

In the Cave of One's Heart¹

Spiritual Formation

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Writing an article on Spiritual Formation in Seminaries in general is a very difficult task, just because it is a very vast topic. Many important documents of the Church in recent years have dealt with the subject at length.² Without claiming to be comprehensive I would like to highlight only some aspects of what has already been said, as I do believe that these aspects need to be focused today. Spirituality is an all comprising subject and we can never say enough!

I. Five Nodal Points in the Spirituality of the Priest

Spirituality can be broadly defined as the way one responds to and acts in a particular context in the light of one's ultimate decision or faith.³ For our clarity, I would like to delineate the content of this definition in terms of five nodal points in the spirituality of the priest today, all of which, in my opinion, together constitute a priestly spirituality in today's world.

¹ From the title of the book by Swami Abhishiktananda, *Hindu Christian Meeting point in The Cave of the Heart*. Bombay: Institute of Indian Culture, 1969. Original French version: *La rencontre de l'Hinduisme et du Christianisme*. Paris: Editions du Suil, 1965.

² To mention just the main ones: *Optatam Totius (OT)*, Vatican II Decree on The Training of Priests, 28 October 1965, Nos. 8 to 12. Pope John Paul II, *Patores Dabo Vobis (PDV)*, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on The Formation of Priests in The Circumstances of the Present Day, 25 March 1992, Nos. 45 to 50. Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), *Charter of Priestly Formation for India (Charter)*, first approved and published in April 1988. Revised on the basis of the Apostolic Visitation, and approved by Congregation for Evangelization, in April 2004, published by CCBI Centre, Bangalore, 2004, Second Print, 2007.

³ John Kulandai, *The Perfect Triangle*, St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchy, 1995, p.7. Also Hans Urs Von Balthasar, "The Gospels as Norm and Test of All Spirituality in the Church" in *Concilium*, 9/1(Nov. 1965) p. 5.

1. At the core of one's being - Interiority: Spirituality is to be understood as a life flowing out of one's interiority or spirit. Some persons call it the core. At its source is a foundational experience, a life event that has affected a person most fundamentally, so as to make one take life-time decisions. We can name it an *Abba* Experience or God-experience. This is made possible by the Spirit of God operating in one's spirit called the soul or the core of one's being. In this sense, spirituality is profoundly personal and pertains to the interiority of a person. It is in the depth of one's heart that one can "live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit"⁴ This is also true of the Catholic Priest and so of the candidate to priesthood. The Church at large and the Seminaries and Formators in particular can and are doing a lot with the sincere desire to instill into the students a salient and deep spiritual formation. But, in the final analysis, we must acknowledge that it is something that takes place in the depth of the human heart, in the "secret" of one's heart (See Mt 6:4, 6, 18),⁵ which is an area open only to the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Formation is the result of interaction between the candidate and the Spirit of God in a particular context of life.

2. A Fellow-Traveller – Solidarity: The priest is one among the people of God, a fellow traveler, "a brother among his brothers". He is not a loner, either in the world or in the Church. There is to be a sense of solidarity with everyone in the world and in the Church. He realizes that, together with the other humans, he is called to the same life's end and he is well aware that he is accompanying others in the same journey or *yathra*. "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity".⁶ This "sense of the world" is to be seen together with the "sense of the Church".

⁴ OT, 8.

⁵ Jesus calls the attention of his listeners often to what is happening within oneself, in other words, to the interiority of one's experience. He believed that the happenings in the world outside have their origin from this human interiority. See Mk 7:21-22.

⁶ *Lumen Gentium*, 40.

Though as a priest he may have chosen a way of life proper to a priest in the Church and in the world, he is nevertheless aware that he and other humans are called by baptism to the same holiness, which is none other than perfection in love. The "specific quality" of the priest's spiritual life as the "living instrument of Christ the eternal Priest acting in the name and in the person of Christ himself" is to be understood within the fact that he is a fellow traveler with other Christians, nay, with all men and women!⁷ Like Christ himself, the Priest is "able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness" (Heb 5:2), because "he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Phil 2:7).

3. For a better human world - Kingdom: Emanating from within a person, Christian spirituality has nevertheless an aim or goal transcending the self and flowing out into the world. It aims at making a difference in the world, to make the world a better place for the humans and for all lives. This life-goal emerges out of the interior experience of priest's surrender and self-gift to the God who encounters him at the core of his being. As a result of this encounter, the person commits himself to make a difference in the world in which he lives, "for the transformation of the entire world –oneself, others and the social structures and the systems that are anti-human and anti-God".⁸ The new world envisaged by Christian spirituality is called the Kingdom of God/the Reign of God. It is what Jesus asked his disciples to pray: "Father, Your Kingdom Come!" (Lk 11:2).⁹ It is the sum-total of his message (Mk 1:14-15). He realized that he had been sent for that by God's Spirit (Lk 4: 18). Thus, Kingdom is Jesus' "ultimate decision".¹⁰

⁷ Cf. *PDV*, 20.

⁸ X.D. Selvaraj, "Priestly Formation Today" in *CPCI News Letter*, 62 (March 2006), p. 5.

⁹ Samuel Rayan, SJ, "A Spirituality for Our Times" in *Gnanadeepa Pune Journal of Religious Studies (JPJRS)* 8/1 (Jan 2005), p.139. See also, Anthony da Silva, SJ, "Towards a Relational Spirituality: Psycho-Social Perspectives" in *JPJRS*, 7/2 (July 2004) pp. 5-16. The issue specializes on some new trends in spirituality and makes a worthwhile reading.

¹⁰ Cf. Hans Urs Von Balthasar, "The Gospels as Norm and Test of All Spirituality in the Church" in *Concilium*, 9/1(Nov. 1965) p. 5.

What is emphasized here is that any Christian spirituality, if it should be called Christian, should have a goal to pursue in life, an ultimate goal, since "The Secret of a man's/ (woman's) life is not only to live but to have something to live for".¹¹ This ultimate goal is what Jesus meant by Kingdom, the "vision" our inner eye needs to have (Mt 6:22-23) and the "treasure" for which the disciple would sacrifice everything else (Mt 13:51-53). It is "a quality that enables it to be ever more and more the matter and form of the Kingdom of God".¹²

4. Engaging totality of one's life - Totality: Spirituality involves the life of the person in its totality of human life: body, mind and spirit. Everything in life, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col 3:17). Spirituality "indeed is the work of the Holy Spirit and engages a person in his totality".¹³ There is nothing that does not come under its purview. Thus, the candidate to priesthood is to view life in its totality, without any dichotomy or division. That a person is called to a life of celibacy, "set apart for the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1) should not be viewed as a call to escape from the responsibility in the world but, rather, as an invitation to commit oneself more to the world with "undivided love of the Lord" and in "perfect Charity",¹⁴ "to become all things to all men". All the activities of the person, be it bodily or of the mind or of the soul or interiority of the person, have something to do with his spirituality. In other words, spirituality is the most inclusive aspect of one's life.

5. An on-going process – A Process: The priest is also called to be aware that spirituality is not something that is fully attained or given at any moment of one's life. It is an on-going process that goes on until the end of one's life. Therefore, holiness, or perfection in love is always in a process. "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal... I do not consider that I have made it

¹¹ Fyodor Dostoevski (1821-1881), Russian Novelist. *cybernation.com*.

¹² Albert-Marie Besnard, "Tendencies of Contemporary Spirituality" in *Concilium*, 1 (Nov. 1965) p.16.

¹³ *PDV*, 45. Cf. John Kulandai, *The Perfect Triangle*, pp.7, 231-239.

¹⁴ *OT*, 10.

my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Phil 3:12-13). This pilgrim aspect of life, instilled into the mind of the seminarians, can help them to ward off from any kind of perfectionism, complacency or a sense of false superiority.

Taking into account one's own strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, the seminarian will carry on his life in the solidarity and fellowship of all other pilgrims, strengthened by God's assurance, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). Dependency and vulnerability is part of the pilgrim nature. Far from being self-sufficient, the future priest seeks divine assistance through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and guidance from God's word through meditation and in having recourse to the Spiritual Director and by open and sincere relationship with the fellow-seminarians, aware that all of them "sail in the same boat". Even the devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, is part of this "pilgrim's progress".¹⁵

II. Measures already Taken

Even a casual survey of the programme of life in every Seminary or Formation House throughout the country will convince us of the fact that there is certainly some system of Spiritual Formation that is being followed.

1. All Seminaries have a programme of daily spiritual exercises: morning and evening prayers, meditation, examination of conscience, etc. Regularity to these exercises is demanded as one of the signs of interest in spirituality or even of one's vocation. Special emphasis is laid on daily Eucharist and frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

¹⁵ Cf. The most popular among Marian prayers, the *Salve Regina*: "we.. poor banished children of Eve... in this vale of tears...this our exile..." words expressing the dire vulnerability of earthly existence. But these words should be understood not in a pejorative sense but as words inviting us for commitment and dedication "in this vale of tears", so that all tears may be wiped out in "the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1, 4-5).

2. Initiation to spirituality is taken up already from the level of the Minor Seminary, as envisaged by the *Charter*.¹⁶
3. The *OT* has recommended that, "To provide a more solid foundation for the students' spiritual formation, and enable them to decide upon their vocation with full deliberation, it will rest with the bishops to set apart a suitable interval of time for more intensive spiritual preparation".¹⁷ Accordingly, the *Charter* recommended a "Propedeutic Period – Spiritual Year".¹⁸ Many Ecclesiastical Regions in India have already established this "Spirituality Year", with an understanding that it should be a "truly Spiritual Year".¹⁹
4. Every Seminary has at least one Spiritual Director, and usually the Seminarians are asked to choose either him or one of the staff members (except the Rector). It is the custom in most Seminaries that the Rector is kept informed not only of the Seminarian's Spiritual Director but also about the frequency of the meeting with him.
5. There are regular instructions by the Rector and by the Spiritual Director.
6. There are regular monthly Recollections and annual Retreats.
7. Ashram experiences, *Yoga* are regular feature in some Seminaries.

III. Some Apparent Inadequacies

Have these programmes really helped? While it is possible for us to answer in the affirmative, we should also underline some dangers inherent in the institutionalization of these exercises of spirituality or in the evaluation of one's spirituality from one's regularity to them.

¹⁶ *Charter*, 2.4.

¹⁷ *OT*, 12.

¹⁸ *Charter*, 2.5.

¹⁹ *Charter*, 2.5.

Pious or Radical?

When I began my ministry as a formator, I did have the idea that the students who were faithful to spiritual exercises would be at the same time good in other respects too. But my experience has not been so. Rather, there have been some students who were meticulous in their observance of regularity and punctuality to the spiritual exercises have been lacking in more important qualities like commitment to hard physical work, initiatives requiring sacrifice of time and energy, etc. Therefore, assessing the students' depth of spirituality from their external practices of piety alone could be "due to the truncated view of man and his position in the world".²⁰

For example, Bro. X was so devoted that he would be often found in the chapel, sometimes even during the time for recreation. One day, in a fit of anger, he beat another student and he had to be shown the door for that violent outburst. Bro. J, very regular to every community exercises, was found to steal cheques and money orders, misusing his hands on them as one in charge of Posts ("Post Master")! On the other hand, Bro. G was not very meticulous about spiritual exercises and sometimes would even "scandalize" others by sharp comments about them. But he would gladly take up challenging tasks, would be correct and sincere in accounts, and would make a lot of sacrifices in working with the prisoners. Since the latter was open and sincere in his dealings, he could be corrected for his misgivings on the importance of spiritual exercises, in which he later became interested and involved. Now, as a priest, he is very much appreciated for his committed work as a pastor. Therefore, faithfulness to spiritual exercises alone should not be taken to mean good quality in discipleship.

Vatican Council II has rightly given this warning and has stated that "care must be taken that spiritual formation does not consist in these alone nor develop religious sentiment, merely".²¹ The Council

²⁰ All India Seminar on The Church in India Today, Bangalore, May 15-25, 19690, *Workshop Handbooks*, Part I, p.3.

²¹ *OT*, 8.

does not fail to mention that a 'religious sentiment merely' is not to be mixed up with spirituality. Much before Vatican II, Bonhoeffer has already warned us to distinguish between "the cheap grace" and "the costly grace".²² In itself, it is very easy to be faithful to spiritual exercises. But it is very difficult to take up some of the hard duties of the community life and service to the poor and slum, to be honest, sincere and bold in one's expressions and views. It is the "narrow gate", and the "hard road" of value based life (Mt 7: 13-14). Indeed it is becoming increasingly challenging for the Seminarians to reveal freely their own mistakes. I have found that much more than a legalistic regularity to spiritual exercises, these practices of human virtues has been more effective in formation of sacrificing and committed character and in achieving quality in life.

Fr. John D'Mello has brought out another important point. His study has revealed that the students in the seminary have practiced some of those spiritual exercises even contrary to their own personal convictions. There is a dangerous gap between the ideal and the actual. Usually convictions of persons would outweigh their own behaviour. They would be very much convinced of certain things and then would try to come up to their own expectations. But in the case of the Seminarians it has been contrary. This is indicative of the evil that those students do those things not because they are convinced of them, but because they act under duress.²³ Such behaviour not only makes them insincere and therefore deforms their character, but also instills certain aversion to those things. Once they are free, they stop doing any of them.

²² See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, SCM Press, London, (1959) 1969, pp. 35-47. This is a revised and unabridged edition of the original German, *Nachfolge*, Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1937.

²³ John D'Mello, "What Kind of Culture Are Our Seminaries Producing?", *In Shaping Tomorrow's Church*, ed. Kurien Kunnumpuram, SJ, St. Paul's Publications, Mumbai, 2006, pp. 78-79.

Ill-effects of over protection and “paternal” supervision:

Students of theology often complain that they are over protected and that they are overly watched and supervised. The prefect or Minister or Moderator may be like a watch-man, lurking about to catch transgressors with a view to pin them down! Fr. Paul Parathazham's study has revealed that such a “sacristy spirituality” has rendered our seminarians less mature and less capable of taking their own decision than their peers elsewhere!²⁴ More, when overly protected candidates finally experience complete freedom once they are in the field as priests, they are at a loss to make good use of the “freedom at last!”

Fear of superiors is the end of wisdom!

Contrary to the fear of God is the fear of superiors. The former is the beginning of wisdom, but the latter blocks wisdom completely. Unfortunately, many a student in the seminary lives with a disastrous fear of their formators. Some of them are also so afraid of even the people at home that they continue in the seminary even against their own will.²⁵ What good can such fears do to the formees? In fact these fears make all our efforts at formation empty and even poison the character of candidates to priesthood and Religious life. Some of the Rectors frankly admit that throughout the year the seminarians wear masks and they often wonder whether the person sitting before them is the real one at all.

Alienation and artificiality: In recent years, some Religious Congregations have moved their seminaries from lonely locations and have venued them right into where people are living. Solitude and isolation from populace was once considered ideal for study and formation. Not so after the Vatican II underlined the importance of

²⁴ Paul Parathazham, “Vocation and Formation of Priests and Religious in India: an Empirical Study” in *Shaping Tomorrow's Church*, pp 38-39.

²⁵ Paul Parathazham, “Vocation and Formation of Priests and Religious in India: an Empirical Study,” pp 49-52.

incarnational setting and "strictly pastoral training" for a realistic and effective formation.²⁶ Just keeping the students safe within the walls of the Seminary and providing them whatever they need, without any fatigue or hard work, renders their life artificial and unnatural to such an extent that they tend to blow out of proportion even small problems! "Seminarians are away from the realities of the people and their life struggles... The present formation does not make the seminarians capable of understanding the people and their problems..."²⁷

IV. Some Practical Proposals:

Now I would like to present some practical proposals for bold and speedy action! I do not mean to be comprehensive and what is stated here should be understood only together with the proposals already made in all documents and guidelines mentioned in the course of this article. These proposals have been voiced in many meetings, and they are also being put into practice by some Seminaries.

Responsible Freedom, First Precondition for Formation

No human person can be effectively formed except in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility and Seminarians are no exception to this rule of life. When we speak of freedom and responsibility, stage of the candidate is to be taken into consideration. For example, a candidate who has just entered the Minor Seminary may need closer guidance and observation, compared to the Seminarian in the theologate. Therefore, what is proposed is, is a "graded freedom": "Standard of discipline should be applied with due regard for the age of the students, so that while they gradually acquire self-mastery, they will at the same time form the habit of using their freedom with due discretion, of acting on their own initiative and energetically, and of working harmoniously with their confreres and with the laity".²⁸

²⁶ OT, 19.

²⁷ Catholic Bishops' conference of India, *CBCI Evaluation Report*, CBCI Evaluation committee, New Delhi, 1995, p. 83.

²⁸ OT, 11.

The *Pastores Dabo Vobis* too emphasizes the importance of “training in freedom” by which the candidate to priesthood can step by step become “master of oneself... ready to open to others, generous in dedication and service to one’s neighbour”.²⁹ The *Charter* has a full section on “Growth in Freedom”,³⁰ in which it underlines the need of this “graded formation”. Speaking of responsibility, the *Charter* has this to say: “He (the Seminarian) is to be encouraged to take decisions for himself, and given opportunity to exercise responsibilities during his formation.”³¹

There are serious hindrances in putting into effect this important aspect of formation insisted upon by all the documents of the Church and by all experts in the field of formation. First comes the need of a correct vision on the part of the Formators. This underlines the need of Formation of Formators.³² The right conception on the part of the Governing Board of Bishops or “Formation Team” (Congregation/Province) is another crux of the problem. It is important that the team of Formators in the Seminary or Formation House enjoy certain amount of freedom, without “too much” interference from Superiors. Whether it be the Formators, the Superiors or the Bishops, all should have a right understanding of what human formation is. Besides, the Formators (Bishops and Superiors) should not be shocked at the face of some misuses of freedom, which are bound to come, because freedom to use is also freedom to misuse! Only in an atmosphere of freedom can the true qualities of persons be revealed. Moreover, Freedom and unconditional love are coexistent. Just think of the freedom the father gave to the son in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 11ff).

The importance of a clear vision on the part of all those concerned and focusing on ‘graded formation’ in an atmosphere of freedom and trust are all the more to be emphasized wherever a “Propedeutic Seminary” for a “Spirituality Year” has been started.

²⁹ *PDV*, 43.

³⁰ *Charter*, 3.1.4. See also 3.2.2. “Inner freedom”.

³¹ *Charter*, 3.2.1.f.

³² Statement of ARMS General-Body meeting, November 2006.

Two important questions are to be answered if we can assure the usefulness of this new step. The first is about the timing of the Spirituality Year. The *Optatam Totius* does recommend only “a suitable interval of time for a more intensive spiritual preparation”.³³ The *Charter* clearly states that it precedes philosophy.³⁴ While most of the Ecclesiastical Regions in India have followed the *Charter*, two Regions have opted to have the “Spirituality Year” after the Regency period and before the candidates enter theology, which is endorsed by the Meeting of the Rectors of Asia 2006.

The second problem is the vision and training of the formators assigned for this phase of priestly formation. It would be not only a colossal waste of time and energy, but will further harm priestly formation if these formators consider the spirituality year as another year of study or even as a year of intense spiritual exercises. The Spirituality Year will yield the expected results only if it is programmed in such a way that the Seminarians are left to themselves to form a spirituality of their own, under the guidance of the formators and in the light of the sessions or experiences that may be given them. Further clarity on this will be available only after an evaluation of the entire programme after giving it a trial for at least three years and after observing the life and ministry of those who have undergone this new training on spirituality.

Self-Formation:

“All formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self formation” and “we must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent of his own formation”.³⁵ “With freedom, personal choice, responsibility and inner conviction, he must open himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit...”³⁶ Without this personal

³³ *OT*, 12.

³⁴ *Charter*, 2.5.

³⁵ *PDV*, 69.

³⁶ *Charter*, 4.1.

choice and inner conviction, all other efforts in formation will be just irrigation of water directed to a wasteland .³⁷

How can this guidance be put into practice? The note above on responsible freedom is the most important guideline. There should be an atmosphere of trust and confidence and freedom from fear of being watched. Next will come the part played by the candidate himself on his own evaluation. Won't it be appropriate that the Rector gets an evaluation from the candidate himself before he gathers the Seminary Council?

Another aspect of this self formation would be to allow the candidate to choose the time of his own ordination, once the formation period is over. What is meant here is that elevation to any level on road towards priesthood or the Priestly Ordination itself should not be considered as something automatic. This is the idea implied in requiring a personally written request from the candidate. Another proposal would be to leave to the candidate when a type of corrective procedure is recommended, such as additional regency, a year of break, or some years of secular studies, etc.

Group and the Animator System:

The candidate's companions or confreres in the Seminary play an important role in formation, especially in spiritual formation. In my view, the ideas and opinions of the peers influence the students much more than those of the Formators.³⁸ We should encash this in the process of Spiritual Formation. 'Formation in small groups' envisioned in *Charter*³⁹ could be handy in this. Group-sharing, group-prayer sessions, group-Liturgies and even instruction in groups accompanied by expression of views by each one are ways that could help in the process of spiritual formation.

³⁷ Cf. *PDV*, 69.

³⁸ Though this point is absent in important documents such as *PDV* and *Charter*. The former mentions in one of the subtitles "The Seminary as an Educational Community" as one of the Agents of Priestly Formation, but fails to mention the confreres among them. See No. 66.

³⁹ *Charter*, 3.1.6.

I called you friends:

Formation of healthy friendship between the Seminarians will not only offer them some opportunities for personal exchange of tender loving care, but will also help them to go beyond successes and failures and gaze towards a life-goal that they have set before themselves. Moreover, the Seminary should also play the role of a training ground for salient relationship between priests without which the priests cannot live and work together in the same diocese.⁴⁰ "Esteem for priestly friendship" is called for also in the context of loneliness inherent in the life of a celibate.⁴¹ It is said that that priests should "form the habit of drawing close to him (Jesus Christ) as friends in every detail of their lives".⁴² The future priests too should foster a "communion with Jesus in terms of friendship".⁴³ How will the future priests cultivate this tender relationship with Jesus if they do not experience the same among themselves? It is human relationships that provide the mode of relationship with God.

People as Formators:

The community of faithful exercises great influence in the life of a Seminarian. Indeed the community of his origin is acknowledged to be an agent of Priestly formation.⁴⁴ The section describes what the families, associations and youth movements can do in the formation of future Priests. In fact besides the professors in the Seminary, the common people whom the Seminarians meet can teach a lot on life and values in life.

⁴⁰ See *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, (PO) Vatican II , *Decree on Ministry and Life of Priests*, 8.

⁴¹ *PDV*, 50.

⁴² *PO*, 8.

⁴³ *PDV*, 46.

⁴⁴ *PDV*, 68.

The *Charter* speaks of Priestly formation in Small Christian Communities into which “the Seminarians are to be initiated” and “they will be the leaders of the same later”.⁴⁵

The pastoral camps, regency and week-end ministry offer opportunity to the Seminarians in this regard. Besides, I have found that formal and informal interaction with the Laity leave lasting influence on the future Priests. Encounter with the persons of other denominations and those of other faiths and listening to the speakers and writers of good name, especially those writers who stand for a counter society, can do monumental help in the process of priestly formation. The views, concepts, experiences and ideas acquired in and through such encounters will bear more fruit if they are brought in for personal and group reflection and assimilation.

Formation of Good Habits for Life:

“You cannot change your future. But you can change your habits. And your habits will surely change your future”, said Bernard Shah. Seminary is a place where good habits are formed and formation can be conceived as a process of formation of suitable habits for one's life and ministry. It is habits that make good things easy! It is not without reason that the Book and Rule of Life in the Seminary is called “Customs' Book”. They are meant to train the students “so that the practices of these virtues may develop in them a spirit of prayer... and may invigorate other virtues...”⁴⁶ The programme of formation in Seminaries is meant to facilitate formation of such healthy habits, so that the Spiritual Life of priests, understood as a totality of priestly life and ministry towards the realization of God's Kingdom on earth may become a habit of life.

⁴⁵ *Charter* 3.2.4.e. We must make one clarification here. In fact the Parish Priests are not the ‘leaders’ of Small Christian Communities (or Basic Ecclesial communities). A leader of an SCC is elected or chosen by people from among themselves. The Pastor is an animator or a spiritual guide of the SCC.

⁴⁶ *OT*, 8.