

***RATIO FORMATIONIS
GENERALIS, C.Ss.R.***



GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Updated, Rome, 2020

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The original text is English

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ABBREVIATIONS

Can. = Canon

Gen. Chap. = General Chapter

C. + CC. = Constitution(s) C.Ss.R.

Comm. = *Communicanda* (Communications from the Superior General, C.Ss.R.)

CV = *Christus Vivit* (2019)

DS = *Directorium Superiorum* (ed. 2018)

DSM = General Directory for Shared Mission

EG= *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013)

FDSynod2018 = Final Document of the Fifteenth Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2018), *Young People, the Faith and Vocation Discernment*

FLC = *Fraternal Life in Community* (1994)

GE = *Gaudete et exsultate* (2018)

G.G. = General Government

NWiNW = *New Wine in New Wineskins* (2018), *The Consecrated Life and Its Ongoing challenges since Vatican II*

OT = *Optatam Totius*

PC = *Perfectae Caritatis*

PI = *Potissimum Institutioni*, CICLSAL, February (1990), *(Orientations on Formation in Religious Institutes)*

PO = *Presbyterorum Ordinis*

SAFC = *Starting afresh from Christ, a Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* (May 19, 2002).

S. and SS. = Statute and General Statutes, C.Ss.R.

RFIS (2016) = Gift of Priestly Vocation, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*

RIS = *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis*

SAFC = Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium (2002)

VC = *Vita Consecrata* (1996)



CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

RESCRIPT

Prot. N. 0000 088/2020

There came to the General Curia the document:

“RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS”

**of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer,
updated version, 2020**

Request for approval from the General Secretariat for
Formation.

.....

After considering this document carefully, attending to
all pertinent information, and performing all the acts
required by law in this case, with the consent of the
General Council, I, the Superior General, have
determined as follows:

Approbatur

In communicating this rescript, I pray for God's blessing upon you that you may enjoy His fatherly protection in the name of our Redeemer and through the intercession of Mary our Mother of Perpetual Help.

Given in Rome, on June 27, 2020

Feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help

Michael Grell, C.S.R.

.....
Superior General

Brandon J. Kelly, C.S.R.

.....
Secretary General

LETTER OF PRESENTATION

Father General, V. Rev. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Dear Confreres,

With gratitude to the General Secretariat for Formation, it is my privilege to present the updated and revised *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (2020). The present document is the result of the dedicated work of the General Secretariat in consultation with formators and experts. May it be helpful in the ongoing process of formation of Redemptorist Missionaries to be witnesses of the Redeemer today in our wounded world.

Following the 21st General Chapter in 1991, Fr. Lasso initiated the process of preparing a new *Ratio Formationis Generalis*, which would integrate all the different formation *Ratio* into one continuous and gradual, lifelong process for the formation of Redemptorist Missionaries. This work was entrusted to the General Secretariat for Formation. In 2003, Fr. Tobin presented this *Ratio Formationis Generalis* to the Congregation.

This *Ratio* guided the revision of the *Ratio* of each (V) Province of the Congregation. Over the last fifteen years, the Church and the Congregation have both introduced new decisions about formation for Consecrated Life, as well as about the specific requirements for seminaries and continuing formation of pastoral ministers and religious, which affect both brothers and clerics.

The document which I now present to the Congregation reflects the work of the General Secretariat for Formation over the last years. It is not a new *Ratio Formationis Generalis*. Instead, it is an updated and revised *Ratio* to incorporate decisions and other aspects of integral formation which have assumed greater importance in recent years.

These updates reflect recent Vatican documents, such as the new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 2016, documents produced during the year of Consecrated Life (2014-2015), the recommendations of the recent Synods of Bishops, especially the Synod on Youth and Vocational Discernment (2018), the document from the *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life* (CICLSAL) on Brothers and *New Wine, New Wineskins* from the same Dicastery, as well as other indications about formation for and in Consecrated Life.

At the same time, the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (2020) has updated and integrated the decisions of the 24th and 25th General Chapters (2009/2016) and the Decree on Initial Formation (April 2015). (V) Provincial Secretariats of Formation

should ensure that these decisions are integrated into the programs for both initial and continuing formation.

It is important to remember that the principles of formation, as well as the different fundamental dimensions (*Human, Spiritual, Community, Academic, and Pastoral-Missionary*), must continue to guide and animate our formation programs so that they prepare authentic and effective Redemptorist Missionaries to witness to the Redeemer and preach the Gospel ever anew.

Nor can we forget the process of restructuring in which the Congregation is living today! This spirit challenges us to ever greater interprovincial, international and intercultural formation – both in initial formation programs and in continuing formation for mission. It is more and more the norm that each Conference will also prepare a common *Ratio Formationis* which applies the general principles to the local situation and circumstances. In the spirit of restructuring, our Formation Programs are more often implemented in common formation communities, which are shared by more than one Unit with interprovincial teams of formators.

We continue to develop and to encourage formation programs, which are inter-conference, and which prepare us for a greater missionary availability so that we can serve wherever we are called.

The 24th General Chapter (2009) presented the Congregation with the profile of the Redemptorist Missionary

formed according to this spirit of restructuring and congregational identity. Our goal is to let the Holy Spirit form us in such a way that we can truly and effectively witness to the Redeemer in solidarity for mission in this wounded world. I encourage all Formators and all Formation Secretariats to continue working to fully integrate both this spirit and this *Ratio* in all our programs of initial and continuing formation. May the Holy Spirit assist us with wise discernment and courageous generosity!

On behalf of the General Council, I thank the General Secretariat for Formation for the generous dedication that has led to this updated *Ratio Formationis Generalis* 2020. Above all, I thank the Formators at every level who daily give their lives to offer our confreres the best possible formation programs. This is truly an authentic witness to ‘missionary availability’!

May Jesus, our Redeemer, and brother accompany every formation community and each formator and formand in this lifelong process of human and Christian maturity so that we generously give our lives for plentiful redemption! May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, be our model and our help.

In Christ our Redeemer,



Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Superior General

Rome, March 15, 2020, Jubilee year of Saint Clement

**PROFILE OF THE REDEMPTORIST
CONFRERE SHAPED BY THIS NEW VISION**

XXIV General Chapter 2009

Decision 6, 12 – 17

6.12. The principles of restructuring assure the continuity of our fundamental identity and mission as Redemptorists in the Church and the world. At the same time, they call for new realities and structures that would give fresh impetus to that mission and identity.

6.13. The following is a possible profile of a confrere in a restructured Congregation.

6.14. This confrere would participate in a novitiate program of various Units, usually belonging to the same Conference. He would interact with confreres from other countries, cultures, and maybe even languages.

6.15. During the confreres Initial Formation, he would learn about the charism of the Congregation and the unique gifts and apostolates of his Unit. He would understand from our history that constant renewal and restructuring have been vital for the continuity and continuation of our mission.

6.16. When the confrere makes his vows, his commitment will be to the whole Congregation and not merely to a particular Unit. This commitment will give practical expression in the Unit and the Conference to which he belongs. He will need to have a broader grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities, and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion.

6.17. Above all, the confrere will know that he belongs to and willingly participates in the mission of a worldwide Congregation that takes seriously the challenge of being alert to the signs of the times, making vital apostolic decisions, that respond ever anew to our call to mission.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THOSE FOR WHOM THIS ACTUALIZED *RATIO FOMATIONIS GENERALIS* (2020), IS INTENDED:

1. The newly revised edition of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis 2020* is intended for all the members in formation of the Congregation: young, elderly, Brothers, permanent deacons, clerics, as well as lay missionaries of the Redemptorist family living the same *Vita Apostolica*. Religious formation, as such holds the privileged place in the text, as all are to have the same basic religious formation. Formation requirements specific to the priesthood or diaconal formation will be indicated as such whenever it is not evident from the context.
2. It is intended in a particular way for those who are preparing to become finally professed Redemptorists, whether they are candidates, novices, or temporarily professed; for them, it forms a kind of road map helping them to identify actively and consciously with the Redemptorist Charism.
3. General Statute 0169a says: “Under the term directors of formation come: the director of the juvenate; the master of novices; the prefect of ‘formandi’; the prefect of studies; teachers; the director of pastoral initiation; the prefect of the new brothers for the entire (Vice) Province.” This *Ratio* is intended as an

essential guide for them. They are the persons immediately involved and charged with coordinating and evaluating the progress of a candidate as he moves through his Initial formation in the Congregation.

4. This *Ratio* is also directed to the Coordinators, (Vice) Provincial and Regional Superiors (cf. C. 82b), to the members of the Secretariats and Formation Boards, to those who form part formation communities, and to all those who participate as part of the formation team (including the laity). Although this *Ratio* is not directed explicitly to the formation of lay missionaries, it can be useful for this purpose.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS *RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS*:

5. The fundamental objectives of this *Ratio Formationis Generalis* are:

- a) To guarantee that the Mission of the Congregation inspires the whole process of formation (cf. Const. 77),
- b) “...to lead the candidates and members to such a degree of human and Cristian maturity that, with the help of God’s grace, they will be able to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and wholeheartedly to the service of the missionary Church in Redemptorist community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor” (Const. 78).
- c) To give consistency to all the stages of the formation journey from the first contact with the candidates, during initial formation and prolonged through the Continuing Formation of the confreres,

- d) To be a guide for the elaboration of the *Ratio* or directories of the Conference, (Vice) Provinces and interprovincial and local formation projects,
- e) To promote the greater solidarity in the Congregation (25th General Chapter, 2016, Decision # 2, Four principles for Solidarity)
- f) To describe the goals of all the stages of formation.

6. This updated edition of the *Ratio* (2020) has taken many elements from earlier editions of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (2003). It now formally replaces all previous editions, whether directed to clerics or brothers. This *Ratio* wishes to respond to the actual needs of the Church and the Congregation (cf. Can. 659, 2), and highlight the basic and standard criteria of redemptorist formation, that ensures:

- a) That it be a formation for Mission that lasts all of one's life,
- b) That the principal agent of formation is the subject himself and his response to the Holy Spirit but helped by the formators so that he accomplishes the integration of the various dimensions of formation and places at the center the person of Christ,
- c) That formation takes place in the community and that the community has a significant role that cannot be substituted.
- d) This *Ratio* will be the basis for each particular *Ratio Formationis*, the Directories of the houses of formation, and the various Redemptorist Formation Programs adapted to the Apostolic Plan of the Conference and Unit in their

new cultural, ecclesial and Congregational restructured context.

7. Redemptorists today find themselves the heirs of a rich history. We are developing our mission in more than eighty (80) countries around the world and organized in five Conferences. The diversity of the Congregation shows itself in a very special way in the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage which is ours as a Congregation composed of members who belong not only to the Latin rite but to various oriental rites as well (cf. C. 1). The various specific *Ratio* of the Conferences, (Vice) Provinces, Directories, and formation programs should respect this *diversity in unit* that characterizes our Institute.

8. This plurality within the context of Restructuring and Reconfiguration in which the Congregation finds itself, implies not only a unique richness for all its members but also, a challenge. Those in charge of formation strive to foster in the formandi both a clear understanding of the culture and needs of their particular Conference and Unit and also a strong sense of solidarity with the broader international Congregation, taking into account its missionary history and present reality throughout the world.

CHAPTER I:

FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

9. Redemptorist vocation is a mystery of the love of God for the Church and each of us wherein all of life becomes a dialogical process. Moved and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we follow Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, by preaching the good news to the poor (cf. C.1). As a mystery of love and faith, it is not easily reducible to the workings of human reason. While acknowledging the limitations of any attempt to encompass this mystery of God's love, this updated *Ratio Formationis Generalis* intends to be an aid for those in the process of being formed by the Holy Spirit as missionaries in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

10. Constitution 77 specifies that: “the apostolic purpose of the Congregation must inspire and penetrate the whole formation process of its members. This process includes the selection of vocations, the different periods of training, and the formation which must last throughout the whole of life.” From this, it is clear that formation within the Congregation is a life-long process with various dimensions centered in the total dedication to the person and mission of Christ. In the formation process, which applies to the whole of life, we distinguish two main moments,

initial and continuing formation.¹ Both these stages are informed by principles and ideals that are necessarily the same, although applied and lived differently at different periods in one’s life.

11. It is essential to always bear in mind that formation is an interactive process of individuals, local communities, and the entire Congregation. “The whole Congregation is continually in the process of formation and development, to be ready to meet the needs of the people to whom its members preach the Gospel” (C. 82) and the communities “must aim at continual progress through constant interior renewal” (C. 40).

1.1 FORMATION INTO THE CHARISM ² OF THE CONGREGATION

12. From the beginning of the Congregation, the theme of formation for the specific mission of the institute has been part

¹ Of the different terminology used for this dimension of formation, for example, “ongoing”, “permanent”, continuing formation seems to best represent the interpretation that this *Ratio Formationis Generalis* wishes to describe. For this reason, we will be using this term when referring to this formation dimension in this *Ratio*. cf. footnote # 8.

² Charism: the concept of charism, from Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* and *Perfectae Caritatis*) is the primary focus in the renewal of Religious Life. Charism signifies the “the identifiable characteristics of each Institute” and the “distinctive dynamism of each religious family” (Paul VI, “*Evangelica Testificatio*”). Pope Francis speaks many times about the new ways of exercising the charism: “This initial experience then matured and developed, engaging new members in new geographic and cultural contexts, and giving rise to new ways of exercising the charism, new initiatives and expressions of apostolic charity. Like the seed which becomes a tree, each Institute grew and stretched out its branches.” [n.1] (Apostolic letter of Pope Francis, to all consecrated people on occasion of the year of Consecrated Life, November 21, 2014). Pope John Paul II’s address to the members of the Redemptorist Congregation on December 15, 1977 also contains excellent reflections on the renewal in fidelity to the charism.

of the discussions and decisions of various Chapters, as can be seen in the legislation of the time of Saint Alphonsus. Moreover, when the Redemptorists were accused of opening a house of formation without permission from the civil government, our founder defended himself by affirming: “If we had not taken in new young men at this time [in order to form them], one could say that we are practically finished (as a Congregation) ... Moreover, these young men do not come from their homes, already able to conduct missions. Rather it is necessary that we teach them so that they will be able to preach, to give instructions, to conduct spiritual exercises for the local clergy, and especially that they will be able to hear the confessions of the people who come to the missions. For our work to be able to continue, it is absolutely necessary to accept such young men and to teach them what is necessary.”³

This was also true in the following decades when St. Clement Hofbauer began a formation program at Saint Benno’s. Again, when the structure of the minor seminary (Juvenate) and that of the interprovincial seminary for the study of philosophy and theology (Studentate) were introduced, there was always a conscious awareness of providing a formation guided by the necessities of our lived missionary charism as part of our religious community identity. Such formation is not a luxury but rather a vital necessity, and thus: “the vitality with which the Congregation pursues its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of the Candidates who seek admission to the Redemptorist community” (C. 79).

13. Fundamental to our Spirituality and Charism is “Discipleship,” that is being and acting in the Spirit of Christ, our Redeemer. Discipleship is reflected in the themes of the General

³ Alfonso de Liguori, Memorial alla Real Camera, *Spicilegium Historicum* CSSR 25 (1977) 305.

Chapters: of 1985 and 1991 “Evangelizare pauperibus et a pauperibus evangelizari,” 1997 Spirituality, 2003 “Giving our lives for Plentiful Redemption,” 2009 “Proclaim the Gospel always anew, (St. Clement). Renewed hope, renewed hearts, renewed structures for mission”, 2016 “Witnesses of the Redeemer: in solidarity for mission, to a wounded world.”

14. Specific structures and systems can be varied, but formation into our proper Charism is essential in every instance. Only in this way can future generations of Redemptorists be faithful to our specific mission in the Church. The fact that in the last few decades so many vocations to the Congregation find themselves studying in colleges, seminaries, or universities, whose task is not precisely the passing on of our distinctive identity, poses a new challenge for formation.

15. For Redemptorists, formation is determined by our identity and is orientated to our identity because it is through formation that the formand is helped to continue from the initial enthusiastic fruit of a mission, or the encounter with a Redemptorist or with a community, to the true identification with Christ and his Redemptive mission as it is lived in the Congregation.

16. “In order that future Redemptorist missionaries will be better equipped to evangelize in a secularized society, each Conference Secretariat of Formation will engage the assistance of qualified professionals and confreres whose study, research and expertise in this area can be put at the service of Redemptorist formation” (25th General Chapter 2016, Dec. 31).

1.2 STAGES AND PERIODS OF FORMATION

17. Different stages of formation are discussed throughout this *Ratio*. At the foundation is always the loving call of God (although at the beginning the way of understanding it may be fragile and incomplete), that gradually leads each one to dedicate all of his life (C. 77) to the person of Christ in the mission of the Congregation and lived out according to our specific charism, traditions and Constitutions and Statutes. It is a never-ending dialogical process that calls one to a life of sanctity and joy in the love of God, which informs it from beginning to end.

18. Because of the diversity within the Congregation and the fact that there is at present no standard and precise set of terms to describe the different stages of formation, the various Units of the Congregation use different terminology. Also, different Units use identical terms with different meanings. Moreover, the educational system of each region uses different words to describe the educational process leading from the lower to the higher phases. To avoid confusion, in this *Ratio*, the terminology that will be used referring to the different stages of formation as indicated in Constitution 77 is that used by the General Government in the Decree on Formation 2015:

1. Vocation Promotion and Accompaniment, (including the “vocation of mature persons”)⁴

⁴ The term “mature persons” is used in this document to conform to the use of this term by the recent Vatican Documents in English. In the languages of Latin origin (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French), this category is referred to as “adult” vocations. Although the reference to vocations of “mature” persons is not technically a stage of formation, special attention to these formandi will be given in our initial formation system and in this *Ratio*. Today, people of different ages express interest in joining the Congregation. It is important that accompaniment from the very beginning of the formation process, and throughout it, be age appropriate.

2. Formation Prior to Novitiate (Candidate),
3. Novitiate (Novices)
4. The period from Temporary Profession to Perpetual Profession (temporarily professed) (The Formation for Brothers)⁵
5. Pastoral Experience Stage during temporary profession.
6. Preparation for Perpetual Profession
7. Transition to Ministry,
8. Continuing Formation⁶

The intention is to insist that formation for Redemptorists is a continuing journey until the end of life and not a series of unrelated steps. The theology and spirituality on which our *Vita Apostolica* is based are the same in all the stages.

19. What follows is a description and indications with regards to each stage:

- 1) **Vocation Ministry and Accompaniment:** In this pastoral context, within a broad vocational process, to Consecrated Life and as lay missionaries, the candidates have their first

⁵ The last two General Chapters (24th and 25th) as well as the Decree on Formation offer important reflections on the Brothers and formation. It may be argued that rather than a stage, the Formation for Brothers, while including these stages, also involves other components.

⁶ As indicated, when referring to those in formation, that is, those in the stage prior to novitiate are referred to as “candidates”, those in the Novitiate are referred to as “Novices”, those in the period from first to Perpetual profession are referred to as “temporarily professed” and those in final vows are referred to as “perpetually professed”. “Confreres” refer to all in vows, whether temporary or perpetual. When referring to only one person in formation, the term used is “formand”, when referring to all in formation irrespective of the stages, the term used is “formandi”.

encounter with the Congregation. After an initial period of discernment, a more personalized vocational accompaniment can lead the candidate to the next stage in his formation. Such accompaniment offers two distinct possibilities and processes, one for candidates for Consecrated Life (Brothers and Clerics) and one for candidates as lay missionaries. We concentrate here on the process for the candidates and formandi to Consecrated Life. For the lay missionaries, there will be another different process (cf. Formation *Ratio* for Lay Redemptorists, 25th Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. # 11).

- 2) **Formation Prior to Novitiate:** This is the phase during which a candidate, although not yet professed, lives in a formation community in the spirit of the evangelical counsels (cf. C. 85) striving to integrate himself ever more progressively into the Congregation. Its purpose is to prepare the candidate for entry into the Novitiate. During this time, according to the specific programs of the Units, there are diverse sub-stages; for example, Juniorate, Aspirancy, Postulancy, pre-novitiate, etc. Special attention is to be given to the vocation of mature persons (cf. Flexibility, of this *Ratio*, # 25).
- 3) **Novitiate:** “The novitiate aims to have the novices consider more thoroughly whether they are called by God to follow Christ by making Religious Profession in the apostolic life of the Congregation” (C. 86.2). The process of discernment, besides by the novices, is also the responsibility of the formators (novice master and socius) of the novitiate as representatives of the Congregation.
- 4) **From Temporary Profession to Perpetual Profession:** This is the phase in formation during which the newly professed continue their growth in religious life within a

structured formational environment. This phase is to be for at least three years.

Formation of the Brothers: A period, not less than three years, must be included for Brothers, after the first Profession, with a formation program, and in a formation community.

- 5) **Pastoral Experience Stage before Perpetual Profession:** This is an uninterrupted period of time, lasting for at least six months, where the temporarily professed confrere experiences the concrete reality of Redemptorist Apostolic Community (in a mission outside of his Unit or country).
- 6) **Preparation for Perpetual Profession:** The preparation for the perpetual profession will last for at least one month (cf. S. 075), besides an eight-day retreat. “The Program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied for the perpetual profession, and have been accepted. In so far as possible, preparation for perpetual profession must take place at a Conference level”. (Decree on Initial Formation, 2015)⁷.
- 7) **Transition to Ministry, Redemptorist life and mission:** This is the period during which a perpetually professed confrere (Brother or Cleric) makes his transition from Initial Formation to one of the apostolic communities of the Unit. This takes place in two steps, within a Formation Community and in an active Apostolic Community of the Unit.

⁷Strictly speaking, initial formation for a Redemptorist Missionary ends with Perpetual Profession. But formation is a life-long process. After Perpetual Profession/Ordination, accompaniment is to be provided for the rest of consecrated life with different modalities.

- a) Transition to presbyterial ministry and the life and mission of the Congregation: which includes the diaconate, priestly ordination, pastoral practice, etc.
 - b) Full integration of the Brothers in the Consecrated Life and the life and mission of the Congregation (cf. the “Guidelines” or “Directory” of the pastoral formation of the Brothers).
- 8) **Continuing Formation**⁸: The Continuing Formation is the formative project realized for the whole of one’s life as a continuous process of “becoming more efficient as missionaries” (cf. C. 90) in service to the Church.
- a) Personal formation:
 - a.1. Formation at the level of the individual and for life.
 - a.2. Specialized formation: licentiates, doctorates, masters, or other types of studies, according to the needs of the mission according to the Priorities of the Apostolic Plan of the Conference, of the (Vice) Province, Region, Mission, and Congregation.

⁸ Rather than a formation stage, Continuing Formation is more a lifestyle, a discipline, a value, a series of habits that become an integral and assimilated part of being a religious and, a Redemptorist. Many authors today prefer to place Continuing Formation at the beginning of the formation process. Father Amedeo Cencini says, “Permanent formation is not what comes after initial formation, rather, as paradoxically as it may seem, is something that goes before and make possible initial formation; it is the mother-idea or the generating womb that nurtures and gives formation its identity.” (*La formación permanente*, Amedeo Cencini, Colección SÍGUEME 2, San Pablo 2002, Buenos Aires, Argentina, p. 5).

- b) Community formation:
 - b.1. Formation in the local communities.
 - b.2. Formation in the (Vice) Province, Region, Mission
 - b.3. Formation at the level of the Conference and of the Congregation.

1.2.1 Key Moments in the Formation Process

20. Within the stages of formation, the following moments have a special place of importance and significance as experiences of God's *kairos*:

- a) Temporary Profession
- b) Perpetual Profession
- c) Ordination to the permanent or transitory diaconate to the priesthood (cf. SS. 01, 081b)
- d) Priesthood Ordination

At such times, the formator is especially required to accompany the formand to help him to integrate the values that are appropriate at this moment that the formand is living.

1.3 IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR CONGREGATION FORMATION

21. It is important that the differences between these important documents for Congregation formation are understood so that

there be clarity when elaborating each one, and that the efficacy of these according to their objectives be guaranteed. What follows is a brief description of the documents starting from the most generalized, that is, the Constitutions, the General Chapters, the Decrees, and the *Ratio*, to arrive at the more specific, which are, the Directories, the Redemptorist Formation Programs, Contracts, and Agreements.

1.3.1 Official Congregation Documents

a) *CONSTITUTIONS*

The Constitutions define the charism of the Redemptorist Missionaries in the Church. Together with the General Statutes, they constitute the fundamental code of law proper to a religious institute, drawn up by the members and sanctioned by the competent ecclesiastical authority (*Codex iuris canonici*, Can. 587 §2). The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer were approved by the Holy See in 1982. Changes were made in 1984 and submitted to the Holy See for approval that same year. These changes were approved by the decree of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on July 23, 1986. They, in their entirety, are the principal official document for Redemptorists, but at this level of Formation, we must especially emphasize Chapter 4, “Formation for the Apostolic Community”, which comprises numbers 77 to 90.

b) *GENERAL CHAPTERS*

“The general chapter, legitimately convoked and constituted, is the supreme organ of the internal government of the Congregation; it also represents it. It is an expression of the concern and participation of all members in promoting the good of the whole Institute” (C. 104). Convoked every six years, its duty is “to care for the interests of the apostolic life of the entire

Institute, to strengthen the links that bind its individual parts together, and to further the adaptation of the institutions and norms of life in the Congregation to the needs of the Church and humanity” (C. 107). For this reason, besides the General Constitutions and Statutes, the decisions of the General Chapters are normative for the life and mission of the Redemptorists.

c) *DECREES OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT*

Legitimately constituted Chapters, both General and of each Unit, as well as the Governments, both General and of each Unit, legitimately appointed, can issue decrees in their areas of authority (cf. CC 109:b, 119:3, 137:b and SS 0140:a, 0143). In this regard, and in reference to Formation, we should not overlook the decisions of the General Government in its “Decree on Formation” (April 2015).

d) *RATIO FORMATIONIS GENERALIS*

The word “*ratio*” is a Latin word meaning “reason, *Rationale*.” *Ratio Formationis Generalis* is a term in Latin that is used to signify the principles and values⁹ for formation in all of its stages. From these principles and values enunciated in the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* are elaborated the particular *Ratio*, the Directories, the Programs, and the other documents related to formation.

⁹ For the sake of clarity, the difference between a principle and a value, two terms often used interchangeably, is that a principle leads to something, for example, it may lead to values, while values, when internalized, prompt people to act consistently with their principles, that is, what they judge worthy of their time, energy and talents. Both principles and values cannot be abstract if they are to be internalized by those involved. Encouraging the internalization of principles is a pedagogical challenge and especially so of a *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.

The particular *Ratio* should be based on the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*. The 2020 updated version of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* is organized with a General Introduction, four chapters: 1) Formation in the Congregation, 2) the basic Principles of our *Vita Apostolica*, 3) the Agents and other formation elements and 4) a practical structure format for each stage of formation. Two appendixes and four attachments are also included. To facilitate the elaboration of each particular *Ratio Formationis*, the use of the schema (practical structure) offered by the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (Part III) is recommended.

The Conference, Common Houses of Formation, and Units not involved in a common

formation program within the Conference are required to do their respective *Ratio*. The final approval of the different *Ratio* is the responsibility of the General Government (SS. 067, 081).

1.3.2 Other Documents

a) *DIRECTORIES*

The Directories define the organization of the formation houses, that is, the areas and practical aspects that should be attended to in a particular formation house. The Directories progressively have greater relevance and up to date importance in management and administration, considering the increase of the Conference and interprovincial formation houses. In the circumstances where there co-exists in the same house a missionary and a formation community, their interrelationship should be specified in the corresponding directory.

b) REDEMPTORIST FORMATION PROGRAMS

In the Congregation, due to the variety of institutions where our formandi study, different courses, and programs are offered. Each Unit and Conference should carefully choose the most suitable centers for the preparation of Redemptorist formandi. Canonical requirements regarding clerical formation should be met, and care should be taken to ensure that academic deficiencies in those non-Redemptorist centers are complemented in our house of formation. When we speak here of Redemptorist Formation Programs, we are not referring to these strictly academic programs and content, but to the internal Redemptorist formation to be given in our formation houses.

The specific Redemptorist formation programs should include the formation contents and themes, based on the five dimensions, for each formative stage established in the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* and applied to each formation stage in each Conference or Unit. There is a close relationship between the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*, the particular *Ratio*, and the Redemptorist Formation Programs. Each stage of formation will have its formation program. The programs should respond to the themes of personal and community formation, Redemptorist spirituality and Charism, and the preparation for the activities of the missionary pastoral. The programs should always be oriented towards progressive and continuing formation. The graduality of formation should be attended to as well as the avoidance of gaps in the formation program and useless, unnecessary repetitions.

c) AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

As previously presented, the actual formation situation, both at the level of the Conference, as between Provinces, etc., require determined agreements and contracts between the participating Units in the common houses of formation.

Agreements and contracts that have to do with formation are ordinarily elaborated by the Major Superiors, accompanied by the Coordinator of the Conference. The General Government should be consulted and informed of the important agreements and contracts, and, depending on the issue, approve them. Each agreement and contract should be signed by those directly responsible. Normally they are decided and approved by the “Board” or Council, formed principally by the Major Superiors of the participating Units, dated, indicating who is responsible for its execution, the moment for its revision or evaluation, etc. All these agreements or official contracts should be filed in each Unit, in the Conference and a copy sent to the General Government.

CHAPTER II:
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OUR *VITA*
APOSTOLICA

22. *Vita Apostolica*: This term is the title of our Constitutions and General Statutes. It is a term used in Latin and almost exclusively among Redemptorists to express what is our missionary identity in the world, and within the Church as the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, that is to follow the example of Christ which “comprises at one and the same time a life specially dedicated to God and a life of missionary work” (C. 1), “living together and forming one missionary body... as helpers, companions, and ministers of Jesus Christ in the great work of redemption” (cf. C. 2).

2.1 THE PROGRAM AND ITS QUALITIES

23. Formation, which is the work both of grace and human effort, is also an art and a science. Formation “must do more than educate the young consecrated persons on docility and the good customs and traditions of the group. This ministry means teaching a free heart to learn from the story of each day throughout life in the style of Christ to be of service to all” (NWINW, #35, d).

24. Consequently, it is essential to be faithful to the basic criteria that guide it. In the last decades, the Church has been much preoccupied with the formation of religious, whether in broad terms embracing the whole Church, or in national conferences of bishops, or religious. New and vital ecclesial documents on formation offering norms, criteria, and orientations, are not few. This *Ratio* invites, in a special way the formators, to know and frequently consult the existing documents.

25. **Flexibility:** Formation systems should take their point of departure from the persons they are meant to serve rather than from rigid structures into which all must fit in precisely the same way. They should be flexible and adapted to individual growth processes. Formation involves a personal spiritual voyage, and this voyage is always tied to the mysterious workings of God. Thus, out of respect for this mystery, and for the uniqueness of each individual, formation programs should be so structured as to allow for legitimate differences between persons and their possibilities for conversion and growth. This is important, particularly when there are vocations of mature persons.

26. Passing from one level to the next is not automatic but instead occurs only when the personal and spiritual growth of the candidate guarantees his passing on to the following stage. This will be determined in an open dialogue between the candidate and his formation director and after consultation with the other

members of the formation team/community. The final decision in this matter always rests in the hands of the major superior of the Unit and his council.

27. Consistency: The different stages of formation should be complementary to each other, later stages building on what has been achieved in earlier stages in a clearly linked and harmonious way. This has consequences as regards the formators, the formandi, and the Unit as such. Effective communication and elaboration as formation teams between formators of the different levels should be the hallmark of the entire system, together with a shared philosophy and understanding of the goals proper to each stage. An essential part of this communication and elaboration is, at the end of each stage of formation, the passing on by the formators of a comprehensive report and evaluation of the candidate and formand with pertinent information regarding each of the five dimensions. The formandi should know what their formational goals are at each level. Moreover, during the transition to ministry, they should find the same values embodied in the apostolic communities as were present in the formation communities. The stability and the full dedication of the formators are very important and also important is that they are not changed frequently as this has harmful effects on the continuity of the formation process and the building up of the trust and rapport needed between formators and those entrusted to them. Moreover, formation communities should not be islands isolated from the normal life of the Unit.

28. Holistic Integrity: In keeping with Constitution 78, formation always refers to the holistic development of the person. As such, it is to include the:

- a) “human dimension” (growth at the affective, emotional and psychological levels),

- b) the “spiritual dimension,” i.e., consecration to Christ the Redeemer (maturation in the passion for Christ, personal faith, personal and community prayer and response to one’s call to be a Redemptorist),
- c) the “community dimension” (continuing development in the interpersonal skills needed to live and work in our apostolic communities),
- d) the “academic dimension” (growth in all human and sacred sciences necessary for our life and work),
- e) the “pastoral-missionary dimension” (a growing ability to work in the apostolate, especially among the “poor and most abandoned” and in collaboration with the laity).

It should be noted that academic growth is not the only criterion for passing on to the next formation stage in the Congregation.

29. Interculturality: There is no doubt that the social and Congregational reality will be each day one of greater intercultural relations. The fundamental values of the Gospels, as well as our “Constitutions and Statutes”, should be assimilated by the formandi without provoking unnecessary contradictions to their legitimate cultural and societal traditions. This poses a challenge to formators to constantly strive to find ways of passing on the Redemptorist essential values and, at the same time, maintaining, where necessary, a healthy tension with the values of the culture within which formation is taking place. Consecrated life is called, in the globalization context, to include and integrate the differences, giving testimony to universality and openness in diversity. “Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression, but rather, ‘remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the

traditions of the church, it will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root.”¹⁰

30. Restructured: Considering the historic moment that Consecrated Life and the Congregation is living which seeks to revitalize its apostolic life by means of Restructuring and the Reconfiguration for Mission of Units with all of its implications (cf. 25th Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. 1), the formation of the future Redemptorists is fundamental for this process. Because of this, formation must be guided by a new availability that promotes one missionary body, simplicity of life become more and more interprovincial and interconference, always in an open and organized way.

31. Interconference, Interprovincial, and International: The present situation of Restructuring of the Congregation is of vital importance in the process of formation of authentic Redemptorist Missionaries. This process proposes a well-defined option for Formation, Initial as well as Continuing, in collaboration with other Conferences, Units, and countries. This option has been expressed in various Congregational documents, for example: “all the novitiates will be interprovincial” (Decree of General Government, April 2015) and “the Coordinator, working in the spirit of collegiality with the Assembly, will exercise his delegated authority in the following areas... Initial and Continual Formation...” (24th Gen. Chap., 2009, Dec. 2.4). This process requires preparation, study, and knowledge at various levels. Essential to this process is the study of the different official languages of the Congregation during the different stages of formation.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 24, 2013), # 116, and NWiNW #37.

32. **For the whole of life:** "...formation is a life-long project. It is necessary that we renew and actualized ourselves, on the personal and community levels, to provide better service to the mission. The Continuing Formation programs should be oriented to this objective (22nd Gen. Chapter, 1997, Orientations 5. 7). What originates in Initial Formation does not end with Perpetual Profession or with Transition to Ministry, but rather should continue for all our lives. In other words, Initial Formation should be seen in the perspective of Continuing Formation, since "formation is not only a learning period for the vows but also represents a theological journey of thinking about Consecrated Life" (SAFC, # 15).

2.2 THE PERSONS AND THEIR QUALITIES

33. What are presented here are essential qualities that should be nurtured in those being formed. This is neither an exhaustive nor prioritized listing of desirable qualities for only the formators and the formandi. It is instead an indication of qualities that must be present in all candidates and formandi together with openness to growth and development during the formation process. When Jesus encountered the rich young man with many qualities, he could do nothing owing to the young man's inability to be more generous (cf. Mk 10:21-22). Envisioned here is the active participation of all formandi in response to the call to holiness.

34. **Prayer:** The ability to converse with God is fundamental to our life and mission. A healthy prayer life in both its private and communal forms should be fostered throughout the formation process. As sons of St. Alphonsus, the Master of Prayer, we have inherited a specific way of praying and doing meditation, together with a concern for sharing this with the faithful. This is especially important during the transition to ministry stage when community

prayer may manifest an important change with regards to that lived in the formation houses.

35. Co-responsibility: The quality of co-responsibility is an integral part of the Redemptorist life (cf. CC 35,73). Thus, one of the goals of Initial Formation must be to train the candidate in precisely what this means for Redemptorist life and to help him to actualize his capacity to live in this way. (cf. 24th Gen. Chap., 2009, seventh guiding principle for Restructuring). Formation cannot be seen as a purely passive thing that is done to a candidate by a formator. It is instead a process in which both participate and strive in dialogue with one another and with the broader community, to grow in one's capacity to live the Redemptorist life (cf. C 81).

“Formation must focus on developing in future pastors and consecrated men and women their ability to carry out their role as guides in an authoritative, but not the authoritarian way, educating young candidates and formandi to give themselves for the community. Special attention needs to be given to some criteria of formation, such as: overcoming tendencies towards clericalism, the ability to work in a team, sensitivity towards the poor, transparency of lifestyle, the willingness to allow themselves to be accompanied”.¹¹ (FDSynod2018, #163).

¹¹ “There is also a special need to accompany young men and women showing leadership potential, so that they can receive training and the necessary qualifications. The young people who met before the Synod called for “programs for the formation and continued development of young leaders. Some young women feel that there is a lack of leading female role models within the Church and they too wish to give their intellectual and professional gifts to the Church. We also believe that seminarians and religious should have an even greater ability to accompany young leaders”. (FDSynod2018, #163 and CV # 245).

36. Identity as a Redemptorist and “Sense of Belonging”: It is necessary to have an effective program so that all many acquire a strong sense of Redemptorist identity. This identity must include solid knowledge of our history and traditions as well as a solid grasp of present-day Redemptorist life. Together with this, a strong sense of loyalty to the Congregation, one’s community, and a real sense of ownership must be present. Such ideas should foster a real sense of belonging in the one being formed. “The confrere, on professing his vows, commits himself to the whole Congregation, and not only with his particular Unit” (24th Gen. Chap. 2009, Dec. 6.16). Redemptorists are called to be missionaries, and as missionaries are also available to go where the pastoral priorities so require.

37. The simplicity of lifestyle: Simplicity of lifestyle is a true sign of detachment for the sake of the Gospel. (cf. CC 62, 65) besides being a Redemptorist tradition from the time of St. Alphonsus. All must be well trained in the common life and a true detachment from material things. The rampant materialism of the present age must not be allowed to corrupt our common life and our willingness to serve the poor in areas and situations that entail real material deprivation on the part of the missionary (cf. 25th Gen. Chap., 2016, Four Guiding Principles of Solidarity).

38. The ability to live and work in Apostolic Community: Community life is at the heart of Redemptorist life and the apostolic mission. Both our prayer and our workflow from our life together as brothers. Therefore, a genuine desire and ability to work and live in community are essential in Redemptorist life (cf. C. 21). In formation great attention should be given to developing all those qualities that are necessary for life in common: “brotherly love, self-denial, availability to all, especially the lowly and the poor, the ability to work in close cooperation with others in the labors of the apostolate, daring and firm confidence, simplicity, and sincerity of heart, tolerance, and

kindness, the ability to suffer cheerfully in want, in labors and affliction and persecutions for the sake of Christ” (S. 057).

39. Option for the Poor: For those in Initial Formation, personal direct pastoral contact with the poor is an essential and fundamental element of their formation experience. Since the option for the poor is the sign of the fidelity of the Institute to its vocation in the Church, the formators should ensure that “solidarity with the poor and promotion of their fundamental rights of justice and liberty (cf. C. 5), are an integral part of the formation process. “We live simply and generously in solidarity with the poor” (25th Gen. Chapter 2016, Dec. #2, Principles of Solidarity).

40. “All Units will ensure that initial and Continuing Formation programs include components of ‘formation by insertion’ which allow for experiences of real closeness to the poor. They will develop programs that will make provision for a period of a more stable sharing in the life and lifestyle of the poor whom we serve” (25th Gen. Chapter 2016, Dec. #32).

41. Involvement in the work of the Congregation: A willingness to be genuinely committed to the specific work of the Congregation is necessary to our identity in the Church. As a sign of our communal collaboration and as an expression of our spirituality, we are reminded that a Redemptorist can “never be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ nor become holy if he does not have the spirit of the Institute,”¹² which consists in the evangelization of the most abandoned, especially the poor. Private apostolates should be exceptions done by individuals who are sent by the community and who work in its name for reasons of pressing pastoral needs.

¹² St Alphonsus, *Considerations on Religious Life*, n. 13.

42. Joyous Practice of the Vows: Life in accord with the Evangelical Councils should be a source of joy and peace. Chastity is the loving consecration of one's sexuality to God for the sake of the kingdom. It should be embraced as a mature act of love that opens one in generosity to service for God and others. Poverty is the proper ordering of all material things to the service of the kingdom. It is a much-needed counter-witness to the materialism of our age that puts material things above people and even above God himself. Obedience is an act of faith in the real presence of God in one's life, as that is expressed through superiors and community discernment (cf. C. 71-76).

43. Special Gifts: A formand's unique gifts and strengths should always be affirmed, and a serious effort should be made to develop these talents in so far as they enrich both the individual and the community. This is even more important as regards personal talents that are useful in the apostolate, such as music, theater, elocution, etc. All should "bear in mind that the higher charisms are directed to charity as to a more excellent way" (S. 049; cf. Cor. 12:31f).

44. Involvement in the Life of the Local Church: Constitution 18 stresses the need for cooperation with both the universal and the local Church in their efforts in the apostolate. Candidates must accordingly know the pastoral reality of the Universal and Local Church. They should be trained to take part in the apostolic life and pastoral programs of the dioceses in which they function with full awareness that the Congregation is not "a side chapel inside the holy and large Church." (Comm. 1, 1998, #21).

45. Formation and Shared Mission: The formation process should be so oriented as to create opportunities for communication and participation among consecrated men, consecrated women, and laity, especially with those who adhere to our charism. Redemptorist Religious should be trained in such

a way that they are at ease with the laypersons with whom they collaborate in a joint mission, and able to help these brothers and sisters in their desire for closer communion with the Congregation (cf. VC 54-58). Thus, the Redemptorist family should see itself as a “new sign of the times,” in which together in the shared mission, we journey fraternally as disciples of Christ (cf. XXII General Chapter 1997, Dec. 6.1) (cf. General Directory for Partnership in Mission).

46. Flexibility and Adaptability: Due to the continually changing demands both of the modern world and the mission, missionaries must have the ability to change and to adapt when and as needed (cf. C. 15). Rigidity should not be confused with the strength of will. Nor should blind adherence to one way of doing things be confused with loyalty to tradition. Rather both loyalty to tradition and strength of will should be encouraged in such a way that they are also ready to change for the sake and needs of the apostolate. Included here is also the ability and willingness to move and to go where needed.

47. Union with Christ: “Since the members are called to continue the presence of Christ and his mission of redemption in the world, they choose the person of Christ as the center of their life, and strive day by day to enter ever more intimately into personal union with him. Thus, at the heart of the community, to form it and sustain it, is the Redeemer himself and his Spirit of love. And the closer their union with Christ, the stronger will become their union with each other” (C. 23).

48. Discernment: “How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense, it is also a gift that should be petitioned, and in which one should grow” (GE 166). “The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today” (GE 167). It has to do with the meaning of

each person's life before the Father who knows and loves me as I am, with the real purpose of my life, which nobody knows better than He. Ultimately, discernment leads to the wellspring of undying life: to know the Father, the only true God, and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (cf. *Jn* 17:3; GE 170; C. 83). All of this is accomplished considering each person in particular, the formators, the local community, and the Major Superior with his Council. And always in a spirit of contemplation to discover God in the persons and in the events of each day, where we perceive in the true light His saving plan and distinguish reality from illusion (cf. C. 24).

49. **Solitude:** The ability to be alone and comfortable with oneself and to be able to find God in the desert of one's solitude without giving way to depression or an uncontrollable urge to escape into the noise and turmoil of overactivity is basic to the life of a Consecrated person. In this God created solitude, one learns to discern in grace-filled silence, through prayer and meditation, God's plans for one's life and vocation. (cf. CC. 45.2, 81; VC 38).

50. **Compassion:** To be a Redemptorist is to live with a deep sense of pastoral compassion, like Christ before the multitude, as He looked at persons with the eyes of God. The concern for the salvation of the most abandoned explains why the Redemptorists "know very well that all are sinners, but equally, they know that, at a deeper level, all have been chosen, redeemed, and gathered in Christ" (cf. C. 7).

2.3 THE PROCESS AND ITS DIMENSIONS

51. In this *Ratio*, the formation process will be looked at and discussed in terms of the five dimensions of formation, which comprise the process as a whole. (cf. C 78, VC 65, 71)

- a) **human** (cf. S. 055, RFIS 2016, 43-44),
- b) **spiritual** (cf. S. 056, RFIS 2016, 45-50),
- c) **community** (cf. S. 057, VC 67),
- d) **academic** (cf. RFIS 2016 51-56),
- e) **pastoral-missionary** (cf. S. 058, RFIS 2016, 57-59).

52. **The Human Dimension** – This dimension is to be understood in the following words from *Vita Consecrata*, # 71: “...the object of formation is the whole person, called to seek and love God, ‘with all one’s heart, and with all one’s soul, and with all one’s might’ (cf. Dt 6:5), and one’s neighbor as oneself (cf. Lev 19:18; Mt 22: 37-39)...The human and fraternal dimensions of the consecrated life call for self-knowledge and the awareness of personal limitations, to offer its members the inspiration and support needed on the path towards perfect freedom”. Thus, formation is to foster those human qualities required for the life and mission of each confrere in the Redemptorist community:

- a) charity towards others,
- b) the ability to work in close elaboration with others in the apostolate,
- c) self-abnegation,
- d) the capacity to be free and authentic and not guided by unconscious motivations and to constructively assume his personal history,
- e) the putting of oneself at the disposal of all, especially “the poor and the most abandoned,”

- f) the ability to make balanced judgments concerning people and events,
- g) the ability to make well-considered decisions,
- h) the ability to suffer cheerfully in want, in labors, trials, and afflictions, and in persecutions for the sake of Christ (cf. S. 057, OT 11),
- i) the psychological and emotional maturity,
- j) integrated sexuality and sexual identity,
- k) the capacity to practice sports and other dimensions as are music, the arts, etc., as a means for integrating the whole personality.

53. The Spiritual Dimension – For Redemptorists, “spirituality is at once the source and the fruit of mission” (XXII General Chapter 1997, Message, #6). This is what informs and energizes the whole of what we are and what we do. (cf. also, Comm. 1, 1998 – Spirituality our most important challenge; Comm. 2, 1999, when speaks of missionary Spirituality). Thus, formation is:

- a) To deepen a capacity to walk the same path as Christ the Redeemer even to the sacrifice of oneself on the cross and to the victory of the Resurrection,
- b) To cultivate a personal relationship with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in a relationship of familiar and continuous conversation, in the tradition of St. Alphonsus, “in order to truly participate in the Son’s love for the Father and for men, they will foster the spirit of contemplation through which their faith grows and is strengthened” (C. 24),

- c) To develop one's love for the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours (cf. C. 29, 30),
- d) To provide adequate time in the daily schedule for meditation on the word of God with a strong emphasis on the Alphonsian method of mental prayer (cf. C. 31). Since the formandi will one day have "to preach the word of God, they must be abundantly nourished by it. They must constantly give themselves to meditation on the mystery of salvation" (C. 81),
- e) To deepen one's relationship with God, with oneself, with others, and with creation establishing a spiritual "grounding" in order to personalize the radical options in faith, hope and charity, as well as in the evangelical councils of chastity, poverty, and obedience.
- f) To deepen one's awareness and assimilation of the charism of the Redemptorist community through the study of the spirit of our founder, an assimilation of the *Constitutions and Statutes*, the study of the lives and works of St. Alphonsus and our other significant confreres, the development of true apostolic zeal marked by simplicity, faithfulness to the people, a preference for the poor, watchful eagerness for situations of pastoral urgency and a desire for explicit evangelization,
- g) To celebrate the Redemptorist feasts with fitting joy and solemnity as occasions for strengthening our Redemptorist identity,
- h) To encourage visits to the Blessed Sacrament and other forms of devotion in accordance with our Alphonsian tradition (cf. C. 30),

- i) To provide for monthly days of recollection and the annual retreat (cf. S. 029),
- j) To have opportune occasions for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other communal celebrations such as “a review of life,” celebrated as a sign that Redemptorist communities are called to be communities of conversion, (cf. S 038),
- k) “Following the tradition of Sint Alphonsus, all the confreres will honor each day the Blessed Virgen Mary (under the advocacy of Our Mother of Perpetual Help). To all is recommended the recitation of the holy rosary, so that with grateful hearts they may reflect upon and imitate the mysteries of Christ in which Mary had a share”. (C. 32),
- l) To provide ample opportunity for flexibility and creativity in prayer,
- m) To encourage those in formation to become leaders of prayer for the People of God and to value judiciously various forms of popular piety.

54. The Community Dimension – Redemptorist formation involves a strong community dimension. Because “community does not truly exist when members merely live together; it requires as well as genuine sharing on the human and spiritual level. The whole purpose of community life is to have members, like the apostles (cf. Mk 3:14; Acts 2:42-45), in the spirit of genuine brotherly union, combine their prayers and deliberations, their labors and sufferings, their successes and failures, and their material goods as well, for the service of the Gospel” (CC. 21-22). Thus, formation is:

- a) To train formandi to live in communities of prayer that are also solid communities of persons dedicated to human and spiritual growth for the sake of the mission (cf. CC 21-45).
- b) To form all in such a way that the love for the community will grow into a deep and solid love of all the confreres (cf. Ph. 2: 1-5). It is important that this is understood in light of the broader theology of religious life as a symbol of the larger ecclesial community (cf. FLC, 2).
- c) To foster the desire to live community life, as did the first Christian communities, while at the same time teaching the formandi to know and accept the limitations of the community which by its very nature cannot meet all expectations. In this regard, the formandi must learn to accept that solitude and loneliness are unavoidable facts of life and can be spurs leading their hearts to God.
- d) To carefully moderate various tendencies of the modern world: 1) the tendency towards excessive individualism, 2) the tendency to be narcissistically preoccupied with one's development to the detriment of one's awareness of and concern for the needs of others, and 3) the tendency towards activism to the neglect of virtues such as acceptance and contemplation.
- e) Organize talks and workshops on the practical ways in which true charity in community can express itself, concern for the needs of others, avoiding destructive criticism, safeguarding the good name of others.
- f) To provide a structure to the formation community that will promote a real sense of responsibility not only for studies but also for integral community life.

- g) To provide regular times to gather to recreate and to enjoy each other's company.
- h) To provide regular opportunities to develop the skills they need to work together in the evangelization ministry.
- i) Cultivate interculturality and mutual respect in the historic moment of great collaboration and the living together of confreres with diverse origins and backgrounds.
- j) The bonds that are created in the *formation houses* between formators and formandi, and between the formandi themselves, must be marked by a sense of communion and fraternity. "A fraternal relationship 'cannot just be left to chance, to fortuitous circumstances,' but is instead a conscious choice and an ongoing challenge." (RFIS 2016, # 52)

55. The Academic Dimension – In Redemptorist missionary life, the academic and intellectual dimension is fundamental. It helps us to understand better our past and present reality and is a necessary tool for the evangelization of cultures. "To diminish the need for study can have serious consequences even on the apostolate, creating feelings of marginalization and inferiority or giving rise to superficiality and recklessness in the one's initiatives... The need for studies cannot be reduced to first formation or the achieving of academic degrees and professional certifications; this is rather the expression of a desire to know God ever more profoundly, which is never finished." (VC 98).

56. In addition to this, the academic standards and requirements demanded by the Church and various episcopal conferences for priesthood formandi must be met in all instances. While requirements specific to the priesthood are not mandatory for brother candidates and formandi, nonetheless the brothers should

be provided opportunities to increase their knowledge of theology or other sciences and to develop their talents and acquire professional skills useful for ministry and the particular needs of the Unit in which they will serve. Thus, formation should:

- a) Ensure that formandi are given solid academic formation. Formators should ensure that the institutes of learning, which our formandi attend, are of good quality, and truly adapted to the needs of our apostolic community and our missionary charism.
- b) Encourage and foster a deep desire to grow in one's understanding of the mystery of Christ the Redeemer. (cf. Rom. 16: 25-27; I Cor. 2: 8-12; Eph. 1: 8-10, 3: 14-19; Col. 1: 9-11)
- c) Provide missionary pastoral opportunities, which will help to put into practice what they learn in the classrooms (cf. C 88).
- d) Ensure that the studies create in the formandi a critical sense to: understand the realities of our world without falling into structures of closed and simple thinking, evaluate everything in the light of the Gospels, to discern, through the Holy Spirit, the signs of the times and places, to have a sense of solidarity with the people, above all with those who are more deprived of spiritual help, especially the poor, the powerless and the oppressed, sharing with them their hopes and anxieties to bring them salvation in such a way "that they will be able to overcome the evils that oppress them" (cf. S. 09).
- e) Ensure that special stress is placed upon the dimensions, the problems, and the means of evangelization so that the formandi can become capable missionaries for the

apostolic projects of the Conference and their (Vice) Province. It may be that in the field of moral theology and the history and the apostolic ministry of the Congregation (cf. S 023)., according to the charism of St. Alphonsus which distinguishes us in the Church, be indispensable supplemental courses to enrich what is offered in most institutes of academic study that do not belong to the Congregation. (cf. S 058) (Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. 14).

- f) Evaluate regularly the pastoral experiences of the *formandi* to ensure a balanced integration of study and mission.

57. The Pastoral-Missionary Dimension – Constitution 77 makes clear that the apostolic purpose of the Congregation must penetrate the whole formation process, and this is further specified in General Statute 058 which states: “The pastoral orientation of the whole course of *formation* is a distinctive feature of missionary formation, and this must be clearly in evidence. Everything relating to formation – both studies and spiritual life – must be combined with practical apostolic exercises and experience, so that the *formandi* may be able to renew and increase their faith in the mystery of salvation and so be prepared to preach the Gospel with confidence to others.” *Formandi* have to be accompanied in embracing and being part of the development of the Restructuring for Mission process of the Congregation. For this as a value to succeed, dissemination of knowledge and the ongoing process must be assured. Thus, formation should:

- a) Lead the *formandi* and confreres “to such a degree of human and Christian maturity that, with the help of God’s grace, they will be able to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and wholeheartedly to the

service of the missionary Church in Redemptorist community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor” (C. 78).

- b) Progressively learn “what the following of Christ demands of them, required as it is by baptismal consecration and confirmed by religious profession, and thus become true missionaries” (C. 78).
- c) For Redemptorists to be free and courageous apostles, who will constantly dedicate themselves to the evangelization of all people and especially of the poor, the deprived and the oppressed (cf. CC. 4, 20), knowing that the Redemptorist mission is a life experience in which we evangelize and allow ourselves to be evangelized.
- d) Provide opportunities for those in formation to get to know the actual work, priorities, and the Apostolic plan of the Conference and the Unit to which they belong so that they can better prepare themselves for their pastoral and missionary integration.
- e) Instruct formandi in the charism and traditions of the Congregation so that they may be guided by these fundamental values in their future work and apostolic choices.
- f) Foster a deep love for the “most abandoned, especially the poor” (C. 1)
- g) Provide progressive forms (appropriate to each level) of well-structured and guided apostolic experience (i.e., with preparation, actualization, and evaluation). The particular *Ratio* of the Conference/(Vice) Province shall indicate more concrete procedures about this for each level of formation (cf. S 058). These should be experiences that help formandi broaden their capacity:

to assume responsibility, to adapt themselves to the circumstances in which they find themselves, something that requires flexibility and courage in times of difficulty, but also strong convictions and identification with the apostolic project, to maintain good personal relationships with the different people with whom they work,

- h) Nurture the capacity to work with others, confreres and lay, as an apostolic team in keeping with one's vocation and being able to evaluate honestly one's performance, and to change when the discernment of the community indicates this is necessary.
- i) To be up to date in the knowledge of the best practices to protect minors and vulnerable adults and put them into practice in pastoral and professional activities.
- j) Ensure real collaboration between those in charge of the initial stages of formation, those in authority in the Conference or (Vice) Province, and those in charge of Continuing Formation (cf. S 060).
- k) It is highly recommended that formandi have one-year pastoral experience in a country other than their own (cf. Decree on Initial Formation, April 2015).
- l) "The study of English and other languages are to be included in all Initial and Continuing Formation programs to prepare confreres for possible work in the future in the Conferences of the Northern Hemisphere." (25th Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. 6). The official languages established by the Congregation are English, Spanish and Italian and other local languages desirable for the specific mission.

CHAPTER III:

AGENTS, AND OTHER FORMATION

ELEMENTS

58. Formation is a process guided by the Holy Spirit, who is also the first formation agent and involves individuals and institutions, where all are active participants within the context of the Redemptorist community, the local Church, and the cultural ambiance and maintaining the principle of co-responsibility. The formation process demands a clear, serious, and profound dialogue among all these participants in formation.

3.1 THE AGENTS AND THE FORMATIONS PROCESS

3.1.1 Formandi

59. Without formandi, there would be no formation. They are the future and the hope of the Congregation. The formandi should be attentive to the Redeemer's call, according to God's will, so that guided by the Spirit, they may grow and mature in their formation

process. The formandi should assume that they are the agents and primarily responsible for their formation, accompanied by their formators and superiors.

In his diary (Dec. 31, 1899), Gaspar Stanggassinger wrote: “Pray, pray at length for our formandi. ‘If the Lord does not build the house, in vain, do the laborers struggle.’ The vocation is the most important thing. To nurture, develop, cultivate, help the vocation of each student is more than... preaching the most brilliant of missions.”

3.1.2 Formators

60. So that those in formation may become apostles (C. 20) according to the expectations of the Christian community and the demands of our special mission in the Church, formators as those having the immediate responsibility for formation, should be selected from confreres adapted to formation work and properly prepared for it: “for those in charge of formation must be prepared by special training and have adequate missionary experience in the Congregation” (C 82). For formators, the task of formation is their most important apostolate.

61. In the choice of formators, “it is not enough for them to be well qualified; they need to be capable of fraternal relationships, listening with empathy, profound inner freedom” (FDSynod2018, # 163), and also adequate experience of missionary practice. These qualities are especially important for dealing with multi-cultural formation experiences, which is the growing reality of our formation houses.

62. Formators should periodically receive updating and formation for their ministry. An important way of doing this is by sharing their experiences with other formators in encounters and courses

at the level of the Units and Conferences, as well as with other formators of other Religious Congregations (22nd Gen. Chap. 1997, Decisions #s 5.2 and 5.3).

63. This personalized human formation should be carefully attended to by the formation teams, Superiors, and the Coordinator of the Conference. As an aid for the formators, the General Secretariat for Formation has published a series of volumes on REDEMPTORIST FORMATION.

64. “The formator must exercise discretion when it comes to the lives of the seminarians (*of the formandi*). Each formator should be possessed of human, spiritual, pastoral and professional abilities and resources, to provide the right kind of accompaniment that is balanced and respectful of the freedom and the conscience of the other person, and that will help him in his human and spiritual growth. Moreover, those who are marked out to become formators need a specific preparation and generous dedication to this important task. Formators are needed who can ensure their full-time presence and who, above all else, are witnesses of how to love and serve the people of God, giving themselves without reserve for the Church” (RFIS 2016, # 49. cf. **Attachment 1. *Personal Accompaniment***)¹³

¹³ When ecclesial documents are cited and they make references to the Seminary and Priestly Formation which are also applicable to Religious Formation Houses and formandi for Consecrated Life, placed within the quote within parenthesis and in italics is the corresponding terminology.

3.1.3 Spiritual Directors¹⁴

65. The tradition of spiritual direction (spiritual accompaniment) has a long history of consecrated life. Its importance is such that qualified spiritual directors should be available to those in both initial and Continuing Formation. While these directors need not be Redemptorists, they should be persons with knowledge of the Redemptorist way of life and mission. Moreover, among Redemptorists, there is a strong tradition of acting as spiritual directors (cf. S 024) and thus the need for both the personal experience of and training for this apostolate.

66. Spiritual direction is a privileged method for the integral growth of the person. The spiritual director must be chosen with complete freedom by the formand from among the persons proposed and in dialogue with the responsible formator. This freedom will only be authentic when the formand opens himself up with sincerity, trust, and docility. Meetings with the spiritual director should not be occasional, but scheduled, communicated, and evaluated in a timely manner. In fact, the quality of spiritual accompaniment is important for the very effectiveness of the entire formation process (cf. RFIS 2016, n. 107).

67. In order to guarantee the total freedom and independence, both of those who accompany and those who are accompanied, it must be clear that the formators, the Provincial Superior, or other confreres who have to give, at a certain moment of the formation

¹⁴ In the different Conferences and Units of the Congregation, different terminology is used for the ministry of “Spiritual Directors”. Among the terminology used are “spiritual companions”, “counselors”, “instructors”, “guides”, “mentors”, etc. For the purpose of this document, the arbitrary term used is that of “spiritual directors”. The Spiritual Director accompanies the Religious in the deepening his or her honest and transparent relationship with the Lord, and especially, in the vocation to which the Lord has called him/her. (Cf. Can. 239, 2)

process, judgment or vote on a particular formand, must not be his spiritual director or confessor in a regular and continuous way. In an extraordinary circumstance, and for a grave reason, an exception may be made, knowing that later they will not be able to give a judgment or vote on that particular formand (cf. Can. 630 §1, §4; 985; and 240 §2).

3.1.4 Confessors

68. Since formation is a process built on openness to the Holy Spirit and conversion of heart, it is important to frequently celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (cf. C 41). Qualified confreres and also other confessors should be available to the formandi. The formand should always have the choice to approach freely any confessor, either within or outside the formation house. These confreres need not be members of the formation community but should be available on a regular basis. It is fitting, for an integral formation, that the Spiritual Director could also be the regular confessor. In no case may they be those who are immediately responsible for the formation of the individual. (cf. RFIS 2016, #107)

3.1.5 The (Vice) Provincial and the Coordinator

69. The (Vice) Provincial Superior in his Unit and the Coordinator in the Conference, as the delegate of the General superior, have the primary responsibility with regard to formation (cf. C. 82; 24th Gen. Chap. 2009, Dec. 2.4)). This responsibility is expressed by the careful appointing of competent formators, regular dialogue with those appointed as formators (cf. C 83); being vigilant that the objectives of formation are being realized and regularly visiting the houses of formation, ensuring that good programs of formation extend from initial formation to Continuing Formation (cf. Pastoral Guide for Superiors). Today an adequate dialogue and collaboration between the Coordinators

and the (Vice) Provincials are needed in the efforts to find the best formation for our formandi.

3.1.6 The Secretariat of Formation of the Conference and the (Vice) Province

70. The Secretariat for Formation in each Conference and Unit is responsible for co-coordinating and overseeing the quality of the entire program of formation. It is to advise the government of the Conference and the (Vice) Province in this (cf. S. 0114). The membership and competence of the Secretariat for Formation are determined by the Statutes of the (Vice) Provinces and the Conferences.

With the new restructured composition of the Units, it is necessary to establish offices for the coordination of the vocation ministry in each country and Unit. The presence of lay collaboration in these formation teams should be provided.

3.1.7 The Board of the Interprovincial Formation Houses

71. In a special way the Congregation's Interprovincial Novitiates, but also other common special formation experiences, as are the interprovincial theologates, preparation for perpetual profession, and, increasingly more formation experiences in the Congregation, require a direction and decision-making board that assumes the organization for the group of Units (cf. Decree on Initial Formation, 2015). It is the responsibility of the members of the Board of the interprovincial formation houses to dialogue and elaborate the *Ratio*, Directories, the programs, and the Contracts/Agreements that govern the formation in these joint formation projects.

3.2 THE COMMUNITIES OF THE FORMATION HOUSES

72. The diversity of formation houses, systems, and situations that exist in the Congregation render it difficult to outline only one type of formation community. However, the development of a solid formation community must be a primary objective for all Units because the communities of the houses of formation are the context and point of reference for those who wish to know and to experience our way of life and mission. In this sense, the formation should not be delegated to one person only, but to a team in which there is one person primarily responsible, and where all form a school of community life. It is wise to keep in mind that, if the number of formandi is too small, this gives rise to another series of problems because the shared experience of the group risks being compromised. Consequently, if a Unit lacks the necessary personnel to build communities of formation, or the appropriate structures needed to guarantee the adequacy of a formation process with all its essential elements, it should seek the help of other Units in the Conference (cf. C. 141).

73. As far as the numerical size of formation communities is concerned, those that are too big run the risk of de-personalization and inadequate knowledge of the young people on their journey. Communities that are too small can be suffocating and suffer from a logic of dependency. In the case of the later, it is better to establish common formation houses between various (Vice) Provinces, Regions, Missions, and Conferences with clear formation projects and well-defined responsibilities (cf. FDSynod2018, #163).

74. Formation communities should not isolate themselves from the life of their Unit. Thus, formation communities will participate in the life of their Unit and Conference while maintaining their specific character of formation. To this end, they will make use of the various printed and digital media within

the Unit, the Conference, and the Congregation as a sign of communion for mission, formation and Redemptorist life in general.

75. Today in the Congregation, attention, and care must be given to the interprovincial communities where some of the formation stages take place in the Conferences. It is recommended that adequate attention is given to the confreres that compose these communities given the formation and multicultural character as well as the establishment of an adequate Project of Community Life (PCL) (cf. 25th Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. 21) that considers the objectives for which the community was established. For this reason, these communities must be, for all intents and purposes, true interprovincial communities and not just communities of one Unit hosting formandi from other Units. This requires an authority (council or “board”) shared among the participating Units. At the same time, this requires a shared collaboration of personnel, formators, finances, etc., of all the Units involved in this project.

3.3 THE CO-RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THE CONFRERES

76. Without prejudice to the direct responsibility of the officially designated formators, all members and communities of the Unit share the responsibility for formation, and it should be ranked high among its priorities. This should be especially true as regards the fostering of vocations (cf. C 79; 25th Gen. Chap., 2016, Dec. 29). This responsibility is met by a generous concern by all for the work of vocation ministry, a readiness to present the challenge of the call of God (cf. Mt. 19:21), a welcoming attitude to young people interested in our way of life, and an eagerness to invite possible candidates to join us. The happiness and fraternity in our community life and our apostolic work should be visible to all.

All the confreres should be available to collaborate in formation offering to give retreats, conferences, act as spiritual directors, or to accept the diverse responsibilities within the formation process. Communities should be welcoming, accompany, and help the formandi, especially during pastoral experiences. Members can be asked to give their impressions of the formandi and, in that way, contribute to their formation and evaluation.

3.4 OTHER FORMATION ELEMENTS

3.4.1 Help from Psychology

77. The human sciences, especially psychology, offer great help to formation in Consecrated Life. It is very important before a candidate is accepted to know his qualities and then during the whole of the process to offer him help for personal growth. As the Church says, “superiors are to be vigilant about admitting only those who, besides the required age, have health, suitable character and sufficient qualities of maturity to embrace the particular life of the institute; this health, character, and maturity are to be attested to, if necessary, by using experts” (Can. 642). Furthermore, formation involves “the whole person, in every aspect of the personality, in behavior and intentions...indeed, at every stage of life, consecrated persons must be offered opportunities to grow in their commitment to the charism and mission of their institute” (VC 65).

78. A particular present-day challenge is obtaining adequate and mature affectivity. “A balanced affectivity, especially sexual balance, which presupposes the acceptance of the other, man or woman, respecting his or her difference” (PI, # 43) is essential to all clerics and religious. “Recourse to psychological examination can be useful...” (PI # 43) as a tool to ensure the health and wellbeing.

79. The directives of the Holy See in relation to the acceptance of candidates who are homosexual should be taken into account (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2005, cf. **Attachment 2. Persons with homosexual tendencies**).

3.4.2 The program of Academy Studies

80. The formandi “should receive the cultural and scientific training which qualifies young people in their country for higher studies” (S 053). The courses given should be part of an accredited program. Also, “responsibilities or works that may impede their education should not be assigned to those in Initial Formation (Can. 660, 2).

81. Whenever possible, Brothers should acquire an education, culminating in a diploma or degree, in whatever area is suited to the individual’s talents and according to the charism of the Congregation, and the priorities of each Unit and Conference. The formation for brothers should include basic education in theology and pastoral experience (C 89; PC 18) so that they can exercise the co-responsibility in leadership according to their talents (cf. 25th Gen. Chap. 2016, Dec. 27).

82. For formandi for the priesthood, special attention should always be given to the areas of moral theology and homiletics, and whenever necessary supplementary courses in these areas should be offered within the formation community.

83. After the successful completion of all the required academic courses in Initial Formation, the possibility for specialization in both the human and the sacred sciences according to the priorities of the Unit and the Conference should be offered to suitable confreres. For those sent for higher studies, the *Collegio Maggiore Sant’Alfonso* in Rome offers a unique opportunity to learn more about the Congregation in its international outreach

(cf. S 083). In the area of Moral Theology, the Congregation has several different institutes and, most especially, the *Accademia Alfonsiana* (cf. S. 023; 25th Gen. Chap., 2016, Dec. 14).

3.4.3 Evaluations

84. At the conclusion of each stage, it is important to assess whether the aims of that particular period of formation have been achieved, taking account of periodic evaluations, preferably each semester, or at least annually, which the formators will prepare in writing to the respective superior. The attainment of formation objectives should not necessarily be tied to the time spent in each formation stage and especially not to the studies completed (cf. RFIS 2016 # 58). No one should arrive ‘automatically’ to the next formation stage merely because of having followed a series of pre-established stages in chronological order and set out beforehand, independently of the actual progress that has been achieved in overall integral maturity. Evaluations of the formandi by the formators teams should be made on a regular basis, as indicated by the corresponding Stage and particular *Ratio*. Positive and improvable aspects should be discussed with them in non-threatening meetings and in such a way as to allow them the opportunity to grow as needed. The evaluation should allow for input not only from the formation Directors, but also from other agents who have been involved with his formation, e.g., the formation community, professors, fellow formandi, and laypersons who have collaborated at the formative or pastoral levels.

85. The community of formators must be coherent and objective in the periodic and integral assessments they make of formandi, taking account of the five dimensions of formation. “The seminarian (*formand*) is required to be docile, to review his own life constantly and to be open to fraternal correction, to respond ever more fully to the workings of grace” (cf. RFIS 2016. #58).

86. The major superior should never act hastily in this very delicate area of evaluation. In case of doubt, he should investigate as much information as possible before making a judgment or opinion on the situation or the particular person. The Major Superior and his Council are the ones who approve the passage of the formandi to the next stage of formation. In voting for Profession (temporary or perpetual), as with the vote for Ordination (diaconate or priestly), the following do not have a vote, but the advice may be sought from: formators, spiritual directors, local superiors and members of the communities through which the formandi have passed, technicians, relatives, etc. The norms of the Directory of Superiors of the Congregation are to be followed.

3.4.4 Collaboration Within and Between Conferences

87. Formation is a delicate and demanding mission demanding trained personnel, considerable resources, and a sufficient number of formandi. Many Units could profit by collaborating with others in their Conference for some or various of the stages of formation, for example, novitiates and interprovincial theologates or stages of the Conference. The Secretariats for Formation should be called on to evaluate formation programs, recommending, if considered necessary, the formation together with other Redemptorist Units. Such joint programs should be carefully thought out with the responsibilities of each participant contained in a contract, which is subject to periodic evaluation and revision by the respective major superiors and their councils (boards).

88. Continuing formation of the confreres, communities, and Units can also be organized on a Conference level to share all types of knowledge and experiences among the confreres. This can take many forms, such as formal courses, workshops, apostolic experiences, etc.

CHAPTER IV:

A PRACTICAL SCHEMA TO DETERMINE WHAT SHOULD BE SPECIFIED IN EACH STAGE OF FORMATION

89. Each *Ratio* should respond to its actual needs of formation in each Conference or Unit. Given the actual circumstances of formation where there are stages like interprovincial novitiates and theologates, etc., these *Ratio* will give preference to the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* and that of the Conference. It should include all the necessary aspects and other elements (for example, even if the Unit does not presently have candidates or formandi for Brothers, vocations of mature persons, etc., these elements should be considered) so that later there will be no “improvisations” in formation. Thus, each *Ratio* will specify:

- a) the process of formation as a whole, articulated in its various stages and dimensions according to the Decree on Initial Formation, April 2015,

- b) the Formation Plan, specifically Redemptorist, according to the stages and dimensions
- c) the academic curriculum of studies to be followed by our formandi, for both clerical and formandi for the of Brothers,
- d) the *Ratio* should present the knowledge, qualities, and skills that the formand should attain before passing on to the next stage, and which are essential, especially for Temporary and Final Profession,
- e) the competence and integration of the Secretariat for Formation,
- f) the assignment and formation of the formators and formation teams,
- g) the plan for vocational pastoral,
- h) any supplementary course which formandi may be required to take (cf. XXII General Chapter 1997, *Orientations* n.5.3),
- i) the Transition to Ministry, formation for the time between Perpetual Profession, Diaconate and Priestly Ordination for clerics and the complete integration of the Brothers in the pastoral communities,
- j) indication for the program for Continuing Formation,
- k) the composition, determination of competencies and the relationship between the various formation communities,
- l) the study of the official languages of the Congregation, especially those necessary for the stage of interprovincial collaboration.

4.1 VOCATION MINISTRY AND ACCOMPANIMENT

General objective

90. This is the time of the first contact with the Redemptorist Apostolic Community. Its end is to announce and to promote the call of God and to detect, accompany, and discern the vocational aptitude of a candidate (signs of being called) to follow Jesus Christ the Redeemer by preaching the word of God to the poor. It is important to be aware of the reality that our vocations no longer come from minor seminaries or youth below the age of 18. Actual reality indicates an increasing change in the number of vocations, and consequently, the need to adopt new paradigms and new practices of vocation ministry and the accompaniment of the candidates. That is a vocation ministry that is open to the evolving differences of the candidates concerning age, religious and ecclesial formation, and the ambientes from which vocations come. For this reason, taking these differences into account, the Redemptorist missionary vocation should be presented from its two perspectives: Brothers and Clerics, placing special attention to the vocations of mature persons. “Let each one remember that the best and most successful ways of promoting vocations are his own apostolic zeal, the example of his life and constant prayer (cf. Matt. 9:38, Luke 10:2) (C. 80).

91. World Day for the Promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation

General Government in the “Decree on Formation” (April 2015) established the second Sunday of November as the World Day for the Promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation in all of the Congregation. Effective 2015.

92. Youth and Vocation Ministry

- a) Every Redemptorist Unit must have a Pastoral Vocation ministry. Every Unit, by itself or in collaboration with other Units, will appoint full-time Vocation teams (Clerics, Brothers, Laity) who will work together to promote the Redemptorist missionary vocation. The new reconfiguration of the Units will necessarily involve the reorganizing of this ministry between various countries, and so, adequate attention to this new paradigm is necessary.
- b) Every Unit should define the relationship between Vocation and Youth Pastoral.
- c) Vocation discernment should be given special attention due to the multitude of vocational opportunities that modern society presents to our youth, whether in or outside of the Church's structures.

93. The collaboration of the laity in Vocation Ministry:

The assigned and responsible Redemptorist vocation directors should work together (Consecrated and Lay), as a team in this ministry of promoting vocations to the extended Redemptorist Family.

Attachment 3: *Admission, dismissal, and departure from the Seminary (formation house)* contains important directives with regards to Candidates who come from other formation house or from other Religious Institutes.

94. Vocation of “Mature” Persons

“Those who discover the call to the ministerial priesthood (*and consecrated life*) at a more advanced age come with a more developed personality and a life journey characterized by a range of experiences. Their initial admission to the Seminary (*formation house*) should be preceded by a spiritual and ecclesial program, in which a serious discernment of the motivations in responding to a vocation can be undertaken.

It is necessary to assess the interval between Baptism or Christian conversion and entry into the Seminary (*formation house*) carefully since it is not unusual to encounter confusion between the following of Christ and the call to the ministerial priesthood (*Consecration in Religious Life*).

As in the case of other seminarians, these candidates should be accompanied in a serious and comprehensive journey, which should include, in the context of community life, a solid spiritual and theological formation, using appropriate pedagogical and didactic methods, that take account of the personal profile of each man. It will be the competence of the Conference of Bishops (*Congregation and the Conferences*) to issue specific norms appropriate for their national situation, assessing whether to establish an age limit for the admission of such vocations and considering whether to establish a separate Seminary (*formation house*) for them” (RFIS 2016, #24).

95. Vocations Arising among Indigenous Peoples

“Special attention needs to be given to vocations among indigenous peoples: they need a formation which takes account of their culture. While receiving a proper theological and pastoral formation for their future ministry, these candidates for the religious life should not be uprooted from their own culture.

The very presence of such vocations is an important element of the inculturation of the Gospel in these regions, and the richness of their culture must be adequately respected. Vocational assistance can be provided in the native language whenever necessary, placing this in the context of the local culture” (RFIS 2016, #25).

96. Vocations and Migrants

“The phenomenon of migration is becoming quite widespread for a variety of reasons of a social, economic, political, and religious nature. It is important that Christian communities offer constant pastoral care of immigrant families that live and work in their country for a time. These families are a valuable resource for them. Vocations (*to the Consecrated Life*) can arise from within these families, which must be accompanied, keeping in mind the need for gradual cultural integration. There are young people who feeling called by the Lord, leave their own country, to receive formation for religious life elsewhere. It is important to pay attention to their personal history and to the background from which they have come, and to assess the motivations carefully for their vocational choice, establishing a dialogue with their Church of origin whenever possible. In any case, during the process of formation, it will be necessary to find ways and means to ensure an adequate integration, without underestimating the challenge of cultural differences, which can, at times, make vocational discernment rather complex” (RFIS 2016, #26 – 27).

4.1.1 Qualities to examine and foster in Candidates

97. The human dimension

- a) A candidate’s personality should be balanced and should integrate all the dimensions of life in a way appropriate for his age,

- b) An initial evaluation of the candidate should be made based on attentive observation and information obtained from his parents and persons who know the candidate well. It should take into account his family history, the psychological profile and characterological dynamism at work in the person's life such as his level of self-esteem, his propensity for introversion or extroversion, his level of idealism and realism, whether he is an independent person or one who is excessively dependent on others, etc.,
- c) A candidate should be given an adequate understanding of the different vocations, including celibate and married life (cf. *Potissimum Institutioni* 43),
- d) An attempt should be made to determine a candidate's capacity to accept himself with both his strengths and shortcomings and his ability to accept others in a healthy way.

98. **The spiritual dimension**

- a) Given that the evangelization impact of the family and school becomes more and more limited, the Redemptorist Youth Vocation Pastoral (RYVP) should be an intense time of evangelization,
- b) It is highly recommended that a candidate speaks with a spiritual director before entering the program,
- c) The process of accompaniment must involve at least an initial evaluation of the individual's experience of God, and the factors motivating his vocational search,
- d) This process of vocation accompaniment can help to clarify for the candidate his religious experience, and the image he has of God and the Church.
- e) Those accompanying the candidate will help him to express in a more mature and appropriate way his

comprehension of religion (through *narrations*, popular devotions, social work, personal prayer, etc.).

- f) They should also try to measure, to some degree, the candidate's capacity for prayer, silence, and the interior life.

99. The community dimension

- a) The candidate should have some aptitude for community life:
- b) A capacity for dialogue,
- c) A capacity to work with others in a team,
- d) Openness to life in a community,
- e) A readiness to forgive and accept others and himself.

100. The academic dimension

- a) The candidate's ability to do academic-studies should be verified.
- b) The academic requirements for both brothers and clerics should be indicated in the *Ratio*.

101. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) The candidate should show a basic aptitude for the Mission of the Congregation,
- b) It would be good to have had some pastoral experience in his parish, school or youth group,
- c) He should have some sensitivity to the needs of the poor and the most abandoned and a desire to serve them through ministry in the Congregation.

4.2 FORMATION PRIOR TO NOVITIATE

General Objective

102. The finality of these stages previous to Novitiate is to accompany a candidate in his First experience of Redemptorist Apostolic Community. It includes an initial formation in community life that facilitates his self-knowledge and introspective examine to better discern his vocation before entering the novitiate. Thus each (Vice) Province should make sure that the necessary structures are available to achieve this end.

103. Some Units divide this stage into distinct parts such as the PROPEDEUTIC stage (academic, linguistic and spiritual studies), the ASPIRANCY, POSTULANCY (during which the study of philosophy is generally incorporated), PRE-NOVITIATE (the time for the immediate preparation before the entrance into the Novitiate), etc.

104. “The General Government mandates that before beginning Novitiate, the candidate must have lived in a formation community and followed a formation program for at least two years.” (Decree on Initial Formation, Gen. Gov., 2015).

105. Given the fact that the Congregation has adapted the norm that all the Novitiates be interprovincial, it is an indispensable requirement that the candidates in these previous stages receive an adequate formation and preparation in being part of a multicultural group to enter the Novitiate. The candidates at this stage are made aware that the Redemptorist world is bigger and is not composed of only their Unit, country, culture and language. The presentation of some introductions and documents on the life and mission of the Redemptorists, familiarity with the devotion of our Mother of Perpetual Help and with various Redemptorists

figures, in particular with the Saints, Blessed, and Redemptorist Martyrs, are useful means for the achievement of this objective.

106. All necessary required documents (regarding his family, studies, faith, etc.) must be provided from the beginning, and also, if the candidate comes from another seminary or religious Institute, it is necessary to have a written certificate from his previous formator regarding his suitability as a candidate for the Congregation.

4.2.1 The formation process and its dimensions

107. The human dimension

- a) This stage is to be structured in such a way that it will be able to help the candidate attain and grow in all necessary human qualities, including his knowledge of himself, his culture, and his family history.
- b) It is recommended that there be psychological testing that serves as tools to determine the suitability of the candidate for Consecrated Life, and that permits him to have a better understanding of himself, thus structuring an accompaniment process in a way that will be truly helpful to him.
- c) In addition to verifying his physical aptitude, he should be taught how to care for his health in a balanced way.

108. The spiritual dimension

- a) A practical introduction to meditation based on sacred scriptures is to begin at this level.

- b) The candidate meets regularly with a well-trained spiritual director to clarify and refine his personal experience of God at work in his vocation.
- c) An objective of this dimension is to assure that the candidates, concerning this particular moment in his life, have the adequate and correct comprehension of the faith.
- d) The formators ensure that the spiritual life is not seen as an occasional or isolated part of the day but is rather an integrated and integrating reality in the candidate's life.
- e) It is important to indicate the courses and lectures that should introduce the formandi to the history, charism, and spirituality of the Congregation, as well as the lives of our saints and other outstanding Redemptorists.

109. The community dimension

- a) The communities during this stage will be structured in such a way that develops both personal responsibilities for the life of the community and trust between its members.
- b) All should strive to acknowledge and to affirm the legitimate differences which are bound to exist in any community.
- c) The candidate will receive the necessary help to develop and promote attitudes and skills that favor community life.

110. The academic dimension

- a) The formation process will ensure that the candidate is given a sound foundation in all necessary methodologies and critical approaches to study and that he is adequately prepared to begin the required academic seminary courses.

- b) Without going into detail on the various subjects, introductions will be given in various fields such as the Consecrated Life, the history of the Congregation, the Unit and the Conference, etc.
- c) Special importance will be given to the study of the official languages.

111. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) Little by little, the formation process should provide opportunities that help the candidate to integrate into pastoral and missionary activity.
- b) This is achieved by accompanied and evaluated pastoral experiences carried out in teams at the level of the local Church, as well as at the level of the Congregation.

As described above, the formation of the candidates in the pre-novitiate period should be similar so that they can integrate a homogeneous group from the beginning of the novitiate. In addition, a prudential time will be set before the beginning of the novitiate in order to configure the group on the human, spiritual, cultural, linguistic, and other levels.

4.3 NOVITIATE

General Objective

112. “The novitiate, by which life in the institute begins, is ordered to this, that the novices better recognize their divine vocation and on which is, moreover, proper to the institute, that they experience the institute’s manner of living, that they are formed in mind and heart by its spirit, and that their intention and suitability be tested” (Can. 646).

113. The discernment and spiritual formation, which is given at this level, should aid the novice to grow in his love of and loyalty to the Congregation and to increase his capacity to embrace our apostolic life freely.

114. “All Novitiates will be Interprovincial Novitiates. Some of these Interprovincial Novitiates (proposed by the Conference and approved by the General Government) will be Conference Novitiates. Boards will be created among the Units to direct the Interprovincial Novitiate. The Conference Coordinator will ordinarily be a member of the Board.” (Decree on Initial Formation, Gen. Gov., 2015).

115. “Every Unit must participate in an Interprovincial Novitiate Board even if it does not have novices in an Interprovincial Novitiate.” (Decree on Initial Formation, Gen. Gov., 2015)

116. Care should be taken with regards to the creation of the Novitiate Boards so that they be the result of an authentic collaboration between the Units. The participation of the Coordinator in the Novitiate Board will be assured to give a profound sense of solidarity and communion between the Units members.

4.3.1 The formation process and its dimensions

117. The human dimension

To help the novice grow in his knowledge and acceptance of himself (his abilities and his talents, his strengths and his weaknesses), his family and his culture:

- a) To help the novice grow in his freedom to make responsible “life choices.”
- b) To help the novice grow in the self-consciousness of his sexuality and affectivity to integrate them, in a healthy way, into a chaste and celibate way of life,
- c) Respect the different cultures, traditions, and Rites (Churches),

118. The spiritual dimension

The novice master accompanies each novice in his process of discernment¹⁵ and the organizing of his spiritual journey. He also helps him to integrate both the personal and the communal dimension of his new life as a Redemptorist:

- a) In his acquiring the habit of personal and communal prayer,

¹⁵CV, #282. In this process of formation, we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, even as we develop “the habit of doing good, which also is a part of our examination of conscience. We do not simply identify sins, but also recognize God’s work in our daily lives, in the events of our personal history and the world around us, and in the witness of all those men and women who have gone before us or accompany us with their wisdom. This helps us to grow in the virtue of prudence and to give an overall direction to our life through concrete choices, in the serene awareness of both our gifts and our limitations”.

- b) In his knowledge and appreciation of Redemptorist spirituality and history,
- c) In his ability to accept the will of God for him,
- d) In developing a strong dynamic of constant conversion.
- e) To better discern the Word of God in his life,
- f) To help him develop a well-formed and mature conscience.

119. **The community dimension**

- a) To help the novice grow in his calling to live in community,
- b) To provide solid experiences of community life as a place of faith, service, and acceptance of others in fraternity,
- c) To help the novice grow in his love for and desire to work with the Church,
- d) To assure that the candidate can contribute to the community life in the Congregation.

120. **The academic dimension**

- a) The novitiate is **not** a time for formal academic studies (Can. 652,5; DS 1005).
- b) The novitiate is the most intense time of the formation process for the study, reading, and knowledge of the main aspects of the spirituality, history, mission, and the life of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.
- c) An essential aspect of the novitiate is the knowledge of the life of the big mystics and writings of Saint Alphonsus, our founder, the Redemptorists Saints, Blessed, and Martyrs.

- d) The “courses’, themes, conferences and presentations within the novitiate should help the novice understand the history, the spirituality, the mysticism, and the theology of the Vocation to Religious Life as well its most significant representatives.
- e) The novice should be guided in a study of the *Constitutions and General Statutes* as well as the study of the Statutes of his Unit, the history of the Congregation, of his Unit, the Conference, and the requirements of Canon Law regarding religious life.

121. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) To help the novice deepen his commitment to the “poor and the most abandoned” (C. 1) and to deepen the virtue of apostolic charity, some pastoral work experience must be part of the program,
- b) These specific experiences, according to the Redemptorist charism, will be developed in a shared way and evaluated in a timely manner,
- c) However, such work is not the heart of the novitiate experience and should not be excessive (DS 1004.4). What is important is that the novice is helped to develop a method of spiritual reflection on his apostolic experience, thus integrating it into his spiritual life.

122. At the end of the novitiate

As the novice moves through the novitiate experience, the expectations that are placed on him must be clear both to himself and the novice master. Before making Temporary Profession, a novice must have demonstrated:

- a) his love of Christ,
- b) a solid life of prayer,
- c) his willingness to serve and to collaborate with others,
- d) his deep conviction about his vocation to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer,
- e) a firm knowledge of the implications of the three vows and the ability to live them in Redemptorist community.

4.4 PERIOD FROM TEMPORARY PROFESSION TO PERPETUAL PROFESSION

General Objective

123. This time is understood as a formative period in which the religious continues to grow and to mature in his commitment to Christ in the apostolic life of the Congregation. The formation program during this time should provide a personalized accompaniment to help integrate the systematic studies into his life, the apostolic experiences with the religious community, and integrate it all into the consecration to Christ the Redeemer.

124. *The formation of the Brothers.* While this stage of formation for those preparing for priestly ministry focuses on the skills necessary for such ministry, academics and otherwise, likewise, “the Initial Formation of the Brothers must include no less than three years after the First Profession in a formation program in a formation community” (Decree on Initial Formation, G.G., 2015, Brothers Formation).

4.4.1 The formation process and its dimensions

125. The human dimension

- a) This is a time for furthering the growth which was begun at earlier levels and strengthening it in preparation for perpetual profession and transition to ministry.
- b) This remains a *tempus probationis* (C. 84) in which the new religious should become ever more convinced of his vocation and the Congregation of his suitability for our apostolic life.

- c) Psychological accompaniment should form a normal part of this stage of formation.
- d) When serious and ‘insoluble’ problems of human growth arise, the formandi “should be told in good time, so that they can withdraw from our life, and with full awareness of their Christian vocation, be helped to enter readily on the apostolate of the laity” (S. 054).

126. **The spiritual dimension**

- a) Formation houses should have a spiritual ambiance.
- b) Qualified spiritual directors should always be available to those in formation.
- c) Using spiritual direction, spiritual conferences, retreats, etc., confreres at this level of formation should be helped to harmonize their systematic studies with their faith.
- d) Conflicts that arise between their professed life as religious and experiences which they encounter in their work should be used to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the vows and religious life.
- e) Their knowledge and appreciation of St. Alphonsus and his teachings should continue to grow as well as their knowledge and love of our history and the significant confreres of the past.
- f) “The members who aspire to the priesthood shall be trained with the object of forming them in the image of Christ the Eternal Priest” (C. 87).

127. **The community dimension**

- a) At this level, formation programs must strive to deepen the person's love and appreciation for the mystery of community life as a "prophetic and liberating proclamation of the Good News" (*Comm.* 11, # 51) and his ability to participate in it.
- b) Thus those being formed should be given opportunities to grow in their ability to interact with other confreres and with superiors, accept responsibility for the overall life of the community, to grow in their ability to have and to appreciate friendship with persons of both sexes and learn how to face and to resolve in a positive Christian manner the inevitable tensions and conflicts which arise in community.
- c) As petitioned by decision # 49 of 25th Gen. Chapter, also within this dimension, the formation of the administration and the management of goods and finances will be initiated.

128. **The academic dimension**

- a) The academic and professional studies, undertaken during these years, should foster a solid critical/constructive mentality that will enable them to analyze in a mature and Christian way the modern world and its peoples.
- b) Strong knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Church should be integrated with a sound understanding of the modern sciences.
- c) Greater formation should be had in the field of missiology, interculturality, administration and pastoral.

- d) The Redemptorist formation plan program should indicate the additional courses to be given when our formandi are attending non-Redemptorist academic institutions, and in a special way in Moral Theology.
- e) For formandi to the priesthood, all academic requirements demanded by the Church must be satisfactorily completed.
- f) The Brothers should also follow some academic formation according to their capacities and talents.

129. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) Guided and diversified pastoral experiences should be made available to those in formation.
- b) All guided pastoral experience should include a component to help the formand to deal with problems positively and constructively.
- c) In a special way, pastoral and missionary experiences within a Redemptorist setting should be emphasized.

4.5 PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE

(During the time of Temporary Profession)

General objective

130. As affirmed in Gen. Statute #058, “the pastoral orientation of the whole course of formation is a distinctive feature of missionary formation, and this must be clearly in evidence.” This stage intends to facilitate for the professed in temporary vows an important missionary experience. This stage should be developed in a community that is not regulated by the formation structures, where the formand can identify himself as a full member of the local community. This experience facilitates for the formand his definitive option as a Redemptorist Missionary before making his Perpetual Profession. This stage should not be confused with a pastoral practice that the Brothers or young Clerics have in the time of pastoral immersion.

131. “The General Government mandates that the Pastoral Experience Stage is part of Initial Formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and will be one continuous period of no less than six months” (Initial Formation Decree, Gen. Gov., 2015). The Decree also recommends that this stage is undertaken in a Unit different from the Unit of origin.

132. In our Congregation, different terms are used in reference to this time of pastoral experience: Pastoral Year, Internship, Insertion Year, Regency, etc. For many years the Congregation has promoted a pastoral experience to help the formandi develop pastoral and missionary abilities in the light of their future dedication as Redemptorist Missionaries.

4.5.1 The formation process and its dimensions

133. The human dimension

- a) Permits the temporarily professed to experience life as an equal confrere in an ordinary Apostolic community, not formative, of the Congregation,
- b) It can be an opportune time of communion with the most abandoned, especially the poor to whom the Congregation is principally sent to take “the Good News of Abundant Redemption,” (cf. CC. 6 and 20).
- c) This stage should help the confrere to interiorize the values proper to our missionary charism.

134. The spiritual dimension

- a) The formand will discover that besides the common moments of prayer, he will have to be faithful in cultivating and developing his own personal, spiritual dimension,
- b) It is important that the formators accompany each of the formandi in finding his own spiritual expression.
- c) In the same way, this experience will help to incarnate and bring to his personal and community prayer the concrete and real needs of the mission,
- d) This experience should help the confrere to strengthen his vocation, to grow spiritually, and to confirm his future option definitively in the Congregation.

135. The community dimension

- a) The formand, during his time, will be accompanied, besides by his formators, also by a confrere in the community.
- b) It is evident that this formation stage will permit the temporarily professed to feel integrated as a confrere in an “ordinary” community of the Conference where he can have an experience of that which may be the future of his life and mission.

136. The academic dimension

- a) It is evident that this formative stage is directly orientated to the mission as such, the apostolic and pastoral work, from which consequences can, later on, be extracted,
- b) In this way, this time will serve the formand by putting in practice in a concrete reality what he has studied and learned until now,
- c) It will be of great help if the formand is capable of identifying his qualities and possibility of future specialized studies for the Redemptorist mission.
- d) It is not opportune that formal academic studies be done during this stage to facilitate for the student a full experience of pastoral ministry.

137. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) The formand will have the opportunity to get involved and share in diverse Redemptorist missionary experiences shared with other confreres already inserted in the ministry,

- b) Permits the formand to know the pastoral work of the Congregation in the local Church and in its particular situation,
- c) In this area, the experience can help the formandi to know better the other Units and the new missionary projects of the Conference as it realizes the Apostolic Plan and its priorities,
- d) At the same time, it can be an adequate time for the practice of other languages, official as well as in relation to the pastoral priorities.
- e) The contents of **Attachment 4: *The Protection of Minors, Vulnerable Adults, and the Accompaniment of Victims*** and the respective protocols should receive special attention during this stage of formation, ensuring that the protocols are known and fully understood.

138. As a conclusion to this stage, it can be expected that the confrere should be able, in this pastoral experience of life and mission in a non-formative community, to integrate teachings, accomplishments, develop his talents and analyze his weaknesses and limitations in his ministry as a Redemptorist Missionary.

139. At the same time, helping this will help a personal guided evaluation by his formator. The community also, where the pastoral experience took place, should present their evaluation of the experience.

4.5.2 On finalizing this period of Temporary Profession

140. This is ordinarily the moment to solicit Perpetual Profession in the Congregation as a definitive option, motivated and founded in God's grace. The formand and the formators should perceive

with clarity that the essential requisites are fulfilled for Perpetual Profession:

- a) A demonstrated capacity, on the part of the formand, to live according to the evangelical councils,
- b) The profound desire to live and work in the Congregation for the rest of his life,
- c) The ability to integrate himself fully in the Priorities of the Unit, the Conference and the Congregation,
- d) The availability to carry out this mission in a community way,
- e) The full identification with this own vocation as a Brother, permanent deacon, or priest.

4.6 PERPETUAL PROFESSION

141. The April 2015 Decree of the General Government on Initial Formation establishes, “The preparation for perpetual profession will last for at least one month (GS. 075), in addition to the canonically required eight-day retreat. The program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied for perpetual profession and have been accepted. In so far as possible, Preparation for Final Vows must take place at a Conference level”. The program of this stage should follow the related indications established in the Conference and Unit *Ratio* and the Directory and Program.

142. No formand should arrive ‘automatically’ at Perpetual Profession merely because of having followed a series of pre-established stages in chronological order and previously established.

143. If the completed process of this spiritual, human, communal, and apostolic-missionary journey has been developed adequately, the formand would have been able to assume an awareness of his Redemptorist missionary vocation.

144. So, instead of Perpetual Profession being a goal to be reached, it presupposes the beginning of a commitment, as a mature human and Cristian person, that is life long, according to the Redemptorist vocation.

4.7 TRANSITION TO MINISTRY

Introduction

145. Transition to Ministry is the point at which a confrere, once having made Perpetual Profession, leaves the community of Initial Formation (Brothers and Clerics) and enters into full participation in the life and apostolate of his Unit, Conference, and Congregation. This process of full integration into the life and the mission as a Redemptorist missionary, while it can be a joyful and hope-filled process, at a certain point, as experience has shown, can also convert into a difficult and complicated time. The very passing from a structured program in the formation houses to a program that requires growth and maturity in personal and communal responsibility can be needing adequate accompaniment and orientation.

146. In every Unit, or at the level of the Conference, there should be a program that helps the confrere to integrate little by little into the fraternal and ‘ordinary’ pastoral. This program is known as ‘Transition to Ministry,’ which is initiated with Perpetual Profession and should be prolonged for the following (five to ten) years.

General Objective

147. The purpose of this program, which should be designed to encompass the first (five or ten) years, is to accompany the confrere and help him to adequately integrate himself and consolidate his identity with regards to his person, his community, and his pastoral activity. It should be a formally structured program, which includes all the dimensions of our “*Vita Apostolica*” and is under the direction of a well-balanced confrere as a mentor. His role should be delineated. Other confreres or professional counselors may assist him in his work.

It may be advisable for certain Units to develop at least some parts of this program in inter-unit collaboration at the Conference or inter-Conference level.

4.7.1 The formation process and its dimensions

148. The human dimension

This program should be so structured as:

- a) To give support and orientation to the confreres in transition,
- b) To stimulate their creativity and initiatives while at the same time move them to achieve a new personal synthesis (a personal life project),
- c) help them overcome the normal anxieties and frustrations during this transitional time in their lives,
- d) To consolidate in them generous service, as humble and courageous servants in the proclamation of the Good News of Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who is the head and model of the new humanity (cf. C. 6).

149. The spiritual dimension

The program is designed to:

- a) Help the confrere to continue the following of Christ as the center of his consecrated life,
- b) Cultivate the desire to share in a spirit of friendship their successes and failures with more experienced confreres,
- c) Help him to continue to grow spiritually and to experience his spirituality as “at once the source and fruit of mission.” (22nd Gen. Chap. 1997, Final Message 6)

150. **The community dimension**

The program aims to:

- a) Help build trust between all involved,
- b) Facilitate confreres to integrate themselves into the life, work, and ministry as authentic Redemptorist Missionaries,
- c) Permit the community to undertake an effort to build a fraternal environment which includes the new confreres,
- d) Establish an environment of trust, so that with the necessary help, it is possible to present and dialogue difficulties and emerging tensions in the process, at the level of the fraternal life in the community as well as spiritual and missionary. (cf. VC 44).

151. **The Academic dimension**

The program provides:

- a) Continuing guidance and structured reflection on the integration of what one has learned and its practical application in the ministry,
- b) Opportunities for the new community to stimulate them to continue their education (especially by personal study and reading),
- c) It is also a time for a Confrere to get an academic specialization (special degree) for the benefit of the Apostolic Priorities of the Unit and Conference,
- d) Information regarding worthwhile seminars and workshops that may be of value to the new confrere's Continuing formation should be available,

- e) This would be the proper time to improve their ability to work in the area of actualized mass media.

152. **The pastoral-missionary dimension**

The program helps the confrere:

- a) To grow in their ability to take on leadership roles and to work as a member of a pastoral team, which may include laity and other religious,
- b) To celebrate, recognize and exercise their talents, gifts and acquired knowledge,
- c) To cultivate a desire to prepare for explicit preaching and catechetical presentations together with an openness to an evaluation of their activities,
- d) It is also a time for a Confrere to develop skills in Redemptorist Missionary Activity, e.g., *Tirocinium* (mission preaching, retreats, novenas, extraordinary preaching, etc.),
- e) Provide any special training that an individual may need to take part in the Redemptorist mission according to the Priorities of the Unit, the Conference, and the Congregation.

4.8 CONTINUING FORMATION¹⁶

General Objective:

153. To keep alive an awareness among the confreres of the need for on-going formation throughout the whole of their lives. To be conscious of the necessity to cultivate a constant and actualized formation at the level of the local communities, the Units, and the Conference. Promote special times for personal renewal to develop with creativity the proper abilities and the missionary service in Redemptorist Apostolic Life (cf. C 90, also *Potissimum Institutioni* (PI) 67-69; RFIS 2016, 70-81; VC 69).

154. Continuing formation is composed of distinct levels, dimensions, and stages that should be taken into account. Because of this, it is important to bear in mind that Continuing Formation makes use not only of special opportunities for study, but also makes use of the experiences of daily life in the community, which are reflected on and interiorized, and also of missionary experiences.

155. While it is true that the ultimate responsibility for Continuing Formation is of the (Vice) Provincial Superior (C. 90), also responsible is the Coordinator at the level of the Conference, who together with the respective Secretariats of Formation is responsible for making proposals and the accompaniment of this essential formation in Consecrated Life.

156. Continuing formation of the confreres should not be identified only with specialized formation: licentiates, doctorates, magisterium of various types of studies, etc. Rather, it should be guided in according to the needs of the Mission and according to the Priorities of the Apostolic Plan of the Conference, the (Vice)

¹⁶ Cf. footnote # 8.

Province, the Region and the Mission to which it belongs in the Congregation (cf. RFG, 2020, # 19.8).

4.8.1 The formation process and its dimensions

157. The human dimension

Confreres are to be made attentive to the different stages of psychological-affective maturation:

- a) The passage from Initial Formation to a less structured way of living (the first five to ten years of active ministry),
- b) The following ten years in active ministry wherein the risk of life becoming ‘a habit’ and the danger of a decline of enthusiasm may begin to pose both personal and ministerial problems,
- c) The approach of retirement age, which is frequently a point at which persons may begin to experience a diminishment of their strengths and abilities,
- d) The ‘third age’ during which a person progressively withdraws from the active life (cf. *Potissimum Institutioni* 70, VC 70, *Communicanda* 3 - the year 2000).
 - i. The Continuing Formation program should help confreres accept in a constructive way each of life’s stages as opportunities for growth.
 - ii. To help confreres to continue to purify their commitment to Christ and to reaffirm in an ever more mature way their consecrated life,
 - iii. Confreres should be attentive in maintaining an adequate care of their health at all levels.

158. **The spiritual dimension**

- a) To promote an Incarnational Spirituality among the confreres (cf. *Communicanda I*, #24, 1998),
- b) To value the intimate unity between the announcement and the testimony of new life (Cr. C. 51),
- c) To maintain and to strengthen both one's personal and communal prayer life to make ever more real the injunction of Constitution 23 "to have Christ as the center of their life,"
- d) To foster a spirit of daily conversion to the Lord,
- e) To facilitate the ability of the confreres to make monthly days of retreat as well as their annual retreat and to encourage others and even longer periods devoted to spiritual renewal,
- f) With the passing of the years, one should understand better that pastoral dynamism springs up more from being than from doing since it is because of profession that all Redemptorists are "truly missionaries" (C. 55),
- g) "If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries" (cf. EG, #272).

159. **The community dimension**

- a) To belong in a heartfelt way to the Congregation and the local community,
- b) To facilitate the integration of the different 'visions of ministry and community',

- c) To favor an affective maturity which allows meaningful bonds between persons and the expression of one's emotions while showing sensitivity in acknowledging the emotions of others,
- d) To facilitate the capacity for adaptability and flexibility of mind and heart,
- e) To facilitate the making of our communities into 'open and welcoming' places while respecting the community's way of life,
- f) To create a community of co-responsible persons united in solidarity with one another and with the larger Redemptorist Community of the (Vice) Province and the world.

160. **The academic dimension**

- a) To facilitate and to insist on the need for doctrinal and professional updating which may include but not be limited to Biblical and theological study; study of the documents of the local and universal Church; study and better understand the culture where one is living and working; professional and technical training and updating; language studies,
- b) To have an opportunity to grow regarding the work of the Congregation, especially to discover new and better ways of preaching the Gospel, and to use mass media¹⁷, etc., when available.

¹⁷ "Web pages and social networks have created a new way to communicate and bond. They are a public square where the young spend much of their time and meet one another easily, even though not all have equal access to it, particularly in some regions of the world. They provide an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter and exchange between persons, as well as access to information and knowledge. Moreover, the digital world is one of social and political engagement and active citizenship, and it can facilitate the

161. The pastoral-missionary dimension

- a) To actualize personal charisms in service to and in dialogue with one's concrete pastoral reality and in harmony with the charism of the Congregation (cf. S 049),
- b) To foster constant creativity and adaptability in our pastoral methods so as able to better respond to the challenges of the times and not "to settle down in surroundings and structures in which their work would no longer be missionary" (C. 15),
- c) To seek to respond to urgent pastoral challenges as these develop and are discerned in social and ecclesial analyses,
- d) Formation in the Administration on Stewardship and Financial Management (25th Gen. Chap., 2016, Dec 49).

4.8.2 Specialized studies

162. "In addition to the institutional studies, required for the formation of every priest (*Redemptorist cleric*), the apostolate (*the missionary pastoral*) may require some preparation. Besides the possibility of developing some specialization for the benefit of pastoral ministry, it is important to prepare priests (*Clerical confreres or Brothers*) destined for tasks or offices that demand a more specialized preparation utilizing pertinent institutes of study. In this regard, over and above specialized study of the familiar sacred sciences, other initiatives can also be envisioned, promoted by particular Churches (*Units*)." (RFIS 2016, *Specialized Studies*, # 185).

circulation of independent information providing effective protection for the most vulnerable and publicizing violations of their rights. In many countries, the internet and social networks already represent a firmly established forum for reaching and involving young people, not least in pastoral initiatives and activities" (CV, # 87).

APPENDIX I

1. DECREE ON FORMATION



CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Prot. N. 0000 117/2015

DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING INITIAL FORMATION

VOCATION PROMOTION

The General Government establishes the second Sunday of November as an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation. (Effective 2015)

FORMATION PRIOR TO NOVITIATE

The General Government mandates that before beginning Novitiate, the candidate must have lived in a formation community and followed a formation program for at least two years. (Effective 2016)

NOVITIATE

1. All Novitiates will be Interprovincial Novitiates. Some of these Interprovincial Novitiates (proposed by the Conference and approved by the General Government) will be Conference Novitiates. Boards will be created among the Units to direct the Interprovincial Novitiate. The Conference Coordinator will ordinarily be a member of the Board.

2. Every Unit must participate in an Interprovincial Novitiate Board even if it does not have novices in an Interprovincial Novitiate. (Effective 2016)

BROTHERS FORMATION

The initial formation of Brothers must include a period of no less than three years after first profession in a formation program in a formation community. (Effective 2016)

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE

The General Government mandates that the Pastoral Experience Stage is part of initial formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and will be one continuous period of no less than six months. (Effective 2016)

PREPARATION FOR FINAL VOWS

The preparation for perpetual profession will last for at least one month (GS. 075), in addition to the canonically required eight-day retreat. The program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied for perpetual profession, and have been accepted. In so far as possible, Preparation for Final Vows must take place at a Conference level. (Effective 2016)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPROVINCIAL FORMATION

The General Government recommends that at least one year of formation will be done outside of the Unit of origin and in so far as possible outside of the country.

Effective 2016 for those beginning the formation process.

Given in Rome, on April 10, 2015.

Michael Grede, C.S.R.

.....
Superior General

Brendan J. Kelly, C.S.R.

.....
Secretary General

2. LETTER FROM FATHER GENERAL

To the Very Rev. Provincial Superiors,
Vice-Provincial Superiors, and
Regional Superiors

Rome, April 12, 2015

Prot. N. 0000 117/2015

Dear Confreres,

The Lord is risen! Alleluia!

As we celebrate the great feast of Easter, and the promise of life to the full which is the gift of the Risen Lord through the action of the Holy Spirit, we also renew our call to be “signs and witnesses before people of the power of his resurrection, proclaiming the new and eternal life” (c. 51).

With this letter, I am sending you some Decisions of the General Government with regards to Formation. These Decisions are the result of a long and careful process of consultation, dialogue, and prayerful reflection. In 2011, the General Secretariat for Formation began a reflection on the implications of the Decisions of the XXIV General Chapter for initial formation. This reflection took into account:

- The Process of Restructuring, the Conferences and the Coordinator;

- The “Profile of the Redemptorist Confrere shaped by this New Vision” (Decisions of the XXIV General Chapter 6.12 – 6.17);
- The challenges facing initial formation in the Congregation today, and especially the challenges of common, interprovincial formation projects.

As a result of this process of reflection and dialogue, especially with the General Council and the Coordinators, the General Secretariat for Formation recommended certain decisions about common formation especially with regards to the Novitiate, the Pastoral Experience Stage (during temporary profession), and the Preparation for Final Vows. They also recommended some other decisions which touch especially on preparation for novitiate, and the formation of Brothers. These proposed decisions were presented to the General Council, and subsequently to the Coordinators, the Assemblies of the Conferences, and Formators throughout the Congregation. The very helpful feedback from this consultation and dialogue modified the proposed decisions presented to the General Council for voting in September 2014.

With these Decisions, the General Secretariat for Formation has also included a letter to explain some of the reasons and implications of them. I hope that this document will also be helpful. As you will notice, the first decision was already promulgated – that the second Sunday of November will be an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation.

Except for Brothers formation and the Pastoral Experience Stage, the General Secretariat for Formation did not focus at this time on the entire period of initial formation from First Profession to Final Vows, nor on the period of Transition to Ministry, nor on ongoing or Continuing Formation. This does not mean to diminish their

importance. These present Decisions should be taken as an initial response to the challenges of initial formation today. Further reflection and consultation will lead to further decisions when the time is right.

However, we are aware that there are (Vice) Provinces and Regions which need to reflect especially on their ability to offer a good, solid formation program for those in temporary vows, whether clerical students or brothers. Can they prepare and appoint a team of Formators in a healthy formation community? Can they offer accompaniment and formation which addresses all five dimensions in the *Ratio Formationis Generalis (2003)* – human, spiritual, community, academic and pastoral? If they cannot, then it is urgent that they collaborate with other Units in order to provide the best possible initial formation for all our members in temporary vows.

Initial Formation is essential for the mission of the Congregation: “The vitality with which the Congregation pursues its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of the candidates” (c. 79. “The aim of formation for both candidates and members is to lead them to such a degree of human and Christian maturity that, with the help of God’s grace, they will be able to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and wholeheartedly to the service of the missionary Church in Redemptorist community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor.” (C. 78)

It is my fervent hope that these Decisions will help us to face the challenges of initial formation today with hope and courage. May God who continues to call apostles to follow Jesus the Redeemer as he proclaims the Gospel to the abandoned, especially the poor, form all of us more and more into the image of his Son. May Mary, the first disciple and our Mother of Perpetual Help, accompany us and teach us to become ‘missionary disciples’.

May the blessings of this Easter Season fill us with the joy of the Gospel, and the courage of the apostles.

Your brother in the Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Superior General

3. RATIONALE FOR AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING INITIAL FORMATION

All the members share responsibility in the work of formation. They share it not only for those who are beginning life in the Congregation, but for all the confreres. For the whole Congregation is continually in the process of formation and development, to be ready to meet the needs of the people to whom its members preach the Gospel. (Const. 82)

XXIV GENERAL CHAPTER (2009): A PROFILE OF THE REDEMPTORIST CONFRERE SHAPED BY THIS NEW VISION

6.12. The principles of restructuring assure the continuity of our fundamental identity and mission as Redemptorists in the Church and in the world. At the same time, they call for new realities and structures that would give fresh impetus to that mission and identity.

6.13. This is a possible profile of a confrere in a restructured Congregation.

6.14. This confrere would participate in a novitiate program of various Units, usually belonging to the same Conference. He would interact with confreres from other countries, cultures, and maybe even languages.

6.15. During his initial formation, he would learn about the charism of the Congregation and the special gifts and apostolates of his own Unit. He would understand from our history that constant renewal and restructuring have been vital for the continuity and continuation of our mission.

6.16. When he makes his vows, his commitment will be to the whole Congregation and not simply to a particular Unit. This commitment will be given practical expression in the Unit and the Conference to which he belongs. He will need to have a wider grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities, and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion.

6.17. Above all, he will know that he belongs to and willingly participates in the mission of a worldwide Congregation that takes seriously the challenge of being alert to the signs of the times and making vital apostolic decisions that respond ever anew to our call to mission.

STAGES OF FORMATION

Because of the diversity within the Congregation, there is at present no common and precise set of terms to describe the different stages of formation. Different terms are used among the various Units of the Congregation; and again, identical terms are used with different meanings in different Units. Moreover, the educational system of each region uses different words to

describe the educational process leading from the lower to the higher phases. (Ratio Formationis n° 10)

Our current reality of formation in the Congregation is one in which we are moving toward common formation, meaning, greater collaboration among Units. It is also the reality that various Units are still able to hold on to their long-standing tradition of formation and therefore, have developed different stages to respond to their needs. It may be the case that there needs to be a revision of these formation programs to determine whether they are in fact meeting the needs of formation today.

In order to promote greater solidarity and to advance the work of common formation, we propose the following stages as a way of providing the Congregation with a common vocabulary regarding formation:

1. Vocation Promotion and Accompaniment.
2. Formation Prior to Novitiate. [Candidate]
3. Novitiate. [Novice]
4. Period from First Profession to Final Vows. [Temporarily professed]
5. Pastoral Experience Stage during temporary profession.
6. Preparation for Final Vows.
7. Transition to Ministry.
8. Continuing Formation: Personal, Community, Unit, levels, and Specialization for the mission.

Each Unit is free to have substages where necessary within the proposed stages in order to accommodate their reality, while maintaining the fundamental aspects of each stage.

VOCATION PROMOTION

The vitality with which the Congregation pursues its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of the candidates who seek admission to the Redemptorist community. For that reason, all the confreres, out of love and appreciation for their own vocation, should zealously engage in the apostolate of fostering vocations to the Congregation. (Const. 79)

Decision: The General Government establishes the second Sunday of November as an annual day for the promotion of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation throughout the Congregation. Effective 2015.

- We are aware that Vocation Promotion is the responsibility of each and every confrere, of each community and each Unit as well as those directly responsible for that ministry.
- In many countries, the Religious Sisters and Lay Missionaries are also deeply committed to promoting vocations to this charism, which belongs to us all.
- The best way to pass on and to promote vocations to the charism is through living authentically our Constitutions and Statutes, thus becoming authentic Redemptorist Missionaries, “as one missionary body” (Const. 2) together with “the most abandoned especially the poor” (Const. 1).

- This decision of the General Government is geared toward achieving the goal of keeping confreres and collaborators constantly aware of the need for vocation promotion and accompaniment of candidates interested in becoming Redemptorists.

FORMATION PRIOR TO NOVITIATE

***Decision:* The General Government mandates that before beginning Novitiate, the candidate must have lived in a formation community and followed a formation program for at least two years. Effective 2016.**

- This stage of formation needs to follow a definite program of formation in the Redemptorist charism, as determined by the *Ratio Formationis 2003*, within a Redemptorist formation community, which will fulfill the requirements for an interprovincial novitiate.
- In the Congregation, there exists different names and various stages prior to Novitiate, for example: Aspirancy, Propedeutic, Postulancy, Pre Novitiate, etc.
- In consultation with the Conference, Units can determine the duration of this “Prior to Novitiate stage”, but it cannot be less than two years.
- Some topics to be considered in developing programs of formation for this level are: getting to know and appreciate the Redemptorists, spirituality, prayer, ecclesiology from the perspective of Vatican Council II, community life, psycho affective development, etc.

- Programs for this level of formation should include study of the language skills and cultural sensitivity necessary to prepare candidates to participate in the interprovincial novitiate.
- Units are encouraged to have this stage of formation locally. Each Unit should take this opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to forming new members and as a sign of solidarity with the Conference or Interprovincial efforts at formation.
- If a Unit is unable to develop and sustain an adequate program of formation prior to novitiate, it will be advised by the General Government to collaborate with another Unit or participate in a Conference program of formation.

NOVITIATE

It is the function of the general government to decide on the erection of the novitiate, and designate by a written decree some house of the Congregation where it will be situated; it defines the program of formation for the novitiate and determines other matters in accordance with the common law and the general statutes. (Const. 86. 1°)

This confrere would participate in a novitiate program of various Units, usually belonging to the same Conference. (Profile new Redemptorist n° 6.14)

Decision:

1. All Novitiates will be Interprovincial Novitiates. Some of these Interprovincial Novitiates (proposed by the Conference and approved by the General Government) will be

Conference Novitiates. Boards will be created among the Units to direct the Interprovincial Novitiate. The Conference Coordinator will ordinarily be a member of the Board.

2. Every Unit must participate in an Interprovincial Novitiate Board even if it does not have novices in an Interprovincial Novitiate. Effective 2016.

- Renewed structures for mission require the General Government to direct, with renewed vigor, the establishment of novitiates and to promote the collaboration among the Units in the Conferences. Consulting the Conferences, the General Government will determine the number of novitiates in the worldwide Congregation, what languages they are conducted in, and their locations.

- Care must be taken in the creation of the Boards in order to make the novitiates true collaborations among the Units. The Coordinator's participation on the novitiate board will be the key to creating a deeper sense of solidarity. To achieve this goal, Interprovincial Novitiates, which already have a Board of directors, should update their *Ratio*/Directory to include the Coordinator as a member of the Board if he is presently not a member.

- Some of the functions of Novitiate Boards are: writing Directories with guidelines for the selection of Novice Directors (formation team), approve *Ratio* outlining the program of formation, approve Contracts or Memoranda of Understanding to guarantee participation and good faith among the Units.

- Novitiate *Ratio* should include the basic requirements for entrance into the Novitiate, Curriculum, time in pre-novitiate, necessary language skills etc.
- Boards should also consider the time of preparation required before the canonical start of the novitiate, taking into consideration the decision regarding the “Prior to Novitiate” stage.
- To be a truly collaborative effort, all Units need to participate in Interprovincial Novitiate Boards even if they presently have an independent Novitiate within their Unit.
- The *Ratio*/Directory of the Interprovincial Novitiate will make provisions for Units, determining which Units have a vote and which don’t. The Directory should also attempt to define the degree of participation of each Unit.
- Novitiate Boards need to think through financial issues thoroughly. Participating Units, as an expression of solidarity, offer support to the Novitiate, even if a Unit does not have novices in a given year.
- The General Government took this decision understanding that some Units would require more time to comply. In these cases, the Unit must request an exemption from the Superior General, indicating the reasons, which warrant the exemption.

BROTHERS FORMATION

As Redemptorist missionaries, the Brothers must receive a proper formation to prepare them to live their apostolic mission and their religious consecration effectively.

This time must be of sufficient duration to allow for the full implementation of the proposals in the Ratio for formation, until their Perpetual Profession, the Brothers are to be considered in formation which is the primary purpose of this period. During these years, the Brothers in temporary vows must remain together, under the guidance of a Prefect and in a formation, community which offers them the possibility of living a truly religious life. Their principal service to the Congregation and the Church during this time is their formation, which is preparing them to become missionaries according to their way of life and for such services as the Congregation will require of them after their Perpetual Profession. (Letter Ratio Formationis for Brothers Fr. Juan M. Lasso de la Vega 1996)

Decision: The initial formation of Brothers must include a period of no less than three years after First Profession in a formation program in a formation community. Effective 2016.

- It is a common practice in the Congregation for Brothers to be sent to a community immediately after First Profession.
- With this decision the General Government is asking for a more adequate formation for Brothers up to Final Vows.
- Vocation promotion in every Unit will focus on recruiting prospective candidates to the Redemptorist life either as Clerics or Brothers. Vocation promotion material

whether they are pamphlets, videos, IT presentations, talks to groups of youth/young adults, or one-on-one, whatever form this vocation promotion takes, will focus on presenting the Redemptorists first as disciples who respond to a call to follow Christ the Redeemer, to preach the Good News to the poor and most abandoned through living the consecrated life and second, as Clerics or Brothers. Vocation promotion, therefore, will be focused more on becoming a Redemptorist.

- During the Prior to Novitiate Stage, both Cleric and Brother candidates follow the same program of formation in all Dimensions except for the Academic/Professional Dimension, whose contents may be different for the Brother candidates. The overriding character which defines this stage is its focus on accompanying men in their initial experience of Redemptorist Apostolic Life.
- Novitiate will be the same for all Candidates.
- During the first profession to final profession stage, a definite program of study geared toward qualification for specialization in a field compatible with Redemptorist apostolate and within the confrere's competence will be the focus of the Academic/Professional Dimension.
- The Temporary Professed Brother will live in a formation community and be properly accompanied.

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE STAGE

The apostolic purpose of the Congregation must inspire and penetrate the whole formation process of its members. (C. 77)

The pastoral orientation of the whole course of training is a distinctive feature of missionary formation. (G.S. 058)

It is highly recommended that candidates, prior to final profession, have a well-planned supervised one-year pastoral experience. (Ratio Formationis Generalis 2003, # 48)

When he makes his vows, his commitment will be to the whole Congregation and not simply to a particular Unit. This commitment will be given practical expression in the Unit and the Conference to which he belongs. He will need to have a wider grasp of the changing circumstances, human realities, and apostolic priorities not only of his Unit but of the entire Conference to which his Unit belongs. He will, for example, have to learn about the phenomenon of migrants within the geographic area of his Conference. He will, to give another example, be able to participate in the ministry of Redemptorist shrines within his Conference, a ministry growing in importance within the modern phenomenon of popular religious devotion. (Profile new Redemptorist n° 6.16)

Decision: The General Government mandates that the Pastoral Experience Stage is part of initial formation for the entire Congregation. The Pastoral Experience Stage will be done during the period in which the confrere is in Temporary Vows and will be one continuous period of no less than six months. Effective 2016.

- The need for sound pastoral experience during initial formation is echoed in our Constitutions and Statutes, in

the current *Ratio Formationis* and the deliberations and decisions of the XXIV General Chapter.

- In some Units, Pastoral Experience is done throughout the period of initial formation and sometimes immediately after final vows
- The goal of this decision from the General Government is to establish the appropriate location within the program of initial formation for this stage. This stage is not to be confused with pastoral work during Transition to Ministry or pastoral immersion after ordination.
- The General Government believes that this stage of formation presents an excellent opportunity for Conference collaboration. It could allow the Temporary Professed the chance to experience new initiatives, which have grown out of the Conference priorities. It might even serve as a way in which the Conferences animate efforts at apostolic collaboration in the Conferences.
- If the Pastoral Experience Stage becomes a common initiative of the Conference, the Conference Secretariat for Formation will be able to propose the principles governing the fulfilment of that stage, including its duration, which must not be less than that stipulated in the decision, apostolic experiences and other elements such as clear guidelines on appropriate accompaniment and a process of evaluation.
- The Pastoral Experience Stage provides an ideal opportunity for confreres in initial formation to be assigned to a mission outside of their Unit or country.

- This is a special, unique stage of Initial Formation during which the Temporary Professed will not be undertaking any academic studies in order to allow him to be fully involved in pastoral ministry.
- This stage must not be confused with Transition to Ministry

PREPARATION FOR FINAL VOWS

Religious profession is the definitive act of the whole missionary life of Redemptorists. (Const. 54)

Some form of preparation, after the manner of novitiate, is to be made for perpetual profession; it should last for at least a month. (G.E. 075)

Decision: The preparation for Final Vows will last for at least one month (G.S. 075), in addition to the canonically required eight-day retreat. The program will be for those confreres who have discerned their commitment to the Congregation, applied for perpetual profession, and have been accepted. In so far as possible, Preparation for Final Vows must take place at the (Sub)Conference level. Effective 2016.

- It has become common practice in many Units to include the retreat as part of the one-month preparation. This decision allows for adequate preparation and a proper respect for the importance of the canonically mandated retreat.
- Because of the seriousness of the commitment which the confreres are preparing to make, the impression must not

be given that this is the “*last bridge to cross*” before professing Final Vows.

- This is indeed an important stage of the initial formation process and must be approached with the same seriousness of every other stage and given the necessary time allotted so that the goals of the stage may be achieved.
- Preparation for Perpetual Profession is one of the most appropriate stages to engage in formation on an Interprovincial/(Sub)Conference level.
- The Secretariats of formation of the (Sub)Conferences will have the occasion to work on a program of formation, choose the directors, find an appropriate location, and determine its duration in keeping, of course, with the General Government’s decision.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPROVINCIAL FORMATION

ONE YEAR OF INITIAL FORMATION OUTSIDE OF THE UNIT OF ORIGIN

(Profile of Redemptorist Confrere, XXV Cap. Gen., Dec. n° 6.16)

Recommendation: The General Government recommends that at least one year of initial formation will be done outside of the Unit of origin and in so far as possible outside of the country. Effective 2016 for those beginning the formation process.

- Considering that the mission in our Church today is a global one, future Redemptorists must be adequately prepared to respond to this global mission.

Given in Rome, on April 10, 2015

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION

APPENDIX II

LETTER OF M.R.F. JUAN MANUEL LASSO DE LA VEGA, TO THE FORMATORS

CONGREGATIO SANCTISSIMI REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis, emeritus

9 November 1995

0000 0298/95

To formators and those in formation.

To (V)Provincial and Regional Superiors.

re: Formation for the Redemptorist Mission.

Dear Confreres,

We are drawing near the Tercentenary of the Birth of Saint Alphonsus, and the Congregation has already begun to organize various programs to recall the life of our Founder. I would not like this occasion to pass without sending a special word to our formators, and so this letter is directed particularly to them. I know, of course, that many other members of the Congregation will read it with particular interest. In the context of the Tercentenary, I have endeavored to give this message a spiritual

content while at the same time dealing with some crucial points touching our present situation.

While I do not claim to cover everything nor indeed to say the last word I do wish to address our formators and those in their charge. What I have to say is based especially on my own personal experience and on a synthesis of various themes treated in the recent meetings of formators. As well as having been a formator myself in my own Province I have had many contacts with groups of formators throughout the Congregation. As President of the General Secretariat for Formation I coordinated the different stages in the drawing up of the *Ratio Formationis*, still in force, and I have organized several meetings for formators. I have always been convinced that formation is at the very core of the renewal of the Congregation and a sign of its vitality.

1. Formation is a way forward realized in a group.

Two disciples were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them (Lk. 24, 1315).

1. On their way to Emmaus, " the disciples were talking to each other about all the things that had happened... "

Recently some things have happened in our Congregation about which you also are talking to each other. In *Communicanda* #3 "Reading the signs of the times", the General Council endeavored to give an objective description of the actual state of the Congregation. One of your major preoccupations is that formation should take account of what has happened and what is happening in society, in the Church, and the Congregation. These preoccupations you have shared in the meetings organized by the

General Secretariat for Formation. The General Council also has devoted much time to discussing initial and Continuing Formation.

While the present number of those being formed gives ground for hope, it is also a cause of worry. At the moment there are 752 professed in formation of whom 685 are Chorists and 67 Brothers in temporary vows. The Chorist formandi are distributed as follows: Southern Europe 24 Northern Europe 20 Eastern Europe 104; Latin America 273 North America 30; Asia Oceania 176 Africa 58. To these should be added the novices, philosophers, and other young people who are preparing to enter the Congregation as Chorists or as Brothers.

While there is new hope in certain areas of the Congregation, questions like these are being asked: Are we capable of forming our young people to identify with the Redemptorist mission, and are we able to integrate them into our communities? What will be our future in these areas where there is a lack of vocations? Our society is marked by great instability in making commitments, and this also has repercussions on the perseverance of our young people. An average of 80 confreres leave the Congregation every year. How do we guarantee that personal, emotional, and religious maturity that is necessary to make stable commitments? How do we prepare our candidates and formandi to accept celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven, to dedicate themselves to God and the mission of Christ personally and as members of a community?

2. Formation is a personal journey with Christ. "Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them." Since it is a personal journey, formation must consider the concrete person of each one being formed, with his own individuality, the social and religious situation of each country; it is a personalized and inculturated journey. Formation is not an automatic machine that always

produces the same model, and neither is it a supermarket where each one chooses what pleases him. The purpose of this journey is to become personally penetrated and permeated by the mission of Christ who died and rose from the dead. This is the good news for the poor, and it is this that identifies us as Redemptorists. Spiritual Direction helps to discover how Christ walks by the side of each one and what He desires to transform in our life.

3. This journey with Christ is not undertaken individually but in a group in a formative community. The community dimension is essential in our Redemptorist life and demands a training, which leads us to share everything with the confrères. When the number being formed is very small, the possibilities of effective communication are much less. Even though Interprovincial collaboration has increased, it seems to me that we ought to take more advantage of it to ensure a more competent formation.

4. Formation as well is in reference to a larger community, the Congregation or Province which gives meaning to the whole life. The two disciples of Emmaus after having met the Risen Christ returned to the community reunited in Jerusalem because that was the place where they could relive their experience with the Risen Christ. Formation is a journey towards integrating oneself in a community that has a concrete mission in the Church.

We know that the clearer our identity, the easier and more effective is for the formative process. Young people need to be confronted with clear models who can show them the ideals of the community in which they are inserted. The recent General Chapters have requested us to make a serious clarification of the pastoral priorities of each Province and of our mission in its unifying and global sense. The Final Document of the last Chapter uses a keyword which today is our theme of reflection and conversion. The word is "coherence" between enculturated evangelization, community and spirituality (No.11). Coherence

in "apostolic life" on the part of the members of the Province naturally stimulates the coherence of those being formed in their option for Christ, the Redeemer.

5. In this journey forward, the person of the formator is of outstanding importance. He is an integral part of the specific mission of the Congregation. Good preparation of formators and a certain continuity in their mission give solidity and stability to the formative process. It is the Provincial community which confers on them the office of formation. They should, therefore, carry out their duties not merely as a community of formators in community with those being formed but also in the name of the (V)Provincial community since they are forming for this community. The young men should not be formed according to impractical ideals but in order to revitalize the actual situation of the (Vice) Province or Region. The provincial community should be closely involved in the training which the young men are receiving. It must understand well in what way they are to be formed and what their aspirations are. Young people always bring us something new.

2. A journey filled with difficulties and risks.

Though seeing Jesus, "they somehow did not recognize him. He said to them, 'What are you talking about back and forth as you walk along?' And they stood still with sad faces. One of them said to him 'Are you the only man living in Jerusalem who does not know what has been happening there these last few days'. 'What things, he asked?'" (Lk. 24, 17-18)

1. The formative process is not as easy as you well know. At the outset, it seems to be too long a journey and too confused. In the end, one realizes that it has been insufficient to prepare one to be a witness to Christ in our world. Many things prevent Christ from being present on this journey. Sometimes it is discouragement

and apathy. Young people are influenced by many things in today's world that create difficulties for formation in families and in our centers of formation as well. The very fact that our studies of philosophy and theology are done in outside academic centers does not always permit a formation which takes account of the specifics of the Congregation, of our spirituality and of our mission, of our history as preachers of the Word and of our mode of living the Alphonsian charism in which all the dimensions of our life should be included. Sometimes there is really no time to create a family spirit and a religious community. Certain things are lacking in the study of Moral Theology and other subjects that are necessary for a missionary. All this was much easier when we had our own Houses of study.

What is important is not the many things one has learned or has experienced, but the depth and coherence with which one forms a concrete project for life. As formators, you should help the young people to take all these elements and to insert them in their proper personality. The Final Document of the last General Chapter says, "During first formation, the greatest attention must be given to the experience of spiritual life, communal life and a solid formation at the human, academic and practical pastoral levels ... In formation communities, the spiritual life must be the force which animates the studies and the work, as well as the community and pastoral life" (25th General Chapter 2016, F.D. 4849). In order to arrive at this harmony, it is indispensable to have a continuous and ongoing dialogue with the young men you are directing.

2. Formation is an answer to the question 'What is happening in the world'? There is no question here of experience in the abstract nor of a hothouse situation which protects from the problems and worries of ordinary people. It presupposes a knowledge of history and of the reality in which we live. In the past, the preoccupation was often about 'learning' theories and prefabricated answers.

Today the point of departure is the question 'What is happening'? It is the same question which Jesus asked the disciples. The human sciences tell us what is happening at present, and they form an essential part of formation for religious missionary life. However, it is necessary that they should be underpinned by theological and spiritual reflection in order to give true meaning to the problems of the world. The apostolic experiences themselves, which form part of the period of formation, ought to help towards an evangelical understanding of the question "What is happening"? Formation, which takes place through insertion, when this has been chosen by the Province, can have no other purpose than a better understanding of the anxieties and hopes of human beings to be taken up and redeemed in Christ.

3. It is at this point that there are many worries and many questions. For example, what should be done so that the apostolic purpose of the Congregation inspires and permeate all formation? How can we bring about our participation in the mission of Christ as the unifying principle of our whole life? Our life is lived together with today's women and men, many of whom are marked by suffering, poverty, and injustice. What must we do so that our option for the poor may be effective in our lives and in our activities? In some countries religious life can be seen as moving up the social scale and capable of making us lose that prophetic witness of our mission "to evangelize the poor, allowing ourselves to be evangelized by them." If our houses of formation are not fairly austere; it will be difficult for us to become incarnate among the poor. Today many things are "happening." How do we give a unified sense to so many things done during formation prayer, study, apostolate, manual work? The object of the *Ratio Formationis* is to promote an appropriate coherence and harmony in all the dimensions of our life. This should also be the main theme at local and regional meetings of formators.

3. Your word is a lamp for my steps.

Then he said to 'them 'How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! ... and beginning with Moses and the writings of all the prophets he explained to them what was said about Him in all the Scriptures. When they came near the village to which they were going, he acted as if he were going further. But they held him back saying ' Stay with us; the day is almost over, and it is getting dark'. (Lk. 24, 25-29).

1. In our complex world of today, it is not always easy to understand how God operates. Neither is it easy to find the best way to form missionaries who will courageously proclaim abundant redemption to the world. For this very purpose, Jesus walks along with us so that he may enlighten us. His presence opens our hearts and our intelligence to recognize where he is passing in the world and the life of each one. Foolish and slow to believe..." Christ is active in formation as well as the one called to this office, and with his Spirit guides our steps and opens our minds. Formation for the religious missionary life entails much more than what one can give in a university center or in a formandi' residence. Formation does not mean so much a period of time or the learning content, but rather a total growing into Christ. This continual contact with Christ and with his Word gives us the strength through faith and prayer to be able to respond to all the difficulties in a secularized world which has different values. "Your Word is a lamp for my steps."

2. Our Christocentric Redemptorist spirituality is very well defined in the Final Document, "The center of Redemptorist spirituality is Christ the Redeemer, as he reveals himself above all in the mysteries of his Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection which we celebrate in the Eucharist. This profoundly Christocentric spirituality impels us to rediscover the heritage of

St. Alphonsus in his 'exodus' towards the poor. The Redemptorist 'follows' Christ the Redeemer and 'continues' his liberating action" (F.D. #36). This spirituality, understood as the following of Christ the evangelizer under the guidance of his Spirit, is the soul of the apostolic community, of our evangelizing work as well as being the very kernel of our Redemptorist formation. How is this to be achieved? " Stay with us, the day is almost over, and it is getting dark," (Lk. 24, 29) said the disciples. The period of first formation is a privileged one. During it, the experience of studying and living the Word of God in a community is realized and in such a manner as to provoke a thirst for the presence of Christ, the desire to speak through Him with the Father in prayer and to make real his merciful love in the Liturgy, especially in the Eucharist. The openness of formators and those being formed to the Word of God is a continual call to conversion and will be the best guarantee for a formation which follows Christ and continues his liberating action. The most important thing is not knowledge about Christ but living by his Word, which is the source of divine wisdom.

3. The spirituality of a religious group is always a tradition, an historical experience, and at the same time an answer to the signs of the times. For each Redemptorist by virtue of his vocation and profession, the Alphonsian way of living the Gospel as an exodus to the poor becomes a normal reality. More than many other systems of spirituality which have arisen in the history of the Church, the Redemptorist vocation includes identification with the way of the Founder. This spirituality is an integral part of our mission. It does not mean a lack of appreciation of other forms of spirituality or movements in the Church, rather it integrates them giving priority to the 'Christian experience' of St. Alphonsus.

4. At the end of the journey, there is Christ again.

Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.... They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others.... The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread (Lk.24, 29).

1. The first formation is not an end in itself. It is oriented towards the growth of the person to make a conscious option for Christ and to be a permanent witness of his presence and activity in the world. One day this first formation will end. It cannot be reduced to a form of protection, which makes young people incapable of facing the stresses of concrete life in the communities of the Province. Redemptorist formation, like the experience of the disciples of Emmaus, should enable the young man to set out on his journey.

Formation finishes, but the formative process never comes to an end. The formation is for life and during the whole of life. This is the only way to draw the generations nearer to each other and to avoid a generation gap. We must have, not only one heart but also one mind (cf Acts 4, 32; Phil. 2, 5), which means, that we must allow ourselves to, be guided by the same scale of values. All this won't prevent tensions but will help us to, contain them. The new generations will continue to, be idealistic and problematic. The older generations will continue to be realistic and prudent. Both of us need one another. However, all of us should have the same mind as Christ.

2. It is a very important moment for young people when they become members of the communities of the Province. We know from experience that for some, it is a privileged moment of coherence and maturity; others discover difficulties and crises

which seemed to them to, have been already overcome. It is very important to prepare young people for insertion into new communities, and on the other hand, it is important to prepare the communities to receive young people and to have confidence in them. The Superior of the community should direct the young people closely at this stage of their journey, avoiding treating them as seminarists in continuing first formation but rather sharing with them community and pastoral responsibilities. Annual meetings of young fathers and perpetually professed brothers are important for continual formation. Some provinces have begun to organize trimester courses for these confrères five years after priestly ordination or perpetual profession. I think this pause for reflection and prayer should be planned in the whole Congregation.

3. It should be the task of formators to consider their mission in a spirit of hope. When in 1743 St. Alphonsus assumed the direction of the Institute, his primary concern was the complete first formation of the candidates. He himself became a formator and professor. On different occasions he showed his satisfaction with the young people in formation to, whom he dedicated his great work of Moral Theology. Your satisfaction consists above all in seeing your confrères make progress in their work when they tell what happened to them on the journey and how they have recognized Christ in the breaking of the bread. Let us leave the growth of the seed to God in patience and in that hope that is born of faith.

Conclusion

I am well aware that I have not dealt with all the themes regarding formation which concern you at this time, nor have I claimed to do so. What I wish to emphasize is that this letter of mine is meant to be a support to you in your Redemptorist mission as formators.

I also wish to stimulate you to give the best of yourselves to this task on which depends the future of our Institute and its renewal. We are all convinced that the renewal of the Congregation is brought about through the first and Continuing Formation. On this depends our growth and our effectiveness. I think this is the point which we Redemptorists must stress most strongly if we wish to respond to the challenges which we face today.

I would like to have been perhaps more concrete in what I have said. But you know well that in formation there are no ready recipes. The process of personal insertion into the redemptive mystery of Christ cannot be directed from a distance. So that your mission as a formator may be effective, you must frequently ask the Lord: "Where do you wish us to prepare the Pasch for you?" In what place do you want us to be, or what do you want us to do so that we may experience the reality of your death and the power of your resurrection?

Together with the General Council, I send fraternal greetings to all of you.

Yours in the Most Holy Redeemer,

Juan Manuel Lasso de la Vega y Miranda, C.Ss.R.

Superior General

ATTACHMENTS

1. PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

“The seminarians (*formandi*) need to be accompanied in a personal way in the various stages of their journey by those entrusted with the work of formation, each according to his proper role and competence. The purpose of personal accompaniment is to carry out vocational discernment and to form the missionary disciple.

In the process of formation, it is necessary that the seminarians (*formandi*) should know himself and let himself be known, relating to the formators with sincerity and transparency. Personal accompaniment, which has *docibilitas* to the Holy Spirit as its goal, is an indispensable means of formation.

Conversations with formators should be regular and frequent. In this way, the *formandi* will be able gradually to conform himself to Christ, docile to the action of the Spirit. Such accompaniment must bring together all the aspects of the human person, training him in listening, in dialogue, in the true meaning of obedience and interior freedom. It is the task of every formator, each according to his proper responsibilities, to assist the *formand* in becoming aware of his condition, of the talents that he has received, and of his frailties, so that he can become ever more receptive to the action of grace.

A necessary element in the process of accompaniment is mutual trust. The programme of formation should explore and outline the concrete ways in which this trust can be encouraged and safeguarded. Above all, those conditions should be sought and

fostered, which can, in some way, create a peaceful climate of trust and mutual confidence: fraternity, empathy, understanding, the ability to listen and to share, and especially a coherent witness of life.

Accompaniment must be present from the beginning of the journey of formation and throughout life, even if it requires different approaches after ordination (*the profession of vows*). A serious discernment of the vocational situation of the candidate at the outset will avoid needless procrastination when it comes to making a judgment about suitability for Priestly ministry (*Religious Life*). This will avoid leading the seminarian (*formand*) to the threshold of ordination (*Perpetual Profession of vows*), without having ascertained whether the indispensable conditions have been met.” (RFIS 2016 #s 44 - 48).

2. PERSONS WITH HOMOSEXUAL TENDENCIES

“In relation to persons with homosexual tendencies who seek admission to the Seminary (our formation system), or discover such a situation in the course of formation, consistent with her own Magisterium, the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary (formation house) or holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture’. Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women. One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a

transitory problem – for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate (*perpetual profession*).

Moreover, it must be remembered that, in a relationship of sincere dialogue and mutual trust, the student is obliged to reveal to his formators – to major superior, his Spiritual Director, and to other directors – any doubts or difficulties he may have in this regard.

In this context, “If a candidate practices homosexuality or presents deep-seated homosexual tendencies, his spiritual director, as well as his confessor, have the duty to dissuade him in conscience from proceeding towards (Perpetual Profession and/or) Ordination.” In any case, “It would be gravely dishonest for a candidate to hide his own homosexuality in order to proceed, despite everything, towards (*Perpetual Profession and/or*) Ordination. Such a deceitful attitude does not correspond to the spirit of truth, loyalty, and openness that must characterize the personality of him who believes he is called to serve Christ and his Church (as a *Perpetually Professed Religious or*) in the ministerial priesthood.

In summary, the seminarian (*formand*) must be reminded, and, at the same time, it must not be kept from them, that “*the desire alone to become a religious is not sufficient, and there does not exist a right to make profession of vows. It belongs to the Congregation [...] to discern the suitability of him who desires to enter the formation house, to accompany him during his years of formation, and to call him to the profession of vows if he is judged to possess the necessary qualities.*” (RFIS 2016, VIII, c, 199-201).

3. ADMISSION, DISMISSAL, AND DEPARTURE FROM THE SEMINARY (FORMATION HOUSE) FORMATION PROGRAM

Admission:

The Church (Congregation) has the right to verify the suitability of future religious including by means of recourse to medical and psychological science.” The Bishop (major superior) is responsible for admissions to the Seminary (Redemptorist formation house); with the help of the community of formators, he is to evaluate the human, moral, spiritual and intellectual qualities of the candidates, their physical and psychological health, and their right motivation. In this sense, the guidelines for the use of experts in the psychological sciences must be considered, together with situations of transfer from another Seminary or Institute of Formation, and the possibility of a candidate having homosexual tendencies. In general, “the initial selection of candidates in view of their admittance to formation house must be undertaken carefully, since seminarians (formandi), as they continue their path towards religious life, not infrequently consider each stage as a consequence and continuance of this first step.” (RFIS 2016, VIII, Criteria and Norms, b, #189).

The question of admission becomes particularly delicate in the case of “wandering candidates” relational and affective instability, and the lack of ecclesial roots, are danger signals. Ignoring ecclesial norms on these matters is irresponsible behavior, which can have serious consequences for the Christian community (cf. FDSynod2018, #163). “It is contrary to the norms of the Church to admit to the house of formation persons who have already left or, a fortiori, have been dismissed from other seminaries or houses of formation, without first collecting the due

information from their respective bishops or major superiors, especially concerning the causes of the dismissal or departure. The previous formators have the explicit duty of furnishing exact information to the new formators” (*Enchiridion Vaticanum* 25, 2011, # 1284; cf. Can. 241, § 3). Thus, the Secretariat of Formation, in collaboration with the Major Superior of the Unit, should Study the entrance petitions y ask for the appropriate reports from the aspirant’s Bishops or Major Superiors.

Dismissal:

“In the event that the candidate, at a formulated petition by the formators, were to reject be submitted to a psychological consultation, they are not to be forced in any way against their will and the formators are to proceed prudently in the discernment process with the knowledge at their disposal.” (*Orientalions for the use of the competency of psychology in the admission and in the formation of the candidates to priesthood*, n. 6: *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 25 (2011, 1258 -1260, 1277).

“Whenever the community of formators considers it necessary to dismiss a seminarian (*student*) at any moment of the journey, after having consulted the Bishop (*major superior*), in general, this decision should be given in writing and a copy appropriately kept. It should provide a prudent explanation, at least in summary form, but nevertheless sufficiently clear, of the circumstances that have led to the decision, along with a synthesis of the discernment carried out.” (RFIS 2016 VIII, b.3., #197).

Physical Health

“From the moment of admission to the formation house, the student is obliged to show that his health is compatible with the future exercise of the ministry. In particular, he must present the results of a general medical examination as a guarantee of a

‘healthy and robust constitution,’ along with any documentation concerning diseases, operations undergone, or special treatments that have been necessary in the past. Only the Bishop and the Rector of the diocesan seminary (*major superior and the formator of the formation house*) may have access to the information contained in this documentation, and any disclosure thereof shall be regulated in accordance with the civil and ecclesiastical legislation in force in each country.

In this regard, one must take careful account of what has been established by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding the prudent and personalized evaluation of those who are affected by celiac disease, or who suffer from alcoholism or other analogous conditions. The Conferences of Bishops (*General Government*), bearing in mind the dispositions of the dicastery (*Vatican*) relative to other health issues that could adversely affect the exercise of the sacred ministry (*living of communal consecrated life*), are entrusted with the preparation of norms regarding these matters.

Suitable health conditions must continue and will have to be verified throughout the whole period of formation.” (RFIS 2016, III. B.1., #190).

Psychological Health

“As a rule, candidates will not be admitted to Seminary (*formation house*) who suffer from any pathology, be it manifest or latent (for example, schizophrenia, paranoia, bipolar disorder, paraphilia, etc.), that could undermine the discretion of judgement of a person and, consequently, his ability to assume the obligations of the vocation and the ministry.” (RFIS 2016, b.2 Psychic health, # 191).

“In this area, the theme of recourse to experts in the psychological sciences in the field of formation for ordained ministry (*for those called to the consecrated life*) has already been addressed in the past by the Church and by the Holy See. The contribution of the psychological sciences has generally been shown to be a considerable help to formators, as they are responsible for vocational discernment. This scientific contribution allows the character and personality of the candidates to be known better, and it enables formation to be adapted more fittingly to the needs of the individual: “*It is useful for the formators to be able to count on the elaboration of experts in the psychological sciences. Such experts [...] cannot be part of the formation team.* Given the delicacy of the task and the particular nature of formation for priestly ministry (*Redemptorist Vita Apostolica*), the choice of such experts must be made carefully and prudently: “*Therefore, it must be borne in mind that these experts, as well as being distinguished for their sound human and spiritual maturity, must be inspired by an anthropology that openly shares the Christian vision about the human person, sexuality, as well as vocation to the religious life and to celibacy. In this way, their interventions may consider the mystery of man in his personal dialogue with God, according to the vision of the Church.*” (RFIS 2016, b.2 Psychic health, # 192).

“In an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness, that must characterize the request for admission to the formation house, the aspiring candidate is obliged to inform the Major Superior, and the Director of formation about any past psychological problems, and any therapy received, as an element to be assessed with all the other qualities required in the candidate. In any case, it is appropriate to obtain a psychological evaluation, both at the time of admission to the formation house, and subsequently, when it seems useful to the formators” (RFIS 2016, b. 2 Psychic health, no. 193).

“It must be recalled that recourse to an expert in the psychological sciences can only proceed when the person concerned has given his previous, informed, and free consent, in writing. On the other hand, *“a candidate for the priesthood (Redemptorist Vita Apostolica) cannot impose his own personal conditions but must accept with humility and gratitude the norms and the conditions that the Church herself places, on the part of her responsibility.”* To protect his privacy, *“the candidate will be able freely to approach an expert who is either chosen from among those indicated by the formators or chosen by the candidate himself and accepted by the formators. According to the possibilities, the candidates should be guaranteed a free choice from among various experts who possess the requisites indicated”* (RFIS 2016, b.2 Psychic health, n. 194).

“Having prepared his report, and observing the civil laws in force, the expert is to communicate the results of his examination directly to the party concerned and only to those persons who have lawfully been authorised to receive this information, by reason of office: *“The expert, having carried out his evaluation, and also taking into account the indications offered him by the formators, will present them – but only with the candidate’s previous written consent – with his contribution to understanding the subject’s personality and the problems he is facing or must face. In accordance with his evaluation and competence, he will also indicate the foreseeable possibilities as regards the growth of the candidate’s personality. Moreover, he will suggest, if necessary, forms or pathways of psychological support”*. Specifically, taking into account what has been said, those authorized to have knowledge of the information provided by the expert are the Major superior, the director of the formation house, and the Spiritual Director. (RFIS 2016, b.2. Psychic health, n. 195).

“It will be the responsibility of each Redemptorist Conference to issue norms for insertion into the *Ratio Nationalis* (*corresponding Ratio*), establishing the way psychological evaluations are to be carried out. These norms shall also determine for how long documentation relating to the physical and psychological health of formandi is to be stored, respecting the civil laws in force in different countries. They shall also consider the possible consequences, including criminal liability, of divulging, even involuntarily, facts contained in such documentation.” (RFIS 2016, VIII, b. 2., # 196).

4. THE PROTECTION OF MINORS, VULNERABLE ADULTS AND THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF VICTIMS

“The greatest attention must be given to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, being vigilant that those who seek admission to a House of Formation, or who are already petitioning to receive the Profession of vows, have not been involved in any way with any crime or problematic behavior in this area.

Formators must ensure that those who have had painful experiences in this area receive special and suitable accompaniment.

Specific lessons, seminars, or courses on the protection of minors are to be included in the programmes of initial and Continuing Formation. Adequate information must be provided in an appropriate fashion, which also gives attention to areas dealing with possible exploitation and violence, such as, for example, the trafficking of minors, child labor, and the sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults.” (RFIS 2016, VIII, d, #202).

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