in various synods, to see theological reflection resulting in a definite taste for the Scripture.<sup>28</sup> The biblical texts of this document

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. G. Caprile, “Un dono del papa ai sacerdoti, l’esortazione apostolica post sinodale *Pastores Dabo Vobis*”, p. 285.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. G. Caprile, “Un dono del papa ai sacerdoti, l’esortazione apostolica post sinodale *Pastores Dabo Vobis*”, p. 284.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, “I sacerdoti del terzo millennio siano sacerdoti secondo il cuore di Cristo, esortazione post-sinodale. La presentazione del documento ai giornalisti”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 8 Aprile (1992), p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. J. P. Schotte, “I sacerdoti del terzo millennio siano sacerdoti secondo il cuore di Cristo,

represent the key point of the varied topics discussed in each chapter. Above all, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (Jer 3:15), the name of the document itself, is a quotation which expresses the biblical foundation of the entire document. The text from Jeremiah speaks about God himself intervening in the life of his chosen people and giving them shepherds according to his heart. The prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled in the new context of the new covenant.

The introduction and the conclusion have the citation from the prophet Jeremiah: “I will give you shepherds after my own heart” (Jer 3:15). The first chapter begins with a quotation from the Letter to the Hebrews: “Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God” (Heb 5:1). It concerns the basic orientations of priestly formation and the present situation of the priesthood. The opening scriptural citation in the second chapter: “The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him” (Lk 4:20), focuses on the christological and ecclesiological foundation of the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood. The third chapter begins with “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Lk 4:18). As in the case of Jesus himself so also in the ministry of priests, the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of sanctification and mission. The specific spirituality of the priest and his vocation to holiness is the core of the chapter.

“Come, and see” (Jn 1:39) is the key word of the fourth chapter. It refocuses the priestly vocation to pastoral ministry within the Church and the contents and methods for promoting vocations. The fifth chapter commences: “He went up the mountain, and called to him those whom he wanted; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message and to have authority to cast

out demons” (Mk 3:13-15). Here the Pope emphasises the intimate relationship of seminarians with Christ. “I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (2Tim 1:6). These words of St. Paul to Timothy can be appropriately applied to the ongoing formation of priests as found in the scope of chapter six. The Holy Father in the concluding paragraphs of the document reminds us that the priesthood must be compatible with the will of God.

## 5. Priestly Vocation and the Challenges of Priestly Formation

The Exhortation begins with the statement that the Church needs priests “to announce the Gospel and to renew daily the sacrifice of the giving of his body and the shedding of his blood for the life of the world.”<sup>29</sup> At present, one of the most important tasks of the Church is to foster priestly vocations through prayer and to provide proper training and formation for the future priests. Concerning priestly formation, we read in *PDV*: The formation of future priests, both diocesan and religious, and life long assiduous care for their personal sanctification in the ministry, and for the constant updating of their pastoral commitment is considered by the Church as one of the most demanding and important tasks for the future of the evangelisation of humanity.<sup>30</sup>

The first chapter of this document presents the complex situation of the contemporary Church along with the challenges facing priestly formation. The Holy Father describes briefly the positive and negative factors, which affect the vocation to priesthood and formation. This chapter spe-

---

<sup>29</sup> *PDV*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

cifies the reason for the formulation of the new document and describes the actual problems of priesthood and priestly formation.

Concerning the formation of priests, the Holy Father says: “The new generation of those called to the ministerial priesthood display different characteristics in comparison to those of their immediate predecessors. In addition, they live in a world which in many respects is new and undergoing rapid and continual evolution.”<sup>31</sup> The formation of the priest in the present milieu should be responsive to the signs of the times.<sup>32</sup> Hence, the formators of the future priests should take into consideration the various challenges confronting the Church today.

In this present complex situation with regard to the formation of priests, we need to study the new circumstances that surround priestly formation and the signs of the times which should provide an orientation for the future of the Church. The current situation influences ecclesial and socio-cultural contexts and would affect children, adolescents and youth. The Pope considers an intense thirst for justice, peace, and God and a new vitality of the Church in several places as positive signs in the present world.<sup>33</sup> There are also at the same time counter signs such as, rationalism, subjectivism, practical and existential atheism, the break-up of families, and a distortion of the meaning of sexuality. These factors affect young people and the priests. For the Pope, the Gospel is the real touchstone to both the positive and negative signs. “Only in this way can an adequate answer be given to the fundamental question: How can we

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Bishop Cordeiro holds that this century has three special characteristics in the world: 1) developments in all sections of life, science, technology, medicine; 2) change: the world has changed completely, politically in a relatively short time; 3) Violence: war, terrorism, ethnic fighting still going on. So the formation of priests should be given so as to respond appropriately to the challenges of the times. cf. J. Cordeiro, “Bishops Gathered in 1990 Synod Focused on Priest and His Identity”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 (1992), p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 6.

form priests who are truly able to respond to the demands of our time and capable of evangelising the world of today?”<sup>34</sup>

One of the important aspects of the papal exhortation is the emphasis laid on the expression ‘pastoral charity’ as the animating spirit of every priest. The term ‘pastoral charity’ appears fifty-one times in *PDV* and one finds the idea reflected in all the chapters except chapter one.<sup>35</sup> The purpose of the exhortation is well expressed in the term ‘pastoral charity’. Pastoral charity is a participation in the same charity of Jesus Christ; which in substance consists of the “gift of self, the total gift to the Church”.<sup>36</sup> ‘Pastoral charity’ is the means of unity, it is “the dynamic inner principle capable of unifying the many different activities of priests.”<sup>37</sup> *PDV* specifies the necessity of formation and the life of priests to be modelled after the dimension of the unique shepherd’s charity.

Chapter four of *PDV* deals with the vocation to priesthood in the Church. A priestly vocation is a gift of God and at the same time, “it always comes about in the Church and through the Church.”<sup>38</sup> As a major concern to render pastoral care to foster vocations, the Pope exhorts: “all the members of the Church, without exception, have the grace and responsibility to look after vocations.”<sup>39</sup> He also invites bishops, priests, Christian families, lay faithful, diocesan and parish communities and various associations and movements to work for and to foster priestly vocations.<sup>40</sup>

Chapter five is the longest chapter and it discusses the formation of the

---

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Of a grand total of its fifty-one occurrence times in *PDV*, once in chapter II, thirty times in chapter III, once in chapter IV, four times in chapter V, and fifteen times in chapter VI.

<sup>36</sup> *PDV*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 41.

candidate to the priesthood. It focuses on the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions of priestly formation.<sup>41</sup> It seems that human formation must be the foundation of priestly formation, spiritual and liturgical formation is its heart, intellectual formation is the means, and pastoral formation is the end. The human, spiritual and intellectual formation of candidates to priesthood is directed to “a specific pastoral end” which ensures a “certain precise content and characteristics.”<sup>42</sup> Now we shall discuss each aspect of formation.

## 6. Human Formation

Human formation in the seminary was not given sufficient emphasis in the pre Second Vatican Council Church Documents. Since Vatican II the need to emphasize this aspect has been felt. As a result, there was a clear reference in *Ratio Fundamentalis* (1970) to human formation. A distinct place was given to the topic of human formation in the 1990 synod of Bishop. The synod states that the whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation.<sup>43</sup> The significance of human formation is clearly and emphatically stated as the basis of all priestly formation in *PDI*.<sup>44</sup> The priest who is called to be ‘loving image’ of Jesus Christ should seek to reflect in himself the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnated Jesus. So that the priest should be able to know the depths of human heart, to perceive difficulties and problem, to make the meeting

---

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 43-59.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

and dialogue easy, to create trust and cooperation, to express serene and objective judgments.<sup>45</sup>

Human formation is a process which results in a mature, well integrated person who is able to actualize his own potentialities and simultaneously contribute to the welfare of the society. Genuine formation is holistic, helping a person to integrate all dimensions of his life and personality.<sup>46</sup> A well-integrated person will be intellectually free and open to new approaches to reality; he will be emotionally free to relate to both men and women with openness, trust and love; and he will be spiritually free to do the will of God in all circumstance.<sup>47</sup> The human touch of a priest has special relevance for his ministry as well. In order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible, it is important that the priest should mould his own personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man.<sup>48</sup>

The human formation is a gradual and lifelong process. In this process, the seminarian is active agent and subject, not a passive object. For this seminarian should learn to know, accept and respect himself with all his strengths and weaknesses. Regarding this *PDV* states: The future priest should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry. These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their words, to be genuinely compassionate,

---

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>46</sup> FABC, *Education and Youth*, Manila, 1991, 3.1.

<sup>47</sup> Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, *Charter of Priestly Formation for India*, New Delhi, 1988, 3.1.4.

<sup>48</sup> *PDV*, 43.

to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgements and behaviour.<sup>49</sup> Any compromise or concession at this level of formation will be suicidal for priestly vocation and life. The capacity to relate to others is of special importance for a man of communion,

He should not be quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and service-minded, quick to understand, forgive and console.<sup>50</sup> A healthy community life, where there is an atmosphere of responsible freedom, is very helpful for integral growth and human formation

### 6.1. The significance of Human Formation

Human formation is important because of its foundational role, the basic call of priesthood and vast changes in the contemporary socio-cultural milieu.

Foundational Role: The various dimensions of formation are not watertight compartments but interdependent and mutually influencing process. Without sufficient human maturity other dimensions of formation will not be feasible. That is why *PDV* observes that the whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation.<sup>51</sup>

The basic call of Priesthood: The priest, who is called to be a 'living image' of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitude towards others as we see narrated in the Gos-

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Synod of Bishops on Priestly Formation, Rome, 1990, *Proposito*, 21.

<sup>51</sup> *PDV*, 43.



pels.<sup>52</sup> Christ is the human *par excellence*. He was like us in everything except sin (Cf. Heb 4:5). Therefore the basic call of priesthood is to be *alter christus*.

The contemporary circumstances: The contemporary society, with the benefits of scientific and technological progress, cultural trends and life-style is dynamic, challenging and enriching in several aspects of human growth. In these circumstances priestly ministry demands strong personalities, credible life witness and effective ministry amidst the attraction and challenges of consumer culture, hedonistic life-style, require a good psychological balance and maturity.

## 6.2. Dimensions of Human Formation

Overall human maturity is the goal of human formation. Basic task is to help the students to become self-aware and equip themselves, as far as possible with the vision attitudes and skills conducive to becoming integrated personalities. Present day life and ministry pose serious challenges which require a mature personality. Formation in the seminary begins after about two-thirds of pliable growth period. In the past we could rather build on, but today we often need to restructure. Special attention is needed in today's disturbed socio-cultural and family situations.<sup>53</sup>

Dimension of human formation discussed about a sound mind in a sound body, cultivation of talents, mature and healthy relationships, responsible freedom, sound value system, etc. *PDV* gave special attention to affective maturity, responsible freedom and basic human qualities.

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 44.

### 6.3. Affective Maturity

Man is an emotional being, capable of experiencing various types of pleasant and unpleasant emotions like joy, affection, love, anger, fear, sadness, etc. It is in fact emotions that make human life truly alive and colourful by rendering sweet, warm, enjoyable, or bitter, restless, depressing, etc. Many personal and social problems also arise from inadequate or poor management of emotions. This is a very important reason for the future priest to acquire good emotional maturity and management of time and talents. During this formation, the seminarians shall strive to grow in emotional integration, particularly through interpersonal interactions, relationships, sufficient self-awareness and guidance.<sup>54</sup>

A special aspect of emotional maturity is affective maturity. Affective maturity presupposes the awareness that love has a central role in human life. It is at the heart of relationships, friendships, love, sexuality and celibacy. Education for responsible love is absolutely necessary for those who are called to a life of celibacy. *PDV* describes affective maturity, which is the result of an education in true and responsible love, as a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood.<sup>55</sup> Affective maturity is the capacity to manage emotions constructively and smoothly. It requires awareness about one's emotions, especially negative ones, due appreciation and acceptance of them as part of self and the ability to control them reasonably. Many of the pastoral problems arise due to the mismanagement of emotions. Emotional maturity is best achieved through healthy interpersonal interaction within the

---

<sup>54</sup> The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for the Clergy and Institute of the Consecrated Life, *The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church*, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2007, 18.3.

<sup>55</sup> *PDV*, 43.

community, outside the community and with both genders. This requires an open, mutually accepting and caring community with due guidance. A closed, rigid or unconcerned community hinders it; it fosters repression, denial, shyness or displacement of emotions, blocking integration. Students need to be enlightened and guided about all these and it should begin in the minor seminary.

#### 6.4. Responsible Freedom

The ability to take decisions through responsible exercise of freedom is a key index of human maturity. Responsible exercise of freedom is not possible without good personality integration because one's feeling, thinking, judgement, needs and values exert their influence on the exercise of freedom.<sup>56</sup> Students should live and grow in an atmosphere of freedom and at the same time be responsible, which requires self-discipline. Freedom promotes spontaneity, naturalness and relaxed atmosphere which are indispensable for enjoyable community life. But a formation with little concern for discipline is a contradiction. It is not surprising that the new generation of students, accustomed to free upbringing and life style, tend to overestimate the role of freedom, without due appreciation of the significance of discipline.

Regarding freedom-discipline-maturity interaction, people, especially youngsters, believe that freedom is the sure path to human maturity. Freedom is a requirement for growth in maturity, but does not guarantee it. More mature people tend to use it maturely and grow further, while less mature ones use it in immature and selfish ways and probably become

---

<sup>56</sup> The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for the Clergy and Institute of the Consecrated life, *The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church*, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2007, 18.5.

worse, they are given facilities to grow and properly guided. So, getting more freedom may not help unless one learns to use it properly.

## 6.5. Natural Value

Respect for every person, sense of justice, special concern for the poor and compassion for the suffering should have high priority in the value-virtue scale of seminarian not only because they are values of ethical life but also because one needs to be well-grounded in them in order to respond effectively to the challenges of an unjust and exploitative world.<sup>57</sup> In order that the candidate may faithfully meet his obligation with regard to God and the Church and wisely guide the consciences of the faithful, he should become accustomed to listening to the voice of God, who speaks to him, in his heart, and to adhere with love and constancy to his will.<sup>58</sup>

## 7. Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation means formation in communion with God through encounter with Christ, led by the Spirit.<sup>59</sup> Practically it is nothing but growing in love with Jesus Christ. Human formation leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation, which basically consists in ecclesial and liturgical spirituality.<sup>60</sup> For every priest his spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and his acting as a

---

<sup>57</sup> The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for the Clergy and Institute of the Consecrated life, *The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church*, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2007, 18.6.

<sup>58</sup> *PDV*, 44.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 45; *OT*, 8.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 45.

priest.<sup>61</sup> Pope Benedict XVI said to the seminarians during the World Youth day in Cologne on 19 August, 2005: “You are seminarians, that is to say, young people devoting an intense period of your life in seeking a relationship with Christ, an encounter with him, in preparation for your important mission in the Church. This is what a seminary is: *more than a place, it is a significant time in the life of a follower of Jesus*. As baptised person and as a member of the church every diocesan priest-seminarian has to respond primarily to the universal call to holiness.

The Second Vatican Council very clearly presented the essential content of spiritual formation of the seminarians in *Optatam Totius*. Pope John Paul II reaffirms it in *PDV* and states: Spiritual formation should be in such way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father thorough his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing close to him as friends in every detail of their lives. They should live his Paschal Mystery in such a way that they will know how to initiate in to it the people committed to their charge. They should be taught to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office, to seek him in the Bishop by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they were sent, especially the poor, little children, the weak, sinners and unbelievers. With the confidence of sons they should love and show reverence to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who was given as a mother to the disciple by Jesus Christ as he was dying on the Cross.<sup>62</sup> The best model of priestly formation is found in the way Christ formed his apostles, they lived with Jesus, were consecrated and empowered by the Holy Spirit and sent to the

---

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 45; *OT*, 8.

world with Jesus' own mission.

There is an essential aspect of the priest that does not change: the priest of tomorrow, no less than the priest of today, must resemble Christ.<sup>63</sup> Since priestly vocation is essentially a call to holiness,<sup>64</sup> the whole formative process throughout its various stages should aim at bringing the candidates closer to Jesus Christ.

People expect that priest be, above all, men of God and spiritual leaders. Though priests should have concern for the temporal welfare of the people, their first and foremost duty is to look after the spiritual needs of the faithful.<sup>65</sup> If priests are to be a spiritual leaders, their lives should be built on a solid spiritual foundation. The period of formation is the right time to lay that foundation. If their lives are deeply rooted in Christ, seminarians will grow in holiness and become powerful instruments in the work of salvation. Priests and seminarians who discard spiritual life and become 'social workers' will do no good for the church. For the modern priest who wishes to fulfil Jesus' mission in our society the personal awareness of the Spirit of Jesus, the experience of God's power and freedom, of his love and demands, are indispensable. A diploma in social sciences and expertise in the techniques of social change may be important, but in the priestly ministry they are no substitute for the spirit of Jesus.<sup>66</sup> If the social and cultural activities come to the fore in the formation programme of seminary, it is natural that spirituality will suffer a lot. Friendship with Christ starting from listening to and mediation on the word of God and from the Eucharist, Liturgical celebration, the

---

<sup>63</sup> *PDV*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. John Paul II, "Homily During the Mass at Pune on 10-02-1986," in *The Popes speaks to India*, Bombay, 1986, p.175.

<sup>66</sup> J. Neuner, "The priest' Role in the Quest for a New Society", *Vidajyothi* 46, 1982, p. 25.

practice of Christian, human and priestly virtues are the means for the same.<sup>67</sup>

Being in intimate union with Jesus Christ is the first value and demand of spiritual formation of priests.<sup>68</sup> As the priest has to continue the mission of Christ, he has to imitate Christ the best way possible and to grow in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Hence “to be with Him” (Mk 3:14) becomes the life force of a priest. For, Jesus said, “apart from me, you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). The spiritual life of a priest comprises all those elements, which enable him to conform to Jesus Christ: filial devotion to the Father, friendship with Jesus, life and ministry guided by the Holy Spirit and pastoral charity. By virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and corresponding anointment of the Holy Spirit, “the spiritual life of priest is marked, moulded and characterized by the way of thinking and acting proper to Jesus Christ [...] which are summed up in his pastoral charity”.<sup>69</sup>

The second great spiritual formation value is the search for Jesus. They should be taught to seek Christ.<sup>70</sup> The spiritual life of a person who is preparing for priesthood is dominated by this search: by it and by the finding of the master to follow him to be in communion with him. The seminarians have to grow in the awareness that the Holy Spirit dwells in them and helps them to discern the will of God in everything. An earnest effort has to be made also to grow in the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Gal 5: 22-13).

---

<sup>67</sup> J. E. Bifet, *Spirituality for a Missionary Church*, Roma: Urbaniana University Press, 1994, p. 191.

<sup>68</sup> *PDV*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 21,

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

## 7.1. Prayer Life

An essential element of spiritual formation is the prayerful and meditative reading of the word of God, a humble and loving listening of him who speaks.<sup>71</sup> The spiritual development of a seminarian happens through listening to the Spirit and growing in the virtue of faith, hope and love. Personal prayer, community prayer and liturgical prayer are important aspects of priestly life. Promoting *Lectio Divina* as foreseen by the church and giving emphasis to the contemplation part is a need of the time.<sup>72</sup> Other religious traditions are greatly and successfully promoting meditation. Sufficient focus on the eastern culture can promote the importance of experience in our formation. The apostles shared with the people what they had experienced, seen and heard (1Jn 1:2). St. John Mary Vianney became a good formator of prayer for the people of Ars by being the witness of his God experience.

### 7.1.1. Eucharist

The high point of Christian prayer is 'Eucharist'. It is the 'summit and source of Sacraments and Liturgy of the Hours' and the essential moments of the day for seminarians.<sup>73</sup> The Eucharist fosters in him the intimate disposition of gratitude, self-sacrifice, unity and adoration.<sup>74</sup> Pope John Paul II on 1 July 1990 during the Angelus talk said: "It is fitting that seminarians take part every day in the Eucharistic celebration, in such a way that afterward they will take up this daily celebration as a rule of their

---

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 48.



priestly life. They should, moreover, be trained to consider the Eucharistic celebration as the essential moment of their day, in which they will take an active part and at which they will never be satisfied with a merely habitual attendance. Finally, candidates to the priesthood will be trained to share in the intimate dispositions which the Eucharist fosters: “gratitude for heavenly benefits received, because the Eucharist is thanksgiving; an attitude of self-offering, which will impel them to unite the offering of themselves to the Eucharistic offering of Christ; charity nourished by a sacrament which is a sign of unity and sharing; the yearning to contemplate and bow in adoration before Christ, who is really present under the Eucharistic species.”<sup>75</sup> An Altar-Centred formation enable the candidate to imbibe the essential characteristics of the New Testament priesthood, i.e., priest and victim at the same time. The Eucharistic compassion of the Lord teaches the candidate the lesson of the true compassion.

### 7.1.2. Confession

The beauty and joy of the sacrament of penance is necessary aspect of the spiritual formation of priests.<sup>76</sup> Fr. John Mary Vianny insisted on the need of frequent confession.<sup>77</sup> Pope John Paul II comments on this principal charism of the saint: “My encounter with this saintly figure confirmed me in the conviction that a priest fulfils an essential part of his mission through the confessional — by voluntary ‘making himself a

---

<sup>75</sup> Pope John Paul II, “Angelus Talk on 1 July 1990”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2-3 July 1990; *PDV*, 48.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. John Mary Vianny, *Sermon of the Cure of Ars*, U. Morrissy (tr.), Illinois, 1960, pp. 108-118.

prisoner of the confessional’.”<sup>78</sup> True experience of the divine compassion in the confessional prepares one truly to be compassionate to fellow-men who are equally weak. Formation for the altar has to be necessarily linked to the confessional.

### 7.1.3. Ascetic Life

An ascetic way of life is indispensable for the effective pastoral life. The seminarians should be helped to inculcate the value of ascetical practices like fasting. The Synod Fathers wrote: “It is necessary to inculcate the meaning of the cross, which is at the heart of the paschal mystery. Through this identification with Christ crucified, as a slave, the world can rediscover the value of austerity, of suffering and also of martyrdom within the present culture, which is imbued with secularism, greed and hedonism.”<sup>79</sup> The cardinal virtue of temperance needs highlighting in a growing consumeristic society.

### 7.1.4. Seeking Christ in People

Priest is a man of Charity and is called to educate others according to Christ’s example and new commandment of brotherly love. The spiritual life is, indeed, an interior life, a life of intimacy with God, a life of prayer and contemplation. But this very meeting with God and with his fatherly love for everyone brings us face to face with the need to meet our neighbour, to give ourselves to others, to serve in a humble and disinterested fashion, following the example which Jesus has proposed to

---

<sup>78</sup> John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery, On the fiftieth Anniversary of my Priestly Ordination*, Vatican, 1997, p. 58.

<sup>79</sup> *Propositio*, 23.

everyone as a program of life when he washed the feet of the apostles: “I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (Jn 13:15).<sup>80</sup> The Synod Fathers state that: “When we speak of forming future priests in the spirituality of the heart of the Lord, we mean they should lead lives that are a response to the love and affection of Christ the priest and good shepherd: to his love for the Father in the Holy Spirit, and to his love toward men that was so great as to lead him to give his life in sacrifice for them.”<sup>81</sup>

### 7.1.5 Celibacy

The spiritual formation of one who is called to live celibacy should pay particular attention to preparing the future priest so that he may know, appreciate, love and live celibacy according to its true nature and according to its real purposes, that is, for evangelical, spiritual and pastoral motives.<sup>82</sup> Celibacy is to be considered as a special grace, as a gift, for “not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given” (Mt. 19:11). Through his celibate life, the priest will be able to fulfil better his ministry on behalf of the People of God.

Quoting the Synod Fathers pope John Paul II authoritatively set down the criteria to be followed in formation for chastity in celibacy: “Let the bishops together with the rectors and spiritual directors of the seminaries establish principles, offer criteria and give assistance for discernment in this matter. Of the greatest importance for formation for chastity in celibacy are the bishop’s concern and fraternal life among priests. In the seminary, that is, in the program of formation, celibacy should be

---

<sup>80</sup> *PDV*, 49.

<sup>81</sup> *Propositio*, 23.

<sup>82</sup> *PDV*, 50.

presented clearly, without any ambiguities and in a positive fashion. The seminarian should have a sufficient degree of psychological and sexual maturity as well as an assiduous and authentic life of prayer, and he should put himself under the direction of a spiritual father. The spiritual director should help the seminarian so that he himself reaches a mature and free decision, which is built on esteem for priestly friendship and self-discipline, as well as on the acceptance of solitude and on a physically and psychologically sound personal state. Therefore, seminarians should have a good knowledge of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, of the encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* and the *Instruction for Formation in Priestly Celibacy* published by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1974. In order that the seminarian may be able to embrace priestly celibacy for the kingdom of heaven with a free decision, he needs to know the Christian and truly human nature and purpose of sexuality in marriage and in celibacy. It is necessary also to instruct and educate the lay faithful regarding the evangelical, spiritual and pastoral reasons proper to priestly celibacy so that they will help priests with their friendship, understanding and cooperation."<sup>83</sup>

## 8. Intellectual Formation

Intellectual formation of candidates to the priesthood aims at widening their vision of God, world and man. Intellectual formation has its own characteristics but it is also deeply connected with, and indeed can be seen as necessary expression of, both human and spiritual formation. The synod Fathers and the *PDV* reminds us: if we expect every Christian to be

---

<sup>83</sup> *Propositio*, 24.

prepared to make a defence of faith and to account for the hope that is in use (Cf. Pt 3:15), then all the more should candidates for the priesthood and priests have delight care of the quality of their intellectual formation in their education and pastoral activity.<sup>84</sup> To be pastorally effective, intellectual formation is to be integrated with a spirituality marked by a personal experience of God.<sup>85</sup> Intellectual formation should enable the students ‘to look beyond’ and to communicate the mystery of God to the people. If the intellectual formation does not create a vision of faith in the seminarians, then it will be futile exercise. For the candidate to the priesthood intellectual formation is not mere information gathering; rather it should help him in his human formation and finally enable him to be transformed into another Christ.<sup>86</sup> We must ask seriously how much of this purpose of formation is served by the intellectual formation.

### 8.1. Philosophical Formation

*Pastores Dabo Vobis* asserts that the seminarians’ philosophical formation would be deficient if philosophy did not offer the basis for the certainty of truth that grounds his lifelong commitment as a priest.<sup>87</sup> We have to admit, that philosophy, properly understood can play a major role in forming his convictions.

A proper philosophical training is vital, not only because of the links between the great philosophical questions and the mysteries of salvation which are studied in theology under the guidance of the higher light of

---

<sup>84</sup> *PDV*, 51.

<sup>85</sup> “The Formation of Priests in the Circumstance of the Present day”, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 39; *PDV*, 51.

<sup>86</sup> The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for the Clergy and Institute of the Consecrated life, *The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church*, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2007, 24.

<sup>87</sup> *PDV*, 52.

faith, but also vis-à-vis an extremely widespread cultural situation which emphasizes subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth: Only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Pope John Paul II notes three major fruits to be reaped from the philosophy course: that truth is not created or measured by man but is a gift given to man, that in a limited way human reason can reach objective and universal truth, even that relating to God and the meaning of life, and that faith cannot do without reason and effort of thinking through its contents.<sup>89</sup> Only a sound philosophy can help the candidate for a priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, the truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ.<sup>90</sup>

## 8.2. Theological Formation

Theological formation must strengthen the faith of the seminarians. Theology is faith seeking understanding. These two aspects, namely faith and reflection are intimately connected. True theology consists in the coordination and interpretation of these two aspects. Faith is the point of departure and the point of arrival of theology and theology has intrinsic Christological and Ecclesial connotation.<sup>91</sup> The study of theology must help the students to have a vision of the world, men, God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, and the Church and the essential character of Christian

---

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>89</sup> *Cf. Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>90</sup> *Cf. Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>91</sup> *Cf. Ibid.*, 53.

priesthood. The content and orientation of the theological formation must respond to the pluralistic situation of the Church. Emphasis should be given to inter-religious dialogue and ecumenical initiatives but they should not drive them to non-committed and passive religiosity. Seminary training should emphasize the uniqueness of Christ otherwise there can be a tendency to see Jesus Christ as one of the founders of religion and the seminarians may arrive at the conclusion that there is no need of evangelisation. Today there is so much talk about orthodoxy and praxis. What we need today is neither orthodoxy nor praxis but an *orthopraxis* which emphasizes the practical application of our truth.

## 9. Pastoral Formation

The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the good shepherd. Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.<sup>92</sup> The Council's decree *Optatam Totius* states very clearly when speaking of major seminaries: "The whole training of the students should have as its object to make them true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd. Hence, they should be trained for the ministry of the word so that they may gain an ever-increasing understanding of the revealed word of God, making it their own by meditation and giving it expression in their speech and in their lives. They should be trained for the ministry of worship and sanctification so that by prayer and the celebration of the sacred liturgical functions they may carry on the work

---

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. They should be trained to undertake the ministry of the shepherd, that they may know how to represent Christ to humanity, Christ who “did not come to have service done to him but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for the lives of many” (Mk 10:45; Jn 13:12-17), and that “they may win over many by becoming the servants of all” (1Cor 9:19).<sup>93</sup> Pastoral training should characterize every aspect of seminary formation.<sup>94</sup>

### 9.1. Specific Features of Pastoral Formation

*PDV* explains the different aspects of the pastoral formation of the priest in relation to the ministerial mission of Christ the good shepherd. The characteristic feature of the spirituality of the priest is that he is by nature a shepherd of the people of God. Priests exercise a shepherding ministry in the Church by their dedication and service to a particular Church and the people of God.

### 9.2. The Priest: Image of the Good Shepherd

Jesus as he revealed himself, is the good shepherd (Jn 10:11), and he is the eternal priest. Christ the shepherd gave the example of service by his self-sacrifice for his flock. His being, action and dedications are in keeping with his profound reality as the good shepherd.<sup>95</sup> The good shepherd calls, guides and leads his sheep to good pastures (Jn 10:3). The threefold ‘munus’ — preaching, sanctifying and shepherding —

---

<sup>93</sup> *OT*, 4.

<sup>94</sup> *Cf. OT*, 19.

<sup>95</sup> *Cf. PDV*, 21-23.



become the expression of the shepherd's love. The shepherd's life, in a better way, epitomises priestly spirituality. P. Laghi, observes that in *PDV*, Pope John Paul II uses the image of the shepherd in such a way that the Pope expresses well the various aspects of the prophetic, kingly and priestly ministry, without bypassing anyone of these.<sup>96</sup> J. E. Bifet states: "Christ's affective and effective love has a threefold dimension: love of the Father in the Holy Spirit; love of his fellow human beings; and offering himself as a sacrifice."<sup>97</sup> Christ's love for the Father in the Holy Spirit is expressed by doing the will of the Father for the universal salvation of humanity (Cf. Lk 20:21; Jn 2:4; 13:1; 14:31). His love for the Father and human beings enabled him to offer himself as a sacrifice. The good shepherd's love was a sacrificial love manifested from the act of the incarnation until sublimated through the sacrifice at Calvary. The good shepherd's charity for humanity is the focal point for priestly spirituality. In this regard, the Pope teaches: "When we speak of forming future priests in the spirituality of the heart of the Lord, we mean they should lead lives that are a response to the love and affection of Christ the priest and good shepherd: to his love for the Father in the Holy Spirit, and to his love toward men that was so great as to lead him to give his life in sacrifice for them."<sup>98</sup>

Priests draw inspiration for their life and ministry from the charity and service of the good shepherd.<sup>99</sup> Diocesan priests are pastors and are destined for service in the particular Church to which they belong. As

---

<sup>96</sup> Cf. P. Laghi, "Le Principali chiavi di lettura", in *Vi darò pastori secondo il mio cuore: Esortazione Apostolica 'Pastores dabo vobis' di S.S. Giovanni Paolo II circa la formazione dei sacerdoti nelle circostanze attuali* (25 marzo 1992), Quaderni di "L'Osservatore Romano", vol. 20, Città del Vaticano, 1992, p. 195.

<sup>97</sup> J. E. Bifet, *Priestly Spirituality and Mission – Sign of the Good Shepherd*, Roma: Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1995, p. 43.

<sup>98</sup> *PDV*, 49.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. J. Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1985, p. 137.

shepherds of the community they are entrusted with the authority to lead the people, to gather the faithful, until they reach the perfection of their Christian vocation through the power of the Spirit.

The authority of Jesus Christ as head coincides then with service, with his gift, with his total, humble and loving dedication on behalf of the Church. All this he did in perfect obedience to the Father; he is the one true Suffering Servant of God, both priest and victim. [...] The priest is to perform this service freely and willingly as God desires. [...] in order to bring to humanity the fullness of life and complete liberation.<sup>100</sup>

By virtue of ordination, priests are endowed with the special grace to be one with the head and shepherd of the Church so as to render service to the people of God. Priestly spirituality is a participation in the life and mission of Christ the priest rightly manifested in the image of the good shepherd. In emphasizing the self-emptying aspect of priesthood, John Paul II writes that priestly spirituality is “marked by this fundamental attitude of service to the people of God.”<sup>101</sup> The priests’ life and ministry draw inspiration from the good shepherd’s attitude of service to the people. Hence, the Pope says that “not only consecration but mission as well is under the seal of the Spirit and the influence of his sanctifying power.”<sup>102</sup> J. H. Miller states: “the priest’s consecration is for mission, a mission which permeates his spiritual life. When he fulfils his ministry according to the consecration received the priest grows in the love of Christ and the Church.”<sup>103</sup> P. Bernier speaks of priests as a “part of a group that has made a special public commitment to serve as a servant of Jesus Christ

---

<sup>100</sup> *PDV*, 21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>103</sup> J. H. Miller (ed.), *The Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II*, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1998, p. 471.

and his Gospel. What we have is essentially a servant spirituality.”<sup>104</sup>

Jesus is the source of all holiness and priests can attain this holiness “in an authentic relationship of intimate friendship with Him and readiness to serve the Church community.”<sup>105</sup> In the words of Pope John Paul II “the spiritual life is, indeed, an interior life, a life of intimacy with God, a life of prayer and contemplation.”<sup>106</sup> According to V. Gambino, priestly spirituality becomes a deep commitment in relation with Christ, by making an effort to live in a close communion with him; with the Church, by forming and sustaining the unity of the community; with the world, by committing oneself as a protagonist of the ecclesial mission in the world for the salvation of all men and the establishment of a temporal order directed to the common good.<sup>107</sup> For R. Schwartz, “The spirituality of priest has a very specific goal: the total growth of the presbyter so that he might be an effective sacrament of Christ, the head of the Church.”<sup>108</sup> According to him there are four important qualities for priestly spirituality: prayerfulness, leadership, participation and service.<sup>109</sup>

Priests are not only members of the Church, but also its servant leaders. Membership and service in the Church must be seen together for a comprehensive understanding of priestly spirituality and formation. This aspect has been rightly presented by R. J. Hauser when he says: “Christian spirituality flows from the response to the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier. Priestly spirituality is simply the priest’s effort to respond faithfully to the Spirit in living the priestly identity as defined by the Church.”<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> P. Bernier, *Ministry in the Church*, Mystic, Twenty-third Publications, 1992, p. 263.

<sup>105</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, 23.

<sup>106</sup> *PDV*, 49.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. V. Gambino, *Dimensioni della formazione presbiterale, prospettive dopo il sinodo del '90 e la "Pastores Dabo Vobis"*, Leuman, Elle Di Ci, 1993 p. 194.

<sup>108</sup> R. Schwartz, “The Priest Today”, *Origins*, 18 (1989), p. 539.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. R. Schwartz, “The Priest Today”, pp. 539-540.

<sup>110</sup> R. J. Hauser, “Spirituality of the Ministerial Priesthood”, *Review for Religious*, 49 (1990),

### 9.3. Pastoral Charity: The Soul of Priestly Formation

The priest is a man of charity; the root of this charity is found in his identity as a “man of God”. God is love and since the priest is a man of God, he must also be a man of charity.<sup>111</sup> The sacrament of holy orders imprints a resemblance to Christ and enables the priests to love and serve others as Christ loved and served. Pope John Paul II teaches with regard to pastoral charity: The internal principle, the force which animates and guides the spiritual life of the priest inasmuch as he is configured to Christ the head and shepherd, is pastoral charity, as a participation in Jesus Christ’s own pastoral charity, a gift freely bestowed by the Holy Spirit and likewise a task and a call which demand a free and committed response on the part of the priest.<sup>112</sup>

Participation in Christ’s pastoral charity demands from the priest a particular and specific way of developing his personal relationship with the presbyterate, united in and with the bishop.<sup>113</sup> The relationship between a priest’s spiritual life and the exercise of his ministry can also be explained on the basis of pastoral charity. The ministry of the priest, precisely because of its participation in the saving ministry of Jesus Christ the head and shepherd, cannot fail to express and live out this pastoral charity which is both the source and spirit of his service and gift of self.<sup>114</sup> Pastoral charity could be considered as the fruit of the sacrament of holy orders<sup>115</sup> and the source of priestly formation and spirituality.

---

p. 326.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. John Paul II, “Priest Called to be Man of Charity”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 28 (1993), p. 11.

<sup>112</sup> *PDV*, 23.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *PO*, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 23.

#### 9.4. Pastoral Charity: the Gift of Self

Jesus, the good shepherd, was ready to sacrifice his life for his sheep (Jn 10:11-15). Those who are called to the priesthood are entrusted the same mission of good shepherd's heroic love for the sheep. Therefore, the Pope teaches that: The essential content of this pastoral charity is the gift of self, the total gift of self to the Church. "Pastoral charity is the virtue by which we imitate Christ in his self-giving and service. It is not just what we do, but our gift of self, which manifests Christ's love for his flock. Pastoral charity determines our way of thinking and acting, our way of relating to the people. It makes special demands on us."<sup>116</sup>

The gift of self in the priestly life is not simply an external virtue demanded by Christ, but it is an internal attitude basically attached to the identity and mission of the priest.<sup>117</sup> Jesus maintained the essential aspects of self-sacrifice through his life and mission (Cf. Lk 24:25-26) and invited his followers to continue his saving mission throughout their lives. Priests represent Christ and bring about his pastoral presence in the world through their life and ministry. Therefore, the *Decree on the Training of Priests* explicitly demands that the candidate for priesthood should be trained in a spirit of self-denial to imitate the crucified Christ and to give up willingly even those things that are lawful.<sup>118</sup> Priests can exercise the pastoral ministry as a humble service to God and to the people of God only if they identify themselves with the crucified Christ. According to Pope John Paul II the elements of the spiritual life of priests consist in "the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and

---

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 23; see John Paul II, *Insegnamenti*, 12, 2 (1989), p. 785.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. A. Favale, *Spiritualità del ministero presbiterale*, Roma: LAS, 1985, p. 127.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *OT*, 9.

self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the cross.”<sup>119</sup>

The Synod of Bishops in 1971 also observed that the self-gift imposed by the pastoral life itself helps the priest to acquire an ever greater sharing in Christ’ Cross and, hence, the attainment of a purer pastoral charity.<sup>120</sup> Pope John Paul II said: “The gift of self has no limits, marked as it is by the same apostolic and missionary zeal of Christ, the good shepherd.”<sup>121</sup> Genuine concern for the people demands of priests to live for them without seeking their self-interest and a readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake of their people. Sometimes this total self-gift demands from priests humiliation and suffering in imitation of the good shepherd. Self-denial for the sake of others is considered as a distinct virtue necessary for the promotion of pastoral charity. The gift of self is to be seen as the means to grow in pastoral charity. Pastoral charity in its genuine form is truly a self-sacrificing love, which finds its full expression in freely giving up one’s life for the people.

### 9.5. Pastoral Charity: For the Service of Christ and the People of God

Christ, the head of the Church, is in a unique sense of being a servant of the Church.<sup>122</sup> He “came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many” (Mk 10:45); and again: “He is the one true suffering servant of God, both priest and victim.”<sup>123</sup> Accordingly, priests should dedicate themselves for the service of the other even at the risk of their own selves and that of suffering to become holy in order to lead

---

<sup>119</sup> *PDV*, 48.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *UT*, II, I, 3; cf. *Directory*, 43.

<sup>121</sup> *PDV*, 23.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

others to holiness. The people of God expect from a priest not only a man who welcomes them, who listens to them, shows real interest in them, but above all a man who helps them to turn to God.<sup>124</sup> Pope John Paul II writes: “All that Christ did and taught was at the service of our redemption. The ultimate and most complete expression of this messianic service was to be the cross on Calvary. [...] And this salvific service, which embraces the whole universe, is ‘inscribed’ forever in the priesthood of Christ.”<sup>125</sup>

## 9.6. Pastoral Charity in Relation to the Laity

Priests, in the words of St. Paul, are set apart for the Gospel of God (Cf. Rom 1:1) which however, does not mean that they are to be separated from the people; rather it does mean that they are to be fully dedicated to the people (Cf. Acts 13:2). Priestly life is motivated by pastoral charity and is realised in the service of the people of God (Cf. Mt 20:24-28; Mk 10:43-44). The essential nature of pastoral authority consists in a humble and selfless fraternal service in the spirit of pastoral charity. Authority is for service, as Pope Paul VI said: “You (priests) become servants at the service of the brethren.”<sup>126</sup>

Priests, by means of their service to the Church, lead the people of God to the heavenly kingdom. Regarding the love and service of priests, R. E. Lander says: “he is giving himself in service to those he loves; he is making himself available in love to those he serves. But because of the Risen Christ’s presence to him in grace, and also through the sacrament of

---

<sup>124</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>125</sup> John Paul II, *Letters to My Brother Priests: Holy Thursday (1979-2001)*, Socias, J. (ed.), Princeton, Scepter Publishers, 2001, p. 157.

<sup>126</sup> Paul VI, “Homily”, During the Ordination of 278 Priests held in St. Peter’s Square on Pentecost Day 17, 1970, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 22 (1970), p. 5.

orders that he has received, the priest can bring especially rich presence to the people.”<sup>127</sup> The relation of the priest with the people shall be effective only when he approaches them with pastoral charity. That is why Pope John Paul II teaches: “Our pastoral activity demands that we should be close to people and all their problems, whether these problems be personal, family or social ones, but it also demands that we should be close to all these problems ‘in a priestly way’. Only then, in the sphere of all those problems, do we remain ourselves. Therefore if we really are of assistance in those human problems, and they are sometimes very difficult ones, then we keep our identity and are really faithful to our vocation.”<sup>128</sup>

Priests should seek the will of Jesus and work together with the people of God in order to build up and spread the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, as servants of God, priests have to lead the Christian faithful in a spirit of charity, sanctify them through the sacraments and nurture them with God’s Word.<sup>130</sup>

## 10. Agents of Priestly Formation

For the Pope, the main agents for priestly formation within the Christian community are the bishops, seminary faculties, families, parishes, ecclesial movements, and the candidates themselves.<sup>131</sup> *PDV* also speaks about the need for seminary and religious formation houses as formation places of future priests. The seminary in its different forms, and analo-

---

<sup>127</sup> R. E. Lander, *The Priest as Person*, Worcester: Mercantile Printing Company, 1981, p. 120.

<sup>128</sup> John Paul II, *Letters to My Brother Priests: Holy Thursday (1979-2001)*, p. 16.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *PO*, 9.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. J. Mullin, *The Catholic Church in Modern Africa: A Pastoral Theology*, Dublin Geoffrey Chapman, 1965, p. 193.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 65-69.



gously the 'house' of formation for religious priests, more than a place, a material space, should be spiritual space, a way of life, an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of formation, so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become, with the sacrament of Orders, a living image of Jesus Christ, Head and shepherd of the Church.<sup>132</sup>

The charter for priestly formation for India says that at the every stage of their formation, the seminarians should be in touch with societal, cultural and religious realities in which they are [...].<sup>133</sup> The lack of touch with the life of the people is a major problem in seminary formation, and it was adequately brought to the light by the various studies undertaken on formation in India. One survey states that, for an adequate and fruitful formation, future priests should be exposed to the socio-economic, socio-cultural and political realities of Indian life while living in the seminary. They should come into contact with the people and material needs and aspirations through reflective analysis of these situations.<sup>134</sup> Bridging the enormous gap between the expectation and reality in this regard is the first and foremost step in any effective change in the priestly formation today.

## 11. Ongoing Formation of Priests

Priestly formation does not end with ordination. It is a lifelong requirement for priests to update their competence. Ongoing formation is considered as the natural, necessary continuation of the formative process

---

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. *Charter for priestly formation for India*, 1988, p. 21

<sup>134</sup> Paul Parathazham, "Catholic priests in India Reflection Survey" *VJTR*, 52, 1988, p. 385.

of the whole life of priests.<sup>135</sup> In *PDV*, the Pope explains the need of the ongoing formation of priests: “Priests who have been actively involved in the ministry for more or less lengthy period of time seem to be suffering today from an excessive loss of energy in their ever increasing pastoral activities. Likewise, faced with the difficulties of contemporary culture and society, they feel compelled to re-examine their way of life and their pastoral priorities, and they are more and more aware of their need for ongoing formation.”<sup>136</sup>

It is not simply the question of a professional periodic updating in the field of theology, but a spiritual need to grow “in every age in all conditions of life.”<sup>137</sup> It is the means to rekindle the gift of God that is within the ordained (Cf. 2Tim 1:6). The Church has the responsibility to provide ongoing formation to all priests. Chapter six of *PDV* explains the ongoing formation of priests as “the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building priestly personality”.<sup>138</sup> The Holy Father describes ongoing formation from different perspectives and theological motivations.<sup>139</sup> He specifies the different spiritual formators and places involved in permanent formation.<sup>140</sup> The first and most important agent of ongoing formation is the priest himself. “In a certain

---

<sup>135</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 76.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 3; *PDV* provides a large section on the ongoing formation of priests with a theological and pastoral foundation for the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of developing a priestly personality. Cf. Chapter six of *PDV*, 70-81, “I Remind to Rekindle the Gift of God that is within you, The Ongoing Formation of the Priests.”

<sup>137</sup> *PDV*, 76; cf. M. Veillette, “Ongoing Formation of Priests”, *Origins*, 20 (1990), p. 362.

<sup>138</sup> *PDV*, 71; The Congregation for Clergy published a *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, on Holy Thursday 1994 as means of implementing the Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. This *Directory* in its third chapter gives emphasis on the ongoing formation. Cf. *Directory*, 69-97.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. *PDV*, 70.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 71; V. Gambino, “La formazione permanente del sacerdote nell’esorazione apostolica ‘Pastores Dabo Vobis’: Un cambiamento nel concetto di formazione”, *Orientamenti Pedagogici*, 40 (1993), pp. 547-570.

sense, it is the priest himself, the individual priest, who is the person primarily responsible in the Church for ongoing formation.”<sup>141</sup> The bishop of a diocese has the greatest care in the ongoing formation of priests. “He is responsible for ongoing formation, the purpose of which is to ensure that all his priests are generously faithful to the gift and ministry received, that they are priests such as the People of God wishes to have and has a ‘right’ to”.<sup>142</sup> Bishops should also ask help for the ongoing formation of priests “from theological and pastoral faculties or institutes; seminaries, offices and federations that bring together people—priests, religious and lay faithful—who are involved in priestly formation.”<sup>143</sup> The family members of priests have a significant role to play.<sup>144</sup> They can accompany their priests with prayer and respect. According to the Pope, “ongoing formation aims at increasing the priest’s awareness of his share in the Church’s saving mission.”<sup>145</sup>

## Conclusion

After analysing *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, we have arrived at the conclusion that pastoral charity is the core of priestly formation. Our attempt to perceive the specific nature of priestly formation leads us to the following theological and pastoral conclusions.

Faithfulness to one’s vocation is an essential element of holiness. It consists of one’s seeking and living the vocation primarily for the glory of God, for the good of the Church and fellow human beings. It is in ac-

---

<sup>141</sup> *PDV*, 79.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

cordance with the promise of Jesus Christ the eternal and supreme pastor that we are sanctified and become the heirs of the kingdom of God. Through his invitation ‘to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Mt 5:48) Jesus places a great challenge before us. God calls each one to participate in His own perfection according to the vocation proper to each one.

Church teaches that every vocation to priesthood is a mystery and gift. The formation must consider how to make the seminarians aware that their vocation is a mystery and a gift and that this alone will make them committed priests, committed to Christ and to the Church. Priesthood is understood to be leaving everything to follow Jesus, the pearl of great price. There are seminarians who have left lives of comfort and voluntarily accepted a poor and simple life style out of their religious convictions. But to some the change of life style is towards affluence. They do not believe in simplicity or in poverty. There is fear among the lay people that we offer comfortable life style in the seminary. We have to give a serious thought about this fact if we have to form genuine priests of tomorrow.

The pastoral ministry of priests is a ministry of charity to build up the Christian community. Priestly ministry is centred on the ministry of the Word, the ministry of the sacraments and the ministry of building up of the church. Priests carry out the ministry *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae* in relationship with the hierarchy, other priests and the laity. For this, one should be formed properly. There is an urgent need to have better formators, who possess a sound spirituality. A student of theology once told me that many of our professors are very good teachers. However, what we need most is not a clever teaches of philosophy and theology. We need priests we can look up to, priests from whom we can learn how to be a good priest. Hence, the seminary formators must be role

models to students, who are interested in priestly ministry and have a strong experience of it, whose life style is inspiring, who are intelligent enough to grasp and teach theological and philosophical doctrines, and whose judgement is sound.

Priestly formation helps the seminarians to have an intimate union with Christ. Such an intimate union with God is nourished by means of personal prayer and contemplation. This is sustained by the celebration of the Eucharist and the ministry of the Word of God. Intimate union with Christ is deepened by the practice of the evangelical counsels of celibacy, obedience and poverty. Such practice helps them to renounce worldly desires, to dedicate themselves more fully for the service of the people with an undivided heart, and to understand the difficulties of the poor and the down trodden.

Today we are living in a world where the rules of the economy and the market are the guiding principles. The sole motive of such a world is profit and utility. Even man's worth is judged according to his usefulness to the society. Charity is the neglected virtue in a utilitarian society. In such a civilization, each one is preoccupied with his interests and is withdrawn into his own world. In the pursuit of profit and utility, the weakest and the poorest are marginalised and neglected. Such a situation is truly a challenge to all those who respect human values and human dignity. Moreover, the Church, the continuation of Christ, who came to the world in search of the poor and needy, finds today a new platform for its mission by witnessing to Christ and His mission. Though every Christian is called to witness Christ in this world, priests have the particular mission to continue the charity of Christ by virtue of priestly ordination. Therefore, priests are called to be witness of love of God through their pastoral charity.

Now, in the light of the present study we would suggest a programme,

which would be helpful for the formation of priests and seminarians in pastoral charity, which is already inherent in the teaching of the Church and the Code of Canon Law.

In the seminaries, where future priests are formed, due importance should be given to both theoretical and practical aspects of pastoral charity.

Also in the seminaries, indigenous spirituality should be taught and practised in order to get a clear understanding of the specific spirituality of the diocesan priests. Outreach programmes for seminarians to parishes, slums, factories and hospitals should be promoted to experience the need of pastoral charity for the mission of priests.<sup>146</sup> The spirituality of priests should be influenced by the particular social situation of the country and the society in which priests have to fulfil their mission.<sup>147</sup>

The seminarians should be able to read the signs of the times to interpret them and to suggest solutions in the light of the charity and the teaching of the Church. Priests must be well oriented to face the challenges opened by the social changes and the technical developments of the present society. For this purpose, diocesan priests should have the possibility for ongoing formation, at least in their ecclesiastical province or region. The ongoing formation is one of the most valid instruments for the growth in pastoral charity and it promotes human and Christian maturity. It can promote an increased experience of fraternity which is helpful to bring the rich variety of inter-diocesan experience of ministry to bear on the life and the development of the Church.

Occasional meetings and prayer sessions with people of other religious communities should be encouraged in the seminary levels to foster pastoral charity.

A living and learning programme for priests of a diocese with their

---

<sup>146</sup> Cf. *CIC*, 258; *CCEO*, 353.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. *CIC*, 252, 255; *CCEO*, 350, 352.

own bishop could be initiated. Bishop and priests need to have fraternal relationships as co-workers in order to experience charity.<sup>148</sup>

Priests' associations should be promoted for the fraternal development of diocesan priests at diocesan, regional, national and international levels.<sup>149</sup> The scope of such association would be to foster the spiritual life, human relations, cultural and pastoral coordination and the unity among priests themselves and with the bishops.

Joint pastoral ministry should be promoted so that priests can work as a team and programme pastoral ministries in their parishes in a spirit of fraternal charity.<sup>150</sup>

In short, the priestly formation should help the seminarian to identify himself to Christ in such a way that he may be able to represent Christ in an effective manner, so that he himself would become the sign of the kingdom to which his whole life is oriented. In the present pluralistic society, there exist different religious traditions and secular ideologies. Considering the present social, ecclesial, ecumenical and inter-religious contexts, the priestly spirituality and formation should reflect the genuine orthodoxy on the doctrinal level and viability in the modern life situations. Otherwise, the true nature and doctrine of the Church cannot be expressed and communicated to the faithful by the ministries of Church. Therefore, priestly formation has to be pastoral in its nature, ecclesial in action, liturgical and sacramental in its context, loving and liberating in its endeavours and fundamentally oriented to the kingdom of God. This will help the seminarians to preach the Gospel by becoming living witnesses to its perennial message of charity.

---

<sup>148</sup> Cf. *CIC*, 279; *CCEO*, 372.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. *CIC*, 278; *CCEO*, 391; *PDV*, 81.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. *CIC*, 280.

## Bibliography

- Bifet, J. E., *Priestly Spirituality and Mission: Sign of the Good Shepherd*, Roma: Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1995.
- Caprile, G., “Un dono del papa ai sacerdoti. l’esortazione apostolica post sinodale *Pastores Dabo Vobis*”, *Civiltà cattolica*, 143/2 (1992), pp. 284-292.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Il sinodo dei vescovi 1990, ottava assemblea generale ordinaria (30 Settembre–27 Ottobre 1990)*, Roma: Edizioni “La Civiltà Cattolica”, 1991.
- Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, *Charter of Priestly Formation for India*, New Delhi, 1988.
- Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, auctoritatae Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus, *AAS*, 82 (1990), pp. 1033-1363. Et *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, Latin-English edition, Translation Prepared under the Auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, Kottayam, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India, 1992.
- Editorial, “25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Synod: VIII Synod Opens on Formation Topics”, *OR*, 40 (1990), pp. 1. 9.
- Favale, A., *Spiritualità del ministero presbiterale*, Roma: LAS, 1985.
- Flannery, A. (ed.), *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1992.
- Galot, J., *Theology of the Priesthood*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985.
- John Mary Vianny, *Sermon of the Cure of Ars*, U. Morrissy (tr.), Illionis, 1960.
- John Paul II, “Homily During the Mass at Pune on 10-02-1986,” in *The Popes speaks to India*, Bombay, 1986, p.175.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Closing Address to the Synod”, *Origins*, 20 (1990), pp. 378-379.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Priest Called to be a Man of Charity”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 28 (1993), p. 11.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Letters to My Brother Priests: Holy Thursday (1979-2001)*, Socias, J. (ed.), Princeton, Scepter Publishers, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstance of the Present Day,



- Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 25 March 1992, *AAS*, 84 (1992), pp. 657-804. ET John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, 1992.
- Laghi, P., “Le principali chiavi di lettura”, in *Vi darò pastori secondo il mio cuore: Esortazione Apostolica ‘Pastores dabo vobis’ di S.S. Giovanni Paolo II circa la formazione dei sacerdoti nelle circostanze attuali (25 marzo 1992)*. Quaderni di “L’Osservatore Romano” vol. 20, Città del Vaticano, 1992, pp. 193-201.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “The Identity and Ministry of Priests”, in *The Formation Journey of the Priest, Exploring ‘Pastores Dabo Vobis’*, McGregore, B. / Norris, T. (eds.), Dublin: The Columba Press, 1994, pp. 22-28.
- Mullin, J., *The Catholic Church in Modern Africa: A Pastoral Theology*, Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965.
- Muszynski, H., “Overview of Synod Proposals”, *Origins*, 20 (1990), pp. 353-355.
- Schotte, J. P., “I sacerdoti del terzo millennio siano sacerdoti secondo il cuore di Cristo, Esortazione post-sinodale. La presentazione del documento ai giornalisti”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 8 Aprile (1992), p. 17.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Major Themes Emerge from the Synod Discussions”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 42 (1990), p. 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “*Pastores Dabo Vobis*: Programme for Renewal”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 14 (1992), pp. 1. 4.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Perché un sinodo sulla formazione sacerdotale?”, *Seminarium*, 30 (1990), pp. 47-68.
- Synod of Bishops, *The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day, Lineamenta*, Vatican City, 1989.
- Synodus Episcoporum, *De sacerdotibus formandis in hodiernis adiunctis, Instrumentum Laboris*, Civitate Vaticana, 1990.
- The Code of Canon Law*, Translation Prepared by Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1983.

투고(접수)일(2015년 5월 4일), 심사(수정)일(2015년 6월 4일),  
 게재확정일(2015년 6월 12일)

## ■ Abstract ■

□

*PDV* is the longest document of John Paul II and consists of six chapters with a long introduction (nn. 1-4). The first three chapters discuss the challenges, nature, mission and spirituality of the ministerial priesthood, while the other three treat the theme of priestly formation and the ongoing formation of priests. The conclusion consists of a prayer to Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ and the Mother of all priests. In fact, the exhortation is an inspiration for priestly formation with an ample illumination by way of a formative itinerary on the quality of the spiritual life of priests.

Chapter five is the longest chapter of *PDV* and it discusses the formation of the candidate to the priesthood. It focuses on the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions of priestly formation. It seems that human formation must be the foundation of priestly formation, spiritual and liturgical formation is its heart, intellectual formation is the means, and pastoral formation is the end. The human, spiritual and intellectual formation of candidates to priesthood is directed to “a specific pastoral end” which ensures a “certain precise content and characteristics.”

One of the important aspects of the papal exhortation is the emphasis laid on the expression ‘pastoral charity’ as the animating spirit of every priest. The term ‘pastoral charity’ appears fifty-one times in *PDV* and one finds the idea reflected in all the chapters except chapter one. The purpose of the exhortation is well expressed in the term ‘pastoral charity’. Pastoral charity is a participation in the same charity of Jesus Christ; which in substance consists of the “gift of self, the total gift to the Church” ‘Pastoral charity’ is the means of unity, it is “the dynamic inner principle

capable of unifying the many different activities of priests.” *PDI* specifies the necessity of formation and the life of priests to be modelled after the dimension of the unique shepherd’s charity.

- ▶ Key Words: Human Formation, Spiritual Formation, Intellectual Formation, Pastoral Formation, Pastoral Charity.

■ 국문 초록 ■

□

## 「현대의 사제양성」(*Pastores Dabo Vobis*)에 따른 사제 양성

토마스 케루파람빌 신부  
(인도 교황청립 성 요셉 신학교 교수)

「현대의 사제 양성」은 요한 바오로 2세 교황의 문헌 중 가장 긴 문헌이며 긴 서문(1~4항)을 포함한 6개 장으로 구성되어 있다. 첫 3개 장은 직무 사제직의 도전, 본성, 사명, 영성 등을 다루며, 나머지 3개 장은 사제 양성과 사제 평생 교육 등의 주제를 다룬다. 결론은 예수 그리스도도의 어머니시요, 모든 사제들의 어머니이신 마리아께 바치는 기도를 포함하고 있다. 사실, 이 교황 권고는 사제의 영성 생활의 질을 양성 여정에 비추어 보는 풍부한 조망을 지니기에 사제 양성에 영감이 되는 문헌이다.

제5장은 「현대의 사제 양성」에서 가장 긴 장으로서 사제지망자들의 양성을 다루고 있다. 이 장은 사제 양성의 인성적, 영성적, 지성적, 사목적 측면에 초점을 맞추고 있다. 인성 양성은 사제 양성의 초석이 되어야 하고, 영성 및 전례 양성은 그 심장이 되어야 하며, 지성 양성은 수단이 되어야 하고, 사목 양성은 목표가 되어야 한다. 사제지망자들의 인성, 영성, 지성 양성은 “일정한 내용과 명확한 특징”을 확실히 가질 수 있도록 해 주는 “사목적인 성격을 띤 궁극적인 목표”를 향해 나아간다.

이 교황 권고의 중요한 측면 중 하나는 모든 사제들에게 활력소

로서 “목자로서의 사랑”이라는 표현이 강조된다는 점이다. “목자로서의 사랑”이라는 말은 「현대의 사제 양성」에 쉰 한 번 등장하며, 제1장을 제외한 모든 장에서 이 개념이 고찰된다. 이 권고의 목적이 “목자로서의 사랑”이라는 말에 잘 표현되어 있는 것이다. 목자로서의 사랑은 예수 그리스도의 사랑과 똑같은 사랑에 참여하는 것이다. 이 사랑에는 본질상 “교회에 자기 자신을 온전히 봉헌”하는 것이 포함된다. “목자로서의 사랑”은 일치의 수단으로, “사제가 벌이는 수많은 다양한 활동들이 통일성을 이룰 수 있도록 힘을 불어넣어 주는 내적인 원리”다. 「현대의 사제 양성」은 양성의 필요성과 사제의 삶이 유일한 목자께서 보여 주는 사랑의 차원을 닮아야 한다는 점을 명시하고 있다.

▶ 주제어: 인성 양성, 영성 양성, 지성 양성, 사목 양성, 목자로서의 사랑.